

No shift in policy on Pakistan: China

Strategic partner: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with his Pakistani counterpart Khawaja Asif in Beijing on Friday. AFP/LINTAO ZHANG

After agreeing to list Pakistan-based outfits Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) as international terror groups during this week's Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) summit, China on Friday reassured Pakistan that there was no shift in its policy of recognising Islamabad's role in countering global extremism.

During a press conference with his Pakistani counterpart Khawaja Asif, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that Beijing saw Islamabad as a close ally that is a key part of the battle against international terrorism.

Post-BRICS balancing

Mr. Wang embarked on a post-BRICS balancing act when he praised Pakistan as Beijing's "good brother and iron friend". "For years Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism. More importantly Pakistan is an important participant in the international cooperation against terrorism." He added: "When it comes to the issue of counterterrorism, Pakistan has done its best with a clear conscience. In comparison, some countries need to give Pakistan the full credit that it deserves."

Ahead of his visit, and following the statement at the BRICS summit, Mr. Asif had told Geo News, in reference to China's decision to endorse a ban on the JeM and LeT during the BRICS summit, that "friends should not be tested [every time], particularly in the changed scenario". "Instead, we should impose some restrictions on the activities of elements like LeT and JeM, so that we can show the global community that we have put our house in order," he had observed.

Much of the press conference was devoted to the joint role of Beijing, Islamabad and Kabul to ensure durable peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Asif said that China had played a crucial role in bringing Pakistan and Afghanistan together. "To support that initiative Pakistan has already undertaken many steps and will pursue those steps for improving relationship with Kabul."

He also underscored that Islamabad is working on "a substantive and robust engagement with the Kabul... (at the) political level, security level, military level, intelligence level". Mr. Asif said that he would be meeting his Afghan counterpart on the sidelines of the upcoming UN General Assembly session in New York.

Engagement with Kabul

The Chinese have escalated their engagement with Kabul, especially after the collapse of the four-party talks involving the United States, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In June, Mr. Wang had visited Kabul and Islamabad to reinforce a Beijing-driven initiative in Afghanistan.

At the Friday press conference, Mr. Wang said that Beijing was "exploring" hosting a China-Pakistan-Afghanistan conference later this year. He said that "strategic communication, security dialogue and practical cooperation" would be the pillars of the new platform for regional cooperation.

From China, Mr. Asif will travel to Iran on the second leg of his visit.

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com