

Authority NND 767000  
By JW NARA Date 5-12-99

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 29, 1969

5/29/69

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TO : J - Ambassador Johnson  
THROUGH : EA - Mr. Green <sup>MC</sup>  
FROM : EA - Winthrop G. Brown <sup>W13</sup>  
SUBJECT : Basing of U.S. Strip Alert Planes at Tainan Airfield on Taiwan -- ACTION MEMORANDUM

Current JCS directives governing the conduct of aerial reconnaissance along the coast of Communist China prevent our aircraft from going closer than fifty miles from the coast (as compared to a CPA of twenty miles in force before the EC-121 shootdown) and direct maximum fighter strip alert as feasible. The only feasible place to provide fighters on strip alert for the protection of planes reconnoitering along the South China coast is Taiwan.

DOD has asked the Department to secure GRC permission to deploy sufficient fighter aircraft to Taiwan for this purpose.

Four fighters would be kept on alert at a time, and at least one or two more would be needed on Taiwan in reserve. Fighters will be launched at any time that the reconnaissance aircraft receives warning conditions 1 or 5 and would proceed to the defense of the reconnaissance plane. They might be launched earlier as a precautionary measure, but in that case would be held in a ready CAP orbit well clear of the mission aircraft unless a more serious threat developed. In any event, our aircraft will certainly be observed by the ChiCom radar.

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This would mean that for the first time since the last Taiwan Strait crisis the United States will be regularly operating combat aircraft potentially targeted against a ChiCom target from Taiwan

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EA:WG Brown ilra

bases. We must assume that this will be seen by Peking as a significant escalation of the U.S. base use in Taiwan, something that we have been trying to avoid at least until we could come to decisions on NSSM-14 (Policy Toward China). It obviously also risks a clash between U.S. and Chinese Communist aircraft, a clash that would be linked with Taiwan.

Moreover, this will probably be seen by Chiang Kai-shek as further evidence of the correctness of his intransigent position towards Peking. He, of course, would almost certainly agree to the placing of our fighters at Tainan. It is possible that if we tell him that we propose to go ahead with our plans to recognize Outer Mongolia despite his objection, he might drag his heels on this one and try to hold it up, but I believe that would be doubtful.

Therefore, this action is undesirable from the point of view of our policy posture towards both Communist China and the GRC.

There is also some doubt in our minds as to how much protection aircraft on strip alert can in fact provide.

Nevertheless, the President has directed that these reconnaissance flights be resumed and we have warned the intelligence community that although we think it unlikely that the ChiComs would shoot down one of our planes, they might, in view of their present very hostile attitude and the example of North Korean success in the EC-121 episode, be strongly tempted to follow the North Korean example.

Under these circumstances, I do not see how we could ask that the planes go unprotected, so we probably have to go along with this proposal with a strong recommendation that the number of aircraft and personnel sent to Taiwan should be the minimum necessary, and be removed as soon as possible.]

We have considered suggesting to DOD that we run a few test flights with a 50 mile CPA to see what the pattern of ChiCom reaction is before making the final decision that fighters need to be based in Taiwan. But we feel that (a) we would be criticized for taking even this amount of risk, and (b) a test period without reaction would provide no real assurance for the future.

Authority NND 969000

By JW NARA Date 5-12-99

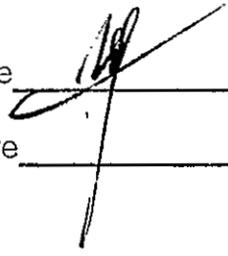
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We have also considered the use of GRC fighters for this purpose. But we reject this because it would be even more provocative than using our own and would give the Gimo a greater claim on us.

We, therefore, reluctantly recommend that we agree to DOD's request and request your approval.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_  
Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_



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Approved: EA:MGreen (substance)  
Cleared: EA/ACA:HThayer  
EA/ROC:RHart



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