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Robert Kuhn: Hong Kong is China and will remain China



Lack of understanding: instability in Hong Kong, like instability anywhere, retards economic growth.

Zheng Qi, People's Daily Online

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American public intellectual, international corporate strategist and investment banker warns against calls for Washington to use the current unrest as leverage in Sino-US trade negotiations

"Stability is the foundation of economic development, just as rule of law is the foundation of civil society. Instability in Hong Kong, like instability anywhere, retards economic growth," China expert Dr Robert Lawrence Kuhn told People's Daily.

The American public intellectual, international corporate strategist and investment banker said: "It is understandable that leading Hong Kong entrepreneurs have criticised the violence, which directly impacts the value of their assets, especially real estate. Some wonder why it took them so long."

Over the past decades, Dr Kuhn has focused on China and has been a media commentator on the nation's politics and economy.

He did not hide his disagreement with the current allegations by some in the West that Beijing is trying to control Hong Kong in a more repressive way.

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Dr Robert Kuhn, China expert

Dr Kuhn said: "Those who claim that China's central government seeks to control Hong Kong in a more repressive way betray their lack of understanding of China. Hong Kong's role has been a vital portal for multinational corporations to do business in China, building China's economy, strengthening China's technology. Why would China want to jeopardise that?"

In a recent article that he shared with People's Daily, Dr Kuhn wrote: "Looking forward, Hong Kong is China and will remain China." He also emphasised he continues to believe that "the central government seeks the best for Hong Kong, stressing social stability, essential for economic development, and rule of law, essential for social development".

Recently some political voices in Washington have been asking for a link to be made between the current situation in Hong Kong and the US-China trade negotiations, using Hong Kong as leverage to force compromise from China.

But Dr Kuhn said: "Any who would link the Hong Kong issue with US-China trade negotiations badly misreads the Chinese government and the sensitivities of a large majority of the Chinese people. Such 'bargaining', in essence using Hong Kong as a trading chip, would be a gross insult to the Hong Kong people."

In his view, Hong Kong's economic future is almost totally related to its integration with the mainland, especially the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area, a grand vision of regional co-ordinated development.

"The Greater Bay Area gross domestic product is around \$1.7trn, 12 per cent of China's GDP, and is projected to reach around \$3.5trn by 2030. If the Greater Bay Area were a country, its GDP would rank almost in the world's top 10," Dr Kuhn said.

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