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***As Delivered***

Thanks Dato Zakaria – Dr. Zak -- for the kind introduction. Unlike the other panelists, I haven't been your student, but one can only hope!

I'd like to acknowledge the members of the panel, the Midas fellows, and all of our distinguished guests joining us today. I also want to recognize Ambassador Joe Yun, who is a great friend and mentor to me.

I especially want to express my appreciation to my good friend General Zulkifeli for inviting me to be here. Malaysia is fortunate, indeed, to have the General at the head of your Armed Forces.

I'd also like to thank Prime Minister Najib for meeting with me this morning. The Prime Minister spoke eloquently and forcefully about the challenges to this region when he opened this Forum yesterday.

I look forward to visiting once again with Defense Minister Hishammuddin tomorrow. And thanks to the Malaysian Parliament for enabling the Putrajaya Forum panel; events like this are important to help us all find cooperative solutions to address global challenges.

Some of these challenges were recently outlined by my boss, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter: the ongoing fight against ISIL and terrorism ... a provocative and expansionist China ... a revanchist and increasingly aggressive Russia ... a dangerous North Korea with its quest for nuclear weapons ... and Iran. Not only are these challenges global in nature, obviously they are prevalent in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

One of the first things Secretary Carter said to me when I took command of PACOM less than a year ago is: "Security is like oxygen - when you have enough of it, you pay little attention to it. But when you don't have enough, you can think of nothing else."

So I'd like to start my formal remarks this afternoon by personally thanking all of you here for your commitment toward the region's security matters. I applaud your

efforts to enhance the rules-based security architecture that has served this region so well for decades.

The United States Pacific Command, or PACOM as we like to call it, works to support institutions and initiatives that are critical to addressing regional challenges. So to generate discussion at today's panel, I'd like to briefly mention some of the ways that we can help mitigate these threats that degrade our security and stability ... and place at risk our prosperity and well-being.

Perhaps it's best I set the stage by providing a little context about PACOM, America's oldest and largest military combatant command.

We're made up of nearly 400,000 personnel – Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard and Department of Defense civilians – who stand the watch over half the Earth ... from Hollywood to Bollywood ... and penguins to polar bears.

Headquartered in Hawaii, PACOM is responsible for all U.S. military operations in this vast area, including exercises and capacity building with our allies and partners.

Although many refer to this region as the Asia-Pacific, I prefer to call it the Indo-Asia-Pacific – this more accurately captures the fact that the Indian and Pacific Oceans are the economic lifeblood that links India, Australia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Oceania and the United States. Oceans that once were barriers keeping us apart are now super highways that bring us together.

Strengthening that economic connective tissue through diplomatic and security partnership is what America's strategic Rebalance to the Indo-Asia-Pacific is all about.

Enhancing our collective prosperity is a big reason why President Obama initiated our Rebalance a few years ago, a clear sign that the United States recognizes this region as the world's economic and political center of gravity.

In the South China Sea alone, approximately \$5.3 trillion in annual global trade relies on unimpeded sea lanes ... \$1.2 trillion of this sea-based trade is destined to or from the United States. The Strait of Malacca alone sees over 25 percent of global oil shipments and 50 percent of all natural gas transits each day.

The rules-based order, anchored by like-minded nations like Malaysia, the United States and many others, has delivered the greatest run of peace and prosperity this planet has ever known. The pace and scale of economic growth in our region are two of the great success stories of modern times.

And one of the great success stories of the ongoing Rebalance, in my opinion, is our bilateral relationship with Malaysia. The U.S. is committed to deepening already strong bilateral ties and nurturing interoperability between our armed forces on important issues such as humanitarian assistance and disaster response, counter-terrorism, maritime domain awareness, counter-piracy, and international peacekeeping.

Keris Strike, our primary annual exercise, is expanding and becoming more complex. And as U.S. Army Pacific commander General Vince Brooks said during his visit here last January, we're also moving forward with our Pacific Pathways initiative to increase collaboration between our land forces.

The long-standing military-to-military cooperation between Malaysia and the United States provides a solid foundation for enhanced multilateral collaboration ... and that's important, because the combined effort of like-minded nations is critical to maintain the prosperous conditions set by the current international rules-based order. And working together is the best way to address regional challenges and maintain the peace and security we all desire.

When I get up every morning, I see many challenges to our region. Because we all live in the "Ring of Fire," we'll continue to deal throughout our lifetimes with natural disasters like the earthquakes experienced this week in Ecuador and Japan. My prayers go out to all impacted by these tragedies.

In addition to natural disasters, we also have challenges involving terrorism – as the previous speaker spoke about. Unresolved historical tensions, militarization of the South China Sea and the Arctic, transnational seaborne crime, piracy, and threats in the space and cyber domains.

These threats suck oxygen from the room ... and they're transnational in nature, impacting the entire region ... and therefore require a transnational approach. No one nation can shoulder the task on its own.

So I'd like to touch upon some opportunities that, if better maximized, in my opinion, can help us counter these transnational challenges.

First, I'm always seeking ways to support regional institutions that engender cooperation among partners and friends. We see this with ASEAN, the 10-state organization in the heart of the region.

As U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice recently said, the impetus behind America's Rebalance policy was to forge a network of partners throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific to sustain a rules-based international order. And since ASEAN is founded on common principles like respect for international law, free trade and

peaceful resolution of disputes, it's a natural partner for the United States ... and from day one has been a core focus of the Rebalance.

So I'm pleased that the ASEAN Defense Ministers Summit will be hosted in Hawaii this fall and I look forward to supporting that important engagement.

I also want to give a shout out to U.S. mission to ASEAN, especially Ambassador Nina Hachigian, who has continually made strides in helping the region improve maritime domain awareness and combat the challenge of illegal fishing. I'd also like to thank and acknowledge Malaysia for hosting last year's ASEAN chair and for working to better position the organization to peacefully address maritime disputes. This is leadership, ladies and gentlemen. While the United States takes no position on competing sovereignty claims, we do take a strong position on protecting the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace guaranteed to all countries. To protect these rights, PACOM routinely conducts Freedom of Navigation and other operations in the region.

When Secretary Carter and Defense Minister Hishammuddin embarked on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt on patrol in the South China Sea last November, it was another demonstration of America's commitment to maintain security and stability in this region.

And when Secretary Carter and Philippine Defense Secretary Gazmin embarked on the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis again in the South China Sea just last week, we again emphasized that the United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows.

As PACOM military forces continue the routine and robust presence we've maintained in the region for the last 70 years, I encourage all claimants to refrain from unilateral actions that undermine regional stability and instead take steps to create space for meaningful diplomatic solutions to emerge. One big step would be to conclude a binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Another important step to enhance regional security architecture involves the Proliferation Security Initiative, or PSI. This global effort – currently endorsed by 105 nations – exists to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction or WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials.

I previously mentioned some threats that underscore the need for all of us to take a more proactive counter-proliferation posture and put an end to WMD-related trafficking. It's essential that we invite all like-minded nations to join the PSI, encouraging them to exhaust every effort, within their governmental framework, to support this initiative.

This includes examining ways to strengthen national laws, including on export control, and international frameworks, such as ongoing commitment of each endorser to undertake tangible interdiction actions in accordance with its resources and national authorities.

WMD proliferation is a shared challenge ... and countering the threat demands a transnational approach ... so I applaud Malaysia for becoming one of the most recent endorsers of PSI. Regional nations such as China, India, and Indonesia would make a great addition to the PSI.

Finally, I'd like to address the scourge of international terrorism that impacts all of us, and I want to join our previous panelist who took this podium. Permeating the region, is a tide of violent extremists, including the terrorist organization ISIL, guided by false ideologies engaging in violent actions against random targets and resulting in losses of innocent lives. Many of our friends here in Asia have been victims of terrorism, and many of them are close counter-terrorism partners.

We especially appreciate the steps Malaysia has taken to address the legitimate security threat resulting from the increase in foreign terrorist fighters from Southeast Asia. As Prime Minister Najib said earlier this year, the Islamic State is a "very real" threat, so I applaud Malaysia's efforts to tackle extreme ideologies. Such efforts by all nations in the region are not only good for the safety of people in individual countries, but they're good for the entire global community. So I encourage all like-minded nations to join the United States in our counter-ISIL campaign.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I think about the oxygen required to maintain a secure and prosperous region, I realize that I've used quite a bit of it by running my mouth for the last 10 minutes.

So I'll conclude by restating that only together can we mitigate the threats to the rules-based security architecture that has served this region well for decades.

Only together can we protect the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea, air, space and cyberspace guaranteed to all nations under international law, and that are essential to prosperity, stability, and security of this region.

Only together can we stop WMD proliferation and crush terrorism, including ISIL.

Indeed, we are stronger together.

For decades, the U.S. Pacific Command has demonstrated a strong commitment to the collective security of this region. And we stand ready to work on new ideas that continue that commitment.

We value our partnership with Malaysia and other like-minded nations in the region. And I value engagements like this Putrajaya Forum where we can collaborate and share ideas. So I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can help keep this region secure, prosperous and peaceful.

Thank you very much.