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Outcomes of US official's visit seen as test of sincerity

Maintaining stable economic ties crucial for both countries and entire world, expert says

By ZHONG NAN and WANG KEJU

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US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo's four-day visit to China will help improve the conditions for future discussions amid bilateral relations, which remain at their lowest point in decades, analysts and business leaders said on Monday.

They also said that whether both sides can achieve constructive outcomes regarding the relaxation of controls on technology exports to China will test the sincerity of the United States.

The remarks came after Commerce Minister Wang Wentao met with Raimondo in Beijing on Monday.

During her stay in China from Sunday to Wednesday, the US commerce chief is scheduled to discuss issues related to US-China business ties and potential areas for cooperation with Chinese officials and US business leaders, according to information released last week by the US Department of Commerce.

Lyu Xiang, a researcher of US studies at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the US official's trip to China will contribute to enhancing the circumstances for future discussions between the two countries.

Maintaining stable economic and trade ties between China and the US is crucial not only for both countries, but also for the entire world, and in this regard, concrete action is required, he said.

With some media in the US reporting that one potential outcome of Raimondo's visit could be the formation of a working group with China's Ministry of Commerce to discuss export controls, Lyu said it would be a practical initial step if the two sides agreed to settle specific issues through dialogue.

Raimondo's visit comes just weeks after US President Joe Biden signed an executive order to block or regulate US high-tech investment in China covering sectors such as advanced computer chips, microelectronics, quantum information technologies and artificial intelligence.

Wei Zongyou, a professor at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University, said that face-to-face, in-depth communication is obviously much better than no talks at all. However, based on experience, it is unlikely that Wang's meeting with Raimondo will yield major breakthroughs on issues such as investment restrictions on high-end technologies in China, Wei said.

Although Washington has recently emphasized the importance of bolstering high-level exchanges between

the two nations to better manage differences and seek cooperation, the Biden administration's attempt to strike a balance between competition, confrontation and cooperation remains unchanged, he added.

While many high-level US officials have discouraged pursuing a policy of decoupling from China, the US has promoted a policy of "de-risking", said Xu Bu, president of the China Institute of International Studies.

In high-tech areas, the US is likely to continue wielding monopoly power and resorting to arbitrary trade and investment restrictions in the name of "national security" to suppress China's development and maintain US technological hegemony, Xu said.

Speaking at the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers' Meeting last week in Jaipur, India, Wang Shouwen, vice-minister of commerce and China's international trade representative, called on G20 economies to oppose the practice of broadening the concept of national security, misusing export controls and trade remedies, employing state influence to target foreign enterprises, and engaging in unilateral, protectionist behavior.

Highlighting China's massive market and well-developed industrial system, Ding Hongyu, senior vice-president of 3M Co and president of 3M China, said that the US multinational group will continue to invest in local manufacturing and innovation capabilities in China in the years ahead.

"The Chinese economy has shifted from high-speed growth to high-quality development," he said, adding that investing in fields such as vehicle electrification, home improvement and consumer electronics presents significant opportunities for 3M.

Raj Subramaniam, president and CEO of FedEx Corp, said the US transportation and delivery service provider attaches great importance to the Chinese market.

"We hope to further deepen communication and cooperation with both the Chinese government and business partners in the future, and strive to serve as a bridge for promoting economic and trade exchanges between China and the US," said Subramaniam, who also is vice-chair of the US-China Business Council.

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Vigil for shooting victims



Residents gather on Sunday at a prayer vigil for the victims of a mass shooting a day earlier in Jacksonville, Florida. A white gunman, who shot and killed three black people at a Dollar General store on Saturday, later died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. JOHN RAOUX / AP

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Draft law expected to better safeguard sovereignty

By CAO YIN

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A draft foreign state immunity law, which is being reviewed by China's top legislature, will serve the nation's high-level opening-up, advance construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, and better safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, an official said on Monday.

The draft law was submitted for further review on Monday to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislative body.

"Formulating such a law aims to help China adapt to new situations and new changes in the country's international exchanges, and it's also expected to make comprehensive and systematic provisions for

the jurisdiction of our courts in handling civil cases involving foreign states," Zhou Guangquan, an official with the NPC's Constitution and Law Committee, said while explaining the draft to legislators.

Zhou noted that the formulation of the law will be conducive to improving China's legal system related to foreign affairs, serving its high-level opening-up and advancing construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.

He added that the law also aims to implement the central leadership's requirement on taking a coordinated approach to promote the rule of law in China and in matters involving foreign affairs, "and it will contribute to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens, with benefits for promoting our friendly exchanges with other countries".

Before the review, the draft had been already discussed by lawmakers in December, and it was then published online to solicit suggestions from the public.

A total of 104 suggestions, along with a letter, were collected from December to January, according to the NPC Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission.

"Many of the suggestions focused on further highlighting the legislative purpose and clarifying the definition of commercial activities," Yang Heqing, a spokesman for the commission, said on Friday.

Yang added that, after the draft was publicized, lawmakers also held seminars with experts on external affairs and international law to learn about their ideas on the legislation.

In 2020, Ma Yide, a law professor at the University of Chinese

Academy of Sciences, proposed formulating the law following malicious litigation filed in countries such as the United States against China over its COVID-19 prevention and control measures.

Ma was invited by the commission to participate in related research work and seminars to take forward the proposal.

Ma said that with the deepening of international exchanges and the acceleration of globalization, there has been a growing number of lawsuits against other countries and their governments, "but China doesn't have a specific law in this sector".

"It means Chinese parties find it difficult to sue other countries in Chinese courts, and there's no law to follow when our courts deal with cases concerning sovereign immunity," he said.

Belt and Road gives boost to the growth of Global South

The Silk Road Economic Belt was officially proposed during President Xi Jinping's visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013. The following month, in Indonesia, Xi proposed the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Together, these two proposals are known as the Belt and Road Initiative.

The initiative came at a time when the serious negative impacts of the 2008 global financial crisis were still being felt by developed as well as developing economies. It emerged at a time when the powerful imperialist states were seeking to solve their problems at the expense of the poor and weaker Global South countries.

This was manifested in growing protectionism, in which goods from developing countries became uncompetitive in the world market due to the massive



subsidies that the large Western countries were giving to their companies, both in industry and agriculture. This policy caused an explosion of poverty in the world.

Basing its endeavors on its experience of opening-up at the end of the 1970s, China sought solutions that would not negatively affect the poor and powerless. This led China to promote a new type of international relations based on the win-win approach of mutual benefits and mutual security. It is an approach that sees the world as one, where cooperation is the most important condition for advancement.

That is why, when China's economic strength began to grow after the country launched its reform and opening-up policy, it started to help the poorest countries in the world. It extended a helping hand to those countries that could not obtain assistance from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund because

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XI'S INITIATIVE HELPING SOLVE GRASSROOTS PROBLEMS, ADDRESS COMPLAINTS

Visit to Pujiang county 20 years ago paved way for villagers' regular meetings with officials

By SUN SHANGWU, ZHU ZHE and CUI JIA in Pujiang, Zhejiang



For the past 20 years, officials in Pujiang county, Zhejiang province, have been routinely visiting villages and communities to listen to and solve people's problems.

Without the need to make an appointment, villagers can raise any issue that is bothering them with the officials when they visit the village on the 15th of each month.

The officials sometimes come to the village before that date if residents feel their issues are particularly urgent, said Zhu Yutang, who comes from Xingguang village.

The 74-year-old added: "We are so used to seeing the Party chief or county head here in the village. What's important for us is that they aren't just here for show. The villagers know the officials can provide solutions on the spot."

Zhu said that as the officials make regular visits, residents no longer need to leave the village to raise their

concerns. At the same time, the officials gain a clear picture of the issues that are worrying people the most.

"Having officials visit villages to solve people's problems may be a common practice in Pujiang now, but 20 years ago, such a breakthrough was made when filing petitions to a higher authority was the best way for villagers to make the local government take their problems seriously," Zhu said.

That breakthrough, known as the "Pujiang experience", was made by President Xi Jinping, who at the time was secretary of the Communist Party of China Zhejiang provincial committee. The practice has helped Pujiang cut the number of public complaints filed by letter or in person from 10,307 in 2002 to 629 last year.

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Moving to safety



Rescuers evacuate flood-affected people from Burewala, a town in Pakistan's southern Punjab province, on Sunday. Increasing instances of extreme weather events around the world have raised demands for greater international efforts to reduce the impact of climate change.

SHAHID SAEED MIRZA / AFP

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