

Under Xi Jinping's administration, there has been a gradual upsurge both in the degree of importance and seriousness of governance in the aspect of national integration (Hong Kong, Taiwan, ethnic minorities), as well as the demands for the establishment of hegemony in the international community (new form of international relations, "Belt and Road" initiative, human community with a shared future). The emphasis on work toward the united front, which has become prominent in recent years, is believed to have developed based on this backdrop.

Accordingly, I shall approach the research problem of "the domestic factors that have an impact on China's external actions" based on the theme of "The United Front, and the Role of Overseas Chinese." This work comprises the following two pillars: (i) a study of the policy process cycle using the enactment of the Regulations on United Front Work by the Communist Party of China (Provisional) (hereafter, "the Regulations") as the subject, and (ii) a study of domestic and foreign collaboration in relation to political activities conducted overseas by overseas Chinese representatives of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) (hereafter, "overseas Chinese representatives").

1. Enactment of the Regulations

The Communist Party of China (CPC) enforced the Regulations on May 18, 2015. According to an essay on the origins of the Regulations, the following are the processes leading to the enactment and enforcement of the Regulations.¹

The Regulations were drafted based on a decision made by the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC (setting of policy issue), and it took one year and five months from the making of this decision to the promulgation of the Regulations. Accordingly, the enactment of the Regulations was the policy issue that spanned the period from the end of 2013, about one year after the inauguration of Xi Jinping's administration in November 2012, until early 2014.

The development of the policy involved many senior officials and departments from the central government to the local administration.

The starting point was in the central government. The work ranging from drafting to enactment was carried out under the direct guidance of the CPC's Central Committee from start to finish. However, the hearing of reports and instructions related to the drafting policy were carried out by the General Secretary, Xi Jinping himself. In light of that, the Chairman of the CPPCC, Yu Zhengsheng, who is in charge of coordinating the united front work among the top leadership,

issued concrete instructions for the series of work processes, and penned the draft of the Regulations himself.

Based on the presentation of the policy by the top leadership, the concrete work toward the enactment of the Regulations began. The United Front Work Department, which comes under the direct control of the Central Committee, was positioned at the heart of this work. Work began with an effort to build unity of purpose through the convention of four ministerial working meetings led by Sun Chunlan (member of the Politburo), who heads the United Front Work Department. Then, in February 2014, the United Front Work Department, along with eight related central departments (among CPC departments, the Organization Department of the Central Committee and the Taiwan Work Office of the Central Committee; among CPPCC departments, the CPPCC General Office; among State Council departments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office), established a drafting organization and drafting team for the drafting of the Regulations.

After organizations at the working level of the Central Committee and fine-tuning of the policy had been concluded, work began from March of the same year, centered mainly around the drafting team. This was predominated by the sharing of a common purpose between the central and local governments. In other words, while the drafting team commenced work on the gathering of materials and reviews toward the enactment of the Regulations, it also flew to various parts of the country in April to conduct field studies in the localities. A total of 48 discussion meetings were held, with participants from within and outside the CPC from all 31 first-level administrative districts. On the other hand, work was divided among the leaders of the United Front Work Department, who conducted hearings with the top leaders of the Central Committee (probably Xi Jinping and Yu Zhengsheng) regarding their opinions on the draft Regulations. It is believed that the contents of the articles in the Regulations had largely been firmed up by this point.

At the beginning of March 2015, a conference of the heads of united front work departments across China (31 provinces, cities, and autonomous regions, and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps) was held in conjunction with the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. After listening to the opinions of these heads of united front work departments, the drafting team conducted its last hearing in the middle and end of the month on the relevant departments, including the eight departments involved in the drafting work.

The policy decision could be described as a formality, in light of the fact that the remaining time was very short (promulgation and enforcement on May 18), and based on the nature of the organizations involved. In other words, Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the CPPCC, held a symposium with non-CPC members on April 27 to solicit their opinions and proposals. This was attended by the central members of the eight democratic parties, key officials of the All-China

Federation of Industry and Commerce, and representatives of political independents. Finally, two days after that on April 29 and 30, the Politburo Standing Committee and the Politburo reviewed and deliberated on the draft Regulations respectively, and officially promulgated and enforced it. The attached figure shows the processes and actors in the enactment of the Regulations.

As of the present time, it has not been possible to obtain sufficient materials to study the policy implementation and policy evaluation processes. However, as the official regulations, based on revisions made to the “Provisional” version, were promulgated recently (“soon” according to communications by Xinhua News Agency in Beijing on January 5, 2021), the disclosure of new materials, including materials that can help to shed light on “FA,” is anticipated.

2. Political activities conducted overseas by overseas Chinese representatives

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, overseas Chinese have been an important subject of united front work. This policy has remained unchanged in recent years, as demonstrated clearly by the inclusion of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office among the members of the drafting organization for the Regulations that was established under the United Front Work Department, as we have affirmed in 1. above, and by the inclusion of overseas Chinese as one of the subjects of united front work in the main text of the Regulations.

What kind of activities do overseas Chinese representatives undertake “overseas” under the guidance of the CPPCC or the United Front Work Department, in order to realize the CPC’s goal of national integration, and how are these activities reflected back into China? These are the subjects of my interest at the current stage, before a full-scale literature review and the gathering and reading of materials are conducted.

I shall set out the following information, which I have obtained at the present point, as hints for shedding light on the aforementioned questions.

(i) Based on Master’s dissertations found through a search on the China Integrated Knowledge Resources Database under the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) project ²

(a) Overseas Chinese representatives belong mainly to two “sectors”—the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (ACFROC), and the China Zhi Gong Party (CZGP). In short, despite being “overseas Chinese,” they comprise mainly residents of China (hereafter, “overseas Chinese” refers to “returned overseas Chinese” unless otherwise stated). Incidentally, among the 30 members from the CZGP who are members of the CPPCC, seven have some form of connection to overseas Chinese. Of these seven members, the only one who is positioned as a “returned overseas Chinese” is Wan Gang (Chairman of the CZGP, Vice Chairman of the CPPCC, and Chairman of the China Association for Science and Technology), who stayed overseas for about 16 years (he resided in Germany from 1985 to 2001).

(b) Apart from the committee members, overseas Chinese can also attend the CPPCC as special representatives/committee members, or as academic experts. However, those who participate as attendees have the right to make a proposal, but not the right to create and submit a bill.

(ii) Based on *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia*³

Zhu Minshen is regarded as a CPPCC member with Australian nationality. Hypothetically, a person who is not of Chinese nationality would not be an overseas Chinese, but an ethnic Chinese (of foreign nationality). As the subject of the united front work would also include non-Chinese nationals in this case, it would require the perspective of interference with national sovereignty (of another country). The following is information about Zhu based on materials from China.⁴

(a) Zhu has Australian nationality as of May 2004.

(b) On March 6, 2014, Qiu Yuanping, Director of Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, met with overseas Chinese representatives in attendance at the second session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). One of these attendees was Zhu (Principal of Top Education Institute). The overseas Chinese representatives in attendance at this meeting numbered 35 people from 21 countries, and they had begun attending from 2001 (fourth session of the 9th National Committee of the CPPCC). According to Zhu, since 2001, the CPPCC has invited a total of 399 overseas Chinese representative attendees living in 62 countries to its sessions.

(c) 17 overseas Chinese representatives who were in attendance at the third session of the 13th Municipal Committee of the CPPCC attended the overseas Chinese representative conference held on January 14, 2020 by Shanghai City's Political Consultative Conference. Zhu was one of the attendees, while the writer Mo Bangfu also attended from Japan.

(d) Zhu has also founded The Australian Chinese Times. He also penned articles for the paper himself, including articles covering the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, Lee Teng-hui's "two states" theory, and visits by Chinese leaders to Australia. As of the end of January 2021, publication of the paper has been suspended due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

¹ "Origins of the Regulations on United Front Work by the Communist Party of China (Provisional)," <http://www.bjsy.org.cn/Articles/Detail.aspx?id=1061> (Last accessed: January 30, 2021)

² Gao Si, "Research on the Role of Overseas Chinese in the CPPCC" (Master's dissertation, South China University of Technology), 2015.

³ Clive Hamilton (Japanese translation by Tetsuhide Yamaoka and Masashi Okuyama, published by Asukashinsha Publishing, 2020, pp.113-118)

⁴ "Director Qiu Yuanping meets with overseas Chinese representatives at the second session of the 12th National Meeting of the CPPCC," <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0311/c157278-24605046.html> (Last accessed: January 23, 2021). "Zhu Minshen Postscript from Attendance at the National Meeting of the CPPCC," <https://alumni.fudan.edu.cn/3e/c7/c14599a147143/page.htm> (Last accessed: January 22, 2021). "Active Proposals from the 17 Overseas Chinese Invited to Attend the Municipal Meeting of the CPPCC Organized by Shanghai City," <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1655773361407826767&wfr=spider&for=pc> (Last accessed: January 20, 2021). "Australian Chinese businessman, Zhu Minshen,"

<http://www.chinaqw.com/node2/node116/node122/node174/userobject6ai3564.html> (Last accessed: January 18, 2021).