

# **International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace**

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### **Preface**

Cyberspace is the common space of activities for mankind. The future of cyberspace should be in the hands of all countries. Countries should step up communications, broaden consensus and deepen cooperation to jointly build a community of shared future in cyberspace.

—Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, 2015/12/16

Today, the rapid advancement of information technology represented by the Internet has brought about new ways of social production, created new space for people's life, opened new horizons of state governance and enhanced people's ability to understand and shape the world.

As the common asset of human society, the Internet has turned the world into a global village. In the interconnected cyberspace, countries are bound together by intertwined interests. It is in the shared interests and also the responsibility of the international community to safeguard peace and security, promote openness and cooperation and foster a community of shared future in cyberspace.

*International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace* provides a comprehensive explanation of China's policy and position on cyber-related international affairs as well as the basic principles, strategic goals and plan of action in its external relations on that front. It aims to guide China's participation in international exchange and cooperation in cyberspace for the next period of time, and encourage the international community to come together to enhance dialogue and cooperation and build a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace and a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet governance system.

## **Chapter I. Opportunities and Challenges**

With the accelerating trend toward a multi-polar, economically globalized and culturally diverse world and the profoundly changing global governance system, mankind has entered a new era of information revolution. The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) represented by the Internet has changed people's

way of production and life and boosted market innovation, economic prosperity and social development. Cyberspace is becoming a new channel for information dissemination, a new frontier of people's work and life, a new engine for economic growth, a new carrier for cultural prosperity, a new platform of social governance, a new bridge for communication and cooperation and a new domain of state sovereignty.

While creating tremendous opportunities, cyberspace also faces a number of new issues and challenges. Security and stability in cyberspace has become a global concern which bears on the sovereignty, security and development interests of all countries. Problems such as unbalanced development, inadequate rules and inequitable order in cyberspace have become more evident. The digital divide among countries and regions is widening. Critical information infrastructure faces considerable vulnerability and potential risk. The existing global governance system of basic Internet resources hardly reflects the desires and interests of the majority of countries. Cyber terrorism has become a global public menace. Cyber crimes are spreading. Interference in other countries' internal affairs by abusing ICT and massive cyber surveillance activities happen from time to time. The absence of general international rules in cyberspace that effectively govern the behavior of all parties hampers the development of cyberspace.

No countries can stay immune from such problems and challenges. The international community can only work together through intensified cooperation in the spirit of mutual respect and mutual understanding and accommodation so as to put in place a rule-based global governance system in cyberspace.

## **Chapter II. Basic Principles**

China has been a force for world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of international order. It steadfastly pursues a path of peaceful development, works to uphold justice and friendship and pursue shared interests, and calls for a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation. With the theme focusing on peaceful development and the core message for win-win cooperation, *International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace* advocates the principles of peace, sovereignty, shared governance and shared benefits in international exchange and cooperation in cyberspace.

### **1. The Principle of Peace**

In the interconnected cyberspace, countries are bound together by intertwined interests. A secure, stable and prosperous cyberspace is of great significance to all countries and the world.

The international community should observe the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter in real earnest, particularly non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes, in order to ensure peace and security in cyberspace. All countries must oppose ICT-backed acts of hostility and aggression, prevent arms race and conflicts in cyberspace and settle disputes through peaceful means. Countries should reject the Cold War mentality, zero-sum game and double standards, uphold peace through

cooperation and seek one's own security through common security on the basis of full respect for other countries' security.

Cyber terrorism poses a new threat to international peace and security. The international community should take pragmatic measures to prevent and fight against cyber terrorist activities. Efforts should be made to prevent terrorists from using the Internet to spread extremist ideology, or plan and orchestrate cyber terrorist activities.

## **2. The Principle of Sovereignty**

As a basic norm in contemporary international relations, the principle of sovereignty enshrined in the UN Charter covers all aspects of state-to-state relations, which also includes cyberspace. Countries should respect each other's right to choose their own path of cyber development, model of cyber regulation and Internet public policies, and participate in international cyberspace governance on an equal footing. No country should pursue cyber hegemony, interfere in other countries' internal affairs, or engage in, condone or support cyber activities that undermine other countries' national security.

Upholding sovereignty in cyberspace not only reflects governments' responsibility and right to administer cyberspace in accordance with law, but also enables countries to build platforms for sound interactions among governments, businesses and social groups. This will foster a healthy environment for the advancement of information technology and international exchange and cooperation.

National governments are entitled to administer cyberspace in accordance with law. They exercise jurisdiction over ICT infrastructure, resources and activities within their territories, and are entitled to protect their ICT systems and resources from threat, disruption, attack and destruction so as to safeguard citizens' legitimate rights and interests in cyberspace. National governments are entitled to enact public policies, laws and regulations with no foreign interference. Countries should exercise their rights based on the principle of sovereign equality and also perform their due duties. No country should use ICT to interfere in other countries' internal affairs or leverage its advantage to undermine the security of other countries' ICT product and service supply chain.

## **3. The Principle of Shared Governance**

Cyberspace is the common space of activities for mankind, hence needs to be built and managed by all countries. International cyberspace governance should follow a multilateral approach. Countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are all equal members of the international community entitled to equal participation in developing international order and rules in cyberspace through international governance mechanisms and platforms, to ensure that the future development of cyberspace is in the hands of all peoples.

Second, international cyberspace governance should feature multi-party participation. All parties, including governments, international organizations, Internet companies, technology communities, non-governmental institutions and individual citizens, should play their respective roles in building an all-dimensional and multi-tiered governance platform. Countries should enhance communication, improve cyberspace-related dialogue and consultation mechanisms and jointly develop international cyber rules. The United Nations, as an important channel, should play a leading role in coordinating positions of various parties and building international consensus. Other international mechanisms and platforms should also give play to their respective advantages to complement relevant efforts. The international community needs to work together to manage jointly and distribute equitably 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**

Integrated development of the Internet and other sectors has overall and revolutionary significance on countries' economic structure, social formation and innovation system, and provides strong driving force for world economic growth and the realization of sustainable development goal. To ensure Internet development brings benefit to all regions and countries will facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The international community should promote greater openness and cooperation in cyberspace, further substantiate and enhance the opening-up efforts, build more platforms for communication and cooperation and strive for complementarity of strengths and common development of all countries in cyberspace. This will ensure that people across the world can share the benefits of Internet development and a people-centered, development-oriented and inclusive information society will be realized, as envisaged by the World Summit on the Information Society.

Countries should promote development cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels. In particular, more technical and financial assistance should be channeled to developing countries for capacity building and help them seize the digital opportunities and bridge the digital divide.

### **Chapter III. Strategic Goals**

The strategic goal of China's participation in international cyberspace cooperation is: resolutely safeguard the country's sovereignty, security and development interests in cyberspace; ensure secure and orderly flow of information on the Internet; improve global connectivity; maintain peace, security and stability in cyberspace; enhance international rule of law in cyberspace; promote global development of the digital economy; and deepen cultural exchange and mutual learning, so that the fruits of Internet development will reach every corner of the world and benefit people of all countries.

## **1. Safeguarding Sovereignty and Security**

China is committed to upholding peace and security in cyberspace and establishing a fair and reasonable international cyberspace order on the basis of state sovereignty, and has worked actively to build international consensus in this respect. China firmly opposes any country using the Internet to interfere in other countries' internal affairs and believes every country has the right and responsibility to maintain its cyber security and protect the legitimate rights and interests of various parties in cyberspace through national laws and policies. The tendency of militarization and deterrence buildup in cyberspace is not conducive to international security and strategic mutual trust. China encourages all parties to commit to peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use or threat of force and other basic norms in international relations and put in place consultation and mediation mechanisms to forestall and avoid conflict, so that cyberspace will not become a new battlefield.

Enhanced defense capability in cyberspace is an important part of China's endeavor to modernize its national defense and armed forces, which complies with the strategic guideline of active defense. China will give play to the important role of the military in safeguarding the country's sovereignty, security and development interests in cyberspace. It will expedite the development of a cyber force and enhance capabilities in terms of situational awareness, cyber defense, supporting state activities and participating in international cooperation, to prevent major cyber crisis, safeguard cyberspace security and maintain national security and social stability.

## **2. Developing A System of International Rules**

As a new frontier, cyberspace needs to be governed by rules and norms of behavior. China supports formulating universally accepted international rules and norms of state behavior in cyberspace within the framework of the United Nations, which will establish basic principles for states and other actors to regulate their behavior and intensify cooperation in order to uphold security, stability and prosperity in cyberspace. China has supported and actively participated in international rules making process and will continue to make its contribution through enhanced dialogue and cooperation with the international community.

China is firmly committed to safeguarding cyber security. As a victim itself, China opposes all forms of hacking and regards them illegal criminal activities that should be tackled in accordance with law and relevant international legal instruments. Given that cyber attacks are usually transnational and difficult to attribute, countries should work together to ensure cyber security through constructive consultation and cooperation.

## **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 of the international community. Countries are entitled to participate in Internet governance on an equal footing. It is important to ensure equitable distribution of basic

resources of the Internet and joint management of critical information infrastructure such as root servers. Relevant international processes should be open and inclusive with greater representations and voice of developing countries.

China calls for enhanced communication and cooperation among all stakeholders including governments, international organizations, Internet companies, technological communities, non-governmental institutions and citizens. Relevant efforts should reflect broad participation, sound management and democratic decision-making, with all stakeholders contributing in their share based on their capacity and governments taking the leading in Internet governance particularly public policies and security.

#### **4. Protecting Legitimate Rights and Interests of Citizens**

China supports a free and open Internet. It fully respects citizens' rights and fundamental freedoms in cyberspace and safeguards their rights to be informed, to participate, to express and to supervise while protecting individual privacy in cyberspace. Cyberspace, in the meantime, is not a place beyond the rule of law. Like the real world, freedom and order are both necessary in cyberspace. China pursues effective governance in cyberspace to promote free flow of information while ensuring national security and public interests.

#### **5. Promoting Cooperation on Digital Economy**

China is vigorously implementing the national strategies for cyber development, IT application and big data and the "Internet Plus" action plan. It encourages the development of e-commerce, promotes integration of the digital and real economies and works to optimize the allocation of resources and boost total factor productivity, which will drive innovation, transform growth model and adjust economic structure.

China values fairness, openness and competition in the market. While pursuing its own development, China advocates cooperation and shared benefits and commits to promoting investment, trade and a stronger digital economy globally. It supports fair and open international trade, opposes trade barriers and trade protectionism and pursues an open and secure environment for the digital economy, to ensure the Internet serves the economy and innovation. It calls for fair, reasonable and universal access to the Internet, popularization of Internet technology and diversity of Internet language, and seeks enhanced cooperation and exchange with other countries and regions on cyber security and information technology, for the advancement and innovation of Internet technology, equal sharing of digital dividends and sustainable development of the cyberspace.

China believes that security guarantees development and development enhances security. A healthy and strong digital economy would not be possible if the pursuit of absolute security is allowed to constrain momentum, openness or innovation, or necessary security regulation is not observed with the excuse of free market and free trade. Countries and regions differ in levels of Internet development and cyber security capacity. Efforts should be made to assist developing countries with capacity building to

bridge the digital divide between developing and developed countries so as to ensure the digital economy would benefit all and the weak links of global cyber security are addressed.

## **6. Building Platform for Cyber Culture Exchange**

The Internet is an important carrier to spread mankind's fine cultures and promote positive energy. Cyberspace is a place that connects us all. Countries should shoulder the responsibility to carry forward the fine cultures through the Internet, develop an uplifting cyber culture, enable culture to play its role in nourishing people and society and driving growth, and jointly work for a sound environment in cyberspace and the prosperity of cyber cultures.

China will work with other countries to give full play to the Internet as a shared platform and enhance international exchange with the Internet as a bridge to facilitate interactions among fine cultures. Efforts should be made to strengthen the capacity building for cultural exchange and promote diversity of cultures on the Internet so as to enrich peoples' mind and thinking and advance human civilization.

## **Chapter IV. Plan of Action**

China will continue to actively participate in cyber-related international processes, enhance bilateral, regional and international dialogue and cooperation, promote international mutual trust and common development and address threats through joint efforts, with the goal of reaching universally accepted international rules and establishing a fair and reasonable global cyberspace governance system.

### **1. Peace and Stability in Cyberspace**

China will participate in bilateral and multilateral discussions on confidence building measures, take preventive diplomatic measures, and address various cyber security threats through dialogue and consultation.

China will step up dialogue to study new threats in the cyber field that affect international peace and security, and work with others to curb the abuse of information technology and prevent arms race in cyberspace.

China will encourage the international community to discuss the peaceful nature of cyberspace and study the application of international law in cyberspace from the perspective of maintaining international security, strategic mutual trust and preventing cyber conflicts.

### **2. Rule-based Order in Cyberspace**

As the United Nations should play a key role in formulating international rules in cyberspace, China supports the UN General Assembly to adopt resolutions regarding information and cyber security and will continue to facilitate and participate in the

processes of the United Nations Governmental Groups of Experts (UNGGE) and other mechanisms.

In January 2015, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states submitted to the UN General Assembly the updated *International Code of Conduct for Information Security*. It is the first international paper dedicated to norms of behavior in cyberspace and an important public security product China and other SCO member states provide to support international efforts for a code of conduct in cyberspace. China will continue to enhance 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 the discussion and consultation on cyber issues.

### **3. Partnership in Cyberspace**

China is committed to establishing extensive cooperative partnership with all parties of the international community, expand dialogue mechanisms on cyber affairs with other countries and conduct bilateral foreign policy exchange and pragmatic cooperation.

China will continue to hold World Internet Conference (Wuzhen Summit) and other international conferences, and bilateral Internet forums with relevant countries. China will pursue discussions on cyber issues within the framework of China-Japan-Korea cyber policy consultation, ARF and Boao Forum for Asia, and expand platforms for cyber dialogue and cooperation.

China will promote practical cyber security cooperation among member states of SCO and BRICS and facilitate balanced cyber security process within ARF. It will encourage and support regional organizations to carry out cyber security cooperation, including the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. It will advance cooperation initiatives within APEC and G20 among others in the fields of the Internet and digital economy, and explore exchange and dialogue on cyberspace with other regional organizations.

### **4. Reform of Global Internet Governance System**

China will participate in the follow-up of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, support the international community to consolidate consensus and implement the outcomes, ensure equal sharing of the benefits of information society, and list information society building and Internet governance as important items for review.

China will push for institutional reform of the UN Internet Governance Forum to enable it to play a greater role in Internet governance, strengthen its decision-making capacity,

secure steady funding, and introduce open and transparent procedures in its member election and report submission.

China will participate in international discussions on fair distribution and management of critical Internet resources. It will vigorously promote the reform of ICANN to make it a truly independent international institution, increase its representations and ensure greater openness and transparency in its decision-making and operation. China will actively participate in and contribute to activities of global Internet governance platforms, such as the “Future of the Internet” Initiative under the World Economy Forum.

## **5. International Cooperation on Cyber Terrorism and Cyber Crimes**

Along with other countries, China will explore norms of behavior and concrete measures for international cooperation against cyber terrorism, including discussion on an international convention on combating cyber terrorism and consensus building on fighting cyber crimes and cyber terrorism, to provide the basis for law enforcement cooperation among countries.

China supports the UN Security Council to play an important part in international cooperation against cyber terrorism.

China supports and contributes to UN effort on fighting cyber crimes. China will participate in the work of the UN CCPCJ and UNGGE and promote discussion and formulation within the framework of the UN of a global legal instrument.

China will enhance regional cooperation and pursue cooperation on ICT-enabled crimes within the framework of the Asia-Pacific meeting and coordination mechanism. China will take part in cooperation within regional organizations such as the ARF, and work on arrangement among BRICS countries on fighting cyber crimes and cyber terrorism.

China will step up policy exchange and law enforcement cooperation with other countries on cyber crimes and cyber terrorism. It will explore institutionalized dialogue and communication on cyber terrorism, establish bilateral police cooperation mechanisms with other countries, improve judicial assistance mechanism and promote technology and experience sharing on fighting cyber crimes.

## **6. Protection of Citizens’ Rights and Interests Including Privacy**

China supports discussion on privacy protection at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and calls for establishing relevant principles for protecting individual privacy in cyberspace. China encourage countries to take measures to curb Internet-enabled infringement of individual privacy, and pursue dialogue on the practices and efforts on respecting and protecting individual privacy in cyberspace.

China will urge businesses to increase awareness of data protection and will support their effort to strengthen self-discipline and discuss best practices of individual

information protection in cyberspace. Efforts will be made to facilitate cooperation between the government and businesses to safeguard individual privacy in cyberspace.

## **7. Digital Economy and Sharing of Digital Dividends**

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

China supports Internet-based innovation and entrepreneurship, and the digitalization of industry, agriculture and the service sector. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are encouraged to apply information technologies. Efforts will be made to increase ICT investment, expand broadband access and quality, improve public skills, promote digital inclusion, enhance the availability, integrity, confidentiality and authenticity of online transactions and develop trusted, stable, and reliable Internet applications.

China supports assisting developing countries with cyber security capacity building, including technology transfer, critical information infrastructure development and personnel training, with a view to turning the digital gap into digital opportunities so that more developing countries and their people will share the benefits of Internet development.

China advocates formulating cyberspace trade rules and effective policy coordination among countries. E-business cooperation will be carried out at the international level along with greater facilitation of customs and logistic services. It is important to protect intellectual property rights and oppose trade protectionism to create a global market of the Internet and build a prosperous global Internet economy.

China supports enhanced cooperation and sharing of Internet technology. It calls for countries to work together to address technological difficulties and grow new industries and new business models through closer cooperation in network communication, mobile Internet, cloud computing, Internet of Things and big data. Personnel exchange will be further enhanced to expand the rank of professionals strong in innovation.

Keeping in mind the Belt and Road Initiative, China will encourage and support Chinese Internet companies, together with those in the manufacturing, financial and ICT sectors, to take the lead in going global, participate in international competition in line with the principle of fairness, explore international market and build cross-border industrial chain. Chinese companies will be encouraged to actively engage in capacity building of other countries and help developing countries with distance learning, remote health care and e-business among others to contribute to their social development.

## **8. Global Information Infrastructure Development and Protection**

China will work with other countries to strengthen global information infrastructure to facilitate smooth flow of information. It will promote information infrastructure

connectivity and the Belt and Road Initiative with neighboring countries and beyond, so that more countries and their people can share the development opportunities brought by the Internet.

China will promote international cooperation to raise the awareness of critical information infrastructure protection, explore a mechanism which brings governments, industries and enterprises together to share cyber security information in an orderly manner, and shore up the security and protection of critical information infrastructure and important data.

China will encourage countries to reach consensus on critical information infrastructure protection, map out specific cooperation measures and increase exchanges on legislation, experience and technology in this field.

China will promote cooperation in such areas as early warning and prevention, emergency response, technological innovation, standards and regulations and information sharing in order to increase capacity for preventing and responding to risks.

## **9. Exchange of Cyber Cultures**

China will facilitate cyber culture cooperation among countries to leverage the strength of the Internet to showcase the progress of civilizations of all countries and peoples, enhance cultural exchange and mutual learning and enable peoples to share their feelings and deepen mutual understanding. With the animation, comic and games industry as a priority area, China will carry out practical cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road, encourage Chinese enterprises to provide cyber cultural products and services catered to local needs based on local cultural resources. Cyber culture exhibitions and trade fairs home and abroad will play an important role to help Chinese cyber products and services go global. China will support participation of Chinese enterprises in major cyber culture exhibitions and facilitate their operation overseas.

## **Conclusion**

The 21st century is an era of the Internet and IT application. At a new historical starting point, China has set out a national strategy for cyber development, which is a major step to implement the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, attain the two centenary goals and realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China has been contributing its part to building and maintaining cyberspace. The development of China's cyber and information sector will not only benefit the Chinese people, but also contribute to a secure and growing global Internet.

While moving forward with the national strategy for cyber development, China will, guided by the vision for a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation, work with the international community to strengthen communication,

deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, forge partnership and build a community of shared future for mankind, thus making greater contribution to a secure, stable and prosperous cyberspace.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China)



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