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Imagery analysis report

63rd Army, Beijing Military Region, China (TSR



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63RD ARMY, BEIJING MILITARY REGION, CHINA (TSR

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ABSTRACT

1. (TSR) This report discusses the status of the 63rd Army of the People's Liberation Army in the Beijing Military Region of China. Physical changes to facilities, order of battle changes, and fluctuations in the levels of activity from June 1975 through March 1980 are described in this report. The functions and locations of the units were derived primarily from KEYHOLE imagery. Numbered unit designators were derived primarily from collateral data. National Basic Reference Graphics published in 1976 by DIA were used as aids in determining the associations of various facilities.

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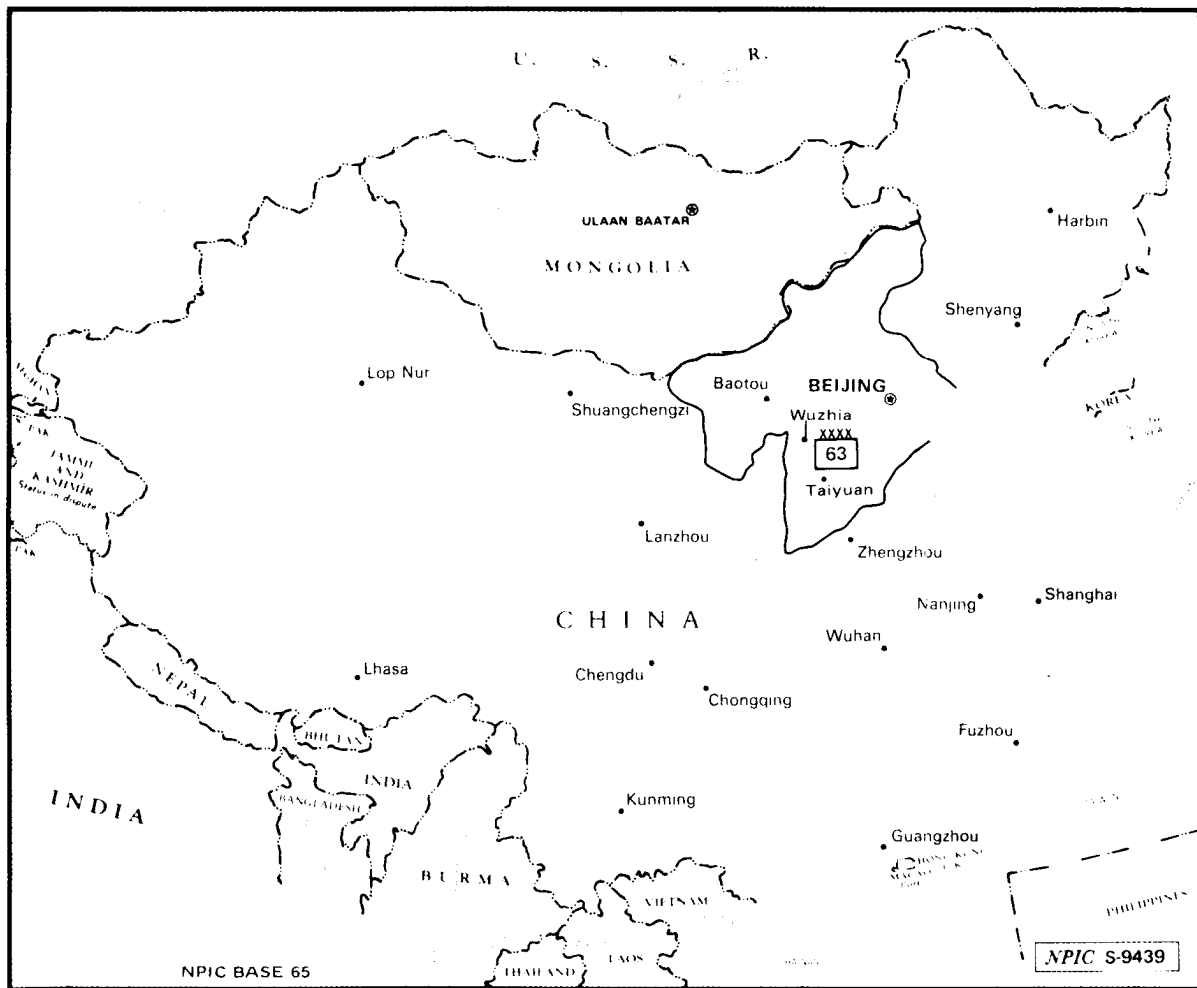


FIGURE 1. 63RD ARMY, BEIJING MILITARY REGION, CHINA

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2. (TSR) No extensive force upgrading/improvements within the 63rd Army have been observed on limited coverage during the period covered by this report. The low level of activity within units, the introduction of a minimal amount of new equipment, and minor construction suggest that this army may be in a reduced state of readiness. The majority of the units in the 63rd Army are equipped with older weapons systems and support equipment.

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3. (U) This report contains two location maps, two annotated photographs, four charts, and one table.

INTRODUCTION

4. (TSR) The 63rd Army¹ is one of eight main force armies in the Beijing Military Region (MR) of China. The organizational structure of the army is generally the same as that of ground force units throughout China.² Numbered unit designators were derived primarily from collateral data.¹ National Basic Reference Graphics (NBRGs) published in 1976 by DIA were used as aids in determining the associations of various facilities.³ The headquarters (hq) of the 63rd Army is housed in Taiyuan (at 37-46-52N 112-34-52E; Figure 1 and Table 1); the army is bounded by the 28th Army approximately 110 nautical miles (nm) to the southwest and by the 69th Army approximately 150 nm to the north. Two divisions within the 63rd Army are north of Taiyuan; the third is approximately 10 nm southeast of the city (Figure 2). The orientation of these units is along a north/south axis, which suggests that a mission of the 63rd Army is to protect the western approaches into the region. However, the lack of any built-up defensive areas indicates that the primary mission of the 63rd Army may be to augment the 69th Army and/or reinforce the Northern Front. Provision of forces for the protection of routes into the region and Taiyuan would then become a secondary mission. The proximity of the units within the army to major lines of communication supports both of these postulated missions.

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BASIC DESCRIPTION

5. (TSR) The 63rd Army consists of an army headquarters, army-level support units, the 187th Infantry Division, the 188th Infantry Division, and the 189 Infantry Division (Chart 1).

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Headquarters and Support Units

6. (TSR) The headquarters of the 63rd Army is at Taiyuan Headquarters Army and Barracks AL-9. In addition to the headquarters, the installation may house an engineer battalion (bn). A previously associated antiaircraft artillery (AAA) battery,³ consisting of ZPU AAA heavy machine guns (AAHMGs), has not been seen since 1976, and it is believed that this battery has rejoined the AAA regiment housed in the Taiyuan city area.

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7. (TSR) The AAA regiment housed at Dayu Army Barracks AL-1 has not been seen since late 1976. An army-level AAA regiment has been housed in a new barracks area (Taiyuan Army Barracks AL-12; Figure 3) since March 1979; construction has been underway

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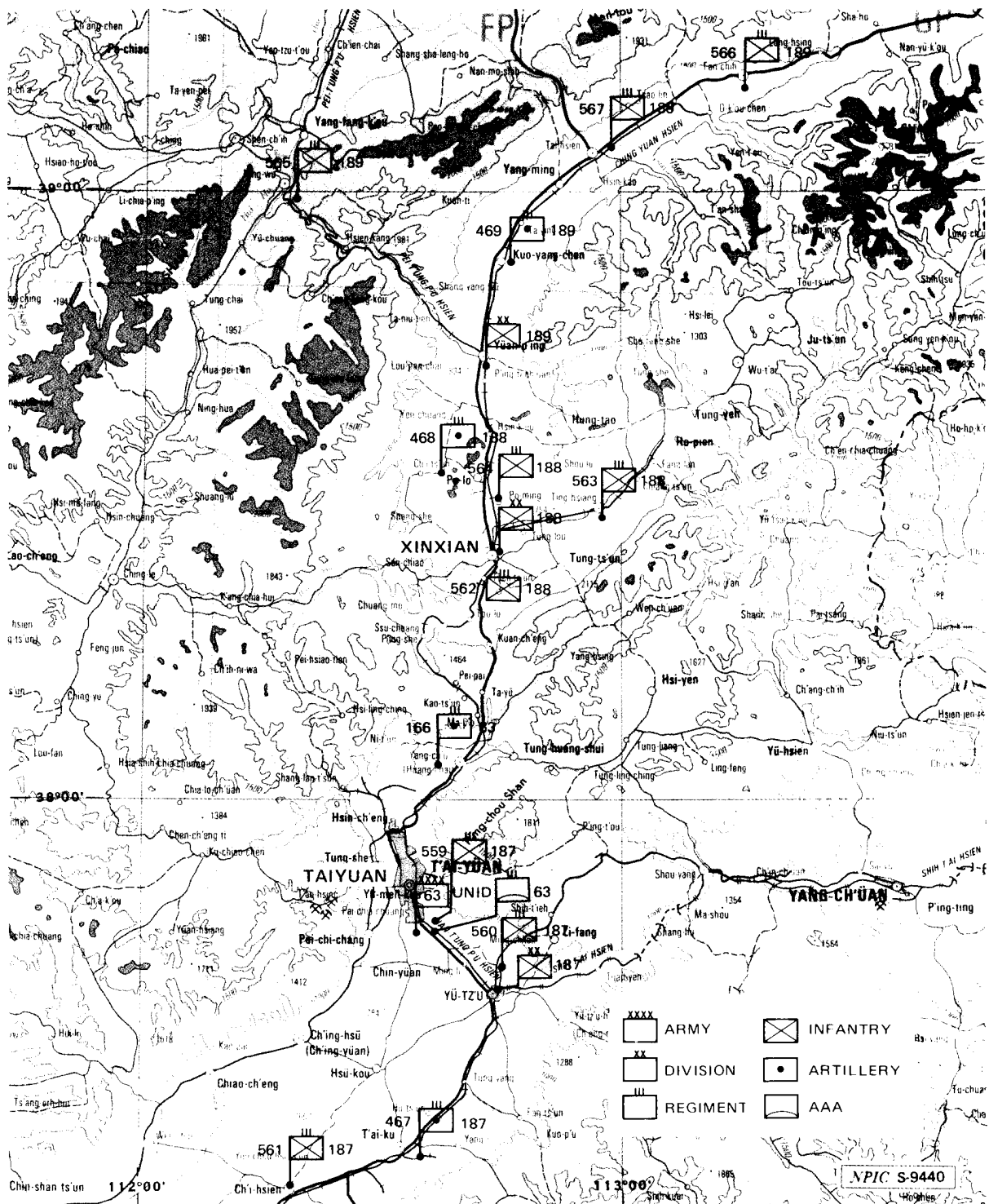


FIGURE 2. LOCATIONS OF UNITS WITHIN THE 63RD ARMY

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in this area since mid-1977. Earlier observations of AAA equipment in the vicinity of and at the adjacent Taiyuan Army Barracks Southeast AL-2³ indicate that the regiment may have been moved into the area as early as the spring of 1977. The lack of AAA equipment at Dayu Army Barracks AL-1 since 1977, and at other area installations, indicates that this is the AAA regiment that is organic to the 63rd Army.

8. (TSR) No significant change has been observed at the 166th Artillery Regiment housed at Taiyuan Army Barracks North AL-3 since 1976. The NBRG³ for this facility indicates the presence of a rocket launcher (rl) battalion subordinate to this regiment. The presence of a rocket launcher battalion cannot be confirmed at present. Field artillery equipment has been observed in four separate barracks areas subordinate to this regiment. This does not appear to conform to the standard battalion-level integrity usually seen at other facilities.

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187 Infantry Division

9. (TSR) The 187th Infantry Division consists of the division headquarters, division support units, the 559th Infantry Regiment, the 560th Infantry Regiment, and the 561st Infantry Regiment.

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10. (TSR) The headquarters of the 187th Infantry Division is at Yuci Headquarters Infantry Division and Barracks AL-2, 6 nm south of Taiyuan. In addition to the headquarters, the installation supports the division AAA battalion, an engineer battalion, and several of the rear service support units, e.g., motor transport and medical. The original dispersal of the units within the installation has changed, but the units housed in this facility remain unchanged.

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11. (TSR) The 467th Artillery Regiment is housed at Taigu Army Barracks AL-1 and is under the older organizational structure.² The regiment consists of one mortar battalion, one field gun battalion, and one howitzer battalion. Since 1977, ten vehicle storage and support buildings—including two 19-bay and two ten-bay vehicle sheds—have been constructed, which expands the storage and maintenance capability at this installation. Although no new or additional equipment has been seen at this facility, the fact that the previously established normal equipment counts are still seen in open storage—with new storage facilities available—indicates that new and/or undetermined types of equipment may be stored in these vehicle storage sheds.

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12. (TSR) The 559th Infantry Regiment is housed at Taiyuan Army Barracks Southeast AL-2. Since 1976, significant construction has occurred at this installation. A second barracks complex adjacent to the southeast corner of the housing area was completed prior to 1976 and has been included as part of the installation. A large firing range, southeast of both barracks complexes, was completed in late 1978 or early 1979. A third barracks area, initially associated with this regiment, has been reevaluated and separately targeted as Taiyuan Army Barracks AL-12 (Figure 3). During 1977, Taiyuan Army Barracks Southeast AL-2 appeared to have been used to support both the infantry and AAA artillery regiments until new facilities for the AAA regiment at Taiyuan AL-12 were completed.

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13. (TSR) The 560th and 561st Infantry Regiments are housed at Yuci Army Barracks AL-1 and Qixian Army Barracks AL-1, respectively, and have remained relatively unchanged. A firing range has been added to the Qixian Barracks complex. A nine-gun ZPU AAHMG AAA battery (a minor upgrading) was added to this regiment in 1978. No other significant activity was observed.

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188th Infantry Division

14. (TSR) The 188th Infantry Division consists of the division headquarters, division-level support units, the 562nd Infantry Regiment, the 563rd Infantry Regiment, and the 564th Infantry Regiment.

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15. (TSR) The headquarters of the 188th Infantry Division is housed at Xinxian Headquarters Infantry Division and Barracks AL-1 along with the division AAA battalion and possibly the engineer battalion. The northeast corner of the headquarters area has been separately secured and now appears to serve no military function. The AAA battalion is equipped with the standard 37mm AA guns found in battalion-sized units. There has been no equipment (bridging or service related) to indicate that the engineer battalion is present. However, there is a distinctly delineated battalion-sized area with sufficient vehicle/equipment storage space to accommodate the battalion.

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16. (TSR) Equipment and facilities within the 468th Artillery Regiment housed at Jicun Army Barracks AL-1 have been upgraded since 1976. The mortar battalion has been replaced by a gun-howitzer battalion. The addition of 18 BM-14/-19 multiple rocket launchers in May 1977 makes the 468th the only regiment with a known rocket launcher battalion in the 63rd Army. The barracks area housing the rocket launcher battalion is approximately 1.5 nm east of the regimental headquarters. A firing range, 1,000 meters south of this barracks area, has been built and operational since mid-1978 (Figure 4).

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17. (TSR) No significant activity or change has been observed since 1976 at the 562nd, the 563rd, and the 564th Infantry Regiments.

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189th Infantry Division

18. (TSR) The 189th Infantry Division consists of the division headquarters, division-level support units, the 565th Infantry Regiment, the 566th Infantry Regiment, and the 567th Infantry Regiment.

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19. (TSR) The headquarters of the 189th Infantry Division is at Yuanping Headquarters Infantry Division and Barracks AL-3. Division units also associated with this installation are the AAA battalion, the engineer battalion, and a motor transport battalion. Observations of TPP bridge sections and powerboats in September 1976 and the continued observations of service and construction equipment on a regular basis support the supposition that the engineer battalion is still housed at this facility. However, the ponton bridge company has not been seen since September 1976. Sufficient storage space does exist to keep this equipment from view.

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20. (TSR) The 469th Artillery Regiment is housed at Kou-hsien Army Barracks AL-1 and consists of mortar, gun, and howitzer battalions. The mortar battalion is collocated with the headquarters; the gun and howitzer battalions are housed in separate barracks facilities to the south and north, respectively.

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21. (TSR) Little activity to date has been seen at the 565th Infantry Regiment housed at Ningwu Army Barracks AL-1. Activity has been limited to the addition of three vehicle/equipment storage buildings in 1978 and 1979.

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22. (TSR) Little activity was seen at the 566th Infantry Regiment, housed at Fan-chih Army Barracks AL-1, during the period covered by this report.

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Table 1. 63rd Army Units as Derived from All-Source Information*This table in its entirety is classified TOP SECRET RUFF*

Unit	Installation Name	Coordinates	Remarks
Army Headquarters and Army-Level Support Units			
Army Hq	Taiyuan Hq Army and Barracks AL-9	37-46-52N 112-34-52E	Collocated engineer bn not confirmed by imagery analysis
AAA Regiment	Taiyuan Army Barracks AL-12	37-47-30N 112-37-05E	Not confirmed by collateral data
166th Artillery Regiment	Taiyuan Army Barracks North AL-3	38-04-00N 112-38-32E	No evidence of rl bn observed; standard three-gun bns verified
187th Infantry Division			
187th Infantry Division Hq	Yuei Hq Infantry Division and Barracks AL-2	37-42-28N 112-44-53E	Imagery analysis indicates motor transport unit at facility
AAA Bn	Same		No significant activity
Engineer Bn	Same		No significant activity
559 Infantry Regiment	Taiyuan Army Barracks Southeast AL-2	37-48-11N 112-36-26E	New firing range added 1978/79; second barracks complex added to installation
560 Infantry Regiment	Yuei Army Barracks AL-1	37-43-47N 112-44-31E	No significant activity
561 Infantry Regiment	Qixian Army Barracks AL-1	37-21-46N 112-19-33	Imagery indicates 9-gun AAHMG battery upgrading in 1978
467 Artillery Regiment	Taigu Army Barracks AL-1	37-25-04N 112-35-18E	Old TO&E: one field gun, one mortar, and one howitzer bns; no rl bn observed
188th Infantry Division			
188th Infantry Division Hq	Xinxian Hq Infantry Division and Barracks North AL-1	38-25-10N 112-43-25E	No significant activity
Engineer Bn	Same		Not confirmed by imagery
AAA Bn	Same		No significant activity
562 Infantry Regiment	Yen-tsun Army Barracks AL-1	38-18-12N 112-41-20E	Weapons bn; equipped with 160mm mortar
563 Infantry Regiment	Dingxiang Army Barracks South AL-2	38-28-25N 112-57-15E	No significant activity
564 Infantry Regiment	Dingxiang Army Barracks AL-3	38-30-01N 112-43-53E	No significant activity
468 Artillery Regiment	Jicun Army Barracks AL-1	38-32-24N 112-36-16E	Only known rl bn in army; two 122mm howitzer bns & one field gun bn complete TO&E
189th Infantry Division			
189th Infantry Division Hq	Yuanping Hq Infantry Division and Barracks AL-3	38-42-35N 112-41-50E	Imagery indicates a motor transport unit collocated with hq
AAA Bn	Same		No significant activity
Engineer Bn	Same		No significant activity
565 Infantry Regiment	Ningwu Army Barracks AL-1	38-59-30N 112-17-20E	No significant activity
566 Infantry Regiment	Fan-chih Army Barracks AL-1	39-11-21N 113-15-18E	No significant activity
567 Infantry Regiment	Dai Xian Army Barracks AL-1	39-04-45N 112-57-28E	No significant activity
469 Artillery Regiment	Kou-hsien Army Barracks AL-1	38-53-20N 112-45-25E	No significant activity

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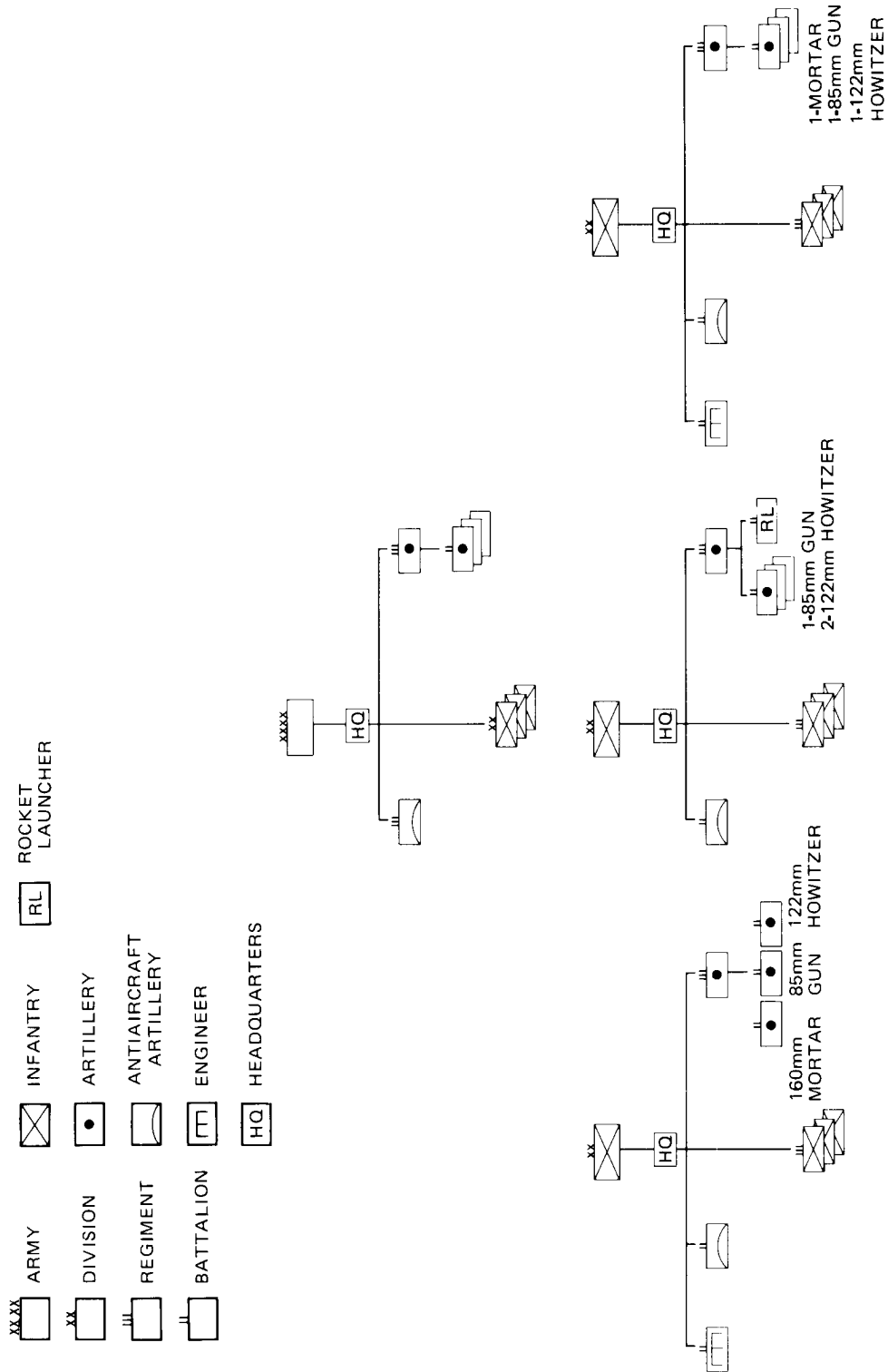


CHART 1. 63RD ARMY UNITS CONFIRMED FROM IMAGERY ANALYSIS

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23. (TSR) A low level of activity, similar to that seen at the other two regiments, was seen at the 567th Infantry Regiment at Dai Xian Army Barracks AL-1. However, an infantry assault course with mockups of vehicles and personnel trenches was built adjacent to the headquarters area during late 1978 or early 1979. This is the first such course seen in any regimental-sized unit within the 63rd Army.

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IMAGERY ANALYST'S COMMENTS

24. (TSR) During the approximately five-year period covered by this report, most of the units and installations of the 63rd Army were imaged an average of one to two times a year. Because of the presence of vehicle storage sheds and the lack of imagery during normal seasonal training exercises, it has not been possible to determine if extensive force upgradings/improvements have occurred throughout the divisions or regiments within the 63rd Army. Of particular note was the apparently older table of organization and equipment (TO&E) structure² of the units and the overall low level of activity seen throughout the army. The fact that only one rocket launcher battalion was identified within the Army—and that being at division level—does not fit the usual echelon replacement schedule. For example, the highest echelon units are expected to receive equipment before their subordinate counterparts (i.e., regiments receive equipment before battalions). Further, only one artillery battalion was upgraded during the reporting period—mortars were replaced by howitzers. During a period when the People's Liberation Army has been making an effort to upgrade its AAA capabilities throughout China, not one of the division AAA battalions of the 63rd Army was increased to regimental size. Additionally, in most observations engineering equipment, especially ponton equipment, was all but nonexistent, although engineering equipment was evident in many other installations across the region.

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25. (TSR) Analysis of the level of activity, construction, and equipment change seen at installations within the 63rd Army suggests that the army may either be in a reduced state of readiness or considered to be of secondary importance by senior military officials who determine replacement and construction expenditures. This, in turn, would mean that the mobilization time for the 63rd Army would be much slower than for the 69th Army to the north and thus reduce the overall effectiveness of military operations within the region.

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REFERENCES

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MAPS OR CHARTS

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3. DIA. NDA-07/5028/76 through NDA-07/5049/76, *National Basic Reference Graphics* [Reports pertain to the 63rd Army], 30 Jul 76 (SECRET [redacted])

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