

**The original documents are located in Box 20, folder “November 28 - December 7, 1975 - Far East - Memoranda in Support of the President's Trip to the People's Republic of China (2)” of the National Security Adviser Trip Briefing Books and Cables for President Ford, 1974-1976 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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FOREIGN POLICY





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November 21, 1975

## PRC FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION

There have been no major departures in Chinese foreign policy over the past year, although Peking has continued to make adjustments in the general diplomatic orientation it established in the early 1970s. In the past half year there has appeared to be a growing sense of strain underlying China's view of its prospects abroad, to which the outcome of the war in Vietnam, the Helsinki summit conference and continuing stagnation in its bilateral relations with the United States have probably all contributed. Despite the sometimes spectacular diplomatic gains of the early 1970s, Peking at this juncture does not seem certain that it has achieved a permanent and decisive breakthrough in the international sphere. But while there may be a growing sense of pessimism in China, this mood does not yet appear so pronounced as to result in a major reorientation of policy.

China's major preoccupation continues to be the Soviet Union. Peking continues to attempt to undercut Soviet policy wherever possible, and to consolidate its own influence at Moscow's expense whenever it can. Since last spring, however, Peking has appeared to view Soviet intentions with greater apprehension, showing renewed concern that Moscow is maneuvering to "surround" and isolate China. This heightened concern seems directly related to the outcome of the Indochina war, which the Chinese seem to believe foreshadows further diminution of US power in Asia and consequent opportunities for Moscow to pick up some of the slack, particularly in Southeast Asia. Since last summer Chinese anti-Soviet

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[REDACTED]

rhetoric has noticeably increased and has acquired a sharper edge. It is possible that some sort of exchange between two powers may have occurred in the summer, but there is at present no direct evidence of this. The Chinese, however, have again begun to stress the possibility of a Soviet attack to domestic audiences, and a "preparations for war" movement reminiscent of that of 1969-1972 appears to be beginning.

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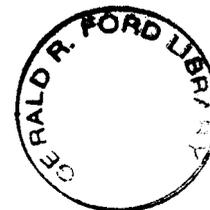
[REDACTED] a decision was apparently taken to streamline and modernize the Chinese force structure over the next several years; this decision was justified in terms of the necessity to fend off a putative Soviet attack.

Bilateral relations between the two powers remain frozen, and both have claimed that there are no prospects for early improvement. The Chinese, moreover, have recently begun to raise in public issues of considerable sensitivity to Moscow. They have begun to refer to the Soviet helicopter they downed in northwest China for the first time since shortly after its crew was captured in mid-March 1974, and in a speech in early October a member of the Chinese Politburo raised the spectre of a Soviet attempt to stir up trouble among the ethnic minorities in Sinkiang Province. The annual Sino-Soviet river navigation talks (which normally deal with such mundane matters as the setting of navigational buoys in the Ussuri and Amur rivers) were skipped this year [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The border talks in Peking remain deadlocked and are currently in recess.

Signs continue to surface in China from time to time that the issue of the proper relationship with Moscow is a contentious one in the upper reaches of the regime. It

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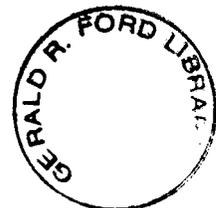
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seems fairly certain that at least some important elements in the Chinese leadership would prefer a less abrasive relationship with the Soviets, but it is impossible to judge how widespread this sentiment is. In any event, it is likely that some at least consider the issue less as a serious policy question than as a means of scoring points off possible opponents in the jockeying for power now taking place in Peking. In fact, relations with Moscow have probably deteriorated rather than improved over the past six months or so -- that is, since Mao returned to the capital after a long sojourn in the provinces.

Chinese concern that Moscow might succeed in isolating and "surrounding" China has clearly conditioned Peking's approach to relations with North Korea. In the past year China has supported Pyongyang's position on reunification and withdrawal of US forces from the peninsula and on related issues in the United Nations far less equivocally than was the case in the early 1970s. Kim Il-song's visit to China last spring and the recent visit of Politburo member Chang Chun-chiao to Korea clearly was meant to underline the closeness of the present relationship -- from China's point of view at least -- at the expense of Moscow. This unabashed cultivation of Pyongyang has paid off to some degree. For the past year the Koreans have not bothered to edit out anti-Soviet remarks by Chinese leaders when replaying their speeches in Korean media. Moreover, by identifying closely with Chinese support for Prince Sihanouk and with the Chinese position on Cambodia generally the Koreans have appeared to endorse -- by implication at least -- Chinese attempts to circumscribe Soviet influence in

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Indochina. Peking's cultivation of Pyongyang underscores its belief that it is playing for high stakes in Korea and that its vital interests are involved in the attempt to ensure a lesser degree of Soviet influence on the peninsula than it seems to believe now exists in Indochina.

Concerns about Soviet machinations also condition Peking's relations with Japan, but in this case China's fears are clearly exaggerated. The Chinese game here is to keep Moscow off balance and to throw as many roadblocks as possible in the development of closer Japanese-Soviet relations. In any assessment of the possibility of expansion of Soviet influence in Asia, Japan obviously assumes an important place in Chinese eyes, and Peking's hardening on the issue of the anti-Soviet "hegemony clause" in the proposed Sino-Japanese treaty of peace and friendship roughly paralleled the denouement in Indochina. The Chinese clearly see the issue as a litmus test of current Japanese attitudes toward Peking and Moscow respectively, and crude Soviet pressure on the Japanese to resist inclusion of the clause in the treaty certainly raised the stakes for the Chinese. Moreover, Peking is apparently more suspicious of Miki than it was of the amiable Tanaka, and this suspicion doubtless was reinforced by what the Chinese clearly regard as Japanese backtracking from the position Tokyo adopted when relations were established in 1972.

However, despite the continuing difficulties over the hegemony clause, Peking is certainly not prepared to write off Tokyo. The Chinese took a relatively relaxed view of Japanese arrangements allowing for resumption of air traffic to Taiwan

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[REDACTED] Economic relations between the two countries remain strong, and the Chinese have largely kept the negotiations on the peace treaty isolated from other aspects of bilateral relations. [REDACTED]

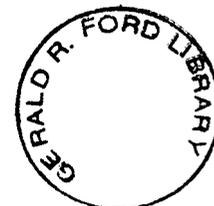
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[REDACTED]

Peking continues to go through the motions of searching for a gesture that would lead Taipei to enter into meaningful talks on the future of the island -- the latest such gesture was the release of a considerable number of "agents" who had been captured while infiltrating the mainland in the 1960s, but it clearly does not expect a response from the Nationalists. In fact, the Chinese mood with respect to the Taiwan problem has darkened somewhat in the past few montas. Teng Hsiao-ping continues to tell foreign visitors that Peking is prepared to wait for quite some time before the resolution of the problem and can afford to do so,

[REDACTED] At the same time the populace is apparently being told that China's military establishment has been instructed to draw up plans to "liberate" the island, perhaps in five years' time -- that is, by the time of the 1980 elections in the United States.

It is unlikely that the Chinese leadership rates the possibility of a rapprochement between Moscow and Taipei as highly as these internal instructions would suggest, or that, given China's problems with its northern neighbor, it would be willing to divert the major military resources

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required for a conquest of the island while at the same time ensuring a disruption of its relations with Washington and the creation of major problems in its relations with Western Europe, Japan, and the countries of Southeast Asia. However, the new instructions may represent a concession to elements in Peking who may be arguing that China's current foreign policy line has not brought reunification of the island with the mainland significantly closer. It is probably no coincidence that the Chinese populace is also being told not to expect a major breakthrough on the Taiwan issue as a result of President Ford's upcoming visit to China.

In contrast, the Chinese undoubtedly consider Southeast Asia an area where they have made some progress in the past year. Thai recognition followed quickly on that of the Philippines; both moves were clearly a gain for Peking, but it almost certainly does not expect either Indonesia or Singapore to follow suit any time soon. China is continuing to offer material aid to the insurgencies in Burma and Thailand and to offer moral support to insurrectionaries in Malaysia and the Philippines, but its current emphasis is clearly on state-to-state relations. Ne Win, for example, has just visited China. As part of their effort to draw the nations of Southeast Asia closer to Peking, the Chinese are emphasizing the potential threat from the USSR -- an expansionist superpower with vast if undefined designs on the region. These scare tactics undoubtedly reflect genuine Chinese concerns, but Peking is also very much aware of the utility of this line of argument in creating a bond of common concern with the countries in the area. A similar mix of genuine concern and tactical considerations lies

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behind Peking's parallel claim that the Southeast Asian nations have much to fear from Hanoi but little to fear from China; this second argument is likely to fall on fertile soil and already has had a positive effect in building a new relationship with Thailand. At this juncture the Chinese clearly see a period of relative stability in the region to be in their interest; they remain relaxed on the question of US bases in Thailand and the Philippines, both with Thais and Filipinos and with third parties.

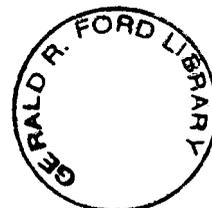
In contrast, Peking does not appear to be relaxed about relations with Vietnam; a Chinese diplomat was reported to have recently described them as "appalling." While the Chinese view of Soviet influence in Hanoi is undoubtedly exaggerated, Peking certainly does believe that Moscow has the inside track in Vietnam -- a view that is apparently shared by the Soviets themselves. Even apart from putative Soviet influence in Hanoi, the Chinese appear to consider Vietnam a relatively well-armed, potentially expansionist and generally troublesome close neighbor, and it seems prepared to take the lead in keeping Hanoi in check. Chinese relations with Cambodia are apparently being cultivated with an eye to both Moscow and Hanoi without very much regard for Vietnamese sensibilities, and Peking has been telling its populace in south China that a dispute with Hanoi over the common border is developing.

[redacted] differences with Vietnam [redacted]

[redacted] emphasize publicly its claims in the South China Sea through a slogan calling for "liberation" of the Spratly Islands, many of which are occupied by Vietnam.

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[REDACTED]

The Chinese undoubtedly recognize the disadvantages of an open breach with Hanoi [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Le Duan's recent visits to China and the USSR have certainly done nothing to improve the situation from the Chinese point of view. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Chinese were fairly niggardly in their aid offers, and Le Duan's party left China without the publication of a joint communique and without entertaining the Chinese at the customary farewell banquet. In contrast, in the communique issued at the conclusion of the parallel visit to Moscow, the Vietnamese endorsed detente -- a development certain to deeply anger the Chinese, who are of course vehemently denouncing detente in public and in private. The quarrel with Hanoi -- and Moscow -- has inevitably spilled over into Laos, and although Peking has ostensibly taken a fairly relaxed attitude toward conditions there, [REDACTED]

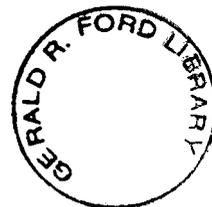
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[REDACTED] China might have to withdraw its road-building engineering units now operating in northern Laos.

Relations with India, like those with the USSR, remain frozen. Although the recent border clash is unlikely to have major repercussions, the Chinese are certain to consider Mrs. Gandhi's [REDACTED] a good indicator that relations with Delhi will remain strained for some time to come. Peking is apparently unwilling to provoke India -- it may have possible Indian moves in the Himalayas in mind -- and it has reported the developments in Delhi in low key, but the Chinese are probably pessimistic about a significant improvement of their position on the subcontinent. They undoubtedly take satisfaction both in the fall of the Rahman regime and in their subsequent establishment of relations with Bangladesh -- Chiao Kuan-hua played a major part

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[REDACTED]

in the Bangalee-Pakistani negotiations which paved the way for the latter development, but Peking is not likely to believe these gains greatly alter the balance of power on the subcontinent and may fear that if political instability continues Delhi will be tempted to intervene in Bangladesh in order to restore the status quo ante. The Chinese continue to cultivate the Pakistanis and are perhaps more relaxed about the situation in Afghanistan than they were a year ago.

Peking continues to see Iran as the key to its Middle East policy and is persisting in its low-key wooing of Teheran. The Chinese [REDACTED] welcome improvement of Iran's relations with Iraq, but they consider Syria far more important to the balance of forces in the area than Baghdad [REDACTED]

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The Chinese are clearly pleased with the Sinai II agreement

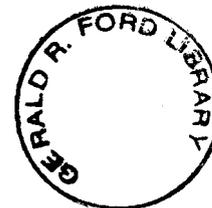
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king is not especially optimistic that anti-Soviet momentum in the area can be maintained, however. The Chinese appear to fear Syrian intervention in the Lebanese situation, and they seem to think that Moscow may attempt to play the Palestinian card, arming and encouraging the fedayeen. To cover their flank they continue to refuse to write off the Palestinians entirely and they continue to offer them verbal support in the United Nations and other forums. China's current interest in the Gulf states does not appear to be especially high. As they have since late 1973, however, the Chinese continue to endorse the actions of OPEC. Nevertheless, they seem unable to reconcile their position

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on this matter with arguments that rises in the price of oil tend to harm the economies of the Western European and Third World states, and have generally responded to such arguments with embarrassed evasions.

In general the Chinese continue to make what they consider the proper noises with respect to Third World issues. Much of this rhetoric, however, is just that; in practice Chinese actions remain cautious. Historically, Chinese interest in the underdeveloped nations has been highest when Peking has been unsure of its position in the international arena. Attention to the Third World in the past two years is probably a reflection of current uncertainty. In the past year some strains -- none thus far overwhelming -- have developed in China's relations with several African states which Peking has been cultivating for some time. Last summer the Chinese were at odds with Zambia over Kaunda's desire to achieve a solution to the Rhodesian problem in concert with South Africa.

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Peking is also almost certainly concerned about gains by the MPLA in Angola, but they are likely to allow the US and South Africa to bear the major burden of supporting the rival FNLA and UNITA.

Peking is currently paying relatively little attention to Latin America. It is primarily concerned with cementing state-to-state relations with the countries of the region, attempting thereby to make gains at the expense of the Soviets and the Nationalist Chinese. To this end Peking continues to maintain relations with Chile, even at the cost of some tarnishing of its revolutionary image. Its relations with Cuba remained strained.

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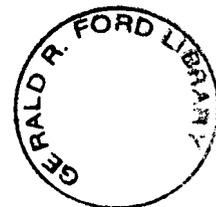
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Chinese interest is much more directly focused on Europe, which continues to remain the central factor in Peking's rhetorical and rather apocalyptic public analysis of the international scene. China continues to cultivate nearly all of the West European states; streams of visitors, both officials in office and opposition leaders, have visited China in the past year. Both Franz-Joseph Strauss and Edward Heath have recently completed second visits to Peking; Teng Hsiao-ping visited France last spring -- his only official visit other than to the United Nations since his return to power in 1973. The burden of the Chinese message to the Europeans remains constant: unremitting vigilance is necessary to frustrate Soviet designs on Europe. This message in only slightly different form is being passed to the maverick nations in Eastern Europe as well. Official Romanian delegations to China have all but tripped over each other in recent months, and the Yugoslav premier visited China in October -- the first Yugoslav premier to make the journey.

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Chinese importunings in Europe are obviously undertaken with an eye toward Moscow, in the hope that if the Soviets become more preoccupied with their western flank they will have less energy and inclination to concentrate on problems in the east. Peking's interest in Europe, however, is not simply tactical; they seem genuinely concerned that Moscow is gaining a freer hand there. In this regard, the recent Helsinki summit unquestionably increased Chinese anxieties.

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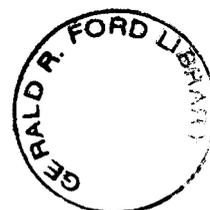
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Although they have not devoted as much propaganda attention to the meeting as they have to some other issues, the Chinese almost certainly believe that the conference tended to legitimize the Soviet position in Eastern Europe while presenting Moscow with opportunities for political advances further west. The publicity surrounding the signing ceremony and the fact that the meeting was held at the summit level probably reinforces this line of Chinese analysis and may have increased Peking's current sense of relative isolation and vulnerability.

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NATIONAL DEFENSE

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 030354

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇMemorandum

TITLE . . . . . The National Defense Posture of the PRC

CREATION DATE . . . . . 11/21/1975

VOLUME . . . . . 11 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 035800409

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. TRIP  
BRIEFING BOOKS AND CABLES OF GERALD  
FORD

BOX NUMBER . . . . . 20

FOLDER TITLE . . . . . November 28 - December 7, 1975 - Far  
East - Memoranda in Support of the  
President's Trip to the People's  
Republic of China (2)

DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 07/01/2010

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . GG

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November 21, 1975

THE NATIONAL DEFENSE POSTURE OF THE PRC

Peking has the largest conventional armed forces in the world and a small, but growing nuclear capability. China's army, navy, and air force have a combined total of more than four million men. These forces maintain largely a defensive posture. Peking [redacted] intends to streamline and modernize its armed forces in order to improve their combat effectiveness.

The Chinese army currently has approximately three and a half million men in main, local, and support forces equipped with 6,000 tanks and assault guns and 14,000 pieces of field artillery. Most of the main forces are organized into 37 armies. Nearly half of the Chinese ground forces are concentrated in the four military regions which border the Soviet Union.

[redacted]

-- The bulk of any cuts clearly would be absorbed by the army. [redacted]

-- The paring of staffs and even large cuts in troop strengths should not seriously hamper China's military capability.

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BY [redacted] NLF, DATE 3/13/09



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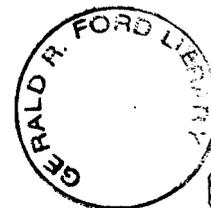
-- Any manpower reductions in the combat forces probably would be partially offset by increases in mechanized, anti-tank, chemical, and other technical and specialized forces. These should enhance China's firepower, mobility, and flexibility.

China currently has the third largest air force in the world, but it is no longer growing as fast as it did in the late sixties.

- Most of China's 5,000 aircraft consist of outdated MIG-15, 17, and 19 jet fighters, although the Chinese also possess several dozen of the more modern MIG-21s and some 350 of the Chinese designed F-9 fighter-bomber. China's bomber force consists of less than 600 aircraft, mostly old IL-28s.
- China's air force is clearly a defense force. While jet fighters are scattered throughout the country, Peking has concentrated almost half of its MIGs at eastern bases. Because of sheer numbers of fighters, the Chinese are capable of inflicting heavy losses on an attacking air force during clear weather. They are less effective against high speed aircraft and have only a limited nighttime capability.

China's aircraft do not compare in performance or sophistication with modern Soviet and Western aircraft, consequently they do not adequately perform the complex military tasks necessary in modern warfare. In an effort to overcome this shortcoming, Peking has embarked on a modest program of aircraft development coupled with selective import of foreign aircraft technology.

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-- China has been working [redacted]

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[redacted] on a new fighter [redacted]

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[redacted] It is a large delta-wing intercep-  
tor with twin engines [redacted]

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-- The Chinese also have developed a large new am-  
phibian aircraft for use in anti-submarine war-

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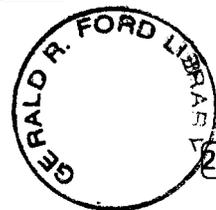
In our view, the Chinese have not yet made a serious  
effort to obtain foreign combat aircraft.

The Chinese navy continues to perform essentially as a  
coastal defense force, although it is slowly attaining a modest  
capability for more extended operations. The navy consists of  
20 major surface ships, more than 150 guided missile boats,  
over 70 attack submarines, and large numbers of small, lightly-  
armed patrol craft.

-- The navy's lack of modern anti-submarine  
weapons and equipment makes it vulnerable  
to submarine attack. The navy also lacks a  
surface-to-air missile capability [redacted]

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- [REDACTED]
- In addition to the ships that they obtained from the Soviets during the 1950s, the Chinese have produced their own version of some Soviet-designed ships as well as some of their own unique design.
  - The Chinese now produce several destroyer escorts, patrol boats, and submarines. They have produced one nuclear-powered attack submarine of their own design [REDACTED]

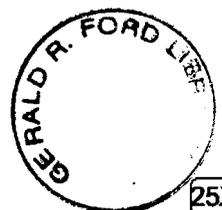
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### Strategic Considerations

As can be seen from this overview of the forces at Peking's command, the capability of Communist China's general purpose forces is impressive. But there are constraints under which the strategic planners of the PRC are forced to operate, and these constraints as well as changing circumstances have shaped the national defense posture that we see today.

Before 1969, the major threat perceived by Peking was an attack from the sea by the US and/or the forces of the Republic of China. But after the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969, Peking became increasingly concerned with the threat of attack by the Soviet Union. Accordingly, defense planners were forced to rethink their strategy and reorient the armed forces to meet these new conditions.

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Peking's current military strategy can best be described as all-around defense but with a preponderance of power in the north. The forces are prepositioned in each threat area at levels perceived sufficient to blunt initial assaults.

- Reserve forces would move quickly to reinforce areas under attack. Once reserves are committed, units in other parts of China probably would be required to move into vacated staging areas and become reserves.
- At some point the mobilization of civilian manpower, especially those in militia units, would be required to replace deployed units.

#### Limiting Factors

One factor limiting the PRC's capability to form new units is an apparent lack of heavy weapons stockpiles and a restricted capacity to produce these weapons.

- Even if we assume that Peking's vulnerable weapons production facilities could continue to produce at reduced levels after being attacked, and that some new facilities could be activated, it would still be difficult to replace equipment lost or destroyed in combat.
- Only in the long term would industry possibly begin to produce enough heavy equipment to equip any substantial numbers of new units.
- Until then, fully equipped units would be available only from those existing at the commencement of hostilities. This means that no one area of operation would be self-sufficient.

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As long as Peking's relations with the USSR are strained, the border situation remains tense, and large numbers of Soviet forces are deployed along the border, China is not likely to mount major military operations elsewhere.

- Limited military operations are, however, still a possibility in a situation where there is a high expectation of success and relatively little risk. The best example of this would be the operation in the Paracels which occurred last year.
- We do not believe that Peking at present has the capability to initiate a successful large scale military operation against Taiwan or the Pescadores, but Communist spokesmen have recently reiterated that force remains one option for solving the Taiwan problem.
- An attack against the offshore islands of Chinmen and Matsu is possible but this carries a degree of risk which would probably preclude a direct assault on the islands. Peking probably could carry out a blockade of the offshore islands. However, this is not likely in the short term. Peking will probably gradually and carefully extend its naval power in the Taiwan Strait but in doing so will seek to avoid a confrontation with the US or Taiwan.

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 030355

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . ÇMemorandum

TITLE . . . . . The Status of China's Strategic Weapons  
Programs

CREATION DATE . . . . . 11/21/1975

VOLUME . . . . . 9 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 035800409

COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. TRIP  
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DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 07/01/2010

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November 21, 1975

THE STATUS OF CHINA'S STRATEGIC WEAPONS PROGRAMS

China possesses a limited but credible nuclear strike capability and can deliver nuclear weapons on targets around its periphery by both missile and bomber. [redacted]

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[redacted]

-- The 600 mile medium range missile that we call the CSS-1 can reach targets in the Soviet Far East, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and South-east Asia. [redacted]

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[redacted]

In addition to these systems, the Chinese are [redacted]

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[redacted] longer range land-based missiles [redacted]

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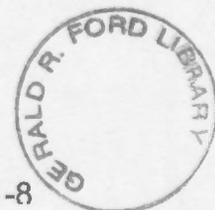
and on a submarine-launched ballistic missile.

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BY [signature] NLF DATE 3/13/09

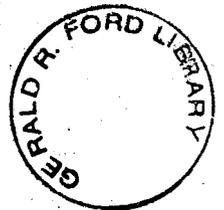
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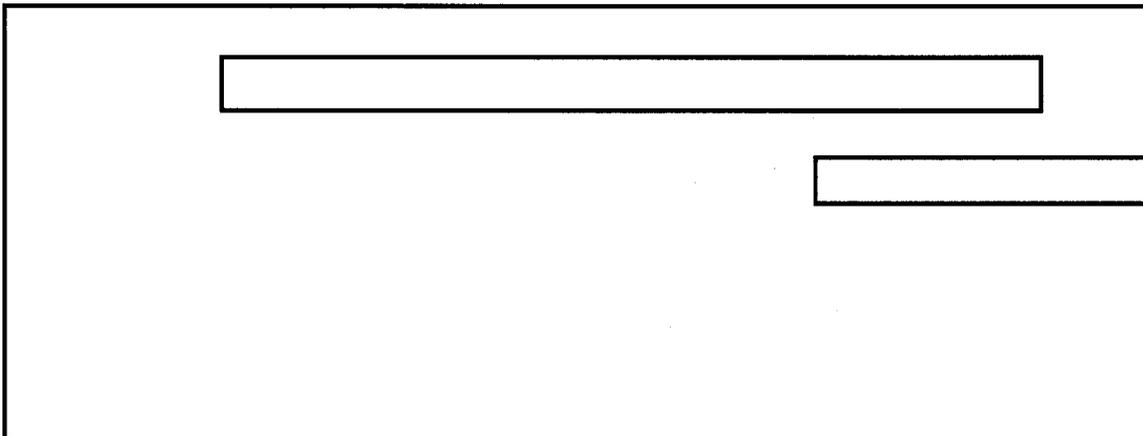
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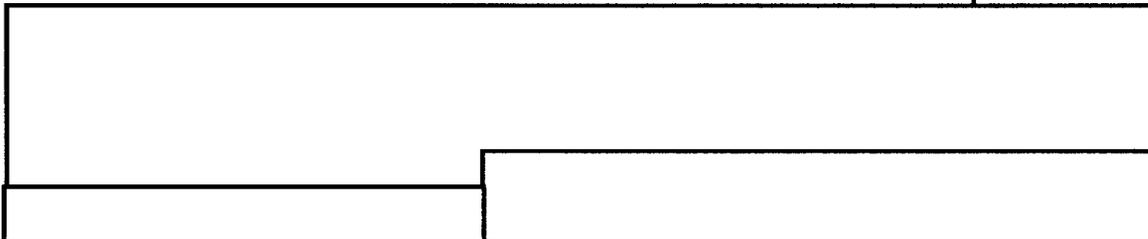
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The Chinese have both medium and light jet bombers which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

-- China's 60 TU-16 medium bombers are deployed at a half dozen airfields in the northern half of the country. These aircraft can deliver a nuclear weapon to a distance of more than 1,600 miles, but we do not know how many of them actually have a nuclear delivery role.

-- Peking also has over 400 IL-28 light bombers. These aircraft have a combat radius of just over 500 miles, and some of them could carry nuclear weapons. [redacted]

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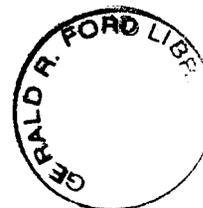
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-- China's IL-28s and TU-16s are obsolescent by Soviet and Western standards and probably would have little success in penetrating a modern defensive system. There is no evidence that Peking is developing a suitable replacement for either aircraft.

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Space Programs

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The Chinese space program has made slow progress since its inception.

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-- The Chinese space program is still in a nascent stage.

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