

Ma turning Taiwan into 'police state,' Chen's office says

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Former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) office yesterday criticized law enforcement agencies for conducting long-term surveillance operations on elected representatives, urging the administration to stop such practices in the run-up to the planned visit of China's top cross-strait negotiator next month.

In a statement, the office said Huang Kuo-chan (黃國昌), a Tainan City Police Department captain, confessed during a court hearing on Aug. 5 this year that part of his job was to gather intelligence on Tainan City Councilor Wang Ding-yu (王定宇) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

Wang was sentenced to four months in prison after he was convicted of harassing a visiting Chinese official in an incident that was widely televised last year.

The incident took place on Oct. 21 last year when Zhang Mingqing (張明清), vice chairman of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), was visiting Taiwan to attend a seminar in Tainan. Wang was accused of pushing Zhang to the ground to protest his private visit to the city's Confucius Temple. Zhang, who suffered minor bruises, filed a complaint with local authorities and cut short his visit.

Zhang's visit preceded that of ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin (陳雲林), the highest-ranking Chinese envoy to visit Taiwan in 60 years.

Wang denied that he had pushed Zhang, arguing that Zhang simply lost his balance.

As Chen Yunlin is scheduled to visit Taiwan again next month for the fourth round of cross-strait negotiations to be held in Taichung, Chen's office yesterday urged the administration to protect the human rights of all Taiwanese and ban security personnel, intelligence agencies and police forces from breaking the law and abusing their power by gathering intelligence on members of the opposition and ordinary people.

The former president's office yesterday made public Huang's testimony and said it wanted to show the public how the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) is turning Taiwan into a "police state."

In the testimony, Huang said he was supposed to follow Wang and gather information when Wang's defense lawyer asked Huang what his duties were on the day of the incident. He said he did not have any personal connection with Wang and that he was not the only elected representative under surveillance.

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