

Xi Jinping's Historic US visit

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Both China and US must ensure that they pave the way for cooperation

Xi Jinping's maiden visit to USA as China's President, spread over a week, occurred at an opportune moment in the history of both nations as well as the world. Coming on the eve of the 70th Anniversary of the advent of United Nations General Assembly where the US was swarming with leaders from all over the world including Pope Francis, Xi Jinping's state visit was planned so immaculately that it left an indelible mark. Systematised to cover over a dozen burning issues in diverse moots, debates, summits and addresses, President Xi made the optimum utilisation of the opportunities that have left his admirers in awe and even his detractors gasping over his power to seize the opportunity.

At the first port of call Seattle, the East Pacific coast city, President Xi addressed a welcome banquet jointly hosted by Washington State government and friendly communities. Xi Jinping had prepared his speech painstakingly and received standing ovation as he touched the right chords for his references to the famous 1993 Hollywood movie 'Sleepless in Seattle' which he stated had made the city almost a household name in China. Mentioning the ongoing American political drama television series 'House of Cards', endeared him to his audience proving him being up to date with US entertainment industry. Speaking of the "Chinese Dream" was relevant since it is in consonance with the "American Dream".

Whether he was being hosted by his US counterpart Barack Obama at the White House or addressing a joint press stakeout or visiting educational institutions or sponsoring the Sino-US Food Wisdom Valley establishment ceremony reception, speaking to industrial giants or jointly chairing the China and the United Nations roundtable on South-South cooperation in the United Nations Headquarters in New York or addressing the UN Development Summit, President Xi Jinping was at his eloquent best in not only dispelling doubts regarding Chinese economic reforms, alleged cyber attacks or hegemonic designs in the South China Sea.

In the same backdrop, the Chinese First Lady, Peng Liyuan, who has been a performing artist and music teacher for many years and is currently the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and the UNESCO Special Envoy for the Promotion of Education for Girls and Women, participated effectively in numerous events. Her compassion for the sick, impoverished, undernourished and uneducated, visible during her exchanges with organisations and people from the US and other countries, made deep impressions. China and indeed the international community is blessed to have a Chinese first lady who is willing to contribute to social issues worldwide, expend her energy and attention to finding lasting solutions to some deep rooted problems voluntarily.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon greeted President Xi warmly, recognising that China was an important member of the international community and was an indispensable partner of the United Nations agenda. He reiterated that China had long been the cause of world peace and development to promote the proper settlement of international and regional issues and had played an active role, and made outstanding contributions.

Xi Jinping, on his part, while addressing the UN Development Summit, in his speech titled “To seek together to do win-win cooperation for sustainable development partner”, announced a series of initiatives to support the United Nations development agenda.

In the past, there used to be “North-South Dialogues”, where the opulent North was expected to address the imbalance with the impoverished South but ended up exploiting the deprived and destitute states. Setting a new trend, amidst tremendous applause, Xi Jinping announced a series of goodwill measures, starting with China setting up a “South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund”, in which the first phase will comprise \$2 billion to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda of developing countries with no strings attached. He pledged that China will continue to increase investment in LDCs, and strive to reach 12 billion US dollars by 2030. China will exempt government related interest-free loan debt to the least developed countries, landlocked and small-island developing countries by the end of 2015. China will set up a knowledge centre for international development, research and exchange with other countries for development theory and development practice in accordance with their respective national conditions.

China will build world’s energy initiative to promote a clean and green way to meet the global demand for electricity. China is also willing to work with relevant parties to continue to promote “along the way” construction, promote the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS Development Bank to play a role in contributing to economic growth and people’s livelihood in developing countries.

In the realm of environment and climate change, China silenced its critics by announcing the establishment of a “cap-and-trade programme”, the world’s largest carbon-trading system by 2017, which pertains to putting a price on carbon dioxide emissions and encouraging big polluters to develop alternative ways to generate energy. Ultimately, the programme is intended to curb the planet-warming emissions that are generated by burning fossil fuels.

This is the first time in the history of the world that two leading nations, instead of competing with each other and jostling for supremacy, are willing to pool resources to make the world a better place.

China has learnt the relevant lessons from history, itself suffered slavery and is determined not to repeat them. No wonder that President Xi Jinping categorically stated that the US and China should avoid the “Thucydides Trap”. He was alluding to the Greek philosopher—whose theory warns of the dangers two parties face when a rising power rivals a ruling power—as Athens did in 5th century BC and Germany did at the end of the 19th century or the 20th Century Cold War era between US and USSR.

Abraham Lincoln once said: “The best way to predict the future is to invent the future.” China and the US are destined to jointly lead; they must ensure that they do not adopt the path of conflict but pave the way for cooperation since unity is strength

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