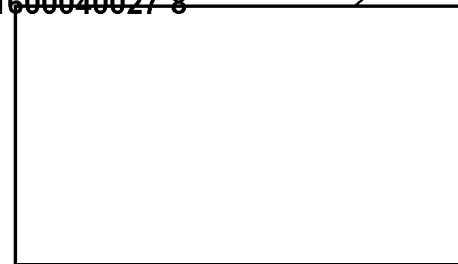


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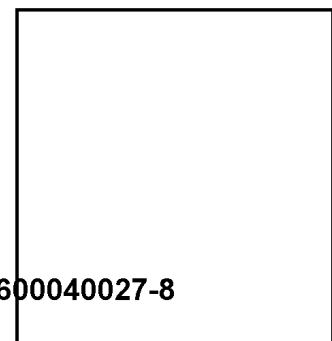
Intelligence Memorandum

Communist China: Expansion Of The Railroad Network Since 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
February 1971

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Communist China: Expansion Of The Railroad Network
Since 1966

Introduction

Following the collapse of the Great Leap Forward in 1960, railroad construction activity in Communist China dropped precipitously. Construction activity remained dormant for several years, until the Chinese began preparations for a Third Five-Year Plan (1966-70). The renewed attempt to expand and improve the railroad net was interrupted in turn in 1967-68 when the Cultural Revolution led to dislocations in economic planning and output and to work stoppages at many railroad construction projects. In 1969 and 1970 the scope and intensity of railroad construction increased significantly as the disorders of the Cultural Revolution waned and as the Chinese began to revive long-term economic planning. Much of this recent construction represents the continuation of work started in the 1950s; only a few major projects were initiated in the past decade. The Chinese have indicated that expansion of the rail system will be given a high priority in the new Fourth Five-Year Plan (1971-75).

This memorandum examines railroad construction activity in China since 1966, discusses the additions made to the rail network, and describes the construction currently under way. It concludes with an appraisal of the significance of this construction for the Chinese railroad system.

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Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and was coordinated within the Directorate of Intelligence.

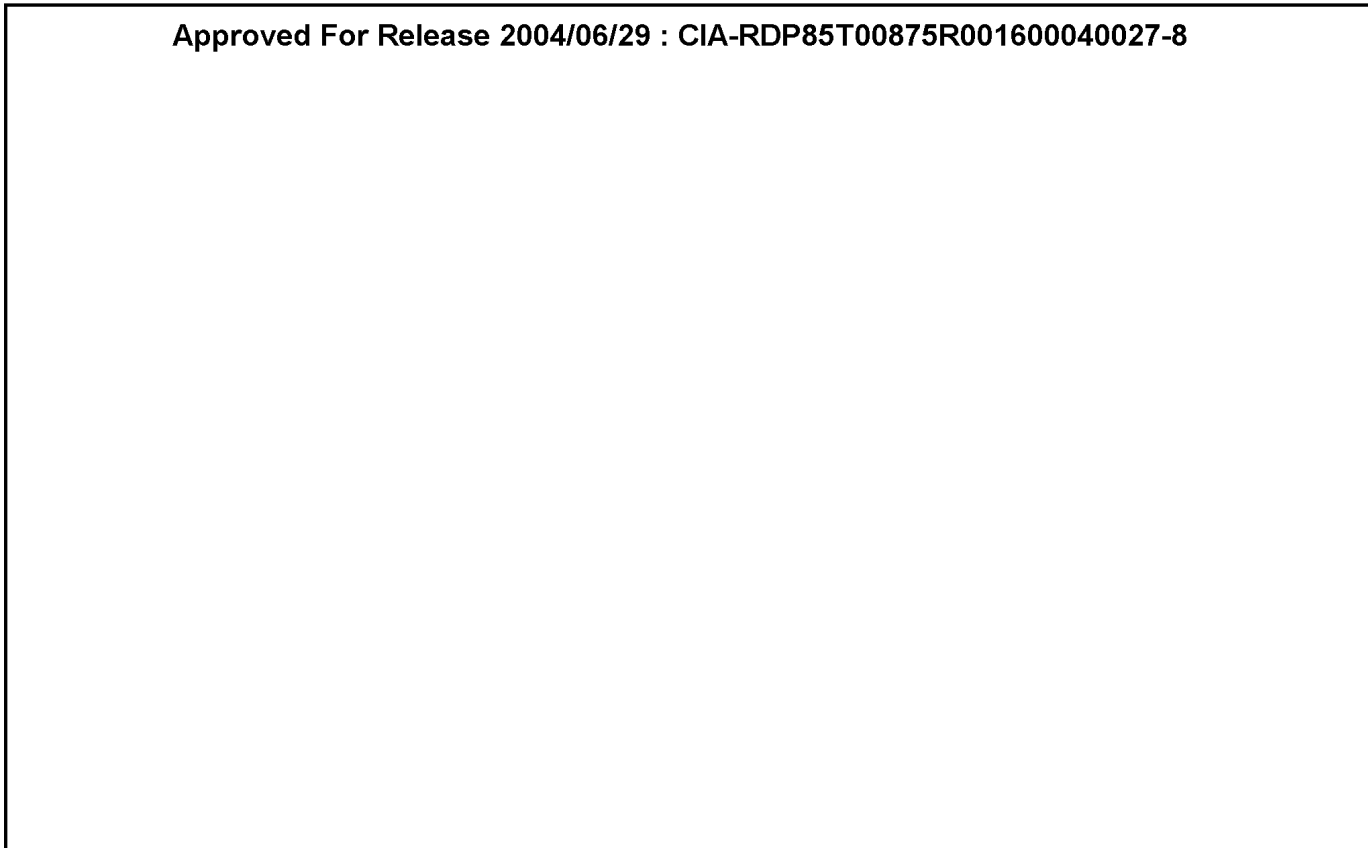
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The Pace of Construction

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1. After the collapse of the Great Leap Forward in 1960, the Chinese Communist regime was forced to concentrate on restoring the food supply to a tolerable minimum level and on maintaining activity in a narrow range of top-priority military research and production. Railroad construction was among the branches of the economy that were drastically trimmed back. The amount of railroad track opened to traffic dropped to one-third its former level (see the Table). With the revival of the general economy and start of preparations for the Third Five-Year Plan (1966-70), railroad construction activity recovered to the former level of about 1,000 kilometers (km) of track completed per year. This recovery was short-lived, however, as the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution again resulted in a downturn in railroad construction. The estimate of newly opened track for the three years -- from the fall of 1965 to the fall of 1968 -- suggests an annual rate of 620 km [redacted] but the rate presumably was lower than this during the most intense period of the Cultural Revolution in 1967-68. 25X1

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Individual Construction Projects*

3. The following are major rail lines recently completed or currently under construction in Communist China.

Completed

Ch'eng-tu - K'un-ming Line

4. The Ch'eng-tu - K'un-ming rail line was completed by the end of 1970 after 13 years of construction activity. This major north-south line, extending 1,070 km through extremely rough and mountainous terrain [redacted] was one of the few rail construction projects that remained active during the Cultural Revolution. Providing a shorter and more direct route to Yunnan Province from the Szechwan Basin, this rail line establishes the means for transporting the rich mineral resources of this region to major industrial cities such as

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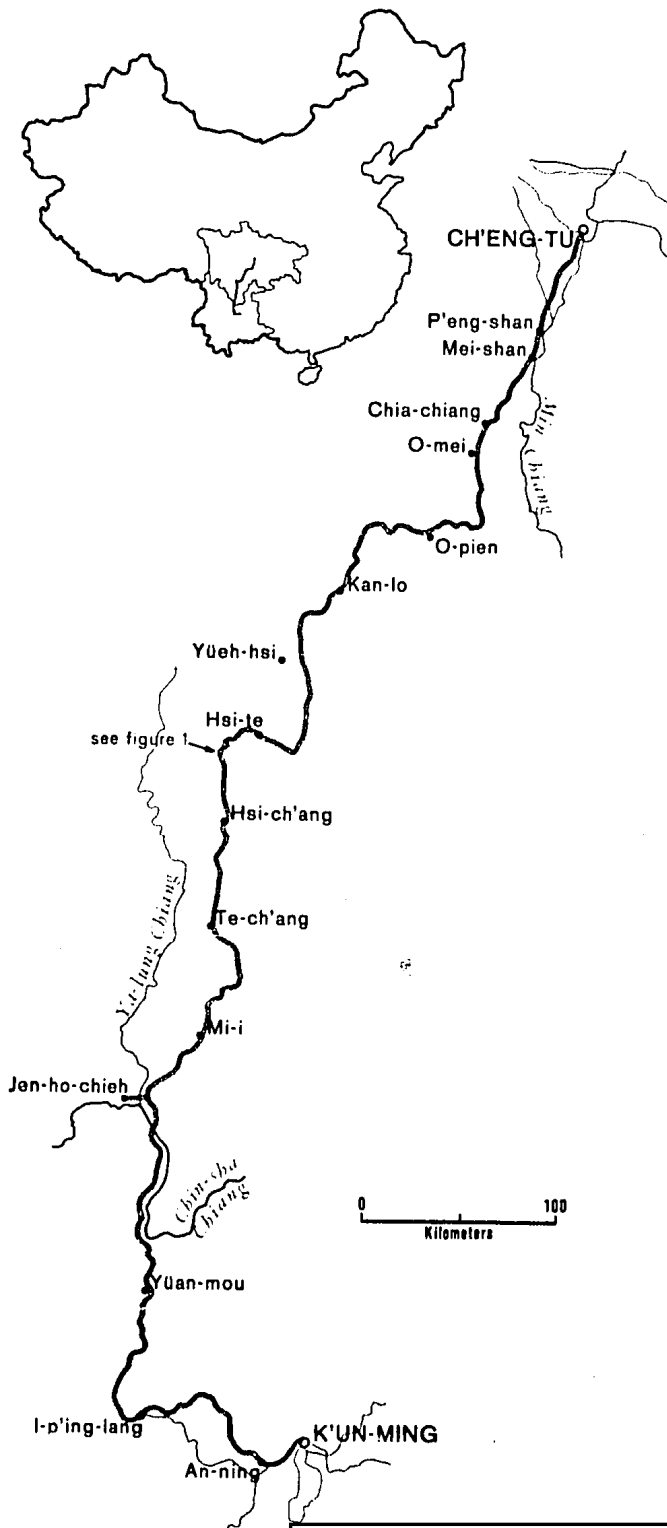
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Ch'eng-tu-K'un-ming Rail Line



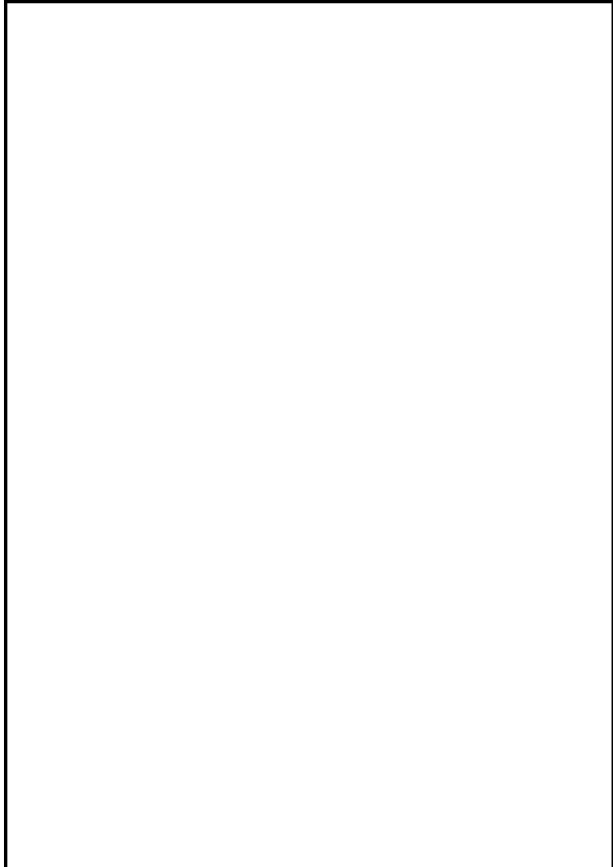
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Ch'eng-tu and Ch'ung-ch'ing and for promoting the overall economic development of the region.

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5. The Jen-ho-chieh industrial complex, a major new facility being built near the Yunnan-Szechwan border, is located on a short spur line from the newly constructed rail line. This

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Currently Under Construction

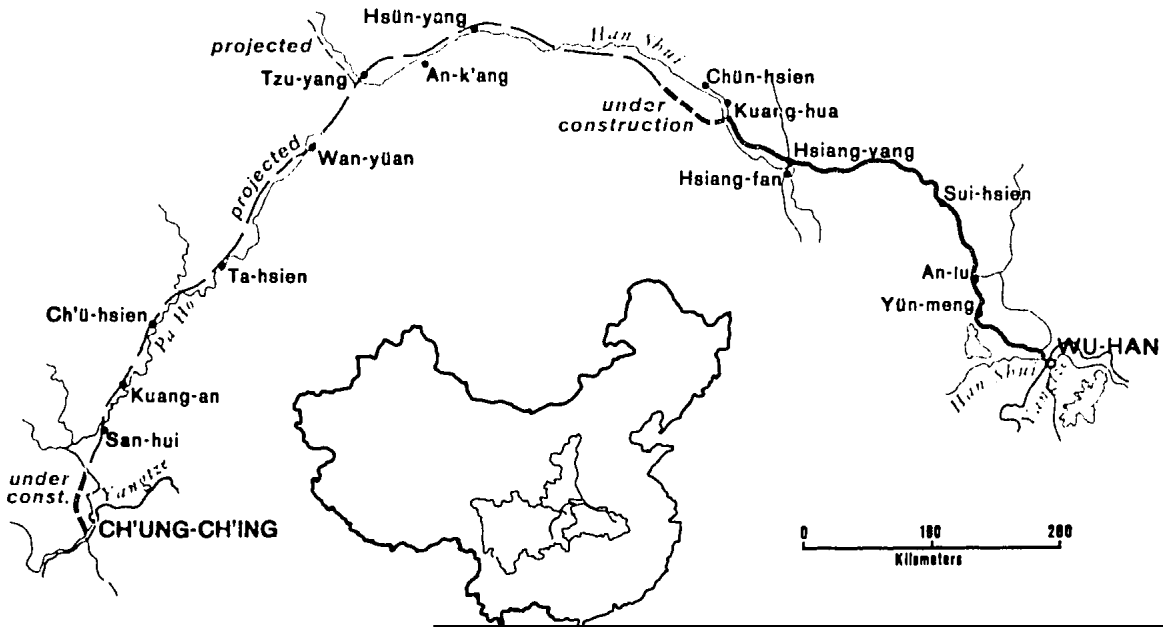
Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing Line

6. The Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing rail line, located in Hupeh, Shensi, and Szechwan

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Wu-han-Ch'ung-ch'ing Rail Line



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Provinces, was originally started in 1958 as an 800-km connection between Wu-han and Sian in Shensi Province. This line was operational to the vicinity of a hydroelectric complex near Kuang-hua by the end of 1966, when roadbed construction was halted. However, work continued during the Cultural Revolution on a major railroad bridge over the Han River near Kuang-hua. This bridge was completed in late 1969, and roadbed construction resumed toward the northwest. At the same time, roadbed construction started north of Ch'ung-ch'ing toward the northeast.

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7. This rail line -- which forms a huge arc -- will be approximately 1,200 km in length when completed and will provide the first direct rail route between the Szechwan Basin and eastern China. At present the main connection is the inland water route on the Yangtze River. The new line will connect with two major north-south rail lines at Hsiang-fan and Wu-han, providing ready access to the existing system. Little industrial or mining activity presently exists along the alignment of the proposed rail line, but increased economic activity can be expected when the project is completed.

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8. Closely related to the work presently under way on the Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing line was the initiation in 1969 of a rail line in the upper Han River Valley which may link the projected line with the Pao-chi - Ch'eng-tu line to the west. This line will be approximately 310 km in length when finished. At present it is complete from the Pao-chi - Ch'eng-tu rail line to a point about 150 km east of the line. The construction of this line will open the Han River Valley for industrial development and will establish increased access to western China when the Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing line is open to traffic.

Lan-chou - Tsaidam Basin Line

9. The Chinese resumed construction on a rail line between Lan-chou and the Tsaidam Basin in Tsinghai Province during 1970 after some nine years of inactivity. Roadbed construction had been resumed near Hai-yen on this projected 1,200-km line by August 1970 and work was under way on culverts and bridges further west along the proposed route. Work on two additional segments of the line, abandoned in 1961, has not resumed.

10. This line will provide improved access to the mineral rich Tsaidam Basin as well as to the strategically important Tsinghai-Tibet highway.

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[Redacted]

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Lo-yang - Lou-ti Line

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11. [Redacted]

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By the end of 1970 this line had been completed to Chih-ch'eng where the fourth major bridge to cross the Yangtze River was nearing completion. [Redacted] Further roadbed preparation was also under way south of the river. This rail line approximately parallels the existing Peking-Canton line, located some 100 to 200 km to the east, and probably will eventually be constructed at least as far south as Lou-ti.

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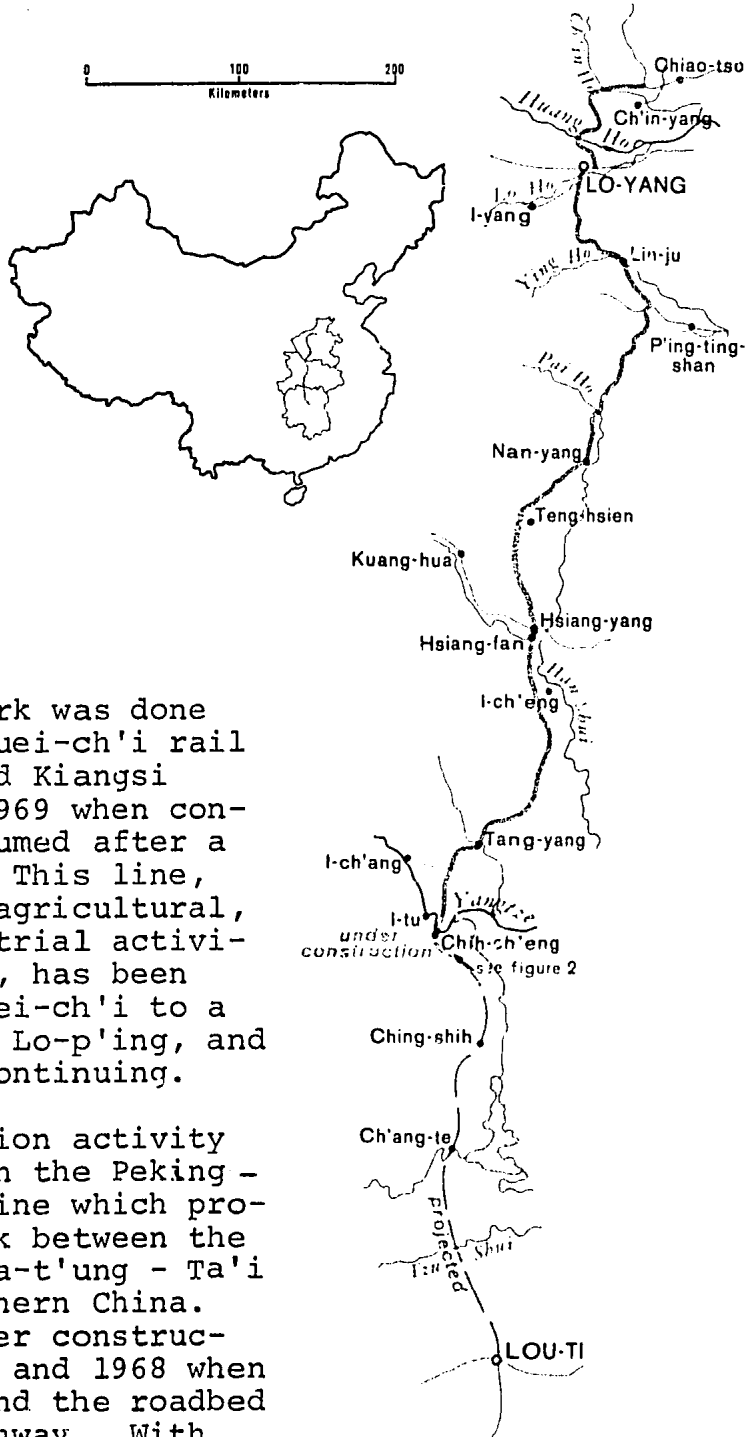
12. In addition to establishing an alternate route for heavy north-south traffic, this line will open up parts of Honan, Hupeh, and Hunan Provinces for industrial development and other economic activity. This line connects with the new Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing line at Hsiang-fan.

Other Lines

13. Little work was done on the Wu-hu - Kuei-ch'i rail line in Anhwei and Kiangsi Provinces until 1969 when construction was resumed after a halt since 1960. This line, which will serve agricultural, mining, and industrial activities in this area, has been completed from Kuei-ch'i to a location south of Lo-p'ing, and construction is continuing.

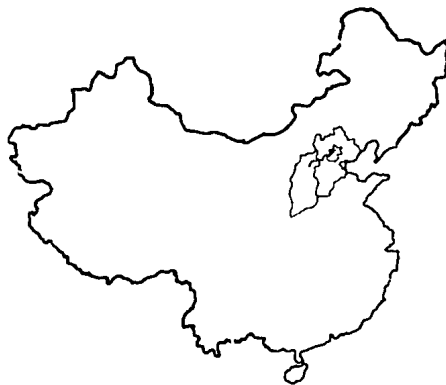
14. Construction activity resumed in 1969 on the Peking - Yuan-p'ing rail line which provides a third link between the capital and the Ta-t'ung - Ta'i yuan line in northern China. This line was under construction between 1966 and 1968 when work was halted and the roadbed was used as a highway. With the resumption of rail line

Lo-yang--Lou-ti Rail Line

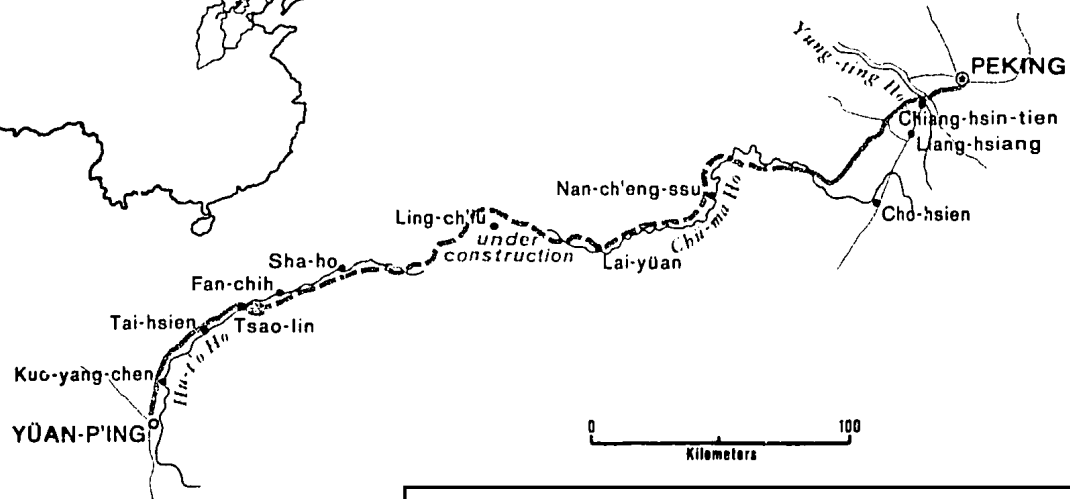


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Peking-Yüan-p'ing Rail Line



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construction in 1969, work has progressed rapidly on the line. It will provide an additional line to the interior from Peking and will serve the numerous agricultural and mining activities in this region. A massive new petroleum refinery is under construction at a location near the new line.

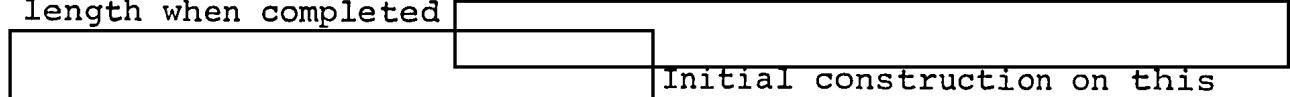
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The Ning-wu - Ko-lan branch line, which leads west from the Ta-t'un - T'ai-yuan rail line, will be approximately 95 km in length when completed

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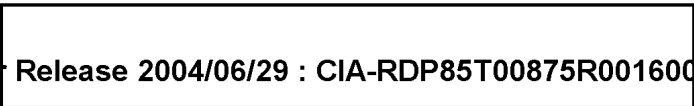
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Initial construction on this line was begun in the latter part of 1968 and has continued to the present. Two rail yards are completed and three additional rail yards are presently under construction along this line.

16. The K'u-lu-ch'i - Mo-ho area rail line in northeastern China has been under active construction since its inception in the early 1960s. With the exception of the summer of 1968, when Cultural Revolution activities apparently stopped construction on this line, the Chinese have given it high priority

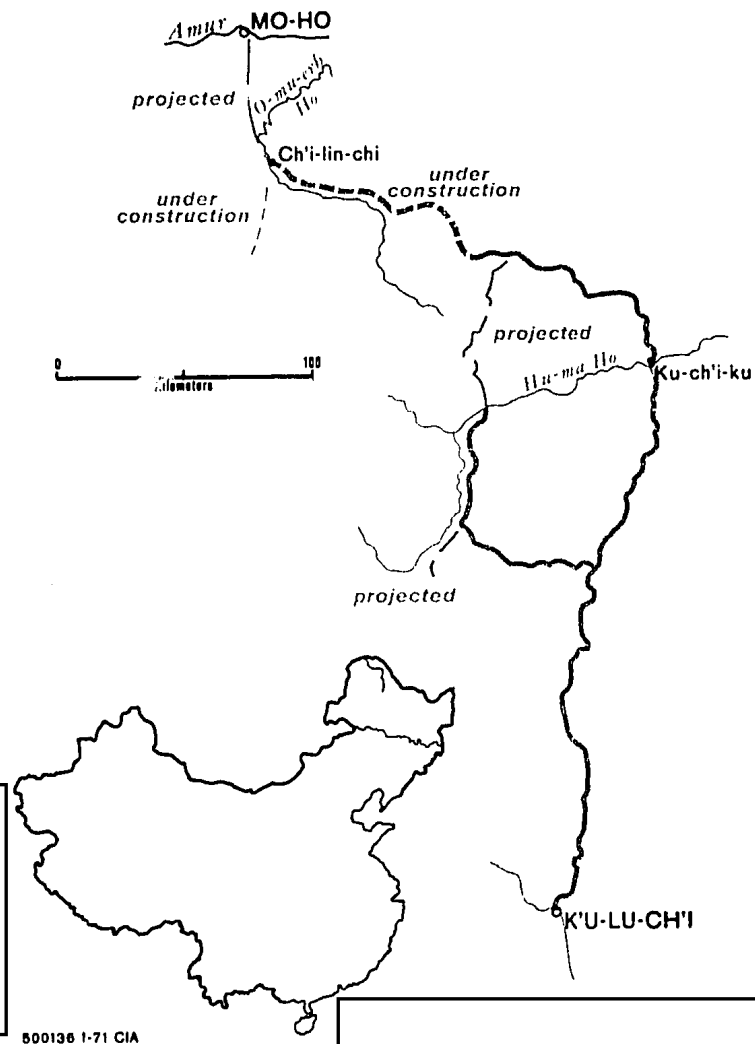
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presumably because of the rich timber resources which are found in this region.

17. The rail line proceeds north from K'u-lu-ch'i to Ku-ch'i-ku and then continues north and west through heavily timbered terrain. Several small rail yards and rail-to-road transfer points are located along this route as well as along a major branch line which extends west and north from a point approximately half-way between K'u-lu-ch'i and Ku-ch'i-ku.

K'u-lu-ch'i-Mo-ho Area Rail Line



18. The proximity of this rail line to the border area possibly adds strategic significance to its completion and to the high priority given it. Another line projected to the Sino-Soviet border in Manchuria is the Pei-an to Ai-hui line where construction was halted in 1966 at a point north of Lung-chen. No further work has been noted on this line.

19. The completion of the 152-km Sui-ch'i to Fu-yang line in Anhwei Province in the latter part of 1970 provided the means for serving agriculture and mining activity in this area. Primarily a regional rail line serving regional interests, the

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line has no strategic significance. This line exemplifies much of the construction activity in the eastern part of the country -- serving local and regional transport requirements as well as expanding the existing national rail network.

20. Construction resumed on the Yen-liang - Ch'u-wo-hsien rail line in Shensi and Shansi Provinces beyond Yen-liang in 1970. Approximately 122 km of rail line had been completed by the end of 1970. Better access to the west from the Ta-t'ung - Feng-ling-tu line and to the regional industrial and mining activities located in this area will be gained with its completion.

Significance for the Railroad System

21. The length of the main railroad network in Communist China was approximately 40,000 km at the end of 1970, about 7%, or 3,000 km, of which had been built since 1966. This total length will be increased by about 3,700 km when the rail lines presently under construction are completed, and further projects will be initiated in the 1970s. During the past decade the Chinese have attempted to correct the uneven physical distribution of the rail system in order to help solidify central government control over some of the more remote areas of the southwestern and central parts of the country, to disperse China's industrial base into areas potentially rich in mineral resources, and to provide more efficient logistical support to critical areas for national defense purposes.

22. These goals have been emphasized in the current railroad construction program. The expansion of the rail network into the southwestern and central regions of the country represents an effort on the part of the Chinese to provide the necessary transport infrastructure for overall economic development, to establish the means for transporting the rich mineral resources both within and out of these regions, and to improve the capability for transporting military supplies and troops in these areas. In particular, the Ch'eng-tu - K'un-ming, the Wu-han - Ch'ung-ch'ing, and the Lo-yang - Lou-ti rail lines illustrate these goals.

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23. In addition, the internal expansion and development found in the eastern part of the country reflect the Chinese desire to maintain and improve the existing railroad network for purposes of providing a modern, efficient system to carry the increased economic traffic expected to be generated by the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1971-75). The construction of numerous new branch and spur lines to industrial, mining, and agricultural facilities as well as the addition of new rail yards and bypasses, the realignment of existing track, and the improvement of rail junctions are representative of Chinese efforts to prepare for the new Plan.

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24. Peking has assigned a high priority to the expansion and improvement of the railroad system, particularly to the extension of the rail system into new areas of southwestern and central China. However, the Chinese have chosen to rely less on double-tracking for the movement of traffic on heavily traveled lines than initially envisioned during the Great Leap Forward.

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Conclusions

25. Railroad construction activity in Communist China dropped during the Cultural Revolution but revived strongly in 1969-70. The length of the main railroad network in Communist China was approximately 40,000 km at the end of 1970, about 7% of which had been built since 1966. The Chinese have attempted to extend the rail system in order to solidify central government control over some of the more remote areas of the country, to disperse China's industrial base into areas potentially rich in mineral resources, and to provide more efficient logistical support to the military.

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