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REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL AIR FLEET,

PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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FOREWORD

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL AIR FLEET,
PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

[Following is a translation of an article by V. Kurakin and V. Shlyakov in Grazhdanskaya Aviatsiya [Civil Aviation], No. 10, Oct 1959, pp. 4-5.]

The first of October was the tenth anniversary of the memorable day when the red five-starred flag of the Chinese Peoples Republic was raised over the T'ian An Men Square in Peiping. The Tenth Anniversary of the Republic is being celebrated by the brotherly Chinese people and by the toilers of all the socialist countries, and by all progressive mankind.

The celebration of this glorious anniversary was participated in by a Soviet Party and Government delegation headed by Comrade N. S. Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee CPSU and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, as well as by Party and Government delegations from the peoples democracies and representatives of fraternal communist and workers parties.

The festival devoted to the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Peoples Republic poured forth in a clear demonstration of the tremendous achievements of the Chinese people in the building of socialism, the unbreakable unity of the countries of the great socialist camp, the solidarity of the world communist and workers movement and of the friends of peace and progress.

Ten years have passed since the formation of the KNR (Chinese Peoples Republic). This famous date -- 1 October -- has been celebrated by all progressive mankind.

Ten years is a very short period of time for a people whose history is counted in millenia. Having languished in the recent past under the yoke of colonizers and reactionary governments, China has been transformed now into an independent state which is successfully building socialism.

Immediately after their victory in the liberation struggle the Chinese people bent their tremendous energies to the development of industry, agriculture, and transportation. The development of civil aviation in China is indissolubly connected with the unheard-of progress of the entire national economy.

Before the liberation of the country civil aviation was operated jointly by the Kuomintang Government and American and German monopolists. Crushed by the Peoples Liberation Army, the Kuomintang reactionaries in fleeing from China destroyed almost all the country's airfields, equipment, and aircraft. Considerable efforts were required to restore aerial communications.

In December 1949 the Central Peoples Government established the Administration of the Civil Air Fleet. Naturally, great difficulties were encountered in the initial period in the creation of national aviation. These difficulties were augmented by the fact that China possessed almost no experienced aviation and technical personnel of its own. Mostly foreigners had been employed in China's aviation. Therefore the creation of its own national cadres, devoted to the cause of building the new socialist China, was one of the most important tasks which confronted civil aviation at that time.

Aware of the difficulties which were being experienced in this period by the young Chinese Peoples Republic, the Soviet Union extended the hand of fraternal aid, delivered the necessary aviation technique and equipment, and also sent its own experienced specialists.

In July 1950 three international air routes were opened: from Peiping planes began to fly to China, Irkutsk, and Alma-Ata. These airlines not only contributed to closer economic and cultural cooperation between the two great powers and also the peoples democracies, but also strengthened the communications between the capital of China and peripheral areas. The flight routes of the planes extended across broad regions of the Northwest and Northeast of the country.

In August 1950 the first operations began on the Peiping to Kyang-chou airline (connecting the capital with the South of China) and the Tientsin-Chungching line. At the same time the Administration of the Civil Air Fleet began planned training of technical and flight personnel. Courses were opened (more than 20 in all) at which various types of aviation specialists were trained.

Civil aviation flight personnel were reinforced by experienced workers and began to operate still more successfully and independently. As early as 1951 the original plan for expansion of air traffic was overfulfilled by 23 percent. In the following year the plan was also considerably overfulfilled and the cost of flights was almost halved.

In 1953 the Chinese people began to implement their First Five-Year Plan for the development of the national economy -- the plan for the socialist industrialization of the country. And new tasks were laid on civil aviation. A further expansion was planned in communications between the capital and the most important cities of the country and with the border areas. At the same time it was necessary to develop special-purpose aviation for the needs of agriculture and forestry, for geodetic reconnaissance work, and for other national-economic requirements. In this period air freight became increasingly important in the shipment of industrial equipment. These shipments constituted more than one-half of the total volume.

The volume of air shipments and freight-turnover grew steadily. A great deal of attention was given to the further expansion of air lines into inaccessible regions, particularly in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the country. In 1956 the Urumchi-Altay, Peiping-Pao-tou-Lanchou, and other lines were opened.

Airlines were opened to meet the tasks of the Five-Year Plan and were of exceptional importance for the development of industry in outlying regions, and for the economic and cultural exchange between the peoples inhabiting the KMR.

The last year of the First Five-Year Plan -- 1957 -- was memorable for still greater accomplishments in the development of civil aviation. Regular air communications connected 38 major cities of the country. The total length of airlines exceeded 26,000 kilometers. International airlines were opened connecting China with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and with Burma. The targets for passenger, mail, and freight traffic, laid down in the First Five-Year Plan for the end of 1957, were considerably overfulfilled and the total number of flights increased 3.5 times in comparison with 1952.

Civil aviation in the Chinese Peoples Republic has continued to develop on the same scale as the growth of the entire national economy. By 1958 the volume of passenger flights had increased 12 times in comparison with 1950. Still greater was the increase in air freight. At present, the total length of airlines amounts to more than 36,000 kilometers. During the Second Five-Year Plan considerable allocations were planned for the development of civil aviation. By 1962 (the last year of the Second Five-Year Plan) the airlines system of the country is to be enlarged several times in comparison with 1957.

With the aid of the Soviet Union, in addition to transport aviation special-purpose aviation has been developed in China. Its operations are expanding from year to year.

Within a comparatively short time aerial geodetic reconnaissance work has been carried out on a large scale for many regions of the interior of Mongolia, the Northwest, and the middle and lower courses of the Yangtse River. Aviators have aided in the discovery of a large number of deposits of valuable natural resources. At the present time oil explorations are being carried out by air.

Civil aviation pilots are taking an active part in the struggle with agricultural pests. Last year work was done in the KMR in the spreading of fertilizers on the soil from airplanes. Aviation has an important role also in forest preservation. Aerial photography is being steadily developed.

The aviation industry is being developed on the base of the general economic expansion of the country. The domestic Chinese airplane-manufacturing industry has achieved great successes. Thanks to the aid of the Soviet Union the production has been mastered of jet and piston aircraft. By their own efforts Chinese designers and workers built the Ai-2 type plane which is widely used in many branches of the national economy.

Along with the expansion of the airlines a great deal of work is being done in the re-equipping of old and the construction of new airfields. In March 1958 the Shoudu airport, the largest in China, was opened in Peiping. It is equipped with the latest technique and first-class communications equipment. The airport can be used around the clock by a large number of aircraft, including such aerial liners as the Tu-104, Il-18, and Tu-114.

Airplanes of Chinese civil aviation are now flying to the Soviet Union, Mongolian Peoples Republic, Korean Peoples-Democratic Republic, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and to Burma. Peiping is now connected by regular flights with more than 70 cities in China and abroad.

For the satisfaction of the growing demand for air flights it is proposed by the end of this year to put Il-18 turboprop planes into service on the domestic lines of the KNR.

The newly created air transport of China has achieved enormous successes. It has become accessible to the masses of the toilers. And thanks to air transport constant communications are maintained between the industrial and previously completely backward border districts of China. The glorious Wings of China are truly serving the common cause -- the development of the national economy, the strengthening of fraternal friendship among the peoples of this great socialist country.

[Photograph -- Passengers boarding a plane at the Wuhan airport]

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