

Wisdom needed to prevent U.S.-China ties from further free fall: expert

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WASHINGTON, July 29 (Xinhua) -- Political wisdom is urgently needed for avoiding a further free fall in U.S.-China relations which are crucial for the two countries and the world as a whole, a leading U.S. expert on China said.

"The cascading free fall in U.S.-China relations is ripe with danger, as chances for escalation or miscalculation rise to flood-water levels," warned Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn foundation, in an interview via email with Xinhua.

There is "certainly election-year politics involved", Kuhn said. "With the U.S.'s disastrous record of controlling the coronavirus, bashing China seems both a politically expedient target and a convenient distraction."

The contest between President Donald Trump and his presumptive Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, will be a "slug-out brawl," Kuhn said. "Who can best bash China will be the winner, they believe, the tough-guy champion."

"In this election, it's like playing a 'whole deck of China Cards,' he said. "Is all this negativity furthering long-term American interests? Of course not."

"Neither are the anti-American pronouncements in China furthering Chinese interests," he added.

The senior expert lamented that "there is a vicious cycle between American and Chinese mutual attacks, each reinforcing the other in a race to the bottom."

"While the U.S. has recently instituted, unilaterally, disrupting policies on China, it would be a mistake to cast current American concerns as only election-year rhetoric. This time it is more," he said.

"In fact, opposing China is just about the only issue that the bitterly opposed Democratic and Republican political parties agree on ... How to combat these current perceptions is a challenge for China," he said.

According to the expert, accusations against China will be made when playing the "China Card" in the coming campaign, including alleged unfair economics, job loss, and the COVID-19 pandemic, among others.

"Notwithstanding real issues on both sides, simplistic bias and one-dimensional stereotyping, on both sides, is a recipe for confrontation, not cooperation," Kuhn said.

The challenge for the United States is to avoid threatening China's core interests, while the challenge for China is to reduce the anxiety of those who fear China's rise, he said.

The expert believes that "a window of opportunity shall open for China and the United States to reset relations" after the U.S. election is over in November. However, "the window will be narrower than normal, and the differences will be wider," he said.

"A reset will be attempted after the election. That will be good. But no going back to halcyon days of amiable U.S.-China relations," he predicted. "Nothing would be better for the American and Chinese peoples, indeed for the peoples of the world, than genuine cooperation between the U.S. and China. I'm watching for wisdom."
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