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CHINESE COMMUNIST PREPARATIONS FOR CIVIL CRISIS IN CHINA

The Chinese Communists now appear to be convinced that, barring an unexpected change in the international situation, full scale civil war with the Central Government is imminent and unavoidable. At present Yen-an considers itself engaged in a two-front war, against the Japanese and against Chungking. With the approach of Allied victory over Japan, however, Communist military and political plans and actions apparently are being focussed more exclusively on the expected internal crisis in China. Although Communist troops will continue to seize every opportunity to expand their regions of control at the expense of the Japanese, their objective in so doing will be to improve the Communist position for the coming test of strength with Chungking.

The Communists do not minimize the technical superiority which Chungking armies trained and equipped by the United States would have in the approaching struggle. They nevertheless appear confident that the numbers, mobility, training, and spirit of their own troops and the strategic geographic advantage of their holdings in northern and eastern China will counterbalance Chungking's initial military superiority. Above all the Communists are counting on their ability to mobilize the Chinese peasantry into a major instrument for civil war and for the establishment of a Communist regime for all China.

The Communists probably will continue to seek closer relations with the United States despite their conviction that the United States has decided to abandon its role as mediator in China and to support the Kuomintang exclusively. The Communists, who think in terms of a long civil war, are determined to fight any military force which may be disposed against them. They predict that should American forces land in eastern China and bring with them Kuomintang troops or civil administrators, clashes with American as well as Kuomintang forces would probably result.

The Communists apparently are beginning to consider the possibility that the USSR may not be willing to risk an open challenge to the American position, which Yen-an believes has crystallized into full backing for Chungking, and that Soviet support for Yen-an might therefore not be immediately forthcoming. Yen-an gives every indication of having formulated its plans and policies independently of Moscow and of being ready to attempt to carry them through without Soviet backing if necessary.

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Political Issues and Communist Strategy

Convinced of the imminence of civil war, the Communists are perfecting the political and governmental machinery upon which they intend to rely. Although they still express dread of the prospect, they apparently consider division of China into two warring states inevitable if the Kuomintang pursues its present policy.

Communist leader Chou En-lai's return from Chungking to Party Headquarters at Yen-an in February 1945 marked for the Communists the end of negotiations with the Kuomintang under American auspices. From the Communist point of view the Central Government had shown no signs of willingness to meet the basic Communist terms: (1) recognition of minor parties; (2) establishment of a multiparty committee with plenary powers to form a democratic coalition government; (3) recognition of Communist-sponsored governments in Communist-liberated areas behind Japanese lines; (4) a place for the Communists in the control of Chinese military policy; (5) release of political prisoners and restoration of civil liberties.

Since February Communist propagandists have become increasingly bitter in their criticism of the Central Government, which they claim is openly preparing for civil war. They say the Kuomintang is laying the basis for a final break with Yen-an by refusing to allow the creation of a provisional coalition government and by unilaterally scheduling a National Assembly which will only serve to consolidate Kuomintang one-party rule. They accuse the Central Government of preparing for civil strife by hoarding American lend-lease supplies instead of applying them to the defeat of the Japanese. Although these accusations are leveled primarily against Kuomintang "reactionaries," thus apparently not excluding the possibility of negotiations with "liberal elements" in Chungking, the Communists appear convinced that, for the moment at least, chances of a compromise are unlikely.

Most recently the Communists have protested against the resolution of the Kuomintang Party Congress in May, which scheduled for 12 November 1945 the convention of a National Assembly to ratify China's draft constitution. This move was interpreted in Yen-an as an attempt to create a favorable impression at home and abroad while in effect forestalling the establishment of a genuinely democratic coalition government. The Communists pointed out that the Assembly would be convened under Kuomintang direction and that the original delegates, elected in 1937 for an Assembly which was never held, included a number of persons now holding important positions in the Japanese-sponsored puppet governments.

Despite the Kuomintang resolution that the National Assembly would "embrace representatives of all parties of China," the Communists, together with the liberal minority parties in the Chinese Democratic League, claim that a truly representative assembly cannot be convoked

until the restoration of China's lost territories permits free elections to be held throughout the country. A "constitutional" government created during the war, they believe, would only legalize the Kuomintang's virtual monopoly of power. The Communists have gone so far as to say that if the Assembly is held in November, the Kuomintang will thereby "split the Chinese people" and precipitate civil war.

In protest against the plan for the National Assembly, the Communists refused to participate in the recent meeting of the People's Political Council (PPC) in Chungking. The Council, a public forum with no real legislative powers, had been asked by Chiang Kai-shek to discuss the question of membership in the November Assembly and advise the Government of its opinions regarding the adoption of China's draft constitution. The Communists pointed out that they would gain nothing from attending since they have only eight seats in the PPC and since the exact powers and membership of the Assembly will ultimately be determined by the Kuomintang's "reactionary" Central Executive Committee. Furthermore, they complained that all PPC delegates, including the Communists, were hand-picked by the Kuomintang.

The 7th Communist Party Congress, held in April 1945, served to tighten Party organization and confirmed Mao Tse-tung as the Party's supreme leader. During the Congress sessions Mao declared that the Kuomintang dictatorship should be supplanted by a Provisional Democratic Coalition Government to rule until a "regular democratic government" can be set up after the war. According to Communist General Wang Jo-fei, the Communists recognize that genuine communism is impossible in China under current economic conditions and therefore support a democratic government as an intermediate step in the attainment of their ultimate goal.

Mao also indicated that the Communists, having received no promise of an early coalition government and feeling themselves threatened by the scheduled Kuomintang National Assembly, are prepared to hold an assembly of their own as a countermove. A "conference of the people's representatives" from Communist-controlled areas, scheduled to meet before the Kuomintang-sponsored Assembly in November, is being called to integrate the autonomous "liberated areas" into a People's Liberation Union. Although Mao has been careful to state that this conference is to be a consultative assembly and not a governmental assembly representing a separate regime in opposition to Chungking, its creation would unquestionably provide the Communists with an organization which could easily be converted into a provisional government should a complete break with the Central Government seem advisable to them.

Essential to Communist political and military strategy is the conviction that the balance of political power in China resides in the peasantry. The Communists believe that, whether or not they have modern military equipment or techniques, the Chinese peasantry in the long run will unseat any regime it opposes and confirm in power any

regime it favors. Among the predominantly peasant population in the areas they now control the Communists claim the support of 95.5 million people. They claim that their success is due to the following major policies which benefit the peasantry: (1) land reforms which reduce the burdens of land tenancy without dispossessing small and middle-class landowners; (2) restriction of the tax burden on the local population to a minimum by keeping governmental and military expenses low; (3) recruitment on a voluntary basis rather than conscription, a system which has been successful because of provision for the economic well-being of the troops; (4) close cooperation between the armed forces and the peasantry; (5) encouragement of a high degree of economic self-sufficiency.

The Communists are confident that they will readily be able to turn against the Kuomintang the popular strength which they mobilized against the Japanese. Yen-an propagandists have carried on a persistent campaign to discredit the Kuomintang in the eyes of the people in Free China as well as in the northern areas of their own control. The Kuomintang has been accused of being dominated by "reactionaries, monopolists, and big landlords," of fostering a "police-ridden, corrupt, and populace-fearing regime," of having failed to mobilize the people for the war against Japan, and of having connived, through some of its leaders who have become Japanese puppets, to secure Japanese help in defeating the Communists before the eventual defeat of Japan.

Chungking policies of taxation and conscription, the Communists believe, have been so burdensome to the peasants that the Communists may find the most fertile soil for instigating revolt in precisely those areas over which the Kuomintang has had the fullest measure of control since 1938. Communist underground organizations have been active not only in rural areas of southern China, but also in major port cities, where every attempt will be made to stimulate proletarian uprisings when the time comes.

Military Issues and Communist Strategy

The Communists have reacted violently to what they term Chungking attempts to create the impression that the collapse of at least one phase of inter-party negotiations last winter was solely due to Communist intransigence. To the specific charge stressed by Chungking, that the Communists had refused to incorporate their army in the National Army under the command of an American general, the Communists answered that the suggested arrangement provided for no similar control over Kuomintang forces. The Communists had initially asked for American command of all Chinese forces to prevent the possibility of the Kuomintang's use of its armies to pursue domestic power instead of to combat the Japanese.

The Communist position would seem to require a supreme American commander with both Communist and Central Government commanders taking orders directly from him and with no Central Government generals in the chain of command between supreme headquarters and Communist field commanders. A coordinate principle insisted upon by the Communists is that Kuomintang and Communist troops should not be mixed, but that each should have a separate geographical sphere of operations.

On 9 June Yen-an radio transmitted a request that the United States discontinue lend-lease supplies to Chungking, which it implied were being stockpiled for use against the Communists instead of the Japanese. Yen-an quoted a statement by War Minister General Chen Cheng which it interpreted as preparing a pretext in advance for civil war. General Chen's pledge that all lend-lease armaments would be used against the enemy contained the statement that, "if the Central troops are attacked by unfriendly troops it is against human nature to expect that the former will not use weapons in their possession for self-defense."

In the absence of a reorganized government and high command, the main lines of Communist military strategy, though unannounced, are fairly apparent. The Communists claim that their regular army has been strengthened to number more than 900,000, although all of these may not be armed for combat. Despite the steadily improving position of Kuomintang troops south of the Yangtze, the present disposition of Communist forces indicates that the Communists feel strong enough to carry the war to the Kuomintang in southern China. Yen-an is shifting its troops from north of the Yellow River to the area immediately to the south and from north of the Yangtze River to the area immediately to the south, and apparently plans to make a major effort to secure the important Yangtze River cities.

Civil war on a small scale is already in progress in Shensi, Shansi, Hopei, Honan, Shantung, Anhwei, Hunan, and Chekiang. Communist forces are steadily trying to neutralize Kuomintang and puppet Chinese pockets of control east of the Japanese north-south corridor in central China. From the Communist point of view there is no distinction between Kuomintang troops which have remained independent of the Japanese and those which in self-protection have become puppet forces.

Except for Japanese holdings, the Communists virtually dominate the area north of the Lung-Hai railroad, which runs east and west between Tunghai and Sian. Yen-an also boasts a steady increase in Communist positions south of the Lung-Hai, particularly along the Ping-Han railroad, which runs north and south between Peiping and Hankow.

South of the Yangtze River the Communists are still in the preliminary, largely underground, stages of their program. They are undoubtedly engaged in widespread political activity in all the south-

eastern provinces, and they claim that a junction of Communist controlled districts in the area between Shanghai and Hangchow is imminent.

Attitude Toward the US and the USSR

For some time Communist propaganda has been insisting that Chiang Kai-shek's regime, without American aid, would have been forced to change its policies in order to unify the country and gain popular support. Kuomintang leaders, Mao has said, "are preparing to launch a civil war and are only waiting till certain Allied troops have driven the Japanese from certain parts of China." Although Communist leaders in China have repeatedly expressed the desire for an orientation toward the United States, a Chinese Communist at San Francisco recently stated that, while the Communists dread the division of China into two spheres backed by two great powers, if the United States aids only the Kuomintang, Yen-an will ask for direct help from the USSR. While on the one hand Communist leaders are sharp in their criticism of alleged "American imperialists," they have also expressed the conviction that American economic cooperation will be essential to China's postwar industrial development.

The Communists apparently feel that they now face a choice between two alternative policies toward the United States: (1) To cooperate with the United States Army to whatever degree American policy permits, hoping thereby to win some American recognition and to mitigate the difficulties they anticipate from an advance of American and Chungking forces into Communist territories. (2) To attempt to force a change in American policy by refusing military cooperation, and at the same time launch an intensive anti-American propaganda campaign in order to mobilize Chinese popular support. The special disadvantage to the Communists of the latter program would be that Chungking would be given an immediate opportunity to claim itself the sole Chinese force cooperating in the war against Japan.

Although the Communists look to the USSR for sympathy and probably are making every effort to put their case for eventual aid before the Soviets, they at present apparently have no detailed assurance of Soviet support and no foreknowledge of Soviet plans regarding the Far Eastern war. Contact with the USSR is probably maintained through Chinese Communists in Moscow and through the radio at Yen-an. To date the Chinese Communists have received no Soviet arms. Yen-an seeks to indicate that the extent of its orientation toward the USSR will depend on the attitude taken by the United States on outstanding problems in China.

"Without the participation of the Soviet Union... a final and thorough settlement of the Pacific question" will be impossible, Mao Tse-tung said in his Party Congress address in April. Should the USSR

attack the Japanese in Manchuria, the Communists plan to cooperate by extending their guerrilla operations into Jehol and south Liaoning. Their underground activities throughout Manchuria would also be accelerated. The Communists believe the Soviets will recognize whatever Chinese forces they meet in Manchuria and that the USSR will make no territorial demands as long as Manchuria is controlled by a friendly regime. The Communists say they would be willing to grant the USSR port and transportation facilities on a commercial basis in Manchuria as long as no infringement of Chinese sovereignty is entailed.

Similarly the Communists declare that Outer and Inner Mongolia will remain parts of China if they are given autonomy on a federative basis. Active assistance in improving the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the territories would be counted upon to prevent them from seceding to the USSR. So far Soviet policy in Outer Mongolia has been very beneficial to the Mongols, but has not been aggressive, the Communists claim. They imply that Mongolia can still be redeemed by the Chinese from its present pro-Soviet orientation. The Communists accuse Chungking of provoking the current revolt in China's central Asiatic border province of Sinkiang by a repressive policy toward the local population. They maintain that the province will be kept out of the Soviet orbit only by receiving autonomy based on a progressive policy toward its many racial groups. Yen-an accuses the Kuomintang of courting the support of small reactionary ruling minorities everywhere at the expense of losing the allegiance of the people of China.