

Spotlight: Top U.S., Chinese experts urge joint efforts to maintain bilateral cooperative ties

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Former Dean of the Kennedy School of Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye delivers a speech during a forum on "China's Economic Development and China-U.S. Relations" at Harvard University's famed Loeb House in Cambridge of Massachusetts, the United States, Oct. 15, 2018. Joint efforts have to be made by both the United States and China to maintain the healthy and stable development of bilateral cooperative ties, which are not only mutually beneficial but crucial for a stable world order, top American and Chinese experts said here Monday. (Xinhua/Wang Ying)

by Xinhua writers Yang Shilong, Chang Yuan

BOSTON, Oct. 15 (Xinhua) -- Joint efforts have to be made by both the United States and China to maintain the healthy and stable development of bilateral cooperative ties, which are not only mutually beneficial but crucial for a stable world order, top American and Chinese experts said here Monday.

Considering the changing dynamics of the global political and economic order, China and the United States should not be a threat to each other but explore how they rely on and compete with each other for the benefit of both countries and the world as a whole, said professor Joseph Nye at a forum held at the Loeb House, Harvard University.

"And I fear that what we are going through now in the current time of trouble is that we're going to lose some of that capacity to appreciate each other's soft power, and thereby jeopardize some of our longer-term capacity to cooperate," he said. "China and the United States can work together, and we are not going to have an international order where either country can prevail."

Nye, who coined the term "soft power" in the late 1980s, said that much of the current rhetoric in the United States and the West regarding China's use of soft power is based on misperceptions.

For a stable international order that is beneficial to all parties, the world's two largest economies have to cooperate with each other and use their soft power for the common good of mankind, said Nye, who served as chair of the National Intelligence Council and assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs in the Clinton administration.

"If China and the United States are going to cooperate on major problems of the future, such as climate change or rules for cyberspace or pandemics, we're going to have to have an attitude towards each other of being able to cooperate," he said.



William Overholt, senior research fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Harvard Kennedy School, delivers a speech during a forum on "China's Economic Development and China-U.S. Relations" at Harvard University's famed Loeb House in Cambridge of Massachusetts, the United States, Oct. 15, 2018. Joint efforts have to be made by both the United States and China to maintain the healthy and stable development of bilateral cooperative ties, which are not only mutually beneficial but crucial for a stable world order, top American and Chinese experts said here Monday. (Xinhua/Wang Ying)

William Overholt, senior research fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Harvard Kennedy School, voiced a similar opinion.

While both China and the United States have valid grievances and much to negotiate, it is useful for both countries to step back and review the historic transformations and mutual benefits of bilateral collaboration that have occurred despite disagreements, said Overholt.

Overholt, who wrote "The Rise of China: How Economic Reform is Creating a New Superpower," also highlighted how both countries must collaborate in a highly complex globalized and post-industrial economy that places great value on innovation as well as ethical and environmental responsibility in the global supply chain.

"The China-U.S. relationship has contributed to some of the most significant accomplishments in the world today," he said. "If we recognize that, we can overcome the challenges facing our two countries today. We can take the past successes of the previous 40 years and bring them to the next level."

Zhang Weiwei, professor of international relations at Fudan University, believed that China and the United States can achieve enhanced cooperation and win-win results for the benefit of the people in both countries and in the world at large should the two sides end their misperceptions on issues concerning the bilateral relationship.

"China's mentality is more about win-win than zero-sum," Zhang said. "We have every opportunity now to embrace mutually assured prosperity, given that the United States and China are now the two largest countries, and there are 14,000 people traveling each day between the two countries. So we are closely connected."

China proposes to build a shared future for mankind and advocates that all countries can learn from different development models, said the professor who penned the best-selling and award-winning "China Trilogy" ("The China Ripple," "The China Wave" and "The China Horizon").

The professor said China's successful reform and development proves that China has consistently adhered to a foreign policy of peaceful development, cooperation and win-win solutions.



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"Shanghai today is what China wants the whole country to be by 2050," said Robert Kuhn, a leading China expert and chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, whose documentary series "China's Challenges" has won many awards such as the China News Award and an Emmy.

Kuhn said Shanghai's development can be "a model for understanding how China wants to develop," and explained how Shanghai has taken the opportunity of China's 40 years of reform and opening-up to become a world-leading international metropolis in the fields of finance, trade, logistics, infrastructure construction, education, and technology.

The first China International Import Expo, to be held in Shanghai from Nov. 5 to 10 this year, further demonstrates to the world China's determination to continue to open its market and share its development achievements with the world, he said.

Kuhn believes the U.S.-China relationship should not be endangered by misperceptions, including a self-fulfilling prophecy of identifying malign motives in each other.

Over 100 international research experts and Harvard students attended the event organized by the China Institute of Fudan University themed "China's Economic Development and China-U.S. Relations."

An exhibition on "Amazing Shanghai" was on display during the forum, featuring photographs highlighting the rapid development of Shanghai's economy, culture and society since China's reform and opening-up 40 years ago.



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