

# The Nation

**Islamabad**

**13 November 2017**

## **Trump Visits China**

**Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik**



---

U.S. President Donald Trump has been warming up ties with China . As part of the third leg of his 12-day marathon Asian tour, he arrived in Beijing on 8 November for a three-day state visit to exchange in-depth views on issues and concerns of both sides. His visit to Beijing looks highly fruitful, rewarding, and full of mutual gains to overcome mutual uncertainties on a number of matters, trade issues, and North Korea. Trump exchanged a warmer tone with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Both leaders' chemistry also worked well during talks. Xi commented that "China-U.S. ties are now at new historic starting point."

Earlier, Trump visited Tokyo and Seoul. In Tokyo, he taken a relatively tougher stance on the issue of North Korea but turned to a soft stance in Seoul and offered a deal to North Korea to come to thenegotiating table. In China , Trump remained further soft on mutual issues with China , trade, and North Korea, which was seen as a sea change in

Trump's policy toward China since coming into power. Xi held a grand ceremony to welcome him at the Great Hall of the People on 9 November.

Both leaders attended a business exchange and witnessed the signing of deals worth as high as US\$ 250 billion, being calling a "true miracle" by Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan. The deal was made by big American companies like Boeing Co., General Electric Co., Ford Motor, Goldman Sachs, Bell Helicopter, Terex Utilities, Viroment, and Caterpillar. Chinese companies included Qualcomm Inc, China Energy Investment Corp., Qualcomm, OPPO, Vivo, China Aviation Suppliers Holding Co. Sinopec, Bank of China , and China Investment Corp. The U.S. companies were also welcomed by Xi to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, making Chinese business open and transparent with no strings attached.

Common issues that often come on the forefront of media were trade friction, successful de-nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and the South China Sea as core issues between the United States and China . How these issues will figure in the U.S-China bilateral talks would be seen positively in Trump's discussion with Xi. The actual bilateral relationship is greater than these issues. Diplomatic and security issues, people-to-people issues, law enforcement and cyber-security were some of the crucial matters of bilateral exchanges.

Moreover, bilateral trade is a thorny issue between the two big trading partners. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, China is currently the largest trading partner of the United States with US\$578.6 billion total two-way trade in 2016. Goods exports totalled US\$ 115.8 billion; goods imports totalled US\$ 462.8 billion, making the trade deficit of US\$ 347 billion, "shockingly" imbalance for Trump to understand but China just cannot be "blamed" for that gap but the "U.S. itself" for this "one-sided" and "unfair" relationship, he simply admitted in Beijing. He blamed the past U.S. administrations for allowing this deficit to increase. The US\$ 250 billion business deals would greatly address to reduce American trade deficit with China .

Trump appreciated Xi's efforts to rein in North Korea's weapons program. Trump threw an olivebranch to North Korea during his South Korean visit. Beijing already believes to resolve the North Korean missiles and nuclear program through negotiations. The consensus would help join other stakeholders to amicably resolve the looming crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Both the United States and China agreed to work on North Korea missiles and nuclear program together. They will not accept the nuclear status of North Korea. This is a big outcome. There are Chinese limits of leverage on North Korea. China is fully understood and no longer misunderstood by the United States on North Korean issue.

The Trump-Xi talks in Beijing created a new global consensus to resolve a number of hot issues in the Asia-Pacific. Making further space for China and Japan to talk, creating congenial atmosphere for the North Korean resolution, the two-Koreas talks, combating terrorism, ensuring cyber-security, and respecting the position of both China and the United States in the South China Sea, thereby protecting world peace, stability, and prosperity. The United States will stick to “One China” policy. Trump and Xi also touched on cooperation on achieving peace in Afghanistan through an Afghan-led solution.

Chinese media hailed Trump’s visit to China . He adopted a soft tone toward China on thorny issues like trade friction and North Korea. The sober personal relationship developed between him and Xi would decrease bilateral tension in the days to come. The visit was more successful than expected by the two sides. It was productive. Global Times wrote on 9 November that “Xi-Trump meeting extends cooperative spirit” and “instils positive factors” in the Sino-American ties. The paper finds “trade and communications are becoming broader and more extensive” between the two nations. Both leaders have offered a hand of friendship to each other before attending the 25th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders’ Meeting at Da Nang in Vietnam. Trump did not play out a game in China but he sincerely discussed crucial matters to build good relations between the two nations.

*The writer is Director of the China-Pakistan Study Center at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. He writes on East Asian affairs.*

<http://nation.com.pk/E-Paper/lahore/2017-11-13/page-7>