

Interview: China watcher says Belt and Road Initiative a key contribution to world stability, equality



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Picture shows the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, collectively known as the Belt and Road initiative. (Xinhua)

by Xinhua Writer Liu Chang

BEIJING, Sept. 27 (Xinhua) -- The Belt and Road Initiative is an important contribution toward achieving long-term global stability and economic equality, said Robert Kuhn, a U.S. expert on China.

During a recent interview with Xinhua on the sidelines of an international seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative in the northwestern Chinese city of Xi'an, the old China hand said because of economic inequalities, ideological and religious reasons as well as bloody conflicts, the world appears to be worsening.

"If people have no material benefits, then they have nothing to lose, and therefore they will go into more extreme activities," he warned.

"The Belt and Road Initiative is a very important contribution to the stability of the world because it deals with areas of the world where there is the most instability," he said.

The initiative refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. It brings together countries in Asia, Europe and Africa via overland and maritime networks.

Kuhn said that because the world is unbalanced in term of social and economic development, the initiative can meet the desperate needs for infrastructure and help raise the living standards in countries that get involved with the new Silk Road program.

In answering a question on the most notable achievement of the initiative over the past three years, he believes it is the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

He said the bank "will bring world's best practices" and "meet the highest standards of project analysis, regulatory conformance and anti-corruption -- all the things that are necessary for world class standards."

Speaking of future challenges, Kuhn said political instability is the greatest risk confronting the world, yet he warns that it "shouldn't deter us and make us afraid to go forward."

"The biggest antidote to that kind of poison is to make sure that all the projects are structured in the best and most professional way, and structured financially so that the stream of revenue in the future matches the financing," he added.

On China-U.S. relations and the on-going U.S. elections, Kuhn said relations between the world's top two economies are no doubt the most important bilateral relationship in the world and will continue to be in the future.

He believes that it is "categorically wrong" to believe that if something bad happens to the United States, it would benefit China. "If the economy of either country fails, the other would suffer severely."

Commenting on the phenomenon of China-bashing in the heat of the U.S. presidential race, the expert said whoever gets elected in the end, he or she must recognize that the best way forward is to seek cooperation.

"China and the United States have to get over the fact that some very small differences, like the trade issues, are so minor compared to working together to achieve stability in the world," he added.



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