



Interview With Wyatt Andrews of CBS

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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(10:30 a.m. Local)

MR. ANDREWS: Thanks for taking the time this morning. Let's start with democratic reform in Russia. You, yourself, have used the word "worrying." You've called the trend lines not positive. What is it that disturbs, if you will, or worries the U.S. the most?

SECRETARY RICE: The concern is that Russia has been experiencing a kind of concentration of power in the presidency, in the Kremlin, really at the expense of countervailing institutions like a strong legislature or an independent judiciary or, perhaps most importantly, a truly independent media. And this means that whatever the intentions of President Putin are or those around him, you don't have the ability of those other institutions to provide a check on power.

This is offered in a spirit of cooperation and friendship with Russia. Because we really do believe that for Russia to be vital and prosperous in the future, it will have to find a way to have a political system that is more open, that encourages creativity, that encourages political liberties.

It's by no means the Soviet Union. Let's be realistic. This has not gone hurtling back to the bad old days. But we continue to try to persuade the Russians and talk to them about these trends.

MR. ANDREWS: You've used the words "coming in friendship." You said you're not here to lecture the Russians. Fair to say?

SECRETARY RICE: That's fair to say, yes.

MR. ANDREWS: But what happened to the President's policy that any ruler, any nation that stifles internal dissent will be confronted?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we don't lecture anyone. We simply tell people what we think about the importance of democratic development and reform. Russia has made a lot of progress over the last 15 years. We have to remember where this country started. But our concern is with certain trend lines. Our concern is with certain developments I think are not just concerning the United States. But if you look at the international community as a whole, if you look at investors who are no longer so sure about the role of the rule of law in economic decisionmaking in Russia, these are concerns that are pretty widespread.

We do, with every country in the world, have a democracy dialogue now and talk about what needs to be done. But we have a good and constructive relationship with Russia, and so we can do these -- talk about these differences in a spirit that is not hostile, that is not confrontational.

MR. ANDREWS: I'd like to -- I know you're a Soviet specialist before you got this job. And I'd like to hear more about your approach. There are those critical of the administration who believe the administration should be much tougher. There has been suggestions in the Senate that the U.S. move to suspend Russia's -- Russia's involvement in the Group of Eight Industrial exercise. You've been cool to that.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

MR. ANDREWS: Why is that?

SECRETARY RICE: Because I see nothing and the United States sees nothing to be gained by isolating a Russia that is still in transition. What we need to do is to be very clear with the Russians that the deepening of U.S.-Russia relations is in large part dependent on common values and on continued democratic development in Russia.

We also need to be clear though that, not only is it a matter of Russia making those choices in a vacuum, but Russia is making those choices in the context of institutions that indeed do rest on democratic values. I think we actually have more leverage. For instance, we're going to have the G8 leadership will shift to Russia after the British leadership of the G8. There's expected to be a G8 meeting here in Moscow. That's an opportunity for Russia to demonstrate that it understands that membership in the G8 has certain responsibilities and obligations toward democratic development, toward free markets, toward free trade, because all of the members of the G8, the other members of the G8, accept those principles about governance. In that context, Russia will need to accept those principles about governance as well.

MR. ANDREWS: The -- do I take it you don't see all of the signs here as bad?

SECRETARY RICE: I do not see all of the signs as bad. I think this is a very complicated place. I would note that despite the fact that independent media is really fairly nonexistent in terms of electronic media, there are a lot of newspapers. People say all kinds of things in the newspapers. I do think individuals still retain the right to speak out. There seems to be some criticism of the government. There was certainly a lot of criticism of the government's reforms to try to monetize pensions and the like.

So, yes, there are still some hopeful signs. And we need to continue to encourage those hopeful signs while making very clear to Russia that if the continued concentration of power is there, if there's a continued absence of independent media, not only will we not be able to advance U.S.-Russian relations as we would like, but Russia is not going to advance as Russia would like.

MR. ANDREWS: I have a couple more Russia questions if we have time, but I need to move on for a minute to John Bolton. These charges against Mr. Bolton -- we now hear in Congress him being accused of being a serial abuser. There's a new charge that he chased an aide down the hall in a hotel. Were you aware of any of this?

SECRETARY RICE: No. First of all, that's not the John Bolton that I know, and an awful lot of people who work for him, that's not the John Bolton that they know. He has a lot of people who worked for him who have been very loyal to him.

John will be a very fine ambassador to the United Nations. I expect him to be a good leader of the people at the United Nations Mission in New York. I know that he is a very outspoken and tough negotiator; I think that's a good thing for the United States. But with all due respect to the advise and consent role of the Senate and the deliberative process there, I hope that we can bring this to conclusion. Because the United States is currently without an ambassador to the United Nations at a time when the United Nations is key, for instance, to our efforts in Lebanon and Syria, key to our efforts in Sudan, key to our efforts to participate in the reform process that was outlined recently by Secretary General Kofi Annan. It is really time for the decision to be made here so that we can get the President's choice for the United Nations

to New York.

MR. ANDREWS: Given the reality, though, in the Senate right now, do you think these charges are serious enough to derail his nomination?

SECRETARY RICE: I would not have supported John Bolton for this job if I thought he couldn't do the job and if I thought he was a bad manager of people. Look, management style, as a confirmation issue is an interesting twist. There are different management styles. I know an awful lot of people who have worked for John Bolton who love working for John Bolton, who find him inspiring, who find him supportive of them. And I will certainly expect that when John Bolton goes to New York, that he will operate in a way that is supportive of, and gets the best out of, the people in New York.

MR. ANDREWS: All right. I'd like to move on to energy. You've put energy on the table at this meeting with the President, President Putin. And I'm going to interpret something that you said yesterday and if I'm off, tell me. But if I'm on it, tell me.

Do you think Russia right now, with oil being as expensive as it is, do you think Russia can play a role or should play a role in holding down the price of oil?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, of course, the price of oil is a market -- market based -- (inaudible) market-based outcome there. What Russia can do is to adopt policies in its energy sector in terms of the development of its energy sector that will increase the supply of oil both in the short term and -- hopefully in the short term but most especially in the long term. This is a place that is very rich in resources, but it has not had the kind of investment that would give long-term development to its energy resources and that might help to relieve some of the pressure over the long term.

MR. ANDREWS: So will you be encouraging the President to increase the supply?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, to increase policies that lead to further investment in the Russian energy sector. And here, (inaudible) there have been confusing signals about the role, for instance, of foreign investment, about the ability to completely rely on rule of law in the energy sector. And I think the Russians do need to send consistent signals about what they intend to do in terms of energy development.

We're not going to fix the energy problems in the short term. The fact is we're not going to do that in a matter of months. But over the long run, all of us who want the international economy to grow, and I think that includes Russia, need to look at what can be done in terms of development, in terms of alternative sources of energy supply to take some of the pressure off of the energy supplies that are now available.

MR. ANDREWS: I think we're down to our last 30 seconds; Emily is giving me that sign. But Iran. Russia's sale of reactor technology to Iran, big issue, small issue?

SECRETARY RICE: Iran is a big issue for the international community because everybody knows that you cannot have a nuclear weapon in Iran, in the Middle East, which is already a terribly troubled region. I think the Russians understand that too. The Bushere reactor, we have had concerns about (inaudible) built in Iran. I would note that the Russians have gone a long way to try and put in place proliferation safeguards, including a fuel provision and then fuel take-back provision which, while it doesn't resolve completely the proliferation concern, it does mean that the Russians recognize that the Iranians should not enrich and reprocess, which would really be a proliferation risk of considerable weight.

We have good discussions with the Russians on this. We've had a lot of progress, I think, over the last couple of years in our sense that the Russians fully understand this obligation.

MR. ANDREWS: Madame Secretary, thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you.
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