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SHAPING ASIA'S EVOLVING SECURITY ORDER

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Dr John Chipman, ladies and gentlemen, after 16 years the Shangri-La Dialogue has proven its role and position with practical cooperation in promoting dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation for regional peace, stability and prosperity. I would like to thank the IISS, the government and the Ministry of Defence of Singapore for inviting me to this meeting and giving me the opportunity to share my viewpoint in this important plenary session. This year a large number of politicians, diplomats, military leaders and scholars representing different countries are attending the Shangri-La Dialogue, especially the participation of the Indian Prime Minister Modi with an important keynote speech yesterday. His speech and other ministers' interventions before me once again have shown the common aspiration for peace, security and stability in the region and the world.

At this time, while we are actively cooperating to nurture regional peace and stability, it is necessary to take a good look at the reality that the traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including territorial disputes and terrorism which were forecast and now are very much existent, are placing the potential and promising Asia-Pacific in front of genuine and immediate risk. We are witnessing the great power shift towards Asia-Pacific with the Indo-Pacific Strategy, Belt and Road Initiative and a series of country groupings in the region, all of which announce the aim for peace and stability. However, the outcomes for the region and the world are somewhat yet to be unveiled. I believe the topic 'Shaping Asia's Evolving Security' has a great significance and somehow may be able to answer this big question for our region.

I would like to stress the situation in the Korean Peninsula with recent positive signs. The efforts of DPRK, ROK and other countries have brought us hope that the US, DPRK, ROK and other major powers including China, Russia and the international community will continue to act responsibly for peace, security and denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula that will contribute to regional peace and security. However, the peace and cooperation process in the Korean Peninsula and beyond still remains a stretched and bumpy road.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fact that all concerned parties agree to sit down and resolve disagreement and disputes by peaceful means of dialogue instead of confrontation, threatening the use of force or acting unilaterally, is really the best solution to resolve multiple issues on the basis of common interest, respecting international law and regional institutions. From our experience, we believe to resolve conflict/security issues, first and foremost each country must be able to determine its own fate. At the same time, it requires support and assistance especially from major powers in an impartial, fair and objective manner with the aspiration of common interest of the international community. With that, the message that I would like to deliver today is that independence, self-determination, promoting cooperation and adhering to international laws are the foundation of security, peace and development.

How do we cooperate to achieve that future vision? Firstly, all security architecture and mechanisms must be in line with international laws, the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, and recognise

the Code of Conduct (COC) and regional commitments, which are the foundation and the political consensus of all parties for common interest; building mutual trust by conducting consultation, information exchange, high-level visits and promoting joint activities among militaries and enhancing civilian and military coordination. Most importantly, all parties need to clarify their policy, show their goodwill and determination to honour their commitment and legal obligations, and walk the talk.

All parties, especially major powers, need to act responsibly to shoulder the responsibility in the joint effort for peace, stability, cooperation and development of the region. Particularly, they need to be self-controlled, refrain from the use of force or threatening the use of force, and avoid unilateral activities that could complicate the situation, to effectively implement, expand and diversify regional and trans-regional dialogue, defend security politics and economic cooperation mechanisms, continue to promote the sharing of information and experience in crisis prevention and management, sharing practical cooperation.

First is in the field of HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief), maritime law enforcement, maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight, counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, etc. Consider establishing a new mechanism to assist concerned parties to peacefully resolve security issues, especially complicated ones such as the Korean Peninsula, the East China Sea, the East Sea or South China Sea, while respecting sovereign territory, international law and non-interference in each others' internal affairs. Encourage parties to utilise dialogue channels for policymakers to share and discuss with academia towards a bigger picture beyond international interests.

Ladies and gentlemen, ASEAN is a model of cooperation and integration for medium and small nations which is playing an increasingly important, positive and central role in the common efforts of shaping security architecture and maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific. The unified and solid ASEAN has proven to be beneficial for all member states and partners in conflict management, preserving the security and stability of the region on the basis of both common interest and national interest in accordance with international law. The main focus of ASEAN is to enhance the security and related capability conduct, confidence-building, preventative diplomacy and cooperation for conflict resolution, together with other countries, to establish a sustainable security order.

A number of ASEAN-led mechanisms include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Maritime Forum, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting and especially the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), which is a significant mechanism in participation with dialogue partners and plays an important role in promoting dialogue and high-level contact to build confidence and deal with various non-traditional security challenges.

In 2020, Vietnam will be the Chair of ASEAN and also celebrate the tenth anniversary of the ADMM-Plus. We will try our best to put forward two documents, including the Asia-Pacific Security Vision Statement, within ADMM-Plus and promoting ASEAN's centrality and attachment to the unity of solidarity and responsibility of ASEAN member states. This is within ADMM. Vietnam wishes to continue to receive support and active participation of dialogue partners and other countries,

especially major powers, on the basis of respecting ASEAN's centrality. The ADMM-Plus could actually become an open and inclusive defence-cooperation mechanism to mobilise the collective power in dealing with common security challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vietnam always values peace and consistently advocates independent, self-reliant, peaceful and cooperatively developed foreign policy, to multilateralise and diversify our international relations and strategically balance the relationship with all nations. We pursue a peaceful defence policy. We do not take sides with one country against another. We do not use force or threaten the use of force. We do not allow foreign countries to have military bases in Vietnam. We respect the independence, sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity of other countries in accordance with international law and regional norms, and request others to respect ours. We put our national interest first but also take into consideration the rightful interests of others.

Regarding the issue of the East Sea, South China Sea, we are consistent with the support of peaceful dispute resolution on the basis of international law, including UNCLOS (the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) 1982, observe the DOC (Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea), and promote the establishment of a COC as a means to build strategic trust between ASEAN and China. Also, to show the determination of concerned parties to contribute to regional security orders in accordance with international law. Under no circumstances could we excuse militarisation by deploying weapons and military hardware over disputed areas against regional commitments. Instead, all sides need to show their responsibility in building order at sea, so that the East Sea truly becomes a sea of peace, cooperation and friendship.

Besides the mission of safeguarding national independence and sovereignty, the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) has been actively participating in sustainable-development programmes of the UN and the Millennium Goals, including peacekeeping. Recently, within a relatively short period of time, the national flag and the uniform of VPA personnel has become a familiar and trusted symbol in United Nations missions [for] people on the faraway continent of Africa, where the damages of conflicts and war exist.

Ladies and gentlemen, in a globalised world the fourth industrial revolution is happening vigorously, which brings about growing security challenges as well. No individual country could be developed by singling out from the regional and international community. The fate and responsibility is on our shoulders. Whether Asia and Southeast Asia can retain peace, security and prosperity relies on the course of action we choose today. One of them is the effort to build common security institutions and architecture in accordance with the basic principles of international law, mutual trust and the responsible behaviour of all parties.

On this occasion I also would like to express my support and congratulations to our Singapore 2018 ASEAN Chair and all the initiatives being presented under the theme 'Resilient and Innovative'. This spirit will help ASEAN to be more steadfast in shaping the regional security order, supporting, coordinating and promoting common efforts for peace and stability, [and] enhancing economic integration to our people with a spirited dialogue and cooperation.

I am optimistic that, with the practical and wholehearted cooperation of all of us, the turbulence in the Asia-Pacific can only bring us closer together, encourage us to try harder for a common interest, for the brighter future of each country and the entire region. With that, I would like to conclude my presentation with a quote from President Ho Chi Minh: 'Security and freedom can only be guaranteed by the independence of each country from any major powers and by the voluntary cooperation of each country with all other major powers.'

Thank you very much for your attentive listening.