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Intelligence Information Cable

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WARNING NOTICE
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

PAGE 1 OF 12 PAGES

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COUNTRY CHINA

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SUBJECT APPRAISAL OF SITUATION: A VIEW OF THE EXISTING
SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA

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FIELD NO.

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SOURCE

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SUMMARY: THE DISRUPTIONS IN CHINA'S PROVINCES ARE NOT YET AS WIDESPREAD
OR AS VIOLENT AS THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN,
BUT THEY ARE LIKELY TO INTENSIFY IF THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE IN PEKING

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Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3

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DRAGS ON. PEKING HAS ISSUED STOPGAP DIRECTIVES TO COPE WITH INDIVIDUAL PROVINCIAL PROBLEMS RANGING FROM ARMED CLASHES BY RIVAL FACTIONS TO NON-VIOLENT PROTESTS BY WORKERS. THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL. THE PRESENT DISORDER, WHICH SO FAR HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LIMITED, HAS DEEP ROOTS. THE DISORDER IS AN OUT-GROWTH OF PEKING'S OWN FACTIONALISM AND WILL PERSIST AS LONG AS THE PRESENT DIVISIONS REMAIN IN THE CAPITAL. IN ADDITION TO THE DRAMATIC AND OCCASIONALLY VIOLENT FACTIONAL CLASHES IN THE PROVINCES, THERE ARE EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT PROTESTS FROM ORDINARY WORKERS WHO ARE ANGRY WITH PEKING'S INABILITY TO FULFILL PROMISES TO RAISE LIVING STANDARDS. THESE PROTESTS, WHICH HAVE LED TO WORK SLOWDOWNS AND RAIL TIE-UPS, COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ECONOMY IF THEY EXPAND. THE MILITARY, WHICH HAS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN PROVINCIAL FACTIONALISM IN THE PAST, HAS LARGELY REMAINED ON THE SIDELINES, BECAUSE NEITHER THE CONTENDING PEKING FACTIONS NOR THE MILITARY COMMANDERS THEMSELVES SEEM ANXIOUS TO SEE THE ARMY DRAWN AGAIN INTO THE FRACAS. END SUMMARY.

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WARNING NOTICE
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

PAGE 3 OF 12 PAGES

SECRET

(classification)

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1. TENSIONS HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY IN CHINA'S PROVINCES SINCE THE DEATH OF PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI AND PURGE OF VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-P'ING, BUT THE VIOLENT INCIDENTS, WHICH SEEM TO BE THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE, HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY ISOLATED AND HAVE GENERALLY BEEN CONTROLLED. WHILE MUCH OF THE TENSION IS DUE TO THE POWER STRUGGLE IN PEKING, THERE ARE OTHER, MORE COMPLEX FACTORS INVOLVED THAT ARE ONLY PARTIALLY RELATED TO THE SUCCESSION QUESTION. AT THE ROOT, THE PRESENT DISTURBANCES IN THE PROVINCES ARE AN OUTGROWTH OF TEN YEARS OF INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP AND BROKEN PROMISES BY PEKING.

2. THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PROTESTS TAKING PLACE IN THE PROVINCES, AND THESE PROTESTS INVOLVE TWO DIFFERENT SETS OF PEOPLE. ONE IS ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL AND PARTISAN; IT IS MANIFESTED IN ARMED CLASHES AND WALLPOSTER ATTACKS. PHYSICAL CLASHES BETWEEN RIVAL FACTIONS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN SEVEN OF CHINA'S 29 PROVINCES: CHEKIANG, FUKIEN, HONAN, HOPEH, HUPEH, Kiangsi, AND YUNNAN. MOST OF THESE ARE TRADITIONALLY TROUBLED PROVINCES PRONE TO FACTIONALISM IN THE BEST OF TIMES. FOR THE MOST PART, THE ARMED CLASHES THAT HAVE OCCURRED SO FAR HAVE BEEN RATHER SMALL AFFAIRS AND RELATIVELY ISOLATED INCIDENTS,

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(classification)

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PAGE 4 OF 2 PAGES

FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

SECRET

(classification)

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THOUGH SOME DEATHS HAVE OCCURRED, CHEKIANG AND FUKIEN PROVINCES ARE AN EXCEPTION. THE SITUATIONS THERE HAVE DETERIORATED TO THE POINT THAT MANY GOVERNMENT AND PARTY ORGANS ARE NOT FUNCTIONING, PARTLY BECAUSE MANY CADRES, SICK OF THE CONSTANT INFIGHTING, HAVE THROWN UP THEIR HANDS AND WALKED OFF THE JOB.

POSTERS HAVE BEEN FAR MORE COMMON THAN ARMED REBELLION. APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF CHINA'S TOP PROVINCIAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED IN THEM. MOST OF THESE ATTACKS SEEM POORLY ORGANIZED AND SEEM TO POSE NO THREAT TO THE TARGET. PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES, HOWEVER, DO SEEM TO BE IN SERIOUS DANGER. THE LEADERS OF CHEKIANG AND KIANGSI MAY BE PURGED-- HUAPHER HAS NOT APPEARED IN PUBLIC FOR SIX MONTHS AND BOTH HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED--WHILE THOSE IN FUKIEN AND HUPEH SEEM TO HAVE KEPT THEIR POSTS ONLY TO LOSE MUCH OF THEIR INFLUENCE. AS A WHOLE, THE MODERATE FACTION IN PEKING SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO PROTECT ITS SENIOR-LEVEL ALLIES IN THE PRO-

PROVINCIAL SITUATIONS ARE LIKELY IF THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE PRESENT THE DISARRAY IN THE PROVINCES DOES

PAGE 5 OF 13 PAGES

SECRET

(classification)

(dissem controls)

FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

NOT MATCH THAT OF THE CRITICIZE LIN AND CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN, WHEN SERIOUS DISORDERS WERE REPORTED IN OVER HALF OF CHINA'S PROVINCES. THE CRITICIZE LIN AND CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN DID NOT BEGIN TO APPROACH THE VIOLENCE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

5. THE FACTIONS IN THE PROVINCES CONTINUE TO EXIST BECAUSE THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS TOO DIVIDED TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEM, AND INDEED, HAS EVEN ENCOURAGED THEIR ACTIVITIES, ALBEIT INADVERTENTLY AT TIMES. IN MOST CASES, THE FACTIONS OPERATING IN THE PROVINCES TODAY ARE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THOSE SPAWNED BY THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. THESE GROUPS EXPLOIT EVERY OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY THE DIVISIONS IN PEKING TO PURSUE THEIR OWN PRIVATE VENDETTAS, SOME OF WHICH ARE NOW TEN YEARS OLD. THE GROUPS ARE NOT SO MUCH LOYAL TO ONE OF THE FACTIONS IN PEKING, THOUGH MOST HAVE CONTACTS AT THE CENTER, AS THEY ARE TO LOCAL LEADERS, WHICH MAKES IT VERY HARD FOR ANYONE IN PEKING TO CONTROL THEM. PEKING HAS COMPOUNDED THE PROBLEM BY ISSUING VAGUE AND CONTRADICTIONARY DIRECTIVES BECAUSE OF ITS OWN INABILITY TO BE DECISIVE. CONTENDING PROVINCIAL FACTIONS USE THE EXISTING INDECISIVENESS TO ATTACK EACH OTHER. AT OTHER TIMES, PEKING HAS INTENTIONALLY AGGRAVATED THE

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SITUATION. LEFTISTS SUCH AS POLITBURO MEMBERS C H I A N G CHIING AND Y A O WEN-YUAN HAVE DISPATCHED AGENTS TO THE PROVINCES IN HOPES OF BRINGING DOWN MODERATE LEADERS. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS Y E H FEI, WHO WAS ONCE BOSS OF FUKIEN, IS REPORTEDLY ASSISTING THE INCUMBENT MODERATE FIRST SECRETARY AGAINST YEH'S OLD ENEMIES.

6. THE SECOND TYPE OF PROTEST IS LESS POLITICAL, AT LEAST IN THE PARTISAN SENSE; IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE ORDINARY MAN'S FRUSTRATION WITH THE SYSTEM. THESE PROTESTS HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF WORK SLOWDOWNS, HIGH ABSENTEEISM, AND INCREASING CRIME. WORKER DISSATISFACTION HAS BEEN REPORTED IN TWELVE PROVINCES, BUT IT UNDOUBTEDLY IS A NATIONWIDE PHENOMENON. PRODUCTION HAS BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED IN FACTORIES IN AT LEAST SIX PROVINCES (CHEKIANG, FUKIEN, HUPEH, KIANGSI, KIANGSU, AND KWEICHOW) AND, ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, POWER SHORTAGES HAVE CREATED PRODUCTION PROBLEMS IN PEKING. RAIL TIE-UPS SEEM PARTICULARLY WIDESPREAD, AND ONE SOURCE REFERRED TO A TWO-MONTH BACKLOG. THE RAIL DISRUPTIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY WORK SLOWDOWNS, HAVE MADE IT HARD

SECRET

(classification)

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Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

PAGE 7 OF 12 PAGES

FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

• SECRET

(classification)

(dissem controls)

FOR SOME PLANTS TO GET NECESSARY RAW MATERIALS AND HAVE EXACERBATED THE FOOD SHORTAGES IN SOME PROVINCES. AS A RESULT, BLACK MARKET ACTIVITY SEEMS TO BE ON THE RISE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE THE IMPACT OF THESE LOCAL DISRUPTIONS ON THE OVERALL ECONOMY, BUT, AS YET, THEY DO NOT SEEM TO BE AS EXTENSIVE OR SEVERE AS THOSE EXPERIENCED IN 1974 WHEN THE CRITICIZE LIN AND CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN LED TO A DROP IN THE GROWTH RATE.

7. A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC PROBLEMS ARE FEEDING WORKER DISCONTENT, BUT AT THE HEART OF THE DISCONTENT IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT PEKING HAS ONCE AGAIN GONE BACK ON PROMISES TO RAISE WAGES AND IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS. AS LATE AS EARLY FEBRUARY, WORKERS WERE LED TO BELIEVE THAT A GENERAL WAGE INCREASE WAS COMING, BUT THE PURGE OF TENG, WHO CHAMPIONED THE INCREASE, NOT ONLY KILLED ANY PROSPECTS FOR HIGHER WAGES, BUT ALSO LED TO A REDUCTION IN WORK PERFORMANCE BONUSES AND SOME TIGHTENING OF CONTROLS ON PRIVATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY-- IMPORTANT SOURCES OF SUPPLEMENTARY INCOME FOR MANY. WORKERS REACTED AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST BY SLOWING DOWN OR STOPPING

Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3

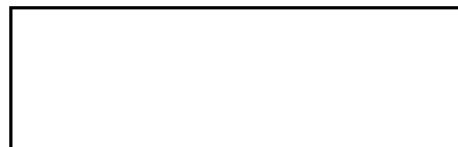
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(classification)

(dissem controls)

Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3

WARNING NOTICE
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED



PAGE 8 OF 12 PAGES

FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

SECRET

(classification)

(dissem controls)

WORK ALTOGETHER, C H O U EN-LAI'S WILL, A FABRICATION APPARENTLY CIRCULATED BY PRO-TENG FORCES, HAS COMPLICATED MATTERS FURTHER, BESIDES GIVING CHOU'S BLESSING TO TENG, MOST VERSIONS OF THE WILL CALL FOR AN ALL-OUT EFFORT TO RAISE LIVING STANDARDS. IT HAS BEEN WIDELY DISTRIBUTED, OFTEN IN HAND-COPIED VERSIONS, AND APPARENTLY HAS GAINED WIDE POPULAR ACCEPTANCE. PEKING HAS ATTEMPTED TO GATHER UP ALL THE COPIES AND CONVINCE THE MASSES IT IS A FAKE, BUT THE DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, AND MANY PROBABLY FEEL MORE BITTER THAN BEFORE.

8. PEKING HAS TAKEN SOME STEPS TO COPE WITH THE DIS-ARRAY IN THE PROVINCES. VERY EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TENG, THE PARTY ISSUED DIRECTIVES PROHIBITING "FIGHTING TEAMS" AND "EXPERIENCE EXCHANGES," TWO PRACTICES THAT SPREAD THE VIOLENCE DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. THESE INJUNCTIONS, WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY CONTAINED IN CENTRAL DOCUMENT NUMBER TWO OF 1976, WERE REPEATED IN CENTRAL DOCUMENTS SIX, SEVEN, AND TWELVE, SUGGESTING THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN RIGOROUSLY FOLLOWED. OTHER DIRECTIVES, MOST NOTABLY SEVEN, EIGHT,

SECRET

(classification)

(dissem controls)

Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3



PAGE 9 OF 12 PAGES

SECRET

(classification)

(dissem. controls)

FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

AND ELEVEN, DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF SPECIFIC PROVINCES, CHEKIANG, KIANGSU, AND HOPEH, RESPECTIVELY. ON TWO OCCASIONS, ONCE IN YUNNAN AND ONCE IN KIANGSU, TROOPS WERE USED BRIEFLY WHEN LOCAL SITUATIONS BECAME INTOLERABLE. IN OTHER LESS SEVERE CASES, CENTRAL PARTY WORK TEAMS HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO HANDLE PROBLEMS. ONE HAS BEEN IN HONAN SINCE THE SPRING TRYING TO RESOLVE THE RAIL DISPUTE THERE. THE MOST RECENT CENTRAL DOCUMENT, NUMBER SIXTEEN OF 1976, ORDERS WORKERS BACK ON THE JOB. MOST PROVINCIAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO PUBLICIZE THE DOCUMENT. KWANGTUNG HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE.

9. THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL. THE PROVINCES SEEMED TO BE A LITTLE QUIETER IN JUNE, BUT THE PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO FESTER JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. AN INTENSIFICATION OF THE SUCCESSION INFIGHTING IN PEKING IS LIKELY TO TRIGGER NEW INCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCES. INDEED, AS LONG AS PEKING IS ONLY ABLE TO ISSUE VAGUE DIRECTIVES BECAUSE OF ITS OWN DIVISIONS AND AS LONG AS INDIVIDUAL POLITBUREAU MEMBERS SECRETLY UNDERWRITE LOCAL FACTIONS, RIVALS IN

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FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USE OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

THE PROVINCES WILL SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THEIR ENEMIES. PEKING'S EFFORTS TO CURB ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS WILL NEVER BE WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL UNTIL PEKING STOPS TREATING THE SYMPTOMS--WALKOUTS, ABSENTEEISM, SLOWDOWNS, ETC.-- AND TACKLES THE CAUSES, DEEP-SEATED WORKER DISSATISFACTION WITH PRESENT WAGE LEVELS AND THE PROSPECT OF EVEN MORE SPARTAN LIVING CONDITIONS IF THE RADICALS SUCCEED IN COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF MATERIAL BENEFITS,

10. THE MILITARY REMAINS THE ULTIMATE SANCTION SHOULD THE SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES FINALLY REQUIRE IT, BUT IT IS A SANCTION BOTH FACTIONS IN PEKING WOULD HESITATE TO EMPLOY EXCEPT UNDER THE MOST DRASTIC CIRCUMSTANCES. THE LAST TIME THE ARMY WAS USED ON A NATIONWIDE SCALE TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN THE PROVINCES IT TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO GET THE COMMANDERS TO RETURN TO THEIR BARRACKS. NEITHER FACTION WANTS TO REPEAT THAT EXPERIENCE. IN THE TWO INSTANCES IN THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN WHERE THE ARMY HAS BEEN USED, IT HAS BEEN TO ASSIST, NOT REPLACE, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AND ONLY FOR SHORT PERIODS. IN FACT, THE ARMY'S UTILITY TO PEKING IN COMBATTING FACTIONALISM IS LIMITED IN SOME CASES BECAUSE THE ARMY IS ALSO FACTIONALIZED. DIFFERENT UNITS ARE

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APPARENTLY ARMING DIFFERENT FACTIONS IN CHEKIANG. DURING TENG'S TENURE, SEVERAL MILITARY COMMANDERS AND SOME UNITS WERE TRANSFERRED TO REDUCE IN GENERAL THE MILITARY'S SAY IN PROVINCIAL POLITICS AND TO END FACTIONAL ACTIVITY IN PARTICULAR. FOR THEIR OWN PART, ACCORDING TO ONE SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIAL IN A POSITION TO KNOW, MOST SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS WOULD PREFER TO STAY OUT OF THE CURRENT STRUGGLE, BUT THEY WILL NOT TOLERATE WIDESPREAD PURGE NOR CIVIL DISORDER. SO FAR THE CHEKIANG EXAMPLE SEEMS TO BE THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE RULE.

11. AS MAO'S HEALTH DECLINES, THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE IN PEKING WILL PROBABLY INTENSIFY. IF SO, PROVINCIAL MALAISE IS LIKELY TO INCREASE AND INTENSIFY. THE LONGER THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLE DRAGS ON, THE UGLIER THE SITUATION WILL BECOME, AND IT COULD CONCEIVABLY REACH THE PROPORTIONS OF THE CRITICIZE LIN AND CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN OF 1973-74. THE PROBLEMS IN THE PROVINCES WILL CERTAINLY COMPLICATE SUCCESSION POLITICS. WHOEVER EMERGES WITH A MANDATE TO RULE WILL HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS QUICKLY WITH THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS UNLEASHED BY THE

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SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

25X1A

PAGE 12 OF 12 PAGES

SECRET FURTHER DISSEMINATION AND USES OF THIS INFORMATION SUBJECT
TO CONTROLS STATED AT BEGINNING AND END OF REPORT.

(classification)

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SUCCESSION STRUGGLE, AS WELL AS WITH THE REVITALIZATION OF THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES IN THOSE PROVINCES WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN BADLY DAMAGED, IT TOOK CHOU, TENG, AND THE OTHER MODERATES SEVEN MONTHS TO GET THE PROVINCES BACK ON THEIR FEET AFTER THE CRITICIZE LIN AND CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN, AND IT COULD TAKE THAT LONG AGAIN. EVEN THEN, THE PROBLEMS THAT BRED THE DISORDER WILL REMAIN AND FESTER UNTIL THE LEADERSHIP IN PEKING IS SUFFICIENTLY UNIFIED TO ADDRESS THE CAUSES AS WELL AS THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE.

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• SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/06/18 : CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130027-3

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OUTGOING MESSAGE

1		4		7	
2		5		8	
3		6		9	

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AC/EA 8

DDO 2

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