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Condoleezza Rice

Government Official (1954-)

Condoleezza Rice is the first black woman to serve as the United States' national security adviser, as well as the first black woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State (2005-09).

NAME

Condoleezza Rice

OCCUPATION

Synopsis

Government Official

BIRTH DATE

November 14, 1954 (age 63)

DID YOU KNOW?

Condoleezza Rice was the first African-American woman to be appointed national security adviser and U.S. Secretary of State.

EDUCATION

Stanford University, University of Denver, University of Notre Dame

PLACE OF BIRTH

Birmingham, Alabama

FULL NAME

Condoleezza Rice

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Condoleezza Rice was born on November 14, 1954, in Birmingham, Alabama. She grew up surrounded by racism in the segregated South, but went on to become the first woman and first African-American to serve as provost of Stanford University. In 2001, Rice was appointed national security adviser by President George W. Bush, becoming the first black woman (and second woman) to hold the post, and went on to become the first black woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State. (She was the nation's 66th Secretary of State, serving from January 2005 to 2009.)

Early Life

Condoleezza Rice was born on November 14, 1954 in Birmingham, Alabama. The only child of a Presbyterian minister and a teacher, Rice grew up surrounded by racism in the segregated South. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Denver in 1974; her master's from the University of Notre Dame in 1975; and her Ph.D. from the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies in 1981. That same year, she joined Stanford University as a political science professor—a position that she has held for more than three decades and plans to soon return to, full-time, according to a statement she made in 2012.

In 1993, Rice became the first woman and first African-American to serve as provost of Stanford University—a post she held for six years. During that time, she also served as the university's chief budget and academic officer.

Political Career

In the mid-1980s, Rice spent a period in Washington, D.C., working as an international affairs fellow attached to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1989, she became director of Soviet and East European affairs with the National Security Council, and special assistant to President George H.W. Bush during the dissolution of the Soviet Union and German reunification. In 1997, she served on the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender-Integrated Training in the Military.

A few years later, in 2001, Rice was appointed national security adviser by President George W. Bush, becoming the first black woman (and second woman) to hold the post. She went on to become the first black woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State—she became the nation's 66th Secretary of State in 2004, following Colin Powell's resignation, and served from January 2005 to 2009.

As Secretary of State, Rice has dedicated her department to "Transformational Diplomacy," with a mission of building and sustaining democratic, well-governed states around the world and the Middle East in particular. To that end, she has relocated American diplomats to such hardship locations as Iraq, Afghanistan and Angola, and required them to become fluent in two foreign languages. She also created a high-level position to de-fragment U.S. foreign aid.

Rice's books include *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* (1995) with Philip Zelikow, *The Gorbachev Era* (1986) with Alexander Dallin and *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (1984).

In Recent Years

In August 2012, Rice and South Carolina businesswoman Darla Moore became the first women to (simultaneously) become members of the Augusta National Golf Club, located in Augusta, Georgia. The event was monumental. The club, which opened in 1933, had infamously been known for its all-male membership and repeated failure to admit women.

Just a few weeks later, on August 29, 2012, Rice attended the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida, showing her support for the Republican Party's [2012 election candidates](#), Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. Rice delivered a riveting speech on the second day of the convention, spurring positive media attention: "I think my father thought I might be president of the United States. I think he would've been satisfied with secretary of state. I'm a foreign policy person and to have a chance to serve my country as the nation's chief diplomat at a time of peril and consequence, that was enough," she said, adding that her future plans focus on being an educator, not a politician.

"I'll go back and be a happy Stanford faculty member," Rice said. "And, obviously, I'll do what I can to help this ticket. But my life is in Palo Alto. My future is with my students at Stanford and in public service on issues that I care about like education reform."

ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM

Condoleezza Rice's Book on Democracy Could Not Have Come at a Better Time

Spreading democracy is still the best chance for global peace, she argues.

BY DANIEL RUNDE | AUGUST 22, 2017, 2:22 PM

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's **book**, *Democracy: Stories From the Long Road to Freedom*, published in May, focuses on the merits of democratic systems of government and the need for the United States to remain active in promoting democracy around the world. It could not have come at a better time.

It is the most readable book on U.S. and Western democracy promotion since Natan Sharansky **published** *The Case for Democracy* more than ten years ago. Rice makes the case that the United States must continue to leverage its national example, diplomatic power, and international foreign assistance budget to strengthen and spread democracy. I do not know Rice, although I served in the George W. Bush administration, but I strongly support her focus on democracy promotion. I have “voted with my feet” on this issue by sitting on the bipartisan board of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems — a democracy promotion organization funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other bilateral aid donors.

Rice's book comes after more than a decade of limited success for the democracy project. The folks in the business call this limited progress the “democracy recession.” One can count on one hand the big wins for democracy in recent years. Myanmar is the country that comes to mind. At the same time, she reminds the reader that although democracy has been in “recession” for the last 15 years, we should recognize the great progress that has taken place over the last 50, 100, or 200 years. She includes a number of maps of the world to make that point. She also rightly references that, according to Freedom House, there are around 150 “free” and “partly free” countries out of about 200 countries in the world. This is a sign of major progress.

The book is thoroughly researched and includes country case studies that provide snapshots of various stages of democratic development. Rice covers Poland, Kenya, Colombia, Ukraine, Russia, and various countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Iraq, Tunisia, and Egypt. In each of the case study, Rice brings personal anecdotes from her time as national security adviser or secretary of state. The studies of Russia and Ukraine benefit from her decades of exposure to that part of the world. The fact that she speaks fluent Russian and was a Sovietologist (my Microsoft Word does not recognize this as an actual word, which says something) provides even greater insight.

Perhaps what makes the book most interesting is its constant return to the American experience. She includes a chapter about American democratic development, and reminds readers that women did not get the vote in the United States until 1920 and that African Americans were not fully given the right to vote until the 1960s. Her experiences as an African American woman in various parts of the world — including in Alabama — provide some important insights and perspective. Strikingly, she mentions that she has never missed an opportunity to vote because it would be an insult to her ancestors who did not have the chance to vote. Why does she use the American experience? One of the key messages of the book, and an observation that she tries to drive home, is that democracy takes a long time to build and that progress is not linear.

The book offers an implicit defense of the Bush administration's "Freedom Agenda," outlined in Bush's second inaugural address in 2005. She discusses the halting progress in Afghanistan and Iraq, but notes that both countries have held multiple elections and have a variety of functioning, albeit weak, institutions. She remains optimistic that, in the long term, these countries will become democracies. Rice also takes on one of the usual critiques of the democracy agenda, which points to the successes of places such as Singapore and China. She spends significant time looking at China and ultimately concludes that China will also become more democratic over time.

What about the upheavals in 2016, such as Brexit and the surprise election of President Donald Trump? She gently disagrees with those who say these outcomes put the system at risk. She says that these events represent voters seeking to make change peacefully. She defends the rule-based international order set up after World War II, but also signals that many people have either not benefited from globalization or see many of the changes ushered in by globalization as threats to traditional ways of life or traditional values. Those who seek to promote globalization need to account for those threatened by it. She also makes the case that we need to be brought together and not be sliced and diced into "ever smaller groups," each with their own interests. In

summary, she suggests that the voters have given policymakers and politicians a series of strong messages, and that they should listen to the voters.

Rice makes the case that democracy promotion is unambiguously in America's interest. Democracies are much less likely to go to war, much less likely to participate in terrorist attacks, and much less likely to tolerate human trafficking than nondemocratic countries. Many global problems are caused by authoritarian regimes (often weak and failed states, I would add). So democracy promotion is not only a values proposition, but also in our enlightened self interest over the long term.

In some ways, Rice's book is welcome not only because of the democracy recession, but also because of the perceived reluctance of the Obama and Trump administrations to prioritize democracy promotion. Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush each supported different dimensions of the democracy promotion agenda. Giving credit where credit is due, Myanmar's opening happened under the Obama administration's watch, and the United States played a critical role in helping birth its young democracy.

Rice likely wrote this book in part to prepare current and future policymakers for the long slog ahead. The bad guys have gotten a lot better at countering the use of social media (for example, the Great Firewall of China). Russia and its partners are very aggressive about closing civil society's space. In addition, a number of the unfree countries look like pretty hard dictatorships to crack from the outside. Rice and Sharansky would argue that we cannot know for sure if change is coming to these societies. Sharansky argues that dictatorships are actually quite brittle because of the way those societies are organized. Who, for example, would have said the Soviet Union was going to collapse less than ten years after 1982?

Finally, one of the last chapters in the book is titled, "They will look to America." Will we be ready? Many observers worry that the Trump administration has already deemphasized the democracy agenda. They point to Trump's so-called skinny budget, which **decreases funding** for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and **zeroes out** the Democracy Fund. At the same time, the skinny budget does not reflect what Congress will appropriate and Congress has a large number of democracy promotion champions on both sides of the aisle. Critics also point to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's unusual **absence** from the release of the annual Human Rights Report by the State Department, a report that is traditionally presented by the secretary of state. All of the above makes democracy advocates around the world nervous.

On the other hand, Mark Green is the new administrator of USAID, which is a major funder of democracy promotion activities by the U.S. government. Green is a former member of Congress and the former head of the International Republican Institute, one of the four National Endowment for Democracy institutes. Also, the Trump administration has rightly raised concerns about democracy and human rights in [Cuba](#), [Syria](#), and [Venezuela](#), among other countries. I recently asked a prominent democracy promotion advocate if he was worried about whether the United States would engage in democracy promotion under Trump. He told me, “I am not worried because of Article One of the U.S. Constitution and the naming of Mark Green as USAID administrator.”

Photo credit: ROB KIM/Getty Images

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Condoleezza Rice's new book is a repudiation of Trump's 'America first' worldview

By **Carlos Lozada** May 11

DEMOCRACY: Stories from the Long Road to Democracy

By Condoleezza Rice. Twelve. 496. \$35.

Early this month, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson delivered a speech in which he separated American values from American interests. Even though values — in particular, U.S. support for freedom and human rights — are “constant,” he assured, there will be times when overriding economic or security interests dictate that we

set such values aside, or at least that we not make such a fuss over them “in every situation.” Essentially, the United States has declared that it will stand for liberty only when the costs of doing so are sufficiently low.

Among Tillerson’s influential backers is former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, who endorsed the onetime ExxonMobil chief executive for his new gig. So it is a deliciously awkward bit of timing that just days after Tillerson’s speech, Rice has released a 500-page book implicitly repudiating the Trump administration’s “America first” worldview, and warning against the pernicious effects of populism, nativism, protectionism and isolationism, dubbing them “the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”

Rice worries that the advance of nationalism in the United States and elsewhere could upend the international order that has sought to spread freedom. “Democracy has gained adherents in the context of this global order,” she writes. “Can it continue to do so if America and others withdraw from the responsibilities of the system they created? What will happen to those who still seek liberty in a world told to go its own way? What becomes of those still living in tyranny if we cease to tell others that democracy is a superior form of government and that its tenets are universal?”

In a travelogue of sorts, Rice takes us to Russia, Kenya, Colombia, Poland and Iraq, among other spots, and revisits each country’s democratic struggles. She mixes realism and idealism; this is a book that gazes at the stars with its feet shackled to the ground. “There is no more thrilling moment,” she writes, “than when people

finally seize their rights and their liberty. That moment is necessary, right, and inevitable. It is also terrifying and disruptive and chaotic.”

To temper that chaos, we have institutions, and Rice is nothing if not an institutionalist. Democracies endure when they strike a balance between central and regional authority; between civilian and military leadership; between the state and civil society; and, of course, among the legislative, judicial and executive arms of government. “In functioning democracies,” Rice writes, “institutions are invested with protecting that equilibrium.”

A free press. The rule of law. A vibrant private sector. Regular and fair elections. In the nations she considers, such institutions are not always present, or when they are, they’re rarely strong enough.

[Review of “On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the 20th Century”]

In early post-Soviet Russia, Rice argues, “the abrupt shift to capitalism outpaced the establishment of rule of law and institutions that could regulate against its excesses.” When Boris Yeltsin’s promising government degenerated into oligarchy, corruption and erratic presidential behavior, it was not hard for Vladimir Putin to step in and concentrate power, leaving the Russian people with “no institutionalized way to express their views,” Rice writes.

In Kenya and Colombia, solid institutional frameworks struggled to assert themselves against underlying social divisions. Kenyan tribalism overpowered regional and party affiliations, while Colombia’s democratic traditions and practices

“were unable to contain competing interests — rural and urban, rich and poor, social liberals and religious conservatives,” Rice explains.

And she warns that Poland, a democratic success story for which she has “always had a soft spot in my heart,” is veering off course, with the illiberal Law and Justice Party undercutting the judiciary and the news media. “In Poland today, the resurgence of deeply conservative social attitudes, including religious piety, is clashing with evolving and more liberal European values,” Rice writes. “Poland’s democracy is not likely to be destroyed by the current challenges. . . . Yet the current circumstances in Poland remind us that democracy’s development is never a straight line.”

There is something slightly tautological about the institutional argument for democracy — if democracy survives, it must be because the institutions were strong enough; if it crumbles, clearly, the institutions were too weak. A similar logic pervades development economics, with emerging economies being told that what they really need for long-term growth is strong fiscal institutions, a proper regulatory framework, clear property rights and other items on an endless list of reforms.

Yes, institutions are vital, but they can also feel like a catch-all explanation.

Rice’s writing style won’t send me to the streets in protest, but it doesn’t exactly inspire freedom from clichés, either. She is obsessed with “the narrative” — identifying it, rewriting it, sealing it — and in her tales of diplomacy during the George W. Bush years, excitement is always palpable, tasks are always unenviable,

and words always go unminced. Some of her personal recollections, such as an unfortunate Ukrainian campaign poster that read “Vote for us and you’ll never have to vote again,” are memorable. But many of them feel dutiful, as though she were filling in Insert Anecdote Here prompts in her manuscript.

Rice devotes her longest chapter to the Middle East, where she defends past controversial positions and take the long view. She blames the Pentagon for committing too few troops to secure Iraq after the 2003 invasion and slams envoy Paul Bremer for disbanding the Iraqi army, among other screw-ups of imperial life. Rice confines her own failings to her role as national security adviser during Bush’s first term, when the Pentagon and State Department often clashed. “I felt that I had failed to wire the various parts together into a cohesive whole,” she writes. And she recalls an infelicitous remark during the 2006 Lebanon war — “We are experiencing the birth pangs of a new Middle East,” she said — that she now thinks was correct. “The tumultuous events of the last decade have indeed torn apart the map of the area and cast aside the pillars of the old order,” she writes. “A new Middle East is emerging through war, unrest, revolution — and in a few cases, reform.”

[Why America is terrible at making the world a better place]

Any discussion of U.S. foreign policy principles should recognize that there have often been gaps between values and interests; Tillerson may be merely acknowledging that reality. And Rice has fallen short of high-minded rhetoric, as when she relied on legalisms to defend enhanced interrogation techniques. But in diplomacy, messages matter, and a speech Rice gave in Egypt early in Bush’s second

term provides the sharpest contrast with Tillerson's remarks, especially because she upholds liberty as a universal value.

“For 60 years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in this region here in the Middle East — and we achieved neither,” Rice declared. “Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people.” Again, Rice believes that she will be proved right. “Despite regional circumstances less favorable today than in 2005, I stand by that statement,” she writes. “A stable Middle East will one day have to be a democratic Middle East.”

When an early version of this book arrived, the cover featured a note: “The epilogue found in this galley is currently being revised to include analysis of events from after the 2017 Inauguration.” In the new epilogue, Rice does not mention President Trump by name — she refers only to America's “new president” — but she calls out those politicians who scapegoat immigrants, stoke nationalism and seek to tear down institutions rather than work through them.

Even so, she decides, the notion that American democracy is threatened is “alarmist and premature.” It's an intriguing conclusion to a work obsessed with the institutional architecture of democracy, especially when Trump has been intent on delegitimizing judges, journalists and many norms of the office he holds.

Democracy was built to weather disruptions, Rice argues, so perhaps we can trust that American institutions — our “spirit of constitutionalism,” as she puts it — are up to the challenge.

But this book should give us pause. When modern democracies falter, it is usually “a story of executive authority that is outsized in comparison to other institutions,” Rice explains. And strongmen, she says, are sneakier than they used to be. “In today’s interconnected world, the creeping and subtle authoritarianism of illiberal elected leaders is a greater threat to democracy than if they were to crush it with tanks in the city square.”

The story of the Trump presidency can feel like an epilogue endlessly rewritten, never caught up. So I’m grateful that Rice made the effort. But her arguments and conclusions don’t always mesh. Perhaps it’s early for definitive interpretations. Or maybe Rice’s words are just a little bit minced.

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