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## Interview With Bob Schieffer of CBS's Face the Nation

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Washington, DC  
February 12, 2006

02/12/2006 -- [Interview With George Stephanopoulos of ABC's This Week](#)

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Good morning again, and with us this morning, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. She's in the studio. Joining in the questioning, Elizabeth Bumiller of the *New York Times*. Madame Secretary, welcome. I want to get right to this controversy about these cartoons that set off these riots, literally, around the world. You said last week that you believe Iran and Syria are using these riots to basically stir up anti-American feelings around the country and you said the world ought to call them on it. How do you call them on it? What do you do?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, first of all, this has been a very difficult period of time for everybody. We certainly understand that there is genuine outrage. There are people who genuinely were offended by the cartoons and many people found them offensive. I found them offensive. But obviously there's also a press freedom involved here, a lot of press responsibility involved.

Now, that said, whatever your views of this, the violence and going into the streets and burning embassies and killing innocent people is totally unacceptable and there are leaders in the Muslim world who have spoken out against that, like the Grand Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq.

You got a different response in Iran, for instance, where they said, well, all right, we'll just print anti-Holocaust or we'll print Holocaust cartoons that are offensive to Jewish people, to stir up and to continue; the President of Iran out in the streets inciting people.

In Syria last weekend when the Embassy of Norway was burned, we said to the Syrian Government directly these are incited riots and they need to be controlled. And so it's a question of how governments have responded to this, not a question of how people ought to respond to the cartoons.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Well, is there anything really in the end that we can do about it? I mean, you say you have spoken to the Syrian Government. Obviously we don't have relations with Iran. Is there anything beyond just you speaking out on Face the Nation that can be done about this?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I think it's just very important to draw a distinction between people who go out and protest peacefully, as people might do in any place if they're offended by something that appears in a newspaper, from the incitement to violence that is really beyond the pale. And we have to draw that distinction. I'm hopeful that more and more governments and more and more leaders are going to speak out for the need for calm. I think that the Danish Prime Minister has said that he understands the feelings of people. But this just reminds us that we are in a world in which we need to have tolerance and understanding of each other and that it's in short supply.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** One other question. I would just note that Kofi Annan of the UN says that he sees no evidence that Syria and Iran are taking part in that.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I think we understand the nature of the Syrian and Iranian regimes. You don't just go out in the streets of Iran and protest spontaneously and in the streets of Syria and protest spontaneously. The Syrian and Iranian Governments have very good control of these things. There were plenty of Syrian intelligence around at the time that this happened.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** I don't want to spend the whole program on this, but why would Kofi Annan say something --

**SECRETARY RICE:** I'm not going to get into an argument with the Secretary General about this. I think we both have the same view, which is that governments need to tamp down, not stir up. I would just remind people that when a government says our response ought to be to tell our newspapers to print anti -- to print Holocaust cartoons, that's not tamping down the situation. That's incitement.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Which is what the Iranians --

**SECRETARY RICE:** Which is what the Iranian Government said. If that's not incitement, I don't know what is.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Elizabeth.

**MS. BUMILLER:** Let me move to Iran. A number of people in your Administration have said, as you know, that there's not much we can do ultimately to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. So what moving ahead, what is your strategy for dealing with that probability?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, let me say that I don't know -- yes, maybe some people are saying this anonymously. It's certainly not our view. It's certainly not the view of the President. It's certainly not my view.

Our view is that if there is a robust international response to Iran in the Security Council, if there is the kind of unity that has been demonstrated in the recent weeks when the entire Permanent 5 -- China, Russia, the United States, Great Britain and France -- are united with countries like Brazil and India and others to say to the Iranians, yes, you can

have peaceful nuclear power but you cannot have technologies that might lead to a nuclear weapon. If we have that kind of robust response, that kind of unity, I think we can prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon.

**MS. BUMILLER:** Would you not say, though, right now that pressure seems to be pushing Iran into a corner and it's reacting by being even more insistent that it pursues nuclear ambitions?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, what's pushing Iran into a corner is Iran's own behavior. Everybody has tried to give Iran a way out. If I could just review, back in -- more than a year ago when I first went to Europe, I remember thinking that somehow people thought the United States was the problem, not Iran; that we weren't prepared to really support the EU-3 negotiations. We came out and supported them completely. We came out and supported the Russian proposal completely. And that has demonstrated to the world that it is Iran that is isolating itself.

Now, Iran has a way out. And I want to say it's not the Iranian people. It's the Iranian regime that is isolating Iran because they can take any of the proposals on the table, which would not give them access to these dangerous technologies. They can have a path to peaceful nuclear energy and they can be back in the community of responsible states. But they've taken a different path thus far. We now have to remain united so that they realize there isn't another path.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Let me ask you this, Madame Secretary, and it has to do with Mr. Putin of Russia. When you moved this to the United Nations, it's my understanding that you slowed down the UN taking any action on it for a month or so at the request of the Russians. More and more, we see Putin taking positions that are different than those of the United States. On Hamas, when they took over and won the parliamentary elections, in Israel. Mr. Putin says he's going to invite them to come to Moscow. Israel says that's a stab in the back because everybody and the others in the West are saying, you know, we're not going to give them any aid until they announce that Israel has a right to exist and so on and so on.

What's going on with President Putin of Russia? Are you satisfied with the way he's handling things these days?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, let me make a general point. In general, I think we have very good relations with Russia. Probably the best relations that have been there for quite some time. We cooperate in the war on terror. We cooperate in a number of areas. Obviously we have some differences, too.

But on the Iranian situation, we've actually had very good cooperation with the Russians. Sometimes in order to have everybody come on board, you have to give a little and they have to give a little. They did not think that it was quite time to go to the Security Council because they wanted to have time to explore their proposal. They wanted to have time to get further reports from the IAEA. We said it has to be in the Security Council now but we will wait until there's another final report from the IAEA and until you've fully explored your proposals with the Iranians. That has given us unity on the Iran cause.

On Hamas, yes, the Russians make the point that they, unlike us, have not listed Hamas as a terrorist organization. Let me be very clear. Hamas is a terrorist organization for us and for the European Union. But Russia is signed on to a Quartet statement, the Quartet being the UN, the United States, the EU and Russia, that is the sort of guardian of the roadmap process in the Middle East; that the Quartet has signed on to the statement that says a Palestinian

government must recognize Israel's right to exist, must give up violence, must accept the two-state solution and so on.

The Russians assure us, after President Putin's comments, that anything that they say to Hamas will simply be to reinforce that message.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Well, Israel says it's a stab in the back, as I just said. Do you think that somehow Russia is trying to reestablish itself and try to regain the position that it once held in the Middle East? Because it doesn't have much of a say in what goes on there anymore and there was a time when it did. Is that what this is all a part of?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the Russians have decided on their own course that perhaps it would be helpful for them to have contacts with Hamas because they don't recognize it as a terrorist organization. What we're concentrating on is making certain that the message to Hamas is a consistent one, and that message simply has to be that the right to Israel exist cannot be in question -- the right of Israel to exist cannot be in question. How can you have a peace process, how can you have a two-state solution, if you believe in violence and if you don't recognize the right of one of the parties to exist?

**MS. BUMILLER:** Dr. Rice, did President Bush misjudge Mr. Putin when he said that he had looked into his eyes and seen his soul? I mean, he has been -- there has been a lot of troublesome behavior and developments since then from Russia.

**SECRETARY RICE:** On the Russians, we certainly have had our differences. We've certainly had our commonalities as well. I think the President retains a very good relationship with President Putin. Obviously we are very concerned particularly about some of the elements of democratization in Russia that seem to be going in the wrong direction. This is not the Soviet Union; let's not overstate the case. I was a Soviet specialist. I can tell you that Russia bears almost no resemblance to the Soviet Union.

But clearly the law on nongovernmental organizations is a problem. Clearly the use of energy in the way that it was used concerning Ukraine is a problem. And Russia is about to -- it is now the president of the G-8 process. We would hope for behavior that is befitting of the president of the G-8 process.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Well -- and this will be the last question, but let me just ask you this because there are a lot of people saying they have no business being the host of the G-8 summit, as you are well aware. Do you, at this point, think that Mr. Putin shares the values of the other members of the G-8?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I do believe that Vladimir Putin is a Russian patriot who believes in a more open Russia than certainly the one that was the center of the Soviet Union, and we see that. I think the question is open as to where Russia's future development is going, but I don't see that there is anything positive to be gained by the isolation of Russia from institutions where those values are demanded of its members, from institutions where those values are practiced by those members.

And so we have a choice: We can say, all right, it's all gone bad in Russia and therefore we're just going to go back to the old days and isolate them from these institutions like the NATO-Russia Council or the G-8; or we can continue to say to the Russians, yes, we want you in these institutions but we expect behavior that is consistent with the values of those institutions and indeed challenge not just Vladimir Putin but Russia as a whole, Russia is a polity, the Russian

people, to fully integrate those values into their future.

**MR. SCHIEFFER:** Madame Secretary, it's always a pleasure to have you. Thank you for coming.

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