

~~TOP SECRET~~

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAY 2004

SNIE 13-10-68
19 September 1968

(b) (1)
(b) (3)

SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 13-10-68

COMMUNIST CHINA'S ICBM AND SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED
BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAMS

Handle Via Indicated Controls



~~WARNING~~

~~The sensitivity of this document requires that it be handled with maximum security precautions on a need-to-know basis. Recipients will insure that only persons having all proper clearances and a need-to-know will have access to this document.~~

Submitted by

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf

19 September 1968



Authenticated:

James S. Lay, Jr.
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY USIB

Pages 8

Copy No.

152

~~TOP SECRET~~



~~TOP SECRET~~

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:

- The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, the AEC, and the NSA.

Concurring:

- Vice Adm. Rufus Taylor, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence
- Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, the Director, of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Carroll, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
- Lt. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, the Director, National Security Agency
- Dr. Charles H. Reichardt, for the Assistant General Manager, Atomic Energy Commission

Abstaining:

- Mr. William O. Cregar, for the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

WARNING

~~This document contains information affecting the national security of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws U.S. Code Title 18, Sections 793, 794, and 798. The law prohibits its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person, as well as its use in any manner prejudicial to the safety or interest of the United States or for the benefit of any foreign government to the detriment of the United States. It is to be seen only by personnel especially indoctrinated and authorized to receive information in the designated control channels. Its security must be maintained in accordance with regulations pertaining to the [redacted] and [redacted] [redacted] Controls. No action is to be taken on any [redacted] [redacted] which may be contained herein, regardless of the advantage to be gained, if such action might have the effect of revealing the existence and nature of the source, unless such action is first approved by the appropriate authority.~~

~~GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

19 September 1968

SUBJECT: SNIE 13-10-68: COMMUNIST CHINA'S ICBM AND SUBMARINE-
LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAMS

THE PROBLEM

To assess China's intercontinental ballistic missile and submarine-launched ballistic missile programs and to estimate the nature and size of these programs through 1975.^{1/}

^{1/} This SNIE supersedes relevant sections of SNIE 13-10-67, "Chinese Reactions to a Certain US Course of Action," dated 3 August 1967, TOP SECRET, ALL SOURCE. It is an interim estimate prepared in response to a specific request. All aspects of China's strategic weapons program will be discussed in detail in NIE 13-8-68, "Communist China's Strategic Weapons Program," which is scheduled for publication in December.

~~GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T~~



THE ESTIMATE

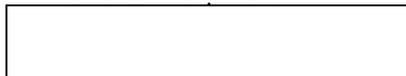
I. THE INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAM

1. In early 1967 it appeared that the Chinese had virtually completed the necessary facilities at the Shuang-cheng-tzu Missile Test Range to begin an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test program. Within a few months, however, they began major new construction at this facility. Recent photography confirms that the original launch pad (designated pad B-1) is being extensively modified and what appears to be an umbilical tower has been added. Another launch pad of a different design (designated pad B-2) is under construction. The new pad, however, probably will be served by the gantry erected for pad B-1. A control bunker to serve the new pad has been built. Numerous other installations, including provision for additional fuel and water storage for the entire complex, are also under construction.

2. We can only speculate at this point as to the reasons for these developments. One possibility is that management failures, owing partly to political turmoil, resulted in lack of coordination

- 2 -

~~T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T~~



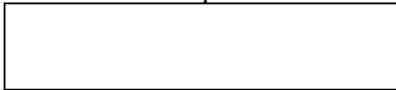


between missile designers and those in charge of range facility construction. Or the correction of design errors in the missile system could have forced alterations. It is also possible that all of these changes, especially the construction of a new pad at the test range, reflect major changes in missile design.

3. One thing is increasingly clear from this experience and from our general observations of Chinese military programs; the Chinese are consuming more time in the development and production of modern weapons than previously seemed likely on the basis of their apparent progress several years ago. Some of this delay is almost certainly due to the disruptions and confusion of the Cultural Revolution. There is ample evidence not only of production and transportation delays throughout the economy but also of political disorders within key organizations involved in directing and operating the advanced weapons programs.

4. More basic and of continuing significance beyond the present period of turmoil is China's lack of a broadly based scientific-industrial establishment. It is one thing to put together teams of select scientific personnel for research and development; it is quite another to manage the complex processes





and to produce in quantity the components of advanced weapons in a country possessing only a small pool of trained manpower and few sophisticated industrial plants and machines. The advantages to China of following the pioneering work of others and the benefits of being able to obtain much useful data, materials, and equipment from Japanese and Western sources have not, and we think for some time will not, offset these basic shortcomings.

5. All this is not to say, of course, that Chinese advanced weapons programs are doomed to stagnation, or continuous delays. Peking has already made substantial investments in its effort to develop an ICBM and a thermonuclear warhead and the program is moving forward. But it does suggest caution in estimating the probable rate of progress over the next few years, particularly with respect to the production and deployment of complex missile systems.

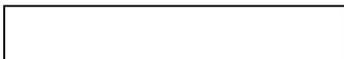
6. Present evidence suggests that pad B-1 could be ready for use by the end of this year or early in 1969, and flight testing could begin, assuming that test vehicles are ready. From whatever time the Chinese begin testing we estimate it would take at least three years to achieve an initial operational





capability (IOC).^{2/} Such a test period is comparable to Soviet and US experience with first generation ICBMs. Thus, an IOC in early 1972 is possible; but in light of the Chinese record and considering general political and economic conditions in China, it is more likely to be later, perhaps even by two or three years.

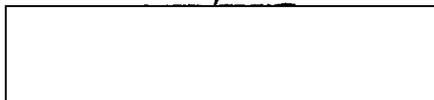
7. The recent information sheds no new light on the characteristics of the Chinese ICBM system. The test facilities appear adequate to handle thrusts large enough to carry a warhead 

 to a range of 6,000 miles.

8. As for warhead availability, sufficient fissionable material, including plutonium, should be available for a modest program by the time the missile system is ready for deployment. China's last nuclear test in December 1967 was probably aimed at reducing the size and weight of a thermonuclear weapon.



^{2/} We mean, in the Chinese case, two or three missiles deployed with trained crews at operational sites.





Force Projection

9. We have no basis for estimating how far the Chinese will carry the deployment of their first generation ICBM. Their decision and performance will depend on political-military developments as well as on economic and technical capabilities. We believe the Chinese will not be able to deploy a large force of ICBMs in the first few years. By this we mean that by the end of the first 3 years of deployment they could probably achieve a force of somewhere between 10 and 20 operational ICBM launchers. Hence, assuming the earliest possible IOC of 1972, the Chinese are not likely to have more than 20 or so ICBMs deployed by 1975. If the Chinese made a maximum effort and were successful, they could conceivably double that number. But we believe the chances for delays and difficulties are high and it would be unrealistic to estimate that the Chinese would reach a force level of 40 or so ICBM launchers by 1975. There is no evidential basis for estimating the accuracy and reliability of China's first ICBM, but we believe that they will fall considerably below present Soviet performance.

10. A major attempt to put the first generation ICBM in hardened sites or to develop a second generation system would



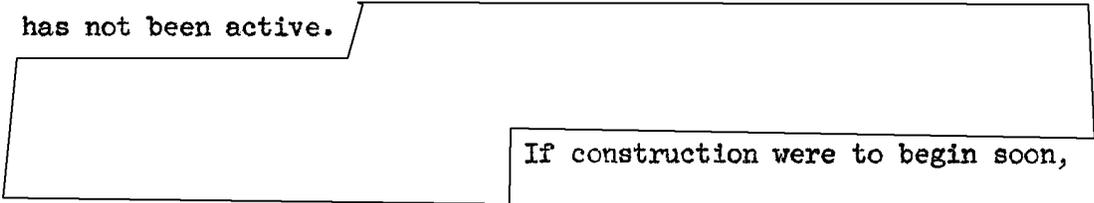


retard deployment of their first system. We believe it is unlikely that the Chinese could deploy hardened first generation missiles before 1974 at the earliest. Though a large solid propellant facility is under construction at Hu-ho-hao-te, the Chinese probably will not be able to deploy a solid propellant ICBM before 1975.

11. The Chinese could probably develop relatively simple exoatmospheric decoys, e.g., balloons, by the time of first deployment. The development of an effective chaff system and of sophisticated, endoatmospheric decoys almost certainly could not be accomplished by 1975. Multiple reentry vehicles are also unlikely to be available by this time. Though the first generation warhead may have some inherent hardness, we have no basis for making quantitative estimates about the hardness of this or future warheads.

II. MISSILE SUBMARINES

12. The Chinese launched a G-class submarine in October 1964. We believe this boat has not done any missile firing and in general has not been active.



If construction were to begin soon,



~~T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T~~

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

a maximum of three or four boats could be constructed by 1975 and be equipped with missiles with a range of 350 miles or so. But the G-class submarine probably would be able to fire only when on the surface, and the Chinese would have major problems operating far from their bases. Hence we believe that the Chinese will not look to diesel-powered missile submarines as a means of threatening US territory. We estimate that the Chinese will not be able to develop a nuclear-powered submarine before the late 1970's at the earliest.

- 8 -

~~T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T~~

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DISSEMINATION NOTICE

1. This document was disseminated by the Central Intelligence Agency. This copy is for the information and use of the recipient and of persons under his jurisdiction on a need-to-know basis. Additional essential dissemination may be authorized by the following officials within their respective departments:

- a. Director of Intelligence and Research, for the Department of State
- b. Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- c. Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, for the Department of the Army
- d. Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), for the Department of the Navy
- e. Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, for the Department of the Air Force
- f. Director of Intelligence, AEC, for the Atomic Energy Commission
- g. Assistant Director, FBI, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- h. Director of NSA, for the National Security Agency
- i. Director of National Estimates, CIA, for any other Department or Agency

2. This document may be retained, or destroyed by burning in accordance with applicable security regulations, or returned to the Central Intelligence Agency by arrangement with the Office of National Estimates, CIA.

3. When this document is disseminated overseas, the overseas recipients may retain it for a period not in excess of one year. At the end of this period, the document should either be destroyed, returned to the forwarding agency, or permission should be requested of the forwarding agency to retain it in accordance with IAC-D-69/2, 22 June 1953.

4. The title of this document when used separately from the text should be classified: ~~SECRET~~

DISTRIBUTION:

White House
National Security Council
Department of State
Department of Defense
Atomic Energy Commission
Federal Bureau of Investigation