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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES AND
INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO TAIWAN

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The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 5 April 1951, except as noted by the Director of Intelligence, USAF, on page 4.

CHINESE COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO TAIWAN

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Chinese Communist capabilities and intentions with respect to securing control over Taiwan in 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that the Chinese Communists could not launch a large-scale attack on Taiwan without a major shift of troops from other parts of China into the coastal staging areas. We further believe that such a redeployment would adversely affect their commitments or operations in Korea and elsewhere.
2. In the absence of US participation in the defense of Taiwan, the Chinese Communists could, after the necessary redeployment, probably capture Taiwan by a large-scale invasion. We believe, however, that, if the US Fleet participates in the defense of the island, the Chinese Communists do not have the capability of launching a successful large-scale invasion on Taiwan without substantial Soviet assistance. The USSR would probably estimate that it would incur a substantial risk of war with the US if it furnished assistance of the type and scale that would be required to make the operation successful. We do not believe the USSR is likely to incur this degree of risk solely on account of the advantage to be gained from Chinese Communist conquest of Taiwan in 1951.
3. Although military and logistic difficulties severely limit immediate Chinese Communist capabilities for a large-scale invasion, we estimate that the Chinese Communists currently have the capability for a limited assault on Taiwan. Such an assault might be launched in the expectation of making a landing before the US Fleet could intervene effectively and of exploiting whatever potential dissidence exists on the island.
4. Although there is insufficient intelligence available at this time to make a positive prediction, it is estimated that Communist China is not likely to attempt either a large-scale or limited attack on Taiwan during 1951 so long as US policy with regard to Taiwan remains unchanged and the Chinese Communists continue to be committed in the Korean war. The likelihood of a Communist invasion attempt would be greatly increased, however, under any of the following circumstances:
 - a. If the Chinese Communists should achieve a decisive victory in Korea before summer or should otherwise be able to disengage themselves from the Korean campaign;

b. If the tactical situation in Korea made the redeployment of the US Fleet units in Korean waters unlikely;

c. If the Chinese Communists were convinced that the Chinese Nationalist Government and its defense forces had become so weakened that they would disintegrate after an initial show of Chinese Communist strength;

d. If over-all Communist strategy required the conquest of Taiwan regardless of the risks involved.

The Chinese Communists, if they decided to make an assault on Taiwan, would be most likely to attack in the spring or summer, when weather and sea conditions are most favorable. (See appendix A.)

6. We believe that the courses of action that Communist China is most likely to follow during 1951 are:

a. Maintain the threat to Taiwan.

b. Attempt to expand a network for subversive activity on Taiwan.

c. Emphasize in domestic propaganda that US support to the Nationalist Government constitutes aggression against China.

d. Stimulate international disagreement over the disposition of the area and international criticism of US support of the Chiang regime.

e. Exploit the Taiwan issue in connection with proposals for a peaceful settlement in Korea.

f. Perhaps exercise its capability for capturing the small Nationalist-held islands off the east China coast.

DISCUSSION

Chinese Communist Capabilities for An Assault On Taiwan

The military capabilities of the Chinese Communist regime stem almost entirely from the strength of its ground combat forces (field forces), which at present number about two million men. These forces are at present committed roughly as follows:

1. An undetermined but certainly large number of field force and militia troops are engaged in containing dissidents and bandits on the mainland estimated to number 1,000,000.

2. At present the Chinese Communists have approximately 370,000 field force troops engaged in the Korean theater of operations and maintaining a force of 365,000 field force troops in reserve in Manchuria.

3. The Chinese Communists have approximately 200,000 troops deployed in the South China area within 250 miles of the Indochina coast.

d. Approximately 385,000 field force troops are reportedly deployed along the invasion coast from Shanghai to Canton.

8. A large-scale invasion of Taiwan in 1951 would probably require a major shift of Chinese Communist forces from other parts of China to maintain the security of southeast China while the invasion is in process. We believe it unlikely that the Chinese Communists could make such additional troops available without adversely affecting their commitments or operations elsewhere, as noted above. Such a deployment, if undertaken, would probably require 90 days to complete.

9. The Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) probably contains at least 1,200 active pilots and possibly 3,000 pilots in training. The CCAF is estimated to have available to it approximately 650 aircraft of jet and piston fighters, ground attack, light bomber, and transport types, of which at least 250 are believed to be under direct Soviet control. Soviet-type jet aircraft have been reported in both the Shanghai and Canton areas. The

Chinese Communists have sufficient usable airfields within effective fighter and light bomber range of Taiwan. However, since most CCAF aircraft are located in Manchuria and elsewhere in northeast China, a major re-deployment of aircraft would be required before the Chinese Communists could make a maximum offensive air effort in the Taiwan area. Moreover, in the absence of Soviet logistic support on a large scale, losses due to combat attrition and maintenance difficulties would substantially reduce the combat effectiveness of the CCAF within a week of sustained operations.

10. The Chinese Communist Navy, small and untested, comprises about 80 vessels, the largest being patrol-frigate types. Although there are reports that the navy may have received some submarines from the USSR, it is doubtful that there are Chinese crews capable of manning them.

11. In the event that a major amphibious assault were attempted, it probably would require the use of all the sea-going troop-lift capacity the Chinese Communists can muster.

a. By using a heterogeneous assortment of shipping consisting of steamers, motor launches, motorized junks, and a few armed landing craft, the Chinese Communists could probably lift 200,000 troops. However, the troop capacity of conventional craft, such as landing craft and coastal steamers, probably is not more than 60,000.

b. Chinese Communist airlift capacity is estimated to be sufficient to carry approximately 3,000 troops during an initial 24-hour period. According to reports, the Chinese Communists are training 20,000-25,000 airborne troops which are not now in the invasion coast area.

12. The Chinese Communists would face serious logistical difficulties in supporting an assault against Taiwan, particularly if it were to take place while operations in Korea were continuing. Because of the weakness of their internal lines of communication, the Communists would have considerable difficulty in rapidly re-deploying troops and materiel. Therefore, prior to an invasion attempt, they would be forced to stockpile materiel and de-

ploy most of the troops required for the entire campaign in the vicinity of the outloading ports to the extent not already accomplished. The reinforcement and resupply of the assault forces would require a substantial daily water-lift and it would be essential for the Communists to maintain air and sea supremacy in the Straits.

13. Moreover, it would be virtually impossible for the Chinese Communists to achieve surprise in a large-scale assault, not only because of the necessity of a substantial advance build-up, but also because:

a. Even if transportation and storage facilities permitted all necessary troops, shipping, and supplies to be assembled in the three port areas adjacent to Taiwan (Swatow, Amoy, and Foochow), such concentrations would be difficult to conceal (see Map);

b. In the event that the Communists attempted to coordinate operations from widely separated points along the coast, there would be a 24-48 hour differential between the time of departure of assault forces from more distant ports (such as Shanghai or Canton) and that of forces from Amoy or Foochow.

14. The USSR, in addition to giving planning aid, technical advice, and logistic support, is in a position to increase substantially Communist China's capabilities in submarine, air, and mine warfare.

15. While the military and logistic difficulties outlined in preceding paragraphs limit severely the Chinese Communist capabilities for a large-scale invasion of Taiwan without additional assistance by the USSR, the possibility that the Chinese Communists might attempt a limited attack on the island cannot be ignored. This attack might be carried out by a force of up to 60,000 troops carried in available landing craft and coastal steamers that have a dusk-to-dawn radius of 120 miles. The amphibious attack could be launched in conjunction with a small-scale airborne operation. The Chinese Communists might launch such an assault in the expectation of making a landing before the US Fleet could intervene effectively and of exploiting whatever potential dissidence may exist on the island.

Nationalist Capabilities to Defend Taiwan

16. The Chinese Nationalist concept of the defense of Taiwan calls for a static perimeter defense by the infantry with an armored force centrally located and serving as a mobile reserve.

a. Approximately 300,000 Nationalist troops, mainly infantry, are stationed on Taiwan. The armored force has an estimated strength of 30,000 men and 400 light tanks. As a result of continuous training, better pay and rations, and, to some extent, improved command, the present capabilities of the Nationalist ground forces are apparently greater than at the time of the Nationalist defeat on the mainland. Chiang Kai-shek has made strong efforts to remove all personnel of questionable loyalty and has placed political "advisers" in all military units, but the potential effectiveness of the Nationalist forces is still impaired by dissension within the High Command.

b. The Chinese Nationalist Air Force (CNAF) has a reported over-all strength of 845 aircraft, of which only 345 are operational. There are no jet aircraft in the CNAF. In its present state, the defensive combat capabilities of the CNAF are very low. However, the CNAF has the organizational structure and necessary personnel, including 1,700 trained active pilots, to absorb and utilize additional equipment to improve its effectiveness as a defensive force. Such additional equipment alone, however, would not be sufficient to enable the CNAF to defend the island against Communist air attacks.

c. The Chinese Nationalist Navy consists of approximately 150 miscellaneous craft, the largest of which are seven destroyer-type vessels. About half of the Nationalist fleet is constantly laid up for repair or overhaul. Although naval personnel are fairly well trained, the political intrigues of the senior officers detract from the Navy's capabilities.

17. The Chinese Nationalist Government has taken far-reaching steps to guard against Chinese Communist sabotage on Taiwan through strict surveillance and drastic methods. Nevertheless, the Communists appear to have maintained some underground organization

on the island which might be capable of sabotage of lines of communications and military installations at the time of an assault. Should Nationalist troops and officials feel that a Communist victory on Taiwan were imminent, many would be susceptible to subversion, and a movement by separate groups to obtain their own best terms from the Communist invaders would probably spread rapidly.

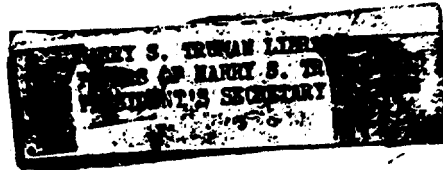
18. In the absence of US participation in the defense of the island, the Chinese Communists, after necessary redeployment, probably could capture Taiwan by large-scale invasion.* Nationalist naval capabilities to intercept an invasion fleet are extremely limited. The CNAF could not provide adequate defense for Taiwan against the type of attack the Chinese Communists could mount. The armored force, a key element in the defense of the island, probably would have difficulty in fulfilling its mission as a mobile reserve because of the condition of its equipment and lack of spare parts. In these circumstances, even without taking into account the reliability factor, it is doubtful that the Nationalist ground forces could successfully defend the island if the Chinese Communists succeeded in making large-scale landings.

19. On the other hand, we believe that the Chinese Nationalists are capable of holding Taiwan against a determined Chinese Communist invasion if substantial US naval power and air power participate promptly in the defense of the island and if the USSR does not intervene.*

Sino-Soviet Intentions With Respect to Taiwan

20. Reports continue to be received of amphibious training and landing craft construction on the east coast of mainland China, in-

* The Director of Intelligence, US Air Force, estimates that as long as the Chinese Communists remain heavily engaged in Korea, the Chinese Nationalists probably are capable of holding Taiwan, without the direct employment of US forces, against a determined invasion attempt by the former, providing the Nationalists are given substantial US aid now rather than at the outset of any invasion attempt and that the USSR does not intervene.



[REDACTED]

ting that Peiping probably has not abandoned its plans for an invasion of Taiwan. Recent troop build-ups along the coast opposite Taiwan and intensified construction work at nearby airfields could indicate preparations for an early assault on Taiwan or on some of the smaller Nationalist-held islands off the coast (such as Chinmen or Matsu) which the Chinese Communists could capture at will; may, on the other hand, be merely measures of defense against anticipated US-supported Nationalist landings.

The Chinese Communists consider gain-control over Taiwan to be of major importance. In Nationalist hands, Taiwan represents the last major remnant of organized resistance to the Communist regime, a symbol of independence, and a source of aid to mainland China. The Chinese Communists undoubtedly believe that Taiwan will eventually be used as a base for a US-assisted invasion of mainland China, and they will regard Taiwan as a threat to their security until the island is under their control. Although the Chinese Communist leaders are apparently anxious to proceed with the conquest of Taiwan and have repeatedly pledged themselves to the "liberation" of the island, recent Chinese propaganda has placed less emphasis on Taiwan and has committed the regime to an early invasion only if necessary. (See Appendix B)

The USSR might favor an early Chinese Communist conquest of Taiwan in order to disrupt the US Pacific lines of defense and obstruct the area for further Communist offensive action to the south. Both the USSR and the Chinese Communists, however, will probably view the problem of Taiwan not in isolation but in relation to the world situation generally and to the situation in the Far East particularly. If these larger considerations prevent them from accepting the risks involved in an early assault on Taiwan, a continuation of the present impasse still has certain advantages in that it has a divisive effect on the major Powers and serves as an additional point of friction for Chinese Communist anti-Americanism.

As long as the US Fleet is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the *status quo*

with respect to Taiwan, therefore, we believe it is unlikely that the Chinese Communists will attempt a large-scale assault on the island unless the USSR provides sufficient assistance to offset the effect of the participation of US forces in the defense.

The USSR might hope that it could furnish sufficient aid to insure the success of a Communist assault on Taiwan without precipitating general war. It would realize, nevertheless, that furnishing such aid would involve a substantial risk of war with the US. It would probably estimate that it would incur a substantial risk of war with the US if it furnished assistance of the type and scale that would be required to make the operation successful. Consequently, the USSR would have to weigh the advantage of a Chinese conquest of Taiwan against an uncertain degree of risk of war. We do not believe the USSR is likely to incur this degree of risk solely on account of the advantage to be gained from Chinese Communist conquest of Taiwan in 1951.

24. The likelihood of a Communist invasion attempt would be greatly increased under any of the following circumstances:

a. If the Chinese Communists should achieve a decisive victory in Korea before summer or should otherwise be able to disengage themselves therefrom;

b. If the tactical situation in Korea made the redeployment of the US Fleet unlikely;

c. If the Chinese Communists were convinced that the Chinese Nationalist Government and its defense forces had become so weakened that they would disintegrate after an initial show of Chinese Communist strength;

d. If over-all Communist strategy required the conquest of Taiwan regardless of the risks involved.

25. Under present circumstances, however, we believe that in 1951 the Chinese Communists are more likely to restrict their activities with respect to Taiwan to the following:

a. Maintain the threat to Taiwan;

b. Attempt to expand a network for subversive activity on Taiwan;

c. Emphasize in domestic propaganda that US support to the Nationalist Government constitutes aggression against China;

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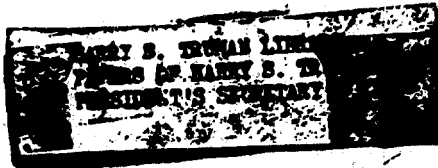
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d. Stimulate international disagreement over the disposition of the area and international criticism of US support of the Chiang regime;

e. Exploit the Taiwan issue in connection

with proposals for a peaceful settlement in Korea.

f. Perhaps exercise their capability for capturing the small Nationalist-held islands off the east China coast.



APPENDIX A

WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE TAIWAN STRAITS

We believe the Chinese Communists, if they decided to make an assault on Taiwan, would be most likely to attack in the spring or summer, when weather and sea conditions are most favorable.

PERIOD	GENERAL CONDITIONS	FEASIBILITY OF LARGE-SCALE SEA OPERATIONS
October thru March	Strong northeast monsoons, currents setting south-westerly through the Straits and reaching maximum drift of 60 to 85 miles per day in December and January.	Weather unsuitable for large-scale sea operations.
April thru June	Transition period between northeast and southwest monsoons; variable winds; light and variable currents setting generally northeast; high seas and swells observed 6-10 percent of time in April and May. Typhoons may occur in June.	April and May are best months for large-scale sea operations; there is risk of encountering typhoons in June.
July thru August	Southwest monsoon, average velocities low and calms frequent; sea and surf moderate. Typhoons move from Pacific due west across Taiwan into China.	Average conditions better than in April and May, but danger of typhoons makes this period less suitable.
September	Transitional period between southwest and northeast monsoon; typhoons may occur, winds are variable.	Period from late September through early October after typhoon danger is over and before strong northeast monsoon begins may not be too unfavorable for sea operations.

APPENDIX B

RECENT CHINESE PROPAGANDA LINE ON TAIWAN

The Chinese Communists in their domestic and foreign propaganda as well as in UN negotiations have never altered their public pledge to take Taiwan. Changes have occurred, however, in the relative emphasis placed on the promised "liberation" and in the timing of the operation. The 1950 New Year's message of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party asserted that the 1950 task was "to liberate Taiwan, Hainan Island, and Tibet, annihilate the last remnant forces of the Chiang Kai-shek gang, and accomplish the cause of unifying China, not allowing the aggressive forces of American imperialism to have any foothold in our territory." In contrast, the various 1951 New Year's messages gave no assurance of any specific action against Taiwan during the coming year, and, moreover, subordinated Taiwan to the more general struggle against American "imperialism," particularly in Korea. Although most recent Peiping broadcasts directed at Taiwan have stated that the victory on Taiwan "will not be long deferred," the principal emphasis is on appeals to the "people of Taiwan" to unite for liberation with the "people" on the mainland and on appeals to Nationalist military and political leaders to return home and join the "new China" rather than to remain on Taiwan awaiting extermination. It is apparent, however, that the failure of Chinese Communist propaganda to specify a target date for invading Taiwan is not, by itself, proof that such an operation is not planned for 1951.

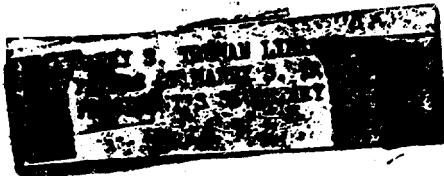
Propaganda with respect to Taiwan began to shift in line but not in intensity immediately after the outbreak of Korean hostilities. Without openly stating that action had been postponed, the presence of US fleet units in Taiwan waters provided an excuse for lack of an immediate offensive, while major attention was focused on the aggressive designs of

American imperialism. On 6 July 1950, Foreign Minister Chou En-lai provided the Communist position in a statement cabled to the UN Secretary-General:

"Taiwan is an inseparable part of the territory of China. This is not only a historical fact recognized by the entire world, but is also confirmed by the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration, and the situation since the surrender of Japan Now, in the name of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, I declare: Despite any military steps of obstruction taken by the United States Government, the Chinese peoples are irrevocably determined to liberate Taiwan without fail."

By September, the Taiwan issue, while never ignored, had given way in propaganda to the alleged American threat to China from Korea. Taiwan was lowered to the status of a secondary springboard from which US forces were planning to invade China. In urging the necessity for preparations to resist attack, there was an implicit recognition of a temporary postponement of the promised "liberation." Thus, General Yeh Chien-ying, in a speech at Canton on 6 October 1950, stated:

"At the same time we must realize clearly that the Chiang bandits, who are cornered in Taiwan and directly under the command of the American imperialists, while in no position to launch a counter-offensive against the mainland, may still despatch their warships and planes to attack our coastal points and our major cities, and to despatch special agents and stooges to infiltrate into our inner ranks for sabotage activities. We must therefore strengthen our measures against attack and against infiltration, consolidate our internal ranks, strengthen our unity, be determined in the suppression of



arch criminal elements, and consolidate security."

Taiwan became a part of the persistent build-up of the theme of "defense" of China, which was utilized to the fullest extent as an excuse for intervention in Korea. An article in *People's China* (16 November 1950) was typical of the treatment of the Taiwan issue. It stated in part:

"Knowing that their puppet Chiang will fall at the first well prepared blow of the People's Liberation Army, who will be aided by the heroic islanders, the American imperialists have decided that they must drop the mask and resort to a naked act of aggression in order to retain control of Taiwan. This was the immediate reason for Truman's decision to send the US 7th Fleet in an attempt to prevent the liberation of the island, with the further despatch of air and ground units, military missions and advisors."

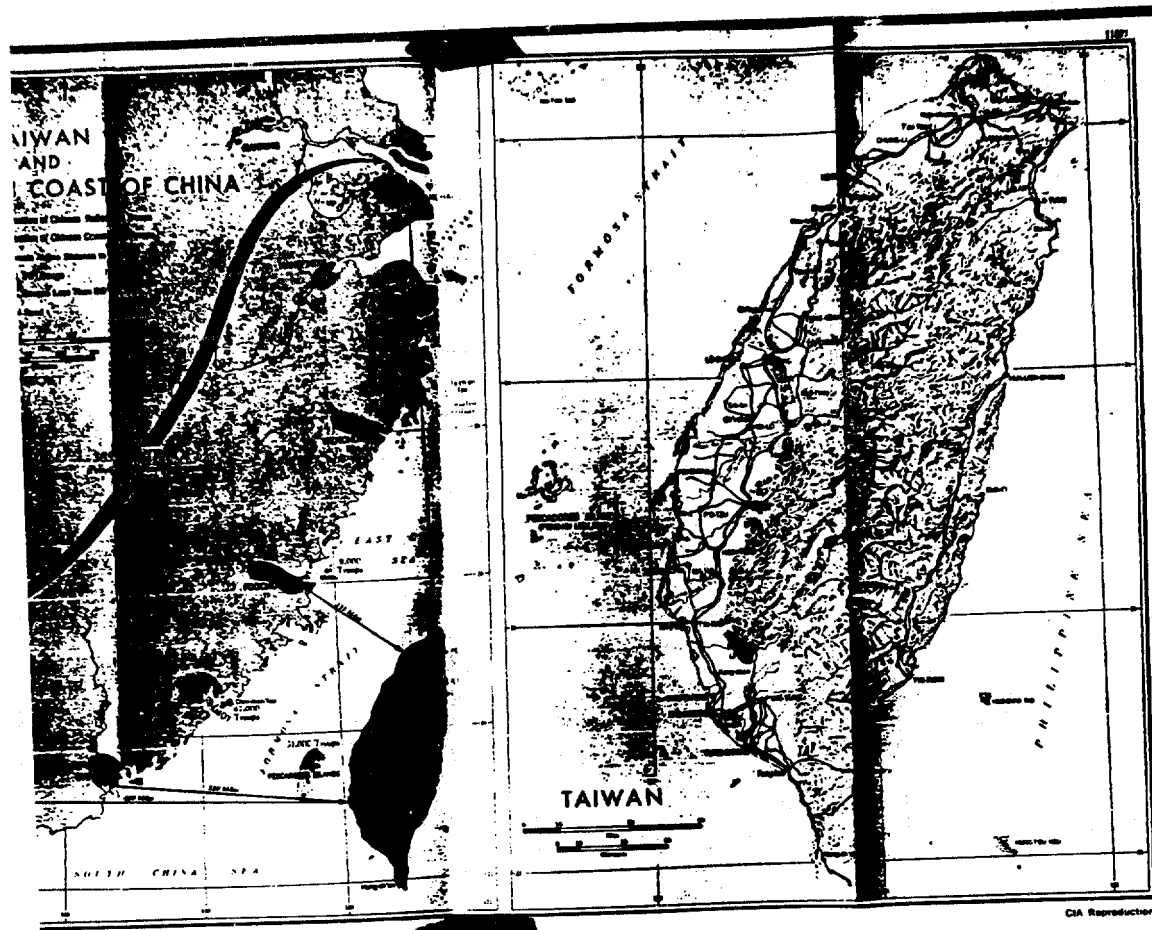
In the United Nations, the Chinese Communists in concert with the entire Soviet bloc sought to exploit the unpopularity of the US position, hoping particularly to impress neu-

trals such as India and to weaken UN activities in Korea. Familiar charges—of US armed aggression against Taiwan, as well as other parts of China territory, and maintaining on Taiwan a regime that represents nobody—were made. The Chinese Communist delegate, General Wu Hsiu-chuan, said in a speech to the Security Council on 28 November:

"Regardless of any military measures of obstruction by the United States Government, and no matter how it may arrogate for its purposes the name of the United Nations, the Chinese people are firmly determined to recover Taiwan and all other territories belonging to China from the grip of the United States aggressors. This is the irrevocable and immovable will of the 475 million people of China."

In the various statements, official and unofficial, relating to cease-fire proposals, the Chinese Communists have insisted that the withdrawal of US forces from Taiwan is one of the basic conditions for any settlement of the Korean hostilities and related Far Eastern problems.





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TAIWAN AND THE INVASION COAST OF CHINA

- Invasion of China from Taiwan
- Invasion of China from the coast
- Invasion of China from the coast
- Invasion of China from the coast
- Invasion of China from the coast



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