Red China Today...

A Tiger At The Gates
No Chicken In The Pot

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In 1955 at Bandung, Indonesia, Red China was beguiling the neutral Southeast Asians with promises of trade, aid, and regional peace. Chou En-lai and Nehru had reached an agreement on coexistence and Sukarno was proclaiming his brotherhood with the Chinese.

Now China appears willing to risk her political gains with an aggressive move to the south. She has stirred boundary disputes in Burma and India.

Rainbow Maps
The Chinese publish maps which, reminiscent of the rainbow library that justified the ways of realpolitik in Europe, show that 20,000 square miles of Burma really belongs to China.

Weak Laos
In Laos, China has a weak opponent. Previous American aid to Laos has bought support from local politicians, not economic stability or defense. Mao wants to shake Western influence in Laos but probably won't resort to an open war now unless United Nations or United States support of Laos threatens the communists hold on North Vietnam.

Nevertheless, Mao's government, to justify its heavy arms expenditures, must convince the Chinese that there is a tiger at the gates.

Oppressive Tiger
Fear of the tiger must make bearable depressed living standards for 600 million Chinese and divert their attention from the failures of the commune system.

The Laotian crisis may be the embryo of a ten-year expansion plan in Southeast Asia. The speed with which the plan develops will probably depend on China's major internal problem: feeding an expanding population from an arable land area two-thirds the size of the continental United States. There is little usable land left and the chances for reclamation are small.

A Billion By '80
By 1980 China could have one billion people to feed. Small escape-valve areas in Manchuria, Northwest China, and Tibet were filled last year. The commune administrators claimed to have solved China's food problem with 375 million tons of grain, potatoes, and yams.