

Bush and then to his son, holding the post of national security adviser in his first term before being appointed as Colin Powell's successor at State in his second. Today she is back at Stanford, although some Republicans are hoping she will venture back into politics, perhaps to run for president herself.

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Asked about what seems like the extreme partisanship in politics today, which so many students say turns them off, she takes a long view. "I sometimes think we have very short historical memory in the United States," she says, "which sometimes is not a bad thing because it helps us get over our history. I have a lot of contact with countries where they're still fighting what happened a thousand years ago. But our short historical perspective sometimes makes us

overstate the degree to which things are so partisan now or so red and blue. I've been reading lately the biographies of the founding fathers, and it's been really fun for me. I read Alexander Hamilton and I read Ben Franklin. I just finished a great biography of George Washington. Politics was literally a blood sport." She chuckles at this. "You know, I mean it was rough. And the press was rough, and the rumors were rough, and Thomas Jefferson spread rumors about George Washington being senile. It was pretty awful. So I don't mean to excuse the roughness of politics, but I also don't think that the republic necessarily is going to be weakened because the politics gets rough." Here are some more of her views:

### **On patriotism:**

I think it means, first and foremost, not just loving your country but appreciating and respecting what your country stands for. And sometimes patriotism, I think, is confused with what I'll call "jingoism" or just my country, right or wrong. Well, in fact, our country, the United States of America, is a very human institution. And so sometimes it's been right,

and sometimes it's been wrong. But it's always stood for principles that I think are very right. And it's always struggled toward those principles.

### **On keeping the republic:**

Recognize that democracy works not just on the rights that you personally are afforded. We're actually very good at defending our individual rights—it's my right to do this, it's my right to do that—but [there are] obligations that go with that. And you can fulfill those obligations, I think, by acting on the other side of democracy. There is also a communitarian part of it. If it's just a group of individuals, it's not going to hold together. . . . Whenever I spoke to students at Stanford, I would say that, to me, the obligation is to recognize that you are where you are, not necessarily because you were the smartest or the best. There were probably a lot of people who were smarter and better who, by reason of circumstance, didn't make it there. And then that bestows on you an obligation to reach back and to help those who didn't have the circumstances.

**Source:** Condoleezza Rice talked with Christine Barbour on August 16, 2005.