

US politicians concerned about A-bian

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Chairman of the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Steve Chabot points to a picture as Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, center, and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairman Su Tseng-chang, right, looks on at the DPP headquarters in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Liu Hsin-de, Taipei Times

US Republican Representative Steve Chabot met with Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairman Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) yesterday to discuss former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) condition.

Chabot and fellow US Representative Eni Faleomavaega visited Chen, who is serving a 20-year jail sentence for corruption, in Taichung Prison's Pei Teh Hospital on Thursday.

Chabot said that during the visit Chen's hands visibly shook and he stuttered when he spoke, adding that he and Faleomavaega were very worried about his situation.

Chen has been diagnosed with depression, sleep apnea, non-typical Parkinson's disease, a speech disorder and mild cerebral atrophy.

Faleomavaega added that while he is not a doctor, it was evident to him that Chen was not in good physical condition.

Sources said that Chabot said to Su yesterday during their meeting that Chen's contribution to

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the advances of Taiwanese democracy should not be forgotten.

Chabot said that as Chen's friend, he was worried and said that Chen's human rights should be respected.

Chabot said that because he has no right to interfere in Taiwan's judicial procedures, he was merely offering his personal viewpoint.

In response to media queries after a meeting with Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) yesterday afternoon, Chabot said that US representatives cannot tell Taiwan what to do, but "we think there is a humanitarian way to resolve the situation, and we would like to see that happen."

"Ultimately, it's up to the leadership in Taiwan to make that decision," he added.

Separately yesterday, French political economist Guy Sorman, said in a speech in Taipei, hosted by former DPP chairperson Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) Thinking Taiwan Foundation, that he was sad to see that as a democratic country, Taiwan has imprisoned a former president.

Sorman said that he was not familiar with the case and has no intention of interfering in Taiwanese politics, but added that he hopes that the nation's democratic achievements could serve as a model for China.

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