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# Wang En-mao—Reappointed First Secretary of the CCP Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Committee

## I

Sinkiang, the vast Northwest China province bordering the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia and Tibet, was renamed the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region (SUAR) by the Chinese Communists on October 1, 1955. Because of its complex population and geographical environment, it has been a thorny problem for the Peiping regime. The 635,830 sq. mi. territory, about three times the size of France, is inhabited by people of various nationalities, among them, the Uighurs who form a majority of the population, the Hans, Kazakhs, Huis, Mongolians, and Russians. Its contiguity to the Soviet Union adds to the vulnerability of Sinkiang. How to maintain stability and unity in the province and prevent Soviet infiltration is an almost insurmountable task. In an effort to counter Soviet pressure, the Chinese Communists have revamped the previous Sinkiang Military Region on the lines of other first-level military regions by renaming the Urumchi Military Region and reinforcing its defense capabilities.<sup>1</sup> In addition, an "army reclamation farm" zone has been created along the border to prevent the people of the province from escaping and the Soviets from infiltrating.

In January 1981, Wang Chen (王震), a CCPC member and a standing committee member of the CCPC Military Commission, visited Sinkiang and addressed cadres of the PLA units in Urumchi at and above divisional level.<sup>2</sup> In May, he led a Central Committee delegation to inspect the Changchi Hui Autonomous *Chou*. On May 22 he received representatives attending the conference on the management of the state-owned farms held by the SUAR.<sup>3</sup> In mid-August, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, accompanied by Wang Chen and Wang Jen-chung (王任重), secretary of the CCPC Secretariat and concurrently director of the CCPC Propaganda Department, went on an inspection tour to Sinkiang

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<sup>1</sup> Radio Sinkiang, January 9, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Central People's Broadcasting Station, January 20, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Radio Sinkiang, May 21, 1981.



where he aired his views on the work being carried out there. Wang Chen and Wang Jen-chung also expressed their views on the "strengthening of national unity and leadership on the ideological front."<sup>4</sup> And as early as February of the same year (1981) Ku Ching-sheng (谷景生), formerly head of the Mass Work Division under the PLA General Political Department and deputy political commissar of the Canton Military Region, replaced Chou Jen-shan (周仁山) who had long kept a low profile as second secretary of the CCP Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Committee (CCP SUARC),<sup>5</sup> and later came to hold concurrently the post of political commissar of the Urumchi Military Region.<sup>6</sup> The fact that high-ranking CCP officials paid frequent visits to Sinkiang, the changes in the Party and military leadership there and no sign in public of the then first secretary in Sinkiang, Wang Feng (汪鋒), during and after Teng Hsiao-p'ing's inspection trip, illustrated the complicated problems of the area. These were the circumstances prevailing when Wang En-mao (王恩茂) was appointed on December 10, 1981, first secretary of the CCP SUARC by the CCP Central Committee.<sup>7</sup>

## II

Born in 1912, a native of Yunghsin county in Kiangsi province, Wang En-mao was reared in a landlord family and received a high school education. In 1931, he joined a regiment of the Hunan-Kiangsi Independent Division as a political officer. The division at that time was led by Li T'ien-chu with Wang Chen as a political commissar of Wang En-mao's regiment. In 1932 when the division was incorporated into the the Red 8th Army with Li T'ien-chu as commander and Wang Chen as political commissar, Wang En-mao retained his position as a political officer. Later, although the designation of his unit was changed many times, he remained a colleague of Wang Chen in the border area of Hunan and Kiangsi provinces.

In August 1934, he followed the Red 6th Army Corps in the "Long March" and reached Shensi by way of Hunan, northern Kwangsi, Szechwan, Sikang and southern Kansu. During the "Long March," he was identified as a cadre in the organization section of the political department of the army corps. In January 1937, he entered the second graduate class of the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yen-an. In August that year, following the outbreak in the previous month of the eight-year war against Japan, he completed his training and on August 22,

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<sup>4</sup> *People's Daily*, August 23, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> Radio Sinkiang, February 2, 1981.

<sup>6</sup> Radio Sinkiang, April 6, 1981.

<sup>7</sup> Wang Ta-jen in a speech reported by Radio Kirin, November 16, 1981.



when the Communist forces accepted reorganization by the National Government into the 8th Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army, Wang was made deputy political commissar of the 359th Brigade (commander Wang Chen) of the 120th Division (commander Ho Lung) under the 8th Route Army. The 120th Division, taking orders from the Government troops of the Second War Zone, crossed the Yellow River to join the war against the Japanese in Shansi.

In the autumn of 1939, Mao Tse-tung secretly recalled the 359th Brigade to northern Shensi where Wang En-mao and Wang Chen succeeded in forcing out the then commissioner in Suiteh county, Ho Shao-chou, and expanding the Communist base in the area.

In March 1941, the 359th Brigade was moved southward to Nanniwan with two missions: 1) to safeguard the Communist Party Central from attack by Government troops, and 2) to engage in land reclamation work (including the planting of opium) to solve the grain shortage in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region caused by the economic blockade conducted by the National Government. Two years later, the brigade's productive labor, new to the Communist forces, was praised as the "Nanniwan spirit" by Mao Tse-tung who, taking it as a model, launched a "self-reliance" movement to reclaim land in all Communist-held areas. The non-military experience in production work gained by Wang Chen and Wang En-mao in Nanniwan led to their future assignment as leaders of army land-reclamation in Sinkiang.

In November 1944, the Chinese Communists reorganized part of the 359th Brigade into the "Southbound Detachment" with Wang Chen as commander and Wang En-mao as deputy political commissar and sent it to establish bases in Japanese-occupied Hunan and Kiangsi provinces. On March 26, 1945, upholding the name of the "Hunan People's Anti-Japanese National Salvation Army," the two Wangs led their forces into Pingchiang in eastern Hunan and set up the CCP Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Regional Committee, the Hunan-Kiangsi Military District and the Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Administrative Office. Five months later, however, the Southbound Detachment was defeated by Government troops in Pamien-shan and lost all their bases in the three provinces. In September remnants of the unit took refuge in Ching kangshan. In the following month, they crossed the Yangtze River to rendezvous with Li Hsien-nien's (李先念) 5th Division of the New 4th Army. In June 1946, Government troops waged an all-out encirclement campaign against the Communists in the "Central Plain Liberation District," and inflicted a heavy blow to the forces led by Wang Chen and Li Hsien-nien. In September of the same year, with Mao's help, the forces fled into northern Shensi.

### III

In early 1949, when Communist Northwest Field Army was incor-



incorporated into the 1st Field Army (commander P'eng Te-huai), Wang En-mao was appointed political commissar of the 2nd Army of the 1st Corps (commander Wang Chen). In May of the same year, he participated in the battle of Sian. In June his men encountered a flank attack by Ma Pu-fang and Ma Hung-k'uei's Government troops and retreated eastward. In early September, he followed the 1st Corps thrusting into Tsinghai province and seized the capital, Sining. From there the Communist forces traversed the Chilien Mountain, attacked Huang Chu-hsun's Government troops at Changyeh in Kansu province, and occupied the Kansu Corridor. Before they advanced toward Sinkiang, two events in their favor occurred. In September, T'ao Shih-yueh, then the National Government's commander of the Sinkiang Garrison Command, defected to the Communist side with the 42nd and 78th Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division. And Stalin, who had patronized Saifudin's separationist movement in Sinkiang, stopped his support because he figured it would be merely a matter of time before the Chinese Communists would obtain control of Sinkiang as proxy for the Soviets. Therefore, when P'eng Te-huai, Wang Chen, and Wang En-mao entered Sinkiang, they met with little resistance. There Wang En-mao came to occupy the following positions: deputy secretary of the CCPC Sinkiang sub-bureau (whose secretary was Wang Chen), member of the Northwest Military and Administrative Council (chairman P'eng Te-huai), and member of the Sinkiang Provincial People's Government (governor Burhan Shahidi 鲍尔汉). Wang En-mao assisted Wang Chen in incorporating Tao's troops into the 22nd Corps, and the Eastern Turkestan National Army formerly led by Saifudin into the 5th Army of the 1st Corps of the 1st Field Army. From April through August 1950 Wang En-mao suppressed Nationalist guerrilla units and some resistant Kazakh tribes. From November 1950 through May 1951, in the movement to suppress counterrevolutionary elements that the Chinese Communists conducted from 1950 through 1952, he persecuted to death former military officers of the National Government, the former governor of Sinkiang, and many leaders of the Kazakh, Uighur and Hui peoples. All the killings were aimed at consolidating Communist rule in Sinkiang. In 1952, he was instructed to assist Wang Chen in incorporating the 22nd Corps of the Northwest Field Army into a Nanniwan-type production and construction corps.<sup>8</sup>

In January 1953, when the Northwest Military and Administrative Council was redesignated the Northwest Administrative Council, he retained his membership. In the autumn of the same year, after Wang Chen had been assigned as commander of the Railway Engineering

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<sup>8</sup> Chang Chung-han, "Premier Chou's Brilliant Image Stands on the Army Reclamation Battle Line For Ever," *People's Daily*, January 18, 1981.



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Headquarters, he was elevated to the post of first secretary of the CCPCG Sinkiang sub-bureau and served concurrently as commander and political commissar of the Sinkiang Military Region, thus acquiring both Party and military power in Sinkiang.

In August 1954, when the Sinkiang Production and Construction Army Corps composed of the entire 22nd Corps, some divisions of the 1st Corps and a part of the 5th Army, was formally established, Wang En-mao was made concurrently its political commissar.<sup>9</sup> In September he was elected deputy to the First National People's Congress for Sinkiang. On September 27 he was elevated to the rank of "lieutenant general" and was awarded the Orders (first-class) of "August 1," "Independence and Liberty," and "Liberation."

### IV

At the end of 1953 the incident of the "Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih anti-Party Clique" broke out. To weaken the power vested in local regions, the CCP Central Committee abolished in 1954 all its regional bureaus, sub-bureaus, administrative regions, and reorganized the military regions. On October 1, 1955, when the CCPCG Sinkiang sub-bureau was abolished, Wang was relieved of his post as its first secretary and reassigned as secretary of the newly established CCP Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Committee.<sup>10</sup>

In July 1956, when the CCP SUARC changed from a secretary-deputy secretary system to a first secretary-second secretary system, he was reappointed first secretary of SUARC. On September 15, he participated in the 8th CCP National Congress and was elected to the presidium of the Congress. On 27th of the same month, he was named an alternate member of the 8th CCP Central Committee.

On May 25, 1958, he attended the Second Meeting of the 8th CCP National Congress and became an 8th CCPCG member through a by-election. At an enlarged meeting of the CCP SUARC held in June that year he delivered a summing-up on the struggle for the Marxist-Leninist line. While accusing the Soviet Union of infiltration and subversion in the border area in Sinkiang, he disclosed that the people of Sinkiang had strongly resisted the Peiping regime and an open revolt had only been barely averted. On January 29, 1959, he was named a member of the People's Council of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. In the same month he was elected chairman of the SUAR Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC).

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> NCNA, October 1, 1955.



V

Following the abolition of the CCP Central bureaus and sub-bureaus, tendencies that challenged the central authorities emerged in many places in mainland China, such as "Rightists," "Right opportunism," "localism," and "regional nationalism." To cope with the situation, the 9th Plenary Session of the 8th CCPC held on January 14, 1961, decided to restore the system of Central Committee bureaus. Six CCPC Bureaus were reinstated, namely, the Northeast Bureau, the North China Bureau, the East China Bureau, the Central-South Bureau, the Southwest Bureau, and the Northwest Bureau. And Wang En-mao was appointed secretary of the Northwest Bureau.

In 1961, the sagging relations between Peiping and Moscow took a turn for the worse. The Soviets, playing their old tricks on the lines of aiding Saifudin's insurgent activities and setting up the "Eastern Turkestan Republic" in Sinkiang, established the "National Liberation Committee" in Alma-Ata, capital of the Kazakh S.S.R., adjacent to Sinkiang. And they made cat's-paws of the people fleeing to the Soviet Union, including the former deputy chief of staff of the Sinkiang Military Region, Aumum Taibov, by employing them for subversion in Sinkiang. Under instigation and coercion, thousands of Sinkiang border inhabitants fled to the Soviet side.<sup>11</sup> To cope with the situation and Soviet provocations in the Northwest China border area, Chou En-lai approved in February 1962 a proposal made by Chang Chung-han (張仲翰), then vice minister of the Ministry of Farm and Reclamation, to create a zone of farm land reclaimed by the Sinkiang Production and Construction Army Corps in the Sinkiang border area.<sup>12</sup> These army reclamation farms thus became an important element in Chinese Communist strategy against Soviet encroachments in the area. On January 4, 1965, Wang En-mao was named a member of the National Defense Commission. In February 1966 he was reappointed first political commissar of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Army Corps, to which the post of a second political commissar had been introduced.

Wang came under fire at the outbreak in 1966 of the decade-long Cultural Revolution.<sup>13</sup> Armed clashes occurred from time to time between the Red Guards on his side and those supported by the Unit 7335 of the PLA Air Force which had entered Sinkiang from other areas. Later, the "Red Second Headquarters" under the aegis of the Cultural Revolution Group of the CCP Central Committee, planned to purge him, but he remained unscathed because of the protection of the CCP

<sup>11</sup> Chang Chung-han, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), October 21, 1966.



Committee. In April 1968, he was charged with imposing political persecution upon Unit 7335. In July of the same year, he stepped down from the post of commander of the Sinkiang Military Region in favor of Lung Shu-chin (龍書金), one of Lin Biao's proteges. Wang was also stripped of his position as first political commissar of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Army Corps. On September 5, when the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Revolutionary Committee came into being, Lung Shu-chin was appointed its chairman and concurrently first political commissar of the Sinkiang Military Region, but Wang was given only the post of vice chairman of the regional revolutionary committee. On April 24, 1969, he was elected an alternate member of the CCPCG at the 9th CCP National Congress. In 1970 he suspended all public activities apparently because of pressure by Lung Shu-chin.

Wang was liberated in 1975. On December 20 of that year, in his capacity as deputy political commissar of the PLA units in the Nanking area, he met a military delegation from Albania at the Nanking Airport.

After the downfall of the Gang of Four in October 1976, the Chinese Communists launched a campaign to expose and criticize remnant followers of the quartet. Wang Wei-hsiang (王維湘), then first secretary of the CCP Kirin Provincial Committee and first political commissar of the Kirin Provincial Military District, was purged on charges of having been a sworn follower of the Gang of Four and acting as the "King of the Northeast." As a result Wang En-mao was transferred to Kirin where he not only took over Wang Wei-hsiang's Party and military positions, but also assumed the chairmanship of the Kirin Provincial Revolutionary Committee. On March 29, 1977, in those capacities, he attended the Kirin Provincial Second Conference to Learn From Tach'ing in Industry. On July 21, he was identified as deputy political commissar of the Shenyang Military Region when he cut the ribbon at the opening of a photo exhibition of the three Northeast provinces held in Kirin city. From August 12 through 18, he participated in the 11th CCP National Congress in Peiping and was elected a member of the CCP Central Committee. On December 25, at the first session of the Fifth Kirin Provincial People's Congress, he was re-elected chairman of the Kirin Provincial Revolutionary Committee and concurrently named chairman of the Fourth Kirin Provincial Committee of the CPPCC. On October 20, 1981, he returned to Sinkiang as first secretary of the CCP SUARC.

Wang En-mao's predecessor in Sinkiang, Wang Feng, used to serve as chairman of the Minorities Affairs Commission of the Northwest Military and Administrative Council and as deputy director of the



CCPCC United Front Work Department. And Wang Feng's deputy in Sinkiang, Chou Jen-shan, had held post of vice chairman of the Minorities Affairs Commission of the Council. After the purge of the Gang of Four in October 1976, Peiping reinstalled Wang and Chou to Sinkiang to undertake united front work among the minorities there and attend to other problems. The fact that Wang Feng and Chou Jen-shan have been removed indicates that Communist united front work in Sinkiang had encountered great setbacks.

Wang En-mao worked in Sinkiang for altogether 20 years. He has abundant experience in border defense, in minorities work and army-conducted land reclamation. In the Chinese Communist choice of a new leadership cadre for the work in Sinkiang, he was an obvious choice. On October 27, 1981, at a cadre conference held by the CCP SUARC, Wang made his first speech after assuming his new office. Besides calling for resolute implementation of the line, guiding principles and policies adopted since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCPC, he emphasized: "1) We should strengthen unity in all quarters... the unity of various nationalities and the unity of the Army, people, localities, and the farm and land reclamation department. In particular, we should strengthen the unity of the regional CCP committee and Party committees at all levels. Cadres of various nationalities should trust and learn from each other. They should also support and understand each other. We should express views beneficial to unity and avoid saying anything harmful to unity. We should do all things beneficial to unity and avoid doing things harmful to unity. Unity means strength. Unity means victory. 2) We should carry out well economic construction in Sinkiang. From now on we should exert our main efforts toward economic construction. Party committees should constantly discuss the problems of such construction. We should continue to do a good job in readjusting, restructuring, reorganizing and upgrading our national economy. 3) We should strengthen the Party organizationally. In accordance with instructions issued by the central authorities, we should select and promote middle-aged and young cadres and solve the problem of the shortage of cadres. We should resolutely implement the spirit of the forum held by the central authorities on the problems on the ideological front.... We should correct the mistakes of breaking away from the Party's leadership and the socialist road and curb tendencies toward bourgeois liberalization. We should unswervingly pursue the guiding principle and always work together politically with one mind with the central authorities. We should resolutely check unhealthy tendencies. 4) We should strengthen border defense.... We should strengthen army-civilian joint defense and integrate the strength of the army with that of the civilians. 5) We should do a good job in straightening out social



order.... We should strengthen education in the five attentions and four beauties.<sup>14</sup> We should improve the people's standard of living... deal a heavy blow to counterrevolutionary elements and criminals. 6) We should improve our work style.... Communist Party members should... pay attention to democratic work style and avoid the error of 'laying down the law by one person alone.'<sup>15</sup>

As evident from the foregoing, Wang put stress on achieving the unity of all circles in Sinkiang, that is, unity among various nationalities, unity between the army and civilians, and between the CCP autonomous regional committee and Party committees at all levels. Therefore, the major tasks confronting Wang are to win over the hearts of the various minorities, to quell the activities of "regional nationalism" that causes splits, to achieve smooth coordination between the army and the "state-owned" farms and to pacify intellectual youths sent down to farms in Sinkiang.

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<sup>14</sup> Five attentions refer to the "attention to civility, courtesy, sanitation and hygiene, order, and ethics." And four beauties refer to the "beauty of mind, language, behavior, and environment." These were concrete steps urged to be taken by the mainland Chinese people in the Communist campaign to promote the so-called "socialist spiritual civilization" during the past two years.

<sup>15</sup> Radio Sinkiang, October 29, 1981.







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## Hsiao Ch'üan-fu—Commander of the Urumchi Military Region

In early 1980, Teng Hsiao-p'ing reshuffled the leadership of the mainland's Military Regions, appointing as many as eight new commanders, two new first political commissars, and the commander of the PLA Navy, and promoting Yang Te-chih to be chief of the PLA General Staff.

On the surface this reshuffle seems to show that the Chinese Communist army is trying to carry out improvements, however, it may actually be an attempt by Teng Hsiao-p'ing to expand his own influence over the army. Hsiao Ch'üan-fu, former deputy commander of the Shenyang Military Region, was promoted to be commander of the Urumchi Military Region. This is interesting because Hsiao was not forced to "stand aside," nor did he make any outstanding "contribution" during the Cultural Revolution.

### I

Hsiao Ch'üan-fu (蕭全夫), also known as Hsiao Ch'üan-fu (蕭全夫), was born in 1914. He was one of the founding members of the 46th Army of the Red Army. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, Hsiao served as commander of the 14th Regiment of Eastern Hopei Military District under the Hopei-Jehol-Liaoning Military Region (commander: Li Yün-ch'ang 李運昌; deputy commander: Chan Ts'ai-fang 蔡才芳; the Red 4th Front Army), and engaged in guerrilla activities under the command of Li Yün-ch'ang.

In 1945, following the end of the Sino-Japanese War, Li Yün-ch'ang was defeated while commanding the main forces of the Hopei-Jehol-Liaoning Military Region in an attempt to stop the Nationalist troops from entering Shanhai Pass from the south. Li then moved northward to Jehol; Hsiao followed Chan Ts'ai-fang to eastern Hopei, where he was made commander of the 13th Brigade. Later on he was appointed commander of the 11th Separate Brigade of the Eastern Hopei Military District.



In 1917, Hsiao's brigade, while being encircled and suppressed by the Nationalist troops, retreated to Northeast China. In September of the same year, his brigade became the 9th Column of the Northeast Field Army which was commanded by Chan Ts'ai-fang. The political commissar was Tu P'ing, currently political commissar of the Shenyang Military Region. The 9th Column contained the 25th, 26th and 27th Divisions, and Hsiao took command of the 26th Division. At the end of 1917, his 26th Division, while following the 9th Column to western Liaoning, coordinated its military operations with those of the 7th Column (later renamed the 4th Army; commanded by Teng Hua), and destroyed the Nationalist unit led by Wang T'ieh-han (王鐵漢).

In the spring of 1918, Hsiao's division was sent for training at Koupangtzu in western Liaoning. In September of that year, Hsiao participated in the Chinchow campaign; Hsiao's 26th Division was in charge of the southern line's assault, and his unit was the first to storm Chinchow. In November, his unit swung back to capture Yingk'ou, forcing the Nationalist army in the northeast to break out of their encirclement and retreat by the sea route. In December of that year, Hsiao's unit followed the 1st Army Corps of the Northeast Field Army (commanded by Hsiao Chin-kuang and with Hsiao Hua as its political commissar) through Shanhai Pass. In January 1919, Hsiao took part in the Battle of Tientsin. When the 9th Column was renamed the 46th Army (commander: Chan Ts'ai-fang) of the 4th Field Army, he was promoted to be commander of its 137th Division; and together with Chan Ts'ai-fang, they went southward to Hengyang, Hunan. In October, he took over the concurrent post of commander of the Hengyang Garrison.

In 1950, Hsiao was made deputy commander of the 46th Army, and in early 1952, he became its commander. In September 1952, Hsiao led the 133rd, 136th and 137th Divisions from Hengyang to participate in the Korean War. Following the end of the Korean War, Hsiao led his units back to Northeast China.

In September 1955, Hsiao was given the rank of major general. In 1959, he was sent to the Military Academy to study military sciences. In July 1960, he wrote "Remember the Red Flag" (遙憶紅旗) which was published in *Chiang-ch'eng wen-yi* (江城文藝); later on, he wrote two other recollections: "First Love in the Flames of Battle" (烽火初戀) and "Long Practice Makes a Good Soldier" (久練出精兵), both published in *Ch'ang-ch'un* (長春).

In 1963, he was appointed deputy chief of staff of the Shenyang Military Region (commander: Ch'en Hsi-lien). Later in December 1965, he was promoted to be deputy commander of the Shenyang Military Region. Hsiao did not suffer any setbacks during the Cultural Revolution.



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In 1980, he was transferred from Shenyang to Sinkiang and promoted to be commander of the Urumchi Military Region. In September 1982, he was elected a member of the 12th CCP Central Committee.

## II

Sinkiang is a vast province in Northwest China whose border with the Soviet Union is as long as 1,000 miles. Because of its complex mixture of nationalities and its geographical environment, it has been a thorny problem for the Peiping regime. After the 1st Field Army (commander: Wang En-mao) entered Sinkiang in October 1949 and a military district was established there, Sinkiang became the "mountaintop" of the 1st Field Army. It was not until August 1968 that Wang En-mao was replaced as commander of the Sinkiang Military District by one of Lin Piao's proteges, Lung Shu-chin (龍書金), then commander of the Hunan Provincial Military District. But Lung was purged right after Lin Piao's downfall in September 1971, and the actual strength of the 4th Field Army gradually degenerated. Although the region was commanded by Yang Yung, Liu Chen, and Wu K'e-hua in succession, they could not restore stability in Sinkiang for various political reasons.

## III

On January 5, 1979, Teng Hsiao-p'ing established the Eastern Sinkiang Military District (commanded by Lu K'e-hsueh) which was equal to a Provincial Military District. The purpose of this set-up seems to be to strengthen the combat readiness of the border areas to improve border defense. In April of the same year, the Sinkiang Military District was upgraded and redesignated the Urumchi Military Region, and the position of its commander was raised.

According to a report issued by the Chinese Communists in June 1982, the Sinkiang Production-Construction Corps, which had been disbanded in November 1974, was reestablished in February 1982, with Ch'en Shih, the former chief of staff, as its commander; and Ku Ching-sheng, political commissar of the Urumchi Military Region, as its first political commissar. Obviously, the Sinkiang Production-Construction Corps is still under the command of the Urumchi Military Region. Their headquarters is still at Shihhotzu. The Corps consists of 500,000 soldiers divided into divisions and regiments (farms).

Of the Production-Construction Corps which were disbanded during the Cultural Revolution, why has Teng Hsiao-p'ing only chosen to reestablish the one in Sinkiang? There are four possible reasons for this: (1)



Sinkiang, situated on the Northwest border, has often been the target of Soviet military pressure; the reestablishment of the Corps may improve its combat readiness and strengthen border defenses. (2) The Corps is a paramilitary force which functions as both a fighting unit and a work brigade. The Corps may prevent conflict between the various nationalities; while it is working at grassroots level, it may also improve the relations between the military and civilians, and help establish stability. (3) To reinforce the development and improve the economic situation in the border area. (4) To reinforce military control over the "intellectual youths" who have been sent down to farms in Sinkiang.