**Righting the Wrongs and**

**Committing to Mutual Respect and Win-win Cooperation**

Speech by State Councilor Wang Yi

At the Opening of Lanting Forum on

Promoting Dialogue and Cooperation and Managing Differences: Bringing China-U.S. Relations Back to the Right Track

Beijing, 22 February 2021

Distinguished Guests,

Friends,

Good morning and good evening. During the Chinese Spring Festival season, visionary people from China and the United States are gathering at Lanting to discuss the future of China-U.S. relations. This is indeed very important. Let me begin by extending, on behalf of the Foreign Ministry, our New Year greetings to all the friends who have been caring for and supporting China-U.S. relations over the years.

As we bid farewell to winter and usher in spring, the change of seasons shows that the chills of winter will eventually melt away and the hopes of spring are just around the corner. Humanity must not lose confidence facing the unprecedented common challenges of the global pandemic, economic recession and climate change. We must stand up to them with courage, solidarity and responsibility. As two major countries, China and the United States should first take care of their own stuff and at the same time, they should also work together for the common good of humankind. This is the expectation of the international community and the due responsibility of major countries. On the Lunar New Year’s eve, President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden had their first telephone call. President Xi underscored China’s principled position that it is willing to work with the Unites States, in the spirit of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, to focus on cooperation, manage differences, and promote sound and steady development of China-U.S. relations. The two Presidents had in-depth exchange of views at length, and agreed that the two countries should enhance mutual understanding and avoid misperception and miscalculation; they should treat each other with candor and sincerity and not seek conflict or confrontation; and they should unclog communication channels and facilitate exchange and cooperation. This very important phone call has oriented China-U.S. relations that had been struggling to ascertain its bearings at a crossroads. It has also sent out the first encouraging news of this spring for the two countries and the whole world.

Friends,

In the past few years, China-U.S. relations deviated from the normal track, and ran into the biggest difficulties since the establishment of diplomatic ties. The root cause was that the previous U.S. administration, out of its own political needs, seriously distorted China’s future path and policy, and on that basis, took various measures to suppress and contain China, which inflicted immeasurable damage to bilateral relations. Today, to right the wrongs and bring the relationship back to the right track, the walls of misperceptions must be torn down first to clear the way for knowing, observing, and understanding China as it is.

**China is a country that always upholds and promotes people’s democracy**. Over a long time, Western countries have either seriously distorted or misunderstood China on democracy. In fact, democracy is not a patent of a few countries. It is a common value of humanity. There are various ways to realize democracy, and there is no fixed model or standard answer. True democracy must be rooted in the realities of a country and serve its people. The socialist democracy practiced by China upholds the organic unity of the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. It is a whole-process democracy. Important legislation and policy-making must go through set procedures and extensive discussions, and the final decision must be made on the basis of scientific and democratic deliberations. It is the most representative democracy where people’s matters are widely consulted for the greatest common denominator that suits the will of the whole society. For example, when drafting the 14th Five-year Plan, the Chinese government placed importance on the views from various sectors, and collected over one million comments and recommendations from online channels alone. Facts have shown that China’s socialist democracy embodies the will of the people and fits the country’s realities. It is thus endorsed by the people, and has made special, important contributions to the progress of political civilization of humankind.

**China is a country that is always committed to protecting and promoting human rights.** Asthe largest developing country, China takes a people-centered approach to human rights. We believe that the rights to subsistence and development are basic human rights of paramount importance. At the same time, we strive for comprehensive and coordinated development of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. Over the past 70 plus years since the founding of the People’s Republic, China’s per capita GDP has risen from less than U.S.$30 to over U.S.$10,000. More than 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty. We have eliminated abject poverty for the first time in China’s thousands years of history. Places inhabited by ethnic minorities, such as Xinjiang and Tibet, have stood out as shining examples of China’s human rights progress.

In the past 60 years and more, Xinjiang’s GDP expanded by over 200 times, with per capita GDP growing by nearly 40 times. And its average life expectancy increased from 30 to 72. In fighting COVID-19, we have made the utmost efforts to protect the right to life and health for each and every Chinese, and at all cost, we have curbed the spread of the virus in the fastest possible speed, and have done our best to raise the cure rate and lower the fatality rate. This has made it possible for the society and the economy to recover quickly.

**China is a country that always values and safeguards world peace.** China has benefited from world peace in its development, and has contributed to world peace in turn with its development. In the past 70 years and more, we didn’t provoke any war or occupy one inch of foreign territory. We seek to settle differences through dialogue and resolve disputes through negotiation. We have no intention to export ideology. Nor do we attempt to overturn the government of any country. We always stay on the new path of state-to-state relations to seek dialogue instead of confrontation and teaming up instead of ganging up. We actively participate in the good offices on hotspot issues. China is the second largest contributor to the UN’s regular budget and peacekeeping assessment. It is also the largest contributor of peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

**China is a country that always advocates and pursues win-win cooperation.** We take win-win cooperation as an important principle in our diplomacy. We believe in shared interests and common good. We help fellow developing countries with sincerity and good faith, and we do not attach political strings or impose our wills. In the past seven years since we launched the Belt and Road Initiative, China’s trade in goods with partner countries surpassed U.S.$7.8 trillion, and direct investment in those countries topped U.S.$110 billion. All this has been helpful for local employment and economic growth. Despite the global economic recession, China has hosted international import expos for three years to share with other countries the Chinese market opportunities. At the moment, China is following the new development vision, fostering a new development paradigm featuring “dual circulations”, with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other, and advancing opening-up at a higher level. This means a bigger market and more development opportunities for other countries.

**China is a country that always practices and upholds multilateralism.** China firmly believes in multilateralism. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the restoration of China’s lawful seat at the United Nations. During these five decades, China has upheld the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, supported the UN in exercising its authority and playing its due role. We believe that all countries are equal, regardless of their size. And we firmly promote greater democracy in international relations. We never seek to form small circles targeted at other countries. We never take actions unilaterally outside the authorization by the UN. When unilateralism and protectionism ran amok in the last few years, China immediately stepped forward to resist the tendency, and took concrete actions to uphold the basic norms of international relations and safeguard the common interests of developing countries. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres put it, China has become a backbone of multilateralism and an indispensable and trustworthy force for world peace and development.

China now is in an epoch-making year. We will celebrate the centenary of the CPC. The American people have come to know about the CPC for at least 85 years since Edgar Snow visited Yan’an in 1936. From the revolution years to reform and opening-up, from completing the building of a moderately prosperous society to fully building a modern socialist country, the CPC is always committed to the eternal great cause of the Chinese nation. It is showing even stronger vigor and vitality at its 100th anniversary.

We know that the new U.S. administration is reviewing and assessing its foreign policy. We hope that U.S policy makers will keep pace with the time, see clearly the trend of the world, abandon biases, give up unwarranted suspicions, and move to bring the China policy back to reason to ensure a healthy and steady development of China-U.S. relations.

Friends,

**How to bring China-U.S. relations back to the right track?**

Fifty years ago, Dr. Henry Kissinger made the ice-breaking visit to China, and with extraordinary political resolve, leaders of China and the United States jointly reopened the door of interaction which had been closed for decades. Fifty years later today, we must, with the sense of responsibility for the two countries and the world, make once again the sensible and right decision. Here are some key points of China’s position.

**First, it is important to respect each other and not to interfere in each other’s internal affairs.** This is a basic norm governing international relations. A good-mannered gentleman never thrusts his knife and fork into the food on someone else’s plate. Similarly, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, a teaching by Confucius, is widely accepted around the world. For major countries like China and the United States, there is a greater need to respect each other, rather than being fixated on remodeling, suppressing or even defeating the other. Such attempts have not succeeded, and never will. They will only cause problems and even conflicts unnecessarily.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China has all along respected the choices made by the American people, welcomed the strong growth momentum of the United States, and never interfered in its internal affairs. We have no intention to challenge or replace the United States. We are ready to have peaceful coexistence and seek common development with the United States. Likewise, we hope the United States will respect China’s core interests, national dignity, and rights to development. **We urge the United States to stop smearing the CPC and China’s political system, stop conniving at or even supporting the erroneous words and actions of separatist forces for “Taiwan independence”, and stop undermining China’s sovereignty and security on internal affairs concerning Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet.** Only with true mutual respect can China-U.S. relations achieve steady improvement and growth in the long run.

**Second, it is important to step up dialogue and properly manage the differences.** Given the differences between our two countries in social system, development stage, history and culture, it is natural for us to have disagreements. What is crucial is to enhance mutual understanding through dialogue and not allow our relations to be defined by disagreements. Over the past few years, the United States basically cut off bilateral dialogue at all levels. And this was one of the main reasons for the deterioration of China-U.S. relations.

At present, both sides should follow up on the phone call between the two Presidents on the eve of the Chinese New Year, act in the fundamental interests of the two peoples, take a forward-looking, open-minded and inclusive attitude, and reactivate or establish dialogue mechanisms in various areas and at various levels. The two sides should engage in candid dialogues on a broad range of issues in bilateral relations and on major regional and international issues, so as to get a clear understanding of each other’s policy intentions, sort out the critical issues in China-U.S. relations, and explore effective ways to manage sensitive issues, ward off risks and remove obstacles. China is, as always, open to dialogue. We stand ready to have candid communication with the U.S. side, and engage in dialogues aimed at solving problems.

**Third, it is important to move in the same direction to restart mutually beneficial cooperation.** Both countries gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation. This has been proved time and again by history and by practices since the diplomatic relationship was established. With regional hotspot issues and global challenges emerging one after another, areas for China-U.S. cooperation are expanding rather than shrinking, and the prospects for interaction are broadening rather than narrowing. More than ever China and the United States are more capable of getting big things done to the benefit of the two countries and the world at large.

Under the current circumstances, the two sides may start from easier things, interact actively, and build up goodwill. Economic cooperation and trade is an important part of China-U.S. relations. Despite COVID-19, two-way trade expanded last year against headwinds, reflecting the win-win nature and intrinsic vitality of bilateral trade ties. China welcomes greater success of U.S. businesses in China, and will continue to take effective measures to improve our business environment. At the same time, **we hope that the U.S. side will adjust its policies as soon as possible, among others, remove unreasonable tariffs on Chinese goods, lift its unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies and research and educational institutes, and abandon irrational suppression of China’s technological progress, so as to create necessary conditions for China-U.S. cooperation.** COVID-19, climate change and world economic recovery are the three most pressing tasks for the international community. As a major responsible country, China is ready to coordinate policies and work with the United States in these three areas for the good of the whole world.

**Fourth, it is important to clear the path for the resumption of bilateral exchanges in all areas.** Over the past 40-odd years of diplomatic relations, various sectors of the two countries have forged deep bonds. There are 50 pairs of sister provinces/states and 232 pairs of sister cities. China had been the biggest source of international students in the United States for ten years in a row. However, these normal exchanges were seriously disrupted in the past few years. The number of Chinese visitors to the United States, either for exchange programs or study, had plummeted. **The social foundation of bilateral relations was “poisoned”, which should not be allowed to happen in the first place.**

People-to-people friendship holds the key to state-to-state relations. The Chinese and American peoples enjoy a long-standing friendship, which should stay immune to the ups and downs in the political dimension of the relations. The late Professor Ezra Vogel, a prominent China scholar, called for a rational China policy till the last days of his life. He co-authored the open letter, entitled “China is not an enemy”, and it was co-signed by many well-known people. **We hope that the U.S. side will act as early as possible to lift its restrictions on Chinese educational and cultural groups, media outlets and institutions for overseas Chinese affairs in the United States, remove its obstructions for U.S. subnational governments and social sectors to engage with China, and** encourage and support the resumption of normal exchange programs between universities, research institutes and of students. China is ready to work with the United States with an open mind to build a good environment for people-to-people exchanges.

Friends,

In the final analysis, the future of China-U.S. relationship is in the hands of the two peoples. Its improvement always requires support of the two societies. I sincerely hope that today’s Lanting Forum will be a platform for candid discussions and consensus building as well as a source of vision, insight and wisdom for a better China-U.S. relationship. I hope that the two sides will work together to steer the giant ship of China-U.S. relations back to the course of sound development toward a bright future with boundless prospects.

Thank you!