

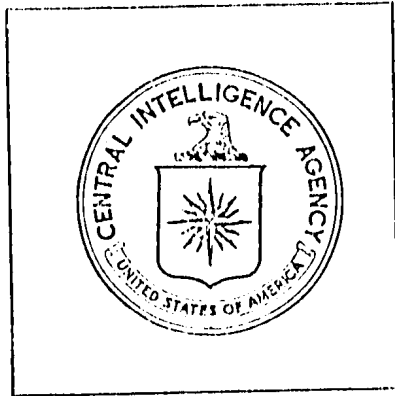
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China: Patterns of Population Movement

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June 1973

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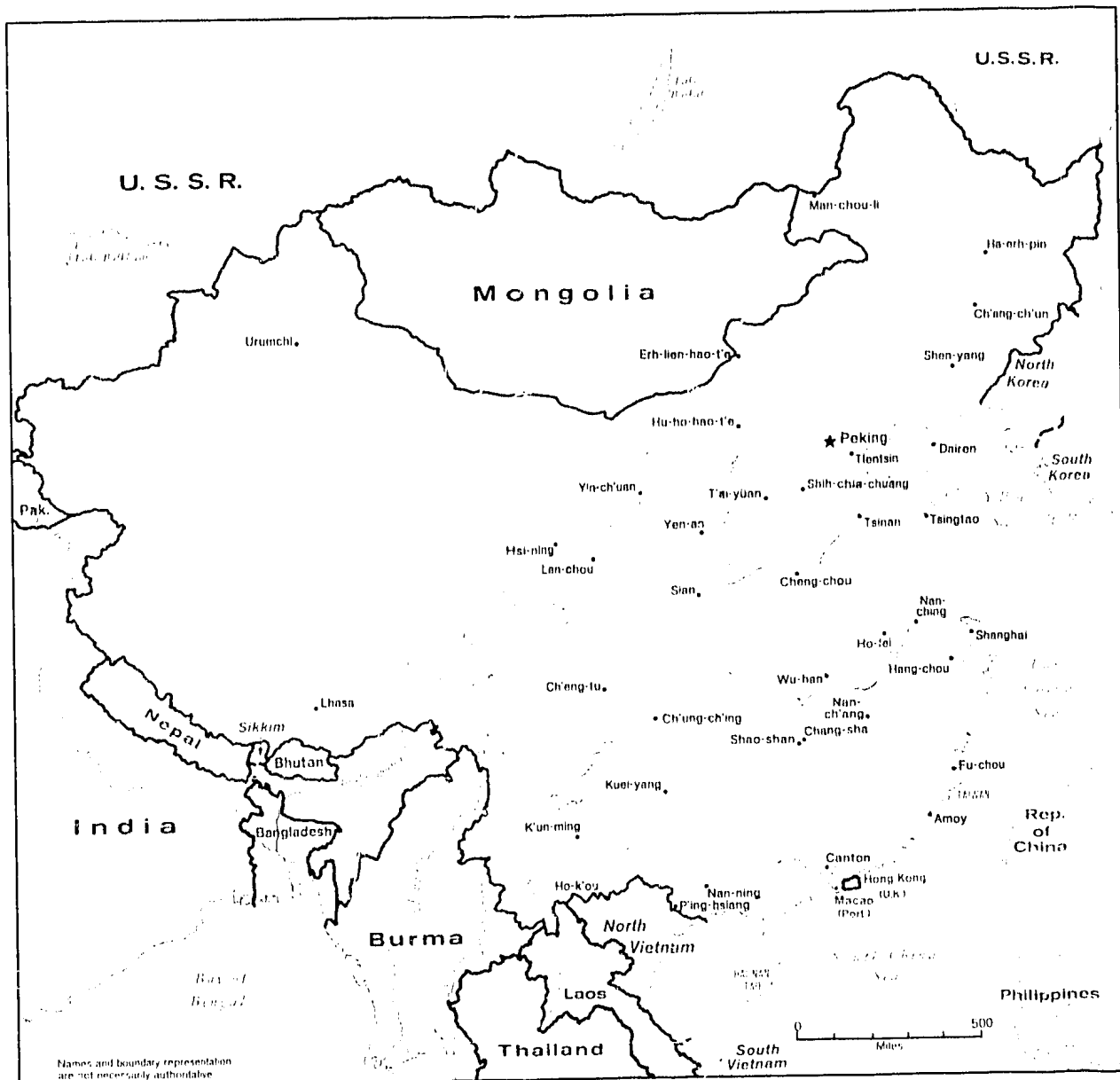
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Central Intelligence Agency
Directorate of Intelligence
June 1973

CHINA: PATTERNS OF POPULATION MOVEMENT

SUMMARY

Security controls are so pervasive in China that voluntary internal movement is difficult and external contacts are virtually prohibited. Short-distance travel--for agriculture, local industry, and familial visits--probably continues, however, much as in the past; and, despite official barriers, an uneven but massive rural-to-urban flow has been in progress since 1949 and has created a serious problem for the Chinese leadership. To alleviate this situation and to further its long-range economic development plans, the regime has forcibly moved millions of people to the sparsely populated frontier regions of the north and west and to other rural areas. Legal traffic abroad has been extremely limited except for that moving through Hong Kong. International movement into and out of the country will probably increase, however, as China's diplomacy and trade expand.

Traditionally, population movement within China was extremely localized and involved mostly village-to-market trips, reflecting a limited transport net and a largely rural populace. War, famine, and floods often distorted this pattern, causing widespread population dislocations. Since the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, these major causes of unpredictable population movement have been



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largely controlled or eliminated, while increased mobility has been made possible by a greatly expanded and improved transport net. Movement has been restricted, however, by government control measures.

Beginning in the mid-1950's, the PRC began to transfer large numbers of people, principally youth, to the countryside in programs designed to provide work for underemployed urban dwellers, to purge "bourgeois" attitudes, and to reclaim agricultural land in frontier provinces. The latest intensification of this long-term urban-rural resettlement program began in 1968 and reached a peak the following year. By 1971 the program had leveled off, but probably more than 20 million persons, mainly students and other young people, had been sent to rural areas. This recent "down-to-the-countryside" movement is a more complex and seemingly far-reaching program than earlier ones. Political objectives, including the "tempering" of youth in the countryside to create selfless Mao-motivated citizens, have been stressed. The upgrading of living conditions in the countryside also is an objective. The introduction of educated youth plus some teachers, medical personnel, and technicians (the latter usually on a temporary basis) may help reduce rural illiteracy, improve health standards, and bring modern technology to agricultural production.

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Internal Movement

1. Population movement in China today can be divided into two general categories, voluntary and enforced. The voluntary pattern of movement includes rural-to-urban flow, farm-to-market trips, tourist visits, and travel required to meet the needs of seasonal agricultural work. Since military service is highly popular, movement for military induction and deployment purposes is also included in this category. The second category, enforced movement of people, is comprised principally of urban-rural transfers and is often effected under the guise of a voluntary program. The most recent example of this type of movement in the PRC is the "down-to-the-countryside" program, which has several political and economic goals.

Voluntary Movement

Rural-to-Urban

2. The regime has a variety of mechanisms to control population movement including mandatory registration of the individual, the issuance of grain ration coupons in conjunction with registration, and the requirement of official permission to initiate most travel or change of residence. Each person is required to have papers indicating his residence in a certain commune, town, or city. Travel permits, issued by a local government unit or employer, stipulate the time and place of arrival and departure, and approved travel between town and country is fairly common to visit relatives and friends or see local attractions.

3. Although the PRC attempts to control all internal movement, a continual illegal flow of people to the cities has been under way since 1949, though no estimates are available on the size of this migration. "Black people" (non-registered residents) live in all major cities, their number recently swelled by the backflow of "down-to-the-countryside" youths and others displaced during and after the Cultural Revolution. This is recognized as a serious problem to the regime, and it reflects the ineffectiveness of PRC control measures, particularly their enforcement by local authorities. Quantitative information on the backflow

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however, is almost totally unavailable. If these illegal migrants are apprehended by the police, they are returned to their villages. The difficulty of sustaining life without work permits and ration cards--unless they can steal them--and the strains involved if friends or relatives provide help force many to return voluntarily to the countryside. Others try, some successfully, to escape to Hong Kong.

Farm-to-Market

4. Temporary short-distance movement, necessary for marketing and other agricultural tasks, continues much as in the past. Rural markets, where local produce raised on private plots may be sold or exchanged, were banned during the days of collectivization of agriculture and in the initial stages of the commune system but were reintroduced in the early 1960's. The amount of movement represented by this traditional rural activity is enormous in the aggregate, but distances traveled by each individual are short and in most cases by foot.

5. Longer distance travel has been facilitated in rural areas by the establishment of transport units consisting of a few state-owned trucks (boats in a few areas) which move grain and other products from the villages to processing, collecting, and distributing points. Some individual communes and factories also own a few vehicles, and public bus service is available in most rural areas. The availability of modern transportation has had only a limited effect upon normal patterns of population movement; it is most often used by cadres* and officials to conduct their affairs. The ordinary worker only occasionally uses the public bus system for village-to-market travel or for personal trips.

*All those, both within and outside the Party, who hold any posts in the bureaucratic hierarchies in China, from top to bottom.

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Seasonal Agricultural Work

6. There are no migratory farm workers in China. Harvesting, planting, and other farm chores are usually carried out by the local people. Most of the rural schooling is done during the slack farming season, enabling the rural young to receive some education without jeopardizing the agricultural economy. If help is needed, the local People's Liberation Army (PLA) unit or students from nearby cities "volunteer" their services. Even when help is not needed, urban students have at times been sent to the surrounding agricultural areas for "work experience."

Tourist

7. Tourist movement within China is minimal. It consists predominantly of trips by upper echelon government and military personnel and a few foreign visitors. Only during China's three national holidays--May Day (May 1), National Day (October 1), and the Chinese New Year Spring Festival (January-February)--is there an increase in movement to the larger cities, especially to Peking. At these times a 2- or 3-day holiday enables people to travel to see the sights and celebrations. Two areas often visited because of their historical importance in Chinese Communist history are Yen-an and Shao-shan. Yen-an, the "cradle of the Chinese revolution," located in the bleak highlands of northern Shensi, served as the Chinese Communist capital from 1935 until 1946. Shao-shan, near Chang-sha in Hunan Province, is Mao's birthplace and a much publicized and visited attraction.

8. Foreign (non-Chinese) travelers normally are restricted to a limited number of the larger cities and a few standard attractions: Peking, with a trip to the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall; Canton, where the biannual international trade fairs are held; and the industrial area around Shanghai. Others major cities may be included on tourist itineraries; visits to Szechwan, Sinkiang, Tibet, and sensitive frontier areas, however, are discouraged or prohibited. Depending on their interest, status, or propaganda value, visitors may tour a model commune, a school, university, industrial plant, and/or hospital.

Military Induction and Deployment

9. The PLA has an estimated strength of 3 million men. Each year approximately 10 million reach the conscription age of 18, but fewer than 1 million are inducted. Terms of service are subject to change but since late 1969 have been approximately 2 to 3 years for ground forces, 4 years for the navy, and 5 years for the air force.

10. Induction usually occurs during the slack agricultural season, December to February. In 1967, in an effort to recruit more youths from urban areas, a summer induction period was introduced to coincide with the period of school vacation for urban students. Rural youth, however, still constitute the bulk of inductees. After induction, new troops are generally sent to military camps within their province for one or two months after which they are permanently transferred to regular units elsewhere in China. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, the normal practice was to post inductees to another province within the military region from which they came. Since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, however, military units have frequently been rotated out of their home military regions.

11. Ground force units are deployed unevenly throughout China, corresponding roughly to the pattern of population density: troops are generally located near major urban areas and along rail lines. Until the spring of 1967, most ground force units had remained in place since the termination of the Korean War. Between 1967 and early 1969, however, major redeployments were carried out, primarily in conjunction with the Cultural Revolution, to maintain order in areas affected by factional disputes and clashes. Additional changes occurred in 1968-69 when several armies in Szechwan, Yunnan, and Kwangtung were rotated among these provinces to break ties between military personnel and the local population. Since 1969 still other shifts have been under way to increase armed strength in the military regions adjacent to the Soviet Union.

Enforced Movement

12. An uneven but continuous flow of people from the countryside to the cities has been the most persistent and serious population movement problem since the establishment

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of the PRC. A desire to escape from the spartan conditions in rural areas to higher wages and better living conditions, particularly during the collectivization and commune formation period (1954-58), has proven a powerful stimulus to the rural-urban flow. Poor harvests in 1954 and in the 1959-61 period further quickened the pace to the cities. Concomitantly, urban youths reached working age and graduates from all education levels entered the labor market. Unemployment and underemployment developed rapidly.

13. To reduce urban populations and provide employment for the surplus citizenry, the PRC initiated population programs in conjunction with long-range economic development plans. The regime initially encouraged, then forcibly and systematically began settlement of sparsely populated frontier regions of the north and west. Not only did the regime reduce excessive population densities in the eastern provinces, particularly the urban areas, but, equally important, it brought arable wasteland in the frontier provinces under cultivation. A likely additional important consideration was the desire to populate certain border sectors--particularly in Sinkiang--with Han Chinese colonizers to better control indigenous minority groups. Urban dwellers, most of them from the populous eastern cities, also were resettled to rural areas within their native provinces.

14. Political recalcitrants, unemployed workers, and students form the majority of those forced to move. Some demobilized soldiers are transferred to quasi-military units, most of them engaged in various types of land reclamation projects situated in the frontier provinces. Because of the forced nature of the moves and the failure of the Government at times to aid the settlers, a backflow--probably sizable--has been a feature of all these resettlement programs.

15. Travel restrictions were relaxed when the Red Guard movement was launched in August 1966, and the Government encouraged long-distance movement. Millions of youths, both urban and rural, answered the call to journey to Peking, while large numbers of resettlers seized the opportunity to leave their posts and return to their home towns. Many of those sent to the countryside apparently believed that the resettlement programs were tied to Liu Shao-chi's policies and that

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his downfall (1966) signified an end to their own rustication. Existing programs for rural development and population distribution were in abeyance during the ensuing political upheaval of the Red Guard movement and the Cultural Revolution, but, with the gradual recovery of political stability in 1968, the government again focused its attention upon population transfers and the continuing problem of educated unemployed youth.

16. The "down-to-the-countryside" program initiated in mid-1968 is comparable to previous urban-rural movements in China. The initial goal, for short term political expediency, was to remove disillusioned youths and the Red Guard from the cities and disperse them in small, controllable groups in the countryside. A second reason was to change the belief of the educated youth and cadre that fundamental differences exist between mental and physical work and between urban workers and peasants. Finally, the program was intended to upgrade living conditions in the countryside by improving rural educational levels and providing technically trained individuals.

Scope of Movement

17. Only rough estimates are available to indicate the scale of past and present enforced movements. Approximately 10 million people were moved to the border provinces and other rural areas during the 1950's and early 1960's. From 1968 to 1971 it is estimated that more than 20 million were moved. The gaps in reporting are so great that the actual number of persons affected may be much larger. Within the past year the focus of the program has changed, with current emphasis on urging 1973 middle-school graduates to go to the countryside voluntarily. The regime has acknowledged that work in rural areas is not popular with urban youth, and attempts apparently have been made to make rural service more palatable. Provision of adequate housing for new arrivals, for instance, is now being stressed in several areas as important to the success of the rustication program. Nevertheless, numbers involved during recent months appear to be far less than in the 1968-71 period.

18. Five major cities--Shanghai, Peking, Tientsin, Wu-han, and Canton--contributed many of the "sent-down" personnel destined for the more backward areas and those

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on the frontier. These five cities contain large industrial complexes, national universities, and technical schools. In line with the Government's objectives of regional self-sufficiency and economic development of the border regions, it is probable that many sent from these cities are technically trained students and workers.

19. During the 1950's and 1960's China's population movement programs aimed at long-distance, inter-province migrations from the over-populated east coast to the sparsely populated regions of the north, west, and southwest. The "down-to-the-countryside" movement in its earlier stages (1968-1969) also focused on long-distance migration, but later the emphasis changed to short-distance intra-province movement. Both types still exist, but short-distance movement now accounts for a larger percentage of the total. Movement out of the larger cities into isolated and backward rural areas within the same province generally covers only 50 to 150 miles. These remote areas often are situated in mountainous terrain, are cut off from the major transport links in the province, and lack most basic government services--schools, health clinics, and agricultural extension services.

Types of Personnel

20. Five occupational categories of personnel are involved in the present-day movement: students, cadres, teachers, medical personnel, and technical personnel. Each of these groups has been transferred for a different reason; some of the people have been transferred permanently and others temporarily, depending upon the nature of the work and the problems involved in the transfer.

21. Students. Students form by far the largest category of personnel, perhaps as many as 70 percent of all those transferred. Some 90 percent of the middle-school and university students of the classes of 1966 through 1971 were sent to PLA farms, state farms, rural construction projects, or rural communes. The majority of these transfers were permanent, although some students, after serving a 2- or 3-year stint, did have the opportunity to return to school or apply for work in the city. Since

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1971 urban jobs have increased and provided a reprieve for more university students. For the most part, students from lower school and some from middle school are still assigned permanently to communes and rural construction projects. Since 1968, tens of thousands of middle-school graduates from Peking, Sian, and other urban centers reportedly have settled near Yen-an.

22. Cadres. The transfer of cadres to temporary or permanent assignment in rural areas seems largely directed toward reforming the politically "errant," but the regime also seems interested in teaching them the requirements of agricultural production and in redirecting those who are superfluous in their administrative posts. In particular, cadres have been sent to Yen-an, usually for 6 months to 2 years. Such transfers have accompanied most earlier reform movements, but a larger number of cadres may be involved in the current movement than was the case in earlier years.

23. In the early part of the movement cadres were assigned permanently to posts in the administration of agricultural brigades or communes, but by mid-1969 most were being assigned to May 7th schools for relatively short periods of time. The majority of these schools, the first of which was established in May 1968, are actually farms set up in relatively primitive rural areas. Cadres sent to these farms are expected to undergo rigorous political training, including self-criticism, as well as manual labor.

24. Teachers. Teachers have been sent to the countryside for "ideological reform" and to provide faculty for additional schools in rural areas. In addition, the regime hopes that the "sent-down" teachers will be able to make more efficient use of local resources and thus lower the cost of establishing and maintaining the rural schools.

25. Medical Personnel. Since 1968 medical personnel have been transferred to rural areas on both a temporary (6 months to 3 years) and permanent basis to establish medical service cooperatives. They provide

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medical care, improve rural sanitation and health, and disseminate birth control information and devices. They also train health personnel, rudimentary para-medics called "barefoot doctors," who are predominantly "down-to-the-country" youth.

26. Technical and Scientific Personnel. Various factories, finance and trade units, and scientific and technical services centers have organized teams of technically trained workers, scientists, and engineers for temporary visits to rural areas. The practical experience provided by touring rural areas is supposed to provide information to their sponsoring organizations on agricultural problems and on the specific needs of the area they serve. The teams train peasants and contribute their skills to such problems as pest control, the construction of small plants, and the maintenance of agricultural tools and machinery.

International Movement of Population

Legal travelers

27. The international traveler is a rare though increasing sight in the PRC. Movement into and out of China is small, and tourist facilities are limited. The majority of China's international visitors are businessmen, government personnel, and Overseas Chinese. Others include seamen, who are seldom allowed off their ships, a handful of Asian scholars, an occasional journalist, and a few tourists.*

28. There are approximately 20,000 official or semi-official Chinese personnel stationed abroad--2,000 diplomatic and 18,000 economic, technical, and military. Most of the 18,000 are involved in building the Tan-Zam Railroad. Approximately 350 foreign diplomatic personnel resided in China in 1970; some of these commuted frequently between China and their home country.

*An important aspect of China's expanding diplomacy is the program that encourages foreign scientists and engineers to visit China: more than a thousand, of various nationalities, have been to China since mid-1970.

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29. Initial contact with China by outsiders usually occurs at the air terminals in Peking, Canton, Shanghai, Nan-ning and K'un-ming; through Hong Kong; or at the seaports. Trans-border movement between the PRC and her immediate neighbors other than Hong Kong is negligible. Tourist, government, and business travel is largely by air or through Hong Kong rather than by sea, and seamen predominate among foreign visitors to port cities.

30. Hong Kong is the most important entry/exit point for legal movement, and Overseas Chinese and Japanese businessmen comprise the bulk of travelers through this port. The volume of Overseas Chinese traffic remains fairly steady throughout the year. The majority of these travelers or their ancestors originally lived in southern China, especially Kwangtung and Fukien Provinces, and their visits are restricted to their former home village and to areas where their relatives reside, or to major cities.

31. In contrast to the steady flow of Overseas Chinese through Hong Kong, the travel of businessmen to the PRC peaks with the Spring and Autumn Trade Fairs, held at Canton in late April and in October. More than 25,000 foreigners attended the Spring Trade Fair in April 1973. Most businessmen must travel through Hong Kong since the Chinese air links with other countries are so limited.

Illegal Travelers

32. Hong Kong continues to be the major haven for illegal refugees from the mainland. After the mass exodus in the spring of 1962 the outward flow declined, principally because of more stringent Chinese security measures and more stable internal conditions. Increases in the number of refugees in 1971, however, reflected the growing political disaffection of the urban youth forced to settle in the countryside. Almost 90 percent of the 3,894 refugees apprehended by Hong Kong authorities in 1971 were

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"down-to-the-countryside" youth.* Most refugees arrive by swimming or by small boat, but a handful walk across the heavily patrolled border.** The peak refugee period is in the warmer months, April to November, when swimming is most feasible. Refugee movement into Macao is small, averaging 25 per month. Macao, as does Hong Kong, has an extradition agreement with the PRC to return escapees to mainland custody, but it does not rigorously honor the agreement.

Other Transborder Movement

33. Transborder movement, other than with Hong Kong and Laos, is minimal because of restrictions placed on border crossings by both China and its neighbors. Sizable numbers of Chinese workers have moved into northwest Laos in recent years to construct roads. Chinese construction troops apparently have left North Vietnam, and current transborder movement there is slight. To the west, the China-Burma border is officially closed, but an unknown amount of movement is connected with anti-Burmese Government insurgents who control large areas of northern Burma and periodically cross into China to obtain arms and guerrilla training.

34. Movement along routes across the South Asian border, once heavily traveled by traders and religious pilgrims, is no longer permitted. A small amount of illicit movement probably occurs, particularly by herdsmen who recognize good pasturage but not international boundaries and by Tibetans filtering into Nepal and India.

*This total is approximately one-fourth of the illegal immigrants. The Hong Kong Government has an immigration quota of 50 immigrants a day from China (approximately 18,000 per year), but a few persons have been allowed to leave China legally in recent years. Hong Kong is therefore willing to tolerate illegal immigration up to that level without serious concern.

**See Appendix.

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The Chinese, by agreement, constructed two motorable roads across their border: one is through the Karakoram Mountains into Pakistan (Karam Highway) and the other through the Himalayas into Nepal (Kathmandu-Kodari Highway). Transborder movement on these roads is negligible.

35. Rigid security measures are in effect along the USSR, Mongolian, and North Korean borders, and in recent years only a trickle of movement, legal or illegal, has been reported. The last known major movement was the exodus from Sinkiang in 1962 of thousands of Uighurs and Kazakhs to the Soviet Union. Most of the motorable roads linking the PRC with its neighbors cross these borders, but with the possible exception of North Korea the roads are closed.

36. Passenger rail traffic between the PRC and its neighbors is scant except for that between Hong Kong and Canton. Almost all transborder movement by rail is freight traffic.

Future Trends

37. Internal population movement probably will continue at present levels. Although expansion and improvement of the transportation network and public transport are anticipated, they will be little used by the vast majority of the PRC's citizens. Strict controls will continue to prevent much travel other than that sanctioned by the government--transfers of industrial and other urban workers, military-related travel, and the movement of cadres and government officials.

38. The government-planned, usually forced transfers of literally millions of people that have taken place since the mid-1950's seem destined to continue. Still present are the problems of urban growth and lack of urban employment, the principal reasons for these periodic resettlement programs. The brunt of relocation programs will probably continue to fall upon youth, both educated and uneducated, who enter the labor force at a yearly rate of 15 to 20 million.

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39. Forced resettlement to physically harsh and intellectually sterile environments will continue to produce negative reactions. Massive doses of political indoctrination on the benefits of socialist construction and "making revolution" in the countryside will not overcome a lack of enthusiasm. Political discontent and cynicism among those moved will have to be balanced against the need to reduce urban pressures and augment the rural labor force, particularly for land reclamation and conservation projects. The latest rustication program has added a new dimension, however, with its emphasis upon providing an infusion of relatively high-skilled and well-educated persons into the rural economy. This program may make short-range sense, but accomplishments and long-range effects are still unclear.

40. Illegal population movement presumably will continue, its magnitude dependent on many factors. The number of persons involved in rural resettlement programs and the degree of coercion used will influence the size of the eventual backflow. Poor crop years spark additional movement to the cities or to the exiles' native provinces even if the alternative upon return is to live "black." Illegal movement and residence also depends upon the strictness with which local officials and security personnel enforce regulations: at times a "look-the-other-way" attitude has permitted a significant and successful backflow from the countryside.

41. Until recently, exit from and entry to China was almost as difficult as it was during the late 18th century, the heyday of the Manchu dynasty. Exit permits for PRC citizens still are infrequently granted, and even petty border trade--traditional along some sectors of China's long international frontier--has virtually ceased to exist. Improved PRC foreign relations have allowed a small influx of travelers, many of whom the Chinese consider to be important opinion-makers, to tour selected areas in China. A continuing albeit slow and carefully regulated increase in commercial and tourist traffic is probable, barring further political convolutions such as the Cultural Revolution.

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APPENDIX

Refugees From the China Mainland

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Table 1

Hong Kong: Total Number of Arrests of Illegal
Immigrants By Method of Travel
(1968-1971)

<u>Method of Travel</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971*</u>	<u>Totals</u>
By Swimming	200	724	1,163	1,070	3,157
By Boat	2,339	515	413	117	3,384
By Land	50	34	99	78	261
Totals	2,589	1,273	1,675	1,265	6,802

*Total number of arrests for January through June only.

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Table 2

Hong Kong: Approximate Number of Arrests
 of Illegal Immigrants by
 Month and Method of Travel

	Method of Travel			Total
	By Swimming*	By Boat*	By Land*	
January**	0	598	30	628
February	5	885	32	922
March	27	581	28	636
April	164	132	29	325
May	586	84	13	683
June	601	62	25	688
July	431	20	12	463
August	436	364	10	810
September	336	65	15	416
October	414	108	12	534
November	153	183	20	356
December	4	302	35	341
TOTAL	3,157	3,384	261	6,802

*Figures were derived by totalling monthly arrests made during the years 1968-1971. Figures are approximations and are intended to show peak periods of arrival by the various methods of entry.

**Total number of arrests from January through June 1971 included. Data for July-December 1971 not available.

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PRC: Railroads



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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA CIVIL AVIATION ROUTES

DOMESTIC



0 Miles 500

International Carriers

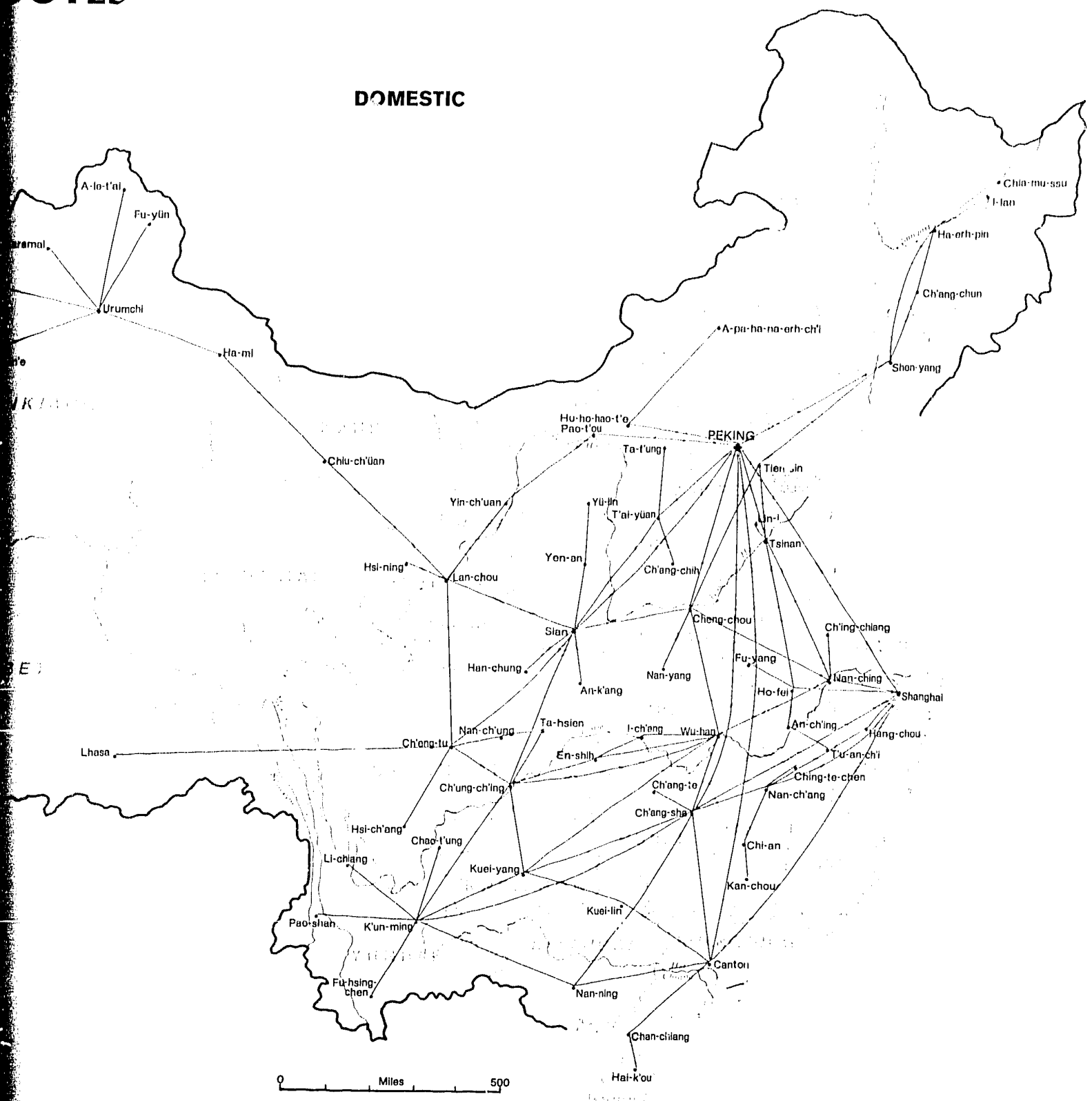
- CAAC People's Republic of China
- EAL Ethiopia
- Air France France
- CAAK North Korea
- PIA Pakistan
- Aeroflot U.S.S.R.

NAVES AND BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION ARE NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE

CHINA ROUTES

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DOMESTIC



NAMES AND BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION
ARE NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE

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