

*Suggested State/CIA
conclusion*

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II. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

Conventional Forces

China's armed forces are designed for the defense of China rather than for the projection of its military power at substantial distances beyond its borders. [To what extent this reflects a national policy preference and to what extent it is dictated by the limitations of its military forces and arms production capabilities cannot be determined.]

fully [Certainly both factors are involved, and the defensive character of the forces is ~~not in conflict~~ *accounts* with the international posture described in the Introduction.]

The purpose of the armed forces is to preserve internal security and to defend the integrity of China's territory against other powers. This latter concept allows for the use of Chinese forces to reclaim "Chinese" territory which might be held by others. Military force is not used in such cases if to do so might bring on a war that would threaten the security of China--for example, a war with the US or USSR. [Thus there has been no attempt to seize Taiwan in the face of US guarantees and no attempt to wrest former Chinese territory from the USSR by force. The attack on Indian forces in the Himalayas in 1962 did not involve risk of a counteraction threatening China's security.]

Peking demonstrated in Korea in 1950 and, to a lesser extent, in North Vietnam in the mid-Sixties that it prefers to defend its borders from the other side rather than on Chinese soil. China's defensive military doctrine is not a passive one. In both these cases, however, there was the important additional factor that the adjacent country in whose territory the Chinese inserted their military forces was a Communist country whose continued existence *as a buffer* was considered vital by Peking.

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In case of a major invasion which could not be stopped on the other side of the border, China's defensive strategy follows classic Maoist lines, with some modifications reflecting increased main-force capabilities.

The disposition of forces and prepared defenses indicates that the opening stage of the strategy of defense is different for the Soviet border area than for the other borders and the coast.

Peking apparently does not intend to put up major, main-force resistance against invading Soviet forces until those forces have extended their lines of communication well into China. Geographic factors and the relative firepower of Soviet and Chinese forces make this a practical course.

In the other areas Chinese military defense would normally begin well beyond its borders. In the case of the seacoast, the navy, the air force, and the coast defense forces would try to prevent the invader from gaining a foothold on Chinese soil.

Invasion forces penetrating into the interior from any direction would all get the same treatment. Chinese forces would put up a stiff resistance by conducting mobile and positional defensive warfare, retreating to alternate prepared positions whenever necessary to preserve the bulk of the main-force units. Concurrently China's vast manpower would be brought to bear in a wide variety of harassing actions against the invading troops and their lines of communication *would be conducted.*

When the invading forces have been sufficiently weakened by all this, the doctrine calls for a crushing blow by the Chinese main forces.

The navy is beginning the development of a deep sea capability; the air force is developing a medium range bomber force and a more modern ground attack capability. The ground forces are improving their firepower and mobility. Sometime beyond the *all conventional forces are engaged in extensive modernization programs.*

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period covered by this study the resultant increase in offensive capability might lead to some changes in doctrine. [It is also possible that outside factors such as fundamental changes in posture by the US or USSR could cause the doctrine to be altered.] Through 1976, however, Chinese conventional force strategic doctrine will almost certainly continue to be essentially defensive. [Chinese tactical battlefield doctrine will continue to provide for potent offensive thrusts of limited range and duration.]

Advanced Weapons

For our understanding of conventional force doctrine we have numerous writings and speeches by Chinese leaders, more than 20 years of observed behavior, and a fairly good knowledge of deployment patterns. For advanced weapons doctrine we have no such basis for understanding. Most of what can be said has to be very tentative and speculative.

When the Chinese leaders decided sometime in the mid-Fifties to embark on a program to develop and produce nuclear weapons and strategic missile delivery systems, they may have had no very clear idea of just how they would employ these systems. [They may not have developed much doctrine] beyond the conviction that the possession of such weapons was essential if China was to join the ranks of the leading military powers. [We have no way of knowing.]

[In any case, the subsequent break with the Soviets introduced a major change into whatever strategic equation they were developing.]

In 1967, we estimated that the Chinese were about to begin deployment of medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs). Deployment did not begin then. It may have begun by now, but we still have not identified an operationally deployed site.

What caused the apparent delay? Perhaps our estimate of readiness was wrong, although the evidence on which the estimate was based still looks

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persuasive.* Perhaps the distractions of the Cultural Revolution delayed a decision to deploy. Perhaps a change in Peking's strategic thinking dictated a delay in deployment.

The only thing the Chinese have said about their nuclear-use doctrine is that they have a firm no-first-use policy and, in the light of the overwhelming nuclear superiority of the US and USSR, this is probably a realistic statement of intent. Beyond this statement we can deduce a few probable principles from what they are doing and from the hard facts which limit their realistic options.]

The size of China's continuing investment in facilities for the production of nuclear weapons and delivery systems indicates that Peking plans more than a token force. It is not content merely to have become "a member of the club."

At the other end of the spectrum, the achievement of anything approaching parity** with the US or USSR lies, at best, in the unforeseeably distant future.

During the 1973-1978 time span of this study, China's strategic weapons force will remain small compared with US and Soviet forces but overwhelming

* Developmental testing appeared to have been completed by 1967. The Chinese claimed that their fourth nuclear test, in October 1966, was missile delivered. Our evidence tends to confirm that the fission device which was exploded at that time probably was delivered to at least 400 nautical miles by a missile. We do not know what type of missile was used, but the MRBM is the most logical candidate. This indicated a high degree of confidence in the missile.

** Possible models for a token force and an attempt to move toward parity are discussed in somewhat more detail in Section III.

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in relation to the capabilities of its Asian neighbors. Any rational Chinese doctrine must be compatible with this fact.

It is unlikely that Peking would make any crude, direct use of nuclear blackmail against its nonnuclear neighbors. To do so would be against its policy as announced and practiced up to now. Furthermore, such a maneuver would be complicated and perhaps even dangerous, because of possible reactions by the USSR or the US in providing a nuclear umbrella for the nonnuclear powers.

Nevertheless, in any confrontation between China and an Asian neighbor, China's nuclear weapons capability would be in the consciousness of the other party and might have some effect on the outcome.

It is also highly unlikely that Chinese doctrine provides for China's initiating the use of nuclear weapons either against its Asian neighbors or against the US or the USSR. In the first case the use of nuclear weapons would be unnecessary, it would entail great political costs, and it might provoke retaliation from one of the superpowers. Initiating a nuclear attack on the US or the USSR would invite the elimination of China as an industrial or military power, while an attack elsewhere will invite the side of superpower response.

In 1946 Mao Tse-tung spoke brave words about the atom bomb being a paper tiger, a statement which the Chinese reprinted in 1961. These were the words of a leader whose nation had no nuclear capability and felt compelled to belittle the threat. The large and costly program China has undertaken to acquire a strategic nuclear weapons capability is a better measure of Mao's true estimate of the power of such weapons. China's several three-megaton tests have given its leaders some idea of the havoc that could be wrought upon their country by even a fraction of either the Soviet or US nuclear arsenal.

The foregoing leaves only two functions for China's strategic weapons: prestige and deterrence.

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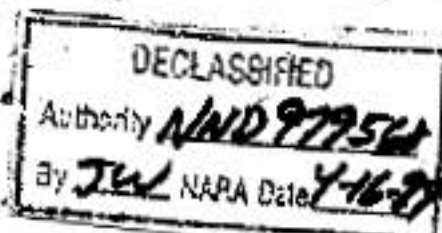
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Continuing development of China's nuclear, missile, and space capabilities will elevate China's status as a scientific, technological, and military power in the eyes of most of the world. [This could have political and economic payoffs.]

[It is difficult to know what constitutes a deterrent. Even now the leaders in Moscow must be in doubt as to what sort of attack they could launch that would guarantee no surviving Chinese capability to deliver at least one three-megaton weapon on a nearby target such as Vladivostok or Khabarovsk.] The Chinese may calculate that they have already achieved a first small measure of deterrence against the Soviets.

China's distance from the US makes achieving a credible deterrent more difficult. Ultimately, it would be dependent upon ICBMs or submarine-launched missiles capable of hitting the US homeland. Peking probably calculates that, if the US were to overcome all its other inhibitions in deciding to launch a first strike on China, it would not be deterred by the possibility that the Chinese might be able to strike back at one of America's Asian allies. Thus the Chinese cannot be confident that a regional nuclear capability would constitute an adequate deterrent against the US and apparently feel the need for an intercontinental capability. In the meantime the Chinese count heavily upon the pressure of world opinion to deter both their major antagonists from initiating the use of nuclear weapons against China. Even as their own capability develops, they will continue to value world opinion as a shield.

[Maximizing China's deterrent capability requires maximizing the survivability of its weapons. The Chinese probably intend to achieve this through concealment, dispersal, and hardening. The road-transportable MRBMs, which could strike some important targets in the USSR, are adaptable to concealment. Probably 1976 is about the earliest that concealment by means of submarine launching platforms could



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become a factor (a limited capability might be achieved a year or so sooner if the Chinese chose to develop a diesel-powered missile submarine). ICBMs and IRBMs will probably rely on dispersed, hardened silos for survival.

Another means of maximizing survivability is to adopt a launch-on-warning doctrine. This would get missiles into the air before they could be struck on the pads or in their silos. Such a doctrine would probably be impracticable for Communist China until sometime beyond 1978. Development of either a phased-array radar system like the Soviet Dog House or a sophisticated infrared satellite system to provide early warning of a missile attack would take on the order of a decade or more.

If the Chinese develop a tactical nuclear weapons capability, it also would probably be aimed at deterrence, not first use. [The Chinese would be highly unlikely to initiate the use of tactical nuclear weapons in a war with the US (or the USSR) because of the overwhelming superiority of such weaponry on the other side.] In any war with the US or USSR the Chinese would instead strive to fight on conventional terms which would maximize the value of manpower *and minimize their enemies' nuclear superiority*

If the Chinese had no tactical nuclear weapons, however, their only deterrent to the use of tactical nuclear weapons by an enemy would be the threat--implied or spoken--to launch their own strategic weapons in response. [Since this would invite an overwhelming response in kind meaning the veritable destruction of China,] this might not be considered a credible deterrent. The Chinese might therefore feel some tactical nuclear weapons capability would be essential to implement a doctrine of tactical nuclear deterrence. [The threat to respond in kind, below the threshold of a strategic nuclear exchange, might be considered a more credible deterrent.]