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JCSM-1013-64

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DATE: JUN 12 1997

3 - DEC 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: A Military Appraisal of Chinese Acquisition of  
Nuclear Weapons (U)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have prepared a military appraisal of the implications of Chinese acquisition of nuclear weapons in response to a memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), I-28605/64, dated 17 October 1964, subject as above. A copy of the appraisal is attached.
2. The possibility of a Sino-Soviet rapprochement leading to a resumption of Soviet military aid to the Chinese communists (CHICOMs) would inject new dimensions into the problem. Should such a situation develop, consideration of adjustments to the US posture would be required prior to the time the CHICOMs could attain a significant operational nuclear weapons delivery capability.
3. The US military posture in the Pacific, provided for in plans which are effective through 1970, is considered generally adequate to meet US security requirements, assuming the CHICOMs continue to develop their own independent weapons/delivery capability without external aid or assistance. US military planning has anticipated that Communist China would progress toward achieving a nuclear capability. The threat of an evolving CHICOM nuclear capability will continue to be reflected in US military posture planning for subsequent years based on estimates of the progress the CHICOMs achieve.
4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that:
  - a. The implications of CHICOM acquisition of nuclear weapons on their strategy in conducting "wars of national liberation." The CHICOMs will attempt to exploit their nuclear capability to extend

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their influence over their Asian neighbors, thereby attempting to attenuate US influence. Infiltration and insurgency probably would constitute Peiping's chief instruments of aggression. If the CHICOMs attain an intercontinental nuclear delivery capability, their confidence in their ability to extend their influence by political and economic means short of overt military action will increase.

b. The effects of a limited use or threatened use of nuclear weapons against US forces and bases. The probability of a direct confrontation with the United States or the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons against US forces and bases will not significantly increase. If the CHICOMs attain an operational intercontinental delivery system, there is danger that they might misjudge US will and determination to stand by its commitments in Asia. CHICOM employment of nuclear weapons against US forces and bases should provoke immediate US nuclear retaliation.

c. The possibility and danger of a CHICOM transfer of nuclear weapons to other nations. A CHICOM transfer of nuclear weapons to the custody of other nations appears unlikely, although deployment under CHICOM control is possible.

d. The effect on US defense arrangements, especially in Asia, more specifically in India and Japan. The United States must demonstrate firm support of our Asian allies against CHICOM aggression and nuclear blackmail if it is to maintain a position of leadership and influence in the Far East.

(1) The United States should increase its effort to attain objective level forces and force improvements, through MAP, for Korea, the Republic of China, the Philippines, and Thailand.

(2) As a corollary to the Presidential address to the nation made on 18 October 1964, which offered nations support against CHICOM nuclear threats and blackmail, {

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✓ (3) The United States should explore the possibility of broadening and strengthening SEATO/ANZUS to build a stronger alliance or alliances, or study the feasibility of developing an effective multilateral regional alliance that would provide greater unity for common defense and cause a greater contribution of standing forces and resources by our allies. [

(4) US military planning and assistance for India should continue to reflect collective action by US and other Free World forces of the magnitude required to stop a maximum supportable communist attack, and to restore the status quo as outlined in JCSM-1006-63, dated 26 December 1963, subject: "Contingency Planning - India."

(5) Japan should be persuaded to increase her defense efforts, including enlarged conventional forces to be used in the common defense of Asia, and should provide military assistance to other nations. ]

e. The military posture the United States must adopt to cope with the CHICOM nuclear capability. A credible US military posture is required to deter CHICOM aggression and prevent the CHICOMs from effectively using their nuclear capability to threaten and blackmail Asian nations. Implications of CHICOM nuclear capability on US posture include:

[ (1) Throughout the three stages of CHICOM nuclear development listed in the referenced memorandum, US forces must have the capability to deter the employment of the CHICOM nuclear capability; should deterrence fail, ]

[ (2) Highly mobile ground, air, and naval forces capable of rapid deployment, and supported by modern airlift/sealift forces, will continue to be required.

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(3) Although US military posture in the Pacific does not appear to require adjustment at present, certain areas such as air defense, should be re-examined in light of the evolving CHICOM nuclear threat. At your request, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are presently reviewing a US Navy study of US military requirements in the Indian Ocean area.

(4)

f. The acquisition by Communist China of nuclear weapons will not, for the indefinite future, alter the real relations of power among the major states, or the balance of military power in Asia. A CHICOM nuclear capability need not impose new military restrictions on the US response to aggression in Asia that impinges on US security interests.

5. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the attached appraisal be considered in future national policy planning actions with the understanding that this is only an initial appraisal based on the evidence available at this time.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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APPENDIX

A MILITARY APPRAISAL OF CHINESE  
COMMUNIST ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (U)

GENERAL

1. Purpose 1
- a. The purpose of this appraisal is to analyze the 2  
implications of the emergence of Communist China as a 3  
nuclear power based on the following stages of 4  
weaponry development. 5
- (1) A limited capability based on possession of 6  
20 - 30 weapons using current delivery systems. 7
- (2) An effective mid-range delivery system based on 8  
possession of jet bombers or ballistic missiles which 9  
could deliver a significant (over 50) number of war- 10  
heads on targets within 800 - 1000 NM range of China. 11
- (3) An intercontinental delivery system based on 12  
a finite but limited capability (not less than ten 13  
nor more than 100 ICBMs) to attack targets in the 14  
United States and Europe. 15
- b. The appraisal addresses the following: 16
- (1) CHICOM strategy in conducting "wars of 17  
national liberation." 18
- (2) The estimated effects of a limited use, or 19  
threatened use, of nuclear weapons against US forces 20  
and bases. 21
- (3) The possibility and danger of a CHICOM transfer 22  
of nuclear weapons to other nations, to include 23  
North Vietnam, North Korea, and Indonesia. 24
- (4) Implications for US defense commitments, particu- 25  
larly in Asia, and specifically in India and Japan. 26
- (5) The nature of the military posture which 27  
the United States must adopt to cope with the 28  
CHICOM threat. 29

2. General Considerations

a. This appraisal is based on the assumption that the USSR will not resume extensive military aid to Communist China, although a degree of political accommodation between the two may be reached. A Sino-Soviet rapprochement leading to the resumption of extensive military aid to the CHICOMs would inject new dimensions into the problem. Should such a situation develop, consideration of adjustments to US posture would be required prior to the time the CHICOMs could attain a significant operational nuclear weapons delivery capability.

b. Communist China exploded its first nuclear device on 16 October 1964. US strategic planning has been predicated on this eventuality and its timing was predicted with some accuracy.

c. As time goes by, the importance of the evolution of Communist China as a nuclear power will weigh ever more heavily on the entire spectrum of US diplomatic and military actions.

ESTIMATE OF CHICOM NUCLEAR THREAT

3. CHICOM Capability to Become a Nuclear Power

a. A preliminary analysis of the 16 October detonation reveals that the CHICOM nuclear program is somewhat more advanced than pre-explosion estimates indicated.

b. The CHICOMs are expected to place a high priority on continued development and refinement of weapons and compatible delivery systems.

c. The CHICOMs may be able to produce twenty or thirty fission weapons by the end of 1965, deliverable by their 13 TU-4 (BULL) aircraft and two TU-16 (BADGER) aircraft. It is believed that the CHICOMs are now capable of producing a less sophisticated gun type fission weapon for delivery by the IL-28 (BEAGLE) and TU-16 (BADGER); a smaller implosion weapon for these aircraft probably could not be produced before 1967.

d. It is believed that the CHICOMs could have a limited operational capability with a Soviet type MREM and nuclear warhead by 1967-1968, and an effective mid-range ballistic missile weapons system, based on deployment of over fifty warheads, after 1970.

e. There is no evidence that the CHICOMs have decided to pursue an ICBM program. It is believed that ten or more years from inception would be required for the CHICOMs to achieve an initial operational capability with an ICBM system of native design.

4. Implications on CHICOM Strategy in Conducting "Wars of National Liberation"

a. From a limited to mid-range capability. The acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability and an effective mid-range delivery system may result in a more assertive and militant anti-US foreign policy. The CHICOMs probably would not adopt a general policy of open military aggression, or even become willing to take significantly greater military risks. Infiltration and insurgency would continue to constitute Peiping's chief instruments of aggression. The CHICOM primary

objective would continue to be the domination of 1  
Asia by political means, attempting to deny US access 2  
to the area by nuclear blackmail. 3

b. Intercontinental nuclear capability. Once the 4  
CHICOMs attain an intercontinental nuclear delivery 5  
capability, their relations with the Soviet Union will 6  
become an almost overriding factor in any speculations 7  
concerning their strategy. A detente with the Soviets 8  
could provide the CHICOMs greater freedom of maneuver. 9  
CHICOM acquisition of an intercontinental nuclear 10  
capability would, as a minimum, increase the difficulty 11  
and danger for the United States, the USSR, and Communist 12  
China in any major crisis. Peiping would recognize that 13  
any CHICOM provocation could invite US pre-emption as 14  
a prelude to other military action. The Chinese, there- 15  
fore, might realize that their own actions would have to 16  
be kept at a low key, well below the level threatening 17  
vital US interests. Nevertheless, the possession of an 18  
intercontinental nuclear capability would increase its 19  
confidence in its ability to extend its influence in 20  
neighboring areas at the expense of the United States and 21  
the USSR, by political and economic means short of overt 22  
military action. 23

5. Threat vs US forces and bases 24

a. The CHICOMs can be expected to target US 25  
bases and forces as their nuclear delivery capability 26  
increases. It is unlikely, however, that these bases 27  
would be attacked by the CHICOMs so long as they are 28  
convinced that such action would result in destruction 29  
of their military and industrial base by US retaliatory 30  
nuclear power. 31



b. The CHICOMs probably would not risk a direct confrontation, but, through nibbling actions, they could test the level of US intentions and determination. These aggressive actions would become more probable should the CHICOMs feel that their nuclear capability would deter US counteraction.

c. Availability of Korean and Philippine bases does not seem likely to be affected, nor does access to Thai bases, provided US words and actions provide evidence of a continuing strong commitment to Thai defense. Dramatic effects on access to Japanese bases are not likely, though there may be some tendency toward restriction. In the near future, increased restrictions in Japan seem less likely since the strongly pro-US Sato recently became Prime Minister. US operations from Taiwan bases of the Republic of China will probably not be adversely affected. US territories in the Pacific, such as Guam, can be expected to become of more strategic importance to US operations.

d. [

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6. Possibility and Danger of a CHICOM Transfer of Nuclear Weapons to Other Nations, to Include North Vietnam, North Korea, and Indonesia. Communist China probably would be willing to exchange scientific data and possibly provide aspiring nuclear powers with technological assistance. Political and military considerations almost certainly would preclude China's transferring nuclear weapons to other nations. The Chinese could, however, deploy MRBMs to North Korea and North Vietnam, while retaining operational control of accompanying nuclear warheads.

IMPACT ON FRIENDLY NATIONS

7. The long term attitudes and reactions of Communist China's Asian neighbors will have a very important bearing

on US security and military posture. A drift towards neutral-  
ism or accommodation with the CHICOMs would complicate US  
security considerations.

ASIA

8. The CHICOM nuclear detonation, in general, has had a  
sobering effect on some US allies in Asia. There are indica-  
tions that these countries are reassessing their defense  
postures. The attitudes of our Asian allies must be the sub-  
ject of watchful and continuous analysis. The United States  
must take every action to convince them of US determination to  
defend their freedom against communist aggression. Otherwise,  
these countries will be under greater pressure to disassociate  
themselves from US influence and seek an accommodation with  
Communist China. Preliminary analysis indicates:

a. The GRC will become increasingly restive as the  
reality of the implications of the CHICOM nuclear capa-  
bility undermines their belief in eventual return to the  
mainland and as international support for the representative  
position of the GRC continues to erode.

b. Within the Government of Japan, there seems to be  
emerging an internal agreement that the country's defense  
posture must be re-examined. Japanese attitudes will con-  
tinue to be ambivalent towards this posture. Any reduction  
in the level of US military forces or expenditures in Japan  
may be interpreted with concern.

c. India is in the process of re-evaluating her defense  
position. Although India has announced its intention to  
confine nuclear activities to peaceful uses, it is recog-  
nized that India has the capacity to develop nuclear  
weapons if it desires. Despite announced intentions,  
various pressures could lead to a decision to develop her  
own nuclear weapons capability.

EUROPE

9. Although the principal impact of CHICOM acquisition of nuclear weapons will be on China's Asian neighbors, it will also tend to sharpen the proliferation problem worldwide. This influence will be felt particularly in Europe as possession of nuclear weapons becomes the symbol of power status for the 1970s. Thus, the United States can be expected to come under increased pressure from some NATO Allies to make nuclear weapons available to them through a unilateral, multilateral, or some other nuclear sharing formula.

CONSIDERATION OF US DEFENSE COMMITMENTS

10. A major task facing the United States in the immediate future, and as Communist China attains an operational nuclear weapons capability, is to establish credibility of US determination to Communist China, the USSR, and our allies, that the United States will live up to its commitment to protect Asian nations against CHICOM encroachment and nuclear blackmail.

11. The United States may be called upon for greater commitments, including more definitive guarantees and military support as a consequence of the Presidential statement made on 18 October which offered US support against CHICOM nuclear threats.

a. On 18 October 1964 in a public address the President offered United States' support to other nations against CHICOM nuclear threats and blackmail. As an extension of this protection,

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b. A strong multilateral alliance in Asia would strengthen resistance to CHICOM infiltration and subversion, and provide regional deterrent against overt military aggression.

(1) The United States should explore the possibility of broadening and strengthening SEATO/ANZUS, using these as vehicles upon which to build stronger alliance or alliances composed of as many of the free nations in Asia as possible.

(2) Should the foregoing not be fruitful, the United States should study the feasibility of the development of an effective multilateral regional alliance in Asia that would provide greater unity for common defense and cause a greater contribution of standing forces and resources by our allies. All the free nations in Asia along Communist China's periphery, plus Australia and New Zealand should be considered. Such an alliance would require major US policy changes to include the degree of integration of US forces into the alliance, and the organization and direction of a military structure to support the alliance.

(3) The political climate in Asia is such that a strong, effective alliance seems unlikely in the immediate future. However, the United States should examine methods for strengthening the Pacific area through alliance.

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12. The United States should make a concerted effort to convince Japan that it is in Japan's long-term interest to assume a greater role in the leadership of Asia. Japan should be persuaded to provide increased defense efforts, including enlarged conventional forces to be used in the common defense, and provide military assistance to other nations. If Japan were to assume a larger military role in Asia and commit its forces outside of Japan for the common defense of Asia, revision of the Japanese Constitution would be required.

13. Although limited in-country resources and current projected US MAP dollar reductions prevent the attainment of objective level forces and force improvements for Korea, Republic of China, the Philippines, and Thailand, positive future US actions to contribute toward achieving these force levels would serve to demonstrate US interests and intentions. Build-up of modernized indigenous conventional

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forces committed to the common defense against Communist 1  
China, would help to relieve the requirement for US forces. 2

14. US military planning and assistance programs for 3  
India should continue to be based on collective action by 4  
the United States and other Free World forces of the 5  
magnitude required to stop a maximum supportable Chinese 6  
Communist attack and to restore the status quo that existed 7  
prior to initiation of aggression as stated in JCSM-1006-63, 8  
dated 26 December 1963, subject: "Contingency Planning - 9  
India." 10

15. A successful solution in South Vietnam is essential 11  
to the retention of US influence in Asia. 12

#### US MILITARY POSTURE

16. Current US posture in the Pacific. US forces in 13  
the Pacific are positioned to support US forward strategy - 14  
a posture designed to demonstrate US physical presence to 15  
our Asian allies, to provide a flexible force to counter 16  
local contingencies immediately, 17

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and to provide air defense. These 19  
forces have faced the Soviet nuclear threat for many years. 20  
PACOM forces are limited; to meet certain contingencies, 21  
forces must be shifted within the theater until augmentation 22  
forces arrive from CONUS. 23

17. US posture vs a CHICOM limited nuclear capability. 24

a. Until the CHICOMs attain a significant mid-range 25  
nuclear weapons operational capability, military force 26  
levels in the JSOP are generally adequate to cope with 27  
the CHICOM threat. Initially, the limited numbers of 28  
delivery vehicles available to the CHICOMs will limit 29  
this capability; however, the possibility of the 30  
CHICOMs mating a nuclear weapon to the IL-28 in the near 31  
term and the consequent increased threat must be considered. 32

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Targets in close proximity to mainland China, especially 1  
Taiwan, Japan, Southeast Asia, and South Korea, will be more 2  
vulnerable to nuclear attack. It may be no longer prudent 3  
to leave generation of active air defense until after a 4  
contingency situation begins. Consequently, a re-evaluation 5  
should be made of the air defense capability in the PACOM 6  
area. 7

b. During this time period, maintaining and using, as 8  
appropriate, flexible forces with both a conventional and 9  
nuclear capability in forward areas becomes most important 10  
to provide visible evidence to our allies, as well as to 11  
the CHICOMs, that the US defense commitment is firm. This 12  
is especially pertinent in Southeast Asia where CHICOM 13  
expansionist efforts are most active. 14

c. At the request of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint 15  
Chiefs of Staff are reviewing a US Navy study of US 16  
military requirements in the Indian Ocean area. 17

18. US posture vs a CHICOM mid-range capability. 18

a. United States military power will exceed that of the 19  
CHICOMs even if they attain a significant mid-range nuclear 20  
delivery capability. However, several factors may tend to 21  
degrade the credibility of the US deterrent to the Asians. 22  
US forces in the Far East will be more vulnerable, and the 23  
CHICOM nuclear threat may inhibit some host countries' 24  
acceptance of US bases, although this does not seem likely. 25  
The United States would have to increase alert measures, 26  
dispersal, and adopt other tactics to improve security of 27  
its forces and may be required to commit additional forces 28  
to meet contingency situations. 29

b. Adjustments to US posture that may be required to 30  
meet the CHICOM MREB threat will be assessed in the 31  
appropriate JSOP planning cycle as the threat is more 32  
definitively identified. 33

19. US posture vs a CHICOM limited intercontinental delivery capability. The implications of a limited intercontinental ballistic missile capability pose several major problems. Modern nuclear weapons delivery capabilities, continental air defense, detection and warning systems, and a mix of modern conventional forces will be required.

a. In view of the options that would be available to the CHICOMs for employing this nuclear capability, US forces must have the ability to deter the employment of the CHICOM nuclear capability; should deterrence fail, [

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c. If the CHICOMs attain sufficient intercontinental 1  
delivery capability to pose a significant threat to the 2  
United States, the US deterrent vis-a-vis Communist China 3  
could attenuate somewhat unless the Chinese are convinced 4  
that the United States maintains the will and capability to 5  
destroy or neutralize the CHICOM nuclear threat. If the 6  
deterrent fails, the CHICOM land forces would become a more 7  
significant factor to the US strategy in Asia. The 8  
CHICOMs might commit forces to test the level of US and 9  
allied intentions. Highly mobile ground, air, and naval 10  
forces capable of rapid deployment, supported by modern 11  
airlift/sealift forces will continue to be required to deter 12  
the CHICOMs from exercising their ground capability. 13

d. Modern nuclear weapons delivery capabilities, 14  
continental air defense, detection and warning systems, 15  
and a mix of modern conventional/dual purpose forces will 16  
be required. 17

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