

SUSAN E. RICE

I. INTRODUCTION

Susan E. Rice enjoyed a rapid rise in the Clinton Administration's foreign policy apparatus, starting her career in the National Security Council and becoming an Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs at the age of 33. As Assistant Secretary, she was responsible for formulating and implementing U.S. policy toward the forty-eight countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including political, economic, security, and humanitarian issues. Rice helped to raise the profile of African affairs and worked on the continent's enduring problems, most notably the persistent conflicts in the region.

Rice, along with others on the Clinton foreign policy team, has been criticized for failing to cooperate with Sudan to make inroads against al-Qaeda, a charge Rice strongly denies. Regarding Rwanda, a 2002 book review in the *National Journal* quoted Rice as asking, at a 1994 interagency meeting, about the effect on the upcoming congressional elections if the U.S. used the word "genocide" and then failed to do anything about it, a remark that could be characterized as inappropriately political. However, Rice later characterized U.S. inaction in Rwanda as "one of the greatest failings of the Clinton administration."

Since leaving the Clinton Administration in 2001, Rice has burnished her credentials as a broad-based foreign policy expert. She published articles and op-eds on a range of topical foreign policy matters, served on prestigious commissions, and has become affiliated with prestigious institutions. Rice also served as a foreign policy adviser to 2004 presidential primary candidate Howard Dean and then to 2004 presidential nominee John Kerry.

Rice has a reputation as a smart, articulate, dynamic policy-maker. Her aggressive approach has earned both champions and critics. Some see her as determined and focused; others see her as strident and a micro-manager. All seem to believe she is smart and a strong advocate for whatever position she takes.

II. BACKGROUND

Rice, 43, is the daughter of one of Washington, D.C.'s elite black families. Her mother, Lois Rice, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants who worked as domestics, attended Radcliffe and has served as a director on corporate and nonprofit boards. Her father, Emmett Rice, was an economics professor at Cornell and has worked as an advisor to the Central Bank of Nigeria, in the Treasury Department, at the World Bank, and as a governor on the Federal Reserve Board.

Rice's parents stressed education and started their daughter's education at the family dinner table, where she was fed a steady diet of policy discussions. Dinner guests included Madeleine Albright, with whom Rice's mother served on a school board. Political and arts activist Peggy Cooper Cafritz was her surrogate godmother. Rice attended Washington's National Cathedral School, where she was president of the student council and class

valedictorian. She excelled in basketball, playing point guard and earning the nickname “Spo,” which was short for Sportin’.

Rice went on to Stanford University, where she studied history. She graduated with honors in 1986 and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. At Stanford, Rice was known for her activism on apartheid. While other college students were building shanty-towns out of scrap cardboard to dramatize apartheid, Rice devised a pragmatic protest. She created a fund for alumni donations that would hold the gifts until either the University divested from companies doing business in South Africa or the country abolished apartheid.

According to a profile of Rice in the Stanford Magazine from January/February 2000, “as an African-American, Rice always assumed she’d have to work doubly hard to earn her success. In college, she pushed herself to ‘excel beyond belief,’ as her mother put it.”

After leaving Stanford, Rice won a Rhodes Scholarship and studied at Oxford, where she earned a doctorate from New College in international relations. Rice wrote a prize-winning dissertation on the negotiations that transformed white-minority-ruled Rhodesia to independent, black-majority-governed Zimbabwe. She also continued to play basketball at Oxford.

Rice is married to her college sweetheart, Ian Cameron, a Canadian who works as a television news producer. They have two children.

III. PROFESSIONAL RECORD

During a break in graduate school, Rice worked on the Dukakis presidential campaign and impressed Dukakis aide Nancy Soderberg, who sought her out four years later to join President Clinton’s National Security Council. At the time, Rice worked as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company in Toronto. From 1991-1993, she served clients in oil-and-gas, steel, transportation, retail, public/non-governmental and pulp/paper sectors.

Rice’s first post in the NSC was as Director for International Peacekeeping, which she held from 1993-1995. In 1995, she was promoted to Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs. As an NSC staffer, Rice visited Rwanda in 1994, which she has described as her “most searing experience”:

I saw hundreds, if not thousands, of decomposing corpses outside and inside a church. It was the most horrible thing I’ve ever seen. It makes you sad. It makes you determined. It makes you know that even if you’re the last lone voice and you believe you’re right, it is worth every bit of energy you can throw in it.

Stanford Magazine, January/February 2000. In a later interview, Rice said that inaction in response to the 1994 Rwanda genocide “was one of the greatest failings of the Clinton administration.” *Africa News*, November 21, 2001.

At the African Affairs Directorate in the NSC, Rice helped shape Administration policy. She was involved, for example, in formulating the 1996 African Crisis Response Initiative, whose goal was to train and equip battalions of African soldiers that—with airlift by others—could undertake complex humanitarian interventions effectively.

In 1997, at the age of 33, Rice was nominated and confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, becoming one of the youngest assistant secretaries of state in history. At the time of her appointment, there were rumors that Secretary Albright was her godmother and that the relationship played a role in landing her the position. While Albright was not in fact her godmother, their close personal relationship is often noted in profiles as a behind-the-scenes factor in Rice's appointment.

As Assistant Secretary, Rice presided over the Clinton Administration's Africa policy and raised the profile of engagement with Africa. Rice has been credited with making President Clinton's 1998 and 2000 trips to Africa a reality and providing the substantive framework for his visits. She brought to the position what commentators have called "Afro-Optimism." Rice lobbied for increased aid to and engagement with African countries and that strong partners in Africa would help deal with threats such as terrorism, narcotics, weapons proliferation, disease, and environmental degradation. Rice helped to develop the Administration's initiative for a new Partnership with Africa, one based on deep U.S. engagement in the region by all parts of government. Rice traveled to Africa repeatedly and testified before Congress on behalf of the Administration.

Following President Clinton's 1998 trip to Africa and building on its momentum, Rice helped to convene a well-regarded ministerial summit. The U.S. invited ministers from 46 of 48 sub-Saharan African countries to Washington to meet with a broad group of U.S. Cabinet and sub-Cabinet officials. The purpose of the session was to strengthen the U.S. partnership with Africa, most focused on (1) accelerating Africa's integration into the global economy, and (2) working together to combat transnational threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and HIV/AIDS.

Rice's tenure at the State Department was marked by substantial conflict and internal strife in Africa. Terrorists bombed U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, war broke out in the region, and much of the continent was unstable, reeling from disease and ethnic rivalries. Rice worked with other U.S. diplomats on civil wars and struggles, including Angola's protracted civil war against the UNITA rebels, Nigeria's Niger Delta crises, the conflict in the Congo, and the Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute. She learned to conduct shuttle diplomacy to attempt to broker peace and developed new approaches to addressing conflict. She championed an all-African peacekeeping force to avert conflict on the continent. And she helped shepherd the African Growth and Opportunity Act trade legislation through Congress to provide greater access to American markets for African products.

Rice worked to isolate the repressive Khartoum government in the Sudan; in 1999, she supported a controversial congressional measure that allowed Washington to provide assistance

to rebels fighting the regime, a measure signed by President Clinton. Rice repeatedly condemned the Sudanese government for its support of terrorism, human rights violations, efforts to destabilize its neighbors and the continuation of one of the deadliest civil wars in the world. In 2000, Rice visited rebel-held southern Sudan, where she promised that Washington would work tirelessly to stamp out slavery in Africa's largest country.

In 2000, Rice was co-recipient of the National Security Council's Samuel Nelson Drew Memorial Award for distinguished contributions to the formation of peaceful, cooperative relations between nations, and U.S. security policy for global peace.

Since leaving the State Department in 2001, Rice has published articles and op-eds on a range of foreign policy matters, served on commissions, and joined the boards of a number of prestigious institutions. Following government service, Rice became a managing director of Intellibridge International, a provider of open-source intelligence and analysis services chaired by former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke.

In 2002, Rice joined the Brookings Institution as a senior fellow jointly affiliated with the Foreign Policy and Governance Studies program, while also working as an independent speaker and policy consultant. Her work at Brookings focused on U.S. foreign policy, weak and failing states, the implications of global poverty and transnational security threats.

Rice is currently on leave from Brookings, serving as a senior foreign policy advisor to Obama. Rice also worked as a foreign policy advisor to Howard Dean during the 2004 presidential primary and to John Kerry's presidential campaign beginning in July 2004.

Rice has served on two high-level commissions. She served on the Commission on Capital Flows to Africa, which in 2003 produced a report entitled: "A Ten Year Strategy for Increasing Capital Flows to Africa". Rice also served on the bipartisan Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security, co-chaired by Stuart Eizenstat and John Edward Porter. The Commission's June 2004 report warned that if the U.S. fails to come up with a new development strategy, it will undermine its national security. Among its recommendations are (1) the creation of a Cabinet-level agency that incorporates all aspects of development policy, and (2) greater investment in preventing states from sliding further toward failure and away from successful, democratic governance.

Rice is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Aspen Strategy Group. She is also a member of the boards of directors for U.S. Fund for UNICEF, the National Democratic Institute, the Bureau of National Affairs, the Partnership for Public Service, the Beauvoir School, and the Atlantic Council. She serves on the advisory board of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University and America Abroad Media. She is a past board member of the Internews Corporation. She also served on the advisory council of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.

IV. VIEWS ON ISSUES

Rice's public positions on the issues are generally consistent with Senator Obama's. Like Obama, Rice has been opposed to the war in Iraq from the beginning and shares his support for a diplomatic approach to national security issues.

A. U.S. National Security Policy

Rice has been deeply critical of the Bush Administration's national security policy and has argued for a dramatic change in course. In an article published in the Winter 2004 issue of the Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, she characterized Administration policy as a "huge—and seemingly endless—mess of enormous expense" and argued that we have squandered post-9/11 good will in the world community. Rice contended that devoting attention, troops and resources almost exclusively to Iraq, absent a link to the 9/11 attack, is misguided. She argued instead for a "new type of leadership" that engages and respects the international community and makes effective uses of collective instruments and institutions such as the United Nations and NATO. This new leadership would also act on the U.S.'s critical stake in enhancing the security, health, freedom and economic well-being of others around the world through efforts to close the gaps between rich and poor and address issues such as HIV/AIDS.

B. War on Terrorism

Rice has written critically of the Bush Administration's war on terrorism. She argues the U.S. should "get back to basics" rather than remain consumed by the war in Iraq. According to Rice, we need to (1) devote far greater effort and attention to the global fight against al-Qaeda and other terrorists with global reach; (2) speed efforts to improve homeland security by hardening critical infrastructure, equipping and training first responders and improving bio-preparedness; (3) finish the job in Afghanistan and Pakistan; (4) stop soft-pedaling the Saudi Arabia problem; (5) strengthen and expand intelligence-sharing and law enforcement cooperation with countries that can help us wrap up Al-Qaeda operatives, cells, and finances; and (6) invigorate efforts to prevent terrorists from obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

Rice has also characterized failed states as a direct threat to U.S. national security, because they serve as safe havens and staging grounds for terrorists. She has argued that to be serious about fighting terrorism, the U.S. must become more rather than less engaged in the difficult task of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and nation building in failed states--from Central Africa to Afghanistan, from Sierra Leone to Somalia.

C. Iraq

Rice has been critical of the Administration's handling of Iraq. Prior to the war, she was on record believing that Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, even predicting that the war could lead Hussein to unleash those weapons. However, Rice also urged caution and giving the inspectors a "genuine opportunity to do their job or conclude that they cannot." She pressed

the Administration to resist a strike without broad international support and at least regional acquiescence.

Since the war, Rice has criticized how policymakers used intelligence, although she has acknowledged limitations in intelligence gathering and analysis. She has characterized as “abysmal” the Administration’s postwar planning. For example, she faulted the Bush Administration for invading with insufficient troops to secure WMD facilities in Iraq from looters. She also criticized the Administration’s request for \$20 billion in Iraq reconstruction, arguing that, unlike the Marshall Plan, the Administration’s strategy did not give Iraqis an adequate role in reconstruction, was not devised to be finite in cost and duration, and was an insufficient sum to rebuild Iraq. *New York Times*, October 24, 2003. In January 2004, Rice said that Iraq would take years to rebuild and that it would be years before U.S. troops could come home:

We can’t realistically expect to take a country that has basically been devastated by dictatorship, by sanctions and by now two wars, and expect to turn it into something that’s stable, that has a representative government friendly to our interests and doesn’t threaten its neighbors in a short period of time. So, it’s a long term investment.

CNN, January 7, 2004. Rice further noted that Iraq is “obviously not Vietnam,” but involves a “very serious insurgency.” She also questioned whether the administration’s vision of a western-style democracy in Iraq is “realistic.” Nevertheless, Rice has stated, “we must see this job through.”

In her recent work at the Brookings Institute, Rice and Stewart Patrick created the “Index of State Weakness in the Developing World.” The index ranks and assesses all 141 developing countries on their performance in fulfilling the four core functions of statehood: providing security; maintaining legitimate political institutions; fostering equitable economic growth; and meeting their people's human needs.

According to the index, nearly 60 countries -- over a quarter of all U.N. members -- are unable to meet the basic requirements of statehood. Most of the world's weakest states are in Africa, but the problem affects countries from Haiti to Yemen, Burma and Nepal. Afghanistan is a fully failed state, second only to Somalia. These two, along with the Democratic Republic of Congo, fail to fulfill any core state functions. According to the index, Iraq has become the world’s fourth-weakest state, just one notch above Congo and below Burundi, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. Rice concluded, “the severity of the problems we face in Iraq and Afghanistan is far greater than American officials acknowledge.” *The Weak States Gap*, Brookings Institute, March 7, 2008.

D. Doctrine of Preemption

In a policy brief, Rice and co-authors challenged President Bush's emphasis on preemption in the National Security Strategy issued in September 2002. They argued that while preemption has long been accepted as legitimate and appropriate in international law, the Administration is broadening its meaning to encompass preventive war, even without evidence of an imminent attack, to ensure that a serious threat to the U.S. does not "gather" or grow over time. The authors argued for reserving the preemptive military tool for a narrow, rare class of situations where inaction poses a credible risk of large scale, irreversible harm and where other policy tools offer a poor prospect of success.

E. Conflict Resolution

Rice has written critically of the Bush Administration's "cautious" approach to conflict resolution. She contends that "the Administration must overcome its reluctance to prevent conflicts and attempt to broker peace, even where peace is elusive." Rice argues that the Administration should engage early and aggressively across the board when the conflict is imminent or persistent, reasoning that the U.S. has important interests in preventing the threats to our national security that are spawned by failed and failing states.

Rice has written in favor of improving the U.N.'s capacity to mount and sustain effective peace operations by addressing three areas: (1) early warning and preventive response to conflict; (2) rapid deployment of trained, equipped, and capable forces; and (3) the political will of the U.N. Security Council and its key member states to respond effectively to crises and to finance necessary actions. Rice argues that these steps are essential to enabling the international community to deal consistently with those threats to international peace and security that emanate from internal and regional conflict, failed states, and their attendant humanitarian consequences.

F. Darfur

In October 2004, Rice criticized the Bush Administration for not "taking action consonant with the magnitude of the catastrophe in Darfur. At the same time, she stated, "I don't think there's a huge difference" between Kerry and Bush on how to handle Sudan in that neither candidate advocates sending U.S. troops to Africa to end the fighting. Her views on how to handle the problem in Darfur are in line with Obama's, as both support the use of international troops to stabilize the situation.

In a May 2004 op-ed, Rice and a co-author argued for increased U.S. efforts to address the situation in Darfur. She argued for a four-pronged strategy. First, the U.S., acting through the Security Council, should pressure the government of Sudan to halt the killing, disarm the militia, and allow full, unimpeded access for humanitarian workers and supplies. This pressure should include travel and financial sanctions, as well as a ban on the purchase of Sudanese oil. Second, the U.S. should press the Security Council to grant member states the authority to

intervene militarily to protect innocent civilians and ensure the security of humanitarian workers and assistance efforts. Third, the U.S. should press European and capable African countries to lead this humanitarian intervention with U.S. support. Finally, the U.S. should begin urgent military planning and preparation for the contingency that no other country will act. The op-ed concluded, “It is too late to change the historical record on Rwanda. But it is not too late to set a better precedent for the future.” *Washington Post*, May 30, 2004.

G. Middle East Peace Process

Rice has been critical of the Bush Administration for neglecting the Middle East Peace Process “out of disdain for President Clinton’s active engagement.” This, she argued in a 2002 speech, has “let go unchecked serious excesses and escalations on both sides.”

H. Global Poverty and Economic Inequality

Rice has written in support of increased investment in addressing global poverty. She argues that developed countries have more than a moral or humanitarian interest in these issues, emphasizing the implications for international peace and stability. Rice supports increased investment in a broad range of programs to combat global poverty, including: (1) eliminating domestic subsidiaries that harm developing country producers; (2) granting open access to developed countries’ markets for all goods and services from least developed countries; (3) using tax and other incentives as well as investment insurance to encourage job-creating foreign direct investment in a range of developing countries; (4) extending multilateral debt relief to a far broader range of developing countries and deepening the relief provided; (5) increasing and accelerating aid to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and (6) taking action in the United Nations to address global poverty through resolutions binding on all member states.

V. COMMENT ON PROFESSIONAL RECORD

Rice enjoys strong support from her former colleagues in the Clinton Administration. Madeleine Albright, one of Rice’s biggest supporters, has said, “If I were to characterize her, whether it’s playing basketball or anything else, she’s fearless. She says what she thinks. She steps into situations without doubt. I just never doubted that if Susan wanted to do it all, she could.” *Washington Post*, March 30, 1998.

When Rice joined the Brookings Institution, its president Strobe Talbott commented, “I worked with Susan in government for eight years. She was a standout in every respect: smart, committed, energetic, disciplined — with a powerful determination to tackle big problems facing our nation and the world.”

As a member of Obama’s foreign policy team, she apparently has lived up to her reputation for strong leadership. Major General Scott Gration, another member of Obama’s foreign policy circle, has described her as a “take-charge person” who “accomplishes a task while building a team.” *New York Sun*, January 28, 2008.

Rice also enjoys support among prominent individuals engaged in issues relating to Africa, such as Trans-Africa head Randall Robinson. Rice won praise from some congressional leaders with oversight over African affairs.

Some inside the African Bureau at the State Department, however, have taken issue with Rice's qualifications for the job and her management style. A March 30, 1998 profile in the Washington Post noted:

Opinions about the assistant secretary fall into two camps, with some overlap. Even her detractors concede that in a town of bright people, Rice is smart. She is thought of as a dynamic, creative leader with a well-defined vision — African integration into the global economy, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and greater engagement across the continent — who reinvigorated a bureau that many thought had been lacking focus.

But some charge she is a micro-manager--a demanding, autocratic leader whose unwillingness to grant autonomy sometimes demoralizes her staff, many of them career foreign policy diplomats. "Once she settles on a position, it's holy writ. Moses on the mount."

Some critics of U.S. policy in Africa also have argued that during her tenure Rice focused too much on a handful of fleeing leaders — by devoting time to shuttle diplomacy to address conflicts in the region — rather than strengthening lasting institutions. In an interview, Rice denied the charge, arguing that the U.S. is "investing massively in institutions, civil society and democratic transitions." Stanford Magazine, January/February 2000.

VI. CONTROVERSIES/LIABILITIES

A. Osama bin Laden and Sudan

In 1996, Sudan expelled Osama bin Laden, after Sudan's reported back-channel offer to the U.S. to arrest bin Laden and place him in Saudi custody was rejected by Saudi Arabia. The Clinton Administration has since maintained that there was no other option in the legal, political, and intelligence environment of the time. In 1998, the Clinton Administration responded to the attack on U.S. embassies in Africa in part by striking a target with cruise missiles incorrectly thought to be a factory producing chemical weapons for bin Laden's use.

During Rice's tenure in the Clinton Administration, there was a debate about whether to engage Sudan's government in Khartoum or to contain and isolate it. Rice was a proponent of isolation, the policy that ultimately prevailed. Critics of U.S. policy have charged that isolation contributed to missing critical information about al-Qaeda offered by the Sudanese. Former Ambassador to the Sudan Timothy Carney co-authored an op-ed alleging that in 1997, Rice and NSC terrorism specialist Richard Clarke objected to Secretary of State Albright's plan to reengage the government in Khartoum and pursue offers to cooperate on terrorism. According to

Carney, they convinced NSC Chief Sandy Berger to “override a months-long interagency process,” undermining U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

According to a 2001 Vanity Fair article, the Clinton Administration rejected repeated offers by Sudanese intelligence officials to provide “copious intelligence” on bin Laden’s network, including detailed files on al-Qaeda operatives that contained photographs, travel details, and origins (e.g., information about the operatives’ identity, location and background). Vanity Fair also reported that the Sudanese arrested two suspects in the 1998 bombings and offered them to the FBI, but the U.S. rejected those offers. Dick Morris opined in an op-ed that the Clinton foreign policy team (specifically including Sandy Berger, Madeleine Albright, and Rice) was “so obsessed by their conviction that Sudan was a terror-sponsoring nation that they refused to heed signs that it was willing to flip and come over to our side.” After the Vanity Fair story appeared, Rice dismissed its allegations as “wild lies” and “irresponsible journalism.” She stated that the U.S. had an obvious interest in gathering as much information as possible from Sudan and spent a great deal of time between 1994 and 2001 meeting repeatedly with Sudanese officials. According to Rice, the U.S. sought to elicit information on counterterrorism, but Sudan neither offered to provide nor did provide useful intelligence to the Administration. Former Amb. Tim Carney claimed to be unaware of the meetings that Rice described. Rice countered that Carney attended meetings in which the U.S. tried to elicit information on terrorism. CNN, December 3, 2001. The public record shows no resolution of this dispute.

B. Rwanda

A 2002 book review in the National Journal reported that the Clinton Administration was cautious of labeling the Rwanda situation a “genocide” for fear of political ramifications. According to this piece, a 1994 paper prepared by the Defense Department warned: “Be careful . . . Genocide finding could commit [the U.S. government] to actually ‘do something.’” And, “Rice, who at the time was a member of the National Security Council staff, reportedly asked during an interagency teleconference late in the month when the genocide began: “If we use the word ‘genocide’ and are seen as doing nothing, what will be the effect on the November [congressional] election?”” National Journal, June 29, 2002.

In a 2001 interview, Rice characterized the U.S.’s inaction in Rwanda as “one of the greatest failings of the Clinton Administration.” She argued that blame, however, lay “not just with the [Clinton] administration, but Congress, and our public and our press.” The only useful intervention in the Rwanda crisis would have been direct military intervention, said Rice. “I defy you to find me a member of Congress, or an editorial board, who, in the early weeks, was arguing that the United States ought to intervene with American forces. “ If Clinton had ordered troops in, “Congress would have eaten him for lunch.” Africa News, November 21, 2001.

C. The 3 a.m. Call Comment

On March 5, 2008, Rice gave an interview with Tucker Carlson on MSNBC in which she was questioned about the Hillary campaign’s controversial “3 a.m. phone call” campaign

advertisement. Carlson asked Rice when Obama had been in a position to make the “kinds of decisions” represented by the 3 a.m. phone call, and Rice responded, “He hasn’t and he hasn’t claimed that he’s been in a position to have to answer the phone at 3 o’clock in the morning in a crisis situation...Hillary Clinton hasn’t had to answer the phone at 3 o’clock in the morning. And yet she attacked Barack Obama for not being ready. They’re both not ready to have the 3:00 a.m. phone call.” See, e.g., New York Times, The Caucus, March 6, 2008. The clip is available on YouTube and appeared on dozens of conservative blogs almost immediately; the Clinton campaign evidently mailed it to reporters.

Rice herself responded in a blog posting on the Huffington Post the next day, decrying the heavy editing of the clip by the Clinton and McCain campaigns and noting that what is needed “at 3 a.m.” is a leader with good judgment, as exhibited by Obama in voting against the war in Iraq. She published the full transcript of the interview, in which she also noted that McCain had not had “3 a.m. phone call” experience.

D. Liberia and Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor, the brutal Liberian dictator, escaped from a prison in Massachusetts in 1985. In 1998, Massachusetts decided to drop charges stemming from the escape. When asked at a Senate subcommittee hearing about the State Department’s role in getting Massachusetts to drop the charges, Rice answered, “I don’t think the State Department played any role.” The commonwealth’s official notice of intent not to prosecute Taylor, however, stated: “The State Department has requested...that this charge be dismissed against Charles Taylor.” The New Republic, October 30, 2000.

E. Sierra Leone and the Lome Peace Deal

Rice was criticized for Clinton Administration policy with regard to Sierra Leone. The U.S. crafted a peace deal that later fell apart; it included blanket amnesty and high-level government posts for the brutal members of Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front. At a Senate subcommittee hearing, Rice admitted that the peace deal did not look good in hindsight but she insisted that it made sense at the time. The New Republic, October 30, 2000.

VII. ANALYSIS

Rice is a strong candidate for a senior national security position. She earned a reputation as an articulate, smart, confident, and dynamic policy-maker during her tenure in the Clinton Administration. Rice would bring valuable experience to a senior-level appointment.

Her role in the controversy over Sudan and al-Qaeda could arise in a confirmation setting, but these issues already have been explored extensively and publicly — and Rice was acting as part of a larger foreign policy team. No doubt the YouTube clip of her asserting that Obama isn’t ready for the “3 a.m. phone call” would be resurrected. Criticism stemming from Rice’s lack of credentials and inexperience would be muted by efforts she has taken in recent

years, though these concerns could obviously loom larger depending on the level of the position for which she was being nominated or appointed. Rice's reputation and expertise remain centered on Africa, but she has worked over the past few years to broaden her credentials. Her experience as part of the Kerry and Obama campaigns has heightened her profile and given her a chance to demonstrate a broader command of foreign policy issues.

Rice is aggressive and opinionated, causing some to see her as headstrong and rigid. But no one questions her intelligence or her ability to articulate policy effectively. She has important experience, knows how to move things forward, and will not suffer for lack of action. She could make a valuable contribution to an Obama Administration.

Lindsay B. Buchanan, updating a memo by
Nicole Rabner