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5 July 1962

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SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

CHINESE COMMUNIST
SHORT-RANGE MILITARY INTENTIONS

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
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Central Intelligence Agency

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Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 5 July 1962. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

5 July 1962

SUBJECT: SNIE 13-5/1-62: CHINESE COMMUNIST SHORT-RANGE MILITARY INTENTIONS

THE PROBLEM

To assess the significance of the Chinese Communist military buildup in the Foochow Military Region facing the Taiwan Strait.

NOTE

This Estimate supplements SNIE 13-5-62, "Chinese Communist Short-Range Military Intentions," dated 20 June 1962, on the same subject.

THE ESTIMATE

1. At the time when SNIE 13-5-62 was approved on 20 June, Chinese Communist armed forces had moved into the Foochow Military Region in large numbers. There had been no public announcement of the move, and no

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propaganda manifestations by the Chinese Communists which appeared to have any relationship to it. Neither were there any other clear indications of the purposes and motivations which might lie behind it. The Chinese Communists did have sufficient reason to take seriously the possibility of incursions by GRC forces in the coming months, and they had of course not abandoned their claims to Taiwan and the offshore islands.

2. Soon after 20 June news of the Chinese Communist military buildup appeared in the Western press, accompanied by statements of concern about Peiping's intentions. Chinese Communist propaganda then began vigorously to attack the Chinese Nationalists and the US, accusing them of a concerted intention to invade the mainland, but placing no stress on the "liberation" of the offshore islands or Taiwan. No movements of major military units into the Foochow Region were noted subsequent to 17 June. On 23 June Chinese Communist Ambassador Wang sought out US Ambassador Cabot in Warsaw, probably in order to discover what he could of US intentions. He was told that the US would not support a Chinese Nationalist attack on the mainland under present circumstances, and was also warned of the risks involved in a Chinese Communist attack on the offshore islands. US statements and Press Conference remarks by the President reaffirmed earlier declarations of US policy on the issues involved. Movements and increased readiness of US forces accompanied these statements.

- 2 -

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3. Although these developments have changed the situation considerably they still do not permit a firm estimate of the motivations which lay behind the military buildup. A plausible interpretation is that the Chinese Communist leaders were seriously concerned with the possibility of a GRC incursion, perhaps with US support, on the mainland at a time of considerable unrest, and that they accordingly moved enough forces into the area to deter such incursions, to cope with them if they occurred, and to be in a position to attack the offshore islands if such a course seemed desirable, possibly in connection with repelling Nationalist landings on the mainland. They may also have had various expectations of political profit to be made when the troop movement became known, the reactions to it registered in the world, and the US attitude tested. This interpretation of the Chinese motives does not exclude the possibility that offensive action was under consideration prior to the US reactions.

4. Whatever the original motivations of the Chinese Communist military buildup may have been, world attention has been focused again on the Taiwan Strait issue, and a declaration of attitude and policy has been issued by the US. Publicly, the Chinese Communists proclaim their disbelief in the US disclaimer of support for GRC intrusion on the mainland, and they probably do remain somewhat uncertain of US intentions. Yet the US statement probably diminished their fears of such attacks. It must also have encouraged them to hope for serious friction between the US

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and the GRC. Finally the Chinese Communists have used the situation to try to arouse the mainland population from its lethargy and perhaps to reduce the chances of local support for any possible Chinese Nationalist landing.

5. The magnitude and scope of the military buildup have increased the offensive as well as the defensive capabilities of the Chinese Communists, and we still cannot dismiss the possibility of a full-scale assault on the offshore islands. However, the element of surprise has been largely lost, and the risks of the enterprise have been confirmed by US policy statements and precautionary measures. For the near future, therefore, we think that the odds are against such an attack. The Chinese Communists might undertake raids or small-scale attacks on one or another of the smaller islands held by the Nationalists, but there would be danger of escalation even in such actions and we doubt they would consider the gains worth the risk.

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