**Forging Ahead to Boost China-Pakistan Ironclad Friendship**

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This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and China’s neighborhood policy of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness-both proposed by President Xi Jinping. It also marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In this context, being appointed as the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, I’m fully aware of the glorious mission with heavy responsibility.

Not long ago, I flew over the majestic Karakoram and arrived in Pakistan, a friendly country what we call “iron brother” in China. Even within this short stay, I have already felt the China-Pakistan friendship that is said to be “higher than mountains, deeper than ocean, and sweeter than honey”.

China and Pakistan are linked by mountains and rivers, and have enjoyed ever-lasting friendship. During the past 72 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties, no matter how the international situation may change, China-Pakistan have always stood side by side in weal and woe. The two countries have rendered each other mutual understanding and mutual support, and forged an ironclad friendship. In April 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Pakistan, during which the two sides elevated China-Pakistan bilateral relations to all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, opening up a new chapter in the development of bilateral ties. Since then, President Xi Jinping has met with Pakistani leaders many times and both sides have reached important consensus, which provides the fundamental principles and action guidelines for the development of bilateral relations. China-Pakistan relations have maintained a high level of operation and are full of vigor and vitality.

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Both sides have maintained close high-level exchanges. Not long ago, President Xi Jinping sent a message of congratulations to the 10th anniversary of the CPEC, and dispatched his Special Representative, Vice Premier of the State Council of China Mr. He Lifeng to visit Pakistan for the celebration. It fully demonstrates the great importance attached to China-Pakistan relations by our leaders. The Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping have received positive response in Pakistan. The strong guidance of the leaders has set the direction for the development of China-Pakistan relations and steer the way forging ahead.

China-Pakistan practical cooperation has achieved fruitful results. The economic and trade cooperation maintains high level. China has been Pakistan’s largest trading partner for eight consecutive years. Pakistan’s exports of agricultural products to China have grown rapidly. The CPEC has evolved from vision into reality, becoming a vivid testament of the all-weather friendship, and providing important support for building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era. Two sides are committed to jointly building CPEC into a growth corridor, a livelihood-enhancing corridor, an innovation corridor, a green corridor and an open corridor, and carry forward the CPEC with high-quality development.

China-Pakistan military exchanges and cooperation have continued to deepen. The leaders of the two militaries have maintained good momentum of frequent exchanges and visits. This year, senior leaders of the Pakistani military including Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of Army Staff visited China successively. The two militaries have witnessed fruitful cooperation in fields such as joint training and exercises, anti-pandemic cooperation, equipment and technology collaboration, constantly enriching the connotation of bilateral strategic cooperation, making important contribution to safeguarding regional peace and stability.

China-Pakistan cultural and people exchanges have continued to expand. Flights between the two countries have resumed in an orderly manner. Exchanges of visits by scholars, media professionals, religious representatives and other groups have taken place one after another. Students from the two countries are enthusiastic about studying abroad in each other’s country. The people-to-people bond has been further strengthened. This year is the China-Pakistan Year of Tourism Exchanges. The Gandhara Art Exhibition was successfully held at the Palace Museum in Beijing, injecting new impetus into the people-to-people contacts, tourism cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Now under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the entire CPC and people of all ethnic groups in China are earnestly implementing the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC, and to embrace the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization. Despite the complex and challenging external environment, Chinese economy still has strong resilience with tremendous potential. The fundamentals sustaining China’s long-term growth remain unchanged. China has the confidence, the conditions and the ability to promote the continuous optimization of its economic structure, continuous enhancement of its growth momentum, and continuous improvement of development trends. China will accelerate efforts to foster a new development paradigm, pursue high-quality development in a comprehensive way, and contribute more positive energy to global economic recovery. China’s development will undoubtedly create new opportunities for China-Pakistan cooperation.

China views its relations with Pakistan from a strategic and long-term perspective, and Pakistan has always been a high priority in China’s neighborhood diplomacy. I am ready to work with friends from all walks of life in China and Pakistan, by implementing the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and Pakistani leaders as the guiding principle, building a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era as the main line, and promoting high-quality development of the CPEC as the major platform, to continuously consolidate, deepen and expand China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperation, safeguard our common interests against changes unseen in a century, and better benefit the two countries and the two peoples.

Chin-Pak dosti zindabad!

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