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U.S., China should first build mutual confidence to improve ties: Kuhn

Xinhua, December 12, 2020

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 (Xinhua) -- The United States and China should first build mutual confidence to improve the consequential bilateral ties, a leading U.S. expert on China has said.

"There's no question that proper U.S.-China relations are critical for the peace and prosperity, not only above country, but at the entire world. We've all been saying this for two decades or more, and it's becoming increasingly true," Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the Kuhn Foundation, told Xinhua in an interview.

"Yet during this time we've had a severe deterioration over the last five years and intensely in the last year or two, exacerbated by the pandemic. So that's where we are today. I think there are two categories to prescribe what to do (to improve the ties)," he said.

The first category, said the senior expert, is to "avoid making things worse."

"That means that each side should understand the red lines of the other side and look not to do things that will particularly irritate the other side. It's easier said than done, but we can talk about what some of those issues are," he said.

The second category is to "look for those areas of common good, which no matter what the political or economic problems are, everybody recognizes is good for themselves," Kuhn said.

"Look for those areas of common interest that no matter what will be beneficial to both countries. We've mentioned climate change, pandemic control, but there are others as well. Then we can begin to deal with the thornier issues of economics, trade... various other kinds of competition," he said.

"I'm hopeful that we, coming out of the tensions that we now face, will become more rational actors, and both sides can stabilize the relationship and then gradually build it back," he said.

"Don't look for a sudden transformation back to where it was because then you'll be disappointed, but look to not make things worse, look for areas of cooperation, then that will build a confidence to go forward into the more difficult issues," he said. Enditem

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