

[Home](#) [Issues & Press](#) [Travel & Business](#) [Countries](#) [Youth & Education](#) [Careers](#) [About State](#)

Remarks With Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Kyoto, Japan
June 27, 2008

FOREIGN MINISTER KOMURA: (Via interpreter.) Now we've just finished our talks and first of all, the Japan-U.S. relationship is so important. So needless to say, I agree with Secretary Rice that Japan and the U.S. will continue its close partnership.

On North Korea, I and Secretary Rice reaffirmed that it is important to advance both denuclearization, as well as Japan-DPRK relations, including the abduction issue. On the nuclear issues, it is necessary to soundly verify the declaration by the North Korea. And our ultimate goal is the abandonment of the nuclear programs by North Korea. So on that point, Japan and the United States must also cooperate and that's our agreement. And on the abduction issue, I received a very powerful, strong message from Secretary Rice that the United States will support Japan's position, and also, there will be no change on the United States' position on this issue.

And on the climate change, the G-8 summit meeting as well as the M-E-M, MEM, Major Economics Meeting, about to be held in Toyako, and Japan and the United States will also maintain its close partnership. And both myself and Secretary Rice believe that the G-8 Foreign Ministers meeting produce a great outcome. And on the issue of Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, we could send a strong message.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much, Minister, for hosting me. I want, again, to thank the people of Kyoto for the wonderful arrangements here. There has been great warmth and friendliness from the people, despite the fact that I'm sure we've made it a little bit harder to get around. We've had a good discussion of our bilateral issues, including our efforts to modernize the alliance through the work that the 2+2 has done on defense realignment.

We have had a very good discussion of the North Korea issue and affirmed, again, that the next important step is for North Korea to cooperate fully so that we can verify the completeness and the accuracy of the declaration that it has submitted, and so that we can move forward on our ultimate goal, the North's complete abandonment of its nuclear weapons and its nuclear programs.

I reaffirmed to the Minister – I also affirmed to the Minister again what the President said yesterday, which is the United States will never forget the Japanese citizens who were abducted, and we will continue to press North Korea to resolve this issue early and in a positive manner. It is extremely important to the United States, as a matter of American policy, that this issue be resolved.

Finally, we did discuss the upcoming G-8 Heads of State meeting and had an opportunity to talk, in particular, about climate change, where Japan and the United States are cooperating, both on the major economies meeting and, most especially, looking forward to Japanese leadership on this issue at the G-8.

So we will continue our close cooperation and our consultation. And thank you, again, for hosting me here, and later on tonight for the trilateral meeting that we will hold with our Australian colleague, Foreign Minister Smith.

MODERATOR: We would like to take a question, one question each; first from Japanese press, then the U.S. press.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter.) Just a few hours ago, it was broadcasted on CNN, the blast – the blowing up of the cooling tower in Yongbyon in North Korea. But that cooling tower is already not working and it's almost disabled. So the -- we are wondering, what is the importance of that in blowing up?

And the second question is that President Bush stated that he will never forget the victims of the abduction; however, the – especially the Japanese people – especially the families of the victims have a very negative sentiment and the feeling – are very worried about that -- this time, the United States movement. So if there's any message from the United States to the family of the victims -- like to share?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes, thank you. As to the blowing up of the cooling tower, it is a part of the disablement. In many ways, the disablement has been going on for several months now. This was an active reactor. Let us remember that this is a reactor that was making plutonium, that made enough plutonium for several devices, including one that was tested in 2006. So it is important to put North Korea out of the plutonium business. But that will not be the end of the story. We also must deal with proliferation. We must deal with highly enriched uranium. We must verifiably end all of North Korea's programs.

And even that is not the end of the story, because in order for North Korea to enter, in some way, the international community of states, it will have to deal with the many issues, including human rights issues, and that brings me to the abduction issue.

I would say to the families -- and by the way, President Bush was very moved by his meeting with them -- and I would say to the Japanese people, the United States considers the case of the abducted Japanese citizens as a humanitarian and a moral cause.

This is a terrible, terrible thing that North Korea did. And they must be accountable for it and they must resolve the issue. The United States has pressed very hard to have the DPRK sit down with Japan and find a way to resolve this, and we are going to continue to press this case at every opportunity. And the United States retains, very much, plenty of leverage to deal with North Korea going forward.

When the President spoke, he said North Korea remains -- will remain one of the most heavily sanctioned nations in the world. The sanctions that North Korea faces for its human rights violations, its nuclear test in 2006, and its weapons proliferation will all stay in effect. And all United Nations Security Council sanctions -- sanctions will stay in effect as well.

And so there is still much that North Korea seeks from the United States. This is not the end of the story.

MODERATOR: U.S. press, please.

QUESTION: Thank you. Susan Cornwell with Reuters. Madame Secretary, will the United Nations Security Council consider sanctions against Zimbabwe next week? And if so, what sanctions might they consider? And lastly, is there a possibility of some kind of peacekeeping force? Because I think Morgan Tsvangirai has suggested that.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes. Well, we are going to consult with the South African Development Community, with the AU. We have consulted today with our G-8 counterparts. There was a strong, strong sentiment in that room today, that what is going on in Zimbabwe is simply unacceptable in the 21st century and cannot be ignored by the international community. And that is why the statement speaks to the legitimacy of anything that -- any government that comes out of those sham elections today.

You know that the United States has widespread sanctions on Zimbabwe and individuals already. But I think it's fair to say that those operating in Zimbabwe should know that there are those in the international community who believe that the Security Council should consider sanctions. And since the United States is the president of the Security Council until the end of the month, we intend to bring up the issue of Zimbabwe in the Council and we will see what the Council decides to do.

FOREIGN MINISTER KOMURA: (Via interpreter.) I'd like to answer to that question from the Japanese press, that on the -- about the blast of the cooling tower, it might -- it is not right to -- too much focus on that issue. But it is also unfair that it is meaningless. And there is also the mentioning that -- the worrying about the Japan-U.S. alliances, but neither of -- myself and Secretary Rice like to please North Korea by endangering the Japan-U.S. alliance. And I think this is not the interest of anybody. So I'd like to seek the cooperation for the good -- the alliance relationship between Japan and the United States.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER KOMURA: Thank you.

2008/T19-7

Released on June 27, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.