



**Celebrating Women Leaders**  
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**Washington, DC**

**Ambassador Susan E. Rice**  
US National Security Advisor

**Judy Woodruff**  
PBS NewsHour

***Major National Security Challenges Facing the US***

**Judy Woodruff:** Welcome everyone. I'm Judy Woodruff with the PBS NewsHour and I am thrilled to be here with all of you for this luncheon with the Women's Foreign Policy Group as we prepare to have a conversation with the President's National Security Advisor, Susan Rice, who will be joining us momentarily to talk about what has been dubbed "Major National Security Challenges Facing the United States" and we know there are more than a few of those right now.

I'm so pleased to welcome everybody here. I don't think this could be more timely because we know, as National Security Advisor, Susan Rice is right at the President's side. She is advising him on all international issues whether it's national security, foreign policy, ranging beyond that. She is just back from a trip to the Middle East late last week and just a few weeks ago she was in Asia, so we are looking forward to a rich discussion. And that reminds me to ask you to please get your questions ready. I will be starting out the conversation but we'll be looking for those questions from you and I think there are cards that have been passed around that are at the tables.

So, it is now my great pleasure to introduce a friend, she is the Women Foreign Policy Group's Board Chair. Ann Stock, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Ann Stock. [*Applause.*]

**Hon. Ann Stock:** There's always that moment where you wonder is your speech here, and the answer is, it is. [*Laughter.*] I would say Ambassador Rice, except she's joining us shortly, your excellencies, government officials, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you today as we celebrate our nineteenth year promoting women's leadership in foreign policy. And I think that deserves a big round of applause. [*Applause.*] Mark your calendars, next year's our twentieth, and Pat Ellis tells me it's gonna be a block buster year. I say they all are. Thank you, Judy, for your avid, avid support for the Women's Foreign Policy Group. As you all know, Judy's an outstanding journalist, who has moderated many discussions for us, but as she just said, I think this, with everything that's going on in the world, will be the most timely yet.

It is truly amazing to be here with so many distinguished leaders from the diplomatic core, business, government, and the non-profit world. Support for Women's Foreign Policy Group is broadly based, and as chair, I'd like to take a moment, if you'd indulge me, to say some very special thank you. First to my board, and if they'd just stand quickly: Elisabeth Bumiller, Dawn Calabia, Isabel Jasinowski, Gail Leftwich Kitch, Theresa Loar, Donna McLarty, Diana Negroponte, Mary Catherine Toker, and Patricia Ellis, our leader and president. [*Applause.*] And I want to say a special thank you to our Associate Director Kimberly Kahnhauser, the major domo of this, along with our interns and the volunteers who pitched in to help today. [*Applause.*]

But next is my passion, and those of you who know me know I talked about this for years and years and years, but especially, as Assistant Secretary of State and now as chair of this board, today's room is filled with many young emerging leaders from the State Department, other agencies, and lots and lots of students. They are the future. Please stand, and I know you're shy, so stand up and let us recognize you. [Applause.] I know there are four tables of people here, and some didn't stand up, so I'm taking names and numbers.

And our hats off to the Host Steering Committee, which is listed in the program. Next, let me thank our sponsors, if I could. And because of their support this event is a sold out success. Please stand when you hear your name, but let's hold our applause until the end because you know I'm about staying on time. Our benefactor, CH2M Hill and our patron, Maxine Isaacs. Our sponsors, the Ann and Ronald Abramson Family Foundation, the Honorable Ann McLaughlin Korologos, and I did see Tom, Tom you can stand too, please. [Applause.] Donna McLarty, the United Nations Foundation, and that whole table can stand, and the Tahir Institute for Middle East Policy, and me. Our supporters, the Boeing Company, Host Hotels and Resorts, Procter & Gamble, and NAFSA [Association of International Educators], everybody's being shy today, and our special friends, IREX, RTI International, and the Somayajulu family. Lastly, our diplomatic core deserves special recognition. Year in and year out, ambassadors host events at their embassies, speak to our membership, and help us understand our ever changing world. You do so much for us, and to make this organization zing, and for that we are eternally grateful. Since we are the Women's Foreign Policy Group, I'd like to ask the women ambassadors to stand first. [Applause.] Now, all ambassadors and diplomats please stand. [Applause.]

And, for our group, 2014 brought a whirlwind of fifteen successful events so far. Madame Ambassador, we started on a snowy, snowy night at the Embassy of Finland with Jane Holl Lute on cybersecurity and we didn't lose anybody to the snow, they knew they were coming to the Embassy of Finland. For International Women's Day we joined forces with the UN Foundation and the UN Office in Washington to hear from Dr. Jill Biden and Ambassador Cathy Russell. We've hosted two major Embassy Series events with the ambassadors of Mexico and Singapore. We discussed the foreign policy and national security challenges facing the Obama administration with correspondents, from *The New York Times*, David Sanger and, from *The Washington Post*, Karen DeYoung. We held conversations on the hot topics of the day including US-Russia relations and the Ukraine crisis, Venezuela, MENA after Arab Spring, and much, much more. Believe me, we've had a packed schedule. And we have upcoming events with the Ambassador of Spain at his residence and another timely briefing on Africa with the Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

Most importantly, and again, dear to all of our hearts, we held mentoring fairs in Washington and New York, mentoring the next generation of women, as you can tell, is central to our mission. I applaud those of you have participated in these events, and I invite all of you to please participate, and do help us mentor the next generation of leaders. We need your active support to continue highlighting women's leadership in foreign affairs. I believe that together we can make a huge difference and ensure that women's voices are heard every day on the topics that are most important to all of us. For those of you that are members and know us well, I thank you for your participation and support. If you're not a member, please join us and sign up today. Conveniently, we've also placed membership forms on every table, [Laughter] and Pat and I will be at the door taking them on our way out. No we won't. Finally, also at your table, as Judy mentioned, are index cards. Please list your name and affiliation and a brief question and write legibly. This is your chance to ask Ambassador Rice the question that's on your mind. And now, as you enjoy lunch, let me introduce one of the women interns, Kim Quarantello, who's been mentored by the Women's Foreign Policy Group. Currently, she's working on Capitol Hill for Senator Richard Blumenthal, and I thought it would be nice for us to hear from one of our interns and mentees today. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

**Kim Quarantello:** Thank you. My name is Kim Quarantello, and it's an honor to speak to such an accomplished audience today.

I was a summer intern with the Women's Foreign Policy Group before beginning my senior year at Wellesley College. This internship was a fantastic opportunity to explore foreign policy issues and contribute to the work of a small, active, NGO to promote women's leadership in the international arena. I was able to refine my professional skills through writing memos, conducting research, and participating in event planning. This experience enabled me to pursue globally focused job opportunities after graduation and ultimately prepared me for my current position as foreign policy correspondent for Senator Richard Blumenthal.

The internship itself was a form of mentorship, as Patricia Ellis and Kimberly Kahnhauser took time to provide interns with guidance throughout the summer. Women's Foreign Policy Group board members also served as mentors, such as Dr. Diana Negroponte, who met with our intern class and was gracious enough to meet with me again during my senior year.

But for me, the mentorship continued long after the conclusion of my internship. As I'm sure many of you know, finding a paid job in this economy—especially in Washington, DC—can be a challenge. But I was determined to prove to myself and my parents that my liberal arts degree was a good investment. [Laughter.] And throughout my job search, the Women's Foreign Policy Group supported me. I attended the Women's Foreign Policy Group mentoring fair in New York City and spoke with many mentors about their organizations, Kimberly Kahnhauser also wrote recommendation letters on my behalf and referred job opportunities for me to consider. And when I finally landed my current role as a foreign policy correspondent for Senator Blumenthal, Ms. Ellis was the first to congratulate me, reminding me that with the Women's Foreign Policy Group, "Once you're here, you're family."

Thank you to the Women's Foreign Policy Group for the opportunity to practice my professional skills as an intern. And thank you for supporting me to start my career. I encourage everyone in this audience to help others to realize their ambitions and I hope to one day return the favor and serve as a mentor myself. Thank you very much, and enjoy the event.

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**Woodruff:** Hello again everybody, I hope you have enjoyed your lunch. Please continue to enjoy your dessert and your coffee. The person you've been waiting to hear from has arrived and we're gonna get started. So, we are, just again, we are so delighted to be able to have this program today with the Women's Foreign Policy Group. It's just, I have to say at the outset that it's been such a pleasure for me, as someone who worked with Pat Ellis at the NewsHour some years ago that it's just been a thrill to watch the growth of this organization, to watch how important it's become, a place that brings women together, not only who are interested in foreign policy, but who are accomplishing things in foreign policy, and as we heard earlier the mentor program with young women is just a remarkable thing and I know that's gonna continue to grow as well.

So now it is my great pleasure to introduce the person that you've come to hear, Ambassador Susan Rice. She is, as you know, the President's National Security Advisor. She's been in this position since July of last year. Before that, she was the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and, of course, a member of the President's cabinet. In the Clinton administration, she served as US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and prior to that as Senior Director for African Affairs and the Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping at the National Security Council. Between her two stints in government, Ambassador Rice was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and I could go on and on but we want to leave time for some questions. So, please join me in welcoming Ambassador Susan Rice. [Applause.]

**Ambassador Susan Rice:** Thank you.

**Woodruff:** Well, Madame Ambassador, there's so many areas of the world that are under—that are getting a lot of attention right now that one hardly knows where to begin. And maybe that's how you feel

every morning. *[Laughter.]* But, just to start with an area that I know has captured everyone's attention in the last couple weeks, and that is Nigeria. What, right now, is the state of the search for these young girls who were kidnapped, abducted from their school, and this is now that the US has joined with other countries and working with the Nigerian government?

**Rice:** Well, Judy, I appreciate your asking about that because it's such a horrific situation and for those of us who are policy-makers, but also those of us who are parents, as I am—it's just heartbreaking to imagine your teenage girl taken away and potentially at risk of being sold into captivity or worse. So, this has gripped all of us in the administration and across the country and we are doing all that we can to support the Nigerian government's efforts to recover the girls. Obviously, job one is to try to find them. And they are now missing in a search area that's roughly the size of the state of West Virginia, so that's a large territory. The United States is very actively involved; we have a team of now up to thirty people on the ground cooperating very closely with the Nigerian government. Our team consists of diplomats, military advisors, intelligence experts, law enforcement experts, and even development experts, all coordinating closely with the Nigerian government, and now increasingly with representatives from the British government, the French government, and the Israeli government, all of whom are there in search of the girls. We also are applying aerial assets including manned and unmanned aircraft to do what we call intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance over this large area so that we can maximize the resources devoted to locating the girls. As I said, that's job one.

**Woodruff:** I think everybody's observed in how long it took the government of Nigeria, the government of Goodluck Jonathan to get started on this. Is there a good reason for the delay that explains the delay?

**Rice:** Well, I think that's a question best addressed to the Nigerian government. We're certainly pleased that now they have accepted international offers of assistance, including that of the United States. We had indicated from early on our readiness to help in whatever ways they deemed necessary and I think it is late but it is hopefully not too late and the good news is that the best efforts of the countries that can provide the most sophisticated support and surveillance are now on the job, on the team. The government is working very cooperatively with us and others now on the ground in an all-hands effort.

**Woodruff:** You won't be surprised to know, Ambassador Rice, that there are already voices on Capitol Hill being, if not critical, at least questioning the administration. Senator Susan Collins is saying that there should be Special Forces deployed on the part of the United States. Senator John McCain is saying not only should there be troops, but they should be sent in even if the Nigerian government doesn't want them. *[Laughter.]*

**Rice:** Well, *[Laughter]* let me say that, obviously in this sort of situation, the responsibility rests with the sovereign government, which is the government of Nigeria, to provide for the security of its people and to protect civilians. To the extent that they make requests of us or others to provide support, we're open to entertaining those. But obviously, as I said at the outset, the most important thing now is to locate the girls. There's no point in sending in any kind of additional support if we don't know where they are, so that has to be the first order of business.

**Woodruff:** But you're not ruling it out for the future?

**Rice:** Well, I think that, frankly, in all likelihood, if we were to do more with respect to a Nigerian request, it would likely be an advisory capacity, which is what we're doing thus far and what we could potentially do more of if we had better information on where the girls are located.

**Woodruff:** Let me turn, there are so many parts of the world to ask you about, but let me try to get to several that I think are most important and next I want to turn to Ukraine. As I know, there are so-called round-table talks that have begun today, supposedly aimed at perhaps de-centralizing the government

in some way, shifting more power onto officials outside the capitol, Kiev. Do these talks, in your view, have a chance of success, since at this point the government still is not including any representatives of the pro-Russian separatists?

**Rice:** Well, these talks, for folks who haven't been following them as closely, they began today as Judy said, in the parliament building in Kiev, and it is a quite broad cross-section of Ukrainian society, folks from the east as well as the south as well as the western part of Ukraine, former politicians, civil society, groups of all sorts supported by the OSCE, the international organization that's been integral in trying to reduce tensions inside Ukraine. It doesn't yet include elements from the armed opposition. And the government has taken the perspective that if they're to participate in a national dialog, or a round-table, they need to lay down their weapons. The separatists, the armed separatists, for their part, have refused to participate as well, so this is something that we hope can be as inclusive as possible. Clearly, in a national dialog, it's not the place for armed elements, but if they were willing to participate and do so on a peaceful basis, I think the government of Ukraine would be open to that and we certainly would be supportive. But, the OSCE, an organization that we're a member of, that the Russian government is also a member of, has committed itself to supporting this process, an internal dialog within Ukraine to deal with the very real issues of the constitution, of language, of decentralization, that need to be resolved in any event and that are important to address in the run-up to the May 25<sup>th</sup> election.

**Woodruff:** Do you think a new form of government in Ukraine is inevitable given, now, what we've seen in this informal election, I know the separatists are calling it a referendum, others are not recognizing the legitimacy of it, certainly this administration is not. But, clearly, there is dissatisfaction on the part of a significant minority, if not a majority, of parts of eastern Ukraine.

**Rice:** Well, I wouldn't say anything, Judy, is inevitable in this context. I mean, first of all, there will be elections in a couple weeks time. These are very important elections that the vast majority of Ukrainians are committed to participating in and taking seriously. We hope very much that security conditions will be such that those elections can be held throughout the country. It is a small minority that have resorted to armed tactics in the east, and the Ukrainian people, having been through a huge political and social transformation, want very much to have the opportunity to determine for themselves the future form of their government and their new constitution, and I think that there will clearly be a need, as reflected in this national dialog, or the round-tables, to work through these issues that have been so divisive, including decentralization and language and the like. But, they will do so, I think, with the opportunity to chart together what their new form of government will be. So, I don't think that one should assume that the east is gone or that there's inevitably going to be an external dictate as to the form of the Ukrainian government.

**Woodruff:** Russia does seem to be taking a different posture toward what's happened in eastern Ukraine, different from what happened in Crimea where it seemed there was a quick move for Russia to come in annex Crimea. Is there a different approach—does that say to you that you think there's a resolution—that resolution of this is possible and that it's possible in the near term? Or do you look at this as a long, drawn-out slog, in effect, that will mean rising sanctions and just continued tensions with the Russians? They've already canceled—they've already said Americans can't use their rocket engines for space exploration, so it seems like every day there's something else. But, which way do you see this, right now?

**Rice:** Well, I think that the true answer is one can't be certain how this is going to unfold. And, in the first instance, let's be clear, what happened in Crimea is completely illegitimate and nobody in the international community gives that any credence. That, itself, is something that we need to be firm about and recognize that there are costs that have already been imposed for the illegal annexation of Crimea and we're not, nobody is accepting that. But, beyond that, what the Russians may choose to do and what they will risk for themselves if they go further is really the tension that we're dealing with. On the one hand, the Russians have seen significant costs already to their economy in terms of the

currency, the outflow of capital, private sector businesses from around the world being very reticent to get more deeply involved in what was already a weakening economy, and we've been very clear, if the Russians move forces in or take actions that destabilize the elections of May 25<sup>th</sup> such that they can't be held in a credible fashion, that will for the United States and Europe and many of our partners trigger much more significant sanctions, including, as we've indicated, the potential for sectoral sanctions on key elements of the Russian economy. And, so, I think that that prospect has been heard and understood and has, I wouldn't say definitively deterred Russia, but has, I think, caused Russia to rethink the wisdom of trying to run such a play in the rest of Ukraine as they ran in Crimea.

**Woodruff:** But, it sounds like you're saying, right now, it's in the Russians'—it's in Vladimir Putin's lap to determine which way it goes.

**Rice:** Well, it's not in his lap to determine what price he pays. That's—that will be for us and the rest of our allies and partners to determine. He has to weigh the very real risks to his country and his economy of further destabilization.

**Woodruff:** Let's turn to the Middle East, where there's a lot to look at, and starting with Syria. Yesterday, you and the President met with the leader of the Syrian opposition at the White House, reaffirmed your commitment to a political solution in Syria, but this was on the same day that there were two other significant developments, one of them was the resignation of Lakhdar Brahimi, who had been designated by the United Nations as a mediator. He quite that job, he criticized, among other things, he criticized the failure of what he said was the rest of the world to agree even on humanitarian aid, much less on meaningful assistance in a way that would bring this terrible crisis to an end. The administration's statement, Ambassador Rice, says that the Assad regime has lost all legitimacy, but isn't President Assad, right now, the one with the upper hand. I mean, he's called an election, his military—his military certainly seems to have the upper hand. What can anyone on the outside, including the administration, do to change the situation on the ground in Syria?

**Rice:** Well, we had a very productive meeting yesterday with the leadership of the Syrian opposition. It was not just Mr. Al Jarba, the leader of the military side of the opposition and a number of their top advisors. The meeting lasted over two hours. And, we had the opportunity to hear from them what they most want from the United States and the international community. And, it was a very interesting discussion in several respects. First, what they explicitly do not want is US military or foreign military intervention. What they do want is increased support to the vetted, moderate opposition—

**Woodruff:** Lethal?

**Rice:** Which is exactly what we're doing. Lethal and non-lethal. They want both. In fact, a large part of the discussion focused on their desire to be able to stand up hospitals and schools and the institutions of civil authority in the areas that they control. They're very concerned, obviously as we are, about the humanitarian situation, and the United States is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance, \$1.7 billion worth, which they're very appreciative of, and obviously want to see continue. The problem on the humanitarian side that we discussed at length is really two-fold: the denial of access across lines and across borders that the government is substantially responsible for, and the use of barrel bombs and other weapons of terror that are increasingly a tactic employed by the government. So they have asked for support to deter the use of aerial bombardment, and particularly the barrel bombs, along with the increased humanitarian, civilian, and, of course, they want military assistance. From the US point of view, we have, now for quite a while, been not only the primary provider of humanitarian assistance, but we have been ramping up our support to the opposition both in terms of the armed opposition and the civilian opposition, and we've been very careful to try to vet the aid that we provide and the recipient so that we provide it to the moderates. But, that is increasing, and they acknowledge and appreciate that it's increasing, and, obviously, they want to see more.

**Woodruff:** But there's a disagreement over more lethal assistance. The administration is concerned that it gets into the wrong hands.

**Rice:** Well, they are very concerned about it getting into the wrong hands too. They are, in effect, fighting a two-front war. On the one hand against the Assad regime and on the other hand against the extremists, the Al-Nusra and their affiliates, and the Al Qaeda elements and ISIL, so they are very focused, frankly, on the need to rid Syria of the radical extremist threat, even as they are trying to accomplish their political objectives inside of Syria vis-à-vis the Assad regime through the negotiating table and they view the military effort against Assad as a way of getting the government, in a credible way, to the negotiating table.

**Woodruff:** The other development yesterday was the French foreign minister said there is evidence that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons more than a dozen times after it signed a treaty banning them. Minister Laurent Fabius went on to say France had been prepared to use force last year as part of a US-led coalition but had not wanted to act alone. He said that if a strike had been carried out, "it would have changed many things". Do you or the President have any regrets at this point about not moving into Syria?

**Rice:** Judy, the purpose of the credible threat to use military force was to deal with the threat of chemical weapons and I think that there are no number of air strikes that might have been contemplated that would have done what has been accomplished, which is now 92.5% of the declared chemical weapons are now out of the country. That last 8% we are determined to get out and we have made more progress in that regard in the time that has expired than I think many would have thought possible. I was in Israel last week meeting, as I do with some regularity, with my Israeli colleagues and counterparts and they obviously have, for many years, been deeply, deeply concerned about the chemical weapons inside of Syria and the risk that that poses to Israel and to other neighboring countries. They thanked us profusely for our approach and our success in helping to get those chemical weapons out, which has substantially increased their sense of security, even as they're dealing in a very difficult environment. And I want to thank Ambassador Rose Gottemoeller, our Under Secretary for Arms Control, who's been the most active person in trying to work with the OPCW, with the United Nations, and, indeed, with the Russians to get those chemical weapons out. So I think that's a huge success, and it's important that we recognize that had we not had the credible threat of the use of force, nothing would have changed, the Syrians would not have acknowledged that they had these weapons, much less packed them up and shipped them out. Now, in terms of the most recent allegations, that's something that we're quite concerned about. The allegations, by the way, are that the Syrian government may have used a form of chlorine gas, which is not the same substance, not the sarin and the other lethal, banned substances that are on the chemical weapons list. But the use of even chlorine, which is an industrial chemical, even though it's not on the chemical weapons prohibited list, is a crime, and against the chemical weapons convention if it's used in combat. So, we're looking very seriously into that through the OPCW [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons], which has launched an investigation on the ground, they're the ones that are doing the removal, and if, in fact, these allegations are verified, we will deal with them accordingly. But I want to be clear, that there's some confusion in the public domain, these are not the same weapons that were meant to be confiscated and removed. This is taking, if it's in fact the case, an industrial chemical and repurposing it as a weapon of terror.

**Woodruff:** But based on what the French foreign minister said, it sounded like there was some sort of division among the western powers because he said if the President had acted, "it would have changed many things." I mean, it sounds like—

**Rice:** I guess what I would say is that because we acted and made it clear that the use of force was credible, what has changed is that 92.5% of the chemical weapons are out of Syria, and I don't know how that would have been accomplished otherwise.

**Woodruff:** There's been a discussion, and you're very familiar with this, Ambassador Rice, about comments you made back during the time, or actually, subsequent to the time you served in the Clinton administration National Security Council staff, but Samantha Power, who is, of course, the UN Ambassador now, quoted you as saying to her after Rwanda, 20 years ago, 1994, you said: "I swore to myself that if I ever face such a crisis again, I would come down on the side of dramatic action, going down in flames if that was required."

**Rice:** Some would argue that I have. [*Laughter.*]

**Woodruff:** Okay, well, my question is, isn't Syria as equally horrible a humanitarian crisis as Rwanda was?

**Rice:** Well, Syria's a horrible, horrible humanitarian crisis but it is not a genocide, and 1 million people, thankfully, have not been killed with machetes in a door-to-door massacre. These are—look, we all as human beings, as policy-makers, as mothers and fathers, feel these tragedies personally and deeply. I visited Rwanda six months after the genocide and walked through schoolyards and churchyards where the bodies were still laying out unburied and that's the kind of searing experience that I think will never leave me or any other individual who experiences that. So, when you see a situation like Syria, where the costs and lives and particularly for children is extraordinary, one feels passionately about it. But the question is: what are the tools available to us and what is wise? And Syria is, now, a civil war. It is something that is horrific, but it needs to be distinguished, and I think importantly so, from the sort of genocide that we saw in Rwanda. And, you know, there will be instances where the tools we have can be employed with a greater or lesser effect to try and prevent the continuation of a civil conflict, of which, obviously, this is, sadly, not the only one. What's happened in Congo, for example, has cost many many more lives, is profoundly disturbing, and if you visit there you see the huge human cost and you can say the same in places like Somalia, and parts of—

**Woodruff:** South Sudan.

**Rice:** South Sudan, Central African Republic, and in each of these instances, I think, you know, our consciences are tested, but that doesn't mean that in every instance that the obvious answer is US or international military intervention. Sometimes it may be, but not always, and as pained as we are by each of these circumstances, I don't think that it is reasonable or wise to think that our military intervention in each of them is viable.

**Woodruff:** Do you have a yard stick for when it is appropriate for the US to get involved militarily?

**Rice:** I don't think there is a yard stick, Judy, 'cause each circumstance is different. And, the approach of the international community, the unity of the international community may vary; the complexity of the situation may differ. I mean, let's talk about Libya, for example, where we were able to intervene with positive effect. Remember where we were in Libya on the eve of the UN Security Council decision to intervene. Gaddafi's forces were on the outskirts of Benghazi, a city of 750,000 people, and he had said he was going to wipe it out. And given that he had the history of wiping out tens of thousands of his own citizens in a single day, that was a credible threat. What distinguished Libya, though, was that the international community was united, there was no great power arming and backing Gaddafi or his government, it was not a situation in which you had Al Qaeda and other extremists involved, it wasn't a situation at the time that had regional dimensions, and we were able to accomplish that with a coalition that was broad-based including Arab states and countries in the region.

**Woodruff:** Right, right.

**Rice:** That's very different, unfortunately, from what we are dealing with in Syria, or in any number of the other places we've just discussed.

**Woodruff:** Since you brought up Benghazi— *[Laughter.]*

**Rice:** You're too smart for that. That's— *[Laughter]* Come on.

**Woodruff:** The Republicans have, as you know, created a special committee in the House of Representatives to look at what happened before and during the attack on the consulate when the ambassador and three others were killed. Is there—what more is there that the administration has done or said that we're not aware of right now?

**Rice:** Dang if I know. *[Laughter.]* I mean, honestly, the administration has produced, I think, 25,000 pages of documents or 25,000 individual documents. They supported, participated in, contributed to the investigations of seven, I think, different committees. We have had an accountability review board by a very distinguished group of outsiders. House and Senate committees have pronounced on this repeatedly, so it's hard to imagine what further will come of yet another committee. What I think about and focus on as the National Security Advisor, is what we can do and what we must do with Congress to increase the security of our embassies and facilities around the world. We have a budget request on the Hill for \$4.6 billion that is necessary in the administration's judgment to make the kind of upgrades and provide the kind of security that our facilities need. Let's focus on that. Because what is lost in all of this discussion about Sunday shows and talking points is that we lost four brave Americans on that day and their families and those of us who work with them continue to grieve, and the last thing we need to do is to lose any more. And looking around the world, in Yemen, in Kenya, in Somalia, in any number of places where American diplomats and American service men and women are doing what we ask them to do, being on the front lines of our foreign policy, they deserve the support and protection that we can best provide.

**Woodruff:** But, do you not think it's legitimate, as the Committee Chairman, Congressman Trey Gowdy said, to look at, among other things, whether the administration should have done more to make that consulate safe, to make the ambassador safe before this happened?

**Rice:** Absolutely, which is what we've done. Which is why we had an accountability review board and why we're implementing the recommendations of the accountability review board and why we're seeking the resources we need not only to deal with what transpired in Libya but the risk that our personnel may face in various other parts of the world. The security and safety of American personnel is absolutely the top priority of the President, of the administration, and ought to be of congress. So, to the extent that we're focusing on that, I think we all agree that's where the focus ought to be.

**Woodruff:** Alright, several other things I want to ask, and I'm going to incorporate some of the questions I've been given from you all; Iran, negotiations over Iran's nuclear program resuming again today. What's your sense? Is that feeling like there's gonna be a productive outcome?

**Rice:** Too soon to tell. The negotiations for the comprehensive agreement have been about halfway through and what we can say so far is that the interim agreement that was concluded in January has been substantially implemented by the Iranians, by the other side including us, and that is indeed a positive step because what it means is that Iran will be ridding itself of its stock pile of 20% enriched uranium, it will be rolling back its nuclear program in this interim period in meaningful ways while it halts progress on the remaining elements. But, whether we will get to a successful conclusion of a comprehensive agreement, I think, is very much to be determined. There are gonna be some very difficult issues and the Iranians are gonna have to make some very difficult decisions.

**Woodruff:** A quick side note: Saudi Arabia's invited Iranian leaders to come—

**Rice:** Foreign minister.

**Woodruff:** And have a meeting, which is remarkable because these two countries have been arch-rivals. Do you—how significant a move is that?

**Rice:** It's a good move, and it's one that we've certainly encouraged and supported because the tensions in the region that go well beyond Saudi Arabia and Iran but are actually being played out including in places like Syria can best be addressed by enhanced communication, and we've supported that, whether it happens and what comes of it, I think we'll have to see.

**Woodruff:** The Israelis and the Palestinians. You just came back, as you said, late last week, from a trip to Israel, you met with the Israeli leaders, you went to Ramallah, I believe—

**Rice:** I did.

**Woodruff:** You met with the Palestinian leaders. Any hope for serious peace talks in the coming year?

**Rice:** Any hope? I think that, yeah, those of us who work in my business always have to have hope, and I do. But I think that we're clearly at a point of pause in the direct negotiations that were going on for the last nine months and we have made clear, and my message to both sides was that the only sustainable solution to this tragic conflict is yet a negotiated two-state solution. That's our view, that's the position of both sides, but they're not yet ready to take the steps, I think, to actualize that, and also we've underscored that in the meantime, as we manage this moment of pause, and as they manage this moment of pause, more precisely, that they ought not to take steps, either of them, that make the circumstances more tense or more fraught.

**Woodruff:** Well, I mean, in fact—well, what's happened in the last several weeks is that some of the US officials involved in those negotiations are now saying that it was the Israeli government's expansions of settlements, specifically Prime Minister Netanyahu's plan to build 14,000 more housing units, that sabotaged the peace efforts.

**Rice:** Well, what I think you've heard American officials say quite directly and what I have said and what others had said is look, first of all, we're disappointed that it wasn't possible to continue the negotiations. That has not been in our judgment, the fault of one side rather than the other. Both sides, in our estimation, and we said this very directly, took steps, particularly in the latter stages, that were not conducive to a positive atmosphere, and those steps included the Israeli government's decision not to release the prisoners and to settlement activity, but it also included, quite notably, the Palestinians' decision to acceded to 15 treaty bodies at the late treaty stages of the negotiations, which is something that they had previously refrained from doing and was very upsetting to the Israeli side and then also the very surprising and untimely announcement of a bid to reconcile with Hamas, that came at the very end. So, our view is that both sides took steps that were disappointing and not conducive to progress, but both sides have the ability, should they choose, to resume the negotiations.

**Woodruff:** But the Israelis will continue to build settlements, so how do peace talks get started again in these circumstances?

**Rice:** Well, Judy, I think if there were a magic wand here, we would have waived it and we would not be in 60 plus years of conflict. I don't have the ability to sit here today and say, you know, "Here's our silver bullet." I think both sides have the responsibility to look at their circumstances, look at their future, look at their children, and ask themselves, how do you forge a future of peace? Both sides are going to have to make very difficult decisions to do that. We think it's in their interests to do so. You know, Israel has the prospect of becoming a secure, recognized Jewish state that has the recognition of countries throughout the region. That's something that it has sought and wants. The Palestinians say that they want a viable state of their own. They both say they want to live side-by-side in peace and security. That's a future that we want for both of them, but we can't want it more than they do.

**Woodruff:** There are a couple of other countries I wanna mention, one is China and what's happened just recently between China and Vietnam. China is faulting the US for encouraging provocative moves in what they call the South China Sea. They said the dispute should be resolved by the parties concerned, but now we've got, I guess, riots, rioting going on in Vietnamese cities, reportedly against Chinese factories but I guess other factories as well. What can, if anything, the US do to resolve what is clearly a growing area of tension in that part of the world? China has its issues with Japan and now Vietnam. I mean how—what constructive role can the US play there?

**Rice:** The US has been very clear that the only way to resolve these territorial disputes, and disputes over sovereignty, are through the mechanisms of international law and peaceful resolution, whether it's the Law of the Sea Convention or other international legal instruments. We have not, and we never have, taken a position on the sovereignty of these disputed territories, but we have been very clear that provocative actions, intimidation, steps to create facts on the ground that complicate the prospect for diplomatic resolution are completely unhelpful. That was the message that the President took, in part, during our recent trip to Asia and it won wide support from each of the countries he visited where, in fact, what we're seeing in Southeast Asia are countries that want good and constructive relationships with China but are increasingly unnerved and put-off by what they view as provocative and aggressive actions by China. And we've been clear that what China has done vis-à-vis this latest incident of putting down an oil rig and both sides then imploring shows of force to react in response to that, it is provocative and unhelpful, and what you saw behind closed doors at the ASEAN meeting last weekend was a lot of anxiety, which doesn't serve China well. China has every interest in the countries of that region wanting to partner with it, not to be talking behind closed doors about how to counter it.

**Woodruff:** But is there any evidence that the Chinese are listening, responding to this kind of concern?

**Rice:** Well, I think one thing that can be said about China is it wants to be welcomed and accepted as a major player, not just in its own neighborhood but on the global stage, and to the extent that it is becoming more isolated and the subject of concern and opposition within its own neighborhood can't be a welcome development from the Chinese point of view.

**Woodruff:** I was just handed a card saying the Chinese seem to be getting ready to build a structure on the Johnson Reef, which is within the economic zone of the Philippines, so there's another—

**Rice:** Who handed the question?

**Woodruff:** Where'd it come from?

**Unidentified Speaker:** The ambassador.

**Rice:** Ah, okay.

**Woodruff:** Which just, I think, touches on the same thing you were just saying.

**Rice:** Yeah, you see, it's very much in the same vein, and I see the ambassador here from the Philippines, we were just there a couple weeks ago. Now, the Philippines have approached us, we think, in a very responsible fashion by taking their concerns and their case to a tribunal of the international—the Convention on the Law of the Sea. That is the type of mechanism that we think can and should be utilized to resolve these kinds of disputes.

**Woodruff:** Ambassador Rice, you're aware of the criticism that's been leveled at the President, the administration, for not being sufficiently strong. I could use, I could quote other adjectives. Not being sufficiently outspoken, not projecting American strength and presence and values in the world. The President himself addressed this briefly at a news conference when he was in Asia several days ago, but how do you see that? How do you address the frustration that there are so many parts of the world

now that both look to the US for guidance and leadership and help, military or otherwise, and on the other hand, parts of the world, so many parts of the world that resent the US, that don't want to US involved? How do you—I mean as you sit back or lean forward, how do you see all that? And what—

**Rice:** You know—

**Woodruff:** What do you want this audience to know about that?

**Rice:** Well, first of all, there is no country on the planet as powerful and as strong as the United States of America, whether it's the size of our economy, the strength of our alliances, the power of our military, nobody matches us across any dimension. So, the notion that the United States is weak or withdrawn is just counterfactual. And having spent time recently in Asia and in Europe, where we were in very close consultation and communication with some of our closest allies and partners, our Asian allies and partners our European allies and partners, I can tell you that they all continue to look to the United States as their principle partner, friend, and source of strength and protection. And those alliances are mutually reinforcing and mutually beneficial. I was just in Israel, as I mentioned, and prior to that on a separate trip into the gulf region, and there as well, each of our partners is looking to the United States and grateful to the United States for what we provided in terms of our security cooperation, our global leadership on issues across the spectrum, and the fact that there is nowhere else for them to look on the planet where you have the moral leadership, the economic strength, the security, might, and not to mention, our technology, you know, the power of our culture and our society. The United States is very much viewed in a very positive light in all of those parts of the world.

**Woodruff:** So finally, what's your one or two words of advice to the young women here today?

**Rice:** Why is that "finally," by the way? Not that we shouldn't be, that the time is not up, but that should've been an earlier question. [*Laughter.*]

**Woodruff:** You can take as much time as you want. What is your advice to young women—

**Rice:** I thought that was the large part of what we were doing here. [*Laughter.*]

**Woodruff:** To young women who are thinking of making a career in foreign policy and national security?

**Rice:** Do it. [*Laughter.*] Two words. First of all, I want to be quite frank and say, you know, I believe very deeply that young women, and young people, not just women, ought to follow their passion. You should not do what your parents tell you to do when it comes to picking your career. You should not do what you think is going to make you the most money. You should do what you love. And I hope for many of you that will be public service, that's what I love. And you know, back when I was twenty years old, I could've gone either way, I didn't know whether I was gonna end up in foreign policy, domestic policy, law—things happened they way they happened. But I knew from the time that I was ten years old that I wanted to be public servant, and I think it's a huge privilege to do so and I hope that many others will view it that way. We need the best and the brightest women and men to want to serve their country in one way or another. And there are many many different ways to do that. By the way, it doesn't mean only in government, I think public service encompasses the non-profit sector, in my judgment it encompasses journalism, and in many respects it can be accomplished in the private sector if the work that one is doing serves a larger goal and a larger group. And so I hope that folks will follow their passion. I love being in foreign policy, I think there's incredible complexity, incredible challenge, it's never boring. I get to work with very smart, committed people, and obviously, in my case, now, for a President for whom I have just enormous respect and I find intellectually, incredibly challenging to work with and for. But I do hope that all of you who are thinking about these sorts of careers will look carefully into it and I hope you would find it as rewarding as I have.

**Woodruff:** Even with the political polarization?

**Rice:** It would be better if there weren't, [*Laughter*] for sure. No, you know what, can I just, since you mentioned that, going back to your prior question about America's role in the world and our leadership, the one weakness that our friends and partners point to, and the one thing that undermines our strength around the world is our political polarization, is the fact that when countries look at us, they wonder and they worry if we will have our collective internal act together, whether it's over our budget, whether it's over how we engage in the world, that is what undermines us, if anything, in terms of our international standing.

**Woodruff:** It's also the strength of our democracy.

**Rice:** Democracy doesn't have to—we've had a democracy for 230 plus years. It hasn't always been as dysfunctional as it can be now.

**Woodruff:** On that uplifting note, [*Laughter*] let's thank Ambassador Susan Rice. Thank you. [*Applause.*]

**Stock:** And, Ambassador Rice, thank you for a scintillating discussion and helping us understand what President Obama faces every day. We'd like to present you with the Women's Foreign Policy Group Award—

**Rice:** I didn't know that I was getting an award.

**Stock:** Called Celebrating Women Leaders—

**Rice:** That's cool.

**Stock:** For being a role model and encouraging more women worldwide to be part of foreign policy. Thank you very much for being here. [*Applause.*]

**Rice:** Thank you.

**Stock:** And Judy, thank you for being here. And we hope to see you at another event soon. [*Applause.*]