

The Early Experience and Its Enlightenments of CCP's Media Diplomacy

Ni Jianping

Dalian University of Technology, China

The media diplomacy thought initiated by the CCP from Yan'an is main component of the Party's diplomatic thoughts. The CCP has always attached great importance to the use of media diplomacy to determine domestic and international united fronts of dependence, unity and struggle in its foreign relations, and has made important contributions to the victory of Chinese national liberation struggle and the building of the PRC. In its 100 year's development, the CCP carried out media diplomacy through international friendly journalists, introduced the United Front thought and its ruling concept, and had important impact on Sino-foreign relations. From historical wisdom, we obtained profound enlightenment, which have important reference significance in deep understanding and implementation of General Secretary Xi Jinping's thoughts on diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the New Era, especially his thoughts on media diplomacy, as well as in creating good international public opinion environment.

Keywords: the CCP, early stage, media diplomacy, experience, enlightenment

Introduction

The CCP attached great importance to media diplomacy since its early stage in 100-year's history, it is of great importance to look back and summarize the glorious practice and valuable experience of it. In the mid-1930s when the CCP initiated media diplomacy, it conveyed its diplomatic idea of "Alliance to the United States and Anti-Japanese" through a group of foreign progressive and friendly journalists represented by the well-known American journalist Edgar Snow, which in turn prompted President Roosevelt to adjust the U.S. policy toward China during the War of Resistance Against Japan. In the early founding of the PRC, the CCP expanded channels and dimensions of communication with foreign political parties through media diplomacy, and strived to smash the US imperialists' attempts to create "two Chinas". Whether as a participatory party during the War of Resistance against Japan or as the ruling party after the establishment of the PRC, the CCP attached great importance to the use of media diplomacy to determine domestic and international united fronts of dependence, unity and struggle in its foreign relations, which made great contributions to the victory of the Chinese national liberation struggle and the building of the PRC. In the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics under Xi Jinping's diplomatic ideology, media diplomacy has played an active role in promoting the CCP's external communication and exchanges, and has also developed into brand new connection way and exchange platform between Chinese and foreign political parties. By retracing the CCP's

media diplomacy thought during the Anti-Japanese War and the early founding of PRC, we explored its great course in media diplomacy, which is of great important reference significance to deeply understand and implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's new era diplomatic thoughts with Chinese characteristics, especially Xi Jinping's media diplomatic thought, correctly treat and hand current Sino-foreign relations, and create good international public opinion environment.

Establishing United Front of “Alliance to the United States and Anti-Japanese”: The CCP's Launching Point for Media Diplomacy

The opening of the CCP's media diplomacy era can be said to have a major bearing on the first trip to Northwest China by American journalist Edgar Snow in the fall of 1936. The CCP Central Committee proposed its willingness to establish cooperative relations with European and American countries at Wayaobao Conference in December 1935. However, after the failure of the Great Revolution in 1927, the CCP was completely isolated from the outside world by the Nationalist Government, and it was continuously stigmatized by the KMT using its press privileges. Therefore, the CCP Central Committee decided to start with media diplomacy and invite Western reporters and writers to interview in northern Shaanxi, so that the diplomatic philosophy and policies of the Party can be better known to outside world, which is conducive to the Chinese Anti-Japanese War and the improvement of the Party's international influence. Snow was not the first American journalist to cover China, but he was the first to arrive at Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Revolutionary Base when the CCP needed media diplomacy the most, and reported real situation of the Party and Workers' and Peasants' Red Army to the world through the most influential British and American newspapers. He was also the first American with whom Mao Tse-tung had direct contact after he became leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

The CCP attached great importance to Snow's coverage of border area, and the CCP Central Committee convened the Politburo Standing Committee to discuss Snow's interview outline. It was the first special meeting in history of the Party to discuss international relations. Mao had a conversation entitled “The CCP and World Affairs” with Snow. He pointed out that Japanese aggression threatened not only China but also world peace; Japanese imperialism was not only the enemy of China, but also enemy of people of the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Mao believed that the United States was an anti-war country, and that the United States would form united front with the Chinese people; President Roosevelt was an anti-fascist, and China could cooperate with such people (Baijia Zhang, 1991). This was the first time that the CCP had expressed its willingness to form anti-Japanese united front with the United States and other countries in the world, and it positively evaluated the positive role played by the United States in the Far East.

Mao and other leaders of the CCP Central Committee took the initiative to open up to Snow in Yan'an, and Snow, with his keenness as a journalist and profoundness as a historian, wrote a series of news works from Yan'an that shocked China and the world. Based on his field interviews in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region from June to October 1936, Snow wrote a documentary reportage of “Red Star Over China”, which accurately and vividly presented the growth and revolutionary performance of the CCP and the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army to the international community. Central leaders such as Mao Tse-tung, Zhu De, and Zhou Enlai set an example. They were good at making friends with foreign journalists and dealing with news media, and promoted the CCP's anti-Japanese propositions internationally through foreign journalists and mainstream media they represented. It played a key role in spreading positive image of the CCP and guiding public opinion at home and abroad. After Snow's “Red Star Over China” was published in Britain and the

United States in 1937 and 1938, broad public at home and abroad not only approached the struggle history of Chinese people under the CCP's leadership, but also deeply appreciated the concrete content of friendship between Chinese and American people that it implied. "Red Star Over China" was published in the United States on January 3, 1938, and became precious resource for American people and government to understand China. American President Roosevelt's understanding of the CCP also began with this book, which led him to adjust his policy towards China from "supporting Chiang Kai-shek" to "supporting Chiang Kai-shek and allying with the CCP". Snow's "Autobiography of Mao Tse-tung", published in English "Asia Monthly" in the middle of 1937 was also translated into Chinese by professors and students in Fudan University. It was published and distributed nationwide, which greatly inspired Chinese people to embark on the road of anti-Japanese and national salvation.

The important role that Snow played at the critical moment of Chinese nation's Anti-Japanese War undoubtedly left a deep impression on the CCP. Mao commented on Snow in an interview with a German reporter the following year: "When we were forgotten by the whole world, only Snow came here to get to know us and tell the outside world what happened here. Therefore, we will always Remember Snow's great help to China (Edgar Snow, 1984). It was also under the pioneering and guidance of Snow, the "Northwest Visiting Group of Chinese and Foreign Journalists", composed of famous reporters from major domestic and foreign newspapers from the second half of 1936, went to Yan'an and Jinsui Anti-Japanese War Front to conduct interviews, thus forming three climaxes of media diplomacy in the CCP's early days.

In June 1944, due to the pressure at home and abroad, Chiang Kai-shek was forced to agree the group to visit Yan'an, which was a major event in the early history of the CCP's media diplomacy. There were 21 people in the group, in which 6 foreign journalists named Stein, Epstein, Foreman, Maurice Budo, Shanan Khan, and Pujinke were from the Associated Press, Reuters, United Press, TASS, etc. They faithfully spread the new look of Yan'an and base areas behind enemy lines to the whole world. Epstein had written many articles for "New York Times" and "Time", and authored "China's Unfinished Revolution"; Stein was the author of "Red China Challenges"; Foreman published "Red Report from China"; Budo in Reuters published "I'm Back from Northern Shaanxi". This was the largest coverage on the anti-Japanese base areas behind enemy lines by foreign journalists and media after Snow's "Red Star Over China".

The CCP Central Committee then invited Anna Louise Strong to visit the Eighth Route Army headquarters in Wutaishan, Shanxi in January 1938, where she interviewed Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, He Long, Liu Bo Cheng and others. She subsequently wrote the book "One Fifth of Mankind", enthusiastically praising new People's Army under the leadership of the CCP. In February 1941, shortly after the Southern Anhui Incident, Strong made a special trip to New York to fulfill Zhou Enlai's great trust to find a friend who worked for the New York Herald Tribune and publish an inside story on the South Anhui Incident. President Roosevelt attached great importance to it; he opposed Chiang Kai-shek's launch of an anti-communist civil war at this time, so he issued a warning to the KMT regime, which played a certain role in preventing the collapse of Chinese anti-Japanese camp.¹

After the outbreak of the Pacific War, the CCP's Eighth Route Army Office in Chongqing actively carried out united front work with the U.S. Through various means and occasions, the CCP representatives propagated its anti-war policies and ideas to American journalists and military and political personnel in China, eventually

¹ Zhou Enlai secretly meets with Strong, the Chinese Communist Party News Party History Channel.

prompting the U.S. government to dispatch a military observation team to Yan'an in June 1944 without interference from Chiang Kai-shek, and the U.S. government established "quasi-official relations" with the CCP. On August 18, the CCP Central Committee issued an internal "Instruction on Diplomatic Work", describing the significance of the mission as "the launch of our international united front and the beginning of our diplomatic work". It also indicated that the CCP's media diplomacy of "uniting the U.S. against Japan" changed from foreign propaganda to "semi-independent diplomatic work" (Jun Niu, 1992).

In July 1946, the CCP Central Committee invited Strong to interview in Chinese Soviet area again. After flighting to Shanghai, Strang finally arrived in Yan'an in early August after a long journey. He was received several times by leading comrades of the Central Committee. Mao accepted two exclusive interviews with Strong in late August, and had long talks with Strong on many issues, including postwar international political relations with the U.S.-Soviet relationship at its core and whether the Communist Party could win final victory after the outbreak of a full-scale civil war in China. On the basis of his assertion that "The atomic bomb is a paper tiger", he went on to make a series of famous assertions such as "All reactionaries are paper tigers" and "In the long run, the real power belongs not to the reactionaries but to the people" (Wensheng Shi & Xiaoling Yang, 2020). Through his media diplomacy with Strong to the United States, Mao took the initiative to lead China's social conditions and public opinion, condense the hearts of the party, the people, and the military. It was of great importance to guide the people's armed forces under the leadership of the CCP to adopt correct strategies and tactics to overthrow KMT's reactionary rule and establish the PRC.

Sino-Italian Political Party Contacts Enrich Economic and Trade Dimension of CCP's Media Diplomacy

From the 1950s to the 1960s, the communication between the CCP and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) once became one of the most important channels for direct communication between leaders of the two parties. At the invitation of the CPC Central Committee, a five-member delegation headed by P. Nenni, general secretary of the PSI, visited China from September 29 to October 20, 1955. The intensive coverage of Nenni's visit to China by Chinese and Italian party organs at the time highlighted the direct and profound impact that Nenni's visit had on the Italian government's reopening of negotiations on the establishment of mutual trade institutions between Italy and China in 1964, and thus on the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries 15 years later. The People's Daily, an organ of the CCP Central Committee, published the Xinhua News Agency's "Premier Zhou Enlai Meets with Nenni" on the National Day in 1955, reporting that Premier Zhou Enlai had spoken with five members of the Nenni delegation on September 30 about Sino-Italian relations and the prevention of "two Chinas" conspiracy, pointing out that "if Italy cannot establish diplomatic relations with China yet, we can wait. We advocate negotiating with Italy on the issue of diplomatic relations, which also includes talks about trade. The Italian Foreign Minister proposed to talk about trade in London, and we are ready to answer: It is possible to talk about trade before establishing diplomatic relations, but we strive to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations first. If he refuses to talk about it, we can also talk about trade". Zhou Enlai's statement on behalf of the CCP Central Committee had a greater impact on Nenni's specific actions to promote economic and trade relations between two countries after returning to his country.

"People's Daily" reported on October 4, page 1, that Chairman Mao Tse-tung pointed out when talking about the international environment and external pressure on the establishment of diplomatic relations between

China and Italy, "the problem lies in the pressure exerted by the United States on Italy not to recognize People's China. As long as the Italian government can resist this pressure, we can establish diplomatic relations immediately. It is estimated that it will take some time." On October 5, the Italian newspaper *Unità* also reported on Nenni's meeting with Chinese leaders, emphasizing the significance of Nenni's visit to China in advancing relations between the two countries. "Beijing's newspapers today published on page one the meeting between Mao Tse-tung and Nenni. It confirms the importance of Nenni's visit to China, which was not simply a friendly visit, but the first act to open up Sino-Italian political relations."

"People's Daily", on October 8, page 3, published a press release authorized by Xinhua News Agency on "Mr. Nenni's speech at the welcoming meeting of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference". During the grand welcoming meeting held for the delegation by CPPCC with more than a thousand people, Mr. Nenni expressed his strong desire to strengthen relations and establish diplomatic relations between Italy and China: "One of the reasons why I came to China, besides getting to know you, was to highlight the absurd situation of the current relations between our two countries. I hope that this situation will not continue for long. In any case, I will be happy to bear witness when I return to Rome that all I see here is the friendship with Italy and the Italian people, the emphasis on the labor of our workers, peasants and technicians, and the understanding of our country's problems; What I see is only the desire to rebuild diplomatic relations between the two countries as a starting point for establishing commercial relations based on needs and interests of the two peoples."

During his visit in Beijing, Nenni also pointed out in an exclusive interview with the "People's Daily" on the status and prospects of China-Italy relations on October 8. "The relationship between China and Italy is unfortunately hindered by the following fact, which is: our government does not recognize the legitimate government of the PRC, but maintains relations with the so-called Taiwan government, though this relationship is completely nominal and unreal. I once conducted a huge and open campaign that normalized the diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between Rome and Beijing. I have seen very good emotions and desire to make it happen in Beijing. I hope to convince our parliament and government, which are afraid of offending the Americans. As for the Italian people, they have long been ready to cooperate with China in friendship."

In addition to large and continuous report on Nenni's visit to China in *People's Daily*, the PSI's organ, "Forward", the Italian Communist Party's organ, *Unità*, and other newspapers made a lot of relevant reports, which attracted close attention from the Italian government, political parties and all sectors of society. Three days after his returning, Nenni himself summarized his trip to China in the Socialist Party's organ "Forward". He considered it absurd not to recognize the Beijing government; the signing of trade agreement with China would allow a huge amount of trade between Italy and China. Nanny also noted in a speech that "I have just returned from a trip which, in the case of the Socialist Party, was intended as a way of making public opinion, the parliament and even the government concerned with normalizing our relations with China and improving relations with the Soviet Union." (Pietro Nanni, 1956).

On January 24, 1969, the foreign ministers of the Chinese and foreign Italian center-left governments of Nenni announced in the House of Representatives that they recognized the PRC and expressed their willingness to establish diplomatic relations with China. They also raised the issue of restoring the legitimate seat of the PRC in the United Nations. Nenni's speech in the House of Representatives caused sensational reaction in Italy and abroad, especially in the United States and Europe (Quanxi Yu, 2015). The Sino-Italian negotiations on the establishment of diplomatic relations lasted from January 1969 to November 1970 under the impetus of Nenni,

who was a major participant in the first phase of negotiations. The normalization of Sino-Italian relations was a major event in diplomatic history of the PRC, marking the beginning of the bankruptcy of the Western camp led by the United States to contain China. In October 1971, less than a year after the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Italy, the PRC resumed its legal seat in the United Nations. As an Italian scholar pointed out, "from political point of view, the most important thing was Nenni's visit...where he had an indelible and favorable impression of China, which played a decisive role in his subsequent understanding of Chinese issues and influenced the role of PSI in Sino-Italian relations." (Guido Samarani & Laura De Giorgi, 2011).

Four Enlightenments From the CCP's Early Practices of Media Diplomacy

The media diplomacy thought initiated by the CCP from Yan'an has developed and taken deep roots in rich practice of political party interactions, process of Sinicization of Marxism and exchange of international political party theories. Now the CCP's media diplomacy is facing more complicated situation, more arduous tasks and more glorious missions. It is necessary to draw the strength from the glorious history of the Party's early media diplomacy and promote its foreign relations work in new era. And all require us to obtain profound enlightenment from the historical wisdom of the CCP when it crossed cultural and ideological differences, introduced truth about the anti-Japanese base areas to the world through international friends and had an important impact on Sino-American relations. It is of great practical significance for us to improve the Party's media diplomacy theory and open up a new situation of party diplomacy.

First, the CCP's media diplomacy thought not only had important guiding significance at that time in terms of the basic principles of handling foreign relations and foreign policy, but also has had tremendous and far-reaching historical impact on the CCP's foreign policy on the road of national rejuvenation since the founding of PRC. Especially since the 18th Party Congress, the Party Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, has carried out colorful practice of media diplomacy based on profound historical experience in its foreign work, and the CCP's media diplomacy has been found active in conceptual innovation and system construction. In overseas visits, multilateral conferences and receptions for foreign and political party leaders, Xi and other central leaders have actively introduced the Party's governing philosophy and practical experience to the international community through various means, such as talks, speeches, interviews or articles, to enhance the international community, especially foreign political party dignitaries' understanding and appreciation of China's development path, political party system and governing philosophy. Guided by Xi's important thoughts on the Party's foreign affairs, the CCP has paid more attention to grasping the laws of media diplomacy and has developed in inheritance and innovation, as the world's politics and economy are experiencing grand changes that has not occurred in a century. It has also enriched the contemporary connotation of its media diplomacy in six aspects: strengthening political leadership, promoting political party contacts, deepening special research, building a network of people, enhancing international image, and consolidating the foundation of public opinion (Tao Song, 2017).

Second, the CCP's media diplomacy is, in the final analysis, to handle the network of relationship, especially with foreign journalists. During the Anti-Japanese War, Zhou Enlai asked everyone in the International Propaganda Group that subordinated to Southern Bureau of the CCP Central Committee, to make friends with foreign journalists and explain the position of the Party to people at home and abroad. The CCP leaders showed good manners in their dealings with foreign journalists and won praise. What is lacking now in

U.S.-China relationship is a 21st century Snow, to present real China and the CCP to the international community. Some American and Western journalists who vilify China through “gray and black filters”, distort China by “transposition” and smear China with fabrications. Therefore, the CCP's media diplomacy work should make full use of unique advantage of its wide communication channels to continuously strengthen communication with other countries. The in-depth communication and exchanges between media and people from all walks of life strive to change the understanding of foreign journalists who are biased towards the CCP, and subtly cultivate new-age Snows, who will become friends of the Party and the backbone to know China and make good relations with China. They are encouraged to show good image of the Party and China in a targeted manner, which making media diplomacy content reach the public in target countries directly, so as to accumulate and expand CCP's “circle of friends” and “media circle” in the world, and create a stable, healthy and friendly external governing environment for the Party's governance.

Third, the CCP has continuously strengthened media diplomacy on the theme of economic and trade cooperation in party diplomacy, enriching the economic and trade dimension of its media diplomacy in the new era. It is an important task of the CCP's party diplomacy to find ways to meet bilateral or multilateral economic and trade cooperation through party cooperation. Especially since the 18th CCP National Congress, party diplomacy has become important part of the CCP's media diplomacy to serve domestic economic construction and promote economic and trade cooperation. For example, the International Department of the CCP has held “China-Arab/-Africa Medium & Small Business Cooperation Forum” in Ningbo in 2009, “2010 Petrochemical Industry Forum Yangzhou China — Arab States in the Gulf” and “ICAPP Conference on Poverty Alleviation” in Kunming China in 2010, etc., establishing a new platform for promoting economic and trade cooperation between China and relevant countries and regions. At the second “China-Europe High-Level Political Parties Forum” hosted by the CCP, representatives from Chinese and European business circles discussed relevant economic and trade issues, and reached intentions on cooperation in new energy, new materials, energy conservation and environmental protection, information and bio-industry, high-end manufacturing and other fields. These media diplomatic forums with the theme of economic and trade cooperation not only inject new vitality into China's foreign relations, and enhance the level of inter-party exchanges between China and foreign countries, but also open up new channels for the CCP's party diplomacy and expand the economic and trade latitude of the media diplomacy.

The last, but not the least, continuing efforts need to be made to deepen and expand the CCP's media diplomacy theory. Exploring new propositions and dealing with new problems, so as to make new contributions that keep pace with the times to effectively build a new type of party relationship. China is moving closer to center stage, the CCP must not only grasp overall stability of international environment, but also pay attention to complex situation of international security challenges. As the connotation and denotation of the CCP's foreign relations continue to expand, the Party's media diplomacy is also facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. The International Department of the CCP can establish a permanent media diplomacy structure to clearly articulate the long-term vision that media diplomacy play roles in developing party relations and enhancing national security. In addition, the Party's media diplomacy needs to fulfill the same mission in terms of funding, expertise, policy and social participation, which requires the workers to “keep pioneering, committed and enterprising spirit, as well as always take the initiative to learn and self-innovation”. They should keep up with the development of the times, and broaden their knowledge and business level in media diplomacy, so that the Party's media diplomacy strategy can grasp the direction of the entire discourse system

from a global perspective, and strive to build a political party discourse system with Chinese characteristics, style and vision, as well as new expressions and concepts of media diplomacy that integrate China and abroad. The 100-year-old CCP is now at the right time to strengthen its media diplomacy infrastructure and develop a future-oriented media diplomacy strategy.

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