

Pak-China Dosti Zindabad*

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“My friend’s lovely image dwells in the mirror of my heart; I tilt my head slightly, and here it comes into my sight.” Just as this line from an Urdu poem describes, Pakistan is such a good friend in my heart. When I was young, I heard many touching stories about Pakistan and the friendship between our two countries. To name just a few, I learned that the Pakistani people were working hard to build their beautiful country, and that Pakistan opened an air corridor for China to reach out to the world and supported China in restoring its lawful seat in the United Nations. The stories have left me with a deep impression. I look forward to my upcoming state visit to Pakistan.

This will be my first trip to Pakistan, but I feel as if I am going to visit the home of my own brother. Over the years, thanks to the nurturing of generations of leaders and people from all sectors of both countries, China-Pakistan friendship has flourished like a tree growing tall and strong. No matter how the circumstances in our two countries, the region and the world change, our bilateral relations have enjoyed sound and steady growth. We have always respected, understood and supported each other on issues concerning our respective core interests. In Pakistan, our relationship is poetically hailed as a friendship “higher than mountains, deeper than oceans and sweeter than honey.” In China, Pakistan is known as a sincere and reliable friend. Obviously, China-Pakistan friendship is deeply felt in the hearts of our two peoples.

Over a long period of time, China and Pakistan have conducted all-round, mutually beneficial and fruitful cooperation in various fields,

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bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries. At present, the two sides are working together to steadily advance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Committed to building a China-Pakistan community of common destiny, we cooperate to expand our converging interests and strive for common development. Our aim is to deliver even more benefits to our peoples and realise brighter development prospects.

The government and people of Pakistan are pursuing economic development and the improvement of people's livelihood. At the same time, Pakistan is resolutely fighting terrorism and extremism. As a result, good progress has been made in national security and social stability. As Pakistan's good friend and brother, China is truly happy for every progress and achievement of Pakistan. I believe that as long as the Pakistani people work together in unity, Pakistan will surely embark on a development path suited to its national conditions, achieve even greater success in national development and realise its dream of becoming an "Asian tiger" at an early date.

The Chinese people are working toward the Chinese dream of great national rejuvenation. It is a dream about peace, development and win-win cooperation. What we pursue is not just the interests of the Chinese people, but also the common interests of the world people.

China wishes to live in harmony with Pakistan and other countries in South Asia and contribute its share to the development of this region. The aim of China's initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is to promote common development by enhancing connectivity among countries along these routes. We hope that this initiative will enable us to work together with South Asian countries to fulfill our common dream of rapid development.

Pakistan is the first stop of my first overseas visit this year. During my visit, I will meet with President Mamnoon Hussain, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other Pakistani leaders as well as people from various sectors for in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relations and issues of shared interest. I look forward to working with Pakistani leaders during the visit to explore the general framework for bilateral cooperation, make

substantive progress in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and practical cooperation in other fields and push for the furtherance of bilateral ties at a higher level.

China and Pakistan need to align development strategies more closely to realise the dreams of our peoples. Both our countries face the important task of economic development and improvement of people's livelihood. We need to enhance strategic coordination, deepen practical cooperation and work together for common development. We will build the China-Pakistan community of common destiny and set a fine example for such efforts by China and its neighbouring countries.

China and Pakistan need to align economic and trade strategies more closely to deepen economic interdependence. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is located in where the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road meet. It is, therefore, a major project of the "Belt and Road" initiative. We need to form a "1+4" cooperation structure with the Economic Corridor at the centre and the Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure and industrial cooperation being the four key areas to drive development across Pakistan and deliver tangible benefits to its people.

China and Pakistan need to align security concerns more closely to strengthen security cooperation. The security interests of China and Pakistan are closely related. Our cooperation in the security and economic fields reinforce each other, and they must be advanced simultaneously. We need to deepen defence cooperation and enhance coordination and collaboration on regional hotspot issues.

China and Pakistan need to intensify people-to-people and cultural exchanges to promote inter-civilisation dialogue. On the basis of our excellent political ties, we should build a momentum of people-to-people exchanges and set a good example of mutual learning and friendly cooperation between different civilisations. This year is the China-Pakistan Year of Friendly Exchanges. The two sides should work closely together to ensure the success of the celebration activities. We need to increase mutual visits, language training, youth exchange and cooperation

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between sister cities, media and think-tanks so that China-Pakistan friendship will have strong popular support, and the hearts of our peoples will be brought even closer.

China and Pakistan need to coordinate diplomatic strategies more closely to build a harmonious neighbourhood. Our two countries have common or similar positions on major international and regional issues. It is important that we maintain close communication and coordination to protect our common interests and foster a peaceful and stable neighbouring environment.

Let us stand shoulder to shoulder and work hand-in-hand to open up an even brighter future of China-Pakistan relations. China-Pak dosti zindabad! (Long live China-Pakistan friendship!)

Source: *Security-risks Monitor.*