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Intelligence Report

Policy Issues in the Purge of Lin Piao

(Reference Title: POLO L)

reflected in "The Fall
of Lin Piao" in CR -
July/Sept '73 -

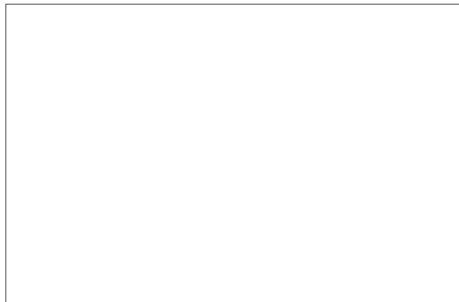
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POLICY ISSUES IN THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO

MEMORANDUM FOR RECIPIENTS

This study finds that the principal -- and still unresolved -- issue behind the momentous purge of Lin Piao and associates, has been the issue of civilian versus military control over China's political system. Although dramatic, differences over foreign policy -- for example, whether China should seek improved relations with the US and/or the USSR -- have apparently not been central to the purge. Certain differences do seem to have been present concerning the style and pacing of domestic policies; but, by and large, back of the political-military struggle for power, questions of policy have been weapons used to attack and undermine domestic adversaries, rather than matters of substantive difference.

In preparing the study this Staff has benefited from the comments and contributions of a number of other offices of the Central Intelligence Agency. Because of the still incomplete nature of available data, however, the study's views represent the judgments essentially of this Staff and of its author. Further comments will be welcome, and should be addressed to the study's author of this Staff.

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Hal Ford
Chief, DD/I Special Research Staff

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POLICY ISSUES IN THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO

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POLICY ISSUES IN THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO

Summary

In very broad and somewhat simplified terms, the origin of the purge of Lin Piao's "conspiratorial clique" is believed to be the same as the origin of the Cultural Revolution -- Mao Tse-tung's conviction that he would have to remove his designated successor as the leader of a "disloyal opposition" in order to regain control over the political apparatus in China. Demonstrating the difficulty of delegating power within China's political system, the Cultural Revolution and the Lin Piao affair have been in essence struggles for control of the political apparatus between Mao and his designated successors. Within this larger context of a struggle for power, policy issues become primarily weapons for use in, rather than the causes per se of, such struggle.

The supreme irony of the Cultural Revolution, undertaken in order to enable Mao Tse-tung to regain control over a "bureaucratic" Party apparatus, is that it ended with the creation of a new Army-dominated apparatus even less responsive to Mao's direction and control. In a very real sense, the growing disagreement over the respective roles of civilian and military authority in the period from 1967 to 1971 reflected mounting friction over the roles of Mao and Lin in the new structure of power. When Mao first suspected and then became convinced that Lin was opposing his efforts to re-establish civilian Party control, the issue of civilian versus military control became the central issue in a protracted political struggle which would lead in time to the fall of Lin Piao.

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Although personal attitudes and impressions are hard to document, the record does seem to indicate clearly Mao's growing disillusionment with the performance of Lin Piao and the military apparatus over a period of time dating back to the spring of 1969, when Mao issued the first of many warnings to Army representatives serving in the new Revolutionary Committee structure to correct their defective work-style. In these early warnings, Mao characterized this work-style as "arrogant and complacent" and "crude and careless," defects which he charged had led the PLA-dominated apparatus to commit "mistakes" in the implementation of regime policies.

Mao's growing distrust of his chosen successor was manifested dramatically in March 1970 when Mao decided to remove the post of Chairman of the State from the new draft Chinese People's Republic Constitution. Lin apparently interpreted this decision, which confirmed Chou En-lai as the de facto head of the government, as in effect disinheriting him as the successor. This helps to explain why Lin Piao (who saw Mao withdrawing his right to the succession), Chen Po-ta (who was vulnerable, at a time when the policy line was shifting to the Right, as the exemplar of "ultra-leftism") and four top-ranking military leaders (who viewed Mao's escalating pressure on the military apparatus as a threat to themselves) banded together "to prepare and launch a surprise attack" -- as the Party documents explaining the Lin affair now assert -- at the Second Plenum at Lushan in August 1970.

Since it was apparent that Lin was challenging him as the head of a powerful military organization, Mao was compelled to be cautious and circumspect in taking action against him.

any action against Lin at this juncture without concrete proof of conspiracy would have aroused opposition from military

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leaders and might have resulted in civil war. Instead, Mao at the Second Plenum intensified the continuing pressure on Lin's military apparatus by initiating a "criticize revisionism and rectify work-style" campaign which would dominate China's political life throughout the following year.

Since the road to power in the Cultural Revolution of both Lin Piao and the PLA had been one of "giving prominence to politics," the central charge in this campaign -- that an overemphasis on politics had resulted in "Leftist deviationism" in the implementation of Mao's policy line -- served to undercut one of the most important justifications for Lin's and the PLA's continued right to rule. The generally negative response of military authorities throughout China to this rectification campaign indicated, moreover, that they were quite aware that it threatened their continued domination of the political structure. The struggle between Mao and Lin for control of the political-military apparatus had reached an impasse, soon to explode in the bizarre sequence of events beginning with an abortive Lin-sponsored attempt to assassinate Mao and culminating in Lin's fiery death in a plane crash in Mongolia.

If it is true that Mao even before the Ninth Party Congress suspected Lin of opposing Party leadership over the Army, there is reason to believe that Mao sensed this opposition first in a disagreement over the scale of the purge within the Party. This was a disagreement not only over the extent to which the old Party was to be purged but also, as a corollary, over the criteria to be used in selecting new Party cadres. The implications of the shift following the Ninth Party Congress -- to emphasize professional qualifications rather than revolutionary criteria in the selection of new Party leaders -- were clear. Many of these were to be old Party cadres who,

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having been properly educated and "transformed," were to be "liberated" and returned to positions of authority. Sensing a threat to their continued exercise of political power, both radical ideologues and military leaders had reason to join forces to carry out what is now called an "ultra-leftist" cadre policy characterized either by wholesale purging of old Party cadres or "failing to liberate cadres on time."

The mechanism for carrying out this "ultra-leftist" cadre policy was the May 7 Cadres School, an institution to which old Party cadres were sent for a refresher course in the study of Mao Thought -- as well as hard physical labor -- and where through faithful performance of these duties they could demonstrate anew their loyalty to Chairman Mao and Mao's revolutionary line. The flaw in this arrangement was that these schools were run by the PLA, with military leaders empowered to decide whether the old cadres had passed the test of political loyalty. The charge that the radical ideologues of the Cultural Revolution Group and officers of the PLA abused this authority to prevent the rehabilitation of veteran Party cadres and thus perpetuate their own power is both credible and supported by developments at the time.

A highly dramatic and visible issue, the role of foreign policy in domestic political conflict in general and in the Lin Piao affair in particular, must be approached with great care. There is a strong temptation, for example, to define a priori the foreign policy issue in the Lin Piao affair in terms of a dispute concerning the triangular relationship between China, the Soviet Union and the United States, with one group favoring a rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the other with the United States. In fact, it appears that Mao, Lin, Chou and the top PLA leaders were all agreed that the Soviet Union constituted the gravest military threat to China and that policy differences vis-a-vis the USSR were confined to questions of degree and emphasis.

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The dispute concerned not so much which of the two great powers, Russia or America, China should conciliate, but whether China should switch from the isolationist and confrontationist foreign policy posture of the Cultural Revolution to a more flexible and pragmatic approach. Lin Piao is clearly on record as one of the principal architects of what might be called the "revolutionary model" of foreign policy which dominated China's foreign relations during the Cultural Revolution. Since Chou En-lai personified the post-Cultural Revolution turn toward what might be called a "nationalist model" of foreign policy, the dispute over the issue of foreign policy in a real sense was a dispute between these two leaders, each striving to enlist support for his views. The record shows, moreover, that Chairman Mao backed Chou throughout most of this struggle, providing decisive support in the final showdown debate when Lin stood up in a Central Committee meeting to oppose the proposed visit of President Nixon to China.

Lin based his opposition to President Nixon's visit not so much on considerations of power as of ideology, portraying negotiations with the United States as a betrayal of the Chinese and world revolutions. It seems fairly clear, moreover, that although Lin used the Soviet Union as a counter in his argument against the Nixon visit, he did so more from a desire to score debating points or to strengthen his ideological argument than from any prior understanding with the Soviet leadership. Just as Mao and Chou had earlier attacked policies with which Lin was directly associated as "ultra-leftist," Lin and his military supporters were now attacking the Mao-Chou policy of negotiations with the United States as "too rightist."

With respect to economic policy, the central charge leveled against Lin Piao is that, whereas Liu Shao-chi had committed the Rightist error in the early 1960's of overemphasizing production at the expense of politics,

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Lin and his colleagues were guilty of the "ultra-leftist" error of overemphasizing politics at the expense of production. Although grossly exaggerated and distorted, there is an element of truth in this indictment of the military-dominated apparatus for having handled poorly the complicated task of rebuilding the economy following the disruption of the Cultural Revolution. The end result of radical ideologues and military leaders together controlling the implementation of economic policy in the period following the Ninth Party Congress was an "ultra-leftist" tendency to go beyond Mao's policy guidelines, a tendency expressed first in setting unrealistic goals and then in resorting to coercion in an attempt to achieve these goals.

Characterized as "Chairman Mao's new economic line," these guidelines were reminiscent of the economic strategy which had produced the Great Leap Forward, only this time presented in a more reasoned and moderate vein in an apparent effort to take account of earlier mistakes. A central feature of these guidelines was Mao's call for a sustained high rate of economic development to be achieved primarily by mobilizing China's huge underemployed labor force to carry out Leap Forwards in agriculture and medium-and-small-scale industry. In this effort to undertake simultaneous Leap Forwards in both industry and agriculture -- the entire undertaking to rely heavily on political indoctrination and ideological incentives -- there was ample room for controversy in the allocation of blame when the effort began to founder in early 1970.

Among the reasons for revising China's Fourth Five Year Plan at or shortly after the Second Plenum in August 1970, the basic reason was that the attempt to carry out a "practical" Leap Forward had failed. Another reason for the change was the need to reverse the trend toward decentralization of economic and administrative power and to re-establish centralized control over the

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economy. A third reason, revealed by Chou En-lai in discussing a dispute within the leadership over "guns versus butter," was the difficulty which had been experienced in attempting to shift the burden for the development of China's agriculture and local industry to the provincial level.

In this debate over the age-old question of "guns versus butter" (which would be discussed in the press as the question of whether industry should be developed with "electronics" or "steel" at the center), there was a natural basis for alliance between the radical planners and the military. For to the extent that the ideological view of Chinese man (as willing to subordinate individual to collective or national goals) prevailed, there would be more funds available in the central budget for the development of advanced weapons and military industry. That such an alliance, whether tacit or overt, did in fact exist is suggested, moreover, by the content of the public discussion of this issue.

Another policy issue was the undertaking following the Cultural Revolution to reform China's rural communes. This constituted an attempt to revive a number of the original features of China's commune system. This time, however, these radical reforms were not to be imposed from above by administrative fiat, but rather were to be accepted "voluntarily" by a peasantry whose ideological consciousness had been raised as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

The vehicle for the "voluntary" introduction of these reforms was a nation-wide campaign initiated in the fall of 1968 of learning from and emulating the model Tachai agricultural production brigade, a collective farm so advanced that it had eliminated private plots, merged production teams and instituted a system of income distribution combining both socialist and Communist features.

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Simply put, the problem facing the "leading comrades" at all levels in carrying out the "learn from Tachai" campaign was how to persuade China's peasants "voluntarily" to produce more and consume less in order to accelerate economic development.

That this campaign was based on a utopian view of human nature was demonstrated by reports of rising peasant discontent throughout 1969-1970. Confronted with these reports and with a threatened decrease in production, the Maoist leadership was compelled step by step to abandon these radical rural reforms, so that by the Second Plenum in August 1970 it had returned once again to the rural institutional system to which China had retreated in the early 1960's. In explaining how this nation-wide "learn from Tachai" campaign (which clearly had the approval of Chairman Mao at the outset) had gone so badly awry, the basic charge against Chen Po-ta and Lin Piao concerning rural policy is not that they opposed Chairman Mao, as was the case in foreign policy, but rather that they encouraged -- with evil intent -- the "overzealous implementation" of Mao's rural policy guidelines.

Although other policy issues appear now to be largely settled, the central policy issue in the Lin Piao affair -- the issue of civilian versus military control over China's political system -- has yet to be resolved.

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Mao and Chou are quite aware that the task of regaining control over an Army-dominated political apparatus is much more formidable than the earlier task undertaken in the Cultural Revolution of regaining control over a Party-dominated apparatus. Relying once again on a rectification-and-purge campaign to accomplish this difficult task, Mao informed regional military leaders more than a year ago (even before Lin's abortive coup attempt) that the time had come for the PLA to give up the political role it had played during the Cultural Revolution and concern itself with military affairs.

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The amount of progress achieved during the past year in returning political power to civilian Party leadership in Communist China is difficult to determine. Party documents indicate that more than 30 central and regional military leaders have been purged as members of Lin Piao's "conspiratorial clique," and many more military leaders are missing. Nearly all of the key military region commands have, as Mao directed, made self-criticisms and expressed their determination hereafter "to respect, support and observe" civilian Party leadership. Several well-documented meetings of central and provincial leaders in Peking in recent months, together with the rehabilitation of a number of Party figures, also suggest that progress is being made in the civilianization of China's political structure.

Until such time as the identity of those holding the top positions in the new Party and government apparatus is known, it would be prudent to reserve final judgment on the outcome of this effort to return China to civilian rule. It would also be prudent, however, to recognize that Mao Tse-tung has demonstrated repeatedly his ability in the face of great odds to rectify and purge, if not finally to control, the political apparatus in China.

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POLICY ISSUES IN THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO

Introduction

By 1964 Mao Tse-tung had lost effective control over much of the Party hierarchy set up by his 'successor,' and also over the state administrative apparatus... Liu Shao-ch'i and his like-minded comrades... utilized the Mao cult in theory and slighted Marxism in practice... Mao was convinced that the people and Party rank and file were with him but were misled by his disloyal opposition.
 -- Edgar Snow, "Aftermath of the Cultural Revolution," in The New Republic, 10 April 1971.

Mao Tse-tung said that his object in launching the Cultural Revolution had been to renew the leadership and to restore to the revolution that spirit that had characterized it in 1949. It was misleading to look for policy motives -- for instance, economic or foreign policy -- behind it.
 -- Edgar Snow, Comments On His Visit to China, March 1971.

In very broad and somewhat simplified terms, the origin of the purge of Lin Piao's "conspiratorial clique" is believed to be the same as the origin of the Cultural Revolution -- Mao Tse-tung's conviction that he would

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have to remove his designated "successor" as the leader of a "disloyal opposition" in order to regain "effective control" over the political apparatus in China. As Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping were charged with corrupting the Party and state apparatus with a form of Rightist "revisionism" in the early 1960's, so Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta are now charged with corrupting the post-Cultural Revolution apparatus with a form of Leftist "revisionism," the end result in each case being the sabotage and failure of Mao's "correct" policies. As the latest and most striking example of a recurring phenomenon in the Chinese Communist political system, Lin and Chen are being used as scapegoats for the failure of Mao's Cultural Revolution policies.

Demonstrating the difficulty of delegating power within China's political system, the Cultural Revolution and the Lin Piao affair have been in essence struggles for control of the political apparatus between Mao and his designated successors. To Mao, the fact that the apparatus is not responsive to his directives and policy guidelines is evidence that his successor is attempting to expand his power base by creating an "independent kingdom." To his designated successor, familiar with Mao's political work-style, the fact that Mao then launches a rectification campaign against his apparatus -- the Party in the case of Liu Shao-chi, the Army in the case of Lin Piao -- is a clear sign that in time he too will have to undergo this process of "rectification."

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It is in this context of mounting distrust and suspicion between Mao and his successor that the role of policy and policy issues in the Cultural Revolution and the purge of Lin Piao must be viewed. Within this larger

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context of a struggle for power -- with Mao convinced that his successor is conspiring to take away more and more of his power, and his successor convinced that Mao is intent upon disgracing and purging him -- policy issues become primarily weapons for use in the struggle, rather than the causes, per se, of such struggle. The struggle over policy issues, moreover, has not involved competing policies so much as charges of defective implementation of Maoist policies. Whereas Liu Shao-chi was charged with sabotaging Mao's policies from the Right through willful obstructionism, Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta are now charged with sabotaging Mao's policies from the Left by carrying them to excess -- and with evil intent.

In sum, policy issues in the Maoist political system are concerned basically with considerations of prestige and power. To the victor in policy struggles (so far Mao) belongs the spoils of infallibility, to the vanquished the ignominy of political disgrace and almost certainly, in the case of Lin Piao, death.

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The Issue of Civilian Versus Military Control

The Army... has now taken power in 7,000 local units [of government]... By and by we want to pull the Army back from its dominant position in the local units. But that can only be done after we have found new leaders.

-- Lin Piao, Speech at Central Committee Work Conference, 30 March 1967.

There is a certain uneasiness among some Party members about the power role inherited by the Army following the break-up of the Party bureaucracy during the Cultural Revolution... Is there not a tendency for high military officers to become overlords of the Party? An 'army dictatorship'?

-- Edgar Snow, "The Army and the Party," in The New Republic, 22 May 1971.

The supreme irony of the Cultural Revolution, undertaken in order to enable Mao Tse-tung to regain "effective control" over a "bureaucratic" Party apparatus, is that it ended with the creation of a new Army-dominated apparatus even less responsive to Mao's direction and control. As indicated by Lin's statement cited above, Mao and Lin were agreed in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution that this dominant political role of the Army was only a temporary expedient until the violence and disorder of the Cultural Revolution subsided and "new leaders" could be found. To understand the most important of the many policy issues in the purge of Lin Piao, it

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is necessary to understand how Mao and Lin came to disagree on the central issue of civilian versus military control over China's political system.

In a very real sense, the growing disagreement over the respective roles of civilian and military authority in the period from 1967 to 1971 reflected mounting friction over the roles of Mao and Lin in the new structure of power. As Mao turned away from the "destructive" phase of the Cultural Revolution (centering on the destruction of his opponents entrenched within the old Party and government apparatus) to the "constructive" phase of defining post-Cultural Revolution domestic and foreign policies and building a new political apparatus, he began to turn increasingly to Chou En-lai for advice and assistance, and to stress the need for rehabilitation of civilian "veteran Party cadres" as more experienced and expert in carrying out these complicated tasks. Sensing Mao's increasing reliance upon Chou En-lai, and Mao's concurrent shift toward a more moderate policy line as a threat to his position as the successor, Lin then began to turn to the Army (his other major base of power aside from Mao) and to Chen Po-ta (the architect of a number of the Leftist policies of the Cultural Revolution) for support in a struggle for the succession. When Mao first suspected and then became convinced that Lin was opposing his efforts to re-establish civilian Party control, the issue of civilian versus military control became the central issue in a protracted political struggle which would lead in time to the fall of Lin Piao.

Although personal attitudes and impressions are hard to document, the record does seem to indicate clearly Mao's growing disillusionment with the performance of Lin Piao and the military apparatus over a period of time, dating back at least as far as the Ninth Party Congress in the spring of 1969.

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events which culminated in Lin's abortive coup attempt began in early 1969 when Mao issued the first of many warnings to Army representatives serving in the new Revolutionary Committee structure to correct their defective work-style. Mao in these warnings characterized this work-style variously as "arrogant and complacent" or "crude and careless," defects which he charged (for example, in his 28 April 1969 speech to the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee) were responsible for "mistakes" in the implementation of regime policies. Coupled with this early warning against Army mistakes in policy implementation was the charge appearing in an August 1969 Red Flag article that these "leading cadres" in the new structure of power were violating the requirement of "collective leadership"; that is, were slighting or suppressing the viewpoints of the civilian components of these Revolutionary Committees, and thus were guilty, as subsequently charged, of "one-man rule."

In a series of articles published in November 1969, Mao's criticism intensified with the leveling of a new and more serious charge against the PLA-dominated apparatus: that its defective work-style resulted from ideological shortcomings and a bourgeois world outlook. An important 5 November People's Daily editorial criticized this work-style as "bureaucratic, subjective and formalistic," in contrast with Mao's practical and realistic work-style. In what appears in retrospect to be a significant allusion, a commentary in the November 1969 issue of Red Flag refuted the argument that "so long as one has a correct main orientation, the question of work-style is a minor matter." Since Lin Piao is now attacked for advancing this very argument (as he in fact did), it appears that Mao and Lin may already by the fall of 1969 have had differences of opinion over the reliability and loyalty of the Army-dominated political apparatus.

Strengthening the view that the issue of civilian versus military control may already have surfaced was a

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significant alteration at this time of the formula expressing command and control over the People's Liberation Army. Whereas previously the standard formulation had been "personally founded and led by Chairman Mao and directly commanded by Vice-Chairman Lin," leadership of the PLA was now depicted (in the authoritative 1 October 1969 National Day editorial) as "founded and led personally by Chairman Mao and commanded directly by Chairman Mao and Vice-Chairman Lin" (underlining supplied). Although this change to call attention to Mao's direct command role was short-lived and generally interpreted at the time as demonstrating heightened regime concern over the possibility of a Sino-Soviet border war, it now appears [REDACTED] that this change reflected disagreement between Mao and Lin over the degree of control each should exercise over the PLA. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the concurrent decision to begin de-emphasizing the "cult of Mao Tse-tung" was also a sign of tension between Mao and Lin. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In view of the fact that Lin Piao had been the principal sponsor and beneficiary of Mao's cult, Mao's criticism of the excessive implementation, not to mention disloyal exploitation, of his cult appears to have been directed, at least, in part, against Lin.

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It was at just about this time, in November 1969, moreover, that the Central Committee launched an investigation (reportedly under the direction of Chou En-lai) of the "5/16" group, a hypermilitant Red Guard organization which in 1967 had engaged in conspiracy to seize power and in 1969 generally symbolized the extremism, violence and Leftist excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Although perhaps intended more as a warning to Chen Po-ta and other radical ideologues at this stage, many of the charges of "ultra-Leftism" leveled against the "5/16" group at this time (e.g. their "desire for instant Communism" and their persecution of "veteran Party cadres") would be leveled subsequently against Lin Piao and his military supporters.

As a final indication of a growing divergence throughout 1969 between Mao and Lin, the recent Party documents purporting to explain the Lin affair charge that Lin's conduct and behavior toward Mao changed following the Ninth Party Congress in April of that year. In a criticism remarkably similar to one made earlier against Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping for their conduct in the period preceding the Cultural Revolution, it is charged that Lin "isolated himself, and took no notice of, nor did he seek the advice and opinions of Mao Tse-tung." In fact, this changed relationship resulted more, it is believed, from a change in the conduct and attitude of Mao who, as noted above, turned away from Lin to rely increasingly on Chou En-lai and to espouse more moderate policies following the Ninth Party Congress. Feeling himself "isolated" from Mao, Lin then turned for support to his other major source of power, the Army. In this way, then, the larger problem of civilian versus military control was being transformed into a personal struggle between Mao and Lin for control of the structure of power in China.

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Mao's growing distrust of his chosen successor in the fall of 1969 was manifested dramatically in March 1970 when Mao decided to remove the post of Chairman of the State from the new draft Chinese People's Republic Constitution. Lin apparently interpreted this decision, which confirmed Premier Chou En-lai as the de facto head of the government outranking Lin Piao in both of Lin's government positions of Vice Premier and Minister of National Defense, as in effect disinheriting him as the successor. Although Chou, to whom Mao had turned more and more in the year following the Ninth Party Congress for advice and assistance, had in some ways already become the de facto successor, this action suggested that Mao intended in time to designate Chou as his de jure successor.*

Following this momentous decision, two developments in mid-1970 set the stage for the dramatic confrontation which would take place between Mao and Lin at the Second Plenum in August. First was the movement instructing the PLA to study Mao's thought on Party-building, centering on "Article 5 of the Party Constitution" -- the article which specifies civilian Party leadership over the Army. The second was publication in the authoritative 1 July Party anniversary editorial of a new set of criteria for

**It is interesting to note that following the purge of Lin Piao, Tung Pi-wu has once again appeared regularly in the position of "acting Chief of State," a position in which he was identified briefly in October 1969 and then not again till February 1972. This suggests that Lin's interpretation of Mao's March 1970 decision was correct -- that it was directed not at the office but at the man who was supposed to inherit that office.*

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selecting Communist Party members, which differed sharply from those advanced by Lin Piao in August 1966 at the outset of the Cultural Revolution. Lin on that earlier occasion had defined a loyal Maoist (one therefore entitled to Party membership) as one who eagerly studied Mao thought, attached great importance to political and ideological work, and was filled with revolutionary zeal; the 1 July 1970 editorial redefined a loyal Maoist as one who was loyal to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought and to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line (featuring the combination of theory with practice), who trusted the masses and practiced collective leadership, and who, after making mistakes, was willing to conduct self-criticism. By omitting any reference to Lin's three criteria, redefining Maoism in less Leftist terms (Mao would soon tell Couve de Murville in October that he was a "center-Leftist") and continuing to attack (indirectly) the "arrogance and complacency" of PLA representatives serving in the new structure of power, this editorial helps to explain why Lin Piao (who saw Mao withdrawing his right to the succession), Chen Po-ta (who was vulnerable, at a time when the policy line was shifting to the Right, as the exemplar of "ultra-Leftism") and four top-ranking military leaders (who viewed Mao's escalating pressure on the military apparatus as a threat to themselves) banded together "to prepare and launch a surprise attack" at the Second Plenum at Lushan in August 1970.

This attack, contained in speeches by Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, was directed at those leaders (Kang Sheng directly, Chou En-lai indirectly) who, in drafting the new State Constitution, had deleted the post of Chairman and a provision extolling the "genius" of Mao Tse-tung. By so doing, Lin and Chen charged, Kang and Chou had revealed their opposition to Mao's leadership and Mao's thought and, accordingly, should be criticized and presumably purged. Attempting to use Mao's name, prestige and position (in Lin's proposal that Mao should become the first Chairman of State under the new Constitution)

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in order to win majority support, the strategy of what would come to be known as Lin Piao's "conspiratorial clique" backfired when Mao rejected both the proposal for a State Chairman (reminding Lin that on six earlier occasions he had told him "we do not need a Chairman of the State") and the view of "genius" which Lin and Chen had propounded in their speeches. Choosing this overt test of struggle in an effort to protect himself and his military structure of power, Lin was forced to retreat on the political battlefield (withdrawing the minutes of his speech and dissociating himself from Chen Po-ta) and to turn from openly-declared political combat to the clandestine plotting of a coup d'etat as the last act of a desperate man seeking to reclaim by force what had once been granted to him and then taken away -- his right to rule China as Mao's successor.

Since it was apparent to Mao that Lin was challenging him as the head of a powerful military organization (he subsequently referred to this struggle at Lushan as the tenth major struggle between opposing "lines" and "two headquarters" in the history of the Chinese Communist Party), Mao was compelled to be cautious and circumspect in taking action against him.

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any action against Lin at this juncture without concrete proof of conspiracy would have aroused opposition from military leaders and might have resulted in civil war. Instead, Mao at the Second Plenum intensified the continuing pressure on Lin's military apparatus by initiating a "criticize revisionism and rectify work-style" campaign which would dominate China's political life throughout the following year.

As the latest in a long series of rectification or "line" struggle campaigns considered necessary whenever there is a basic change in policy line in China, it is important to note the similarities between the

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"criticize revisionism and rectify work-style" campaign and its predecessor, the Cultural Revolution. A central feature of both was to transfer responsibility for the failure of the preceding policy line from Mao who had originated it to the political apparatus which had implemented it. The strategy for both was to hold a few "class enemies" at the top primarily responsible for the mistakes committed in carrying out the previous policy line, accusing them of formulating and spreading a "revisionist" ideology which then corrupted the work-style of leading cadres at intermediate and lower levels of the apparatus. Whereas the Cultural Revolution had, at a time when the policy line was shifting to the Left, attacked Rightist "revisionism" and the resulting "bureaucratic" work-style of the Party apparatus, the objects of attack in the campaign initiated at the Second Plenum, at a time when the policy line was shifting to the Right, were a form of Leftist "revisionism" and the resulting work-style of "arrogance and complacency" of the PLA-dominated political apparatus.

Within this larger strategy, a common tactic in both campaigns was to identify the "class enemies" at the top either singly or in small groups at different stages, working upwards to reach the number two man in the Chinese Communist leadership held ultimately responsible for the conduct of the political apparatus under his control.

Lin was not deceived by Mao's initial tactic of focusing exclusively on Chen Po-ta (attacked as an "ultra-Leftist" and "political swindler") in the early months of this latest rectification campaign. As early as the winter of 1970-1971, Lin sensed that he would be the ultimate target of this campaign and by spring of 1971, his suspicions hardened to a conviction, he was already engaged in plotting a desperate coup d'etat as preferable to the certain fate of political disgrace which lay before him.

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Although primary responsibility for the failure of the preceding policy line was assigned to a few "class enemies" in the central leadership in Peking, leading cadres at the regional and provincial levels (the civilian Party First Secretaries in the Cultural Revolution and the military leaders who dominated the political apparatus following the Cultural Revolution) were also held partially responsible for the mistakes committed in carrying out the previous policy line. This responsibility resulted from ideological failings which, in the period preceding the Cultural Revolution, had caused them to deviate to the Right by overemphasizing production at the expense of politics and, in the period following the Cultural Revolution, had caused them to deviate to the Left by overemphasizing politics at the expense of production. The three-fold remedy for this latest error of "Left deviationism" was, by means of the "criticize revisionism and rectify work-style" campaign, for leading military cadres: (1) to remould their thinking (by studying Mao's philosophic works and thus learning how to "integrate theory with practice" and to adopt a "realistic and scientific" approach to problems); (2) to rectify their work-style (correcting the defects of "arrogance and complacency" and overcoming the tendency toward "one man rule" by respecting the collective leadership of civilian Party committees); and (3) to demonstrate their loyalty to Mao and their willingness to return to the correct Maoist line by engaging in self-criticism.

Since the road to power in the Cultural Revolution of both Lin Piao and the PLA had been one of "giving prominence to politics," the central charge in this campaign -- that an overemphasis on politics had resulted in "Leftist deviationism" in the implementation of Mao's policy line -- served to undercut one of the most important justifications for Lin's and the PLA's continued right to rule. The generally negative response of military authorities throughout China to this rectification campaign

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indicated, moreover, that they were quite aware that it threatened their continued domination of the political structure. This response, in well-documented instances at the Military Region level (e.g., the Canton MR) was to ignore the campaign's injunctions to change course, carry out self-criticism and obey the directives of the civilian Party apparatus. Further, a number of regional and provincial military commanders continued, in the face of mounting evidence that both Lin and the Army's political role were under Maoist attack, openly to praise Lin Piao and glorify the Army. Although this was true in a number of provinces throughout the early months of 1971 (e.g. Shantung, Sinkiang, Kwangsi and Hupeh), it was most graphically illustrated in Fukien where, as late as April 1971 in his Party Congress speech, the Foochow MR Commander Han Hsien-chu assigned almost as much prominence and praise to Lin Piao as he did to Mao.

This striking manifestation of resistance to the "criticize revisionism and rectify work-style" campaign confirmed what Mao already knew -- that in Lin and his military supporters he faced a powerful adversary against whom he would have to move cautiously both at the center and in the provinces. Apparently feeling that the time had come, Mao in August and early September 1971 conducted an inspection tour of the Canton and Nanking Military Regions aimed generally at "educating cadres, achieving unity and denouncing conspiracies and intrigues" and specifically at seeking assurances of support from these regional military leaders in an impending showdown with Lin and his group of military leaders. The struggle between Mao and Lin for control of the political-military apparatus (the issue of civilian versus military control) had reached a flashpoint, soon to explode in the bizarre sequence of events beginning with an abortive Lin-sponsored attempt to assassinate Mao and culminating in Lin's fiery death in a plane crash in Mongolia.

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The Issue of the Scale of the Purge

The other thing the Chairman [Mao] was most unhappy about [concerning the Cultural Revolution] was the maltreatment of 'captives' -- Party members and others removed from power and subjected to re-education... Maltreatment of [these] captives... had slowed the rebuilding and transformation of the Party.
 -- Edgar Snow, "A Conversation with Mao Tse-tung," in Life, 30 April 1971.

I was told [by a Chinese official] that the first disagreement between the two hierarchies [the political and military] concerned the scale of the purge within the Party... The supporters of a more radical purge... dreamed about a pure and hard Party, but they came up against Mao Tse-tung who... wished to limit the damage... and against Chou En-lai who was anxious not to break the tool [the Party].
 -- Claude Julien, "The Lin Piao Mystery," in Le Monde, 30 December 1971.

If it is true that Mao even before the Ninth Party Congress suspected Lin of opposing Party leadership over the Army, there is reason to believe that Mao sensed this opposition first in a disagreement over "the scale of the purge within the Party." Beginning in the fall of 1968 (when the task of rebuilding the Party was first undertaken) and continuing

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right up to the dramatic events of September 1971, this was a dispute not over the need to purify the old Party apparatus (a central aim of the Cultural Revolution) but over the manner in which and the extent to which, this purge was to be carried out. The outcome of this struggle between two groups of "radicals" (including Lin Piao, Chen Po-ta and probably Kang Sheng as well) and "moderates" (including on this issue Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai) within the top leadership would determine, of course, who would control the new post-Cultural Revolution structure of power.

There is good evidence that Mao, who initiated the attack on high-ranking Party cadres at the outset of the Cultural Revolution, had become alarmed by reports of widespread violence and of the wholesale purge and replacement of old cadres in the nation-wide "purification of class ranks" campaign carried out by the military-dominated apparatus in the fall of 1968. Reacting to this early example of "maltreatment" of Party cadres, Mao directed that no further arrests be made without prior approval at the provincial Revolutionary Committee level and further instructed (in the 1969 New Year's Day editorial) that in carrying out this campaign thereafter "the target of attack must be narrowed and more people must be helped through education." This new emphasis on moderation in "class struggle" was extended at the Ninth Party Congress to provide "a way out" ("liberation" and "suitable work") even for "bourgeois reactionary academic authorities" and "capitalist roaders in power." Intended to signal the end of the "destructive" phase of the Cultural Revolution, the new emphasis on unity and conciliation at the Party Congress also indicated a desire to get on with the final "constructive" phase of the Cultural Revolution in which the central task was reconstructing the Chinese Communist Party.

Addressing the First Plenum of the new Central Committee immediately following the close of the Congress,

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Mao stressed the need to "be careful and prudent" in rebuilding the Party, citing the previous "mistake" which had resulted from "carelessness" of "arresting... too many people." Asserting that it is "always better to unite more people" including even "those who oppose us," Mao then repeated an earlier instruction that it was the responsibility of the military to solve the widespread problem of factionalism, quarreling and disunity at provincial and local levels of the new political structure. As the de facto government already held responsible for solving all other problems in their local areas, the military apparatus was now informed that it was also responsible for rebuilding a united civilian Party which would then replace it as the right-fui ruler of China.

This reminder to the military that its dominant political role was only temporary and transitional was made more pointed in accompanying editorials (for example, the 17 February 1969 People's Daily editorial entitled "To Be Good at Translating the Party's Policy Into Action by the Masses") pointing out that "veteran Party cadres" were better qualified, because of their "richer experience and better understanding of the Party's policies", to undertake the complicated tasks of the new "constructive" stage of the Cultural Revolution. Whereas Lin Piao had stressed simple political virtues (the eager study of Mao thought, the earnest promotion of political and ideological work, and revolutionary zeal) as the criteria for selecting new leaders during the initial "destructive" stage of the Cultural Revolution, now more emphasis was to be placed on professional qualifications in selecting Party leadership cadres. In terms of the familiar Maoist dialectical formulation of the ideal cadre -- both "red and expert" -- the pendulum was now swinging back from the earlier Cultural Revolution extreme of excessive reliance on "redness" to a position in which "expertness" was now considered to be of at least equal if not greater importance in the selection of new leaders.

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The implications of this shift from revolutionary to professional criteria (a shift undoubtedly encouraged by Chou En-lai in the interest of administrative efficiency) in the selection of new Party leaders were clear -- most of these were to be old Party cadres who, having been properly educated and transformed, were to be "liberated" and returned to their former or similar positions of authority. Sensing a threat to their continued exercise of political power, both radical ideologues and military leaders, not only in Peking but also at provincial levels, had reason to join forces to carry out what is now called an "ultra-leftist" cadre policy characterized either by wholesale purging of old Party cadres or "failing to liberate cadres on time."

The mechanism for carrying out this "ultra-leftist" cadre policy was the May 7 Cadre School, an institution to which old Party cadres were sent for a refresher course in Mao Thought study and hard physical labor and where through faithful performance of these duties they could demonstrate anew their loyalty to Chairman Mao and Mao's revolutionary line. By mid-1970, 100,000 cadres from the central political apparatus and some one million cadres at the provincial level had been sent down to these schools in the countryside for study and labor. The flaw in this arrangement was that these schools were run by the PLA, with military leaders empowered to decide whether the old Party cadres had passed the test of political loyalty and were thus entitled to return to positions of authority in the new political apparatus. The charge that the Cultural Revolution Group radical ideologues and the PLA abused this authority to prevent the rehabilitation of veteran Party cadres and thus perpetuate their own power -- a charge first intimated by Mao to Snow in December 1970 and now explicitly stated -- is both credible and supported by developments at the time.

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There are a number of indications, for example, that beginning in the fall of 1969 Mao was turning to Chou En-lai for advice and assistance in dealing with this coalition of radical civilian and military leaders intent upon perpetuating the power structure and policies of the Cultural Revolution. [REDACTED] as early as October 1969 Chou had been entrusted with full authority to prepare for convening a National People's Congress (which would then approve a new State Constitution and establish a new Central Government apparatus) and that one of the reasons why the Congress was postponed on several occasions in the ensuing year was that the continued practice of "military control" was considered incompatible with the NPC idea of rule by the people (i.e. civilian rule). Thus, if Chou was not yet in a position to challenge military dominance in other areas (for example, at provincial and local levels of the new political apparatus) he could at least (with Mao's authorization) keep the military from moving in to dominate the slowly emerging Central Government structure.

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Another development in the fall of 1969 was the holding in November of a national leadership meeting at which a series of important policy decisions were made, two of which concerned this ongoing struggle for control of the post-Cultural Revolution political apparatus. First was the decision, apparently made at this time, to abolish the Cultural Revolution Group (which had been charged with carrying out most of the Leftist policies and programs of the Cultural Revolution) and to demote its head Chen Po-ta to a position of relative unimportance (there is no record of Chen making a speech or even a private statement relating to policy after October 1969).

The second was the concurrent decision to initiate the campaign noted earlier against the "5/16" group, the militant Red Guard organization active in 1967 which now symbolized both the discredited policies of the Cultural Revolution and those who continued to promote these

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policies. A central charge in the anti-"5/16" group campaign as it unfolded in 1969-1970 was that it had been guilty of "ultra-leftism" in its attitude and behavior toward Party cadres -- specifically, that it had "wrongly accused people... hung up the cases of cadres for years... [and] wanted to exclude all veteran cadres." These charges would be extended a year later to apply to Chen Po-ta (explicitly) and Kang Sheng (implicitly) and then further extended another year later to apply to Lin Piao and his supporters throughout the military apparatus.

Lin's responsibility for the "ultra-leftist" cadre policy is traced back to the three criteria he had formulated in August 1966 (with Mao's approval) for defining a loyal Maoist -- criteria which stressed the simplified study of Mao thought, the primacy of political and ideological work, and revolutionary zeal. These criteria, it is now charged, were used by his military apparatus following the Cultural Revolution to strike at and purge systematically without cause veteran Party cadres (employing the argument among others that "the older the cadres, the more outmoded they are") in order to appoint friends and proteges to positions of authority in the new political apparatus. To correct this unjust and corrupt use of power, there has been in recent months a campaign to rehabilitate veteran cadres (90 to 95 percent at local levels), including even the much-maligned Commander of the Wuhan Military Region Chen Tsai-tao, who in mid-1967 had achieved notoriety for allegedly leading a mutiny against Peking.

With the fall of Lin Piao and his principal supporters, the issue of the scale of the purge appears to have been largely resolved, with Chou En-lai on record as estimating that not more than one percent of the membership has been expelled from the Party as a result

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of the Cultural Revolution. In the struggle over this issue, a struggle which began in the spring of 1969, Mao and Chou have emerged victorious, with the result that more experienced and expert civilian Party cadres are now beginning to take over from the military cadres who, since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, have dominated the structure of power in China.

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The Issue of Foreign Policy

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A highly dramatic and visible issue, the role of foreign policy in domestic political conflict in general and in the Lin Piao affair in particular must be approached with great care. In addition to the usual difficulty of attempting to ascertain the positions adopted by leaders of opposing factions or interest groups on the domestic political scene, there is the complicating factor that the actions undertaken by foreign governments have a significant impact on the development and outcome of the internal leadership debate on foreign policy. There is the further

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complicating factor that Chinese officials have, in briefing non-Communist Westerners, tended to exaggerate the importance of foreign policy out of a desire to minimize the still potentially explosive central issue in the Lin Piao affair of civilian versus military control in China. Finally, there is a strong temptation to define a priori the foreign policy issue in terms of a dispute concerning the triangular relationship between China, the Soviet Union and the United States, with one group favoring a rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the other with the United States. In fact, it appears that Mao, Lin, Chou and the top PLA leaders were all agreed that the Soviet Union constituted the gravest military threat to China and that policy differences vis-a-vis the USSR, if any, were confined to questions of degree and emphasis.

The evidence, as illustrated by the quotation cited above, indicates that the role of foreign policy in the Lin Piao affair was more tactical than causative or fundamental in nature. The dispute, moreover, concerned not so much which of the two great powers, Russia or America, China should conciliate, but whether China should switch from the confrontationist and isolationist foreign policy posture of the Cultural Revolution to a more flexible and pragmatic approach. An intensive review of the record indicates, furthermore, that the impact of developments abroad upon this internal policy debate, while significant, was not decisive. The effect of these developments, principally those in Southeast Asia, would be one of slowing down but not reversing the trend toward moderation in China's relations with the outside world.

In contrast with other policy issues, Lin Piao is clearly on record as one of the principal architects of what might be called the "revolutionary model" of foreign policy which dominated China's foreign relations during the Cultural Revolution. In his famous treatise

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on people's war published on 3 September 1965, Lin proclaimed the need to promote revolution abroad patterned after the Chinese revolutionary model, a model featuring rural-based armed struggle which would then surround and finally capture the cities. In his speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution on 6 November 1967, Lin depicted this model (which Chairman Mao "with genius" had created) as a "great new development" in both the Marxist-Leninist theory and practice of revolution and, as such, having general validity throughout the world. And in the accompanying joint People's Daily, Red Flag and Liberation Army Daily editorial on this occasion, Chairman Mao was hailed as "the greatest teacher and most outstanding leader of the proletariat in the present era" and China was declared to be "the center of world revolution."

In practice, as is now well known, this effort to propagate Mao's thought and thus promote revolution abroad embroiled China in controversy with nearly every important government of the world. The realization that, as a result of the provocative and self-defeating foreign policy of the Cultural Revolution, China stood isolated in the face of a major threat to its national security then produced a turn to the Right toward a more pragmatic and moderate foreign policy, a process which began hesitantly in the fall of 1967 and has proceeded through several fairly well-defined stages up to the present. Since Chou En-lai personified this turn toward what might be called a "nationalist model" of foreign policy, as Lin Piao had personified the preceding "revolutionary model," the dispute over the issue of foreign policy in a real sense has been a dispute between these two leaders, each striving to enlist support for his views. The record shows, moreover, that Chairman Mao backed Chou throughout most of this struggle, providing decisive support in the final showdown debate when (as noted above) Lin stood up in a Central Committee meeting to oppose the proposed visit of President Nixon to China.

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The first stage in this protracted process of re-treating from Left (the "revolutionary model") to Right (the "nationalist model") in foreign policy extended from the fall of 1967 through the summer of 1968 and was marked by the return of Premier Chou En-lai to a dominant role in foreign affairs. Speaking to workers in this field in December 1967, Chou reminded his listeners that like it or not Peking had no choice but to deal with other countries primarily as sovereign states and governments and quoted Mao as stating that China during the preceding summer had been guilty of "great-power chauvinism." Also revealing a new awareness of the nationalist sensibilities of Communist Parties and other governments throughout the world, the Chinese leadership in a Central Committee decision in May 1968 directed that Chinese propaganda intended for foreign audiences would no longer refer to China as "the center of world revolution" or to Mao Tse-tung as "the leader" of the international Communist movement or as "the leader of the peoples of the world" -- views which Chou En-lai would subsequently (in mid-1971) characterize as "ultra-leftist." That Mao in 1968 was already dissociating himself from these "ultra-leftist" views was indicated by his instruction in September to a Japanese revolutionary group that, instead of blindly imitating China's revolutionary model, it should "integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of its own revolution."

The second stage in this slow process of moving toward the Right in foreign policy lasted from the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 through a series of border clashes with the Soviet Union in 1969 and the Cambodia military campaign in the spring of 1970 to the Second Plenum in August 1970. Within this stage two distinct and contradictory trends appear. The first was in the extreme ideological and confrontationist tradition of the Cultural Revolution, consisting of an intensified attack on the Soviet leadership (now excoriated as "social-

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imperialist" and "social-fascist"), a solemn declaration (subsequently identified as Maoist) of the arrival of a "new historical stage of opposition to United States imperialism and Soviet revisionism," and the launching of a massive "war preparations" campaign in which (as Lin Piao put it) "all work" was to be "observed, examined and approached from the standpoint of war." This "war preparations" campaign justified: (1) in politics, the continued domination by the military of the political apparatus; (2) in economics, the priority development of military industry; and (3) in ideology, the continued primacy of Lin Piao's interpretation of Mao's thought in which "redness" (revolutionary zeal, austerity and sacrifice) outweighed "expertness" (professional qualifications) as the most important element in Maoism. Directed against the Soviet Union (designated "the principal enemy"), this campaign was a definite asset to Lin Piao in the struggle already underway for control of the political apparatus in China.

The same trend was manifested, moreover, in the revolutionary manifesto issued by Chairman Mao on 20 May 1970, entitled "People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs." Reacting to the combined South Vietnamese and United States military intervention in Cambodia three weeks earlier, the Chinese leader -- in what would subsequently be referred to as "Mao's new evaluation of the international scene" -- declared in effect that the United States had now displaced the Soviet Union as China's number one enemy. The personal insults and hostile rhetoric formerly reserved for the Soviet Union and the Soviet leadership were now heaped on the United States government (engaged in "fascist rule") and on President Nixon (the perpetrator of "fascist atrocities"). This new hostile and confrontationist posture toward the United States was revealed even more clearly in a 25 June 1970 joint editorial entitled "People of Asia, Unite and Drive the U.S. Aggressors Out of Asia," in which

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it was stated unequivocally that "one's attitude to the United States is the principal criterion for judging a true or sham revolutionary."

The other -- and contradictory -- trend throughout this period was one clearly associated with Chou En-lai which sought to substitute negotiation for confrontation and to adopt a more flexible foreign policy stance at a time of national danger. This flexible approach was to be applied towards both superpowers, first toward the United States in the tentative invitation in November 1968 (later withdrawn) to resume the Warsaw talks, and then toward the Soviet Union in the October 1969 agreement to negotiate the Sino-Soviet border dispute. It was in keeping with this flexible strategy of playing the United States and the Soviet Union against each other that Chairman Mao, on the day following the United States military intervention in Cambodia in the spring of 1970, ostentatiously sought out the chief Soviet negotiator on the reviewing stand at May Day for a friendly chat, including an injunction to get on with the border talks.

Keeping in mind that Chairman Mao (as well as Premier Chou) is renowned as a master of tactics, a close reading of the ensuing 20 May statement suggests, moreover, that it was intended not only for use in the struggle against China's enemies abroad but also for use in the continuing struggle for control of the political apparatus at home. For it was by virtue of the much-quoted dictum contained in this statement -- "The danger of a new world war still exists... but revolution is the main trend in the world today" -- that Mao then set about de-emphasizing the "war preparations" campaign within China and thus deprived Lin Piao and his military supporters of a major justification for the continued dominance of the military. While appearing to defer to the Lin Piao strategy of espousing revolutionary struggle abroad, it appears in

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retrospect that an equally important if not more important objective of Mao's in issuing this 20 May statement was to undercut Lin's and the military's right to rule at home.

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Peking, following the issuance of this statement, did not in fact significantly step-up material support for revolutionary armed struggle throughout the world. In authoritative explanations of this 20 May statement in July and August 1970, Chou En-lai and Kang Sheng were quite explicit in pointing out that revolutionary organizations abroad would have to rely on their own resources and that, since in most areas of the world "no revolutionary possibilities existed," China, rather than providing political, military and financial support to revolutionary groups abroad, would seek to promote the interests of world revolution thereafter by relying primarily on state-to-state relations. Underlining the need (in accordance with Mao's teachings) to "combine Marxism-Leninism with reality in each country," these officials criticized the mistakes of "left-extremism" and "great-nation chauvinism" in China's foreign relations during the Cultural Revolution, citing as one example the mistake of claiming universal validity for China's revolutionary model. Since Lin Piao was the only prominent Chinese leader on record as having committed this mistake, it appears that Mao's 20 May statement, far from representing a return to the "ultra-leftist" foreign policy line of the Cultural Revolution, was being used as a tactical weapon in the accelerating struggle between the proponents of civilian (Maoist) versus military (Lin Piao) control over the political apparatus within China.

It is in this larger framework of a struggle for power, then, that the last stage of turning to the Right in foreign policy -- a stage represented by the dramatic debate within Peking's top leadership over President Nixon's visit -- must be understood. Although the terms of this debate are now fairly well known, the timing and

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occasion can only be deduced on the basis of related developments. It is of crucial importance, in attempting to ascertain when the debate took place, to know when the proposal for a visit reached China's top policy-makers. This, according to Edgar Snow, had taken place "by late autumn of 1970" when "several urgent and authentically documented inquiries reaching China had indicated that the President wished to know whether he or his representative would be received in Peking." This suggests that the debate took place no earlier than the Second Plenum (August-September 1970) and probably at an expanded Politburo meeting held in November to sum up and criticize the errors committed by Chen Po-ta. That the debate (characterized as one between Lin and Chou, with Mao coming down on the side of Chou) was held no later than November is suggested by Mao's assurances to Snow (in their conversation of 18 December 1970) that President Nixon "would be welcome" -- that "he could just get on a plane and come." The actual invitation would not be tendered, however, until sometime the following spring, only after the new crisis in Sino-American relations occasioned by the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos had been resolved.

As indicated in the quotation cited at the beginning of this discussion, Lin based his opposition to President Nixon's visit not so much on considerations of power as of ideology, portraying negotiations with the United States as a betrayal of the Chinese and world revolutions. This was probably dictated by tactical considerations, since it was difficult to deny that the Soviet Union with more than a million armed men posed on the Sino-Soviet border represented a graver threat to China's national security. It seems fairly clear, moreover, that although Lin used the Soviet Union as a counter in his argument against the Nixon visit, he did so more from a desire to score debating points (he is reported to have said, for example, "If Mao can invite Nixon, why can't I invite

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Brezhnev?) or to strengthen his ideological argument (the USSR depicted as a "socialist" country and therefore deserving at least equal if not favored treatment compared with a "capitalist" country) than from any prior understanding with the Soviet leadership. What does seem clear is that the ex post facto charge against Lin of collusion with the Soviet Union in plotting the anti-Mao coup is fabricated. A standard charge against all Chinese leaders indicted as "class enemies," the charge that Lin Piao carried on "illicit relations with foreign countries" is supported by no other evidence than that in a last desperate effort he sought to escape to the Soviet Union rather than await disgrace and imprisonment, if not death, in China.

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It is solid evidence, though. He could have been set for

Just as Mao and Chou had earlier attacked policies with which Lin was directly associated as "ultra-leftist," Lin and his military supporters were now attacking the Mao-Chou policy of negotiations with the United States as in effect Rightist. In fact, the charge that Mao's foreign policy was "too Rightist" in its betrayal of North Vietnam and the lofty Marxist-Leninist principle of "proletarian internationalism" is made

neutral ground, like Japan

by Lin's group. The evidence strongly suggests, then, that the issue of foreign policy was more a tactical weapon for use in, than a fundamental cause of, the political struggle which would lead to the fall of Lin Piao.

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The Issue of Economic Policy

There are two ways to construct our country. One is the Russian way, giving emphasis to materials, machines, mechanization, and so-called material incentives... The other way is our way led by Chairman Mao in which revolution leads mechanization. In comparison, man is more important than machines.

-- Lin Piao, Address at the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Work Conference, 25 October 1966.

The emergence of the situation of great leap forward is the inevitable result of the development in depth of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution... A new Leap Forward in industrial and agricultural production is bound to appear after every great political campaign... This is 'spirit being turned into material.'

-- Canton Radio, 30 December 1969.

One of the most distinctive elements of Mao's thought is reliance on political indoctrination to motivate and control human thought and behavior. The ultimate expression of this political indoctrination, "mass-line" approach to economic development was the Great Leap Forward. A central purpose of the Cultural Revolution, as indicated in the quotations cited above, was to arouse the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses preparatory to a new Leap Forward in economic development.

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The central charge now leveled against Lin Piao with respect to economic policy is that, whereas Liu Shao-chi (following the Soviet revisionist example) had committed the Rightist error in the early 1960's of over-emphasizing the material factor, Lin and his colleagues are guilty of the "ultra-leftist" error of overemphasizing the human, spiritual factor in the production process. In ideological terms, this overemphasis of the subjective factor is said to derive from the "bourgeois world outlook of idealism and metaphysics." Although Lin, Chen Po-ta and other of their supporters at the top are held primarily responsible, leading cadres at intermediate and lower levels of the apparatus are also held responsible for having implemented this "ultra-leftist" economic policy line.

Although grossly exaggerated and distorted, there is an element of truth in this indictment of the military-dominated apparatus for having handled poorly the complicated task of rebuilding the economy following the disruption of the Cultural Revolution. In much the same way as it performed badly its task (assigned at the Ninth Party Congress) of rebuilding the political system, the end result of radical ideologues and military leaders together controlling the formulation and implementation of economic policy in the period following the Ninth Party Congress was an "ultra-leftist" tendency to go beyond Mao's policy guidelines, a tendency expressed first in setting unrealistic goals and then in resorting to coercion in an attempt to achieve these goals.

Mao's policy guidelines were first outlined in an unpublished speech by Premier Chou En-lai on 4 May 1969 and then discussed at greater length in an authoritative October 1969 Red Flag article entitled "China's Road of Socialist Industrialization." Although characterized by Chou as "Chairman Mao's new economic line," it was in many ways reminiscent of the economic strategy which had

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produced the Great Leap Forward, only this time presented in a more reasoned and moderate vein in an apparent effort to take account of earlier mistakes. Vague and contradictory and perhaps inherently unworkable as these guidelines were, it is not surprising that those leaders at both central and local levels responsible for interpreting and implementing them eventually came to grief.

As spelled out in Chou's speech and the Red Flag article, Mao in his new economic line called for a sustained high rate of economic development (as opposed to the low projections of economic growth which he attributed to Liu Shao-chi) by asserting that "we have unlimited possibilities for developing our economy unceasingly and at a very rapid pace without parallel in capitalist economies." This was to be achieved in the modern industrial sector by rejecting Liu Shao-chi's doctrine of "trailing behind foreign countries at a snail's pace" and instead (as Mao had put it five years earlier) "making maximum use of advanced techniques so that our country can be built into a socialist modern power within a not long historical period."

This was to be achieved primarily in the non-modern sector, however, by mobilizing China's huge underemployed labor force to carry out Leap Forwards in agriculture and medium-and-small-scale industry. To make this approach more appealing to the peasants (who were expected, under the doctrine of self-reliance and local self-sufficiency, to finance this local industrial effort), the rapid development of local industry, it was stated, would bring about agricultural mechanization quickly and would, furthermore, by reducing the differences between town and country, facilitate the advance to Communism. In this effort to undertake parallel Leap Forwards in industry (in both the small-scale and locally-financed and the large-scale centrally-financed industrial sectors) and simultaneous Leap Forwards in both industry and agriculture -- the entire undertaking to rely heavily on political indoctrination

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and ideological incentives -- there was ample room for controversy in the allocation of blame when the effort began to founder.

Another feature of this "new economic line" -- the decentralization of administrative and economic power so that China, as Mao told Snow, could stimulate "regional and local initiatives" -- would also create difficulties in its implementation. One difficulty was the divergence which began to develop among provinces in late 1969 and early 1970 in the understanding and execution of Mao's vague policy pronouncements. Aligned on one side were zealots in such provinces as Heilungkiang and Kiangsi stressing revolutionary courage and daring as a prime requisite for promoting Leap Forwards in industry and agriculture and criticizing "rightist conservative cadres who failed to see the revolutionary zeal of the masses imbued with Mao Thought." On the other side were more moderate leaders in such provinces as Liaoning and Kirin who stressed the need for a practical and realistic work-style, warned against the setting of unrealistic goals and pointed out the danger, in criticizing Liu Shao-chi's Rightist revisionist economic line, of going to the opposite Leftist extreme of neglecting production and equalizing the distribution of income.

The problem of drafting China's Fourth Five Year Plan in accordance with the vague and contradictory provisions of Mao's "new economic line" was further complicated by the fact that at the time it was being drafted in 1969-1970 China was in the grips of a "preparations against war" campaign in which all work, including economic work, was, according to Lin Piao's injunction, to be "observed, examined and approached from the standpoint of war." This provided an opportunity for military leaders at the Center to call for greater emphasis on the development of advanced weapons and military industry in the drafting of the Five Year Plan. That this opportunity was exploited is suggested by the criticism, explicit and implicit, leveled against

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the first draft of this Plan after it was changed at (or shortly after) the Second Plenum in August 1970.

The new draft of China's Fourth Five Year Plan, [redacted] re-
flected a basic decision to reject the Great Leap Forward approach in favor of a more realistic economic strategy; to shift investment resources away from the development of technologically advanced and military industry toward basic industry in a more balanced development of the national economy as a whole; and, at provincial and local levels, to place greater emphasis on the development of agriculture as opposed to local industry and, as a result, to stretch out the timetable for achieving agricultural mechanization.

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[redacted] In what was probably an implicit reference to Chen Po-ta and other radical economic planners in China, Mao cautioned against those who promised spectacular development in the economic field within a short period and urged the Pakistani President to be candid in explaining the true status of the economy to his people. The 1971 New Year's Day editorial repeated an old Mao statement that it would take "several decades" to overcome China's economic backwardness, indicating publicly both the shift away from a Great Leap Forward approach in the drafting of China's Fourth Five Year Plan and Mao's endorsement of this change in plan.

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Among the reasons for this shift toward a more realistic strategy of economic development, the basic reason was that the attempt in 1969-1970 to carry out a "practical" Leap Forward had failed. Despite periodic injunctions (for example, in February and March and again in November 1969) to "leave enough leeway" in the drawing up of production plans, the practice of escalating production targets to demonstrate revolutionary zeal (for example,

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the goal of doubling grain production in a number of provinces within five years) had become widespread.

Another reason for the change was the need to reverse the trend toward decentralization of economic and administrative power and re-establish centralized control over the economy. What had happened was that the provinces (and the administrative subdivisions within the provinces) had abused the power entrusted to them, it was charged, to overemphasize the development of local industry at the expense of agriculture. Kiangsi Province was a case in point. Whereas only eight months earlier Kiangsi had been hailed as a national model and pace-setter, the provincial leadership in Kiangsi admitted in a long December 1970 editorial of self-criticism that it had been guilty of "blind development, departmentalism and excessive decentralization" in its development of local industry. In this admission of "blind development" of local industry, there was evidence that still another mistake of the earlier Great Leap Forward period -- the diversion of scarce human, financial and material resources from the agricultural to the industrial sector -- had been repeated. This admission was then made explicit in a subsequent People's Daily discussion of "leftist" errors committed in carrying out agricultural mechanization, errors consisting of an excessive accumulation of funds from China's peasants and the allocation of excessive amounts of labor from agriculture to the development of local industry.

A third reason, revealed by Chou En-lai in discussing a dispute within the leadership over "guns versus butter" which he claimed had been a central issue in a "critical policy debate" preceding the fall of Lin Piao, was the difficulty which provincial officials had experienced in attempting to "persuade workers, peasants and soldiers to accept directives from Peking...requiring them to rely on their own initiative in the financing of local development." Although this was a somewhat

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disingenuous explanation of the Lin Piao affair (Chou was after all referring to a debate which had taken place more than a year before Lin's fall), it is likely that Chou was alluding to an important aspect of the economic policy issue -- the extent to which the burden for the development of China's agriculture and local industry could be shifted to the provincial level, leaving the lion's share of the central budget for the development of a technically advanced modern industrial sector oriented toward national defense.

In this debate over the age-old question of "guns versus butter" (which would be discussed in the press as the question of whether industry should be developed with "electronics" or "steel" at the center), there was a natural basis for alliance between the radical planners (symbolized by Chen Po-ta) and the military (represented in this case not only by Lin Piao as a political-military leader but also by Lin's Chief-of-Staff Huang Yung-sheng as a professional military leader). For to the extent that the ideological view of Chinese man (as willing to subordinate individual material interests to collective or national goals) prevailed, there would be more funds available in the central budget for the development of advanced weapons and military industry.* That such an alliance, whether tacit or overt, did in fact exist is suggested, moreover, by the content of the public discussion of this issue.

**In the absence of hard data on budgetary allocations, there is no way to estimate the amount of funds involved in this dispute. It is likely*

that the amount, although significant in a symbolic sense, was not large in absolute terms.

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The charge that those favoring the development of China's industry with "electronics at the center" included a "gifted theoretician" and "political swindlers who advocate laying hold of advanced technology" in order to speed up entry into Communist society suggests strongly the radical ideologue Chen Po-ta. The charge that those who supported the "electronics industry" also claimed it would "promote development of the national defense industry as well as the national economy as a whole" suggests a reference to the military leaders Lin and Huang.

In sum, it appears that the dispute over economic policy, like that over foreign policy, was not a fundamental cause of the purge of Lin Piao. Rather, the issue of economic policy provided another weapon with which the contestants could joust and maneuver for position in conducting the larger struggle for control of the political apparatus in China.

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The Issue of Rural Policy

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After the great proletarian cultural revolution... the handful of class enemies... changed their tactics and said... that the Party's basic policy toward the rural people's communes was 'incompatible' with the requirements for accelerating rural socialist construction... and should be 'changed' in order to 'realize Communism' right now.

-- Hsiang Hui, "Conscientiously Implement the Party's Economic Policies for Rural Areas," in Red Flag, No. 13, 4 December 1971.

The undertaking following the Cultural Revolution to reform China's rural communes was an integral part of the Great Leap Forward approach to economic development. Intended to generate new resources and thus "accelerate rural socialist construction," these reforms constituted an attempt to revive a number of the original features

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of China's commune system. This time, however, in much the same way that an effort was made to apply the Leap Forward strategy in a more realistic and practical way, these radical reforms were not to be imposed from above by administrative fiat, but rather were to be accepted "voluntarily" by a peasantry whose ideological consciousness had been raised as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

The vehicle for the "voluntary" introduction of these reforms was a nation-wide campaign initiated in the fall of 1968 of learning from and emulating the model Tachai agricultural production brigade. This collective farm, located in Shansi Province, was so advanced that it had eliminated private plots, merged production teams, and instituted a system of income distribution combining both socialist (distribution according to work) and Communist (distribution according to political attitude) features. As the merger of production teams penalized the more productive teams, so did the new distribution system and the abolition of private plots serve to penalize the more productive peasant households by reducing their income. Simply put, the problem facing the "leading comrades" at all levels in carrying out the "learn from Tachai" campaign was how to persuade China's peasants "voluntarily" to produce more and consume less in order to accelerate economic development.

That this campaign was based on a utopian view of human nature was demonstrated by reports of rising peasant discontent throughout 1969-1970. Confronted with these reports and with a threatened decrease in production, the Maoist leadership first of all acknowledged (in editorials in March and April 1969) that mistakes had been made in the "learn from Tachai" campaign -- specifically the mistake of not realizing that "commune members' private plots... are currently

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necessary for solving their problems of food and manure and at present still cannot be abolished." The next step was to allude publicly to policy problems (including references for the first time to an "ultra-left" trend) which had arisen and to repeat earlier warnings against the use of coercion or commandism in carrying out the "learn from Tachai" campaign. Another step, perhaps representing a compromise in the continuing controversy over rural policy, was a Central Committee directive dated November 1969 which stipulated that implementation of the Tachai distribution system could be postponed if the ideological level of the peasants in a people's commune or production brigade was not high enough.

It is not surprising that provincial leaders, exercising the discretion authorized by this ambiguous directive, proceeded to carry out the "learn from Tachai" campaign in the spring and summer of 1970 in quite different ways. Some, notably in Kiangsi, Fukien and Heilungkiang, called for stepping up political indoctrination in order to vigorously extend the Tachai system which "integrated the socialist principle of 'to each according to his work' with the Communist revolutionary spirit." Others, as in Liaoning and Kirin, warned of the consequences of carrying this campaign to extreme, the consequences for example of declining production and equalitarianism in the distribution of income.

As was the case with most of the other policy issues discussed above, the issue of rural policy was largely resolved at the Second Plenum in August 1970. The draft State Constitution approved at that Plenum was, in terms of rural policy, a notably conservative document. In declaring its approval -- "at the present stage" -- of the peasants' private plots and of the production team as the commune's basic accounting unit, it returned to the rural institutional system to which

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China had retreated after the collapse of the Great Leap Forward in the early 1960's. Moreover, its blunt declaration that "those who do not work shall not eat" suggests that the quantity and quality of work are now much more important than political attitude in determining compensation and indeed seems to preclude at least at present further experimentation with the Tachai distribution system.

It remained only to explain how this nation-wide "learn from Ta-chai" campaign, which clearly had the approval of Chairman Mao at the outset, had gone so badly awry. At the top, the responsibility for failure was assigned primarily to Chen Po-ta, attacked obliquely but unmistakably in Red Flag and other regime publications throughout 1971 as a "sham Marxist" who following the Cultural Revolution "had put forward proposals to change the Party's basic policies ... undermine the socialist system of ownership... [and] ... realize Communism now." At the provincial level, Chen in some cases (e.g. Heilungkiang and Shansi) had been assisted by "agents" who had also "distorted" the Party's rural policies with the evil intent of "dampening the socialist enthusiasm of the cadres and masses." A more common charge leveled at "leading cadres" (i.e. the PLA representatives serving in the Revolutionary Committee structure) at intermediate and lower levels of the political apparatus, however, was the lesser offense of "blindly following" Tachai's methods of distribution and management "without regard for the level of consciousness of people's commune members or for local conditions."

The basic charge against Chen Po-ta (representing the civilian radicals) and Lin Piao (representing the military apparatus) concerning rural policy is not that they opposed Chairman Mao, as was the case in foreign policy, but rather that they encouraged -- with evil intent -- the "overzealous implementation" of Mao's



rural policy guidelines. Since these guidelines were initially advanced or at least endorsed by Mao himself, it seems clear that the issue of rural policy should also be viewed as part of a larger struggle for control of the political apparatus which would reach a climax in the destruction of Lin Piao.



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Conclusions

The New China News Agency official explained that Chen Po-ta's fall from power, rather than resulting from just one or two acts by Chen, had an ideological basis... He implied that Chen had been left behind as the ideological struggle passed to a new level.

-- New China News Agency Official
Comments on the Purge of Chen Po-ta,
25 July 1971

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution... it was necessary to enable the broad masses of the people to grasp Chairman Mao Tse-tung's thought... [through the study of]... the quotations of Chairman Mao. And in this aspect... Comrade Lin Piao made a great contribution... But by now the Cultural Revolution has deepened... and the time has come for us to study in a deeper way Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought.

-- Chou En-lai, Conversation with the
Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars
Friendship Delegation, 19 July 1971

If the Cultural Revolution, featuring "class struggle" and Mao Tse-tung's well-known "mass line" approach to the solution of political, economic and social problems constituted a sharp swing to the Left

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in Maoist ideology, the political struggle leading up to the purge of Lin Piao was accompanied by an almost equally sharp swing back to the Right in Communist China's basic ideological and political line. In the early "destructive" phase of the Cultural Revolution, both Chen Po-ta (symbolizing the Red Guards) and Lin Piao (symbolizing the power of the Army) had, as indicated in the quotations cited above, made a "great contribution" in bringing down Mao's opponents entrenched within the old Party and government apparatus. But when the Cultural Revolution moved into its "constructive" phase of building a new political apparatus and specifying post-Cultural Revolution programs and policies, Chen (now symbolizing the discredited policies of the Cultural Revolution) and Lin (now symbolizing the military apparatus charged with implementing these policies) discovered that they were being "left behind."

To Lin, being "left behind" meant at minimum losing the succession and probably in addition undergoing, together with Chen, the distinctive Maoist process of "rectification"

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To other top military leaders being "left behind" meant that the Army would lose its dominant role in the post-Cultural Revolution political apparatus.

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Although admittedly difficult to document, it is important to try to ascertain at what point in time Mao and Lin began to view one another with suspicion

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and distrust. As noted earlier, there is good evidence of Mao's mounting disillusionment with the performance of Lin and the military apparatus over a period of time dating back at least as far as the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969. The record also suggests that by the fall of 1969 Mao and Lin already held different views concerning the loyalty and efficacy of the Army-dominated political apparatus, with Mao criticizing and Lin defending the post-Cultural Revolution power structure. This finding, if true, supports the view that other policy issues which did not come to a head until 1970 or 1971 -- that is, the issues of the scale of the purge, of foreign policy, of economic policy and of rural policy -- were less important as causes of the political struggle which would lead to the destruction of Lin Piao than they were as tactical weapons for use in that struggle.

Although these policy issues appear now to be largely settled, the central policy issue in the Lin Piao affair -- the issue of civilian versus military control over China's political system -- has yet to be resolved.

Mao and Chou are quite aware that the task of regaining control over an Army-dominated political apparatus is much more formidable than the earlier task undertaken in the Cultural Revolution of regaining control over a Party-dominated political apparatus. As noted above, Mao is relying once again on a rectification/purge campaign to accomplish this difficult task, a campaign which Mao discussed at length in talks with military leaders at the regional and provincial level during an inspection tour in late August and early September 1971.

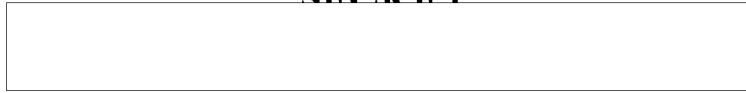
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The amount of progress achieved during the past year in returning political power to civilian Party leadership in Communist China is difficult to determine.

 more than 30 central and regional military leaders have been purged as members of Lin Piao's "conspiratorial clique" and many more military leaders are missing. Nearly all of the key military region commands have, as Mao directed, made self-criticisms (some, as in the cases of the Nanking and Shenyang Military Region Commands, have made public self-criticisms) for having committed such "mistakes" as following the wrong "line" and being "arrogant and complacent" and have expressed their determination hereafter "to respect, support and observe" civilian Party leadership. Several  meetings of central and provincial leaders in Peking in recent months, together with the

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rehabilitation of a number of Party figures, also suggest that progress is being made in the civilianization of China's political structure.

Until such time as the identity of those holding the top positions in the new Party and government apparatus is known, it would be prudent to reserve final judgment on the outcome of this effort to return China to civilian rule. It would also be prudent, however, to recognize that Mao Tse-tung has demonstrated repeatedly his ability in the face of great odds to rectify and purge, if not finally to control, the political apparatus in China.

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