

Retired air force captain arrested on spying charge

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A former air force captain has been arrested on charges of colluding with Chinese intelligence operatives, the Taiwan High Prosecutors' Office said on Monday.

Chen Kuo-wei (陳國偉) was turned over to the office for alleged violations of the National Intelligence Services Act (國家情報服務法), it said, adding that the Taiwan High Court ruled to detain him incommunicado.

Senior Ministry of National Defense officials said Chen might have colluded with Chinese intelligence after his failed attempt to conduct business in China.

Chen, 40, retired as a captain in the air force's logistics and maintenance division 15 years ago and has since been traveling to Shanghai to try to start his own business, they said.

While Chen had no access to classified materials or intelligence during his time in the air force, most of his friends in the military are now colonels or lieutenant colonels, making him a target for Chinese intelligence, the ministry said.

It said Chen was asked by the Chinese to persuade his contacts in the military to supply information and it was during such an attempt that he came in contact with a person working in the Military Intelligence Bureau.

The person reported the incident to his superiors, because he was concerned that Chen's overtures might be an attempt to obtain military information and build an intelligence network in Taiwan for the Chinese, the ministry said.

The bureau and prosecutors monitored Chen's activities for some time and, deciding that they had collected enough information on Chen to build a case, obtained permission to detain him on Sunday when he returned to Taiwan, allegedly to collect information from his sources, the ministry said.

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The bureau declined to comment on whether Chen had succeeded in forming an intelligence network in the military, saying that the case has been turned over to the prosecutors' office for investigation.

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