

## **Chinese investment in the Gwadar port is purely economic**

ISLAMABAD: “Chinese investment in the Gwadar port is purely economic,” said Mr. Hu Xijin, Editor-in-Chief of a leading Chinese daily, the Global Times, here on Wednesday. He was speaking at a roundtable organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) on Pak-China relations with the editorial staff of Global Times. He added that China will make all the necessary investments in the port to make it fully operational to support Chinese trade with West Asia, especially the trade between western part of China and that part of the world.

Mr. Hu said that China considers Pakistan an important friendly neighboring country and that Chinese investors want to invest in projects in Pakistan. He added, however, that some Chinese investors are apprehensive about the security situation in Pakistan. He said that China will keep supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan post-2014. He added that China does not want to undertake projects in any country that are opposed by the host communities. Responding to a question about the imbalance in trade of China with Pakistan, Mr. Hu said that China is a free market economy where the government cannot dictate to the companies to import products from other countries if they are not market competitive.

Mr. Ashraf Azim, President of IRS, pointed out that Indian concerns about the use of Gwadar port as a naval base were completely baseless. He termed the transfer of the port operations to China Overseas Port Holdings Limited a great achievement of the current government. He emphasized the need for business and cultural links between Pakistan and China alongside cordial government-to-government relations.

Other participants of the roundtable discussion included: Mr. Liu Yang, Senior Editor at the Global Times; Ms. Hu Jia, Editor at the Global Times; Ms. Li Ying, Editor at the Global Times English Edition; and Ms. Farhat Parveen, Ms. Shaheen Akhtar, Mr. Zia Khokhar, Mr. Khalid Malik, Mr Aarish Khan, Ms. Humera Iqbal, Mr. Imran Sardar, Mr. Shahbaz Saeed, and Mr. Aqeel Kazmi from IRS. Mr. Shah Faisal Afridi, President of the newly established Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry, participated in the roundtable as a special guest.