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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 18, 2007

His Excellency Hu Jintao
c/o Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear President Hu:

I write on an urgent matter where our two countries have the opportunity to expand their cooperation and advance an important objective of the United Nations: ensuring the deployment of an effective peacekeeping force for the Darfur region of Sudan. This peacekeeping mission hangs in the balance, threatened both by intransigence on the part of the Sudanese government and a critical equipment shortage. I ask for your government's support on both issues. Together, the United States and China can make a real difference for the people of Darfur, and help restore peace to this troubled region. And we can demonstrate what can be accomplished when two great powers cooperate in the interest of humanity. Given China's deep commitment to promoting a "harmonious world" marked by peace and security, and given your government's considerable economic stake and influence in Sudan, I am confident that you will make best efforts to ensure the success of the UN peace initiative.

As you know, the UN Security Council approved a peacekeeping force for Darfur last July. Your own skillful diplomacy helped convince President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan last summer to accept the deployment in principle. But in recent weeks, President Bashir has balked at the composition of the UN force. He is refusing to approve the participation of non-African troops, including Nepalese, Thai and Nordic soldiers who would be crucial to the force's effectiveness. I would note that some of China's engineers are already on the ground as part of the Heavy Support Package, and their presence is demonstrating the value of a predominantly but not exclusively African force that capitalizes on the skills of all the contributing nations. I ask that you remind President Bashir of his commitments to the international community, and urge him to cooperate fully with the UN in the deployment of the full contingent 26,000 peacekeepers to Darfur, without restrictions. Should the Government of Sudan continue to obstruct deployment, the international community must take immediate and meaningful measures.

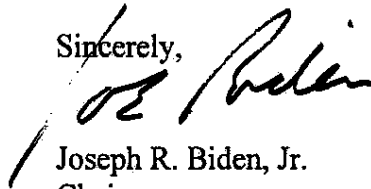
The other issue on which I seek your support involves the international effort to provide the UN-authorized force with the equipment it needs to operate. Specifically, I hope that the People's Republic of China will give favorable consideration to supplying helicopters. Tactical airlift is absolutely essential for the UN peacekeepers to adequately patrol and monitor conditions in a territory the size of France. Yet UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has had difficulty securing the two dozen tactical and utility helicopters needed to support the mission.

The People's Liberation Army, especially elements of the 15th Airborne Army, has significant helicopter assets. The Z-9 helicopter manufactured in China is well-suited to the utility role required by the UN peacekeepers, and it is my hope that your government would be willing to commit some of these modern rotary aircraft to the mission.

Let me emphasize that the United States is prepared to do its share. The United States already is providing strategic airlift for the Darfur peacekeepers and will continue to do so. We are also paying for the construction of the camps for the peacekeepers and will make a substantial financial contribution to the mission as a whole. I have personally urged President Bush to provide U.S. helicopters and crews if no other nation does so, but I recognize that there are significant international obstacles to such a role for U.S. forces. Speaking more broadly, there is strong bipartisan Congressional support for the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, and also a profound hope that China will join with us as a responsible stakeholder as we strive to bring peace to a troubled land.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Biden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Chairman