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## Briefing En Route Halifax Nova Scotia, Canada

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Halifax NS, Canada

September 11, 2006

**SECRETARY RICE:** Let me say a few words about our trip and then I'll take any questions that you have. After this morning's events to commemorate September 11th, events which I think for all Americans were quite emotional as we think back to five years ago today when I think our country changed forever, when our strategic perspective on the world changed forever.

After commemorating those events this morning, I thought it appropriate to go to Halifax and to thank the people of Halifax, and indeed the people of Canada, who in that moment of need on that September date came to the aid of so many people who were travelers.

I'm sure you know the story that suddenly planes were told to land wherever you are and people simply landed. Many of them didn't know where they were or why they were there. They didn't know that attacks had taken place. But when they arrived in places like Halifax, what they found was that people were welcoming and warm and ready to have them stay for as long as possible. And so first and foremost, I want to thank the people of Halifax and the people of Canada for that generosity to so many Americans on that very grave day.

It's also important to recognize that September 11th was in many ways a day that was very international. We think of it as a great American tragedy, but the ceremony that we just had at the State Department with 90 countries represented because they had all lost citizens, reminds us that New York and indeed America was such a magnet for people from around the world that America was not the only country that experienced great loss that day. And so together with the events this morning, I wanted an opportunity to emphasize and to underscore the degree to which the tragedy was one that people around the world felt, both in solidarity with the United States and because of their own loss.

So with that, I'll take a few questions.

**QUESTION:** Secretary Rice, there's a report that the Iranians have floated the idea of a two-month suspension of

their enrichment activities after talks begin. Does that idea have any interest at all -- hold any interest at all for you?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I have had a chance to talk with Javier Solana after his talks with the Iranians, and the issue is are the Iranians prepared to suspend so that negotiations can begin. And I think they thought that the atmosphere was good for the talks, but I don't have any -- I don't think there is an outcome yet that would permit negotiations to begin because the condition for negotiations to begin is that there has to be a suspension of the Iranian enrichment and reprocessing activities.

And that is the condition set not by the United States but by the IAEA Board of Governors and now by the Security Council. I should just note that work is continuing among the members of the Security Council coming out of the political directors meeting that took place that Nick Burns attended a couple of days ago, and that work is going to continue. But we've always said we would keep open the path for discussions, and if the Iranians wish to suspend so that we can begin negotiations, that would be a good thing.

**QUESTION:** So just to clarify, this offer, which seems to be an offer to suspend for a month or two, is not sufficient?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I don't think there is an offer, Jonathan, at this point. And the point is there would have to be a suspension. If there is a suspension, then we can have discussions, but there has to be a suspension. And as far as I know, the Iranians have not yet said that they would suspend prior to negotiations, which is what the issue has been.

**QUESTION:** Sorry. One more clarification on this. If the Iranians said -- if they were in fact willing to suspend, negotiations could begin? Their offer, as we understand it, has to do with what happens next, that there could then be two months worth of negotiations but they wouldn't -- their suspension would be time-limited.

**SECRETARY RICE:** First of all, it's suspension. Verified suspension. That's the condition. Secondly, it's suspension for suspension. We've said that if the Iranians are in a state of suspension, then we will be prepared not to have activity in the Security Council, but there has to be a suspension if there are going to be any negotiations. As for time limitations, I don't -- I haven't heard any Iranian offer so I don't know what to make of that. But the question is: Are they prepared to suspend verifiably so that negotiations can begin? That's the issue.

**QUESTION:** (off-mic)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Our clock would be running, too.

Anybody else?

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, we seem to be moving, if the suspension does not go forward, toward sanctions. Do you think that the menu of sanctions that the UN Security Council is considering are strong enough to get Iran to suspend? And if they don't, what are our options after that? Should Americans start getting used to living with a nuclear-armed Iran?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Nobody is going to become accustomed to the idea of a nuclear-armed Iran. That's why we're on this course. I do think you will see that there will be a series of sanctions that are commensurate with Iranian behavior

and with what the Iranians do in response to the Security Council resolution. The international community can bring a lot of isolation on Iran, both formally and informally, both through the Security Council and through likeminded states taking action even if the Security Council does not.

And so this is the beginning of a road. I continue to hope that the Iranians are going to take the opportunity put before them, which is to suspend and to begin negotiations. It's only in that way that we can explore whether there really is an answer to this problem through negotiation. But I'm quite certain that you're going to see, if this does not work out, that you're going to see sanctions and that those will be commensurate with Iranian behavior.

It may well be, Helene, that it will be several resolutions. I wouldn't suspect that everything is going to be in resolution number one, but I do think you'll see in resolution number one an important signal to the Iranians that they are now under international not just scrutiny but international pressure and indeed international isolation. And as I've said, that can have effects both formally and informally.

But we'll see what comes out of these talks. From our point of view, we have nothing to lose by - as we work towards the sanctions resolution - having Javier Solana explore with the Iranians whether there's a way to get to negotiations. That's just fine. But the time is coming very soon when we're going to have to vote a Security Council resolution, when it's ready, when it's been consulted and prepared.

**QUESTION:** Just one on Sudan. You met with the Foreign Minister today. Is there any progress to report towards an agreement on peacekeepers?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I did meet with the Foreign Minister and I gave him a very strong message that the international community and the United States expect Sudan to accept, indeed facilitate, a UN international force. The Government of Sudan has not been able to -- not able to or not willing to -- stabilize the situation in Darfur. That situation has not gotten better; indeed, there are concerns that it may get worse. And we have no choice as an international community to insist that there will be an international force that can protect the innocent, can protect aid workers, can prevent a humanitarian crisis, because the Government of Sudan has not been willing or able to do that.

The UN has had a long debate in this recent UN reform discussion about the responsibility to protect. Well, it's time for the international community to exercise the responsibility to protect, and that means a UN force.

So I won't say that we made progress, but I will say that I delivered the strongest possible message in the strongest possible terms to the Sudanese Government that any hope for bettering relations between the United States and the Sudan rests on Sudan's cooperation with this UN Security Council resolution.

**QUESTION:** (off-mic.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** He brought a letter to the President, which I have not seen. I am transmitting it. And he brought hope for better relations between the United States and Sudan and I told him in no uncertain terms that that wasn't on the agenda unless the Sudan acted responsibly.

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