



Remarks to the Press en Route Ankara

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Ankara, Turkey

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SECRETARY RICE: Okay. I just wanted to come back and make just a couple of remarks. We've had good meetings obviously in Britain and in Germany and in Poland. We've talked a lot about the future and what we can achieve together in the alliance in the future--a lot of discussion in all three places about the prospects for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian issue. We talked a good deal about the importance of the road ahead in helping the parties prepare. In particular, I thought the Polish discussion of what they might be able to do in terms of the building of new institutions, even in the Palestinian territories was...it was important, and something I'd not heard before, that they were interested in doing that.

We also talked about Afghanistan and Iraq. And in Poland, in particular, as well as in Germany, we talked a good deal about the experience those two countries have had in taking institutions that were once totalitarian institutions and turning them into democratic institutions, whether it's the training of police or the training and capacity-building of ministries. So, it was a very interesting set of discussions with all, and I know that Prime Minister Belka and Foreign Minister [Rotfeld] talked about the need for good news when the Presidents speak. And let me just clarify that we did have some discussions in Poland...as you know, there have been concerns about visa policy, and we had Assistant Secretary Maura Harty out here over the last couple of days putting together with the Poles a kind of road map for how we might resolve some of the visa concerns that the Poles have had. And that was, in part, what he was referring to. And we also are working on what we might be able to do to help the Poles in terms of support for their military modernization, through support for coalition partners in what we may be able to do in the supplemental. So, there will be more details about that, but I thought I would try to de-mystify what that conversation was about. So, yes.

QUESTION: Thank you, Madam Secretary. You also mentioned today your concerns over democratization in Russia, and these are concerns that have been expressed for a long time. The Russians don't appear to have done much to meet you on this, and in fact, while you talk about the march of democracy, it seems that it's in reverse; it's in retreat in Russia. So, at a time when the President and you are trying to spread democracy around the world, can you go further than just expressing concerns? Can you, for example, stop supporting Russia for the WTO? You know, affect them on the economy rather than just use the rhetoric?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, let me just say that what the President is trying to do and what the United States is trying to do is to encourage those in countries who seek democracy in their aspirations. I know we sometimes talk about the United States spreading democracy and liberty; of course, the United States stands for the spread of democracy and liberty. But we're fully aware and believe that this has to be done from within. It was done from within in Ukraine; it was done from within in Georgia. Even in places where the overthrow of a dictatorship like in Iraq or Afghanistan takes place, it still has to be done from within.

As to Russia, it will be aided by the growth of democratic movements and by party building and by the growth of civil society in Russia that can bring to bear on the Russian government and on future Russian governments the desires and the aspirations of the Russian people for that same kind of democratic development. That's why the United States has been very involved in efforts to support civil society. It's why we spent, I think the number is \$43 million last year, in support of democracy programs in Russia. It is why I think it would be exactly the wrong thing to do to try and isolate Russia from the effects of something like the World Trade Organization, which has the effect of liberalizing economies, changing the relationship of citizens to their economies, as those economies liberalize, and, we believe, can have the effect of, indeed, promoting democratic development. And so, I don't really think that the isolation of Russia from the broad trends that are developing worldwide is the answer. Rather it is a combination of helping and supporting those in Russia who are trying to support democratic development. It is continued discussion and dialogue with the Russian government about the expectations of the world about Russia in terms of rule of law, support for free press. And it is encouraging Russian integration into those institutions in the international system that, in fact, promote economic liberalization and democratic development. It's one reason that we continue to be very supportive of Russian work in development, for instance with the OSCE, which has not been easy lately. But it's an important organization in promoting elections and democratic development.

QUESTION: If we could just follow up, Madam Secretary. It seems as though...is this a correct perception: it seems that there is now less common ground between the U.S. and Russia than there has been in a long time? It's been growing in the opposite direction.

SECRETARY RICE: I wouldn't characterize it that way. In fact, I think that we have improved the situation with Russia on a number of fronts. For instance, in Asia, the work of the Russians in the six-party talks puts Russia into a forum with the United States for the solution or the resolution of a serious security issue in Asia. I don't remember in my history of U.S.-Russian relations that kind of engagement on Asia. We still have and are, in fact, extending and expanding our cooperation on the matters of the war on terrorism. I think anyone would tell you that the intelligence and law enforcement cooperation is, in fact, been growing with the Russians, that some of the old suspicions have been breaking down with the Russians on that area.

In the WTO, there are still a number of steps that the Russians have to take but we've recently accelerated and intensified our efforts to support Russian accession in the WTO. We've even resolved, at least in part, some of our disputes, for instance about poultry, which was a very big issue of about a year and a half ago. So we've learned to work through those. I would say that we have in very good cooperation in the Middle East. Russia has, as a member of the G-8, been very active in all of the G-8 initiatives, whether it is on the broader Middle East or, of course, the global partnership for non-proliferation in nuclear security, of which Russia is a major participant and the major recipient of some of that aid.

So, in fact, I think we have been increasing our cooperation. On the matter of domestic trends in Russia: yes, I think those have been less favorable in recent times, and we've made no secret of that. But we're not going to stop working at it. We haven't stopped talking about it, and I think it continues to be an important part of our dialogue.

QUESTION: Just following up on that. After the President's inaugural address, there were a lot of questions about exactly how his new declaration was going to affect conversations with Russia. And, as you know, there were some briefings with a senior administration official who said that--I forget the words--that there would be a slightly higher level of elevation of these concerns from now on. I think that was the suggestion. I wonder, without telling us what you plan to tell the minister tonight, whether in a general way you can talk about how these issues are now going to be discussed with Russia in light of the inaugural address? Thanks.

SECRETARY RICE: Steve, I also know that similar administration officials talked about the address as really a continuation of American policy, not a break. And I think that's very important, because in many ways this policy, or the policy implications of what the President said in the inaugural, go back at least to Whitehall, and before that to his speech at the National Endowment for Democracy, and at the Churchill event at the Library of Congress. So, this is not a clean break, and, in fact, we've been having these discussions with the Russians for some time.

To the degree that the emphasis continues to grow in American policy and American rhetoric about democracy and the importance of it, of course it becomes a more central part of every discussion we have around the world. But, I would hope we would have discussions with the Russians that are not just aimed at what is happening in terms of democracy in Russia, but also the importance of the Russians supporting democratic processes elsewhere. For instance, it is a good thing that after some problems concerning Ukraine, Russia and Ukraine have reached out to each other. President Yuschenko and President Putin have demonstrated that they want to have a good relationship, that Russia is prepared to respect what the Ukrainian people have done. Similarly after the Rose revolution in Georgia, that Russia was able to reach out to Saakashvili, President Saakashvili, and that, as hard as it is...and I know it's difficult when we're talking about Russia's neighbors...that it is important that the

Russians, when there are these democratic developments, that they are supportive of them, and supportive of the will of the people. So, this is not just about democratic developments in Russia, it's about democratic developments in the whole of Europe, and indeed in all of the neighbors of Russia. Russia is, by the way, also involved in Afghanistan, in those efforts of democratization, I think in a very favorable way.

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, I don't know if we're going to get the chance to talk to you tomorrow on the way to Israel, but I wanted to jump ahead a little bit to there, and just get a feel for what it is that you're going to tell either side on what you want perhaps the Palestinians to do and maybe what the Israelis you want them not to do. But also, to get a better feel for...obviously it seems to be that the U.S. stance now to be somewhat on the margins and see whether the parties can move things forward on their own...when it might be a circumstance in which the U.S. would become more forcefully, or forcibly, involved in what's going on there.

SECRETARY RICE: The U.S. has several roles. First of all, I think we've helped to set the context for what the parties are doing by, with our partners, having, of course, a Road Map to which we hope everyone can return. But it's also the U.S. support that has been there for the Israeli disengagement plan, which has been very forthright and very strong. The support for, obviously, the Palestinian elections, and for what we can do to help the Palestinians begin to develop the institutions that will become the basis of statehood. That really is, in many ways, what I hope to accomplish here, which is to work with the parties to look ahead a little bit as they go through what are really now very crucial steps to getting back on the Road Map. What can we do in terms of developing those Palestinian states? How can we be helpful? And I think we will be very critical in the reform and re-training of Palestinian security forces. What can we do to encourage the parties to have coordinating meetings and mechanisms for the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza? Prime Minister Sharon has talked about the willingness to coordinate that withdrawal. We think that's extremely important. What can we do to help the parties to develop means by which they can talk and solve the kind of crises that are inevitably going to come up as they go along this road? We know that the rejectionists and the tyrannist terrorists are going to continue to try to make statements, sometimes violent statements, that they are unreconciled to a process of reconciliation and forward movement between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

So, the United States wants very much for this to be a process that is the parties' process, that is owned by the parties, that's owned by the regional state. That's why what Egypt is doing is a very, very welcome development. We have no doubt that we are very involved with all of them at this point and that when our involvement needs to take on a different character, that we'll do precisely that. But, I would hope that we would all get into a mindset that says if the parties are able to continue to move on their own, that's the very best outcome that one could possibly have. The United States will continue to set the context, to be there to help, to provide whatever assistance we can. But a process in which the parties are moving ahead is really favorable from our point of view.

QUESTION: We're flying into Ankara and I wanted to ask you a question about Turkey. Lately, there have been some negative comments from Turkey about Iraq. They have not been very pleased with the fact that the election took place under those circumstances. They have even said some rather hostile words about the United States and the policies of this administration. What exactly would you want Turkey to do in the context of a neighbor of Iraq and especially when it comes to the Kurds in the north?

SECRETARY RICE: We will concentrate on this during this visit, on how we move ahead. We are fully aware that the Turks have concerns about developments in Iraq. This is their neighbor. And, we know that this is an area where stability and progress are of extreme importance to Turkey and extreme importance to Turkish security. And so, we have a number of issues that we will examine, but I'm here really, in part, to say to the Turks that we are firmly committed, firmly committed, to a unified Iraq; to an Iraq in which all parties, all ethnic groups, all religious groups, all minorities are represented and whose interests are represented in the new government; that we are making that message clear through all channels that we have in Iraq to those who might govern; that we hope to see the development of positive relations between Iraq and Turkey. And we've had, for instance, some trilateral meetings on some issues of concern about the terrorism that is carried out by an organization that we, of course, list as a terrorist organization: KongraGel. We are by all means devoted to continuing those trilateral efforts, because it is not just the relationship between the United States and Turkey that matters; it's the relationship between Turkey, Iraq, and the United States, as well. And so, I'm here really to offer that message, and to listen... most especially to listen...to the concerns of the Turks and to factor those into policies.

But this is a very strong and good relationship. It has been for many, many years. We were strong supporters of Turkey's efforts to accede to the European Union. I think that's appreciated and understood in Turkey. We have cooperated with Turkey in Afghanistan, where Turkey was at one point the lead in the ISAF. And, of course, we have been very actively involved with the Turks as they have tried to make economic reforms that have really helped the Turkish economy. So, we have a lot to celebrate in U.S.-Turkish relations, and I think we need to continue to do that, but we know that it is a relationship that is changing, due to changes in Turkey: changes that we consider to be very, very positive, as Turkish democracy continues to develop.

QUESTION: You've been to three countries now as Secretary of State. Can you give us your impressions about how things are different from being the national security advisor to being a secretary of state?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, let's see...there's all those cameras, to begin with. That makes it a little different. No, I've enjoyed the first few legs of this trip. I really have found people enormously welcoming and, you know, ready to start this new chapter. For me personally, it's been a great experience working with the folks at the State Department who have been...they are a remarkable group. And I want to tell you how wonderful it was to spend time with, for instance, office directors who came up to brief me about each of these stops. And they are, for the most, officers who are just a few years into their careers. And it's actually something I learned from Colin Powell, which was his ability to reach out to these officers who are just beginning.

I remember one of the first meetings that the President had was in Mexico. And when we went to the State Department to be briefed, Colin had all of the office directors from the Mexico desk sitting around. And it made an impression on me and it's been great to have those people be part of this.

So, it's been a great experience in terms of meeting the leaders that...I've met all of them before...but meeting them on new terms. And my first experience working with what's really a terrific team at the State Department.

QUESTION: Isn't it a little intimidating?

SECRETARY RICE: I don't think so. I mean, I'm enjoying it. I've found everybody so warm and wonderful, and it helps that I have met, I think, all of these people in one incarnation or another. So it's not new in that sense. My role is new, but these are relationships that I know well and these are people that I know well.

Sorry, I'm pretty...I have to sit down. Robin I've got to sit down. Next time, I promise.

(cross-talk)

QUESTION: You've talked about moving forward with all of these countries in Europe. Can you give us some specifics? The Herald Tribune two days ago gave us more in specific terms that we've heard from the party about what the Netherlands and Hungary and Germany. What specifically do you want these countries to do?

SECRETARY RICE: Robin, I didn't come with a shopping list of what we want these countries to do. What I came with is a sense that we want people to recognize the new phase that we are in, in Iraq, and to examine what they can do for the Iraqis. There are clearly a few things that the Iraqis have said that they need. They need capacity building; they need the ability to strengthen their ministries. And these are countries--Germany and Poland, in particular, but others that we will visit--who have a lot of opportunity, a lot of ability to help with technical assistance in the building of these ministries and these institutions. It's clear that we need more opportunities to train Iraqi police and to train leadership for the Iraqi armed forces. That's another thing that people can do.

As we move forward on reconstruction, I would hope, particularly as the security situation improves, that we will see new overtures to the Iraqis on the reconstruction front. But, this was an opportunity to really listen to our partners about what kinds of contributions they think they can make, because I think everybody now really wants to help the Iraqis.

QUESTION: Like what?

SECRETARY RICE: The President is going to have a chance to continue these discussions, but, I mentioned to you that the...that a number of these states, particularly the Polish and the Germans, are very interested in what they can do on the capacity-building side. I think the chancellor said that he was interested in what Germany could do to expand its efforts on police training, and I think you will see more of that. But, I didn't come...I really didn't come to collect. I came to begin a discussion of what we might do. And we have to remember we are about to have a new Iraqi government. They also need to have a say in what these contributions are going to look like.

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