

A strong bilateral relationship

By RT HON PHILIP HAMMOND MP

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PHILIP HAMMOND graduated in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from University College, Oxford. After a 20-year career in the private sector, he entered Parliament in 1997 as the Conservative MP for Runnymede and Weybridge. He was appointed Secretary of State for Transport on 12 May 2010, a position he held until 14 October 2011, when he was appointed Secretary of State for Defence. He was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs on 15 July 2014.

Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China

This week's State Visit is well-timed. Our two dynamic nations already enjoy a vibrant relationship, and our co-operation has brought significant benefits. We have a shared interest in boosting our collaboration; and in strengthening our dialogue across the board.

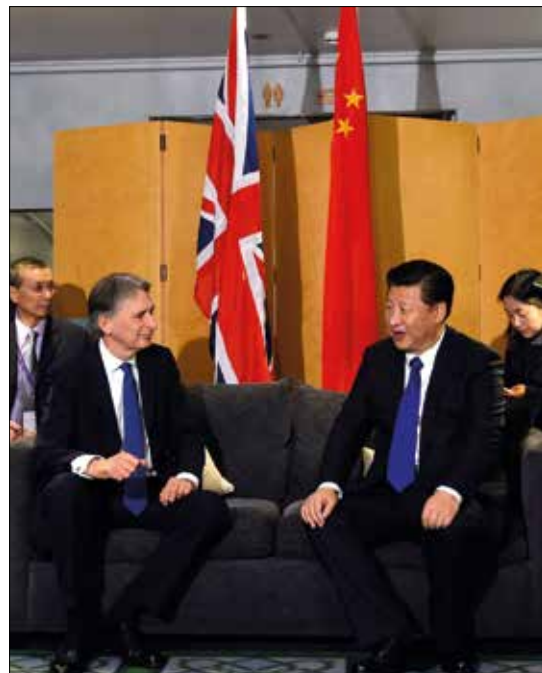
President Xi and Madame Peng will enjoy a busy and ambitious programme reflecting the three themes of the Visit:

The United Kingdom is *Open for Business* – British companies are exporting a rapidly increasing amount of goods and services to China. At the same time, the UK has become China's number one investment destination among major EU countries.

The United Kingdom and China share a focus on *Economies of the Future* – clean technologies, climate change, healthcare, science and the creative industries offer exciting potential for collaboration. This year we have also celebrated the inaugural Year of UK-China Cultural Exchange.

And the UK and China are committed to *Working Together Globally* – especially as China is an increasingly important actor on the global stage.

During my visit to Beijing in August for the Strategic Dialogue, I outlined how the UK and



China, as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, have a responsibility for stewardship of the international rules based system developed after the Second World War. Global stability is fundamental to our future prosperity: and we have a good track record of working together. China's participation in the international coalition led by the UK, in response to the Ebola Crisis, in Sierra Leone was unprecedented. It showed a great willingness and capability to work with us and others, to contain and suppress a disease that was potentially a threat to all mankind. And no member of the P5+1 could have achieved alone the momentous deal reached with Iran in Vienna this year.

In March 2015, the UK became the first major Western country to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). And last year, the UK became the first Western country to issue RMB-denominated sovereign debt. We believe that China's 'One Belt One Road' initiative offers long-term opportunities for UK – China collaboration in third markets, supporting infrastructure development across Asia. The State Visit will also include a business element in Manchester, promoting Chinese investment in the Northern Powerhouse. I welcome China's investment in the expansion of Manchester Airport City and the launch of direct flights from Manchester to Beijing.

There are growing opportunities to broaden our partnership in the future. China is the world's biggest carbon emitter and one of the biggest consumers of antibiotics, and we will continue to develop our joint work in areas like climate change and anti-microbial resistance. There are also opportunities for enhanced collaboration in areas like peacekeeping, and international development, particularly Africa.

We are supporting this co-operation with an increased diplomatic presence in China. In the last five years, we have expanded the UK's diplomatic network in China, opening a new Consulate General in Wuhan and boosting the number of British diplomats. We are delighted that China, in turn, has added a new Consulate General in Belfast to its established ones in Edinburgh and Manchester.

The State Visit is a key moment – but our work together will extend beyond this week's events. I am confident that the State Visit of President Xi will herald the start of a 21st Century global partnership; that these four days will set the tone for the next decade. **E**