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Remarks by Ambassador Cui Tiankai

At the Reception Celebrating the 91st Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Liberation Army

The Honorable Brigadier General Kevin Wulfhorst,

The Honorable Brigadier General Robert Spalding,

The Honorable Rear Admiral William Pennington,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends,

Good evening. I would like to welcome you to today's reception to join us in celebrating the 91st anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The history of the PLA is integral to the development of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and plays a vital part in the course the People's Republic of

China has gone through. It is a glorious chapter of striving for liberation and happiness of the Chinese people. In the past, the PLA has made irreplaceable and indelible contribution to the liberation and peaceful development of the Chinese people, to reform and opening-up of China, and to safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests of China. Today, the PLA remains a “guardian” for the Chinese people in their pursuit of a safe home and a better life, and it gives a strong boost to their efforts to fulfill the dream of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The strategic task of the PLA is to build strong national defense and world-class forces commensurate with China’s international standing and in line with its national security and development interests. In particular, it must spare no effort to safeguard China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity. We shall not lose even a single inch of our territory; at the same time, we will never covet even a tiny bit of what belongs to others. The PLA has taken essential strides in fulfilling the dream of building a strong military through reform, taking on a new look for the world.

China is committed to the path of peaceful development and adopts a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. The PLA will honor its international responsibilities and obligations and play a more important role in the UN peacekeeping operations, escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and international humanitarian rescue and assistance. China is the biggest contributor of peacekeeping troops among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and takes up the largest share of peacekeeping assessment rates among developing countries. As such, the PLA is and will continue to be an important force that helps build world peace, contribute to global development and maintain the international order.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends,

This year marks the 40th anniversary of China’s reform and opening-up. And next year, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US. Back then when diplomatic ties were just established between us, quite a few people were taken by surprise, calling into question the prospects of our relations. But the past four decades

have proved that our cooperation has delivered huge benefits to the people of our two countries and the whole world.

China has always been a peace-loving country. The Great Wall itself is a symbol of defense. China's strategic goal is to develop itself rather than to challenge anyone else. China has no intention to challenge the international standing and interests of any other country or the existing international order and system. China adheres to the principles of peaceful development and win-win cooperation and rejects any expansionist or colonialist path. China offers the world community unprecedented opportunities and opens up the prospects of jointly building a community with a shared future for mankind. Anyone without biases shall see this very clearly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends,

The China-US relationship is at an important stage of development. Historically, our two countries fought shoulder to shoulder in the World Anti-Fascist War. Today we have increasing needs for cooperation in promoting strong global economic growth, improving international economic governance, responding to numerous global challenges, combating terrorism and maintaining international peace and stability. Looking ahead, China and the US enjoy vast prospects for cooperation, as our shared interests far outweigh our differences. Cooperation is the only right choice that our two countries should make. What the interests of our two peoples have put on us is the historical responsibilities to get the China-US relationship right, not the liberty for anyone to make it fail.

At the same time, it is only natural for China and the US to compete in some areas, which is nothing unusual in international relations. The key is what kind of approach we take to such competition. We believe that our competition should be healthy and positive, aiming to improve ourselves, not to replace the other side. Our two sides need to promote cooperation through competition and achieve win-win results from cooperation. Only in this way can the interests of both countries be best served and can we honor our responsibilities to the whole world.

Earlier this year, General Han Weiguo, Commander of the PLA Ground Force, visited the US, and US Secretary of Defense James Mattis visited China.

During the visits, the leadership of the two militaries reached important agreement on increasing military mutual trust, deepening practical cooperation and managing risks and challenges. In the latter half of this year, General Wei Fenghe, China ' s State Councilor and Defense Minister, and General Shen Jinlong, Commander of the PLA Navy, will also visit the US. The two sides will work together to make the pie of shared interests even bigger and steer to the direction of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, with a view to making the mil-to-mil relationship a stabilizer in the bilateral relations.

Guided by the principles of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, we would like to work with the US side to well implement the important consensus reached by our Presidents in their Beijing meeting, focus on cooperation, manage differences and successfully stage the second sessions of the four high-level dialogue mechanisms, so that China-US relations will move forward along the right track.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends,

I would like to propose a toast,

To the 91st anniversary of the founding of the PLA,

To the sound and steady development of our bilateral and mil-to-mil relations,

To the friendship and cooperation between the two peoples,

And to the health of all the friends present,

Cheers!

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Your comments are welcome.