Conference on Disarmament
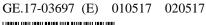
Letter dated 3 March 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
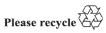
I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the State Internet Information Office on 1 March 2017.

I would be grateful if you could issue and circulate the letter and the annexed text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(*Signed*) **Fu** Cong
Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs of China
to the Conference on Disarmament

International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy

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Preface

Cyberspace is a shared space of activities for humankind; its future must be in the hands of all States. The countries of the world must together strengthen communication, broaden consensus and build cooperation to forge a common destiny in cyberspace.

— *Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, 16 December 2015*

In today's world, changes in information technology emerge with every passing day, as we can see in the Internet. These changes have transformed the way we produce things in our societies; they have opened new expanses for our lives, extended the scope of governance to new domains and massively increased humankind's capacity to understand and transform the world.

As a common asset of human society, the Internet has turned the world into a global village. In cyberspace, countries are bound together by intertwined interests, for better or for worse. The international community has not only a shared interest in cyberspace, but also a responsibility to safeguard peace and security in this field, to promote openness and cooperation and to build a community with a shared future.

The International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy comprehensively sets out the policy and position of China in relation to international cyberspace issues and presents the country's basic principles, strategic goals and plan of action in its external relations relating to this question. It aims to guide the country's participation in international exchange and cooperation in cyberspace in the near future and to encourage the international community to come together to strengthen dialogue and cooperation to establish cyberspace as a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly place, with a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet governance system.

Chapter I
Opportunities and challenges

Humankind is entering a new age in the information revolution, at a time when the world is becoming increasingly multipolar, economically globalized and culturally diverse, against a backdrop of profound change in the global system of governance. The rapid advance of information and communication technologies (ICT), as seen in the Internet, has altered the way we produce things and live our lives. With every passing day, these changes stimulate market innovation, bring prosperity and bring about social progress. Cyberspace has increasingly become the new channel for information dissemination, a new expanse for people's work and lives, a new engine for economic growth, a new medium in which culture flourishes, a new platform for social governance, a new node for communication and cooperation and a new domain of State sovereignty.

While creating tremendous opportunities, cyberspace also raises numerous new issues and challenges. Security and stability in cyberspace have become a global concern bearing directly on the sovereignty, security and development interests of all States. Problems in the Internet are becoming increasingly evident; these include unbalanced development, inadequate rules and an irrational system of order. The digital divide among States and regions is continually widening. Critical ICT infrastructure is vulnerable and potentially at risk. The existing global system of governance for basic Internet resources hardly reflects the desires and interests of the majority of States. Cyberterrorism has become a global public threat. Cybercrime is spreading. We have now seen interference in other countries' internal affairs through the malicious use of ICT and we have seen cybersurveillance activities on a massive scale. In itself, the lack of universal, effective rules governing the conduct of all parties restricts further development.

No country can face such problems and challenges on its own. The international community can only work together in a spirit of mutual respect and compromise, through dialogue and cooperation, to put in place a rules-based global cyberspace governance system.

Chapter II
Basic principles

China has always been a force for world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of international order. It steadfastly follows a path of peaceful development, working to uphold justice and pursue shared interests and advocating for and establishing a new model of international relations on the basis of win-win cooperation. The International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy, with peace and development as its themes and win-win cooperation at its core, advocates peace, sovereignty, shared governance and shared benefits as the basic principles for international exchange and cooperation in cyberspace.

1. The principle of peace

Cyberspace is interconnected, and countries are increasingly bound together by ever more intertwined interests. Ensuring that cyberspace is secure, stable and thriving is of the utmost importance to all States, and indeed to the entire world.

The international community must diligently adhere to the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of the non-use of force or the threat of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes, to ensure peace and security in cyberspace. All States must together work against the use of ICT for hostile acts or aggression and prevent a cyberspace arms race, guarding against the emergence of cyberconflicts and supporting the peaceful settlement of disputes. The time has come for them to abandon cold war mentalities, zero-sum games and double standards and to work, through shared security based on cooperation for peace, to ensure their own security, on the basis of full respect for the security of other States.

Cyberterrorism poses a new threat to international peace and security. The international community must take practical measures to prevent and cooperate in the fight against cyberterrorism. Efforts should be made to prevent terrorists from using the Internet to spread extremist terrorist ideologies or to plan and carry out terrorist activities.

2. The principle of sovereignty

The principle of sovereign equality, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, is a basic norm of modern international relations. As it covers all fields of relations between States, it is applicable to cyberspace. States must respect each other's right to choose their own paths of cyberdevelopment, their models for Internet regulation and their public Internet policies. They must participate in international Internet governance on an equal footing. No State should seek to exercise hegemony over cyberspace, interfere in other States' internal affairs or engage in, condone or support cyberactivities that undermine the national security of other States.

Affirming sovereignty in cyberspace is not just a manifestation of the responsibility and right of Governments to administer cyberspace in accordance with law; it also helps States build valuable platforms for interaction between government, business and social groups and establishes a healthy environment for international exchange and cooperation and the development of ICTs.

National Governments have the right to administer the Internet in accordance with the law. They have jurisdiction over ICT infrastructure, resources and activities within their countries and they have the right to protect their country's information systems and resources against threats, disruption, attacks and sabotage in order to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of their citizens in cyberspace. National Governments have the right to define their State's public Internet policy and laws and regulations without any outside interference. While States exercise their rights in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality, they are also responsible for carrying out the corresponding obligations. States have the obligation not to use ICT to interfere in the internal affairs of other States

and not to use their own position of dominance to undermine the security of other States' supply chains for ICT products and services.

3. The principle of shared governance

Cyberspace is a common space of activities for humankind. It should thus be constructed and managed by all States. International cyberspace governance must first and foremost be multilateral. States, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are all equal members of the international community and all have the right to equal participation in establishing an international order and rules for cyberspace through international Internet governance mechanisms and platforms to ensure that the future development of cyberspace is in the hands of the peoples of all countries.

International cyberspace governance must insist upon multipartite participation, and a multilayered governance platform covering all areas must be built with room for all — Governments, international organizations, Internet companies, technology associations, non-governmental organizations and private citizens — to have their say. States must strengthen communication and exchanges, improve mechanisms for dialogue and consultation on cyberspace and together draw up international rules in this field. The United Nations — a crucial agency in this endeavour — must fully play its role as a coordinating body, bringing the positions of the various parties together and building international consensus. Other international mechanisms and platforms too should make use of their own strengths to usefully complement these efforts. The international community must work together to jointly manage and equitably distribute basic Internet resources and put in place a multilateral, democratic and transparent global governance system so that the Internet will be a place of open resources and shared responsibilities, governed through cooperation.

4. The principle of shared benefits

Commercial integration of the Internet has had a global and revolutionary effect on national economies, social patterns and innovation; it has unleashed enormous forces driving economic growth in the world and given an impetus to the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Promoting the Internet's universal benefits for everyone and for all countries and regions will assist in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The international community must promote cooperation and openness in cyberspace. It must freely share content, raise the level of openness, set up more platforms for communication and cooperation and promote Internet breakthroughs that are mutually complementary, jointly developed and provide shared benefits, in order to achieve the people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society that was set as an objective by the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society.

States must promote development cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels. In particular, more technical and financial assistance must be channelled to developing countries for capacity building to help them take advantage of digital opportunities and bridge the digital divide.

Chapter III
Strategic goals

The strategic goals of participation by China in international cyberspace cooperation are: to resolutely defend the country's sovereignty, security and development interests in cyberspace; to ensure the secure and orderly flow of information on the Internet; to improve global connectivity; to provide for peace, security and stability in cyberspace; to promote the international rule of law in cyberspace and the global development of the digital economy; to increase cultural exchange and the constructive exchange of experiences; and

to ensure that the fruits of Internet development will be reaped globally and benefit the people of all countries.

1. Defending sovereignty and security

China is committed to ensuring peace and security in cyberspace and, on the basis of State sovereignty, establishing a just and coherent international cyberspace order. It has worked actively to advocate for and build international consensus on this question. China firmly opposes any State using the Internet to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and believes every country has the right and responsibility to defend its cybersecurity and protect the proper and legitimate rights and interests of the various parties in cyberspace through national laws and policies. The trend towards militarization and deterrence in cyberspace is not conducive to international security and strategic trust. China encourages all parties to commit to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use or threat of the use of force and other basic norms in international relations and to put in place consultation and mediation mechanisms to prevent and avoid conflict so that cyberspace does not become a new field of battle.

For China, building defence capabilities in cyberspace is an important part of the modernization of the country's military and its national defence, in keeping with the guidelines of the active defence strategy. China will make use of the significant weight of the military in defending the country's sovereignty, security and development interests in cyberspace. It will expedite the development of a cyberforce and enhance capabilities in terms of situational awareness and cyberdefence, supporting national cyberactivities and helping to bolster international cooperation capabilities. It will prevent major crises in this field, safeguard cyberspace security and maintain national security and social stability.

2. Developing a system of international rules

As cyberspace is a new frontier, rules and norms of behaviour are urgently needed. China advocates formulating, within the framework of the United Nations, universally accepted international rules and norms of State behaviour in cyberspace so as to establish basic principles to govern the actions of States and other actors and to intensify cooperation by States. The aim is to ensure a secure, stable and thriving cyberspace. China has supported and has actively participated in processes to draw up international rules. It will continue to make its contribution through enhanced dialogue and cooperation with the international community.

China is a resolute defender of Internet security. It has also fallen victim to hackers' attacks. China opposes all types of hacking; hacking in any form is an illegal and criminal activity that always calls for repression under the law and relevant international treaties. As cyberattacks are generally transnational in nature and difficult to trace back to the source, China calls for States to work together through constructive consultation and cooperation to defend cybersecurity.

3. Promoting fair Internet governance

China believes that a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet governance system should be built through equal participation and joint decision-making by the international community. States must have the right to participate in Internet governance on an equal footing. It is important to ensure equitable distribution of the Internet's basic resources and joint management of critical information infrastructure such as root servers. The relevant international processes must be open and inclusive, ensuring that the developing countries are better represented and able to have a say.

China calls for enhanced communication and cooperation among all stakeholders, including Governments, international organizations, Internet companies, technology associations, non-governmental institutions and citizens. The stakeholders must ensure broad participation, sound management and democratic decision-making, each contributing

to the governance model described above in their corresponding and assigned role, with Governments taking the critical lead in Internet governance, particularly in respect of public policy and security.

4. Protecting citizens' legitimate rights and interests

China supports a free and open Internet. It fully respects citizens' rights and fundamental freedoms in cyberspace and defends the public's rights to information, participation, expression and the exercise of oversight, while also defending individual privacy in cyberspace. At the same time, cyberspace is not a place beyond the rule of law. In cyberspace, like in the tangible world, freedom must be promoted and order must be upheld. China is working to provide for effective governance in cyberspace to ensure the free flow of information, national security and the public interest as an organic whole.

5. Promoting cooperation in the digital economy

China is vigorously implementing national strategies to strengthen the country's cyberspace, its information technologies and its big data and to carry out the Internet Plus action plan. Major efforts are being made to develop e-commerce, promote integration of the digital and real economies, optimize the allocation of resources and boost total factor productivity, all of which will exert a positive effect, driving innovation, transforming growth models and adjusting economic structures.

China advocates fairness, openness and competition in the market. While pursuing its own development, China adheres to the principles of cooperation and shared benefits, promoting investment, trade and a stronger digital economy at the global level. China is in favour of fair and open international trade. It opposes trade barriers and trade protectionism and supports an open and secure environment for the digital economy with the aim of ensuring that the Internet is at the service of the economy and innovation. It calls for fair, coherent and universal access to the Internet, popularization of Internet technologies and Internet language diversity. It seeks enhanced cooperation and exchange with other countries and regions on cybersecurity and information technology in the interests of the joint advancement and innovation of Internet technologies, equal opportunities for all to benefit from the digital dividend and the sustainable development of cyberspace.

It is the view of China that security is beneficial to development, and development is beneficial to security. To have a healthy and strong digital economy, a quest for absolute security cannot be allowed to dampen vitality, restrict open exchange or fetter technological innovation, nor can essential security regulation be dispensed with under the pretext of market or trade liberalization. Countries and regions differ in their levels of Internet development and cybersecurity capacity. Efforts should be made to assist developing countries with capacity-building in order to bridge the digital divide separating them from developed countries. For the digital economy to be a win-win proposition, cybersecurity gaps must be filled globally.

6. Building a cyberculture exchange platform

The Internet is an important medium for disseminating the high points of our shared culture and for providing an impetus for further positive contributions. Cyberspace is a shared spiritual home for us all. States must assume responsibility for using the Internet to carry forward the magnificent culture of humankind, breeding and developing a positive and uplifting cyberculture, employing culture to cultivate humankind, to further refine societies and to promote economic development, together driving the development of a thriving cyberculture and the establishment of a cybercivilization.

China wishes to work together with other States to make full use of the Internet as an ideal platform, building international bridges to promote exchanges and the constructive sharing of experiences among national cultures. Efforts should be made to strengthen

capacity for cultural exchange and promote the diversity of cultures on the Internet to enrich the human psyche and foster the advance of human civilization.

Chapter IV
Plan of action

China will continue to actively participate in international processes related to cyberspace. It will strengthen bilateral, regional and international dialogue and cooperation, build international trust, seek paths of joint development and address threats shoulder to shoulder with other countries with a view to achieving universally accepted international rules for cyberspace and establishing a just and coherent global cyberspace governance system.

1. Advocating and promoting peace and stability in cyberspace

China will participate in bilateral and multilateral discussions on confidence building measures, take diplomatic steps to prevent problems and address the various threats to cybersecurity through dialogue and consultation.

It will strengthen dialogue to study new cyberthreats against international peace and security and will work with others to curb the misuse of information technologies and to prevent an arms race in cyberspace.

It will promote a discussion by the international community of the peaceful nature of cyberspace and call for it to study the application of international law in cyberspace in order to maintain international security, build strategic trust and prevent cyberconflicts.

2. Advancing and establishing a rule-based order in cyberspace

The United Nations has a key role to play in the formulation of international rules governing cyberspace. China will urge the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of relevant resolutions on information and cybersecurity and will continue to facilitate and participate in the work of United Nations groups of governmental experts and other mechanisms.

In January 2015, the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) submitted to the United Nations General Assembly an updated proposal for an international code of conduct for information security. The draft code is the first paper at the international level comprehensively setting out norms of behaviour in cyberspace. This text, produced by China and the other SCO member States to ensure joint security, is an important contribution in support of the international community's effort to establish a code of conduct for cyberspace. China will continue to launch and strengthen the international dialogue to seek broader international understanding and support for this initiative.

China supports universal and equal participation by members of the international community in discussions and consultations on cyberissues.

3. Constantly expanding partnership in cyberspace

China is committed to establishing an extensive system of cooperation and partnership with the parties in the international community, to expanding dialogue mechanisms on cyberaffairs with other States and to conducting extensive bilateral foreign policy exchanges and practical cooperation in this field.

China will continue to organize the World Internet Conference (the Wuzhen Summit) and other international events and will continue holding bilateral Internet forums with the countries concerned. It will continue holding discussions on cyberissues in the framework of forums such as the China-Japan-Korea cyberpolicy consultation, the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (the ASEAN Regional Forum) and the Boao

Forum for Asia, and it will pursue new opportunities for dialogue and cooperation relating to the Internet.

Practical cooperation for cybersecurity will be promoted among the member States of SCO and also in the group comprising Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS States). China will promote a balanced cybersecurity system within the ASEAN Regional Forum. It will encourage and support cybersecurity cooperation in regional organizations, including the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (China-CELAC Forum) and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO). It will put forward cooperation initiatives relating to the Internet and the digital economy, inter alia within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and the Group of 20 (G-20), and it will explore opportunities for exchange and dialogue relating to the Internet with other regional organizations.

4. Actively advocating a reform of the global Internet governance system

China will participate in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. It will work to consolidate the consensus for the implementation by the international community of the outcomes and to ensure equal sharing of the benefits of the information society, and it will put forward the topics of the construction of the information society and Internet governance as important items for due consideration.

China will advocate for the institutional reform of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum to enable it to play a greater role in Internet governance. It will call for a strengthening of the Forum's decision-making capacity, for stable funding and for open and transparent procedures for the selection of the Forum's membership and for its submission of reports.

China will participate in international discussions to ensure the fair distribution and management of critical Internet resources. It will vigorously promote the reform and internationalization of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to make it a truly independent international institution, constantly working to make it more representative and to ensure greater openness and transparency in its decision-making and operations. China will actively participate in and promote global Internet governance activities such as the Future of the Internet Initiative of the World Economic Forum.

5. Strengthening international cooperation against cyberterrorism and cybercrime

China will explore standards and concrete measures for cooperation in the international community to suppress acts of cyberterrorism, including the drafting of an international cyberterrorism treaty, building consensus on the international community's suppression of cybercrimes and cyberterrorism and providing a basis allowing States to cooperate in specific law enforcement measures.

China promotes and supports the important role of the United Nations Security Council in international cooperation against cyberterrorism.

China promotes and supports the work done by the United Nations to combat cybercrime. It takes part in the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the Group of Governmental Experts on Cybercrime, and it is in favour of the discussion and drawing up, under the aegis of the United Nations, of a global, international legal instrument for the suppression of cybercrime.

China will strengthen regional cooperation. It will make use of Asia-Pacific annual meetings and coordination mechanisms for cooperation in combating information technology crimes, actively taking part in the work of regional cooperation organizations

such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, and it will put forward a plan for the BRICS States to adopt a mechanism to combat cybercrime and cyberterrorism.

China will step up practical cooperation with other countries for exchanges on policy and law enforcement combating cybercrime and cyberterrorism. It will actively explore establishing institutionalized platforms for dialogue and exchanges on cyberterrorism, establishing bilateral police cooperation mechanisms and sound judicial assistance mechanisms with other countries and promoting the sharing of technologies and experience in fighting cybercrime.

6. Protecting privacy and other citizens' rights and interests

China supports discussions at the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on the protection of privacy. It calls for the establishment of principles for the protection of the privacy of individuals in cyberspace. China encourages States to take steps to curb the use of the Internet for the violation of personal privacy and to exchange information on practices and conduct that are respectful and protective of individual privacy in cyberspace.

China encourages business entities to be more conscious of data security protection. It supports their efforts to strengthen self-regulation and to discuss best practices for the protection of individuals' privacy in cyberspace. It will support increased cooperation between Governments and business and joint protection by them of the privacy of individuals in cyberspace.

7. Promoting the digital economy and the sharing of the digital dividend

China will work to achieve the goal set by the World Summit on the Information Society to build a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society as a way to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

China supports Internet-based innovation and entrepreneurship and the digitalization of industry, agriculture and the service sector. It will promote the use of information technologies by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). It will encourage investment in information and communication technologies, expand access to broadband services and improve their quality, improve the public's ability to use digital resources and ensure greater inclusiveness. It will increase the user-friendliness, integrity, confidentiality and reliability of online transactions and develop trusted, stable and reliable Internet applications.

China will support the provision of assistance to the numerous developing countries in cybersecurity capacity-building, including through the transfer of technology, the development of essential and basic information infrastructure and personnel training. The "digital divide" will be transformed into an opportunity, thus allowing more developing countries and peoples to share in the benefits of Internet development.

China will advocate for the formulation of a complete set of rules for cybertrade and for States to effectively coordinate their respective policies in this area. It will advocate international cooperation relating to e-commerce and the facilitation of customs and logistic services. China will protect intellectual property rights and oppose trade protectionism so that a great worldwide market can take shape on the Internet. It will support the development of a thriving, global Internet economy.

China supports strengthening cooperation and the sharing of Internet technology. It calls for technical cooperation among States so that they can work together to solve technical problems arising in the development of the Internet and together grow new industries and new retail models by means of closer cooperation involving networked communications, mobile Internet services, cloud computing, the Internet of Things and big data. The exchange of network personnel will be further strengthened so that, together, countries can expand the ranks of innovative professionals.

In close relation with the implementation of the One Belt, One Road initiative, China will support Chinese Internet companies and encourage them, together with companies in the manufacturing, financial and information and communication sectors, to take the lead in going global, to engage in international competition in line with the principles of fairness, to together open up international markets and to build cross-border supply chains. Chinese companies will be encouraged to actively engage in building other countries' capacities and to help developing countries, working inter alia on distance learning, telemedicine and e-commerce to promote their social development.

8. Strengthening the development and protection of the global information infrastructure

With other States, China will work to build a global basic information infrastructure, paving the way for the free flow of information. It will promote basic information infrastructure connectivity and the One Belt, One Road initiative with neighbouring States and beyond, allowing more countries and peoples to partake in the development opportunities provided by the Internet.

China will promote international cooperation and raise awareness of the need to protect basic critical information infrastructure. It will explore mechanisms to bring Governments, industries and enterprises together to share cybersecurity information in an orderly manner and strengthen the security and protection of basic critical information infrastructure and of sensitive data.

China will encourage States to reach a consensus on critical information infrastructure protection, mapping out specific cooperation measures and increasing exchanges on legislation, experience and technology in this field.

China will promote cooperation in areas such as early warning and prevention, emergency response, technological innovation, standards and norms and information-sharing in order to increase capacities for risk prevention and response in cyberspace.

9. Promoting the constructive exchange of experiences through cyberculture exchange

China will facilitate cooperation among States in the field of cyberculture. The Internet should fully showcase the achievements of national civilizations and become a platform for cultural exchange and the exchange of valuable experience, making it possible for peoples to share their sentiments and exchange their thoughts and feelings. With the animation, comic and video game industry as one of the priority areas, China will cooperate in the field of culture with the countries linked by the One Belt, One Road initiative. It will encourage Chinese enterprises to provide diversified cyberculture products and services catered to local needs, relying on local cultural resources. Cyberculture exhibitions and trade fairs both in China and abroad will play an important role in helping Chinese cyberproducts go global. China will support the participation of Chinese enterprises in major cyberculture exhibitions and will facilitate the operation of cyberculture enterprises overseas.

Conclusion

The twenty-first century is the age of the Internet and informatization. China, at this new starting post in history, has set out a grand objective: to be a great Internet power. This means implementing the main steps in the "four-pronged comprehensive strategy", achieving the two centenary goals and inevitably choosing to realize the grand dream of the Chinese people — the renewal of the Chinese nation. China has from the outset built, defended and contributed to cyberspace, and it will continue to do so. The development of the cyber and information sector in China will not only benefit the Chinese people, it will also contribute to a secure and growing global Internet.

As China puts forward this strategy to build a great Internet power, it will at the same time hold fast to a new model of international relations, with win-win cooperation at its core. It will endeavour to work shoulder to shoulder with the international community, strengthening communication and exchanges, intensifying mutually beneficial cooperation and forging new cooperation partnerships with the shared objective of building a common destiny for humankind, so as to make a greater contribution to the construction of a cyberspace that is secure, stable and thriving.