

Chinese Vice Minister of Public Security Chen Zhimin (陳智敏), who led a delegation on a secret visit to Taiwan in the middle of last month for meetings with officials from various security-related agencies, was in Kathmandu weeks before, where he sought to strengthen Sino--Nepalese cooperation against Tibetan activists, reports showed.

During a visit on July 26, Chen, who headed a delegation of 11 officials, announced new financial assistance to Nepalese security agencies to better monitor and prevent Tibetan refugees from engaging in “anti-China activities” on its soil, Nepalese media reported.

Chen called the “anti-China activities taking in Nepal in the name of religion and human rights unacceptable to China,” adding that they posed “grave threats to the sovereignty and integrity of China.”

The meeting, held at Beijing’s behest, covered issues including border security, Tibetan refugees and collaboration on security matters, Nepalese media said.

During the visit, Chen announced an extra annual contribution by Beijing of US\$1.47 million to the Nepalese Ministry of Home Affairs to strengthen its security apparatus to curb Tibetan activities.

Earlier this week, the Taipei Times asked Taiwanese officials whether the topic of “anti-China activities” was raised during Chen’s Sept. 13 to Sept. 18 visit to Taiwan.

“We didn’t discuss politics and we didn’t discuss religion. Our understanding was that we would stay on the topic at hand as outlined under our agreement to combat crime,” said Hsu Jui-shan (許俊山), the chief administrator of the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB), which organized the trip’s itinerary.

Hsu was referring to the Joint Cross-Strait Crime Fighting Agreement signed in the third round of discussions between Taiwanese and Chinese negotiators in April.

However, it is now clear that Chen, who is also a committee member of the Chinese Communist Party, has become Taiwan's point man on police matters with the Chinese government. Information from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security shows that Chen is also responsible for maintaining senior-level contacts with police officials in Hong Kong and Macau.

The latest information by the National Police Agency reveals that Chen's visit was the fourth time he met publicly with senior Taiwanese judicial officials. He met CIB commissioner Lin Teh-hua (林德華) in Beijing earlier in March and in October last year had exchanges with Wu Mei-hung (吳梅虹), director of Legal Affairs at the Mainland Affairs Council. During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Chen was responsible for receiving a low-profile delegation headed by Hsieh Hsiu-neng (謝修能), then deputy Taipei City police commissioner, to study China's anti-terrorism tactics and prevention measures. Hsieh has since been promoted to Taipei City police commissioner.

On what was meant by anti-terrorism, Hsu said the discussions centered on how to provide -security arrangements for large events, including Taipei City's flora expo, which is opening next month.

Hsu also said Taiwan and China had apparently swapped lists of "subversive elements" that would be jointly watched by police authorities on both sides.

Included on the list were the names of prominent figures in Taiwanese organized crime, fugitives and some members of the public with "violent tendencies," Hsu said.

The two sides agreed to jointly crack down on serious crime, including homicides, drug and human trafficking, as well as economic crime, including money laundering, fraud and corruption. Also included in the five-point clause were "terrorist activities" and "other criminal acts."

Critics have expressed reservations about the ambiguous language found in the six-page agreement. A note underneath the fourth clause, for example, allows Taiwan and China to jointly proceed with police action even if a crime isn't recognized as such by the other side.

Such activity would have to be -approved by cross-strait consensus on a case-by-case basis.

However, Hsu said under another “tacit agreement,” the clause would not apply in cases of religious or political persecution. The note was essential, he said, because of some differences in legal terminology in Taiwanese and Chinese law.

Analysts said China’s growing interest and ties with Nepal were accompanied by increasing influence and interference in its domestic affairs. Acting under heavy Chinese influence, Nepalese authorities have intensified their targeting of Tibetan exiles to prevent them from taking part in demonstrations against the Chinese occupation of Tibet and repression of Tibetans.

Unlike his visit to Taiwan, no effort was made to keep Chen’s trip to Nepal secret, with reports of the meetings appearing in the media a week earlier.

Asked to comment on Chen’s visits to Nepal and Taiwan, Taiwan Friends of Tibet president Chow Mei-li (周美莉) said the main impact could be on Tibetans trying to visit Taiwan.

“[Chen’s visit] is a serious matter, especially as everything was kept secret,” Chow said. “Chen met officials from the Ministry of the Interior, which is in charge of border control. He may have asked the government to refuse entry to Tibetan activists.”

Other Tibetans, however, said they did not believe the visit would lead to anything harmful to Tibetans here.

“The situations in Taiwan and Nepal are very different: The government of Nepal is very unstable, the country is very poor and relies heavily on financial support from China. Some people even say the Chinese embassy [in Kathmandu] actually runs the country,” Regional Tibetan Youth Congress-Taiwan president Tashi Tsering said. “Taiwan, on the other hand, is a real democratic country.”

PRC official targeted Tibetans: reports

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Chime Tsering, another Tibetan living in Taiwan, said the Tibetan community here — with about 400 people — was not significant enough to be of concern to China.

“[Chen] must have come to Taiwan for something much bigger than Tibetans [here],” Chime said.

However, Chime said that in recent years it appeared to have become more difficult for exiled Tibetans in other countries to obtain visas to come to Taiwan.

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