

# Carter to Rice: Your Statement 'Is Not True'

*No sooner had former President Jimmy Carter completed his ground-breaking tour of the Middle East (April 13-21), than Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that she had told Carter not to meet with the Syrians or Hamas. In response, Carter released the following statement, which appeared April 23 on the website of the Carter Center:*

President Carter has the greatest respect for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and believes her to be a truthful person. However, perhaps inadvertently, she is continuing to make a statement that is not true. No one in the State Department or any other department of the U.S. government ever asked him to refrain from his recent visit to the Middle East or even suggested that he not meet with Syrian President Assad or leaders of Hamas.

Before leaving on the extended visit to monitor an election in Nepal and then to visit Israel, the West Bank, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, President Carter placed a telephone call to Ms. Rice to describe his itinerary and to inform her of his intended conversations. She was in Europe and her deputy returned his call. They had a very pleasant discussion for about fifteen minutes, during which he never made any of the negative or cautionary comments described above. He [Carter] never talked to anyone else.