

CHINA'S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT

Carrying Forward the Great Spirit of China's War of Resistance

Liu Yazhou

The great spirit of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, fought from 1931 to 1945, was born from the heroism of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese people, and forged from the blood of the heroic martyrs who laid down their lives in resistance against Japanese aggression. Emerging from the trials and tribulations that the Chinese nation endured throughout modern history, it was the shining spirit of a nation, and a precious source of inner strength shared by all Chinese people. By engaging in a major effort to carry forward the great spirit of China's War of Resistance, we will ensure that this spirit continues to serve as an important and profound source of inspiration for the Chinese people as they work to overcome all manner of adversities and challenges and realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

I. From crisis to rejuvenation: a testament to the strength of the Chinese nation

The Chinese people's victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was a historical turning point that saw the Chinese nation emerge from crisis and put itself on the path to rejuvenation. Metaphorically speaking, the great spirit of the War of Resistance was like a monument that towered over this historical

turning point. It was the spirit of the nation, fostered and practiced primarily by the CPC and the military and civilian forces under its leadership, and shaped together with the Chinese people as a whole.

1. A source of inner strength underpinning the Chinese people's victory

The War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression has been described as a "rare spectacle in the history of war,

Liu Yazhou is Political Commissar of the National Defense University and General in the People's Liberation Army.

a brave feat of the Chinese nation, and an earth-shaking event." This was not only because it wrote a grueling chapter in the Chinese people's modern quest for independence and freedom, but also because it spurred an epic spirit, a moving song of resilience that stood out in the history of the Chinese nation. Throughout history, desperation has often been the grinding stone of great national spirit. As China and its people were pushed to the brink of annihilation by Japan's crazy actions such as "bet of national fates" and "contest of small against large," and by the Japanese military's fanatic prayers to die in battle, a great spirit of resistance was sparked within the Chinese people. Empowered by this spirit, Chinese people of all ethnic groups, all ages, and from all parts of the country united in a mortal struggle against a common foe, setting in motion a bitter and unrelenting fight to save the nation from destruction. One after another, the heroic sons and daughters of the Chinese nation laid down their lives in defense of their country, showing no fear in the face of brutality. This display of heroism was enough to sow doubt in the hearts of even the most fervent of enemies, and ultimately spell defeat for even the most brutal of aggressors.

2. A powerful sign that the "sleeping lion" had awoken

The Chinese people have an enduring tradition of bravery, a trait which can be said to flow through their veins. However, eroded by the enslaving effect of feudal education, the narrow-minded conservatism of the ruling clique, and the deeply flawed patriarchal system, this tradition of bravery

went into decline, eventually falling dormant. And so the lion entered a deep slumber, becoming ever weaker as time passed. Apathetic and devoid of feeling, it simply lay down and accepted its humiliating fate. But after suffering a string of humiliations in modern history, Chinese people began to carry out a series of struggles in a bid to win national independence and liberation. This was a process of national awakening, a process of sublimation in which the spirit of Chinese nation rose up and was transformed. By the time of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, this process of national awakening and sublimation had reached its peak. As Chairman Mao stated, the extent to which the war made the Chinese people more aware and more united could not be matched by any of the great struggles that the Chinese people had carried out over almost a century. In that most perilous of moments, the lion woke up from its slumber, letting off its "final roar." And thus the ancient land of China was reborn, like the phoenix that rose from the flames.

3. An unlimited driving force behind China's national rejuvenation

We are currently living in a grand age of national rejuvenation, an age in which major opportunities and major challenges go hand in hand. The greater the challenge, the more we need to promote the great spirit of the War of Resistance. At this crucial phase of our push for national rejuvenation, in which we will strive to turn China from a large country to a strong one, the tasks we are shouldering are more arduous and testing than ever before, the challenges we are facing are



Veterans of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression ride in formation during a grand military parade held in Beijing on September 3, 2015 to mark the 70th anniversary of the Chinese people's victory in their War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the world's victory against fascism. PHOTO BY XINHUA REPORTER CHEN FEI

greater and more complex than ever before, and the risks and dangers we are confronting are more severe than ever before. Facing task after task that must be completed, and problem after problem that must be resolved, we will need to draw strength from the great spirit of the War of Resistance in order to succeed in our goals.

II. The profound contemporary relevance of the spirit of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression

The spirit of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression can be broken down into the following components: a patriotic sentiment

compelling people to take responsibility for the fate of the nation; a sense of national integrity empowering people to look death in the face and never yield; a heroic mettle instilling people with the courage to fight to the bitter end; and an unyielding, indomitable belief in victory.

1. A patriotic sentiment compelling people to take responsibility for the fate of the nation

Patriotic sentiment formed the core of the spirit of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The Chinese are a great people who boast a time honored patriotic tradition of putting the interests of the country and the nation first. All Chinese peo-

ple, regardless of identity or profession, see it as a great honor to serve their country with unreserved loyalty. This tradition of putting the interests of the country and the nation first, which flows through the veins of the Chinese people, erupted with volcanic magnitude during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. In the face of aggression, Chinese people

The Chinese people's great patriotic spirit, which compelled them to fight bitterly against the Japanese aggressors for national independence and world peace, constituted a precious source of strength for the whole of humanity.

of all ethnic groups, classes, party affiliations, and social groups, as well as patriots from all walks of life, compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese, devoted themselves to this great struggle. Swearing never to be enslaved, they fought for their nation, for their motherland, and for their dignity, writing an earthshaking chapter in the history of patriotism. The Chinese people's great

patriotic spirit, which compelled them to fight bitterly against the Japanese aggressors for national independence and world peace, constituted a precious source of strength for the whole of humanity.

2. A sense of national integrity empowering people to look death in the face and never yield

National integrity formed the essence of the spirit of China's War of

Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. As the old saying goes, jade may be smashed, but its color never fades; bamboo may be burned, but its joints remain strong. Since ancient times, the Chinese people have regarded integrity as a virtue, placing it before personal gain, and have cultivated the strength of character to be uncorrupted by riches and power, unmoved by poverty and destitution, and unperturbed by the threat of violence and force. Over the centuries, under the influence of this culture, the Chinese people forged a great sense of national integrity, viewing their dignity with more importance than their lives. At countless times during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Chinese people fully demonstrated their strong national integrity, looking death in the face and refusing to yield whenever fate hung in the balance. In the face of the brutal Japanese onslaught, mothers sent their children to fight off the invaders; wives watched their husbands depart for the battlefield. Countless heroic men and women of all ages rose up in arms, giving everything they had to support the war effort, and ultimately laying down their lives for their country. The great national integrity of the Chinese people was a powerful source of inner strength that empowered countless heroes during the war. Even the Japanese military, as inhumane as they were, could not help but be moved by the deeds of heroes such as Yang Jingyu and Zhang Zizhong.

3. A heroic mettle instilling people with the courage to fight to the bitter end

Heroic mettle formed one of the main features of the spirit of China's

War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. During the War of Resistance, driven by the determination to fight till their very last breath, the Chinese people engaged in a series of mortal struggles with the heavily armed fascist forces of Japan. This heroic mettle became a weapon in itself, instilling all Chinese people with the courage to fight fearlessly for national liberation and independence against a formidable enemy. No matter how arduous the conditions, how grave the predicament, and how brutal the fighting, the Chinese people carried out their resistance to the bitter end, refusing to capitulate. From Yang Jingyu and Zuo Quan to Zhang Zizhong and Dai Anlan, millions upon millions of compatriots united to form a great iron legion, spilling their blood and laying down their lives to protect the dignity of the Chinese people. At a desperate time when the annihilation of the people and destruction of the country seemed imminent, it was this heroic mettle that gave the Chinese people the strength to prevail.

4. An unyielding, indomitable belief in victory

An unyielding, indomitable belief in victory formed the foundation of the spirit of China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. During their long history, the Chinese people have suffered all manner of trials, trib-

ulations, and setbacks. But they have never yielded. The foreign powers could not crush them, and the imperialists could not break them. The Chinese people have always maintained their vitality and creativity, creating a human miracle in the form of a civilization that has gone uninterrupted for five millennia. They have achieved this by drawing on the great confidence they have in their own culture, and by relying on an unyielding, indomitable belief in victory that stems from this confidence. Following the advent of modern history, the Chinese people's path to rejuvenation was repeatedly obstructed. But instead of yielding, the Chinese people tenaciously overcame one adversity after the next, constantly regrouping as they went. In the early stages of the War of Resistance, the Japanese invaders poured into China, quickly occupying a large area of Chinese territory. Guided by the Chinese people's firm belief in victory and their astounding political and military wisdom, Chinese Communists, led by Mao Zedong, introduced a strategy of fighting a prolonged war of resistance, significantly boosting the morale of the Chinese people. In the most trying stages of the strategic deadlock that ensued, Chinese armed forces and civilians relied on their own strength to wage a bitter struggle, eventually defying all odds to embrace a stunning victory. 求是