

The Seventh Annual Scholar-Statesman Award Dinner

by [Condoleezza Rice \(/experts/condoleezza-rice\)](/experts/condoleezza-rice), [Mortimer Zuckerman \(/experts/mortimer-zuckerman\)](/experts/mortimer-zuckerman)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Condoleezza Rice \(/experts/condoleezza-rice\)](/experts/condoleezza-rice)

Dr. Condoleezza Rice served as national security advisor and Secretary of State during President George W. Bush's administration.

[Mortimer Zuckerman \(/experts/mortimer-zuckerman\)](/experts/mortimer-zuckerman)



Brief Analysis

On October 1, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy presented its 2013 Scholar-Statesman Award to former secretary of state Dr. Condoleezza Rice and paid special tribute to publisher and philanthropist Mortimer B. Zuckerman at a gala dinner in New York City. The following is a selection of excerpts from Dr. Rice's remarks.

On receiving the Scholar-Statesman Award: I am so grateful to receive this award because it comes from The Washington Institute. For almost three decades now, for almost thirty years, you have been engaged in the extraordinarily important work of making ideas matter in some of the most vexing and critically important debates of our time. Ideas do matter, but they matter only if they are ideas that are tested by people who are willing to engage in civil discourse with those who might disagree -- people who are willing, indeed, to search for the truth. That has been the reputation and the reality of The Washington Institute since your founding.

On U.S. negotiation posture toward Iran: I fear that the Iranians hope that we are so desperate for a deal that we are prepared to put aside several extremely important elements that we have to have [in a deal]. They cannot continue -- in any fashion, in any shape, at any percentage -- to enrich and reprocess uranium. It's unacceptable. Secondly, what they have reprocessed and stored should be shipped out of the country into safekeeping. And third, there needs to be verifiable -- to the degree that one can verify -- destruction of the sites that can produce that. Because the problem is, if you leave Iran with the capability, even if they're not actively engaged, you leave them with the option for a nuclear weapon at the time of their choosing. Since we know that bomb design and delivery vehicles have already been probably acquired, it's only a matter of the fuel. So, they're already very far along.

On the credibility of the U.S. threat of the use of force: We have a lot to repair. There's a saying where I come from down in Alabama, "Don't cock it if you don't plan to shoot it." I think that the problem now is that we cocked the pistol and then laid it on the table, and that has seriously undermined [American] credibility.

On U.S. options regarding Syria: We now have very few good options in Syria. I think the issue is whether there is anything you can do at this point -- and I hate to use this terminology, because it's not my nature -- to fight to a

stalemate. Right now, Assad thinks he's winning, and he probably is. Is there anything that you can do to give more reasonable forces on the ground, people who were at one time in the Free Syrian Army, a chance to affect the situation on the ground, so that when you go to the diplomatic table, you've got some cards to play? Diplomacy follows the situation on the ground, not the other way around.

On the decades-long pursuit of Israeli-Palestinian peace: Ehud Olmert laid down a deal that I don't know the Palestinians will ever get from another Israeli prime minister. And I remember saying to President Abbas, "Mr. President, you should've taken the deal in '48, you should've taken the deal in '67, you should've taken the deal in 2000, take the deal. Every time you don't take a deal, your state gets smaller. What about this don't you see?"

I don't think the Palestinians have prepared their people for what is needed for peace, and ultimately when they get a deal, they can't take it, because they fear their own people. So I think that work has got to be done.

About the Award

The Scholar-Statesman Award celebrates outstanding leaders who, through their public service and professional achievements, exemplify the idea that sound scholarship and a discerning knowledge of history are essential to wise and effective policy and the advancement of peace and security in the Middle East. Previous honorees include President Bill Clinton, British prime minister Tony Blair, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State George P. Shultz, human rights activists Natan Sharansky and Saad Eddin Ibrahim, veteran diplomats and advisors Dennis Ross and Elliott Abrams, and eminent historian Bernard Lewis.

Related Video

President George W. Bush Introduces Dr. Condoleezza Rice (<http://youtu.be/Zr-bnkK4r4I>)

Paying Special Tribute to Mortimer B. Zuckerman (<http://youtu.be/CiLX--3t-Y0>) ❖

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