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## Ex-Chinese Spy Backs Espionage Arrest in Australia

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A former Chinese intelligence agent has welcomed the arrest of an Australian woman on espionage-related charges, describing it as a critical step in countering Beijing's covert influence operations in the country.

On Monday, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) confirmed that a woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had been arrested and charged with reckless foreign interference.

She is accused of covertly gathering information on the Guan Yin Citta Buddhist association in Canberra, allegedly on behalf of China's Ministry of Public Security.

The Buddhist group, which maintains a presence in both Australia and China, is considered a cult by Chinese authorities.

In an interview with Sky News Australia, a former Chinese spy identified only as "Eric" applauded the AFP's actions, stating it signaled a shift in how authorities are handling espionage within Chinese community organizations.

"This may be the first time we've seen action taken against a spy operating inside a Chinese community group," Eric said. "We know the Chinese government has heavily invested in such organisations not only to silence dissidents but also to influence elections and political decisions."

Eric warned that foreign interference from Beijing goes far beyond isolated cases. He stated that while the AFP's evidence suggests this individual may have been acting alone, China likely maintains a much broader intelligence network in Australia.

"The CCP conducts its espionage on two tracks," he explained. "One is to suppress criticism of the Chinese government and protect its governance. The other is geopolitical, involving business, technology, and military intelligence."

Eric emphasised Australia's strategic significance in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the event of a future military conflict between the United States and China. He said China views Australia as pivotal and invests in intelligence operations to sway its political alignment and gain access to sensitive defence information.

"The CCP wants to ensure that if there's a confrontation in the Pacific, Australia either stays neutral or doesn't support the U.S. and its allies," he said. "They're willing to invest significant resources to achieve that."

He also described how Chinese intelligence agents often work to cultivate individuals over time, sometimes offering financial incentives to obtain classified or politically useful information.

When asked what Australians should do if approached by Chinese operatives, Eric urged them to report to the authorities immediately.

“Don’t be stupid,” he said. “You might be arrested, and the Chinese government will never admit to supporting you. If you’re involved, go straight to ASIO or the police.”

The Australian government has increased its focus on combating foreign interference in recent years, particularly from China. National security experts continue to warn that foreign influence remains a serious and ongoing concern, particularly within diaspora communities and critical infrastructure sectors.