



Post 10-12-77

Stanley Karnow
**Chou Recounts
 Lin's Demise**

TANTALIZING new details on the mysterious disappearance of Marshal Lin Piao, formerly Chinese Communist Party's Chairman Mao Tse-tung's official heir, are again emerging—this time from the lips of Premier Chou En-lai.

But whether these details are accurate may be less important than the obvious fact that the present Chinese leadership is strenuously striving to efface Lin both at home and abroad. And this suggests that the power struggle that has been nagging China for more than two years is not yet over.

The latest account of Lin's purported death was described last weekend by Chou in a nocturnal discussion with 22 U.S. editors now touring China. According to Chou, Lin died when a Chinese airplane crashed in Mongolia in September 1971.

Recounting the episode, Chou said that the Chinese authorities first suspected that Lin might be trying to flee China when his son, Lin Li-Kuo, secretly ordered an airplane.

CHOU further revealed that Lin's aircraft, one of four British-built Trident passenger jets owned by the Chinese, took off from Peitaiho, a coastal resort 175 miles east of Peking. This has never before been said to foreigners by a Chinese official, but Chou rhetorically asked the editors: "Don't you know that? Every Chinese knows that."

Continuing his account, Chou said that the airplane

flew north into the People's Republic of Mongolia, where it failed to spot an airfield runway. Chou went on:

"Its fuel was nearly exhausted so it had to try a forced landing. It slid over a distance on the ground leaving behind very clear marks. When the plane landed, one

of its wings first touched the ground and caught fire, and all the nine persons on board burned to death."

Chou explained that the Mongolian government advised Peking of the incident, which occurred on the night of Sept. 13, 1971, and permitted a Chinese team to visit the spot and "to take photos and bury the bodies." He said that although the bodies aboard the airplane were badly burned, "they were not completely destroyed and it was still possible to identify them." Thus, he said, Lin Piao was identified among the dead.

CHOU omitted any reference to Lin's wife or son, reportedly killed as well. Nor did he mention the fate of the Chinese military leaders who were supposedly involved in Lin's alleged plot to overthrow Mao and have since been purged.

Despite his appointment as Mao's constitutional heir in April 1969, Chou said, Lin "knew he could not really become the successor, so he engaged in conspiracy." Even so, he went on, there was no plan to arrest Lin. Or as Chou put it:

"We only wished to know what he wanted the plane for. Therefore, we say that while it was inevitable that his conspiracy would fail, there was an accidental element in his flight abroad and subsequent death."

Chou concluded by saying that his account of Lin's demise was "much clearer" than former Chief Justice Earl Warren's report on the assassination of President Kennedy. But when one of the American editors persisted in seeking clarification of what he called "this jigsaw puzzle," Chou replied with the aplomb that has made him one of the world's great diplomats.

"What puzzle?" he said. "There is no puzzle about it. I have told you everything."

Kissinger's Command Is a Hot Spot

By Jack Anderson

Every day, coded messages flood into Washington from our embassies, military commands and intelligence outposts all over the world. The most urgent telegrams are funneled into Henry Kissinger's command post in the White House. Digests of overnight intelligence reports are delivered each morning to President Nixon.

From sources with access to this intelligence flow, here are some recent highlights:

New Offensive?—Privately, Henry Kissinger is optimistic about the prospects of a cease-fire in Vietnam. Yet intercepted messages indicate that North Vietnam is preparing for a renewed offensive. Our military intelligence has found no trace, however, that Russia has replaced the tanks and artillery the North Vietnamese lost in their spring offensive. They were able last spring to sneak heavy hardware into South Vietnam virtually undetected. But the best available intelligence suggests that both Russia and China have cut back military shipments to North Vietnam. Hanoi's military preparations, therefore, may be for a limited attack upon a political target, perhaps even Saigon itself. But no one really knows whether the guns will be silenced or booming when the voters go to the polls on Nov. 7.

Soft on Thieu—Hanoi may be softening slightly on its

arch enemy, President Thieu. In the secret truce talks, North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho has emphasized that the Saigon regime must be dismantled and replaced by a tripartite government dominated by neither side. But he has indicated that Saigon can choose anyone it wishes to the new government, that neither side should have a veto over the other's appointments. The implication is that Hanoi would not object if Saigon appointed the hated Thieu as a member of the tripartite government.

Mao's Vow—China's supreme ruler, Mao Tse-tung, told visiting Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka fiercely that the Chinese would resist to the death any encroachments by Russia. A CIA report on the secret Mao-Tanaka talks quotes old Mao as saying China would sacrifice its own people to prevent Soviet domination. He cited the fate of his former heir apparent, Lin Biao, who died in a plane crash fleeing to Russia after attempting a pro-Soviet coup against Mao.

Chou's Opposition—The Central Intelligence Agency reports that Chinese Premier Chou En-lai is still encountering opposition inside Peking's ruling circle. Chou's opponents are upset over his policy of detente with the United States, Japan and the West. They contend that the detente has hurt China's credibility with revolutionary forces around the world.

Soviet Shipments—A classified State Department analysis charges that Israel's forays across her borders against the Palestinian guerrillas have given the Soviets a pretext for strengthening their foothold in Syria and Iraq. Military shipment have been sent not only to Syria and Iraq but to the Palestinian guerrillas directly. Contrary to press reports of a Soviet "airlift" to Syria, however, the airlift consisted of only four transport planes, which have ceased to make regular deliveries. But the shipments, though no more than token military aid, have had the effect of strengthening Soviet bonds with the Arab hotheads. The analysis concludes, nevertheless, that Russia wouldn't likely risk war for Syria, Iraq or any other Arab country.

African Wildman—The efforts to placate Uganda's wildman, General Idi Amin, appear to have backfired. He has ordered the Asians, who had become the backbone of Uganda's economy, out of the country. He has made impossible demands upon neighboring Tanzania. He has made and broken promises to visiting mediators. He has imposed harsh martial law upon his country, charging that Tanzania, India and even Britain are planning to invade his small country. For the sake of black African solidarity, a host of black African leaders have made pilgrimages to Uganda to placate General Amin. But

a CIA report suggests all this attention has merely enlarged his ego and made him more difficult than ever.

Castro "Uncouth"—Intelligence reports acknowledge a rise in anti-U.S. feeling throughout Latin America. But apparently Cuban Dictator Fidel Castro's attempts to exploit U.S. unpopularity for his own purposes have failed. A typical message from our defense attache in Ecuador, where Castro visited last year, describes the top Ecuadorean military brass as anti-U.S. but also anti-Castro. The message quotes them as calling Castro "uncouth" and "not the great leader that many people consider him to be."

Cuba-Panama Friendship—A secret CIA cable, reporting on a conversation with a Cuban intelligence officer known only as "Alfredo," quotes him as saying that "the Cuban government generally supports the PJG (Panama's military junta) and General Omar Torrijos, the head of Panama, but wants to find ways to encourage Torrijos to move further to the left. 'Alfredo' suggested that . . . leftists in Panama form a Panama-Cuba Friendship Society, which could promote friendship with Cuba, put pressure on Torrijos from the left and possibly be used as the center for certain unspecified Cuban activities."