



## Interview with Quatrina Hosain Currim of Pakistan Television

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Islamabad, Pakistan  
March 17, 2005

**MS. CURRIM:** Good evening. We are joined today by a special guest, the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice.

Dr. Rice, thank you so much for joining us here in PTV World (inaudible) your first visit to the region.

And what were your expectations before you got here and after your talks with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz? Have your expectations been met? Any areas you feel you need to work on further?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I've known for some time, of course, how very special this relationship has become with Pakistan, a vital ally in the war on terrorism, but also a country that is going through a transition internally. And we've been interested with Pakistan in partnerships not just in the war on terrorism but a broad relationship. I had an opportunity to talk about the economic reforms that are going on here, about the possibilities for foreign direct investment in Pakistan, about the educational reforms that are going on here, and of course about the important work that we have still to do in fighting terrorism. So it has more than met my expectations. I met most of the leaders at one time or another but it's very nice to be here in Pakistan and I only wish I could stay longer.

**MS. CURRIM:** And, of course, Pakistan and the United States, as you mentioned, have had this wonderful relationship and especially going with the war on terrorism, but the average Pakistani has this fear that when the United States loses interest, it walks away. And how would you allay those fears of the people here?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I would say to the people of Pakistan that the United States will be a friend for life, that we understand that at one time in our history we did not maintain and continue a deep relationship with Pakistan after having shared strategic interests during the Cold War. I believe that we paid a price for that in the United States and that Pakistan paid a price. And so we remain and will remain committed to this relationship for the long term.

**MS. CURRIM:** And there have been concerns here in Pakistan about a proposed anti-missile system, the Patriot system, to India. How do you respond to that? Do you think that that would really upset the balance of power here in the region?

**SECRETARY RICE:** I am here, in part, to talk about strategic relationships, to talk about defense needs and defense cooperation. We are always concerned about the military balance in South Asia, as we're concerned about the military balance worldwide. But I would note that this is a good time, we believe, for relations between India and Pakistan. We understand that there are still deep differences to overcome. We understand the history. But we've been very impressed with how President Musharraf and now Prime Minister Singh and Prime Minister Vajpayee before him have been charting a course for a more peaceful relationship between the two countries. And I understand that there will even be a cricket match that President Musharraf will attend, and I promise that I'm going to learn to understand cricket. (Laughter.)

**MS. CURRIM:** And, of course, one of the other issues that has been talked about was the sale or proposed sale of F-16 fighter jets to India and Pakistan. Now, Pakistan, of course, has purchased F-16s which haven't been delivered, so what is the status of both F-16s at this point?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we continue to discuss the defense requirements of Pakistan. We are, of course, interested in those defense requirements and we've had good discussions here about the strategic relationship, about the defense cooperation, and we'll continue to have those discussions.

**MS. CURRIM:** And you mentioned earlier the peace process between Pakistan and India, and Kashmir remains the major issue that Pakistan is very, very concerned about. Are you going to be bringing any suggestions that could help that process along, especially on Kashmir?

**SECRETARY RICE:** So far the parties have been making a lot of progress themselves on matters that really matter to ordinary people, people who want to travel and the people in Kashmir, and that is a process that is underway and that we fully support.

We do not believe that the United States can play a mediating role in the crisis or the differences over Kashmir, but certainly we want to be supportive of those discussions. We want to be supportive of efforts to bring a better life, a more -- a life with greater political participation for the people of Kashmir. And we want to see an end to the kind of violence that has wracked Kashmir and both India and Pakistan.

**MS. CURRIM:** And, of course, in New Delhi you talked about the proposed gas pipeline project between Iran, India and Pakistan, and you said that you were opposed to it. Now, if that project were to go ahead, what would be the U.S. response to that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we're certainly concerned about it and we've made very clear our views. I wouldn't want to speculate on the U.S. response, but what we do understand is that this is emblematic of the fact that there are energy needs that growing economies have, the growing economy of India, the growing economy of Pakistan. In fact, the American growing economy has very dire energy needs. And we are all going to have to pool our technologies and our thinking to see if we can't find ways that are environmentally sound and that can meet the burgeoning demands for energy.

**MS. CURRIM:** And last month, of course, when you were in London, I believe, you said that attacking Iran was not in the U.S. agenda at this point in time and that diplomacy can play a role. Now, what direction would U.S. policy be taking toward Iran? It's been some time now since you made that statement.

**SECRETARY RICE:** After we left -- after the President left Europe, I worked with my colleagues in Europe and I think we've forged now a common approach concerning Iran's nuclear program. The goal here is to get Iran to live up to its international obligations not to seek a nuclear weapon under cover of civilian nuclear power development. And we and the Europeans have come to a common framework. We are working with them and we will continue to do that.

There is plenty of room here for diplomacy, but Iran needs to take the offer that is being made to them to demonstrate that they are going to live up to their international obligations.

We are concerned also about Iran's role in terrorism, about the role that, for instance, Iran plays in supporting groups that would destabilize the now developing chance for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

And, of course, the Iranian people, like all people, deserve a chance to live in freedom.

**MS. CURRIM:** And let's also (inaudible) to Iraq, and the reason for the war was weapons of mass destruction and regime change. Saddam Hussein has been ousted but the cost of that war has been tremendously high in terms of Iraqi and American lives. Now, for a regime change, was that price too high?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, Saddam Hussein was for a long time a destabilizing force in a region that can't afford destabilizing forces. What the United States learned the hard way on September 11th is that the ideologies of hatred that led people to fly airplanes into our buildings on one fine September morning had to be confronted; it had to be confronted to take care of threats that were gathering; it had to be confronted to give a chance to liberty and freedom to replace these ideologies of hatred.

And what we have achieved now in Iraq is a chance for the Iraqi people to build a different kind of Iraq, an Iraq that will be an ally in the war on terrorism, an Iraq that will respect its neighbors, and Iraq that will be democratic and will, in fact, in the center of the Arab world, be a source of inspiration for those throughout the Arab world who want freedom. And we're seeing the effect of that. We're seeing that the elections, which I think everybody admired, where the Iraqi people went out in large numbers despite the threats from terrorists, have emboldened people in other parts of the region.

So the sacrifice has been terrible. We mourn every life -- American, coalition, Iraqi. But nothing of value is ever won without sacrifice, and if we can leave to our children and to the children of the broader Middle East a freer, safer, more stable world, then it will have been worth it. And I believe we are making progress on that goal.

**MS. CURRIM:** (Inaudible) frequently, though, that United States, that American foreign policy, is tilted against Muslim countries. How do you respond to that charge?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The President stands for human dignity and for freedom for all people. I would make a couple of points. Americans have used military force in recent decades and most of the time to try and help Muslims, whether it was to stop the bloodshed and the slaughter in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kosovo; to free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein who had invaded and occupied the country; in Afghanistan to free the Afghan people from this terrible regime that repressed people, brutalized people, especially women; and then in Iraq to give the Iraqi people a chance at freedom.

The United States also is a place in which the Muslim faith, the faith of Islam, Muslim culture is respected because it's one of the largest growing populations in the United States itself, where Muslims are worshiping freely and raising their children according to their traditions and very much a part of America's vibrancy. So we have enormous respect for the great religion of Islam, for Muslim tradition and culture, and it is respect that is so great that we simply do not accept the notion that Muslims somehow don't want to live in freedom or that there is something that makes the Muslim culture and democracy enemies of one another.

Indeed, I think the United States is a place that believes these values are universal and I hope that that is now understood throughout the Muslim world.

**MS. CURRIM:** Dr. Rice, thank you very much for joining us here on PT World.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you.

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