

April 12, 1967

**Transcript of a Telegram from the GDR Military
Attaché in Beijing, 'About the Situation in the PR
China'**

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Summary:

A report on the Chinese army and their interactions with other organized groups.

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Transcript[\[1\]](#)

Military Attaché

Beijing, 12 April 1967

Beijing

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Information

Subject: About the Situation in the PR China

Text:

The situation is characterized by the further Army penetration of the state and economy apparatus. The Army is eager to assume major responsibilities, a certain stabilization to be observed since mid-February. Due to the political and economic problems, the extremist forces rallied around the "Central Cultural Revolution Group" had been forced to cease their propaganda for "disorder", and they themselves had to counter anarchic tendencies. Apparently during this period, the moderate forces, mostly concentrated within the state and economic apparatuses, have strengthened their positions. Currently one can note a new intensity of the conflicts. The "Central Cultural Revolution Group" and its "Red Guard Organizations" are demanding to complete the "Cultural Revolution" and to smash the allegedly reorganizing "bourgeois-reactionary forces". The "Central Cultural Revolution Group" criticized the activities of the group for "Cultural Revolution" within the Army and demanded they take their cues from the "Central Cultural Revolution Group".

The leadership of the "Army Cultural Revolution Group" was subjected to changes. Its head is Xie Fuzhi[\[2\]](#), Vice Premier of the PRC and Minister of Public Security, his deputy is Xiao Hua[\[3\]](#), head of the Political Main Department of the People's Liberation Army.

It is assumed those leadership changes represent a strengthening of those forces advocating the maintaining of order and thus a stronger leaning towards the moderate forces. In recent days, Beijing "Red Guard Organizations" are heavily attacking Ye Jianying[\[4\]](#), Deputy Premier and Deputy of the Chairman of the National Defense Council. He had been newly appointed to the Politburo just by the beginning of the year. Together with other former general, he is said to have attacked Lin Biao at a Politburo meeting held in March. He was supposedly accused of not having provided the leadership with a realistic description of the situation within the Army. Currently we see a reflection of the contradictions between the moderate and the extremist forces within the Army. There are also tendencies within the Army to end the "Cultural Revolution" in order to counter the further deepening of conflicts.

According to reports from "Red Guard Newspapers", there had been several clashes between Army units and "rebel organizations" in Hunan Province. According to official reports, the Army has taken over full power in Qinghai Province, and other reports in "Red Guard Newspapers" are saying the Army is still exerting major control in the

provinces of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia.

The Army has decisive influence in those provinces, where new provisional power structures have been established through the so-called triple alliance (party cadres, Army, and rebels).

In almost all provinces, so-called leadership committees of the production front have been established by the Army and thus secured the latter's influence within the industry.

The recently again increasing demands of "Revolutionary Rebels" for the Army to take over also central ministries are also directed against the position of Zhou Enlai, who had declared in a speech on 17 February 1967 before "Revolutionary Rebels" from the various ministries: "What kind of triple alliance is supposed to be established within the central organs? Here there are masses and leading functionaries. If we now also include in addition representatives of the People's Liberation Army from outside, it will result in a military takeover. The central organs are not in need of a military takeover. Triple alliances mean in this context here a union between high-ranking functionaries, mid-level functionaries and representatives from your revolutionary mass organizations."

Attacks against Chen Yi^[5] (Foreign Minister), who has been already frequently attacked during the course of the "Cultural Revolution", have increased again.

Indications towards an escalation of the situation are also on display in Beijing. According to eyewitness reports, heavy clashes between "rebel organizations" have occurred in the Cultural Palace of Nationalities. At the Summer Palace, 7 people are said to have been killed during clashes. More than before, the Army is controlling the streets with armed two-man patrols.

The currently ongoing intense attacks against the Chairman of the PR China, Liu Shaoqi^[6], are apparently supposed to prepare for his removal. In the "Red Flag" he is called "Ruler Number 1" who follows the capitalist road - as the "Chinese Khrushchev". For months, Liu Shaoqi has not appeared in public any more. It is hard to tell to what extent his influence does still exist today. Apparently also the international reputation of the PR China requires a decision on the issue of the Head of State.

Conclusions:

The power struggle between the various groups is not decided. The political and economic problems, the increasing international isolation, and the growth of sabotage actions as well as of apparently truly reactionary elements - all this does also compel the extremist forces to show willingness for compromise. Right now already, the Army is exerting major influence over the entire public life. It cannot be evaluated, however, to what extent the Army is in a position to perform as an independently acting political force.

An order issued by the Military Committee of the Central Committee (attachment^[7]) is showing the major difficulties facing the Army in resolving political issues.

Signed Pankow
Navy Captain

For the accuracy of the transcript:

Signed Ulbricht

Sergeant

[\[1\]](#) Of a telegram.

[\[2\]](#) 1909- 1972. Minister of Public Security 1959-1972.

[\[3\]](#) 1916-1985. Also known as Xiao Yizun.

[\[4\]](#) 1897-1986.

[\[5\]](#) 1901-1972. Foreign Minister of the PRC 1958-1972.

[\[6\]](#) 1898-1969. Chairman of the PRC 1959-1968.

[\[7\]](#) The attachment is not part of the document.