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New York 18, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The administrative map of China is getting a New Look. The Chinese Communists are reshuffling administrative units and redrawing boundaries. Because the new divisions have not yet finally crystallized Communist China is still a cartographer's nightmare, but a new pattern is gradually emerging. In the new pattern the smaller administrative units have been left intact for the most part, but the larger units are new and different. This is not the first time that new rulers have experimented with the map of China, but the Communists' main innovation, regional administrative groupings, will make the map very different from any of its predecessors.

Communist armies are capturing new cities and villages every day, and in such a fluid situation administrative divisions within Communist China are naturally changing all the time. Even in many areas which have been under Communist control for months or years the divisions are largely provisional, and a reshuffling of units and boundaries is periodically reported in the press. Nevertheless, the present administrative geography of Communist China is of some interest, because it suggests trends which may be of a considerable political significance.

Communist China at present is divided into six main geographical regions, each of which bears the title of Liberated Area. These six regional divisions are: Northeast China (Manchuria), Northwest China, North China, Central China, East China and South China. Each of these major divisions is an amalgamation of various smaller Liberated Areas, Provinces and other administrative units, and there is little uniformity in character or development among the six regions. The demarcation of these regions did not, as a matter of fact, take place simultaneously or according to any announced overall plan. The regions formed gradually, and the definition of each one took place independently and in accord with existing local conditions.

The North China Liberated Area as a unit is the oldest of the six (it took shape in the Summer of 1948), and it is the most advanced in its development since it has definite boundaries and a well-organized regional government. The Northeast Liberated Area has well-defined boundaries but until recently it has functioned under a temporary

government called the Northeast Administrative Commission. The Northwest Liberated Area is still expanding, and its government is a provisional hold-over from the earlier wartime government in the area. The Central China Liberated Area has a well-organized regional government, but its internal boundaries are vague and its territory still unconsolidated. The East China and South China Liberated Areas are both amorphous, without clear internal boundaries or regional organs of civil government. South China in particular is little more than a vague geographical expression, and as Communist control is extended several regional divisions may grow out of the large territory now referred to as the South China Liberated Area.

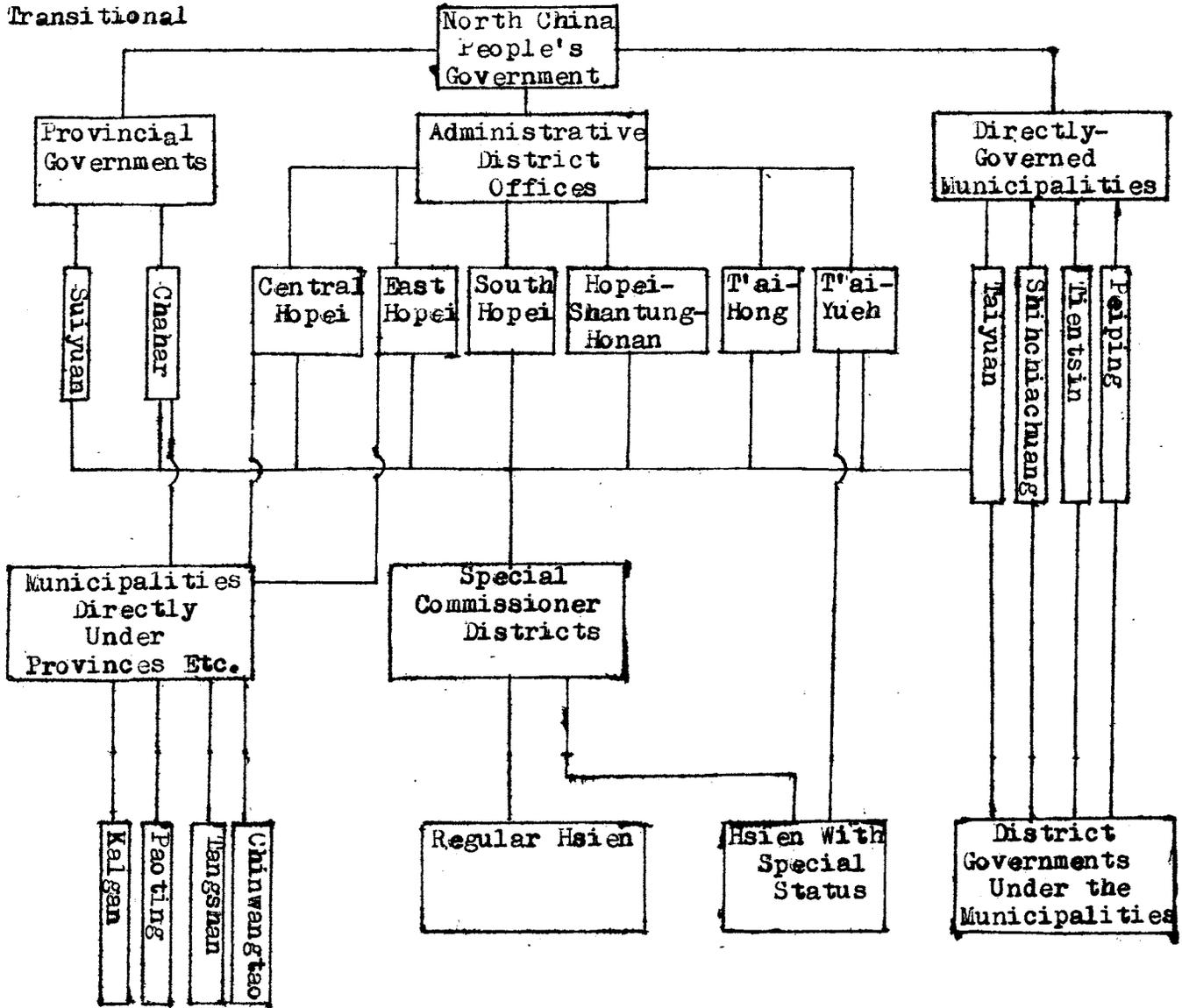
The consolidation of the territory within the overall boundary of North China has passed through two distinct stages since the beginning of 1949. (See attached Chart.) The first stage, which involved radical departures from previous provincial boundaries, was a provisional demarcation based principally on the guerilla areas which the Communists had established in North China. The second stage, only recently carried out, involved a return to previous provincial boundaries to the extent feasible within the framework of the new regional boundary.

At the beginning of this year the newly-formed North China Liberated Area (which was formed by merging the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei and Shansi-Hopei-Shantung-Honan areas, the latter itself being an amalgamation of two previous units) consisted of one Provincial Government, six Administrative Districts and four Municipalities, all with provincial rank. The one Province was Chahar, and compared with the original Chahar its territory had been enlarged and its boundaries freely redrawn. The six provincial-rank Administrative Districts were Central Hopei, East Hopei, South Hopei, Hopei-Shantung-Honan, T'aihang and T'aiyueh. These districts roughly followed the outline of wartime Liberated Areas in the region. Boundaries were far from identical with those wartime units, but it was easy to see that the Administrative Districts were an outgrowth of areas formed during the war, because as a rule they followed the major trunk-line railways, as did the guerilla areas which formed the basis of Communist administrative divisions in North China during resistance against Japan. The four Municipalities which were given provincial rank and administratively placed directly under the regional government were Tientsin, Peiping, Shihchiachuang and Taiyuan.

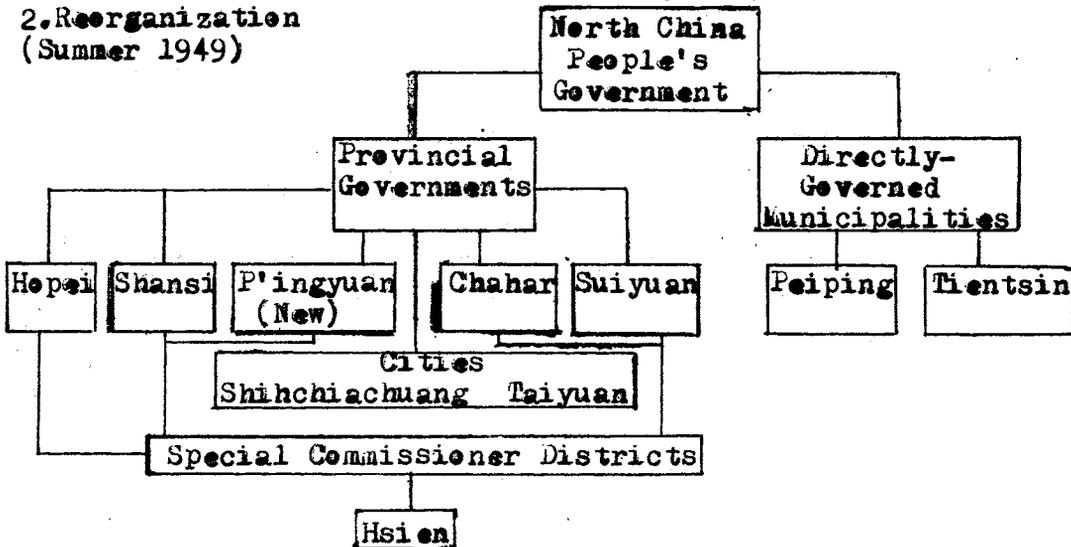
Under the major divisions in North China, as of the beginning of this year, there were 38 Special Commissioner Districts (also sometimes translated as Special Administrative Districts), and four lesser Municipalities (Chinwangtao, Tangshan, Paoting and Kalgan) directly under the administrative control of the six Administrative

Administration - North China Liberated Area (Simplified Chart)

1. Transitional



2. Reorganization
(Summer 1949)



Districts or the one Province. Finally, at the level of administration below these, there were 307 Hsien, two small cities with a special status of dependence upon nearby Municipalities, and forty so-called District Governments under the four Municipalities of provincial rank.

A few changes were introduced soon after this set-up was announced. The first important change was the addition of another large unit, the Suimeng ("Suiyuan-Mongolia") Administrative District. This district lasted only a short period of time, however, and was converted into Suiyuan Province.

As early as mid-April, Tung Pi-wu, Chairman of the North China People's Government, told a meeting of government leaders that the existing administrative divisions were based on the wartime situation, and that boundaries should be withdrawn to conform with post-war needs. He recommended returning to the old provincial boundaries as far as possible. Almost four months later, on August 1, it was publicly announced that this step had been taken. North China is now divided into five provinces - Hopei, Shansi, Chahar, Suiyuan and Pingyuan - and two Special Municipalities - Peiping and Tientsin. Because the overall regional boundary cuts across traditional provincial lines (see attached maps), the new provinces, squeezed into the regional mold, depart radically from their previous shapes. Pingyuan Province is an entirely new creation, constructed from bits and pieces of Hopei, Shantung and Honan. The new provinces are divided into Special Commissioner Districts and Hsien, as in the past.

How does this new administrative structure in North China compare with the past? Despite their inclination to redraw the boundaries of larger administrative units, the Communists, in their acceptance of traditional Chinese forms, seem in many ways to show more desire to respect precedent than to experiment. The Province, Special Commissioner District (or Special Administrative District) and Hsien remain the basis of administration. Furthermore, the boundaries of the latter two have remained fairly constant. This is particularly true of the Hsien, which with a few exceptions have the same shape and form that they had previously. Many Hsien, in fact, have changed only slightly, if at all, during the past two thousand years, due to the fact that a Hsien is usually made up of a walled city and its agricultural hinterland. The walled cities, and the economic relationship between country and city, change very little, and the Hsien seem destined to maintain their identity under a Communist regime, as they have under past regimes. The new provinces, however, have changed considerably and disregard many of the basic economic, geographical and historical facts upon which previous provincial boundaries were based. The main reason for this seems to be the Communists' desire to establish new regional areas, and the necessity of redrawing the provinces, and usually reducing them in size, to fit into the regional pattern.

The special status of major cities, and the centralization of control over them, is another feature of administration which seems to be well-established in China and which the Communists apparently accept. This gives the central authority direct control over the most important economic, political or cultural centers. At the beginning of this year, in fact, it looked as if the Communists were extending the principle to include cities of medium size and importance, but recent developments would indicate that they are returning to the "pre-liberation" pattern.

Although North China has taken more definite shape than most of the other regional areas in Communist China, the other areas have undergone a certain amount of reorganization.

The administrative divisions within the Northeast Liberated Area, as announced in April of this year, are different from anything in the past. The Northeast is divided into six Provinces, and the regional boundary leaves out a large area in Northwest Manchuria which formerly was Hsingan Province. (Manchuria was divided into three Provinces before the war. Jehol was added later, and the Japanese redivided the whole into nine Provinces.) The present six Provinces depart from past boundaries considerably. They are: Liaohsi, Liaotung, Kirin, Heilungkiang, Sungkiang, and Jehol. In addition the Northeast has four Municipalities of Provincial rank directly under the central regional authority. These cities are Mukden, Fushun, Anshan and Penhsi - which together form the heart of the industrial area in Manchuria. Under the six Provinces in the Northeast are 163 Hsien, 18 Municipalities and seven Mongol Banners.

The Northwest area of Manchuria, formerly Hsingan Province (possibly together with pieces of Jehol and Chahar) has been made into a new region called the Inner Mongolian Self-Governing Area. This is an interesting and new development. If this area is given permanent status it will be the first time in modern China that the Mongols living in the area of greatest Mongol concentration within the boundaries of China have had a territorial base for autonomy. It looks as if this will take place and that the Communists will include such a region in the territory of China on a sort of federal basis.

The Northwest Liberated Area, formed by combining the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border Area and the Shansi part of the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area, was set up in February of this year. At that time it consisted of three Administrative Districts of provincial rank - Shansi-Kansu-Ninghsia, Northwest Shansi and South Shansi - containing six Special Commissioner Districts and 114 Hsien. New territory has been added since then, and the area is growing all the time. The East China Liberated Area at one time consisted mainly of Shantung

but now includes all of Kiangsu, most of Anhui and Chekiang, and part of Kiangsi. The Central China Liberated Area todate includes most of Honan and Hupei, and parts of Hunan and Kiangsi. South China is still undefined.

The most significant innovations in this administrative set-up under the Communists are the new regional areas. When these began to take shape many people believed they would be temporary and would disappear after the formation of a central government. At present, however, there are many indications that they will be a permanent part of administrative organization in Communist China. It is significant, for example, that the final provincial boundaries (fitted into the regional boundary and including a new province) in North China, and the establishment of a formal Northeast People's Government (less than a week ago) have been announced since preparations to create a central government were publicly revealed. Organizations of all kinds -- farmers' and labor unions, women's, youth and student federations, and so on -- are being organized with this regional framework in mind. For example, under the All-China General Labor Union is a North China General Labor Union, and so on. Furthermore, all party, government and army organizations in Communist territory are based on this regional framework at present. Regional boundaries seem to be becoming increasingly important. For example, travel for Chinese is relatively easy within a region but more difficult between two regions. Economic planning and policy formulation on a regional basis seems to have become established already, and there is considerable variation in policies between regions. Between North China and Northeast China not only are traded commodities usually taxed, but currency must be exchanged from People's Bank Notes to Northeast Bank Notes (at a current rate of about one to 160). Another trend which seems to indicate the permanence of these regional divisions is the growth of inter-regional state trading by government trading companies on a barter basis.

The idea of regional administration is not entirely new in China. The country is so large that regional subdivisions under central authority have occurred many times. Under the Ch'ing Empire, for example, Provinces were often grouped together for administrative purposes. More recently, Chiang K'ai-shek established so-called Presidential Offices throughout the country on a regional basis. These posts, in Mukden, Peiping, Lanchow, Chungking and Canton, were filled by Personal Representatives of the President who were the top authority on both political and military questions in their respective regions. Even after the Nationalist Government's constitution went into effect these regional offices continued, under new names, to exercise great authority.

The Communists seem to have gone much farther than any of these precedents, however. Instead of merely having a supervisory authority over a region, they have established (or are establishing) a full-fledged government in each of the major geographical regions in the country and have proceeded to organize both political and economic life on this regional basis. Furthermore, there seems to be considerable regional differentiation and, especially in the case of Manchuria, autonomy.

It is still too early to know definitely what the political significance of these regional sub-divisions of the country will be, but it is safe to predict that if they are retained their political importance will be considerable. The boundaries of the new regions cut across the lines of some of the old provinces, which have traditionally been the geographical basis for organized localism as a threat to central authority, and in this sense the new administrative pattern may help to undermine regionalism of the traditional sort. On the other hand, administrative regionalism in a new form is established more firmly than before. Although their functions may be reduced after the formation of a central government, at present the existing regional bodies are, theoretically at least, governing bodies instead of simply branches of the central government as comparable organizations have been in the past. The new regional areas could, therefore, be either a blow to traditional localism or the basis for a new kind of localism; it is too soon to say how they will work out. It certainly seems probable, however, that the Communists, because of their tendencies toward organizational centralization, will attempt to keep the regional areas under strict central control either directly through central government - regional government relations or indirectly through party control of top personnel in both.

It is possible that the new regional areas will form the basis of a federal state in China similar to the union of republics in the U.S.S.R. The pattern seems to suggest, in fact, that the Chinese Communists may be consciously following the Russian model in this respect, although there is no definite evidence that this is true.

The significance of the regional governments may be greater in Manchuria than anywhere else. Certainly the Northeast seems to have more administrative autonomy than any other area at the present time. Based on pure speculation, two divergent interpretations can be given to this fact. It may foreshadow the ultimate formation of an autonomous or semi-autonomous Manchurian republic with closer relations to Russia, or it may be a Chinese Communist attempt to give Manchuria the formal appearance of a degree of autonomy and

forestall the real growth of Russian influence there. It is impossible, however, to know definitely what will develop out of these new regional governments, either in Manchuria or elsewhere.

Sincerely yours,

A. Doak Barnett

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