

# Study of Chiang Kai-shek's Foreign Policy during the Anti-Japanese War

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**Abstract.** Around 1903's, China faced the huge threat of Japan's full-scale invasion of China and the serious struggle against Japanese aggression. The "two-pronged" policy of unremitting struggle against Japan and seeking international assistance has become the focus of Nanjing National Government headed by Chiang Kai-shek. The Soviet Union had made great efforts to aid China, but because of Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Soviet policy and Britain and France's war in Europe, Chiang Kai-shek only hoped for the support of the United States. In 1938, after the negotiation between China and Britain on the British loan to China failed, Chiang Kai-shek decisively adjusted his wartime foreign policy, recalled Wang Zhengting, who was not very popular with the United States, reused pro-American people, and appointed Hu Shi, a famous international scholar with high prestige, as ambassador to the United States. As the only legitimate government in China at that time, the Chinese Kuomintang government, in addition to establishing the national anti-Japanese national united front on the basis of Kuomintang Communist cooperation in politics, cooperated militarily with the front battlefield of the Kuomintang and the battlefield behind the enemy opened and led by our party to jointly resist the enemy and fight against the Japanese aggressors. In terms of diplomacy, the Kuomintang government also actively carried out diplomatic activities and sought assistance from the international community to support China's cause of anti-Japanese war.

**Keywords:** Chiang Kai shek; Foreign policy; The period of the war of Resistance Against Japan.

## 1. Introduction

History is a human activity, and historical research should be carried out with people as the center. The study of human thoughts is an important part of historical research [1]. Chiang Kai shek is a key figure in China's modern history, the leader of the Kuomintang after Sun Yat sen, and the actual head of the Chinese government, government and army during the Kuomintang's rule. During the 22 years from the founding of the Nanjing National Government to 1949, Chiang Kai shek's personal thoughts were permeated in a series of domestic and foreign policies of the National Government [2]. Since the late Qing Dynasty, many Chinese people have been full of fear and ignorance about the world outside China. This situation has lasted for a long time, and has changed with the increase of overseas students [3]. Compared with the old-style officials, Jiang, like most of the overseas students, has broader foreign relations, and his constant contact with overseas forces has strengthened his confidence in the free use of diplomatic rights. Chiang Kai shek, who studied military in Japan in his early years, clearly understood the importance of diplomacy for weak countries. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, Chiang's power was expanding unprecedentedly, and the manipulation of diplomacy and even personal participation were undoubtedly crucial to China's political situation during the war. After the September 18th Incident, Chiang Kai shek's compromise diplomacy towards Japan was an indisputable fact [4].

However, on September 25, 1931, when he learned that the League of Nations was weak in dealing with Japan, he also had the idea of a main battle because of disappointment, and thought that "if direct negotiations or local negotiations are conducted, there will be no good results. I can't leave it alone, and I will fight it to the death, so as to decide my final survival [5]. Instead of fighting and dying, it is better to fight and die in order to preserve the personality of the Chinese nation. " On the 28th, he wrote a will determined to sacrifice in the war of resistance. However, based on his ideological principle of "to fight outside, you must first settle inside", he still failed to turn his desire to fight against Japan into reality. Obviously, this decision did not restrict Chiang Kai-shek much [6]. Soon

after Jiang went to Japan, he immediately said, "I am here to observe and study Japan, which has made amazing progress in the past 13 years, so as to make plans for the future." To a large extent, the "Future Plan" aims at diplomacy. Jiang's re-emergence in the late 1920s further consolidated his supreme position in both political power and party power. Since the Republic of China, especially from 1926 to 1927, the Regent's Cabinet had no real power, including the foreign minister, "all of them obeyed the most powerful autocratic soldiers" [7].

Chiang Kai shek advocated force and strong ships and guns. As the "most powerful soldier", Chiang took control of all departments, and naturally became the top leader in diplomacy. This article starts with the diplomatic thoughts rarely involved in the academic circle, and analyzes Chiang Kai shek's diplomatic thoughts towards the United States. Therefore, the article analyzes the basis of Chiang Kai shek's diplomatic thoughts towards the United States: Chiang Kai shek's nationalism, Chiang Kai shek's American view and his world order view. We will deeply discuss the background, structure, reasons, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of its "system", so as to clarify the main context of Chiang's diversified diplomatic system and restore its historical features.

## **2. Strive to enhance mutual understanding between the two sides with the goal of establishing international united achievements**

### **2.1 Gradually adjust the policy of compromise and concession to Japan to declare war against Japan**

After 1935, Japanese imperialism's aggression against China deepened step by step, the survival of the Chinese nation was extremely threatened, and the interests of the United States and other countries in China were also severely hit.' the Communist Party of China (CPC) adjusted its foreign policy in a timely manner, distinguishing British and American imperialism from Japanese imperialism, and actively committed to establishing an international United front against Japanese imperialism [8]. According to the changes in international relations caused by Japan's invasion of China, the Communist Party of China (CPC) estimated that the conflicts between the United States and Japan in the Pacific Ocean and the Far East were inevitable, and the United States was bound to play an important role in the war against Japan. Therefore, before the Pacific War broke out in, it adopted an active foreign policy towards the United States in order to win the cooperation of the United States to deal with the common enemy Japanese fascists [9]. On L 2, 1936, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kuomintang government issued a statement: Our government rejected the so-called "Three Principles of Hirota" put forward by Japanese Foreign Minister Hirota Hiroshi. On July 14, the same year, the closing declaration of the Second Plenary Session of the Fifth Kuomintang Central Committee stated: The National Government has made the utmost tolerance and painstaking efforts at home, and temporarily sought national unity; We will never tolerate any invasion of territorial sovereignty. At the same time, under the auspices and suggestions of Chiang Kai-shek, the meeting refused to sign an agreement to recognize the puppet "Manchukuo" [10]. On July 17, he also released the famous "Lushan Talk". He said: "If the last moment comes, we will have to fight for the life of the whole nation in order to achieve national coexistence... When the last moment comes, we will have to sacrifice to the end and fight to the end." "If the war starts, it will be no matter whether the land is north or south, whether the age is young or old. Everyone has the responsibility to defend the land and fight against Japan, and should be determined to sacrifice everything."

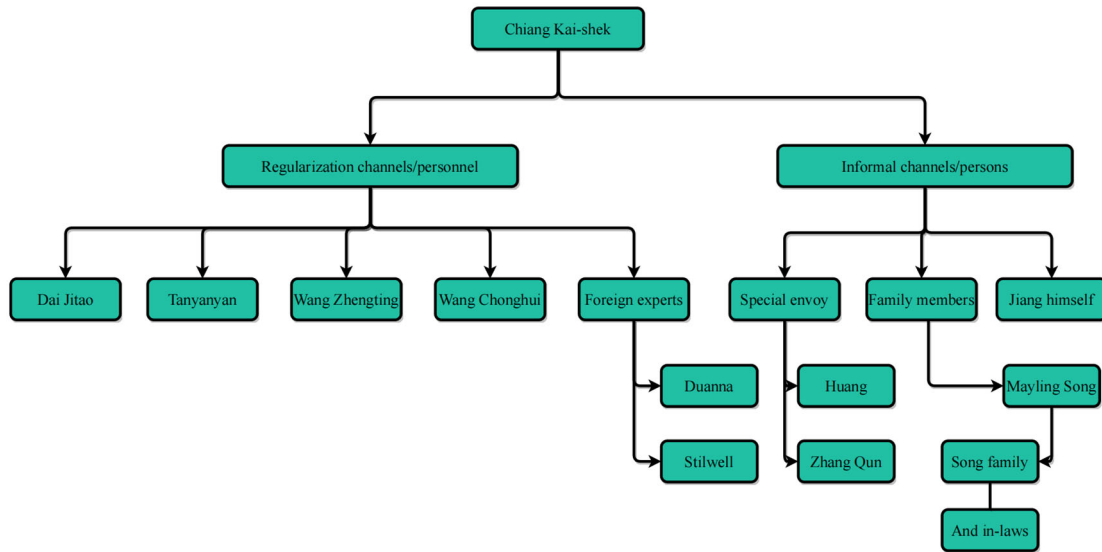
After the Nanjing National Government was formally established on April 18th, 1927, it actively sought to coordinate its relations with western powers, with special emphasis on being close to the United States. Various departments of Nanjing National Government employ a large number of American consultants. American Millard first became an adviser to the National Government. After that, Nanjing government hired four American consultants, including Young who drafted young plan. American car magnates have also become "honorary advisers" of the central government. In addition, the Ministry of Finance has 17 American consultants, the Ministry of Communications has five, and even the Ministry of Internal Affairs has one. Of course, these American consultants should guide

Nanjing government to vigorously develop political and economic relations with the United States. At the end of 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek asked Song Meiling to marry him in Japan, he expressed his desire to learn from Japan and met with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiichi Tanaka at that time. However, his plan to unify China was not supported by Yoshiichi Tanaka, so Chiang Kai-shek decided that it was impossible to rely on Japan to help him achieve reunification. Just then, the success of Chiang Kai-shek's proposal made his diplomacy closer to the United States. As a result, Chiang Kai-shek gradually determined his belief of relying on the United States. Of course, another important factor for Chiang Kai-shek's dependence on the United States is that the national strength of the United States is unmatched by other countries.

After the September 18th Incident, the contradiction between China and Japan rose to the main position of China's diplomacy, and the establishment of an international anti-Japanese front, including the United States, became the main content of Chiang Kai shek's diplomatic strategy. The "non-recognition doctrine" adopted by the United States against Japan's invasion of China not only left Chiang Kai shek broad space for the United States to support China's resistance to Japanese aggression, but also often made him dissatisfied with the American foreign policy of egoism. This shows that the Chinese government has made a major adjustment in its foreign policy and has determined to fight against compromise. Since then, the Chinese Kuomintang government troops have successively organized major defensive battles in the front battlefield, such as Songhu, Taiyuan, Xuzhou and Wuhan, which have effectively attacked the arrogance of Japanese imperialism, inflicted huge casualties and consumption on Japanese troops, and forced them to stop their strategic offensive in the front battlefield.

## 2.2 Use American influence to avoid civil war

After the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan, although the Kuomintang was forced to agree to establish an anti-Japanese united front with the CPC, it still adhered to the one-party dictatorship, prevented the Communist Party everywhere, and restricted the development of the Communist Party. Especially after the Anti-Japanese War entered the stalemate stage in 1938, the Kuomintang more blatantly implemented the policy of passive anti-Japanese and active anti-Communist, and was likely to resort to force against the armed forces led by the Communist Party of China at any time. Therefore, maintaining the anti-Japanese united front and preventing civil war has become a very important task of the CPC. In view of this, the leaders of the Communist Party of China hoped that the United States could use the Kuomintang's desire to exert some restraint on Chiang Kai shek and try to avoid civil war in China. The attitude of the American government to a certain extent allowed the Kuomintang to set off an anti-Communist upsurge even more vigorously, which finally led to the South Anhui Incident in May 1941, which shocked China and foreign countries. After the incident, the Chinese Communist Party disclosed the truth of the incident to the outside world in time. Strong published a large number of materials about the friction between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party provided by Zhou Enlai in December 1940 in new york, which caused great repercussions in the United States. At this point, the U.S. government realized that the deterioration of the relationship between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party could lead to another civil war in China at any time, so it had to adopt a limited policy of suppressing Chiang Kai-shek. Jiang himself has great enthusiasm for diplomacy, and his marriage with the Song family, which has deep ties with the United States, makes the Nanjing government "like God's help" in foreign affairs. At the same time, officials with close ties to Chiang Kai-shek and even guards have successively visited Britain, the United States and other big countries as "special envoys" of Chiang Kai-shek. Obviously, Jiang was very satisfied with "diversification" and applied it to other international affairs. Therefore, many foreign relations reflect the "diversification" of Jiang's characteristics. However, the seemingly complicated Chiang's diversified diplomatic system is actually not complicated. It is mainly divided into two parts, namely, the formal and informal diplomats and their channels. As shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Diversification of formal and informal diplomats

Compared with other departments of the National Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was set up with reference to the Western model, seemed to be more rigorous in structure and organization. In addition to the general director, vice minister and counselor, there are also many subordinate departments, including the General Affairs Department, the Department of Government Affairs, the Department of Commerce and the Department of Communication, including the Document Section, the Statistics Section, the Accounting Section, and the General Affairs Section. The structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is very clear at least on the surface, and in most of the time of the Republic of China, it was dominated by overseas students with relatively simple social backgrounds. As shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Foreign Ministers of Nanjing Government

Full name	Countries studying abroad	Duration
Chen Youren	Britain	April, 1927; December 30th, 1931
Wu Dynasty Pivot	USA, UK	May-October, 1927
Guo Taiqi	U.S. A	November 1927-January 1928
Huang Fu	Japan	February-April, 1928
Tang Yueliang	Unknown country of study	May, 1928
...	...	...

Chiang's frequent activities in Japan prompted the US government to change its wait-and-see attitude and start to explicitly support Chiang Kai-shek. Through negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek, the American representative in Japan signed a secret agreement, which stated: The United States is willing to fully support Chiang Kai-shek in establishing a government in China and unifying China; Chiang Kai-shek's government should try its best to protect and help the development of all rights and interests of the United States in China. The Chiang Kai-shek's government should help the establishment and development of new measures taken by the United States anywhere in China with a very friendly attitude. Later developments showed that Chiang Kai-shek was faithful to this secret agreement. Here, the Chinese Communist Party placed the unity in China, mainly the relationship between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, in the Pacific anti-Japanese United front. In fact, it clearly told the United States that China's anti-Japanese war could not be separated from cooperation with Britain and the United States. Similarly, if Britain and the United States wanted to win the war against, it could not be separated from the unity in China, and the key to the unity in China was the unity between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. If the Kuomintang dares to launch a civil war to undermine this unity, it will not only harm China's anti-Japanese cause, but also

harm Britain and America's own interests. Although the Kuomintang subjectively wanted to launch military action against the Chinese Communist Party, the United States did not approve of it, which, after all, had a strong restriction on it. Therefore, in the years after the Southern Anhui Incident, the Kuomintang did not dare to launch a large-scale military action against the Chinese Communist Party.

### **3. Politically strive for China's status as a great power**

#### **3.1 Adhere to the principle of diplomatic and military use**

In his previous "pro Japanese diplomacy" and "compromise diplomacy", Chiang Kai shek highlighted the feature that diplomacy was more important than military affairs. With the adjustment of domestic and foreign policies, he began to show a strong attitude towards Japan and applied the principle of combining diplomacy with military affairs. In terms of diplomacy, he advocated starting "the whole negotiation with Japan, resolving all disputes, and no longer negotiating with him piecemeal." As Chiang Kai shek said, "The most important thing at present is to decide on a sound strategy based on a reasonable strategy. On the one hand, we should cover all strategic preparations with a strategy, and on the other hand, we should achieve final success with a strategy." That is to say, we should use diplomacy as a cover for military preparation and use military to promote the success of diplomacy. In his message to Song Zheyuan on November 20, he hinted at the support of the Central Committee for Song's War of Resistance against Japan: "The Central Committee must use its strength as its support and never make it difficult for its brother alone." When meeting with the Japanese ambassador to China on the same day, he said: "As China, we must not allow the autonomy system that causes anti national sovereignty integrity and undermines administrative unity", showing an unprecedented tough attitude, it shows that he adheres to the diplomatic principle of sovereignty in his attitude towards Japan.

These diplomatic activities of the Communist Party of China (CPC) have produced positive results. Some realistic diplomats and soldiers began to turn their attention to the CCP. In May, the third secretary of the U.S. Embassy, Xie Weisi, took the opportunity to return home to report to the State Council and suggested that the United States send representatives to visit the base areas of the Chinese Communist Party, so as to know what value the Chinese Communist Party has for the cause of its allies. In his report on October 5th, Davis also talked about getting information from Japanese troops in North China and other places. The United States had better send a team of officers to the area controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. At the same time, Roosevelt also considered putting the armed forces of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party under the command of General Stilwell to solve the problem of China in one fell swoop. To arrange the details of Stilwell's command, Roosevelt sent Hurley as his special envoy to China. The situation at that time showed that the military cooperation between the CPC and the United States was developing in a healthy direction. Unfortunately, Hurley's arrival in China reversed this direction. Since Hurley was completely on Chiang Kai shek's side, naturally, he also disagreed with Chiang Kai shek that the United States should continue military cooperation with the Communist Party of China. On the contrary, he urged the Communist Party to hand over the army to the Kuomintang's one-party autocratic government. During the Anti-Japanese War, especially after the outbreak of the Pacific War, the CPC and the United States had a common interest in cooperation in the face of the common enemy, Japanese fascism. In order to combat the common enemy, Japanese fascism, the CPC actively carried out diplomacy with the United States, aiming to use the influence of the United States to contain the Kuomintang's civil war, promote democracy in China, and improve China's anti-Japanese environment, the military strength against Japanese aggressors will be enhanced through military cooperation.

#### **3.2 Safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity**

After Japan forcibly occupied the three northeastern provinces of China, it established the so-called "Manchukuo", demanding the recognition of the Chinese government, and the Kuomintang

government issued a declaration to reject it. The declaration states: "For the establishment of puppet governments in the three northeastern provinces, the Japanese government has always been held fully responsible for all illegal acts of the rebel organs." After the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan, the Chinese military and civilians rose up to resist and bravely killed the enemy, creating famous battles such as the Taierzhuang War and the Wuhan Defense War, which inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese army. Since then, the Japanese government has issued three consecutive "Guard Statements", proposing the construction of the so-called "New East Asian Order" and calling on Japan, Manchuria and China to unite to "jointly achieve mutual goodwill and friendship and jointly prevent republican economic cooperation." On April 13, 1941, the Soviet Union and Japan signed the Soviet Japanese Neutrality Treaty. The two sides recognized "Manchukuo" and "the People's Republic of Mongolia" as exchange terms and declared "neutrality". In response to this blatant recognition of the puppet "Manchukuo" and disregard of China's territorial sovereignty and integrity, Wang Chonghui, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kuomintang Government of Chongqing, issued a statement on the 14th, stressing that the four northeastern provinces and Outer Mongolia are Chinese territory. As for any agreement between third countries that hinders China's territorial and administrative integrity, "we must not recognize it, and solemnly declare that the joint declaration issued by the Soviet Union and Japan is absolutely invalid for China."

For the international organizations to be established, China's main suggestions are: regional organizations should be subordinate to world peace organs, with no emphasis on regional organizations; Safeguard the territorial integrity and political independence of Member States; Peaceful settlement of international disputes; The world peace structure focuses on the Council, with China, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union as permanent members; Or the motion of the general assembly or the Council can be adopted by two thirds or half of the votes; "Aggression" should be defined in detail, and the measures to sanction aggression should be formulated; Set up international police or air force to support moral disarmament; Establish an international economic cooperation structure; Set up the International Court of Justice and so on. The principle of cosmopolitanism runs through Chiang Kai-shek's diplomatic thoughts towards the United States. In the early days of Japan's invasion of China, Chiang Kai-shek, in his weak state of mind, on the one hand, tried to avoid military resistance with Japan, on the other hand, he never gave up his efforts to seek foreign aid. He advocated that "the China issue is the world issue", and tried to solve the China issue in the system of international relations, so that he showed a delaying attitude towards Japan, and struggled for a favorable international situation in the war of resistance against Japan. He took "to make China's war of resistance end at the same time as the world war" as the goal of the war of resistance, and emphasized that the war of resistance "should last until the end of the world war, when justice and righteousness were upheld", and used international forces to coerce Japan to abandon the unequal treaties and return China's sovereignty. Although Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance should be totally denied, his cosmopolitan diplomatic principle in dealing with Sino-Japanese disputes is worthy of recognition, which is also a manifestation of China's diplomatic progress.

Chiang Kai shek's reliance on the United States will inevitably damage China's wartime diplomacy. The United States' policy towards China will ultimately serve the national interests of the United States, not altruism. Chiang Kai shek's reliance on American aid will eventually pay the price. The President and the Secretary of State are most concerned about the interests of the United States, just as your Chairman and other leaders are concerned about the interests of your country. What is gratifying is that the interests of China and the United States are quite consistent. Both countries believe in peace. As a country that believes in democracy, the United States deeply hopes that China can also build along this path. It is indeed a traditional policy of the United States to hope that China can become a politically prosperous country. " In short, in the early days of the Hangzhou Japan War, the Kuomintang government was relatively active in the war of resistance; After the Anti-Japanese War entered the stalemate stage, it actively fought against the Communist Party and passively fought against Hangzhou. However, the author believes that the efforts and achievements made by the Kuomintang government in safeguarding national territory and sovereignty should be affirmed.

#### 4. Conclusions

Since the late Qing Dynasty, the chaos of domestic political situation has become the keynote of China's political life in the following decades. "For politicians, workers' leaders, propagandists and military leaders who are commensurate with each other and have worked together for years, it is not an easy task to rid China of imperialism and warlordism". In a word, Chiang Kai shek's diplomatic thought towards the United States fully reflects the characteristics of China's diplomacy in the semi colonial and semi feudal society. There is not only a strong will to strive for national independence and revitalize China, but also the difficulties and helplessness of weak country diplomacy, as well as the limitations of Chiang Kai shek's personal thought, which caused Chiang Kai shek to use the international situation of the anti-fascist war in his diplomacy with the United States to win the War of Resistance against Japan with the aid of the United States, But at the same time, Chiang Kai shek's autocratic dictatorship, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist ideology led him to fail to make full use of the power of the Communist Party and the broad masses of the people in his policy toward the United States, rely on American aid, and be subject to the United States everywhere, which seriously damaged China's national interests, and ultimately foreshadowed the collapse of Chiang Kai shek's regime.

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