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**STATE COUNCILOR; MINISTER OF NATIONAL
DEFENSE, CHINA**

General Li Shangfu, State Councilor; Minister of National Defense, China

Dear Dr Chipman, ladies and gentlemen, friends, it gives me great pleasure to attend the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue. I want to first thank Dr Chipman and the IISS for your invitation. My thanks also go to the government and Ministry of Defense of Singapore for your great hospitality.

In China, we have a city called Shangri-La in Yunnan Province and a small town also called Shangri-La in Sichuan Province. Shangri-La is synonymous with a utopia of purity, beauty, harmony and serenity. And here we are at the Shangri-La Hotel. Though we are from different parts of the world, I believe we are all here for world peace and development and for the wellbeing of people in the Asia-Pacific.

Today, as we look around, we see sluggish global economic recovery, resurging cold-war mentality, rising regional conflicts and security threats emerging one after another. Our world is far from tranquil, and people across the countries long for peace, development and cooperation.

President Xi Jinping has proposed the Global Security Initiative, or GSI, and he calls for promoting common comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and exploring a new path to security, featuring dialogue over confrontation, partnership over alliances, and win-win over this zero sum. The GSI contributes China's wisdom to addressing global security challenges.

And today, I would like to share with you China's ideas on how to flesh out the GSI, assess prospects for security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and elaborate on China's position on relevant issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, the Asia-Pacific is a shared home where regional countries live and thrive. Sustained prosperity and stability in our region hinges on a sound security and development environment. This is something that has not come easily. And regional countries have done so much to have made it possible. On the other hand, we should not ignore that the Asia-Pacific faces unprecedented security challenges.

People cannot but ask these questions: Who is disrupting peace in the region? What are the root causes of chaos and instability? And what should we stay vigilant and guard against? These questions must be answered in the interest of the security, stability and future of the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, we must make wise choices by standing on the right side of history and promoting the common interests of regional countries.

First, mutual respect should prevail over bullying and hegemony. Facts have proven that where there is hegemonism and power politics, there will be instability, chaos, and even worse. We, in China, believe that the key for countries to live in harmony is mutual respect and treating each other as equals. We are strongly opposed to imposing one's own will on others, placing one's own interests above those of others, and pursuing one's own security at the expense of others.

Some country has wilfully interfered in other countries' internal affairs and matters, in the affairs of other countries, and frequently resorted to unilateral sanctions, incursion with force. It has incited colour revolutions and proxy wars in different regions, created chaos and turbulence, and just walked away, leaving a mess behind. We must never allow such things to happen again in the Asia-Pacific.

The essence of mutual respect lies in respecting each other's strategic autonomy and the right to development. On the contrary, hegemonism essentially deprives others of their strategic autonomy and

the right to development. China firmly supports Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) centrality and its strategic autonomy. We are committed to promoting cooperative, collective and common security in our region on the basis of mutual respect.

Second, fairness and justice should transcend the law of the jungle. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. International affairs should be handled by all countries through consultation rather than be dictated by one or a few countries.

China advocates and stays committed to improving justice and equity in the world, and firmly upholds the UN-centred international system, the international order underpinned by international law and basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. We practise multilateralism and pursue win-win cooperation. Some countries, however, take a selective approach to rules and international laws. It likes forcing its own rules on others, and even attempts to constrain others with a convention itself has not acceded to.

It is a so-called rules-based international order. It never tells you what the rules are and who made these rules. It practises exceptionalism and double standards and only serves the interests and follows the rules of a small number of countries. A just and equitable environment for development meets the shared interests of Asia-Pacific countries. Anyone who attempts to fleece the flock or prey on the weak will surely be opposed by countries in the region.

Third, eliminating conflicts and confrontation through mutual trust and consultation. It is natural for countries to disagree with each other. But there are two approaches to addressing differences. One is exacerbating tension and adding fuel to flames, while the other is seeking consensus and promoting reconciliation and negotiations. It is quite clear which one is the right choice.

China is committed to upholding peace in handling international crises. On issues concerning the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula and Ukraine, China has played a constructive role and made great efforts to cool down the situation and facilitate political reconciliation. Meanwhile, some countries is expanding military bases, reinforcing military presence and intensifying arms race in the region and transferring nuclear-weapon technologies to a non-nuclear state, or such practices which it often resorts to are designed to make enemy/confrontation, fuel the fire and fish in troubled waters.

As a matter of fact, regional countries have every wisdom and capability to settle their differences and disputes. At the end of the day, only enhancing dialogue and communication and promoting solidarity and cooperation will ensure stability in our region.

Fourth, preventing bloc confrontation with openness and inclusiveness. The cold-war mentality is now resurging and greatly increases security risks of bloc confrontation in the Asia-Pacific. Some big power continues to promote its so-called Indo-Pacific strategy. China holds that no strategy should be based on ideological grounds and aim to build exclusive military alliances against imagined threats, as this could easily lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The true design of pushing for NATO-like military alliances in the Asia-Pacific is to hold countries in the region hostage and play up conflict and confrontation. Such attempts will only plunge to the region into a whirlpool of division, disputes and conflicts. History has proven that bloc politics, division and

confrontation have never delivered genuine security. They can only escalate tensions and destabilise the region.

Today, what the Asia-Pacific needs are big pies of open and inclusive cooperation, not small cliques that are self-serving and exclusive. We must never forget the catastrophes inflicted by the two world wars and the Cold War. And we must never allow such tragedies to happen again.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, China is committed to promoting world peace and development with concrete actions. The Communist Party of China, uniting and leading the Chinese people in concerted efforts of several generations, has successfully blazed a Chinese path to modernisation. One distinctive feature of the Chinese path is peaceful development. This is an invaluable guide for our way forward that we have developed through years of hardships and dedicated efforts.

The achievements China has made come from the hard work, diligence and creativity of more than one billion Chinese people; not from aggression, expansion and pandering. Wherever China goes, we focus on building capacity, seeking cooperation and promoting development. This is widely recognised by the international community. As a Chinese saying goes, a just course should be pursued for the common good. China is ready to join hands with all countries on the path towards modernisation, and create new opportunities for global stability and prosperity.

First, Chinese modernisation has become a powerful force driving development for all. As a major country with more than 1.4bn people, China is pursuing modernisation in a peaceful way. And this will surely inject a strong impetus into global development and progress. In the past decade, China's contribution to global economic growth averaged 38.6%. Today, China is a major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions.

Last year, trade between China and ASEAN reached RMB6.52 trillion, or US\$923bn. And China and ASEAN are each other's biggest trading partners, trying to help eradicate extreme poverty and provide much needed poverty-alleviation assistance to many developing countries. As of April this year, China has provided over 2.3bn doses of vaccines to more than 120 countries and international organisations, including over 600 million doses to ASEAN countries.

The Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI, has become a well-received international public good and a platform for international cooperation. Thanks to the BRI, many countries now have access to cross-border railway cargo transportation. Some are able to build their first subway line. Some no longer need to transport their goods for domestic consumption via a third country. And people in some countries now have 24-hour supply of drinking water. More and more countries have benefited from the BRI. China will continue to pursue a mutually beneficial opening-up strategy and pursue high-standard opening up and deliver more development benefits to people of other countries.

Second, Chinese modernisation has contributed significantly to safeguarding world peace. Peaceful development is enshrined in China's constitution. We firmly pursue a national-defence policy that is defensive in the first place and have endeavoured to safeguard world and regional security. Since 2008, China has sent over 139 naval vessels in 44 groups, providing protection to over 7,000 Chinese and foreign ships. In April this year, People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy ships evacuated from Port Sudan 940 Chinese citizens and more than 230 foreign citizens. Over the years, China has sent over

50,000 peacekeepers to UN peacekeeping operations, making it the largest troop-contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

We have maintained exchanges and cooperation in peacekeeping with more than 100 countries and international original organisations including ASEAN.

Also, to our great sorrow, 16 PLA service members never came back home from their peacekeeping missions. Right at the moment, more than 2,000 Chinese peacekeepers are on duty in seven peacekeeping mission areas. I once read a line written by a Chinese soldier on his mission. And here I quote: 'If people ask why go into such dangerous places to keep peace, please tell them someone must step forward to safeguard the fundamentals of human civilisation.' This is a simple wish of a Chinese soldier. It is also a solemn commitment made by the Chinese military to the world.

Third, Chinese modernisation has played its role in improving global governance. Facing growing deficits in global governance, China holds high the banner of multilateralism and endeavours to follow a vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We take seriously the legitimate security concerns of other countries and are committed to advancing global security governance.

China upholds justice and equity and commits itself to bridging differences and enhancing solidarity. On the Ukraine issue, China has taken an objective and impartial stance based on the merits of the issue. We have published China's position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, and sent a special representative of the Chinese government on Eurasian affairs to have consultations with relevant parties. And we will continue to seek the broadest common ground possible among the international community for resolving the crisis.

On the Afghan issue, China has initiated international coordination and hosted or participated in a number of relevant meetings. We have released China's position on the Afghan issue, and provided RMB350m, or US\$49.5, worth of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. We will continue to work for ending chaos and restoring stability in Afghanistan without interfering in its internal affairs.

Recently, in accordance with the important consensus reached between President Xi Jinping and leaders of Saudi Arabia and Iran, the latter two countries held a dialogue in Beijing and signed a joint statement on restoring diplomatic relations. Their rapprochement has led to a chain reaction of reconciliation in the Middle East. This is a victory of dialogue, and a victory of peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, the Asia-Pacific is the fastest-growing region with the greatest potential and most dynamic cooperation in the world. Given the grave and complex international security situation today, what we need most is an Asia-Pacific with lasting stability, rather than chaos and turbulence. China stands ready to work with all parties to enhance our commitment to an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future; promote sound development of regional security cooperation; strive to build an open, inclusive, transparent and equitable architecture; and pursue brighter prospects for security in the Asia-Pacific.

First, China is ready to work with all other parties to build stronger security and confidence-building systems. As the Chinese saying goes, lasting friendship is built upon heart-to-heart exchanges. China calls on all countries to strengthen strategic communication and mutual understanding, build trust and

dispel misunderstanding. On issues that can be resolved in the near term, the relevant parties should engage in sincere consultation and work in the same direction for their early settlement. As to issues that cannot be resolved for the moment, disputing parties should maintain candid consultations, manage differences and build up confidence with each other.

The ASEAN way, which features fundamental principles of mutual respect, consensus through consultation and accommodating each other's comfort level, is a successful practice of the Asian wisdom. China will continue to deepen military exchanges and build stronger security partnerships with other countries. We will follow the guidance of high-level engagement between defence and military leaders, enhance personnel exchanges at different levels and establish various direct hotlines to expand the communication channels. We are committed to resolving maritime and land border issues in a peaceful manner through negotiations and consultation and to strengthening friendly ties with our neighbours.

Second, China is ready to work with all other parties to promote more equitable security rules. The Asia-Pacific will not be secure without right rules and good governance. Setting security rules does not mean reinventing the wheel or overturning the existing rules. Rather, countries should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and complement and refine existing rules to make the international order fairer and more equitable.

Staying committed to the UN Charter, China has joined almost all universal intergovernmental organisations and acceded to more than 500 international conventions. Together with ASEAN countries, we will continue to accelerate consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, or COC. We will manage risks and crisis by advancing air and maritime security talks and strictly following and continuously improving the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea, or CUES.

We will address security issues in emerging areas and explore the formulation of rules for space, cyber and biological security. In short, we will work towards a widely accepted, fair and equitable system of security rules.

Third, China is ready to work with all other parties to improve multilateral security mechanisms. China has established defence and security dialogue mechanisms with over 50 countries, and on this basis, we will continue to promote multilateral security mechanisms. We will continue to support the institutional building of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, or CICA. Together with other Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states, we will optimise its defence-cooperation mechanisms, revise its relevant regulations and gradually improve the functioning of its expert working groups.

We actively participate in multilateral security dialogue and cooperation mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Moscow Conference on International Security and the Shangri-La Dialogue and hold the China-ASEAN Defense Ministers' Informal Meeting on a regular basis.

China hosts the Beijing Xiangshan Forum in the second half of each year to provide a platform for exchanges on security cooperation. Here, I would like to invite you to attend the forum in China later this year.

Fourth, China is ready to work with all other parties to carry out more effective defence and security cooperation. China has conducted various practical cooperation with other countries to maintain security in the Asia-Pacific. We have actively hosted or participated in joint exercises or tabletop exercises on counter-terrorism, maritime security, and humanitarian aid and disaster relief under ADMM-Plus, which effectively improved the capabilities of regional countries in addressing non-traditional security challenges.

Since 2002, China has held around 300 joint exercises with more than 60 countries. Going forward, China will continue to participate in cooperation on military medicine, humanitarian action and peacekeeping under the ASEAN framework. We will deepen and expand bilateral and multilateral exchanges with other countries in the region on equipment and technology, military academies, logistics support, military culture, military meteorology and public health.

We will continue to participate in joint exercises including China–Russia *Joint Sea*, SCO *Peace Mission*, China–Cambodia *Golden Dragon*, China–Singapore cooperation exercises, and the *Aman Youyi* exercise among China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. China is also willing to participate in joint exercises organised by other countries at their invitation. We will do our best to help other countries in the region enhance their defence capabilities and deliver more public-security goods for the international community.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, throughout its 5,000-year history, the Chinese nation has always valued peace and harmony. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China more than 70 years ago, we never started a conflict, occupied an inch of foreign land or waged a proxy war. China has one of the best peace records among major countries. China stays committed to the path of peaceful development. But we will never hesitate to defend our legitimate rights and interests, let alone sacrificing the nation’s core interests.

As the lyrics of a well-known Chinese song goes, when friends visit us, we welcome them with fine wine. When jackals or wolves come, we will face them with shotguns. This illustrates the Chinese people’s character of being friendly and kind but not intimidated by strong power.

With that, I want to underline China’s position on the following issues. On the Taiwan question, it is the core of China’s core interests. Taiwan is an internal affair of China, which is a primary and indisputable fact. Taiwan is China’s Taiwan, and how to resolve the Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese to decide. It brooks no interference from foreign forces. As matter of fact, over 180 countries entered into diplomatic ties with China with the political commitment of abiding by the One China principle.

The One China principle has become a universally recognised basic norm governing international relations. It is written in black and white in the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation that Taiwan shall be restored to China as part of the post-World War II international order. Both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one and the same China. This is an indisputable fact. Any act to obscure or hollow out the One China principle is both absurd and dangerous.

In fact, who is undermining stability across the Taiwan Strait? I think the answer is clear. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities in Taiwan deny the 1992 consensus and have continuously pushed for incremental Taiwan independence. They have tried hard to erase the Chinese

identity of Taiwan and then manipulated and hijacked public opinion. Meanwhile, some big power has repeatedly sold arms to Taiwan, provided military-training assistance to it and upgraded official exchanges with Taiwan. These moves greatly violated its own promises.

People across the world can see clearly that the root cause of tensions across the Taiwan Strait are the DPP authorities soliciting foreign support for independence, and some foreign forces' attempt to contain China with Taiwan and interfere in China's internal affairs.

Let me make it clear once again: the more rampant the separatist activities for Taiwan independence are, the more resolute our countermeasures will be, and all foreign interference will end up in failure. China's reunification is an overriding historical trend and an unstoppable course. The tolerant question arose as a result of weakness and chaos in our nation, and it will be resolved as national rejuvenation becomes a reality.

China must be and will be reunified. It is the aspiration of our people and in line with the trend of our times. We will strive for the prospects of peaceful reunification with utmost sincerity and greatest efforts, but we make no promise to renounce the use of force. If anyone dares to separate Taiwan from China, the Chinese military will not hesitate for a second. We will fear no opponents and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, regardless of any cost.

On the South China Sea, thanks to the concerted efforts of regional countries, the situation in the South China Sea has generally remained stable and regional exchanges and cooperation have grown stronger. The sound momentum towards greater stability must not be disrupted. Every year tens of thousands of ships from different countries sail through the South China Sea, transporting a total of US\$3.5trn of goods to all parts of the world. We have never heard of any of these ships having any trouble passing through or facing any security threats.

However, we do see some countries outside the region exercise their hegemony of navigation in the name of freedom of navigation. They want to muddy the waters so they can rake in profits. Regional countries should stay highly vigilant and firmly reject these acts. Solidarity among regional countries needs to be cherished. China and ASEAN countries are connected by geography, culture and family bonds. People in this region treat each other like brothers and sisters. It is natural for neighbours to disagree with each other from time to time. While countries in the region are engaging in communication and consultation for proper settlement of differences, some countries outside the region keep sowing discord among us and fanning the flame. We need to stay clear-eyed and level-headed over the benefits and risks.

The prospects for regional peace and cooperation are promising. Only by strengthening practical cooperation, expanding common interests, can we better achieve more win-win and all-win outcomes. China will join hands with other regional countries, keeping in mind the big picture and long-term interests, fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and push forward the negotiations of the COC, so as to build the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

On the China-US relationship, it bears on global strategic stability and is the focus of global attention. The Chinese side believes that China and the United States should live up to the expectations of countries in the world and follow the trend of the times. The China-US relationship is more than a

bilateral relationship and has global significance. The international community looks for a sound and stable relationship, and is concerned about any potential conflict or confrontation.

It is undeniable that a severe conflict or confrontation between China and the US will be an unbearable disaster for the world. China believes that a major country should behave like one. Instead of provoking bloc confrontation for self-interests, it should bear in mind the interests of all, resolve differences through exchanges and cooperation, and meet the aspirations of countries in the world. China and the US should not forget the history and need to draw lessons from history. China and the US have different systems and are different in many other ways. However, this should not keep the two sides from seeking common ground and common interests to grow bilateral ties and deepen cooperation.

History has proven time and again that both China and the United States will benefit from cooperation and lose from confrontation. China seeks to develop a new type of major-country relationship with the United States. As for the US side, it needs to act with sincerity, match its words with deeds and take concrete actions together with China to stabilise the relations and prevent further deterioration.

China and the US should properly handle differences, brave difficulties and find the right way to get along. The past few years have seen China-US relations at a record low since forming diplomatic ties. I believe you all know the cause to such a difficult situation. The world is big enough for countries including China and the US to grow together. The right way for China and the US to get along is following the three principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

Last November, President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden had a successful meeting in Bali and reached an important consensus. We hope the US side will work together with us to follow through the consensus reached by the two heads of state, navigate the bilateral relations back to the right track from the difficult situation, so as to deliver more benefits to both countries and the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, our dreams are linked. People of different countries are pursuing their own Shangri-La, just like the Chinese people. Long and arduous as our journey may be, we will get to the destination as long as we take concrete steps. Let us work hand in hand to build an Asia-Pacific community of shared future, promote stability, prosperity and development in our region, and make the Asia-Pacific a better place.

With that I conclude my speech. Thank you all.