



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT responds to Chinese ministry's distortions on US Tibet legislation

<http://www.savetibet.org/ict-responds-to-chinese-ministrys-distortions-on-us-tibet-legislation/>

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Statement by Matteo Mecacci, President of the International Campaign for Tibet

“The Chinese Government’s reaction on Dec. 14, 2018 to the passing of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act is a gross distortion of Congress' intention to give Americans the same rights of access to Tibet that Chinese citizens have to the US. In fact, as revealed by the Washington Post on Oct. 11, 2018, the Chinese government “interfered” in the American legislative process when it wrote to some Senators urging them not to support the bill.

The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act is about Americans getting the same rights from China that the US accords to Chinese visiting this country.

Through the bill, Congress is only demanding respect for the principle of reciprocity in US-China relations, not only on trade issues, but also when it comes to freedom of movement for US citizens.

As mentioned in the bill, “officials of the Government of the United States submitted 39 requests for diplomatic access to the Tibet Autonomous Region between May 2011 and July 2015, but only four were granted.”

In response to questions from Senators during his confirmation process, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in May 2018, “President Trump has regularly stated his desire for reciprocity in the US-China relationship. I am committed to pushing for reciprocity regarding the open access China and many other countries enjoy in the United States, including for US journalists seeking to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas of China.”

If the Chinese Communist Party propaganda about the situation in Tibet were true, why would they block American journalists, diplomats and politicians from traveling freely in Tibet? Why would they impose strictly controlled tours for all foreign tourists managed by state approved travel agencies? Why don't they allow Tibetan-Americans to visit their relatives, from whom, in some cases, they have been separated for decades?

The answer lies in the fact that for almost seven decades since it invaded Tibet, the Chinese Communist Party has imposed immense suffering and oppression on the people of Tibet; and by blocking access to Tibet, while at the same time imposing an Orwellian control system on Tibetans, they aim at stifling any form of dissent, which has tragically led 155 Tibetans to self-immolate in Tibet and China since 2009. China has no courage to open Tibet to Americans on a reciprocal basis because it has a lot to hide.”

Below is the answer of the spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry on the passage of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act by the US Senate on Dec. 11, 2018.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1622128.shtml

Q: The US Congress has voted to demand access for US diplomats, journalists and tourists to Tibet. If these people do not get access to Tibet, the US Congress wants to deny the access of Chinese officials to the US. What is your reaction to that?

A: The relevant bill passed by the US Congress has disregarded the facts, grossly interfered in China's domestic affairs, and violated the basic norms of international relations. China is resolutely opposed to this and has made stern representations to the US.

Tibet affairs are purely China's domestic affairs and allow no interference from other countries. If a foreigner wants access to Tibet, he/she can go through normal channels to realize that. In fact, every year, a large number of Chinese and foreigners go to Tibet for visit, travel and business. Take the United States for example, there have been nearly 40,000 Americans who have come to Tibet since 2015, including the minority leader of the US House of Representatives and senators. All these have fully proved that the accusations against China in the US bill are totally untenable and must not be accepted by the Chinese government and people

We urge the US administration to immediately take effective measures to prevent the bill from being signed into law, so as not to seriously damage China-US relations and cooperation between the two countries in important areas.