



Situation in Somalia

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Remarks Following the UN Security Council Meeting on the Situation in Somalia
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SECRETARY RICE: I've just attended a very successful Security Council session on piracy. The Security Council adopted Resolution 1851, which is a very strong resolution that deals with issues of detention of pirates, with the prosecution of pirates, with the ability to use all necessary means on land as well as at sea, because we know from history that it isn't really possible to contain this problem just as a maritime issue.

We talked a good deal about the need for coordination on intelligence, on information sharing. The United States is going to lead a Contact Group on Piracy on the Somali Coast. We also talked about the need for commercial shipping to take means that are defensive means, some of which are readily available, so that the pirates cannot turn a situation into a hostage situation, because once a hostage situation comes into being, obviously the stakes go up.

So it was a very fulsome discussion. But ultimately, all members spoke to the need to deal with the root cause of the problem, which is the instability in Somalia. There is great support, as the United States supports the Djibouti process and the hopes for peace as Somali factions begin to try and chart a course ahead.

I also want to note that we are calling on the members of the Transitional Government to deal with their own internal matters. There needs to be a stable government there, and they need to deal with their own differences, because the Somali people deserve that.

Finally, we talked about the security situation. We very much respect and support AMISOM, the AU force, for what they are doing. And the United States has been a big supporter. We've trained -- helped with training and logistics and financial support. But we believe that a proper UN peacekeeping force, as is called for by the African Union, is a necessity here. While AMISOM is doing very good work and we will continue to support it, we have a history with voluntary contributions and voluntary training that, with a situation as urgent as the one in Somalia, we actually have an apparatus within the United Nations that can deal with that kind of situation.

And so the United States believes strongly that we ought to have a Security Council resolution as soon as possible. In fact, we believe that by the end of the year we should try and have such a Security Council resolution. And so we'll take that matter up separately. It was not something that we took up today. We are still in consultations.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: Over the last 24 hours, there's been another two hijackings off the coast of Somalia. I'd like to get your reaction to that. And also, do you see the eventuality of U.S. troops going ashore in Somalia to catch the pirates?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I don't want to take a kind of speculative look at this. I think it's better not to comment in theory. We -- the United States is a part of an international effort. We do have naval forces that have been involved in this effort. What this does, though, is to authorize that the sea -- the boundary of the maritime cannot become a safe haven boundary for pirates. And so what we do or do not do in issues like hot pursuit or so forth, I think we'll have to see and you'll have to take it case by case. So I don't want to commit in a speculative way or in a hypothetical way to anything for the United States. But again, the authorization was a very important authorization.

As to the two incidents that have taken place, I think it just shows the increasing problem that this is. The pirates are a threat to commerce. They are a threat to security. And perhaps most importantly, they are a threat to the principle of freedom of navigation on the seas.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: On the Six-Party Talks, the last round of meetings last week ended with no new declaration from North Korea. How do you leave this to your successors, and how do you respond to those who say that this has been a failure?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we leave in place -- first of all, we are going to continue to work on it until the very last day. But we leave in place a Six-Party framework in which at least five parties are completely agreed as to what the verification mechanism has to look like. I might just note that we have an agreement with the North Koreans about a verification protocol, but there were a number of issues that had to be clarified in order to make sure that that verification protocol was going to be workable. And those assurances were given to us by the North Koreans. We, in fact, reported those assurances to the Chinese chair before this Six-Party round took place. And what happened in Beijing was that the North Koreans at the -- at this last session wouldn't write them down. And at some point, those assurances are going to have to be written down. But there is, in fact, a verification protocol and a set of assurances that the five are agreed to and that the North Koreans, at least privately, before we lifted the terrorist designation, had also agreed to. And so we'll just have to work through this.

I might note, too, that the disabling -- first, the shutdown of the reactor and then the disabling of the reactor has been an important step forward in dealing with the plutonium program. But we have a lot of questions about the highly enriched uranium route for North Korea. We have a lot of questions about proliferation. And we believe that the mechanism of the Six Parties and an associated verification protocol will be the best way to resolve those questions and to get to the bottom of the entire nature of the North Korean program.

And I just might note, too, that the September 19th agreement of a couple of years ago lays out a path for the completely denuclearization of North Korea and of the Korean Peninsula, and that agreement is an agreement among the Six Parties. So I think we leave a pretty good framework, but we'll continue to see if we can get the North Koreans to write down the assurances that they gave us.

QUESTION: Secretary Rice?

SECRETARY RICE: Let me take this gentleman right here.

QUESTION: Two things, Madame Secretary. First of all, military -- a U.S. military commander in the area has expressed reservations about going ashore, so I'm wondering if that means that the resolution lacks teeth and if there is a disagreement between the State Department and the Pentagon on the use of force.

SECRETARY RICE: I wouldn't be -- I would not be here seeking authorization to go ashore if the United States Government, perhaps most importantly the President of the United States, were not behind this resolution. And therefore, any voices about this are voices that need to be understood in the context that I was sent here to get authorization to go ashore so that we did not create a dividing line that was a maritime-to-land sanctuary for the pirates. And that is a position that is supported by the United States Government as a whole.

This gentleman has --

QUESTION: The Secretary General said that he approached 50 countries, through organizations, I believe, asking for troops and he couldn't get them. So I know that you were a little bit critical in saying that there should be some mechanism put in place to sort of force that issue. But if you can't get the countries to contribute troops, how do you --

SECRETARY RICE: The issue here is that, first of all, there is a force on the ground, the AMISOM force; and one of the possibilities is to blue-hat the -- to rehab the AMISOM force and to add forces to it, and there are a number of countries that have expressed their willingness to consider being a part of such a force. I don't think that one is going to raise a large multinational force of

countries from all over the world for Somalia, but the African countries have expressed a lot of interest in doing what they can in Somalia and they've also expressed their – through the AU the need for a UN peacekeeping force. And the Africans – the African representatives here, including South Africa, spoke in favor of a peacekeeping force.

QUESTION: Secretary Rice, would the U.S. commit troops to a UN peacekeeping force, and do you know if Barack Obama supports your push for a UN peacekeeping force?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the President of the United States is the President of the United States, and we are seeking this and we believe that this is the best answer. I do know that no American administration is going to want to see chaos in Somalia. We've been there, we've done that; it didn't look very good.

And finally, the Somalis actually have a legitimate process underway that needs to be supported. Now, I want to emphasize again, we did not seek a peacekeeping force today. The purpose of today was to deal with the piracy issue, and we're going to continue consultations. But we cannot get into a situation in which a security vacuum is left in Somalia and all of the good work of Djibouti is undone and we go back to two years ago, prior to the Ethiopian offensive. That would not be a good circumstance to find ourselves in.

And I really don't imagine American forces being a part of a peacekeeping operation. American forces are pretty busy these days.

Yeah.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, I wonder if we could get you to look more philosophically at diplomacy at the end of 2008 going into 2009 after your eight years in the government, and to see in a new world that is not unipolar, not multipolar, what we can – what lessons we can draw out of especially today's discussion about Somalia and a piracy issue, kind of in the spirit of your friend Alexander Downer, who liked to say that the Owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk. At the dusk, what do you reflect on?

SECRETARY RICE: (Laughter.) Well, let's see. Is it dusk yet? Midnight. In any case, I think that the United States, under President Bush, has actually used the mechanisms and the councils of the United Nations more than they've been used maybe ever, whether it is insisting that Security Council resolutions that have been passed be respected, whether it is seeking to deal with human rights and tyranny cases like Zimbabwe or Burma, whether it is the kind of really remarkable day that we've had today where we've had one resolution that was sponsored by the United States and Russia on the Middle East, something that I think might not have been foreseeable just a very short period of time. And I think, by the way, that is a product of the last several years of diplomacy on the Middle East that really have brought the international community to a joint understanding and strategy of what needs to be done to achieve the two-state solution that Bush outlined. That's why Russia and the United States were able to sponsor this.

And then finally, this piracy case, it's a kind of interesting story because we were down at the APEC, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Council, and the President and I talked to half a dozen leaders down there, including President Hu Jintao, President Medvedev, and others, and we got such strong and resounding agreement that somehow, even though the international community had already gotten very strong authorities on piracy, we didn't seem to be coordinated; people didn't seem to know, we weren't sending a deterrent message to the pirates through our unity. And this has been a remarkable process of getting a very strong, unanimous resolution on a common threat. And so I'm very proud of the multilateral diplomacy that we've been able to do and that the President has been able to support. It's been a good couple days at the UN.

Yes.

QUESTION: Following up on your answer, you said the U.S. has been sure that UN sanctions, et cetera, are followed. Is Pakistan following the UN Security Council's ban on the Jamaat? The Foreign Minister just said this weekend that charitable organizations of the Jamaat-ul-Dawa will not be closed down. Is this a violation of international cooperation?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the – Pakistan is going to have to untangle a difficult circumstance with the Jamaat-ul-Dawa – they are – because I understand that there are so-called charitable activities. But we learned – the United States learned the hard way that sometimes these are too intertwined with organizations that have terrorist ties and that have just been designated here. And so we will be pressing all member-states to adhere completely and to the letter of the designations that the United Nations has taken. And because I know the Pakistani Government to be a government that wants to deal in good faith with the world – it's a new civilian government that is a legitimate government that wants very much to be respected in international politics and, by the way, wants to deal with the terrorism problem that is itself having dire consequences in Pakistan – I expect that there will be great – will be cooperation.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

SECRETARY RICE: We're continuing to pursue it – the 123 agreement. We're continuing to pursue it.

Yes.

QUESTION: On Somalia –

SECRETARY RICE: Yes.

QUESTION: Does the U.S. favor imposing sanctions on Eritrea for its role in the internal conflict? And with the president now firing the prime minister, who is actually authorized in Somalia to authorize this?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, look, first of all, we believe that the prime minister of Somalia can only be relieved by the parliament, and therefore we recognize him. And we've made that clear to the president of Somalia.

Secondly, they need to work together. They have too many problems to be involved in these kinds of spats. I mean, the people of Somalia deserve better than this. And I just sat in a session in which the international community pledged all kinds of support to Somalia, all kinds of help to Somalia. Whether we agree or disagree among ourselves about exactly what kind of force can bring security, everybody in there wants to see security for Somalia, wants to see the Djibouti process work. The least that the leaders of Somalia can do is be equally committed to that cause, and we're sending that message very strongly.

As to Eritrea, we will examine it. We do believe that there are difficulties being caused by the policies of Eritrea, and we'll look at what actions we should take.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) does this resolution mean that –

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you.

QUESTION: -- you can intervene militarily in Somalia?

SECRETARY RICE: We – there is a very – there is a very clear, longstanding understanding in international politics about the role of UN Security Council resolutions in this regard, and the fact that it is the Transitional Federal Government that is desirous of not having their territory used for safe haven for pirates. And so that is what has just taken place here in the Council.

Thank you very much.

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