

# Drop paranoia of China threatening US: Forum speakers

By Chen Bei | chinadaily.com.cn

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Neil Bush, son of former US president George H.W. Bush, delivers a speech at the China Development Forum Special Session in Beijing, Sept 7, 2019. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Scholars, business leaders and officials from China and the US on Saturday rejected claims that China is a threat to US economic and national security.

The group called for the principle of "agreeing to disagree" to guide both sides in future discussions, with the aim of building trust and maintaining a healthy relationship between the two countries.

"The dynamic of China's impressive rise is clearly fueling American discomfort", said Neil Bush, founder and chairman of the George H.W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations.

Bush said that central to the current low point in Sino-US relations is the American question of whether China is a natural friend or foe of the US.

The son of former US president George H.W. Bush rejected the assumption that a strong China will threaten US global power or that China will become a hostile actor on the world stage.

"For my understanding of history, China never uses military or economic power to impose its will on another country, and I think it's useful to look at history as a predictor of future behavior," he said.



Neil Bush, son of former US president George H.W. Bush, suggests the US should embrace a George H.W.

Bush style of leadership in shaping its policy toward China. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

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Bush made the remarks at the China Development Forum Special Session held in Beijing.

In a session on the challenges and prospects of China-US relations since 1979, he and four other speakers—including Joshua Cooper Ramo, Mark Brzezinski, Wang Boming and Zhang Baijia—retraced the legacy of previous efforts to build bilateral ties and explored the underlying issues of China-US trade conflicts and tensions.

Worrying about the Trump administration's treatment of China as a foe, Bush suggested the US should embrace a George H.W. Bush style of leadership.

According to Bush, this is an approach that "wants to create and maintain multiple levels of frequent dialogue; that seeks to build trust; that puts the parties in the other guy's shoes; that looks for the best in others; that is respectful; that accounts for cultural differences".

He said the fear of China's growth posing a threat to the US, rising nationalism shown in Trump's "anti-immigrant, anti-Chinese, pro-America-first rhetoric", and the false premise that only a Western-style democracy can be a civilized player on the global stage are the three main contributors to the demonization of China in the US.

"The bottom line is that our system of government, our democracy doesn't work for China, just as China's system doesn't work for the US," said Bush, while cautioning the US "not to meddle too much in the internal affairs of China" especially given the US' own issues in a "divided country".





Wang Boming, chief editor of Caijing magazine, looks back on history when delivering a speech on China-US relations at the China Development Forum Special Session in Beijing, Sept 7, 2019. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Bush's views echoed other speakers, who attributed the formerly healthy Sino-US relationship to the wisdom of previous foreign policy intellectuals in dealing with disagreements between the two countries in the 1970s.

"The normalization was achieved because a balance was struck between American and Chinese imperatives", said Mark Brzezinski, former US ambassador to Sweden and son of former US national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was known as "Jimmy Carter's Kissinger" for playing an instrumental role in the normalization of China-US relations.



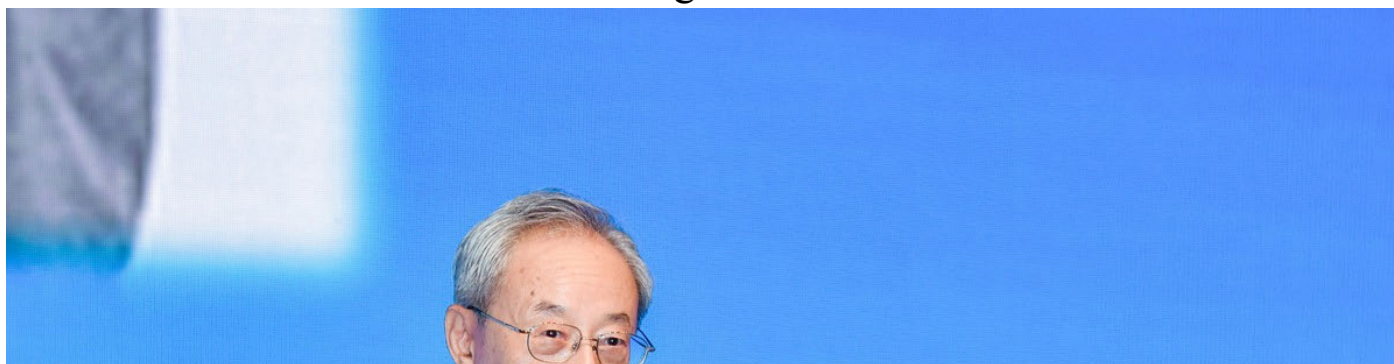


Mark Brzezinski, son of former US national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, delivers a speech at the China Development Forum Special Session in Beijing, Sept 7, 2019. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Similarly to Bush, Brzezinski voiced concern over the demonization of China in the US. "I worry there is in the US an industry around demonizing China, scaring the US business people away from a normal business environment," he said.

Brzezinski said that, in spite of the current trade disputes, Sino-US relations would not break down in the short term, given the growing interdependence between the two countries.

He said if the two sides embrace this interdependence, both would benefit – a failure to do so however will damage both China and the US.





Zhang Baijia, former deputy director of the Party History Research Center of CPC, delivers a speech at the China Development Forum Special Session in Beijing, Sept 7, 2019. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Both Wang Boming, chief editor of *Caijing*, and Zhang Baijia, former deputy director of the Party History Research Center of CPC, looked backed on tough times when China and the US overcame challenges to maintain healthy ties through extended discussions.

They agreed with former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's view that both countries have a different history and culture, which makes work between the two nations a great challenge.

"China and the US are different if we look back on history. If the US can be defined as a young country with the oldest modern economy, China would be a country with the longest history but the newest modernized economy," said Zhang, adding "the differences generated attraction if they stand afar and contradiction if they come close."

They also said that dialogue and consultation is the only way to fight the paranoia that a rising China is the root cause of US problems and to address the escalating friction between the two nations.



Mark Brzezinski, son of former US national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, retraces the history of the normalization of China-US relations, when delivering a speech in Beijing, Sept 7, 2019. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

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