

Opening Remarks

by

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at the
Inaugural Session of the

'First India China Think-Tanks Forum'

at

Sapru House, New Delhi

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Distinguished Shri M. J. Akbar,

Distinguished Ambassador Nalin Surie,

Distinguished Prof. Patricia Uberoi,

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Today the first China-India Think-Tank Forum opens in New Delhi. It is my great pleasure and privilege to attend the forum with Chinese think-tank delegation. First of all, let me express, on behalf of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and other Chinese think tanks, our congratulations on the inauguration of this forum! I'd like to give my sincere thanks to all distinguished guests present at the forum and our Indian partners who hosted this event.

China and India are adjacent to each other and enjoy a long history of friendly contacts. The earliest bilateral contacts can be traced back to more than 2,000 years ago. Indian Buddhism, music, dance, literature, astronomy, calendar, architecture and sugar making technology were introduced into China, while China's paper-making technology, silk, chinaware, tea and music came to India. In history, exchanges between the two ancient civilizations have taken in various forms and borne rich fruits.

In modern times, China and India sympathized with each other and supported each other in the fight for national independence and liberation, which inspired other Asian people in their pursuit of independence. More than 70 years ago, Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis came to China and joined the anti-Fascist war, in which he gave his life and has been remembered by Chinese people ever since.

The late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai paid a state visit to India 62 years ago. He and the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru issued a joint declaration calling on the implementation of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence". These principles are better known in India as "Pancasila", a term used for Buddhist disciplines. China and India expressed their strong wish for world peace and development. Now, the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" has become an important basic norm governing international relations.

When the new century unfolded, China-India relation embarked on a fast track. The two countries have established strategic cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. Over the past decade, bilateral trade value surged over 20 times. China has become the largest trading partner of India. In addition, the number of people visiting each other's countries is on the rise. Both sides have close cooperation and coordination on a wide range of global issues, including climate change, food safety, energy security and cyber security. This has effectively safeguarded common interest of both countries. China-India relations have become one of the most dynamic relations in the 21st century with great potentials for development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During Chinese president Xi Jinping's visit to India in September 2014, China and India issued a "Joint Declaration on Building a Closer Developmental Partnership between China and India", replenishing the contents of the strategic partnership. With "building a closer development partnership" being its theme, the first China-India Think-tank Forum will discuss topics, including strengthening China-India strategic communication, promoting economic cooperation, deepening people-to-people exchanges and shaping regional and global agendas. We believe that the exchange of ideas will help to build our bilateral strategic partnership. Along this line, I'd like to put forward the following proposals.

Firstly, dialogues between think tanks must help to build a closer partnership between China and India. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "China and India are fellow travelers in the same boat that share weal and woe with each other." Both countries are in the historical process of national renaissance and share common goals of development. Think tank discussions must focus on development issues, share national experiences and seek cooperation opportunities, so that people of both countries can benefit from the complementary and win-win cooperation.

Secondly, dialogues between think tanks must help the two countries to become partners to lead economic growth. Currently, both China and India have given high priority to reform and innovation. Supply-side structural reform and the "Belt and Road Initiative" advocated by China will play a key role in accelerating global economic growth. Likewise, the Indian government is actively implementing development strategies such as "Made in India" and "Digital India" to sustain rapid economic growth. Chinese and Indian experts must work together on topics of how development of one country can connect that of the other, so that the China Dragon and Indian Elephant can tango with each other, and how their development would in turn benefit neighboring countries and the world at large.

Thirdly, dialogues between think tanks must help the two countries to become global partners of strategic coordination. The world is undergoing complex and profound changes. It is an era characterized strongly by peace, development, cooperation and a win-win situation. However, unfairness and unreasonableness is still prominent in international relations, and global challenges are emerging one after. As the biggest developing countries and largest emerging economies, China and India are key players in building a multi-polarized world. Awaiting of the general trend of the time, think tank experts must explore the possibilities of expanding and deepening China-Indian coordination and cooperation in global governance and steering international order to a fairer future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

China-India relations are standing upon a new historical starting point, and there is a need for more efforts from both sides to cement all-around communication and mutual understanding so as to identify the directions and objectives of bilateral relations. In this regard, think tanks have an important role to play.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's China visit in May 2015, Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India S. Jaishankar and I signed the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of China-India Think-tank Forum" witnessed by Premier Li Keqiang and Prime Minister Modi. The forum was designed to be a platform for both countries to conduct think-tank communication on a regular basis and to exchange ideas on issues related to China-Indian economic growth and social development as well as important regional and global issues of common concern. The platform aims to deepen mutual understanding, clear up doubts, increase mutual trust, advise on policies and promote cooperation. The endorsement of the think-tank Forum reflects the importance both governments pay to think-tank communication and demonstrate the strong willingness that think tanks in both countries are ready to play a bigger role in enhancing China-India cooperation and friendly relations.

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is the highest academic institution of social science research in China. It is also an important think tank of the Communist Party and the Chinese government. It boasts close to 40 research institutions that cover most research areas of social sciences, as well as nearly 4,000 experts and scholars in all disciplines. Over the years, we have established close cooperative relations with other think-tank partners. The Academy plays an important role in academic enhancement as well as policy advice on national, social and economic development. At the same time, we also prioritize our research in international studies or area studies at CASS. We have a good number of scholars studying in the National Institute of International Strategy, Institute of World Religions, Institute of World History, Institute of Philosophy and Institute of Foreign Literature under Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Prime Minister Modi once said that China and India are "two bodies that share one spirit". The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is willing to work with partners both in China and India and pool academic and research resources of both countries to turn the China-India Think-tank Forum into a success, making it a bridge and a tie to communicate ideas and contributing to friendly cooperation and common development of the two countries.

Finally, I wish the China-India Think-tank Forum a complete success.

Dhanyavad. Thank you!
