

March 18, 2008

David S. Sedney

**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian Security Affairs
Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission
China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools**

Vice Chairman Bartholomew, Commissioner Blumenthal, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to speak on this topic. China's rapid emergence as a political and economic power with global ambitions has significant implications for the Asian-Pacific region and the rest of the world. The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China, and it is our policy to encourage China to participate as a responsible international stakeholder by taking on a greater share of responsibility for the stability, resilience and growth of the global system. A natural outgrowth, indeed an intended effect, of this policy is a higher profile for China in the international community and increased visibility into China's behavior abroad. An important aspect of China's international behavior is that of its military activities. My testimony this morning will offer a Department of Defense perspective on the roles of the United States and China in the international system, and how China increasingly views its military activities as a tool of foreign policy.

The United States and China in the International System

The United States will always act to promote the interests of the American people, our allies, and our partners. Through our connections, our history, and our capabilities, the United States plays a unique role in promoting stability and security throughout the world. We promote political environments that support a free and open market economy, which history shows leads to increased stability and security.

The Defense Department's mission is to preserve U.S. military and strategic interests, and those of our allies and partners. We deal with all international actors, be they the European Union, India, Russia, or China, according to these principles. Creating a situation where the U.S. and China are seen as strategic rivals is not in the U.S. interest. The United States' strength and stature are measured by our goals and accomplishments, not by any type of crude contest or comparison. We control our own destiny.

The rise of China, or any other country, may at times facilitate and at other times complicate this endeavor, but the only way our global influence and security can be diminished is by our own actions.

China's economy is certainly rising, giving China greater visibility and perhaps greater influence in international politics. China uses the same tools to pursue its interests that all nations use, and these include its international military activities.

Military Tools of Foreign Policy

We should examine not what tools a given country is using, but whether it is using those tools responsibly, whether it is using them in pursuit of objectives that are in the interests of the United States, our allies and partners, and the international community. When it comes to China's recent behavior vis-à-vis its military diplomatic efforts, especially involving conventional arms sales and peacekeeping activities, China's record is mixed.

As China's role in the international community expands, so does its responsibility. China itself is steadily, if gradually, coming to this realization. This has forced China to confront some difficult questions regarding its military diplomacy, especially in the realm of conventional arms sales. China uses these sales, as all countries do, both to advance its strategic interests and to make money. These two motives can, at times, be in conflict.

One example of this emerging dilemma is China's effort to co-produce the FC-1 multi-role fighter, which incorporates a Russian engine, with Pakistan. Perhaps unexpectedly, China discovered that this initiative put pressure on its relations with India, and Russia's relations both with India and with Pakistan. Perhaps for the first time, China is forced to consider the broader geopolitical implications of what were once mere commercial transactions.

Another example of the increased responsibility that accompanies China's broader role is the current situation in Sudan. China's commercial interests in Sudan mean that it is best served by stability in that country. However, China's conventional arms sales to Khartoum are assisting an irresponsible actor in an unstable area, and detracting from, rather than adding to, stability. China's own interests should force it to act in a more responsible manner. China's support for peacekeeping efforts both in the Southern region and in Darfur may suggest that China is beginning to awaken to its responsibilities. It remains to be seen whether China will draw a similar lesson regarding its continued conventional arms sales to Zimbabwe, which is also becoming a locus of instability in the region.

I recently traveled to China to participate in bilateral talks with my counterparts in China's defense establishment. One of the agenda items was our respective roles in Africa. The Chinese professed an interest in responsible behavior, and we are prepared to take them up on that. While of course ensuring that U.S. interests are protected, we are willing to look for ways in which the U.S. and China can work together cooperatively.

Regarding China's military diplomatic activities in Latin America, there are questions we know the answer to and questions that remain unanswered. For example, we are aware that the commander of China's strategic forces – the Second Artillery – visited Latin America in 2006. Yet we do not know the reason for this visit. Such unexplained activities lead to heightened concern not just among China's neighbors, but from the larger global community as well.

China has a strong military relationship with Russia, which is China's primary source of advanced military technology. China invites limited numbers of countries to its joint

exercises with Russia, but has not included the United States. This feeds our doubts and concerns.

Chinese President Hu Jintao's attendance with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a recent joint exercise sends a clear message regarding the degree of cooperation between these two in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Exclusive security arrangements in Central Asia, an area that has suffered in the past, are not conducive to regional stability. That being said, we are glad that the SCO has refrained from issuing further statements since 2005 regarding U.S. military bases supporting the War on Terror.

An additional tool of China's military diplomacy is the Professional Military Education (PME) and military training opportunities it provides to other countries. China's use of PME and military training has increased in recent years, at a time when the U.S. is decreasing funding for International Military Education and Training (IMET) for students from Asian countries.

China often purports to maintain a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. As China is now realizing, however, there is no such thing as non-interference, as China's very size, economic and diplomatic presence inevitably impact others' internal affairs. Closing one's eyes to the impact, such as strengthening a repressive regime, does not negate its existence. I recently discussed this connection with Chinese researchers and academics, who appear to be confronting these difficult questions for perhaps the first time.

Conclusion

As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, China's increased global influence can at times complicate, and at other times facilitate, the United States' ability to protect our security and promote our interests, as well as those of our allies and partners. However, there are times when our own policies limit our ability to establish relations with foreign militaries, or when we choose to make a military-to-military relationship the first victim of a strained bilateral relationship. These policies provide China an opportunity to fill the vacuum that we leave behind.

It has been my experience that the interests, history, values, and capabilities of the United States and our allies will ensure successful relations with other countries. The only way for us to lose influence is if we restrain ourselves. Regardless of what challenges may arise, I can assure you that the U.S. is prepared to continue to uphold its responsibility for regional peace and stability.