



## Briefing En Route Ireland

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

En Route Shannon, Ireland

July 31, 2006

**SECRETARY RICE:** All right, you've heard my statement. So, questions. Robin, you get the first question.

**QUESTION:** A number of questions. First of all, you talked about the blue line. And that basically means you have not settled the issue of Shaba Farms or sounds like that way. So can you tell us the status of anything on Shaba Farms? And secondly, can you tell us how this unfolds over the next week? You talked about a cease-fire. Do you really believe that there will be a cease-fire this week?

**SECRETARY RICE:** First of all, I think that we certainly should have the U.N. Security Council resolution -- I am going to push very hard to have the U.N. Security Council resolution this week. I think it's time. Everybody has said urgent, some people have said immediate. I would hope that we're now going to actually do the work to put in place the conditions for a cease-fire.

We really do have to have a cease-fire that isn't going to contribute to a return to the status quo ante, and that means we've got to have a resolution. So my hope is we'll have it by the end of the week or during this week. As to the blue line, you know what the blue line means.

On Shaba, there is, from our point of view, every reason that the issue between Syria and -- I'm sorry, the issue between Syria and Lebanon on Sheba that is referred to in 1680 ought to be resolved. Now, I'm told -- I've not confirmed it myself, but I'm told that there was another statement by a Syrian official yesterday that Sheba is Lebanese. They ought to resolve this, the line ought to be delineated and demarcated. They're definitional issues. And this ought to get resolved. So, you know, the United States would like to see it resolved. But I can't resolve Sheba; 1680 does.

**QUESTION:** Just to follow up, isn't that really essential in order to strengthen the Lebanese government so it can enforce or urge Hezbollah to disarm?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It definitely needs to be resolved. But there is a U.N. Security Council resolution that speaks to this and how it ought to be resolved. That's 1680. It's got to get done. And if, in fact, Syria does mean that Sheba is Lebanese, then this shouldn't take very much time to do at all.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, when you spoke --

**SECRETARY RICE:** People have been telling Syria to delineate and demarcate its borders with Lebanon for some time. If they really are ready to do that, that would be a very positive step toward resolving this.

**QUESTION:** Can you tell us how you felt about Prime Minister Olmert telling you that they needed 10 to 14 more additional days for their offensive? How that fits with your concept of a cessation of hostilities, and whether you feel the Israelis were unhelpful in some of the actions, including Qana, which took place during this sensitive time of diplomacy?

**SECRETARY RICE:** First of all, Andrea, I'm not going to talk about what the Prime Minister and I talked about. And I would not -- I would not, if I were you, assume that everything that you read in the newspapers about what the Prime Minister did or did not say to me happens to have the benefit of being true.

The Prime Minister and I had very extensive discussions about how to move this forward and how to end this conflict. And as I said to you when you asked this question the other day, yesterday, I fully understood that there were military operations under way when I went to this region to try to develop a basis on which we can end the conflict. And so the fact that yesterday's terribly tragic events happened during my visit is not something that somebody planned or somebody set up to try and make the diplomacy more difficult.

Did it make the situation more difficult? Of course. But there's an implication that somehow this was planned to make the diplomacy more difficult, and that simply wasn't the case.

Well, look, it was in the midst of military operations. And the tragic incident happened in the midst of military operations. And, yes, it made things more difficult. But it was not that anyone intended to make things more difficult.

Now, my conversations with the Israelis, as conversations that I had had and conversations that we will continue to have with the Lebanese and with Europeans and others, is how to end this conflict and do it quickly and do it on the basis that Rome and my discussions with the parties has given us. And it's very clear, for instance that we came together around the need for an international force in ways that were not true before we left. There wasn't any agreement that an international force should be part of this package when we left. Rome solidified that position. And now we need to build that international force.

So these conversations were about how to end the conflict. And you know that I said that I want to see the U.N. Security Council act this week. And that's what we've been telling everybody, they need to act this week.

**QUESTION:** What is your current understanding of Prime Minister Siniora's willingness to engage in further diplomacy before there is a cease-fire?

**SECRETARY RICE:** The action really now needs to be at the U.N. because you need a Security Council resolution that establishes a cease-fire on a basis that doesn't allow a return to the status quo ante. That's what we have to do.

This has always been an issue of not having a situation in which the status quo ante, the south returns to circumstances in which you can have yet another terrorist attack across the blue line and yet another Israeli response in the violence that has bedeviled this region time and time again. So when we talk about a cease-fire that is sustainable, when we talk about a cease-fire that can lead to an enduring peace, obviously that cease-fire has to be at a basis that's not going to permit a return to the status quo. And that's what we're working on and I think that now -- that action is really now in New York to get a resolution in -- to that regard.

I spoke -- by the way, I spoke with Prime Minister Siniora this morning.

**QUESTION:** Secretary Rice, how disappointed though were you that you couldn't see Prime Minister Siniora face to face? And how did that complicate your stop here in the Middle East?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I was of course disappointed that the tragic events made it such that we couldn't meet. But I understood that from the very beginning. Practically the moment that it happened, I knew that we weren't going to -- I wasn't going to try to go to Beirut and talk to the Prime Minister at a time when he was dealing with all of the circumstances around him, about how to move the process forward. I knew that from the very beginning.

I'm saddened that that was the case. But, in fact, we are -- we had very good discussions with the Lebanese government prior to that. We are going to continue to consult with the Lebanese government as we go forward. And the issue now is to get a resolution in New York and to get a resolution with the kind of urgency that people have been expressing at Rome in their public comments. There is urgency or there isn't urgency. We think there's urgency and that means get to the Security Council and get this done.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, can you talk about the French position, what your current knowledge of their position is right now, and how that differs? And what you see specifically as the biggest challenge in the Security Council, if that's it?

**SECRETARY RICE:** We're in discussions with the French. Phil Zelikow has been in Paris. And I don't want to try to analyze their position and our position in contradistinction to each other, because I think that there are many common elements in the positions. And so part of this over the next couple of days will be to talk about how to bring together these common elements into a Security Council resolution.

**QUESTION:** Actually, I wanted to ask you an Iran question. Iran is once again saying that it's not prepared to give up its processing abilities. Have you had -- are you working this issue while you've been doing this issue? And there's been a lot of activity as well at the U.N. drawing up the resolution and various other issues. So I just wondered, you've been so focused on the Middle East that Iran seems to have gone off the boil for you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** No, in fact, Iran has not gone to the sidelines. And there is, I think, substantial agreement on a resolution that embodies the agreement that we had in Paris concerning Iran, and I expect it to be voted very soon.

If you remember, the reason for that is -- that resolution, is to make the suspension of enrichment and related activities mandatory, and then to give Iran a deadline by which it should accept the now mandatory requirement that it suspend its enrichment activities. That has been moving along. I've talked several times during this trip to people who are working on that issue, and indeed to John Bolton about it a couple of times as well.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, assuming you get a resolution this week, a cease-fire deal as you said, what happens then? How quickly can you get the elements of the multinational force in to kind of fill a vacuum so that Hezbollah won't launch a rocket and then Israel will feel obliged to retaliate?

**SECRETARY RICE:** That's a very important question. And so we are working on three fronts. We are working on the resolution itself. We're working with various parties on supporting the political conditions that would go into that resolution, so that there is no ambiguity about what a cease-fire would mean in terms of obligations of parties not to reenter the cooperative zone or an area of operations where an international force is working. And then we're working on the force generation issues and mandate issues.

So the hope is that these all come together, the three streams all come together in New York in a way that allows us to get this done this week. That's what we're working very urgently to do. There's a lot of work to do. But when you have a situation in which you'd really like to end a conflict but make certain to end it in a way that doesn't contribute to further conflict, you have to get all the work done, you have to get it done urgently.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, I want to ask you a sort of personal question that probably won't get me anywhere. But to a lot of us who've covered you since the first trip, this seems like it's been your most difficult week as Secretary of State. There have been difficult negotiations in Rome, the Qana incident. Some of the columns back in Washington have been withering. Can you sort of talk about that? Has it been a roller coaster? Or do you just charge on ahead?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I hate to disappoint you. I haven't had much time to read the columns back home. So you can read them to me later.

Look, I am very focused on what we have to get done. And of course it's a difficult time because there is a serious, dangerous and destructive war going on that was begun by a terrorist attack, unprovoked, across the blue line. And because it is a terrorist organization that has clearly grown in its capability over the last several years in which there was supposedly a cease-fire. Yes, those are very difficult circumstances.

But I can't tell you that it is a surprise to me that this is where an American Secretary of State finds herself, because until we can really address the issues here that are underlying this conflict, until we put in place a number of pillars to a real stability rather than a false stability, you're going to have surges of violence of this kind.

When it happens, though, it's important not to lose focus on what you're trying to do, which is to indeed put in place those pillars. And it means not taking any immediate answer that will only break down later so you have another surge of violence.

And so I've stayed very focused on that. I'm very comfortable with that. I know it's the right thing to do. And unless you have a compass and unless you're willing to act on principle, then you're not going to contribute to ultimately to peace. And, you know, we only have -- when you're Secretary of State, you only have a limited period of time in which to try and help affect what is a very complicated and difficult region. And I'm quite aware that if we don't do it in a way that is really going to contribute to real stability and peace, that we will have missed an opportunity. And I worry more about that than I do about what today's columns which I didn't read might be.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, I'm going to try again. I think what Warren was asking was a personal question about how you felt. I think a lot of us were seeing that you looked -- you'll excuse me -- you looked really bad at several times during this trip. I mean, you always look fabulously, but you looked tense. I mean, tell us what you were feeling, like when you were standing up on that podium in Rome and Siniora was saying some of the things that did not quite jive with U.S. policy. Give us a sense personally.

**SECRETARY RICE:** I don't know. Maybe I'm just not as self-reflective as you think I am. You know, I was thinking, all right, we go from Rome and kind of what's next.

Guys, I have a particularly strong sense of commitment to Lebanon itself. This is a place -- these are wonderful people, it's a beautiful place. And it's had such trouble and such misery for such a long time. And I remember being so personally heartened by the March 14th events and by the success of Resolution 1559 in getting Syrian forces to withdraw. And just as it's not easy for Prime Minister Siniora and the Lebanese people to have a -- this kind of setback in what should be a future of just great progress for Lebanon, you know, those of us who were involved -- in a small way, because it was really the Lebanese people who took hold -- but those of us who were involved in a small way, it's hard to see Lebanon in this condition.

But I know what caused this. And I know that there are underlying circumstances having to do with the need to really make this a strong and democratic government that can really extend its authority, that can rebuild its army, that can shield itself from harmful foreign influences, that cannot let its territory or not have its territory be used in the way that Hezbollah, without its knowledge, used its territory, really sinking then the whole area into the kind of crisis that we've got, I know that that's what we have to focus on. Because if we don't, then this hope that was so evident in the events of March 14th and what followed isn't ever going to be realized.

So yes, it is -- it's hard to see what Lebanon is going through. It's hard to see what Israeli citizens are going through. It's been way too long in the Middle East.

But my responsibility is to stay focused on what will, in fact, change those circumstances on the ground for the better. And that's what I'm going to do.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, just on the cease-fire issue one more time, it seems to me that the logic of your position suggests that when you talk about the cease-fire and the resolution, you'll do so in a conditional way which will say, as part of this package, if these various things are done, then we get a cease-fire. Rather than, at the top of the resolution saying, we call for a cease-fire and then having other things we call for too. No?

**SECRETARY RICE:** No, you shouldn't interpret it that way. My point was that -- let me take it on head on. There have been some calls for so-called unconditional, right? Now, the problem is that in those circumstances, there will be no -- there would be no U.N. Security Council statement as to what conditions have to obtain in the south. In other words, what is the cease-fire indeed protecting in terms of the, not returning to the status quo ante.

So when you say that what a cease-fire is aiming to protect is the authority of the Lebanese government to extend its authority throughout the country, not to have armed groups operating in the south, the Lebanese army to move through, it's not meant to be temporal in that sense. But there has to be a very clear indication of what Lebanon -- particularly the south -- is going to look like under conditions of a cease-fire. Otherwise, what is the cease-fire about? It doesn't make sense to have no political framework that the cease-fire is indeed trying to protect.

But, no, you should not read that, you know, we -- I've read, for instance, Hezbollah would have to be disarmed before there is a cease-fire. It's simply not true and I want to put it to rest right now. Okay?

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** They're obligated.

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