

Chinese executives grilled for two hours

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From left, China Innovation Investment Ltd acting director Kung Ching and her husband, executive director Xiang Xin, leave the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office after answering questions about espionage allegations.

Photo: Huang Chieh, Taipei Times

The Taipei District Prosecutors' Office yesterday said that it does not rule out the possibility of requesting evidence from the Australian Attorney-General's Department to corroborate allegations made by self-confessed Chinese spy William Wang Liqiang (王立強).

Taipei and Canberra do not have a mutual judicial assistance agreement, but the office can request the information on a case-by-case basis.

The office yesterday questioned China Innovation Investment Ltd (中興實業) executive director Xiang Xin (向新) and his wife, acting director Kung Ching (龔晶), for more than two hours, reasserting that it has jurisdiction over the case.

After questioning on Tuesday, the couple was barred from leaving the nation over an alleged breach of the National Security Act (國家安全法).

Xiang and Kung were detained on Sunday as they prepared to board a flight at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, after Wang claimed he was recruited by Xiang to take part in espionage operations in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Wang said that before the handover of Hong Kong from Britain, Xiang received orders from high-ranking officials in the Chinese military to acquire two listed companies in Hong Kong,

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which were to serve as top intelligence apparatuses in Hong Kong and Taiwan under the guise of the integration of civil-military development and communications.

Wang said that in 2014, he started working at China Innovation Investment and was asked by Xiang to teach Kung painting, adding that after gaining Xiang's trust, he played the role of "middleman" in espionage operations.

China Innovation Investment on Sunday denied Wang's allegations, saying that it never hired him.

Xiang denied Wang's allegations, saying that he did not recognize Wang, but that he travels to Taiwan nearly every month and often meets with businesspeople in search of investment opportunities.

Xiang admitted to spending more than NT\$100 million (US\$3.28 million) a few years ago to purchase two units in the Kingdom of Global View (國境全球) apartment complex in Taipei's Xinyi District (信義).

As the apartments are not registered in Xiang's or Kung's name, prosecutors said they followed the flow of money to verify the claim.

Asked about having jurisdiction over the case, the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office yesterday said that there is no doubt that it has jurisdiction, because Xiang and Kung's operations, place of residence and purchased real estate are all in Taipei.

Citing Article 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (刑事訴訟法) — which states that "a district court has jurisdiction over the first instance of a criminal case, but the high court has jurisdiction over the first instance of an offense against internal security or external security of the state, and interference with relations with other states" — the office said that it has jurisdiction over a case involving alleged breaches of the act.

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The case of Chinese People's Liberation Army intelligence officer Zhen Xiaojang (甄晓江), who was convicted in 2015 of contravening the act, is an example of its jurisdiction, the office said.

Due to the nature of the investigation, it would not be publicizing information about the case, it said.

The Chinese-language Apple Daily yesterday reported that the couple could have used the three properties in Taipei as bases for infiltrating Taiwan.

Additional reporting by CNA

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