



**Women's Foreign Policy Group
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The New York Times White House Correspondent 2001-2006

Condoleezza Rice: An American Life

Maxine Isaacs: I'm delighted to welcome you here. Thank you so much for coming on this blustery, windy night. It's an honor to have Elisabeth Bumiller here who is an old friend, we've done a lot of campaigns together. So this is a treat for me to have her as well, but thank you for joining us. Elisabeth is the Washington reporter for the *New York Times* as you all know, she was a White House reporter from 2001 to 2006. In addition to the book that we're celebrating here tonight, she's written two others; a book of which the title I love, *May You Be The Mother of a Hundred Sons: A Journey Among the Women of India* and *The Secrets of Mariko: A Year in the Life of a Japanese Woman and Her Family*, which she wrote while she was serving at the Woodrow Wilson Center and the German Marshall Fund, I guess, simultaneously?

Elisabeth Bumiller: Actually I wrote the Condi Rice book at the Woodrow Wilson Center and the German Marshall Fund – nine months at the Wilson Center and three months at the German Marshall Fund.

Ms. Isaacs: Oh, that's wonderful.

Ms. Bumiller: Yeah, I was a sort of think tank vagabond. I went from one place to another.

Ms. Isaacs: Well, anyway, I have not yet had the privilege of reading this book, I really look forward to doing it and I hope that you all are too. What we wanted to do tonight was ask Elisabeth to speak a little bit about the book and then Patricia Ellis, whom you all know, will moderate the Q&A. Before I do that, I wanted to introduce our Board members who are here, Dawn Calabria, Isabel Jasinowski, Theresa Loar, and Donna Constantinople. So we're well represented tonight. So Elisabeth, thank you so much for being here.

I also wanted to be sure if you were not a member of the Women's Foreign Policy Group – I have to make my plug, my pitch – I hope you'll join. We're doing wonderful programs like this one, though this is a special kind of program that we do, but we do a lot of programs and once you get to know us you'll really be proud of all the exciting work we're doing. So, Elisabeth, thank you for joining us.

Ms. Bumiller: Thank you, Maxine. Thank you all for coming out again on this rainy night and I thank you, Maxine, for hosting me and everyone at this absolutely fabulous place. And thank you to Pat who is

such a great organizer and I've known Pat also for many years. Maxine and I go back to the Carter Administration. I realize there are some people in this room and it's like the Truman Administration.

Patricia Ellis: I just want to mention that Elisabeth was once a speaker at one of our Annual Luncheon Events. She was a guest this year and she also spoke about one of her previous books. It was in New York. Was I the first one to contact you about doing a program about this book?

Ms. Bumiller: Yes, you were. I was still at the Wilson Center writing. It was not even a book yet. So, Pat has given me an outline of what you all would like to hear, but I just want to be brief, this is a soup-to-nuts biography of the first African American woman Secretary of State, in a job first held by Thomas Jefferson – great story and expands the fifty-three years of Condoleezza Rice's life, from Birmingham until now. Condi Rice is an extremely fascinating person, but I was also drawn by the range of her life, the fifty years, an astonishing half century in the nation's history.

It starts in Birmingham, her life starts in Birmingham, Alabama when it was a central battleground of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's and '60's. And she was sheltered to some extent from the violence because she grew up, as many of you know, in a middle class family. She grew up in one of two middle class black communities in Birmingham. Birmingham, like other large cities in the South, did have a middle class black community in the '50's and '60's. This is largely unknown to a lot of other Americans, but she grew up with ballet lessons, tap dance lessons, etiquette classes on Saturdays at the Church, French lessons, book clubs, and ice skating. She was an only child pushed and driven to excel by her parents, her education was everything. Not only were her parents well educated, they both went to college, but a number of her grandparents were well educated. So when you think about it, how many white people had education going that far back? I heard her great aunt had a PhD from the University of Wisconsin. So much was expected of Condi Rice as an only child.

I was most transfixed by Birmingham, I could have written a whole book on Birmingham. A lot of people have of course, about what happened but she knew one of the girls who was killed in the 1963 Birmingham Church bombing, the bombing by the Ku Klux Klan, the very first funeral she ever attended was at the age of eight. She went to her classmate's funeral and held both of her parents' hands, she couldn't get inside of the church because of the massive crowds. Martin Luther King delivered the eulogy – you can imagine what kind of childhood that was. From there, Condi Rice moves on and the book moves on to Denver in the 1970's where she studied under Josef Korbel, who was, as many of you know, Madeleine Albright's father. He produced the first two women Secretaries of State so far, very different.

Madeleine Albright has mixed feelings about Condi Rice. She's genuinely touched by how she speaks of her father but she also, obviously, has differences with her on policy and is perplexed, frankly, that's a mild word, about how Condi Rice has ended up where she has ended up and can still embrace her father as an inspiration to her. The term I use in the book is that Madeleine Albright told me – I interviewed her for the book – she thinks that Condi Rice has militarized her father's notion of democracy. The book then moves on to Stanford, where Condi Rice was a very controversial provost. Again I could have written a whole book about Stanford because of the faculty and the huge battle she had with women and minorities about tenure and other issues. It's quite extraordinary and there's a lot of ill will there still. And the Board loved her – she cut the budget, she brought the university under some fiscal control. And then of course there's the last six or seven years and the second half of the book – really more than the second half of the book which starts on Inauguration Day, 2001.

Pat asked me to talk about the process and I'll be happy to do that. Then I can tell you about my conclusions. I am, at the end of the day, a journalist. Writing a book is not a different method really than what I do everyday for *The New York Times*; it just takes a lot longer. And it takes a lot of patience. This book was on a very fast time table. So I interviewed Condi Rice for the book eight times, and I had come up with it, it was Walter Isaacson's idea, of the Aspen Institute, my old neighbor in Bronxville, came up with the idea and he also advised me to go ahead and do the book proposal with Random House and not even to inform the State Department about it until I had a book proposal in hand. He said, and then you go to them and say I'm writing a book I would like to request an interview. He said you don't go and say will you talk to me and then maybe I can write a book. And in fact, that's what happened, I went to Condi Rice's communications person and said that I'm writing a book for Random House and I'll be requesting an interview at a certain point. And you know, they respond to that. I said the book was going to be written regardless. She's quite savvy, you know, with press, despite that she's very starchy and sort of off putting at times in public and she sticks to her talking points. But she's savvy at the end of the day and she realized that having her voice in this book would be better for her. It was also quite a bit better for me because there's a lot of Condi Rice in this book. And there's a lot of on-the-record stuff from the sitting Secretary of State about the Defense Secretary at the time, Donald Rumsfeld and about the Vice President. It's not all – some of it's quite tough but she was willing to air her policy differences with the Vice President with a journalist. I thought that that was very unusual. She talks a bit about the President. So for me, some of the reviews have said that there's all this really interesting fresh material from Condi Rice and it's true, it's been very rewarding to me.

I also interviewed 150 other people, so it's not just Condi talking. It's a work of journalism, an absolutely independent work of journalism. I spent two weeks at Stanford and then when I had all of my Stanford material which was basically interviews, thirty-five people on Stanford. Then I would interview her, because you know, I didn't want to waste her time or mine, she's Secretary of State, she's busy, these are eight hour-long interviews. So I would go into these interviews prepared, much better prepared frankly than I ever go into interviews with *The Times*. With *The Times*, it's often just the news of the day, it's fifteen minutes on the phone, and this was, I knew as much as I could and what I was left with was what she had to fill in, what I really wanted to hear from her, discrepancies between other people. So it was the first time I ever went into an interview with long lists of questions. I usually don't take note questions with me I just scribble something out on a pad, unless it's the President, then you go in with questions. But in this case, I just went down the list. And she talks a lot actually, and you have to interrupt her and you have to be a little rude because – you've seen her on television – she's like a bulldozer, she goes and you know at least if you're not on TV you can interrupt her, it doesn't look rude to anybody, it's just you and a few other people in the room. So I did that and then I did the same thing with Birmingham. And so I did one big interview about Stanford, one about Birmingham – I would always have leftovers for the next interview. I did an interview about Denver and then I did Bush 41, then I did one year at a time.

I started out as far away as I could from the present-day and she was quite good on the past. She was much looser about the past and her family and Denver and Bush 41 even, then the minute we got up to 2001, things got a little – she got a little – more tense. But she wasn't so bad about the early part of the first term. The closer we got to the present-day, the tighter the interviews, the tougher the interviews got. And at the end I went back to her after the book was about to come out and I was working on two pieces for *The Times* that were adaptations of articles that were adapted from the book. The main piece was a long piece about her torturous road to the Middle East peace process in Annapolis. I went back to her in November and I said I wanted to talk to her to freshen things up because the last I'd seen her for the book was in June 2007. So this was this past November and I went and I sat down with her for a half an hour as a *The New York Times* reporter again and it was a mess. I mean it wasn't a mess, it was just a...

I got one quote, she was back to being old Condi Rice talking to *The New York Times*. I found it quite interesting though, that she knew she was talking to me for a book about to come out, but somehow it was different. You know, and I think people always say, I'm just rambling here, but I'll say it and then I'll move it back to the book, that you know to work for *The New York Times*, you get so many advantages, people return your calls, people tab you in, but also people are much more uptight I think when they talk to the *The New York Times* because in their minds they envision the quote on the front page, and they just you know, tense up. And I think that happened to her. It was much easier when she was talking to me for a book.

Let's see. What she's really like, what surprised me. I'm looking at Pat's questions here. Let's see, what she's really like. She can be quite personable, to be quite honest with you, I don't think she ever totally let down her guard with me while I was there because I had a notebook in my hand and a tape recorder. We would sit in her inner office at the State Department, very pleasant inner office. And it would be me and I brought my research assistant Ariel who I hired through the Wilson Center. She's a Northwestern grad like I am, the old girls network I like to keep going and she's now working as an intern at *The New York Times* – I feel very good about that. And so Ariel came with me just because I thought it would be very interesting for her and I was also curious about her impressions. And then Condi Rice had, she usually had one other person there, I guess one of her press people and then this massive tape recorder from the State Department, tape recorder lady from the State Department, so it wasn't us girls kicking back. Somebody once asked me when I finished the book, oh did you go over to her apartment did you sit around and yak – no, no, no. And I really, to be honest, I really didn't want that, I didn't ask to do that because I felt I wanted to keep a certain professional distance because I knew that parts of the book were going to be very tough on her and I knew that people would be, there'd be criticism about being some sort of as-told-to biography, you know people don't understand journalism. It's just an authorizer not an authorized by. So I knew I would have to just deal with that and I really felt I wanted to keep it professional. So, I'm sure some of you know her in this room and again she can be quite personable, she can tell good stories and I was quite surprised sometimes about how, again, how tough she was on some of the people she was working with.

The book decides that she is – this is not going to news for anybody here, and you can argue with me here – a weak National Security Advisor. I don't say that she was the worst National Security Advisor on the face of the earth, like another biographer does, I didn't do that. But I do think she was weak and a lot of it was just the structure of the situation, she came to the White House with only two years of mid-level previous White House experience from Bush 41, she was in the room with Rumsfeld and Cheney and Powell in charge of coordinating these elephants. As we now know, Rumsfeld and Cheney ran over her and she quickly saw that the source of her power was going to be her closeness to the President. She's not stupid, in a way it wasn't a bad decision to make given what she was dealt and so she became the President's friend. And really never left – very seldom left his side; well, she would not – she left his side, but she was right there in the corner of the Oval Office she was in there six or seven times a day or on the phone with him constantly, spent weekends at Camp David. She would go down to the ranch and sometimes she would stay with the family, in the actual family home, you know, one of the guest bedrooms and she really became a kind of a daughter of sorts to the Bushes. When she came to Washington as a National Security Advisor, it had been only ten days since her father had died. And very bereft, she'd just left California which had been her home for almost twenty years, her mother had died years before and she really did adopt the Bushes, I think, as her surrogate family that's really what her friends in California think.

Maybe, years from now we'll get some documents out of this White House we will see that I was wrong, that she did really challenge the President in a tough way but there's no evidence right now that

she did, certainly not about the war, we know that she was completely behind the war. There's a scene in my book in December 2002 and he asks her, do you think we should do this, he meant war, and she said yes. She knew that, but at that point really the decision had almost had been basically made we had that massive troop build up in the Gulf and she kind of just was drawn along in this, in the wake of this, tsunami, really. And I think she's been, I think, when I was writing the chapters about the White House because by the time we got to the White House, it was just one year per chapter, especially 2001, 2002 and 2003. She was getting beaten up by Cheney and this was happening and finally at the end of the summer of 2003, she hires Robert Blackwell to come and help her out in Iraq. And he says, this is a disaster, you need to get control of the situation – Jerry Bremers is not working out in Baghdad and we don't have a strategy. And at his urging, she went to the President and told him that she needed to get, NSC, had to get control of the Iraq policy which where it should have been all along because by that point it was the Treasury Department team doing Iraq and Commerce and State and the Pentagon and at that point she, at least from what I was able to learn, she started pushing back at Rumsfeld. And it was actually more rewarding to write that part because it becomes a little more fun, there's more conflict, but she also kind of pulls herself up and starts pushing back.

She's been a better Secretary of State and the big question of course is has she changed or has the world changed. Well it's both, obviously. She has changed. There's a point in the book where one of her friends says that if you put a lie detector on her she would say right now that there's very little she can do about Iraq, this was actually in 2006, he told me this. And so she has instead, as we have seen, turned to the Middle East and to Iran and to North Korea but particularly the Middle East, and is pushing aggressively and some would say frantically for some kind of a peace deal. I guess the President today said he was going to go back to Israel. Condi Rice is very, very sincere about her pushing towards a peace deal towards the Middle East but the President is not on board – I mean I hadn't heard that for a long time. We heard that from somebody really, who should know, last night and I was surprised by that and today I saw, the President announced he was going back very soon so maybe he's going gotten the bug, I don't know. But Annapolis would certainly not have happened without her. When I talked to her she said, Annapolis is the President's vision as much as it's mine, but last summer there was a lot of evidence that this was really her pushing Bush and getting frustrated that he wasn't coming along as quickly. There's a lot in the book about the relationship between the two of them.

Questions and Answer

Ms. Ellis: Thank you so much. Well I'm going to open it up and then I will try to call on everyone, I just ask that people identify themselves and keep their questions brief. I just wanted to ask you about her image and how you think she's perceived around the world versus how she's perceived here and also there was a recent article, I think just two days ago, in *The Washington Post* about the Foreign Service perception of her. And so I'm just wondering if you could shed some light on that.

Ms. Bumiller: I think that around the world, and again I haven't interviewed a lot of people overseas, but I think that she's perceived as—people know she's speaking for the President as opposed to Colin Powell, who was beloved overseas. There was also the sense that he wasn't running – he didn't have the ear of the President and that was true and I think people know that when Condi Rice speaks this is directly from Bush and they trust this. On the other hand, we're really unpopular overseas. So that's a problem for her. She does have a tendency to lecture people – she's a former professor and I've been on the other end of it. You know, if you write a story she doesn't like, you hear about it. It's all over. But she can be very tough and say now – the President feels very strongly, we're going to make this very clear, that was certainly the case early on.

Ms. Ellis: (To Karen DeYoung) We were just talking about what was said in your article.

Ms. Bumiller: And then Terry can tell you about the other one, she's so unpopular at the State Department. There's a sense that she's surrounded herself with a lot of, cut off a lot of people and she's got a small group. Karen wrote about this much more than I ever did, people had to go to Iraq regardless and I remember even caring when I was interviewing her for something else and it looked like this whole situation was going to be resolved and they would have enough people to volunteer for Iraq, but instead of backing off, she just took this really tough line and said I think this is the right policy and we're still going to do it and we don't get enough people they're still going to have to go.

Question: I think people were more offended by how it was done.

Ms. Ellis: This is Karen DeYoung from *The Washington Post*. We also did a book event with Karen.

Ms. DeYoung: You know, she didn't have her wits about her enough in a personnel sense to inform people before they read about it in the newspaper and then got this very starkly worded cable that said you're going...

Ms. Bumiller: All the stories that she told me about Dick Cheney always have Condi prevailing, right. That's why she told them to me. But they were about conflict. You know she talked about how it was known that she, there were general stories that Cheney had gone to the President to try and get control of NSC meetings. You know when the President isn't there the National Security Advisor runs the National Security Council meetings. I knew Cheney had gone to the President earlier on and said that he should have that job; that was well known. But what was interesting to me was I asked Condi Rice about that she said that yes, on the record, and I had to go to the President and basically get my job back. On one hand you can see there's this Washington turf battle but what it really was, was who was going to run National Security policy. And she said she went to the President and said Mr. President, this is what National Security Advisors do. I mean, she was livid. She didn't tell me that but some other people did. And so for the very first day she's set up in this conflict with this very powerful Vice President and he's already stomped on her territory, from day one, she's been having to try and get back her turf.

She also talked – it was an interesting story about how she had – remember when Cheney had made that speech in August of 2002 to the veterans of foreign wars in Nashville? I remember it very well because I had to write about it but that's when he went way out in front of where the President was on Iraq and really basically threatened war with Iraq way early and it was sort of a well known point in this run up to war, when the whole Administration was in chaos – Bush was in Texas, and everybody was spread out. And the stories that came out afterward were that Condi Rice was given the task of gently telling the Vice President you went too far. Well the story she told me was that no, no, she went to the President and said, Mr. President, the Vice President has gone too far, we need to do something. She cast herself as the person who was going to Cheney, going to the President saying something is wrong here. And the President according to her said, “Well, go tell Dick what you want to do.” The problem with the book is, one problem, Cheney wouldn't talk to me, I tried very, very hard, but he would not cooperate, so I don't know what his version of the story is. Although when one of my pieces ran in *The New York Times*, I tried again, and this time I said look, I've got this, do you have any comment. I got nowhere. Although I did get an interesting phone call, this background phone call from somebody very close to Cheney, complaining about something Condi had said in the book. I said, well you know, now you tell me.

Question: Theresa Loar from the Women's Foreign Policy Group. Thank you, Elisabeth, for opening up to us. You mentioned that you would tell us a little bit about Secretary Rice's relationship with the President.

Ms. Bumiller: Well, I don't have anything new or salacious here, but I do think that it's extraordinarily close, the two of them, my take on them, is that a lot of books have said and a lot of articles have said that they're really very different and opposites have attracted because Bush is intuitive and impulsive and a gut player and Condi Rice is academic and careful and disciplined. I think on a deeper level, they're very much alike. My argument is that they're both products of American elites, Bush from the northeastern establishment, from the WASP establishment, and Condi Rice from a southern black professional class, patricians if you will. And while both of them are supremely self confident on the surface, they have deep resentments underneath. Condi Rice, like the President, has been underestimated most of her life, as an African American, as a woman, and for many years, as the youngest person in the room. And I think they bonded over that. The other thing about their relationship which – they first spent a significant amount of time together in the summer of 1998 at Kennebunkport, at the Bush family compound. Bush 41 had invited his old Soviet expert Condi Rice to join them for the weekend and it was kind of like a father passing on a favorite advisor to the son. Bush at that point was thinking of running for President, he was governor of Texas, and that weekend, they bonded over the exercise machines at the gym at Kennebunkport, they fished, they talked about foreign policy. And I think Condi Rice at that point was going through some pretty brutal faculty wars at Stanford and she was coming to the end of her time at Stanford as provost. And she was very unpopular at least among the faculty and some of the students. And she was thinking about moving on and I think she saw that Bush really needed her, much more than Bush 41 had certainly. Bush didn't know much about the world, he hadn't traveled very much and I think it was a very powerful feeling, plus I know, she liked his style. I mean he's the opposite of a stuffy academic. He's very direct and she liked that. And so it was a very powerful attraction I think from the very beginning and right after that or very soon after that, she was named their, became his foreign policy advisor in the campaign, worked with Paul Wolfowitz, that was the beginning of the group called the Vulcans.

Ms. DeYoung: The conventional wisdom has always been that she always tells him what he wants to hear and that she doesn't stand up to him or tell him that something he's doing is wrong and I wondered if you found that, or maybe it's that they don't disagree.

Ms. Bumiller: We'll know more, later. I didn't find out. There are a few things about her when she stands up not anything that's really big and certainly not in the first term. It's been reported but it's, I have it in detail in my book – it's in Northern Ireland, I believe. It's right before the Iraq war ends, and they're arguing about the role the UN is going to play in Iraq remember, and there's a scene where, and the source – it's a really good source – and the scene is the two of them and Condi's upset because the President has said in his speech, the UN is going to play a vital role in Iraq and Cheney didn't want him to say that and so she goes up to Bush afterwards and starts fussing at him that he's used this word – you said vital role and you weren't supposed to use that. There's this back and forth and finally Bush gets mad and says I said it, that's it, it's over – it's like this married couple fighting. And she backs off. But it's an interesting anecdote because the President's very stubborn, he can blow up and he pushes back and it's not pleasant. And we don't know how many times and again maybe we'll know more later, she went to him on serious matters and she got nowhere. And I do – you know people have told me that the way she and this is also in the book, the way she handles him is that she will go to him back over and over again. She did that on Iran on the change of Iran policy in 2006 and it takes a number of months and she'll tease him and push him a little bit and then come back, so it's a very slow process. I think it can be very quite frustrating actually.

Question: I wonder, does Condi Rice have her own coterie of advisors and people closer that we may not know?

Ms. Bumiller: Well, no, and Karen knows this better than I do. She's very close to Nick Burns. You know it's interesting when she first went to the State Department, after she'd been at this very hawkish White House, she brought in all of these moderates and some Democrats I think, but pragmatists. Zelik we can call... A group of people who were.. Krasner, from – well, he's a conservative – but basically moderates. You know very different crowd than she was working with at the White House. But she's very close to Nick Burns I think and she's very close to Hadley, Steve Hadley, he's basically operating as her Deputy now. I don't have this in the book but there's some interview where somebody asks, well when you're really upset who do you turn to or something and she said Steve Hadley. She also has friends, she has friends, she has a group of women friends that she goes to the Kennedy Center with. Probably her closest is Chip Blacker out at Stanford – they talk policy you know he's a Democrat but he seems to talk to her a lot.

Question: Donna Constantinople, Women's Foreign Policy Board. I wanted to ask about their legacy, you know, their joint, the duo. I mean they have to know that they have no legacy, but as you just described half you-know-what efforts on his part in the Middle East, so that must be the only thing that they can zero in on at this point, because of Iran at this point, I think they'd be taken out if they went down that road. What is this is about and how effective can they be in these months?

Ms. Ellis: If I could just follow up on that – what does she hope it will be, versus what the reality may be?

Ms. Bumiller: They've made some progress in North Korea. I know Christopher Hill has, our Chief Negotiator, you have to give her credit for that change. And there was a slight shift in Iran policy I mean she – in the spring of 2006 – announced that we would talk to Iran if Iran stopped enriching uranium, that was a pretty onerous condition, it hasn't happened, it's a mess right now, but on the Middle East, I think she hopes there's some kind of a peace agreement by the end of the term, Bush said that today. But I don't know anybody who thinks that's really possible.

Ms. Constantinople: Isn't that ultimately her failure though if she is so close to him, to them, how could there not have been an ability on her part to make him aware of the importance of the Middle East?

Ms. Bumiller: Well, she herself wasn't engaged for a long time, she thought in early 2001 that she agreed there was no point in pushing or even staying involved even after everything had blown up under Clinton and Powell was the only one of the senior people who felt that it would be unthinkable for the United States not to be involved but she completely sided with Bush and Cheney and Rumsfeld on that one. So, you know, if you talk to people they say that she changed for a lot of reasons on the Middle East that she came under a lot of pressure – especially as Secretary of State – from the European allies. The U.S. had to do something. She was going all over the world and Europe hearing this constantly. And she also felt that because there was a moderate Palestinian leadership this was the right time – you could make the other argument of course, that everybody's weak – so I mean I think you should for whatever reasons she's doing it I still think you should give her some credit that she's tried. And I think it's sincere. The main criticism would be that it's too little, too late.

Question: Yes, hello, I'm Jerry Hagstrom, from *The National Journal*. I went to college at the University of Denver while Josef Korbel was still there. But I was an undergraduate so I had no personal contact with him but I've always been intrigued with what Condi Rice's world view is compared with Madeleine Albright, his daughter, and I'm wondering if you have any observations – I mean Madeleine Albright I know has said I just don't understand how she could have been educated by my father and become a Republican, so I'm wondering if you have any observations about the two of them?

Ms. Bumiller: Yes, I said this earlier but I said I talked to Madeleine Albright about this. I certainly interviewed her and I've been out to Denver and talked to a lot of people who, like you worked with Korbel or remember him, and you know Condi Rice was a Democrat when she started out – she voted for Carter in '76 but voted for Reagan in 1980, but was still a Democrat and then by '84, when she was a Republican, she was nonetheless helping to advise Gary Hart when he was running for President, so she's kind of been all over the map. The answer to that is that to be charitable, they both took from Korbel what they wanted. Madeleine Albright today has been very conflicted about Condi Rice. She says, on one hand, she is genuinely touched and moved that Condi Rice speaks so warmly of her father, but on the other hand, she feels that Condi Rice has twisted his legacy, and the term she has, the phrase she used with me was that she has “militarized democracy” and she's quite put off by it. She was reluctant to talk to me frankly, for a long time, because she knew that it was going to be a tough interview for her, she didn't want to be negative so she walked a pretty careful line, but I thought that was an interesting term. She thinks that Rice has taken again what he said and used it for her own purposes.

But there's no question though that Condi Rice was really drawn to Korbel. He truly did inspire her and by all accounts, you were there, he was a wonderful raconteur, he told these fabulous stories. Essentially, she had never met anybody like Korbel before in her life, not in Birmingham, not in Denver. And she wandered into his class, when she was in dire search for a major. She had just given up the piano – she was going to be a concert pianist, she spent most of her life studying piano, she was a student at the LaMont's School of Music, she had gone off at the age of seventeen to the Aspen Music Festival and was devastated to see that there were these twelve year olds who could play far better than she could and then she came back and said I've got to get out of music and her parents said were very upset with her, but they said alright, but you have to finish college in four years, it was a money situation. And so she was – this is spring of her junior year – she was in desperate search and she wandered into Korbel's class and he transfixed her, which I guess he did to a lot of people.

Mr. Hagstrom: If I could just follow up on that, I think that it's very interesting that both Madeleine Albright and Condi Rice have these sort of situations in Denver, which she has come from the South and of course Madeleine and Korbel came from Eastern Europe but how do you square what Madeleine Albright said with the fact that supposedly Madeleine Albright said to Colin Powell, “Well, if you have this military, use it”? To me, that seems as if Madeleine Albright seems almost as militaristic as Condi Rice.

Ms. Bumiller: Well, I don't deal with that, but Powell was appalled, he was just appalled. Well, Madeleine Albright was talking about the Iraq war and the Bush Administration pushed for democracy across the world and she actually said to me, if my father were alive, he would be very, very upset about the Iraq war and I raised that with Condi Rice in my interviews with her and her answer was, oh give me a break. It's in the book, actually.

Question: Has she played a very important role for the Bush Administration's China policy?

Ms. Bumiller: China policy – it's not been a huge priority for her. I mean I can't actually answer that question – but her main priorities now are really the Middle East, Iran, North Korea, I would say, a little bit of, Iraq – that's way down the road, it's not that important as it used to be.

Ms. Ellis: This is part of that question and this is the last one before she's going to sign books, but I'm just wondering, relating to that, did she engage with you on issues that relate to other issues from around the world that did not relate to conflict or democratization, I'm just wondering.

Ms. Bumiller: Well, that was mostly my fault. I didn't ask her about every country in the world, but she would have. She can talk on anything but there are parts of the world I left out. I mean I dealt with the big ones that drove policy.

Ms. Ellis: Okay, well Elisabeth, thank you so much. This has been absolutely wonderful. I want to thank Maxine for opening up her beautiful home once again. I mean it's just glorious to be here. I want to thank you all for coming and for your good questions and I also want to thank my wonderful Board members here. Elisabeth is going to sign books in the library – it's really a great read, so you all ought to get one. Thanks a lot.

Ms. Bumiller: Thank you.