

China travel limits might be tightened

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The Executive Yuan has drafted an amendment to extend the period during which retired generals would be prohibited from traveling to China in an apparent response to two retired generals praising Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) at a political event in China last year.

The Executive Yuan on Thursday said it has drafted an amendment to the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area (臺灣關係法) to extend the period during which former generals, mayors, science officials and intelligence officers must obtain Ministry of the Interior approval before they can travel to China to 15 years from three years.

The proposed amendment aims to prevent retired government and military officials from attending events in China that could unduly assert Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan, the Executive Yuan said.

The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) official People's Daily on Jan. 29 reported that two retired Taiwanese generals, Huang Shing-chiang (黃升強) and Chen Ting-chung (陳廷忠) in December last year attended the Cross-Strait Generals Forum in Xiamen in China's Fujian Province.

The report was written by former Chinese-language People's Liberation Army Daily president Huang Guozhu (黃國柱) and was titled: "Look over here, Taiwanese generals: Commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan."

At the event, Taiwanese generals discussed "reform and liberalization to jointly pursue development" with their Chinese counterparts, sang the Chinese national anthem and joined others in issuing an "initiative for peaceful unification," the report said.

The generals also praised the "five points" that Xi mentioned in an address on Jan. 2, it said.

The paper quoted them as saying that China's transformation to a more liberal economy has

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brought “tremendous benefits” to Chinese and Taiwanese, and that they endorsed the so-called “1992 consensus” and Beijing’s “one China” principle.

Huang was quoted as saying that “the hope of cross-strait unification must not evaporate. This is our shared goal as Chinese and members of the Zhonghua minzu [Chinese ethnic group, 中華民族].”

“When the development of Chinese culture reaches its climax, our nation shall be at its most powerful. Turning one’s back on Chinese culture would be forcing one’s self into oblivion,” Chen said, according to the report.

When reached for comment, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Tsai Shih-ying (蔡詩瑛) on Saturday said that soldiers have a duty to protect the nation, so if they ingratiate themselves with China, it would defeat the purpose of having a military.

Retired generals who ingratiate themselves with China do not deserve a pension, he added.

The “1992 consensus,” a term former Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi (蘇起) in 2006 admitted to making up in 2000, refers to a tacit understanding between the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the CCP that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own interpretation of what “China” means.

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