

SPECIAL ANNEX III

Chinese Military Activity, September 1964-January 1965

In addition, after the Tonkin Gulf affair and the dispatch of Chinese fighters with training personnel for North Vietnamese use, Hanoi and Peking began to develop joint air defense techniques while Peking improved its own air defense capabilities in South China.

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The Chinese also improved the landing strip at Peitun/Yunnani air base which, like the Ningming base then under priority construction, could have been used (though not as well as Ningming) for operations over North Vietnam. More importantly, the Chinese improved their fighter capabilities in South China: In the four months following the Tonkin Gulf crisis, Peking improved the quality and more than doubled the number of fighters at southern bases (from some 150 to approximately 350), improved radar facilities, and increased AAA deployment. The 7th Air Army's command net was moved forward from Canton to Nanning whose base was then occupied.

More ominously, in late December 1964, Chinese fighters for the first time began to pursue US reconnaissance craft out of China over North Vietnam, and, on January 2, 1965, actually downed a US drone over North Vietnam.