

**Testimony of Deputy Secretary John D Negroponte  
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
May 15, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address U.S. policy toward China.

I just returned from a two-day visit to Beijing, where I met with senior Chinese government leaders to discuss issues of bilateral and international concern. Both we in the Administration and our Chinese interlocutors are keenly aware of the spotlight focused on China during these final three months before the Olympic Games commence in Beijing on August 8. We continue to express our support to the Chinese people for a successful Olympic Games. At the same time, we emphasize to Chinese leaders the importance of making progress on issues that matter to the American people.

These issues span the subjects of global security, human rights, the environment and trade. In some areas we have been able to develop common approaches with the Chinese; in others we remain far apart. That there exist substantial policy differences should come as no surprise, given the two countries' very different demographic and economic conditions, histories and political systems. Nonetheless, our constant objective is to engage with an increasingly influential China to shape the current and future choices that Chinese leaders make in ways that serve global stability and U.S. interests. China is, after all, a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It possesses one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies. It is a nuclear power, and it is the seat of a great civilization. U.S.-China strategic cooperation is in our mutual interest.

I would like to address three dimensions of our engagement with China that are central to our relationship: maintaining peace and stability in Asia; motivating China's positive contributions to global stability, and encouraging China's greater respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

I will not speak about trade, energy, and the environment, other than to say that they are key topics of our government's engagement with the Chinese and that such engagement has produced positive results.

We have discussions with China in over fifty dialogues at all levels.

We believe that this extensive consultative framework will help us ensure progress in our cooperation with China in the years ahead.

### Peace and Stability in Asia

A major priority in our engagement with China is the maintenance of peace and stability in Asia. The United States is a Pacific power, and the stability and economic dynamism of Asia has been essential to the health and growth of our economy over the past twenty years.

While China grows as a regional power, its leaders are at pains to reassure its neighbors that its rise is a peaceful one and that a prosperous China will benefit the entire region. Beijing also acknowledges the benefits of the U.S. presence and recognizes that a diminished U.S. profile would make its neighbors nervous. Our task is to challenge China to exercise real leadership in solving problems in the region. We encourage China to reach out to its neighbors in a peaceful and constructive way. At the same time, we remain deeply committed to our Alliances and maintain an active U.S. security presence in Asia. A robust U.S. presence in Asia, undergirded by our strong alliances, has been a guarantor of the regional stability that has created the conditions for Asia's emergence as a major engine for global economic growth.

In some areas, China is showing constructive leadership on difficult issues. The United States and China recognize that North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons would not benefit the long-term security interests of any party, including the citizens of North Korea. We continue to work closely with China on our shared Six-Party commitment to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. China's leadership as chair and host of the Six-Party Talks has been essential to the progress we have made in drawing North Korea out from isolation and into constructive dialogue, and we rely on China's active engagement to continue this process. Beijing also joined us in imposing mandatory Chapter VII sanctions against the DPRK in the UN Security Council. Our combined efforts benefit international security.

It makes sense to discuss the issue of Taiwan within the context of peace and stability in Asia. With the inauguration of Ma Ying-jeou on May 20 we will have safely navigated a tense period in cross-Strait relations. Our "one China" policy, based firmly on the Three Communiqués and the

Taiwan Relations Act, continues to guide our approach to cross-Strait relations. We do not support Taiwan independence and we are opposed to unilateral attempts by either side to change the status quo. We want cross-Strait differences to be resolved peacefully and according to the wishes of the people on both sides of the Strait. Nobody should question our resolve in insisting on such a peaceful process.

We will continue to sell Taiwan defensive arms to maintain the capacity to assist in Taiwan's defense if needed. As you know, this policy fulfills a legal obligation under the Taiwan Relations Act. It also supports our belief that a Taiwan confident and capable of protecting itself will offer the best prospects for a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait differences.

We continue to express concern about the Mainland's ongoing military build-up on its side of the Strait. We view China's build-up as unnecessary and counterproductive. The anxiety it breeds on Taiwan encourages pro-independence inclinations that the Mainland's missile deployment purports to deter. Mainland efforts to squeeze Taiwan's diplomatic space also are counterproductive. We do not advocate that Taiwan be allowed membership in international organizations when sovereignty is a requirement. But we should be able to find ways to allow Taiwan to participate meaningfully in the broad range of international activities. For example, Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization would give it access to vital health information about quickly spreading infectious diseases. That is in everyone's interests.

Taiwan's active democracy is an admirable achievement. As the President noted after Taiwan's presidential election in March, we view Taiwan as a beacon of democracy to Asia and the world and are confident that the presidential election in March -- and the democratic process it represented -- will help advance Taiwan as a prosperous, secure, and well-governed society. It now falls to Taiwan and Beijing to build the essential foundations for peace and stability by pursuing dialogue through all available means and refraining from unilateral steps that would alter the cross-Strait situation. In this context, we were encouraged by news of the initial meeting between President Hu Jintao and Taiwan's Vice President-elect Vincent Siew at the Bo'ao Forum in China and other positive cross-Strait developments that have taken place since the March election.

Another regional issue we work on with China is Burma. In the wake

of Cyclone Nargis, we appreciate China's willingness to press the Burmese regime to cooperate with the international community's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Burma. On a broader front, we are trying to persuade our Chinese interlocutors that the Burmese regime's political repression and disastrous economic mismanagement have created a situation that is unstable and unsustainable, and that continuing such misrule will only result in greater turmoil in the future. While we still have work to do on this subject, we note that the Chinese government has publicly urged meaningful dialogue between the Burmese regime and the democratic opposition and ethnic minority groups in that country. Together, the United States and China have released two UN Security Council Presidential Statements on Burma, most recently on May 2.

### Engaging a Global China

Over the past several years, we have explored issues with China that go beyond management of our bilateral or even regional relations. This is an innovation and represents important progress. In our discussions with the Chinese, we spend an increasing amount of time considering how to improve coordination of our activities toward third countries or regions of the world. The U.S.-China Senior Dialogue, which I lead on the U.S. side, has spawned a series of regional and functional sub-dialogues led by Assistant Secretaries to discuss trends and challenges in every region of the world—this includes talks in the critical areas of nonproliferation and counter-terrorism.

We are seeing results from such discussions. For example, China has supported a number of U.S. initiatives in the United Nations Security Council in recent years, including sanctions resolutions against North Korea and Iran. I highlighted our positive engagement with Beijing concerning Burma and North Korea above. Let me also discuss Sudan and Iran, two additional areas where we have seen some positive developments in China's position:

**Sudan/Darfur.** China's early Darfur policies were aimed at insulating the Sudanese regime from international pressure. In a marked turnaround, China voted in support of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1769 in July 2007. The UNSCR authorized the deployment of UNAMID, the hybrid UN-African Union Mission in Darfur, and committed over 300 engineering troops to the Mission. We credit this change in part to our

senior- and working-level consultations with China's leaders and diplomats, in part to the attention paid to the issue by U.S. lawmakers and non-governmental organizations, and in part to China's increasing sensitivity to the negative implications of close ties to problematic regimes. China's investments in Sudan's energy sector and military trade provide economic and military lifelines to the repressive regime in Khartoum, so we continue to highlight the need for the Chinese government to exert pressure commensurate with its influence. Currently, we are urging the Chinese government to augment its previous commitments by supplying transport equipment essential to a successful UNAMID mission.

**Iran.** The Chinese government says that it shares our strategic objective of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. After participating in lengthy discussions as a member of the P5+1 process, China voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolutions 1737, 1747, and 1803, applying sanctions on Iranian individuals and companies associated with its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. Nonetheless, Chinese companies have expanded their trade and investment links with Iran, particularly in its oil and gas sector. We believe this expansion undermines international efforts to pressure Iran, and sends the wrong signal to the Iranian regime, especially at a time when other oil companies are heeding their governments' wishes to forgo new investments in Iran. We have told our Chinese interlocutors that China's expansion of trade relations with as destabilizing a regime as Iran's is not in keeping with its aspirations to play the role of responsible global stakeholder. We also have made it clear that Chinese entities' continued sale of conventional weapons to Iran is unacceptable. China understands our position that Iran presents a grave international and regional security concern, and that our government reserves the right to apply all multilateral, bilateral and unilateral measures at our disposal to ensure that our concerns are addressed. We reinforce this message at every opportunity.

### Encouraging Improvements in Human Rights and Freedom of Expression

Let me turn now to another important dimension of our engagement with China—encouraging the Chinese government's respect for human rights and freedom of expression. From our own history, we know that human rights and social stability are inseparable. A government that respects the rights of its people secures its own future and a strong future for the nation. In this spirit, we call attention to China's poor human rights

record not only because the cause of individual freedom is noble and just in its own right, but also because we believe that expansion of individual freedoms and greater political liberalization will help China to achieve long-term stability to the benefit of the entire world. Stability allows China to continue as a global economic engine of growth; it also allows it to contribute to regional and global peace and security in the ways I have outlined above.

In our talks with China, we point to concrete ways in which improvements on human rights, religious freedoms, and press freedoms will be a source of stability as China continues a national modernization that has been accompanied by wrenching social changes. If religious groups are allowed to operate more freely, they will be better able to provide material and spiritual assistance to those segments of the population left behind by China's explosive economic development. Similarly, a free press can be a valuable asset in the battle against official corruption. Furthermore, an enlightened and tolerant policy that promotes genuine expressions of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity by minorities could prevent the kind of unrest and violence that recently erupted in Tibetan areas of China.

As I testified before the Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs last month, we recognize Tibet as part of the People's Republic of China, but we have very serious concerns about the recent events, human rights conditions, and limits on religious freedom there. As the President has reiterated on many occasions – most recently in his call to Chinese President Hu Jintao on Tuesday of this week - substantive talks between Chinese officials and the Dalai Lama and his envoys are the best hope to address long-standing grievances and promote stability and prosperity in these Tibetan areas. We were encouraged by the recent meeting between Chinese officials and representatives of the Dalai Lama and the subsequent news that a second meeting will take place soon. At the same time, we urge China to take a close look at long-standing policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions because of their impact on Tibetan religion, culture, and livelihoods, to allow unfettered access to Tibet for diplomats and journalists, and to release protestors who expressed their views peacefully.

Finally, as we examine China's domestic situation, it is worth analyzing Beijing's efforts to respond to some of the challenges that have arisen recently in connection with its role as host of the 2008 Olympics. The Chinese government has exerted substantial effort both to rally its

population and the international community behind a successful Olympic Games. We have urged China to use the Olympics as an opportunity to show greater openness and tolerance, and to increase access to information and expand press freedom. Attempts to clamp down on those who seek to use the Olympics to air their legitimate grievances about certain aspects of China's policies will only serve to embolden China's critics. China will earn the respect and admiration it seeks as an emerging great power only by guaranteeing all of its citizens internationally-recognized human rights.

### Conclusion

If one steps back and views our engagement with China as a moving picture, evolving over time, one will see that in the past few years China's policy postures toward governments in North Korea, Sudan, Burma and Iran have evolved in a positive direction. Supporting sanctions against North Korea and Iran, public calls for domestic political progress in Burma, and the deployment of peacekeepers to the Darfur region of Sudan are major shifts in Chinese foreign policy that suggest Beijing is rethinking its hard and fast principal of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of states friendly to China, and its argument that sanctions and pressure are not effective or appropriate tools in foreign policy. We recognize that there are many factors that have contributed to these outcomes, but we believe that our ongoing dialogues have played a significant role in bringing about these outcomes.

Our approach to influencing China's choices through a strong U.S. military, economic, and political presence in Asia, combined with diplomatic engagement and dialogue, is a long-term proposition. It requires perseverance, patience, and firmness, but it seems clear to us that it has been successful and that there are no other readily available alternatives that would produce better results for the United States and the world.

Thank you, again, for inviting me to testify on this important topic. I welcome your comments and questions.