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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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CHINESE COMMUNIST INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE KASHMIR CRISIS



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Current Intelligence

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
7 September 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Chinese Communist Intentions and Capabilities With Respect to the Kashmir Crisis

1. The Chinese Communists have thus far treated the situation in Kashmir with great caution, and it seems likely that Peking will seek to avoid any major involvement. There are no indications that the Chinese are preparing for military action anywhere along the Sino-Indian border.

2. Fundamental Chinese security interests are not at present engaged in the Indo-Pakistani struggle. The successful border war with India in 1962 gave the Chinese firm control over the frontier areas Peking apparently regards as important. Barring developments which promise to bring a major hostile foreign military presence into the area, Peking would not feel threatened.

3. The Chinese have no important ideological stake in the Kashmir crisis. The conflict is between two non-Communist states, and at this point there is no clear-cut Sino-Soviet or "anti-imperialist" issue involved.

4. Preservation of Sino-Pakistani "friendship" is the most concrete Chinese interest now involved in the Kashmir crisis. This relationship, cultivated on both sides for the past several years, has been useful to China. It has helped to intensify frictions between New Delhi and Rawalpindi. It has put additional strain on the SEATO and CENTO alliance systems. It is currently of some value to Peking in the context of Afro-Asian affairs, where the Chinese find Pakistani cooperation a useful though not a vital tool.

5. Chinese behavior thus far indicates that Peking desires to keep its close ties with Pakistan, is willing to pay something to preserve them, but intends to follow a minimum-risk policy consistent with the limited scope of real Chinese interest in Sino-Pakistani friendship and with the more important Chinese commitments in Southeast Asia.

6. The Chinese response in the current situation to date is quite similar to Peking's reaction during the Rann of Kutch crisis last April. Chinese commentary at that time appeared calculated to provide political backing for Pakistan while avoiding any commitment of military support. Chinese propaganda put the blame on India but did not take a menacing line and was not accompanied by threatening military moves.

7. Initial Chinese propaganda treatment of the current Kashmir crisis was limited to reportorial accounts of the clashes, slanted to show that the Indians are at fault. During a press conference in Karachi on 4 September, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi took a somewhat sharper line. He denounced the Indians for provoking hostilities, for violating the cease-fire line, and for "aggravating the conflict." Chen's promises of backing for Pakistan, however, were guarded. He declared only that China "firmly supports" efforts by Pakistan to strike at "armed provocations" by India.

8. Peking's first formal statement on the Kashmir crisis, issued on 7 September, is more menacing and probably marks the start of a Chinese campaign designed to frighten the Indians into pulling back. The statement charges India with aggression, and with enlarging border clashes into a "general conflict" which is a grave threat to peace "in this part of Asia."

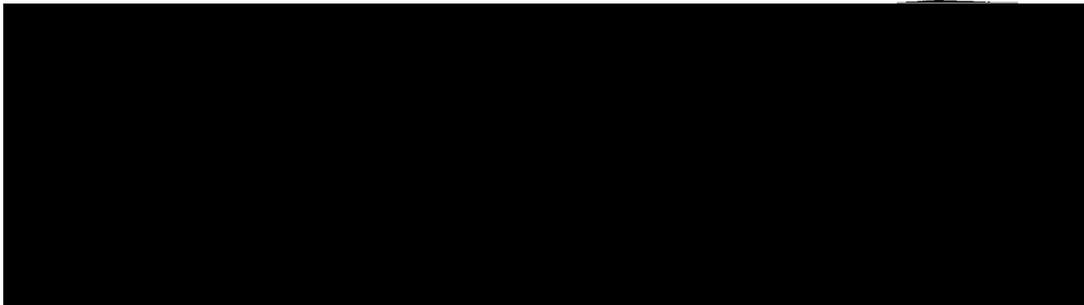
9. Peking raises the possibility of Chinese intervention by references to alleged Indian "intrusions and provocations" along the Sino-Indian border. The statement notes specifically that the Indians are "still entrenched on Chinese territory" along the border with Sikkim and charges them with furtive probes and harassment of Chinese territory

in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border.

10. The Chinese have avoided specific threats of action, however, and go no further than warning that Peking is "now closely following" developments in alleged Indian aggression and is "strengthening its defenses and heightening its alertness along its borders." The statement declares that Indian aggression against any one of its neighbors concerns all of them and warns that New Delhi must accept full responsibility for its actions. It closes, however, with an assertion of confidence in Pakistan's ability to defend itself "with the sympathy and support of the peace-loving countries and peoples of Asia and the whole world."

11. Chinese propaganda statements can be expected to get much harder and more threatening, and it is likely that they will be accompanied by warnings and threats delivered through private channels. Should these deterrent political moves fail in their effect, Peking might back them up by obvious military deployments near the Sino-Indian border, most likely opposite the North East Frontier Area (NEFA) where Chinese forces humiliated the Indian Army in 1962.

12. If despite this the Indians pressed on with the war and the struggle turned sharply against Pakistani forces, the Chinese would come under very heavy pressure from Rawalpindi to provide additional assistance, perhaps by direct military action against India. This would be especially true if the integrity of East Pakistan were to be threatened.



14. [REDACTED] US involvement in support of a major Indian military offensive would be a key element in any Chinese undertaking to help Pakistan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] another Chinese caveat in any agreement would specifically exclude chronic trouble spots like Kashmir and the Rann of Kutch.

15. By initiating border clashes on the scale of those during the 1962 Sino-Indian campaign, the Chinese could probably bring very heavy psychological and military pressure on India. However, even if such action were to be undertaken by the Chinese Communists, it is highly unlikely that the scope of their military operations could go beyond localized border fighting primarily because of severe limitations in the supply system to these remote areas.

16. The Chinese Communists maintain about 60,000 troops in the entire Military Region of Tibet, as compared with about 466,000 troops in the two military regions adjacent to Vietnam and about 434,000 troops in the military region adjacent to North Korea. Most of these 60,000 troops are concentrated in the areas east from Shigatze including Lhasa, Gyantse, and Changtu. Only a relatively few troops are deployed opposite Kashmir--probably not more than 5,000 or 6,000. There are about 17,000 troops in western Sinkiang, some of which could be brought into the area.

17. The Chinese do not have a tactical air capability in Tibet proper or in western Sinkiang. There are, however, several airfields which could be used. For operations in the Kashmir area there is little doubt that Hotien--a recently improved airfield in western Sinkiang which can accommodate any of Communist China's aircraft--would play an important role. Problems in supplying POL and armament would, however, limit the effectiveness of air units deployed in this area.

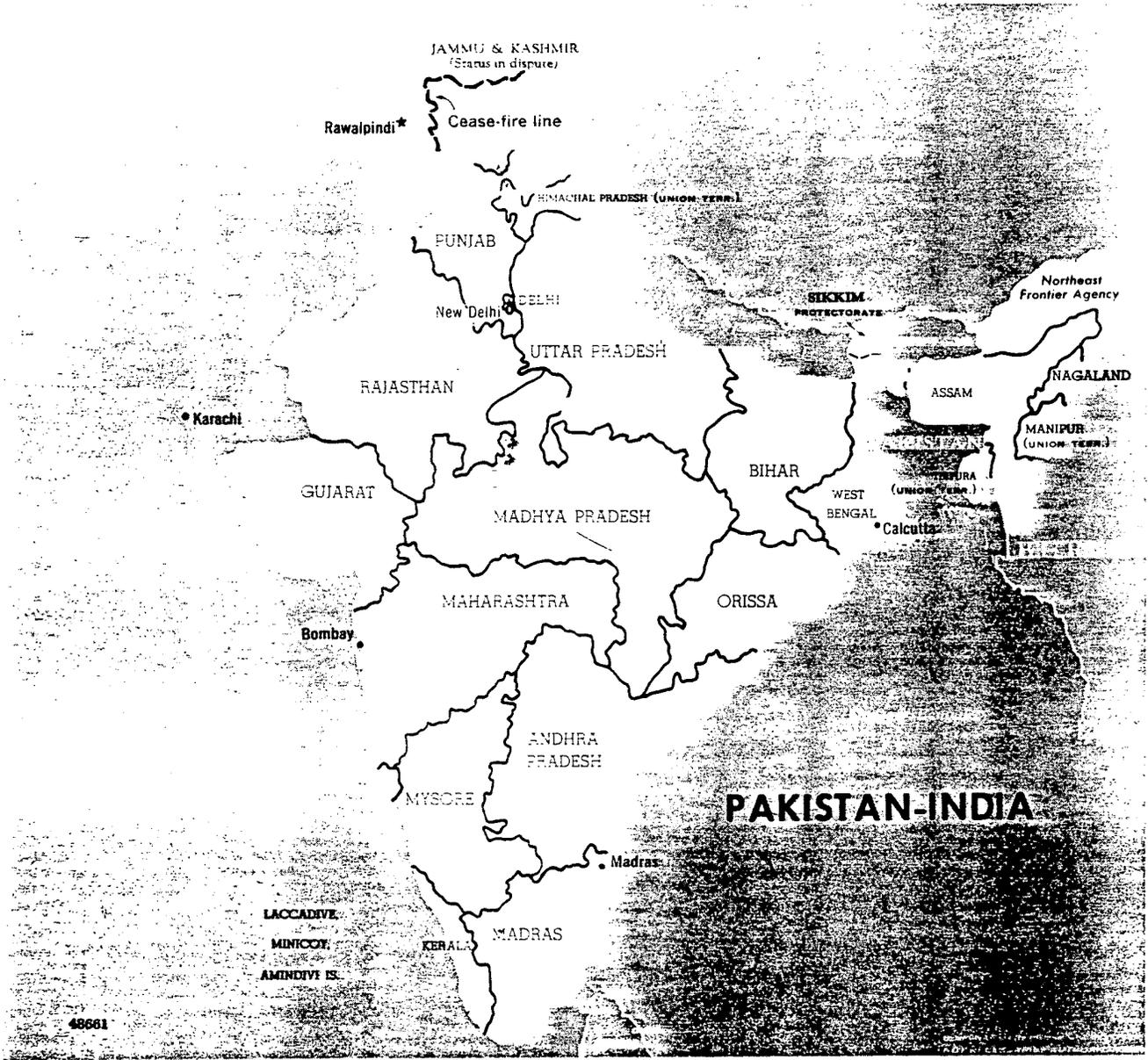
18. The most important factors limiting Chinese Communist military operations in this area are logistical. There are no rail lines running into the area, and the nearest railheads are about 1,000 miles from either NEFA or the Kashmir-Ladakh area where operations might be contemplated. There are roads to the areas

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of operations from the railheads, but they are natural surface highways running through rugged mountainous terrain. The roads are hazardous, and large numbers of trucks would be required to maintain a steady flow of supplies.



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