

*Summary of Remarks by Ambassador Wang Guangya,
Permanent Representative of the PRC to the United Nations,
on the Future of China's Foreign Policy*

Ambassador Wang Guangya, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, delivered the closing keynote address at the University of Chicago's *China and the Future of the World Conference* in the evening on April 29, 2006. He was introduced by Bruce Cumings, University of Chicago Norman and Edna Freehling Professor of History.

Ambassador Wang began by addressing concerns that have arisen in the United States about "the possibility of China repeating the past mistakes of larger powers on the rise." Rising powers have historically attempted to alter or remake the international system, and Ambassador Wang said that international concern was therefore understandable. He argued, however, that China is committed to development predicated on domestic harmony and external peace. China's foreign policy will therefore be oriented towards the pursuit of peace, stability, and international cooperation.

Ambassador Wang explained the necessity of China's policy of peaceful development for China's economic growth. He noted the vital link between China's internal prosperity and its external posture, saying that "peaceful development is nothing less than the prerequisite for China's endeavor to become prosperous." Ambassador Wang noted the momentous steps China has taken to bring its GDP to fourth in the world, but also pointed out that China's per-capita GDP remains behind one hundred other countries. He reasoned that long-term peaceful development is therefore necessary if China is to achieve a high quality of life for all of its citizens. Toward this end, Ambassador Wang said that China has joined over one hundred intergovernmental organizations, signed more than three hundred international treaties, and is "naturally glad to be a responsible stakeholder" in the international system.

Returning to the issue of China as a rising great power, Ambassador Wang reiterated that military clashes and upheavals have historically often accompanied shifts in the international balance of power. He argued, however, that the economic globalization and political multi-polarization of the 21st century have contributed to a new system in which the "traditional patterns of clashes triggered by the rise of a large power [are] bound to give way to peaceful coexistence." He emphasized that China cannot see its rise in zero-sum terms, but that its only option is peaceful development in which all countries prosper. He briefly touched on U.S. concerns about the Chinese defense budget and its alleged lack of transparency, pointing out that U.S. speculation about a Chinese defense budget several times higher than the published figure suggests an unsustainable financial burden on China, in addition to a contradiction of its policy of peaceful development.

Ambassador Wang next considered the question of whether China's economic development presents an opportunity or a threat to the world's other economies. He contended that China's economy, boasting an annual growth rate of over 9% since 1978, represents a contribution to and an opportunity for the development of other economies. China's entry into the WTO, falling

tariffs, the expanding domestic market, and increased aid projects within Asia all point towards a China that is developing as an integral part of the global economy and sharing its success with the rest of the world.

Ambassador Wang said that with different political and social systems and varying historical and cultural backgrounds, the U.S. and China will invariably have disagreements on some issues. Nonetheless, the common interests shared between the U.S. and China are more important, and there is nothing that prevents the two nations from constructing a mutually-beneficial partnership. He noted that Chinese products have saved U.S. consumers \$600 billion in the past decade, while 70% of the 50,000 U.S. firms invested in China are making profits. In addition to economic ties, Ambassador Wang advocated continued cooperation between the China and the U.S. in combating terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, and the spread of infectious disease in an effort to promote peace and stability in Asia.

Ambassador Wang concluded his prepared speech with remarks on the role of the United Nations, noting that while the United Nations may not be a panacea for all global issues, its multilateral machinery remains a vital tool for confronting many unconventional challenges and threats. With continuing reforms, Ambassador Wang said that the UN will improve its efficiency and enhance its authority and role on the world stage.

During the question-and-answer period, Ambassador Wang addressed the involvement of the Chinese government and Chinese companies in the Darfur region of Sudan. He acknowledged that Chinese companies in Sudan are benefiting the Sudanese economy, maintaining that the presence of those companies is unrelated to the policy of the Chinese government on the Darfur issue. He stated his belief that the solution to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur rests on finding peace between the government and rebel forces, saying that China was supporting the efforts of the African Union in this regard.

Ambassador Wang fielded an audience question on China's stance toward North Korea and Iran. He stated that the fundamental objectives of the U.S. and Chinese governments are the same: to maintain the authority of the international non-proliferation regime. He said that China would be among the first nations to condemn Korea or Iran should either acquire nuclear weapons. He went on to explain that China views the Iranian nuclear issue as one primarily for the IAEA, which should play a central role in resolving this issue. The UN Security Council can provide political support but should not take the issue into its own hands with sanctions or military options at the behest of the United States. He said the IAEA should perform inspections to discern Iranian nuclear activity, and that Iran must fulfill its obligations for the peaceful use of nuclear power.

Ambassador Wang concluded with a response to a question about Confucianism's influence on Chinese foreign policy. He said that Confucian thought is the very essence of Chinese civilization, with its deep belief in harmony informing the Chinese approach to peaceful interaction with other faiths, beliefs, and ideas. He affirmed the Chinese commitment to respect for other civilizations and peaceful, harmonious development on the basis of Confucianism's guiding principles.