

US Congress members' 'rare China visit' conveys three signals

Following the phone call between the Chinese and US presidents, a US House delegation, led by US Representative Adam Smith, arrived in China on Sunday for a visit. This marks the first US House of Representatives delegation to visit China since 2019. Analysts widely view the trip as a significant progress in stabilizing bilateral relations. Recently, China and the US have held high-level calls or meetings in the fields of military, diplomacy and trade. The congressional delegation's visit further demonstrates that, under the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, the outside world has higher expectations for the two countries to further deepen strategic communication and inject more certainty into the world.

International media almost unanimously described the visit as "rare." This is certainly due to the fact that China-US exchanges have been generally hindered by many factors in recent years. But more importantly, it reflects the international community's widespread perception of the US Congress as a "stronghold of anti-China sentiment."

When it comes to China policy, Congress and its affiliated institutions have increasingly played a negative and obstructive role in recent years: constantly creating friction through issues related to the Taiwan region, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region; using legislation to lock competition with China into an institutional framework; and leveraging budgetary and oversight powers to constrain and pressure the executive branch to adopt more restrictive measures against China. Such actions have not only fueled geopolitical tensions but also deepened the

general public's misunderstanding of China. This reality underscores the necessity and urgency for US lawmakers to strengthen communication and engagement with China.

The visit to China by Smith and his delegation at this moment conveys three key signals to the outside world. First, the fact that the trip took place through consultations between the two sides reflects the overall improvement in the atmosphere of China-US communication and exchanges, underscoring the irreplaceable guiding role of head-of-state diplomacy in bilateral relations. Second, it shows that the US Congress' direct contact, dialogue, and exchanges with China are by no means unimaginable; the continuous stream of anti-China proposals cannot obscure the willingness of some members of Congress' wish to enhance exchanges with China. Third, the visit may also serve as a bellwether, encouraging more lawmakers to travel to China in the future. As Smith himself put it, "we can both acknowledge that both China and the US have work to do to strengthen that relationship, which should not be, what, seven, six years between visits from the US House of Representatives."

The US Congress has not always been absent from playing a constructive role in China-US relations. In January 1979, just days after the establishment of China-US diplomatic ties, then US Democratic senator Sam Nunn led a bipartisan Senate delegation to China. Following the visit, Nunn and other lawmakers actively promoted pro-China legislation and supported exchanges with China in trade, science and technology, and culture. The China-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement,

which has had a far-reaching impact over the past decades, was partly facilitated by that visit. During his trip, Nunn said that the American people were eager to develop friendly relations with the Chinese people. Decades later, despite ups and downs in bilateral relations, the fundamental aspiration of the two peoples for exchanges and cooperation has not changed, nor will it. In this sense, visits to China by US congressional delegations should not be "rare" occurrences.

For many years, many US lawmakers have relied heavily on media narratives and single sources to learn about China, which makes them prone to bias. By seeing the realities of Chinese society firsthand, they are able to gain a more objective, multidimensional, and comprehensive perspective about China. This adjustment in perception may not immediately translate into policy shifts, but it can, at a deeper level, erode the political utility of extreme rhetoric and gradually lead Congress to recognize that when dealing with a country as large and deeply intertwined with US interests as China, confrontational legislation alone cannot provide effective solutions. Some members of the delegation have long been responsible for military affairs. Against the backdrop of sensitive situations in the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea, even limited exchanges can help reduce risks and prevent miscalculations.

This visit has opened a new window for China-US relations. But to keep that window open and widen it further, both sides must continue working hard together in the same direction. In receiving the delegation, China demonstrated openness, confidence, and a constructive attitude. This reflects both the steadiness

of major-country diplomacy and China's commitment to resolving differences through dialogue. Smith and his delegation also expressed a desire to promote dialogue between China and the US in areas such as trade and military.

It should be particularly noted, however, that some US lawmakers and interest groups, in pursuit of political gain, continue to manipulate anti-China issues, and on the Taiwan question in particular, certain egregious incidents have been especially destructive to China-US relations. For example, congressional pressure to facilitate former Taiwan regional leader Lee Teng-hui's visit to the US triggered the third Taiwan Straits crisis, and in 2022, then US House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan severely undermined political trust, leading to an almost complete suspension of exchanges across many fields at one point. These are lessons the US Congress should heed.

China and the US are the globe's two largest economies and major powers with significant global influence. Strengthening exchanges and cooperation not only benefits both countries but is also closely tied to global prosperity and stability.

As President Xi Jinping has said, China and the US can achieve mutual success and shared prosperity, benefiting both countries and the world. It is hoped that the delegation's China visit will mark a good beginning, encouraging more Americans from all walks of life to come to China to see things for themselves, break down misconceptions and stereotypes about China, and play a constructive role in fostering friendship and common development between the two countries.

Israeli lawmaker's Taiwan visit political stunt, won't shake one-China principle

Recently, Boaz Toporovsky, a member of the Knesset (Israel's house of representatives) from Israel political party Yesh Atid, visited China's Taiwan region, and when he met with Taiwan regional leader Lai Ching-te, he disregarded international consensus by openly calling Lai "president" and even claimed to speak "on behalf of the Israeli people" in expressing thanks to Taiwan island. Such ignorant and irresponsible conduct has been strongly condemned by the Chinese Embassy in Israel.

On Sunday, the embassy's official website published a spokesperson's response to media questions regarding the visit, criticizing Toporovsky as having become a "trouble-maker" for the sound development

of bilateral ties, saying that his political credibility has been completely eroded and that he is not eligible to represent others. The embassy said: "We admonish this [member of the Knesset] not to delude himself that he can harm China's core interests and the national sentiments of the Chinese people without paying a price. If he does not rein in at the brink of the precipice, he will fall and be shattered to pieces."

Toporovsky's provocations are by no means isolated incidents. Two months ago, on social media, he loudly supported Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

ignoring the international consensus around the one-China Principle. Subsequently, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities in Taiwan region reportedly announced plans to provide support to a medical center in an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank, a move that drew criticism from the international community. This exchange of "political backing for material rewards" lays bare the interest entanglement between both parties, and cannot alter the reality they face in international public opinion – truth and justice will always prevail. What Toporovsky calls "support" amounts to nothing more than petty political stunt.

Ding Long, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times that although



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such behavior is only the individual action of a single Israeli Knesset member, Israel has in recent years been under growing pressure on the international stage, and the ongoing escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has subjected it to serious challenges both in terms of international law and ethical legitimacy. Under these circumstances, some Israeli politicians imagine they can find a "breakthrough" by interacting with the DPP

authorities, using provocative acts such as visits to the island to attract attention or pursue self-interest.

However, Toporovsky's actions not only fail to alleviate Israel's international difficulties but further undermine the political foundations of China-Israel relations.

Xin Qiang, director of the Taiwan Studies Center at Fudan University, said that Toporovsky's repeated visits to Taiwan region, and his claim to act "on behalf of the Israeli people" are nothing more than political theater. He is neither qualified to represent the Israeli people, nor can he change the Israeli government's position on the one-China principle, Xin said.

