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9 April 1963

SUBJECT: (U) Changes to DIA Estimate of 18 March 1963,
"The Chinese Communist Ground Threat to India"
(DIAAP-2C, S-16563/P-2)

TO: See Distribution

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SECRETTHE CHINESE COMMUNIST GROUND THREAT TO INDIA

1. An estimated daily deliverable rate of 1,600 tons--assuming the establishment of substantial reserves in the forward areas--is sufficient on a continuing basis to satisfy the resupply requirements of not only the air units, but also a ground force of 225,000, of which a maximum of 175,000 troops could be employed in simultaneous attacks all along the Sino-Indian border.
2. While massive mountain ranges and the undeveloped road and trail system across the Himalayan frontier restrict the number of troops that could be supported in simultaneous attacks all along the Sino-Indian frontier to about 175,000 troops, we believe that normal operational considerations would further reduce the attack force to about 123,000 men.
3. Accordingly, we estimate that--assuming Chinese willingness to violate Nepalese and Bhutanese neutrality--the main threat to India would consist of capabilities for attacks (1) in Ladakh, (2) through the border passes between Ladakh and Nepal into India, (3) into Nepal, and (4) across eastern Bhutan and the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA) into northern Assam by 5 infantry divisions (light), 15 infantry regiments, and 2 airborne battalions.
4. It is estimated that the Chinese could support indefinitely operations in Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan and eastern NEFA. In the border pass area west of Nepal and in central NEFA, the difficulty in moving supplies through the Himalayan border passes would force the withdrawal of committed regiments during the winter months.
5. These attacks, we believe, would have the following military objectives:
 - a. In Ladakh and extension of Chinese control to include the capture of the important communications center of Leh.
 - b. In the border area between Ladakh and Nepal to seize the Chinese territorial claim north of Josimath and possibly to pose a psychological threat to New Delhi.
 - c. In Nepal to facilitate the eventual occupation of the country by seizure of the major valley approaches and Katmandu in order to forestall Indian intervention.
 - d. Along the frontier east of Nepal, the effective occupation of the NEFA and that part of Assam north of the Brahmaputra River. To accomplish this objective the Chinese could either temporarily occupy the key communications center of Siliguri and Hasimara, or effect a strong and permanent lodgement in the Gauhati area. Of the two, we believe that the Chinese would choose to establish the Gauhati salient because it would not only effectively deny the Indians eastward communications and at the same time greatly assist the Chinese advances into central and eastern NEFA, but also would be militarily the easier and less costly venture.
6. If Peiping should decide to renew hostilities only in the disputed border areas without involving Nepal and Bhutan, then

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the ground threat to India would consist of the capabilities to deploy the equivalent of at least 5 divisions (70,000 troops) in attacks in Ladakh, the border pass area west of Nepal, and the Northeast Frontier Agency.

7. If the Chinese chose to introduce tactical air, these ground attacks could be supported by offensive and defensive air operations involving as many as 290 aircraft (a reasonable mix could include 180 jet fighters, 50 jet light bombers, and 60 piston light bombers).

In the West

8. The road net leading from Sinkiang and western Tibet into Ladakh and to the Sino-Indian border will logistically support an estimated seven infantry divisions (light). This capability exists for operations within Ladakh and north of the frontier; for operations into Indian territory, however, this support capability drops to less than four divisions as motorable roads give way to pack trails. Therefore, the magnitude of the Chinese threat in this region is limited by the logistic difficulties that would be encountered in Indian territory, rather than by the number of troops that could be concentrated and supported on the Chinese side of the frontier.

9. After having established their supply reserves and effected necessary troop reinforcements, the Chinese could launch the following attacks in the western sector of the frontier:

- a. One infantry regiment to Panamik.
- b. One infantry division (light) to Leh.
- c. Two infantry regiments through Shipki Pass to Chini.
- d. Not more than three infantry regiments through Manu and Niti Passes to Josimath.
- e. Two infantry regiments through Lipulek Pass to Dharchula.

10. Because of logistic limitations and the need to improve road systems as they advance, Chinese military objectives would probably be limited to an extension of their control of the Ladakh area to include the capture of the key communications center of Leh. It is not believed that the Chinese, in their initial attack, could advance beyond Leh.

In Nepal

11. Because of the inaccessability of Nepal, the Chinese probably could do little more than move individual regiments through the border passes to establish blocking positions at population centers on the main north-south valley approaches.

12. They could, however, after airdropping not more than two airborne battalions onto the Katmandu airfield, follow with an airlift of one lightly-equipped division.

13. It is estimated that the Chinese could not occupy Nepal up to the Indian frontier, and their tenure of northern Nepal would be entirely dependent on stockpiling, their ability to sustain resupply operations through the northern passes in winter, and the retention of air supremacy over the Katmandu area.

SECRETIn the East

14. It is estimated that the Chinese would be unable by direct delivery from the Lhasa area or by redistribution of surplus supplies from Ladakh and eastern Tibet to stockpile sufficient amounts of military stores in the Chumbi Valley and the border areas north of Lhun-tsi Dzong and Bum La to logistically support simultaneous advances to Siliguri-Hasimara, Gauhati and Tezpur.

15. Therefore, in the Sikkim-Bhutan-NEFA sector of the eastern frontier region, the Chinese, having had the opportunity to stockpile and complete troop redeployment operations, could launch the following initial attacks over existing roads and trails:

a. Either: Two infantry divisions (light) to Gangtok and one division (light) to Pharo Dzong.

Or: Two infantry regiments to Lhun-tsi Dzong and two regiments to Tashigang Dzong.

Or: One infantry division to Tezpur.

b. Plus: Two infantry regiments 30 miles south of Longju.

c. Plus: One infantry division (light) to Tepang.

16. Subsequent to road improvements the Chinese could support the following operations:

a. Either: Three infantry divisions (light) and two standard divisions (with armor) to Siliguri and one division (light) to Hasimara.

Or: Maintain three infantry divisions (light) within Bhutan or advance to Gauhati with two divisions.

Or: Maintain two infantry divisions (light) at Bomdi La or one division at Tezpur.

b. Plus: Two infantry regiments 30 miles south of Longju.

c. Plus: Maintain three infantry divisions (light) at Tepang and advance with one of these divisions to Balamaghani.

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A. Supplies for Chinese Communist military forces in southwest Sinkiang and Tibet are transported overland from railheads at Urumchi, Lanchou/Hsiatung and Chengtu via the following main supply routes:

1. From the Urumchi railhead to the southwest Sinkiang supply base at Kashgar. While Kashgar is primarily responsible for the logistical support of those units in the Yarkand and Ladakh areas, some support probably is provided to troops located in extreme western Tibet.
2. From the Lanchou and Hsiatung railheads supplies are moved over the Tsinghai-Tibet road to the Nagchhu Dzong/Yangpaching distribution depots serving west, central and southern Tibet.
3. Military supplies from the Chengtu rail transshipment point are delivered to the Changtu-Pangta area via the Szechwan-Tibet highway for distribution to forces located in eastern Tibet and along the frontier from Lima west to probably Milin.

B. Based on reasonably good information on vehicle inventory and production and on excellent road information, we estimate that the Chinese have available sufficient motor transportation and an adequately developed road net to deliver to their logistics base north of the Sino-Indian border, under optimum conditions, 2,000 tons of supplies per day. This tonnage, however, is unlikely to be achieved during all seasons of the year due to weather and climate conditions which affect the capacities of the three main supply routes. Therefore, it is estimated that the maximum sustained tonnage available at supply distribution points in Sinkiang and Tibet is 1,600 tons per day, including 450 tons required to support offensive and defensive air operations. This estimate represents maximum Chinese capabilities to logistically support their forces within Tibet and in ground attacks and air operations over the major avenues of ground and air approaches into India and the Himalayan border states.

Although an operation of this magnitude may reduce China's available motor gasoline inventory by as much as 40%, we believe that, along with the transportation mentioned above, petroleum stocks and military stores are sufficient to maintain this logistic effort without seriously jeopardizing China's over-all defense posture. If China were to engage in military actions elsewhere, however, simultaneous support for operations in the Sino-Indian border area would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to carry out.

The deliverable rate of 1,600 tons per day, assuming the establishment of substantial reserves in the forward areas, could satisfy the daily resupply requirements of some 225,000 troops. An estimated 175,000 of this force could be employed in simultaneous attacks into India and the Himalayan border states. In addition to meeting the above ground force needs, the through-put tonnage of 1,600 tons per day also could support offensive and defensive air operations requiring approximately 450 tons daily.

C. The daily resupply requirements for the Chinese Communist infantry division (standard), the infantry division (light), and the independent infantry regiment are shown in Appendix 1 to this Annex.

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the vicinity of Chini (45 miles); not more than 3 regiments through Manu and Niti Passes to Josimath (approximately 45 miles); and two regiments through Lipulek Pass to the general area of Dharchula (20 miles).

b. Further advances beyond Chini, Josimath, and Dharchula could not be logistically supported until the Chinese had improved the existing trails to accommodate $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton vehicles. Further, it is believed that in the absence of aerial re-supply during the winter months (December-March), the regiments would be forced to withdraw to north of the passes.

D. The Threat Against Nepal1. Avenues of Approach

a. The Chinese are known to have built roads to within a few miles of the Sino-Nepalese border opposite the five major entry routes and they have good lateral communications with the entire length of the frontier from the Shigatse-Gartok road and its feeder roads in the west to Tingri Dzong. Trails lead from these roads to all the Sino-Nepalese border passes, many of which are open for much of the winter for porter convoys.

b. Caravan routes lead through the following major passes all of which are favorable approach routes for Chinese attacks: Naralagna, Kore La, Kriang La, Kodari Pass, and Rakha La.

2. Military Capabilities

a. It is estimated that the Chinese could air drop not more than two battalions to seize the Katmandu airfield, and could then within five to seven days air land up to one lightly-equipped infantry division. They could support this force by air indefinitely, provided they retained tactical air superiority in the area.

b. In addition it is estimated that by the utilization of pack animals and the mobilization of all available Tibetan and Nepalese porters the Chinese could support the following attacks:

1. Through Naralagna Pass to Bajang: one infantry regiment.
2. Through Kore La to Dana: one infantry regiment.
3. Through Kyriang La to Nawakot: one infantry regiment.
4. Through Kodari Pass to Dhulikhel: one infantry regiment.
5. Through Rakha La to Dingla: one infantry regiment.

E. The Threat in the East

In the eastern sector of the frontier region attacks in the following areas are considered:

1. Chumbi Valley through Sikkim to the Siliguri area.
2. Through western Bhutan to the Hasimara area.
3. Through eastern Bhutan and western NEFA to the Gauhati area.
4. Across the McMahon Line into central and eastern NEFA.