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2018-08-24

Neil Bush, son of former United States president George H.W. Bush, has strong views on the current trade conflict between the US and China.  
When the topic comes up, the younger Bush likes doing a little "poll" on the spot: Of all goods consumed by Americans, what is the percentage of goods made in China?  
"Whenever I ask people, many say 50 percent, nobody goes lower than 25 percent. But the reality is, the percentage of consumer goods from China that Americans buy each year in terms of amount spent accounts for 2.7 percent. When you take into consideration products made with US components, the actual number goes down to 1.2 percent," he told China Daily in a recent interview in his Houston, Texas, office.  
Bush, chairman of the Bush China US Relations Foundation, argues that claims that millions of jobs have been taken away by China are inaccurate.  
"There is propaganda and demagoguery in the US political process that misleads everyone, including my Chinese friends, that there is a giant dependence on Chinese goods in the US," Bush said.  
The fact is that 88.5 percent of products consumed by Americans are made in the US, he said.  
"When you put trade tariffs and barriers up against China, it has a terrible adverse effect on both countries because it affects the supply chain already in place and the relationship. China is going to shift, we are going to shift. We are just going to move away from each other and it'll hurt both countries," he said.  
Speaking on the US trade deficit with China, he said: "If people in China, India or Vietnam make high enough quality products at lower prices than we do in the US, and our consumers benefit by buying those products, and those countries can't afford to buy US products, there is going be a trade imbalance. It's a fact of life, and it's OK."  
Bush believes that as China's demand for higher quality and brand-name products rises, more will be bought by China from the US. In addition, China has huge energy needs, and the US now enjoys an energy surplus.  
"We have a lot of gas, and we can ship LNG to China. We have surplus agriculture products, and we sell that to China to reduce the trade deficit. There is a natural ebb and flow, a shifting of sands as related to trade," he said.  
Instead, tariffs force China to source soybeans and other commodities from other places, such as Brazil. "It hurts our farmers, and they are losing business to Brazil. Now the government is putting together $12 billion in subsidies to the farmers. It's crazy and lose-lose."  
There are big issues that exist between the two countries. However, "Two mature and civilized nations can sit down and work out the differences," he said.  
Bush first visited China in the summer of 1975 when his father was stationed in Beijing as an envoy to China. He calls that trip "one of the most life-changing visits".  
"I became very interested in China back then. Since then, I have been back to China more than 140 times," he said.  
In earlier years he focused on bringing US companies to China. Now he primarily develops businesses in China with Chinese partners and helps bring Chinese investment to the US.  
As China develops its own technologies around medicine and electronics, those companies would want to protect their intellectual property. "The judicial system of IP in China is not mature, but it will get more mature as its own IP feels threatened."  
"The US-China relationship is far more harmonious than it is adverse. Unfortunately, we have a political situation in the US that does not allow politicians to open their eyes to the whole picture, but instead feel threatened by the rise of China," Bush continued.  
He views US President Donald Trump's tariff policy as a bully stick. "I have had two presidents in my family. Neither of them would lead with a stick, but rather preferred to sit at negotiations. I don't trust the approach our president is taking in addressing global trade issues."  
Bush is also sorry to see that the Republican Party that his father, grandfather and brother served — a party that traditionally promoted free trade — is being hijacked by Trump for his own political purposes.  
He said the US president was using trade issues to enhance his party's chances in the November elections.  
"It likely will backfire. He's terribly unpopular among the general population. It will be a tough November for the Republican Party," he said.  
"If you look at the past 40 years of normalization of the Sino-US relationship, both countries have benefited greatly from trade ties and the relationship in general. It's indisputable. To set that track record of mutual benefit off track is ridiculous, and makes no sense to me," said Bush.

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