

CHINA, PAKISTAN HIT OUT AT 'UNILATERAL' KASHMIR MOVES

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Closer ties: A file photo of Chinese President Xi Jinping, right, and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan. APAP

China and Pakistan on Sunday said they opposed "unilateral actions that complicate" the Kashmir issue, as they pledged closer ties following a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

A joint statement released following their meeting in Beijing said "both sides reiterated their support on issues concerning each other's core interests" and "underscored that stronger defence and security cooperation between Pakistan and China was an important factor of peace and stability in the region."

Mr. Khan attended the opening of the Winter Olympics on Friday, which India has boycotted following the use of a PLA commander in the torch relay, and also held talks with Premier and second-ranked leader Li Keqiang prior to his meeting with Mr. Xi.

The joint statement following Sunday's talks said Pakistan was committed to a "One-China Policy and support for China on Taiwan, South China Sea, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet." China, for its part, "reaffirmed its support for Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and security, as well as promoting its socio-economic development and prosperity."

"Both sides reiterated that a peaceful and prosperous South Asia is in the common interest of all parties," the statement said, adding that "they emphasised the importance of pursuit of dialogue and resolution of all outstanding disputes to promote regional cooperation and advance the goals of lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region."

On Kashmir, the statement said Mr. Khan "briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, including its concerns, position and pressing issues at the moment."

China repeated its official stance that the issue "should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements" and said it "opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation". Beijing had in 2019 voiced opposition to India's reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and creation of Ladakh union territory calling it a "unilateral action".

A readout from Islamabad on Mr. Khan's remarks to Mr. Xi, published by the official Associated Press of Pakistan, quoted the Pakistani leader as hitting out at India. He claimed that "the persecution of minorities in India in advancing the Hindutva mindset of RSS-BJP, was a threat to regional peace and stability" and "that the rapid militarisation of India was undermining regional stability."

Those comments and references to India were not mentioned in the Chinese readout, which quoted Mr. Xi as saying "the strategic significance of China-Pakistan relations is getting more

prominent since the world has entered a period of turbulence and transformation.”

Mr. Xi said China “firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, dignity and fighting terrorism” and would continue supporting the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides on Friday signed an agreement to boost industrial cooperation as part of the second phase of CPEC.

The joint statement said the two sides discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the need to expedite humanitarian aid, and said both sides were “ready to discuss with Afghanistan the extension of CPEC to Afghanistan.”

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