

‘Overstaying Chinese might be spies’

Written by Taiwan Tati Cultural & Educational Foundation
Monday, 04 April 2016 06:39 -

Former Taiwan Solidarity Union legislator Hsu Chung-hsin (許昌新) said he has concerns over the intentions of Chinese who go missing after entering Taiwan on the pretext of traveling or undergoing medical procedures, saying they could be on intelligence-gathering missions.

According to statistics compiled by the National Immigration Agency (NIA), there are 146 Chinese who are unaccounted for, entering Taiwan for tourism or to undergo medical procedures.

The NIA and the National Police Agency are still trying to locate them.

“The probability of Chinese engaging in intelligence-gathering activities in Taiwan under the guise of medical examinations or independent travel has surged since President Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) administration further opened Taiwan to China,” said Hsu, who is a professor of law at National Cheng Kung University.

Hsu said it is not that the government is unable to find the missing Chinese citizens, but rather that search efforts have been impeded by its attitude.

However, a Ministry of the Interior report shows that as of February, the number of Chinese overstaying their tourist visa in Taiwan was 2,307, including 769 people from Macau and Hong Kong, while 462 Chinese have overstayed their resident visas in Taiwan, nine of whom came from Macau and Hong Kong.

“The government’s statistics include many ‘dark figures.’ The actual number of Chinese overstaying tourist or residency visas is likely much higher,” Hsu said, adding that he had received many reports of Chinese engaging in intelligence-gathering activities in Taiwan when he served as a lawmaker.

Hsu said Chinese are expected to gather intelligence on information and communications industries and that they are most likely interested in the nation’s Indigenous Defense Fighters,

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weapons and defense facilities.

Since the Ma administration also allows Chinese white-collar professionals to work in Taiwan, some of them could have the opportunity to “legally” gather intelligence through the service sector, Hsu said.

NIA Deputy Director Ho Jung-chun (何俊雄) said the majority of Chinese overstaying in Taiwan are either working illegally or engaging in prostitution.

“We have yet to see a threat to national security,” Ho said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2016/04/04](#)