

Today is the one-month anniversary of the church shooting in Laguna Woods, California. The North America Taiwanese Professors' Association (NATPA), founded in 1980 and consisting of college professors and professionals, expresses serious concern regarding the tragic incident that targeted a Taiwanese-American congregation on May 15. We call for peace and attention to the hate crime imposed on innocent American citizens.

The NATPA condemns any form of violence and the spread of China's agenda through aggression inflicted on Taiwanese Americans. According to the Orange County sheriff, the gunman, a Chinese immigrant, was politically motivated by the hatred and violence messages promoted by the China Council for Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification (CCPPNR), an organization in which he served as a board member of its Las Vegas chapter when it was founded in 2019.

The head of CCPPNR's Beijing headquarters, Wang Yang (汪洋), is currently ranked as the third-most powerful of the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平). According to its Web site, the CCPPNR has a long history of promoting propaganda by desecrating the national interests of the US and Taiwan.

As reported by the press, the gunman was motivated by "anger over the political tensions between China and Taiwan," and his "anti-Taiwan views" had led to the "politically motivated hate incident." The FBI has announced it had enough evidence to open a federal hate crime investigation.

While the CCPPNR Las Vegas Chapter was eager and quick to distance itself from the gunman — who dubbed himself a "destroying angel" in a seven-volume diary — after the crime, it is not unreasonable to speculate about the malignant influences of the CCPPNR, backed by the CCP; their propaganda could be the origin of this horrendous act by planting the seeds in the mind of this extremist with dissatisfaction about Taiwan's politics, resulting in such an indiscriminate hate crime.

Beijing has always labeled Taiwan a renegade province, ignoring the historic fact that Taiwan was never a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The fact remains that Taiwan is an independent nation; a vibrant and robust democracy with a population of 23.5 million and

## Addressing anti-Taiwan hate crime

Written by Li-Lin Cheng

Wednesday, 15 June 2022 04:46

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ranked as the eighth-strongest democracy in the world last year.

Beijing has long been vocal about coercing Taiwan to become part of China under the Hong Kong-style “one country, two systems,” but the brutal ways in which protesters and activists were dealt with in Hong Kong just added another one in its series of broken promises, like to the people of Tibet and Xinjiang, by the PRC regime.

We here at NATPA are deeply saddened by the passing of Dr John Cheng (鄭國強), a father of two teenagers, and a devoted husband and son to his widowed mother, who immediately charged the gunman during the shooting incident. The police compared Cheng’s heroic actions to “good versus evil,” and stressed that without his courageous act and sacrifice, no doubt there would have been many more casualties.

Cheng regarded his work as a family physician as a vocation to help others; his extraordinary courage and love transcend race and national boundaries.

We applaud the wisdom and courage of many Taiwanese Americans at the scene; the swift response by many senior citizens and the Reverend Billy Chang (張炳輝) prevented additional and horrific deaths. The Orange County sheriff said the gunman used chains to lock doors and tried to glue the locks shut. Additional ammunition and Molotov cocktail-like items were found in bags in the church.

This shooting incident at a house of worship targeted not just one ethnic group, but is a violation of the American values that we always defend: freedom, democracy and human rights.

The NATPA calls for the following actions from the US government:

First, for law enforcement: Investigate the activities of the CCPNR and its relationship with the CCP to prevent politically motivated attacks on innocent people from happening again.

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Second, for lawmakers: Define threatening language from China against Taiwan or Taiwanese groups and/or individuals by using force, violence and military power to promote China's unification agenda as a hate crime.

We must not confuse justice with vengeance. Tolerance in a diverse society is to recognize and respect others' values and differences in beliefs and ideologies. Nevertheless, as Thomas Mann, the 1929 Nobel Prize laureate, once said: "Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil."

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