

China's ties to gangs to be investigated

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Minister of the Interior Yeh Jiunn-rong speaks to reporters at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

Minister of the Interior Yeh Jiunn-rong (楊清海) yesterday said China's alleged manipulation of organized crime groups in Taiwan would not be tolerated.

"The government will not tolerate such manipulation and the infiltration of Taiwan's democratic society from abroad. We are resolved to take action and face the problem, and will conduct a full and in-depth investigation," Yeh said during a plenary session at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei.

"We are a nation based on the legal framework of our Constitution, and the people have strong faith in our democratic institutions. Therefore, we must deal with this matter in a serious manner, fully investigate it and take up measures to counter it," he added.

Yeh's remarks followed a report yesterday by the Chinese-language *Liberty Times* (the sister newspaper of the *Taipei Times*

), which suggested that the Chinese Ministry of State Security has been operating an "external liaison office" in Xiamen, China, that communicates with and provides financial assistance to organized crime groups in Taiwan.

Citing sources in the nation's intelligence agencies, the *Liberty Times* said that the external liaison office is nominally an organization at the provincial level under China's Taiwan Affairs Office that handles cross-strait exchange programs, but is in reality an intelligence operations

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center for political warfare, covert espionage activities and related “united front” work against Taiwan.

As the local unit of the Chinese ministry, it is mainly tasked with monitoring Taiwanese organized crime groups that have business and other activities in China, with the aim of recruiting and manipulating the groups into working for Beijing, the report said.

The external liaison office has successfully built up a good working relationship with Taiwan's Bamboo Union and the Four Seas Gang, whose members receive funding to do Beijing's bidding, the report added.

Senior members of the two groups who ran afoul of the law and fled to China to establish businesses or operate in the underground economy became easy targets for recruitment by Chinese intelligence agencies, as they had to collude with local officials to be able to operate and receive forms of political and police protection, the report said.

New Power Party Legislator Hsu Yung-ming (許毓鈞) yesterday urged the government to get a handle on the situation and determine if the Chinese government had a direct hand in attacks on university students by members of the Chinese Unity Promotion Party (CUPP) at a music festival in Taipei on Sunday.

“Shanghai Municipal Taiwan Affairs Office Director Li Wenhui (李文輝) was at the ‘Sing! China: Shanghai-Taipei Music Festival.’ We must find out if he played a role in the violence by CUPP members against students,” Hsu said.

“We know that CUPP Chairman Chang An-le (張安樂) is a gangster boss and that he has close links to Chinese authorities,” Hsu said. “It looks like red [China] and black [organized crime organizations] are joining forces against Taiwan.”

“It is also important to find out if these criminal gangs and the CUPP are receiving large sums of money from China to finance their activities in Taiwan,” he added.

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