



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

No. 5

## Senate

### Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein

#### *“Confirmation of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State”*

MRS FEINSTEIN: Mr. President, I thank the Chair and the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I had the pleasure of introducing Dr. Rice to the Foreign Relations Committee. I thought I might just come to the floor of the Senate and share with the Senate as a whole some of my feelings and beliefs about this nominee.

I consider myself a friend of Dr. Rice's. She is a fellow Californian. I have known her. We have participated together in various think tank discussions. I know the bright, incisive mind that she has. I also know her background. This is a woman who was born 50 years ago in the segregated South, in Alabama. She has been able to reach the highest level of academia and public service. Can you imagine, she went to college at the age of 15 and graduated at the age of 19. Not many people know that. In January of 2001, she became the first African-American woman to serve as National Security Adviser. She has distinguished herself as a thoughtful, determined, and hard-working individual. Consequently, I believe she can be a strong and effective voice for America's interests abroad.

Now, looking at the foreign policy landscape, the United States faces several very complex challenges in many parts of the world. How we respond to these challenges will have a tremendous impact not only on our future, but on the future of the world. If you just take Iraq-- and we are coming up to an election -- what happens after that election? What will be done with the "de-Baathification" policy of Mr. Bremer, which I happen

to think was a huge mistake? Yes, one of the mistakes the administration made was to effectively remove many managers and supervisors, of virtually all of the significant infrastructure of Iraq, including the military and the police department.

I am one who believes that was a mistake. I am one who believes that because of that, the Sunni population has become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. That needs to be dealt with. I do not know what Dr. Rice will do, but I do know I have had an opportunity to discuss it with her, and I do believe she knows that it is a significant problem that needs to be addressed.

In the Middle East, there is a real window of opportunity to advance the peace process with the election of Abu Mazen as the President of the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza. It has also been helped by the fact that the Labor Party has become part of the coalition government, thereby giving Ariel Sharon more flexibility.

I was very pleased to hear her statements before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which she said:

I look forward to personally working with the Palestinian and Israeli leaders, and bringing American diplomacy to bear on this difficult but crucial issue. Peace can only come if all parties choose to do the difficult work and choose to meet their responsibilities. And the time for peace is now.

That is a quote from the next Secretary of State of the United States of

America, who has said that she will make a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli struggle a major priority. That is a very important step and a very important statement.

Iran and North Korea's nuclear weapons programs pose serious risks for peace and stability in the Middle East, in Asia, and they have set back efforts to curb nuclear proliferation. Here, there is need for consistent and effective diplomacy, not to further isolate North Korea but rather to convince North Korean leadership that it is in their country's self-interest to cooperate in dismantling their nuclear programs.

I basically believe countries do what they perceive to be in their self-interest not because we tell them to do something, and I look forward to an initiative to convince the North Korean leadership that it is indeed in their self-interest to rid themselves of a nuclear weapons program.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has consolidated power and taken several steps calling into question his commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Dr. Rice has a very strong background in Soviet and Russian affairs, and I believe this is going to be a big help in charting future diplomatic efforts with President Putin.

Serious challenges deserve quality leadership. I believe Dr. Rice has the skill, the judgment, and the poise to take on these challenges and lead America's foreign policy in the coming years.

I understand that some of my colleagues, many of them on my own side, have serious concerns about Dr.

Rice's nomination, stating that she was a key architect of U.S. foreign policy during President Bush's first term. Let me be clear, I believe the key architects were, in fact, the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of Defense. Obviously, Dr. Rice offered advice and counsel as the President's National Security Adviser, but remember, 78 Members of this body voted to authorize use of force in Iraq based on the intelligence which we received, which at the time was compelling and chilling but which we now know was not credible and was both bad and wrong.

Should Dr. Rice be blamed for wrong and bad intelligence? I think not. That is what intelligence reform was all about. That is what improved oversight over the intelligence community by the Intelligence Committees of both the House and the Senate is really all about, and that is what a new national intelligence director, to coordinate the 14 or 15 different agencies is all about.

For my part, I will continue to fight for a principled foreign policy based not just on military strength but cooperation, understanding, humility, and a desire to seek multilateral solutions to problems that indeed touch on many different nations. I want to see the United States reclaim the respect and admiration of the world and once again be seen as a champion and a leader of democracy, justice, and human rights. I believe the best way to do this is by example, by listening and by understanding that America's great strength is not our military prowess but our sense of justice, freedom, and liberty.

Importantly, Dr. Rice has the trust and confidence of the President of the United States and the world knows that she will have direct access to him. I believe this makes her a very powerful Secretary of State. I believe she will assume this office with a new dimension. To see this brilliant, young African-American woman represent our country's national interests on the world stage can bring about a new dimension of American foreign policy. So clearly this is an asset.

I did not expect this President of the United States to appoint anyone who seriously disagreed with him. The

question really is, Is this woman competent? Is she able? Can she handle and lead the enormous State Department? I believe the answer to those questions is clearly yes. I also believe that she will be able to advocate a course and make changes and adjustments when and where necessary, and enhance the ability of the United States to restore lost credibility among many nations and allies.

Indeed, barring serious questions about a nominee's integrity and ability to serve, a President deserves to have his selections confirmed. There is nothing in Dr. Rice's past performance to suggest she is not capable of performing the job as America's chief diplomat, having the responsibility to conduct America's foreign policy. There is every reason to believe that she is up for this challenge.

No one can be sure if she will succeed.

I conclude by saying this: Only time and events will tell if Dr. Rice will indeed make a great Secretary of State. To be sure, her vision, thinking, and problem-solving skills will be tested. I believe she is a remarkable woman, and I look forward to working with her as the next Secretary of State. I yield the floor.