

A recent exchange between Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) and former vice president Wu Den-yih (吳登輝) over the KMT's new, controversy-dogged policy platform is reminiscent of the brutal removal of Hung as the KMT's presidential candidate in October last year.

Amid a dismal, gloomy and pessimistic atmosphere within the KMT, Hung had stepped forward and volunteered to shoulder a responsibility that no other party heavyweight dared to, presumably out of fear that a predictably disastrous loss in the Jan. 16 elections could end their political careers.

Just when Hung's campaign started to gather some momentum, New Taipei City Mayor and then-KMT chairman Eric Chu (朱立倫) swooped in to push Hung out of the race. He did so under the pretext that her cross-strait policy, which some believe revolves around the goal of rapid unification with China, was too radical and would pave the way for the demise of the KMT. He felt he had to come to the party's rescue.

While there might be some truth in Chu's reasoning, many regarded the annulment of Hung's candidacy as the result of a power struggle between the KMT's pro-China and pro-localization factions.

The tug-of-war between the two factions might have gone underground after Hung's victory in March in the KMT's chairperson by-election — which was primarily, if not entirely, due to the landslide support she received from the deep-blue Huang Fu Hsing military veterans' branch — but it re-emerged after passage of the new policy platform early last month.

In the platform, the “different interpretations” part of the so-called “1992 consensus” appears only once, when it talks about former president Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) success in furthering cross-strait interactions during his eight years in office. What the pan-blue camp has deemed an integral element in the “consensus” is omitted in following mentions.

The “1992 consensus” refers to a tacit understanding between the KMT and Beijing that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own

## Power struggle brewing in the KMT

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interpretation of what “China” means. Former Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi (蘇起) said in 2006 that he had made up the term in 2000.

The perceived intentional omission quickly raised concerns within the KMT, with some members regarding it as part of Hung’s attempts to bring the party’s cross-strait stance closer to that of Beijing, which has never acknowledged the existence of the “different interpretations” part.

Indeed, in the KMT’s previous policy platform, one that was passed under Chu’s leadership in July last year, all mentions of the “1992 consensus” came hand-in-hand with the “different interpretations” component.

Yet it seems far-fetched for Wu, who has made little effort to conceal his ambition to succeed Hung as the KMT’s next leader, to accuse her of seeking to remove the “different interpretations” part altogether.

Maybe Wu’s true intention is to “defend” the “different interpretations” component and ensure the maintenance of ambiguity in the KMT’s dealing with cross-strait ties. Another possible motive behind Wu’s criticism could be that he is attempting to undermine Hung’s chance of winning re-election after her term expires in July next year.

Either way, a power struggle is brewing within the KMT. Whichever faction wins the battle could set the direction for the party’s cross-strait policy for years to come.

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