CPAFFC and the United Front Strategy of “Sub-National Engagement”

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Panel One: China’s International Propaganda and Political Interference Efforts
CPAFFC and the United Front Strategy of “Sub-national Engagement”

Presentation Overview
• Outreach to U.S. state governments:
  The May 2019 U.S.-China Governors’ Conference
• Outreach to U.S. city governments:
  The July 2019 U.S.-China Mayors’ Conference
• What are CPAFFC and CCP “friendship” societies?
• Concluding thoughts on the PRC’s “sub-national” strategy
Outreach to U.S. State Governments: The May 2019 U.S.-China Governors’ Conference

- Fifth “U.S.-China Governors Collaboration Summit” held in Lexington, KY from May 22nd-24th
- Sponsored by NGA and CPAFFC
- U.S. participants from states impacted by U.S.-China “trade war”
- Major themes:
  - Prospects for economic cooperation
  - Ability of “sub-national” ties to maintain U.S.-China ties amid national tensions
Outreach to U.S. City Governments:
The July 2019 U.S.-China Mayors’ Conference

- Fourth “U.S.-China Sister Cities Mayors’ Summit” held in Houston from July 17th-19th
- Sponsored by SCI and CPAFFC
Outreach to U.S. City Governments: The July 2019 U.S.-China Mayors’ Conference

• Fourth “U.S.-China Sister Cities Mayors’ Summit” held in Houston from July 17th-19th
• Sponsored by SCI and CPAFFC
• Major themes:
  • “Cities Mean Business”
  • Xie Yuan (per Xinhua): “…stressed the importance of developing people-to-people and sub-national relationships between China and the United States”
  • Cui Tiankai: “Subnational cooperation and people-to-people exchanges are the highlights in the history of China-US interactions and a driving force for the growth of our relations.”
  • U.S. participants stressed practical nature of local U.S.-China relationships
  • Panel: “Maritime Silk Road and Impact” (OK City – Haikou)
Xi Jinping and "Sister City" Exchanges

- Xi was CCP Secretary for Fuzhou (Fujian) in 1994 when sister-city agreement signed with Tacoma, WA
- 2015: Xi Jinping visit to Tacoma / Lincoln High School
Other Examples of CPAFFC Outreach to U.S. City Governments

• May 2019: Li Xiaolin met with former Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley
  • Daley (per CPAFFC): “Governors and mayors had an important role to play in American politics... [and he would] always continue to actively promote trade and local government exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.”

• August 26: Li Xiaolin met with Dublin, CA mayor David Haubert (founder of the Sino-American Friendship City Association)
  • Li (per CPAFFC): “China has never regarded the United States as an enemy...”
  • “It has been a main task of CPAFFC to advance sub-national exchanges and friendly relations... bilateral sub-national government cooperation is mutually beneficial and win-win.”
  • “Both sides could work together to play an active role in promoting the development of China-U.S. friendship cities and sub-national government exchanges.”
What Is the “Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries”?  

CPAFFC Basic Facts:

• Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (中国人民对外友好协会, Zhongguo Renmin Duiwai Youhao Xiehui)
  
• Led by Li Xiaolin (李小林) (daughter of Li Xiannian)
  • With CPAFFC since 1975; spent much of 1980s / 1990s in USA
  • 1990-1992: First Secretary PRC Embassy in USA

• CPAFFC stands at the apex of the PRC’s “friendship associations” (友好协会, youhao xiehui), with both local organizations within China and numerous chapters abroad
  • Lomová, Lulu, and Hála: “This system is analogous to the friendship associations (общества дружбы) [of] the Soviet Union, only more extensively developed” (Sinopsis, July 28).
What Is the “Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries”? 

CPAFFC Basic Facts:

• CPAFFC conducts “exchanges with organizations among the people” (民间组织交流, minjian zuzhi jiaoliu) -- a state/party agency that presents itself as an NGO

• CPAFFC acts as the PRC’s lead organization for relations with local governments in other countries

• CPAFFC is NOT:
  • The China Association for International Friendly Contact (中国国际友好联络会, Zhongguo Guoji Youhao Lianluobu) – a separate front organization subordinate to the PLA Political Dept. ILD
  • The Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China (中国和平统一促进会, Zhongguo Heping Tongyi Cujin Hui) – a separate front organization subordinate to the UFWD
  • Part of the UFWD – CPAFFC is a united front organization, but not a United Front organization

• CPAFFC subordination is unclear – possible split lines of authority to the Foreign Ministry and the CCP Central Committee Foreign Affairs Commission (中共外事委员会)?