

**A Shaped USA: Chinese Government's Propaganda
and Construction of American Image during War to
Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea**

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Introduction

Abstract

After years of war, the new established China was confronting a tough situation. Surrounded by considerable internal and external problems, Chinese government put its focus of propaganda on consolidating the new-born regime and pushing domestic reconstruction. Things changed sharply after the outbreak of Korean War in June 1950. Chinese government turned to pay close attention to battle conditions with necessary military preparations. On June 30, the Central Committee of the CPC (Communist Party of China) made the decision to postpone liberating Taiwan. In early July, the Northeast China Border Defense Force was established to strengthen the army in the northeastern frontier. On August 4, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai proposed that China would assist North Korea when necessary in Political bureau of the CPC Central Committee. However, at the beginning of Korean War, the decision of dispatching troops to North Korea was still disputable in the decision-making layer of CPC. Consequently, the propaganda related to the Korean War during this period mostly focused on defending the national security rather than entering into the conflict.

After the middle of September, war situation turned emergent towards the North Korea with the Battle of Inchon and US troops' pushing northward. On October 1, Stalin and Kim II-sung made requests to China for sending troops to aid North Korea. Kim II-sung asked China for help again two days later. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages, China made up its mind to enter into the war. On October 8, Mao

officially issued the order to reorganize the Northeast China Border Defense Force into the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA), which joined the war on the night of October 19th secretly. On October 24, Zhou Enlai lectured in the Eighteenth Session of the First National Committee of the CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) and put forward the statement that we should help to "Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea,"¹ which turned to the official call for the Korean War in China later. On October 26, the Chinese People's Movement for Defence of Peace Committee (*zhongguo renmin baowei shijie heping dahui weiyuanhui*) and Chinese People's Movement to Oppose U.S. Aggression upon Taiwan and Korea Committee (*zhongguo renmin fandui meiguo qinlve Taiwan chaoxian yundong weiyuanhui*) were amalgamated into Chinese People's Movement to Defend World Peace and Resist U.S. Aggression Committee (*zhongguo renmin baowei shijie heping fandui meiguo qinlve weiyuanhui*). Movement to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea was subsequently launched across the country vigorously. In order to eliminate negative opinions on government's joining the war and dispel pro, worshipping and fearing attitude toward America among the masses, government's propaganda during this period mainly concentrated on illustrating the necessity of dispatching troops to aid North Korea and America's doomed failure, as well as PVA's strong fighting capacities.

1951 became the critical period to the war as Mao changed his optimistic estimate of the war and thought material and psychological preparations had to be made for a

¹ Zhou Enlai *Xuanji xiajuan* 周恩来选集下卷 [Selected Works of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1980), 54.

protracted war, which required mobilizing all domestic forces to support the war. Consequently the domestic propaganda developed more systematic and more organized. With pervasive apparatus under strict publicity rules, nationwide activities were carried out like consoling the PVA, Movement to Increase Production and Practice Economy, Movement to Sign Patriotic Convention and Movement of Donating Aircraft and Artillery. People were mobilized to link patriotic enthusiasm with their daily life and work and encouraged to back up the frontline through doing anything they could. With high-efficient propaganda network and prudently publicity strategies, Chinese government successfully heightened the multitude's confidence in CPC as well as in PVA and also mobilized them to support the war both in spirit and material. At the same time, the masses' attitude toward America was changed correspondingly. A tyrannical and brutal America image was constructed among the masses and people's hostility toward America was highly enhanced.

Literature Review

What is *propaganda*? Sproule references propaganda in *Channels of propaganda* as an organized orchestration aiming at public's opinion for certain interests with concealed intent and inadequate reasons. Alex Carey describes propaganda as communications with carefully selected form and content to persuade target audience of the sponsors' preferring attitudes and ideologies. Aristotle A. Kallis claims propaganda largely suffices the authorities' need to regulate information and attitudes in public sphere and process them into behaviors they desire. Jowett and O'Donnell