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## *Report-In-House Meeting*

# **Chinese Delegation from China Foundation for Peace and Development**

**February 16, 2016**



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### Pictures of the Event



## Meeting with Chinese Delegation from CFPD

February 16, 2016

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised an In-House Meeting with a delegation from China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) on February 16, 2016. The delegation was led by Mr. Ji Ping, Deputy Secretary General, CFPD. Other members of the delegation included: Mr. Bai Anmin, Deputy Director of CFPD; Mr. Ge Lei, Programme Officer CFPD; and Mr. Mei Jing, Second Secretary of China Embassy. Invitees at the meeting included Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Talat Masood, defence analyst, Mr. Ghulam Murtaza, Punjab University, and representatives from other think tanks in Islamabad.

Welcoming the delegation, the Director General ISSI introduced the CFPD and the work it has been doing in Pakistan, especially its support to Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

In his opening remarks, Mr. Ji Ping thanked the ISSI for arranging the meeting and introduced his team members. He said China considered Pakistan a dear brother and that they always felt that they could discuss issues with Pakistani friends in a frank manner. He apprised the participants about a project CFPD has undertaken in Gwadar to provide vocational training in the area. He said he mainly wanted to know from Pakistani participants about their view of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and what type - economic, political, security, or any other - of threats or potential threats did it face?

Responding to the queries raised by Mr. Ji Ping, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Talat Masood said CPEC had been warmly received by all segments of Pakistani society and the concerns raised by Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were actually an effort to gain maximum share out of CPEC-related projects by putting pressure on the federal government, and, in no way, should this be interpreted as these provinces having reservations over CPEC. Provided CPEC is properly implemented, it will yield massive economic dividends for the all regions of the country.

About Indian and US posture towards CPEC, he said India had opposed CPEC because it knew that CPEC will bring China and Pakistan closer, and make it more difficult for India to realise its goal of regional hegemony. The US, he said, initially had opposed the idea, but realising that Pakistan was determined to pursue it, the US had reconciled to the idea, and might be thinking of becoming a part of CPEC to reap some economic dividends. He said anti-Pakistan forces might try to disrupt CPEC, but Pakistan Army has assured full security for CPEC.

Mr. Ghulam Murtaza agreed with Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Masood, and drew the Chinese delegation's attention to an important policy decision taken by Pakistan by making security of CPEC a part of National Action Plan. He further said that both civil and military leaderships were on the same page in terms of their conviction that CPEC was a strategically important project for Pakistan, which should be pursued at all costs.

Mr. Najam Rafique, Director (Research) at ISSI, also was very optimistic about CPEC's successful completion, noting that Zarb-e-Azb military operation had broken the back of terrorists and they were no longer in a position to pose any serious threat to CPEC, more so because Pakistan Army had raised a special security division dedicated to security of CPEC and the Chinese personnel. Moreover, he said, relations with India and Afghanistan were also likely to improve, which will have a positive impact on the internal security situation in Pakistan. He wanted to know if CFPD had plans to pursue project like the one in Gwadar, in other provinces of Pakistan.

Mr. Sherbaz Khetran, Research Fellow at ISSI, told the delegation that anti-state violence in Balochistan had come down drastically, and the people were eagerly looking forward to reap economic and

development dividends promised by CPEC. Dr. Ahmad Rasheed Malik, Senior Research Fellow at ISSI shared the optimism of other participants about smooth implementation of CPEC.

Responding to the comments and queries by ISSI team members, Mr. Ji Ping said CPEC had given a strong push to China-Pakistan relations. He said the CPEC-related projects were proposed by the Pakistan government, and China honoured these proposals. He said CFPD was open to working in all parts of Pakistan.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan said we are thankful to the Chinese leadership for launching CPEC. All of Pakistan, he said, is united behind CPEC. It is a strategic priority. We will implement it at any cost. All provinces and political parties are convinced that CPEC is in the interest of Pakistan. Their differences are over how to get maximum benefit out of CPEC-related investments.

Ambassador Khan also thanked CFPD for its *pro bono* work in Pakistan, particularly in Gwadar where CFPD was helping Pakistani authorities in turning Gwadar into a proper city.

He further said that China should not be bothered by the ethnic divisions within Pakistan, as Pakistanis know how to resolve their differences. Indian objections to CPEC are false and fallacious, and India would never succeed in harming CPEC. Pakistan and China already have an agreement to regulate their borders. Regarding a question by the delegation on Indian objection over CPEC passing through disputed territory, Ambassador Masood said that CPEC passes through Gilgit-Baltistan and not through Kashmir. He said that even FATA representatives in the Parliament are asking that their areas be given greater share in CPEC. He said that people of Balochistan know that they will be the primary beneficiaries of CPEC.