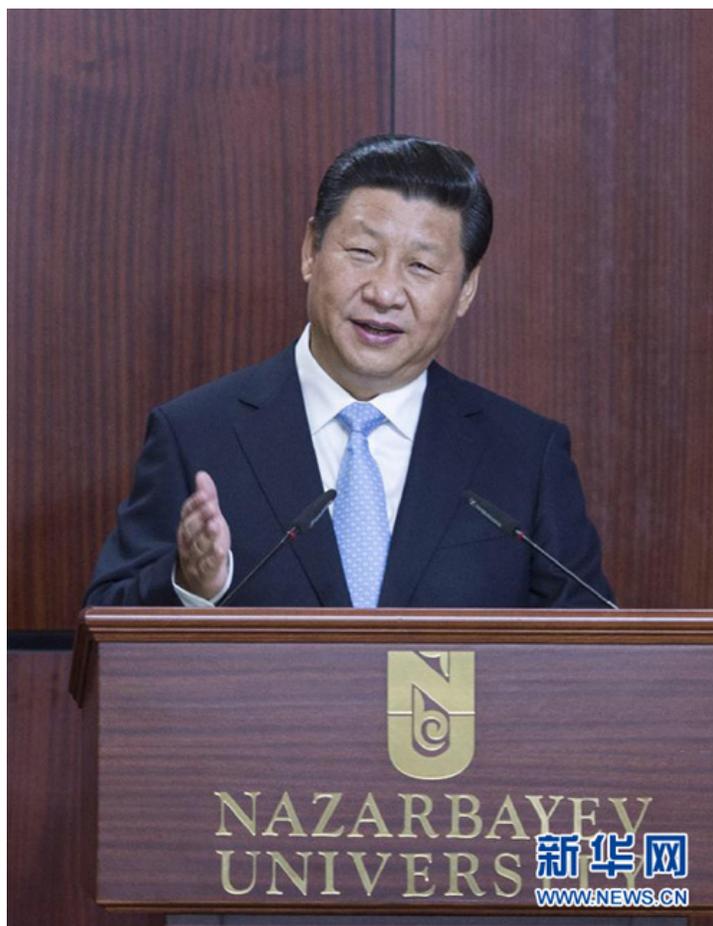


Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future

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Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At Nazarbayev University

Astana, 7 September 2013

Your Excellency President Nazarbayev,
President of Nazarbayev University,
Dear Faculty Members and Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

Good morning. I have come to Kazakhstan, China's great neighbor, on a state visit at the invitation of President Nazarbayev. It is my great pleasure today to come to Nazarbayev University and meet with all of you.

Let me begin by conveying the sincere greetings and best wishes of the Chinese people to the friendly people of Kazakhstan, the faculty members and students of this university and all the friends present today.

As a Kazakh proverb goes, "The history of a land is the history of its people." Since independence, Kazakhstan, under the leadership of President Nazarbayev, has seen sustained political stability, robust economic growth, significantly higher living standards and markedly growing international influence.

The city of Astana, where we are today, has grown into a beautiful, modern city in less than two decades. It is a success story written by the people of Kazakhstan on their magic land. Standing here, I could see both the hard work and ingenuity of the Kazakh people and the bright future ahead of them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Over 2,100 years ago during China's Han Dynasty, a Chinese envoy Zhang Qian was sent to Central Asia twice with a mission of peace and friendship. His journeys opened the door to friendly contacts between China and Central Asian countries as well as the Silk Road linking east and west, Asia and Europe.

Shaanxi, my home province, is right at the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Today, as I stand here and look back at that episode of history, I could almost hear the camel bells echoing in the mountains and see the wisp of smoke rising from the desert. It has brought me close to the place I am visiting.

Kazakhstan, sitting on the ancient Silk Road, has made an important contribution to the exchanges between the Eastern and Western civilizations and the interactions and cooperation between various nations and cultures. This land has borne witness to a steady stream of envoys, caravans, travelers, scholars and artisans travelling between the East and the West. The exchanges and mutual learning thus made possible have contributed to the progress of human civilization.

The ancient city of Almaty is also on the ancient Silk Road. In Almaty, there is a Xian Xinghai Boulevard, which got its name from a true story. At the outset of the Great Patriotic War in 1941, Xian, a renowned Chinese composer, arrived in Almaty after much travail. By then, he was worn down by poverty and illness and had no one to turn to. Fortunately, the Kazakh composer Bakhitzhan Baykadamov took care of Xian and provided him with the comfort of a home.

It was in Almaty that Xian composed his famous works Liberation of the Nation, Sacred War and Red All over the River. He also wrote a symphony Amangeldy based on the exploits of the Kazakh national hero. These pieces served as a rallying call to fight Fascists and proved immensely popular with the local people.

Throughout the millennia, the people of various countries along the ancient Silk Road have jointly written a chapter of friendship that has been passed on to this very day. The over 2,000-year history of exchanges demonstrates that on the basis of solidarity, mutual trust, equality, inclusiveness, mutual learning and win-win cooperation, countries of different races, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are fully capable of sharing peace and development. This is the valuable inspiration we have drawn from the ancient Silk Road.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Over the past 20 years and more, the relations between China and Eurasian countries have developed rapidly and the ancient Silk Road has gained fresh vitality. In a new way, it is taking the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Eurasian countries to a new height.

A near neighbor is better than a distant relative. China and Central Asian countries are friendly neighbors connected by common mountains and rivers. China highly values its friendship and cooperation with these countries and takes them as a foreign policy priority.

At present, China's relations with Central Asian countries face a golden opportunity of development. We hope to work with these countries to strengthen trust, friendship and cooperation, and promote common development and prosperity so as to bring benefits to our people.

- We need to pass on our friendship from generation to generation and always be good neighbors living in harmony. China is committed to the path of peaceful development and the independent foreign policy of peace. We respect the development paths and domestic and foreign policies chosen independently by the people of every country. We will in no circumstances interfere in the internal affairs of Central Asian countries. We do not seek to dominate regional affairs or establish any sphere of influence. We stand ready to enhance communication and coordination with Russia and all Central Asian countries to strive to build a region of harmony,

- We need to firmly support and trust each other and be sincere and good friends. To render each other firm support on major issues concerning core interests such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, security and stability is the essence and an important part of China's strategic partnership with Central Asian countries. We will deepen trust and cooperation with Central Asian countries bilaterally and within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to combat the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism as well as drug trafficking and transnational organized crime to create a favorable environment for the economic development and the well-being of the people in this region.

- We need to vigorously enhance practical cooperation and be good partners of win-win cooperation. Both China and Central Asian countries are at a crucial stage of development with unprecedented opportunities and challenges. We have all set medium- to long-term development goals based on our national conditions. Our strategic goals are the same, which is to ensure sustained and stable economic development, build a prosperous and strong nation and achieve national revitalization. Therefore, we need to enhance practical cooperation across the board, turn our good political relations, geographical proximity and economic complementarity into drivers of practical cooperation and sustained growth, and build a community of shared interests and mutual benefit.

- We need to expand regional cooperation with a more open mind and broader vision and achieve new glories together. The world is going through faster economic integration and regional cooperation is booming. The Eurasian region has quite a few regional cooperation organizations. The members and observers of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) and the SCO are from Eurasia, South Asia and West Asia. By intensifying cooperation between the SCO and the EAEC, we will create even more space for development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

To forge closer economic ties, deepen cooperation and expand development space in the Eurasian region, we should take an innovative approach and jointly build an "economic belt along the Silk Road". This will be a great undertaking benefitting the people of all countries along the route. To turn this into a reality, we may start with work in individual areas and link them up over time to cover the whole region.

First, we need to step up policy communication. Countries should have full discussions on development strategies and policy response, work out plans and measures for advancing regional cooperation through consultation in the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving differences, and give the policy and legal "green light" to regional economic integration.

Second, we need to improve road connectivity. The SCO is working on an agreement on transportation facilitation. If signed and implemented at an early date, it will open up a major transportation route connecting the Pacific and the Baltic Sea. Building on that, we will actively discuss the best way to improve cross-border transportation infrastructure and work toward a transportation network connecting East Asia, West Asia and South Asia to facilitate economic development and travel in the region.

Third, we need to promote unimpeded trade. The proposed "economic belt along the Silk Road" is inhabited by close to 3 billion people and represents the biggest market in the world with unparalleled potential. The potential for trade and investment cooperation between the relevant countries is enormous. We should discuss a proper arrangement for trade and investment facilitation, remove trade barriers, reduce trade and investment cost, increase the speed and quality of regional economic flows and achieve win-win progress in the region.

Fourth, we need to enhance monetary circulation. China and Russia have already had sound cooperation on settling trade in local currencies, and have gained gratifying results and rich experience. There is no reason not to share this good practice with others in the region. If our region can realize local currency convertibility and settlement under current and capital accounts, it will significantly lower circulation cost, increase our ability to fend off financial risks and make our region more competitive economically in the world.

Fifth, we need to increase understanding between our people. Amity between the people holds the key to good relations between states. To have productive cooperation in the above-mentioned areas, we need the support of our people. We should encourage more friendly exchanges between our people to enhance mutual understanding and traditional friendship and build strong public support and a solid social foundation for regional cooperation.

Dear Faculty Members and Students,

Young people are the future of a nation. The great Kazakh poet and philosopher Abay Qunanbayev once noted, "The world is like an ocean and our time is like strong wind. Waves in the front are the elder brother while those behind are the younger brother. Driven by wind, the waves from behind constantly press on those in the front. This has been the case since ancient times." Seeing so many young glowing faces in the audience, I could not but recall with fond memories my own life in university. It was such an unforgettable time of youth!

The Kazakh people often say, "Knowledge brings light to the world; without it, confusion will reign." Indeed, knowledge is power. Young people are in the very prime of life, the best time to acquire knowledge, build character and develop ability. I am sure that the young people to graduate from this university will become future pillars in Kazakhstan's national revitalization.

To facilitate youth exchanges within the SCO framework, China will, in the coming ten years, provide 30,000 government scholarships to SCO member states and invite 10,000 teachers and students from Confucius Institutes in these countries to China for study tours. I hope you will seize these opportunities to come to China for study and exchange.

I also wish to invite 200 faculty members and students from Nazarbayev University to go to China next year and attend summer camp activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Young people are the mainstay of friendship between our people. The common interest and ideal they hold for life all bring them together in true friendship. Here let me share with you two touching stories involving Chinese and Kazakh people.

Back in the early 1950s, a Chinese young man working in Xinjiang met a pretty girl called Valentina at a local hospital. They fell in love, got married and had a son. However, due to the political climate and for other reasons, Valentina returned to her home country when their son was only six years old. When the boy grew up, he tried all means to find his mother but to no avail. In 2009, at the age of 61, he finally found out that his mother was living in Almaty. He visited his 80-year-old mother there and took her to China for sightseeing. This happy family reunion, though overdue for half a century, is a strong testament to the friendship between our people.

The other story is about a young Kazakh student whose name is Ruslan. You may know that the RH-negative blood type is called "panda blood" in China because it is as scarce as a panda. It is very hard for RH-negative patients to find compatible blood source. Ruslan, who studied at Hainan University in China, happens to be RH-negative. Since 2009, he has been donating blood twice a year, helping to save Chinese patients of his same blood type. When praised by his Chinese friends, he simply said, "I feel this is what I should do. It is my duty to help others."

The stories I have just told are two episodes from the epic of friendly exchanges between our people, yet they fully demonstrate how close the Chinese and Kazakh people are to each other.

I believe that young people from China and Kazakhstan, including those of you in the audience, are the future envoys of friendship between our two countries. You will contribute your youth and energy to the growth of China-Kazakhstan comprehensive strategic partnership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

China and Kazakhstan are friendly neighbors as close as lips and teeth. Our 1,700-kilometer long common border, two millennia of interactions and extensive common interests not only bind us closely together, but also promise a broad prospect for bilateral ties and mutually beneficial cooperation. Let us join hands to carry on our traditional friendship and build a bright future together.

Thank you.

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