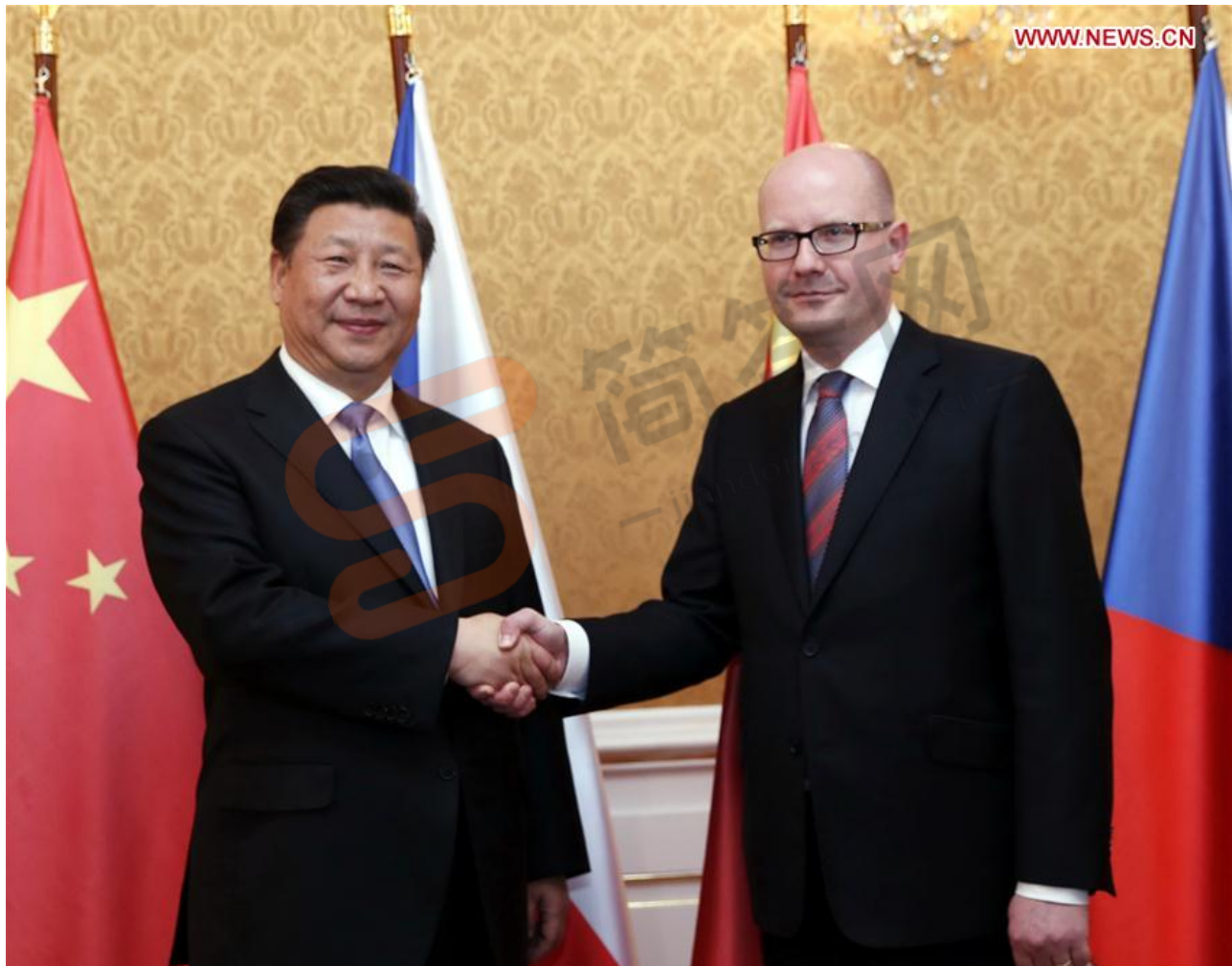


《CCTV9英语新闻：习近平开启中捷关系新纪元》

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PRAGUE, March 29 (Xinhua) -- Visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka here on Tuesday, believing that China-Czech ties have been ushered into a new era.



PRAGUE, March 29, 2016 (Xinhua) -- Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) meets with Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka in Prague, the Czech Republic, March 29, 2016. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)

China and the Czech Republic enjoy traditional friendship, Xi said, lauding the frequent high-level interactions, ever deepening strategic mutual trust, ever expanding economic and trade cooperation, as well as colorful people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two sides over recent years.

The two countries agreed earlier in the day to elevate their relations to a strategic partnership, and inked a host of intergovernmental agreements to promote ties in various areas.

Xi said that the establishment of the China-Czech strategic partnership marks the beginning of a new era of bilateral ties.

The two countries, Xi stressed, should take the opportunity of the signing of the intergovernmental MOU on jointly advancing the "Belt and Road Initiative" last year to further synergize their development strategies.

China is ready to work with the Czech Republic to boost air connectivity, further cooperate in the construction of high-speed railways, roads and bridges, and continue to collaborate in such areas as automobile, aviation, nano-technology and nuclear power.

The Chinese government encourages and supports competent Chinese enterprises to invest in the Czech Republic and welcomes more Czech companies to expand business in China, said Xi, who also urged cooperation in culture, education, sports, tourism, health, film and TV, as well as interactions between local governments.

The cooperation mechanism between China and the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) is entering a maturing phase and delivering early harvests, Xi said, expressing his hope that the 17 countries should carry on the spirit of mutual respect, mutual support, win-win cooperation, mutual benefit, as well as inclusiveness, to synergize China-CEECs cooperation, construction of the "Belt and Road Initiative" and the development of China-Europe ties, and make contribution to regional and world development.



PRAGUE, March 29, 2016 (Xinhua) -- Chinese President Xi Jinping (5th R) meets with Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (4th L) in Prague, the Czech Republic, March 29, 2016. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)

China is willing to advance the connectivity with Central and Eastern Europe and deepen cooperation in education, tourism and sports with the CEECs under the framework of jointly building the "Belt and Road Initiative," Xi noted.

Sobotka, for his part, hailed Xi's "historic" visit to his country.

Bilateral cooperation in economy, trade, aviation, finance, energy and medicine has tremendously benefited the people of both sides, he said.

The Czech side looks forward to linking its plan of further cooperation with China to the "Belt and Road Initiative," and is willing to play a crucial role in China's effort to develop its ties with the European Union and become a transport, logistics and financial hub in Europe for the Silk Road Economic Belt, he added.

The Czech Republic thinks highly of and will vigorously advance the China-CEECs cooperation, and is ready to significantly promote healthcare, investment and local-level cooperation.

Xi arrived Monday in Prague for a three-day state visit. It is the first state visit by a Chinese president in 67 years since the two countries established diplomatic ties.