

# Chinese: Following Sage Advice

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VIENTIANE, Laos—With more and more Soviets arriving every day in this small, backwater Asian capital, there is a story making the diplomatic rounds whereby a European diplomat confesses to a Chinese correspondent of the New China News Agency that he really had no idea how many Russians there are in Laos.

"Even I don't know how many Russians there are here," the Chinese correspondent is supposed to have replied.

As American power recedes in Indochina, the Soviets are trying to fill the vacuum.

Soviet technicians and pilots are now performing many of the functions once provided by the U.S. CIA.

If the Chinese correspondent was a member of the Chinese secret service, as the story is meant to suggest, he has more than enough to keep him busy in this traditional center of intrigue.

The Soviets have replaced the Americans as the primary target of concern for Chinese intelligence agents around the world and nowhere is this more obvious than in Southeast Asia. Here the Chinese fear not only Soviet penetration of the pro-Western countries but Soviet influence with the newly victorious Vietnamese as well.

Vientiane is one of the few places where all the big powers, plus Vietnam and Thailand, have diplomatic missions. As is the case with other major powers, the Chinese have intelligence operatives working within the Chinese embassy, which sits beside a dirt road not far from the morning market.

The Chinese, too, have benefited from the American retreat. While once there were Chinese embassies only here and in Burma, the Chinese now also have embassies in

Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, each with some members of the Chinese secret service. Chinese espionage is worldwide, not limited just to Asia, but compared to the Soviet KGB or the American CIA it is more defensive than offensive in nature.

## Other Cloaks, Other Daggers—V

The Chinese secret service remains one of the most secret in the world. It is probable that the KGB and the CIA know more about each other than they do about the Chinese. There have been very few high-level defectors from the Chinese intelligence apparatus. When Liao Ho-shu, Chinese charge d'affaires at the Hague, defected in 1969, he was billed as a master spy. But the CIA discovered he was little more than an emotionally disturbed, middle-level diplomat and eventually let him go back to China.

Chinese operations have usually been low-key and unobtrusive compared to the CIA or the KGB. As one diplomat put it, the Chinese are not so pushy.

It might be said that the Chinese were the first to analyze espionage in a methodical way. The Chinese classic, "The Art of War," said to have been written by Sun Tzu as early as 500 B.C., has a whole section on espionage. Sun Tzu speaks of "foreknowledge" that cannot be elicited from spirits nor from gods, nor by analogy with past events, nor from calculations, but must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation.

The book describes various types of secret agents: native, inside, doubled, expendable and those to be kept alive. The book explains that native agents are those of the enemy's country whom we employ and inside agents are enemy officials whom we employ.

The modern Chinese secret service seems to place more emphasis on the side of espionage — the collecting and careful sifting of newspapers, technical journals and periodicals — rather than bribing or blackmailing people into stealing documents. They do employ dirty tricks, but not, knowledgeable sources say, to the degree the CIA and the KGB do.

They do not have the technical resources of the Americans or the Soviets and



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their agents are not equipped with the same sort of complicated electronic gadgetry. As far as can be determined, they are not as prone toward assassination as a tool of espionage.

If anything, the Chinese are even more patient than the Soviets in building spy networks. The Chinese stress ideological sympathy. If, for example, they wanted to make an agent out of a secretary to the president of Singapore, one knowledgeable source said, they would try to convert her rather than simply offer her money or photograph her in a compromising situation. Cynics say that in this the Chinese make a virtue of necessity since their service does not have the resources of the superpowers. But others maintain that Chinese agents are, on the whole, more ideologically motivated than the agents of other big powers.

The Chinese secret service has one great strength that makes it comparable to the Israeli secret service. All over Asia, and indeed the world, there are overseas Chinese many of whom, not unlike the Jews, feel a strong emotional pull toward their homeland. The Chinese take being Chinese more seriously than do most nationalities. Although many have lived overseas for generations, they still feel themselves to be Chinese rather than Indonesian, Thai or whatever. Like the Jews in Europe, the Chinese of Southeast Asia have often been persecuted by their host governments.

Some of Peking's most spectacular espionage successes came very quickly, when several top Chinese scientists in the United States were lured back to China after the Communists came to power in 1949. The greatest coup was to persuade Chien Hsue-shen, the Berkeley-trained rocket expert, to come to China to direct Peking's atomic research program. The recent successes of Chinese rocketry were obtained in part by American-trained Chinese who were either lured back or smuggled out.

In some cases the Chinese were not above putting pressure on scientists by saying that members of their family were still inside China and wanted to see them. The threat was implicit.

It has been said that Peking's agents use Chinese criminal societies for their own ends in various parts of the world. It may be true in some places, but traditionally the Nationalist Chinese agents have made more use of the Chinese criminal societies than the Communists.

In the early 1960s, the Chinese secret service tried to extend its operations into Africa and like the Soviets and Americans backed various guerrilla groups with money and arms. They were particularly active in the Congo, where their efforts brought them few benefits.

They appeared to have difficulty understanding the chaotic nature of African politics. Despite the recent Chinese efforts in the Angolan civil war, Peking has for the most part backed away from military involvement, preferring instead such projects as the Chinese-built railway from to Tanzania.

Chinese secret service activity is thought to be Paris. But unlike the KGB, the Chinese secret service does not concentrate on the West. The Chinese favor a strong NATO and an economically and politically integrated Europe to counter Soviet power. Their agents try not to

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HUA KUO-FENG

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Chinese children in Hong Kong demonstrating in 1967. Overseas Chinese can be an intelligence asset for Peking.

subvert governments but to show up Soviet designs wherever possible. The Chinese try to influence Western Communists and other leftists against the Soviets.

In Asia, the Chinese still support Communist insurgencies in Thailand, Malaysia and Burma. But, according to most sources, this is mostly moral support, such as clandestine propaganda radio broadcasts from China, rather than arms and ammunition.

The Chinese distinguish between government-to-government relations and party-to-party relations. Although they have diplomatic relations with the countries involved, they dare not completely abandon moral support of the internal Communist insurgencies lest the insurgents fall completely under the wing of the Soviets or the Vietnamese, whom the Chinese distrust.

Some guerillas are trained in China. In February 1974, 12 shipwrecked Filipino sailors were picked up at sea by a passing ship and brought to Hong Kong. The sailors, asked to be repatriated to China instead of their native land, it was widely suspected that they were guerrillas returning to the Philippines after training on the mainland. The British authorities in Hong Kong put the whole thing under wraps and sent the men to China.

The Chinese aid and train Palestinians, apparently to gain some influence with the Palestinian movement rather than leave the field clear for the Soviets.

One of the greatest Chinese failures in recent years was the anti-Communist counter-coup in Indonesia in 1965. The Indonesian Communist Party, which had very close links to Peking, had gained enormous influence under Sukarno, but it attempted a premature grab for power which the rightist generals brutally suppressed. The back of the Communist movement was broken and countless thousands of Chinese Indonesians were massacred.

Few if any outsiders are entirely sure how the Chinese secret service bureaucracy works. But the sources have concluded that it is made up of several different organizations and departments that all report to some sort of central intelligence control in the Communist Party's Central Committee. This control would then report directly to the ruling Politburo.

These separate but connected organizations include the military intelligence department of the army general staff, the investigation department, the Ministry of Public Security, the United Front and the International Liaison department.

Military intelligence looks after military matters, of course, and the Ministry of Public Security keeps tabs on China's 800 million at home as well as activities in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, which the Chinese consider to be Chinese home territory.

The Ministry of Public Security might be compared with the FBI, but organizationally it has more in common with the KGB's activities within the Soviet Union.

Like the KGB, Peking's Public Security administers most of the daily controls over Chinese life.

Sources say that, if anything, the Chinese are both more successful at this sort of Big Brotherly mass manipulation and less brutal about it than the Soviets. The prisoners of Mao are reportedly better treated than the inmates of the Gulag Archipelago, even though intellectual dissent is even less tolerated in Peking than in Moscow.

The Investigation Department may be the most important of the various intelligence-gathering services and is probably the closest equivalent of the American CIA.

The International Liaison Department has an espionage function. It is responsible for fraternal Communist parties around the world and coordinates activities with them. Whatever support the Chinese give the Thai insurgency, for example, would be administered by this department. The Chinese do not admit the agency has any espionage function, however, and thus are free to identify the head of this organization as Keng Pao.

The Chinese Communist secret service was created

during the days of the anti-Japanese struggle and the civil war with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. The father of the Chinese secret service was Kang Sheng, who died on Dec. 16. At his death he was a vice chairman of the party and probably the fourth-ranking member of the Chinese leadership. He had been very sick for the last several years, however, and confined to a wheel chair.

Kang Sheng visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s to study espionage organization and is thought to have developed a deep mistrust of the Soviets even while the Chinese Communists were closely cooperating with them. In the 1950s and 1960s, he was the undisputed boss and coordinator of intelligence and espionage for the Central Committee.

It is not clear whether any one person has now assumed Kang's mantle. The most likely candidate, however, is Hua Xuo-feng, a Politburo member named head of the Ministry of Public Security in January. That particular ministry found itself in great Taiwan agents often try to infiltrate into China either by sea along lonely coasts or through Hong Kong and Macao.

British police raided a in Hong Kong in November and discovered an arms cache consisting of pistols, incendiary devices, explosives and other weapons. Some of the weapons believed to belong to Taiwanese agents bound for China.

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Hong Kong is a major center of the Chinese secret service, not only for countering agents from Taiwan, but also for running and financing agents abroad. Thousands of overseas Chinese pass through Hong Kong on their way back and forth from China every year. The Hong Kong certificate of identity often serves as a passport for Chinese agents. The New China News service provides a sort of unofficial Chinese diplomatic presence in Hong Kong, and the Communist Chinese own several banks there which can both disguise and finance espionage.

The Chinese often publicize the alleged attempts of Soviet diplomats to establish contacts within China. Given the KGB successes with infiltrating agents into the establishments of Western countries and given the close working relations that the Chinese had with the Soviets up until the late 1950s, it would not be hard to imagine that some pro-Soviet Chinese, especially in the military,

might be persuaded to work for the Kremlin.

The KGB is thought to have a 12th Chief Directorate especially aimed at converting Chinese diplomats.

Although there appears little available evidence for it, sources say that it would be remarkable if the Chinese secret service did not occasionally try to cooperate with Western intelligence services against the Soviets. No one suggests, however, that this cooperation is formal, nor is it suggested that it even approaches the close relations that the major Western secret services like to maintain among themselves.

It is not likely that the top men of the Chinese leadership will be overly shocked at the revelations which have so recently and devastatingly exposed the CIA. The men of the Long March have come up the hard way and they expect rough play. It is more likely that they are not so much shocked at the revelations as in the very fact that such things are revealed in the United States.

But for their own secret service there is very little of the no holds barred espionage that marked competition between the Soviets and the Americans in Berlin, for example. Here in Vientiane the Chinese are simply waiting quietly, trying to keep tabs on the Soviets, put in a bad word for them when they can and wait for them to overextend themselves.

NEXT: How the West  
Germans Spy