SECRET
Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

23 September 1966

OCI No. 0308/66A

Copy No. 715

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY

SPECIAL REPORT

LIN PIAO, NEW NUMBER-TWO MAN IN COMMUNIST CHINA

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

State Dept. review
completed

25X1

54-228530

SECRET

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Page Denied

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

LIN PIAO, NEW NUMBER-TWO MAN IN COMMUNIST CHINA

After months of turmoil within the Chinese Communist leadership, Defense Minister Lin Piao emerged in August as Mao Tse-tung's first deputy in the party. In this role he displaced Liu Shao-chi, long a dominant figure in the regular party apparatus. Lin Piao is the only leader now described in the Peking press as Mao's "close comrade in arms." An aura of personality second only to Mao's has been built up around his name, and he is evidently being groomed as Mao's successor.

Lin has risen in spite of a long record of illness and absence from public view. His chief assets have been his power in the army, Mao's high regard for him, and Mao's apparently growing mistrust of other leaders. Lin's military background once seemed to be a major bar to political advancement in a state which stresses party control over the army. This factor has become less important now that the authority of the party machinery has been downgraded with the demotion or dismissal of many of its leaders.

Lin Piao and the army have been in the center of the drive against the party apparatus. His precise role in this sweeping campaign, however, remains unclear. He may have been merely an instrument of Mao, may have worked with others, or may himself have been the prime mover behind the purge. Whether he has developed a strong enough personal power base to survive after Mao goes is uncertain. At the moment there is little question that he is the dominant leader in the regime after Mao. If Mao's control has slipped badly, as seems conceivable, Lin may already be the dominant leader.

25X6

Background

Lin Piao is considered one of China's most brilliant military commanders. An honors graduate of the Whampoa Military Academy, he had by the time he was 28 won recognition as a theoretician on warfare and was acknowledged the foremost military strategist in the Chinese Communist armed forces. He participated in the Nanchang Uprising on 1 August 1927 which marked the birth of the Chinese Workers and Peasants' Red Army, and in 1934 he led the vanguard Communist troops from central China to Shensi on the Long March. At the 1937 battle of Ping-hsing Pass in Shansi, he defeated the crack Itagaki Division and won the first major Communist victory against the Japanese. His critique

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

OFFICIAL POSITIONS

Member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Politburo

Vice Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the CCP Politburo

Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP

Vice Premier of the State Council

Minister of Defense

Vice Chairman of the National Defense Council

Marshal of the Chinese People's Republic

1908	Born in Huang-kang, Hupeh
1925	Graduated with top honors from Whampoa Military Academy (Chou En-lai was director of the Political Department)
1926	Joined the Chinese Communist Party
1927	Participated in 1 August Nanchang Uprising which marked the birth of Chinese Workers and Peasants Red Army
1934-35	Led vanguard troops on the Long March
1945-49	Commander of the 4th Field Army
1949	Appointed Chairman of the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee
1954	Elected Vice Premier of the State Council, Vice Chairman of the National Defense Council
1955	Elected to the CCP Politburo; made Marshal of the People's Republic of China (one of 10)
1958	Elected to the Politburo Standing Committee and made Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP
1959	Appointed Minister of Defense, Vice Chairman of the Politburo Military Affairs Committee

63669

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

of that battle was used as a text for instruction.

In 1942 and 1943 Lin took part, with Chou En-lai, in the Chungking negotiations between the Nationalists and the Communists. After the defeat of Japan, with civil war impending, he was assigned the crucial mission of consolidating Manchuria as a base for the conquest of the whole of China.

When the Communists came to power in 1949 he was a national hero, but poor health seemingly kept him from playing a fully active role in the Peking regime. He has been absent from public life for several protracted periods since 1937 and there have been official announcements on a number of occasions that he was ill.

He was seriously wounded in 1937 and received treatment in the Soviet Union, and on four separate occasions between 1950 and 1954 organizations subordinate to him sent him "comfort messages"--indicating that he was then incapacitated. In 1960 a Chinese press statement described him as "very weak."

25X6

Lin was out of public view from 1950 to 1956. He made one appearance in 1957, but then numerous ones during the next four years. He may have overdone it, because his public activity dropped off sharply after early 1962 until the summer of 1966.

25X6

Lin has stood at the centers of party and military power for over a decade. He was elected to the politburo, the party's top policy-making body, in 1955, and to the politburo's standing committee, the inner circle of Mao's closest advisers, in 1958. The next year he was appointed minister of national defense, replacing the disgraced Peng Te-huai, and was put in charge of the party's Military Affairs Committee (MAC), the supreme military authority.

As Mao's principal military adviser since 1959, Lin has been a faithful exponent of Mao's

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

political-military theories of "self-reliance," "man over weapons," and "people's war." Little is known of his own military philosophy. He assumed his top military posts at a time of major conflict between Mao and some of the army leaders, presumably to facilitate strengthening of party domination over the armed forces. Under Lin's aegis the role of the General Political Department, the party's arm within the military, was greatly enlarged and political indoctrination was pressed throughout the services.

Lin Piao's name achieved increasing prominence outside the military after a drive was started in 1964 to have the whole country adopt the army's political indoctrination methods. Everybody was told to study Lin's instructions on "putting politics in command" and studying Mao. In September 1965 Lin authored a major article setting forth Mao's views on global strategy and "people's war." Toward the end of the year Lin was being cited as an authority on intellectual and cultural policy.

Throughout this period Lin Piao himself remained a shadowy figure, seemingly serving as an instrument of Mao and lending the prestige of his name to reinforce Mao's authority.

Lin Piao's Recent Rise

It was not until May 1966 that Lin emerged as a serious threat to other leaders. At that time the Liberation Army Journal --pointedly identified in May as Lin's journal--spearheaded the attacks against high party officials who were being brought down in disgrace. The usually authoritative central committee journals People's Daily and Red Flag followed the army journal's lead in that period. In early May, Lin showed up for the first time in 12 months, making an appearance with Mao, party general secretary Teng Hsiao-ping, and Premier Chou-En-lai. The order of precedence at that appearance was Mao, Teng, Chou, and Lin, indicating that although Lin was closer to the top power structure than before, he did not yet stand ahead of top party and government leaders. 25X1

Lin's standing improved after the early May appearance. During May and June he and Mao were virtually the only leaders cited in the party press as authorities on important current developments.

25X1

However, the time was not yet ripe for a move against ranking party leaders such as Liu Shao-chi. During July both the People's Daily and the army journal found occasions to indicate that Liu was still a dominant party leader as well as chief of state.

A showdown apparently took place at the 11th central committee plenum held from 1 to 12 August. Subsequent events indicate that the main decision taken at the plenum was to demote Liu out of the inner circle of power

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

25X1
Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

25X1
Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

and to designate Lin Piao as Mao's first deputy and heir apparent. To achieve this, bargains involving Lin, Chou En-lai, and Teng Hsiao-ping were probably made. Chou retained his number-three position, one he has held for many years, and Teng, while dropping to sixth place, was allowed to remain in the standing committee as head of a weakened secretariat.

Since the plenum Lin has been consistently represented as holding a pre-eminent position over Mao's other lieutenants. He is now the only person described as Mao's "close comrade-in-arms," an accolade formerly given to Liu, Chou, and Teng as well. Press accounts of the three mammoth rallies held in August and September to display the new leadership lineup described Lin as standing "shoulder to shoulder" with Mao and speaking in Mao's name.

Several senior military officers have been added to the politburo. Although no formal announcement has been made, the new politburo lineup implied by published lists of leaders attending the Peking rallies indicates that three senior military officers--all members of Lin's Military Affairs Committee--have been brought in. The only military men on the previous politburo, besides Lin, were the ineffectual Ho Lung and Liu Po-cheng. Six of the 21 members of the politburo now are military men.

Lin Piao's Views

Less is known about Lin Piao than about any other Chinese leader. There is no large body of public writing attributed to him and such few works as are available--the article on "People's War" published in September 1965 for example--are not much help in assessing his attitudes. As might be expected they applaud and echo Maoist doctrine at every point, and thus do little more than reflect Lin's willingness to perform the kind of public kowtow that has been necessary for survival and advancement under Mao.

Lin's contacts with foreigners have been limited. The most detailed available accounts we have of such encounters date from the 1930s and, although they provide clues about his character at that time, they throw little light on his present views. He has never been abroad, except for medical treatment in the Soviet Union, and therefore there is no evidence to be derived from recent impressions gained by Western observers.

The scanty and fragmentary information available does, however, permit a number of tentative conclusions about Lin's outlook which suggest the general approach he might take toward major questions of policy. These are based in the main on what is known about Lin before he rose to a position of authority at the center of power during the mid-1950s and must

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

therefore be treated with caution. The passage of time and the burdens of responsibility inevitably affect and sometimes profoundly alter a man's character. There is no way of knowing with any certainty how events of the last decade have influenced Lin's outlook.

One thing that is reasonably certain, however, is that he received his fundamentally revolutionary orientation as a young man. He was born just before the collapse of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 and grew up in the ensuing period of political ferment during which demands for social change and newly assertive nationalism grew into powerful forces shaping the thought of China's youth.

Lin, the second son of a petty landholder who was also the proprietor of a small factory in the Yangtze valley province of Hupeh, was sent to a middle school at Wuhan--one of China's first industrial centers--in 1921. While at school Lin joined a group known as the "Social Welfare Society" directed by a man who later became a prominent propagandist for the Chinese Communist Party. During his four years in Wuhan, Lin's thought probably acquired a basic Marxist twist.

To this was added an important overlay of modern chauvinism when Lin was caught up in the May 30th Movement of 1925 which dwarfed all previous antiforeign demonstrations. This social convulsion was touched off when police in the International Concession in Shanghai fired on a group of demonstrators protesting against foreign control. Strikes, boycotts, and militant "anti-imperialist" demonstrations --led by student agitators--erupted all over China and continued for many months. There is no precise information concerning Lin Piao's role in these events but it is clear that he was much influenced by them.

Driven by the thrust of twin forces--the thirst for social change and the desire to erase the humiliation of foreign domination--Lin Piao chose a military career to realize his ambitions and entered the Whampoa Academy late in 1925. This school, with Chiang Kai-shek as commandant and Chou En-lai as director of the political department, produced the officers who commanded China's armies in the years to come.

While at Whampoa, Lin learned his lessons well. In 1926 he renounced his membership in the Kuomintang, joined the Communist Party, and graduated to command a platoon in Chiang's "northern expedition" against the warlords. When the Kuomintang and the Communists split in 1927 Lin Piao joined the Communist forces led by Chu Te. From that point he rose rapidly--commanding a regiment at 20, a division two years later, and the First Red Army Group at the age of 24.

From then until 1955 when he was elected to the politburo Lin's role was primarily that of a troop commander, a professional soldier occupied with the problems of training armies and directing them in the field. In this he became a legendary figure. No leader in a Communist army can be apolitical,

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

and indeed success in guerrilla warfare--at which Lin proved himself a master--demands great skill in the arts of propaganda and political manipulation. Lin used these arts while head of the anti-Japanese military and political university in the early 1940s. Lin's pride, however, is clearly in his achievements as a strategist and tactician.

25X1

The composite picture that emerges from all of this lacks sharp definition but suggests the outline of a man different in important respects from the ideologues who have been directing Peking's course. Lin appears as an old revolutionary, one clearly still adept in manipulating the symbolic language of Marxism and threading the labyrinth of party politics. Although he has repeatedly identified himself with Mao's propositions, it is doubtful that he is entirely in tune with the kind of nonsense current in China during recent years which insists that study of Mao's thought is more important than field exercises in forging a military machine--or in coping with any similar practical problem.

His attitude toward the outside world is probably suspicious and hostile. US officials who dealt with him in the period just after World War II found him an evasive and misleading bargainer and there is nothing in his record since then to indicate any change in his approach to the West. Lin probably subscribes wholeheartedly to Mao's proposition that the US should be despised "strategically" and over the long run it is likely that he takes even more seriously the second part of the "paper tiger" thesis which enjoins cautious respect in tactical situations existing today.

Lin's Future

In each of his major statements made in August and September Lin Piao declared that the main task ahead was to bring down additional powerful party figures. This indicates both that he feels he has some distance to go before fully consolidating his position

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

and that he has considerable confidence in his strength. He has many things going for him--Mao's trust, the backing of the army, the apparent cooperation of Chou En-lai and the government apparatus, and the acquiescence of some leaders in the party apparatus.

In the present fluid situation, however, Lin's position must be considered uncertain. His physical vigor is in question. Mao's health and control may be slipping. Whether Lin is strong enough to survive without Mao's backing, should he die suddenly, is also in question. Mao, who has recently turned against many old comrades, could even turn against Lin next. In short, the situation is expected to remain unstable until Mao finally goes and Lin--or some other contender--fully consolidates his position.

25X1

* * *

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4

Approved For Release 2007/10/26 : CIA-RDP79-00927A005400090002-4