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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 306

17 July 1950

SUBJECT: Communist Intentions Regarding an Early Attack on Taiwan

PROBLEM: To estimate Communist intentions regarding an early attack on Taiwan.

ASSUMPTION: That the Chinese Communists still have the capability of launching a successful amphibious assault on Taiwan despite US opposition.

DISCUSSION: (See Enclosure A.)

CONCLUSION: Given the above assumption, it is estimated that the Chinese Communists will probably launch an early attack on Taiwan.

Document No. [redacted]

NO CHANGE in Class.

DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

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Date: 5/1/78 By: [redacted]

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Note: This memorandum has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

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ENCLOSURE A

1. Prior to the invasion of South Korea, there was evidence of Chinese Communist preparations for an early assault on Taiwan. Since the US decision to isolate Taiwan with naval forces, there has been evidence, though not conclusive, that such preparations have continued, and the Chinese have reiterated their intention to take the island (time unspecified) despite this US commitment.
2. The USSR probably did not expect the firm US-UN reaction in Korea, but seems to have made military preparations for such an eventuality. The North Korean army has been able to carry on its offensive successfully despite the intervention of US-UN forces and the USSR has permitted it to do so.
3. The Kremlin has permitted the North Korean forces to become militarily involved with the US and therefore the possibility must be recognized that it may be willing to permit the Chinese Communists to become similarly involved.
4. A successful Chinese Communist assault on Taiwan would bring tangible and prompt advantages to the Soviet cause. It would:
  - (a) demonstrate world Communist power in the face of the announced US intention to prevent an invasion of Taiwan;
  - (b) fulfill the long-standing Chinese Communist promise to "liberate" all of Nationalist China;
  - (c) promote lack of confidence in US commitments, and generally undermine US policy and the will of non-Communist countries throughout the world to resist Soviet aggression;
  - (d) possibly lead to a prolonged military involvement of the US with Communist China, thereby creating a further drain on US resources; and
  - (e) provide the USSR and Communist forces with a base for further threatening the US military position in the Pacific and for defending the Chinese mainland.
5. Certain basic considerations, however, might deter the USSR and the Chinese Communists from attacking Taiwan:
  - (a) the invasion of Taiwan, by enlarging the area of conflict between Communist and US forces, would increase the risk of global war involving the USSR; and

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(b) an invasion in the near future would probably increase substantially the tempo of US mobilization and preparation for eventual global war.

6. It is still entirely possible that these basic considerations may induce the USSR to localize the Korean conflict and refrain from similar moves elsewhere. However, the fact that it is pressing its objective in Korea in defiance of US-UN intervention suggests that the USSR may not consider the risk of global war to be an overriding deterrent to further aggression. In view of US lack of preparedness and the existing superiority of Soviet forces in being (excluding the Soviet atomic capability), the USSR although not planning to initiate global war, may now be willing to accept the risk of global war implicit in using Satellite forces to expand Communist control over peripheral areas. Moreover, Soviet planners may estimate that, if the prospect of a global war seems imminent, they will still be able to reduce international tensions before a critical point is reached.