

A rising China can be of great benefit to world nations

There is every possibility, given sufficient good will in the West, that the nation will play a constructive and collaborative role on the world stage for many years to come

SHOLTO BYRNES

The ongoing protests in Hong Kong continue to make headlines around the world. But other events that deserved greater coverage have taken place in the territory. They include a two-day conference hosted by the China United States Exchange Foundation and the China Centre for International Economic Exchanges. If that sounds less than thrilling, think again.

We are so used to hearing of wariness about China, of people doubting its stated good intentions, condemning its attitude towards human rights, and predicting the inevitability of military conflict with the US that it is refreshing to be reminded that not all westerners share that apocalyptic view of what the rise of the Middle Kingdom entails. And at the conference President George HW Bush's son Neil delivered one of the most forthright defences of the benefits of China's growth and its relationship with America that I have ever heard.

His father often stated that this was, in fact, the most important bilateral relationship in the world. Mr Bush pointed to the freedoms gained by the Chinese over the past four decades – to choose where to live, whom to marry, to travel and enjoy better living standards, and how the connection between the two countries had led to Americans gaining access to lower-cost, high-quality goods.

He described the economic leap-forward as having built “what one might call the American dream with Chinese characteristics”. He acknowledged cultural differences, observing that “our system of government, our form of democracy, would not work for China, just like China's system would not work for us”, while also warning that “If the Chinese government gets carried



Beijing's central business district offers a clear illustration of the country's modern trajectory.

away denying basic rights, there will be a pushback from within.”

He also characterised the “demonisation of China” as “hysterical”. And, critically, stated clearly that “the zero-sum, winner-loser mentality is wrong and naive. The truth is that our trade deficit with China is natural – the richer country buys more stuff from the poorer country.”

Mr Bush is founder-chairman of the George HW Bush Foundation for US-China Relations. Some might respond: “He would say that, wouldn't he?” But other prominent attendees at the conference, such as the former Japanese prime minister Yasuo

Fukuda and the former Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien cannot be dismissed as Chinese stooges (although Mr Chretien was known as a Sinophile while in office).

And while some criticisms of Beijing are definitely valid, there is most certainly a case for describing the attacks on China as “hysterical”. It has long struck me as bizarre, not to say unfair, that the worst motives are assigned to the country's every move. At the same time, Western critics happily apply double standards, allowing that states such as the US and Australia might fairly consider themselves to have a rightful “sphere

When it comes to China, Mr Trump should read Mr Bush's speech and take the lessons handed down from the late Republican president: that a zero-sum approach will fail and that the only way to make America great again.

Reviving America's busing debate won't

JANINE DI GIOVANNI

In 1971, at the height of the busing debate in the US, I was a tiny kid wearing giant bell-bottoms and riding a Schwinn bike with training wheels. It was a heady and dangerous time: the height of the Vietnam war, the early years of feminism and the aftermath of the civil rights movement. Four years had passed since the long, hot summer of summer of 1967, when riots broke out in cities across America: Detroit, Newark, Cincinnati, Buffalo.

Busing was a national experiment, a means to integrate public schools in America, a way of achieving racial balance. It was not the best plan – under the Department of Education's mandate, black children from the inner cities were bused hours away from their homes to predominately white suburban schools. These schools were usually better equipped, had better teachers and offered a higher standard of education. That part, we can all agree with – these kids deserved the same education as their white counterparts.

However, the ones who were bused, and their parents, weren't given a choice – it was a federal

decision. Equally, white children who went to the better public high schools were sent to inner-city high schools, which were predominantly black. No one was happy with this initiative, least of all the students and their parents.

The notion of mixing the demographics was good. The way it was carried out was not. It inflamed rather than soothed racial tensions. In the end, studies showed that white parents just sent their children to private schools, or moved to the suburbs – a pattern that became known as “white flight”.

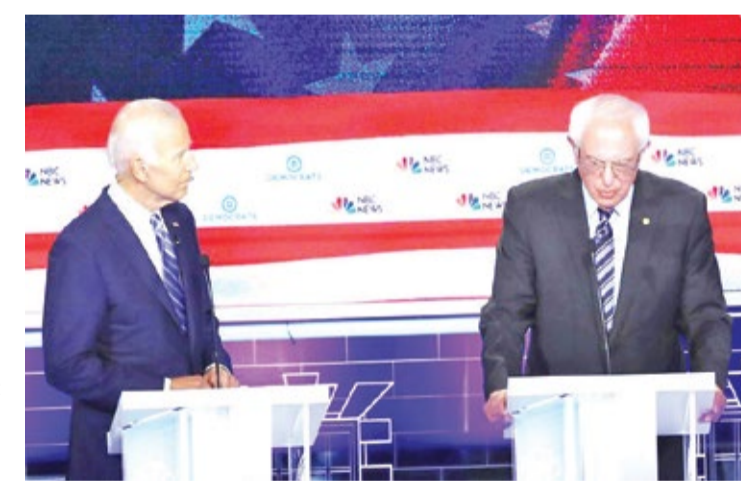
Busing happened nearly half a century ago, but it has come back as a major campaign issue since the first Democratic primary debate in Miami two weeks ago. That was when the ambitious California Senator Kamala Harris skewered her rival and former vice president Joe Biden by asking him why he did not support busing back in 1971, when he was a young prosecutor in Delaware.

Ms Harris grew up in Berkeley, California, and was one of those kids on the bus. She understands how painful it is to live with racism every day. But trying to take Mr Biden back 50 years, when

he was a young prosecutor who disagreed with the practice and implications of busing, is wrong. Mr Biden had earlier fought for civil rights and was committed to equality. When it came to busing, he did not agree with the methods. He felt that the Department of Education was wrong to order transports of students to school, within or outside their school district, in an attempt to reduce racial segregation.

I believe that Mr Biden is not the uncaring white man the Harris campaign is attempting to portray him as. Back in 1971, in his home state of Delaware, Mr Biden fought for racial equality, but opposed busing because he thought it “pushed civil rights back” and that it was a bankrupt policy. Looking back at old footage of busing in places such as Boston, Philadelphia and Maryland, all I can see is anger. It did not do much to soothe the already wounded spirit of America, broken by racial tensions.

Mr Biden, clearly, is no racist. He believed and fought for racial equality. And a speech he gave to Yale's graduating class this year explains why he chose to work alongside the conservative and



Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris at the first debate.

segregationist North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms to create an anti-busing amendment to that year's education spending bill.

Why would Mr Biden work with such a man? He had an answer: “Senator Helms and I continued to have profound political differences, but early on we both became the most powerful members of the Senate... something happened, the mutual defensiveness began to dissipate. And as a result, we began to be able to work together in the interests of the country.”

This brings us back to the cen-

tral topic: how to heal America post-Trump. The Democrats need to come together, not attack one another. Ms Harris's attempts to distort Mr Biden's history and his words were a cheap shot to turbocharge her campaign. She recalled one of the most painful moments in American history, one that we should not forget, but one that we should also not use and manipulate. For anyone who grew up during the civil rights movement which I did, it seems almost sacrilege to try to corrupt the facts of that time to gain votes.

Democrat presidential hopeful Kamala Harris has attacked rival Joe Biden's record on race