

# Telecom Control in Northeast China during the Puppet Manchukuo

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**Abstract**—This paper discusses the telecom control in Northeast China during the Puppet Manchukuo. Telecom construction in the northeast was more rapidly developed than they were in the past for war and its ruling policy. Before 1937, Japan had been strengthening control over telecom in the northeast through force and relevant agreements with the Puppet Manchukuo. Then Japan's control on telecom was reinforced by adjusting management of the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. while Japan strengthened telecom management with governmental agencies and law by the puppet government. China telecom sovereignty was violated badly. Though Japan increased and improved the telecommunication equipments, its behaviors were to invade China to snatch more interests. Telecom control of Japan seriously hindered the development of China's telecom. The Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. actually served as an important tool for the Japanese invasion in China.

**Keywords**—*Telecom in northeast; Telecom control; Japan; the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Telecom, as an important control way of politics, economies and propaganda, is always grabbed by relevant forces and governments in the special historical environment. On the second day of September 18, 1931, the Japanese army invaded Shenyang telegraph office, and then on September 27, Japan violently occupied the telecommunication institutions and equipment in Shenyang. Japan wanted to make full use of all kinds of resources in the northeast to reduce the pressure of aggressive war to maintain Japan's colonial rule in the northeast of China, so Japan would change the northeast of China to Japan's northeast China war base. Moreover, Japan wanted to turn the northeast into its vassal of economic because of its scarce resource and small market. It continued to develop telecom, which made the telecom in this area more rapid.

This subject has been paid more and more attention. The basic data and policy research on the northeast telecom industry during the puppet Manchukuo have been attended by scholars in some local chronicles and compilations of local data. Zhang Yunyan, Wu Xiaoli, Yang Guang presented telecom was closely related with the aggressive policy of Japan [1]. Xue Zixin analyzed the consequences of the domination of the telecom in time of the Puppet Manchukuo [2]. These studies are not enough to understand the situation of this period.

This paper discusses the development and the telecom Control of the northeast telecom in China, and analyzes the consequences of the control, which will make us to evaluate telecom of the Puppet Manchukuo objectively.

## II. GENERAL SITUATION OF NORTHEAST TELECOM

There is no doubt as to the broad extent of Japanese interests in Manchuria. The sufficient capital and complete transportation made it each other possible if Japan wanted to acquire larger interest. The central plain's fertile soil supplies beans, wheat, kaoliang, and other crops and the surrounding hills contains coal, iron, and many other minerals in northeast of China. To construct the northeastern area for strategic bases of the war, Japan invested and developed the telecommunications.

First, the extensive system was being set up. The number of telegraph offices was increased from 363 in 1933 to 1148 by 1943 and the telegraph circuit was extended to 111,500 km. The telephone offices and subscribers were both growing. There were 41,499 subscribers in 1934, and the number increased to 94,355 in 1939. It was more than 110,000 in 1945. There were more than 2600 km both overhead conductors and underground cables of local telephone. The total extension of bare lines was more than 52,000 km and telegraph poles were set up more than 158,000. Besides, the expansion of long-distance telephones was being actively pushed in northeast. Trunk lines were being established with such rapidity. There lay about 816 km long-distance telephone lines between Shenyang to Changchun, Changchun to Harbin, and Shenyang to Andong. There were also some long-distance overhead conductors in other cities [4].

Japan was also actively developing radio facilities. They regarded Changchun as the center, Shenyang and Dalian as the south keys, Jiamusi, Harbin, and Qiqihar as partitioning keys. In all of these cities power stations were set up. The more extensive system was formed. Radio also followed war. Small radios of 5 to 50 kw were set up in more important military sites, such as Mohe, Sanshenmiao, Fuyuan, Dongan, Suifenhe, Chunchua, Hunchun, Changbai and Andong. In addition, the international radiotelegraph, with Changchun as the hub, reached San Francisco, Paris, Berlin, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Second, more modern equipments were installed. The Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. had the technical support from South Manchuria Railway Company

and invested in new technology of communication facilities. By 1939, 60,000,000 yen was mainly used to adopt new technology of telecom, such as carrier-current telephone which made telephone automate, management which made all work coordinate. By August 1945, the stowger switch was adopted in the three provinces of east China, including Dalian, Fushun, Tieling, Mudanjiang, Anshan, Yingkou, Benxi, Tonghua, Jilin, Siping, Qiqihar, Hailar, and Puziwo. The Siemens-halake switch is adopted in Shenyang, Jinzhou, Andong, Changchun, Harbin, Jiamusi, Chengde, Jinzhou and other bureaus. The total capacity had 102,700, and the actual installed capacity had about 80,000. The Strowger switch used a rotary dial for signaling to the exchange.

Connection on Station between Shenyang and Fushun was realized because of the AC dialing in 1936. Some new technologies on cable were used in other cities which made the capacity added, made the load-bearing capacity of cable increased, made the distorted voice improved and made the consumption of electric increased. The short-wave technique also succeeded. Some improvements in cold-proof technology of telecommunication were researched and advanced. In the northeast region, there was a severe winter and a large temperature difference between day and night. Frost disasters on cables often occurred. The most serious ones happened in December 1907, October 1921, December 1929 and 1936.

Third, business of telecommunication was improved. At the end of 1941, the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. sent telegrams 16,450,806 times which was more than three times as much as that of 1933, and its workers reached over 15,000. Commercial wireless phone got significant development in international telephone service. After wireless telephone exchange was founded in Changchun, through which 90% of telephone users in the northeast could call with Japan. In 1936, a wireless telephone office was set up in Dalian, where the wireless telephone lines increased.

### III. TELECOM CONTROL IN NORTHEAST CHINA

Until 1937, Japan had been strengthening control over telecom in the northeast, which was realized through force and the relevant agreements with the Puppet Manchukuo.

The northeast telecom sovereignty had been violated in modern China. Due to the non-resistance policy the Northeast Army executed at the moment, Japanese occupied Shenyang City just within one night and then the whole Northeast China within four months. At that time, Japan was keeping occupying telecommunications by force and the employees and managers of Ministry of Communications of Nanjing government were gradually evacuated from the northeast until Communications Ministry of the northeast was migrated to Peking. All of telecommunications in northeast China were grabbed under Japan. In April 1933, Nanjing government announced that the northeast telecommunication Ministry was merged into the Hebei Bureau for Electric Administration Affairs, which means Communications Ministry of the northeast disappeared in the national government's jurisprudence.

After the Puppet Manchukuo was established, the business of the northeast telecom was managed by the puppet Manchukuo Ministry of communications in name only. There were two telecom authorities, which were in Mukden (Shenyang) and Haerbin. Japan didn't want to give up its vested interest. The undercover service of Kwantung Army and economic commission of the South Manchuria Railway Company produced so-called Guidelines on the Puppet Manchukuo Economic Construction, which was released by the puppet government in the government gazette extra outline. Article 3, "Defense-related industries and public enterprises must be public-operated or become special companies." Moreover, the Japanese government and the government of Puppet Manchukuo signed the decision on the establishment of a joint Japan-Manchuria communication company, and then moved the company in Dalian to Changchun. Apparently a special company, the puppet Manchuria Telephone and Telegraph Co., to operate these communications was to be established under joint Sino-Japanese investment. Several Japanese companies were to be interested, including the Japan Telephone and Telegraph Co., the International Electric Communications Co.. Finally, the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. established in August 1933, were invested by the Japanese government, the puppet Manchukuo government, Manchuria Railway Co., Japan Broadcasting Corporation and Korea Bank.

On 28 June 1934, the puppet Manchukuo government issued A Statement on General Industry, in which "the telegraph and the telephone should be 'state owned', 'public owned' or special companies. Special companies should be established and managed in accordance with Investment Company Act and the treaty between the puppet Manchukuo and Japan". The special companies to be found agreed with Japan's strategic policy and position on the continent.

The puppet Manchukuo government set the price of the original telecommunications equipments in northeast China as the joint capital while Japan participated in the huge investment. However, the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. were fully snatched because of the situation. The Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. were free of the puppet Manchukuo's commission according to the agreement. Change of corporate system, appointment and removal of directors and officers should be permitted by the government, while business communications should serve the needs of government and war. It also stipulated that the shareholders and directors of the company should be limited to public servants or private persons of the governments. The Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. was actually the spokesman of Japan. The company made Japan to further strengthen the control of telecom in northeast of China. First the company began to take over the original northeast electric communication. Then the telecom nearby South Manchurian railway, the local telecom and the business telecom occupied by Japan army were consolidated. At that time, there were 117 telephone stations and about 14,000 consumers in the northeast [3]. According to the agreement, a portion of the profits would be paid to the local company when they were taken over every year, but in fact it was often taken over by force. So was long-distance

telephone situation in Jiamusi in 1936. Many telegraph situation began to use Japanese.

In March 1935, the Middle East Railway was purchased in the hard way and the telecommunication nearby also were taken over. Japan had fully snatched telecom of northeast China through the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co., which was deeply strengthened in 1937.

From 1937 to 1945, Japan's control of telecom was reinforced by adjusting management of the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co..

The company was transformed and adjusted by Japan, and various rules and regulations were set up. At the beginning of the company, an internal management organization was established and the business scopes of each organization were defined. According to the regulation, there were 5 directors, 3 monitors. The number of them was determined by the company's shares held by Japan and the Puppet Manchukuo. They were selected from more than 10 shares of shareholders. All of this must be approved by both sides. One president, one vice president, and three directors should be elected from the five directors. One supervisor should be elected from the three supervisors. The president, acting as the chairman of the board, represented ownership in a company they gave the holder rights to participate in major decisions the company faces. The vice president can act on the president's office when the president was busy. When the company was founded, the headquarters was temporarily set up in Dalian with general affairs which secretarial office, personnel office, investigation office and supervision office were set up, business department which comptroller office, expenditure office, construction and maintenance office were set up, technology department which general affairs office, lines office, machinery office were set up, management department and Tokyo agency. With the continuous development of the company's business, broadcast department was added. It was responsible for broadcast and the market of wireless telephones and broadcasting receivers in 1938. The new administration of radio was founded, and then merged the broadcasting station in Changchun in April, 1943. The broadcast department was dismissed. The new administration had the guidance and supervision, organization power in various radio stations work on the implementation of the puppet. Not only that, but the special company adjusted the managing scope of telecom authorities.

At the same time, the company strengthened the management of telecom services. They reinforced military telegraph service and opened the communication service from Mukden to Osaka. Meteorological notice telegram, medical wireless telegram and unrequested telex were also opened. Japan wanted to acquire larger interest. To construct the northeastern area for strategic bases of the war, Japan invested and developed the telecommunications. The extensive system was being set up while more modern equipments were installed

The company also put Japanese in important positions and despised Chinese. All communication services were arranged by the Japanese. The Chinese retained only served as telegraph operators, linemen, and menial servants.

Besides, Japan strengthened telecom management with governmental agencies and law by the puppet government. In 1937, the puppet government reshuffled postal department of the puppet ministry of communications to General Post Office with telecom department set. All telecom departments in local postal administrations were renamed telecom offices that were specialized in supervising the telecommunications business in the area. The puppet Press and Publication Bureau was responsible for broadcasting and radio communication of guidance and control while the puppet Ministry of Communications, radio wavelengths, frequencies, and the ministry of communications, facilities, etc.. All publicity organizations, such as radio stations, newspapers, art groups, magazines, film and paper factories, etc., were directly supervised and directed by the puppet Press and Publication Bureau. In accordance with the guidelines and policies designated by the puppet Press and Publication Bureau, the implementation of the various aggressive policies propagated by the radio station and the special company strengthened the control of the northeast.

#### IV. HOW TO EVALUATE TELECOM OF THE PUPPET MANCHUKUO

First, it can be seen that China telecom sovereignty were violated. Since Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Japan began to provide itself post. In 1930s, there was an argument about telecom enterprise in Japanese at the time. Some thought the telecom should be state-run and others thought it should be privately operated. Kwantung Army in northeast of China adopted the former, which would be good at national defense and make the military has priority in the use of convenience.

Japan controlled the telecomm in northeast of China and the development sketch of the telecomm in northeast of China during the Puppet Manchukuo. Business of telecommunication was improved. The development of telecommunications was subjected to the political needs. Japan took over and controlled the local telecom in northeast China through Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. and speeded up expansion of telecommunications with the aggression war. The Japan aggression to telecom was continuous and stepped-up, which seriously hindered the development of China's telecom. The telegraph and telephone offices of various counties were merged into the telegraph and telephone offices of the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co..

Second, Japan increased and improved the telecommunication equipments to control the people of northeast China in order to snatch more interests. Telegraph and telephone were used to police work for social stability, political propaganda for colonial rule and communication for international relations. It also contacted Japanese at home and abroad with the war and the immigrants. In 1935 there were 29,000 telephone consumers of Japan and 17,000 of China.[5] Wireless broadcasting was responsible for the dissemination of fascism and the hoax of policy. Rikio Otsuka, a colonialist, said, "It is the biggest purpose to unify opinion and know public opinion by radio." "The ultimate aim of broadcasting is to accelerate war to the utmost extent." [6] Kubo Noboru, another colonialist, expressed similar opinions. [7] Japan's measures to the telecom industry of the northeast were always attempting to

assimilate the northeastern people from the ideological and cultural, which would make the Chinese people submit to the Japanese invaders.

As against Manchuria's available resources Japan had to face economic difficulties, which made Japan think the Puppet Manchukuo would become his resources origin. Remarkably successful in industrializing the northeast, the Japanese claimed to have invested over four billion yen in Manchuria from 1932 through 1940. The industry of Puppet Manchukuo once was the center. Telecom gave full information.

Third, the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co. actually served as an important tool for the Japanese invasion in China. The special company controlled the telecom seemingly, which seemed legal for Japanese telecom regulation. All the act of the company, including supervision of news publications and the propaganda around the world, was imprinted with Japanese intentions. The special company manipulated the telegraph and telephone services of the northeast and set up special police telephones for the military and police in each county.

The telecom sovereign of China was invaded badly. The special company also hid the aggression of war and supplied with the colonial cultural policy each other.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In this study, we describe the telecom developments on the system, equipments and business during the Puppet Manchukuo. But these developments were based on the invasion and interests and served Japan's aggression war. First, Japan grasped the northeast telecom through force and the unequal agreements. Second, Japan continued to be strengthening control through the Puppet Manchuria Telegraph and Telephone Co., which partly concealed its essence of aggression. Third, Japan reinforced management of telecom by controlling the Puppet Manchukuo. It was shown that the study on the Puppet Manchukuo must be paid more attention to the social environment.

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A brief introduction to the author:

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