

NSC BRIEFING

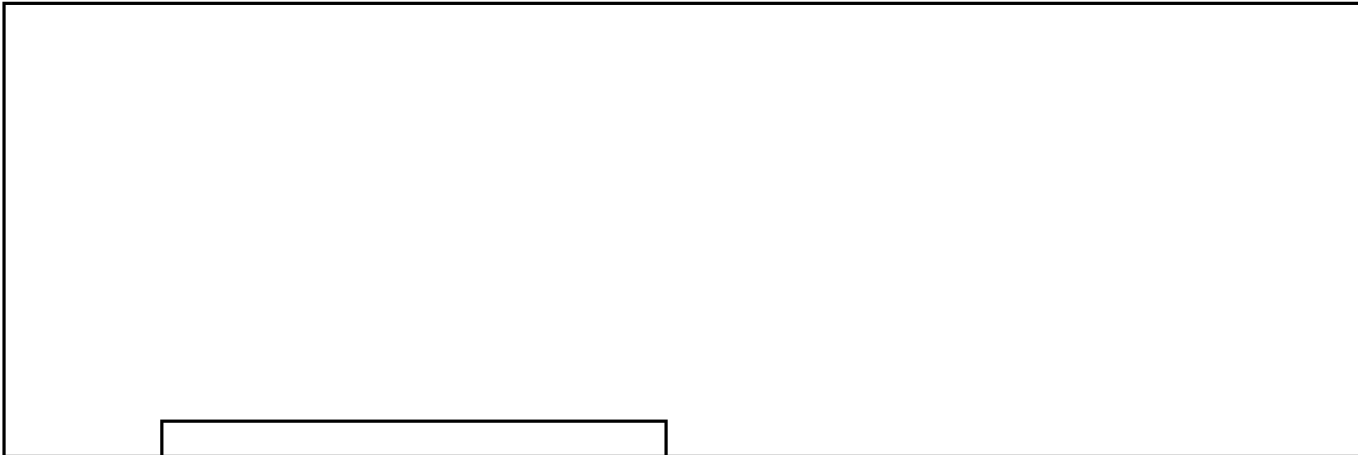
20 August 1958

TAIWAN STRAITS

PACOM review(s) completed.

- I. Chinese Communists have in last few weeks put themselves in a position to attack offshore islands or to interdict the Nationalist supply routes to them without further intelligence warning.
- II. The massive build-up of ChiCom air power in Fukien Province is continuing.

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3. [Redacted] ChiComs have about 250 fighters in commission (106 F-84G's and 146 F-86F's, both types inferior to MIG-17).

B. So far, ChiComs have exercised considerable caution, haven't sought combat with Nationalists.

1. However, since 18 Aug air clash--which, incidentally, seems to have been started by the Nationalists in retaliation for loss of two aircraft on 29 July--ChiComs have increased size of patrols [Redacted]

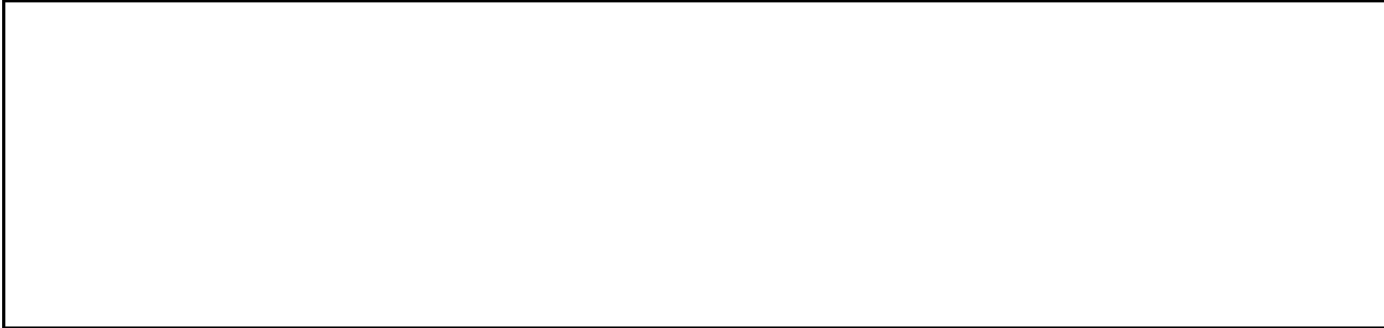


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III. We have less information on Communist naval and ground forces, but we see some signs of naval activity.



C. There are a number of rumors of a Communist ground forces build-up in offshore islands area. We have no evidence to support them, but would not be surprised if some build-up underway.

1. There is evidence that civilians are being evacuated from mainland areas around the Quemoy, but we think this is an air raid precaution.

B. Although volume of "Liberate Taiwan" propaganda remains low, Chinese seem interested in maintaining tension among east coast population.

1. Emphasis is on danger of Nationalist provocations.

IV. Chinese Nationalist position is unchanged and there are no indications that Nationalists will attempt to bomb the Communist airfields unless Matsu and Quemoy are attacked.

A. However, Minister of Defense Yu Ta-wei in letter to Admiral Smoot has requested US advance concurrence in Chinese Nationalist air force retaliatory action against the Communist airbases if the Communists "adopt invasion tactics" or bomb and strafe the offshore islands.

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