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*Conclusions from the case
of Miao Chen-pai.*

A CHINESE DEFECTS

Fred A. Markvart

On 26 July 1966 Miao Chen-pai, a 30-year-old assistant in the commercial office of the Chinese embassy in Damascus, was busy with a caller at lunch time. The fact is, he had purposely timed an appointment with a Lebanese merchant so that he would still be tied up when his colleagues in the commercial attaché's office left for lunch at the embassy building. They would bring him back a snack, as they usually did in such circumstances. Miao had found a loop-hole in the tight Chinese personnel security system.

After saying good-by to the merchant, Miao went to his room in the same building, unlocked his closet, and took out a small suitcase in which he had packed most of his clothes and personal effects. Donning his suit coat, he went outside, carefully locked the door of the commercial office, and began the 7-minute walk to the American embassy. There he presented himself to the receptionist, saying in English, "I have something very important which I wish to discuss with the American political counselor. I am from the Chinese embassy." Within two minutes he was making his plea for asylum to two officers of the political section.

Motivation

Miao's decision to defect was sparked by no climactic event or personal problem. He was in no sexual or financial trouble, had three years yet to serve in Damascus, got on smoothly with his co-workers and supervisors, and enjoyed a faultless reputation in his mission. He was a former navy officer and a ten-year party member. He was bright, reliable, and efficient in his work. He was well regarded by his boss the commercial attaché, and he was something of a pet of the ambassador, who frequently used him as interpreter because of his near-flawless Arabic. With his party membership, class background, and professional expertise he could look forward confidently to a successful if modest career with the Ministry of Foreign Trade, in which alternate overseas and home tours might

eventually lead to a section chief position in the Ministry. He was making a good living, in Chinese terms, enjoyed a position of respect and trust, and because of his rather ascetic personal tastes had no hankering for the material advantages of the West.

His initial disillusionment with Chinese communism stemmed from the period of the Great Leap Forward. An intelligent man, he concluded soon after the movement began that it was a catastrophic mistake. Not the mistake, but the leadership's failure to indulge in any self-criticism after its de facto abandonment of the Leap led him to conclude that there was a dual standard of communist virtue, one for the leadership and another for the led. The party's hypocrisy—the gap between theory and practice—was, then, what started his progressive disaffection.

What carried it on was the thought suppression and constant political indoctrination of the system; he gagged on the pabulum that was supposed to nurture his political growth. He was still a reasonably reliable party member with no idea of defecting when he left China on his first overseas tour in August 1965. But further exercise of thought control within the Damascus mission and the suggestive opportunities provided by service abroad gradually had their effect. As embassy "study sessions" mounted to over 25 hours per week with the advent of the "cultural revolution" in May 1966, he began weighing seriously the pros and cons of defection. By early July he had made up his mind and started his detailed preparations to escape.

Earmarks?

How could we have spotted Miao as a potential defector? He is confident that we couldn't have. He gave no hint of his plans to anyone, continued diligent in his work and in study sessions, and was careful in his final letters to his mother and girl friend in China to betray no sign of his intentions. The system had taught him to keep close-mouthed and rely entirely on his own resources. Had he received a defection-inducement letter even in his last week, he says, he would unhesitatingly have reported it to his superiors. Had he been approached by anyone—Chinese, American, or Arab—without the most convincing bona fides, he would similarly have reported this. Yet during the same week he was taking advantage of the free time in embassy discussion sessions after he had delivered his own speeches to think out the precise steps of his defection!

Miao might be considered a psychological rather than ideological defector. He did not reject communism as a political system for China

or as a way of life for others, only for himself. He does not think his dissatisfaction with the communist system a rarity among cadres overseas, but he adds significantly, "Personality has a great deal to do with what one does about it." He regards himself as independent-minded and willing to take considerable risks to preserve his right of intellectual privacy. He recognizes that his desire for privacy and distaste for the enforced group activity of a collectivist society are unusually strong: in the Foreign Trade Institute he would try to discourage classmates who insisted on joining him when he had planned a solitary walk, and if he was unable to talk them out of it he would give up the plan and return to his room alone. "I'm no monk," he explains, "but there is a part of everyone's life that has to be lived privately." He does not think, however, that this individualistic tendency would be evident to an outsider, earmarking the potential defector.

He did agree that our most likely Chinese defector-candidates would come from among the lower-ranking, junior cadre who had less personal stake in their present careers and whose better education would give them greater confidence in their ability to make their way in the West. He also recognized that a lack of strong ties to family members left in China would facilitate a decision to defect.

He himself, like most previous defectors to us, had no strong family ties. He had left home at the age of 13; his father was dead, his mother retired from school teaching. While in Damascus he had written once a month to his mother and to a girl with whom he had a vague understanding about future marriage. He had written an older brother, the only other member of his family, only twice in all. The looseness of these ties probably accounts for his rationalizing that his defection will not adversely affect his family. He recognizes that it would not be a good idea to write to them now, but he feels that the regime will take no drastic action against them.

Choosing a Haven

Miao was unequivocal in his reasons for selecting the United States as his preferred safehaven. First, it was an enormously strong country where his safety would be guaranteed. (This same thought has been uppermost in the minds of all Chinese defectors who have walked into U.S. installations.) Second, although he had only the haziest notion of the American political system, its ideology had been presented to him as the polar opposite of communist China's; since

he found China's totally incompatible with his needs, therefore, it seemed logical to try the opposite.

He had an early and dim favorable impression of Americans received second-hand through his father, a secondary-school English teacher who had been acquainted with some American missionaries, but this vague impression was of no consequence. The regime's anti-American propaganda had worked effectively on him, he declares, and he had a generally bad stereotype of the United States and of Americans when he walked into our embassy. His reception there, the official treatment he has had since, and his limited contacts with ordinary aspects of American life have all come as pleasant shocks to him.

He deprecates the material attractions of American life for him. "My living was not so bad," he says, "and I've never wanted to be a millionaire."

He knew that there were Chinese nationals in the United States but had no idea of the size, composition, or location of these overseas Chinese communities. The question of finding a wife among Chinese girls here had not concerned him; once established, he says, he would be willing to select a compatible mate of any race.

Planning the Break

Miao studied different possible ways of defecting for three to four months before his actual break. His planning was rational and fairly well conceived. As he examined his situation, he saw three possible methods of escaping from the mission in Syria:

The first was to go to the U.S. embassy in Damascus and request political asylum. There was no question in his mind but that the Americans would be *able* to exfiltrate him successfully; he hoped they would put him in a diplomatic car and spirit him over the border into Lebanon right away, before the Chinese mission had time to report his disappearance to the Syrian authorities. (It did not occur to him that the United States would report his defection to the Syrian government and request its acquiescence in his removal.) His only doubt concerned U.S. *willingness* to accept the prospect of a further deterioration in the already cool U.S.-Syrian relations over a rather low-ranking Chinese defector. He reasoned, however, that "they accepted Tung Chi-p'ing in Burundi"¹ and decided that they would probably accept him.

¹ For a sketch of this case see *Studies IX 4*, p. 22 ff.

If he were turned away from the American embassy, he decided he would next apply at the Italian embassy. It was nearly next door, and Syrian-Italian relations were so nominal that there was unlikely to be any popular outcry if the Italians exfiltrated him. He did not seriously consider the British embassy; it was too far away, and the British diplomatic tie with China might be an obstacle to accepting Chinese defectors. In retrospect, however, he feels that he would probably have approached the British if turned down at the American and Italian embassies. He had determined, if denied asylum in the West, to try first the Yugoslav and then the Soviet embassy; he believed on the basis of study-session propaganda that the "revisionist" missions would probably accept him, and while he could not hope to get to the United States through their doors, asylum in any country was better than returning to China in disgrace. Life in Yugoslavia or the USSR was not an attractive prospect for him; he doubted that they were "revisionist enough" to satisfy his hopes for personal freedom.

The second plan he considered was getting one of the Arab merchants he had met in the course of official business to help smuggle him over the Lebanese border. He focused particularly on an expatriate UAR national who, after his business in Egypt had been nationalized, had fled with some capital to Lebanon and now, established as a trader in Beirut, had major business interests in Western Europe. Miao thought of sounding him out cautiously on Syrian-Lebanese border-crossing and document procedures and, if the answers indicated that there would be little risk for the merchant in the attempt, then asking to be taken along in his car. He finally rejected this plan on the ground that no merchant could be expected to heed a plea based on humanitarianism or friendship; merchants were interested only in money, and Miao's total available cash amounted to the equivalent of U.S. \$37.50.

His third alternative entailed waiting out the anticipated three-year remainder of his tour in Damascus in order to make a break from the mission the night before his departure, when he would have for the first time both his service passport and a valid Lebanese transit visa in his possession. Having fled the mission, he would flag a taxi for the 2-hour ride to Lebanon, fast enough, he hoped, to be ahead of any border guard alert for him. The drawbacks in this plan were the need for a 3-year wait, uncertainty that his air route home would necessarily involve transit through Lebanon and therefore the Lebanese visa, and worst, the absolute necessity of effecting his break from

the embassy on one critical night; he could not be sure of outwitting the embassy's routine personnel security measures on any given night. He did not seriously consider trying to make a break at the Beirut airport on the way home; he could be sure of neither the attitude of the Lebanese police nor his ability to escape from his escorts.

Knowledge of Prior Defections

Miao had learned through various means of several previous actual or attempted Chinese defections:

(1) Tung Chi-p'ing (Burundi). He had read of Tung's defection in the *People's Daily* and had been told by Ministry of Foreign Trade personnel returning from Burundi in April 1965 that Tung was then in the United States. These MFT people made no pretense that Tung had been kidnapped.

(2) Unidentified officer (USSR). During a May 1966 embassy study session, one of Miao's colleagues mentioned hearing that a member of the Chinese Warsaw embassy had defected with his wife in the Soviet Union while en route by train to Peking. No names, dates, or other details were given, but Miao concluded from the fact that the officer's wife had been stationed in Warsaw with him that he must have been of senior rank.

(3) Fu Tsung (London). While in China he had read a brief item on this pianist's defection to the United Kingdom in "Reference News," a restricted-circulation summary of items from the foreign press produced by NCNA.

(4) Unidentified (Cairo). During the May 1966 study session referred to above an embassy colleague who had previously served in Cairo told how a 19-year-old in the embassy there had fled in about 1961. Speaking only Chinese and unable to make himself understood, he had been jailed by the Cairo police. After two weeks Chinese inquiries led to his identification and turnover to the embassy.

(5) Unidentified (Cairo). The same colleague on the same occasion also mentioned the escape of an "accountant" from the Chinese embassy in Cairo. It was unclear whether this man was ever found again.

(6) NCNA man (Prague). At the same study session another colleague, who had previously served in Switzerland, mentioned a Czech attempt to induce the defection of an NCNA reporter

stationed in Switzerland but transferred for hospitalization to Prague. The Czechs were said to have sent him a woman, with whom he fell in love, and to have tried twice to convince him to stay in Czechoslovakia. Although he refused, he continued to correspond with the woman after his recovery and return to Switzerland. The embassy, discovering this correspondence, had him recalled to Peking in 1959. On the way he tried to jump in Prague but was physically restrained by his escorts. He was kept under guard in the Chinese mission in Prague for a month until secure arrangements were made for taking him on to Peking.

(7) Chang Ch'ien-yu (Bombay). Miao read the Chinese version of this trade officer's defection and quick redefection in 1959 in a lengthy *People's Daily* article. Its line was that Chang had gone to the American consulate merely to inquire about a visa for a relative and that once there he had been threatened by the guns of Marine guards and interrogated in an attempt to make an agent of him. Miao thought the visa story a bit fishy, and later he heard from colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Trade that Chang had actually tried to defect and later changed his mind; he was now undergoing labor reform in China, they said.

(8) Chou Hung-ching (Tokyo). Miao's only knowledge of this case (of the interpreter with a Chinese delegation in Tokyo who climbed the Soviet embassy wall, was turned over to the Japanese, asked first to go to Taiwan, then decided to remain in Japan, and finally chose to return to China) came from a long article in *People's Daily* in 1963.

(9) Hsu Tzu-ts'ai (The Hague). Miao had heard of the attempted defection and subsequent death of Hsu (delegate to a welding conference in The Hague in 1966) from BBC, VOA, Radio Peking, and Jordan radio broadcasts.

In all, Miao thus had some knowledge of about one-third of previous Chinese defection cases, and the bulk of his information came from Chinese sources. He says that while it would be bad form for ordinary members of his mission to take the initiative in raising the subject of defections or to ask questions about them, when the party organization in the embassy set up study sessions on this subject one's personal knowledge of past defectors could be mentioned during the discussions. In May 1966 party members of the Damascus embassy had read to them a speech that Ch'en I had made in February to an

ambassador-level conference in Peking touching on the subject of defection:

Some would-be defectors have been caught, but some, through defects in our security system, got away. The people who escaped were not always the sons of landlords or capitalists, and we should remember that correct class origin isn't everything; we have to examine more closely the actual political understanding of our personnel. We must put politics in command, increase political study, and master Chairman Mao's thought.

Ch'en also mentioned that not only the imperialists but some revisionist countries as well were actively trying to induce defections among Chinese personnel overseas.

In Miao's case there is thus the double irony that most of his knowledge about the procedures past defectors had used came from discussions designed to discourage defection and that the official remedy for ideological wavering, more study of Mao's thought, was a major factor in alienating him.

Miao says that party discussions of the defection problem emphasize the need for unshakable ideological purity in order to foil the activities of outside "special agents" using money, women, threats, and materialistic lures. Besides the general reading of Mao's works to combat bourgeois thinking, he classifies types of anti-defection effort under three headings:

Tight physical security controls on mission members,
Frequent emphasis in study sessions on the defects of capitalism and the social rottenness underlying its surface glitter, and
Use of the cases of Chou Hung-ching in Tokyo and Chang Ch'ien-yu in Bombay to dramatize the hostile reception and cynical exploitation any Chinese defector must expect in the West. Miao believes that this line of Chinese propaganda is effective in heightening the already existing fear of the unknown that any potential defector feels. In his words, "The party tells us that Chang was threatened by armed Marine guards in an effort to coerce him into being a spy and that Chou was asked to make propaganda, go to Taiwan, and parachute back into China. Chinese cadres do not want to have guns pointed at them, to be spies, to drop out of airplanes, or to go to Taiwan."

The death of Hsu Tzu-ts'ai in The Hague underlined for Miao the inherent dangers in trying to break away from communist control and the need for careful planning if his own project was to succeed. His

knowledge that Tung Chi-p'ing was "living the life of an ordinary man" in the United States was for him the most effective rebuttal to his fears about treatment by the Americans and a very important factor in making up his mind to defect. That this was the only successful Chinese defection to the United States he knew about and that he never heard of it through the Western press or radio broadcasts suggests our inadequacy in publicizing successful defections.

In American Hands

Some of Miao's reflections about his approach to the American embassy and his reception there include the following:

Several times, while passing the embassy by car, he had a chance to case it quickly. The presence of a Syrian policeman outside the chancery gate disturbed him a bit. Did the policeman challenge or register visitors to the embassy? He considered walking into the military annex where the gate was unguarded, but decided not to out of uncertainty whether anyone there would have the authority to deal with him.

He took the Syrian receptionist in the embassy lobby for a uniformed American; he would not have announced his own embassy affiliation had he realized the man was a Syrian. The removal of the policeman and this Syrian receptionist were the only steps he could recommend to improve the embassy's defector procedures.

He was surprised and pleased by his reception. He was taken in quickly, did not have to wait in a room full of curious visitors. The officers receiving him gave an impression of courtesy and competence. He was relieved when an asylum request form in Chinese was quickly produced, for he regarded this as reassuring evidence that we were prepared. With the allegations that defectors are impressed as spies in mind, he asked just one question before signing the request, "Will I be permitted to go to the United States and live as an ordinary citizen?" Assured that he could, he signed unhesitatingly; he had not anticipated that things would go so smoothly.

He was not alarmed when told that the United States was requesting the Syrian government's acquiescence in his removal. He was not sure that his idea of exfiltration was best. Getting him out safely was now the Americans' responsibility and he was confident they could manage it.

He listed three reasons why he had not brought any documents from his mission when defecting. First, he just wanted freedom, not

to hurt the communists. Second, the documents to which he had immediate access, though classified, all dealt with specific commercial transactions between Syria and the national trade corporations he represented, and he thought they would be of little interest to us. Third, he was not certain that the Americans would accept him, and his having taken documents would have compromised him further if he had had to go back.

The Quid pro Quo

The single most useful point brought out in Miao's debriefing about his reception is that he came "prepared to bargain"; he was therefore a potential turn-around for penetration of his mission. What is important here is not that we may have missed an opportunity in this case, but rather that Miao's attitude confirms our belief that traditional Chinese concepts of mutual obligations and mutual benefits are still very much alive and can be exploited to turn defectors around. This vulnerability was probably what made Miao reluctant to admit that he had considered what we might demand in return for exfiltrating him; you don't show a hand not called.

In planning his approach, Miao reasoned that even if the initial reaction to his request for asylum were no, he could discuss with the embassy officers the conditions under which they might say yes. With the limited means at his disposal, he had researched the legal aspects of defection fairly thoroughly. He consulted a book on international law in his mission's library and found that the granting of asylum meant that the granting government undertook to guarantee the petitioner's safety and livelihood. He thought these substantial benefits must entail some corresponding obligations, and these he could discuss with the embassy to reach a mutual understanding.

Since Chinese propaganda stressed that the Americans would try to turn would-be defectors into spies, he thought "Well, what about being a spy?" and turned for reference to a Chinese reprint in his mission library of the Soviet Information Bureau book on CIA, *Caught in the Act*.² Here he read that the CIA pressed refugees and defectors into working as translators, propagandists, radio announcers, refugee relief office employees, spies, and parachutists. This gave him to reflect that the U.S. government was a large and varied organization with many different jobs for people of different talents, and that reasonable men could be made to see that returning a man like him

² Described in *Studies* VI 1, p. 40 et passim seq.

to China was both impossible and useless. Implicitly, he was prepared to discuss anything short of that.

The idea, however, that he might have been asked to return to his mission quickly, cover his absence as best he could, and work out his passage to America with a year's service there he says simply never occurred to him: the Soviet book said that CIA always seizes its prey first and only afterwards forces the victims to its uses. What if this proposition had been put to him? "The first thing I'd have done was look at my watch; if I had time to get back, I would have considered it. But I would have argued that I had locked the door to the commercial office, and though I might have explained being locked out to my colleagues, there were the really serious problems of my clothes and my suitcase. How could I explain to my colleagues that I had taken, quite unusually, my suitcoat? And if I left the incriminating suitcase at the American embassy, how could I later explain its loss and the loss of my other two suits?" What other arguments would he have used? "I would have stressed the danger and difficulty of finding a later chance to break away, doubt about my ability to endure another year under communist control, and the limited value of any information I could furnish."

To Turn or Not to Turn

Every officer faced with the decision of whether to try to turn around a defecting Chinese official will be faced with arguments similar to these. Routine Chinese personnel security practices virtually guarantee that every Chinese walk-in will arrive at a U.S. installation agitated over his safety, full of single-minded concern for getting away to a safehaven, and with very little if any time left in which his absence will not be noted or can be plausibly explained. This situation, plus the probability that the walk-in would be aware of previous free acceptance of defectors, would probably necessitate taking a fairly hard line to convince him that he really had to earn his passage. To take such a line risks losing a walk-in who cannot or will not return to his installation on our behalf. And given the effective Chinese use of the Chou Hung-ching and Chang Ch'ien-yu cases in indoctrinating their personnel overseas, we can be sure that the story of an unsuccessful effort to turn a walk-in would be given rapid circulation in Chinese missions abroad (though it might not be believed by those who knew about the acceptance of such as Tung Chi-p'ing or Miao Chen-pai).

Nevertheless, the importance of effecting penetrations of Chinese missions and the example of Miao's sense of "mutual obligations" argue for adopting selectively a less passive attitude toward Chinese defectors than we have in the past. It is true that time will usually be too short to wrap up the turn-around process neatly. The 20 minutes one can usually hope for at best will simply not accommodate the laying of probably unfounded fears of provocation, the filling out of questionnaires and asylum requests, and a sympathetic listening to the walk-in's pitch, let alone protracted negotiations about returning to his mission and the patching together of improvised communications arrangements.

The essence of what needs to be done, however, is to identify quickly which walk-ins can safely return to their missions, turn these without alienating them, and furnish them with basic recontact instructions. There is no universally applicable formula which will guarantee against a walk-in's rejection of our proposition or the loss of him as a defector; we must be prepared to take these risks. The professional case officer, aware of the limited time he has to work in, will take these necessary steps:

Immediately after establishing the walk-in's identity and purpose, explore whether the way he made his break would permit his return to his mission. (This basic information must be obtained early, as it will affect the whole course of subsequent handling. If the circumstances rule out a return either unobserved or explainable, there is no point in pushing the walk-in to desperation by trying to turn him; if they do not, every effort should be bent to do so, even if this risks losing him as a defector.)

Assure him in unequivocal terms of the American government's ability and willingness to guarantee his future safety and livelihood. (This assurance will both relieve his major anxiety and increase his respect for the handling officer's stature, since only an official of authority could give such a guarantee.)

Without apologies or equivocation, make this offer contingent on the walk-in's returning to his mission for a fixed period of service for us. (No Chinese walk-in will be pleased by this turn of events, and it may be helpful to point out that arrangements for his safe exfiltration will take time in any event and to hint that previous Chinese defectors to us have similarly earned their passage. The basic point, however, is that the

Chinese walk-in probably expects a deal, not a gift; his cultural conditioning predisposes him to see the equity of a bargain advantageous to both sides, especially if it is presented sympathetically but authoritatively and with evidence of professional planning to minimize his personal risks therein.)

Have communications arrangements ready in advance, so that the officer can quickly and confidently (and in written Chinese text if necessary) set forth the mechanics of basic two-way communication between himself and his new agent.

Successful action under this proposal will require planning and thoughtful preparation. Prior consideration of effective arguments for the immediate return of the defector to his office is essential. Chinese-language texts of these arguments and instructions should be prepared for use with walk-ins whose knowledge of foreign languages is inadequate. A suitable accommodation address must be ready. A safehouse address should be ready for the rare walk-in whose duties will enable him to cover brief unescorted absences from his mission for personal meetings. Drop sites or brush contact plans to permit the passing of instructions will be needed in most other cases; and these will require some prior investigation of where Chinese mission members normally stroll on Sunday afternoons, get their hair cut, have their film developed, and so forth.

Guarantees to a walk-in that if he works for us he cannot be forcibly returned to China under escort should often help convince him to turn. These could be credibly given only in countries friendly to the United States. Host-country relations with the United States are carefully followed in Chinese missions, and it is unlikely that a walk-in could be hoodwinked by unjustified claims in this regard. Miao's own listing of countries in which he felt defection would be no problem was nearly 100-percent accurate; only an estimate of his that France would probably accept a Chinese defector for itself but not for the Americans was questionable.

Communications Prospects

Miao affirms that he would have had no trouble hiding secret writing supplies or a miniature camera among his personal effects. He kept his suitcases in a locked closet in his room, and staffers' personal effects were never searched or disturbed. Many members of the embassy owned 35-mm cameras of their own.

Mailing letters to an accommodation address would have posed no problem to any member of Miao's commercial office. Outgoing letters were thrown into a common wire basket, and any member of the office could at any time call the embassy driver and take the accumulated mail to the central post office. The driver stayed with the car on these occasions, so the commercial officer would have had no difficulty posting a letter of his own unobserved along with the office mail. Miao was uncertain whether other sections of the embassy used the same mailing system.

Obtaining privacy to do the secret writing would have posed a greater problem. Although Miao had a number of free hours every Saturday evening and Sunday, he could never have been sure of complete privacy in the room which he shared with another officer, and which other staffers frequently visited. He believed, however, that by pretending to be writing personal letters or taking notes while studying Mao's works he could have covered, albeit with interruptions, the composition of operational letters.

Getting messages in to Miao would have been a more difficult matter, but even here some prior surveillance of the pattern of embassy staffers' activities would probably have enabled us to lay on secure initial communication. For example, the staffers normally strolled on Sunday through the local market on the Street of Congress, providing an opportunity for using a dead-drop or brush contact. Although they sent for nearly all their personal needs to a communist store in Hong Kong, most of them would buy fruit, for example, from the Ismael Fruit Store near the embassy. They had their hair cut at a nearby barber shop, developed their films at one of two local photo stores, and patronized a Syrian doctor. Recruitment of a support agent in any of these establishments would have made it possible to pass written instructions, and the doctor would have provided cover for occasional meetings.

Miao was also one of the few people in his embassy who were allowed contacts with foreigners. (The others were the ambassador, the political counselor, the diplomatic secretaries, the NCNA representative, and the representatives of other Chinese national corporations.) Miao received Syrian and Lebanese merchants in his office and often talked to them alone at some length. He was also permitted to visit their offices, and though he was always accompanied by another mission staffer, this man would often stay in the car or have his own business to transact with others in the office, leaving Miao

free for private conversation with the merchant. Recruitment of one of these Arab merchants would therefore have been a means to pass both verbal and written instructions to him.

Defection Inducement

Asked for his suggestions on encouraging dissatisfied Chinese officials to defect, Miao could offer no dramatically new insights or proposals, but his views are worth summarizing.

While he does not completely exclude the possibility that a dissatisfied Chinese might betray some hint of his feelings, he believes this is most unlikely. The system puts a premium on keeping one's true thoughts to oneself and in maintaining at all times the mask of doctrinaire conformity. Thus even audio access to group discussions and private conversations in an embassy would not necessarily lead, in his view, to the identification of the staffer most likely to defect; he may appear orthodox and dedicated even to his colleagues. Miao takes little stock, therefore, in the spotting aspects of defection inducement.

Nor does he think we should spend much time in propaganda attempting to convince targets that communism is bad for China. Such a message is futile for the true believer and unneeded by the doubters, who know more about the shortcomings of Chinese communism than we can ever tell them.

He considers our two main obstacles in defection inducement to be the tight personnel controls on the overseas staff and the inner fears that any Chinese waverer will have about the unknowns he will face in defecting. He believes that the message we should try to get across is simply the assurance of a friendly reception and of a free, stable livelihood in the safehaven of the United States for those who make the decision to break away. Recognizing the importance of his own knowledge of Tung Chi-p'ing's defection in overcoming his fears, Miao has been quite willing to have his defection publicized and has skillfully emphasized in several press interviews his satisfaction with his life here "as a means of overcoming the anxieties of my former colleagues." Portions of a letter he drafted at our request addressed to his former colleagues in Damascus illustrate this theme:

You are surely anxious about my fate. When I made this decision, I also had a good many anxieties. I was afraid of the American Government utilizing me and threatening me. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get a stable life . . . But I can joyously tell you that the facts are completely contrary to my expectations. As soon as I reached the American Embassy,

I discovered that they are prepared at any time to help any person get freedom. . . . All the Americans I have met are extraordinarily polite, extraordinarily friendly. . . . They have sincerely and earnestly helped me acquire personal freedom and have helped me arrange my personal life and career. It has been a period of only a short three months, but I am in Washington going to Georgetown University where I have been formally studying English for more than a month. As for my private life, I already have my own apartment and everything is very convenient. The American government is in the midst of helping me find a job. All I have to do is learn English and then I can be settled down to work. . . . The American government has never demanded that I go where I don't want to go or do what I don't want to do. I am an ordinary person, and they are also ordinary people. Although our language is not the same, it is very easy to understand one another.

How can this message be got to Chinese officials abroad? Miao's preference is through the press and radio broadcasts. He points out that listening to foreign-language (even VOA) broadcasts is encouraged as a way of attaining linguistic competence, yet he never heard of a successful defection to the West in any foreign broadcast. His embassy subscribed to eight Arabic Syrian papers, to the English-language *Daily Star* and *Arabic World* and the French *Orient* and *Le Jour* from Lebanon, and to the Paris *Le Monde*, the airmail edition of the *New York Times*, and the *Hsing Tao Jih Pao* and *Ta Kung Pao* of Hong Kong. These papers were distributed to individual embassy officers who were responsible for briefing their colleagues every morning on the important foreign news of the day. Miao believes that even if a discreet officer decided against reporting an item on a Chinese defector at the daily briefing he would be likely to mention it to at least the immediate members of his office.

While Miao is sure that any prudent cadre would immediately report receipt of a defection letter, he sees some use for this more direct means of getting our message to personnel abroad. The commercial, administrative, and cultural offices of an embassy, as well as the NCNA office, receive a fair volume of correspondence from foreigners, most of it addressed simply to the offices but some to personnel by name. This mail is normally screened by the receptionist or security officer, but in the Damascus embassy there were only five officers, all in different sections, who could read Arabic, and defection letters in Arabic addressed either to them personally or to their sections would probably go right to them. Syrian government censorship of such letters could be avoided by placing them directly in the mail box at the main gate of the embassy, where the mission received most of its newspapers and some of its mail.

Miao also sees some limited role for foreign agents with access to embassy staffers. While he recognizes the great difficulty of establishing any sort of meaningful personal relationship in this way and the bona fides problem in using such an access agent to deliver a pitch, he agrees that there are useful lines which such an agent could innocently introduce to strengthen a potential defector's belief in his ability to cope with life in the West. Thus praise of his foreign language ability or of his business acumen might be helpful; Miao himself was subjected to this sort of flattery by several Arab traders, some of whom even jokingly offered him jobs in their firms.

Lastly, he even grants a place to the cold approach, if its limitations are kept in mind. He realizes that only fleeting private contacts are possible in places like cable offices, airports, and post offices, and that there are very real problems of shock and bona fides here. He recommends using a Caucasian, rather than an ethnic Chinese, for cold approaches, so that bona fides is suggested at least by face and mannerisms; all Chinese officials abroad, he says, are extremely wary of unidentified Chinese, fearing Taiwan special agents or provocateurs. He believes that we must expect an initial turn-down rate of nearly 100 percent in cold approaches, since our targets live in a milieu that places a premium on wariness and suspicion of outsiders. But the official who turns quickly away or curses the approacher may well be stimulated by the encounter and use the knowledge he gains from it to plan a defection in his own way at his own time. The cold approach can therefore be justified, in Miao's view, as a direct means to insure, when necessary, that a target has the "welcome" message he should preferably receive more indirectly.