

Full Text of President Xi Jinping's Speech to the Joint Session of Parliament in Pakistan

April 21, 2015

Your Excellency Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,

Your Excellency Senate Chairman Mr. Raza Rabbani,

Your Excellency Speaker of the National Assembly Mr. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq,

Ministers,

Members of Parliament,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

I am very pleased to come to the Parliament of Pakistan today to address you, members of the Parliament of Pakistan. The Parliament of Pakistan's invitation to me to address you today fully testifies to the profound friendship you cherish towards the Chinese people. Thank you very much for your kind invitation.

First of all, I wish to convey, on behalf of the 1.3 billion and more Chinese people, our warmest greetings and best wishes to the brotherly people of Pakistan. I also take this opportunity to pay deep respect to all the Pakistani friends in various fields of endeavor who have over the years worked to promote friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Pakistan is the first foreign country I visit this year. Although this is my first visit to your country, Pakistan is not at all unfamiliar to me. As an old Chinese saying goes, "Meeting a good friend for the first time is like having a reunion with an old friend." This is exactly how I feel during my visit to Pakistan. When I was young, I heard a lot from the elder

generation about life and scenery in Pakistan and the moving stories of friendship between China and Pakistan. So I have long been fascinated by Pakistan. The moment we arrived in your beautiful country, my colleagues and I have been overwhelmed by your warm hospitality. It is just like coming to the home of dear brothers.

Friendship between China and Pakistan is based on trust and mutual support, and we have been devoted friends through both good and hard times. Our friendship is a pacesetter for amicable relations between countries. The Pakistani people say that China-Pakistan friendship is higher than the mountain, deeper than the sea and sweeter than honey. And we Chinese fondly refer to the Pakistani people as our good friends, good neighbours, good partners, and good brothers.

During my current visit, President Hussain, Prime Minister Sharif and I agreed to elevate China-Pakistan relations to an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. By all-weather, we mean that our two countries will always move ahead together rain or shine. This description of China-Pakistan partnership is a most appropriate one, as it aptly defines the all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation between China and Pakistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Pakistan is a great country, both ancient and young. It is home to a splendid ancient civilisation. In modern times, Pakistan fought unremittingly to win independence and pursue national development. The Pakistanis are a kind, brave, dignified and confident people with an indomitable national character. Over the past 60 years and more since the founding of the country, the Pakistani government and people have, in the face of intricate domestic and international developments, risen up to various challenges and made remarkable achievements in upholding sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity as well as in national and economic development. In the new century, Pakistan has stood at the frontline of international fight against terrorism. It has made tremendous efforts, endured enormous sacrifice, and made outstanding contribution to upholding peace and stability of our region and the world. We in China have great admiration for the people of Pakistan.

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The founding father of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah said that "We are not afraid of the deep sea or the fire, because we believe in the sun and the future." The future is something that you either expect or shape. Today, Pakistan has a historic development opportunity. Prime Minister Sharif has crafted the vision of the "Asian Tiger Dream", outlining a great blueprint for Pakistan. The Chinese people are confident that the Pakistani people, united as one in making unremitting efforts, will surely make even greater progress in pursuing national development. The Chinese people will always stand together with the Pakistani people in your great endeavor.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Over 2,000 years ago, the Silk Road became a bridge of friendship linking our two ancient civilisations. Zhang Qian, China's emissary in the Han Dynasty, Faxian, the master monk in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, and Xuan Zang, the great monk in the Tang Dynasty visited Pakistan. Our two countries share similar cultural traditions and values. The Pakistanis believe that good faith is more precious than wealth. And we Chinese believe that a person cannot do without credibility. In recent history, both China and Pakistan suffered from imperialist and colonialist aggression and oppression and we extended mutual sympathy and support to each other. Back in the 1930s, the great Pakistani poet Muhammad Iqbal wrote that the Chinese people are waking up from their sleep and the spring of Mount Himalaya is bursting. Those lines saluted and voiced support to the Chinese people in their struggle for independence and fight against foreign aggression. Similar historical sufferings and the common struggle have brought our hearts and minds together.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, thanks to the commitment of successive Chinese and Pakistani leaders and the concerted efforts of our two peoples, our two countries have forged an all-weather friendship and pursued all-round cooperation. Despite changes in the domestic and international environment, we have always extended sympathy to and supported each other on issues crucial to our respective core interests. Such friendship is truly unique.

As a Chinese saying goes, "Strong wind reveals the strength of grass, and genuine gold stands the test of fire." We will never forget that Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognise New China and the first Islamic country to enter into diplomatic relations with China. At the critical times when New China endeavoured to break the blockade, resume its lawful seat at the United Nations and explore ways to carry out reform and opening-up, Pakistan always came forward with selfless and valuable assistance. When China was hit by natural disasters or faced difficulties, Pakistan always extended a helping hand. In 2008, when the devastating earthquake struck Wenchuan, China, Pakistan responded immediately and sent all its transport aircraft to ship its entire reserve of tents to China. The Pakistani medical team on the transport plane had to remove all seats to make room for the tents and sat on the floor all the way to China. Today, thousands of Pakistanis are working side by side with Chinese engineers and workers on projects undertaken by China in Pakistan, and there are many moving stories about their cooperation.

Similarly, whenever Pakistan is in need, China has come to its help. China firmly supports Pakistan's efforts to uphold sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. When Pakistan was hit by a severe flood in 2010, China provided immediate relief assistance via air and land routes. We dispatched the largest ever medical team and sent a big convoy of vehicles and helicopters to carry out rescue operations, the first time that such an operation was undertaken in the history of China's rescue assistance.

Following the terrorist attack in Peshawar at the end of 2014, China invited the students who had been injured in the attack and their family to spend some time in China for recuperation, so the trauma those kids had experienced could be healed with care and love of the Chinese people.

In the most recent evacuation mission in Yemen, the Chinese navy evacuated 176 Pakistanis from the Port of Aden, and the Pakistani navy evacuated eight Chinese students from Mukalla Port. The Pakistani commander gave the order that the ship would not leave until all the Chinese students were on board. His stirring words again show that China-Pakistan friendship is indeed deeper than the sea.

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Former Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Geng Biao, whom I once worked for, said that the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan will spread far and wide, just like the Karakoram Highway. His forecast has proved true by the thriving China-Pakistan relationship we see today. Having gone through weal and woe together, we couldn't feel more gratified to have each other as great neighbour and friend.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Today, China and Pakistan both shoulder the historic mission of achieving national renewal and realising the great dream of building a strong country and delivering a better life for our peoples. More than ever, we need to work together to strengthen the traditional friendship, fully leverage on geographic proximity and economic complementarity to share opportunities, meet challenges head on, pursue common development and substantiate the China-Pakistan community of shared destiny. This will enable us to create greater benefits to the Chinese and Pakistani peoples, contribute to stability and prosperity of our region and lead the way in building a community of common destiny in Asia.

First, we should strengthen mutual assistance and deepen strategic cooperation. Both being developing countries, we pursue an independent path of development at home and a foreign policy of peace. A defining feature of our relations is deep political trust, which means we always put ourselves in each other's position in addressing related issues. We should keep the good tradition of frequent high-level visits and meetings. As leaders, we should meet often just as family members, and work together on major strategic issues to grow China-Pakistan relationship. We should support each other on issues involving our respective core interests and major concerns, firmly uphold sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity, and be each other's most dependable partner.

Second, we should advance our shared interests and achieve common development. The Chinese culture believes that to achieve success, one should let others succeed as well. China champions a right approach to principles and interests. We believe that to help Pakistan is to help ourselves. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a focal point of our

joint efforts to achieve common development, and we should use this economic corridor to drive our practical cooperation with focus on Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure development and industrial cooperation. The planning and layout of the Economic Corridor should cover other parts of Pakistan as well so that the fruits of its development will reach both all the people in Pakistan and the people of other countries in our region.

Yesterday, several dozen cooperation agreements were signed between the two sides. I am convinced that these agreements will boost our practical cooperation, and lead to substantive progress in the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. To support economic development and improve people's wellbeing in Pakistan, China will provide free assistance to Pakistan for reconstruction in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and for undertaking projects for the improvement of people's livelihood that are important to Pakistan.

Third, we should enhance close exchanges to build lasting friendship. It is the people who advance progress of nations and history. The support of our peoples is the inexhaustible source of force fostering China-Pakistan all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation. This year is the Year of China-Pakistan Friendly Exchanges. We should use the platforms of sister cities, cultural centers and media organisations to conduct diverse and colorful events of celebration. We should continue to send 100-member youth groups to visit each other's country and encourage more contacts and exchanges between young Chinese and Pakistanis. In the next five years, China will provide 2,000 training opportunities for Pakistan and train 1,000 Chinese language teachers for Pakistan. We welcome Pakistan's participation in the programme of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and South Asia to strengthen popular support for China-Pakistan friendship.

Fourth, we should stick together in face of difficulty and jointly meet security challenges. Our two countries share a common stake in security. Over the years, Pakistan has overcome all difficulties and contributed greatly to the security and stability of China's western border areas, and this is something we will never forget. China will assist Pakistan in

strengthening its capacity for fighting terrorism and ensuring security, and work with Pakistan to tackle rising non-traditional security threats so as to provide a reliable security guarantee for bilateral economic cooperation and common development.

Fifth, we should fulfill our due responsibilities and increase coordination on international issues. China-Pakistan relations have gone well beyond the bilateral context. We should maintain strategic communication on regional and international developments and increase coordination and collaboration on major regional and global issues. China supports Pakistan in playing a constructive role on the Afghan issue and will work with Pakistan to advance the reconciliation process and smooth transition in Afghanistan. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the victory of the world's anti-fascist war. We should reaffirm our abiding commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and work together to build a new type of international relations of win-win cooperation.

No matter how the international landscape may change, China will always approach its relations with Pakistan from a strategic and long-term perspective and give Pakistan high priority on its diplomatic agenda. There is a saying in Pakistan that the wind does not always blow in the direction which the sailor wishes. Yes, that is true. But as long as we are guided by the aspirations of our people and strive to meet such aspirations, we will be able to surmount all the obstacles on the way, and China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership will be further strengthened and enriched.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

China has reached the crucial stage of building a society of initial prosperity in all respects. As China and its interests are increasingly integrated with the world, we will enhance cooperation with Pakistan and all other development partners to contribute more to the economic growth in both our region and the world.

The Chinese nation loves peace. Over 2,000 years ago, the Chinese already knew that a belligerent country, however big it may be, is doomed. "Do not do onto others what you do not want others to do onto you." This is a principle that we Chinese adhere to, and we do not subscribe to the belief that a country is bound to seek hegemony when it becomes powerful. Peaceful development is in China's interests, and also in the interests of Asia and the world. Nothing can shake our resolve to pursue peaceful development. China is committed to the principle of non-interference in other's internal affairs; it will never impose its own will onto others; and China will never seek hegemony however strong it may become.

China will continue to pursue win-win cooperation and enhance friendship and cooperation with other countries. It will stay committed to the policy of affinity, sincerity, mutual-benefit and inclusiveness. It will deepen win-win cooperation with its neighbours so as to deliver more benefits to them through its own development. China will remain a reliable friend and sincere partner of other developing countries. China will continue to pursue a win-win strategy for opening-up, and advance all-round opening-up to build an open economy. This will create new development opportunities and space to both Asia and the world.

The initiative of building a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road Initiative) that China has launched is a significant move to fully open up itself under the new conditions. This initiative also reflects China's commitment to sharing development opportunities and outcomes with more countries. We will strengthen cooperation with countries along the land and maritime Silk Roads and realise the connectivity of roads, trade, finance, policies and our peoples, so as to jointly build an open platform for cooperation and create new impetus to achieve sustainable development in the related regions.

South Asia is where the land and maritime Silk Roads meet. It is therefore a focal area and important cooperation partner for advancing the Belt and Road Initiative. Good progress has been made in building the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor which are closely connected with the land and

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maritime Silk Roads. The building of these two economic corridors will give a strong boost to the economic growth of the related countries and provide a strong new force for deepening regional cooperation in South Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Peace, development and cooperation are the theme of our great times. The vast and richly endowed South Asia has boundless potential for development. The hard-working and talented people of South Asia are making vigorous efforts to speed up development in the region and turn it into a new pole of growth for the world economy.

China is the biggest neighbour of South Asia. A peaceful and stable South Asia that enjoys development and prosperity serves China's interests. China is ready to pursue its development strategy with that of the South Asian countries in mind to realise mutually beneficial development and common prosperity. During my visit to three South Asian countries last year, I put forward a number of initiatives to strengthen China's cooperation with the South Asian countries, which are being implemented. China respects the unique culture and historical traditions of the South Asian region. We are a sincere partner of South Asian countries. We will treat each other with respect and as equals, and accommodate each other's comfort level to ensure long-term and sound growth of our relations.

Only with win-win cooperation can we enlarge the pie of common interests and realise common prosperity. South Asia occupies a priority on China's westward opening-up agenda, and we will share more development practices with the South Asian countries to complement each other's development endeavors. China is ready to do more to provide assistance and support to South Asian countries within the framework of South-South cooperation.

Both China and the South Asian countries have a time-honoured history, and we both value benevolence, friendship, inclusiveness, mutual learning, harmony and co-existence. China is ready to strengthen inter-civilisation dialogue with South Asian countries, an important part of such dialogue

across Asia, so as to jointly promote the wisdom of the East and Asian values.

It is thanks to openness, inclusiveness, unity and self-reliance that the Asian countries have succeeded in promoting development, prosperity and national renewal. We must continue to be guided by such visions to achieve even greater development in the future. China will strengthen cooperation with the South Asian countries to jointly advance regional cooperation in South Asia and Asia as a whole. China will upgrade its cooperation with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and step up international coordination with the South Asian countries under multilateral frameworks to jointly uphold the interests of developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

To build a China-Pakistan community of shared destiny is a strategic decision made by our two governments and peoples. It meets the fundamental interests of our two countries. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, once observed that only through united efforts can we turn our ideals into reality. Let us work together to create an even brighter future for China and Pakistan.

Thank you!

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