



**U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE**

Launch of the Civilian Response Corps of... | [Daily Press Briefing](#) | [What's New](#)

**KEYWORD SEARCH**

[Subject Index](#)

[Home](#)

[Issues & Press](#)

[Travel & Business](#)

[Countries](#)

[Youth & Education](#)

[Careers](#)

[About State](#)

[Video](#)

You are in: [Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice](#) > [What the Secretary Has Been Saying](#) > [2006 Secretary Rice's Remarks](#) > [October 2006: Secretary Rice's Remarks](#)

## Remarks With Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdish Regional Government After Their Meeting

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Erbil, Iraq  
October 6, 2006

**PRESIDENT BARZANI:** (*Via interpreter*) First of all, I would like to welcome Madame Secretary and the accompanying delegation. We had a constructive meeting. We talked about the general situation in Iraq. We talked about the national reconciliation process, the political process. Fortunately, our views were very similar and we have pledged that we will continue in our efforts in our cooperation to implement the process that we have started until we establish a federal, democratic, pluralistic Iraq, an Iraq which will be free from terrorism and terrorists.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. I appreciate very much that President Barzani of the Kurdish regional government has welcomed us here so warmly. It's wonderful to be in Erbil again. I said to the President that it is a beautiful region that is obviously growing very rapidly. We have had very good discussions about the national reconciliation process and the vision of a unified and democratic Iraq that is stable, that is at peace, and at peace with its neighbors.

I appreciate your leadership and I appreciate also your important participation in the process of national reconciliation. And thank you again for having me here.

**QUESTION:** (*Via interpreter*) A question from (inaudible) addressed to Madame Secretary. The Kurds have always been an ally and a friend to the United States, and since the beginning of the Iraqi liberation freedom operation we have been fighting together. We have shed blood together in this process. And we have always -- the Kurdish leadership has always been taking care of the American interests in this. What are your guarantees for the rights of the Kurdish people in the future?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we have been friends with the Kurdish people for a very long time, and in fact prior to liberation, well prior to liberation, I think helped to provide stability and protection to the Kurdish people. We now are able



to have a situation in which we will have a democratic Iraq, not just a democratic Kurdish region. There are guarantees in the constitution of that unified Iraq. People understand the importance of autonomy here in the Kurdish regions. They understand the special history of Kurdistan.

And I think that the process that is going on now in Baghdad is one that can, within the framework of a united Iraq, protect and defend the rights of all people. And of course the Kurdish people will be better served by neighbors in the neighborhood who are friendly and who are respecting the integrity and independence of Iraq and will most certainly be better served if Baghdad and surrounding areas are stable and democratic as well.

Paul Richter.

**QUESTION:** President Barzani, there is a lot of talk on the street in Kurdistan about secession from Iraq. I wonder what is your judgment about the level of interest in that idea. Do you share that sentiment perhaps yourself?

Also I wanted to know your views on the new oil exploration in Kurdistan. Should that revenue, do you think, remain in Kurdistan or should it go to the Iraqi treasury?

Also, Madame Secretary, I wonder if I could, did you reach any agreement with the President on how the PKK should be handled by Kurdish authorities or by the Iraqi army?

**MODERATOR:** That was three questions.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes, it was. (Laughter.)

**PRESIDENT BARZANI:** Sir, Kurds, like any other nation, they have the right to self-determination. This is a natural right. But the parliament in Kurdistan has adopted within the framework of a federal democratic Iraq a federal system.

As for the revenues of oil, as it has been stipulated in the constitution with that, we are with a fair distribution of the oil revenues all over Iraq.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you. And as to the PKK, one of the points that I made to President Barzani is that we have made some progress on the PKK issue in the recent months. General Ralston, who is a special envoy on behalf of the United States, has been working on this issue. Everyone needs to play a role: the Kurds need to play a role, the Iraqis need to play a role and the Turks need to play a role.

And I am just very pleased that there has been a shutdown of PKK offices throughout the country and I am very pleased that General Ralston will return here soon to continue the process. Iraq's territory can not be used for terrorism against any country. That is an agreement of all Iraqis. And I think we now are getting very good cooperation between Iraq, Turkey and the United States on this issue.

**PRESIDENT BARZANI:** Thank you.

**2006/T23-10**

Released on October 6, 2006

 [BACK TO TOP](#)



[Updates](#) | [Frequent Questions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[About state.gov](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Other U.S. Government Information](#)