

The Reasons Newly Explored for Feng Yuxiang "Join Zhili and Oppose Manchuria" in the First Zhili-Manchuria War

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Keywords: Feng Yuxiang, the First Zhili-Manchuria War, "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria", reasons, new exploration

Abstract: In April 1922, the First Zhili-Manchuria War broke out. Feng Yuxiang was originally located in a corner of Shaanxi Province. He led his army to leave the country to "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria". This strategic decision of Feng Yuxiang had an important impact on the outcome of the war and the trend of Beiyang politics in the future, and also reflected the unstable political ecology during the reign of Beiyang government. This paper uses new historical materials to explore and propose Feng Yuxiang's personal ambitions, alliance with Zhili Group of warlords and personal ambitions to save the country and save the people from multiple perspectives as new reasons to explain this strategic decision. It is of great significance to understand Feng Yuxiang as a historical figure and the early history of the Republic of China.

1. Preface

Feng Yuxiang, born on November 6, 1882, was born in Chao County, Anhui Province (now Chaohu City, Anhui Province). He joined the military at an early age with his father, Feng Youmao, and rose from a low-ranking soldier to become a general. Feng started the Luanzhou Uprising in 1911 and served as commander of the 16th Mixed Brigade, commander of Xiangxi Town, commander of the 11th Division, and inspector of the Shaanxi Army from 1912 to 1922. Feng, who controlled both the direct military and the independent territories, was a force to be reckoned with in military and political circles. In the First Zhili-Manchuria War in 1922, Feng Yuxiang, who had served as the governor of Shaanxi Province, gave up the previous policy of "governing Shaanxi" to protect the border and secure the people, and adopted the policy of "uniting directly with Feng" and "dividing the army to get out of Shaanxi", which had a great influence on the outcome of the war and the trend of the post-war political situation.

In the past, the academic circle paid insufficient attention to the cause of Feng Yuxiang's "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" in the First direct Feng War, so there were few specialized works on this issue. The academic circles mainly put forward the following opinions on the reasons why Feng Yuxiang "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" in the the First Zhili-Manchuria War.

First, it is the "warlord interests". Tao Juyin, Ding Zhongjiang and others, Feng Yuxiang and

Zhao Ti had a long-standing grudge against each other, and Feng Yuxiang took the opportunity to retaliate by capturing the Henan region from Zhao Ti.^[1] Qi XiSheng and Li Zhaoyang thought, the Beiyang Warlord government during the reign of Feng Yuxiang to stand where the party is commonly decided because of interests, take part in the war because of power and position need, straight in the war for the first time, Feng thought, lineal strength than in alliance with direct is slightly better, than expected returns in terms of service department, and contribute to the immediate group, slant straight attack to serve. They argued that Fong's considerations of personal gain were the main motivation for the operation, highlighting the competing interests of warlord factions.^[2]

Second, it is the direct-subordinate relationship. Li Jiannong, Lai Xinxia, Zhang Xianwen, Jia Shucun and others believed that Feng Yuxiang belonged to the direct line at that time, and did not choose to fight or refuse the initiative of war in the face of Cao Kun, Wu Peifu and others' military orders, which was his obligation as a member of the direct line group. They classify Feng Yuxiang's military actions in leading his army out of Shaanxi in the First Zhili-Manchuria War as a general case of direct combat, but do not highlight Feng's subjective choice of such military actions.^[3]

Third, it is the "moral ideal" theory. Jian Youwen, Xue Lidun, Li Changyin, Zhong Haitao and others believed that Feng was a patriotic soldier who carried out the ideals of rescuing the people and the anti-imperialist spirit throughout his life. All his actions were patriotic and to save the people. The object of this war was to bid farewell to the ambition of saving the country and loving the people.^[4]

In addition, others believed that although Feng Yuxiang had a patriotic spirit, he could not see the inside of warlords' melee, and was ignorant of the meaning and nature of imperialism. What he does learn is that his opposition to Japanese-backed Feng agents eventually led him to become a tool of the Feng warlords against the Zhi warlords during the First Zhili-Manchuria War.^[5]

Through sorting out the previous academic studies, we can see that Feng Yuxiang's ideological system is relatively systematic and coherent, and his character and thoughts are also complex, so we should consider from multiple perspectives when explaining Feng Yuxiang's "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" in the first direct negotiation war. In the past, the reasons for Feng's decision in the First Zhili-Manchuria War have been put forward in academic circles, but they have not been analyzed very thoroughly. Of feng yuxiang in straight for the first time to serve the war "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" current discussions, will use the Beiyang Gvernment archives, newspapers and periodicals of the republic, biography, memoir, and new materials such as diary, from "warlord interest", "direct-subordinate relationship", "moral ideal" three aspects of feng yuxiang straight for the first time to serve the war causes "league straight win in new, In order to deepen the academic understanding of this problem.

2. Left Shaanxi for the Benefit of the Warlords

In late May 1921, Feng went to advance from Xinyang to Xi'an via Tongguan. He assisted Yan Xiangwen in ousting Chen Shufan, the governor of Shaanxi, and was officially appointed governor of Shaanxi by the Beijing government on 25 August.^[6] While supervising Shaanxi, Feng devoted himself to protecting the frontier and securing the people, reorganizing the province's military and political affairs, and taking a hands-off approach to the country's political affairs. Apart from his involvement in the redemption of the Shandong Jiao-ji Railway and his accusations against Zhang Zuolin for favoring the Emperor Hongxian and other individual state affairs, Feng was not enthusiastic about the affairs of the different provinces.^[7] He has strong political ambitions of his own and is not content with dividing a corner of Shaanxi, which is not Feng's long-term development base.

First of all, the political situation of Shaanxi Province in the early years of the Republic of China was characterized by "military dictatorship", and Shaanxi was not truly unified.^[8] After succeeding Yan Xiangwen in Shaanxi, Feng continued to implement the military policies of the Shaanxi National Army. Even then, Feng's power was limited to about ten counties around Xi'an, no better than that of his predecessor, Yan Xiangwen.^[9] If Feng's power even slightly touches the jurisdiction of Liu Zhenhua, Hu Jingyi and others, armed conflict could occur at any time. Even in areas under Feng's influence, it was difficult to establish a stable social order because of the constant harassment of bandits. Feng's efforts to fully rid Shaanxi of separatist forces were hampered.^[10] He could not sufficiently train his troops, and it was difficult to enlarge and strengthen the army. The situation in Shaanxi during the Beiyang Government was not something Feng could modify overnight.

Second, all kinds of evil deeds left Shaanxi people Lu Jianzhang lingering fear and hate, as Lu Jianzhang in-laws with subordinates, Feng Yuxiang has an inseparable relationship with Lu Jianzhang, the Shaanxi people practically produce resistance to his rule, "Feng Yuxiang in this poor and bandit frequency interference in the provinces to by xenophobia". That makes it difficult for Mr Feng to govern. ^[11]At the same time, Feng Yuxiang is grateful for Lu Jianzhang's knowledge and promotion, "in his published book" My Life "nearly no criticism of 'General Lu'. However, the downfall of Lu made Feng Yuxiang has a certain prejudice against the Shaanxi people, and Feng killed Guo Jian later, which was related to this". ^[12]

In addition, Jian Youwen, director of the political department of Feng Yuxiang's army, also concluded: "The barren land of Shaanxi is complicated and difficult to cope with. Therefore, it is urgent to develop into a real army for the country and the people." ^{[7]P99} It can be seen that Feng Yuxiang chose to "unite with Feng directly" and strive for supremacy in Shaanxi because Shaanxi was not an ideal territory for his long-term development. Shaanxi used to be a poor province. After years of successive wars, Shaanxi's finances were in dire straits. The reform of the army did not improve the financial situation. Feng Yuxiang was still too overwhelmed to do anything about it, and this happened to be the first time that Cao Kun, Wu Peifu, and others sent troops to fight in Shaanxi province. Cao Kun and Wu Peifu appointed Liu Zhenhua to the Song army, leaving Feng Yuxiang in charge in Shaanxi. Feng Yuxiang once claimed: "When I was governor of Shaanxi, the most unreasonable thing was to read official documents. Every morning when I got up there was a document two or three feet tall in the case. The documents are imperial in appearance, but ninety percent of them are trivial and routine.... What kind of governor is that when you leave the army to one side?" ^[13]

Unable to make real things in Shaanxi, Feng Yuxiang privately felt very embarrassed and indignant, eager to show talent. Feng Yuxiang considered, that its trapped in Xi 'an, taste with chicken ribs, instead to Cao Kun, Wu Peifu volunteered, the rate of the department in Central Plains, take the opportunity to win a better situation.^[9] When Feng Yuxiang called the troops to speak before setting out, he kicked off his shoes and declared that he had thrown away the governor, just like throwing away the shoes, ^[14]indicating that he had abandoned the governor like garbage, which truly showed the mood of Feng Yuxiang at that time.

Feng was extremely politically ambitious. One of his contemporaries said of him, "Like all the powerful warlords in China at that time, Feng was also an ambitious general. He is desperate to gain power to rule China."^[15] Feng Yu-cheung's support of Cao Kun and Wu Pei-fu was a decision made to protect his own interests, and the two sides were merely a wartime alliance formed for their benefit. Therefore, some foreigners commented after the first direct war: "Whatever may be said about him, he is not a supporter of Wu Peifu anyway. By the way, with respect to the Christian general, I predict that he will soon seek his own personal gain."^[16]

Feng Yuxiang's aim in the First Zhili-Manchuria War was to seize the opportunity to expand

through direct alliances with outsiders. The element of opportunism was fairly strong, and Feng's plan was virtually carried out. In mid to late April, Feng Yuxiang commanded the Shaanxi Army's advance into Zhengzhou as a rear reinforcement. He gathered his forces and defeated Zhao's forces, not only clearing the humiliation but also capturing control of the southern Henan region.^[17] In May 1922, Feng Yuxiang was formally appointed by the Peking government as the military governor of Henan.

3. Alliances with Direct Groups

Under the tutelage of his former boss Lu Jianzhang, Feng has moved closer to the Zhili Group. In 1919, when Feng Yuxiang was removed from his post by the Beijing government on the charge of "disobeying a clear order and acting arbitrarily"^[18], Cao Kun, who was in charge of "strict investigation", took the initiative to plead with Duan Qirui to ensure Feng Yuxiang's reinstatement, which made the central government Cao Kun, who was in charge of the "strict investigation", took the initiative to plead with Duan Qirui to reinstate Feng Yuxiang to his post, so that the central government "reinstated him to the rank of lieutenant general and removed his removal from office".^[19]

Overall, the mutual interests of Feng and the group far outweighed the disputes between the two sides between 1918 and 1922, and as a result the two gradually formed an alliance, with Feng at one point being considered a member of the Zhi Warlord group. Feng Yuxiang's legitimacy as governor of Shaanxi came from his appointment by the Beijing government, which was controlled by the Zhili Group, and his ability to make a difference in Shaanxi was partly due to the support of the Zhili Group, which was a reflection of Feng Yuxiang's friendship with the Zhili Group.

Although Feng Yuxiang has become an ally of the Zhili Group, or even a convert to the Zhili Group, it was claimed that Feng Yuxiang "had to leave Shaanxi and go out of the country, thinking that the Zhili Group army would be backed up, when the horses and troops were fodder".^[20] However, at the outbreak of the first war, Feng Yuxiang, who practiced the policy of "protecting the territory and the people" and governed Shaanxi, had his own territory and army and was highly independent. Although he was a member of the faction, he was not bound to follow its orders unconditionally and to carry out its request to send troops to the war with complete and faithful fidelity... The real reason why Feng Yuxiang helped the Zhili Group and opposed the Manchuria group was out of personal interest, not loyalty to the Zhili Group.

The essential reason why Feng Yuxiang chose to "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" was that he had a bad relationship with the Feng-Zhang group, which was also the reason why he became an ally with the Zhili Group. Before the First Battle, Feng Yuxiang and Zhang Zuolin were not close to each other, but were unfriendly or even hostile to each other due to their political differences and personal relationships.

Feng Yuxiang and Zhang Zuolin have fundamentally different political views and development paths. The interests of the Manchuria group, led by Zhang Zuolin, and Japanese imperialism were closely intertwined politically, militarily and economically. Feng was highly hostile to Japanese imperialism, and his hatred of Japan remained with him throughout his life. He once said, "In the future, if I do not become a soldier, I will be a soldier, and I will fight Japan to the death, and I will never let Japan take away every inch of land."^[13] After the signing of the "Article 21", Feng Yuxiang claimed angrily: "From now on I have decided two goals of struggle, one is to struggle with the evil forces at home, and the other is to struggle with Japanese imperialism."^[21]

Since the founding of the Republic of China, the Japanese imperialists had been seeking agents in China to further their interests in China, and Yuan Shih-kai, Duan Qirui, Zhang Zuolin, and other warlords of the Beiyang region had maintained close interdependence with them. Feng saw the

Meiji warlords as tools of Japanese imperialism to rule China, and therefore strongly opposed their rule, a continuation of his hatred of the Japanese mentality...^[22]Xu Mingshan, who had been with Feng Yuxiang for more than 20 years, recalled that "Feng believed that the backstage of the Manchuria group was Japanese imperialism, and that to fight against the Feng army was to indirectly fight against Japanese imperialism, so he accepted Cao Kun's orders. Moreover, he called Cao Kun and Wu Pei Fu and went straight to the front."^[23]

The discord between Feng Yuxiang and Zhang Zuolin was also reflected in the political affairs of the country: when Feng Yuxiang was stationed in Xinyang, Henan province, the lack of food and wages in Feng Yuxiang's ministry was worsening because Zhao Tu, the governor of Henan province, was pocketing all the people's money and military pay, and "the day was only with salt water for food".^[7] Feng ultimately chose to intercept the special train carrying the payroll, which was not released until 100,000 yuan had been allocated by the Beijing government. Zhang demanded that Feng be severely punished for the carjacking incident, and Feng became dissatisfied with Zhang.^[7]

After the coalition of the Zhi and Feng, the national strategy of Feng Zuolin, who wanted to exclude the Zhili Group and dominate the central government, was: "On the one hand, he wanted to separate Cao and Wu to weaken Wu's support. On the other hand, he wanted to contact Sun Wen, Duan Qirui and Zhang Xun to make Wu's enemies." ^[24]However, the Feng-Zhang group's plans to promote Zhang Xun's service in the mountains and other southward expansion did not come to fruition, as Feng Yuxiang blocked it..Zhang was extremely dissatisfied, and the rift between them deepened..The feud between Feng Yuxiang and Zhang Zuolin finally reached its peak over the issue of Liang Shiyi's cabinet..Feng Yuxiang said, "I am deeply opposed to the behavior of Liang Shiyi, and I particularly hate the fact that Zhang Zuolin, relying on Japan's support, shamelessly wants to send troops to protect him. For this reason, I resolutely resolved to help the Zhili Group to fight against the Manchuria group with all my might."^[23] Feng Yuxiang's campaign against Zhang Zuolin in the First Zhili-Manchuria War was the culmination of irreconcilable conflicts between the two sides over issues of state governance, political opinion, and military control.

The alliance formed between the two was tenuous, and a rupture was inevitable..Not content with the northeast, the Manchuria group intended to expand its power to the Beijing-Tianjin region and the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, but Zhang Zuolin's plans to move south to seize Suzhou, Anhui and E. were repeatedly thwarted, as opposed to the expansion of the Zhili Group, which included the two lakes in its sphere of influence. The expansion of the power of Cao and Wu caused great dissatisfaction to Zhang Zuolin, who therefore actively cooperated with the Anhui faction and the old transportation system, further increasing tensions with the Zhili Group..The outbreak of the First Zhili-Manchuria War was the result of the unequal distribution of power and territory between the two systems, and Zhang Zuolin's desire to win the power of the Peking government and further expand the power of the Manchuria group in China..Feng Yuxiang was worried: "It is said that the general situation is unsettled, the northeast will be in trouble, and Shaanxi, a province, is afraid to be involved in the whirlpool."^[14]

The region of Suiyuan in Shaanxi province, controlled by Feng Yuxiang and close to the Jingzhao region, was also targeted by Zhang Zuolin for expansion. For Feng Yuxiang, if the war was lost, he would lose his most powerful ally, who could provide him with the greatest support, and Feng Yuxiang, who was in an isolated position, would most likely be attacked by Zhang Zuolin, who was ambitious and at odds with himself. Therefore, in this war, Feng Yuxiang's anti-imperialist patriotic spirit at that time was based on an extremely weak foundation, lacking knowledge of the meaning and essence of imperialism, knowing only to oppose the Japanese supported agents, without ever understanding that the Zhili Group was the object of British and American imperialist support. Feng Yuxiang still had the deep-rooted idea of "military first" in his mind at this time, and

regarded his military power as his life. ^[25]Xue Lidun also analyzed: "Feng's opportunistic behavior reflected the code of conduct of a warlord whose feathers were not yet abundant. For the sake of his own career, he had to reconcile various opposing factors, such as the need to comply with the wishes of his superiors, while trying to protect his strength and independence."^[10]

Feng Yuxiang on April 26, 1922, power generation announced "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria", "Feng Zhang called the military Ji Fu, endangering the country. Yuxiang was ordered to lead the team out of Guan... ". ^[26]For personal gain, Feng Yuxiang decided to maintain an alliance with the Zhili Group and join the warlord melee, which led him to act as a tool for the Zhili Group to suppress dissent and seize gains in the First Zhili-Manchuria War.

Zhao Tu, the governor of Henan, who occupied the main road of the Central Plains, and was of great geographical importance, had telegraphed his neutrality at the beginning of the war, so that the Zhili Group, who had let down its guard, decided to withdraw its troops from Henan to the north.^[27] However, when he mistakenly believed that Wu Pei Fu had been killed in battle, he sent a telegram supporting the Manchuria group against the Zhili Group. ^[28]Henan is extremely important to the Zhili Group, the Zhili Group "the military pay from the only limited to the two provinces and the Beijing-Han railroad income".^[29] In order to draw out Feng Yuxiang, to increase the fighting strength of the Zhili Group's army, and to stabilize the rear of the vacant Henan province, Wu Pei Fu appointed Feng as the commander of the southern flank of the Longhai Road, and thus led three divisions and four brigades into Luoyang. ^[30]Due to the timely deployment of the Zhili Group, the counter-plan of the Henan governor Zhao Tu failed to materialize and was eventually defeated by Feng Yuxiang, who took away the Henan governor's post. ^[31]While holding Zhao Tu in check, Feng sent Li Mingzhong and Zhang Zhijiang north to reinforce the precarious line.^[32]

Li Mingzhong brigade and Zhang Zhijiang brigade joined the West Road at the time when "the Feng army was attacking straight with all its might, with sufficient artillery fire and excellent performance, and Wu could not support it". Immediately the whole battle was changed. The entire brigade of quick and brave elite soldiers, unexpectedly copied to the rear of the Feng army, so the whole army was attacked at the back, the strategy shattered, Luguoqiao, Changxindian and other places, were occupied by the Zhili Group army, so a great defeat and retreat, the battle to end. The defeat was caused by the fact that it was unexpected that Feng's army would be able to respond to the reinforcements as quickly as it did, and that the battle was fought with superior numbers... Feng was the savior of Cao and Wu".^[7]

The war's eyewitnesses also recalled afterwards: "As a result of this time Feng Yuxiang aid straight army Li Mingzhong brigade from the West Hill to the right side of the ring of the temple attack into the big gray factory position, the western line disintegrated." ^[33]Feng Yuxiang's action, not only to ensure the wartime transportation of the Beijing-Han railway line, to ensure the security of the Direct Department's operational rear, and strong support for Wu Pei Fu's department in the front line of the battle, the Direct Department in this battle victory over the Feng Department, Feng Yuxiang played the role of the credit.

4. Practice Anti-imperialist Patriotic, Save the Country and Save the People's Ambition

The most immediate manifestation of Feng's strong anti-imperialist and patriotic ideology was his special attention to the patriotic education of the military, regularly enlightening officers and soldiers with anti-imperialist and patriotic ideology to improve their morale and fighting spirit. Feng developed and nurtured a strong anti-imperialist and patriotic ideology from an early age. Born in the late Qing Dynasty when the imperialist powers were plundering and the Chinese nation was suffering more and more, Feng Yuxiang's poor family environment caused by the exploitation of the powers and the corruption of the government, his father's personal education in the army, and

the brutal invaders he fought with shaped Feng Yuxiang's strong anti-imperialist patriotic ideology, for example, after his defeat against the Eight-Power Allied Forces, Feng Yuxiang said angrily. "This kind of slavish inferiority actually makes people furious! No wonder such a man should be eaten alive and humiliated at pleasure. I think this is the result of thousands of years of feudal culture and slave education in our country."^[23] Feng, who usually dealt with the Japanese with strong diplomacy and openly supported local people's activities to boycott Japanese goods, carried out his hatred of Japanese imperialism when he moved to Changde and served as a town guard in western Hunan.^[34]

With his patriotic feelings, Feng naturally developed the ideal of saving the country and the people in the face of a numbed and ignorant people and a corrupt and incompetent government. He believed that "God is the Way, the Truth, and the Science", ^{[23] P248} and he hoped to promote the social virtues of love and devotion, serving the people, and upholding justice through Christian doctrines, so as to realize the wish of improving society and strengthening the country. ^{[11] P99-102} In addition, Feng had a close relationship with Sun Yat-sen, with whom he frequently exchanged letters discussing national affairs, and under Sun's guidance Feng gained a different understanding of reforming society and expressed his ambition to save the country and the people through his military prowess.^[35]

Feng Yuxiang continued to explore and practice, but from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the beginning of the People's Republic, he did not realize the nature of government corruption and did not realize that the social system was backward, but merely believed that all the bad phenomena in society were caused by the "evil people" in power. Under the guidance of this "rule of man" ideology, he made every effort to reform the old army, improve combat power, fight for territory, expand their own strength, the use of pragmatic power tactics, involved in years of warlord chaos, in order to achieve the purpose of decent people like Sun Yat-sen in power, wealthy country and strong people, to resist foreign invasion. ^[36]

The dispute over the creation and abolition of Liang Shiyi's cabinet was the trigger for the eventual rupture in relations between the Feng and Zhili Groups and the move towards war. His assessment of the current Premier Liang Shiyi was that "he was undoubtedly a capable man who had to raise huge sums of money from Japan and dedicate his loyalty to his master, the Feng warlord, at the time of the Washington Conference, conceding the Shandong issue to Japan and issuing the September 6th bonds without declaring their purpose under the pretext of financial difficulties."^[23] Feng Yuxiang's attitude toward Zhang Zuolin and the Feng clique, which rose to power by selling out the interests of the country to Japanese imperialism, was extremely clear: "The acts of flattering Japan and misleading the country are endless, and if he is not struck down by categorical means, his wrongdoing will be unknown to Yi at the bottom of Hu."^[23]

Feng Yuxiang led the army out of Shaanxi to help straight before the oath of office held in Xi'an on the significance of the expedition: "We are not for private rights, but to crush the Feng warlords, to save my porous country... We participate in this war, entirely to do our sacred vocation of soldiers to protect the country and love the people, personal wealth and profit are not essential."^[23]

He believed that the purpose of this expedition was: "To defeat the warlords who were seeking the imperial system, in order to save the republican country and practice altruism. The national spirit must be invigorated in order to achieve the cause."^[14] At that time, people evaluated Feng Yuxiang's war to be "the people of the country were in deep water and suffering, and could not bear to see the people suffer". He was crusading against the people who were "destroying the overall situation and shaking the country".^[37]

Out of his anti-imperialist patriotism and consciousness of saving the country and the people, Feng Yuxiang went to Shaanxi to fight against the Manchuria group, which was not only the embodiment of his simple anti-imperialist patriotism and the idea of saving the country and the

people, but also an essential aspect that distinguished him from other military groups of the same period, and laid an essential foundation for his later revolutionary ideas and actions in response to the Northern Expedition, unity against Japan, and the united war against Chiang.

5. Conclusion

Feng Yuxiang's decision to "Join Zhili and oppose Manchuria" in the First Sino-Fong War was the result of a three-way game between Feng Yuxiang, the Cao-Wu Zhili Group group and the Feng-Zhang group. Feng opposed the Manchuria group and became close to the Zhili Group in an attempt to gain additional benefits for him while resisting the Japanese imperialists and their supporters. Cao Kun, Wu Peifu, and Feng Yuxiang had long been friends, and though they differed slightly in their interests, they shared a common enemy, and the common interests of the alliance much outweighed their differences. The Manchuria group, intent on eliminating the Zhili Group and eyeing Feng Yuxiang, really formed the Feng Yuxiang and Cao Wu Direct Group to work together against the Feng. Feng Yuxiang's action of "joining the straight to discuss the Feng" was decided by a combination of reasons, but these reasons have a primary and secondary. Personal interest, in the author's opinion, was the chief cause and motive.

The alliance between Feng and the Zhili Group was only a secondary motive for the expedition, as Cao and Wu had solicited Feng to lead the army in the First Zhili-Manchuria War as a stopgap measure to strengthen their fighting strength and increase their chances of victory. After the First Zhili-Manchuria War, Wu Pei Fu praised Feng Yuxiang for his "first success in forcing Feng", but Feng Yuxiang was never a close friend of Wu Peifu,^[38] and the two fell into hostility over Henan interests, and Feng Yuxiang was eventually transferred to Beijing and removed from real power.^[7]^{P109} Thus, Feng's conversion to the Zhili Group was only due to a temporary alliance and mutual interest. When the common enemy disappeared, Feng's conflict with the Zhi leaders Cao Kun and Wu Peifu intensified, and Feng's independence from the Zhili Group became increasingly apparent. As a result, Feng was opportunistic in the first war, leaving Shaanxi, which had limited room for development, to capture Henan, a key region in the Central Plains, and maintaining an alliance with the Zhili Group to preserve and strengthen his own power was the preferred option.

Although Feng Yuxiang had a simple ideal of loving the people and saving the country and practicing it, and practicing the ambition of saving the country and loving the people was one of the reasons for this expedition, it was more of Feng Yuxiang's secondary motive and the propaganda of the division, a means to occupy the moral high ground in order to win the battle. Military conflicts during the Beiyang government were mostly caused by factional and interest disputes and factional personal conflicts of interest contributed to the creation of an unprecedentedly large private army.^[39] As the military powerhouse of the feathered republic, Feng was a rational, practical politician who made political plans and decided major issues such as war not on the basis of personal ideological views, but on the basis of power comparisons. Participation in the war was prompted by the needs of their respective positions of power, not by personal animosity.^[40]

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