

MOJ to probe Chen 'US agent' claim

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Minister of Justice Wang Ching-feng (王景弘) said yesterday that prosecutors would look into allegations by former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) attorney that Chen was an "agent" of the US government.

Wang made the remarks at a meeting of the legislature's Judiciary and Organic Laws and Statutes Committee.

She was referring to the former president's petition last week for the US to intervene as the "principal occupying power of Taiwan" to seek his immediate release and restore his civil and human rights.

Roger Lin (林錫山), a member of the Taiwan Civil Rights Litigation Organization, said last week that his organization was sponsoring legal action for Chen and demanding full respect for his civil rights and his immediate release.

Lin said that Chen had declared himself an "agent" of the US government during his eight-year presidency and that the Republic of China government was in exile because Taiwan remains under the US Military Government as per the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty.

Wang said prosecutors would look into the matter and investigate whether Chen has committed treason or other crimes.

During the committee meeting, Wang also vowed to crack down on individuals who owe large amounts to the national treasury in unpaid taxes.

More than NT\$400 billion (US\$12 billion) is owed to the national treasury in outstanding taxes by businesses and individuals, Wang said.

She said that because of limited budgets, the ministry's Administrative Enforcement Agency had only 700 officials, meaning that each enforcement officer is responsible for 20,000 cases, causing delays in the process.

The issue of outstanding tax revenue recently surfaced as the agency sought payment from Jack Sun (孫振球), the former chairman of Pacific Electric Wire and Cable (太平洋電線電纜), who owes an estimated NT\$300 million in taxes. Sun's extravagant lifestyle despite his large debts has attracted much criticism from lawmakers and the public.

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