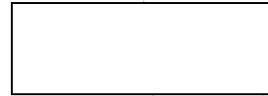


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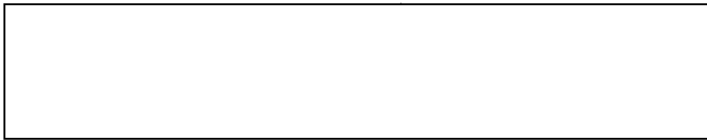
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PRC Defense Policy and Armed Forces

~~Secret~~

NIE 13-76
11 November 1976

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NIE 13-76

PRC DEFENSE POLICY AND
ARMED FORCES

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THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT, AS FOLLOWS:

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the National Security Agency.

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The Director, National Security Agency

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None

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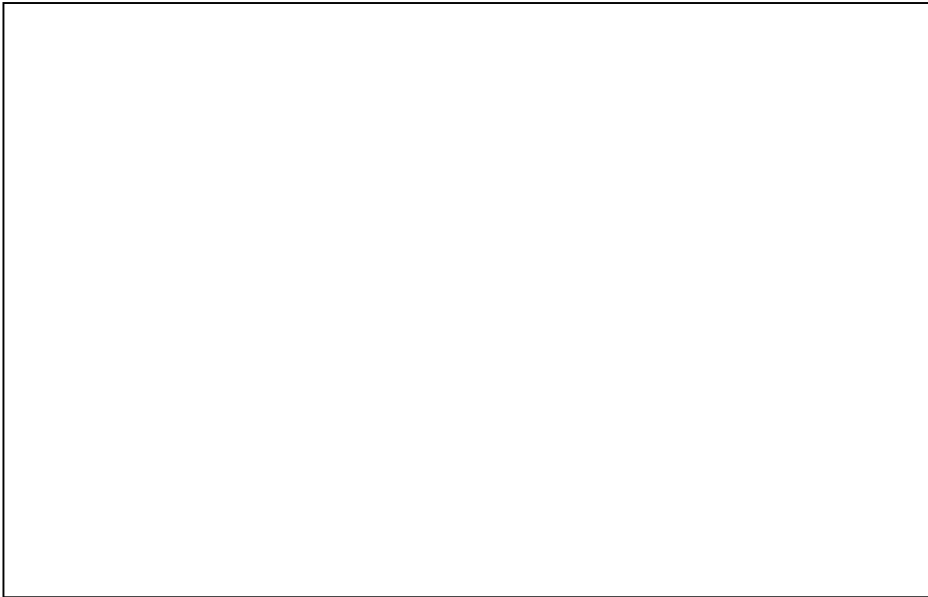
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PRC DEFENSE POLICY AND ARMED FORCES¹



SCOPE

This paper examines Chinese defense policy, strategy, and armed forces in the 1970s and makes some broad predictions for the early 1980s. Separate Annexes provide details on the economy and technology, PLA involvement in politics and the succession, trends in the armed forces, the conventional and nuclear warfighting capabilities of the military, and civil defense.

¹ Supersedes NIE 13-3-72, 20 July 1972 and NIE 13-8-74, 13 June 1974.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Peking considers the United States to be less of a direct military threat than the Soviet Union. The Chinese also view the US as a weakened power, gradually withdrawing from Asia, but nonetheless one of great strategic strength and a long-term ideological adversary (Para 8).

- The main danger, from the Chinese vantage point, is that the US, lacking the political will to pursue its national interests vigorously and allowing itself to be put in a position of inferiority in conventional and strategic arms, will compromise with the USSR on disadvantageous terms, leaving China to face Soviet power alone (Para 8).

B. The Chinese will continue to see it in their best interests not to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, either at the strategic or tactical level. The Chinese aim clearly must be to confine the conflict to the conventional level, where they feel they can make maximum use of advantages in manpower, knowledge of terrain, and defensive complexes (Para 44).

- The Chinese probably hope that their extensive dispersal and passive defense measures will help them ride out a strategic nuclear attack preserving enough force to deter or eventually defeat a follow-on invasion (Para 45).
- At the theater level, the Chinese would not initiate, but apparently envision retaliatory, employment of theater nuclear forces against an invading force (Para 46).

C. Contrary to the last NIE (13-3-72), we do not believe that the Chinese would rely on a "luring deep" *strategy* for defense against Soviet invasion, or exclusively employ a "positional defense" against an attack in coastal areas (Para 43).

- Judging from force developments and dispositions, we now believe that a combination of *tactics* would be used, with much depending upon the nature and location of the attacks as well as upon the kind of invading forces (Para 43).
- Current levels of manpower (4.3 million), weapons and equipment, and training suggest the forces are now generally in a high state of readiness (Annex D, Para 3).

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D. The Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) is not organized, equipped, or trained to conduct operations successfully in a nuclear war environment (Annex D, Para 18).

- China's minimal capability for strategic and theater nuclear war does, however, offer a modest deterrent to nuclear attack (Annex D, Para 18).
- If deterrence fails, China's nuclear warfighting capability would be no match for that of the USSR and could not block a Soviet invasion (Annex D, Para 18).

E. Conversely, the PLA is best organized, equipped, and trained to fight a nonnuclear defensive war against the Soviet Union. It would have an even chance of stalemating a Soviet conventional offensive before it reached Peking and the North China Plain. Any attempt to occupy large areas of China would be unfeasible (Annex D, Paras 9 and 27).

F. China could not conduct major offensive military operations much beyond its Soviet border.

- Consequently it is highly unlikely that Peking would initiate such operations (Annex D, Para 8).
- Against Taiwan, the PLA probably would not have the capability to mount a successful nonnuclear invasion much before the 1980s without unacceptable losses (Annex D, Para 28).
- If the Chinese were to intervene in Korea, they could apply sufficient strength in a nonnuclear situation to overwhelm the forces presently there (Annex D, Para 23).
- Against India, the PLA force in Tibet is suited to denial operations and for punitive expeditions against Indian incursions (Annex D, Para 30).
- The PRC probably could seize and occupy the Spratly Islands even against such opposition as Vietnam, the Philippines, or the Republic of China could mount at this time (Annex D, Para 28).

G. The PLA remains at once an instrument of party policy and a shaper of that policy (Annex B, Para 7).

- China's overall military posture has not been weakened by the preoccupation of some political generals with the succession (Annex B, Para 9).

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H. Peking's material support for insurgency is modest, continuing, and confined to a handful of groups, primarily in Southeast Asia, as potential pressure points and as a means of precluding Soviet and limiting Vietnamese involvement with insurgency in the area (Para 21 and Annex B, Paras 22-23).

I. Chinese foreign military assistance will probably remain small in amount, limited in variety, and unsophisticated in nature (Para 22 and Annex B, Paras 24-28).

J. Economic and technical considerations appear to preclude any dramatic improvement in conventional and nuclear warfighting capabilities over the next five years (Para 58).

- Development of the PLA into a fighting force comparable in sophistication to that of the USSR or the US *today* will take *at least* 10 to 20 more years and would require the acquisition of more expensive and advanced technology than China now has (Annex C, Para 3).
- The Chinese will continue to be highly selective in weapons choice, and they are unlikely to come up with technological "surprises" in military weaponry (Paras 16-17).

K. The modernization of the armed forces will continue to be uneven and slow (Para 50).

- The army is in far better shape than it has ever been and will remain the backbone of the defense of the nation (Paras 50-51 and Annex C, Paras 4-12).
- The navy will remain principally an effective coastal defense force. It will, however, operate at greater distances from the coast over the next five years (Para 52 and Annex C, Paras 13-24).
- The air force will remain a limited air defense force with some ground attack capability, but its overall capabilities will

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improve over the next five years (Para 52 and Annex C, Paras 25-41).

L. There has been little change in the massive paramilitary program (Para 53 and Annex C, Paras 42-49).

M. The Chinese have a small nuclear force of missiles and bombers (Annex C, Paras 50-65).

- A limited-range ICBM, possibly capable of reaching Moscow, is now operational (Para 54).
- More advanced missiles, such as an SLBM system and the first ICBM capable of reaching the United States, are now under development but will not be available for several years (Annex C, Paras 55-57)

N. If, as we believe, a "moderate" leadership is emerging from the overall succession process, these new Chinese leaders would continue to strengthen their military posture against the Soviets, even though there could well be some attempts to reduce the abrasiveness of the Sino-Soviet relationship. They would push ahead with the creation of their intercontinental nuclear forces (Paras 59-61).

O. Certain ongoing trends and defense policies have an enduring quality and will consequently survive the post-Mao transition period into the early 1980s (Para 63).

- The Soviets will remain the main threat (Para 63).
- The Chinese will not align themselves with other powers but pursue an independent stance (Para 63).
- Peking will prefer to use political and diplomatic means rather than military pressures to gain its ends (Para 63).
- The PLA will continue as a huge military force— but one more operationally competent than now. It will remain involved in a great variety of political and economic duties (Para 63).
- Though the PRC will probably begin to deploy a small force of ICBMs and SLBMs in the early 1980s, it could not successfully engage a superpower in a nuclear exchange (Para 63).
- The large discrepancy between strategic nuclear weapons available to the Chinese compared to those of the US and the USSR will continue to seriously constrain the development of any flexible Chinese strategy for responding to an enemy first strike (Para 49).

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THE ESTIMATE

I. CHINA'S POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY

A. Factors Affecting Strategy

1. The Peoples Republic of China has assigned a high priority to becoming a major power with the fundamental purpose of putting China among the foremost nations of the world. More specifically, this effort has been influenced by China's national interests, perceived threats, economic and technological limitations, and the interaction of the Peoples Liberation Army in domestic politics. These factors have also shaped the PRC national strategy and the development of supporting military forces.

2. China's stated aspirations are to transform the country into a powerful socialist state, protect the nation from social-imperialists (USSR) and imperialists (US), and improve the material and cultural well-being of the masses, using Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought as a theoretical basis for guiding the behavior of the nation. The working out of these aspirations in practice has often been difficult and frequently led to arguments over methods and priorities.

National Interests

3. To realize its national purposes, China has several broad national interests and concerns. Internally, the Chinese leadership wishes primarily to ensure the security and territorial integrity of mainland China and, of lesser priority, to recover Taiwan and other territories claimed by China. The leaders also desire to maintain their Maoist ideological purity. Simultaneously, they hope to catch up with the industrial powers in science and technology and develop a modern economy.

4. In foreign relations, they want to assert China's role as a great power on the world stage. Peking hopes eventually to replace the influence of the United States and other Western countries in Asia and counter the expansion of Soviet, Japanese, Viet-

namese, and Indian influence in the area, while gaining greater influence in Southeast Asia. Ideally, the leaders also desire to extend China's major power status by selectively maintaining a significant voice in communist movements and by strengthening Chinese influence everywhere, especially in the Third World.

5. Of these two considerations, the internal is the more important. Protection of the Chinese state, deterrence of possible aggression against it, and failing that, the ability to successfully defend against an attacking force have been Peking's highest priorities since the regime came to power. Yet interest in achieving full status and recognition as a great power has also been high. To a traditional sense of China as the "central kingdom," which automatically deserves homage from its neighbors, has been added a modern nationalism. This nationalism is intensified by two factors: a sense of grievance as a result of the exploitation of China by Western nations and Japan beginning in the late nineteenth century, and a messianic sense that the Chinese revolution and Peking's subsequent efforts at modernization provide the proper model for developing nations throughout the world.

6. In all of these perceptions of their sense of purpose and in their provisions for accepting and making change, the Chinese insist upon preserving some fundamental beliefs and ideals. In their value system, the virtues of independence, self-reliance, frugality, and hard work count a great deal; above all, the Chinese wish to avoid losing their cultural identity in coming to terms with the West and modernization.

Threats, Dangers, and Opportunities

7. Peking's perceptions of threats to the Chinese state are various and of different magnitudes. The most important by far are seen as flowing from the superpowers—above all from the Soviet Union. Ideological differences, conflicting national interests, racial animosity, and Soviet coercive diplomacy have created continuing tension between Peking and

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Moscow. The USSR's military buildup along China's northern border, its Asian collective security proposal, its efforts to affect Japanese diplomacy, and its influence already apparent in Mongolia, Vietnam, and India have convinced the Chinese leaders that China is being "surrounded" by the Soviets. Though they claim that Moscow's eyes are fixed on Europe and the Middle East, they fear the Soviets will eventually attack them.

8. Peking considers the United States to be less of a direct military threat than the Soviet Union. The Chinese also view the United States as a weakened power, gradually withdrawing from overextended positions in Asia, but nonetheless a power of great strategic strength and a long-term ideological adversary. Assessing the United States to be on the defensive in international affairs as a result of Soviet probes, the Chinese believe that Washington must concentrate on its primary opponent, the USSR. To this extent, China shares a commonality of interest with the United States in its struggle with Moscow. The main danger, from the Chinese vantage point, is that the United States, lacking the political will to pursue its national interests vigorously and allowing itself to be put into a position of inferiority in conventional and strategic arms, will compromise with the USSR on disadvantageous terms, leaving China to face Soviet power alone. Peking, therefore, attempts to exacerbate tensions between the two superpowers.

9. Although its attention is focused primarily on the superpowers, China senses some danger in Northeast Asia. Japan, the only other Asian major power, is a potential rival of China. Two bitter wars with Japan over the past 85 years have given Peking reason to fear eventual Japanese rearmament, especially with nuclear weaponry. To lessen this prospect, China is attempting to increase the correlation of Chinese and Japanese interests through political and economic means. In doing so, the Chinese are also benefiting from Japanese economic and technical strength.

10. Korea presents a different kind of security problem. In order to protect their northeast border, the Chinese cannot afford to ignore Pyongyang. Peking, however, wishes to avoid a situation which could draw China into confrontation with the three other major area powers—the USSR, Japan, and the United States—and so is wary of any North Korean

attempt to unify the peninsula forcibly. South Korean acquisition of a nuclear capability [] would further complicate China's policy decisions in the area.

11. Taiwan is the PRC's unfinished civil war. Reunification of Taiwan with the mainland remains an important objective, but it is of less immediate concern than international acceptance of China's claim of sovereignty over the island. Although lately the Chinese have spoken more about the possibility of eventually taking Taiwan by force, such talk seems primarily intended to lend credibility to Peking's bargaining position in any future talks. It also reveals China's increased pessimism about the potential for reunification through negotiations. In any case, evidence that Taipei was close to acquiring a crude nuclear device [] might draw Peking toward military action and serve as a potential flashpoint in Sino-US relations.

12. Elsewhere in Asia, Soviet influence aggravates Chinese concern over minor threats from peripheral nations. India presents a more immediate danger than Japan, but a lesser potential danger. The Chinese are particularly concerned about a nuclear state allied with the USSR on their southern flank. The Sino-Indian border remains in quiet dispute, and despite New Delhi's recent conciliatory move to raise diplomatic relations to an ambassadorial level, Peking doubts that Indian coolness will appreciably abate soon. Soviet penetration of the Indian Ocean area, moreover, has given the USSR a strategic entree in portions of the Indian Ocean littoral. As a consequence, Peking foresees further Soviet naval envelopment of the PRC.

13. The Chinese perceive Vietnam as the most powerful and stable state in Southeast Asia and a potentially expansionist one, which poses a vexing security issue for them. Hanoi is an obstacle to Peking's aspirations for unchallenged influence in the area—a problem exacerbated by long-standing Sino-Vietnamese ethnic frictions and by rival claims to the islands in the South China Sea. These frictions would exist even without Hanoi's currently warm feelings toward Moscow, but such relations magnify them. Any Soviet acquisition of naval base rights in Vietnam—an unlikely event—would significantly heighten Peking's fear of Soviet encirclement.

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14. Given the potential dangers facing it and its lack of permanent allies, Peking naturally is particularly concerned with a possible outbreak of a world war and its impact on China's national interests. Although more pessimistic than most nations that such a war is inevitable, the top Chinese leaders almost certainly are exaggerating the likelihood of an outbreak in the relatively near future. Even though the Chinese claim that the greatest danger is a conflict between the superpowers, they really fear a direct Soviet military assault on China. To decrease the chance that China would have to absorb this attack alone, as well as to improve its current level of deterrence, Peking is attempting to involve US interests in Chinese security. The Chinese seem to think that even a conflict between the United States and the USSR would eventually involve China; Peking fears, however, that given the nuclear standoff between the superpowers, such a war might be fought at first by conventional means which it thinks would give Moscow a decided advantage over the US.

*Economic and Technical Constraints*²

15. As a developing nation, China continues to face complex economic problems. The limited economy continues to force difficult economic trade-offs on the decisionmakers. The scarcity of high-quality human and technological resources requires continued juggling of national resources to accommodate different needs and priorities.

16. Rather than concentrate on quick fixes for weapons modernization, Chinese policy appears to favor the development of a viable economy over the long run in order to support more effective armed forces at a later date. We believe that the Chinese economy, barring extensive agricultural failures or a prolonged political upheaval, will permit the gradual modernization of the military establishment. Force modernization, however, will necessarily depend on the rate of industrial growth and can therefore be expected to proceed at a measured pace. As a consequence, the Chinese will continue to be highly selective in weapons choice.

17. The Chinese obviously have not become as self-sufficient and self-reliant as they had hoped. Having exploited most of the technology gained in the 1950s and early 1960s from the Soviets, they have since turned to the West for more acquisitions of technology

to boost their economy and military production base. So long as the Chinese continue to concentrate on applied rather than basic research, they will be unlikely to come up with technological "surprises" in military weapons.

*The PLA and Politics*³

18. The political role of the military is currently in flux. Since 1971 there has been a gradual but marked disengagement of the military from the political arena and reassertion of the party's political primacy. Yet the voice of the military in policymaking remains strong.

19. The divisiveness among China's civilian leadership makes it unlikely that the military will be pushed further out of political life in the aftermath of Mao's demise. Despite the preoccupation of some political generals with the succession, China's overall military posture is not likely to suffer greatly. Should disorder approaching the scale of the Cultural Revolution occur, the PLA, as the final guarantor of security, would almost certainly intervene. As a consequence, the combat availability of some units would be affected temporarily.

20. [REDACTED]

The extent to which PLA leadership views will influence Chinese foreign policy over the next five years is unknown. Some military leaders apparently continue to believe that the United States provides a useful counterweight to the USSR and a source of needed technology, while others may feel that China's best interests would be served by a foreign policy that was less abrasively hostile toward the USSR.

21. Peking's material support of insurgency is modest and confined to a handful of groups, primarily in Southeast Asia. China will probably continue this assistance as potential pressure points and as a means of precluding Soviet and limiting Vietnamese involvement with insurgency in the area.

22. Compared to that of the superpowers, Chinese foreign military assistance will probably remain small in amount, limited in variety, and less sophisticated in nature. We see no major shifts in character, direction, or scale in Chinese military aid over the next five years. The Chinese will not become a major supplier

² See Annex A for details.

³ See Annex B for details.

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to Third World countries, let alone be able to challenge superpower dominance in arms supply. China, however, provides the Third World nations with an alternative and considers its foreign assistance as enhancing its prestige and influence at minimum financial and military risk.

B. Overview of Chinese Strategy

National Strategy

23. Chinese national strategy deals largely with preserving China's security and maintaining its way of life. In past and present interaction between China and the three major powers on its periphery, at different times each one of them—Japan in the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s, the United States from the early 1950s to the late 1960s, and the USSR from the late 1960s on—has posed the main threat to China's basic security and survival as a national entity. During those 40-odd years, the central task has been to deter or combat that threatening external enemy while in a position of great military inferiority. The essence of the present PRC national security problem is how best to protect the Chinese state against a militarily superior USSR, both now and in the future.

24. As a national strategy, the Chinese are building up their own power position by whatever means possible, while attempting to reduce that of their main enemy. The ultimate aim of this strategy is to attenuate Soviet power so that the USSR no longer presents a threat to the maintenance of Chinese security and well-being.

25. China's current national strategy, however, is one of limited aim, simply because of limited resources. Thus, the Chinese have sought to establish a national defense posture which would not only deter attack but also would allow for balanced economic development. In order to reduce risk-taking, the strategy will likely continue to be militarily defensive in outlook while politically and psychologically offensive in nature.

26. To attain this aim, the Chinese are pursuing a range of policies that seeks:

- To improve political relations with those nations and organizations (e.g., the US, Japan, NATO, Eastern Europe) which have the potential to counter Soviet expansionism and to help soften

the aggressive anti-China policies and outlook of the Soviets. In this connection, the Third World is also to play a role in resisting Soviet influence. (Some Chinese continuing objectives vis-a-vis specific countries and regions are shown on the accompanying pullout map, Figure 2, which, while not depicting any order of priorities, does illustrate some politico-military and economic aspects of Peking's global outlook.)

- To mask internal divisions so as to limit the opportunities available to external mischief-makers.
- To develop economic arrangements to increase PRC industrial strength, technological growth, and military capability.
- To build a military establishment which can deal more effectively with conventional and nuclear war.

27. In sum, the Chinese are now attempting to maximize their strategic position by closely integrating their political, economic, and military policies so that they can move from a position of "relative weakness" to one of "relative strength." Such a strategy furnishes the Chinese with their best hope of avoiding a military conflict in the present, while buying time to prepare ways of dealing more effectively with the superpowers in the future.

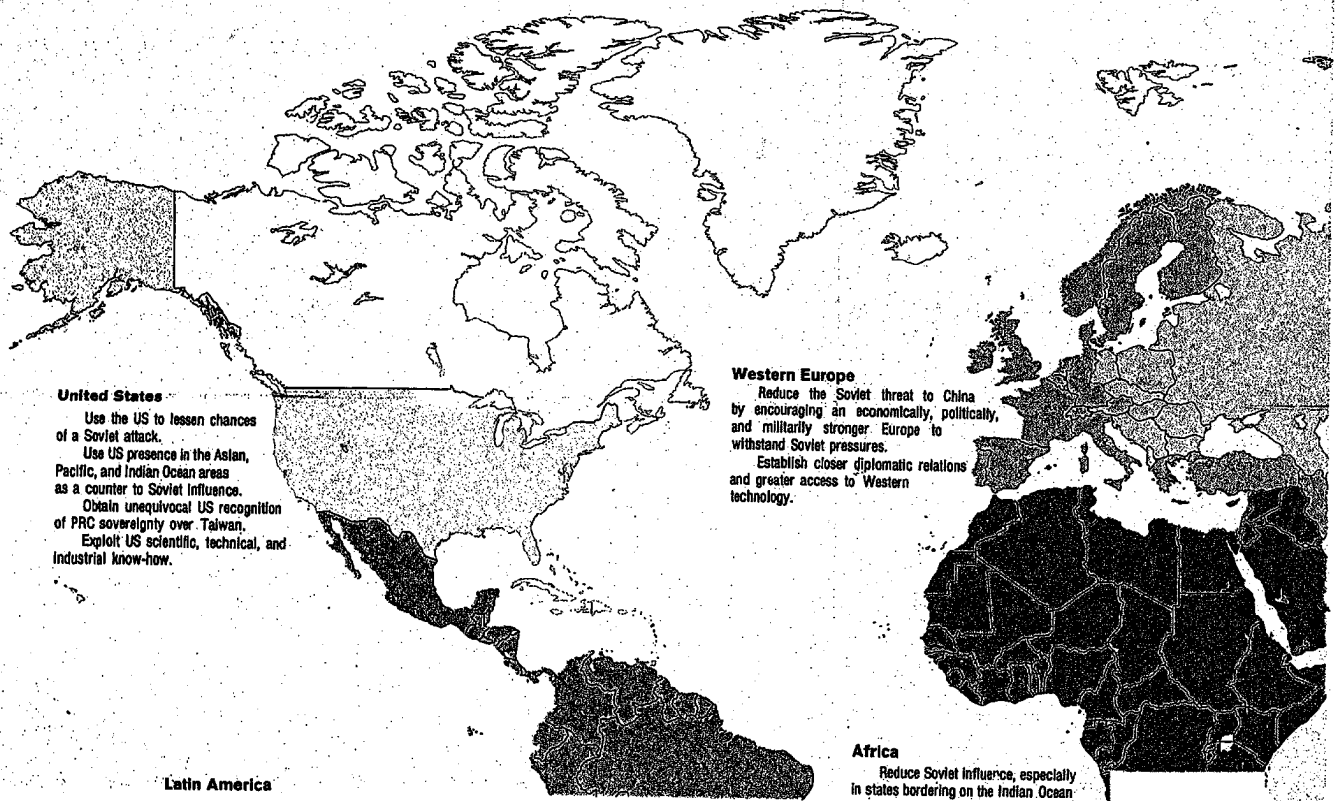
Military Strategy

28. In support of national strategy, Chinese military strategy stresses both deterrence and warfighting capability:

- Deterrence to make an attack on China so costly to a likely enemy that war is avoided.
- Warfighting capability to defend as much Chinese territory as possible, if deterrence fails.

To achieve these strategic military objectives, there is a general consensus among the leadership of the continuing validity of Maoist military concepts, the importance of military power, and the necessity of modernizing the PLA. Nevertheless, there clearly have been and are disagreements on specific issues related to their defense policy and strategy.

PRC Objectives



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Figure 2

USSR and Eastern Europe

Avoid a Sino-Soviet war.
Resolve the Sino-Soviet border dispute on PRC terms.
Discourage USSR-US detente.
Reduce Soviet influence worldwide, especially in countries on China's periphery and elsewhere in Asia.
Encourage greater East European political independence from the USSR, and obtain more ideological support for the PRC in the Sino-Soviet quarrel.

Japan

Discourage movement of Japan toward closer ties with the USSR.
Exploit Japan's technological and industrial know-how and gain access to Western technology.
Discourage acquisition of nuclear weapons or large-scale conventional rearmament.

Korea

Avoid a major power conflict in Korea and discourage adventurism by Pyongyang.
Retain PRC influence in North Korea and reduce that of the USSR.
Secure removal of the UN Command and reduce US military presence in South Korea over the longer term.

Taiwan

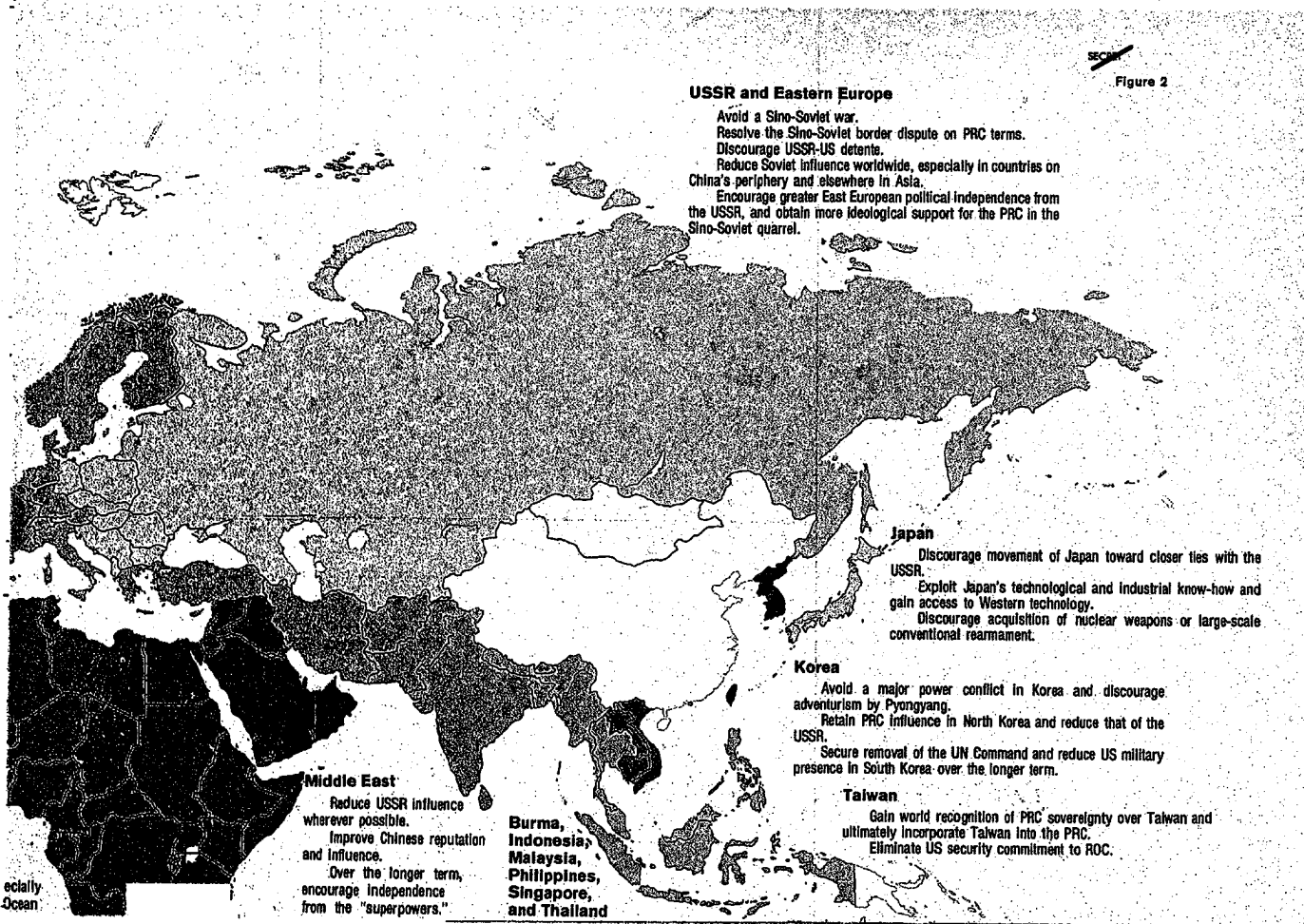
Gain world recognition of PRC sovereignty over Taiwan and ultimately incorporate Taiwan into the PRC.
Eliminate US security commitment to ROC.

Middle East

Reduce USSR influence wherever possible.
Improve Chinese reputation and influence.
Over the longer term, encourage independence from the "superpowers."

**Burma,
Indonesia,
Malaysia,
Philippines,
Singapore,
and Thailand**

pecially
Ocean



Use the US to lessen chances of a Soviet attack.
Use US presence in the Asian, Pacific, and Indian Ocean areas as a counter to Soviet influence.
Obtain unequivocal US recognition of PRC sovereignty over Taiwan.
Exploit US scientific, technical, and industrial know-how.

by encouraging an economically, politically, and militarily stronger Europe to withstand Soviet pressures.
Establish closer diplomatic relations and greater access to Western technology.

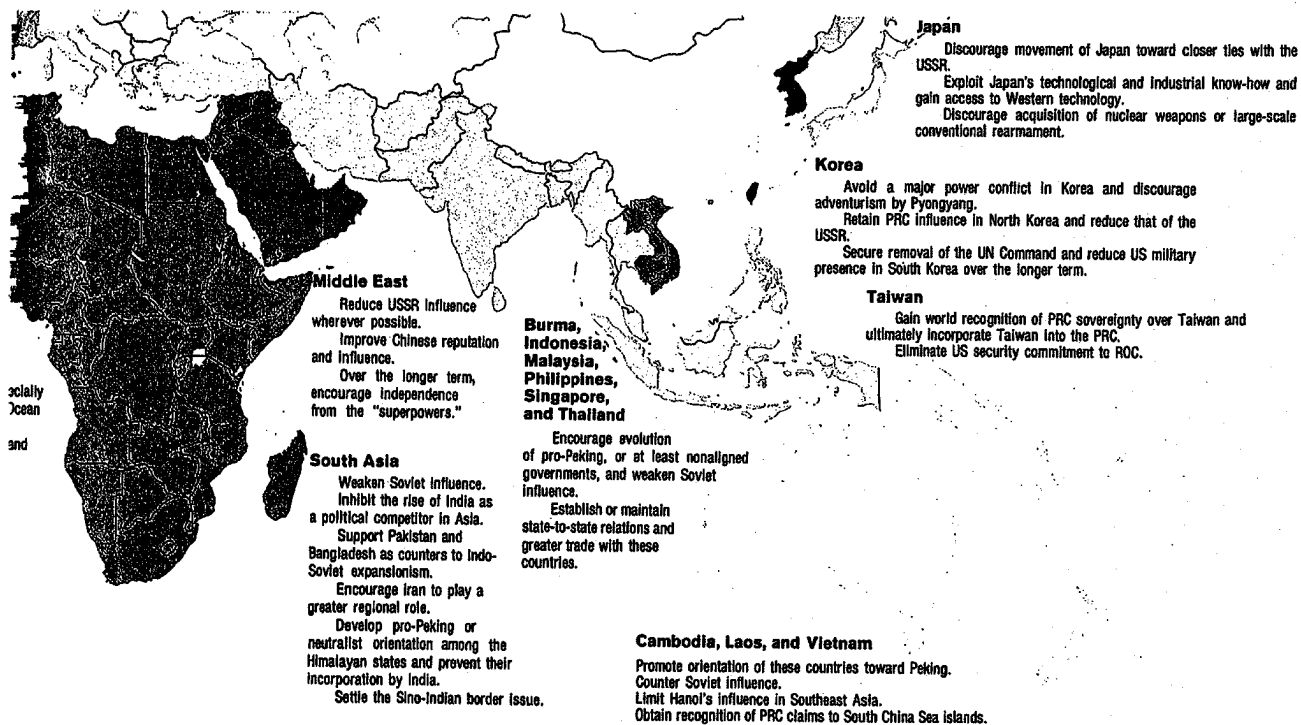
Latin America

Discourage expansion of Cuban influence and Soviet use of Cuba.
Increase PRC influence in Latin America by establishing and expanding state-to-state relations and trade.

Africa

Reduce Soviet influence, especially in states bordering on the Indian Ocean littoral.
Improve Chinese reputation and influence.
Encourage black African independence.

Note: The selected Chinese objectives portrayed on this map are not intended to be comprehensive in nature. They do not reflect certain important nuances in Chinese foreign policy and are intended only for illustrative purposes.



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able to identify or infer some of the most contentious issues. These include:

- Assessment of the threat posed by potential enemies and the type of defense required for each one;
- The value and size of the component parts of the PLA;
- The size and type of nuclear force for deterrence and China's ability to fight a nuclear war;
- The role of paramilitary forces versus conventional forces in a modern war;
- The pace of programs and priorities of resources for PLA modernization, including allocation among the various components; and
- The extent of PLA involvement in political and economic activities.

30. With the death of Mao, these issues may become even more important and contentious. It is difficult to imagine that any current Chinese leader would be able to consolidate his position without at least the support of key members of the PLA. Such support might require major concessions and a significant shift of direction in the PLA's development. Nevertheless, we feel confident of detecting any significant change in the presently accepted compromise melding of competing viewpoints presented below.

Deterrence

31. The Chinese currently view deterrence as an integral part of a broader process of influencing the main enemy without direct confrontation. Their approach is both direct and indirect: at the military level, they are developing more armed strength in order to increase the punishment to be meted out to an aggressor for resorting to war; at the indirect level, they are using political and psychological means to contribute to military deterrence.

32. A balance of the two ways is essential for the PRC. The direct military approach is necessary but very costly. The less visible and more subtle, indirect

approach is attractive because it creates an added measure of deterrence at a cheap price and with much less danger of military provocation, even though it does not provide a great assurance of success.

33. Overall, China's military deterrent is considerable, but its effectiveness differs sharply according to the nature of the war. For example, against a ground invasion, China has achieved a high level of deterrence because of its huge conventional force (well prepared and disposed for defense in depth), a vast geographical area, a massive and highly organized population, and a mobilization capacity for a protracted war. Indeed, a conventional ground attack against China would be a formidable undertaking even for a superpower. The modernization of the general purpose forces, moreover, continues to increase steadily this sizable deterrent.

34. China has a modest nuclear capability which complements its conventional capability. The aim is to prevent nuclear blackmail and to deter a nuclear strike against, or an invasion of, China. In addition, the nuclear force provides a limited nuclear umbrella. The Chinese may feel that this nuclear force might make either superpower reluctant to intervene in local crisis situations for fear of either a ground confrontation with the Chinese or an escalation to a nuclear level.

35. China's nuclear force presents a particular concern for the Soviet Union, as well as for US forces and US Asian allies within range. Although this force will remain vastly inferior to that of the United States and the USSR for a long time to come, its deterrent value will markedly increase, particularly in US eyes, when China's full-range ICBMs and SLBMs become operational, probably in the early 1980s. This added capability will require greater caution in handling situations that could result in a military clash with China.

36. The Chinese have enhanced the deterrent value of their IRBMs and MRBMs by means of concealment and field site deployment. Such measures have not only increased the likelihood of post-strike survival but also have decreased the potential attacker's confidence that he has detected and targeted the entire force.

37. The Chinese have also achieved some added deterrence through political and psychological means.

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Peking's most noteworthy accomplishment has been the improvement of relations with the United States, thus raising the perceived cost and risk of a Soviet military attack upon China. Other political initiatives on defense matters have not been as beneficial, but the deterrent payoff would be significant should Chinese political-military calculations be realized.

38. For example, in the field of arms control and disarmament, the Chinese hope to constrain the flexibility and use of force by the United States and the USSR through various proposals and political-propaganda initiatives. These include:

- Propaganda attempts to undermine MBFR and SALT negotiations, which they fear would provide the USSR with greater military flexibility against China.
- Proposals for adoption by the superpowers of a no-first-use pledge as China has done, withdrawal of nuclear arms from overseas bases, support of various nuclear-free-zone proposals, and participation in a worldwide nuclear disarmament conference.
- Advocating adoption of a 12-mile territorial water claim by all countries and control of the straits within this jurisdiction; supporting the claim of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia for controlling the Strait of Malacca. These measures would serve to limit the free movement of the US and Soviet navies.

Warfighting Strategy

39. *General.* The main focus of Chinese warfighting strategy is to deal with an invasion of the mainland, a nuclear attack, or some combination of both. According to Chinese official statements and issuances at past National Party Congresses, the top leaders envision war at different intensities and taking several forms. It could be large or small, nuclear or conventional, and with or without surprise. Some Chinese leaders even anticipate that an enemy might resort to chemical and biological warfare in order to create famine, civil disorder, and political collapse.

40. *Conventional.* We believe that the current Chinese military strategy basically calls for:

- An all-around defense of China, with a major effort devoted to discouraging a Soviet ground

attack and a secondary effort pointed toward seacoast defense;

- The availability of a central reserve and forces from other areas as reinforcement or for insertion into a threatened area, and of the militia as a replacement pool;
- The maintenance of flexibility by using a combination of main, regional, and guerrilla forces; and
- The execution of a variety of tactics, both offensive and defensive including mobile, positional, and guerrilla warfare as the situation demands.

41. More specifically, in the north the initial defense consists of lightly armed and widely scattered border defense troops. They would provide early warning and intelligence concerning the major axes of advances in the event of a ground invasion. Farther back, in the first defensible terrain, defensive complexes—not unlike coastal defense areas—have been constructed and are manned by artillery-heavy local defense force units. Mobile main-force ground units are located behind these complexes to block penetrations and maneuver to the most threatened areas. The air force is based to provide support for both the defensive complexes and the maneuver forces. In addition, the North Sea Fleet is positioned to block the approaches into north China through the Pohai Gulf.

42. Chinese military strategy also emphasizes measures to counter threats all along the coast. The first line of defense is the navy, particularly its submarines, backed up near the coast by surface combatants and air defense fighters. Ground force local defense units man artillery coastal defense sites and strong points along the coast. Main-force units are positioned behind the coastal sites to serve as maneuver elements and to repel an invader before a beachhead can be secured.

43. Contrary to the last NIE (13-3-72), we do not believe that the Chinese would rely on a "luring deep" strategy for defense against a possible Soviet invasion, or exclusively employ a "positional defense" against an attack in the coastal areas. Rather, our analysis of force developments and positioning of units on the ground, in the air, and at sea leads us to believe now that a combination of tactics would be

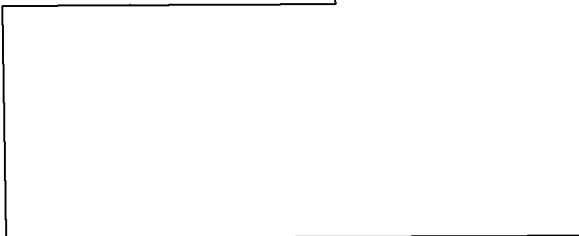
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used, with much depending upon the nature and location of the attack as well as upon the kind of invading forces.

44. *Nuclear.* We believe the Chinese will continue to see it in their best interests not to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, either at the strategic or tactical level. The Chinese aim clearly must be to confine the conflict to the conventional level, where they feel they can make maximum use of advantages in manpower, knowledge of terrain, and defensive complexes.

45. At the strategic level, China's nuclear warfighting strategy is severely limited. For example, a Soviet strategic attack would leave the Chinese few options beyond limited retaliatory strikes on enemy urban areas. The Chinese probably hope that their extensive dispersal and passive defense measures will help them ride out a strategic nuclear attack, preserving enough force to deter or eventually defeat a follow-on invasion. Indeed, China's military strategy remains largely predicated upon meeting an invader within Chinese territory.

46. At the theater level, the Chinese would not initiate employment of theater nuclear forces against an invading force, but apparently do envision possible retaliatory use of these forces



47. However, because the missile systems are inaccurate and cumbersome, they would provide only a crude force with relatively limited value against an invader. In contrast, while the Chinese bombers would provide greater accuracy than the missiles, their effectiveness would be reduced in a sophisticated air defense environment. Nevertheless, the Chinese see the use of missiles and bombers in this fashion as providing some means—short of the strategic level—of responding to an enemy's use of tactical nuclear systems.

48. *Civil Defense.*⁴ A common element to both the conventional and nuclear strategies is civil defense. Besides enhancing civilian morale, the extensive

⁴ See Annex E for details.

construction of shelters and underground tunneling serves two purposes. They are seen as providing some protection of personnel during bombing and as locations from which to fight an invader in the ground defense of a city.

49. In sum, we see a large conventional force being slowly modernized and supported by massive paramilitary organization, all under the cover of a small nuclear force which is developing an intercontinental capability. The large discrepancy between the strategic nuclear weapons available to the Chinese and those of the United States and the USSR will continue to seriously constrain the development of any flexible Chinese strategy for responding to an enemy first strike. China poses no direct military threat to the United States. It is a potential threat to US forces and allies in Asia.

II. CHINA'S ARMED FORCES

A. Military Forces⁵

50. Given the external threat and economic and technological constraints, the Chinese have maintained the bulk of their regular forces at levels adequate to deter an enemy, kept a very sizable paramilitary force available, and simultaneously created a small nuclear force. The modernization of the armed forces will continue to be uneven and slow; it appears to have a momentum of its own, despite political and economic changes (see Figure 3).

51. At the conventional end of the force spectrum, the Chinese army remains the backbone of the defense of the nation. It is about 3.5 million men strong and predominantly an infantry force. Approximately 40 percent are local forces (see Figure 4). Such forces include several large and well-armed garrison divisions but for the most part they are lightly equipped and organized for defense of their own military region. Main force units generally are more heavily equipped and are available for operations anywhere in the country. They are gradually increasing their firepower and mobility, but large-scale mechanization of infantry divisions is still in the future.

52. The navy and air force are both smaller, having about 300,000 and 400,000 personnel respectively. The navy remains principally an effective coastal defense force (see Figure 5). Over the next five years,

⁵ See Annex C for details of size, equipment, deployment, training, and modernization.

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however, it will operate at greater distances from the coast, and these extended operations could become routine in the early 1980s. The air force has not developed much beyond the stage of being a limited air defense force with some ground attack capability (see Figures 6 and 7), but its overall capabilities will improve over the next five years.

53. In addition to these forces, China has a potential paramilitary base of some 130 million personnel, most of whom are assigned to the militia. Of this total, about 7 million lightly-armed troops from the militia and the Production and Construction Corps constitute a de facto reserve and initial troop mobilization base.

54. At the advanced end of the force spectrum (see Figure 8), the Chinese have a small nuclear force of missiles and bombers. This force provides a modest deterrent against attack and permits the employment of a countervalue strategy against several USSR cities and Asian nations, including several US allies. It can also be used as a nonstrategic nuclear force. There is circumstantial evidence that China seeks to develop a tactical nuclear force as well.

55. A limited-range ICBM, possibly capable of reaching Moscow, is now operational. More advanced missiles, such as an SLBM system and an ICBM capable of reaching the continental United States, are now under development but will not be available for several years.

B. Warfighting Capabilities⁶

56. China's capability to defend the mainland from conventional attack by a superpower is substantial, and the PLA is fully capable of defending against attacks by lesser powers.

- A conventional ground invasion by either superpower eventually could be stalemated. Projection of Chinese military power abroad, however, continues to be limited by deficiencies in firepower, mobility, and logistic support.
- China could mobilize large contingents of lightly armed guerrillas. Because of limited availability of major combat weapons and equipment, few if any new, heavily armed conventional units could be activated after hostilities begin.

⁶ See Annex D for fuller details.

- The navy possesses a significant coastal defense capability, but it could not successfully oppose either superpower in open-ocean conflict. It could effectively pursue military denial and blockade operations against smaller nearby nations, unless they were assisted by the USSR or the United States.

- The air force could defend China from air attack and provide air support for ground and naval operations against Asian opponents. Against a sustained effort by the USSR or the United States, air operations would be less successful.

57. China's strategic nuclear capability is obviously no match for either that of the USSR or the United States. The PLA, moreover, has only a rudimentary theater nuclear capability and is not organized, equipped, or trained to conduct operations successfully in a nuclear war environment.

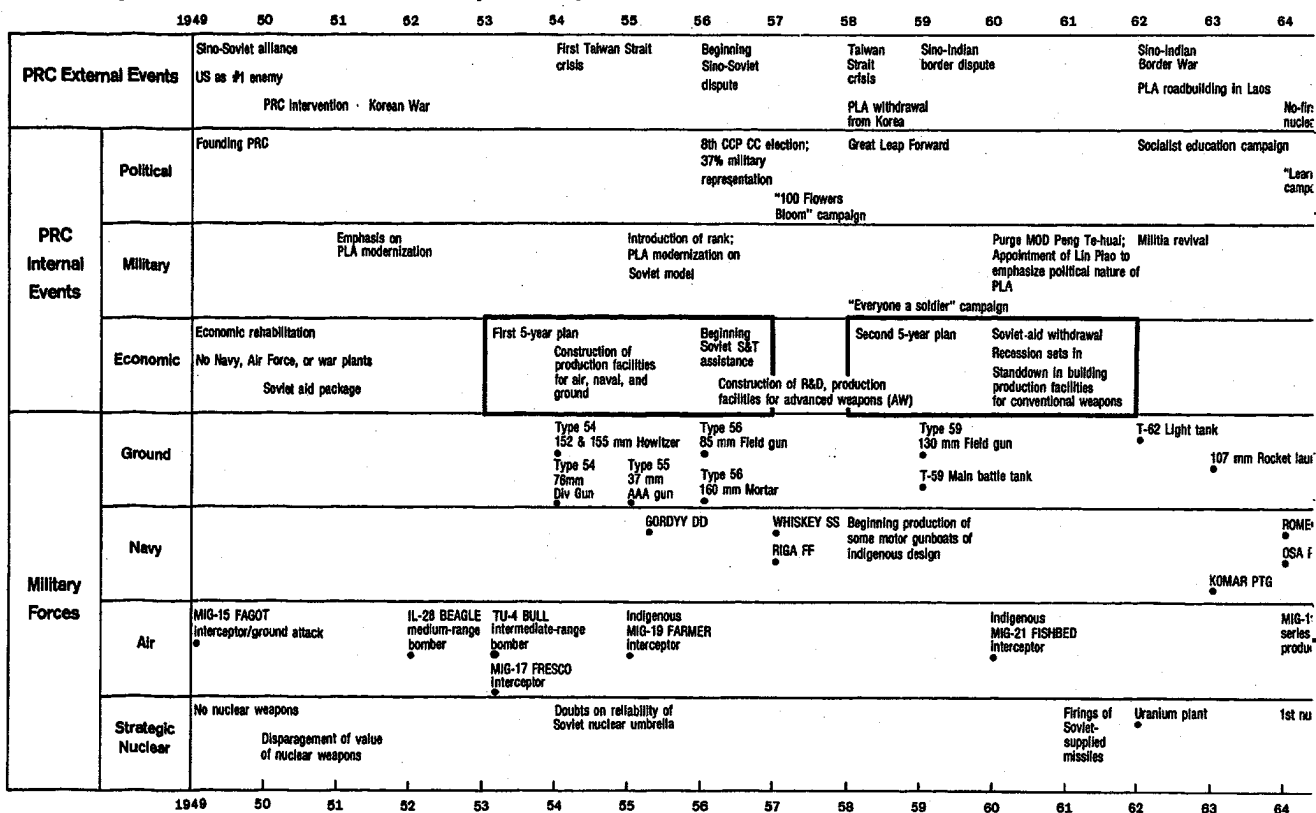
58. Overall, during the next five years, economic and technical considerations appear to preclude any dramatic improvement in the PLA's conventional or nuclear warfighting capability. Operational deployment of an ICBM or an SLBM capable of reaching the continental United States, however, would provide additional deterrence against US or Soviet nuclear strikes. Compared to possible Asian adversaries, China's military capabilities will become significantly more powerful. The ever-present Soviet threat and a limited amphibious lift capability, however, combine as a major constraint and limit Peking's options to project force.

III. THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE

59. China is in transition to the post-Mao era. Events both before and after Mao's death have reinforced our judgment that a "moderate" leadership, pursuing pragmatic policies in the interest of social stability and development of economic strength, will finally emerge from the overall succession process. Initially, a loose grouping of civilian and military leaders seems to be at the helm. Some contentiousness will undoubtedly continue to exist, and the possibility for further conflict remains. Periods of disorder damaging central authority have been endemic in Chinese history, but the recent purge of the "left" suggests only minor and controllable turbulence, if at all, over the near term. No matter what the political

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Time Sequence of PRC Events and Weapons Acquisition



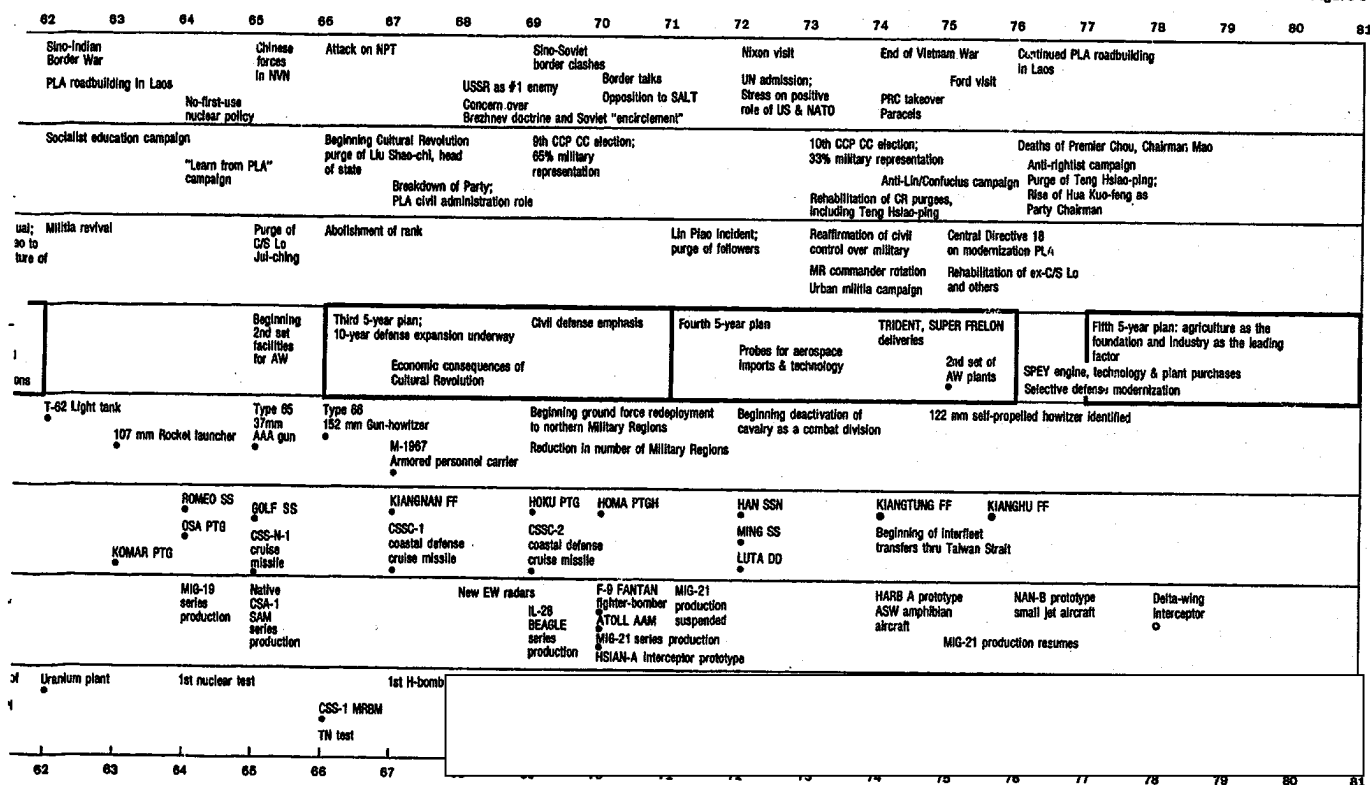
● Initial Operational Capability (IOC)

○ Projected IOC

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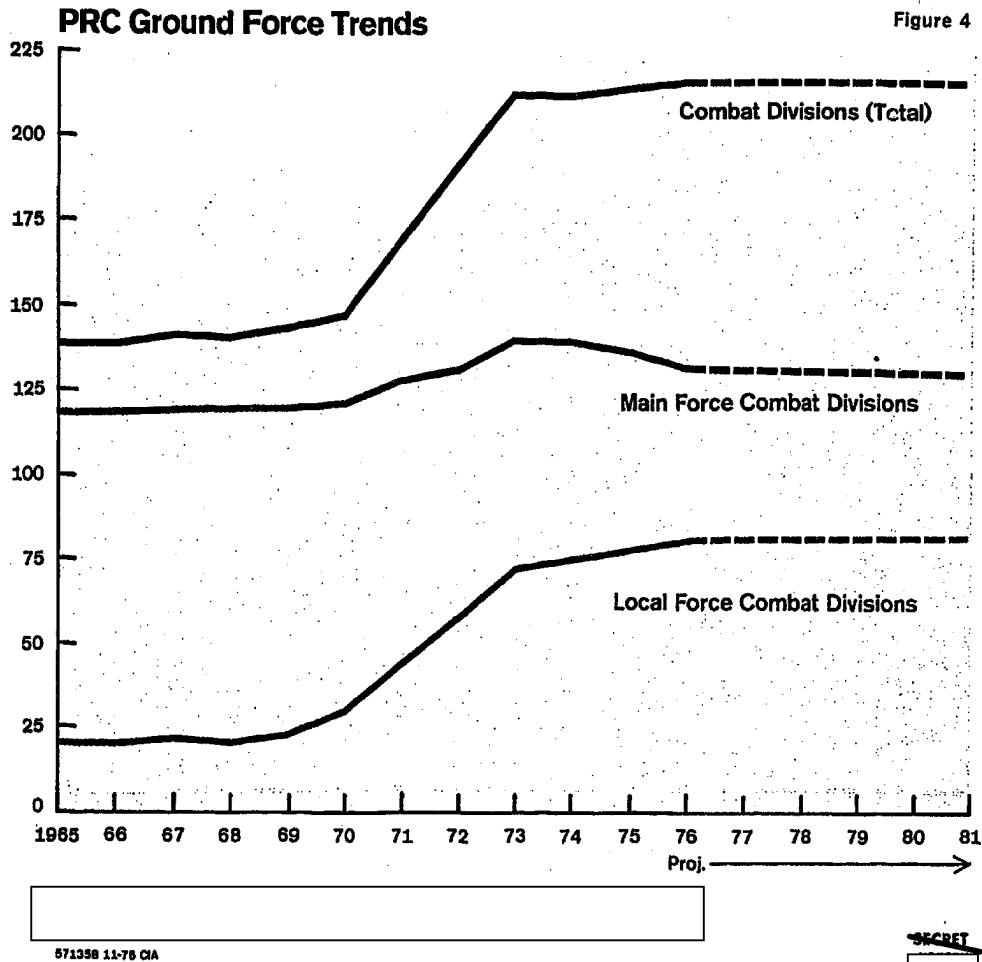
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Figure 3



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coloration turns out to be at first, we expect over the long run the emergence of a single leader who has less authority than Mao at the height of his ascendancy but who will follow policies that balance off the interests of the party, state, and the military hierarchies.

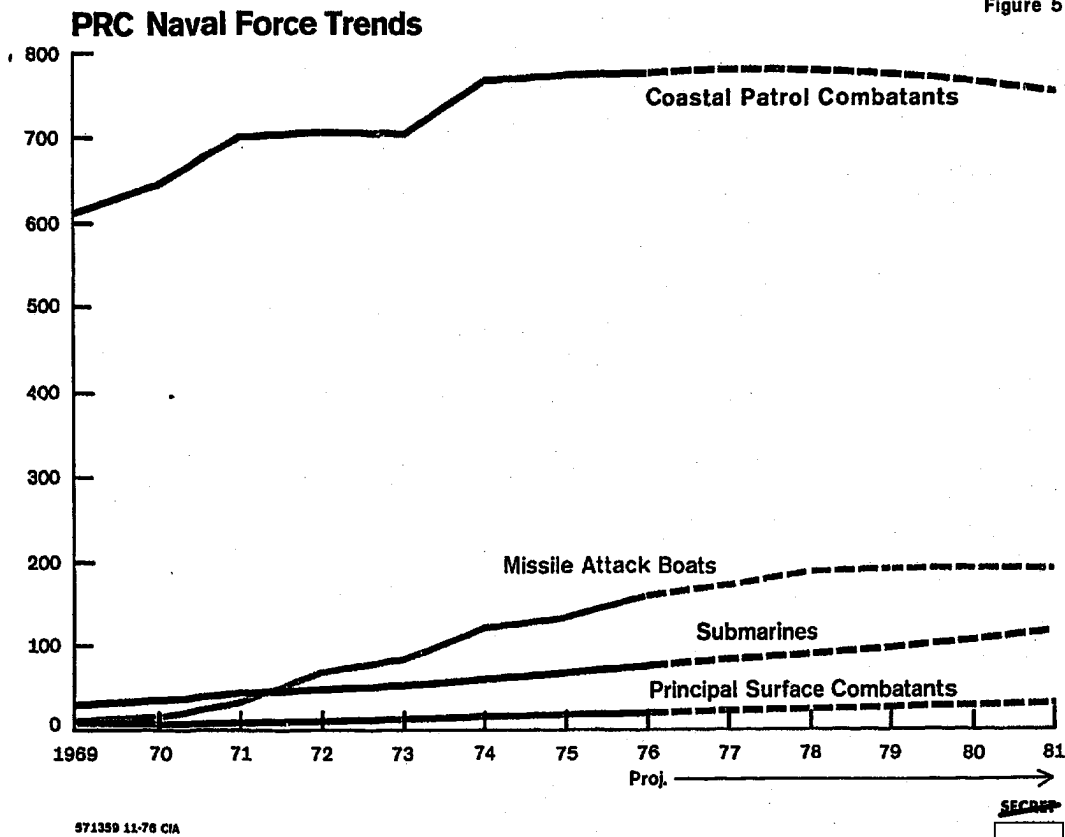
60. If a broadly pragmatic leadership consolidates control, we would expect the Chinese to continue to see the Soviet Union as the most serious potential threat facing them. There could well be, however, some attempts to reduce the abrasiveness of the Sino-Soviet relationship. In that case, the implication for defense policy is that, even if tensions were somewhat

lowered, the Chinese would continue to strengthen their military posture against the Soviets. The new Chinese leaders would not dare to let down their guard, but keep the preponderance of their ground forces oriented toward the north and push ahead with the creation of their intercontinental nuclear forces. They would not, however, be constrained as much by the Soviet military threat as now, and China might be more free to use military force elsewhere to meet a new contingency.

61. We do not, however, expect a pragmatic regime to pursue expansionist policies (other than irredentist claims). It would focus on development of a stable

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Figure 5



environment for healthy economic growth. For example, Chinese pragmatists would be willing to sacrifice some ideological values in order to promote production through more orthodox economic concepts, such as greater use of material incentives. With a technical-managerial team operating the economy, a firmer economic underpinning for the development of the defense establishment would be created.

62. It would be feckless to judge that the direction of China's future defense policy will be largely determined by the ideological differences within the leadership. We believe that the defense policy of any new Chinese leadership will be more sensitive to an interaction among national interests, availability of technology, economic growth, the creation of military power, and relations with the outside world. In this context, pragmatism and the force and intensity of

Chinese nationalism—rather than ideology—will remain major motivating factors for change.

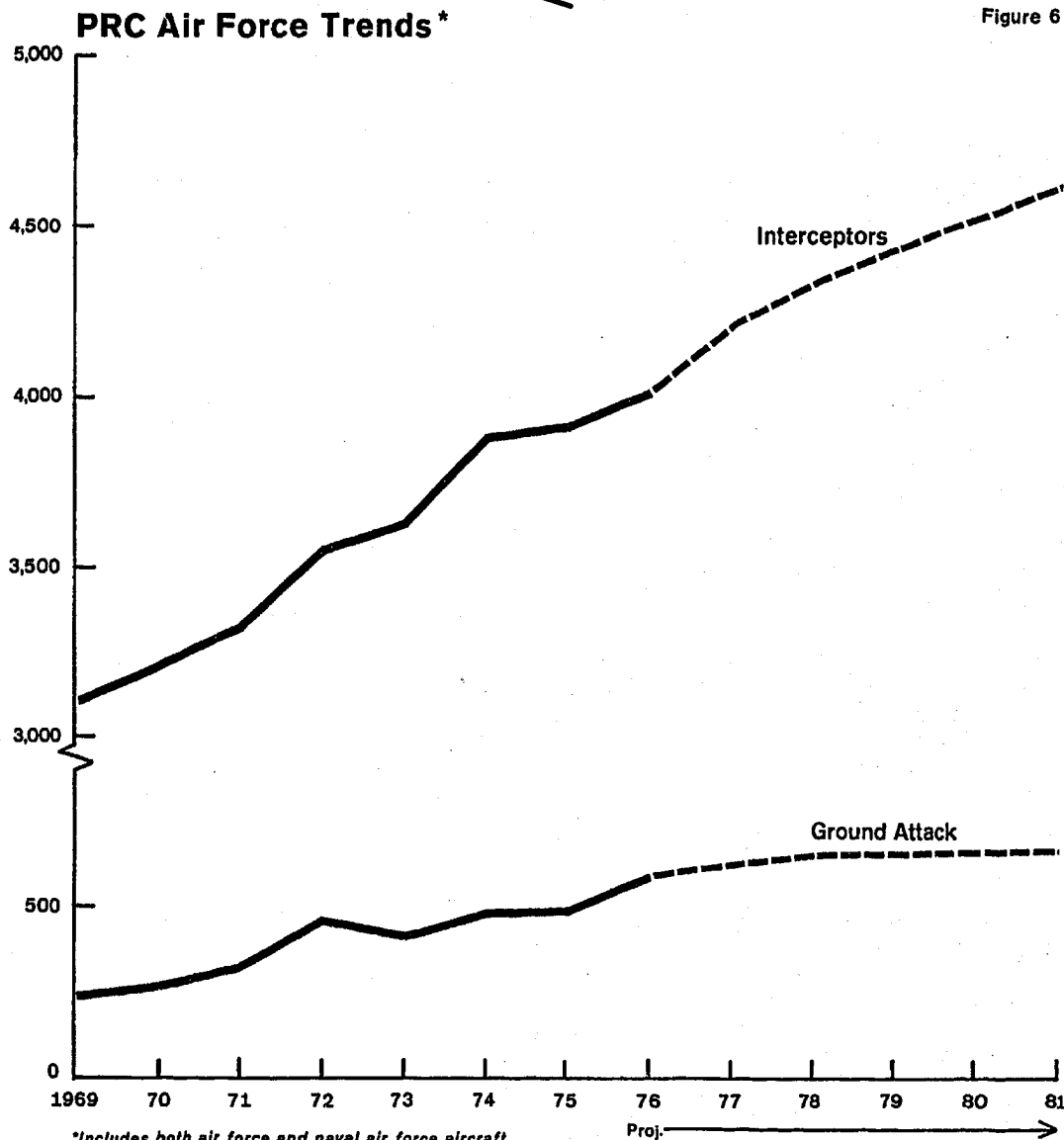
IV. DEFENSE POLICIES IN THE EARLY 1980s

63. We believe that certain ongoing trends and defense policies have an enduring quality and consequently will survive the post-Mao transition period into the early 1980s.

- National security will continue to be the major Chinese preoccupation. The Soviets will remain the main threat. The PRC, however, will not align itself with other powers but will pursue an independent stance.
- The PLA will continue as a huge military force—but one more operationally competent and modernized than now. It will continue to

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Figure 6



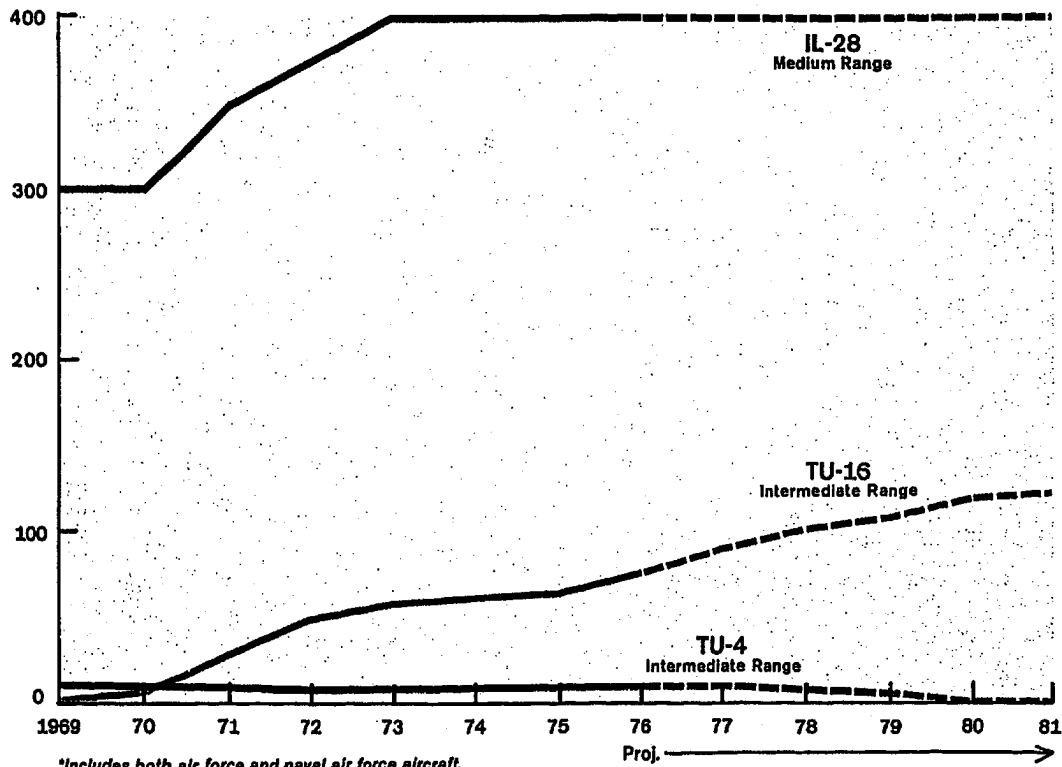
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- be involved in a great variety of political and economic duties.
- China's military power will continue to be circumscribed by that of the superpowers. Although the PRC will probably begin to deploy a small force of ICBMs and SLBMs in the early 1980s, it could not successfully engage a superpower in a nuclear exchange. China will, however, continue to raise the risks and costs of a conventional attack, thereby reducing the prospect of such an attempt.
 - Against small Asian nations, the PRC will have a decided military advantage. Nevertheless, Peking will prefer to use political and diplomatic means rather than military pressures to gain its ends. It will, however, be prepared to resort to force to back up its territorial claims.

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PRC Air Force Trends* (Bombers)

Figure 7



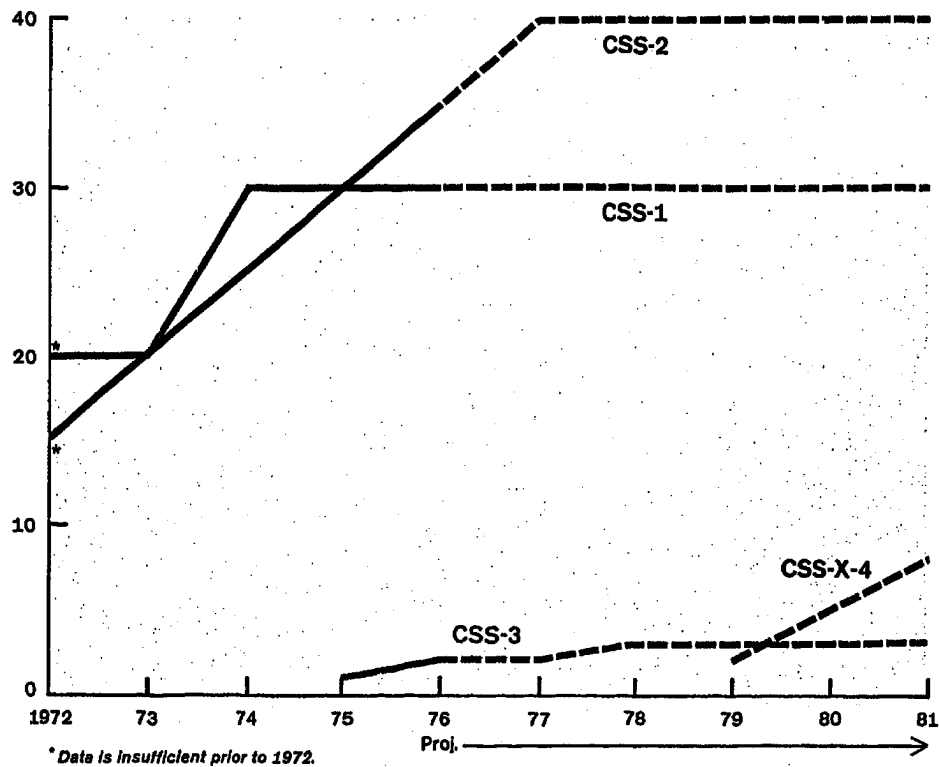
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PRC Missile Launcher Trends

Figure 8



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ANNEX A

PRC ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY

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PRC ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY

I. DEVELOPING ECONOMY

1. China's economic strategy is fundamentally constrained by its resource limitations. It cannot simultaneously (a) develop the country's industrial and technical base, (b) maintain and improve an adequate living standard for a continually growing population already over 900 million, and (c) rapidly modernize the military forces. These competing and conflicting claims for scarce resources must be met by an economy with a GNP rather imprecisely estimated to be the equivalent of about \$300 billion. Over the past five years, the Chinese have been able to maintain substantial overall economic growth—about 6 percent annually—while modestly improving their armed forces. Food production has kept slightly ahead of population growth, a remarkable achievement in itself. Industrial production, upon which the military depend, has expanded at about 10 percent annually.

2. Potentially, the Chinese have the advantage of being self-sufficient in most raw materials, especially oil. But it will be some years before they will be able to exploit all of these resources. They still need to import substantial quantities of nonferrous metals, especially copper, and a variety of special steels and high-temperature and strength alloys for defense industries.

3. *Defense Economics.*

[redacted] we estimate that a large portion of the advanced industrial sector is devoted to defense. The Chinese have chosen an investment pattern that favors agricultural and industrial development in the near term but would still allow a gradual but steady expansion of military forces and weapons systems. Overall, Chinese policy appears to favor the development of an economic base over the long run in order to support the creation of more effective military forces at a later date. Thus, they are sacrificing rapid military modernization in the short term.

4. The heavy costs of maintaining the PLA are partly offset by extensive use of the military in building roads, railroads, canals, and water conservation projects as well as in producing food and some light industrial goods. Nevertheless, defense requirements will continue to be a heavy burden on the advanced industrial sector of the Chinese economy. Further compounding the problem, the Chinese defense budget can be expected to edge upward, certainly in the next five years and then on into the future, because of programs to deploy longer-range land-based missiles, the first submarine-launched ballistic missile system, and new aircraft. Nonetheless, barring extensive agricultural failures or a prolonged political upheaval, we believe that the Chinese economy will permit the gradual modernization of the military establishment. Even so, the Chinese cannot afford the wide range of weapons options open to the superpowers and must be selective in how they develop their defense industries.

5. China's military accomplishments, while impressive, have been hampered by a scarcity of high-quality human and material resources. The most important resource constraint is a chronic and growing lack of skilled technicians and engineers. This deficiency is compounded by the apparent inability to provide quality replacements for their small but aging corps of senior scientists. Another basic constraint affecting force modernization stems from competing resources demands on the limited economy. China simply does not have sufficient resources to provide simultaneously for rapid military development as well as for expanded agricultural and industrial production. Because of the competing demands between the military and civil sectors and within the military between the services, we expect to see a continued juggling of resources as decisions—some fraught with political implications—are made to accommodate competing national requirements.

6. *Self-Reliance and Technology.* The issue of self-reliance and foreign technology in modernizing

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Chinese industry in general, and military technology in particular, has been contested within China's ruling hierarchy since the 1950s. The debate has focused primarily on the extent, style, and pace which foreign technology should be acquired, rather than on whether or not to purchase abroad. In actual practice, self-reliance has meant avoiding dependence upon a single supplier, not complete self-sufficiency.

7. Acquisition of foreign technology is permissible in the short term in order to reduce the need for future imports and as long as China is not exploited by foreigners or "contaminated" by foreign influence. Accordingly, recent Chinese purchases include complete plants and industrial complexes that embrace entire industries. Their technological acquisitions cover machinery, equipment, scientific instruments and metals from the West.

8. Several factors have caused the Chinese to move toward purchases of advanced military technology. Primarily, the usefulness of copying Soviet design technology of the mid-1950s is nearing its end. The Chinese are experiencing technical difficulties in developing some follow-on weapons systems, such as a sophisticated high performance fighter. In addition, creation of an entirely new family of indigenous weapons systems is beyond their existing design and engineering capabilities.

9. PRC interest in acquisitions of military-related technology from the West will remain high. Since China's opening to the West in 1971, Western technology generally has become more available. COCOM restrictions, which formerly barred PRC access to much sought-after technology and equipment, have been progressively eased or circumvented. More significantly, competing Western nations are eyeing the potential of Chinese trade and will attempt to offer a wide range of strategic goods in the future.

10. The extent of future PRC purchases, however, is indeterminable for several reasons. The Chinese leaders themselves may be uncertain as to how far they can go politically to relax their self-reliance precepts, how successful their own weapons development programs will be, and how fast China can absorb new technology. Much, of course, will depend upon the availability of foreign exchange and the existence of a favorable international atmosphere permitting additional military technology transfers to the PRC.

11. *Consequences.* Economic and technological constraints have dictated the creation of armed forces that rely primarily upon manpower and easily manufactured, low-technology weaponry. This has molded a "poor man's" military strategy stressing a defensive posture, with a large conventional force and a minimal strategic force. Given the state of China's economy and its technological assets, these same factors will continue to shape, in a predominant way, China's strategy and forces for the foreseeable future.

12 The present general ordering of military versus civil priorities will probably persist through this decade, regardless of the outcome of the succession. This is because the most important bases of this ordering—the cost and difficulty of a more ambitious defense effort, the urgency of modernization, and expansion of agriculture and industry—will remain essentially unchanged at least through 1981.

13. Military growth and modernization will likely depend on and be paced by industrial expansion. A sudden diversion of some civil resources to defense, however, cannot be ruled out, especially if Chinese policymakers were to perceive a substantially greater external threat. China's military-industrial facilities, moreover, provide an existing potential for a greater defense production effort when needed.

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ANNEX B
THE PLA AND POLITICS

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THE PLA AND POLITICS

I. THE PLA AS A DOMESTIC POLITICAL FORCE

A. PLA Political Posture

1. The voice of the military in party policymaking has been exceptionally strong because of frequent historic intertwining of civil and military functions. In the PLA's lineal ancestor, the Red Army, most leading party officials were either commanders or commissars of major army units; in the period immediately following the founding of the PRC in 1949 the military, as a subordinate arm of the party, directly governed local regions for a few years; and after the breakdown of the party and government organization during the Cultural Revolution, the military had a major voice in civil affairs and for a time was the country's dominant administrative force. As a consequence of this unique and changing role, military participation in the Chinese political process became enlarged, both at the center and at provincial levels.

2. The PLA's political power reached its apogee in the late 1960s. The then Minister of National Defense, Lin Biao, was Mao's designated heir; the military dominated the reconstituted administrative and party organs; and the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 resulted in a central committee packed with military men and in the elevation of a considerable number of senior officers to the Politburo. This rise in the military's political fortunes presented a clear threat to the power of both old-line party functionaries and the civilian "newcomers" who rose to prominence during the Cultural Revolution.

3. Since 1971 there has been a gradual but marked disengagement of the military from the political arena and a reassertion of the party's political primacy. The PLA's presence in policymaking organs and, above all, in the administrative apparatus has been reduced sharply with some abatement of tensions between the military and the reconstituted civilian hierarchy. Civilians have steadily replaced military appointees at influential party and government posts in Peking and in the provinces. At the highest policymaking levels

and in a few provinces, however, individual military figures continue to exercise substantial power.

4. The PLA's representation on civilian policymaking bodies is still greater than it was before the Cultural Revolution. The relative decline since 1971, however, has almost certainly upset some leading military figures who now occupy lesser positions of authority than in the immediate post-Cultural Revolution years. On the other hand, the residual strength of the military powerholders leaves many civilian party leaders deeply suspicious of PLA political entrenchment, and there have been efforts to reduce further the civilian-military balance to the party's favor. However, both sides in the struggle which broke out into the open in February 1976 with the political demise of former Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping seem to have been vying for influence with the military. Such competition could again lead to a larger military say in party affairs, as may have happened during recent political maneuverings following Mao's death.

5. The PLA is by no means wholly homogeneous or monolithic, and the military establishment obviously does not speak with one voice. Since the mid-1950s, the issue of emphasis on military experience versus political training has been contentious. Even during the Cultural Revolution heyday of military influence, many military commands were deeply divided between supporters of various Red Guard factions. Differences probably still exist among military leaders over the nature and pace of force modernization. All of these divisions, in fact, have political and economic ramifications which affect controversies among the civilian party factions as well as those between the civilian and military bureaucrats.

6. There are, nevertheless, some issues of great political importance on which the PLA as an institution would achieve consensus. It is likely that many officers would agree that the PLA deserves a larger slice of the budgetary pie, and most would undoubtedly resist major cutbacks in the defense budget. Also, the officer corps would strongly resent and might resist any civilian and party attempts to

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denigrate the PLA as an institution and to curb its influence. On the issue of law and order, most of the military would prefer to avoid stresses and strains approaching the scale of the Cultural Revolution and would throw their weight in favor of relatively conservative political forces.

7. In sum, the political role of the military is currently in flux, and the PLA remains at once an instrument of party policy and a shaper of that policy.

B. The PLA and Succession

8. The problems of succession have provided possibilities for greater PLA political involvement. The divisiveness among China's leadership since Mao's demise makes it unlikely that the military will be pushed further out of political life. The struggle among the contending factions, which has been brought to a head, has thrust top PLA leaders into a partisan role in succession politics. Several key positions are important, including the Minister of National Defense, the PLA Chief of General Staff, and the commanders of the Peking Military Region and the Peking garrison. All have been influential positions in the political strife of the past decade, and they are likely to remain crucial as the succession period proceeds. In addition, leading military figures in the Politburo, while anxious to preserve PLA influence, will be tempted to advance their own political fortunes.

9. Despite the preoccupation of some political generals with the succession, China's overall military posture has not been weakened. The military chain of command remains intact, no major factionalism has become manifest within the PLA itself, and major military units have been playing at most a peripheral role in the succession process.

10. The PLA itself, as the final guarantor of internal security, would be likely to intervene if any residual factional struggles spill out into the streets, schools, and factories, on such a scale as to threaten Cultural Revolution-style chaos. In the unlikely event of military intervention, requiring administration of the country on a large scale, however, the combat availability of some units, including main force divisions, would be affected temporarily. In addition, such an involvement could pave the way for long-term military domination of the party and government.

II. THE PLA AS AN EXTERNAL POLITICAL FORCE

A. The PLA and Foreign Policy

11.

As an executor of Chinese foreign policy, the PLA will continue to play an active role in providing military aid, assisting certain insurgency movements, and supporting a growing Chinese diplomatic presence abroad.

12.

two points seem to emerge from an examination of this evidence. One is that the PLA, at least since the Korean War, has been painfully conscious of the relative weakness of China's armed forces compared to those of its putative enemies. The other is that in the past at least some of China's leading military figures appear to have taken the view that China's best interests would be served by a foreign policy that was less abrasively hostile toward the Soviet Union.

13. These two points are interrelated.

the PRC's first defense minister, Peng Te-huai, argued in the late 1950s that because China's military muscle was so weak it would be necessary for a number of years to rely on the USSR for military aid, both in the form of direct arms purchase and the development of indigenous arms-production capacity. At that time, however, the United States was considered the primary threat to China. The position of Peng's successor, Lin Biao, is less easy to establish conclusively, but he appears to have argued that it would be unwise to pursue a policy of rapprochement with the US, perhaps because this course risked provoking Moscow into an attack on China. Lin may also have argued

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that China could not afford to irritate deliberately the USSR, since such a course risked a Soviet riposte that the PLA could not counter effectively.

14. The issue is whether or not such views are currently held by any important PLA leaders. [redacted]

[redacted] Logic would suggest that the positions taken by two successive defense ministers were not wholly eccentric and unrepresentative of the important elements within the PLA. Chinese propaganda in 1974 inveighed against an attitude of "capitulationism" which is said to desire a less abrasive policy toward the USSR, suggesting that this attitude exists within the military [redacted]

16. In any event, while Mao lived the views of any military men who might favor a lowering of Sino-Soviet tensions did not have a major, direct impact on the conduct of Chinese foreign policy. Indeed, their ideas probably did not even receive much of an airing within party councils. In the wake of Mao's death, however, any such views could become quite significant, since it is likely that there will be a Soviet overture which could precipitate a full-fledged intra-party debate on policy toward the USSR. If such a debate gets underway while the Chinese leadership is unstable—which is certainly possible—it may become

an issue of some importance in the succession struggle. Moreover, if pertinent military leaders gain an increased voice in policymaking, Peking could become more receptive to the idea of moderating somewhat its unyielding opposition to the USSR.

17. [redacted]

18. [redacted]

V. Undoubtedly the military has closely monitored the development of the Sino-US connection. It is probable that some military leaders, taking a broad view of Chinese strategic policy, believe that the United States provides a useful counterweight to the Soviet Union and that Moscow has been forced to take into consideration possible US reactions to Soviet policy toward China. Some others probably believe that the present Sino-US relationship is inconclusive, has provided few direct benefits to China, and has been largely discounted by Moscow and may even have raised greater risk for China.

19. [redacted]

important elements of the PLA leadership accept Mao's policy of strengthening ties with the West and the United States in particular in order to obtain technological imports which feed China's military-industrial complex. At least some military leaders have pressed for increased technological imports to assist in the creation of a more modern armed force quickly.

B. The PLA as an External Instrument

20. The Chinese have been much less hostile than their propaganda and militaristic stance suggest. They have followed a low-risk, no-confrontation policy for the most part, especially against the superpowers. They have concentrated on avoiding a military

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confrontation with the United States throughout the 1960s and with the Soviet Union since the late 1960s. Above all, they are extremely careful not to be involved in a conflict which might escalate to the use of nuclear weapons.

21. Nevertheless, the Chinese have not hesitated to use force. They have done so when they have been reacting to what they have seen as threats to Chinese territory (e.g., Korea and the border conflicts with India and the USSR) and when reasserting control over claimed territories (the Paracels). In these instances, China acted in a calculated and controlled manner in order to achieve limited objectives.

C. The PLA and Insurgency

22. Although promotion of revolutionary movements has roots in Chinese ideology, there is good reason to believe that pragmatic national interests are the dominant factor in determining the nature and level of Chinese assistance to insurgencies. Since 1971, Peking has sought better state-to-state relationships with developing countries and has disassociated itself from so-called Maoist groups in most parts of the world. Thus, the PRC has been selective and restrictive in its aid to insurgencies. The Chinese do, however, continue to offer propaganda support for "revolutionary action."

D. Security Assistance

24. In addition to aiding insurgency, the PLA provides facilities, instructors, and support for the training of personnel sent to China under the various foreign assistance programs as well as military cadre for PRC military aid programs abroad.

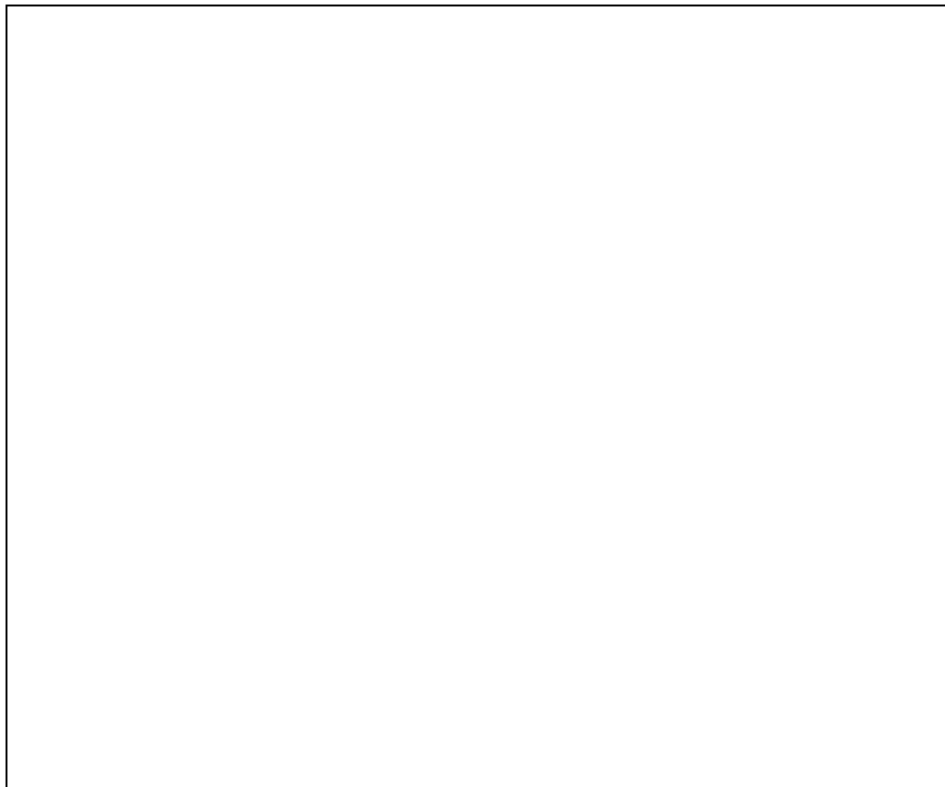
25. Short of direct military action, Peking will continue to make use of military resources to supplement its bilateral diplomacy. A Chinese national security objective is to foster the development of politically stable, friendly nations around China's periphery. Peking also recognizes the value of military assistance in lessening Soviet and US influence in the Third World. Toward these ends, the PRC provided substantial amounts of military aid to North Korea and North Vietnam. In addition, the Chinese have supplied arms to 16 other governments over the past two years, obviously as a means of reinforcing its influence in the recipient nations.

26. China's security assistance program differs radically from that of the West. Because of a paucity of resources, Peking can only offer aid which is small in amount, limited in variety, and less sophisticated in character. Rather than monetary assistance or financial loans, aid is provided on a gratis or interest-free basis. The Chinese have shunned using military assistance programs as a means of obtaining foreign bases and access to military support facilities, creating bilateral military alliances, and establishing multilateral security arrangements.

27. The scale of Chinese military aid is miniscule compared to that of the superpowers. Even so, over the past five years China has exported an estimated \$2 billion worth of military equipment, with over a half going to North Korea and North Vietnam.

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28. We expect Peking to continue its military assistance program over the next five years, without a major shift in character, direction, and scale. The Chinese might seize opportunities, particularly in those Third World countries where Soviet heavy-handedness leads to expulsion, as in Egypt earlier this year. In general, however, they will not be able to seriously challenge Soviet dominance in arms supply.



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ANNEX C

PRC ARMED FORCES AND TRENDS

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PRC ARMED FORCES AND TRENDS

I. CONVENTIONAL FORCES

A. General

1. Since the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969, our estimate of China's general purpose and air defense forces has grown by approximately 40 percent to a peacetime level of 4.3 million men. This increase in the estimate, largely in combat forces rather than in service support forces, has resulted from an expansion of the military presence in the four northern military regions

2. The arms and equipment changes, moreover, lead us to conclude that China has maximized most of the Soviet technology obtained during the 1950s. The present mix of weapon systems, compared to that of the mid-1950s, reflects the growth and transition of the PLA to a force that can conduct many conventional operations.

3. Development of the PLA into a fighting force comparable in sophistication to that of the USSR or US today will take at least 10 to 20 more years and would require the acquisition of more expensive and advanced technology than China now has. We judge that Chinese forces are beginning this difficult and costly transition, but increasing PLA capabilities will be a long and arduous process.

B. Ground Force

4. The Chinese ground force, the largest in the world, has approximately 3.5 million personnel. Its primary objective is to deter an attack on China by means of a strong land defense and, failing that, to defeat an invading force.

5. Ground force posture is largely determined by, and reflected in, Chinese perceptions of the threat. About half of China's combat and combat-support divisions are in the four northern military regions oriented against the primary threat. Another substantial size force—over a third of the total—is arrayed along the coast to defend the secondary potential threat area. Significantly smaller forces are oriented toward China's other frontiers, and the remainder is

located in China's heartland as a central reserve and for reinforcement of threatened areas.

6. Present Chinese ground force levels probably stem from an appreciation of the terrain and potential enemy forces (e.g., US and Soviet). The Chinese probably also calculate that when war comes, they will not have time or the heavy equipment necessary to form new units. Success or failure will depend on having ready and available active forces (see Figure 4, page 19).

7. The Chinese continue to alter the composition and force levels of their combat divisions to obtain a more effective mix. For example, since 1969 they have phased out their cavalry divisions, formed five or six new armored divisions, and upgraded the mobility and firepower of most of their main force units. They have increased the number of tanks in some infantry divisions, and in each division. The number of weapons in artillery units of all types and at all echelons has also increased.

8. Regional forces have also been strengthened. These full-time forces now total 82 divisions, and some of these have more artillery fire support than a standard infantry division. The best equipped of these divisions man elaborately prepared defensive areas located on many major avenues of approach into north and northeast China. There are an additional 119 independent local force regiments located throughout China.

9. The army continues to improve its exercise and training practices. Emphasis is being given to antiarmor, joint service, and antiaircraft artillery exercises. We judge there is an improved ability to conduct division-level exercises throughout China. Emphasis on combined arms training, however, will continue at regimental level and below.

10. Production of a large assortment of ground force materiel continues. A large output of infantry weapons, artillery pieces, ammunition, and communications equipment has been sufficient to equip the

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ground force with relatively modern materiel, to arm portions of the paramilitary force, and to meet export requirements. Also, the inventory of tanks and armored personnel carriers continues to increase at a moderate rate, but we see no trend toward mechanization of forces.

11. We expect development programs on such weapons as a medium tank, a light-weight machine gun, and self-propelled and towed artillery to continue [redacted]

[redacted] we would not be surprised at the introduction of new ground force weapons which, although not projected in our estimate, are within their capabilities and would be useful against a modern, well-equipped foe. These could include improved APCs, tank transporters, antitank guided missiles, new tactical rockets, self-propelled air defense guns, and shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). New weapons, however, will be introduced gradually and their quality probably will not match those of the superpowers.

12. In the chemical warfare environment, it appears the Chinese have only marginally improved. The PLA recognizes the utility of chemical and biological (CB) agents in a military role, but greater emphasis is placed on the protective defensive aspects in training. This includes a wide range of protective masks and clothing, detection devices, and decontamination equipment [redacted]

[redacted]

Over the next five years, they could develop a limited production capability for chemical warfare munitions.

C. Naval Force

13. The navy is now an extremely effective coastal defense force, but the Chinese are attempting to build a more modern and balanced navy. They have improved their naval weapons and altered the composition of the fleet to the point where the navy is

by far the largest in Asia and has a submarine force that ranks third in the world in sheer numbers. Resources allocated to naval shipbuilding suggest that China does not expect to challenge the Soviet or US navies in the near future. For the present, they are determined to develop a navy that can conduct an extended defense of the China coast, to include domination of the China Seas, while simultaneously laying a solid foundation for the establishment of an open-ocean fleet (see Figure 5, page 20).

14. The navy possesses a substantial capability to respond quickly to an attacking surface force, with submarines as the first line of defense. The diesel-attack submarine force, consisting of some 70-odd W- and R-class submarines, is being increased by eight to ten units each year. The Chinese R and W classes have adequate antiship but very limited antisubmarine warfare capabilities. The 21 W-class submarines will reach block obsolescence in five years. The Ming class, two of which were built in the early 1970s, was probably intended as a replacement for the R class, but has not entered series production. We believe a new diesel attack submarine will appear in the next five years as a follow-on for the R class.

15. China also intends to establish a small force of nuclear submarines. A single nuclear attack submarine, the Han, is now operational [redacted]

16. Backing up the submarines is a second line of naval defense, a mix of principal surface combatants and coastal patrol units. A total of 24 destroyers and frigates are available for extended coastal defense, divided about evenly between the two types. The Gordyy destroyers and the Riga and new Kianghu frigates are fitted with the CSS-N-1 naval antiship missile; Luta destroyers may carry a modified version of the CSS-N-1 with an increased range. The two

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Kiangtung frigates appear to be configured for a shipboard SAM system which is still being developed.

17. Destroyers are concentrated at strategic locations within each of the three fleet areas along with torpedo attack submarines. The number of destroyers is expected to grow slightly over the next five years. Emphasis will likely be on the guided-missile frigates rather than on the larger destroyer types. The new Kianghu and Kiangtung classes offer the best hope for improving the limited ASW capabilities of the fleet as well as for correcting the lack of a modern shipboard air defense capability, which currently restricts effective surface operations to within range of land-based air cover.

18. The smaller surface combatants are strung along the China coast at regular intervals for close-in defense. Although most of these units are not as sophisticated as their counterparts in Western navies, their shortcomings are compensated in part by their availability in large numbers—nearly 800—and their excellent material condition. Of these, some 160 guided-missile boats of both Soviet and Chinese design employ the 25-nm CSS-N-1 missile, with the prospect of a follow-on, improved missile becoming operational on these boats. We estimate that the missile attack boats, as the mainstay of combat power for the surface combatant fleet, will continue to increase in numbers over the next five years.

19. Land-based units of the coastal defense force and naval aviation play a supporting role to the submarine and surface forces. Should the at-sea defense be passed, especially in the Yellow Sea, the burden of eroding an enemy assault force would then fall on the numerous coastal defense artillery sites and on the land-based CSSC-1 and CSSC-2 cruise missiles.

20. The naval air force has about 800 aircraft, most of which are interceptors. Although the Chinese navy has some 150 medium and intermediate range jet bombers and 20 F-9 Fantan fighter-bombers that can augment the naval coastal defense force, the surface attack capabilities of the naval air force remain untested. Also, airborne ASW capability is poor, although a prototype aircraft, the Harb A may have an ASW role if it is produced. Otherwise, the Chinese may purchase an ASW amphibian aircraft abroad. The navy has also begun to receive the French Super Frelon helicopter, capable of a multiplicity of roles.

China's aerial maritime reconnaissance will remain poor until the navy obtains long-range maritime patrol aircraft.

21. The Chinese are expending considerable effort on the development and expansion of naval support facilities, [redacted] When these facilities are completed, China will have support and protection capabilities in all three fleet areas. [redacted]

22. China has an active naval research and development program under way, [redacted]

23. The vulnerabilities of the navy continue to be various and long-term. [redacted]

[redacted] The Chinese have not chosen to develop a capability to project major military power ashore. Nevertheless, the navy possesses sufficient amphibious ships and craft to lift about three infantry divisions in medium-haul amphibious operations. However, this small force is used primarily for short-haul logistic support along the Chinese coast.

24. The navy is beginning to assume a bolder, more professional posture. Surface units have begun periodically to operate 100 to 150 nautical miles from the coast. Air units probably are beginning to participate in joint naval exercises, and submarines have begun to undertake extended patrols. Principal Chinese naval units now transit, and smaller units operate in, the Taiwan Strait close to the mainland. The recent deployment of oceanographic research ships into the South Pacific some 4,000 nm from the China coast

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marked a departure from normal naval operations and may be an early step toward deploying submarines into the Pacific. Training exercises continue to emphasize coastal defense, and they have now become significantly larger, more complex, and much longer in duration.

D. Air force

25. The air force, the third largest in the world, is severely limited by the lack of sophisticated aircraft and weapons. Since the Soviet withdrawal in 1960, Chinese air capabilities have improved, with few exceptions, only quantitatively with the production of aircraft based on Soviet Korean War vintage technology. The primary mission of the air force has been the defense of mainland China, and developments since 1969 have been consistent with this mission. We see no evidence, however, that the air force would be used to carry the war to the enemy, such as by destroying hostile tactical air and nuclear forces through long-range interdiction.

26. Air defense is provided by a mix of aircraft, SAMs, and AAA weapons supported by radars, command and control systems, and passive measures such as camouflage, hardened shelters, and dispersion. Tactical air support, although secondary to air defense, has been strengthened since 1969, most notably with the introduction of the F-9 Fantan, a Chinese-designed fighter-bomber based on the Soviet MIG-19 Farmer.

27. The overall aircraft strength in operational units since 1969 has increased by roughly 2,000 aircraft, to a total of over 6,000. Over the next five years we expect to see a slow but continued expansion and improvement of the air force (see Figures 6 and 7), as the Chinese attempt to correct deficiencies in their air defense and ground attack program.

28. The large interceptor force now numbers some 4,000 aircraft. Since 1972 the air defense force has been quantitatively strengthened by adding nearly 1,000 MIG-19 Farmers and by doubling the MIG-21 Fishbed inventory to nearly 60. This represents a considerable upgrading over the old MIG-17 Frescoes which have been in inventory since the early 1950s. The MIG-19/21 force mix can provide an effective defense against small-scale, clear-air mass attack by subsonic penetrators at low-to-medium altitude in

daylight. The Chinese also recognize that reliance upon quantity as a substitute for quality can at best be only a temporary measure. The force combination of MIG-17/19/21s is far inferior in range, payload, avionics, and ECM capabilities vis-a-vis the sophisticated aircraft of the superpowers.

29. In their search for a new or improved interceptor, the Chinese are trying various alternatives. Since the mid-1960s, they have been developing and testing a delta-wing, twin jet Mach II fighter, designated the Hsian A, for a medium-to-high altitude intercept role. The long R&D period suggests developmental problems which may yet be unresolved. If technical problems are resolved soon, the Hsian A interceptor could be in limited-series production in a year or so. The Chinese are also experimenting with the Nan B, a small jet aircraft first noted last year.

30. The Chinese have recently purchased the Spey military jet engine and manufacturing technology from Britain. They will no doubt attempt to design a new fighter for this engine, but such an aircraft will not be available in quantities until after 1981. Also, the Chinese have shown interest in the Swedish Viggen jet fighter, the French Mirage jet fighter, and the British Harrier V/STOL fighter.

31. Despite the potential of a new Spey engine interceptor, Chinese weapons planners as a practical matter will likely decide to produce Hsian As as a hedge, while designing and testing a new interceptor. We judge that a Spey engine aircraft will essentially become an important part of the future Chinese aerospace defense force after the mid-1980s. In any event, the Chinese will retain older systems rather than immediately phase them out.

32. Thus, over the next five years, we will likely see a Chinese interceptor force that is more modern than at present, with greater night and all-weather capability as well as with improved armament. This would include an air-to-air missile (AAM) to replace the rudimentary Soviet AA-2 Atoll. Although we know the Chinese possess some of the latter missiles, it is not clear how many, if any, are available in operational fighter units.

33. Other aerospace defense forces, such as radars, SAMs, and antiaircraft artillery (AAA), will likely be

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improved. China's expanded air defense surveillance system now includes about 900 radars at some 500 sites, with coverage particularly dense around military complexes and industrial centers and along the coast. The Chinese will continue to upgrade native and foreign-designed radars to overcome apparent limitations and to provide improved low-altitude detection, longer surveillance range, and some ECCM capabilities. High-speed data transmission systems suitable for air defense are not likely to be integrated into a nationwide system by 1981. As a result, even at that time China's air defense communications system could be easily saturated and overwhelmed by either a large number of hostile aircraft or those employing sophisticated penetration techniques. Airborne radars are undergoing experimentation, and a rudimentary airborne radar surveillance system might be available by the late 1970s to supplement ground-based radars.

34. China is relying on a combination of SAMs and AAA for air defense protection in addition to aircraft. The mix is AAA-heavy, as the Chinese now have some 11,500 AAA guns, an increase of about 3,500 since 1972. This trend to extend and thicken AAA defenses will likely level off over the next five years. In the meantime, the Chinese will probably make improvements in weaponry and in associated fire-control systems. Self-propelled AAA may be eventually introduced into armor units and possibly into the air force and army antiaircraft divisions.

Light and medium AAA weapons will continue to present a significant threat to aircraft attacking military bases, lines of communications, key cities, and industrial complexes. They could also be used in an alternate role against ground forces.

35. The Chinese SAM force remains a weak link in air defense operations. It is deployed at only 73 sites, predominantly in the four northern military regions and rather heavily around Peking. Nearly all of these SAMs are the old CSA-1, a copy of the Soviet SA-2 and first fielded in 1962.

We expect a new generation of SAMs with improved coverage within the next two years or so, and some increase of SAM sites by 1981 to comple-

ment the AAA growth. Even so, China will be only marginally protected, because the force levels of the new SAMs will be low. We judge from the slow pace of SAM deployment and the sustained emphasis on AAA that the Chinese have decided to rely upon guns, supported by a small number of missiles, as the cheapest, if not the best, air defense mode.

36. Compared to the interceptor force, the ground attack element has received less emphasis. Its slow growth reflects Chinese understanding of a need for a tactical strike force but also a reluctance to invest heavily in its modernization. It now numbers some 1,000 aircraft, about 15 percent of the total Chinese air force. Of these, 400 are IL-28 Beagle medium range jet bombers. The Beagles have stabilized at present levels (see Figure 7, page 22). No replacement bomber has been identified.

37. Since 1970, about 400 F-9 Fantan As, a Chinese-designed fighter-bomber with increased combat radius, have replaced most of the aged MIG-15 Fagots as the principal ground attack fighter, permitting improved close air support to ground divisions. Also, their location in north and northeast China provides a limited capability to execute shallow strikes against hostile tactical air through sudden attacks and without prior deployment, and assists in the development of air superiority in high-value combat areas. The lack of a tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM), however, limits the usefulness of the F-9 against armored break-through operations; but a TASM could be available in the early 1980s, if the Chinese begin development now.

38. The issue of a follow-on ground attack fighter is not clear. The purchase of the Spey engine raises the possibility that it might be used to power follow-on ground attack aircraft. We believe that the increasingly capable enemy air environment, the vast number of PLA ground divisions requiring tactical air support, and block obsolescence of the Beagle will provide momentum for further expansion of the tactical strike forces. We foresee a moderate growth of F-9s over the next five years, and the development of a ground attack fighter armed with a TASM in the mid-1980s.

39. Considering the pressing requirements for better combat aircraft, military transport aviation forces will

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continue to have a relatively low priority. Of the nearly 500 fixed-wing transports, 85 percent are the older, short-range, propeller-driven aircraft obtained from abroad. Recent limited import of more modern light and medium transports from the British (Trident) and the Soviets (AN-26 Curl and AN-24 Coke), however, has upgraded China's transport capability, which will increase only moderately by 1981. As a consequence, we expect China's airlift and airborne capacity to remain poor, though augmentation by civil transports could provide a significant increase in capacity.

40. The helicopter force will improve only slightly compared to the transports. Almost all the 400 helicopters are the older, Soviet-designed MI-4 Hound. Purchase of small numbers of medium helicopters will likely continue, and with Chinese production of an upgraded MI-4, the helicopter force will probably increase substantially by 1981.

41. Since 1969 there has been some improvement in the proficiency of the air force to fight a conventional war. Training has stressed overwater flights by fighter units, mobility of fighter and bomber units, cross-training of interceptors in a ground attack role, and field training of SAM units. Also, an annual training exercise has been initiated since 1974, and a comprehensive exercising of the air defense forces began last year. Nevertheless, aircrew flying hours, which are low compared to those of the United States, are not expected to increase, thus requiring aircrews to devote a considerable amount of time to basic flight training rather than to advanced skills.

II. PARAMILITARY FORCES

A. General

42. The principal paramilitary force in China is the Peoples Militia. The militia and other paramilitary forces in the PRC traditionally were an important component of Mao's thinking on warfare and in the event of hostilities could make a significant contribution.

43. In wartime, paramilitary elements would be used to harass the enemy with guerrilla-type operations, assist in the defense of urban centers, gather intelligence, help maintain production levels, and provide manpower reserves for the regular forces either

as individuals or as moderately trained units. The peacetime paramilitary force is in effect a large-scale, low-cost pool of reserve manpower. It assists the regular forces in security operations, facilitates agricultural and industrial organization, helps maintain law and order, and assists party propaganda efforts.

B. Militia

44. The militia is a part-time quasi-military organization found throughout China at virtually every political subdivision of various economic entities ranging from factories to communes. Although estimated at some 130 million persons, only about 6 million are actually armed. The militia is by far the largest of the PRC paramilitary organizations and constitutes China's de facto reserve and mobilization base.

45. The majority of the militia receives no military training. The armed militia receives several days of training a year and perhaps an extended period of one to two weeks in key areas along the borders. Most of these are trained in the use of small arms, but some elements are familiar with machine guns, mortars, light artillery, and AAA weapons. Some militia units also periodically train with regular PLA units.

46. A reemphasis of the militia has become apparent since 1970, when some independent militia regiments were formed. These regiments, comprising selected members of the armed militia from various communes, are controlled directly by county-level authorities but may be eligible for service outside the counties or municipal areas as well.

47. Expansion of the urban militia may be the most important recent accomplishment in the militia program. Largely a paper organization before 1973, urban militia units now actively participate in military training and security patrolling in many cities. The newly created urban militia commands provide local civilian party committees a quasi-military coordinating agency. They could assume duties for coordinating local security and civil defense activities during periods of disorder.

C. The Production and Construction Corps and Other Paramilitary Organizations

48. A change in status of most Production and Construction Corps (PCC) units from military to civil

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administration began to take place in late 1972. The armed elements of demobilized PCC units have become militiamen. Some PCC units, however, have continued to exist under the aegis of the military, but these appear to be units in the most remote areas, where total reorganization has not been fully implemented. The missions of these units continue to be economic development and border defense and surveillance.

49. Other elements, some 20-30 million strong, include such diverse organizations as civil railroad construction units and transport agencies as well as various public security and civil defense-oriented groups.

III. NUCLEAR FORCES

A. General

50. By Western standards, China's strategic weapons program has been moving at a slow pace since 1972. Intercontinental nuclear weapon systems remain largely in the developmental and experimental stages

of the currently deployed MR/IRBM force is not expected. These nuclear forces have not grown appreciably in strength (see Figure 8, page 23), nor improved in terms of range and accuracy.

51. There are several possible reasons behind the apparent slow pace of China's nuclear delivery systems. One reason is that the creation of the PRC force over the past few years has provided a limited deterrent against nuclear attack or blackmail, and larger numbers of existing systems would only provide a minimal additional deterrence.

52. Other reasons for the slowness in creating a nuclear force may be technical, economic, and political in nature. The Chinese are encountering technical difficulties in developing their strategic missiles. Economic difficulties springing from the limited technological resource base and exacerbated by the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution may also have been a contributing factor. In addition, the Chinese apparently now view the threat itself as less urgent. The United States for the most part has withdrawn militarily from the Asian mainland, primarily from China's southeastern doorstep. The Soviets are no longer engaged in threatening nuclear

rhetoric, although they continue to improve their military forces along the border.

B. Strategic Nuclear Forces

Current Status

53. China has developed three strategic weapon systems and is in the midst of a long-range research, development, and testing program for two more (see Figures 9, 10, and 11). Two of the three deployed weapons systems, the CSS-1 MRBM and the CSS-2 IRBM, were developed from Soviet-supplied technology and became operational in 1966 and 1971 respectively.

54. The third deployed system, the CSS-3 which became operational in late 1975, represents China's first step in developing an ICBM and earth satellite vehicle (ESV) booster. Unlike the CSS-1 and the CSS-2, the CSS-3 is a two-stage, silo-based missile which has the capability of being deployed against Moscow.

55. A larger, more advanced ICBM, the CSS-X-4, has been under development simultaneously with the CSS-3. The recent successful ESV launches using the CSS-X-4 as the booster suggest that early developmental problems with the missile have been solved. However, prior to deployment additional tests of the CSS-X-4 in a ballistic mode and silo construction would be expected. The CSS-X-4 would be the only land-based missile capable of reaching both the United States and all of the Soviet Union.

56. The current higher Chinese priority for the CSS-X-4 vehicle may be in a space rather than in a missile role. The CSS-X-4 has been used as a space booster in the last seven of the ten attempted launches of this system. In 1975 this booster was used to successfully orbit two prototype Elint and one prototype photo-reconnaissance satellites.

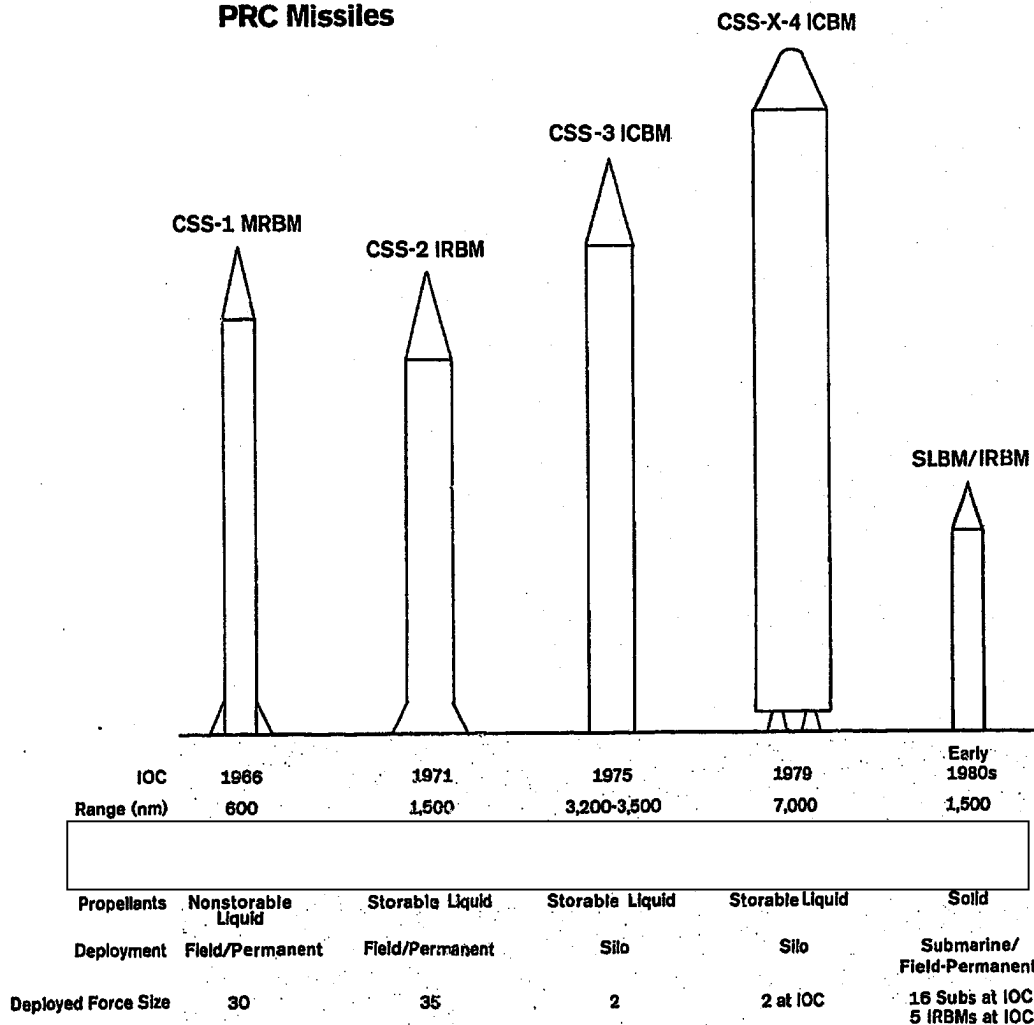
57. China's other potential global strategic threat, the SLBM, has been under development since at least 1967. The SLBM is expected to be China's first attempt at producing a solid-propellant weapon system, which could also be used in a land-based role. Land-based flight testing of this missile could begin at any time.

58. China does not possess a dedicated strategic bomber force such as that of the United States and the

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Figure 9

PRC Missiles



*Due to submarine position errors at launch, the weapon system CEP could be degraded to 2.0-3.0 nm.

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USSR. Its strategic bomber capability consists of some 75 TU-16 intermediate-range bombers and a dozen TU-4s of World War II vintage.

[REDACTED]

While all of the intermediate-range bombers evidently could be used to deliver nuclear weapons, they probably do not have a primary mission of strategic attack. The organization, deployment, and training of the intermediate-range bomber force suggest that it has a dual role of conventional and nuclear bombing.

[REDACTED]

Outlook

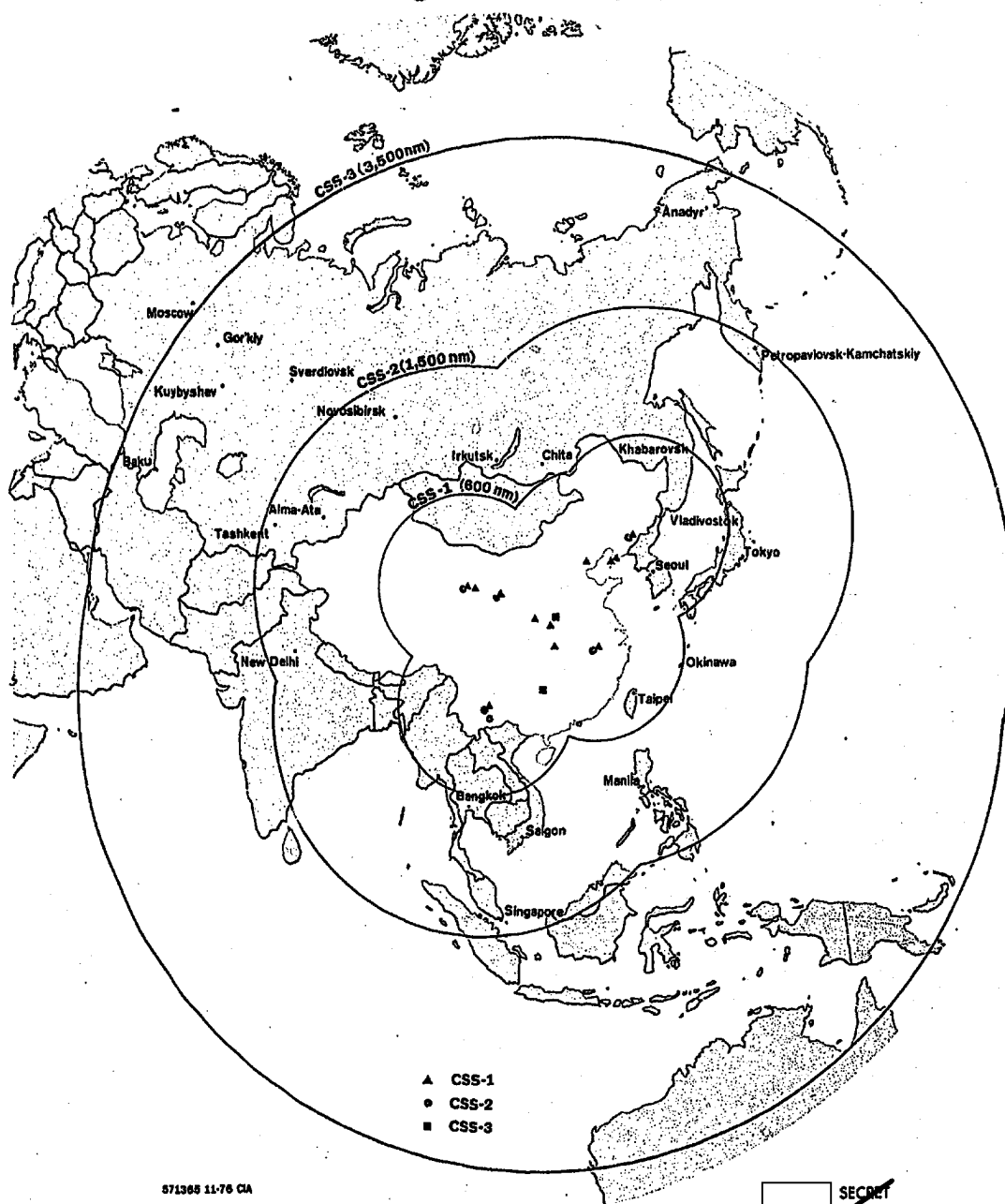
60. Over the next five years very few changes are expected in strategic concepts and deployment. The CSS-1 and CSS-2 will remain active in China's nuclear arsenal with deployment stabilizing at current levels.

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Figure 11

China: Strategic Missile Deployment Range



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68. The Chinese also have fissile material production capabilities [] in excess of what they appear to need for their strategic programs, and in this light, design and production of tactical nuclear weapons is not constrained. From our analysis of Chinese nuclear capabilities, we would not be surprised if the following developments either get under way or become apparent over the next five years:

- small tactical bombs and warheads;
- a nuclear-armed cruise missile;
- a nuclear depth charge; and
- atomic demolition munitions.

69. On the other hand, we rule out several tactical warhead applications for the near future. We judge, based on our knowledge of warhead design, that the Chinese are unlikely to develop certain weapons, such as a nuclear artillery round, nuclear-armed AAMs for fighters, and possibly torpedoes for submarines.

IV. TRENDS

70. From the above developments, we conclude that the PLA is now in far better shape than it has ever been, especially since 1969, to meet foreseeable wartime needs. We also believe that the trends under way will continue to sharpen China's combat capabilities over the next five years:

- There will be a steady effort to develop the PLA as a fighting force, while continuing its political work and economic duties.
- The development of a global nuclear deterrent will continue at a slow but steady pace.
- The general disposition of conventional forces will point toward an increased joint-service, in-depth defense of China, especially in the critical northeast and coastal areas.
- In size, the PLA will remain at about the present level with emphasis on qualitative upgrading of forces.
- There will be further strengthening of command and control arrangements, especially in military

63. China's SLBM system will not be operational until the early 1980s.

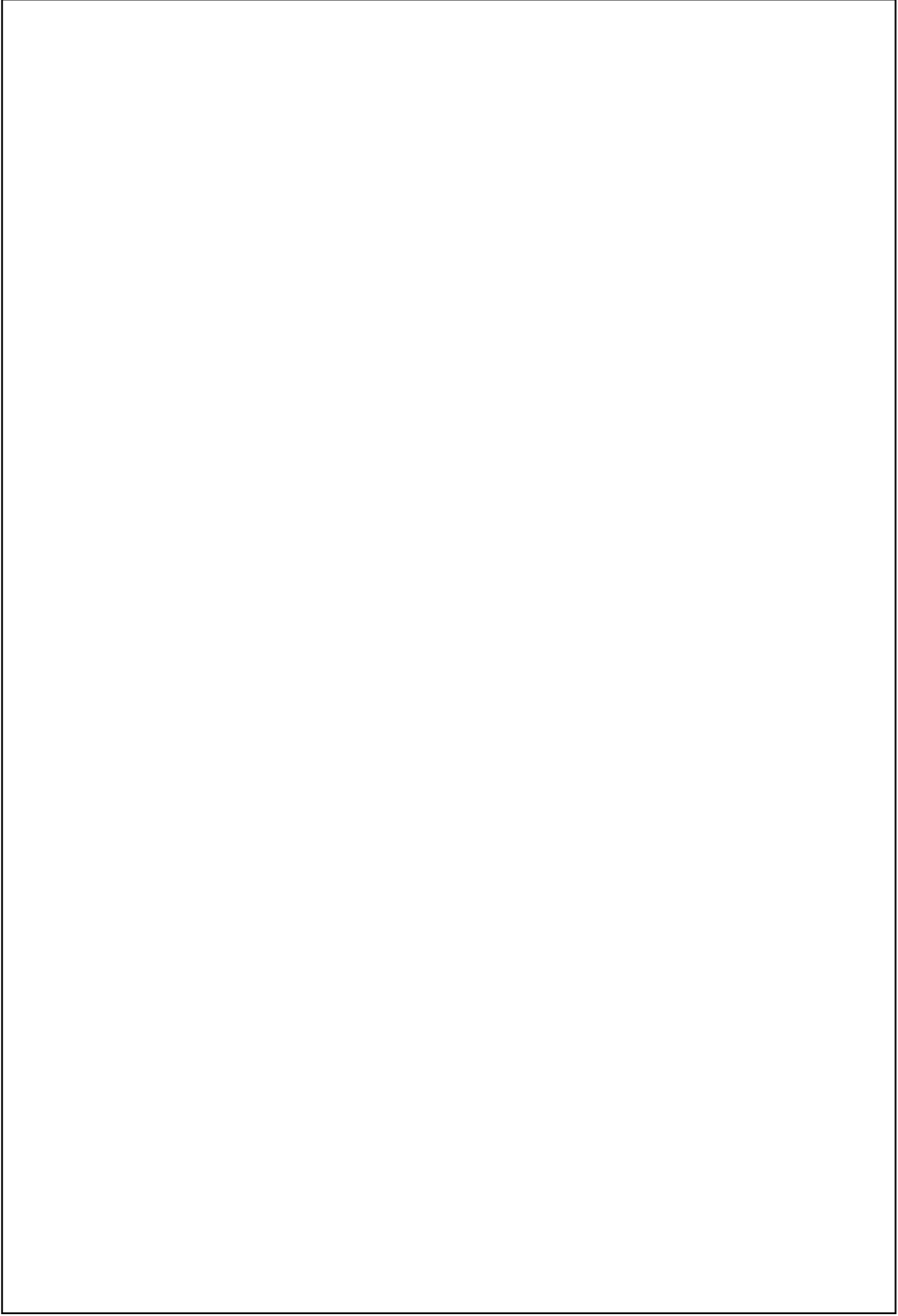
64. We see no indication of a follow-on to any of the systems discussed above becoming operational within the next five years. We judge there will be only subsystem modifications to improve performance.

C. Nonstrategic Nuclear Forces

66. The Chinese have not deployed a tactical nuclear force per se. Instead, they are attempting to make do with what they have to serve theater nuclear force purposes. For example, the MRBMs and IRBMs could be used in a theater role. The TU-16s and the IL-28s, however, are more likely than the MRBM/IRBM force to be employed in either an offensive or defensive tactical nuclear situation. All of these forces provide a meaningful tactical nuclear capability against the USSR and US Asian allies.

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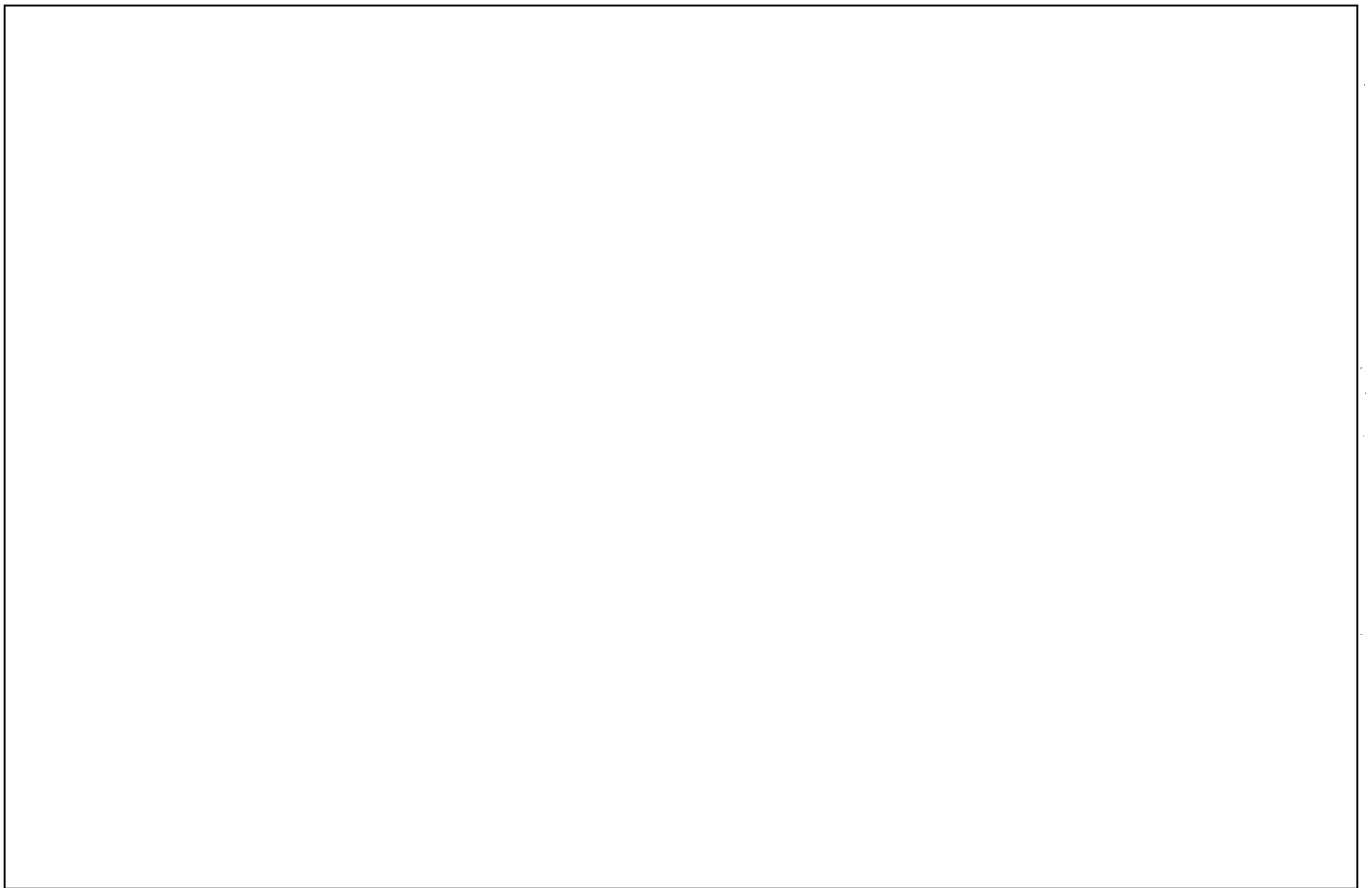
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communications. We may see some exercising of a wartime command echelon higher than a military region, with intermediate command and control exercised by army groups. For present party-army relationships, see the Appendix to this Annex.

—The Chinese will press ahead with a variety of conventional weapons. Indigenously-designed

weapons will be emphasized, using foreign technology.

—Though military capabilities will grow, major limitations will take some time to be corrected, even with foreign assistance [redacted] The lack of an adequate sealift and airlift capability will still hamper the PLA in projecting combat power very far beyond China's immediate periphery.





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APPENDIX TO ANNEX C PARTY/ARMY COMMAND RELATIONSHIP

1

The Chinese clearly continue to view their armed force establishment as a major organ of the Communist Party with internal security, political, and production roles in addition to that of providing for the nation's military defense. The key organizational link between the civilian party apparatus and the military is provided by the Military Committee of the party Central Committee. This organ, atop a hierarchy of party committees extending throughout the armed forces, serves as the highest source of military policy and decisionmaking.

2. The de facto chairman of the Military Committee generally is Minister of National Defense and thus is the senior representative of the PLA within the party. Although the Military Committee policy

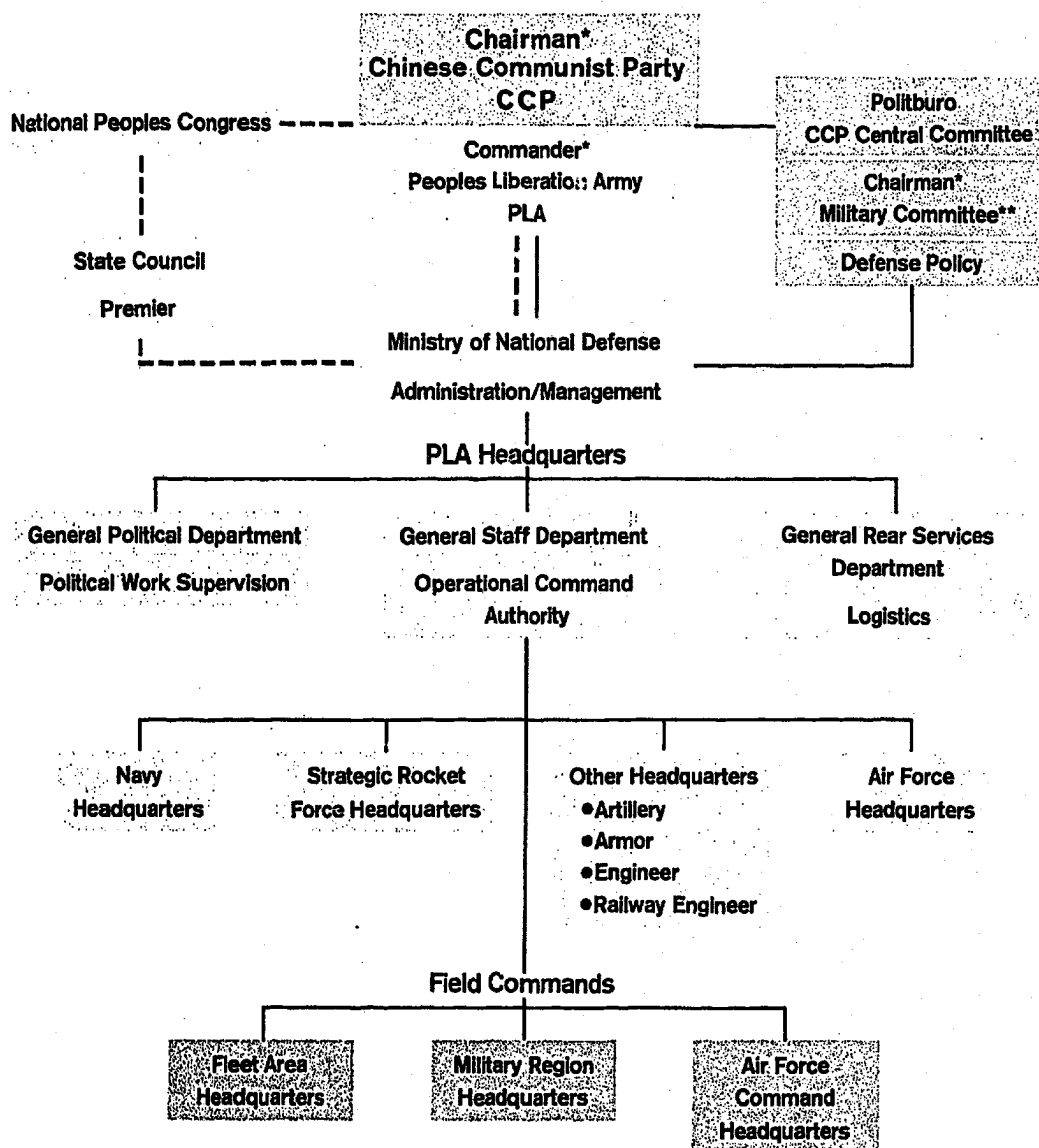
directives will normally be given to the General Staff and/or the General Political Departments for implementation, the Committee has demonstrated the capability of directly intervening at lower echelons. Serving as the principal national level point of contact between party and military organizations, this Committee plays a major role in the formulation and oversight of party policies as applied to the PLA.

3. Within the PLA organization itself, the General Staff Department of the Ministry of National Defense serves as the unified senior command authority for all ground, naval, and air forces. As such the General Staff Department maintains control over major ground force elements through 11 Military Region Commands and through separate national Navy and Air Force Headquarters. Other separate headquarters components provide national control over various missile, armor, artillery, rear service, and construction units.

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National Command Structure

Figure 15



*Same individual

**The Military Committee can directly command any subordinate level.

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ANNEX D

PLA WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY

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PLA WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Background

1. China's warfighting capability lies primarily in its ability to defend against external threats, but the PLA does possess a limited ability to project its military power outside China's borders. The PRC hopes that any war can be confined to conventional weapons and has repeatedly stated its intention never to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Its nuclear capability will remain vastly inferior to either that of the Soviet Union or the US. If either launches a strategic nuclear attack, the ability of the PLA to function as a cohesive military force would be threatened. The Chinese, moreover, are ill-prepared or equipped to fight on a nuclear battlefield.

2. We believe, however, that Chinese fighting forces have good morale, are responsive to central authority, and are highly motivated to defend their homeland.

3. It is not possible to estimate precisely how long it would take the PLA to be fully ready for combat, but current levels of manpower, weapons and equipment, and training suggest the forces are now generally in a high state of readiness.

B. Mobilization

4. China's population of some 900 million people constitutes an enormous manpower pool for wartime mobilization. The mobilization potential of the population is limited, however, because China does not possess a conventional reserve, has few facilities to produce heavy weapons, and has accumulated few stockpiles of heavy equipment. Peking must rely primarily on a large paramilitary force—about 7 million armed troops—which is only partially trained and for the most part lightly armed.

5. The warfighting capability of this force, however, should not be minimized. In areas overrun, an attacker would have to contend with a guerrilla force more numerous than the regular forces encountered.

In either a conventional or nuclear war the majority of these guerrilla forces would survive and continue to resist, thereby making a long-term occupation of China prohibitively expensive.

C. Logistic Considerations

6. The PLA's logistic and support system is primarily designed to support defense of the homeland. Stockpiles of supplies, ammunition, and POL are positioned throughout China apparently as part of a system of central, regional, local, and unit reserves. Efforts to improve the flow of materiel through the various echelons of the logistic system are continuing. Outside China's borders, however, the PLA's logistic system would be hard pressed to maintain a sufficient flow of supplies over long lines of communication.

7. A major conflict would severely test the PLA's logistic system. Rail and truck transport would be required to shoulder the major burden of resupply. Enemy strikes on principal depots and lines of communication would hamper resupply efforts. Many items of supply, however, could still be moved along the logistic chain by militia elements and civilian organizations. The PLA, particularly in a nuclear environment, probably would experience severe shortages of critical items such as POL and ordnance, thus constraining China's ability to engage the enemy in regular, large-scale warfare for prolonged periods. Guerrilla and small-unit activities of course would be less affected by any disruptions of supplies.

II. WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY BY THREAT AREA

A. Northern Area

Sino-Soviet Conventional War

8. The PLA is not equipped, structured, or adequately supported to conduct major offensive military operations much beyond the Soviet border. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that Peking would initiate such operations.

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9. Conversely, the PLA is best organized, equipped and trained to fight a nonnuclear defensive war against the Soviet Union. We believe that the Chinese would have an even chance of stalemating a Soviet conventional offensive before it reached Peking and the North China Plain (see Figure 16). Geography and deployment of PLA forces in the border regions suggest that the Chinese are ready to make an all-out effort to hold territory from the Korean border in the Shenyang Military Region to the Kansu corridor in the Lanchou Military Region.

10. A Soviet attack on China would most likely focus on the Shenyang Military Region. Nearly two thirds of the Soviet force along the border are deployed in this region (see Figure 17). The initial objective of a Soviet campaign there probably would be to overrun Heilungkiang and Kirin Provinces.

11. In response to such an attack, stiff resistance could be expected from the Chinese air defense fighters, and units occupying the defensive complexes. If the Soviets were able to break through to the Manchurian Plain, the poor defensive terrain and lack of air superiority would soon force the small number of Chinese main-force elements in this area into a delaying action. As Soviet forces advanced further south, they would be confronted with the bulk of China's reinforced air and ground forces in the regions. Meanwhile, the Chinese would be capable of denying a major port or beachhead to the Soviet Pacific Fleet during this period.

12. Simultaneously with an attack in Shenyang, the Soviets probably would also launch an operation into Northwest China. Chinese defense of the Sinkiang and Lanchou Military Regions would be aimed at protecting road and rail networks and denying the Soviets access to central and east China.

13. Once Soviet operations in Shenyang and Sinkiang were underway, supplementary attacks into the Peking Military Region from Mongolia might also be attempted. Poor lines of communication, rugged terrain, and substantial numbers of Chinese troops argue against this being the initial primary axis of advance.

14. Although outgunned, particularly in the northwest, and lacking the mobility of Soviet forces, Chinese ground troops would have the advantage of prepared positions. The vastness of the northern border military regions and their underdeveloped lines

of communications would heavily tax Soviet logistic capabilities. By sheer numbers alone, the conventional and paramilitary forces would have some capability for attriting Soviet units even before they confronted the bulk of Chinese forces.

15. Most of China's combat airfields are more than 200 miles from the Soviet and Mongolian borders, thus providing some security from surprise attack. This also increases the time available for PRC fighter aircraft to react. In addition, China's large inventory of aircraft and numerous hardened storage facilities would enable PLA air force units to survive even sustained attacks by the USSR.

16. Eventually, however, the Soviets should be able to gain local air superiority. Obsolescent Chinese aircraft, a lack of air-to-air missiles, and a slow and inefficient command-and-control system for combat operations would gradually degrade the Chinese air capability. Thin SAM defenses and little SAM capability against supersonic and low-flying aircraft also would weaken China's air defense effort. Even after the USSR achieved air superiority, however, the Chinese probably would be able to provide limited air cover and ground support over the battlefield.

Sino-Soviet Nuclear or General War

18. The PLA is not organized, equipped, or trained to conduct operations successfully in a nuclear war environment. China's minimal capability for strategic and theater nuclear war does, however, offer a modest deterrent to nuclear attack. If deterrence fails, China's nuclear warfighting capability would be no match for that of the USSR and could not block a Soviet invasion.

19. On the ground, the Soviet planned rate of advance doubles in a nuclear attack. China's lack of tactical mobility and consequent inability to quickly shift, mass, and disperse forces on the battlefield could prove costly. If dispersed, PLA formations would be slow in reacting to Soviet breakthroughs; if massed, they would become ideal nuclear targets. China's prepared defensive complexes also would be extremely

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Military Regions (MR), Air Districts (AD), and Fleet Areas (FA)

Figure 16



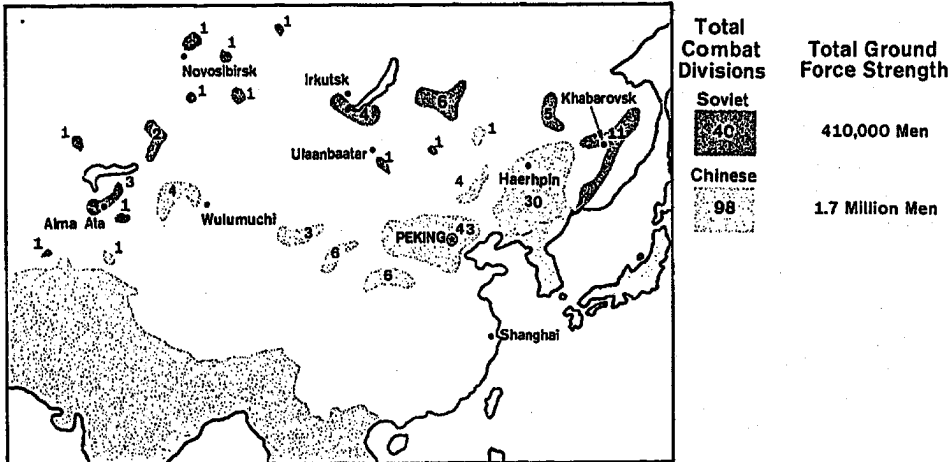
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Soviet/Chinese Border Forces

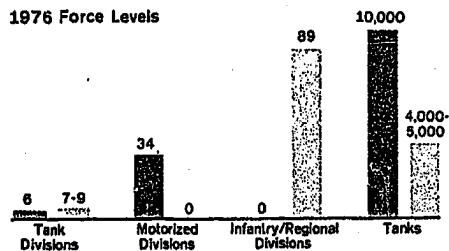
Figure 17

Opposing Ground Forces
in the Military Districts/Regions
Adjacent to the Sino-Soviet Border



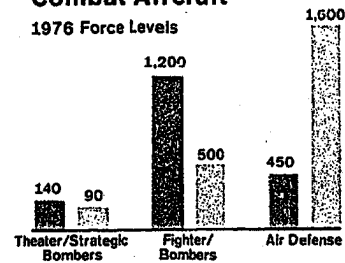
Ground Forces

1976 Force Levels



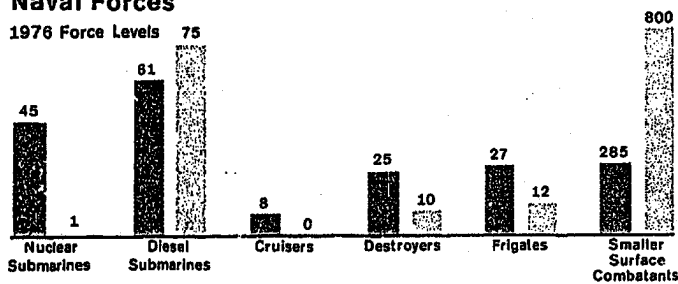
Combat Aircraft

1976 Force Levels



Naval Forces

1976 Force Levels



Tactical Missiles

1976 Force Levels



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vulnerable to nuclear or chemical attack, and the PLA would quickly lose its important terrain advantage.

20. Stay-behind and guerrilla units would be less affected. These forces could inflict only slight immediate damage to the Soviets, but any attempt to permanently occupy Chinese territory clearly would be costly to any invader.

21. Air and naval forces would suffer from similar disadvantages. Neither could continue to fight as a cohesive force for more than a short time. The dispersed and hardened air facilities could only temporarily prolong the life of those forces. Individual naval units could continue to resist, but the Chinese would find it almost impossible to mount a coordinated large-scale operation.

22. A portion of China's nuclear force probably would survive even a preemptive Soviet nuclear strike and would be less affected by a tactical nuclear attack. In any event, the PLA's nuclear warfighting capability is extremely limited, and there would be little the PLA could do to stop a Soviet invasion under these conditions. This would probably also apply in a biological and chemical warfare environment.

Support for a North Korean Attack on South Korea

23. The PLA's capability to support a North Korean attack on South Korea has vastly improved since the 1950s when Peking sent a "volunteer army" to intervene there. Were the Chinese to do so again, they could apply sufficient strength in a nonnuclear situation to overwhelm the forces now there. Today, however, military requirements along the Sino-Soviet border as well as the wide range of possible US reactions to Chinese military intervention in Korea limit the PRC's freedom of action. If consulted by the Koreans, the Chinese probably would attempt to dissuade Pyongyang from launching a major attack against the South. China would at best provide no more than token military support for a major offensive launched by the North, but would provide substantial support in the event military action by United Nations forces threatened the survival of the North Korean regime.

B. Eastern and Southern Area

Seacoast Defense

24. Overall, the PLA has a formidable conventional coastal defense capability. Naval, air, and ground

forces are strategically deployed along the coast and provide a defense in depth against an attack from the sea. The navy is eminently suited for, and fully capable of, an effective coastal defense against any hostile naval force, except the superpowers. The continental shelf environment—relatively shallow water—enhances the navy's ability to conduct anti-submarine warfare and lay defensive minefields.

25. Some 2,400 PRC combat aircraft are available within the eastern region to provide air defense and to support ground and naval operations. Inherent weaknesses—obsolescent aircraft, deficiencies in command and control, and the lack of air-to-air missiles—could seriously degrade China's air force in a contest with large numbers of opposing sophisticated aircraft. Nevertheless, the air force could take a significant toll of enemy aircraft before conceding local air superiority.

26. Over 1.5 million ground troops are positioned in successive lines of defense in the coastal regions. Garrison units man artillery coastal defense sites, and strongpoints along the coast are capable of stiff resistance in all areas suitable for major amphibious landings. Main force units are positioned behind the coastal sites and probably could contain an invader.

27. Given these propositions, we judge that it would be costly for the United States to conduct major amphibious operations against the PRC and virtually impossible for the USSR. Although a superpower could eventually achieve naval and air supremacy over Chinese forces, any attempt to occupy large areas of China would still be unfeasible.

*East and South China Sea Area **

28. The PRC is unlikely to initiate any major military confrontation in these areas (see Figures 18 and 19) during the near term. Nonetheless, the PRC is gradually expanding its activities in the waters of the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, and is capable of attaining certain limited military objectives.

—Most significantly, the PLA currently is capable of sealing the offshore islands and preventing surface entry to an unassisted Taiwan.

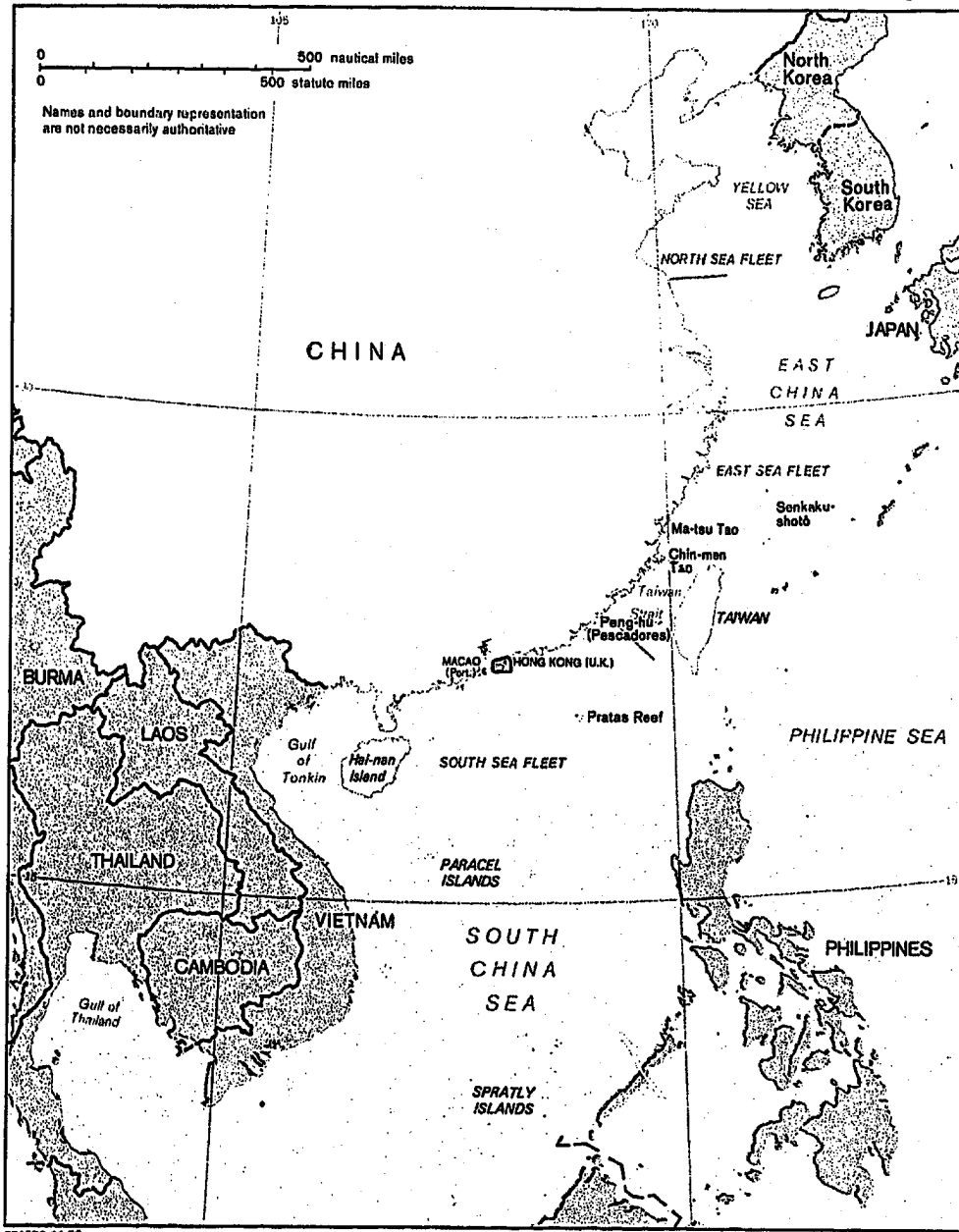
* For a discussion of political considerations, constraints, and military forces in the area, see Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, "PRC Military Options in the East and South China Seas," December 1975.

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Islands of the China Sea

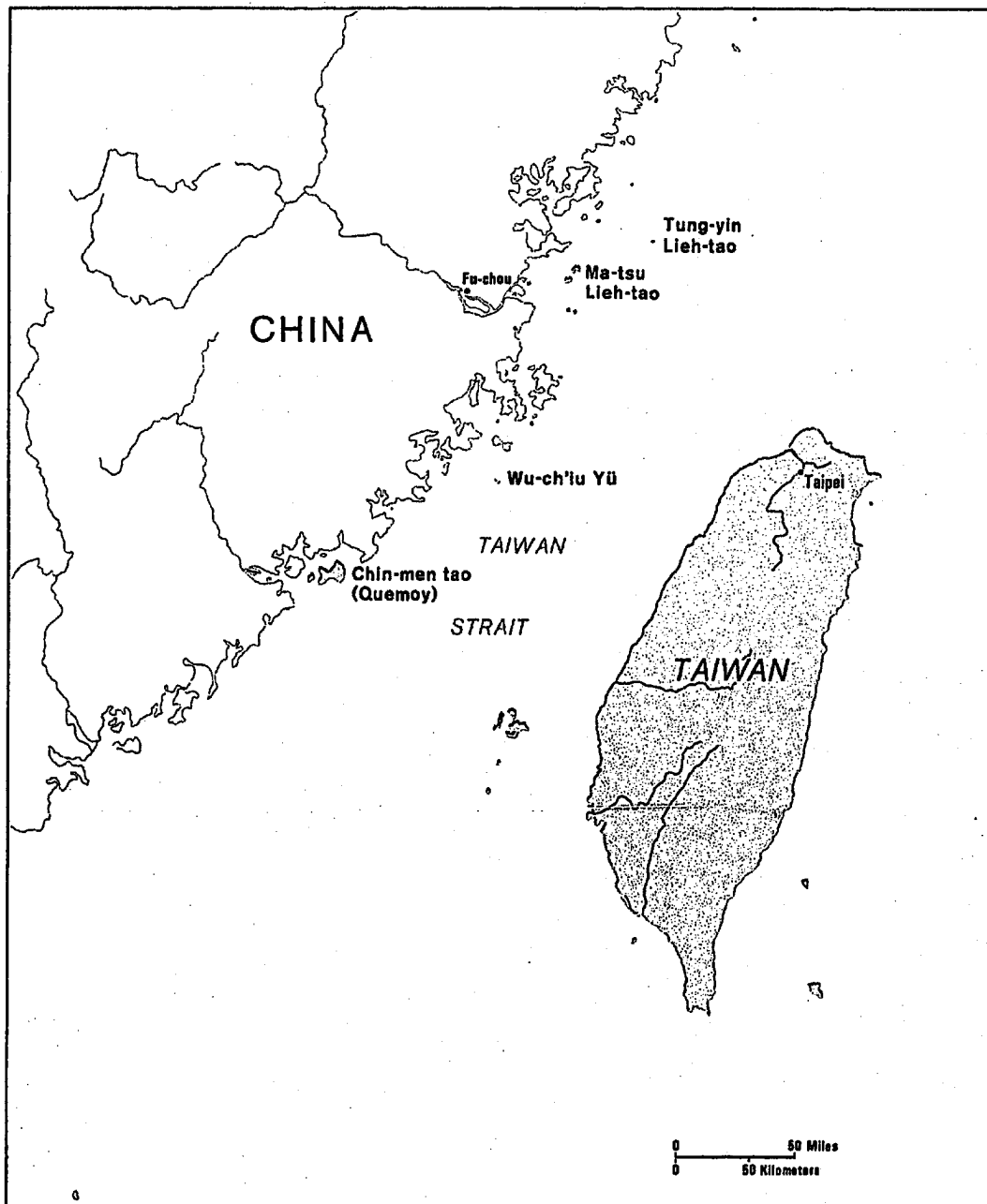
Figure 18



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Chinese Offshore Islands

Figure 19



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- Against Taiwan, the PLA probably would not have the capability to mount a successful nonnuclear invasion much before the 1980s without unacceptable losses.
- In the Penghus (Pescadores), the Chinese could conduct an amphibious assault against the islands—an unlikely option—unless the United States intervened.
- The Chinese probably could seize and occupy the Pratas Reef at any time.
- The PRC could seize and occupy the Spratly Islands even against such opposition as Vietnam, the Philippines, or the Republic of China could mount at this time.
- In the Senkakus, the PRC could assert its sovereignty by occasional naval patrols to show the flag near the area.
- The PLA could occupy the Hong Kong and Macao enclaves.

Mainland Southeast Asia

29. Current force levels in southern China are sufficient to sustain a major conventional offensive

against mainland Southeast Asia, except Vietnam. China can project its power deep into Vietnam but only with substantial reinforcements from other parts of the PRC. The PRC's interceptor force would be able to obtain air superiority. China's navy, vastly superior to its Vietnamese counterpart, would be able to control the Gulf of Tonkin.

C. South Asia

30. PLA capabilities have improved only slightly in the past decade in the Sino-Indian border area. Although the tremendous Chinese logistics problems in the Himalayas are being somewhat alleviated by the construction of a POL pipeline across the Tibetan plateau, such an upgrading has not overcome all of the problems inherent in difficult, remote terrain and severe weather. Additionally, the Indian forces are now better trained, equipped, and positioned farther forward than they were in 1962. We judge the PLA could succeed in minor incursions across the border, but it could not sustain even a limited-objective offensive to capture and hold the Himalayan foothills leading into India. For the moment, the PLA force in Tibet is suited to denial operations and for punitive expeditions against Indian incursions.

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ANNEX E
CIVIL DEFENSE

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CIVIL DEFENSE

I. STRATEGY AND CIVIL DEFENSE

1. The Chinese have taken some initial steps to provide protection against the immediate effects of a large-scale nuclear attack. They apparently feel that their civil defense has enhanced civilian morale as well as their ability to survive an air or missile attack.

2. In contrast to the West's, China's civil defense measures have taken on a new and larger strategic dimension. The extensive construction of shelters and underground tunneling serves two purposes. They are seen as offering some protection of personnel during bombing and as providing locations from which to fight an invader in the ground defense of a city.

II. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

A. Military Role

4. The PLA, of course, plays a major role in civil defense. Its construction expertise and engineering resources were used to build such projects as the Peking subway complex, which would have a civil defense role during a wartime emergency. The PLA, moreover, continues to participate in the various civil defense programs, by providing security and other police functions during air raid drills and by assisting in the implementation of the defense plant dispersal program.

In the event of a nuclear attack on China, the PLA as a

whole would employ all available resources not required for defensive and offensive operations to assist in, and perhaps even control, post-attack rehabilitation.

B. Industrial Dispersal

5. The Chinese place heavy emphasis on the protection of the economy and industry. Despite some attempts at dispersal since the 1960s, much of China's defense industry remains concentrated in traditional industrial areas and remains vulnerable to attack. Nonetheless, with few exceptions, the new aerospace facilities (mostly R&D) have been located in remote areas, away from the Soviet border and from major population centers. Although new plants producing conventional small arms and ammunition are generally near populated areas, they are built in rugged terrain and are spread throughout the country. In contrast, many new civil industrial complexes, including the large imported fertilizer and petrochemical plants, are being built in flat, open, and easily accessible areas where they are more vulnerable to military attack.

C. Shelters and Tunnels

6. As a consequence of the Chinese view of "tunnel warfare" and the inevitability of a ground invasion following a conventional bombing or nuclear strike, the goal of protecting the urban population probably focuses on sheltering in place rather than on relocation and dispersal. Peking's rationale for such a program stems from several reasons. The Chinese recognize that those cities containing the brains of the government and party and the industrial nerves of China must be protected—even at high cost—as part of the overall preparedness policy. They have likely concluded, moreover, that a lack of warning or other circumstances would preclude timely relocation, even though some tunnels would afford the opportunity to exit the city. The Chinese probably calculate that even if evacuees were to be relocated, there would remain a need for fallout protection at temporary sites and a requirement for availability and utilization of

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the populace for an active defense as well as rehabilitation of the cities. In general, in lieu of an antiballistic missile defense system and with only a limited air defense capability, the Chinese find that the most attractive and practical option is to remain in place and to dig deeply into the recesses of the earth.

7. China's shelter and tunnel program is one of the most extensive in the world, though its effectiveness remains untested. Since 1969, the massive effort to build more and better protection has resulted in the construction of a maze of shelters and tunnels under most, if not all, large and medium-sized cities.

we judge that the nature and quality of these underground installations vary from city to city, with some having a history as far back as the Korean War, when the Chinese feared US use of nuclear weapons north of the Yalu River.

9. Overall, we judge that most of China's urban population have some form of protection.

D. Complementary Programs

11. The speed with which military and civilian rescue and relief forces were marshaled after the Tangshan earthquake disaster of last July indicates that the Chinese are at least capable of coping with individual large-scale disasters.

12. The Chinese should receive some tactical warning of a conventional or nuclear bombing attack through their air defense radar network. They would, however, receive little, if any, warning of a nuclear missile strike.

13. From the use of sirens and public address systems in metropolitan areas, we presume the existence of emergency operations centers in high-risk areas. We judge, however, that civil authorities have a very limited capability to monitor radiation or measure chemical and biological contamination following an attack, although the PLA's antichemical units would be available for assistance.

III. OUTLOOK

14. The Chinese will continue to believe that civil defense is an absolutely essential part of the strategic defense of China and that without it, any future war effort would be circumscribed. Nevertheless, we expect the emphasis on civil defense to wax and wane according to Chinese national anxieties of the military threat. For the moment, China's civil defense program has momentum, and it is adequately based and sufficiently broad to accommodate further expansion. We believe there will be an improvement in complementary programs, such as warning, communications, and readiness training, and especially in the in-place sheltering program.

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