



Press Release

“China Lone Moral Voice of the World”

Pakistan advised to follow China in giving primacy to development

Pakistan was asked to listen to China and heed its advice as both countries shared their worldview and had been in step since establishment of their relations. In his eloquent address at a conference on Pak-China relations held in Islamabad the other day seasoned diplomat Ambassador Salman Bashir made a strong plea to the government for revisiting the entire gamut of policies and working systems and to reorient and realign them on the principles and practices that China follows. He declared that China was the only moral voice in the world and only she practiced a principled policy and applied a sane approach to world affairs. It was therefore in the best and abiding interest of Pakistan to adopt the Chinese approach both internally and externally.

The conference was organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and was attended by the Chinese Charge d’Affaires Mr Yao Wen, Senator Raja Zafarul Haq who was the chief guest, former foreign minister ambassador Inamul Haq and ISS Director Mr. Fazalur Rahman.

Mr. Salman Bashir who has recently returned from his diplomatic assignment in New Delhi and was Pakistan’s ambassador to China said that the Chinese were a modest self-effacing people and discouraged boastful epithets like ‘rising China’ etc., unlike some other countries of the

region. Their approach to dealings in external affairs was not reactive but patient and pragmatic as could be seen in their growing trade and economic ties with India and the US despite its territorial dispute with the former and the latter's containment strategies against her. The Chinese political rhetoric was remarkably restrained and sober. The primary concern of their national policy over and above everything was their economic growth and development. There was a lesson in that for Pakistan, the ambassador said.

Senator Raja Muhammad Zafar-ul-Haq, Leader of the House, while highlighting the warmth and exuberance in Pak-China bilateral relations stressed on the need of exploring new avenues to utilise the full potential on both sides. He said that there had been growing realization on the part of both Pakistan and China that the level of bilateral economic and commercial cooperation and people-to-people interaction were not commensurate with their strong political, security and strategic ties. He emphasized that full use should be made of the Free trade Agreement to boost bilateral trade. He said that enmity with India no longer constituted the main determinant of Pak-China ties. He said that friendship with China was the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and there was an across-the-board political and public consensus on maintaining strong bilateral ties with China.

Ambassador Inamul Haq said that regular and constant people-to-people contact must be encouraged as that was lacking at the moment. Moreover, since the younger generation in China had developed a different worldview particularly in terms of international relations, the Chinese older generation needed to play its role in that sphere. Chinese language should be made part of curricula in order to bring the people closer. He lamented the lack of interest in Chinese literature, history and culture among Pakistanis which was detrimental to deepening of relations between the two people.

Mr. Yao Wen, Charge d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy, in his key note address highlighted Pak-China economic and trade cooperation which was on the growth path. China was now Pakistan's second largest trade partner while Pakistan was China's largest investment destination in South Asia.. He also discussed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor stretching from Kashgar, Xinjiang along the Karakoram Highway to Gowadar port on the Arabian Sea. He said that economic corridor would cover the populated and economically developed areas of Pakistan and consisted of energy projects, transportation infrastructures and economic zones along it. He also

mentioned about the situation in Afghanistan which was rapidly transforming. He said that China would work closely with Pakistan on supporting an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political reconciliation process.

Mr Fazlur Rahman, a director at ISS, gave a very detailed account of the economic ties and the joint development projects that are underway.

Amabassador Sohail Amin, President IPRI thanked the participants and said that pak china ties offered challenging prospects and stressed that enhancing people-to-people contact was very important in the interest of our abiding relationship.