



On the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan and the Propaganda of Mao Zedong Thought on Protracted War

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Abstract

Soon after the outbreak of the anti-Japanese War, Mao Zedong gave a clear judgement on the whole situation during the war and proposed the famous Protracted War thought in his paper On Protracted War. As the flag of Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei anti-Japanese base and North China, *the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* is the main medium for the Communist Part of China to propagate the anti-Japanese thoughts and policies, having a significant impact on the history of anti-Japanese and the history of propaganda. The paper made great contribution to propagate Mao Zedong thought on Protracted War.

Key words: *The paper of war of resistance against Japan*; The thought of protracted war; Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei anti-Japanese base; Propaganda

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INTRODUCTION

After the full-blown of the anti-Japanese War, the Japanese invaders were mercilessly hostile and threatened us that they would perish China in three months. Facing the crazy invasion, two inappropriate thoughts arose between our Chinese, one is pessimism presented by the theory of national subjugation, and the other is impatience presented by the theory of quick victory.

The two ridiculous thoughts had bad impact on the anti-Japanese War. To thoroughly refute the two thoughts and unify the thought of protracted war between the army and the people, Mao Zedong wrote the famous military masterpiece-On the thought of Protracted War. Since the beginning-May in 1938 to the accomplishment, it only used less than ten days and contains fifty thousand words. During the Yan'an anti-Japanese seminar held between May 26 to June 3, Mao Zedong gave a detailed description of the thought of Protracted War.

1. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROPAGANDA OF THE THOUGHT OF PROTRACTED WAR

The lecture of Mao Zedong's thought of Protracted War caused a strong reaction, most people thought that what Mao Zedong said had deep content and was convincing. For the thought has important directing significance not only to the party ,but also to people all over China, most people hoped to propagate the thought of Protracted War in a wider rage and then to cause greater social effects, including Chen Yun, the political bureau of CPC central community, minister of organization. He raised the claim to Mao Zedong. Based on the claim, Yan'an mimeographed the book written by Mao Zedong, but due to the limited number of the mimeographed books, many cadres couldn't read the book, especially those cadres in the battlefield. To solve the problem, the CPC decided to print books and publish in border areas, anti-Japanese base and even those areas dominated by Kuomintang. In this background, some papers and journals in the anti-Japanese base launched the study and propaganda of the thought based on their actual situation, and the propaganda of the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei anti-Japanese base was most distinctive.

1.1 The Propaganda of the Protracted War Is the Demand of the Insistence of the Anti-Japanese War Until the Final Victory

Comprehensive anti-Japanese War had been ten months since Mao Zedong proposed the thought of Protracted War in May in 1938. During the period, the situation of the war was not so optimistic, although Kuomintang courageously fought the enemy on positive battlefield, we still retreated one step after another, a lot of land was occupied by the enemy, and many soldiers became prisoners. The soldiers and people didn't have a clear understanding of the purpose, the process and the result of the Anti-Japanese War, and at that time, a correct and scientific theory was urgently demanded to unify the thought between army and people.

1.2 The Propaganda of the Protracted War Is the Demand of Refuting Ridiculous Public Voice

Along with the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, two wrong thoughts soon dominated Chinese social voice. One is the thought of quick victory, and supporters thought that the Anti-Japanese War would end with Japan's failure in a short time. They had left thought, ignored the gap between China and Japan, especially the gap in military. The other is the thought of national subjugation. The supporters exaggerated the gap between China and Japan, thinking that the result only depended on military, but ignoring the trend of the war. The failure of Taierzhuang battle and the battle of Xuzhou made the supporters of these two thoughts more insistent. Therefore, to refute the wrong and ridiculous thoughts and lead people to understand the situation of the war so as to resist the invasion correctly is imminent.

1.3 The Propaganda of the Protracted War Is the Demand of Unifying the Thought in Party

During the ten months since the outbreak of comprehensive Anti-Japanese War to the proposition of the protracted war, the Communist Party of China did not make a clear and unified understanding on the form, content, and the future of the war. Some leaders of the CPC had doubt on the thought of protracted war after a long time since the proposition of the thought, and some basic party members and cadres did not have a deep understanding of it. Along with the war developed, on the thought of Protracted War was proved correct and was scientific. The thought of anti-Japanese between the CPC integrated gradually.

2. THE MAIN PROCESS OF THE PROPAGANDA OF THE THOUGHT OF PROTRACTED WAR

Mao Zedong proposed the thought of protracted war on the anti-Japanese seminar held in Yan'an in late May in

1938. The most important thing for the party, the army, border areas and anti-Japanese bases is propagating the thought of protracted war. The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan is the official newspaper for CPC in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei border area, acting the role of directing social voice. To make the thought of protracted war popular, with regard to people's ability of acceptance for the thought and the war and social reality, the propaganda of the thought of protracted war went through three stages.

2.1 Preparation (1938.6-1938.9)

By the end of May, Mao Zedong proposed the thought of protracted war on the anti-Japanese seminar held in Yan'an, meaning that the thought of protracted war was officially formed, but the stage of preparation is needed for there still existed other thought of anti-Japanese. In the stage of preparation, the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan analyzed the situation of domestic and abroad, the comparison between China and Japan in many fields, criticized some wrong thoughts of anti-Japanese, so as to draw forth correct thought-the thought of protracted war. These works made preparation for people to accept the thought and then to make a correct judgement.

2.2 Development (1938.9-1938.11)

On September 10th, 1938, On the Thought of Protracted War written by Mao Zedong was published in the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, and the advertisement lasted until late September, this opened the gate for the propaganda of the thought of protracted war to the army and people in border areas. At that time, the Japanese invaded Wuhan, and Kuomintang evacuated, so many people had doubt on the future of the anti-Japanese war. The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan applied the thought of protracted war to discuss the Kuomintang evacuation and pointed out that the Anti-Japanese war was necessarily protracted war and went through three stages, inspiring the army and people and at the same time propagating the thought of the protracted war.

2.3 Climax (1938.11-Mid-1939)

After the discussion on the Kuomintang evacuation, the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan used a lot of space to propagate the thought of protracted war directly and indirectly in order to make the thought more popular and attract more people. In the stage, the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan not only published the speech of leaders of CPA related to the thought of protracted war, but also narrated the thought in plain language. In this way can we not only propagate the thought of protracted war, applied correct anti-Japanese strategies, but also through the enemy consumption to seal the thought of protracted war indirectly, so as to lead to climax of the propagation of the thought of protracted war.

3. THE MAIN WAYS OF THE PROPAGANDA OF THE THOUGHT OF PROTRACTED WAR

For the purpose of making the thought of protracted war more attractive, the CPC propagated it vigorously in the anti-Japanese bases. The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan is most important newspaper in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei border area, and its role in propagating the thought of protracted war was irreplaceable. To propagate the thought wider and more comprehensive, the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan used ways below.

3.1 Straight to the Subject to Elaborate the Thought—Analyzing the Thought of Protracted War Directly

Many leaders of CPC gave speeches on the topic of the thought of protracted war after the publication of on the Thought of Protracted War. The editors published them on the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, which demonstrated that the thought of protracted war was correct directly. In September 1938, Zhou Enlai said, ‘The heroic battle lasting for 15 months sealed that only insisting on the protracted war can we gain the final victory of the Chinese Liberation War. The theory of national subjugation and the theory of quick victory of anti-Japanese war was proved to be wrong. The theory of national subjugation only considered the military gap between China and Japan, but ignored the factors such as politics, economy and nature that we transcend Japan, so the supporters of this theory could not foresee and believe that we can persist 15 months’, ‘We also can’t become stronger, change anti-defensive to defensive and expel Japanese from China. So the situation of the war of anti-Japanese is just what Mao Zedong said, it requires three stages, and the first stage is that enemy offend and we defend; the second stage is enemy apply conservative strategy and we prepare to counterattack; the second stage is we start to counterattack and enemy apply retreat strategy’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1. (1938.12.23)*, 1984, p.400). In October 1939, the newspaper published the speech of Mao Zedong on the topic of the international surroundings and the Anti-Japanese War, named The Future of the anti-Japanese War under New International Situation. In the speech, Mao Zedong pointed out that, ‘Under new international environment, under the circumstance that Japan’s situation becomes harder and harder and our country would never compromise, the stage of our retreat strategy had ended, and the stage of locking in a stalemate each other has coming. The stage of locking in a stalemate each other is just the stage of preparation of counterattack. However, the more locking in a stalemate each other in positive battlefield, the less locking in a stalemate each other in battlefield behind enemy lines’, ‘From now on, the main target of anti-Japanese War is the preparation of

counterattack, on one hand, we should solemnly support positive defense and favorable support the battle behind enemy lines. On the other hand, reforms referring to politics and military should be conducted to gather giant power and when the opportunity comes, we could counterattack vigorously to regain lost land’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 3 (1939.10.23)*, 1984, p.243). Besides the speeches’ publication of CPC leaders on the newspaper, the editors of *the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* wrote articles to propagate the thought of protracted war directly. The editors elaborated the thought in a more concise and more pellucid words in order to help those soldiers and people who had little knowledge understand better and deeper. On February 30, 1939, headlines of *the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* reported ‘The Road of anti-Japanese National United Front’s Development’, in which said, ‘three stages are needed to attack Japan, the first is Japan attacks us and we defend’, ‘in the second stage, Japanese soldiers are not so many any more, and gained a great loss during the process of our defense, so they are unable to offend us, we also don’t have power to counterattack, so in this stage the battle is the tug of war,’ ‘In the third stage, Japanese are exhausted, revolution erupts in Japan, so have power to counterattack to expel Japan from our country and regain all the lost land’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 2 (1939.2.13)*, 1984, p.81).

These reports elaborated the thought of protracted war directly, thereby it gained its popularity and recognition. But limited by the speech content and the speech time, the speech could not articulate the details of the thought of the protracted war. In order to solve the problem and make the soldiers and the people in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei borders understand the thought of protracted war better and deeper, headlines of *the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* since September 10, 1938 to September 30, 1938 were occupied by the advertisement of Mao Zedong’s *On the Thought of the Protracted War*, so as to provide convenience for soldiers and people in border areas to read the thought of protracted war, and help people understand the content and meaning of the protracted war.

3.2 War Situation Analysis With Reality—Propagating the Thought of Protracted War From the Perspective of Analysis of War Situation

Along with the spread of the thought of the protracted war, more and more soldiers and people knew the thought better, and at the same time doubt followed. *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* analyzed the situation of domestic and abroad war, proving that the thought of the protracted war correct so as to propagate the thought better. On October 29, 1939, *the Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* reported an article named For More Than 400 Thousands Loss Daily, We Would Give Up Wuhan to Reach the Purpose of Protracted War. In

the article, the author said: ‘The goal of consuming the military strength has reached, and now we decide to retreat from Wuhan which have no value to defend to rearrange and conduct the strategy of protracted war...The loss of the enemy is more than 400 thousand, Wuhan as what they gained has nothing any more’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1(1938.10.29)*, 1984, p.296). In an report four days later, *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* elaborated the war situation after Wuhan retreat and the anti-Japanese policies, ‘The retreat of Wuhan and Guangzhou cut off the international transportation on sea, this surely increased the difficulty of anti-Japanese War,’ ‘This is just disadvantage, but at the same time we should see the advantages,’ ‘The advantage is the consolidation and expansion of the anti-Japanese national united front,’ ‘The second advantage is that through one year’s anti-Japanese War, our military strength has enhanced, united national conscious and strong military all over China, and guerrillas all over the base of enemy. We also acquire considerable experience and lessons, knowing how to defeat the enemy finally with strategies and tactics’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1(1938.11.2)*, 1984, p.306).

3.3 The Enemy Has Scant Support, We Have Giant Support—Propagating the Thought of Protracted War From the Perspective of Analysis of Situation of Domestic and Abroad

After stepping into national war, the cohesion of Chinese had fully showed out and shaped into the strength of anti-Japanese War in the purpose of saving China, especially that CPC matured gradually in the period, which facilitated the shape and enhance of the strength of anti-Japanese to save China. Soon after the outbreak of anti-Japanese War, Mao Zedong analyzed the basic characteristics of the war, ‘China is still a weak country, not only in military, but also in politics, economy and so on’ (Mao, 1991, p.449). From this perspective, the weakness of China became the motivation to inspire soldiers and people instead and therefore strengthened national cohesion. The conclusion was certified on Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei border areas. Soldiers and people helped and encouraged each other to upsurge the consciousness of anti-Japanese and saving China from extinction. *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* reported the grain raise plan in border areas, ‘About grain raise, border administrative committee once called 160 thousands rock grains to save our country, which has gained active support and response in many fields, this is stimulating’ (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1(1938.12.2)*, 1984, p.363). The support between soldiers and people attracted a lot of Japanese soldiers, help positive battlefield remit pressure, and contributed to the final victory of the Anti-Japanese War.

Since the comprehensive outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, the Chinese battlefield attracted a lot of

international attention. In initial stage, China could only gain publicly support, but later China, England and the USA united together to form an international antifascist united front. China’s allies became more and more, Japan became isolated gradually on the contrary. *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* reported the international situation, confirming and propagating the thought of the protracted war. The editor of *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* once translated Griffith’s speech, the member of the England liberal party. ‘We all know the situation of China, we also know that China still revitalized the industry with tough spirit in the period of war’, ‘Especially the railway to Burma has been sponsored by England industrial circles’. On February 15, 1939, *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* reported the resolution paper of aiding to China and boycotting Japan passed by the conduct committee of International anti-Aggression Congress, promoting the united aiding to China from England, the USA, France and Russia. The resolution paper proposed that an international agreement should be made to punish the invasion country. The international situation stated the standpoint of these countries clearly, and more and more countries supported China and put into action, pushing forward the final victory of the protracted war.

3.4 Great Loss and Supply Shortage—Propagating the Thought of Protracted War From the Perspective of the War Loss of Enemy

The military loss of Japan enlarged along with the war elongated and battlefront enlarged, which led to the weaken of invasion, and the war gradually stepped into the second stage of the protracted war—the stage of locking in a stalemate. The phenomenon demonstrated the validity of the thought of the protracted war objectively. In order not only to spread the phenomenon to inspire the people in border areas to continue to resist Japan, but also to propagate the thought of the protracted war indirectly, the editors of *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* illustrated the phenomenon not only in words but also in pictures. On the occasion of a year after the comprehensive outbreak of the anti-Japanese War, *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* counted the military loss this year, the enemy casualties was more than 600 thousands, captured 370 thousands, surrendered 520 thousands, and we seized enemy guns more than 400 thousands, shoot down enemy planes more than 700, damaged enemy cars more than 5,700, damaged their warships more than 100, damaged their cannons more than 300. The 140 troop which Japan assembled initially had been eliminated more than half, the new soldiers Japan assembled included sick and elderly, the dream that 15 divisions would perish China had been shattered, until now Japan had lost 25 divisions, on the contrary, the anti-Japanese power and confidence of China became more and more enhanced. Enraged Japan planned to add

12 corps to China battlefield so as to launch persistent fighting, but they had been caught in a whirlpool of the protracted war (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1 (1938.7.3)*, 1984, p.125). The military consumption was more serious. In 1936, Japanese military expenditure was 1.06 million, in 1937 it reached to 4.013 million, in 1939, it reached to 4.805 million, and in 1940, it even reached to 6 million. The military expenditure accounted for 8.1 in 1936 to 50 in 1940 of the national economy. Under that condition, the data were not so accurate, but what it reflected is true, the loss of Japan was great, the consumption was big, which showed that the final victory must belong to China.

4. THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF THE PROPAGANDA OF THE THOUGHT OF PROTRACTED WAR

The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan propagated the thought of protracted war a lot, and about one year later, the soldiers and people in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei areas could basically understand the thought. They had a reasonable understanding, had a positive attitude to the future of the war. In the ways of the war, they applied guerrilla and other familiar strategies, and the effects were good.

4.1 The Change of Ways of the Battle

Along with the propagation of the thought of protracted war, more and more soldiers and people in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei areas accepted the thought, the most obvious manifestation was the change of anti-Japanese ways in border areas. The soldiers and the people in border areas learned many ways to beat Japan in rear battlefield potential in the thought of protracted war. Guerrilla, railway damage and digging dugout are all practical ways to beat Japan from the thought of protracted war. For example, 'The Song of Special Destroy' was very popular in local area, 'Moon on willow on 8 at night, carry dynamite and shovel, leave the country to destroy the railway, avoid the enemy soldiers' carry; Moon shine on 10 at night, ambush and look around, Japanese can't use our railway, one break the railway and all enjoy; Moon in the sky on 12 at night, enemy sleep and no voice in the field, dig road with the whistle, he would never on the road; Moon angle on 2 at night, rails and stations are all destroyed, one hold prop and iron to make it pulpy; Moon bright on 4 at night, people destroyed railways go back, feel happy for beating enemy, guard people in border area, guard people in border area' (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 1 (1938.12.19)*, 1984,

p.398). Songs like this were very popular with soldiers and people in border areas, assure the anti-Japanese work effectively developed, and also indirectly sealed that the thought of protracted war was correct.

4.2 People's Response

After several months since the propagation of the thought of protracted war, soldiers and people in border areas understand the thought deeper, most of them realized that the thought was correct and scientific, they also didn't insist that we could beat and expel Japan from our country in a short time, but knew there needed three war stages. On November 23, 1939, in a report published on *The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan* named 'Use the power of masses to beat scoundrel' said, 'Depending on correct policies' leading and conduction, especially the power of masses in border areas, we accomplished the target the first war stage gave us, we insist on the war behind enemy lines and enhance the anti-Japanese bases. In the second stage—locking in stalemate, just now, we still must depend on correct policies' leading and conduction, and also depend on the power of masses in border areas. Only in this way can we accomplish the target new situation provides us' (*The Paper of War of Resistance Against Japan, Volume 3 (1939.11.23)*, 1984, p.306). Masses accepted the thought of protracted war gradually, and at the same time it went deeper and deeper.

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