

Secretary Rice's Remarks With Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Rood

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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SECRETARY RICE: All right. Now you've got the real expert here (inaudible.)

QUESTION: He's been writing our leads. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: He's been dictating our stories.

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: They said they were tired. I said (inaudible).

QUESTION: (Inaudible) landmark agreement.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes, landmark – it is a landmark agreement. All right. Why don't we just go directly to questions because Sean likes to make sure that we rotate.

MR. MCCORMACK: Yeah, why don't we alternate the – Polish folks and then our traveling press corps. We'll start out with – how about a Polish journalist who would like to start off? Yes, sir.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

SECRETARY RICE: Let's see, you're going to speak English or Polish?

QUESTION: English.

SECRETARY RICE: All right, great. Thank you.

QUESTION: Secretary of State, congratulations on having the agreement. And with all due respect, I would like to clarify one thing if I may. As far as I know, in the former version of the declaration, there was an (inaudible) guarantee that United States would defend Poland in case of an attack of ballistic missiles. And now, I can't see this guarantee anywhere. Is this a sentence that we (inaudible) now – that we would work together to counter emerging (inaudible) threats? It replaces the former version of --

SECRETARY RICE: Remember that Poland has – I think it's – Poland has an Article 5 guarantee by treaty with the United States. An attack upon one is an attack upon all, and that's the strongest possible guarantee that you can have. The document that you're reading from is an executive agreement between governments, which is a political declaration. But it does nothing to weaken the Article 5 guarantee which is an absolute guarantee from – by treaty.

MR. MCCORMACK: From the travel group, Libby.

QUESTION: In the current circumstances, if you were Russian sitting in the Kremlin right now, how would you view what happened today? Would you feel like you've been surrounded?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, first of all, this is a defensive system that we have long been working with the Poles to come to agreement. And after all, we have offered – John Rood personally has talked with the Russians many, many times, Dan Fried, I with Sergey Lavrov, Bob Gates with his counterpart, Minister Serdyukov, about all kinds of measures that we could take to demonstrate practically that this is a system that is against (inaudible) threats of the kind that Iran or North Korea might pose and not aimed, in any way, at Russia. And so I don't know how we can say it more clearly. I don't know how we can demonstrate it more clearly. But the timing, of course, is simply the timing of when the agreement was completed.

QUESTION: My name is (inaudible). I wanted to ask one thing on a purely legal basis. Will the provisions of that agreement signed today be binding for the next American administration? And point B, will they be binding in case the next administration decides to freeze the deployment of the missile shield?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, it's an executive agreement and therefore a political agreement. But I believe that administrations of the future will recognize both the threat that we face and the substantial commitment that our allies have now taken for missile defense, and that that will leave the United States to continue this program well into the future and to complete the deployment here in Poland and in the Czech Republic.

So you know, administration to administration, we can't – it's not binding in a legal sense. But in a political sense, the very importance of missile defense, which has been demonstrated now several times, and the importance of this relationship with Poland and the Czech Republic, and the fact, frankly, that the

environment, given progress that Iran is making on long-range missile technologies, I think will send some very good (inaudible) going forward.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, this agreement that you signed today goes beyond missile defense. It goes beyond missile defense in the sense – correct me if I'm wrong – that the United States is going to be working to bolster and modernize the Polish armed forces. It talks about a cooperation on defense technologies. It goes, as I said, far beyond just missile defense. Why wouldn't something like that beyond missile defense be a – cause problems for the Russians?

SECRETARY RICE: It is not 1988. It's 2008. Poland is an ally of the United States. Poland is a member of NATO. Poland is a member of the European Union. And so frankly, the strategic circumstances are different than in 1988. This is 2008.

Now, the United States will pursue strategic cooperation, defense cooperation, with its allies when its allies wish to do so. And the strengthening of the Polish military, the strengthening of the Polish air defenses, the strengthening of Poland's capabilities is much in the interest of the United States, of the alliance, of Poland, and, frankly, given the hard work that Poland has been willing to do, first in Iraq and now in Afghanistan, it is in all of our interests that Poland is as capable as it can be.

And so this is a – Poland is a close ally. No one questions that we should have defense cooperation with Great Britain. Well, Poland is in the same category.

QUESTION: But Madame Secretary, Poland is not – I mean, Great Britain is not on Russia's border, first of all. And second of all, what about – well, as close to Russia as Great Britain. But second of all, why doesn't just the NATO relationship and the Article 5 protections suffice?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we have a number of defense cooperation relationships with countries that are members of NATO that are bilateral, that reinforce the ability and strength of the alliance, but also reinforce our bilateral relationships. That's why I brought up Great Britain. We have a NATO alliance relationship and we have bilateral cooperation. With Canada, we have defense cooperation and we have the NATO alliance.

Now, I just want to repeat: It's not 1988. Poland is an ally of the United States. Now, in the context of the post-Cold War world, we have also sought at every turn to offer cooperation to Russia, defense cooperation. We've made a lot of progress actually, on military-to-military ties. We've made a lot of progress on defense cooperation, both through NATO and bilaterally. So it is not as if we drew a line at the states that were once a part of the Soviet sphere of influence and said, well, we're now going to deal with them. We have sought to break down the barriers of the Cold War, and that has meant also having cooperative relationships with Russia. And that remains our goal, although obviously in the current environment, it's more difficult.

MR. MCCORMACK: On the end over here?

QUESTION: (Inaudible). Follow up the previous question, we've heard some very strong words from Moscow and also from Brussels lately. Do you feel that at least on a rhetorical level, the Cold War nevertheless is back, and do you think that it will be – it may be back on a less rhetorical, more actual level?

SECRETARY RICE: No, I don't think this is a new Cold War. What was the characteristic of the Cold War? It was an ideological conflict between the Soviet Union and its clients, and a Western set of values and institutions. That was the Cold War. And that ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now, what the relationship will look like going forward between Russia and Europe, between Russia and the United States – obviously, this is a difficult time. But I think we shouldn't overstate the depth of the difficulty here. I think what we should do is to recognize that there is a path open to Russia which is quite different than anything that would have been opened to the Soviet Union. It's the path of cooperation. It's the path of integration into the international, economic, political, diplomatic security institutions.

We wouldn't have been sitting here in the Cold War with the United States having been supportive of WTO (inaudible) for Russia. We wouldn't have done that for the Soviet Union. We wouldn't have been sitting here talking about the Soviet Union in OECD. We wouldn't have been sitting here talking about the Soviet Union as a part of the G-8 or a NATO-Soviet Council. So let's not lose sight of where we are.

Now, Russia is doing very grave damage to its reputation. It is doing so in order to – apparently, in order to demonstrate that it can use its overwhelming regional and military power against a small neighbor and invade that neighbor and destroy civilian infrastructure and tie up roads and harass Georgian citizens and move in and out of Georgian cities. If that's what it's trying to demonstrate, then it's demonstrating that. At the same time, it's demonstrating that its President doesn't keep his word, given that first it was going to be Monday, then it was going to be Wednesday, now it's going to be Friday. And it also is calling into

question whether it really is accepting the principles that are at the root or at the basis of these institutions to which it's made clear it wants to be in, which it's made clear it wants to be included.

So, no, I think we – we should not talk about a new Cold War. That was a particular era. It's over. The Soviet Union collapsed. It's a different world, a different Europe. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, the Baltic states, Slovenia, Slovakia, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, are members of NATO and Europe. The Cold War is over.

QUESTION: How – just to follow up on that line of questioning – on John's question. Is – we have an agreement with Poland to upgrade its military forces. Beyond the Patriot battery, was there something else that's in this agreement that did not already exist in terms of what we're giving to them? And also, could you tell us what it was that broke the – I won't call it the logjam, you can if you want – but why after so many months of saying – and with the Polish Government telling us, too, we're not ready to do this – what happened? Was it specifically related to Georgia or would you say it was completely unrelated?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, let me – let John answer the question for you in more detail. But let me tell you how I saw it from my perspective. I think we've been close a couple of times; in fact, twice that I can remember when we really thought we were there, but we weren't quite. And so it's not as if it was that sudden a breakthrough. We've been sort of working through the issues one by one. And we have – I think you remember when Radek Sikorski came to the United States and he brought then some new Polish language. We then took that back and worked with the – with Secretary Gates to be able to improve our language. So this has been going back and forth for some time. So I don't think, Karen, it's right to see this as a sudden breakthrough. But, John –

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: I agree. In any negotiation there are highs and lows. But we got down to the last few issues and those are always the toughest. But I would say at the tail end, in the last stanza, if you will, both sides showed some flexibility. And it was a back and forth that allowed us to really, I think, agree on another area of strategic cooperation, which is the deployment of the Patriot battery here in Poland. So it's not just one United States military installation. You're going to have two here, which is significant.

And with regard to the first part of your question about the other areas of cooperation, we did talk about supporting the modernization of Polish armed forces, but also defense industrial cooperation and cooperation in the intelligence sphere in a whole range of security and strategic-related topics. And that's what the declaration speaks to, with the intention of the two countries to have a different elevated kind of relationship.

QUESTION: So just – so it does go beyond existing modernization agreements? In other words, there's something additional added – in addition to the Patriots?

SECRETARY RICE: What there is is there is a commitment for a program of modernization that we expect will be multi-year, that'll take time to unfold. But it – the principal thing, I think, that allowed the breakthrough was on the Patriot battery.

QUESTION: And if I can just – just my question about Georgia, did Georgia have anything to do with finally reaching the agreement?

UNDER SECRETARY ROOD: We'd made arrangements for this last round of negotiations before the conflict in Georgia. We just carried through with the schedule. I think – we were very close, as the Secretary said, to an agreement. Obviously, there's a certain environment you're operating in. People can't deny that there are concerns about what's going on in Georgia. But we've been at this negotiation for a year and a half with a defined set of issues during that time period.

SECRETARY RICE: If I could just say – one other thing about the Cold War. I want just to underscore something. Not only is the Cold War over, but I think the concern that was expressed at NATO yesterday about the events in Georgia is that there not be a new line in Europe, where certain states that made it into the transatlantic structures or into the transatlantic structures and then others remain – or become sort of part of the sphere of influence. The Georgia – the NATO-Georgia Commission, the reaffirmation of Bucharest, the meeting of the Ukraine – NATO-Ukraine Commission and the visit of the Perm Reps is meant to demonstrate very clearly that we're not going to let a new line emerge in (inaudible).

MR. MCCORMACK: (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: (Inaudible) news magazine. We understand that you said there is no new Cold War and that the situation is a bit different. My question is: Has it happens in Georgia, something that has changed your own approach or maybe even your own policy towards Russia?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, certainly what has happened in Georgia has caused us to step back and to want to look hard at whether Russia is really prepared to take a course that would lead it into further

integration into the international community and international institutions or not. This is behavior that is not consistent with the statement that President Medvedev made just a few weeks ago about a modern Russia that would gain its respect in the world through its technology and its science and its culture and so forth. You don't gain that through beating up a small neighbor and then not keeping your word to the European presidency.

So, yes, it's called – it's caused us to step back and ask hard questions. I frankly think Russia is paying a price for what it has done and what it is doing, and that that will become more evident over time. But I would certainly hope that Russia is also assessing, and will assess, the damage that this has done to its ability to go on the course that President Medvedev outlined.

QUESTION: If I may follow up, very shortly? Do you think – I mean, personally, that Russia cares about her opinion in the larger world?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, you know, sometimes it takes a little while for people to realize the cost of their actions, particularly when there may have been a kind of spurt of wanting to demonstrate that Russia could do this against a small neighbor. But frankly, the more the Russians say things like, well, we're doing this as peacekeepers, the more ridiculous that sounds. You know, peacekeepers don't bomb civilian cities and tie up highways and prevent civilian courts from being used. And by the way, it's now having an effect on countries like Armenia and Azerbaijan. So, yeah. The more they say they're peacekeepers, I think one wonders how that could actually be the line that they've chosen to take.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, a couple of technical questions. What kind of cost in dollar value is associated with – not with the missile defense system itself – but with the other pledges that the U.S. has made to Poland as part of the modernization, the Patriot? And also, any estimate on the number of U.S. troops that would be in Poland as a result of the --

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I would have to get those for you from the Defense Department. I can't give you a number. Do you know, John, what the numbers would be?

QUESTION: Okay. What has Russia's behavior in – over the Georgia incident, how does that compare to what your understanding had been of Russia as a Russian scholar yourself? And what kind of Russia policy do you feel you're leaving for your successor?

SECRETARY RICE: Look, this element of Russia, or "this Russia," because it's really sort of halfway in quotes, has always been there and it's always been present. What has been also present was what appears to be a Russian aspiration for a different kind of relationship with the world too. Do any of us who study Russia and dealt with Russia, or – either – whether as scholars or policymakers know that Russia has the capability and sometimes even the impulse to use its military power against small neighbors? Yes, we all know that.

But there has also been, since the end of the Cold War, a different – the possibility that a different Russia was emerging, one that has been cooperative with us on -- in the war on terrorism, one that has been cooperative with us in terms of nuclear nonproliferation, cooperative in the Middle East, cooperative on North Korea, even cooperative on Iran, and also a Russia that was seeing a greater degree of personal freedom for Russians than they had ever had, and an expressed desire – indeed, not just expressed, but pursuing integration into the WTO and into OECD and so on, cooperation with the NATO-Russia Council. So that Russia (inaudible).

And I actually think that a U.S. policy that opens a pathway for the more cooperative and modern Russia to emerge was very important. And I believe that that pathway – it was the right policy, it was the right opportunity. It's unfortunate that Russia has not chosen to behave in a way that makes it appear that they're taking that path. But you know, I certainly don't think that it made very much sense to close off that pathway when Russia was still expressing interest.

MR. MCCORMACK: Can we go down here? (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: (Inaudible.) I want to ask, will there be any real – I mean, real pressure on Russia on behalf of NATO instead of diplomatic declarations such as it was in Brussels last time, and -- considering the fact that Russia has the right to veto in Security Council? And we know that yesterday, there was to be a voting on draft resolution prepared by Western countries, and there was no such a voting. Why?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, because Russia vetoed a resolution – or threatened – was going to veto a resolution that declared that Russia should live up to its obligations. I guess it's not really a surprise.

QUESTION: Yeah, but –

SECRETARY RICE: And so again, Russia has demonstrated in this case that as a member of the P-5, it's not acting responsibly.

Look, you asked about pressure. And as I said, sometimes it takes a little time for a country to recognize the cost to it and to respond accordingly. But I have to say, I guess – I think there is a reason that the Russians keep saying they're going to pull out, even if they're not doing it. I don't know whether they're trying to influence public opinion by saying they're going to pull out. But by saying they're going to pull out and then not doing it, all that they're doing is undermining their own credibility.

So the other point that I would make is that if, as we believe, Russia's strategic objective was to destroy Georgian democracy and to intimidate small countries around it, it's had just the opposite effect. Because the very strong support that you heard for Georgia at NATO yesterday – and this meeting yesterday was very much about being for Georgia. That's what this meeting really was about. The very strong support that you heard, the very considerable reconstruction efforts that are going to come Georgia's way, the support from the G-7 finance ministers to support Georgia's economy will mean that Russia will not achieve its strategic objectives. And so what will Russia have done? Oh, and by the way, on the intimidation factor, I've seen nothing but strong resistance and, in fact, defiance from the small states around Russia.

So what will Russia have achieved? It will have destroyed civilian infrastructure, which will be rebuilt. Unfortunately, the civilian innocent lives that were taken cannot be brought back. It will have damaged the Georgian military capability, which will be rebuilt. And it will have undermined its own reputation and credibility and called into question its suitability for the very institutions that it says it wants to be a part of. Not a very good day's work, actually.

MR. MCCORMACK: We have time for just a couple more questions.

QUESTION: I have two quick questions. What is your – why do you know that Russia has infiltrated Georgia on every level, and their strategic objective of removing Saakashvili from power remains? So what kind of information do you have on how the Russians are currently using that position in Georgia to formulate an internal revolution within Georgia?

And also, do you have an update on the situation in the ground in (inaudible) for example, the Georgian prisoners that were taken yesterday (inaudible). Where are these people going? Where are the Russians taking them? What – who's protecting the Georgians right now?

SECRETARY RICE: (inaudible), I don't have an update on what happened with the policemen who were seized, but that obviously, they should be released and released right away.

And in terms of how the Russians operate inside Georgia, I can't comment on how the Russians may be trying to affect internal Georgian politics. It appears that what they hope to do is to try and make life very difficult for Georgians. In the meantime, they're making life very difficult for people around, like Armenians who are facing shortages as a result of what's happening at Poti. But I have a lot of confidence in Georgian democratic institutions and in Georgian democracy to have the Georgian people make their own choices.

QUESTION: And militarily, what's the update on withdrawal (inaudible)?

SECRETARY RICE: I – we don't see any evidence of Russian withdrawal. They've moved some forces around from time to time. There have been reports of a column here or a column there moving back. But I don't think there's any evidence of withdrawal. And the last I heard, the President of Russia has set yet another deadline for when Russian forces are going to withdrawal.

MR. ROOD: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Yeah. Don't you think that the Russians are not very impressed with the words coming from Brussels, and they – second -- considering what happens there in Georgia? And the second question is, is NATO prepared to take any additional measures? And what kind of measures NATO considers if Russia won't pull out the troops from Georgia?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, it's not so much the words that came out of Brussels. It is that I think that the actions that NATO took represent actions that say to Russia that they – that if this was an effort -- or if part of this effort was to demonstrate that there could be a new line, there are those countries that got into NATO, don't care to think about others, then that was rebuffed, because the Bucharest Declaration which says that Georgia and Ukraine will be part of NATO was reiterated. A new Georgia – a NATO-Georgia Commission was created. The NATO took up several requests that the Georgians have made, including to make an assessment of Georgia's military capability. These are very strong signals to Russia that NATO will not be deterred in deciding who is suitable for membership in NATO at what point in time. And that was the most important message that NATO could deliver.

Now, the European Union, the United States, others have names that are not associated with NATO, including looking hard at what Russian participation should be in various institutions that Russia has

chosen to seek participation and membership in. And I don't think we have to be in a hurry to assess precisely what those steps need to be. The focus right now is on getting Russian forces out and stabilizing the Georgian state. And I think that the best rebuff to Russia will be when Georgia reemerges as economically strong and politically strong. And as I said, Russia demonstrates that what it achieved is showing that it can use its military power effectively to no end, because you shouldn't take a look at what -- where we are today.

Look at where we are in two or four weeks or two months and where Georgia is then. It's all too easy to say, well, Russia isn't paying any price. Well, every day, Russia is paying a growing price. And as I said, some days, it's -- sometimes it takes a little while for a state to fully assess the cost of what it's done.

MR. MCCORMACK: Kim, you have the last question.

QUESTION: I want you to expand a little bit on, sort of, what you just talked about. In terms of Georgia's accession to NATO, I know there's (inaudible) to be discussed in December --

SECRETARY RICE: To MAP.

QUESTION: MAP -- yes, MAP. But the territorial disputes that -- the disputed borders that Georgia has ruled have been there for years and will remain. So under what conditions do you foresee that Georgia will be able to go through MAP and eventually, one day, become a member of NATO?

And the other question is, I wondered if you could expand a little bit on the defiance of established states around Russia, you know, to go after these countries telling (inaudible) who's knocking on your door, possibly (inaudible), but who's knocking on your door, looking for deeper military ties with the U.S.?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I think it's not so much deeper military ties, because many of the states on -- actually, of course, are members of the transatlantic structures already. And I think if you just look at the fact that Poland, Ukraine, (inaudible) to Georgia in the midst -- in the middle of a crisis, that tells you something. And I don't think that you're going to see these small states necessarily seeking military cooperation, but I think you will see them seeking closer political and other ties, and I think that's how it will likely express itself.

As for the territorial problem for Georgia, first of all, MAP has tended to be a way for countries to overcome their -- many of their difficulties and differences and to reform and to deal with their problems. I've mentioned many times, as you know, at the end of the Cold War, I think many people thought that the various differences between Hungary and Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, there were lots of territorial problems out there that turned out not to be explosive in the context of a kind of democratic umbrella. And so I've never believed that the argument that there is a territorial problem and therefore Georgia is unfit, at least for MAP, makes very much sense.

And you know, I don't mean to sound at all cavalier about it, but there was one huge territorial dispute at the inception of NATO. It was called East Germany. And we did not prevent, therefore, West Germany for -- from being a founding -- for coming into NATO. And ultimately, it was in NATO that Germany not only overcame its division, but overcame its very difficult history with its neighbors through a democratic peace. And we need to remember that history, when we talk about territorial problems for Georgia.

MR. MCCORMACK: Thanks, guys.

QUESTION: Thank you.

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