

## Interview on Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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**MR. WALLACE:** Secretary Rice, welcome, congratulations and thanks for being with us live here in studio on this historic day.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much, Chris. It's great to be with you.

**MR. WALLACE:** You just saw what our reporters have found, but I'm sure, I hope, certainly, that you're getting better, more solid information from across the country. What are you hearing about the voting and the violence?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, first of all, we're hearing that this is a remarkable day for the Iraqi people, that across the country, despite the intimidation, despite the threats of Zarkawi, who literally took on democracy directly, that the Iraqi people are turning out in large numbers to vote; that they are jubilant at this opportunity to vote. This is the start of a new day for Iraq.

It's not perfect. There are parts of the country where people have been intimidated and where the violence is very high. We always knew that that would be the case, but the Iraqis have taken a huge step forward and they have hard work ahead of them, but this is a great day for the Iraqi people.

**MR. WALLACE:** I mentioned that one election official, an important member of the Election Commission has said -- talked about a 72 percent turnout. First of all, how seriously do you take that number? And secondly, do you have a benchmark as to what kind of turnout we need to reach in Iraq?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I think we won't know the turnout for some time because you know, Chris, even in our own elections, it takes some time to establish turnout. But what we are seeing is that Iraqis are voting in large numbers. I think everybody believes it's better than expected.

There are parts of the country where we expected a low turnout, but this election is, of course, a first step; and what it really says is that the Iraqi people are not prepared to be fearful and intimidated and kept from their right to exercise their voice. And you're

hearing it from Iraqis like a 94-year-old woman who was taken in her wheelchair by her son and Iraqis who just want this opportunity. So they have a lot of hard work ahead of them. They have said that if the Sunnis are unable to turn out in large numbers because of the intimidation that there will still be an opportunity for representation in the constitutional drafting.

They know that this election is a first step, not a last step on the road to democracy.

**MR. WALLACE:** What does -- it's obvious what today tells us about the commitment to democracy. You just see those long lines in Sheppard Smith's piece and as I've just said to you while it was on, it gives you goose bumps.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Right.

**MR. WALLACE:** What does today tell you about the strength of the insurgency, and what have you heard about how Iraqi security forces have done today?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the good news is that General Casey has been reporting that Iraqi security forces are doing very well in support of these elections; that there have been few circumstances in which American or coalition forces have had to step in for them. They are, of course, still young in their development, the Iraqi security forces. But by all reports, they are doing very well and they're supporting their own democratic process.

We have to get to a point where this is Iraq's fight for Iraq, the fight of Iraqis for their own freedom. And I think you're seeing that today.

**MR. WALLACE:** Have you spoken with the President today?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I have spoken with the President. I've spoken with him a couple of hours ago and he also is just so incredibly encouraged by the Iraqi people.

We need to recognize the threats that they were living under. And their bravery and their willingness to go out is really a vote of confidence for Iraq, but it's also a vote of confidence for these values that are universal values. These are not Western values. These are not values that have to be imposed from the outside.

Obviously, as we're seeing here, as we saw in Afghanistan, as we've recently seen in the Palestinian territories, in Ukraine, people desire to be able to determine their own future and that's what we're seeing.

**MR. WALLACE:** Just as you were just talking with him and talking about the lines and talking about, relatively speaking, the small number of attacks, what did he say?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, he just said that this is a great day for the Iraqi people. And it's also -- it needs to be said that what the coalition has done under General Casey, the military forces, what the Embassy has done, Ambassador Negroponte, himself, has been out to six polling places today.

Our people in Iraq, our men and women in uniform, our diplomats are doing a fine job, as is the United Nations and Mr. Valenzuela, to give the Iraqi people this opportunity.

**MR. WALLACE:** As we've said, and as you've alluded to a couple of times, turnout in the Sunni areas, where the intimidation was greatest and, frankly, where there were also calls for boycotts, was apparently much lighter than in the rest of the country.

What obligation do you think in what seems clearly will be a Shiite majority, what obligation do they have to reach out now? And what do you say to the Sunnis who may feel excluded and left out of this process?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The entire political process of democracy is learning to find ways to overcome divisions and differences. And this is a society in which Saddam Hussein's tyranny accentuated those differences and made people feel that they were not in control of their own futures.

Of course there is an obligation on the part of those who may now be in the majority to bring along minorities and make sure that their interests are represented. But the great thing, Chris, is that I've heard innumerable comments from Shia and Kurd leaders that that's precisely what they intend to do. They intend to be one Iraq. They're going to struggle. It's going to be a process of give and take and compromise. It's a process we well understand from the more than 230 years that we've had to try and bridge our differences.

But the Sunnis will understand, I believe, that their Iraqi brethren want to see this move forward. And we need to recognize, too, that to a certain extent, there are Sunni and Shia who are married to each other. This is a society in which some of these differences at the societal level barely exist. The Sunnis, the Shia, the Kurds and other minorities, I think, will find a common future.

**MR. WALLACE:** Ted Kennedy made a speech this week in which he compared the situation in Iraq to Vietnam. He said that we're in a quagmire. He said that we're losing the battle for the hearts and minds of the Iraqis. He said that we need to begin pulling out U.S. troops, and then he said the following. I'd like you to listen if you would, please.

**SENATOR KENNEDY:** The U.S. military presence has become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

**MR. WALLACE:** Secretary Rice, given, especially, the events of today, what do you think of Ted Kennedy's remarks?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, American and other coalition forces are there under UN mandate because the Iraqis believe that they are needed. The Iraqis are not yet capable of securing themselves. What we're seeing today is what the Iraqis want their future to be. They want it to be one based on democrat-- on democracy, on the vote, not on the gun. And yes, there are some terrible thugs, mostly from the old regime, who are trying to forestall that process. And we saw today that they are not succeeding in keeping the Iraqi people from moving forward.

**MR. WALLACE:** But just, I guess, on a human level, what do you think, knowing the sacrifice they make when you hear Senator Kennedy say they're part of the problem list?

**SECRETARY RICE:** American forces, along with coalition partners are giving the ultimate sacrifice so that those people can be in the streets today to vote. American men and women in uniform, American diplomats, people who are out there are supporting Iraqi democracy. And yes, we will have a discussion with the new Iraqi Government about what the security configuration ought to look like going forward, but this is a great day for an America that has always been associated with the march of freedom and trying to help those who want to aspire to freedom.

The American men and women in uniform deserve to be thanked roundly for the contributions that they're making to democracy.

**MR. WALLACE:** Does what you call today's "great day," today's successful vote; does it have any effect on how quickly we're going to be able to bring home U.S. troops?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, it is a great day, Chris, but, of course, the hard work is still ahead. There's going to be a lot of difficult political work, a lot of difficult security work. I suspect that the insurgents will try to demonstrate that despite today's vote that they are still a very viable force, and they are because they are -- they're very, very brutal intimidators; and I don't expect that to go away.

But what we're doing is, we're working with the Iraqis to train their own security forces. The good news is that they performed pretty well today in support of Iraqi democracy, and we have to finish the work here. We have to achieve the mission. But it has always been the hope and the plan that American and coalition forces will return when they're no longer needed.

**MR. WALLACE:** You won confirmation as Secretary of State this week by a vote of 85 to 13, which is a pretty good margin. On the other hand, as you know, those 13 "no" votes were the most for a Secretary of State since 1825, more even than Henry Kissinger got during Vietnam.

One of the no votes was cast by Minnesota Senator Mark Dayton, who said the

following. Let's take a look.

**SENATOR DAYTON:** I really don't like being lied to, repeatedly, flagrantly, intentionally. It's wrong. It's undemocratic. It's un-American and it's dangerous.

**MR. WALLACE:** Secretary Rice, what do you think those 13 "no" votes, those 13 senators were saying?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I'm not going to try to guess about people's motivations. I'm very gratified by the 85 who voted for me. And the fact is, we've had to do some very difficult things. We have had to talk about the -- a Middle East that had to change, that could no longer continue on the course on which it was going. We had to intervene against a dictator of Saddam Hussein's strength and brutality, who was a huge break on the way to a different kind of Middle East. We've had to do difficult things. But I really do firmly believe that the President's policies and the policies of this country, which are now unfolding in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, will show that history will judge; that when you are on the side of democratic principles, when you don't ignore tyranny, then you are doing the work of securing America.

**MR. WALLACE:** Let's talk about some of those other countries.

You don't get much time to settle into your new office. You leave on Thursday for a trip to eight European capitals -- this is going to wear you out just looking at the map here -- and to Israel and the Palestinian Authorities. You have said several times recently, and you've gone out of your way to say that the time for diplomacy is now.

In Europe, is this a fence-mending mission? Do you see it as part of your role to try to persuade some of the allies, who are concerned that the President's policies are too aggressive?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Chris, I've been in constant contact with my counterparts across Europe, even before I was Secretary of State. And what I see happening is the community of democracies uniting around the great goals that we have ahead of us. We know that there have been differences in the past. There have been differences about Iraq and how we got there. But any leader, any government, any people that's lucky enough to have been on the right side of history in terms of democratic development, that has enjoyed the freedoms that we've enjoyed has got to be heartened by what we've seen today and has got to realize that it is our obligation to continue to spread freedom and liberty across the globe. And so I look forward to going out, having discussions about how we do that moving forward. But I really do believe that we're united now around great causes.

**MR. WALLACE:** In the Mid-East, a couple of questions. First of all, are you going to get directly involved in negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I'm going out to the region, and it's my intention -- the parties are doing, by the way, very well. And they, themselves, have set conditions, which make it possible for this to be a time of opportunity. The Gaza withdraw plan of the Israelis, the Palestinian elections after the death of Yasser Arafat -- and so I plan to go out to discuss with them, to look at what we can do.

Of course, America has a very important role to play, and we will play it. The conditions are now emerging for a -- for movement back onto the roadmap, and for movement toward a two state solution. And I intend to do everything that I can to help push that process forward.

**MR. WALLACE:** And Palestinian President Abbas seems to have been pretty successful so far in suppressing terrorism. Should Israel respond by agreeing to a formal ceasefire?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the Israelis are responding. They've said that they are prepared to start withdrawing from West Bank towns. They have been pulling back in the Gaza.

I do think that it is important that the Palestinians and the Israelis find a way to move forward in this period of calm. It is also important that we not lose sight of the fact that the roadmap requires the dismantling, ultimately, of terrorist organizations. It requires the unification of the Palestinian security forces, so as Prime Minister Abbas himself has said, there can be only one gun under the authority of the state. And whatever means they can use to advance those goals, I would hope they would use them.

**MR. WALLACE:** Finally, I want to play a brief clip from earlier this week, after you were sworn in as Secretary of State and you referred to your relatives from Alabama who were there in the audience. Take a look.

**SECRETARY RICE:** " they represent generations of Rices and Rays who believed that a day like this might somehow be possible."

**MR. WALLACE:** You have gone from a little girl in the segregated South to being the chief representative of this country to the world. What does that say about the United States?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It says that the United States is a place that is living up to its principles; that has had a struggle to do that. I also said in that, Chris, that it was Thomas Jefferson who said that the God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time, and of course, didn't himself personally carry that out perfectly as a slave owner.

It just shows that democracy, if you have the right principles in place, if you have the right institutions in place, it may take a long time, but eventually, the aspirations for one society, unified despite race and gender and religion can start to come into being.

We still have a lot of work to do in America. I look out and I see that work. But I do believe that in a world where difference is a license to kill, to look across and to see people like me or Al Gonzales or others, says that America is trying desperately, and in some sense, succeeding in living up to those principles.

**MR. WALLACE:** On a more personal level, and maybe you got a chance to reflect with your aunts and uncle this week; and I'm sure you had talked, at some point, about your mom and dad, on a personal level, I mean, you must think: Condi Rice, Secretary of State -- I mean, what are your personal thoughts about that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Of course I think that. I think back to my mom and dad, who gave me every opportunity. It didn't matter what I wanted to learn, they tried to provide the opportunity to do it. And I think back to the multitude of teachers in segregated Birmingham who took money out of their own pockets to buy textbooks for kids when there weren't free textbooks for black kids, and I think this is not what I have achieved. This is what a whole generation, the generations of people in places like segregated Alabama achieved, the struggles and the sacrifice.

I was so heartened that Andrew Young and Dr. Dorothy Height were in the audience because this has been a long struggle for African Americans. It's still a struggle for many. But it's not my achievement; it's the achievement of generations.

**MR. WALLACE:** Secretary Rice, we want to thank you so much for being with us on this very special day. Safe travels and come on back. You have a standing invitation here at Fox News Today.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. I look forward to using it.

**MR. WALLACE:** Thank you.

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