

Hassan Daud Butt

The Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Harbinger of Sustainable Growth

This is the edited transcript of Hassan Daud Butt's opening remarks to the Schiller Institute conference on September 6. Mr. Butt is a former Project Director of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and CEO of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Financial Board of Investment & Trade. Subheads have been added.

Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all, let me acknowledge the efforts of the organizers of this important event, and this brings all of us together to talk about something which is very important, especially for our region.

At this time, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to highlight that in the recent years, the global economic landscape has changed dramatically. The main driver of this change has been technology, credit liberalization, free capital movement, advances in communication and transport infrastructure, and the creation of cross-border supply chains. This, along with globalization, while on one hand brings various challenges,



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it also creates numerous opportunities.

However, I believe that the world should be connected and not flat. At this juncture, may I offer a beacon of hope for the participating states. The Belt and Road Initiative, initiated by His Excellency, President Xi Jinping, reflects the far-sighted economic vision of the Chinese leadership for opening gateways for cooperation amongst the countries along the Belt and Road. Connecting four major civilizations, the Initiative has offered a

new development model, preaching mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. As we all know, the Initiative defines five major priorities starting from policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, and financial integration, and of course, connecting people. This connectivity is the heart of the Belt and Road region, and is primarily about linking regions to the world, bringing prosperity and sustainable growth in Asia and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Belt and Road Initia-

Highway Network of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor



becomes a gateway of prosperity. Not only linking Pakistan and China and creating job opportunities, it brings poverty reduction and alleviation, and development, and boosts sustainable industrial growth.

Socio-Economic Development

So, we are looking at socio-economic development through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan Niazi, the scope of the project has been expanded to increase agriculture, socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, and healthcare, so that it can have its outreach to less-developed areas of our country.

As we speak, 22 projects worth USD \$28 billion are in various stages of implementation, contributing to the development of Pakistan. While we

enter the second phase, we are readying ourselves for the industrialization of Pakistan and looking at sustainable investment. The biggest dividend will be through the industrial cooperation creating opportunities for jobs and growth. The government is also taking steps to encourage private sector participation and creating an enabling environment that can reduce risk and create that full factor for investors to come.

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I would also like to highlight that the special economic zone under CPEC is not just China-specific. It offers investment packages and liberal incentives for anyone to come and invest in Pakistan and the CPEC. Additionally, 15 energy projects in IPP (independent power producer) mode are being implemented to address the energy crisis of Pakistan. This is actually expanding our energy basket, and we are looking at ingenious sources of energy in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

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will, *inshallah* [if Allah wills it], boost our economy. CPEC will not only benefit the entirety of Pakistan, but it will also contribute to regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

CPEC is not the name of a single route, but a complete extensive package of cooperation, initiatives, projects, industrial parks, agricultural development, and certainly power generation, tourism, and financial cooperation.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Pakistan of today, under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, is moving towards the path of economic prosperity, and through CPEC, we are improving tourism, human resource development, transfer of knowledge and technology, besides developing rural advancement in the country, which is leading towards a true inclusive

growth. The impact of such development initiatives is visible from the fact that Pakistan is transforming into a better place for foreign investors from other countries, including the Middle East and other areas, and China. I expect that our friends will come and look at Pakistan as a place suitable for their investment because of the large size of our population.

I strongly believe that for inclusive development, we need to work with our partner countries to develop on the success of the Belt and Road Initiative and create a solid foundation for deepening cooperation. That reminds me of Mr. Deng Xiaoping, who said that we will cross the river by touching the pebbles. The first phase of CPEC is over, and now we are progressing into the second phase of CPEC. As it is said, it does not matter how fast you are moving, as long as you are moving.