



CNN – CNN Newsroom

70th Anniversary of the PRC

Accomplishments and Challenges

Robert Lawrence Kuhn, October 1, 2019





HOST: Joining me here in Beijing is a Beijing-based commentator, Robert Lawrence Kuhn. He is a longtime adviser to Chinese leaders as well as Chinese companies. He is an author, a commentator. He also is a host on the CGTN TV show called "Closer to China", and he joins us now.

HOST: Robert, thank you for joining us here in Beijing. And I just want to ask you, yes, we saw that beautifully produced march earlier today, this highly choreographed and micromanaged event, to showcase strength and unity. But the events happening in Hong Kong — that must be weighing on leaders this day.





KUHN: The overarching theme of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China is that China's development has greatly enhanced the living standards of the Chinese people; that China's system, China's path, the one-party system, is working well for China, and it benefits the world.

Beijing
3:23 PM

DEVELOPING STORY

PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS HEAT UP IN HONG KONG

Robert Lawrence Kuhn | Chairman, The Kuhn Foundation

LIVE
CNN
7:23 AM GMT

CNN NEWSROOM

The image shows a news broadcast from CNN Newsroom. On the left, a man in a suit and glasses, Robert Lawrence Kuhn, is speaking. On the right, a live shot shows a wide street in Beijing with a large crowd and a black limousine. The text overlay includes the location 'Beijing' and time '3:23 PM', the headline 'PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS HEAT UP IN HONG KONG', and the name of the speaker, Robert Lawrence Kuhn, Chairman of The Kuhn Foundation. The broadcast is marked as 'LIVE' and shows the time '7:23 AM GMT'.

Kuhn: We've seen that really in four places expressed: The parade, if we analyze it. President Xi's speech today, and his speech last night in the Great Hall of the People at the National Day reception, where it had officials and leaders, past and present — it was the elite of China, representatives of all parts of society.





KUHN: And what was released last Friday, which is the fourth datapoint — and the most comprehensive — a White Paper called “China and the World in the New Era”, and what it showed is the enormous benefits that this system has brought to the Chinese people: 70-fold increase in GDP per capita (at constant prices); 800 million people brought out of poverty; lifespans raised from 35 years to 77 years.



KUHN: And the argument is given – and this is the theme of this session – that China's system with one-party leadership has enabled this to occur – and that they contrast this with what they call the so-called “China threat” – and you read it in the White Paper, which has all the details.



KUHN: And they analyze the China threat, and they use the development of China, and then show how it benefits the world. That's the theme that you hear in Beijing.





HOST:
Right, that is the theme that is a picture that Beijing wants to show to its people and to the world — this picture of strength — and yet China's economy is slowing down.





HOST: You have the ongoing U.S. China trade war. By December about \$540 billion worth of Chinese exports are going to be hit with tariffs by the U.S. — and that is going to hurt. You have the ongoing challenges of Xinjiang, the unrest in Hong Kong. Can China continue to maintain this picture of unity and strength when it is under assault on so many different fronts?





KUHN:
President Xi has certainly been talking about struggles and risks. There's no doubt about it. He started last January in private sessions with officials. It's become more public. That is very well appreciated.



KUHN: I think we have to understand the richness and complexity of Chinese society. It is not simple. The economy is slowing on a percentage basis. it's growing more.

Beijing 3:25 PM

Earlier Beijing

DEVELOPING STORY

CHINA MARKS 70 YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE

Robert Lawrence Kuhn | Host, "Closer to China with R.L. Kuhn"

LIVE CNN

HSI ▲ 137.46

CNN NEWSROOM



KUHN: But if you go back 10, 15 years ago when China entered into the WTO, China was growing at 10 - 12 percent — everybody liked that. But China's economy was less than a tenth of what it is today. So, on an absolute basis, even though China is growing less as a percentage, in absolute terms





KUHN:
There are still many problems in China's economy. Debt is very high. There's still enormous pollution. President Xi has talked about the "three big battles": fighting risk, mainly financial risk of enterprises and local government ; fighting pollution; ending poverty.





KUHN:
What I found most interesting about President Xi speech last night — I attended; it was a short speech — and it was very general about the benefits to the Chinese people from the Chinese system, how the world benefits.

Beijing 3:26 PM

Earlier Beijing

DEVELOPING STORY

CHINA MARKS 70 YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE

LIVE
CNN
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CNN NEWSROOM

The screenshot shows a news broadcast with a split-screen layout. On the left, a male reporter with glasses and a suit is speaking. On the right, a large military tank is shown in a parade setting. The background of the tank scene is hazy, suggesting a large gathering or a specific location in Beijing. The text overlays provide context: 'Beijing 3:26 PM' and 'Earlier Beijing' indicate the location and timing of the footage. The main headline reads 'CHINA MARKS 70 YEARS OF COMMUNIST RULE', and a 'DEVELOPING STORY' banner is positioned above it. The CNN logo and 'LIVE' indicator are in the bottom right, along with a signal strength icon and '0.30'. The 'CNN NEWSROOM' branding is at the very bottom.

KUHN: There was only one specific area that he stressed — again, it was a short speech — and that specific area was on poverty alleviation.



KUHN: And he said this would be considered a “miracle” – to have brought more than 800 million people out of poverty, including 100 million of the intractable poor since 2012 – the last 16.6 million is for this year and next year.





KUHN:
When you understand how it works — with five levels of party leaders involved, with the different techniques they use. They follow every family so there's tens of millions of people. The emphasis on that shows the way the government thinks.



KUHN: And there's a lot of problems but also a lot of distortion too.

HOST: Robert, again, we thank you for sharing your views with us here on CNN – of course on this day, National Day.

