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**DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE**

Intelligence Report

LEADERS OF COMMUNIST CHINA

II. LIN Piao

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WARNING

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PREFACE

This report is the second in a series of in-depth biographic studies of Communist China's top leaders [redacted]

[redacted] The series will fill a gap in our biographical coverage of China's senior leadership and is launched in anticipation of future leadership changes.

[redacted]

The additional length of these reports over our conventional product is primarily attributable to the inclusion of more background information and speculative comment than is our usual custom. Our aim is not to take firm positions on matters of great intelligence interest but to present the available facts--as well as some of the differing views of China specialists on these leaders.

This report was prepared by the Central Reference Service and was coordinated within CIA as appropriate.

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BIOGRAPHIC BRIEF

The enigmatic Lin Piao, Mao's favorite general and the youngest of the ex-marshals in the fading old guard of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), has been Mao's chosen heir apparent for 5 years. He was confirmed by the Ninth CCP Congress in April 1969 as Mao's successor, replacing Liu Shao-ch'i.

Born in a revolutionary-minded environment, Lin matured rapidly as a field general in the 1930's until dealt the severe handicap of recurring ill health following a serious wound in 1938. He mastered his condition sufficiently to reconfirm his towering reputation as a field captain in the military campaigns that preceded the 1949 takeover.

In partial retirement during much of the 1950's, Lin was yet a powerful regional figure and rose quietly in national influence. He emerged at the end of the decade as Mao's counterweight to party politicians, and he gave his full support to Mao's recent struggle for control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), using the PLA as the principal tool in the Cultural Revolution years of 1965-69.

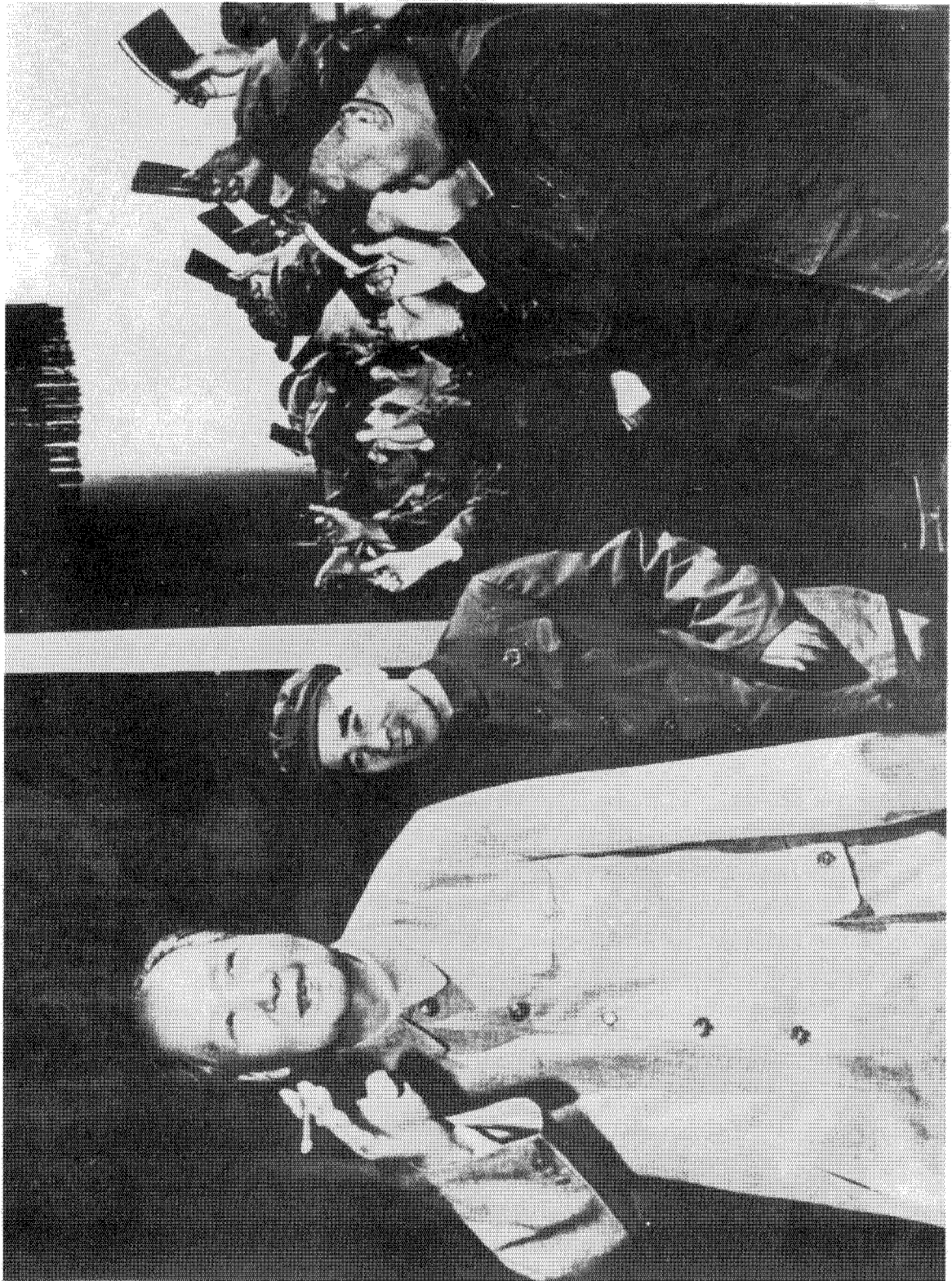
[redacted] His wife, Yeh Ch'un, sits on the Politburo and helps manage his work load.

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MAO AND LIN, OCTOBER 1970

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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

LIN Piao
(2651/1753)

Vice Chairman, Chinese Communist Party; Vice Chairman, Politburo; Principal Vice Chairman, Military Affairs Commission; Minister of National Defense



Lin Piao, Mao Tse-tung's favorite general, the commander of China's military forces, and Mao's designated political heir, has a strong record but uncertain prospects. After 1959, when Mao ended former Defense Minister P'eng Te-huai's career, Lin made the People's Liberation Army (PLA) a model for nationwide emulation. His ideological preparation of the armed forces, in retrospect, appears to have been a deliberate effort instigated by Mao to exploit a rejuvenated PLA under Lin as the major instrument for combating those domestic foes that Mao believed were opposing him.

Lin's status derives primarily from Mao's favor, but it is supported by an apparently effective working relationship with Premier Chou En-lai and by Lin's important political positions.

Despite Lin's rapid rise to prominence since 1959, he remains one of the least known of China's leaders and is difficult to assess. In his posture Lin must take account of Mao's innate jealousy, and it is understandable that Lin's present image is a pallid one. It remains to be seen whether he will be capable of stepping out in his own right after Mao's demise. He seems devoid of charisma, but the frail and bumbling picture sometimes reported is an over-simplified caricature. He has worked for over 30 years under partial physical disability, and he clearly combines great inner strength with his recognized talent.

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Lin is an able military tactician, strategist, politician and administrator. He controls the military establishment through the Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Lin has systematically placed military men personally loyal to him in many key central and regional party and government posts. During the Cultural Revolution, however, his treatment of the PLA was, by Western standards of intraorganizational loyalty, reprehensible, and the resentments kindled then could impede his succession.

Despite Mao's accolade, and despite his own organizational skill, Lin's prospects for a smooth succession to Mao are uncertain. Besides having poor health, he does not take a very positive role in running the country. His public association with some of Mao's extreme policies may also have cost Lin appreciable military and civilian support since 1960, and especially since 1966.

Positions

Lin's titular rise in China's central government began in 1954, when he became a Vice Premier of the State Council. In 1955 he attained membership on the Politburo. He has been a Vice Chairman of the CCP Central Committee (CCP-CC) since May 1958, when he was elevated to the inner circle by appointment to the Politburo Standing Committee. In September 1959 he became Minister of National Defense and senior vice chairman of the CCP Military Commission. With his rise to his present stature as Mao's heir in 1966, he also became the sole Vice Chairman of the CCP-CC (the other four vice-chairmanships were eliminated) and the senior Vice Premier of the State Council. In 1969 Lin was reelected Vice Chairman of both the CCP-CC and the Politburo at the Ninth Congress of the CCP and was also reelected to the Politburo Standing Committee.

With Mao and Chou En-lai, Lin dominates the Politburo through the Standing Committee. He and Mao dominate military affairs through the Military

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Commission and its "administrative unit." The Commission, a panel, and the unit, a secretariat, are bodies through which Lin can control and direct military matters to any needed extent.

Early Life

Lin Piao (born Lin Yu-jung, 2651/3022/1369) was born on 5 December 1907 in Liuchiawan, Huang-kang Hsien, Hupeh Province. He was the second of four sons. Possibly two of his brothers were involved in early revolutionary activity. Three were cadres after 1938; one survives and now works in a tuberculosis hospital in Tientsin. His father was a petty landowner, the proprietor of a small felt factory, which failed, and in later years a purser on a river steamer.

Lin was nurtured under strong revolutionary influences in his family. Maturing in stirring times and in a revolutionary hotbed, he was introduced to Communism by a cousin. This man, Lin Yu-nan, was 20 years Lin's senior and a founder of the "Hupeh Communist Group." Lin Yu-nan was in the USSR in 1917, and in 1920 he organized a Communist Party group in Lin Piao's natal village.

After primary schooling, Lin studied at his cousin's Chunhsin School at Patouwan from 1919 to 1921. For the next 4 years he attended the Kung-chin Middle School in Wuchang (now part of Wuhan). Both schools were centers of Communist indoctrination.

At some time during his student days Lin joined the Kuomintang. At the age of 17, he was much influenced by the May 30th Movement of 1925, and he went to Shanghai as a delegate to a congress of the communistic China National Students' Federation. There he joined Socialist Youth and later its successor, the Communist Youth League. In 1925 he went to Canton to enter the Whampoa Military Academy. At Whampoa he came under the

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influence of Chou En-lai, the school's real political director in the usual absence of the Kuomintang (KMT) figure to whom Chou was nominally deputy. In 1926, when KMT members had to resign if they had Communist affiliations, Lin left the KMT and overtly joined the CCP.

Lin participated in the Northern Expedition of 1926 as a probationary platoon and company commander. He was involved in the 1 August 1927 mutiny against the Nationalists in Nanchang, Kiangsi Province, when the PLA was "born" and endured its first defeat. Under Chu Te, his principal patron and still a Politburo member, Lin quickly became a battalion commander in the 4th Red Army, which was organized after Chu and Mao joined forces in April 1928.

Lin succeeded Chu Te in command of the 4th Red Army in 1930 and in command of the 1st Red Army Group in 1932. He had gained the confidence of Mao and Chu while still junior to other top commanders, and his reputation as an able tactical commander began to grow.

As a field general Lin emerged from the shadow of Chu Te after the Long March of 1934-35, when he and Chou En-lai, under Mao and P'eng Te-huai, Mao's senior general on that trip, were in the vanguard group. At Yen-an Lin was given command of the 115th Division of the Eighth Route Army in the reorganized Chinese Communist Armed Forces.

After June 1936 Lin headed the Eighth Route Army's cadre school, usually known until 1945 as the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political University (Kangta).

Lin is given possibly unmerited credit for a successful ambush of part of the Japanese 5th Division in September 1937 at Pinghsingkuan, the principal point of entry to Shansi from Hopeh. At least two visitors to Yen-an gained the impression that credit for the battlefield victory

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really belonged to Nieh Jung-chen, Lin's deputy commander.

Many of the military men who were later named to key PLA posts served under Lin during the now semilegendary, "heroic" Yen-an days extending from 1935 to 1945.

The Wartime Years

In early 1938 Lin received an incapacitating wound that forced him to depart for the USSR for treatment. He therefore missed the "Hundred Regiments" campaign of 1940.

This climactic offensive involved over 400,000 men in 115 regiments and lasted 108 days. Lin's deputy, Nieh Jung-chen, supposedly furnished 47 regiments from the area under his command, but certain units formerly under Lin's direct command did not participate.



ADDRESSING TRAINEES AT YENAN
C. 1937

Returning to Yen-an from the USSR in 1941 or 1942, Lin assisted Mao in the 1942 Rectification Campaign directed against Mao's inner party opposition. Late in the year he was assigned to the light but essential duty of liaison service with the Chinese Nationalists in Chungking in association with Chou En-lai. One of their tasks was to negotiate preliminary proposals for military collaboration with the Chinese Nationalists. Lin returned to Yen-an after July 1943 to resume the Kangta command and help direct the training of troops. After V-J Day the Communists moved into Manchuria in advance of the Nationalists. Lin assumed overall command of the Northeast Military District and of the Northeast Democratic United Army in October 1945. Lin's growing forces completed the occupation of Manchuria and the elimination of Nationalist resistance by the end of 1948.

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Lin then led his forces, reorganized in late 1948 into the PLA 4th Field Army, in the victorious 1949 sweep to China's southern frontiers. During this period Lin served as commander of the Central China Military District and as first secretary of the Central China Bureau of the CCP, while remaining commander of the 4th Field Army.

The 1950's

Troops drawn mostly from the 4th Field Army, Lin's command, spearheaded the Chinese entry into the Korean War late in 1950. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] claimed that it was Lin who directed PLA operations in Korea from 26 November 1950 until January or February 1951, but the regime itself has never commented on Lin's role, if any, in the Korean conflict, and he was probably not present.

When the national regime was established in 1949, Lin immediately became a member of two interim organs--the Central People's Government Council and the People's Revolutionary Military Council; he became a vice chairman of the latter body in 1951.

In October 1949 Lin was appointed chairman of the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee; he remained chairman of the Central-South Administrative Committee, which succeeded it in 1953. He was also commander of the Central-South Military District from 1949 to 1954 and first secretary of the Central-South Bureau of the CCP from July 1950 to 1954. He remained commander of the 4th Field Army until its reorganization in 1954.

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Lin replaced P'eng Te-huai as Minister of Defense in September 1959. Since then Lin has attempted to articulate Mao's desires--at the price of many fine military managers lost through purge.

The 1960's

After Soviet military advisers left in mid-1960, the CCP-CC Military Affairs Committee, at an enlarged meeting in September-October, endorsed Lin Piao's platform of the "Four Firsts"--abstract theses that identify the four primary working contexts in which, under the influence of Mao's thought, politicization should mature. In terms of increasing specificity, these phases of activity are said to shift from the general human situation to political activity, next to ideological awareness, and finally to the application of the "living idea," i.e., the ability to put Mao's thought to work in solving day-to-day problems.

Also emphasized and subsequently linked with the methods of Lin Piao was the somewhat older "Five-Good Soldier" movement to cultivate individuals who would be "both Red and expert" and who would be above the sort of "professionalism" that chooses to be expert before being "Red" and neglects political activity.

At the beginning of 1961 the Military Commission also promulgated Lin Piao's criteria of "Four Goods" for judging the political and military effectiveness of basic-level units. These formulas have been relentlessly developed and inflated as touchstones of Lin Piao's reinvigoration of the PLA, beginning with a "rectification campaign" in 1960-61.

Despite Lin's having increased PLA combat effectiveness after 1960, the notion that an army exists to fight has, overall, lost ground in favor of the idea that the PLA is the instrument of ongoing revolution and political reconstruction. Lin's position on soldierly preparedness, however, has not necessarily been nonprofessional. Lin has

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always stressed improved training in basic skills for individuals and for small units, and under him the Military Commission ordered the reduction of large-scale military exercises. Lin's philosophy emphasizes the creation of a well-conditioned soldier, flexible in both the political and technical dimensions, and adaptable to new demands. For such a soldier, presumably, retraining is continual and partially self-directed.

The politicization process in the PLA began to take on important domestic political overtones in 1962 when Mao set out to recapture the CCP, intending to use the PLA as the instrument. During the year and a half that followed, the regime was more preoccupied by foreign affairs and by the efforts of Liu Shao-ch'i's old CCP machine to regain the initiative than with matters in which Lin Piao was overtly involved. Lin abolished ranks in the PLA in 1965. This reduced the authority vested in professional officers by rank apart from assignment and greatly simplified politically motivated personnel changes. The propaganda buildup of the PLA as a political model gained great strength in that year.

The Cultural Revolution

"On People's War," a lengthy article ascribed to Lin and published in September 1965 at the outset of the Cultural Revolution, reiterated many Maoist positions and placed them in long-term context. Lin seemingly challenged the nuclear centers of the non-Communist world with envelopment through spreading revolution, but in failing to commit China to anything beyond encouragement, he reinforced Mao's basically inward-looking perspective on China's place in the world political community.

In step with Mao when the Cultural Revolution was launched in early November 1965, Lin issued a directive to the PLA on 15 November on its work for 1966. Lin called for a political mobilization of the PLA, emphasizing the use of Mao's thought, the "Four Firsts," hard political work at the

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company level, and energetic promotion and training programs. This was followed in January 1966 by a PLA political work conference to implement the directive. In late March Lin gave his support to a critical report by Chiang Ch'ing on the PLA political condition and put himself behind both an impending PLA purge and the use of the PLA to support the Cultural Revolution in China. In early August 1966, just before a series of Red Guard rallies began, Lin launched the internal purge of the PLA but largely spared the lower-level line organizations.



ADDRESSING A CULTURAL REVOLUTION RALLY, AUGUST 1966. L TO R: KIANG SHENG, CHIANG CH'ING, CHOU EN-LAI, LIN PIAO AND MAO TSE-TUNG.

Lin's most significant single contribution to the Cultural Revolution in 1966 was to lead, on Mao's behalf, in eliminating P'eng Chen, the leader of the Cultural Revolution's first phase.

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Spearheading Mao's plan after P'eng was purged, Lin then supported Mao's second Cultural Revolution Group, a new and radicalized body, which enlarged the campaign and undertook an all-out attack on the CCP. When the Eighth CCP-CC Plenum met in August 1966 Lin emerged as the leading radical and heir apparent.

For Lin, the months between August 1966 and April 1969 encompassed both intense activity and at least one reported bout of illness, in early 1967. He spoke at four of the eight great rallies (the other four had no speeches), held between 18 August and 26 November 1967, that launched the Red Guards on their destruction of the old CCP.

Lin enforced the assignments laid on the PLA in the first half of 1967. These tasks included implementation of a 23 January order to end spreading chaos caused by confrontations involving PLA forces on both sides; strong participation in the three-way alliance system for establishing revolutionary committees in the provinces; and application of the system of military control committees at all trouble points in the economy and government under PLA officers. An order of early April to the PLA to accept responsibility for keeping order without using force was ineffectual.

In this difficult period, the stress on "politics in command," a purge of numerous senior officers in December 1966 and January 1967, and the later necessity of giving PLA support to radical forces had the effect of deepening the gap between politically minded officers and those more professional officers concerned with military problems.

The Wuhan Incident of 20 July 1967, a regional commander's reaction against the Peking radicals, was a turning point that sobered the regime. Lin had no choice but to replace the commander. Lin temporarily joined the inflamed radicals in taking a stand against imputed sedition in the PLA. A violent but short-lived campaign, initiated to "drag out the rascals" throughout the PLA, became a divisive threat to PLA integrity, generating deep reactions.

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In August, as Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's wife, was restrained from further support of the extreme leftists, Lin shifted his position to support of the PLA and authorized PLA suppression of local turmoil. On 9 August, in his most significant speech of the year, Lin reemphasized the necessity for the disruptions that had occurred but supported imposition of orderly and firm PLA control over mass organizations through better guidance from the center.

In the ensuing half year, Lin's political posture appeared to change as the regional PLA commanders came to greater prominence at the expense of weakening radicalism at the center. For instance, Huang Yung-sheng, commander of the Canton Military Region, replaced Acting Chief of Staff Yang Ch'eng-wu when the latter was purged in March 1968. How Lin figured politically in Yang's removal is not known. Yang's sudden political demise and seeming abandonment by Lin, to whom he had been considered fully loyal, is still unexplained.

As Lin's first decade as chief of the PLA drew to a close in 1969, it was apparent that the PLA had changed drastically. Lin had converted it from the conventionalized force it had become during the 1950's into a politically alert, lower-keyed professional body, without abandoning the goal of modernization. In making it a revolutionary army again, he also had purged it twice. As Mao's ranking party soldier he had successfully supported the elimination of former Chief of State Liu Shao-ch'i, and he had helped dismantle the civil CCP apparatus and replace it with a militant, Maoistic regime reminiscent of the armies of "liberation" of the pre-1949 period.

In April 1969 Lin's stature as Mao's new successor was confirmed, after 32 months' advance notice, by being written into the new CCP Constitution promulgated at the Ninth Congress. He is also named three times in the 1970 draft of a proposed new State Constitution for the People's Republic of China. Article 2 of this document calls him Mao's

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"close comrade-in-arms and successor" and "the deputy commander of all the armies of the whole country."

The Ninth Party Congress also confirmed Lin's stature on the five-man Politburo Standing Committee that had run the Cultural Revolution. The Military Commission, as reconstructed in 1967, apparently continued without change. Its makeup is only partly apparent; the principal known parts of the commission apparatus appear to be under Lin's control.

Recent Activity

Not enough is known about Lin's recent activity to permit useful speculation on what it means in political terms, but his activity patterns are partially known from official Chinese sources.

Necessary public activities for Lin Piao include the annual rallies in Peking on 1 May and 1 October and any very large special rallies. He attends major caucuses, such as Central Committee plenums (e.g., October 1968, May 1969 and August 1970) and enlarged Politburo meetings (e.g., May 1969). His speeches at such gatherings may or may not be published. Occasional unconfirmed reports indicate that he travels. He may have made personal inspections in southwestern China in December 1968 and in the Chenpao Island area of Manchuria in March 1969.

Lin's few private meetings that are reported are generally diplomatic- or military-related. He has audiences with selected foreign visitors, favoring countries that are China's clients. For instance, in May 1970 he received Le Duan, chief of the Vietnam Worker's Party.

Lin's visibility decreased suddenly following the Ninth CCP Congress and its follow-on conferences in April and May 1969. Between 1 January 1967 and 1 June 1969 Lin was relatively active, being physically in evidence for about 16 months, and out of sight for only about 13. Thereafter,

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except for a few single or closely grouped appearances, Lin was withdrawn from the public eye from 1 June 1969 to 1 May 1971.

Two Views of Lin Piao's Prospects

Lin's stature is rooted in Mao's confidence in him, and qualified observers disagree on the strength of his power base in the national military establishment. Outside the capital he depends partly on the projection of his great strength in Peking and partly on the loyalty of the PLA to Mao, to country, and to Lin as its commander.

Much depends on Huang Yung-sheng, the PLA Chief of Staff, who now seems to stand sixth in the regime. Huang's long record of service under and near Lin is impressive. Yet when Huang came to the General Staff it was as an ex-regional commander and not necessarily as Lin's protégé. If Huang should be elevated to the Politburo Standing Committee, the influence of regional commanders might well gain strength at the center at Lin's expense.

In one view, therefore, Lin is a weak choice for the succession because he lacks adequate support in the PLA at regional and provincial levels. He antagonized many military professionals during the Cultural Revolution and bore down heavily, often unreasonably, on the regional commanders until after the 1967-68 winter of Mao-study for high-level military cadres in Peking.

Another view sees Lin as strong through having emerged from the Cultural Revolution with the PLA still united in its loyalty to Mao, and with its commanders united in acceptance of Lin's leadership. In this view Lin's strength is based on his personal relationships. These bonds result more in influence than in direct control, possibly because Lin, like Mao, requires loyal lieutenants to be capable of acting independently for unpredictable lengths of time during which he is unavailable.

Physical Condition

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Lin's 1938 wound was apparently in the region of the chest. His 3 years of treatment in the USSR were followed by light duty from 1941 to 1945. His next period of active command was from 1945 to 1949. Lin is thought to have again been ailing in 1952-54, a time when others seemed to be carrying his burden, and during the rest of the 1950's his appearances were extraordinarily few, quite possibly for health reasons. In 1962 there was a 2-month bout of hospitalization, and he was out of action at least once during the Cultural Revolution.

Personality and Style

Opinions of Lin vary widely.

In one perspective, Lin is a master politician; in another, he is the soldier's soldier. Uncertainty persists because he has kept himself withdrawn and semilegendarly. In the past there have been moments of proud assertiveness, but now, like Mao, he keeps observers guessing. In his leadership style of recent years he has suppressed flair. His style is characterized by brief appearances with limited exposure; infrequent public pronouncements intended to be hailed, capsulized, and propagandized; unpredictable timing; restraint in

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public attack on new targets; and long, unexplained absences of variable duration. Speculation inspired by Lin's public absences has in the past proved so unreliable that it has virtually ceased.

Lin's austere way of life is seemingly devoid of pleasures, and he has a public image of intense preoccupation with serious concerns.

Lin's military style was characteristically aggressive, imaginative and dramatic, supported by exemplary thoroughness in preparation and planning. Lin is a believer in full readiness, flexibility in commitment of forces, incidental dissimulation as needed, and judicious readiness to disengage and retreat. Further, he is not restricted to one scale of magnitude: He can visualize both the building of general success out of small successes and the complex marshalling of field armies; his ability to grasp or to discount detail cannot therefore be disregarded in evaluating his political and managerial talent.

concludes:

From Lin we should therefore expect long periods of deceptive inactivity; followed by lightning moves in specific directions using all the force at his disposal; followed either by consolidation or quick retreat; followed, finally, by a further period of waiting and planning.

Lin has traveled abroad only to the USSR, and his contacts with foreigners have been extremely limited.

Family

Lin is currently married to Yeh Ch'ün, who was first identified by Chinese Communist media as his wife in January 1967. He was previously married to Liu Hsi-ming, by whom he has a son and a daughter. He apparently also has teenage daughters from one of the marriages.

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Yeh Ch'ün heads Lin's staff office and has been a political power in her own right since attaining membership on the PLA Cultural Revolution Group in January 1967 and on the Politburo in April 1969.

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