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# GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORT PROJECT

ASSESSMENT OF DISSIDENCE LEVELS IN 1965  
IN FIVE PROVINCES IN SOUTHERN CHINA

(Provisional Draft)



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ASSESSMENT OF DISSIDENCE LEVELS IN 1965  
IN FIVE PROVINCES OF SOUTHERN CHINA

Summary

Though dissidence in southern China -- Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung -- is not declining, it is increasingly translated into apathy and resignation, and significant indigenous resistance is not known to exist.

An examination of selected examples of dissident activity in 1965, ranging from overt acts of an operational nature to simple evasion of militia responsibilities, shows that the regime is everywhere in full control of the country. The disproportionate amount of resources being poured into the control effort through consecutive campaigns of the interminable Socialist Education Movement, however, may be an unfavorable augury for the regime.

The coastal regions of Kwangtung, including Hainan Island, and Fukien (outside the study area) are the most dissident. Inland, there is little evidence of active dissidence either in the minority areas or in the ethnic Chinese areas of the other four provinces. Reasonably adequate information is available only from Kwangtung, but hypothetical levels of dissidence elsewhere are judged not to exceed those of Kwangtung, as there is little qualitative difference in reports received.

Popular dissidence has less chance of significant flowering than has intraparty dissidence, which can feed on provocative contradictions already present in Kwangtung. The logic of the situation points to eventual loosening of the tight control system, as intraparty dissidence increases, until some kind of semiovert political action becomes possible. Such a process might well begin among the cadres and populace of the Kwangtung coast, because the youthful population there is relatively sophisticated and has extensive relationships with the Overseas Chinese.

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I. The Situation in Southern China

This study assesses present dissidence levels in five southern provinces of Communist China and attempts to identify manifestations of internal political weakness. The five provinces under examination -- Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung -- are not an established regional grouping, and for this reason, the indefinite appellation "southern China" is used. All five provinces, however, have large non-Mandarin-speaking or non-Chinese minority population groups and, except for Kweichow, are contiguous to areas that were either dissident in the recent past (Tibet) or are under foreign control (Burma, Laos, and North Vietnam). The most conspicuous geographical features they share are (a) remoteness from seats of central control; (b) poor overland communications with the rest of China and with each other; and (c) provincial economies which could sustain themselves in absence of assistance from the rest of China or from the outside.

During 1965 southern China continued to labor under longstanding problems of economic stagnation and popular weariness. Both problems were rendered more burdensome by the regime's dogged determination to achieve at almost any cost the reconditioning of the people and of the cadres to draw them away from individualistic economic and political incentives. This reconditioning effort had originated in the decisions of the 10th Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in September 1962. It took form in the Socialist Education Movement (SEM) which began to unfold in 1963. Since then, no area of southern China has entirely escaped a seemingly interminable series of SEM campaigns to screen both leadership and populace through rectification of abuses and errors and cleansing of motives and records. (Some reports forecast a duration of 7 years for these plagues.) Large task forces of students and cadres have descended on communes and other production units to carry out the necessary exhaustive checks.

During 1965 the SEM thrust remained directed toward revitalization of the ongoing "class struggle," which is still the most important ideological objective. This was to be accomplished by organization of Poor and Lower Middle Peasant Associations (PLMPA); by investigative and punitive pressure on hidebound, weakly motivated, or corrupt cadres through the Four Clearances campaign (concentrating on the past performances of people whose backgrounds had survived earlier scrutiny); and by a new Three-Anti campaign in the eastern cities to strengthen internal security and job performance.

These campaigns were supported by a variety of economic and social measures, some apparently experimental, which were designed to improve management practices. Commune accounting practices, agricultural credit facilities, and arrangements for marketing consumer goods received much attention. There were also efforts to begin to improve the morale of

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urban workers assigned to the countryside through a new system of rotational work assignments to rural villages, a system that offered a chance of ultimate return to the city. A vast new program to improve rural literacy and education through new part-time schools was carried forward. Meanwhile, resettlement policies were kept in motion to distribute unneeded city dwellers, including unemployed youth, to state farms and to home-village communes. The prevailing response was sluggish and perfunctory. Though the SEM cut deeply, the people of China have tolerated it so far because they are habituated to such procedures and also because daily necessities were distributed with reasonable fairness and in greater quantity than in other years of greater distress.

As before, militia and People's Liberation Army (PLA) recruitment was carried out late in the year but against a backdrop of war drums, which was no help to recruitment. In 1965 there was a much heavier emphasis on militia recruitment and on improvement of training and military effectiveness. However attractive the conditions of military service were for peasant young folk in many areas, enlistment in 1965 was unattractive to city young folk, especially to those of "questionable" family backgrounds who would encounter discrimination in the service. That the regime was having trouble generally in making enlistment attractive is suggested by continuation of the Lei Feng and similar hero-worshipping campaigns. The nonmilitary nature of the accidental deaths for these new culture heroes is not easily explained. Perhaps even peasant youth, though of pure class background, needed both the stimulus of shining example and reassurance that death in battle was unlikely. Even the dull could see the possibility of surviving military service if, unlike these new heroes, he was careful to stay out from under falling poles, to handle grenades with respect, and not to plunge into holes while fighting forest fires. If the popular mood had been one of ready support for foreign entanglements, surely more red-blooded heroes with a good deal more eagerness to slay foreign devils would have been found. Instead, propagandists belabored fading myths of Communist-won victory in the Pacific War and of American defeat in the Korean War.

Adequate information on movements of people as labor levies is lacking, but this only means that they went unreported. There was probably new and unsettling urgency in the mobilization of labor for distant construction projects, because strategic needs of overriding importance moved to the fore. Removal of industry from eastern China to inland cities such as Ch'eng-tu continued. In transportation, at long last and more in embarrassment than in triumph because of the years of previous delay, the Kweichow - Szechwan railroad was finished and work continued on the still unfinished Kweichow - Yunnan link, a route requiring much tunneling.

Economic stringency continued unabated in 1965, and support for North Vietnam may have become more of an economic depressant than a stimulant. Industrial managers carried on from minor crisis to minor crisis, and their

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working forces were subject to transfer and dismissal despite spot shortages of labor. The telltale national propaganda emphasis on economy at all cost continued, implying that costly diseconomies in the industries concerned still continued.

In sum, 1965 in southern China was not unlike the years that had immediately preceded it. The economy was stagnant, the population was dispirited, and factory dismissals and population dispersion to the countryside were a continuing threat to worker morale. The year was conspicuous for the absence of enough jobs even for trained youth, let alone untrained. Political campaigns followed one another in steady sequence, sifting local leadership down to an awesome depth without introducing any new interest through fresh and vivid symbols. Incessant propaganda for the continuing urgency of the class struggle hung over the south like a pall -- unprogressive, unconvincing, uncompromising, and totally unavoidable.

## II. Problems of Assessment

### A. Source Material

25X1C Little information pertaining to active dissidence is available from Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, or even Kwangtung, although the combined population of these five provinces is almost equal to that of the United States. Kwangtung has more than 38,000,000 people, but only from those parts that are in communication with communities of Overseas Chinese is intelligence reporting reasonably adequate in volume. For the rest of Kwangtung and for Kwangsi and Yunnan, some useful information is available; 25X1C but for Szechwan and Kweichow there is almost nothing.

Direct evidence of dissidence comes from refugees, [REDACTED] travelers, [REDACTED] Indirect evidence helping to identify areas of potential difficulty can be gleaned from the propaganda output of the regime, because a great many 25X1C good and bad local examples and instructive case studies are publicized for the guidance of cadre readers.

### B. Terminology

In this study "dissidence" is used to mean a state of mind involving discontent or disaffection with the ruling regime, and "resistance" is used to mean dissidence translated into action. Because the terminology of the subject is difficult to control, certain qualifications of these definitions need to be stated. Resistance, or action, does not always follow from dissidence, and both terms can be so used as to arouse unjustifiable exceptions by assumed implications. Popular resistance is a phenomenon which the regime understands. However, many other aspects of dissent -- ordinary stubbornness, intellectual and administrative

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"resistance," individual soul searching, dissatisfaction, disaffection, rationalization, and alienation -- may limit or encourage suppressed dissidence without pointing toward overt resistance. The train of influence from such manifestations is especially hard to follow when negative reactions are not directed squarely against the regime and its agents but instead take an oblique course.

Allowance must also be made in describing or assessing actions that are compulsive. At the popular level, when dissident manifestations are compulsive, they may be conspicuous but still weakly directed and lacking in purpose, and thus their significance is lowered. If such types of protest and reaction are not suppressed and rationalized into apathy and resignation or into a conditioned compliance with private reservations, spectacular but pointless events may occur. A food riot is a good example. The participants are unlikely to proceed toward political goals when their first objectives are satisfied by corrective action that is simple and immediate. Their "resistance" is of little long-term significance except to further discredit local cadres, whose discomfiture and possible demoralization may be the only significant consequence.

Within the CCP and its auxiliaries, dissident impulses even when strong are likely to be suppressed under the pressure of personal responsibility and self-concern and transformed into something other than resistance. Such suppressed reactions hold in them the distant promise of the liberalization that has begun to take place within the USSR.

Finally, in this study it is recognized that there is a level or range of dissidence which is normal and tolerable in every political system, even that of Communist China, and that dissidence falling within that range does not usually constitute an appreciable control problem. In healthy democratic countries, where dissent is respected and channeled legitimately into the political process, the dissidence level is very high. In totalitarian countries, where it is carefully watched, dissidence levels still may range from very low to moderate without endangering the stability of the state or of the Party. Even very small displays of overt dissidence are vigorously suppressed in Communist China, and for this reason actions which would be trifles in Western countries merit examination when reported from Communist China. Even appreciable amounts of dissidence, however, though indicative of genuine trouble may be no threat to the state or to Party control of the state. They are generally ineffective as long as they are mostly transformed into apathy and resignation at the popular level or into stylized compliance coupled with conscientious suppression of reservations at the cadre level.

### C. Analytical Pitfalls

Considering the magnitude of the field in southern China, the size of the intelligence sample covering dissidence is uninfinitesimal. Coverage



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is best for Kwangtung, and reports from the other provinces are not qualitatively dissimilar. They stress events that are similar and, often, of equal triviality. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that in the four provinces other than Kwangtung dissidence levels are probably no higher than those in Kwangtung. They are probably no lower than those in the noncoastal parts of Kwangtung. Along the coast the people are less timid, more sophisticated, and more aware of the world of the Overseas Chinese. Comparisons of the extent of dissidence also need to be used cautiously. Apathy and resignation at the popular level are probably widespread. The inference that ipso facto a great deal of potentially active dissidence should exist throughout the five provinces, however, is not necessarily true. In fact, the opposite may be true.

Comparisons between the two main types of dissidence -- intraparty and popular -- are hazardous. The more insidious intraparty dissidence is less conspicuous than the more tangible popular dissidence. Qualitative tests are especially applicable to intraparty situations, whereas assessment of popular dissidence comes down to the weighing of simple magnitudes. Further, the two worlds of work and action are accessible from the outside in entirely different degrees. The populace is almost entirely out of reach in contrast to the cadres and Party members, who are better informed, more alert, and more susceptible to outside stimuli.

The theoretical dissidence potential created by cloth rations that are inadequate provides an example. This situation is a standing reproach to the regime. It is essentially absurd that the populace should be deprived of what it could either make for itself by cottage methods or could secure from efficient factories in a properly working consumption economy. The responsible cadre who controls cloth rationing operates in a system of responsibility which is different from that of the peasant. The peasant's desire is for clothing. If he is issued cloth, deprivation is eliminated as a cause of dissidence, and there is no objective to justify active dissidence. The senior cadre, however, has needs that can hardly be met, short of overhaul of the national economy. Working under pressure from both sides, he tries to satisfy the people, the Party, and himself. When demands from below are importunate and demands from above are unreasonable, his own obvious need is for a situation in which he can perform both responsibly and effectively. Such a need may lead him privately to try to change the system or to conduct himself as though the system had indeed been changed. Put another way, the peasant's problem, his need for cloth, is material, and his career does not hang on the receipt of such cloth. The cadre's problem is organizational, and his career in the system hangs on administering the situation he is handed so as to avoid trouble for himself. Peasant dissidence has nowhere to go, unless a riot can be called an achievement. Cadre dissidence, on the other hand, conceivably has a great deal to gain through keeping the issue alive in order to achieve far-reaching changes in the distribution system without eliminating the cadre.

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III. Selected Examples of Dissidence

The accompanying map, Dissidence in Southern China: Selected Problem Areas, 1965, identifies general areas from which reports reflective of dissident acts or especially weak cadre performance during 1965 were received. The greatest concentration of dissidence is close to the coast, where a tough-minded population simmers in virtual silence. Dissidence levels in the other two areas appear to be lower.

A. Overt Acts

The year 1965 was not as productive of reported overtly dissident acts as was 1964. The most spectacular event definitely known to have occurred in southern China took place on Hainan on 5 February or shortly after. It included the burning of warehouses, destruction of some other facilities, and killing of a number of Communist cadres. The exact location is uncertain, although the press service report placed it in Wen-chang Hsien. As if to corroborate this report, the Chinese Communists later announced that, as of June 1965, the PLA was "actively assisting the local militia in raising their political consciousness and improving their military skills." This was in the Wu-chih Shan of central Hainan, a guerrilla-base area of the past and the area in which GRC agents were captured in 1963. The announcement implied that the local militia performance was unsatisfactory until this PLA "assistance" brought a rise in both enthusiasm and abilities.

Swatow and its environs experienced some terrorism beginning early in the year and an augmentation of repressive activity later in the year. Uncorroborated reports speak of two explosions in early April -- one in the naval yard -- which were followed by some 300 arrests and also of twin explosions in an automotive workshop and in a "chemical factory" on 11 November. Again, the best confirmatory evidence that such events took place was provided by the regime, which in August began to subject Swatow to an intensive anti-escape, anti-corruption, anti-rumor, and anti-sabotage campaign. Although propagandists often use the word "sabotage" metaphorically, a convincing scale of punishments was reported for problems of malingering and "destruction" of equipment, ranging from 5 to 10 years for light offenses to death for serious offenses. Meanwhile, transmission of rumors was also on the increase.

Food riots must have diminished in 1965. The only one which has been reported apparently occurred in Jao-p'ing, 50 kilometers northeast of Swatow on the Fukien border, during the Chinese New Year period. The uncorroborated report states that 3,000 people took part and that it was put down by troops. Canton also experienced terrorism during the Chinese New Year period. Of several explosions reported, perhaps the most serious was one in a textile plant on the day itself, when, reportedly, scores were killed or injured. On 19 January an explosion in downtown Canton

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was accompanied by distribution of anti-regime pamphlets, although possession of these pamphlets draws such vicious punishment that it is hard to believe many are read. Later, in early May, a large factory was "destroyed" by an explosion, which was followed by an explosion in a local railroad station. Once again, the authorities gave some support to these uncorroborated reports by initiating in September a campaign against rumors, escapes, corruption, and discontent, during which shipyard workers learned that the Hsi-ts'un Cement Factory had been damaged by a worker. The culprit was apprehended in August and sentenced -- rather lightly it seems, if the sabotage was tangible -- to 20 years of hard labor.

Apparently these terroristic events were successful in their purpose. Whether they were carried out by indigenous guerrillas or by trespassing saboteurs is not known. It is possible that these deeds were successful sabotage operations staged from outside and not the work of local inhabitants. Nevertheless, they helped to reenforce a mood in which the Canton population is habituated to hearing of such gestures and also to avoiding involvement. Even a senseless railroad station bombing, although it provides no gain in prestige for the perpetrator, contributes to erosion of the regime's prestige by emphasizing the desirability of noninvolvement as an individual goal.

There are too few reports from the restive Tung Chiang region east of Canton to establish any pattern of resistance there. However, several unconfirmed reports from Hai-feng and Lu-feng suggest a low state of popular and cadre morale. This is consistent with conclusions suggested by Four Clearances campaign reports that there was occasional trouble in Hai-feng and Lu-feng. Two soldiers were reported killed in April in a gunfight with two defecting cadres, while 10 out of 12 fishing boats with 120 Shan-wei villagers aboard failed in an attempted escape to Hong Kong.

Reports from elsewhere in Kwangtung are more vague and less credible. It cannot be verified, for example, that there were 500 anti-Communist guerrillas established in Lo-ting and Hsin-i counties of western Kwangtung in spring 1965. A few reports of petty thievery and quasi-banditry suggest that a little local roguery has begun to reappear and, speculatively, that the militia in some remote areas may be unreliable.

No overt dissident activities were reported from Kwangsi in 1965. According to a vague 1964 report, a riot of troops (militia?) in Tung-nan Shan (exact location not known) was followed by extra precautions for the security of troops stationed there. The possibility is that PLA troops encountered resistance in suppressing wayward militia. The only reported overtly dissident events in Yunnan are easily attributable to agents from outside. Nothing meriting reprisal or swift suppression apparently occurred in Yunnan in 1965. The same can be said of Kweichow and of Szechwan, outside of its Tibetan areas, as far as is now known.

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B. Illegal Activities

Petty crime continues and may be organized. Travelers continue to lose their papers and ration tickets at about the same rate as in earlier years. The regularity with which this happens raises the possibility that escapees from labor reform camps, vagrants, disfranchised persons, and others on the social fringe are able to secure redocumentation through underworld sources and that there is a well-entrenched market in ration coupons. Reports of peddling of documentation have been received.

Corruption exists, especially among cadres, and no doubt the regime chooses to call any collusive activity between cadres and populace "corruption." Four Clearances campaign disclosures led to large-scale prosecutions of cadres and numerous suicides. Tan-sui, about 30 kilometers south of Hui-yang and only 40 kilometers from the New Territories, was hit hard, as was Mei Hsien. In Hai-feng and Lu-feng some 40 percent of the cadres were reportedly purged in late 1964. In the wake of the Four Clearances, most punitive assessments on cadres were for sums in the hundreds of dollars, which they conceivably can work off in time. At the bottom of the scale, very small sums were involved. Bribery at the 5-yuan (about \$2.00) level to achieve cadre collusion in helping inmates escape from a forced-labor mining camp was reported in Hua Hsien. Such a sum -- about 2 weeks' pay for an inmate -- was hard to secure either in money or goods, because inmates were paid only in scrip.

Two unverified reports of illegal political activity have come from Canton. In September 1965 a small "counter-revolutionary" organization of students called the Youth-Save-the-Country Party, was uncovered in the literature department of Chung-shan University. The ringleader received a 15-year sentence, and his associates 5-to-10-year sentences. The lightness of these sentences suggests that, if the report is true and the ring actually existed, something is still unexplained. Another group, the anti-Communist "Dragon Republic of China," reportedly saw its founder executed on 27 November 1965 after the organization had accomplished "sabotage" in various places. The founder began his organization during 1962 while a foreign language student at Sun-Yat-sen University, recruiting other youths as fellow "dragons." In late 1965 he himself supposedly had participated in a dynamiting of a Canton "shipyard and steel mill." Some 85 of his associates had been picked up in southeast China and incarcerated for long terms. The significant common denominator in these two reports is the attribution of anti-regime organizational activity to students and ex-students. Only students, probably, would attempt such organization at present. If the accounts are true, a social atmosphere of unconcern and noninvolvement must have existed at the outset.

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An example of illegal peasant activity comes from Chung-shan Hsien. Here villagers who had been deprived of their private plots of land in September 1965 tried later to open up new private plots secretly in remote areas, only to have the new plots discovered and confiscated. The small private plot, by its periodic elimination and almost predictable reappearance, is almost a sort of indicator of the state of local morale. In southern China the Communists have handled the right to have a private plot as a concession. Ironically, in Shensi in North China an old secretary once stated that "we have never given up the principle of having private plots" and that they kept cadre plots besides.

Provinces other than Kwangtung provide little information of similar interest. However, a Kweiyang (Kweichow Province) report stated that, as of mid-1963, about 35 percent of Kweiyang's farmers had not joined communes, though they gave part of their crops to the communes. They were considered backward and were thought to be handling illegal business. This is somewhat indicative of the state of socialism in rural areas that are off the beaten path.

Finally, an example of the thoroughness of Four Clearances sifting and the apparent pettiness of that campaign comes from a county-owned small collective farm in Chung-shan Hsien, perhaps a fairly average local situation, in which 13 percent of those investigated were punished. Of 83 persons on the farm, 9 were punished under the "Five Investigations" of personal backgrounds which ran from April through September. Two of the nine cases were serious -- one had an "unclear background" and one was a "reactionary thinker." In the Four Clearances investigation that followed, two cadres were punished and were sent to labor reform camps. Then the farm workers were at last ready to get busy on preparations for the "Third Five-Year Plan."

### C. Protests and Evasive Activity

Protest in Kwangtung took the form of evasiveness and of escape from the province. Suicides and threats of suicide appeared, not only among cadres, but also among family members of youthful conscriptees. Suicide, though a terminal form of protest, gets publicity and clearly shames the person whose deed caused it. Conscription and militia management were the main points of friction in inland areas, and around the coastal cities youthful discontent over labor assignments to distant farms, villages, and construction sites was prevalent. Stubbornness and evasiveness in the teeth of the Four Clearances campaign were reported from at least two places. In Lu-feng in late 1965 the "class struggle" reportedly became "tense and complicated," thus implying that outside cadres in their cross-country sweep had not found confessions and denunciations readily forthcoming. In Hwai-chi Hsien of western Kwangtung, also, there was Four Clearances difficulty with stubborn local cadres. The press later revealed that preferential work-point (credits in lieu

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of remuneration) distribution to dependents, disabled veterans, and other military-related elements of the population had been a problem and that the regime had partially relented to permit adjudication of the inequities case by case.

Early in 1965 there was already such apprehension over intensified conscription for military and labor needs that mail correspondents in the Canton area falsely prophesied another mass exodus to Hong Kong. Youthful discontent was especially prevalent in the Tung Chiang area between Canton and Hui-yang, where besides the many youth who wished to leave China, many thousands (reportedly 600,000!), including cadres, were in various stages of disillusionment. This was also reported from Hsin-hui Hsien (near Kongmoon), where the authorities were hunting the unregistered residents who were nonnatives and were actively conscripting youth for labor assignments, thus causing them to seek escape to Hong Kong and Macao.

Evasion of militia responsibility was apparently still easy in Yunnan, but getting harder. In May about 800 out of 2,000 Ching-p'o (Kachin) inductees deserted in Ying-chiang Hsien. At the end of the year it was announced that the Kunming Military Command had organized selected cadres and soldiers into 27 teams to circulate in various minority areas to sell the "people's war" concept and to establish militia organizations and training arrangements. Other press items also put a finger on "basic-level militia cadres" and identified remaining problems as those of "ideological consciousness" and "feudal superstitious activities." Villagers in one western county had the courage in early 1965 to protest certain unjust labor reform sentences and shout down unfounded accusations.

Press reports from Kwangsi attest to militia sluggishness there, also, and report at least one commune party branch, in Yu-lin, that got busy and reformed itself. Comparable information from Kweichow and Szechwan is not sufficient to characterize the local situations there.

#### IV. Bases of Dissidence

##### A. Popular Dissidence

##### 1. Minorities

The dissidence potential among minorities (other than the Tibetans, who are not considered here) in southern China is greatly outweighed by that of ethnic Chinese. Chinese Muslims are a submerged group, and although the Chuang of Kwangsi are numerous, they are not important as a minority group. The Chinese Communists have an added advantage in imposing security measures on the local non-Chinese minorities in that they can often offer genuine improvements in the quality of village life. They are skillful in using public health and education

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measures, control of jobs and advancement, administration of supplemental rations, and postponement of unpopular socialization measures to keep tribal communities politically divided and to alienate the young.

No reports were received in 1965 of trouble in the once-dissident Yao areas of northern Kwangtung. The Li and Miao on Hainan, with their record of support to the Communist-led island resistance during World War II, probably are as sensitive to the grievances of their old Communist leaders as they are to specific minority problems. There remains, however, the possibility of some friction with ethnic Chinese newcomers to the island. In Yunnan the Yi and the Ching-p'o are probably the most restless of the large non-Chinese groups. The Yi tend to resist Communist intrusion into their highly inbred, traditional way of life. Perhaps the political sequestration of 48,900 Yi in the new Nan-chien Yi Autonomous Hsien in November 1965 is indirect evidence that the CCP has taken another decisive step in the direction of more effective control over them. The Ching-p'o, conscious of their affinities with the Kachins of Burma, react against hindrances to free movement. Elsewhere small groups such as the Wa, who were once hard to manage, seem to be coming under pacification. The local Tai in the extreme south are not, and never have been, troublesome except in regard to their Buddhism, which they are permitted to retain.

## 2. Youth

About 30,000,000 young people, men and women in the 15-24 age range, live in the five provinces. Mao Tse-tung's blanket indictment of youth as a problem group "with strong revisionist tendencies" suggests that some of their particular subgroups in southern China should be examined briefly.

### a. Students and Ex-students

Students in midcourse have in recent years experienced much interruption of studies by labor assignments or by grueling field assignments as Four Clearances task forces. Even after graduation, many have found that they could not be used in their fields of specialization, and they have been sent down to the countryside to work at inferior occupations. The 7,000 college graduates in Kwangtung in 1965 were all sent to the countryside to work. In recent years, concurrently with steady elimination of unneeded city jobs, efforts have been made to weed out in advance more of those for whom there will be no job after graduation. This, however, does not remove the shock of elimination. The weedouts, called "social and intellectual" youth, are those who have failed to pass examinations, matriculate for higher schools, or find employment and have fast become a growing fringe group of alienated youth in the cities where they live or to which they have drifted.

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The process of removal of student weedouts from the cities is necessarily slow. To move them out permanently the regime has to ship them far away. Before it can do this the authorities must bring them as individuals to the point of readiness to enlist for labor and then screen them for reliability. Otherwise, many find a way to return from ordinary conscript labor assignments close at hand. Youth have been sent from Canton and Swatow as far as Sinkiang and Hainan and from Szechwan to state farms in southern Yunnan. On the state farms they have little to anticipate except endless menial work.

In practice, these youth who do not graduate and thereby fail to qualify to receive the select professional assignments will in the future become part of a subintelligentsia that the regime now flatters in its propaganda but actually views only as the means for proletarianizing the countryside. This group has provided the youthful defectors who have reached the Free World. Their potential for protest in the cities is not great, but in the state-farm network it is conceivable that they might have a potential for organization.

b. Youth of Poor Class Backgrounds

The most unfortunate of China's unemployed and unusable youth are those whose "class background" condemns them permanently to inferior status. Even those who willingly turn on their own families may find that this unnatural deed does not gain them full Party acceptance. A relatively large proportion of such youth live in the coastal areas of southern China, where past KMT affiliations of family members, as well as suspect Overseas Chinese connections, tend to frustrate their careers in the eyes of the CCP. Theirs is a formidable plight, and this group has readymade objectives to justify possible future dissidence.

c. Overseas Youth

The regime has had only qualified success with Overseas Chinese youth who have returned to China for education and careers. They are often highly disappointed in what they encounter, frequently resist work or study assignments, claim special privileges and rights, and "seek the main chance" -- even to the point of escape. Southern China has received its share of these youth; some have families in southern China. Wherever they go they are a leavening element, and as a highly mobile group destined to be mostly rootless, they merit close watching.

d. Peasant Youth

The origins of country youth who seek industrial employment have never been studied. Some rural communities probably send few youth to the cities, but other villages have for generations seen their youth go to the cities. With this avenue now closing to them, rural



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youth have fewer opportunities, despite their having the same aspirations as city youth. The lackluster China Youth League (CYL), now refurbished under strong regime pressure, provides the means for youth work, cadre training, and selection of Party membership candidates; but the CYL recruitment task is an uphill one because of the joylessness of its Party mission. For such youth, if they avoid military service, militia service has some attractive privileges. The long-term prospect for peasant youth is one of increasing exposure to the same influences and pressures that motivate city youth, with the likelihood that their sophistication will increase to the point that political dissidence may finally become possible for them.

### 3. Overseas Chinese and Their Connections

The largest number of Overseas Chinese originated in a relatively few counties in the Pearl River Delta and surrounding Swatow (and the Fukien ports), while lesser numbers came from much broader areas of Kwangsi and Kwangtung, including Hainan. Yunnanese have emigrated in sizable numbers only to Burma.

Through the Overseas Chinese communities, including that of Hong Kong, a large proportion of the population of Kwangtung retains a special awareness of the outside world and is partially dependent on it as well. One village, noted at random, had 70 percent of its population dependent on overseas remittances in some degree. This supplemental source of income and information perpetuates tensions between the regime and the people, because they are exploitable for foreign exchange and at the same time are vulnerable to questioning of their "class status." This population of returnees and their relatives is unique in China for having an independent basis by which to discount regime propaganda (such as war-scare talk) and also for having dissidence assets such as a high degree of resourcefulness to pursue their own ends. Their situations vary from those of managers, cadres, and working peasants to those of political undesirables (labeled as landlords, rightists, counter-revolutionaries, rich peasants, and common criminals), unnecessary city residents, unauthorized returnees from country assignments, intended refugees, materialistic city dwellers, and unregistered elements of the population.

The people of the coastal regions seem to share a growing sentiment of individual detachment from CCP goals while masking it by an increasing sophistication in making motions of conformity. In the future this trend will provide an increasingly suitable environment for slow nurture of forms of political dissidence that may in time secure from the local authorities the privilege of partially tolerated existence.

One important subgroup of the Overseas Chinese includes the 100,000 returnees from Indonesia, some 70,000 of whom were relocated on state farms which were established for them in the southern provinces. Many

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of these were poor people who apparently had no ancestral villages to receive them. They probably have a dissidence potential, even if they have not yet achieved the level of anti-Communist organization which one optimistic report suggests.

B. Intraparty Dissidence

At the national level there are various indications that morale within the CCP is soft in spots. One symptom has been the regime's readiness to push the unfinished SEM to almost any length and at almost any cost in political fatigue and perpetuation of economic stagnation. Another recent symptom has been excessive reliance on Mao as the unanswerable symbol of consensus, which may conceal impending exhaustion of the Party's own ideological ability to persuade. There is also indirect evidence that all is not well between the Party and the PLA. Against this national backdrop, the southern provincial parties, and especially the exposed Kwangtung party, retain their own historical problems.

The Kwangtung Provincial CCP faces a resourceful population with shallow loyalties to the regime. It harbors remnants of an older party machine whose chief failure was unwillingness to admit that local interests are always secondary. Its cadres are inclined to come to terms with local interests. As a Canton editorial said in 1963: "... many rural cadres now tend to sympathize with those under their supervision and no longer unquestioningly accept orders from higher authority." Its cadres have endured the interminable and merciless SEM campaigns of 1963-65 with many casualties from their ranks. A secret reregistration of Party members as part of a weeding-out process aimed at followers of former leaders was reported from Canton in early 1964. There seems to have been little Party progress since 1963 except at great cost, and the possibility for persistence of significant intraparty dissidence seems real. If it were to lead to growth of common cause between remnants of the old party and embattled cadres of the new party, the basis of a conservative, traditionalist, and ideologically tolerant intraparty movement could conceivably materialize.

The accompanying map entitled Rural Kwangtung: Responsiveness to CCP Provincial Committee, April 1963 provides some indication of the relative strength of the local Kwangtung CCP in 1963 against local inertia at the outset of the SEM. It depicts the results of a single inquiry into local response to a new project of the provincial Central Committee -- the "rural edition" of the Nan-fang Jih-pao. The case study was published for the guidance of local cadres, showing where cadres had taken prompt action to make the paper generally available and where they had been dilatory. It appears to have been a reasonable test of relative cadre responsiveness before application of followup pressures. Therefore, it may be considered a measure of the degree to

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which the provincial committee writ was being heeded or ignored in early 1963 when the SEM was being launched.

Results of the survey suggest two types of local situations. In some places blue-ribbon cadre forces held firm control on behalf of provincial authorities. In others presumably second-string cadre forces were either left to their own devices or else conservative party elements may have been in the saddle. Spotted within the areas most sluggish to respond, some key points performed well, as though the Party had concentrated good leadership resources there. Examination of the data suggests that they may have been "corrected" or "reestimated" before publication, but without necessarily altering the general impression presented.

Part of the background of the unimpressive Party position in 1963 is found in the Party history. Ironically those areas of eastern Kwangtung and Hainan where the potential for intraparty dissidence now seems relatively high are places where Chinese Communist activity had its beginnings 40 and more years ago. By now the local population may include many second and third generation Communists, with perhaps even a few of the fourth generation to support the greybeards. It was during 1958 that the older generation of cadres endured a purge similar to that which the present generation endured in 1964 and 1965. During 1958 the provincial committee achieved a fully national orientation by finally turning away from its aging local heroes of the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's. The scars of this overhaul still remain to aggravate present difficulties.

In May 1958 two old Party chieftains were removed from the Kwangtung CCP Central Committee. This signaled the end of an era for so-called parochialist local party machines in some places, especially on Hainan and in Ho-p'u and Shao-kuan Hsiens. It probably extended also to the entire eastern Kwangtung triangle between Canton, Shao-kuan, and Swatow. Ku Ta-ts'un, formerly the boss of eastern Kwangtung, was removed from the central committee though he still lingers on as a powerless deputy governor. Feng Pai-chii, the old baron of Hainan, was also dropped from the central committee and in 1963 was removed from the province altogether and given a vice-governorship in Chekiang. The amount of residual bitterness is not known, but some low-ranking Hainan cadres were still rebelliously disgruntled in 1962. It would be surprising if the old Communists of Hainan and the eastern Kwangtung cohorts were reconciled even yet to the elimination of their old leaders from positions of influence.

### C. Regional Review

In southern China the CCP faces a continuing task of improving its controls in distant provinces. Each province has its strong key points and areas of weaker control, and with security as with dissidence the cities lead and the countryside follows. Away from the vulnerable

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coastal areas the inland regions divide simply into those areas, more intensely cultivated and more densely populated, where ethnic Chinese predominate, and the more sparsely populated and less productive areas where non-Chinese minority peoples live intermixed with ethnic Chinese settlers. In the minority areas, despite greater indulgence of delays in "socialization" and "political reconstruction," the authorities are steadily extending their effective reach and the PLA is deeply involved in tutelage of the population. In the predominantly Chinese areas the CCP does not operate differently from elsewhere.

Canton and Swatow are the centers of mainland Kwangtung dissidence. The important delta counties are under very firm control, possibly because this was originally an area of KMT strength where the CCP did not wait on ceremony to eliminate conservatism.

Elsewhere in Kwangtung, and especially in the Tung Chiang region and on Hainan, there may remain widespread vestiges of a brand of local Communism more conservative than that of the radical top leadership. The scope of the present SEM indirectly suggests that the present generation of cadres is probably coming quietly to terms with local interests in many places. This trend could only have suited the conservative parochialists and sectionalists of the old Kwangtung party. Along the coasts and on Hainan, a population with far-ranging overseas connections and a background of KMT affiliation is now subject to indefinite prolongation of privation, disagreeable urban evacuation and rural resettlement drives, and conscription with discriminatory overtones based on class considerations. Economic stagnation and lack of economic incentives nurture poor cadre morale and disgruntlement of old cadres and uninfluential Party members; and among the populace such conditions encourage personal defeatism or self-serving private scheming and attempts to escape.

Away from the coasts the CCP contends with local stubbornness. The border counties probably have special problems which make them hard to manage, but enough information is not at hand to permit their description. Southwest of Canton between the Kwangsi border and the coast, a report of "guerrillas" lying low is typical of dissidence reports that are impossible to corroborate. Such a report may be discounted as probably meaning that a disaffected population exists in many villages and that any resistance organization there has identified most but not all of the penetration agents within its ranks.

Kwangsi is related to Kwangtung geographically and historically but is far more remote from outside attention. In 1965 no real difficulties were reported from Kwangsi. The newly reattached coastal region of the Ch'in-chou Special District is a depressed area with very modest resources; but it still has an historic claim to dissidence, since one of its central counties, Ho-p'u, was identified as a seat of parochialism in 1958. The counties along the Kwangtung border and especially around Wu-chou were a

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focus of attention in 1965, just as in 1960. This region may be somewhat soft because it is a gateway. Elsewhere in Kwangsi, the points of concern in 1965 were distributed virtually at random.

In Yunnan the efficiency of the provincial government at least and possibly its entire security posture was called into question by the appointment of a Peiping "hatchet man" to the governorship early in 1965. Little amplifying information has appeared since, but press comments leave no doubt that the provincial militia was in far from satisfactory condition during 1965.

The geographical distribution of places of security interest in 1960, compared to that of 1965, shows a predominant distribution along the axis of the east-west highway in 1960 and a province-wide scattering in 1965. The inference is that in 1960 the consolidation of CCP local control was most important along the east-west route, whereas in 1965 CCP standards of control had been raised to include the entire province.

Occasional reports of difficulties among Yunnan's minorities over intermarriage with Han Chinese or over recent intrusion of migrants from other provinces, such as Hunan, into tribal areas are reminders that ethnic conflicts remain. Political tools, such as development of Party "work" within the framework of new "autonomous" units, however, seem to suffice to control the anti-Chinese sentiments that may develop.

The Chinese in Yunnan probably harbor more dissidence than do the non-Chinese, but this is not known to pose any control problem. Some reports suggest that levels of well-being in Yunnan are sometimes higher than in other provinces. Frictions probably exist between Overseas Chinese and local Chinese youth but are not conspicuously important.

The most substantial information regarding Kweichow in 1965 was the unexplained removal in January or February, of Chou Lin, the Party First Secretary and Provincial Governor -- a change that was followed by reorganization of the provincial committee. Later in the year improvement of political controls over agriculture was publicized as a serious problem in the province. Whatever else it meant, the shakeup in Kweichow and the April appointment of Chou Hsing to the Yunnan governorship strengthened the influence of northerners in the southwestern province.

In Szechwan the Chinese population is reported indirectly by East European sources to be widely disaffected toward the regime because of its exploitive grip on the provincial agricultural surplus. While there is no information on present dissidence levels, two current construction programs may have some effect. The first is relocation of factories to Szechwan from eastern locations, introducing more outsiders as well as more industry to the Ch'eng-tu area. The second encompasses the construction needs for this industry and for railroad construction on the

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Yunnan line. Most reporting from Szechwan deals with its Tibetan fringes and is similar to reporting of other years -- minor administrative problems, the woes of travelers, and robbery.

V. Conclusions and Prospects

A. The Downward Slide of Resistance Potential

Dissidence in southern China is not declining but increasingly translates into apathy and resignation, with attendant individual evasiveness. There is no known indigenous resistance movement now active. More information probably will be available later in the year, but as of March 1966 the incidence of overt acts of protest seems to be declining, despite the fact that preexisting levels of dissidence were apparently maintained during 1965.

There is no effective anti-Communist leadership in any part of the study area. Popular apathy and resignation rule out both enthusiastic support of regime programs and energetic dissent from regime programs. As this mood sinks deeper, overt protest is slight but can take such drastic traditional form as suicide.

Both rural and urban inhabitants have learned to avoid translation of economic dissatisfactions into political dissidence and can endure a high degree of deprivation so long as distribution is reasonably equitable without a break in morale. Minorities are mostly uninvolved in active dissidence. Within the study area the coastal regions of Kwangtung, including Hainan, have the largest potentially dissident population. Along the coast there is a greater awareness of the outside world because of the pattern of Overseas Chinese relationships beginning at Hong Kong and Macao and extending throughout the world.

Despite the apparent strength of its control system, the regime is devoting an increasingly disproportionate amount of effort to "class warfare" and ideological campaigns. If this is a necessity merely to maintain existing levels of internal security, it is an unhealthy sign for the regime. As an attritive factor, however, it is balanced by the corresponding dissipation of potentially dissident leadership, especially among the youth and disaffected cadres.

B. Conditions Inhibiting Active Dissidence

In the last analysis, the ability of the regime to contain dissidence rests on its ability to maintain pressure on the people. This awesomely sophisticated ability of the Chinese Communist regime is still unchallenged. It inhibits any formulation of dissident objectives by disaffected elements.

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The use of large task forces of students, other youths, and outside cadres to carry out the Four Clearances campaign illustrates the ease with which the citizenry of Communist China can be manipulated. The task force members -- themselves either under training or under an ideological cloud of some sort and knowing it is in their own interest to do a good job -- have had no reason to make common cause with any stubborn local leaders whom they might encounter. The local people, for their part, reportedly often have taken out their resentments with gusto on the local cadres under Four Clearances encouragement. One side was played off against the other without any hint of mutual dismay being reported.

The current economic stagnation also seems to be, on balance, a factor inhibiting dissidence. The regime manipulates even slight rewards, such as preferential cloth rationing, more effectively than any potential dissidents can exploit the lack of a satisfactory cloth ration. Food shortages, also, seem to have been accepted as facts of life so long as a measure of equity prevails in distribution. The most keenly felt irritants are those that involve inequities or discriminatory treatment. Insofar as the Four Clearances campaign has attached inequities and punished those to blame, it probably has entrenched the regime still further with the peasantry.

It is probable that in the past the percentage of population in Kwangtung living under punitive detention has been large. In 1962, Hui-yang Hsien had a reported Public Security Bureau prison capacity of about 100,000 for a hsien population of possibly 1,500,000. In addition to such facilities, which presumably existed in every hsien, some provincial labor-reform camps such as that at the Lo Chia Tu mines had a population of almost 50,000. Without a separate study of labor-reform camps and local prisons, it can only be estimated that 5 to 10 percent of the provincial population may still be living under some form of detention.

### C. Conditions Contributing to Active Dissidence

Location close to the coast or to a large city is perhaps the most important single factor favoring effective dissidence in southern China. In such locations the regime must keep dissidence at a lower level than in more remote places. For a dissident in such areas, even though living under tight restraint, it is an asset to be part of the world of the Overseas Chinese. He is conscious of and occasionally shares some of the expectations, earnings, experience, and resourcefulness of the Overseas Chinese. The proximity of Hong Kong and Macao is also an influence. Individuals with overseas connections are more likely to be capable of formulating practical short-run plans with materialistic objectives and of attaining some of them. At the very least, such individualistic activity -- which seems to go on now, ramifying along the

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transportation routes away from the coast and the big cities -- contributes to a spreading climate of unconcern for the activity of other people. At most, it could become part of a slowly rising tide of "individualism" and so increase existing strains throughout the control structure that could lead to a loosening of the Chinese Communist system and to the building of a base for future tolerance of dissent, student political activity, and other currently prohibited practices.

The effective potential for active dissidence and resistance in inland areas (except perhaps in the Tibetan area of Szechwan, not considered here) is slight. Levels of dissidence tolerable to the regime may be quite high, physical control by the regime is virtually complete, and peasant objectives are usually limited. Further, peasant hostility to the regime may rise and fall -- depending on fluctuating degrees of deprivation and on changing pressures for labor levies, grain deliveries, and other forms of sacrifice -- without implying that the peasants would necessarily tolerate anti-regime activity. This is especially true if the peasants are protected, as they now are, from neoptism and brigandage. However, even in remote areas any local climate of dissatisfaction and incipient hostility will nourish a growing weight of youthful aspiration and career expectations. The regime's determination to reduce city populations through permanent distribution of surplus individuals throughout the countryside will only aggravate this trend.

In the rural areas there has been no more prolific source of dissatisfaction than the preferential allotment of work points to cadres or to other favored persons and families. Work points have a variable local value, depending on the harvest. They are a sort of phantom currency that farmers, workers, and cadres use to build up balances against which to draw for necessities. Unlike money or scrip, work points are not a private medium of exchange. All arrangements and transactions are recorded and hence must be justifiable. People who deserve them, or think they deserve them, frequently are awarded modest work-point bonuses. Though exceptional arrangements are often reasonable, the system is readily abused. It has encouraged indefensible cadre-peasant collaboration to bypass onerous regulations and has brought on some of the corruption that the Four-Clearances campaign exposed. If the new PLMP associations work effectively, the means of righting work-point inequities will be available to some of the peasants. As other forms of discrimination in favor of selected groups of peasants are being encouraged under the scrutiny of the PLMPA's, however, similar inequities are destined to continue.

Undesirable work assignments are another source of dissatisfaction. Even Party members resist unwanted transfers, thus further burdening the honest, hard-working administrative cadres whose disaffection would be a genuine loss to the regime. The amount of dissatisfaction with, and evasion of, mass labor assignments is unclear, but there is reason to believe that much effort goes into keeping such dissatisfaction under control.

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Finally, conscription for the PLA and for militia service has been far from popular and is even less so now under the cloud of popular apprehension aroused by recent war propaganda.

D. Prospects for Future Dissidence

The possibilities for widespread development of popular resistance are remote at present. The populace is tightly controlled in the densely populated areas. In the rural and hinterland areas, public security divisions and militia forces augment the PLA in physically controlling the territory of southern China so that resistance groups have no safe sanctuary. The most likely cause of dissidence that could lead to popular resistance, under changed circumstances, would be the force of sheer hunger or other types of suffering. Effective armed resistance, however, would require leadership of the sort that could only come from labor reform camps, from the military or civil cadre force, or from the ranks of ex-servicemen.

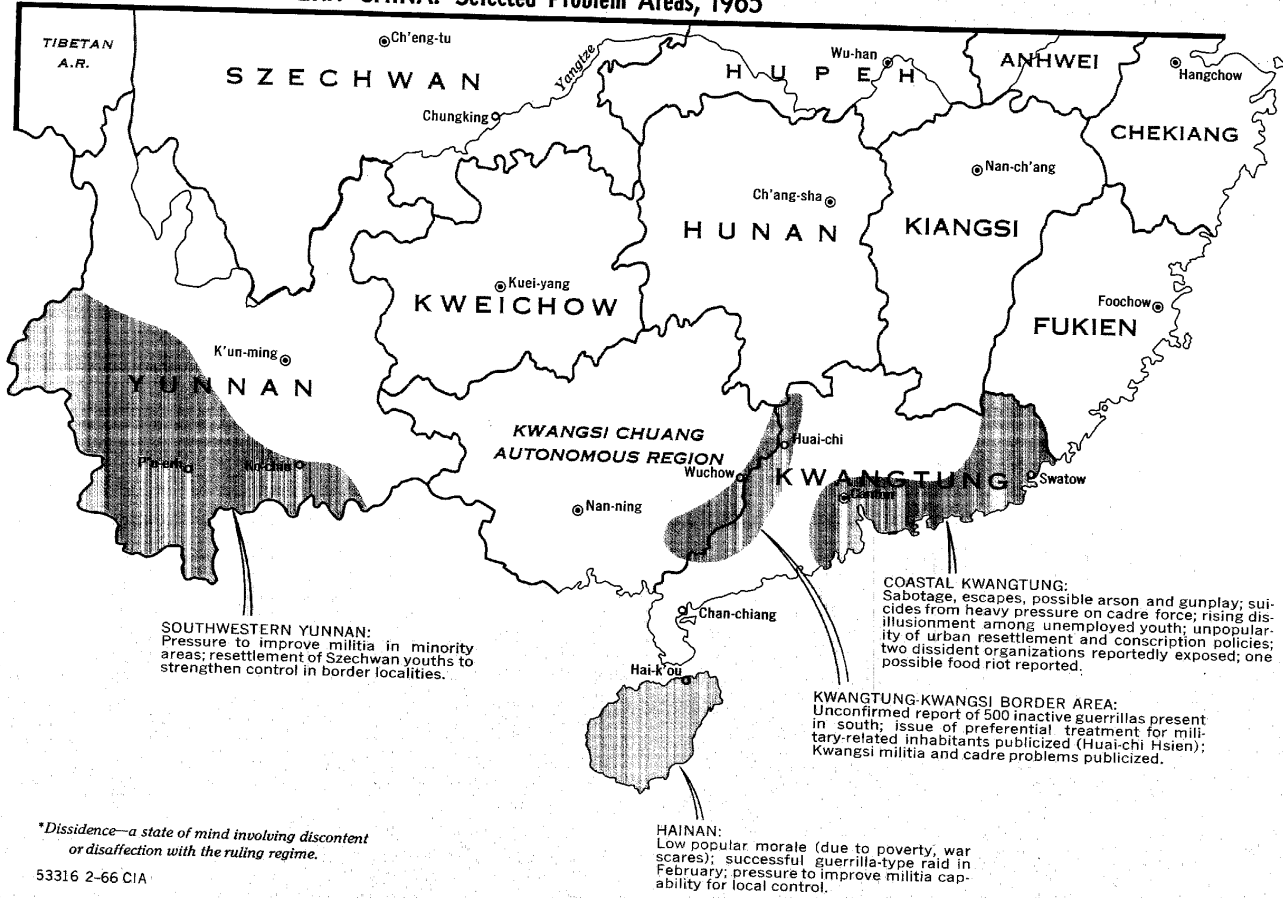
In the inland areas dissidence is likely to continue to be rationalized into resignation and apathy. Along the coasts, where tangible objectives for dissidence are easier to formulate, it could erupt into protest, which in turn could lead to political action. China's next revolution is likely to be a revolution in expectations (following the pattern of the rest of the world). Under any conditions that might loosen the security and control system, such as an increase in material well-being, sentiments typical of a consumer economy could easily start among the more sophisticated populations of Canton, Swatow, and other southern cities and spread swiftly to other major cities of China long before it had penetrated the countryside. The effect on the cadre force would probably be such as to require more tolerance of dissent than the regime presently anticipates, with correspondingly drastic consequences for its system of thought control.

Intraparty dissidence, unlike popular dissidence, is likely to grow out of the very principles of personal responsibility that the regime earnestly inculcates into its cadres. On the national scene intraparty resistance to the radicals who have been in command since 1955 could conceivably crystallize under impact of unanticipated events. In the special situation of southern China and especially Kwangtung, Party stalwarts know that the old "parochialist" element spoke for legitimate local interests. They see southern influence as weak in the national CCP, and they know the limitations on their own career prospects. However, they may not yet be conscious of the degree to which the southern regions have been slighted through the self-defeating biases of the regime in economic planning. They may not yet realize the degree to which the southern provinces are seemingly destined to fall still further behind the rest of the world in economic construction as time wears on. Needless to say, this process of disillusionment has some time yet to run its course and some distance to go before political consequences will be visible.

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**DISSIDENCE\* IN SOUTHERN CHINA: Selected Problem Areas, 1965**

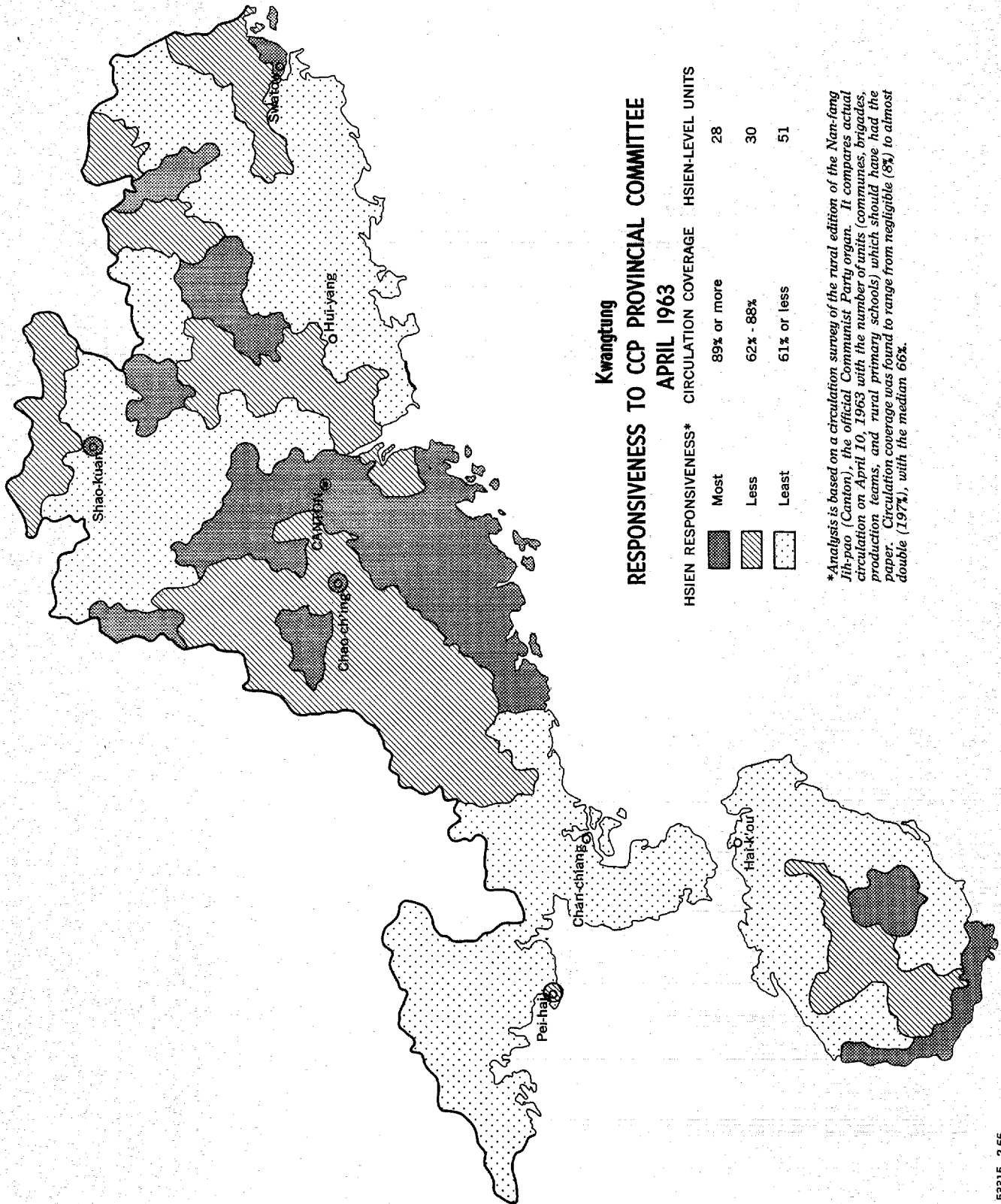


\*Dissidence—a state of mind involving discontent or disaffection with the ruling regime.

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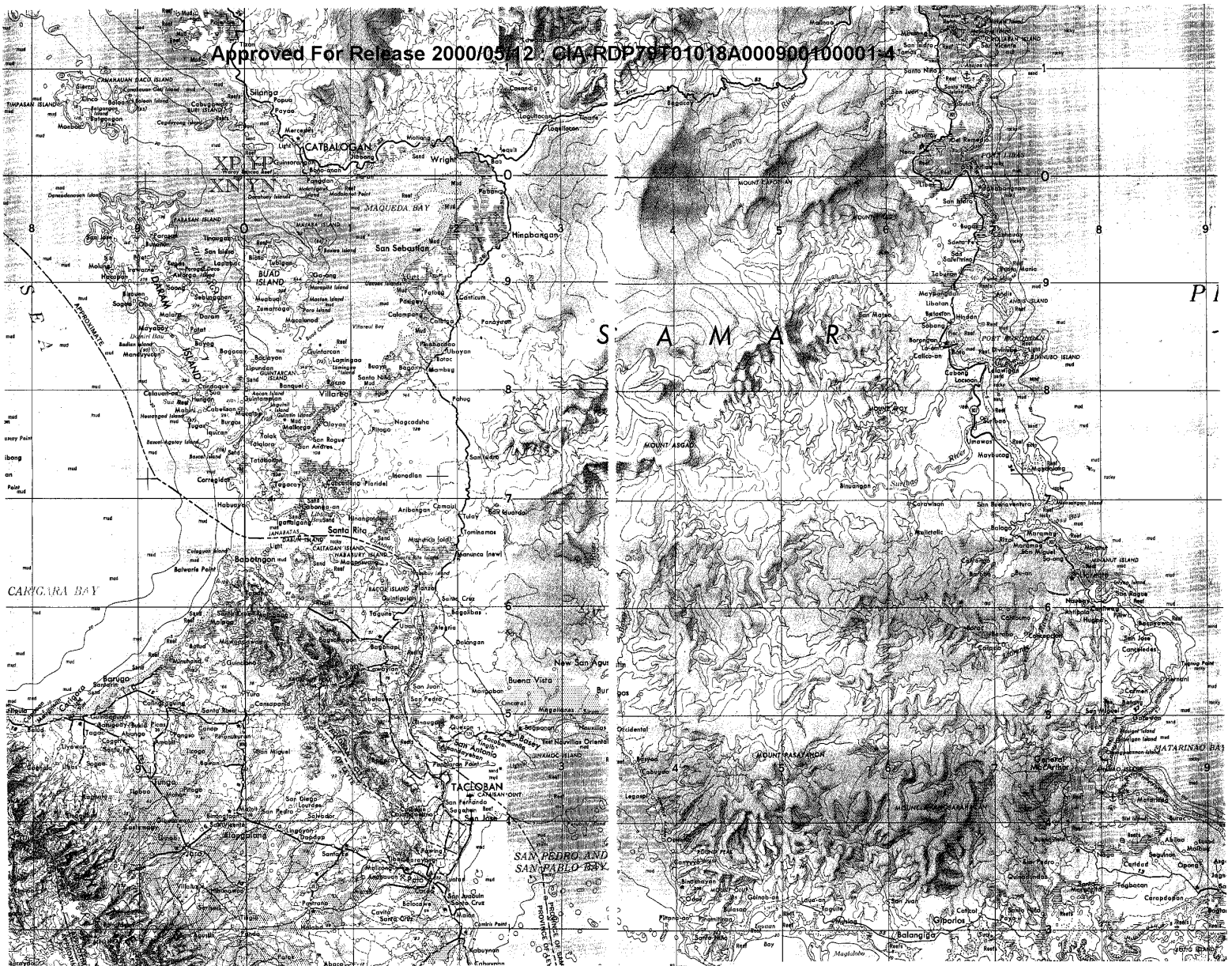
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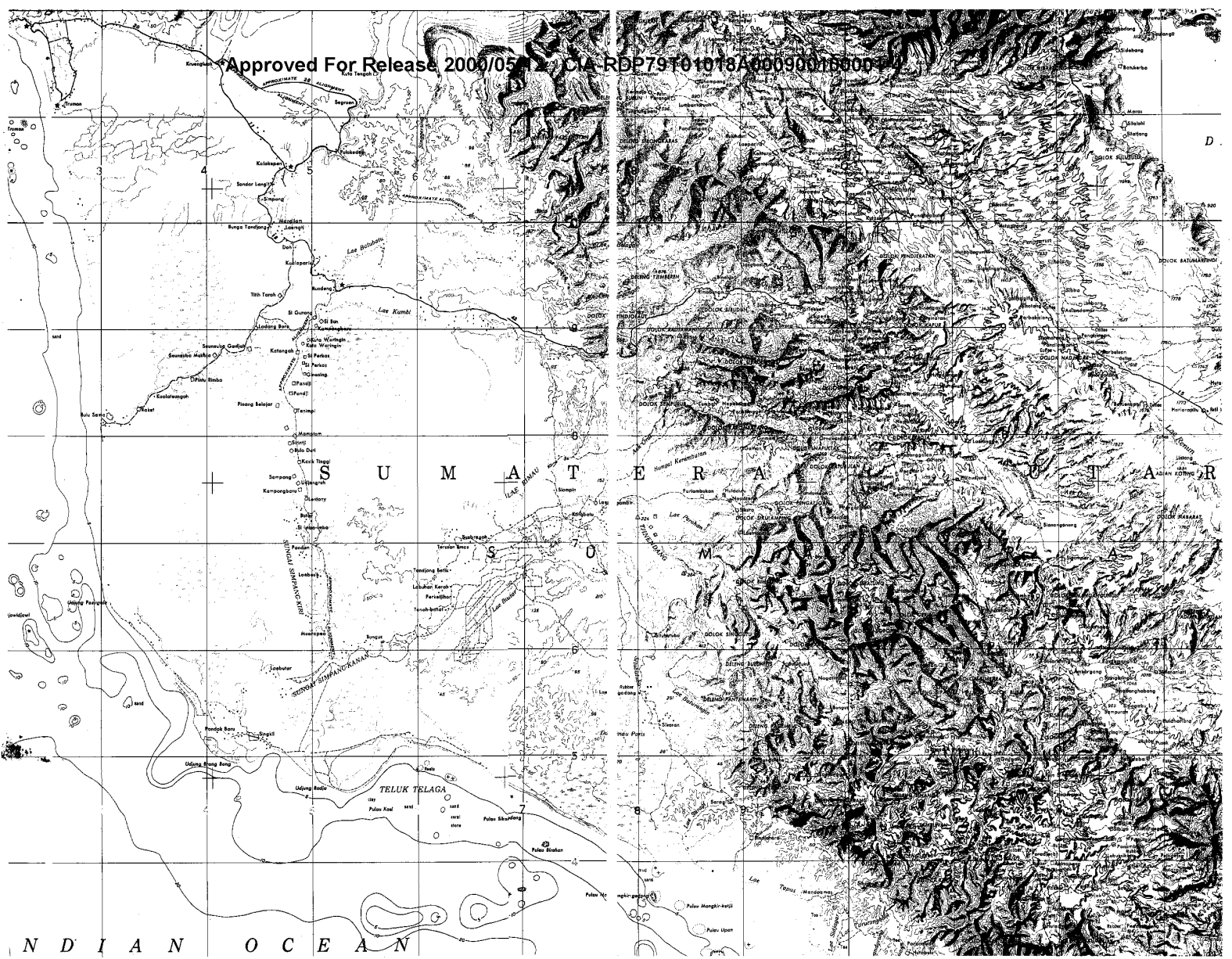


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