

Pro-Taiwan resolution introduced

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South Dakota Democrat Tim Johnson, founding co-chairman of the Senate Taiwan Caucus, has introduced to the US Senate a resolution supporting Taiwan's efforts to gain observer status at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The resolution states that observer status for Taiwan would contribute both to the fulfillment of the ICAO's mission and to the success of its global strategy — based on international cooperation — to address aviation security threats.

"The US government should take a leading role in gaining international support for the granting of observer status to Taiwan in the ICAO," the resolution says.

It also instructs the US State Department to keep Congress fully informed of all its efforts to win observer status for Taiwan.

An identical resolution supporting observer status for Taiwan was introduced to the US House of Representatives last month.

An official at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Washington said that taken together, the resolutions "demonstrate unified staunch support from the US Congress."

"TECRO notes that the absence of Taiwan's participation in the meetings, mechanisms and activities of the ICAO will most probably create a gap in the global aviation security system," the official said.

The official said that the upcoming ICAO General Assembly meeting in Montreal in September meant that the "introduction of this resolution, at this moment, has a significant meaning."

While observer status would not be granted without Chinese support, a mini-survey of US Congressmen and Senators indicated that the idea had widespread backing in Washington.

As stated in the resolution, the Taipei Flight Information Region covers an airspace of 603,663km² and provides air traffic control services to more than 1.3 million flights annually on 12 international and four domestic air routes.

The Airports Council International last year ranked Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport as the world's eighth-largest by international cargo volume and 18th-largest by number of international passengers.

"The exclusion of Taiwan from the ICAO has prevented the organization from developing a truly global strategy to address security threats," the TECRO official said.

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