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12 August 1969

DCI BRIEFING FOR
8/14 NSC MEETING

COMMUNIST CHINA

- I. The long-postponed Chinese Communist Ninth Party Congress, which met through most of April, does not seem to have resolved many of China's massive political problems.
 - A. Some of these problems are long-standing ones, but many are a direct legacy of that peculiar phenomenon which the Chinese Communists call the Cultural Revolution.
 - B. It has been a ~~bi-polar~~^{bigame} situation in which the regime has, in effect, been conducting revolution against itself. This resulted in almost three years of the most violent kind of political turmoil, which at times brought China to the brink of anarchy.
- II. Let me oversimplify~~/~~ for the sake of trying to explain what the Cultural Revolution was all about:
 - A. It had its origin in a wide range of complex factors, but Mao Tse-tung unquestionably played

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By JMR NARA, Date 10/19/2009

[p. 1 of 27]

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PER SEC. 3.5(c)

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the central role in setting off the upheaval.

1. Mao believed the Chinese revolution/his
revolution was running into the sands.
Revolutionary enthusiasm and élan had been
lost.

- a. Bureaucratic buck-passing and inertia were growing. Technical experts were vying with "revolutionary" generalists for authority in making decisions.
- b. The problems of modernizing a huge, over-populated and backward country were growing rather than decreasing.

2. Mao apparently felt himself to be increasingly at odds with many leading members of the Chinese regime. He feared their more practical, hard-headed solutions would lead to a society like that of the Soviet Union/one he believes is fat and slothful in pursuing a revolutionary ideal.

- a. He even came to believe that they were trying to treat him like a "revered elder" whose advice was sought but not acted upon. This

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per sec. 3.5(c)

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feeling was partly paranoia, partly justified.

- B. Mao's answer to these problems was an attempt to rekindle the "revolutionary" fervor that had helped bring him to power.
1. He had apparently developed an almost mystic faith in the power of permanent revolution conducted by mobilized and indoctrinated masses, and sought by this means to counteract growing cynicism and prevent Soviet-style revisionism from infecting China.
 2. Having decided that the party machinery had gotten stodgy and could not be counted on to maintain revolutionary spirit and policies after he was gone, Mao set out in late 1965 to purge the Party leaders so that he could replace them with more reliable, more revolutionary successors.
 3. His chosen instrument to undercut the authority of these party leaders was the

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-3-

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great mass of youth in China, who were
named the Red Guards.

C. It did not, of course, work out quite as Mao must have expected.

1. The Red Guards, once they had been turned on and turned loose, were often unpredictable and uncontrollable.
2. Some of the Old Guard Party leaders-- particularly the provincial bosses far from Peking--saw not only their jobs but their lives endangered, /and fought back.
3. Those who were moderate or neutral in the conflict, /administrators and technicians who had to get the job done--like Premier Chou En-lai and many of the military commanders /--were concerned that China would collapse into complete chaos. Their efforts to check the excesses of the Cultural Revolution produced the on-again, off-again pattern of its history.

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PER Sec 3.5(c)

-4-

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- D. While the Cultural Revolution was at its height, the level of violence rose and fell like the fever chart of a malaria patient.
1. At times there were factional clashes in city after city which put hundreds in their graves and thousands in hospitals.
 - a. We have overhead photography that showed newly dug machine gun pits, communication trenches, and blockaded railroad lines in a city deep in the interior of China.
 - b. At one point, the world watched with amazement as mutilated bodies floated down the Pearl River out of China past Hong Kong.
 2. As these periods of violence and chaos in the cities rose to a peak that seemed to bring China to the brink of civil war, the army was called in to restore order and given sufficient leeway to bring about a short period of quiet.
 - a. Thus the "January typhoon" in 1967 was followed by the February and March "reversal of verdicts." The bloody summer

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Per
Sec. 3.5(c)

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of 1967 was followed by a much longer and calmer fall and winter.

b. Since the spring and summer of 1968, when violence again rose to a peak almost equal to the dreadful summer of 1967, relative calm has fallen on the scene.

3. To achieve this calm, the regime had to send out clear orders that Red Guard violence was to end, by military force if necessary.

a. In most places, the military carried out these orders with gusto, and Red Guard organizations were banned.

b. Vigilante groups organized by military provincial authorities cracked student heads with a vengeance, and many old scores were apparently settled by officials previously under Red Guard attack.

c. The students are no longer being treated as the apple of Mao's eye, and many have been sent to the countryside to army-run state farms.

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III. Maó did achieve one of his primary goals during the Cultural Revolution—he purged an impressively long list of top leaders whom he thought were opposing him and his ideas.

A. This is only the frosting on the poison cake he has baked, however, since the damage done to the political and economic fabric of China was significant.

1. The party apparatus, a fundamental instrument of control painstakingly built up during the past three decades, has been shattered and its authority destroyed.
2. Government machinery was very hard hit, and in many areas for several years barely functioned.
3. The army, the only organization left reasonably intact, has been thrown into unfamiliar political work for which it is ill equipped. Although generally loyal and responsive to orders from Peking, many units have been deeply involved in divisive political disputes--a situation that can only dismay high-ranking professional officers.

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4. Disruptions connected with the Cultural Revolution have adversely affected the economy. Although we cannot be sure exactly how much damage was done, it was a major setback. I shall discuss this aspect briefly a little later.
5. Public discipline and probity, once the pride of the regime, have deteriorated and petty crime flourishes in major Chinese cities.

IV. Now Mao, aided by a new cast of characters in leading roles, is trying to repair the damage done. But the task will be a long and difficult one.

A. The Ninth Party Congress elects a new Central Committee and Politburo to support Mao, and confirmed Lin Piao, who was hand picked by the old man himself, as his successor.

1. This new leadership will probably prove fairly stable in the short run, but differences in outlook and interests persist.
 - a. Policy disputes have been muted, but not eliminated. These continuing differences seem to be adding to Peking's difficulties in taking a firm, unambiguous

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PER Sec. 3.5 (c)

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stand on its many intractable
domestic problems.

- B. Since the Congress was held, Peking has been emphasizing the theme of internal unity.
 - 1. Efforts are being made to rebuild the party apparatus, but progress is slow and painful.
 - a. Channels of command and communication are not yet fully open and there are endemic disputes over which old party members are to be "rehabilitated" and which Cultural Revolution activists are to be absorbed into the party.
 - 2. The Revolutionary Committees, which over the last three years have emerged as the new administrative and political organs of authority at the provincial and local levels, are not yet operating effectively.
 - a. Committees at all levels appear to be split into factions. Individuals and groups within the committees sometimes

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PER Sec. 3.5(c)

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seem to be concentrating more on
strife than on their assigned work.

- b. Because relationships between the committees and the party machine and the military authorities are not fully worked out, there are frequent jurisdictional disputes and political power plays.
- C. As a result of the confusions of the Cultural Revolution, some political and administrative power has devolved from Peking to the provinces and lower levels.
 1. In the largest sense, however, Peking still calls the shots. There is no sign of developing warlordism.
 2. Powerful provincial figures—mostly military men—are attempting with some success to make their influence felt in Peking, rather than trying to go their own way without reference to the central authorities.
- D. To add to the continuing confusion, remnants of rival Red Guard groups renew their factional fighting from time to time.

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1. The most severe fighting has persisted in western China, where the Red Guards are still fairly powerful.
2. Nearly all parts of China have been affected. In recent months at least a dozen provinces scattered throughout the country have experienced clashes.
3. The fighting is sporadic, however. Nowhere has it reached the proportions of 1967 and 1968.

V. In the face of these difficulties, Peking has cut back on some radical social programs inaugurated last autumn.

A. Efforts to radicalize the educational and health systems have slowed, but have not been entirely abandoned. Other programs introduced in the past year have also been put on the back burner.

B. A campaign to send large numbers of city residents to the countryside is still in full swing.

1. Almost fifteen million people may have already been affected.

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2. This campaign is meeting resistance.

The regime is countering it by claiming the population movement is part of China's "war preparations."

C. The theme of preparing for war has been played over and over again in recent weeks, but it seems largely a device to help unify the country, rather than a genuine effort to prepare for hostilities.

1. There have been no efforts at mobilization or other indications that Peking is expecting an early military emergency.

VI. Neither the current drive for "unity," nor the cutback in radical social programs, is likely to solve quickly the administrative and domestic problems caused by the Cultural Revolution.

A. To summarize the present status, the regime seems to be temporizing with many of its problems rather than facing them head-on.

B. The animosities of the Cultural Revolution persist and will continue to do so for some time.

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- C. China's administrative machinery is still out of kilter, and will require strenuous efforts before it is fully operative again.
- D. Far from having restored "revolutionary élan," the Cultural Revolution has led to a greater degree of cynicism and lassitude than existed in China before it began.

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Par. Sec. 3.5(c)

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VII. Although Peking has, as I indicated a moment ago, slowed its radical domestic programs, it has not let up in its campaign of vilification against the Soviet Union.

A. The Ninth Party Congress elevated the USSR ~~/~~ in fact if not yet in slogan--to the position of China's number one enemy.

1. The Soviets have been attacked on almost every conceivable ground since the Congress. Although the tone of these propaganda attacks is no longer as emotional as it was immediately after the Ussuri border incidents last March, it is still very shrill.

2. Peking continues to maintain its formal claim to large areas of Soviet territory in eastern Siberia. This claim is purely formalistic ~~/~~ China does not expect to recover the territory ~~/~~ but Peking will not abandon the claim unless Moscow admits the land was seized "unjustly."

B. Nevertheless, the talks at Khabarovsk ~~/~~ about navigation problems on the Ussuri and Amur border

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rivers/-reached some agreement on August 8th.

1. The Chinese have also reportedly sent a delegation to Moscow for trade talks.
2. These developments suggest that Peking does not wish the inflamed border situation to get out of hand.
3. While both sides appear to be willing to reach some temporary accommodation on such matters as river navigation, neither is likely to compromise fundamental positions.

C. On the border itself, minor clashes and disputes continue; but none has approached the scale of incidents at Damansky Island on March 2nd and 15th.

1. Minor clashes have gone on for some years. The difference is that both sides now seem willing to publicize them.
2. They are not likely to escalate without a specific decision to do so from either Peking or Moscow.

(X)
 (border incident on 13 Aug)
 100 Chinese
 several hundred Soviets

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3. Peking has shown no particular eagerness since March to fan the fires deliberately, but the Chinese do appear willing to allow the incidents to continue.
4. Questions of national prestige could lead to an intensification of a relatively minor incident, so the situation on the border does remain potentially explosive.

VIII. Peking has made little effort to match the extensive Soviet military buildup, now totalling some 30 ground force divisions, in the border regions.

- A. The Chinese have made some improvements in air defense, and have transferred a few aircraft to the lightly defended Sinkiang area. Chinese ground force concentrations, however, remain some distance from the border in essentially defensive posture.
- B. There is little evidence that Peking expects an imminent attack by Soviet forces.
 1. The Chinese probably have a fairly good idea of the extent of the Soviet buildup, although their intelligence collection

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per Sec. 3.5 (c)

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effort against the USSR is not as sophisticated as that of the Soviets against China.

C. Peking has displayed some signs of nervousness in recent weeks, however.

1. Their willingness to come to an agreement on the border river navigation talks is an indication of their mood. In 1967, they deliberately broke off similar talks, rather than reach any accommodation with the Soviets.

2. The "war preparations" theme recently sounded in Chinese propaganda is another, although Peking has taken only minimal military steps to meet this contingency.

IX. The Chinese continue to react sharply in propaganda terms to Soviet political initiatives aimed at "containing" Peking.

A. They have roundly condemned Brezhnev's idea of an Asian collective security

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Per Sec. 3.5(c)

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PER SEC. 3.5(c)

pact, but their diplomatic efforts to counter this ploy have been in relatively low key.

- B. Peking is continuing to promote the formation in foreign countries of pro-Chinese splinter Communist parties, but this too is a low-key effort.
- C. It is almost certain that there will be no significant easing of Sino-Soviet tensions in the next several years.
 - 1. Conflicting national interests, / competition for leadership of the Communist movement, / and genuine fear of each other's intentions will prevent a rapprochement.
 - 2. Even border problems will probably not be resolved to any significant degree in the near future.

Chinese Economy

X. The Chinese economy received a major setback from the Cultural Revolution, and recovery is now proceeding only slowly. Unlike the leap forward campaign of 1958, the aims of the cultural revolution

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were political and social, not economic in nature. This movement was the source of wide-spread, often violent change, which seriously affected the performance of the economy.

A. Considerable declines occurred in industrial production, transportation, and foreign trade in 1967 and early 1968. Gradual recovery began last summer, along with the restoration of order in the country, and has continued up to the present.

1. Industrial production declined substantially in 1967 and early 1968. Recovery beginning late in 1968, brought total production for the year slightly above the level of 1967. The peak level of 1966 will probably be regained this year, unless political turmoil again interferes.

B. Agriculture felt the impact of the cultural revolution much less than the urban economy. Food consumption levels nationally in recent years have been reasonably adequate, and of course well above the low levels of 1960-61.

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Rev Sec. 3.5(c)

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1. Imports of grain and chemical fertilizer continue to make important contributions to maintenance of food supply levels.
- C. China's economic outlook remains uncertain because it depends so greatly on whether, when and to what extent a number of Mao's radical experiments are put into effect. Without serious disturbances, the economy should continue to recover and ~~as~~ planning becomes more stabilized ~~go on to a~~ slow expansion.
 1. The Cultural Revolution's disruptions of economic planning and management are taking some time to remedy, and this has hindered progress in many of the modern sectors of the economy.
 2. Nevertheless, continued expansion of China's small, military-oriented heavy industry can be expected.

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Chinese Communist Military Forces

XI. Despite some disruptions caused by the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese have managed to continue with their advanced weapons program.

- A. Late ^{this past} winter, preparations appeared to be under way for another nuclear test at the Lop Nor range. We then estimated that a test could occur before the end of June. We have no later information, however, and the status of preparations is now unclear. As far as we know, a nuclear test could occur at any time.
- B. The chemical separation plant at the Yumen plutonium facility is approaching completion.
- C. Work preliminary to the actual testing phase continues on the ICBM program.
- D. On the other side of the ledger, we have yet to detect any deployment of the Chinese 1,000-mile MRBM, which we judged to be ready for operational deployment two years ago. They are just beginning the long-expected production of TU-16 jet medium bombers, and may be about to start on MIG-21s.

XII. Our estimate has been that if the Chinese began flight tests for an ICBM system before the end

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Per Sec. 3.5(c)

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of this year, they could have an initial operational capability by late 1972.

- A. In the light of China's inexperience, /its limited technical and scientific base, /and the possibility of continuing political disruptions, /the development is likely to take longer--perhaps as much as another two or three years.
- B. But assuming the earliest possible initial operational date of late 1972, it is doubtful that the Chinese could achieve an operational ICBM force of more than 10 to 25 missiles by 1975.
- C. Construction and modification is still under way at the two launch pads of Complex B at the Shuang-cheng-tzu missile test range.
 - 1. Modification of the smaller pad, originally finished in mid-1967, is nearly complete. We believe that ICBM testing could be conducted as soon as the missile is ready.
 - 2. Construction of the larger launch pad, /which appears to be for a space system rather than an ICBM, /is about one year from completion.

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D. Work on the missile program is also moving ahead at some of the production facilities.

1. A large missile systems test tower at the Nanyuan guided missile plant, near Peking, has been extended in height from about 120 feet to approximately 165 feet. It now appears larger than would be required for an ICBM, and may be designed for space vehicles as well.
2. At a solid fuel rocket motor test facility in northern China, a second large horizontal test cell is nearing completion. Both of the test cells at this facility appear designed for handling static firing tests of medium to large solid-propellant rocket motors.

XIII. China's Air Force is the fourth largest in the world, but it is primarily a defensive force, with a very limited capability for strategic attack. Its fighter aircraft are not the most modern, but the large numbers give China some air defense capability.

- A. The Chinese now have about 2,700 jet fighters, most of which date back to the early 1950s when the Soviets gave them large numbers of MIG-15s and MIG-17s. These are roughly comparable to U.S. F-84 and F-86 jets.

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1. They now produce their own version of the MIG-19, and have about 825 of them.
 2. They have only a handful/about 30/of modern MIG-21s, which they received from the USSR.
- B. The Chinese long range bomber force is severely limited. It has about 15 or so medium bombers, of which five are jets. The others are old piston engine TU-4s--almost identical to our World War II B-29.
- C. The only effective bombing force is the fleet of IL-28 jet light bombers, which have a combat radius of about 550 miles and can carry about three tons of bombs.

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per Sec. 3.5(c)

1. Even this force is declining. Originally China had about 450 of these light jet bombers,/but since the Chinese have produced none, and received none from the USSR since 1959,/this force is now down to about 250 to 275 operational aircraft.

XIV. Communist China has a program to produce new aircraft, but it has not geared up as fast as we had expected.

- A. The production of Chinese MIG-19s, which was

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reduced sharply during the Cultural Revolution, is now back up to about 20 a month. This plane is roughly equivalent to the U.S. F-100. The plant at Shenyang/~~formerly called Mukden~~ was given to China by the Soviets in the 1950s.

- B. Facilities at Chengtu are probably meant for production of the MIG-21, but there are no firm indications that production has begun.
- C. There are facilities at Sian for the production of the TU-16, the Soviet-designed four-engine jet medium bomber which the Chinese have used for air-dropped tests of thermonuclear devices.
 - 1. So far, we have seen two old TU-16s provided by the Soviets, and three new models. ~~but we expect that the numbers will not increase as production continues.~~
 - 2. This TU-16, or Badger, is similar to the U.S. B-47. It can carry up to 20,000 pounds to a radius of about 1,300 nautical miles without refueling/~~or lighter loads to longer ranges.~~ It is at present the only Chinese Communist means of delivering a thermonuclear weapon.
- D. The Soviet Union gave the Chinese some surface-to-air missile equipment prior to 1960, and

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Communist China at present has 20 to 25 operational SAM sites, with emplacements for about 20 more.

1. They are located at major industrial and urban centers, and near advanced weapons installations.
2. These are copies of the Soviet SA-2 Guideline system, but there is some evidence that the Chinese are engaged in developing a new system of their own.

XV. Finally, the Chinese Communist Army, with about 2,300,000 men, is the largest land army in the world.

A. In the absence of opposition from either the Soviet Union or the United States, the Chinese Army could overrun its smaller neighbors in Asia, or pose a serious threat to India.

1. There are 162 divisions--two thirds of them infantry. Deployment, near coastal areas along the Korean border, has remained fairly stable since the Korean War.

B. Modernization and mechanization of forces began at the outset of the Korean War. It has continued at a gradual pace, but the Chinese Communist Army is still well below U.S. and Soviet standards for firepower and mobility.

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Sec. 3.5(c)

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[p. 27 of 27]

NLN 07-H-03/6