



Remarks at the American Enterprise Institute Symposium

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

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DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much, Chris, for your kind introduction and for inviting me to speak at the American Enterprise Institute. I have great admiration for this organization. For almost 65 years, AEI scholars have made valuable contributions to our nation and so I'm very proud to be here today.

We meet today to discuss an important topic: the Asia of 2012. It's a topic of personal interest to me, having been involved in the region in some capacity or other since I joined the Foreign Service at the age twenty-one. I began my career in Hong Kong in 1961, and spent the better part of the next 15 years working on, and at times living in, Vietnam. I had an opportunity to work for President Nixon during the United States opening to China, traveling to China with Dr. Kissinger, when he was the national security adviser. I'd like to show guests -- I enjoy showing guests in my office a photo of me with Zhou Enlai on that trip in 1972 with Dr. Kissinger. If you need proof that I have been at this since the beginning of our opening towards China, I can show you my full head of hair in that picture. (Laughter.)

Since then, I have continued to work on United States policy towards Asia, including as our Ambassador to the Philippines in the mid-1990s. I've had the opportunity to watch the development of Asia for a protracted period, and from a variety of perspectives. And it is Asia's development, present and future, as well as our nation's relationship with the changing Asia, that I would like to talk to you -- talk with you today, with the focus on East Asia, where my career experience has concentrated.

First, we must consider what we mean by "Asia." We look at this region as encompassing Central Asia, down through the subcontinent, out to East Asia and down through Southeast Asia. This is the most dynamic region of the world, now and for the foreseeable future. Asian countries are increasingly driving globalization, drawing together as a region, and integrating in every way, including by strengthening ties across the Pacific. The United States has always been a Pacific power, and we will remain an active leader of a broader Asia-Pacific community.

Asian countries are using their growing wealth to increase their power -- diplomatic, economic, cultural, and yes, military power. By and large, this is a good thing, and we are enhancing our cooperation with our Asian allies and partners to address the full spectrum of global threats, especially the war on terrorism. We do remain concerned about China's rapid increases in military spending, and we are encouraging the Chinese leadership to be more transparent regarding its military doctrine and strategic goals. Transparency and exchanges will most effectively build trust and reduce suspicions. This will likely remain a focus for us well past 2012.

Asia is changing fast and that dynamism has many positive effects. The United States has made noteworthy progress in the region over the past several years, in particular, by decreasing the risks of conflict within Asia. The three traditional flashpoints of conflict in the region remain challenging, but the risks have decreased.

In the Taiwan Strait, the United States is committed to ensuring stability, and we oppose unilateral changes to the status quo by either side. On the Korean Peninsula, we have created a multilateral diplomatic process to resolve security issues, especially denuclearization. And with Kashmir, we worked to prevent war between India and Pakistan in 2001, and we have helped to reduce tensions in the years that followed.

Managing established problems like these has been a result of patient, traditional diplomacy. More broadly, however, the goal of our diplomacy is to help lead our Asian allies and friends towards a confident, responsible global role, working with us and others to use their growing power to help solve global problems.

With our traditional allies like Korea, Australia, and Japan, we are transforming our alliances and building the foundations of truly global cooperation. Together, we are working as allies in the War on Terror. We are increasing our economic competitiveness, through free trade agreements like the one we passed with Australia and the pending agreement with Korea, which we strongly urge the Congress to pass.

We are also transforming our relations with both India and Pakistan. We have good relations with each country and we are tackling challenges in the region and beyond. This was not something that was supposed to be possible. With India in particular, we are developing a global partnership between the world's oldest and largest democracies.

In addition, we are building new partnerships with large developing nations in Asia like Indonesia. We can see the early progress in the 850 Indonesian peacekeepers deployed to Lebanon as part of the United Nations peacekeeping force.

And then, of course, there is China, whose rise is and will remain one of the major events of our time. We recognize that China is a major player in an international community, and we are encouraging China to play a responsible and stabilizing role in the global system. This requires patient, creative diplomacy, and we are now working productively, if painstakingly, with China across a range of global issues -- from Sudan, to climate change, to the nonproliferation challenges posed by North Korea and Iran.

So, as we look forward to the Asia of 2012, what must our focus be? I would suggest three major challenges: regional security architecture, burden sharing, and addressing global issues.

We understand the need to build greater security within Asia for 2012 and beyond. The U.S. alliance system -- our bilateral defense treaties with Japan, Korea, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand -- have been for generations, and remain today, the cornerstone of peace and security in Asia. They have served and continue to serve our national interests and they have enabled the region to prosper. Our alliances are enduring and indispensable, and we have consistently noted that they are not aimed at any third country.

Still, we recognize that the structures for peace and security are not as developed in Asia as they could become. We also realize that a multilateral structure that adds value to the diplomacy and security cooperation among the powers of the Asia-Pacific, including the United States, would be of great benefit to the region. We do not know what form this multilateral arrangement might take. But one idea we are giving serious -- to which we are giving thought is the potential to use the six-party talks, in particular the working group on Northeast Asian peace and security, as the beginning of a more lasting structure for peace and security in Northeast Asia. As we work diplomatically to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, and if one day we reach a peaceful settlement on the Peninsula, that might be the right time to elaborate this idea of a broader multilateral structure for security in Asia.

Our second challenge for the coming five years is to encourage Asian countries, especially the large rising powers like China and India, to share not only the benefits of globalization, but also more of the burdens. As nations increasingly become players in the international system, they must play a role in the maintenance and strengthening of that system. At the same time, international institutions conceived a generation ago must adapt to Asia's rise. That is why, for example, the United States

supports Japan as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

Economically, the integration of the Chinese economy into the global economy has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. India's remarkable economic growth over the last decade can also be attributed to the dismantling of the protectionist economy in 1991 and its dominance of certain global technology sectors. Now is the time, as beneficiaries of the global trading system, for Asian powers like China and India to take the lead in trade liberalization under the WTO's Doha Round. The world needs and expects today's global winners to be tomorrow's pacesetters, not to lag behind the pack.

Sometimes being a leader requires difficult choices and national sacrifices for the greater good. The entire world has been shocked by the ongoing repression in Burma against monks and demonstrators. The international community has spoken: On October 11th, the United Nations Security Council President called for an end to the crackdown and the beginning of a true dialogue with opposition forces. We hope that China and India will urge the Burmese generals to work with the United Nations Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari. Now is the time for Beijing and New Delhi to forgo energy deals that put money in the pockets of the junta and to suspend weapons sales to this regime. This is the burden of maintaining the credibility of the United Nations and the international system.

Finally, we will continue to work with our partners in Asia to tackle threats that could imperil our freedom and our economic well being. Let me just touch on a few of those global challenges.

With regard to terrorism, Indonesian and Philippine local police and national militaries have killed, captured and arrested terrorists and their networks. When these nations asked for help, we responded with police training, information sharing, and other assistance. In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim majority nation, as well as an increasingly successful democracy, we have aided the police force, providing counterterrorism training and necessary equipment. In the Philippines, we have worked with the government to deny terrorists safe haven, and to target top Al-Qaeda affiliated leaders.

On climate change, the United States is working to develop a comprehensive policy that marries environmental stewardship with the steady supply of energy that is needed to fuel economic growth, not only in our country, but especially in poor and developing nations. A major weakness of the Kyoto Protocol was its exclusion of the world's two largest developing nations, and two major carbon emitters, China and India. For this reason, and to support the United Nations Framework Convention, the President called the recent meeting of major economies. As we look to 2012, we must continue working with our friends in Asia, making them part of a solution to the climate change challenge.

Finally, there is nonproliferation, and in particular, the threat posed by North Korea. We recognize the challenge before us. Dealing with the North Koreans is never easy, and we do not have any false expectations. We proceed always with President Reagan's maxim in mind: "Trust, but verify." Still, President Bush believes that the six-party talks is the best approach to achieve the goals we all share -- the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a life of peace and opportunity for all Korean people. The six-party talks are beginning to yield fruit. We expect the key nuclear facilities at Yongbyon to be disabled by the end of this year. There is still much difficult work ahead, but we are pursuing this with urgency and prudence, and I believe that we are on the right path.

Ladies and gentlemen, Asia is the most dynamic region in the world, and it is becoming increasingly the center of our attention -- politically, economically, diplomatically and militarily. Yes, there are great challenges before us in the region, but the history of United States engagement with nations of Asia is and remains a good story, both for us and for the Asians. We will draw on this proud tradition as we tackle every challenge before us. We will remain deeply engaged in Asia. And I am confident that the United States will help shape a freer, more peaceful, and more prosperous Asia.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR: Thank you. Secretary Negroponte would be happy to take a few questions. I will call on you and ask that you introduce yourself, your name and affiliation, before asking your brief question.

And the Secretary is attending a policy symposium, not a press conference, and so I would like to ask members of the press to hold back a little bit so that our other guests can ask questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, for a great view you have given on Asia, and I'm sure everybody liked. My question, that you already answered half of my question about China's expansion in global affairs, what China is saying that U.S. is interfering in China's internal affairs. My question is quickly that, Mr. Secretary, you have been in the region and you have a great experience there from as far as Asia is concerned. As far as expansion of China in military and internal affairs, including Burma and elsewhere, do you think there is threat between -- from China to India? And how can you tackle the threat from China as far as expansion, military and in other areas?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Right. I think -- thank you for your question. First of all, I think China and India have had historical tensions, but I'm not aware that those are active at the moment and I think that the era of tension between China and India may be part of history.

My sense of China's behavior is that it's an expanding economy. It's growing rapidly at truly impressive rates of nine, ten percent per year. My sense is that the principal concern of the leaders of that country, and that's certainly what they tell us, that's what President Hu Jintao tells President Bush, is the internal development -- the internal development of the Chinese economy, the need to create some 25 million jobs a year -- so I think that's their focus.

There are areas of external tension, to be sure, but probably the most important one is in the Taiwan Straits and as I mentioned in my remarks, I think that issue is being managed and it needs to continue to be managed very carefully by all concerned so that there not be any unilateral changes in the status quo. And other than that, our policy has been to seek China's constructive participation in the rest of the world, whether it be the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the sending of an engineer battalion to Darfur, working on various issues around the globe where we think we can have a constructive partnership with the People's Republic of China.

And lastly, on the increases in military expenditures, we are concerned that China is spending for defense at a rate that is even faster than its economic growth rate. But I think the main point we would make is that we need greater transparency into what it is they're doing, what their plans and intentions are so as to avoid any misunderstanding or miscalculations about China's military intentions. And so we want to deepen the dialogue with China in the area of increased military transparency.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, Rob Warren. I want to thank you for your excellent remarks.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Weren't you in Vietnam?

QUESTION: We were. We served together.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: One of our heroes way back when.

QUESTION: Well, hardly. (Laughter.) But I wanted to follow up on your point that you made initially and that is the need for a multilateral discussion among the Asian allies, the U.S. and others. Could you please spell out how that might be brought about through the six-party talks? What do you envision? This seems to be one of the great weaknesses now, that we don't have a fulsome discussion among officials.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Well, Rob, it's -- we've got a start. You mentioned the fact that there's the working group and I did in my comments. Maybe

backing up a bit, people have long commented that one of the differences between East Asia, for example, and Western Europe is that East Asia doesn't have the kind of different multilateral, multinational structures for peace and stability that exist in Europe, NATO and OSCE, but -- all the different fora that exist in Europe which can serve as a channel for various national energies.

So I think it's that notion that has given rise to interest in the working group on Northeast Asian peace and security. The discussions have begun. They're still very tentative and we do believe that more progress has to be made towards disarming the Korean Peninsula. That's the priority task. And then next, as I suggested in my remarks, restoring peace on the peninsula through a final peace agreement of some kind and --between ourselves, the Chinese, and North and South Korea.

But in parallel with that, we think that we can have this discussion about what some structures might be, but I don't think I would want to prejudge, at this stage, where that discussion will turn out. But we think it's an important opportunity and one that we ought to pursue in the months and years ahead.

QUESTION: Yes, Mr. Secretary. My name is Lanxin Xiang; I'm one of the panelists today. I was struck by your using of transatlantic language of burden-sharing. Now if you couldn't succeed in making the Europeans pay or share, how can you make Chinese do this if you don't put them -- no, what I'm trying to say, if you don't put China in the cornerstone category of your Asian relationship?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Right. Well, here's what I would say to that. If you want a different word -- let's say if we want to talk -- to debate the terminology, maybe we could use the term that my predecessor, Robert Zoellick used, which was "responsible stakeholder." And I think the notion is that being part of the international system isn't simply being a nation situated in the East Asia-Pacific region and exporting its export-driven economy goods at will to the rest of the world and not taking on any other kind of responsibilities, particularly when you're the most populist country in the world and are also a member of the Permanent Five of the United Nations.

So I would say responsible stakeholder, which means taking on some of the responsibilities, and yes burdens, in the broader sense of the word of being such an important and influential country. And I think that we're making -- I think our dialogue -- and I'm responsible for the senior political dialogue with China -- I think we're making some progress in that area, whether it has to do with the Korean Peninsula or Africa or other parts of the world.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. My name is (inaudible.) I'm from the Chinese Embassy. You already touched a bit about the possible Northeast Asia --

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I didn't know I'd be getting questions from the Chinese Embassy here. (Laughter.) I'm kidding.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Right.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I mean, that's how to make me want to be asked a question by the press. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: You already talked about the possible Northeast Asia peace regime. I'd like to push you a little bit and --

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Sure.

QUESTION: You know, just before -- just a couple of days ago when the North-South Summit -- the issue that the possible peace regime should be discussed about three parties or four parties concern. So my first question is: who are going to participate that kind of creation of the peace regime? And the second is: what is the relationship between the possible peace regime and the six-party talks? Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Here's my answer to those questions. First of all, with regard to peace on the Korean Peninsula, I think clearly, the two most important parties are North and South Korea. But both China -- People's Republic of China and the United States of America were involved in that conflict and therefore, we think it would make sense for the four parties to discuss the ultimate peace arrangement in the Korean Peninsula.

With regard to the relationship between the peace arrangement and the four party -- or the six-party talks, I don't think there's a formal connection, to my recollection. There's not a working group on that subject. But clearly, these are issues that need to be synchronized. It's a logical next step, once you've got the peninsula denuclearized, to work towards restoring the peace agreement. And when you think about it, it's a vision of peace in Asia that makes a lot of sense and it seems to me -- and I think we all want to believe and want to hope that what Mr. Kim Jong Il has done is to make a strategic decision to accept the denuclearization of the peninsula, but as a consequence to that, as part of that, peace would be restored and there would be greater opportunities for North Korea to interact with the other countries of the region and benefit more from the opportunities that exist for its development.

QUESTION: My question is, how do you see the perception of Asian leaders of Mrs. Rice not attending ASEAN on its 40th anniversary as a symbol that U.S. see Asia insignificant? Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Right. A couple of things; first of all, I did represent us at the ASEAN meeting and I am the Deputy Secretary of State. (Laughter.)

Secondly, I'm somebody who has spent a lot of his career in Southeast Asia. I spent four years in Vietnam, three years in the Philippines and a couple years as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia. I don't sing as well as Ms. Rice plays the piano and she played extremely well at the session the year before. As you know, at the ASEAN meeting, there's always a performance by the different ministers.

But the reason, in seriousness, that she was unable to attend this year, much to her regret, is that as you know, we had a very intense, ongoing debate about the situation in Iraq and it was preparatory to General Patraeus's and Ambassador Crocker's testimony here in Washington. And as a consequence, she and Secretary of Defense Gates had to go to Iraq at exactly that time. And if it had not been for that requirement, that pressing and urgent requirement, she would, of course, have gone to the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting. And I'm sure she will attend next year.

QUESTION: Mr. Negroponte, before your engagement in Asia, you were Ambassador in Latin America, and I would love to ask you a question about that. I'm Elizabeth, a Norwegian journalist. And according to a Norwegian documentary, you personally were responsible for major human rights abuses in Nicaragua and Honduras and El Salvador in the '80s with General Alvarez. This is according to one of your -- well, the guy who was ambassador before you. So I was wondering what do you have to say to these claims from this Norwegian --

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: You know, I've answered that question so many times. If you've found that in the record, I'm sure you've also found my replies. But in brief, there's nothing to those allegations. I supported our government's policy of promoting democracy in Central America. And in fact, Honduras transitioned from military rule to civilian rule during the time that I was Ambassador of that country. So I -- and I think the question has been answered so many times that I don't feel the need to elaborate here at this meeting.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. My name is Stanley Gao (ph) with Techro (ph). Two back-to-back events last week in Washington, D.C., sent a very powerful and equally encouraging message to Asia. One is that Congressional Medal and Mr. President's receiving His Holiness Dalai Lama for the first time in public. And the second would be, of course, the President and the First Lady and (inaudible) Secretary Rice standing up for the demonstrators in Burma. And I think it once again reaffirmed that

freedom, democracy and human rights and the rule of law remains the core ingredients of the President's freedom democracy agenda.

So I was just wondering -- and of course, in recent days, also some sliding back of democracy -- Mr. Putin's Russia and just-concluded Party Congress in Beijing, Mr. Hu Jintao reiterated that this inarguable, tight, one-party control over China's political process and over 1.3 billion population. So I'm wondering if in the remaining term of President Bush term and into beyond 2012 this freedom, democracy, all this we consider universal values, are to remain something the United States like to preach as well as to promote?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Of course, you're right to say that those -- the issue of human rights and democracy are core values not only for our foreign policy but for our society as a whole. And I have no doubt that in the future, just as in the past, advocacy of human rights and democracy on the one hand, and a free market approach to economic development, are going to be core precepts, core elements, of our foreign policy.

At the same time, there'll be specific instances where we advocate in a particular way, such as you mention in the case of the Dalai Lama, whom the President received the other day, and the case of Burma. But we also recognize that this is not a perfect world and that progress on these issues is not going to be achieved overnight. But it remains a fundamental long-term goal of our policies, and where possible and where consistent with other important national interests, we will press as hard as we can on this front.

MODERATOR: That is a good note on which to close. And we must close, and I apologize to the many people who had wanted to ask questions.

I'd like to thank everyone for coming. We look forward to continuing dialogue in our conference this afternoon. Most of all, I would like to thank Secretary Negroponte for his very fine presentation. (Applause.)

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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