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SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

COMMUNIST MILITARY FORCES IN THE KOREAN AREA



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TOP SECRET**COMMUNIST MILITARY FORCES IN THE KOREAN AREA****CONCLUSIONS**

1. The Chinese Communists and North Koreans have available sufficient manpower to sustain large-scale operations in Korea for an extended period. Communist capabilities have been limited, however, by critical materiel and logistic deficiencies and a shortage of technically skilled personnel.
2. In order to sustain extended large-scale offensive operations, Communist forces heretofore identified in Korea require substantially greater materiel and logistic support from the Soviet Union than they have obtained in the past. Even should they receive new equipment, however, we believe that such operations would require Soviet assistance in the form of large numbers of skilled personnel, including ground combat specialists such as tank crews, who would necessarily come in contact with UN forces. However, there is a possibility that other units of the Chinese Communist army have been re-equipped and trained with Soviet equipment in Manchuria and that these units will appear in combat in Korea at any time.
3. The present estimated strength of 860 combat aircraft of the Communist Air Force in Korea, Manchuria, and China represents a considerable recent expansion, but it is still inadequate for the effective protection of lines of communication and for the sustained support of ground forces. We believe that unless this Air Force received substantial additional modern Soviet aircraft, supplies, and technical assistance, its combat effectiveness would be reduced to a very low order in about a week of sustained operations.

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4. Despite numerous reports, there is no acceptable evidence that a Soviet-bloc "volunteer" army is being formed to fight in Korea. Nor is there any evidence that any regular units of the Soviet Army in the Far East (estimated at 32 line divisions and 5 brigades) will be committed to Korea in the immediate future. Although there are indications that the USSR may provide token units of Soviet or other "volunteers" as a gesture to the Chinese Communists, it is more probable that the Soviets will provide manpower in the form of sorely-needed specialists such as radio and radar operators, tank crews, and ordnance technicians. Nonetheless, the possible commitment of major, well-equipped "volunteer" units composed of Soviet-bloc nationals or Japanese cannot be overlooked.

5. There are indications that the Communist air effort in Korea will continue to be enlarged. The current build-up points to the probability of a considerable expansion beyond the 860 aircraft now available to the Chinese Communists. It appears likely that for the immediate future at least, the USSR will continue to augment the strength of the Communist air units in Manchuria and Korea rather than to commit organized elements from the Soviet Far Eastern Air Force. In any event, it must be expected that the full weight of the air strength available to the Chinese Communists may be committed at any time.

6. Communist ability to gain air superiority over North Korea would depend primarily on the number of jet fighters which could be brought to bear against UN air power. A substantial augmentation of the present 260 jet aircraft estimated to be available to the Chinese Communists would constitute a serious threat to UN air superiority over Northern Korea. Provided that the Communists continued to enjoy an air sanctuary, a

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serious challenge to UN air superiority in the entire Korean theater would develop if, in addition, major elements of the existing Soviet Far Eastern air force were deployed to the Korean theater.

7. Although there are at present no indications of the future employment of Communist naval forces in the Korean war, elements of the Soviet Far Eastern submarine fleet could be employed against UN vessels at any time with little warning and mining operations could be expanded.

DISCUSSION

8. The manpower resources which the Chinese Communists and North Koreans have available are sufficient, despite requirements for agriculture, to sustain large-scale operations in Korea for an extended period. Among the critical factors thus far limiting Communist capabilities in Korea have been logistic deficiencies (particularly of food, POL, vehicles, and heavy armament) and the shortage of personnel able to operate the more complicated weapons of modern warfare.

9. As a result of movements during the past few months, Communist ground troops available for operations in Korea are now at an all-time high. An estimated 675,000 Chinese and North Korean troops are presently in Korea. In addition, the Chinese Communists have an estimated 365,000 field troops, and 370,000 military district troops in Manchuria. There is also in Manchuria a partially-trained manpower pool of 560,000 militia which the Communists have been using to furnish replacements for those military district troops drawn into the regular field forces.

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10. The Chinese Communists and North Koreans are now largely dependent on the Soviet Union for logistic and technical support. Until recently, logistical support to the Chinese Communists appears to have been limited to motor vehicles, food, POL, and ammunition. In order to sustain extended large-scale offensive operations, Communist forces in Korea require substantially greater logistic and technical support from the Soviet Union than they have received for their previous offensive operations. Continued UN attacks on lines of communications and failure of the Soviets to deliver supplies adequate to keep pace with combat attrition have in the past been largely responsible for the Communist logistic deficiencies in Korea.

11. The Chinese Communist forces which have heretofore been identified in Korea have apparently lacked the skilled personnel required to operate modern arms and equipment. Thus, even should the Chinese Communists and North Koreans receive large amounts of new equipment, their forces would require extensive reorganization and retraining. We believe that the Chinese Communists heretofore identified in Korea will not be capable of absorbing substantial amounts of modern equipment without Soviet assistance in the form of large numbers of skilled personnel, even including combat personnel, such as tank crews, who would necessarily come in contact with UN forces.

12. However, there have been reports that "major units" of the Chinese Communist Army have been undergoing reorganization and training in Manchuria with Soviet equipment. Although these reports have not been confirmed, a serious possibility exists that substantial units of Chinese Communists using modern equipment may be committed at any time.

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13. Communist air capabilities have been greatly increased by the influx of additional jet aircraft into the area adjacent to the Korean border, and by the intensive training of air crews in Manchuria. The Chinese Communist Air Force is estimated to have available approximately 860 aircraft, including some 115 aircraft of the North Korean Air Force and approximately 380 Soviet-controlled aircraft operating with, but not organic to, the Chinese Communist Air Force. This aggregate air strength consists of the following aircraft types: 260 jet fighters; 210 piston fighters; 175 ground attack aircraft; 140 light bombers; and 75 transports. The jet fighters are apparently Soviet-controlled, and, in some cases at least, appear to be flown and directed by Soviet personnel. Of the total 860 aircraft, it is estimated that 700 (including 220 jet fighters) are currently based in Manchuria, and the remaining 160 in China.

14. At the present time, UN air superiority largely precludes the sustained use of airfields in North Korea by the Communists and therefore the effective range of their aircraft is limited. The Communists have been making continued efforts to maintain these airfields in operable condition in the face of counteraction by UN aircraft. The Communists have 30 airfields available in North Korea which are usable, or could easily be made usable. Seven of these airfields have been recently constructed. The majority of these airfields are suitable only for piston-engined planes but some might be used for very limited jet operations. For the most part, the airfields in North Korea have been located in places close to rail communications. Due to UN air interdiction, logistical support has presented many serious difficulties and as long as UN air superiority is maintained, it will severely limit the Communist Air Force capabilities for offensive and defensive operations from these airfields. There are, however, adequate airfields in the Manchurian sanctuary from which the Communists can launch air attacks on UN forces (see map).

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Operating from the Antung area, even the jet fighters could range well behind UN lines. However, this extended range seriously limits the sortie rate and time over target.

15. The present Chinese Communist Air Force is estimated to have the capability of launching from bases in Manchuria and China, during an initial 24-hour period, the following: 1,115 fighter sorties; 415 ground attack sorties; 330 light bomber sorties; and the airlift for 4,000 troops. However, the effectiveness of such an assault would be hampered by such factors as combat attrition and maintenance problems in addition to the range limitations discussed above. Furthermore, the relative low level of Chinese pilot proficiency and, with the exception of the jet fighters, the inferior performance characteristics of the aircraft would be a major limitation. Thus, unless the Chinese Communist Air Force receives substantial additional Soviet aircraft, supplies, and technical assistance, its combat effectiveness would be reduced to a very low order in about a week of sustained operations.

Soviet or Soviet-Sponsored Military Forces Which Could Be Used in Korea

16. Soviet Line Divisions. The strength of the Soviet Army in the Far East is estimated to be 32 line divisions and five brigades. Of this total, it is considered that a force of 14 to 18 divisions could readily be made available for operations in the Korean war. These divisions include an airborne corps of 3 divisions and up to 6 tank and mechanized divisions with adequate supporting forces. This force could be moved to Korea and committed to combat within 30 to 60 days after a decision had been made to employ it and it might appear in or near the combat zone without being detected. Soviet Far Eastern stockpiles are sufficient to supply and existing lines of

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communications are adequate to transport the necessary logistic support. Augmentation of this force by drawing on Soviet line divisions in the western USSR or after partial mobilization would require a considerable period of time and would be influenced by Soviet strategic and tactical requirements elsewhere in the world.

17. "Volunteer" Forces. It has been reported frequently that an international "liberation" or "volunteer" army is being formed in the Far East. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that this is actually being accomplished. Details concerning the supposed composition and location of this "army" have varied considerably. In addition to Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese, such an "army" could draw upon Mongol-type personnel as well as Soviet and Eastern European "volunteer" units. Of the 80,000 Mongol types now serving in the Soviet Army, virtually all are technically unskilled basic riflemen. There are more than 1,000,000 men of military age in Outer and Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang. Some tens of thousands of the Outer Mongolians have served in their own or the Soviet Armed Forces. The present Outer Mongolian Army, which includes some small mechanized elements, could be expanded rapidly to 100,000 men and readily be equipped by the Soviets. "Volunteer" units could be formed from the existing armies of the USSR and the European Satellites at any time. Such forces could significantly improve the technical proficiency of existing Chinese and North Korean forces, but could be easily identified as Soviet-bloc nationals if they came in contact with UN forces.

18. Air Forces. The Soviet Far Eastern air forces have an estimated authorized strength of 5,300 aircraft of World War II type. Beyond the 260 jet fighters estimated to be in China and Manchuria under Soviet control, there are no other jet fighters known to be in the Far East, although jet operations are reported

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to have been conducted by both the Soviet Navy and Air Force in the Dairen area. It is possible that jets may have been introduced without having been detected by intelligence, and we believe that the Soviets have the capability of deploying jet units to the Far East in a relatively short time.

19. There are 131 airfields in the Sino-Soviet Far East within 500 miles of the 38th Parallel in Korea, or the Japanese Islands of Honshu and Kyushu. The Soviets probably could deploy their entire Far Eastern air strength on these 131 fields. Of the 30 airfields in North Korea, some are capable of supporting very limited jet operations.

20. There is ample evidence that the Soviets have been stockpiling POL products, including jet fuel, in the Far East in substantial quantities. Providing no effective UN action were taken to disrupt Communist supply lines outside Korea, it is believed that the Sino-Soviets could support logistically a major air effort in the Korean theater.

21. If the Soviet Far Eastern air forces were deployed to bases adjacent to Korea, range factors would still prevent effective operations by Soviet light bomber and fighter aircraft against targets or UN aircraft in the extreme south of Korea. Air attacks could be directed against UN naval forces and support shipping in Korean waters. Night bombing attacks of limited effectiveness could be delivered to any point in Korea, or against UN bases in Japan. Saturation-type day bomber operations could also be launched throughout most of Korea if the Soviets were willing to pay a high price in losses, or if they were to succeed in gaining air superiority over Korea. If, however, Soviet medium bombers were deployed to bases in the Far East, they would considerably increase Soviet aircapabilities and expose UN military installations in South Korea and Japan to the danger of atomic

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air attacks. Although there are no known medium bombers in the Far East, an unconfirmed report states that 14 TU-4's have been transferred from European USSR to Manchuria.

22. The bases from which jet operations in Korea could be conducted are located in the Port Arthur/Dairen, Mukden, Antung, and Vladivostok areas (see map). Using wing tanks, Antung-based jets could operate as far as Seoul; Port Arthur/Dairen and Mukden-based jets could operate generally as far as the line Chinnampo-Wonsan; and Vladivostok-based jets could operate effectively only against a small portion of northeast Korea.

23. Communist ability to gain air superiority over North Korea would depend primarily on the number of jet fighters which could be brought to bear against UN air power. A substantial augmentation of the present 260 jet aircraft estimated to be available to the Chinese Communists would constitute a serious threat to UN air superiority over Northern Korea. Provided that the Communists continued to enjoy an air sanctuary, a serious challenge to UN air superiority in the entire Korean theater would develop if, in addition, major elements of the existing Soviet Far Eastern air force were deployed to the Korean theater. Despite reduction of effectiveness due to range limitations if operations were restricted to bases outside of Korea, the introduction of elements of the Soviet Far Eastern Air Force could be effective through sheer weight of numbers.

24. Naval Forces. Soviet Far Eastern Naval Forces consist of the Fifth Fleet with headquarters at Vladivostok and the Seventh Fleet with headquarters at Sovetskaya Gavan. The surface forces of these fleets consist of two cruisers, two destroyer leaders, 26 destroyers, eight destroyer escorts, and 397 miscellaneous vessels including minesweepers, subchasers, mine layers, landing craft, and motor torpedo boats. The submarine fleet has a strength of 81 submarines including 16 ocean patrol types, 37 medium-range types, and 28 coastal types.

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**Indications of Probable Scale and Nature of Soviet Assistance
In the Immediate Future**

25. **Ground Force Assistance.** Additional basic manpower is not required by Communist forces in the Korean area, but there are indications that the USSR may provide token units of Soviet or other "volunteers" as a gesture to the Chinese Communists who are assuming the major burden for prosecuting the war. More probably, however, additional Soviet assistance will be in the form of sorely-needed technicians such as radio and radar operators, tank crews, and ordnance specialists. Personnel such as ground combat troops likely to come in direct contact with UN forces may be of Asiatic appearance and be supplied with Chinese Communist uniforms. It is not likely that large Soviet Mongol units will be employed. There are no acceptable indications that combat "volunteer" units for Korea are being recruited in any of the countries of Eastern Europe or that Soviet line divisions will be employed in the immediate future. There is no evidence that any combat units have been withdrawn from the Satellite armies for service in Korea.

26. It is estimated that at least 10,000 Soviet army advisers are assisting the Chinese and that an additional 3,000 (including 1,000 security police) are with the North Korean army. The Soviets have supplied virtually all the heavy North Korean combat equipment, electronic equipment and antiaircraft guns in China, Manchuria, and North Korea and virtually all POL supplies as well as some food, vehicles, and ammunition for the Korean operations. The USSR will probably supply tanks, artillery, motor vehicles, POL, rations, and ammunition to both the Chinese and North Korean forces. Numerous reports suggest that fairly large-scale re-equipment of Chinese divisions in Manchuria with Soviet weapons may be expected. Indications of actual and potential increases in logistic support from the

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USSR include evidence of a steady flow of materiel into Manchuria and of increasing efforts to move materiel from Manchuria into the forward combat zone in Korea. In addition, the construction of a direct rail line from Vladivostok via Kraskino to North Korea is being rushed to completion. Stockpiling activities in the Soviet Far East have recently been intensified, and industrial output in the Irkutsk area has been increased and is being diverted to the east.

27. Air Assistance. The Soviets have supplied most of the planes in the Communist air force. Communist jet fighter strength has been steadily increased and a considerable step-up in jet training has been observed in the Mukden-Anshan-Antung area of Manchuria. Coincident with the build-up of jet fighter strength in Manchuria, there has been an increase in the number of MIG-15's engaging UN aircraft in the Sinuiju area.

28. Organizational changes, increased activity of long-range air armies, the establishment of special defense fighter commands in Vladivostok and Dairen areas, and the expansion of the ground interceptor network [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in North Korea provide further evidence of a probable early increase in Communist air operations in the Korean area. Finally, there have been substantial shipments, on an urgent basis, of jet fuel from Soviet refineries to Manchuria.

29. Naval Assistance. Indications point to a continuance of Soviet technical and advisory naval assistance in both surface and submarine warfare to the Chinese Communists and, to a lesser extent, to the North Koreans. In addition, virtually all mines thus far encountered in the Korean waters have been of Soviet manufacture, and it is known that large shipments of Soviet mines and torpedoes have been made to Far Eastern Communist bases.

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Indications Concerning Probable Employment of Communist Forces in the Immediate Future

30. Military indications point to the employment of all available North Korean and Chinese Communist Army units in offensive operations as soon as these armies have received the necessary supplies, equipment, and training. Although there are no acceptable military indications that combat units of the Soviet Army will be committed in the immediate future, there are numerous reliable indications that Soviet-bloc technicians will assist Chinese Communist and North Korean Army units.

31. Present Communist dispositions in Korea are favorable for either maintaining a sustained defense in depth or for launching an offensive. Communist strength in the West and West-central sectors is far greater than would be required even for a determined defense.

32. From consideration of the continuing and substantial increase in Communist air strength and capabilities (particularly the build-up in jet fighters, logistic support, and airfield repair and construction), we believe that the Communists will progressively increase their air efforts. The current build-up points to the probability of further and considerable expansion beyond the 860 aircraft now available to the Chinese Communists. This type of phased build-up could be extended progressively to the commitment of major portions of the Soviet Far Eastern Air Forces as "volunteers" or otherwise although there are no indications that they intend to do so. The Communists meanwhile may be expected to bring to bear the full weight of the 860 aircraft available to the Chinese Communists -- whenever and wherever they assess it to be to their advantage. The emphasis on airfield construction and repair indicates that air support of

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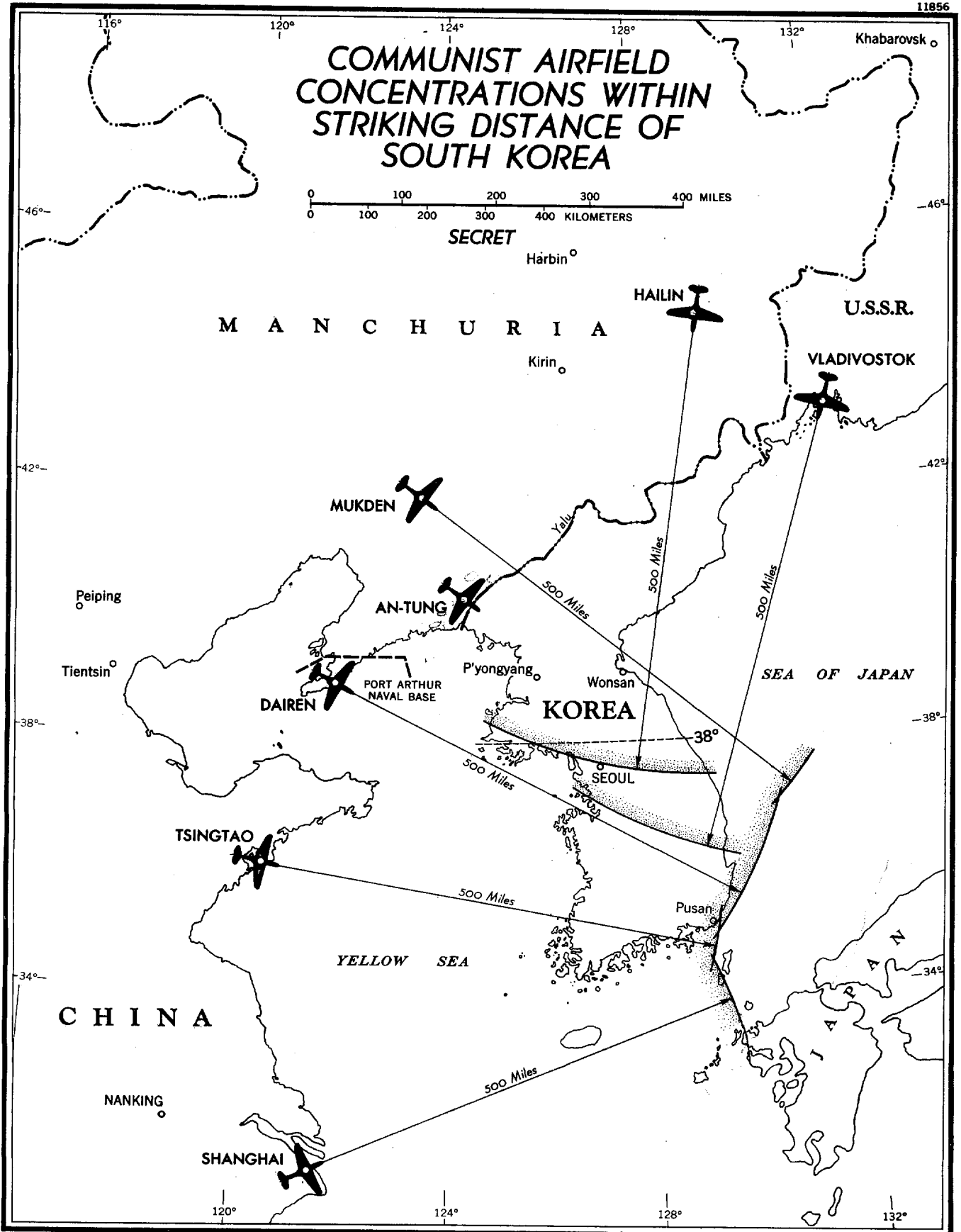
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Communist ground troops and attacks on UN lines of communications should be expected. All these indications suggest that the Soviets will continue to enlarge their air effort by stages geared to their assessment of US and UN reactions to each forward move, and the degree of success achieved by the Communist air forces.

33. There are at present no indications of the probable future employment of Communist naval forces in the Korean war, although mining and submarine activity remain a constant threat.

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