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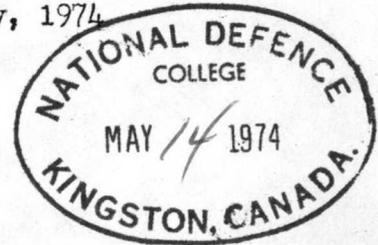
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2075-280/A2 (D Int S 2)

National Defence Headquarters
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6 May, 1974



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Enclosure: A. IAC Brief 9/74 approved 3 Apr 74

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J.F. Davies
Colonel
Director of Intelligence Services
for Chief of the Defence Staff

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References: 2075-280/A2 (D Int S 2) of 6 May, 1974

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CANADA

CHINESE INTERNAL SITUATION

IAC BRIEF 9/74

Approved 03 April 1974

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IAC BRIEF 9/74

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CHINESE INTERNAL SITUATION

Summary

After the turbulence and extremism of the Cultural Revolution and, in particular, since the fall of Defence Minister (and consecrated successor to Mao) Lin Piao in September 1971, China's domestic politics have been characterized by pragmatism and moderation - - the hallmarks of which were the rehabilitation of cadres and intellectuals purged in the Cultural Revolution, the gradual replacement of army by party influence in the political sphere, the adoption of more rational economic policies, and relaxation of the political atmosphere and personal lifestyles. The personification of this period of relaxation in China's political history was Premier Chou En-lai.

1. After the turbulence and extremism of the Cultural Revolution and, in particular, since the fall of Defence Minister (and consecrated successor to Mao) Lin Piao in September 1971, China's domestic politics have been characterized by pragmatism and moderation - - the hallmarks of which were the rehabilitation of cadres and intellectuals purged in the Cultural Revolution, the gradual replacement of army by party influence in the political sphere, the adoption of more rational economic policies, and relaxation of the political atmosphere and personal lifestyles. The personification of this period of relaxation in China's political history was Premier Chou En-lai.

2. The Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, from August 24 to 28, 1973 might have been expected to have placed a final symbolic and institutional imprimatur upon these trends toward domestic retrenchment, stability and unity. In fact, however, the interim and compromise nature of the Congress was suggested not only by (a) its failure to lay down detailed internal policy guidelines for China's future, an omission which strongly suggested continuing lack of consensus on vital issues (culture, education and the import of foreign technology) dividing Chou's pragmatists and the

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well-entrenched if minority radical group, but also (b) the election of a new Politburo which appeared far from cohesive - - more a coalition of divergent interest groups than a true union of like-minded men - - and failed to provide a firm answer to the question of the succession of Mao Tse-tung.

3. The apparent lack of any real unity or prospect of long-term stability evidenced by the Tenth Party Congress has been dramatically confirmed by events since then. Dating from approximately August, a major ideological campaign (frequently labelled the "anti-Confucian" campaign) has gradually gained momentum throughout China. Beginning in the autumn as a movement to criticize traditional, and therefore Confucian, ideas and forms of behaviour, and manifesting itself most dramatically as a criticism campaign within schools and universities, the campaign has gained steam since the turn of the year and has extended into wider social spheres, such as the cultural and economic fields, and manifested itself in behaviour reminiscent of the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution in 1966: big-character posters, mass rallies, criticisms of cadres, attacks on foreign culture and technology, and an apparent toughening of China's foreign policy stance. The campaign appeared to reach its peak with the publication of a major editorial in the February 2 People's Daily confirming that the campaign was a "mass political struggle ... initiated and led by Chairman Mao", explicitly warning cadres against backsliding and emphasizing the role of "the masses" in the campaign at the expense of the party. Other articles spoke ominously of the need for "revolutionary action" and for destruction before construction. The extremist trend suggested by that editorial was, however, balanced by a far more moderate People's Daily editorial on 20 February, stressing the need for discipline and party leadership and on 24 February, by the personal identification of Premier Chou with the campaign enunciated at a banquet for Zambia's President Kaunda. The three weeks following Chou's intervention have been characterized by a lull in the campaign apart from a major and continuing debate in the cultural sphere.

4. There are two major schools of thought amongst foreign analysts on what is at present happening in China. The optimists, who would seem in the majority, believe that the campaign is merely one (approximately the tenth) in a long series of "rectification" campaigns designed to arouse mass consciousness, stamp out conservative modes of thought and behaviour in China and prevent a backsliding from the puritan values of the cultural revolution into Soviet-type

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"revisionism". If directed against any group, they see it as directed against the military, and for evidence point to the shuffle, announced on 2 January, of the commanders of eight of China's eleven military regions, an action that certainly weakens both the political power of the provinces vis-à-vis the party. They regard the campaign as under the strict control and discipline of the party and, in particular, of Premier Chou En-lai, and do not believe it will erupt into another Cultural Revolution. Finally, they do not believe this campaign will affect the overall direction of China's foreign policy. A second, more pessimistic, interpretation suspects the campaign to be engineered by the radicals and aimed at Chou En-lai and the pragmatic policies he has implemented (in the fields of education, culture, the economy, rehabilitation of purged officials and import of foreign technology) and is far less sanguine than the first group that the campaign will avoid excesses and/or purges of the senior leadership. They also fear that the campaign could have an effect on Chinese foreign policy, particularly vis-à-vis the USA.

5. The truth may well lie in between these two interpretations and, in fact, they are not mutually exclusive. In all likelihood, the campaign was initiated by Mao - - with the active support of the left and the tacit consent of Chou - - not only to reaffirm the values of the cultural revolution, but also to prop up the political position of the radicals whose fortunes seemed to be on the wane after the end of 1971. Once the campaign was launched, however, it has developed an autonomous and unpredictable momentum of its own. Although the original motivation for the campaign, in the mind of Mao, may have been to repurify China's masses, political factions (both moderate and radical) have attempted both to use the campaign to their own benefit and to redirect it away from themselves. This could explain why the campaign appears Janus-faced at different times and to different people. It is precisely because it is not inalterably aimed in a certain direction that it is ambiguous. Both interpretations therefore could have some validity - - the optimists may be correct that the campaign is, in part, a general rectification campaign, that it is also, in part, aimed at weakening the army and that, so far, it has avoided excesses and remained under the control of the party. The pessimists may also be correct, however, in arguing that, far from controlling the campaign, Chou (like, perhaps Chiang Ching) has been attempting to deflect and redirect it, and that it would be uncharacteristic of the Premier to launch such a mass movement not only because of the dangers for his policies inherent in its radical nature but also because of its considerable potential for disorder at a time when the army's ability to maintain order has probably been reduced.

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6. Thus the future course of the anti-Confucian campaign, as it unfolds is unpredictable to the extent that it seems to reflect the efforts of differing interest groups, within the general framework and in the name of the campaign, to have their views prevail. Given the majority support he probably commands in both party and army, Premier Chou (as well as his opening to the west) will probably survive, although to do so will in all likelihood necessitate some trimming of his pragmatic policies to suit the new radical breeze. The great unknown in all this, however, remains Chairman Mao, but old men become paranoid, and heirs-apparent have always been a particularly sensitive area for the Chairman.

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