

Research on Xiongxiang Liu's Historical Concept of National Defense

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Abstract: This article takes Xiongxiang Liu's historical concept of national defense as the research object and systematically discusses from the background of ideological formation, core theoretical connotation, and academic influence. The article points out that Xiongxiang Liu regarded national defense as the main line of modern Chinese historical development, and systematically explained the core driving force of Chinese history since the Opium War through historical staging. In his view, modernization is only a tool to serve the national defense, not the internal driving force of historical development. The paper further analyzes the role of Xiongxiang Liu's historical concept of national defense in promoting academic research, including the shift from evidence-based to problem-oriented, and the promotion of national identity and social mobilization by academic research. In the context of the national crisis, historiography is not only a record of the past but also an important force to unite the national spirit and promote social progress. Through the staging model and case study analysis in Xiongxiang Liu's research, this paper argues that the historical view of national defense not only provides a new perspective for historical research, but also provides important insights into the current fields of national security and education, and scientific and technological development.

Keywords: National Defense; Historical Perspective; Xiongxiang Liu; Cultural Pioneers; Modern China

1. Introduction

The development of modern Chinese history has always been accompanied by the external pressure and internal crisis, and how to protect national sovereignty and safeguard national

independence has become the core theme throughout this period. Against this background, the idea of national defense gradually emerged and was embodied in specific policies, movements, and ideological trends at different stages of history.

Xiongxiang Liu (1919-1994), a major scholar of modern Chinese history, conducted a systematic study of Chinese history in the last hundred years from the core perspective of national defense and put forward the historical concept of national defense. He is the one of the greatest contributors to the use of the national defense historical perspective in the mainstream of modern Chinese history in Cultural Pioneers.

Xiongxiang Liu published Historical Sciences articles in the Journals. He authored *Forty Years of Diplomacy and Sea Defense of the Qing Quarter* (1943, Chongqing Sanyou Bookstore), *History of the Construction of Modern China* (1944, Historical Sciences Bookstore), and 600, 000-word book *Modern Chinese History* (1992, Shaanxi People's Publishing House), *Studies in Modern Chinese History* (published by Lanzhou University Press in 1993), and his life story is compiled by the Center for Chinese and Foreign Celebrity Studies in Beijing, and at the same time, it is compiled by the American Institute of Biographical Research. The Cambridge Biographical Research Center in the United Kingdom also wanted to award him the title of "Contemporary World Intellectual Celebrities". His three essays on "On the Mainstream of Modern Chinese History" published in the magazine *Cultural Pioneer* are an important manifestation of his view of national defense history, and also are the guiding ideology of his writing. according to Xiongxiang Liu, Chinese history since the Opium War has not been a mere process of modernization, but a continuous struggle for national security and national survival. His research not only

enriches the understanding of modern Chinese history but also provides valuable lessons for current historiography and national security studies.

The purpose of this paper is to sort out the formation background, core ideas, and academic significance of Xiongxiang Liu's historical concept of national defense systematically, focusing on its unique contribution to the staging and methodology of Chinese history. By analyzing the impact of this idea on the discipline of history, this paper hopes to inspire academic broader discussions, as well as to distill national security concepts of practical significance from history.

2. Contextualization of the Historical Perspective of National Defense

2.1 Influence of Foreign Ideas

The initial formation of the concept of "national defense" was inextricably linked to the activities of Western missionaries who had in China as their main goal the spread of religion in the mid-nineteenth century. at the same time, they also promoted Chinese initial awareness of Western political and military ideas. For example, the exhibition of the Morrisonian School, which stated that "Knowledge is the source of happiness and joy, it is the light that lifts the fog of ignorance from a nation, it is the source of honor, it enhances the wealth of a nation, and, in the last analysis, it is the strongest defense of a nation." [1] (Gu, 1985) which not only emphasized the importance of education but also initially conveyed the relevance of national defense to social progress. Meanwhile, the Japanese idea of defense had a profound influence on China. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan spread modern national defense theories to China through translations of European and American military works and summaries of its own experiences. These ideas reached China through publications such as the Diplomatic Times and the East Asia Times, which discussed strategies such as Russian border defense and British naval defense. Xiongxiang Liu cites these sources several times in his writings, demonstrating the importance of foreign ideas in inspiring Chinese scholars to develop a national defense perspective.

2.2 Thinking about the World War II

The people of our country can be confused by the hypothesis of world peace, and put the national defense in disregard. [2] (chen, 48) from the back of World War II occurred and the results of the view, the fruit is not Chen's words, it's a very high level, precise deduction of talent. At this time, the nation also felt the crisis of the war, newspapers and magazines everywhere were the voice of intellectuals, from the military defense to national defense politics, national defense education, national defense economy, national defense literature, philosophy of national defense, national defense geography, national defense film, national defense news, etc. , national defense has penetrated all areas, by people's general concern, everyone can talk about national defense, not talk about national defense is a traitor. In other words, in the 1930s and 1940s, national defense had become the main trend of academic thinking and culture.

2.3 Needs of China's Historical Development

After the Opium Wars, China faced an unprecedented national crisis. The great powers and internal turmoil forced China to shift from the traditional concept of "barbarians and summers" to a national defense mentality centered on sovereignty, including the natural environment of a country and the thoughts and actions of its citizens, all of which can be covered. "[3] (Bi, 1934). It was against this backdrop that the foreign affairs movement which was launched by the late Qing Dynasty, focusing on the development of military industries and the construction of a modern navy. For example, the establishment of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau and the Mawei Shipyard was a reform of the traditional armament system, marking a shift in national defense from a single military operation to a comprehensive strategic deployment. According to Xiongxiang Liu, these attempts on national defense during this period were not completely successful but provided valuable experience for subsequent history.

3. Core Ideas of Xiongxiang Liu's Historical Perspective on National Defense

3.1 National Defense as the Main Line of History

In the modern Chinese history, Xiongxiang Liu suggests that China's historical development in modern times has always revolved around the central theme of national defense. From the Opium War to the War of Resistance against Japan, national survival and sovereignty security have always been the main driving force behind historical evolution. He points out that, In the following 30 years, although the degree of modernization was deepened, the development was slow and ineffective, and modernization was not realized in the end. "all reforms and movements in modern China, whether it is the Foreign Affairs Movement, the Reform of China, or the Xinhai movement all serve the same goal - to enhance the country's defense capability to cope with external threats." [4] (liu, 1943)

Xiongxiang Liu opposes "modernization" as a single path of historical development, and stresses that modernization in the context of Chinese history was more of a tool for national defense. For example, the attempts at mechanization and the introduction of military technology during the foreign affairs movement were not aimed at pure industrialization, but rather at strengthening military power and national security.

3.2 Methodology of the Stage Dividing

Xiongxiang Liu divides the history of modern China into seven stages, each of which is closely related to the goal of national defense. For example:

Phase I: 1840-1860 (the first Opium War to the Second Opium War)

This phase marked China's shift from the traditional concept of cultural defense to the modern idea of national defense centered on sovereignty and homeland. The defeat in the Opium War directly revealed the backwardness of China's armaments and prompted the Qing government to begin exploring new defense strategies. [5] (liu, 1944)

Phase II: 1860-1893 (the period of the self-improvement)

After the Opium war II, the foreign affairs faction including Xin Yi Guofan Zeng, hongzhang Li zongtang Zuo etc. who launched a modernization attempt focusing on naval defense. The establishment of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau and the initial formation of the Qing Navy, although this movement about self-strengthen and industry

developing failed finally, it established a defense strategy based on military technology as the core idea.

Phase III: 1894-1899 (the period of national defense)

After 1894, the crisis of our country was deepened day and day, many intellectuals demanded to change the law to make the country stronger and began to take the stage of history. They put the Western law system which they trust in to save the country. In terms of historiography, the evolutionary view of history became the mainstream of historiography. The leader of the movement in history was Qichao Liang, who published "Narrative Essay on Chinese History" in 1901 and "New Historiography" in the following year, advocating the writing of people's history. Another representative figure was Zengyou Xia, who adopted the chapter style and wrote the Newest Secondary School Textbook of Chinese History (later renamed Ancient Chinese History). Taiyan Zhang was also a leader in national defense historiography, in his book "Welcome Speech for International Students in Tokyo" wrote in 1906, he put forward the idea of "using the national essence to excite the caste and enhance patriotic fervor". In his book "Reply to Tie Zheng", he argued that nationalism was "like harvest", and that it was dependent on "history" and could serve as irrigation. As long as Chinese people know the history of their own country, "even for those who have no heart at all, the heart of patriotism and love for the country will surely spring up and be unstoppable". Until his later years, he was "on today's essential learning", but also repeatedly emphasized the importance of the study of history and the benefits of reading history, only advocating the reading of history, in order to learn the reasons for the strength and weakness of the country. In the book "The Importance of History," he argued that "if you don't read history, you can't love your country." Zhang's words demonstrated the relationship between history and national defense: history for national defense, national defense to stimulate the development of history, they complied each other inseparably. Phase IV: 1899-1916 (the period of new government)

The League of Nations was founded in 1905 and became the general organization, aiming at the expulsion of the Tartars and the restoration

of society, and the new government was established in 1912. However, the regime eventually fell into the hands of the Beiyang organization and the Xinhai movement failed. Phase V: 1815-1922 (the period of ideological construction)

During these years, most of the vitality of the nation rested on the New Culture Movement. In the beginning, Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, and others believed that politics was a matter of life and death for the country and the nation, the construction of democracy and science, the rejection of authoritarianism and the old arts and religions, and the promotion of the literary movement, which stood on the side of individualism to seek the emancipation of human beings. On the other hand, Sun Yat-sen's Social Construction, Psychological Construction, and Material Construction, which he wrote in the sixth, seventh, and tenth years, and the sixty-two items of the National Defense Plan, were all based on the position of nationalism to seek national liberation. Therefore, the latter's nation-building strategy was more closely integrated with movement and became a driving force for movement.

Phase VI: 1922-1931 (the period of another two new organizations)

Another two new organizations struggled for national defense. To a certain extent, they cooperated each other for common undertaking. In this way, around the national defense as a country and the basic conditions for the survival and development of the nation. [6] (Fang, 2014)

Phase VII: 1931-1945 (the period of national defense war)

The achievements of positivist historiography were significant. The most influential the movement was led by Shi Hu to organize the history of China, which included the ancient history discovery movement initiated by Gu Jiegang and the historical material arrangement and archaeological excavation carried out by the Institute of Historical Languages under the leadership of Fusnian. The major historiographical achievements include Shi Hu's "Examination of the Dream of the Red Chamber" and "The History of Literature in the Vernacular", and Gu Jiegang's "Cascading Chinese Ancient History", whose achievements are reflected in the book "Ancient History Discussions". Yi Lu analyzed the reasons for the flourishing of the

"Finishing the National Histories Movement" in his book "Finishing the National Histories Movement and the Transformation of Modern Chinese Scholarship", emphasizing that "in terms of subjective mentality, the flourishing of the 'Finishing the National Histories Movement' is related to the stimulation of Chinese studies by other countries. The reason for the popularity of the movement was emphasized: "In terms of subjective mentality, the prosperity of the 'movement for the organization of national history' was related to the stimulation of foreign Chinese studies." [7] (Yin, 1985)

Through these staged analyses, Xiongxiang Liu has systematically sorted out the historical process of national defense practices and revealed the diverse attempts of modern China to cope with external crises. This is Xiongxiang Liu's concept about history stages. "Historians divide the historical period, often different. In my humble opinion, in the past hundred years, China's international relations have fundamentally changed, and its ideology, academics, political system, and socio-economics have been affected by other influences, and its deeds are very different from those of the past, so it seems to be more convenient to make a period"[8] (Zhong, 1943)

4. Scholarship in the Historical Perspective of National Defense

4.1 Realistic Concern for the Discipline of History

Ren Gong believed that there is a need to actively plan and implement national defense, whether from the perspective of saving our country's present peril or developing our future national fortunes. There are economic salvation, force salvation, personality salvation, education salvation, and cultural salvation. Gong Ren advocated that education is the center of all kinds of national salvation. Several tools of national salvation should complement each other, and one should not be neglected in favor of the other. In comparison, the modern concept of "national defense" is more scientific and systematic, which refers to economic, diplomatic, scientific and technological, educational, and other activities carried out by the state to prepare for. [9] (Gun, 1933)

According to Xiongxiang Liu, the purpose of

historical research lies not only in academic exploration but also in serving national security and national rejuvenation. In *History of Modern China*, he emphasized that "the task of the discipline of history is to provide the nation with lessons for future development through the study of past experiences and lessons." This idea was widely recognized in the academic world in the early 20th century. For example, Liang Qichao's *New Historiography* advocated replacing the traditional imperial view of history with a "people's view of history" and making the role of ordinary people in resisting foreign enemies the focus of historical narratives. Influenced by this, Xiongxiang Liu's research also pays special attention to the contribution of the people in historical events, for example, how the mobilization of all people became an important part of the country's defense.

From the preceding analysis, we can see that the national defense movement emerged gradually after the country was invaded by the forces of Japanese militarism in the 1930s. "since the movement, the center of its work, the biggest mission, that is, in order to set up a national defense." [10] (Zhang, 1936)

4.2 Driven by Scientific and Technological Developments

Xiongxiang Liu emphasized that progress in the discipline of history needs to be complemented by the development of science and technology. He quoted Jiang Zhongzheng's famous saying, "Without science, there is no national defense." Pointing out the importance of science and technology to national security. Xiongxiang Liu mentioned many times in his research that the experience of technology introduction in the foreign affairs movement provided valuable insights for later national defense construction. In particular, he emphasized that "national defense construction is not only a military issue but also a scientific and technological issue." This point of view is particularly prominent in his analysis of the 1930s war period - both the construction of railroads and the development of the aviation industry were aimed at enhancing the country's comprehensive defense capability.

5. Conclusion

A study of Xiongxiang Liu's historical perspective on national defense reveals that he offers unique insights into the central themes of modern Chinese history. Unlike the traditional modernization research perspective, Xiongxiang Liu believes that it is the national defense that is the intrinsic driving force behind the development of history. His detailed analysis of the staging of national defense not only provides an important frame of reference for academics but also offers a fresh perspective for understanding China's coping strategies in the complex international environment of modern times. Future research can further explore the implications of state defense thinking for modern state governance and security policy from an interdisciplinary perspective.

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