



National Security Bureau Director-General Chen Ming-tong arrives at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday for a meeting of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee.

Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times

The nation's intelligence chief yesterday said that some local Internet celebrities are being paid by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to conduct "cognitive warfare" campaigns in Taiwan and help Beijing spread propaganda.

National Security Bureau (NSB) Director-General Chen Ming-tong (陳明通) said that one example happened in early March following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, when a Taiwanese Internet celebrity on TikTok claimed that the Chinese government was offering to evacuate Taiwanese from the European nation.

The NSB later found that the TikTok celebrity was not in Ukraine, but based in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, Chen said, adding that the person had been trained by the CCP to use social media to spread propaganda as part of its "united front" efforts.

The NSB has a full grasp on such "cognitive warfare" campaigns, and related authorities are investigating, Chen said, without elaborating.

Chen made the comments at the legislature in Taipei in response to a report in the Taipei Times and the Chinese-language Liberty Times (the sister newspaper of the Taipei Times) that Beijing has been training and paying Taiwanese to influence young Taiwanese on media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Little Red Book, also known as Xiaohongshu, the Chinese equivalent of Instagram.

A number of high-profile Taiwanese YouTube celebrities based in China attended the fifth Cross-Strait Youth Development Forum in Hangzhou, China, on Wednesday, during which they shared their successes in running their social media platforms while encouraging more young Taiwanese to join them, the report said.

Taiwan Internet celebrities being paid by CCP: NSB

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The report quoted Democratic Progressive Party lawmakers, who called on the government to come up with measures to counter China's use of Taiwanese Internet celebrities to conduct "cognitive warfare" against young Taiwanese.

The forum was joined by about 450 guests and youth representatives from both sides of the Taiwan Strait, including former Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱), Chinese media reports said.

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