California seeks strong ties despite tensions

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Officials from California, the most populous and third-largest state in the United States, said they are committed to maintaining strong relationships with China, despite trade tension between Washington and Beijing.  
Jimmy Gomez, a member of the US Congress representing California's 34th district, led a group of 16 state officials and business representatives on a nine-day visit to China that started on Sunday. Beijing was their second stop after Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province.  
Gomez emphasized that the trip aims to strengthen ties at the US subnational level with China and continue cooperation in trade, education and cultural exchanges.  
"China is California's third-largest trading partner and we have maintained productive cooperation in entertainment, biotech, healthcare, construction and transportation." He said he values opportunities to work with his Chinese counterparts in a variety of areas amid difficulties given trade tensions.  
The congressman said there certainly are extra challenges for cooperation now, but he thinks that only through dialogue can the two sides improve mutual understanding and reach mutually beneficial agreements, given the pressure from trade disputes.  
"No one wins this trade war. It makes everybody less better off," Gomez said, referring to trade tensions that reached a head when the administration of US President Donald Trump placed extra tariffs on Chinese products. China then placed countervailing tariffs on US products.  
During the trip, the group is scheduled to visit seven Chinese cities and attended the second "Jiangsu-California Mayors' Dialogue" held in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, on Wednesday.  
The cities of Suqian and Yangzhou, and Xiangshui county in Jiangsu, will sign an agreement to build friendly relations with the respective California cities of Fontana, Yorba Linda and Downey during the forum. Wuxi will also sign a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation with San Bernardino County.  
Josie Gonzales, supervisor of San Bernardino County, said the two sides will capitalize on similar interests and identify goals in common after signing the document, which will help them foster relationships between the two locations.  
California has many friendly international relationships, said Wendy Carrillo, who represents Los Angeles' 51st district in the state assembly.  
She said many Chinese students continue their education in California, which not only encourages people-to-people exchanges but also helps build friendship between China and California.

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