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Good morning and thank you for inviting me to speak at this year's Galle Dialogue. I am pleased that we have this opportunity to come together and feel that this year's theme, "Synergizing for Collaborative Maritime Management," is particularly timely, extremely important, and as such, I look forward to an open exchange of thoughts and ideas.

As a nation with global interests, the United States has a vital self interest in maritime security and enduring commitments to our allies and partners throughout the world. In Asia and the Indo-Pacific, these commitments have been longstanding, and encompass a broad spectrum of cooperative engagements and operations to include, collaborative activities with our 5 Mutual Defense Treaty allies in the Pacific, bi-lateral and multi-lateral military exercises, economic investments, information sharing, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and sometimes decisive military action.

The United States has been active in the Pacific since shortly after our birth as an independent nation. My counterpart at CTF-73 has a copy of the ship's log from USS Vincennes which visited Singapore in 1836. U.S. military forces and their families from all services and the

Coast Guard are currently stationed throughout the Pacific. These forces are largely concentrated in Japan, Korea, and Guam. The U.S. Navy has its Seventh Fleet headquarters in Yokosuka, Japan and the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) is in Okinawa.

On any given day, there are 70-90 ships, 200-300 aircraft and 40-50,000 Sailors and Marines in the Seventh Fleet Area of Operations. In addition to U.S. based aircraft carriers and expeditionary strike groups conducting rotational deployments to the region, there are over 20 ships and submarines forward deployed to the Western Pacific with additional ships deployed to the Arabian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. We also have numerous Army and Air Force posts in Japan and Korea. These U.S. forces routinely interact with countries in South and Southeast Asia during exercises, port visits, transits and other military-to-military engagements.

The United States has engaged in trade, port visits, international commerce, and maintained a forward military presence, fostering military to military relationships in the Pacific for over 150 years. Five of the seven U.S. Mutual Defense Treaties are with countries in the Pacific – Republic of the Philippines, Thailand, Republic

of Korea, Japan, and Australia. If you look at our naval deployment and operating schedules for the last fifteen to twenty years, aside from surges to support OEF/OIF you won't see much deviation. We have been deploying ships and aircraft throughout the Pacific and to the Middle East on a regular basis since the end of WWII.

The United States has made significant investments in maritime security in the Pacific. Sixty percent of our attack submarines are now stationed in the Pacific. We have replaced older frigates stationed in Japan and Hawaii with newer guided missile destroyers. We have phased out most of our older P-3 maritime patrol aircraft in favor of newer P-8s. In fact, P-8s were first deployed and operated in the Indo-Pacific. Our carrier air-wing in Japan is being upgraded to reflect our newest aircraft and we have been steadily upgrading our forward deployed aircraft carriers.

Defense dialogues in Washington and forums throughout the region have centered on the importance of military presence in the Pacific. Although our presence is sometimes dictated by outside forces, our goal is to maintain the right balance of presence with a defined purpose. U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific continues to be a source of stability and cooperative engagement in the region that opens the door to long-lasting relationships between the U.S. and countries in the region across the broad spectrum of geopolitical engagement.

Our maritime strategy encourages U.S. agencies and foreign countries to work together, to share information, to become more efficient and effective. Greater emphasis has been placed on building relationships with international partners, while relying less on unilateral solutions to crises. Regular exercises and routine information sharing, training like you will have to fight, is the best way to establish and cement relationships among partners and allies throughout the region.

The security, prosperity, and vital interests of the United States are increasingly coupled to

those of other nations. Our nation's interests are best served by fostering a peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance. We prosper because of this system of exchange among nations, yet recognize it is vulnerable to a range of disruptions that can produce cascading and harmful effects far from their sources. Major power war, regional conflict, terrorism, lawlessness and natural disasters—all have the potential to threaten world stability and prosperity.

Today, 80 percent of all global trade travels by sea, as does two-thirds of the world's oil. Approximately 60 percent of maritime trade passes through Asia – highlighting the strategic importance of maritime security particularly in this area of the world.

Equally important to the flow of goods is the flow of services, which travel around the world electronically as bits and bytes. We talk about cyberspace, but a significant percentage of electronic trade travels through cables across the ocean floor, representing trillions of U.S. dollars in trade each year. Clearly, today's world is more interconnected than ever before, and increasingly it is the oceans and the trade that flows above and below the sea that links our global community together, making maritime security a topic of particular interest.

Our senior leaders have traveled to the region to engage in multilateral forums and discussions, which provide a path to building trust, confidence and transparency. Our Secretary of State Pompeo recently traveled to Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and China. Our Indo-Pacific Commander, Admiral Davidson, recently traveled to Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania. Through regular dialogue engagements and committed forward presence by our military forces and State Department diplomatic corps, we believe that the United States contributes to a more stable and secure Pacific region. Relationships matter.

Our Secretary of Defense, Secretary Mattis, released our national defense strategy earlier this year. It uses the word “allies” 124 times. As he says, “we’re not subtle.” We are all Indo-Pacific nations. The U.S maritime vision is to uphold our shared values for a safe, secure, prosperous, and free Indo-Pacific. We endeavor to achieve this by ensuring respect for the sovereignty and independence of every nation, regardless of its size. Freedom for all nations wishing to transit international waters and airspace. Peaceful dispute resolution without coercion. Free, fair, and reciprocal trade and investment. And finally, adherence to international laws, rules and norms.

U.S. Naval units and personnel participate in more than 125 bilateral and multilateral exercises each year in the Pacific Theater, comprising more than 1,700 unit exercise days per year of engagement. In 2002, the U.S. Navy initiated Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism, or SEACAT. SEACAT is a multi-stage, at sea naval exercise, designed to promote maritime domain awareness and to highlight the value of information sharing. Nations identify and track transnational threats -- terrorists and extremists; proliferators of weapons of mass destruction; pirates; traffickers in persons, drugs, and conventional weapons; and other criminals -- in order to constrain their movement, query, and intercept them when necessary. We recognize that although our forces can surge when necessary to respond to crises, our maritime strategy highlights that trust and cooperation cannot be surged. They must be built over time so that the strategic interests of the participants are continuously considered while mutual understanding and respect are promoted. Over the years, the exercise has become increasingly complex.

Piracy is a problem that affects all maritime stakeholders. Combined Task Force 151 is a multinational maritime task force that was established in 2009 to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, and the Western Indian Ocean. At any given time, Task Force 151 consists of twenty nations operating together to solve a common problem. Before Task Force 151,

countries which operated in the maritime domain were solely responsible for defending their interests from piracy. These individual efforts made little impact on the effects of piracy in the region. Since its formation in 2009, Task Force 151 has dramatically decreased the frequency of piracy. The success of Task Force 151 is a reflection of increased maritime security due to joint efforts by regional nations.

SEACAT and CTF-151 are only two examples of U.S. commitment to maritime security in the region. RIMPAC, Talisman Sabre, Cobra Gold, Balikatan, Malabar, and Pacific Partnership are additional examples of exercises, which foster and enhance partnerships, cooperation, and enable our collective fleets to be more flexible, cohesive, and responsive in this dynamic and rapidly-changing world.

In addition to exercises, foreign military sales enhance regional capabilities, enabling countries to have expanded, battle tested technology. As countries purchase similar hardware and software, interoperability among nations is vastly improved. A key element of maritime security is maritime domain awareness. The ability to share a common operational picture is a force multiplier, particularly for areas such as the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, where shared exclusive economic zones and transnational ship transit is commonplace. As nations learn to share information about potential threats, regional security and confidence among neighboring countries increase significantly. Maritime domain awareness and maritime security cannot be solved individually. International cooperation is critical to success. Trust and cooperation must be built over many years, so that both countries have a mutual confidence in one another’s abilities and thorough understanding of each other’s strategic interests, as well as a basic understanding of one another culturally and historically.

The U.S. maritime strategy is a flexible vision of voluntary partnerships of varying levels of formality, scope, and capability, to meet the world’s needs. Without actions by nations to bring



it to life – again, “actions” being the key word – our maritime strategy would be just another policy document. It is only by committed navies acting in the interests of our global commons that we will achieve maritime security. In this era of globalization and uncertainty, the United States is committed to operating with our allies,

partners and friends, upholding key alliances and expanding regional maritime partnerships. Only by working together to uphold international laws, rules and standards can we ensure a safe, secure, prosperous, and free Indo-Pacific.

Thank you.