

# Chinese legislators visit U.S. Congress

by William Jones

In mid-October, delegates from the Chinese National People's Congress (NPC) had their first real opportunity to address their concerns, with counterparts on Capitol Hill, about pending legislation in the U.S. Congress which could seriously disrupt U.S.-China relations. The U.S.-China Inter-Parliamentary Exchange Group, the ad hoc group which extended the invitation to the Chinese legislators, was established to promote a dialogue between the two law-making bodies. While in the United States, the Chinese delegation also aired their concerns to the U.S. media, holding press conferences on a variety of issues—religious freedom, human rights, satellite launches—on which China has been attacked by the Republican China-bashers and some of their Democratic cohorts in the human rights mafia. While the cacophony of “scandals” being orchestrated by Congressional Republican warlords and the Taiwan lobby has received banner-headline treatment, the visit of the Chinese delegation received scant attention from the U.S. media.

At a press conference at the Chinese Embassy in Washington on Oct. 14, delegation leader Zeng Jianhui, the chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs panel, reiterated Beijing's opposition to any anti-missile system in Southeast Asia that would include Taiwan. “Including Taiwan under any anti-missile system in Southeast Asia would be regarded by Beijing as interference in Chinese domestic affairs,” he warned.

The sudden interest in Tactical Missile Defense sparked by the launch of a North Korean Taepaedong I missile over Japan last year, has been used by some legislators to propose bringing Taiwan under a “protective umbrella”—a signal to certain Taiwan elements that they might want to move toward independence. The Taiwan Defense Enhancement Act, introduced by Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) in the Senate, is a step in that direction. That breaking Taiwan from mainland China is the ultimate goal of these machinations, is blatantly evident in a bill proposed in July by Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), in which he calls for a new “One China, One Taiwan” policy, effectively abandoning the U.S. “One-China” policy of the last 20 years. Such a move by the United States could well trigger a military conflict in the Taiwan Straits.

The Brown bill prompted an outcry by Chinese legislators in Beijing. Zeng Jianhui underlined the serious implications of this measure, if enacted. “This has severely infringed

upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and openly tramples the norms of international relations,” he said. Furthermore, the bill “goes against the ‘One China’ policy adopted by previous U.S. administrations. . . . To resolve the Taiwan issue, the basic guideline is that the two sides across the Taiwan Straits should officially end the state of hostility and achieve peaceful reunification through negotiations in line with the ‘one country, two systems’ policy and in conformity with the principle that there is only one China.” Zeng warned that Brown's legislation would “definitely raise the tension across the Taiwan Straits, and gravely damage peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the relations between China and the United States.”

The Brown bill has gathered only 10 co-sponsors so far. Although the bill may not get too far, the anti-China drumbeat being orchestrated by Helms and his cohorts in the House, and the attempt to shift policy on this sensitive issue, could easily set the world on the road to conflagration. Brown has also introduced a bill calling on the World Health Organization to bring Taiwan in as a member, a clear red flag for China because Taiwan has no independent status for such membership. As an aide to Brown blithely told a journalist, “This move will cause a furor in Beijing.” He added in a more serious tone, “Of course, we don't want to start World War III!” But, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

While Clinton administration policy has followed that of previous administrations—that relations between China and Taiwan should be resolved peacefully and that there is only “one China”—GOP Congressional leaders and the human rights mafia in the Democratic Party are working for a change in that policy, one which would lead to a military confrontation between Taiwan and the mainland—with the United States caught in the middle.

## **‘It's more important that we talk’**

The delegation met with about 30 Congressmen for private discussions, which were characterized by Zeng as “friendly, cooperative, serious, and frank.” As one staffer put it, “Although they have their differences, it's more important that we talk rather than not talk.” The invitation extended to the NPC delegation was, in fact, the first official invitation by the U.S. Congress to any Chinese NPC delegation in a decade, perhaps indicating that there are some interested in reversing the insanity that has been raging on Capitol Hill, especially on the subject of China. Despite their very real concerns about some of the pending legislation, the Chinese delegation seemed generally upbeat about the meetings. “Such talks have enhanced our mutual understanding and increased our common ground,” Zeng told reporters. He said he felt that the meetings had helped establish “channels of communication,” and had laid a good foundation for future exchanges.

Indeed, such contact is needed now more than ever, if the voice of reason is again to be heard in Congress.