



Remarks With UN Deputy Special Representative for Iraq Staffan de Mistura

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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SECRETARY RICE: I'm very pleased to have just concluded a meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary General Staffan de Mistura. And we've had a very good conversation about the excellent work that he is already doing here in Iraq. Everyone is very pleased that he is here. As you know, the UN mission has been expanded and extended so that the UN can be a greater part of helping to stabilize and bring forward a democratic Iraq.

I think this conversation was especially well-timed because I was just this morning in Kirkuk and there were discussions with the various people there, the various communities, about the process concerning Article 140 of the constitution. And I was very pleased to learn that Mr. de Mistura is going to lead a UN technical effort to help the people of the area to resolve some of the differences that they have there, to look at the questions of the -- a way forward so that all Iraqis in the Kirkuk province can feel that they have a future in the new Iraq.

And the UN is very well-placed to do this, to provide the kind of technical expertise and technical efforts that are needed to help these people move forward. So thank you very much for your efforts and I could very much see in Kirkuk how important it's going to be what you're going to do.

MR. DE MISTURA: Thank you. Thank you for that. Shall I say a few words?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes, please.

MR. DE MISTURA: I had the opportunity of elaborating with Madame Secretary, first of all, the plan of the UN in -- based on the instructions I got from the Secretary Ban Ki-moon that we need to be and we intend to be proactive, proactive because this is a crucial year and the Resolution 1770 gives us the capacity of being proactive. And one opportunity is exactly Article 140. The clock was ticking -- it's still ticking -- regarding the referendum because 31st of December is only 13 days away. Your visit to Kirkuk, I think, helps a lot to stop the clock.

And the plan that the UN has and intends to follow up on on a technical level will bring the talk in a different mode. We have six months next year where we intend to work with everybody, starting along the whole area of Kirkuk and beyond so that we can show that dialogue can produce much better result than violence. And that's what the UN, and I think yourself, feel very strongly. So it was a good opportunity of sharing that. Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. And you'll have the strong support of the United States of America.

MR. DE MISTURA: Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you.

MR. DE MISTURA: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary --

SECRETARY RICE: I think we have a press avail a little later.

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