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## Spotlight: U.S. intellectuals, biz insiders laud Xi-Trump meeting as constructive for further progress

by Xinhua writers Ma Qian, Yang Shilong - Source: Xinhua| 2019-07-03 15:26:27|Editor: Li Xia

NEW YORK, July 2 (Xinhua) -- A group of senior U.S. intellectuals and business professionals have lauded the progress made at the latest Xi-Trump meeting as constructive, calling it "a first step" to further ease U.S.-China trade frictions.

On the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in the Japanese city of Osaka on Saturday, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump, agreed that the two sides will restart economic and trade consultations, and that the United States will not add additional tariffs on Chinese imports.

"The situation is indeed improved," Jeffrey Sachs, a senior UN advisor and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at the New York-based Columbia University, told Xinhua on Monday. "They signaled the will to cooperate. This is very important and constructive. Also, President Xi's defense of the open trading system was very important," said the senior scholar.

Carla A. Hills, chairman and CEO of Washington-based trade and investment advisory firm Hills & Company, told Xinhua that she believes the consensus between Xi and Trump would be "a first step hopefully on the road to continued progress." "The 'pullback' is a welcome first step in efforts to reach an agreement, which if steadily built upon by taking positive future steps forward could result in sizeable benefits to both economies and build bonds for the future," said Hills. "Hope is (the) most important outcome of this first step seeking a solution to the outstanding differences (between the two countries)," said the female entrepreneur, who served as U.S. Trade Representative from 1989 to 1993. "The progress to date has fueled hope by our business leaders, workers, and farmers that progress will continue and the two governments will reach a positive outcome," she added.

**Echoing her viewpoints, Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a leading U.S. expert on China, saw the Xi-Trump agreement as a "good result, best could be expected," as the two leaders have taken "the first step by agreeing to stop making things worse."**

**"Conventional wisdom says: deal or no deal, there is now long-term, inevitable and relentless rivalry between China and the U.S. Our challenge is to prove the conventional wisdom wrong," Kuhn told Xinhua in a recent interview.**

To overcome such a challenge, Sourabh Gupta, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for China-America Studies, called on the two sides to "engage each other in full sincerity." "Let's put our heads down with sincerity," Gupta told Xinhua in a recent interview.

The scholars and business insiders all expressed optimism over the potential resolution of trade divergences between the two countries, and reiterated China's crucial role in promoting openness and free trade.

"Both sides should aim to establish new rules under the WTO that address some of the contentious issues," Sachs noted. "Both sides, indeed the world, would benefit from a sound multilateral discussion of these complex issues within the WTO." Sachs stressed that Washington should drop its unilateral trade moves both on raising tariffs and on blocking many technologies, and engage with China and other nations in serious, transparent and multilateral negotiations under the WTO. "I believe that China's support of an open, multilateral trading system is extremely important. And to achieve this, and help to convince others as well, China should also be a global leader of sustainable development, pointing the way to a prosperous and environmentally safe world for all countries," Sachs noted.

**Similarly, Kuhn, also an investment banker, held that a more rapid and broader opening of the Chinese market would "facilitate the rebuilding of the American business community as the staunch and steady supporter of strong U.S.-China relations."**

**He further pointed out that the real challenge in the next few years would come after a deal gets done "in planning and implementing the small, slow steps needed to rebuild trust." "These steps could be along the lines of joint development projects, disease control, space, arctic/antarctic, (and) cultural exchanges," he added.**

As the two countries have agreed that their economic and trade negotiating teams will work on specific issues, Hills suggested that they "meet immediately and regularly to address the remaining issues."

She also hoped that China would continue to move forward to promote openness, which would have a positive impact on the country's relationships with all its global trading partners. "Our aim should be to resolve the current issues and restore a strong and durable economic foundation for a strong U.S.-China relations for the years ahead," Hills stressed.

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