

## China, Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung

**N.B. As per the [disclaimer](#), neither the ICRC nor the authors can be identified with the opinions expressed in the Cases and Documents.** Some cases even come to solutions that clearly violate IHL. They are nevertheless worthy of discussion, if only to raise a challenge to display more humanity in armed conflicts. **Similarly, in some of the texts used in the case studies, the facts may not always be proven;** nevertheless, they have been selected because they highlight interesting IHL issues and are thus published for didactic purposes.

[Source: *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung*, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1963, p. 341; footnotes omitted.]

### ON THE REISSUE OF THE THREE MAIN RULES OF DISCIPLINE AND THE EIGHT POINTS FOR ATTENTION

#### INSTRUCTION OF THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

**October 10, 1947**

1. Our Army's Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention [...] have now been unified and are hereby reissued. It is expected that this version will be taken as the standard one for thorough education in the army and strict enforcement. As to other matters needing attention, the high command of the armed forces in different areas may lay down additional points in accordance with specific conditions and order their enforcement.

2. The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

- (1) Obey orders in all your actions.
- (2) Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.
- (3) Turn in everything captured.

3. The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:

- (1) Speak politely.
- (2) Pay fairly for what you buy.
- (3) Return everything you borrow.
- (4) Pay for anything you damage.
- (5) Do not hit or swear at people.
- (6) Do not damage crops.
- (7) Do not take liberties with women.
- (8) Do not ill-treat captives.

### Discussion

1. Are these Rules of Discipline and Points for Attention consistent with IHL?
2. With specific attention to Art. 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, what provisions of IHL are missing from these Rules and Points?
3. In what areas do these Rules and Points extend beyond IHL? ([GC I-IV, Art. 3; P II](#))
4. Which implementation mechanisms do these Rules and Points provide for?
5. Regarding Rule (1), must a member of the army always obey orders? Even if such orders are inconsistent with other Rules or Points?

