

Beat: Business

FULL TEXT OF CHINESE PRESIDENT S SIGNED ARTICLE ON IRANIAN NEWSPAPER

AHEAD OF HIS STATE VISIT TO THE COUNTRY

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USPA NEWS - Chinese President Xi Jinping published a signed article titled 'Work Together for a Bright Future of China-Iran Relations' on Iranian newspaper Iran on Thursday January 21, 2016, ahead of his state visit to the country. The following is the English version of the article :

Chinese President Xi Jinping published a signed article titled 'Work Together for a Bright Future of China-Iran Relations' on Iranian newspaper Iran on Thursday January 21, 2016, ahead of his state visit to the country. The following is the English version of the article :

As I am about to embark on my state visit to Iran at the invitation of President Rouhani, I am looking forward to in-depth exchange of views on deepening China-Iran relations in the new era as well as on major international and regional issues and working together with my Iranian hosts to bring the relationship to a new stage.

This will be my first trip to Iran, yet like many other Chinese, I do not feel like a stranger in your ancient and beautiful country, thanks to the Silk Road that linked our two great nations for centuries and to the many legendary stories recorded in history books of our friendly exchanges.

Over 2,000 years ago during the West Han Dynasty in China, the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian's deputy came to Iran and received warm welcome. Seven centuries later during the Tang and Song dynasties, many Iranians came to China's Xi'an and Guangzhou to study, practice medicine and do business. In the 13th century, the famous Iranian poet Saadi wrote about his unforgettable travel to Kashgar, Xinjiang.

In the 15th century, a renowned Chinese navigator Zheng He from the Ming Dynasty led seven maritime expeditions, which took him to Hormuz in southern Iran three times.

The much-prized Persian carpet is weaved out of a fusion of China's silk and Iran's sophisticated techniques. And the exquisite blue and white porcelain is produced thanks to a mixture of Iran's 'smaltum' (a type of material containing cobalt, unique to Iran) and China's advanced skills. Via Iran, China's lacquerware, pottery, as well as papermaking, metallurgical, printing and gunpowder making skills were spread to the west end of Asia, and further on to Europe.

And from Iran and Europe, pomegranate, grape, olive, as well as glass, gold and silver ware were introduced into China.

It almost seemed that our two countries were just a camel-ride or a boat trip away from each other. Indeed, the thousand-mile-long land and maritime silk roads made it possible for two ancient civilizations and peoples to embrace and befriend each other. As Saadi wrote, those that are far away and are of times long past deserve to be cherished more.

In history, China and Iran made important contribution to opening the Silk Road and promoting exchanges between Eastern and Western civilizations.

The China-Iran friendly exchanges in the 45 years of our diplomatic relations have continued to embody the Silk Road spirit of peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit.

Since the inception of our diplomatic ties in 1971, the China-Iran relationship has stood the test of international changes and maintained a momentum of sound and steady development. We have given each other mutual understanding and mutual trust in good

times and bad.

On the nuclear issue, China appreciates Iran's assurance of not intending to develop nuclear weapons, supports Iran in upholding its legitimate rights and interests, and fully recognizes Iran's contribution to the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In the next stage, we will work closely with Iran to ensure the smooth implementation of the JCPOA. Economically, our bilateral trade jumped from tens of millions of U.S. dollars in 1970s to 51.8 billion dollars in 2014, and China has stayed Iran's biggest trading partner for six years in a row. Our two countries have also enjoyed very close people-to-people and cultural ties.

As a Chinese saying goes, good friends feel close even when they are thousands of miles apart. The friendship between our peoples has become a significant driver of the friendly relations between our two countries.

Frequent contacts and exchanges between leaders of our two countries play a major role in guiding the growth of our bilateral relations. In the past few years, President Rouhani and I have met many times. In particular, our meeting held on the sidelines of the summits commemorating the 70th anniversary of the UN last September yielded important agreement on growing China-Iran relations in an all-round way in the new era.

In 2013, I put forward the proposal of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which received positive response from Iran. As two important stops on the ancient Silk Road, both China and Iran have high expectations for reviving this road of peace, friendship and cooperation. China is soon to implement the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development. Iran will also carry out the sixth five-year plan for economic development. Our development strategies are highly compatible, which creates huge potential for cooperation.

Cooperation between China and Iran under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative may focus on the following areas:

-- Enhancing political mutual trust to cement the foundation for cooperation. Mutual trust ensures success while distrust spells failure. This is true for state-to-state relations as well as interpersonal relationship. Countries along the ancient Silk Road have built trust, deepened friendship and enhanced cooperation through their exchanges stretching over 2,000 years. Over the past 45 years of diplomatic relations, China and Iran have enhanced traditional friendship and achieved fruitful results in practical cooperation despite difficulties and obstacles.

Today, we need all the more to build on this positive spirit to step up policy communication, accommodate each other's concerns, build more consensus and lay a more solid foundation for our cooperation. We will establish a comprehensive strategic partnership and increase exchanges between political parties, legislatures and at the sub-national levels. We will deepen our cooperation under multilateral frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the UN, to steadily increase political mutual trust and substantiate our strategic relationship.

-- Pursuing win-win outcomes and common prosperity. After more than 30 years of reform and opening up, the Chinese economy has undergone a historic transformation, now ranking the second in the world. China has considerable strength in capital, technologies, equipment and other areas. Iran has rich resources, ample labor force and huge market potential, and it is in the crucial stage of industrialization and modernization. The resource endowments and comparative advantages of China and Iran are highly complementary.

The implementation of the JCPOA will bring new opportunities for the growth of China-Iran relations. China will work to synergize its development strategy with that of Iran and deepen win-win cooperation to fully exert respective strengths for the benefit of our peoples and to achieve greater common prosperity.

-- Promoting connectivity and expanding practical cooperation. Connectivity is the artery of the Belt and Road Initiative. In building connectivity, we should give priority to Asian countries and start with transportation infrastructure.

China has a strong competitive edge in areas such as railway, electricity, telecommunications, mechanical engineering, metallurgy and construction materials. We committed 40 billion dollars to the establishment of a Silk Road Fund in 2014 to support relevant cooperation projects in countries along the Belt and Road. Iran is strategically located and has distinctive geographical advantages.

China is ready to deepen cooperation with Iran on building roads, railway, sea routes and the Internet, and facilitating East-West connectivity in Asia and on this basis better promote trade and investment liberalization among countries along the Belt and Road,

lower the cost of the cross-border movement of people, goods and capital and expand energy, resources and industrial cooperation.

-- Upholding openness and inclusiveness and encouraging inter-civilization exchange. The Chinese people often say, the value of friendship lies in heart-to-heart communication. A Persian proverb also goes, there is telepathy between hearts. Different countries, nations and civilizations should carry out exchanges and mutual learning and live in harmony with each other. Both the Chinese and Iranian cultures have unique strengths and the two peoples have benefited from mutual learning for centuries.

We need to step up exchanges in culture, education, information, publishing, tourism and other fields and encourage more exchanges between the youth and students, so that the spirit of the Silk Road will be passed on from generation to generation and our peoples will develop enduring bonds.

Pomegranate is well-liked in China for its crimson flower and bountiful seeds, for which it came to symbolize plentifulness and prosperity.

Introduced from Iran to China centuries ago, the fruit bears witness to the history of friendly exchanges between the Chinese and Iranians along the Silk Road and augurs even more fruitful cooperation between our two countries.

The long distance between Beijing and Tehran is no obstacle to the interaction or cooperation between China and Iran, nor to the friendship and exchanges between our peoples. China is ready to join hands with Iran to renew the Silk Road spirit and create an ever better future for China-Iran relations.

Ruby BIRD
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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com