

US Congress to hear Taiwan resolution

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A few weeks before US President Barack Obama embarks on a trip to China, Democratic Congressman Robert Andrews has introduced a resolution on Capitol Hill “expressing the sense of Congress regarding the freedom, security and stability of Taiwan.”

It is aimed at pressuring Obama to stand up for Taiwan when the issue is raised — as it surely will be — at his meetings with President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) in Beijing.

Bob Yang (杨伯), president of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), said: “In addition to the military threat, China is now also gaining tremendous economic leverage over Taiwan. China’s dual strategy of economic and military coercion to compel Taiwan into submission has alarmed many Taiwan supporters in the US Congress.”

The resolution says that “grave concerns” exist in Congress over the continued deployment by China of more than 1,400 ballistic missiles aimed at Taiwan.

It instructs Obama to seek “a public and unequivocal renunciation” by the Chinese leadership of any threat or use of force against Taiwan.

The resolution adds that Taiwan’s future should be determined peacefully, free of coercion by Beijing and with the express consent of the people of Taiwan.

While it is unlikely that the resolution will be approved by Congress this year, its significance lies in its simply being introduced at all during this highly sensitive time.

Obama’s nine-day trip through Asia — he leaves on Nov. 10 and returns on Nov. 19 — will take him to Japan, Singapore, China and South Korea.

He will be in Beijing and Shanghai between Nov. 15 and Nov. 18.

China has indicated that trade protectionism will be at the top of its list of priorities and White House sources have said that Obama will push China to reach a bilateral climate change agreement.

But the Jamestown Foundation, a respected US think-tank, puts “the Taiwan issue” first in its list of “sticking points” in the US-China relationship.

Thousands of Taiwanese-Americans are expected to urge their representatives to support the resolution to bring it to the attention of the White House.

Andrews, from New Jersey, is a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee.

A Pentagon report issued earlier this year warns that China’s military modernization could be

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used in the future to pressure Taiwan toward a settlement of the cross-strait dispute on Beijing's terms, while "simultaneously attempting to deter, delay or deny any possible US support for the island in case of conflict."

"The people of Taiwan live under a constant dark cloud of threats, intimidation and harassment. They should be able to determine their own future free from fear," Yang said.

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