

## Sentences toughened for China spies

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Amendments to the National Security Act (國家安全法) that impose higher sentences and fines on people spying for China or other nations, and increase restrictions on retired officials visiting China were yesterday passed by the legislature.

Those found recruiting others in Taiwan under instructions from the Chinese government would be subject to at least seven years in prison and a fine of up to NT\$100 million (US\$3.19 million) under the amendments.

Those conducting espionage by using the Internet would also be subject to the new penalties.

People employed by the military, the civil service, state-run enterprises or public-school teachers who are convicted for contravening the act would lose their pension, while those who have already retired and have received pension benefits would be required to return all the funds paid up to the date of their conviction.

Supplementary resolutions on the issues of how to define China, Macau and Hong Kong within the rubric of “hostile foreign forces,” and how to determine whether disseminated communications from people from those regions or other nations constitute a national threat are to be determined during the next legislative session, the Democratic Progressive Party and New Power Party caucuses said.

Those issues would be addressed through amendments to the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area (兩岸人民關係條例), as well as the relevant communications laws, they said.

Legislative Speaker Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) yesterday morning called a cross-caucus meeting to discuss amendments to Articles 2-1 and 5-1, and the additions of Articles 2-2 and 5-2 to the National Security Act.

The biggest developments that came out of the three-hour meeting were the increase in fines

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and imprison sentences specified in Article 5-1 and the way China, which is considered the greatest threat to national security, is defined in Article 2-1, legislators said.

The amended law would target those found establishing, financially supporting or directing organizations for the interests of a foreign power, they said.

It would also target those found probing, leaking or transmitting documents, images, electronic files or other items related to national security, they added.

Those found guilty of the above offenses specifically to help the Chinese government would face a minimum of seven years in prison and a fine of between NT\$50 million and NT\$100 million, while those guilty of helping the governments of other nations would be subject to between three and 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of NT\$30 million, they said, adding that attempted offenses would also be punishable under the amended act.

Those who admit to committing the offenses would receive lighter sentences or exemptions, they said.

All proceeds paid to collaborators by foreign governments would be confiscated, they said.

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