

Senate reminds Trump of vital Taiwan-US ties

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Thirty-eight US Senators in a letter on Tuesday urged US President Donald Trump to be mindful of Washington's vital partnership with Taipei in his upcoming trip to China and meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平).

The letter, spearheaded by Senate Taiwan Caucus chairs James Inhofe and Robert Menendez, was signed by 38 US senators across party lines, which is more than one-third of the 100 senate seats.

It came on the heels of a similar gesture on Thursday last week by four US representatives — who are cochairs of the US Congressional Taiwan Caucus — Democratic representatives Gerald Connolly and Albio Sires, and Republican representatives Mario Diaz-Balart and Gregg Harper.

“As you discuss critical issues, including North Korea nuclear proliferation and trade priorities, we urge you to remain mindful and an advocate of our vital partnership with Taiwan,” the letter said.

The letter said Taiwan has for generations proved to be one of the US' closest allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and is deserving of Washington's strong support.

“Beijing must understand that our strong ties with Taiwan are not negotiable or subordinate to other, unrelated issues,” it added.

The senators also called on Trump to reaffirm the US' commitment to letting the Taiwan Relations Act continue to be the legally binding policy of Taiwan-US relations, saying such reaffirmation would demonstrate both Washington's policy continuity and leadership in the region.

“A reaffirmation would also reinforce the bipartisan and bicameral sentiments of congress,” the letter said, adding that US congressional support for Taiwan remains deep, wide and

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bipartisan.

“We hope you will make clear that the United States will maintain its relationship and channels of communication with Taipei and also encourage Beijing to maintain its own,” it added.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US later issued a statement expressing its gratitude for the US Congress’ bipartisan support and friendship with Taiwan.

Trump is slated to leave for Asia tomorrow for a 12-day visit, which is to include stops in Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Trump’s upcoming visit has renewed concerns Taiwan might be used by the US president to leverage China’s cooperation on the North Korea issue or negotiate better trade terms for Washington during his meeting with Xi, which is expected to take place between Wednesday and Friday next week.

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