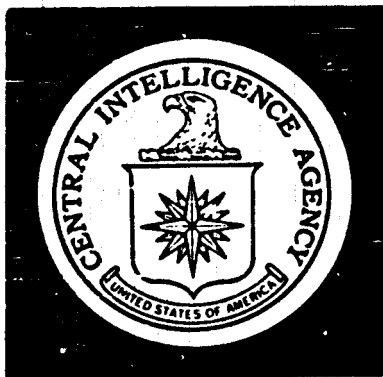


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Report

Communist China: Conflict at the Top

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
26 May 1971

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Communist China: Conflict at the Top

Summary

Two years ago the Chinese Communists held their ninth party congress to mark the "victorious" conclusion of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and to announce the formation of a new ruling elite ostensibly more responsive to Mao Tse-tung and his heir-designate, Defense Minister Lin Piao. The survivors of the "revolution," who were named at the congress to fill all of the 25 seats on the politburo, were not, however, a loyal phalanx of dedicated Maoists. Instead, they represented an uneasy conglomerate of disparate civilian and military interest groups thrown up by the twists and turns of the campaign launched in 1966 to purge and revitalize the nation's power structure. Their relations in the past had been marred by bitter personal quarrels and rivalries, and despite the legitimacy conferred on them by election to the politburo, it was clear that all but a few superannuated figures would wish to consolidate their political positions further in anticipation of the eventual passing of Mao. For nearly a year this fragile coalition presented virtually an unchanging public face. Beginning in March 1970, however, a series of unexplained shifts in the political hierarchy in Peking strongly suggested that the leadership was entering a period of extended tension and more direct confrontation--a confrontation intensified by the process of reconstituting China's party and government apparatus and promoting economic and social recovery following the turmoil that had disrupted national life during the Cultural Revolution.

Note: This report was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and discussed within CIA..

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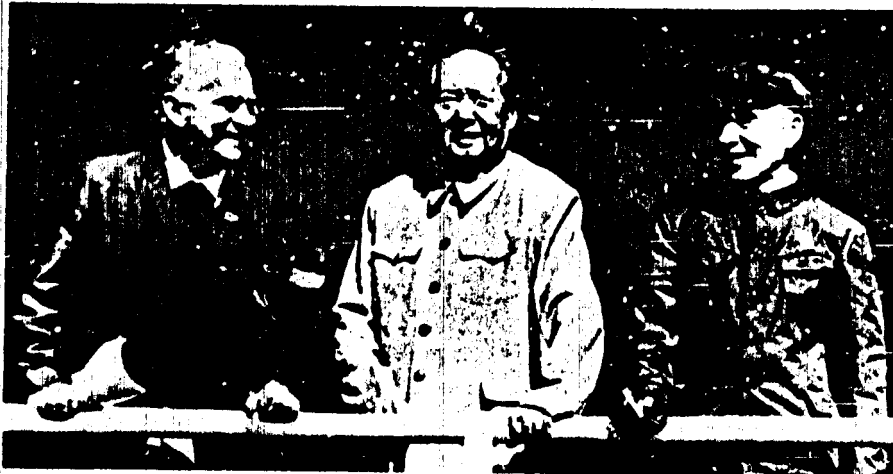
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Edgar Snow Honored In Peking: How Now Mao?

The persistence of serious divisions at the top of China's power structure was affirmed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mao averred that "the Cultural Revolution still continued in the form of the struggle for power at the national level," and others [REDACTED] that factional wrangling was posing a major obstacle to rebuilding the shattered Chinese Communist party apparatus at the provincial level. Since all decisions on staffing major party organs have to be taken in Peking, it appears that the leaders with whom Snow talked were referring to bitter internecine quarreling within the ruling politburo itself.

The sense of fluidity and absence of cohesion within the elite that is conveyed in the Snow interviews add weight to the numerous indirect signs of backstage maneuvering and discord in Peking throughout the past year: the persistent rumors that the major party plenum held early last autumn was stormy, the year-long absence of politburo member Hsieh Fuchih followed by his sudden resurfacing this March under peculiar circumstances, and the apparent political sidelining of politburo standing committee members Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng, both of whom were

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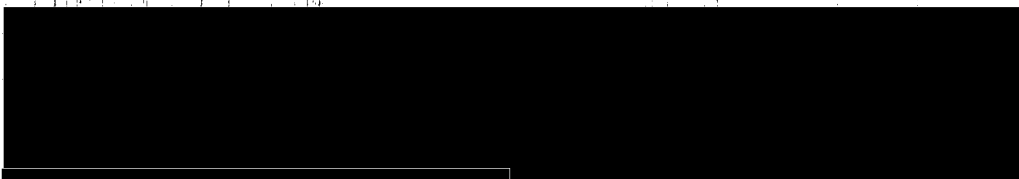
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leaders of the radical Cultural Revolution Group and long-time associates of Mao. Beyond this, the steady drumbeat of propaganda warning that the struggle between Mao's revolutionary line and the "revisionist" line of his former party opponents is not yet over strongly suggests that some elements in the regime--and perhaps Mao himself--are by no means satisfied with either the new governing structure that is emerging from the Cultural Revolution or the direction in which China's reconstruction efforts have been moving.


Nevertheless, there do appear to be some discernible threads running throughout the present pattern of political infighting in Peking. Put broadly, the strains within the leadership seem to stem both from disagreements since the ninth congress on specific policies and from the continuation of personal antagonisms and divisions carried over from the Cultural Revolution. To this explosive mixture has been added an apparently deepening quarrel over the enhanced role of the People's Liberation Army in political affairs and civil administration.

In the past year both the power and policy battle lines within the politburo seem to have been more sharply drawn between the radical ideologues who have been part of Mao's inner circle since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and a looser grouping of proponents of relative "moderation" in domestic and foreign policy, whose principal spokesman appears to be Premier Chou En-lai. Although the impression gleaned last fall by Edgar Snow that "Chou is running the country" may be exaggerated, there have been indications in recent months--such as the breakthrough in forming provincial party committees--that the balance of forces within the politburo is swinging in favor of Chou and some of the more moderate central and regional military figures who are also responsible for day-to-day administration. Conversely, the disappearance of Chen Po-ta and Kang

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Sheng amid reports that the activities of "extremists" are being denounced in Peking suggests a decline in the political fortunes of some, if not all, of those leaders below Mao and Lin most closely associated with the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

Despite the uncertain atmosphere in Peking, Mao-- at 77--unquestionably remains the dominant political figure, and there is no reason to believe that he is not still setting the tone and the general direction of current policies, all of which contain an eclectic mixture of the doctrinaire and the pragmatic. Although Mao's prestige could be tarnished in the course of the current complex infighting over difficult questions of reconstruction policy and personnel staffing, and during the accompanying political maneuvering within the politburo, there is no evidence that any concerted effort is under way to thrust Mao once again on the political sidelines. On the other hand, there continue to be signs that Mao's victory over his major opponents in the Cultural Revolution did not gain him the license to work his will unobstructed on all major policy and personnel questions, and the shifts within the leadership over the past year have demonstrated that the tenuous equilibrium in Peking can be shaken even with Mao at the helm.

Barring any major leadership upheaval before the death of Mao, his post as party chairman presumably will pass uncontested to his heir designate, Lin Piao. But because Lin can have no assurance that his own protégés in China's top civil-military command structure will be reliable, it can only be assumed that to retain his position he will have to secure the acquiescence of the conservatively oriented military powerholders as well as the government bureaucrats led by Chou En-lai. It seems equally clear that Lin will not be able to rule the country successfully if he should persist in playing the role of an unreconstructed Maoist in all fields.

At the moment, the influence of those leaders who seem inclined to acknowledge readily that much of Mao's revolutionary dogma has proved irrelevant

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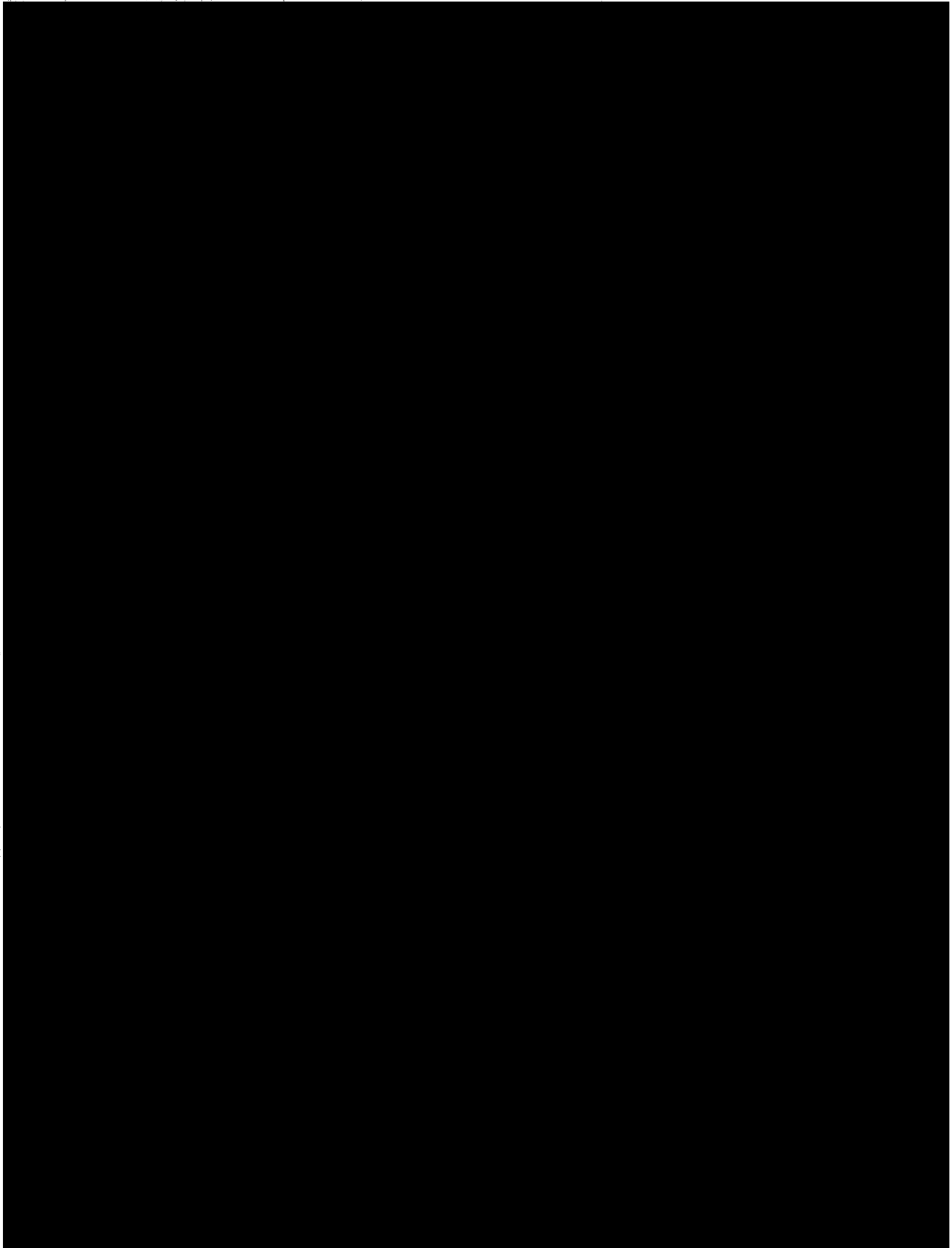
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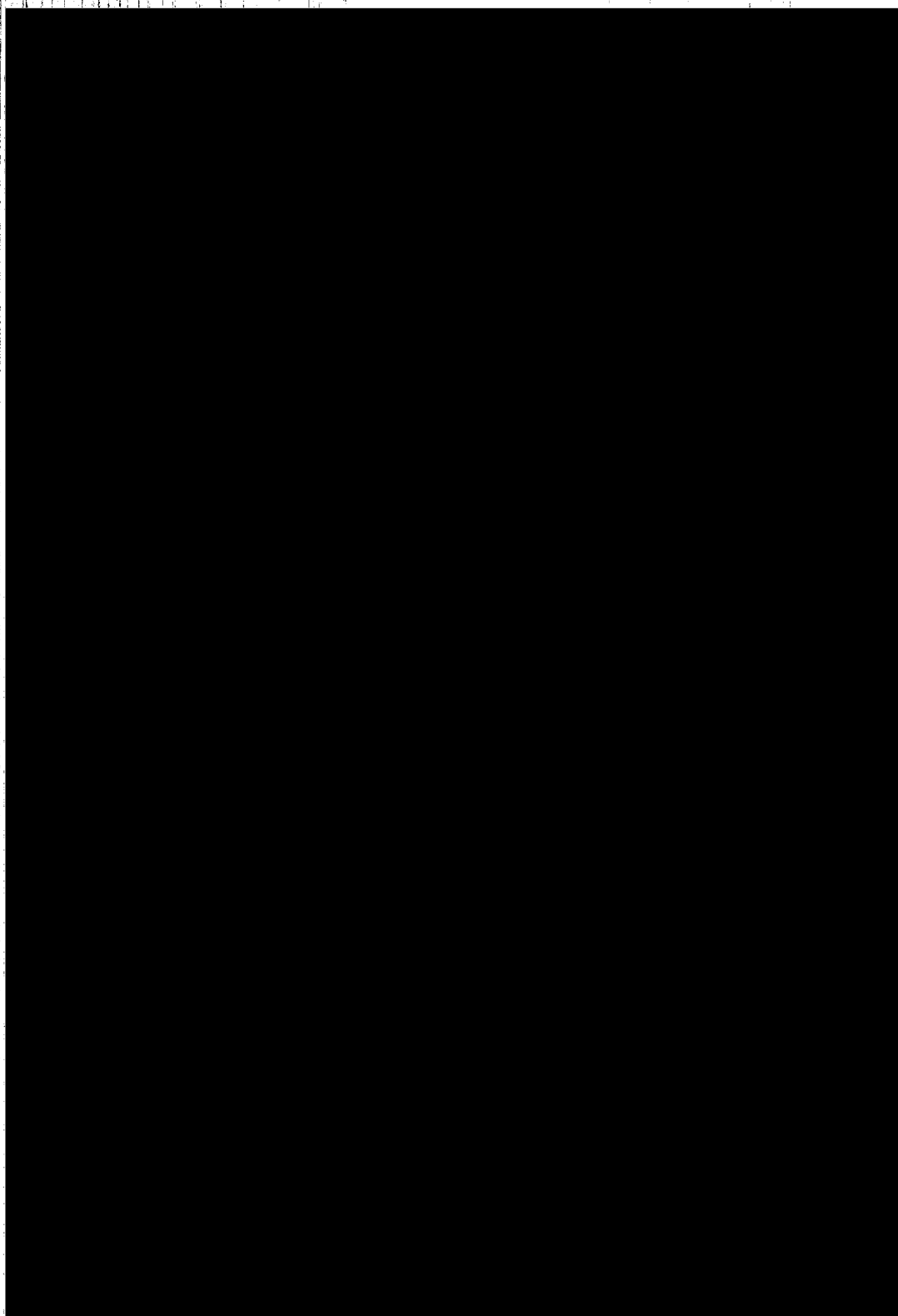
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to China's problems in the modern world seems on the rise. If Mao again attempts to initiate drastic "revolutionary" actions it is possible that a moderate opposition could coalesce to a greater degree than before, posing serious challenges to Mao and Lin over major policy issues and possibly even over their prescriptions for the succession. At this juncture, however, it is probably erroneous to assume that Mao's opponents are ready or willing to challenge his power openly, to do more than try to moderate his penchant for extreme programs, and to curb the influence of advisers whom Mao himself may be temporarily willing to sacrifice. In any case, Peking's failure to acknowledge any breaks in its leadership ranks and its continued reluctance to put forward an authoritative pecking order for the politburo reinforce the impression that relations among the elite are still in flux and that a covert power and policy struggle of considerable dimensions is still being waged in Peking-- a struggle that not only presages a potentially confused succession to Mao but also leaves open to question the precise limits of his present power and authority.

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Peking Atmospheric

1. On the surface at least, the ferment in Peking during the past year appears to have had surprisingly little impact on the regime's principal post - Cultural Revolution reconstruction efforts. Continued progress has been evident in restoring public order, rebuilding the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) apparatus at the provincial level and below, staffing and streamlining central government ministries, working up a new five year economic plan, and, most important, in promoting a more active foreign policy. For these efforts to take place at all there must be a degree of stability and some willingness to compromise within the leadership. Appearances can be misleading, however, and the parameters of Peking's various programs and policies--particularly in the domestic arena--are not always readily discernible. Thus, it seems certain that there are serious divisions at the top that account for the issuance of often-ambiguous policy guidelines, have a direct bearing on the uneven pace in implementing various programs, and help explain the apparent discord between central and local leaders on many issues.

2. The repeated delay in convening the much-heralded National People's Congress--which is expected to be the capstone of the regime's efforts to "revolutionize" the central government bureaucracy and the forum for presenting guidelines on future economic and social policies--also suggests that the leadership cannot yet agree on matters requiring a general consensus. The facts that no important leader in Peking is making speeches on domestic subjects or writing reports for attribution--except for ritual incantations on major holidays and anniversaries--and that any article touching on sensitive or tendentious issues usually is signed by an anonymous "writing group" are additional signs that most officials are maintaining low visibility at a time when tensions are high. Finally, Mao's admission to Edgar Snow that his deliberate efforts in the Cultural Revolution to create "fluid conditions"

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necessary for the party purge had led to a much more "bitter" factionalism than he had anticipated suggests that the current regime is still deeply troubled from within.

The Unfinished Revolution

3. Despite Mao's claim to Snow that he regarded the Cultural Revolution as "successful," it would appear that the root cause of the over-all instability at the apex of power in China today is the fact that the political outcome of the "revolution" is still in doubt. Indeed, the major themes in domestic propaganda over the past six months convey the clear impression that the central issues of the Cultural Revolution--the struggle against revisionism, the fight to re-establish Mao's authority within the party, and the attempt to preserve Maoist ideology as the guiding force in China's future development--have yet to be resolved. Therefore, the political maneuvering within the politburo today appears to be essentially another phase of the crisis in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that precipitated the Cultural Revolution rather than a new and unique power and policy struggle.

The Struggle Over Power and Ideology

4. The Cultural Revolution, with its political turbulence, rapid shifts of front, and confusing ramifications, was obviously an extensive campaign that affected every major phase of the Chinese Communist revolution. Despite the vagaries of the revolution in process, however, its origins are not hard to discern. It is now clear that beginning in the late 1950s an intense debate developed within the party on many important issues, that this debate led to questioning the applicability of a number of the major tenets of the "thoughts of Mao Tse-tung" to the problems of governing and developing China, and that a major struggle for power within the party evolved around this question. A number of leaders grouped around Mao and supported by Lin Piao advocated the preservation and inculcation of the "revolutionary

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ferment" and mass enthusiasm evident in the early days of Communist power, while others--identified with former head of state Liu Shao-chi--although paying lip service to Maoist ideals were more concerned with the practical problems of developing and governing the state. This contrast in approach created for the former a vested interest in "upholding Mao's thought" and for their putative opponents a vested interest in limiting its application in practice.

5. The differences in viewpoint, although rather narrow on the surface, had deep roots. In the Communists' long struggle to attain power in the early 50s, they had emphasized class conflict and contradictions, protracted struggles, the primacy of man over material conditions, and the supremacy of political work. These political doctrines, which succeeded in enlisting a wide popular commitment, served as guides in formulating policies on integrating diverse social groups, party building, collectivizing the economy, and resolving inner party disputes. They were closely identified with Mao himself and contained a built-in bias in favor of uninterrupted revolution and of radicalizing the domestic programs of the CCP. But by the late 1950s, "uninterrupted revolution" could only be applied in an environment of increasing popular desire for a measure of stability, routinization, and individual economic betterment. In particular the disasters growing out of the Great Leap Forward--an example of "revolutionary ferment" in action--led dissident intellectuals--and more importantly senior leaders within the party, government, and military structure--to question whether the Maoist approach was still applicable to the problems of a developing, industrializing, and modernizing society.

6. The emphasis on mass enthusiasm and ferment, however, had become so identified with the personality of Mao that to question it automatically became a crime--at least in the Chairman's own eyes. Articles in the Red Guard press have disclosed that Mao became increasingly concerned that after the Eighth Party Congress (1956) some members of the inner circle were

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challenging his basic assumptions; with the introduction of a program of economic retrenchment after the Great Leap Forward, he became convinced that some of his associates were pursuing programs that in spirit were conservative and evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Indeed, in the period between 1959 and 1962, Mao's control over party affairs was weakened to the point that veiled personal attacks on him began to appear in the press. For Mao this was an intolerable situation. In 1962 he began a counterattack that culminated in the Cultural Revolution four years later.

7. Mao told Edgar Snow last year that it was misleading to look for policy motives behind the Cultural Revolution. He said his challenge to his party opponents took the form of attacks on their revisionist policies, but the real issue had been the leadership plus the need to revitalize the revolution. These remarks are interesting not so much because they are a patent distortion of history--policy differences were indeed an important cause of the revolution--but because they suggest that Mao himself is probably less concerned with specific policies than with the motives of those who propose them. He has shown, for example, a penchant for pushing radical programs, but he also possesses the political acumen to recognize the necessity for periods of consolidation and retreat.

8. Mao felt threatened in the period prior to the Cultural Revolution, however, because other leaders began to doubt the validity of his basic prescription for building a selfless and classless China. Then and since he has labeled the doubters "revisionists" who sought to undermine the goal of achieving communism in China. He concluded that revisionist ideas and schemes must be eliminated from the minds of "dissident" intellectuals and party leaders, and he acted to remove the dissidents from power in the party and government. Extirpation of revisionism became the overriding issue in the Cultural Revolution, and Mao's failure to root out its influence has much to do with the political maneuvering in Peking today.

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Revisionism Today



Writing Poetry or New Thoughts?

9. Indeed, the current high degree of tension in Peking and the problems obliquely hinted at in domestic propaganda over the past six months suggest that the problem of revisionism is far from settled. Although he told Edgar Snow that the Cultural Revolution was successful, China's leadership is apparently still in flux precisely because Mao's victory in purging his major revisionist opponents in the party was incomplete. Since

the second plenum of the ninth party congress last autumn, for example, a mounting campaign to have senior officials re-study Mao's philosophy plus continuing condemnation of persistent revisionist trends in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres all suggest that the major issues that inspired the "revolution" in the first place are still being debated.

10. One area of debate is the economic sphere. In the course of effecting a recovery from the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution, Peking has made it clear that a major goal of future economic plans is the development of small and medium-sized industries in rural areas, primarily to support agriculture. This program unquestionably has Mao's blessing; it accords with his known bias in favor of increasing decentralized economic decision-making, promoting the development of intermediate technology, and fostering self-reliance--a prime requisite, incidentally, for enabling China to defend itself "in depth" against foreign attacks. Nevertheless, in implementing this program the regime has continued to avoid past mistakes such as encouragement of indiscriminate capital construction. Similarly, it has quietly abandoned certain disruptive experiments in agricultural policy that were attempted

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before the ninth congress--experiments that appeared to embody some of the more radical notions put forward during the Cultural Revolution--such as efforts to reduce further the material incentives to peasants by confiscating their private plots, to curb rural free markets, and to make institutional changes aimed at expanding decision-making at the commune level. There have been signs, however, that the present cautious approach has not won acceptance by ideologues associated with the more radical measures, who claim that there are those who are attempting to achieve economic recovery by following a revisionist path--as they did in the early 1960s.

11. Thus, a recent Peking editorial raised the revisionist bogey by declaring that continued existence of bourgeois influence is revealed by emphasis on the use of private plots, material incentives, and so forth. The editorial lashed out at "those comrades" who argue that the struggle between Mao's line and Liu Shao-chi's line has been settled and is a dead issue. This notion is wrong, it declared. In industry there are still those who place production over politics and want to put "experts" in charge of factories; in agriculture there are those who question the validity of a high degree of collectivization; and in commerce, some give priority to profits and adhere to capitalist interpretations of the law of supply and demand. This editorial and others charging that the influence of the revisionist thinkers persists seem to be warnings by the ideologues on the politburo that sentiment is still widespread in favor of insisting on an essentially incorrect ideological approach to economic development. The failure to mention the fourth five-year plan in the second plenum communiqué [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reinforce the impression of continuing debate over the applicability of Maoist precepts in economic planning.

12. There are also many signs of continuing struggle between the two lines in non-economic areas. China's universities were reopened this year and

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are supposedly implementing a series of "radical" reforms, including the abolition of entrance requirements, the introduction of more students with politically correct worker-peasant backgrounds, and the elevation to important academic posts of ordinary workers and others with "practical" experience. All this is designed to obviate the "elitist mentality" fostered by China's pre - Cultural Revolution universities and to reduce what the ideologues consider an unacceptable gap between theoretical and practical training. Regardless of the individual merits of some of these reforms in a developing country, there have been repeated indications in the press that they are being resisted in practice. Thus, denunciations are frequently published of those who are still arguing for the necessity of advanced theoretical training and of bourgeois professors who have refused to mend their ways despite being chastened by Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution.

13. Indications of debate also abound in the arena of party-building--the regime's first order of domestic business since the ninth congress. There has been a series of press denunciations since the second plenum, for instance, of unnamed comrades who have been propounding the theory of "inner-party peace" and who have been attempting to play down the need for prolonged ideological investigation of candidate members, in particular of party veterans being returned to responsible positions.

14. Mounting criticism of the political performance of the veteran party officials and military officers follows the pattern of earlier attacks on the former party and state apparatus. They too have been rebuked for their elitism and their penchant for routinizing, organizing, and consolidating, which did not accord with Mao's notions of revolutionary leadership. In particular, the People's Liberation Army (PLA)--which has taken on a wider range of civil administrative and party functions than at any time since the early days of Communist rule--has been accused of allowing attitudes of arrogance and complacency to become widespread. These criticisms

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could indicate that the ideologues are concerned that a restructured organizational authority dominated by the PLA may evolve into a techno-bureaucratic elite as divorced from the populace and as unresponsive to Mao's revolutionary dicta as the old party and state machinery that was decimated in the Cultural Revolution.

15. Since at present the PLA is the only fully functioning organ of state power, these attacks on the military raise the possibility that Mao may once again believe his personal authority is being threatened and, by extension, suggest that Lin Piao, who had been charged with molding the PLA into a reliable political instrument, has not been entirely successful. This notion seems to be supported by the unprecedented citation in China's new draft state constitution of Mao and his heir designate Lin as the nation's personal rulers. Although the citation may be interpreted as simply a dramatic reaffirmation of Mao's and Lin's victory over their former opponents, it seems equally plausible to view it as an attempt by Mao to stress his personal legitimacy in order to compensate for the weakening of his ideological legitimacy.

16. The theory that Mao cannot and does not dictate by fiat on many issues under debate in Peking was supported in his interviews with Edgar Snow. Snow made the point that Mao should not be regarded as an all-powerful autocrat, adding that Mao himself said that he formulated policy and issued directives but left the details of execution to others. Moreover, the impression left by the Snow interviews is that Mao has some serious reservations over the shape of China's emergent post - Cultural Revolution party and government apparatus.

17. Mao indirectly admitted these doubts when he told Snow that it was wrong to judge his success in renewing the leadership by referring to the national or provincial level, where many of the old cadres were back in office and the army was strongly represented. Instead, Mao told Snow, he should look at the county level; it was here that the new leaders thrown up by the revolution were to be found. According to Mao, they would be the next generation of

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provincial and national leaders, and they would be reliable heirs to his ideals. Available evidence, however, shows that essentially the same forces prevail at the county and other local governing levels as at the national level; it would therefore seem that Mao is either out of touch with reality or straining very hard to rationalize what has been in fact very substantial modification of his goals in the Cultural Revolution. In any case, Mao's refusal to claim success for himself in drastically reforming the top levels of administration and his strange admission that his job now was "to convince the county-level leaders that they had won the revolution," convey the impression that not all of those holding the principal levers of power in the country are entirely responsive to him and his entourage.

Squaring the Inner Circle

18. As long as he remains on the scene, Mao may be tempted to take further steps to maintain the authority of his dogma and to revive revolutionary enthusiasm. But whether he now has the power to do this is a moot point. He remains a consummate politician who, if unable to have his way on all matters, is still able to retain considerable leverage by playing off opposing groups within the elite against one another. Indeed, much of the leadership uncertainty in Peking today may stem from Mao's devotion to this tactic--a device that in effect avoids the risk of raising any direct challenge to his pre-eminence.

19. Because Mao remains a charismatic figure of enormous prestige, such a challenge seems highly unlikely at this stage; but the machinations within the leadership over the past year suggest that Mao may be playing the game of palace politics under more pressure than at any time since his new politburo was formed at the ninth congress. He has attempted to work his will by making timely concessions to the more moderately inclined leaders while on other occasions supporting the efforts of the more radical "Maoists" to improve their standing. The recent shifting within the politburo, however, may

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mean that the fragile balance of rival groupings has been tipped. If so, it seems likely that the shift was caused by an abortive effort by Mao's radical lieutenants to shore up their political positions.

20. Although the various terms employed to describe the broad leadership groupings--"radicals" versus "conservatives," "extremists" versus "moderates," "ideologues" versus "pragmatists"--are inexact, there is nevertheless a distinct group on the politburo which rose to its present position because of proven loyalty to Mao and vigorous backing of power and policy excesses in the Cultural Revolution. Opposing this group is a perhaps looser conglomerate of government bureaucrats and central and military regional figures whose political status was often in doubt during the Cultural Revolution and who generally appeared to favor restraining its excesses. Although the members of this grouping may be personally loyal to both Mao and Lin, most seem to share an antipathy to the lesser figures among the radical forces.

21. Apart from Mao and Lin, the "radical" group associated with the excesses of the Cultural Revolution includes the two leaders' wives; Mao's speech writer, Chen Po-ta; security specialist Kang Sheng; propaganda specialist Yao Wen-yuan; and Chang Chun-Chiao, the political boss of Shanghai. All of these leaders--with the exception of Madame Lin--belonged to the so-called central "Cultural Revolution Group," an inner elite fostered by Mao and charged with purging the Chinese Communist Party and pushing his "revolutionary" ideas. Before the Cultural Revolution, these people, with the exception of Chen and Kang, were political nonentities or lower echelon leaders, with no firm independent base of support. Most, if not all, appear to be fanatical doctrinaire ideologues who share Mao's belief that it is essential to maintain a high state of tension and ideological fervor in China in order to sustain revolutionary momentum and ensure rapid change.

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Odd Men Out

22. Taken as a whole, the members of the Cultural Revolution Group have had only a limited power base of their own since the Cultural Revolution began, although during the more radical phases of the revolution they appeared to be formidable figures both because of Mao's support and because they were able to employ a number of powerful Red Guard groups throughout the country as their political instruments. Despite the fractious nature of these mass organizations, they provided the CRG with a major source of leverage against entrenched party and military establishments in the provinces. The "revolution" was a tortuous process, however, one that ebbed and flowed between periods of extreme radicalism and periods of moderation and restraint. In its later phases the influence of the CRG in the councils of the regime was noticeably weakened.

23. Much of the subsequent inner tension in the regime has stemmed from the efforts of the "radicals" to find politically secure positions in the face of countervailing moderate pressures. The suppression of "revolutionary leftists" in the provinces since late summer 1968 and the normalizing trend evident in domestic politics since the ninth congress almost certainly have further circumscribed the CRG's room for maneuver. Once Mao goes, the power of the CRG is likely to diminish considerably since its prospects for developing new sources of political strength seem remote.

24. The principal stratagems the CRG leaders have employed to improve their positions have changed little since the group was formed in the summer of 1966. Basically they have sought to consolidate their power by acting as ideological watchdogs for Mao and by trying to weaken their opponents within the central and regional leadership. In practice, this has meant that they have led the way in subjecting various policy proposals to the test of ideological rectitude. They have tried to insert revolutionary activists responsive to their direction in responsible

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positions in the rebuilt party and government apparatus, to win military support for their followers, and to purge rival leaders. On the whole, however, these efforts have met with too little success to provide surety for their political futures.

25. In the arena of government and party reconstruction, for example, there are civilian and military cadres in nearly every central and provincial organ who seem to have been promoted because of their fealty to the ultraleftists at the center. But over all, the new party and government units are weighted in favor of conservatively oriented military men and veteran cadres who were strongly attacked by the CRG or their Red Guard cohorts in the past and who can be presumed to be reluctant to accept ultraleftist leadership in the future. Within the PLA, the radicals have had some success in winning adherents within individual units, but the overwhelming majority of the PLA seems to be commanded by order-oriented officers rather than "revolutionary" protegés of the CRG. Moreover, there have been signs over the past two years that within some of China's 11 major military regions armies and divisions that supported local leftists during the height of the Cultural Revolution have been politically neutralized.

CRG Pyrotechnics

26. By and large, the principal political weakness of the CRG stems from the failure of its successive campaigns to undermine the power base of key central government leaders and some of the regional military chieftains who it judged were against it. During the Cultural Revolution, for example, the CRG was clearly behind at least two traumatic and abortive efforts to divide and weaken the military. The first occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Wuhan Incident in the summer of 1967; the second led to the purge of acting PLA chief of staff Yang Cheng-wu in March 1968.

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27. The Wuhan Incident was precipitated in July 1967 when the Wuhan Military Region Commander defied Peking's order to cease suppressing a radical Red Guard faction that was opposing his authority in the region. The commander was promptly dismissed, and a subsequent series of editorials inspired by the radicals that called for the "small handful" of revisionist leaders in the army to be "dragged out" touched off a wave of Red Guard attacks on PLA leaders. At the same time, there were indications that the notorious "May 16 Corps"--an ultraleftist group headed by second echelon CRG leaders, such as journalists Wang Li and Chi Pen-yu--was maneuvering to oust premier Chou En-lai and several military region commanders. All of this radical sound and fury came to an abrupt halt in September when a number of important regional military leaders who feared for their political survival and who wanted to restore order apparently joined Chou En-lai in braking the radicals' drive to intimidate or purge their opponents in the central government and regional military hierarchies. This was not a revolt against Mao, but it did demonstrate an increased ability and willingness on the part of the conservative forces to coalesce when directly threatened by the ultraleftists and to attempt to deflect Mao's decisions to a course more acceptable to themselves.

28. The end of the radical thrust was signaled when the vitriolic Madame Mao (Chiang Ching) apparently was forced to beat a retreat. She gave a major speech on 5 September in which she praised the PLA's political performance, denounced the "May 16 Corps," and demanded that leftist Red Guard factions turn in their arms and cease criticizing local military authorities. At the same time, several CRG leaders of the "May 16 Corps" were purged, and the group ostensibly was dissolved. Thus, the Wuhan Incident earned the CRG considerable enmity within military circles; but it also probably convinced the CRG leaders of the weakness of their position and of the political danger to themselves if China's principal troop commanders were allowed to coalesce against them.

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29. After the regional military leaders were authorized to use force if necessary to halt Red Guard fighting in September 1967, the Cultural Revolution entered a brief revolutionary pause or a "return to normality." During this fragile pause the ranks of the CRG were considerably thinned, and by February 1968 only five of the original 17 members of the CRG still survived. The remaining leaders-- Chen Po-ta, Kang Sheng, Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao, and Yao Wen-yuan--must have felt that their own future was at stake. They apparently did not cease their maneuvering against their opponents-- maneuvering that was overtly demonstrated by a rash of wall-poster attacks upon some of Chou En-lai's prominent vice premiers in early 1968. Ultimately, the machinations of the remaining CRG leaders peaked when the acting chief of staff Yang Cheng-wu, the first political commissar of the air force, and the commander of the critical Peking garrison were ousted. The origins of this purge are still shrouded in mystery.

30. According to the official version, Yang, in order to enhance his own position had been trying to undermine the authority of the CRG and was planning to purge major regional military leaders and vice premier Hsieh Fu-chih, head of the Peking revolutionary committee. Yang's "plotting" was allegedly uncovered by Madame Mao, and her importance along with that of the other CRG members appeared to be increased by the episode. According to the Red Guard press, Lin Piao at that time instructed several units charged with investigating political problems in the PLA to seek advice from her, Chen Po-ta, and Yao Wen-yuan. The affair also was accompanied by calls to stamp out the threat of a new "rightist resurgence" and by renewed armed clashes between radical Red Guards and PLA units in a number of provinces.

31. At the time, the purge of Yang Cheng-wu and his colleagues appeared to be a major victory for the militant forces in the leadership. In retrospect, however, a case can be made that Yang's fall marked yet another downturn in the CRG's disruptive

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quest for political dominance. Yang had fairly good credentials as one of the military officers who sympathized with, or at least was willing to exploit for personal gain, the aims of the radical leaders. He had been handpicked to displace the disgraced Lo Jui-ching as "acting" chief of staff, and had apparently attempted to implement changes in the PLA that emphasized the "revolutionary" over the professional qualities of the army. He also was firmly allied with periodic attempts to promote systematic rotation of PLA units to prevent military leaders from allying with local party and government bureaucrats who might resist the attempts by revolutionary activists to seize power in their bailiwicks. These programs supposedly were advocated by Mao and Lin and the CRG militants, so there is, on the surface, little evidence that Yang was anything but faithful to them.

32. If Yang's militant credentials were adequate, why did the CRG attack him? This question is impossible to answer definitively, but it seems likely that if Yang, as charged, had been moving against military region commanders--such as Huang Yung-sheng, Chen Hsi-lien, and Hsu Shih-yu, who had been under heavy radical attack for the preceding year and a half--then his efforts probably had some backing from the CRG. Indeed, the vigor with which the CRG leaders denounced Yang strongly suggests that he was serving as a stalking horse for the radicals and that this was recognized by his intended victims. In any case, it appears more than likely that Yang's ouster was forced by strong, if not coordinated, opposition from other military leaders opposed to the disruptive policies with which he was associated.

33. The machinations of the radical leaders in 1967 and 1968 to effect changes in the leadership of the revolutionary committees, to divide the military, and to purge or neutralize those who were attempting to moderate the excesses of revolution generated powerful antagonisms that subsequently were carried into the new politburo. This body included a number of military and government figures

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who apparently had been the intended victims of the CRG and whose actions in the revolution may have raised doubts in Mao's mind about their responsiveness to his ideological predilections. Whether or not these men survived the political infighting of the Cultural Revolution because they ultimately were able to prove their personal loyalty to Mao and Lin or because they were simply needed to run the country may be a moot point. Their admission to the inner circle in any event was a recognition of the existing balance of political forces in the nation at the time of the ninth congress. It also meant, however, that because they were powerful figures in their own right, their views would be a counterweight to those of the Maoists in the decision-making process and that sooner or later the radicals might feel impelled to make yet another attempt to shore up their power positions.

34. The move by the radicals apparently came sooner rather than later. As the reconstruction process moved forward in 1969, there were scattered warnings that the Cultural Revolution was not yet over and indications in propaganda that the ideologues were maintaining their ideological watchdog function. Then, in January 1970, [redacted] in the capital [redacted] the brief appearance of wall posters calling for the defense of Chou En-lai, [redacted]

[redacted] Once again something seemed to have fueled existing antagonisms in the politburo, and events in the remainder of the year bore out the notion that another round of battling between the Maoists and their opponents had begun.

The May 16 Affair

35. The full ramifications of the May 16 investigation are by no means clear, but it apparently has been the central issue touching off the kaleidoscopic alterations within the top leadership ranks over the past year. [redacted]

[redacted] the investigation was launched in December 1969. Its purpose, [redacted]

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[REDACTED] was both to weed out former May 16 members from official positions they had acquired since 1967 within various administrative organs-- including the governing committee of Peking University and the Peking city government--and to prevent them from joining the party committees that were in the process of being reconstructed in those bodies.

36. [REDACTED] that the "May 16 Corps" was not an ordinary Red Guard organization, but a relatively small coterie of extremist "have-not" junior officials, journalists, and probably army officers, who hoped to promote their own careers by undermining the positions of incumbent central and regional officials. The group operated behind the scenes in Peking and in several provinces in 1967 under the leadership of some members of the original 17-man CRG. It certainly could not have existed without the backing of Chen Po-ta, Kang Sheng, and Madame Mao. And it is equally certain that it was regarded as a major threat by Chou En-lai, whose vice premiers were victimized by attacks instigated by the "May 16," and by such major regional figures as Huang Yung-sheng, whose base province of Kwangtung was a scene of "May 16" activity.

37. The "May 16" investigation apparently generated bitter recriminations at the top and produced at least one major political casualty a few months after its inception. In mid-March 1970 politburo member Hsieh Fu-chieh, a vice premier and public security minister who was reputed to be in charge of the investigation, mysteriously disappeared from public view. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Hsieh, who had been among the most active politburo members, stayed out of public view for a full year and was clearly on the political sidelines.

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38. Hsieh's record during the Cultural Revolution suggests that he could very well have overreached himself on the "May 16" investigation. Although on occasion he apparently made accommodations to the radical forces, he was more often on record as an outspoken critic of militant tactics and was himself attacked several times by men openly identified with the "May 16 Corps" and with radical Red Guards at Peking University. Even Mao once said that Hsieh was one of those officials who was always being criticized, and Madame Mao--one of the severest critics of the old public security apparatus--publicly described Hsieh as a weak man who had made serious mistakes. Moreover, Hsieh, as a vice premier, worked closely with Chou En-lai--himself a target of the "May 16" attacks.

39. With Hsieh's disappearance it appeared that the CRG leaders had survived a maneuver that was shaping up to be a major effort to circumscribe their authority further. But the murky political picture in Peking failed to clear up. At several leadership turnouts in May, for example, there were some unusual flipflops in politburo rankings that suggested that another of Chou's vice premiers, economic specialist Li Hsien-nien, was being downgraded, at least temporarily. Moreover, in June Peking garrison commander Wen Yu-cheng--a past associate of Chief-of-Staff Huang Yung-sheng--suddenly dropped from public view, another development that could mean that efforts were being taken to realign the political and military power structure in the capital. Whether or not these moves represented radical initiatives is uncertain, but it seems that Hsieh's setback triggered some intense jockeying for position at the top.

40. [REDACTED] the "May 16" investigation continued to be a live issue in Peking after Hsieh's disappearance were confirmed in [REDACTED] 1970 when [REDACTED]

that the difficulties posed by the extremists responsible for burning the British Embassy in August 1967 were a profound problem with which the leadership

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was still grappling. This was a clear reference to the "May 16"; its leaders, allegedly instigated by Kang Sheng, were identified [redacted] as the perpetrators of the turmoil in the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the Peking diplomatic community during that period. The most significant indication that the "May 16" affair had not run its course, however, was the fact that two more ranking politburo members, Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng, dropped from public view between late summer and mid-fall [redacted] that they had been censured for supporting extremist activities during and since the Cultural Revolution.

41. [redacted]

[redacted] Chen and Kang--and to a much lesser extent, Madame Mao--were criticized at a Central Committee plenum last autumn. The story claimed that Chen was specifically charged with a dozen "crimes"; these included organizing the "May 16 Corps," attacking veteran cadres, mistakes in education reform, and advocating egalitarianism in the economy. Most of the charges are consistent with what is known about Chen's views or activities in the past. In August 1967, for example, [redacted] Chen made a "self-confession" admitting his support of the "May 16," and one of the secondary CRG figures later purged for leading the corps said he was acting on Chen's orders.

42. By implication, Chen's fellow CRG member Kang committed similar errors. [redacted] in 1967, for example, indicated that he played a major role in the attacks on Chou En-lai. No details of the charges against him were divulged, however. The only information provided was that he had made a self-criticism at the plenum, which may explain why Kang continued to make public appearances after Chen had dropped from public view shortly before the plenum convened. Kang apparently gained only a temporary reprieve, however; he was not seen in Peking after 13 November, indicating that he too had been politically sidelined. [redacted]

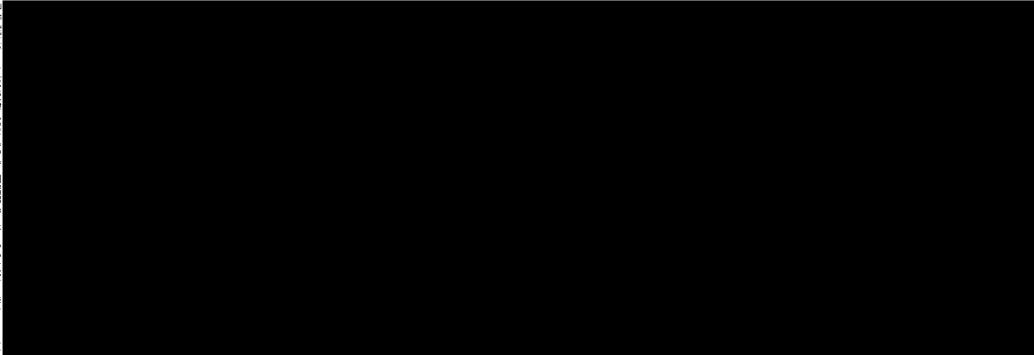
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43. At this stage it seems premature to conclude that both men, long close allies of Mao, have been permanently divested of all political responsibility within the leadership. In fact, [redacted] Chen and Kang have been observed on assignments in the provinces since they disappeared from Peking. Moreover, the unexpected resurrection of Hsieh Fu-chih as first secretary of the newly formed Peking municipal party committee after he had been out of the political limelight for a year demonstrates how risky it is to describe purges in China's present unsettled leadership coalition as final. Nevertheless, even if Chen and Kang have only been reassigned for the past six months, they almost certainly have been at least temporarily excluded from the highest councils of the regime during this period.

44. The reasons for their demotions are not hard to fathom. Because of their previous ties with the "May 16 Corps," both men probably were, or became, targets of the investigation--which reportedly is still in progress and which, according to one recent traveler's account is still "too dangerous to discuss at home." The "May 16" issue appears to be partly a personal vendetta and partly a reflection of deep-seated disagreements within the politburo. These disagreements probably revolve around the cautious tenor of some post - Cultural Revolution reconstruction policies and the staffing of China's rebuilt party and government apparatus with military men and veteran cadres who resisted the power plays of ultraleftists supported by Chen, Kang, and the

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other CRG leaders. Chen, for example, had authorized articles in August 1967 disparaging the army's political performance, and it seems a distinct possibility that continuing criticism along these lines by both Chen and Kang may finally have pushed moderate forces on the politburo to coalesce against them.



The CRG: Will Silence Save Their Seats

45. Thus, in a broad sense, the machinations of CRG leaders since 1967 appear to have gained them little political insurance; instead they have strengthened the hand of their opponents. The radicals' record since the ninth congress in particular seems far from impressive, and there are few indications that the CRG leaders have significantly broadened their bases of power in the rebuilt party and government organs. Effective authority in most of the new provincial party committees, which began to be formed in December 1970, is still in the hands of leaders with conservative records in the Cultural Revolution. In many cases, these are the same leaders who in 1967 were threatened by the attacks of the "May 16 Corps."

46. Insofar as the army is concerned, Chen and Kang may have been questioning not only whether

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the army should continue to carry a heavy civil administrative and political burden, but also the manner in which the army was performing its new chores--in other words, was it supporting local leftists and the goals of the radicals in economic, social, and political activity. In essence, these were the concerns that prompted CRG attacks on selected army leaders in 1967, and it seems likely the criticisms have continued because the radicals believe that the PLA as a whole is still not fully committed to "Maoist" ideals--despite years of indoctrination under Lin Piao--and because they feel that the accretion of power by the army had progressively undercut their own political positions and those of their leftist supporters in various localities. The political price the CRG has paid so far for its criticism of "power-holders" is dramatically underscored by the recent setbacks suffered by Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng.

47. Although the difficulties of these two men cast doubt on the future prospects of other CRG leaders, leftist voices in the regime have by no means been entirely silenced. In the press for example, there are continuing criticisms of "arrogant" attitudes in the PLA, attacks on those in the military who put professionalism ahead of "revolutionary" concerns, and diatribes against advocates of economic policies that subordinate politics to the development of technology. Moreover, the recent appointment of CRG members Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan to the top party posts in Shanghai suggests a conscious effort to ensure that these men will at least retain some regional power base.

48. It is also somewhat unrealistic to discount entirely the role of leftist forces in newly formed party organs. As was the case during the formation of the administrative revolutionary committees, in many of the provincial party committees so far established there seems to be a deliberate effort by Peking to insert into a position of power at least one military or civilian leader who had supported radical elements during the Cultural

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Revolution to serve as a political counterweight to other more conservatively oriented officials. Finally, the continued failure of Hsieh Fu-chih to be identified in his previous positions as public security minister or vice premier or even to appear in public since the announcement of his appointment as Peking party secretary suggests that some form of leftist pressure may be preventing his full rehabilitation.

49. Despite these caveats, not only have the local leftists made few inroads in the new party organs, but it is possible those who retain their positions have less room for political maneuver. In fact, several provincial leaders who were highly praised by the Maoists in 1967--such as, Wang Hsiao-yu in Shantung, Liu Ko-ping in Shansi, and Li Tsai-han in Kweichow--appear to have been purged in the past year.

So long as Mao is alive the political fortunes of the left are unlikely to wane completely, although there have been recent indications that the "May 16" investigation may be reaching a climax. According to a press article by pro-Communist Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, who recently returned from Peking, he was officially informed about an investigation into an alleged anti-Mao plot by ultraleftists--almost certainly a reference to the "May 16" affair. Burchett's article discusses an extreme leftist shadow cabinet that tried to manipulate itself into power during the Cultural Revolution. The journalist claims that the names of the plotters, who may include Chen Po-ta, would be revealed when the investigation was completed. In any case, the setbacks to Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng, the forward movement in provincial party building, the pronounced flexibility in Chinese foreign policy, Hsieh Fu-chih's appointment as Peking party boss, and the continuing denunciations of the "May 16 Corps" are all signs that the political seesaw in Peking has tipped at least temporarily in favor of the moderates.

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Who's Up on the Seesaw?

50. Attaching political labels to the various members of the politburo outside the ranks of the CRG is particularly difficult because of the paucity of data on the activities of a number of lesser, but nonetheless important, full and alternate politburo members, such as the new head of the PLA General Political Department (GPD) Li Te-sheng. Even within the CRG membership there may be differences in positions or at least styles. Thus it is possible that Chang Chun-chiao, who showed a distinct facility for bending with the wind in the Cultural Revolution, might be better able to make a political accommodation with his enemies than, for example, the radical firebrand Chiang Ching. Nevertheless, the reactions to, and activities in, the Cultural Revolution of the remaining non-CRG members suggest that the principal civil government and military leaders of the politburo are not mere opportunists and can be safely regarded as opponents of those favoring further revolutionary or ideological excesses.

51. The military leaders who rank just below Lin Piao--Huang Yung-sheng, Yeh Chien-ying, Chen Hsi-lien, and Hsu Shih-yu--were all under heavy and prolonged radical attacks in the revolution, which undoubtedly generated bitterness and anxiety on their part. Since then they have appeared to favor getting on with the business of reconstruction and probably have sought to modify the disruptive impact of leftist-inspired social and political programs. Their basic inclinations are apparently shared by the civilian ministers, Li Hsien-nien and Hsieh Fu-chih.

52. The political affinities of the lower ranking military men on the politburo, who seem to play an important role in day-to-day affairs, are more difficult to pigeonhole. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Li Te-sheng, a provincial commander whose career has enjoyed a meteoric rise since his 12th Army was ordered into Anhwei Province in 1967 to curb Red Guard disorders. His success there does not in itself explain

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why he was elevated to the politburo or the GDP directorship over men more senior than he, and it remains debatable whether he should be regarded as a representative of the conservative regional military in a sensitive army political post, as a protégé of Lin Piao, or as a favorite of the CRG leaders. The records of General Rear Services Director Chiu Hui-tso and navy political commissar Li Tso-peng are also mixed, although it is worth noting that the navy lined up in province after province with radical forces attacking senior army leaders during the Cultural Revolution. The air force followed a similar pattern, and both Li Tso-peng and air force commander Wu Fa-hsien appear to be good examples of military leaders who have been ready and willing to accommodate programs pushed by the CRG. [REDACTED]

53. Neither of the remaining alternate members of the politburo, party veteran Li Hsueh-feng or newcomer Chi Teng-kuei, seems to play a politically significant role. Little is known about Chi except that he was personally praised by Mao for the support he gave radical forces in Honan Province through the Cultural Revolution. Despite this record, however, Chi was recently given a party post in Honan below several ordinary members in the local hierarchy; his failure to move up to the top party post in the province is a clear departure from long-standing party practice and may be taken as an interesting commentary on the political weight leftist leaders are currently pulling in the politburo.

54. Even with the uncertainties surrounding some of the lesser figures on the politburo, it is reasonable to infer that below Mao and Lin the major actors in the complex pattern of interrelationships within the elite are polarized into two mutually antagonistic groupings, the ideologues and the moderates. Dividing them are not only the broad issue of the continuing validity of Mao's ideological precepts but also the narrower problems relative to

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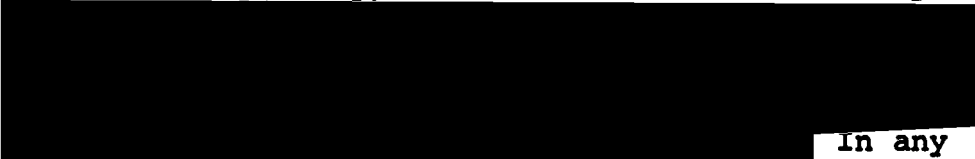


Mao Is Leading, But Who Is Directing

the political future of the radical ideologues. The ideologues are opposed by a seemingly identifiable coalition of top army men and civilian bureaucrats who appear to be working for greater rationalization of the economic and political apparatus or at least for the orderly pursuit of a more pragmatic version of Mao's romantic vision. The principal spokesman for this group seems to be Chou En-lai, who throughout the revolutionary turmoil of 1966-1968 managed to project an image of reasonableness, moderation, and responsibility.

Chou and the Moderates

53. During the Cultural Revolution, Chou had enormous responsibilities not only for the day-to-day administration of the central government but also for overseeing provincial political settlements, a task that obliged him to win the confidence and cooperation of powerful local military satraps, such as Huang Yung-sheng, Chen Hsi-lien and Hsu Shih-yu.



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In any case, Chou has not been identified with the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution and is one of the few leaders--if not the only leader other than

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Mao--who has genuine popular appeal. He also has a reputation as a master of subtle compromise and as a tough political infighter. Thus, he is uniquely qualified to orchestrate the views of those opposing the power and policy pretensions of the CRG leaders.

56. Chou has shown considerable responsiveness to the problems of the top military and civilian administrators in the moderate grouping on the politburo. Moreover, his political future, like theirs, had been placed in jeopardy by radical onslaughts in the Cultural Revolution. As a direct result of their attacks on his vice premiers and other central government officials, Chou's personal power base suffered serious attrition. Through his efforts to curb leftist excesses, Chou apparently incurred the wrath of the principal CRG leaders; [REDACTED]

57. It is likely that Chou survived these political perils because in the end he was able to retain Mao's confidence--although the key factor cementing their relationship may not have been so much Mao's belief that Chou was always loyal to him as his conviction that Chou's multiple talents were indispensable to holding the country together. But whatever the basis of the Mao-Chou relationship, there have been a number of indications since the ninth congress that leftist pressure against Chou may be a prime ingredient in keeping the Peking political cauldron boiling. In the weeks immediately prior to the convening of border talks with Moscow in the fall of 1969, for example, a series of Aesopian cultural polemics appeared in the press denouncing unnamed comrades who favored the "right capitulationist" line of negotiating with the enemy. Since Chou probably was instrumental in persuading Mao to talk with the Soviets in order to reduce the border tensions, it seems probable that these diatribes were directed at Chou to warn him not to go too far and to cast aspersions on his fealty to Mao's doctrinaire anti-Soviet position.

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58. A clearer sign that Chou continued to be the object of radical machinations was the appearance of the wall posters calling for his "defense" early last year and the subsequent "May 16" investigation. [REDACTED] Chou has played an important role in the affair and last autumn delivered several major speeches denouncing the "May 16 Corps." Thus it is likely that in pushing through the investigation Chou has successfully weathered another test of strength with his radical opponents. Indeed, the sidelining of Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng has in some ways given Chou even more freedom for political maneuver.

59. Chou's position in both domestic and foreign affairs seems to have been strengthened since last autumn. [REDACTED] Chou flatly stated for the first time that he was in charge of rebuilding the party machinery. This revelation contrasted with earlier reports that Lin Piao was directly supervising the process and that the CRG had formed a de facto party secretariat with Kang Sheng playing the principal role. Although it still seems unlikely that Chou is in "sole" command of this sensitive project, the disappearance of Kang Sheng and Chen Po-ta may mean that Chou's personal authority in overseeing party reconstruction has been enhanced at the expense of the CRG members. This speculation seems substantiated by the fact that Peking did not begin endorsing provincial party committees--the most important party organs formed since the central committee was produced at the ninth party congress--until after Kang Sheng and Chen Po-ta had vanished from center stage. The naming of Hsieh Fu-chih as first secretary of the Peking party committee may also be at least a symbolic victory for Chou since the two had appeared to be working closely together until Hsieh's fall from grace last March. Finally, the fact that Chinese Foreign Ministry officials have recently made a point of telling visitors that they do not condone "extremist" activities and the continuing enlargement of the image of "moderation and reasonableness" in Chinese foreign policy both suggest that Chou does have increased responsibility for "running the country."

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60. It is important to recognize, however, that although Chou himself is 72, many burdens have devolved on him because he apparently is the only member of China's top triumvirate with sufficient vigor to engage in the day-to-day direction of the central government. This does not in itself mean that he is the dominant figure in the regime or that he does not have to consult with both Mao and Lin on major issues. Given the apparent persistence of radical attempts to weaken his position, however, it is not axiomatic that Chou does or will always retain the full confidence of Mao and Lin. Nevertheless, he has apparently protected himself over the years by somehow reassuring Mao that he was not adding his name to the list of possible successors to the Chairman.

A Successful Successor?

61. There seems to be little question that Mao has carefully weighed the possibility that his passing might occasion a protracted power struggle that could thwart his revolutionary will in a number of unforeseen ways. To avert this Mao has worked assiduously to arrange for an orderly transfer of power. Thus the position of Lin Piao as Mao's chosen successor has been affirmed both in the new party constitution and in the draft state constitution endorsed at last fall's Central Committee plenum. Moreover, the emergence of the PLA as the primary instrument of political and administrative control probably has enhanced both the power and authority of Lin vis-a-vis other members of the elite and has possibly improved his chances of consolidating his position after Mao goes. Thus, on the surface at least, Lin appears to be a formidable figure in the present power equation in Peking.

62. Nevertheless, Lin remains one of the least known of China's leaders and must be considered in many ways an enigma. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and most foreign observers have commented on his lack of

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charisma and physical vigor. Lin's record, however, shows that he is driving and aggressive, a tough and demanding troop commander, and a skilled political infighter. His rapid rise in the military and party hierarchy over more senior officers, his ability to promote himself as Mao's foremost disciple and interpreter, and his transformation of the PLA into a model of Maoist organization in the early 1960s, all indicate that it would be a mistake to discount Lin's political acumen and to dismiss him as only a convenient instrument of Mao's will.

63. There are indications, moreover, that Lin has attempted to shore up his personal power base by influencing in his favor the promotional pattern in the post - Cultural Revolution leadership hierarchy. Nearly all the military men on the present politburo, for example, have had their careers advanced noticeably since Lin took over as Minister of National Defense in 1959. The fact that more officers from the 4th Field Army, which was commanded by Lin from its inception in 1946, have been placed in key regional posts than officers who served in China's other former field army systems is probably another example of a deliberate effort by Lin to offer preferment to men who might owe him some personal loyalty.



Who Examines the Pupil After the Teacher Goes?

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64. On the other hand, other aspects of Lin's role since 1959, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, raise serious questions about the extent and depth of support for him in important military and civilian circles. The major turning point in Lin's career came in 1959 when he was charged by Mao with improving morale and tightening up lax political practices in the army--a move that in retrospect was part of Mao's plan to exploit a rejuvenated PLA under Lin as the major instrument for combating the views of both the professional military leaders and the party apparatus chiefs who were opposing him.

65. Lin's efforts to put "politics in command" in the army, however, exacerbated strains between officers oriented toward political action and those more concerned with professional problems involved in modernizing the PLA. These strains have continued, and polemics against officers who insist on putting professional considerations to the fore and on "separating army building from building political power" have been an important element in the mounting criticism since last fall of the PLA's performance of its civil administrative tasks. Lin himself is on record as stressing the importance of professional training and of learning to deal with the growing problems created by modern weapons, but most of his remarks on the subject have concentrated on individual skills, such as hand-to-hand combat, and on small-unit assault techniques. These preoccupations in the past have been derided by officers who opposed continuing the "guerrilla mentality" in PLA training and who favored developing the sophisticated techniques used in large-scale field operations and coordinated air-ground defense systems.

66. Lin's willingness to push Maoist dogma at every point also casts doubt on his readiness to accommodate to the less doctrinaire views of some of his present colleagues on the politburo. For example, the differences in tone and content of many of the speeches given by Lin and Chou during the Cultural Revolution, with Lin often supporting revolutionary

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excesses and Chou seeking to limit chaos and disruption, suggest a critical disparity in the fundamental philosophies of both men. There is also evidence [redacted] that Lin attempted to play down the seriousness of the "crimes" of the "May 16 Corps" in 1967, which suggests that he was not one of Chou's most stalwart defenders at a time when the premier and his colleagues were being seriously threatened by radical elements in the leadership. There were instances in the Cultural Revolution when the responsibilities and concerns of Lin and Chou more nearly converged, but the possibility remains that differences between the two men over policy and personal priorities in the reconstruction period could have set them at odds.

67. During the "revolution," Lin's support of Mao's purge of numerous senior officers and his constant admonition that the PLA leaders consider themselves the "targets of revolution" (as well as its prime movers) raise questions about his ability to retain the loyalty of some of the PLA officers who are today's major power-holders. Leftist attacks on powerful Lin subordinates, Lin's demonstrated propensity for purges, and his own public statements that "no one can be trusted" may all be more important factors in determining the future responsiveness of Lin's colleagues than their working relations with him before the Cultural Revolution. Little in the Cultural Revolution demonstrates that Lin was ever ready to risk his career to save a colleague, and this knowledge may well have prompted some of his apparent protégés to seek new sources of support.

68. Moreover, it seems possible that the rise of important regional figures--such as Huang Yung-sheng--after the 1967 Wuhan Incident was due as much to the fact that these people had been leading spokesmen for local military power-holders who at the time were demanding that disorders be curbed and that Red Guard attacks on the PLA be halted, as it was to their past ties to Lin Piao. In any case, some presumed protégés of both Mao and Lin, such as Liu Shao-chi and Yang Cheng-wu, have in the past either failed

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their political mentors or shifted their allegiances in crises, which suggests that in China the career identification of one leader with another is not always an accurate measuring rod of the depth of what may outwardly appear to be a monolithic structure.

69. A final problem that casts doubt on the surety of Lin's political position involves his so-called stewardship of the PLA and the reliability of the PLA as a "Maoist" political instrument. Mao and Lin had been industriously indoctrinating the PLA--and on a small scale, purging it--after Lin assumed command in 1959. But in spite of all their efforts, the cohesion of the military establishment was severely strained when it was inserted into the Cultural Revolution. And since then the PLA has exhibited some of the same divisive left-right tendencies that ruptured the party and government, suggesting that Lin was never the complete master in his own house. Moreover, the problems of the civil government that devolved on the provincial military commanders tended to reinforce the PLA's natural proclivity to espouse the administrative virtues of order and rationality and to opt for an early return to stability--a position that Lin, with his Maoist predilections and loyalties, often said had led the military establishment to commit political errors.

70. Even though the army has emerged as the most potent power system in China and seems heavily staffed by men who might be termed Lin protégés, it is still being continuously criticized for ideological and political failings. The criticisms probably emanate in part from the remaining CRG leaders. But they may also be associated with Lin since they include complaints of lapses within the army on the scope of loyalty to Mao's thought, stress the need for continuing ideological revolutionization, and urge putting politics in command--all panaceas that Lin has trumpeted repeatedly since 1959. If there are those in the army who are still "arrogant and complacent," as their critics charge, then it seems almost certain that Lin may continue to feel some elements in the

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PLA are now, or are potentially, disloyal to him. Thus, it appears that Lin Piao's prestige and political strength derive as much--or more--from Mao's confidence in him as from a secure power base in the military establishment.

71. Nevertheless, Lin's position as head of the military establishment is a vital one. While it is certainly true that politburo members, such as Chen Hsi-lien, Hsu Shih-yu, and particularly Huang Yung-sheng--all of whom have roots in the regional military structure--are powerful figures in their own right, they could hardly have risen to their present eminence without at least the acquiescence of Lin--and of Mao. Lin's relations to these and other military figures who not only command troops but also have a major voice in local government administrations are likely to be crucial once Mao departs from the scene. For this reason it behooves Lin to fashion a working relationship with these men, whose political views are almost certainly a good deal more "conservative" and pragmatic than his own--not so much out of ideological conviction but out of practical necessity. Indeed, something of this sort may already have occurred. The criticisms of the PLA that have surfaced in the past months were probably inspired not by Lin, but by the CRG ideologues fighting a rear-guard action against the steady erosion of their power. Such attacks may help cement an alliance not only between the military satraps and Chou En-lai and the civilian bureaucrats, but also between the regional military figures and Lin. In any event there were enough cross-currents in the Cultural Revolution to suggest that Lin and the civilian radicals did not always see eye to eye. But in forging any alliance with more conservative forces in the military, Lin must constantly look over his shoulder at the Chairman--his ultimate source of power. This in turn closely limits his freedom of action.

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Outlook for the Post-Mao Era

72. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, it appeared that the comparative stability of the Chinese leadership and the unifying influence of Mao Tse-tung would prevent a protracted power struggle until Mao's departure from the scene. The launching of the Cultural Revolution proved, however, that for some time past Mao had not been undisputed leader of the party, that his own power interests and ideological predilections could prove a disunifying factor, and that the struggle among his heirs was already under way. This struggle continues to be complicated by major questions concerning the limits of Mao's authority, the capabilities of his designated successor, the persistence of deep-seated quarrels over the proper mix of pragmatic and doctrinaire prescriptions in policy-making, and the heating up of volatile personal rivalries within the politburo. The succession problem is further complicated because the probabilities are high that death or ill health might soon strike down any or all of China's top three leaders. Mao at 77 seems to be in good health, but how much longer he will be around is doubtful. Lin Piao although a mere 63, has a long history of debilitating ailments and might not even last as long as Mao. Chou En-lai at 73 seems full of vigor, but the magnitude of his official burdens may shorten the time he will be able to function with the prodigious energy for which he is renowned.

73. The recent draft state constitution dramatically underscored the difficulties facing the Chinese leadership in coping with the nation's short and longer term succession problems. Presumably because it was a product of compromise among the competing forces, the new draft in many respects represents a series of loosely worded general propositions apparently almost deliberately designed to be subject to varying interpretations. By designating Mao and Lin as the nation's personal rulers and noting specifically that they are supreme commander and deputy commander, respectively of all the nation and all the army, the constitution attests

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to Mao's determination to avert any possible challenge to him or to Lin from other powerful figures in the army, party or government apparatus. The fact he felt the need for these designations, however, seems to reflect considerable internal tension and a realization that the succession could prove difficult. Finally, the highly personalized nature of the constitution renders it a weak and irrelevant instrument for coping with China's succession problem should both Mao and Lin die or should Lin predecease Mao.

74. Because of all the uncertainties surrounding the Chinese succession question, there can be no definitive assessment of how the present leadership is going to cope with the problem. At the moment, the influence of the comparative moderates in the military administrator group on the politburo seems stronger than that of the radical Maoists. In assessing the political future of China's leadership, however, the problem is not simply to determine which leader is up or down at a given moment but also to understand the manner in which compromises are made between ideological and pragmatic considerations. Will the leadership, for example, continue to tolerate the politically unpalatable but economically essential institution of private plots and material incentives? Will it recognize the limited appeal of abstract revolutionary theory in motivating human behavior and instead emphasize nationalistic and personal goals, both of which are better understood and generally supported by the people? These are the questions at the root of the conflict at the top in China today. At present, time seems to be on the side of those leaders who are generally more concerned with political, social, and economic rationalization than with the pursuit of pure revolution.

75. There will continue to be major unanswerable questions as to how far Mao is willing to go in sacrificing his principles and as to whether he will attempt to reverse trends that he feels are contrary to his revolutionary vision. There seems little doubt, however, that those who succeed Mao will have to accommodate

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to changing conditions in a manner that substantially modifies his ideological precepts. China will still remain a harsh and disciplined society, but it probably will be run by men who, even while elevating Mao to the pantheon of China's heroes, will--by choice or necessity--be diluting his thoughts.

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