

President Xi's Speech at Arab League Headquarters

President Xi Jinping
CN TV (Beijing)
January 22, 2016

Work Together for a Bright Future of China-Arab Relations

Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the Arab League Headquarters

Cairo, 21 January 2016

Your Excellency Nabil el-Araby, Secretary-General of the Arab League,
Your Excellency Sherif Ismail, Prime Minister of Egypt,
Distinguished Ministers,
Your Excellencies Diplomatic Envoys of Arab States,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to meet with Arab friends. This is my first visit to the Arab world as Chinese President. First of all, on behalf of the Chinese government and people and in my own name, I wish to pay high tribute and extend best wishes to the Arab states and people.

An ancient Chinese philosopher said, "Visit those who you feel close to even without meeting them before, and invite those you cannot forget long after your paths crossed." Coming to the Arab world, my colleagues and I all feel a sense of affinity. This is because in their exchanges across time and space, the Chinese and Arab peoples have been sincere with each other, forging friendship along the ancient Silk Road, sharing weal and woe in the fight for national independence, and helping each other in building their own countries. Such trust is unbreakable and cannot be bought with money.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

The Middle East is a land of abundance. Yet we are pained to see it still plagued by war and conflict. Where should the Middle East be headed? This is the question the international community keeps asking. The people here want less conflict and suffering, more peace and dignity.

An Arab poet once wrote, when you turn to the sun, you will see hope. There is hope in the Middle East, and all parties should look for it by pursuing dialogue and development.

— The key to addressing differences is to enhance dialogue. Use of force offers no solution to problems, neither will zero-sum mentality bring enduring peace. The process of dialogue could be protracted, and may even suffer setbacks, but it entails minimal adverse after-effects and produces the most sustainable outcome. Parties to the conflict should begin dialogue, identify their biggest common interests, and focus on advancing the process of political settlement. The international community should respect the will and

role of those directly involved, the neighboring countries and regional organizations, instead of imposing a solution from outside. For dialogue to succeed, there is need for utmost patience and flexibility.

— The key to overcoming difficulties is to accelerate development. Turmoil in the Middle East stems from the lack of development, and the ultimate solution will depend on development, which bears on everyone's well-being and dignity. It is a race against time and a struggle between hope and disillusion. Only when young people are able to live a fulfilled life with dignity through development can hope prevail in their heart. Only then will they voluntarily reject violence, extremist ideologies and terrorism.

— The key to choosing a right path is to make sure that it suits the national conditions. There is more than just one path leading to modernization. Given the varied historical conditions, it is only natural that different countries may choose different paths of development. As an Arab proverb reminds us, "Nothing can scratch your skin quite like your own nails." When exploring development paths, one will get nowhere by blindly copying others. Only by proceeding from one's own realities can the right path be found. The development path of a country can only be determined by its people in light of its history, cultural traditions, and level of economic and social development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

The Arab League is the symbol of unity among Arab states. To uphold the lawful national rights and interests of the Palestinian people is the lofty mission of the Arab League and the shared responsibility of the international community. The Palestinian issue should not be marginalized, still less should it fall into oblivion. It is an issue of fundamental importance to peace in the Middle East. To bring an end to the conflict, the international community should not only promote the resumption of talks and implementation of peace agreements, but also uphold fairness and justice. One cannot do without the other. Without fairness and justice, peace accord can only bring about a cold peace. The international community should stick to the principle of fairness and justice, and address historical injustice as soon as possible.

In this context, I wish to call on the international community to take more effective measures, resume peace talks at the political level and advance reconstruction on the economic front so as to bring hope to the Palestinian people at an early date. China firmly supports the Middle East peace process and supports the establishment of a State of Palestine enjoying full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. We understand the legitimate aspirations of Palestine to integrate into the international community as a state. We are in favor of putting in place a new mechanism to promote peace on the Middle East question and support efforts made by the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation toward this end. To improve Palestinian people's well-being, the Chinese government will provide 50 million RMB yuan of grant to the Palestinian side and support the solar power station project in Palestine.

The current state of affairs in Syria is unsustainable. There will be no winner out of a conflict, and it is the people in the region who suffer. To address the hot-spots, what is most urgent now is to bring about ceasefire. Political dialogue is the path to a fundamental solution. At the same time, humanitarian assistance brooks no delay. This year, the Chinese side will provide 230 million RMB yuan of additional humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and Yemen.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

At the Ministerial Conference of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing in June 2014, I called for joint Chinese and Arab efforts to build the Belt and Road Initiative. I suggested that we take energy

cooperation as one priority, infrastructure development and trade and investment facilitation as two key areas, and nuclear energy, aviation satellite and new energy as the three high-tech areas for breakthrough. This so-called “1+2+3” cooperation pattern was warmly received by our Arab friends, and now we have seen early harvest.

— Top-level designing is getting more mature. China and Arab states have set up the mechanism of Strategic and Political Dialogue. China has entered into strategic partnership with eight Arab states and signed agreements with six Arab states on jointly developing the Belt and Road Initiative. Seven Arab states have become founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

— Pragmatic cooperation is thriving. Being the second largest trading partner of Arab states, China has signed US\$46.4 billion of new project contracts with them. FTA negotiations have resumed between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and China and witnessed substantial progress. There are two RMB clearing centers in Arab states and two joint investment funds between China and Arab states. The China-Arab States Technology Transfer Center has been officially inaugurated. The two sides have agreed to set up training centers for peaceful use of nuclear energy and clean energy respectively, and to introduce the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System to Arab states. The second China-Arab States Expo has seen the signing of cooperation projects worth 183 billion RMB yuan, serving as an important platform for our joint efforts to build the Belt and Road.

— People-to-people and cultural exchanges have become more diversified. We have carried out a variety of activities during the Year of China-Arab Friendship, signed agreement on the first joint university and started cooperation between 100 cultural institutions from both sides. The number of Arab students in China has exceeded 14,000. There are now 11 Confucius Institutes in Arab states. Every week, there are 183 flights between China and Arab states.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

China follows the path of peaceful development, an independent foreign policy of peace and a win-win strategy of opening-up. One of our priorities is to take an active part in global governance, pursue mutually beneficial cooperation, assume international responsibilities and obligations, expand convergence of interests with other countries and forge a community of shared future for mankind.

We need to make good use of the coming five years as the crucial period to jointly build the Belt and Road and set out the guiding principles of peace, innovation, guidance, governance and integration. We should be builders of peace, promoters of development, boosters of industrialization, supporters of stability and partners of people-to-people exchanges in the Middle East.

China is ready to work with Arab states to jointly build the Belt and Road and expand common ground in our respective effort to achieve national renewal.

First, we need to hold high the banner of peace and dialogue and take steps to promote stability. The Belt and Road Initiative calls for exchanges between nations and civilizations for mutual understanding, rather than mutual resentment. It is important to remove, rather than erect, walls between each other, take dialogue as the golden rule and be good neighbors with each other.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Mencius said, “Ensuring the right conduct and uphold justice should be the way to follow across the land.” With regard to China’s policy measures toward the Middle East, China decides its position on issues on the basis of their own merits and the fundamental interests of the people in the Middle East. Instead of looking for a proxy in the Middle East, we promote peace talks; instead of seeking any sphere of influence, we call on all parties to join the circle of friends for the Belt

and Road Initiative; instead of attempting to fill the “vacuum”, we build a cooperative partnership network for win-win outcomes.

The Chinese people believe in the philosophy of change and adaptation. The Arabs also say “continuing in the same state is impossible”. We respect the Arab states’ aspiration for reform, and support Arab states in their efforts to independently explore the path of development. To properly handle the relations between reform, development and stability is of vital importance. This is like camel racing, a popular sport in the Arab world. If the camel runs too fast at the beginning, it may be exhausted toward the end of the race. Yet if it starts too slow, it may lag behind in the end. Only the rider who keeps a good balance between speed and stamina can claim the final victory.

The spread of terrorist and extremist ideas poses a serious challenge to peace and development. Countries need to have consensus about the fight against terrorist and extremist forces. Terrorism knows no borders. There is no distinction between good and bad terrorism. And there should be no double standards in fighting terrorism. For the same reason, terrorism shall not be linked with any specific ethnic group or religion, as it will only create ethnic and religious tensions. No policy can be effective on its own, and a comprehensive strategy that addresses both symptoms and root causes must be applied in the fight against terrorism.

To this end, China will set up a China-Arab research center on reform and development. We will hold a roundtable on inter-civilization dialogue and eradicating extremism within the framework of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and organize exchange of visits by 100 renowned religious leaders. We will enhance cooperation on cyber security, block the online transmission of audio and video materials instigating violence and terrorism, and jointly participate in the formulation of an international counter-terrorism convention in the cyberspace. We will provide US\$300 million of assistance to support such projects as law enforcement cooperation and police training to help regional countries enhance their capacity in maintaining law and order.

Second, we need to advance structural adjustment and adopt new ways of cooperation. Given the ever more fierce global competition in development, we need to upgrade our cooperation. We need to advance the “oil and gas plus” cooperation model and further tap the potential of cooperation. China is ready to strengthen cooperation with Arab states across the entire industrial chain from upstream to midstream to downstream, renew long-term oil purchase agreement, and enter into strategic energy cooperation with Arab states that features mutual benefit, reliability and enduring friendship. It is important to set up new mechanism for trade and investment and expand space for cooperation.

As China is already on the fast track of outbound investment and Arab states boast strong sovereign wealth funds, we may sign more currency swap and mutual investment agreements, expand RMB settlement business, accelerate investment facilitation and steer the investment fund and private capital of our two sides toward major projects under the Belt and Road Initiative. It is important to step up high-tech cooperation and foster new driving force for our cooperation. On the basis of the existing technology transfer and training centers, the two sides may speed up the introduction of new and high technologies such as high-speed rail, nuclear power, aerospace, new energy and genetic engineering so as to add more value to the pragmatic cooperation between China and Arab states.

For this purpose, China will implement the action plan for new ways of cooperation, explore a model of package cooperation involving oil, loan and project, and extend the traditional oil and gas cooperation chain to the development of new and renewable energy. China will take part in the development of industrial parks in the Middle East with priority given to the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone. By means of personnel training and joint planning and building of factories, we will integrate the whole process from processing and manufacturing to transportation and export. We will launch China-

Arab states scientific and technological partnership program and jointly build 10 laboratories on modern agriculture, ICT and health. We will hold China-Arab States BeiDou Cooperation Forum.

Third, we need to advance industrialization in the Middle East and carry out production capacity cooperation. Production capacity cooperation is consistent with the overall trend of economic diversification in the Middle East. It can help Middle East countries embark on a new path of efficient, people-oriented and green industrialization.

Chinese equipment is of high quality yet inexpensive price. Combined with technology transfer, personnel training and strong financing support, they can help countries in the Middle East develop urgently needed industries such as iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, construction materials, glass, car manufacturing and power plant with relative low cost to fill the gap in their industrial structure and foster new comparative advantages. China's competitive production capacity and the human resources in the Middle East, when combined, will deliver more and better job opportunities for the region.

This morning, I attended the inauguration ceremony of the second phase of the China-Egypt Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone. The project will bring to Egypt over 100 companies in such sectors as textile, garment, oil equipment, motorcycle and solar energy, and create over 10,000 job opportunities for Egypt.

In order to promote the industrialization process of the Middle East, China will work with Arab states to launch an action plan for production capacity cooperation. Under this initiative, China will set up a US\$15 billion special loan for industrialization in the Middle East to be used on production capacity cooperation and infrastructure projects in regional countries, and provide countries in the Middle East with US\$10 billion of commercial loans to support production capacity cooperation. China will also provide US\$10 billion of concessional loans with even more favorable terms for regional countries. Meanwhile, China will launch a US\$20 billion joint investment fund with the UAE and Qatar to primarily invest in traditional energy, infrastructure development and high-end manufacturing industries in the Middle East.

Fourth, we need to strengthen cultural exchanges and mutual learning and take actions to enhance friendship. Like the diverse species in Mother Nature, cultural diversity gives life to our planet. The Middle East is the meeting place of ancient human civilizations and home to diverse and splendid civilizations and cultures. China will continue to unswervingly support Middle East and Arab states in preserving their ethnic and cultural traditions, and oppose all forms of discrimination and prejudice against specific ethnic group and religion.

The Chinese and Arab civilizations each have their own systems and distinctive features, yet they both embody the common ideals and aspirations of mankind for development and progress, and they both champion such values as moderation, peace, forgiveness, tolerance and self-restraint. We should promote dialogue among civilizations in a spirit of inclusiveness and mutual learning and explore together values in our respective cultural tradition that remain relevant today as positive guidance for good relations.

The regions covered by the Belt and Road Initiative are vibrant in people-to-people exchanges. The close ties between our peoples must be nurtured through constant efforts. Yesterday, I met with ten old Arab friends who received the Award for Outstanding Contribution to China-Arab Friendship. It is the hard work of generations of friendly people from both sides that has enabled the seedlings of China-Arab friendship to grow into luxuriant and evergreen trees.

In order to ensure the smooth flow of talents and ideas along the Belt and Road, we will implement the "hundred, thousand and ten thousand" project for enhancing China-Arab friendship. Under the project, we will launch a "Silk Road Book Translation" program for the translation of 100 Chinese and Arab classics

into each other's language. We will strengthen connectivity between our think tanks and invite 100 experts and scholars to visit each other's countries. We will provide 1,000 training opportunities for young Arab leaders and invite 1,500 leaders of Arab political parties to visit China to bring up young envoys and political leaders for China-Arab friendship. We will also provide 10,000 scholarships and 10,000 training opportunities for Arab states and organize mutual visits for 10,000 Chinese and Arab artists.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

As an Egyptian proverb goes, "Man fears time. Time fears the pyramid." To me, nothing is more enduring than the great spirit of reform and freedom that defines the Egyptian people. Today's Egypt represents the hope of a renewed civilization and carries the mission of national rejuvenation. China firmly supports the efforts of the Egyptian government and people and looks to Egypt to become a pillar of stability and model of development in the region.

In the pursuit of national rejuvenation, setbacks and pains are hardly avoidable. Yet if the path is correct, one will eventually reach his destination. China and Arab states must forge ahead hand in hand to scale new heights, deepen friendship and cooperation, and make a joint endeavor for the lofty cause of peace and development for mankind.

Shukran. Thank you.

Source: <http://english.cntv.cn/2016/01/22/ARTIadCQDyVQjG0ADckR2tcl160122.shtml>