

“Kazakhstan-China Partnership: Common Destiny for Mutual Benefit”

Presentation by Chairman of the Board of Foreign Policy Research Institute under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bolat Nurgaliyev at the International Symposium to Commemorate the 10-th Anniversary of China’s Neighborhood Diplomacy Featuring Amity, Sincerity, Mutual Benefit and Inclusiveness, Beijing, October 24, 2023

Good afternoon, dear ladies and gentlemen! I am grateful to the hosts of the symposium - the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China and to the organizers - the China Institute of International Studies for an invitation to attend this auspicious event and for a generous offer to present my views on Chairman Xi Jinping’s concept of neighborhood diplomacy.

As we know, there are several ways to treat your neighbors. First, you may like them because the neighbors are nice, well-to-do, behave themselves properly. Second, you may be indifferent to them, because as long as they don’t cause trouble, you don’t care how they live, whether they are prosperous and happy or not. Third, you may be condescending to them, because they are less civilized than you, more poor, underdeveloped and are constantly in need of something basic, unable to provide for themselves. Forth, extreme, but unfortunately not so infrequent case - you hate your neighbors for negative baggage of the past, for alleged injustices done by them to your forefathers, for territorial claims to what you believe is rightfully yours, for betrayal by choosing your opponents as their friends, and so on, the reasons for hatred could be plentiful. Yet another type of relationships may exist between big powers and their smaller neighbors when there’s a natural tendency for dominance of mightier over weaker. None of the above except the first one is present in the relations of China with its neighboring countries.

I happily underline that China’s attitude to its neighbors is determined by conviction that your own development should be beneficial

for development of the bordering countries. This is a longstanding tradition.

China's treatment of its neighbors is unique in the consistency of manifesting goodwill, respect and friendship. On May 20, 2023 in Xian - the cradle of the Chinese nation - Chairman Xi Jinping, speaking at the "China-Central Asia" summit, recollected how 2100 years ago special envoy of the Han dynasty Jian Tsiang made a journey to the Western region thus laying foundation for friendly contacts with peoples living in Central Asia. This was the start of the Great Silk Road which played a pivotal role in dynamic development of world civilizations.

Nowadays China together with its Central Asian partners is engaged in comprehensive revival of the Great Silk Road, synonymous with the Belt and Road Initiative. A summit in commemoration of the 10-th anniversary of the BRI was held here in Beijing last week and provided the leaders of the participating states with opportunity to showcase the remarkable achievements and unquestionable mutual benefit of cooperation. If one compares geographical and economic maps of our region now and 10 years ago visual difference is striking: benefits of the BRI projects are exemplified by new highways, railways, bridges, oil and gas pipelines, seaports and airports, power stations, power-lines, cargo-processing terminals et cetera. Kazakhstan along with other Central Asian republics is cooperating with China within the framework of the BRI and the Trans-Caspian International Transportation Route with the strategic goal of opening up huge potential of "East-West" corridor. During the Third Belt and Road Forum in Beijing an intergovernmental agreement was signed to jointly develop the TCITR. Just to quote President Kassym Jomart Tokaev: if in 2013 from China via Kazakhstan to Europe and back only 7600 cargo containers were shipped, nowadays this traffic increased 100 times, to 790 thousand containers. Advancement of transportation and logistics potential strengthens interconnectivity of our region and promotes cooperation in trade, industry, energy, agriculture, finance, green and low carbon development, medicine and healthcare, digital innovation, people to people exchanges. Last week the Kazakh-Chinese visa-free agreement entered into force, facilitating tourism and

business ties between our countries, as well as cultural and humanitarian interaction.

Achievements in the economic dimension of our relations are quite impressive, but of equal importance are our common interests in ensuring a new concept of indivisible, comprehensive, joint and sustainable security. We are committed partners in fighting against “the three evil forces” of terrorism, separatism and extremism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, interference into internal affairs as well as in effective protection of security, peace and stability in our region. We in Kazakhstan especially appreciate Chairman Xi Jinping stating recently that irrespective of volatility of international situation China will remain for Central Asian states a good neighbor, reliable partner, close friend and blood brother, who can always be trusted and relied upon. And the partnership in political dimension is definitely mutually beneficial: both China and Central Asian republics are equally interested in internal stability and in maintaining appropriate conditions for sustainable socioeconomic development. To create a community of a shared destiny of China and Central Asia under changing international conditions we will concentrate on building mutual support and solidarity.

As good neighbors we are seeking solutions for current problems of international and regional security and supplement each other’s conceptual visions of the future. For example, Kazakhstan’s initiative “On Global Unity for Just Peace and Accord” is aimed at the same goals as China’s initiatives “On Global Development”, “On Global Security”, “On Community of Common Destiny of Humankind”, the Global Initiative of Civilization and we are committed to implementing them together in the spirit of friendship and unity, as suggested by Chairman Xi Jinping. Equally important is our partnership within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia and the dialogue platform “Central Asia plus China”. We are united in the understanding that Central Asia needs powerful China, while China needs peaceful and prosperous Central Asian neighbors.

Thank you for your kind attention.