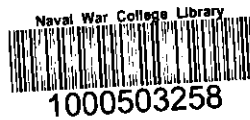


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NAVAL ASPECTS OF CHINESE COMMUNIST STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The fourteen-year-old Chinese Communist Navy was first assembled to support the flank of the People's Liberation Army during campaigns of communist expansion in Asia, to control coastal traffic, and to assist in the defense of the mainland. The navy maintains a limited amphibious capability to invade Taiwan. The navy's first ships were those captured from the retreating Nationalists. Later, other ships were acquired from the Russians and built in China. In addition to two dozen medium range submarines, the navy has several hundred modern jet fighters and light bombers, 150 torpedo boats, many minelayers, and a defensive patrol and escort force.

Russians instructed Chinese naval personnel for many years, and much of the Chinese naval doctrine is patterned after Russia's. Although the Chinese navy has been modernized within limits, the withdrawal of Russian aid in 1960 virtually halted expansion of the Chinese navy and adversely affected its readiness.

Analysts believe the Chinese navy to be primarily defensive; nevertheless, it has considerable offensive potential, principally in submarines, aircraft, and mines. If the balance of deterrents were tilted radically in Russia's favor the current communist fear of general war might be diminished. In any war with the West the Chinese navy poses a threat to Seventh Fleet carriers and merchant shipping.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1949 Communist Chinese armies drove Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists from the mainland and established the People's Republic of China. Since then the government in Peiping has assembled the largest navy in oriental Asia, including hundreds of modern jet fighters and bombers, and the fourth largest submarine force in the world.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the missions and potential of the Chinese Communist Navy as the sea arm of the People's Liberation Army, and to discuss their implications for the West. The study is not restricted in scope to a discussion of the navy proper, but includes also various Western analyses of Chinese broad strategy as it dictates the structure of the naval establishment and its relationship to the other branches of the Chinese military. It is planned to develop the substance of the paper by a discussion of the foundations of the Chinese navy; its defensive and offensive capabilities; and possibilities for its employment in support of communist expansion in the world in general, and in Asia in particular.

Throughout the paper, unless otherwise indicated, the term "Chinese" refers to the Chinese Communists, as distinct from the Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan.



## , NAVAL ASPECTS OF CHINESE COMMUNIST STRATEGY

## CHAPTER I

## FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST NAVY

Background. In the chronology of world powers the People's Republic of China is a latecomer; it celebrates its fourteenth anniversary this year. But the foundations of Chinese strategy antedate by at least two decades the communist accession to government, for many of the leaders who nurtured the communist armies during the 1920's and 1930's and finally led them to victory over the Nationalists are today in power and writing national policy. Their experience, especially in guerrilla warfare, has had a marked influence on the shaping of China's military establishment to implement broad strategic goals.

As early as 1922 the platforms of the Communist Party of China indicated that the ambitions of the revolutionary leaders extended beyond the territory of China proper. (4:97) The Party cadre envisaged an Asia dominated by a communist government in Peiping and a re-creation of the China that had in centuries past been the focal point of power, influence, and culture in the Orient. (27:S-20) The conquest of China was to be only the first step in creating in Asia the framework of "international socialism." Mongolia, Tibet, Turkestan, and Manchuria were to be in-

corporated into a China upon which neighboring nations would come to be dependent for trade and guidance. (4:97)  
(15:2)

Twenty-seven years later the communists had taken the first giant step in achieving Asian hegemony, the conquest of China. But the Chinese nation itself was in poor condition to support an expansionist foreign policy. It suffered from a chronic and perennial shortage of foodstuffs, and from inadequate industrial organization which prevented the large scale utilization of resources of coal, iron ore, etc. to compete in the world market. Worse still, a burgeoning population made the economic situation more desperate daily.

Perhaps Mao Tse-tung's desire to expand beyond the 1949 political boundaries of China was not motivated entirely by militant communistic principles and the ideology of one socialist world. He may have seen in the occupation of the rich rice bowl in Southeastern Asia and other border countries a way to alleviate some of China's food problems, or he may have been driven by resurgent nationalism. Regardless of motives, the ambitions of China were blocked by the anti-communist governments of neighboring countries, governments which were, in many instances, shored up by treaties promising various degrees of United States military aid and assistance.

But China's foreign policy was frustrated not only by containment; the Government of the Republic of China on

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TABLE I (18:22)

COMPOSITION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST  
NAVY

The following table shows the intelligence estimate of Chinese Communist naval strength in mid-1962.

<u>Type/Class</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Old DD/Gordyy	4	USSR	Obsolescent; built 1941.
DE/Riga	4	Chicom	Extensive USSR mat'l and tech. assist. involved.
SS/W class	18	Chicom	Extensive USSR mat'l and tech. assist. involved. Completion last units delayed by withdrawal of USSR assistance.
SS/S-1	4	USSR	Obsolescent; built 1941.
SS/M-V	3	USSR	Coastal submarine.
Patrol-escort/various	14	Chinat	WW II or earlier design.
SC/Kronsh	24	6 USSR, 18 Chi- com	USSR aid needed for Chi- com built units.
SC/SO-1	?	Chicom	
Motor torp./P-6	80	Chicom	USSR aid involved.
Motor torp./P-4	70	USSR	
Fast patrol/Shanghai	12	Chicom	Chicom design.
Motor gunboat	46	44 Chi- com, 2 Chinat	Some USSR components used.
River gunboat	3	Chinat	River use only.
Minesweeper/T-43	14	12 Chi- Com, 2 USSR	USSR aid in Chicom pro- gram.
Minesweeper/coastal	4	Chinat	U.S. WW II design.
Minesweeper/aux.	20	Chinat- Chicom	Inshore sweeping only.
LST	20	Chinat	Obsolescent; U.S. WW II design.
LSM	13	Chinat	U.S. WW II design.
LSIL	16	Chinat	U.S. WW II design.
LCU	10	Chinat	Obsolescent.
LCM	200	Chicom	
Auxiliaries/var.	55	All but 3 Chinat.	All but three WW II or earlier.
Svc. craft/var.	380	Chicom	Inshore patrol only.

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Taiwan ever threatened to invade the mainland and overthrow the communist regime, a sword of Damocles to the fledgling Red empire.

Thus, in the immediate post-revolutionary period, China's most pressing requirement for a navy was to prevent the Nationalists from invading mainland China and to transport communist troops for the early capture of Taiwan. The development of a navy for more far reaching offensive purposes, while not to be ignored, was considerably less urgent. (6:82-15)

Early Organization of the Chinese Communist Navy. In retreating the Nationalists left behind large quantities of military equipment and several munitions factories. Several score small warships of different types, many of them in a state of disrepair, comprised a part of the booty. The extent of this accretion is detailed in Table I. For the most part the naval vessels were patrol and amphibious craft of obsolescent design. Many of them were of foreign manufacture, including some from the United States.

The Chinese began repairing and refurbishing the ships almost immediately. Nationalist defectors and former Nationalist naval personnel were employed as instructors to train crews to man the ships, and, in some cases, former Nationalists officered and crewed their old ships. But the Chinese were already requesting Russia to provide the bulk of the assistance required to build Chinese naval power to

the level it was later to reach.

In 1950 the first Russian aid arrived in the form of training cadres for officer and enlisted personnel; assistance in engineering, shipbuilding, organization, and training tactics and strategy; and a few donations of ships and aircraft. Under Russian advisors ship readiness was improved, and the Chinese were given a minimal capability to operate their ships, sometimes under the direct supervision of Russian officers. (19:145-146) A naval academy was laid down at Dairen, and a large number of officer and enlisted schools were built in various locations along the coast. (5:108) (6:82-26)

The influence of Soviet teaching was reflected both in the overall organization of the defense structure and in the organization of its individual service branches. The navy and the air force were considered to be supporting arms of the Peoples Liberation Army, in which the preponderance of numerical strength was in ground troops. Following the Russian doctrine, the primary purpose of the navy was held to be the protection of the seaward flank of the ground armies during land campaigns. (6:82-12)

Although China signed trade agreements with such far-flung countries as Cuba, Albania, Morocco, Iraq, Canada, France, and Australia during the 1950's, the navy developed no capability to defend its country's trade routes. Perhaps Peiping felt that protection of commerce was beyond the

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needs of the country, or perhaps they correctly forecast that the greater part of China's increasing foreign trade would be carried in foreign bottoms, expendable in time of war.

In 1950 the People's Liberation Army was constituted to fight the type of war that had brought it victory over the Nationalists the previous year. It relied on massive attacks by troops frequently poorly armed and equipped, but possessing a built-in mobility that was well adapted to fighting in the mountainous Chinese hinterland. Mao's dictums for guerrilla warfare were well known throughout the military. Then came Korea.

The frightful losses of Chinese "volunteer" troops employed in human wave tactics in Korea during the fall and winter of 1950-51 forced Chinese military theorists to re-examine the modern day bases for victory against an enemy immensely superior in weaponry and technology. Clearly the weight of manpower alone could not prevail. China, too, must acquire the expensive and complex instruments necessary for the prosecution of a war of machines.

Apparently this evolution of Chinese military thought affected the navy almost immediately, for it was toward the end of the Korean War that Russian naval assistance to China increased significantly in quality and quantity, and China received the badge of a major naval power, submarines. In 1954 the Russians handed over a number of old

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destroyers, coastal minesweepers, subchasers, and M-V and S-1 class submarines. They also gave the Chinese plans for the W class submarine, then one of the most modern in the Soviet arsenal, and provided technical and material assistance in setting up building yards to produce them. In addition, the Russians assisted in the establishment of a land-based jet naval air arm. (5:97) The following year China was given the strategic naval base at Port Arthur-Dairen. Until 1960 supervision and coordination of Russian assistance was carried out by a Soviet Naval Advisory Group. (6:82-15)

Before Russian naval assistance to China was withdrawn in 1960 during the preliminary rumblings of the Moscow-Peking ideological feud the Chinese Communists had built the largest navy in Asia, except for that of Russia in Siberia. By Asian standards the Chinese coastal defense force could be considered reasonably modern; it is probably competent to defend China's 5,500 miles of coastline from seaborne invasion by any other Oriental power. Furthermore, with almost two dozen relatively modern submarines to its credit and the implicit offensive potential of such a force, China has joined the ranks of the world's foremost submarine powers.

Control of the Navy. Like other arms of the People's Liberation Army, the navy is controlled from the highest echelon of the government, and is apparently quickly responsive to its orders. The Commander in Chief, Navy, is a

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Vice Minister of National Defense, and is senior navy member of the National Defense Council. Orders to the Chinese Communist Navy are transmitted by the Minister of National Defense through the General Staff to the Commander in Chief, Navy. Military policy is determined by the Politburo of the Party, which has a standing committee for the purpose. The standing committee is headed by Mao Tse-tung, and includes Chou En-lai, Marshal Chu Teh, and Defense Minister Marshal Lin Piao. Apparently the Military Committee of the Party's Central Committee is responsible for the implementation, coordination, and supervision of policy. (22:149)

Motives for Russian Aid to China. Russian support for the communist takeover in China was strong--indeed, without Russian training the communist leaders in China might well have failed in their decades-long struggle to take over the government in Peiping. But the proffering of Russian military aid in the post-revolutionary period was undoubtedly prompted by more than communist brotherliness. A militarily strong China in the center of the Asian land mass would be an invaluable asset for the more rapid projection of communism in the Orient, a giant step forward toward achieving the Leninist goal of international socialism. At the same time a militarily strong China--especially if its control were susceptible to Moscow's influence--would be an invaluable ally to Russia in the event of a general war with the United States.



Even in the early 1950's Stalin was reluctant to risk triggering massive United States retaliation for Russian attempts to spread communism by military means. However, a strong, puppet China under Moscow's direction could use limited wars and the threat of limited wars with relative impunity in order to advance communism, all at very little risk to Russia. Thus, from 1949 on, Russia supported China in her "just" desire to take over Taiwan from the Nationalists. Russia also supported Chinese involvement in Korea, although she, herself, remained on the sidelines.

The first notes of discord in this intercommunal harmony were sounded in 1956 when Khrushchev denounced Stalin. Subsequently the discord became an open rift, with Moscow trumpeting the policy of peaceful coexistence and Peiping advocating the expansion of communism by more belligerent means. Moscow, although in possession of a limited nuclear capability, feared a nuclear war. Peiping, on the other hand, discounted the efficacy of United States nuclear forces and stressed the thesis that men, not technology, are the ultimate determinant of victory. Consequently China, with such a tremendous manpower reserve, was not afraid of nuclear attack or retaliation. (23:34) Actually this apparent brashness was largely for domestic consumption to bolster Chinese morale. Military leaders in China had discussed for some time the real ability of the Chinese armies to withstand attack by modern conventional and nuclear

weapons. They had concluded that more modern military equipment was needed, and that the army, navy, and especially the air force must be strengthened. (23:35)

It is significant that Russia gave China no weapons of mass destruction, no missiles, and no long-range heavy bomber capability. Evidently Moscow felt that putting an independent deterrent, nuclear or conventional, in the hands of the Chinese would make Peiping less tractable to Moscow's direction and more likely to take unilateral action that might involve Russia in an undesired general war with the West.

While Peiping must have realized that Moscow did not trust China with a genuine offensive capability to attack a well-prepared major Western nation, it seems probable that the Chinese did not realize fully how careful Moscow was to avoid initiating a direct confrontation with the United States. An incident relating to the navy bears out this reasoning. In 1960 it was reported that Premier Chou En-lai told a Burmese official that China expected to build atomic submarines within five years, which indicates that China expected Russian naval aid to continue for some time. (20:66) At the same time the Russians were withdrawing their assistance for Chinese construction of W class submarines, leaving the building yards with a number of uncompleted boats, each of which would have enhanced considerably the offensive capability of China's submarine

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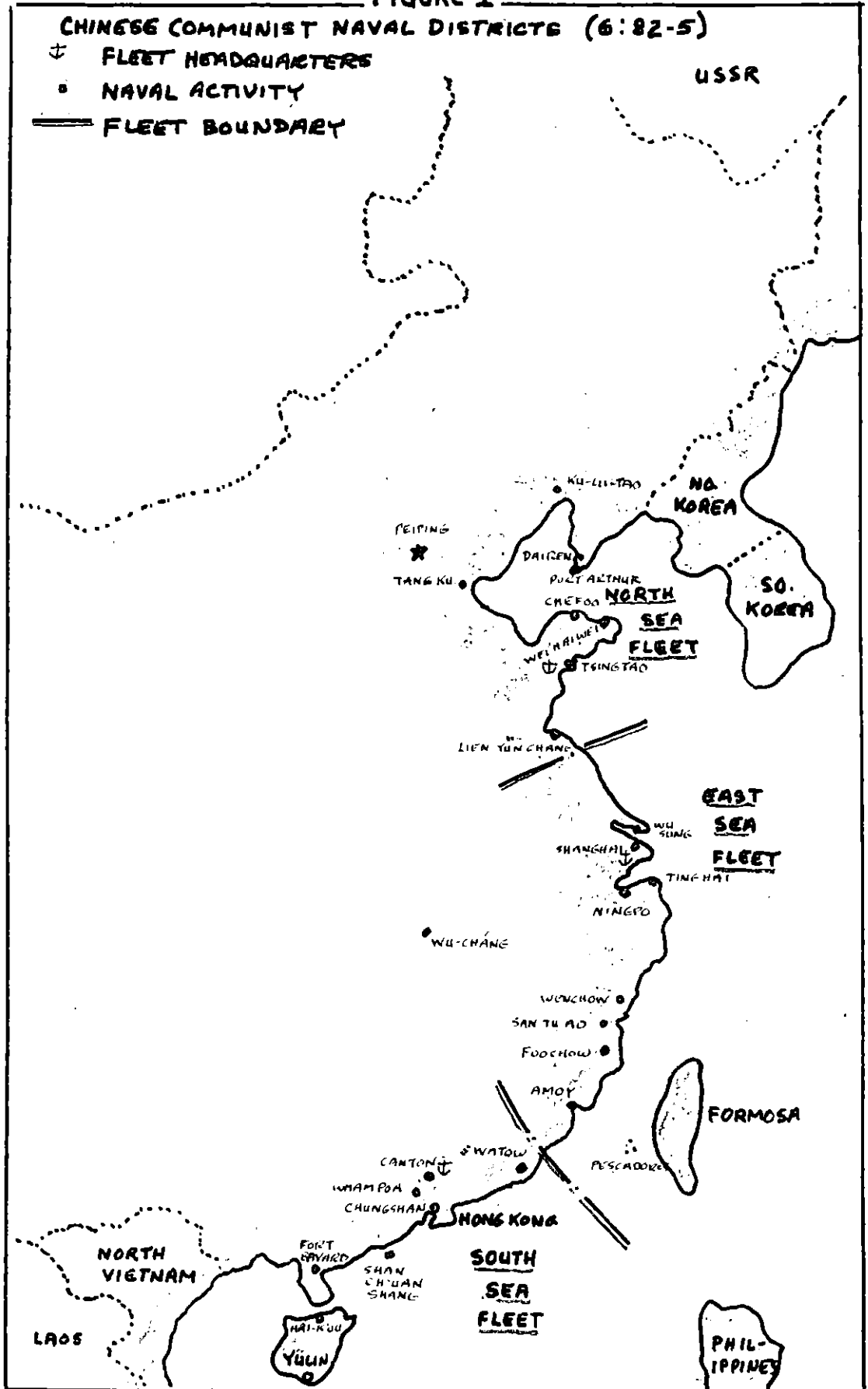
fleet. Chinese plans for the construction of modern destroyers and more modern conventional submarines were similarly written off. (6:82-1) In short, China's appetite for a large and up-to-date navy greatly exceeded Russia's willingness to satisfy it.

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FIGURE I

CHINESE COMMUNIST NAVAL DISTRICTS (6:82-5)

- ⚓ FLEET HEADQUARTERS
- NAVAL ACTIVITY
- ══ FLEET BOUNDARY



## CHAPTER II

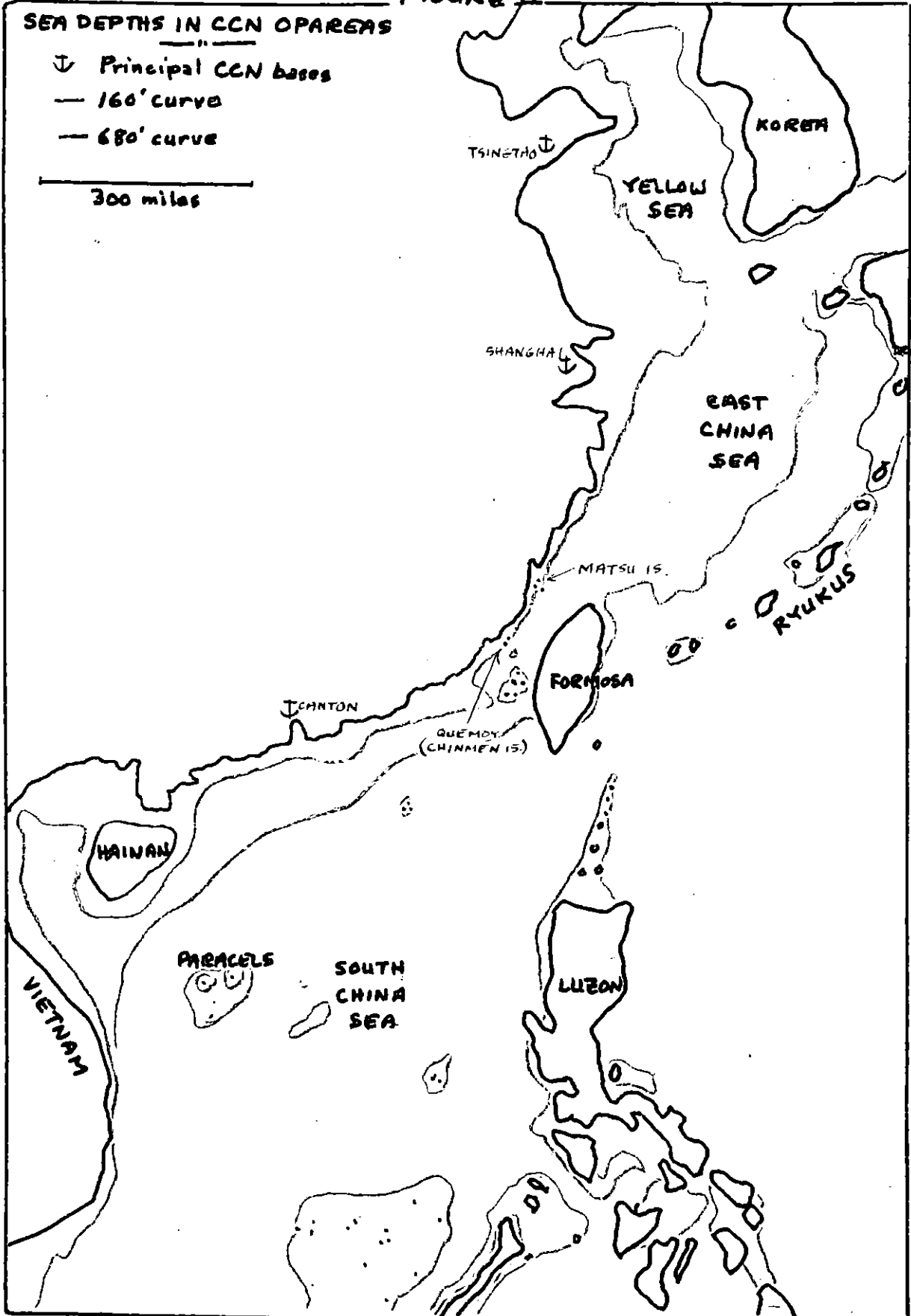
## DEFENSIVE CHARACTER OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST NAVY

Indications of the Navy's Defensive Nature. Although communist leaders tend to subordinate truth to expediency, Peiping's claim that the Chinese People's Liberation Army is for defensive purposes has a kernel of truth in it insofar as its naval arm is concerned. With fewer than 90,000 men, the navy is the smallest of the Army's three arms, and could hardly be used alone to communize a foreign territory. (17:8) Its patrol, amphibious, and anti-submarine craft are tied to Chinese bases by a short tether, and even the submarine fleet is believed to have a primary mission of coastal defense. (6:82-12)

Except for the possible offensive potential of the submarines, which will be discussed in later chapters, the strength, types, and capabilities of Chinese naval vessels are indicative of a defensive naval posture.

1/ The backbone of the surface fleet consists of four old Gordy class destroyers and four Chinese-built Riga class escorts. The rifled gun and antisubmarine ordnance of these ships is much poorer than that found in larger navies, and would be relatively ineffective against Western surface ships and submarines. A handful of Kronstadt and SO-1 class subchasers, some with more modern antisubmarine ordnance, round out the navy's surface anti-

FIGURE II



submarine force. Clearly it is suitable for little more than coastal patrol work, the possible interdiction of merchant shipping along the coast, and limited antisubmarine exercises with Chinese submarines. (6:82-9)

2/ The navy has a "significant" capability for offensive and defensive minelaying. (12:9) Nearly all naval vessels have been fitted out for minelaying, although some of the installations are crude. (18:19) In addition the Russians have helped the Chinese to configure many of the estimated 360,000 Chinese junks to lay mines. However, except for the larger naval units, minelaying craft are short-range vessels incapable of conducting minelaying operations very far from Chinese ports. (6:82-9) Little information is available concerning types and stocks of Chinese mines, although many of the mine types were probably Russian developed. The Chinese also have a capability for fabricating from materials at hand crude mines to be laid by junks. (6:82-36)

As may be seen from Figure II, the coastal waters of China lend themselves very well to both offensive and defensive mining. Since the preponderance of the navy's minelaying capability could be used only in these waters, it may be concluded that the minelaying potential is primarily defensive.

3/ From the standpoint of quantity and quality of minesweepers the navy's minesweeping capability is poor. About

two-thirds of the minesweepers are suitable for inshore and river sweeping only, and the entire minesweeping force would be insufficient to keep clear more than a few of the country's ports. Although some of the larger minesweepers are obsolescent, it is believed that all Chinese minesweepers are equipped to sweep all standard mine types except pressure-actuated mines. (6:82-36)

The relatively large number of fleet minesweepers produced in Chinese yards during the period 1956-60 indicates concern for the susceptibility of China to mine attack, although it is not improbable that it is intended to use the sweepers to clear out defensive minefields around Nationalist-held islands prior to an invasion.

4/ There is an extensive naval shore establishment for defense. It includes communications and observation posts, support and training facilities, naval guard units, and naval coastal artillery and antiaircraft installations. (6:82-7,8)

5/ The Chinese navy, like the Chinese air force, has no long range bombers, although it does have about 200 light bombers capable of conducting strikes and reconnaissance to a range of 1,000 miles from the mainland. These bombers are capable of interdicting coastal shipping, including naval surface forces without air cover, but have no strategic import much beyond the seas bordering China. The naval air arm has a dual function, to defend territorial



waters from intrusion, and to assist the Air Defense Command with the air defense of the Chinese mainland. (6:82-7) Exercises conducted by naval aircraft attest to the primarily defensive character of the force. (6:82-7)

6/ For many years the bulk of the navy has been concentrated at ports in the Yellow and East China Seas, ports which are the most remote from probable Chinese territorial objectives in Asia in the near future. The number of patrol craft attached to the North Sea Fleet and to the East Sea Fleet (see Figure I) is roughly proportional to the extent of the coastal waters in their respective areas, indicating that patrol forces are organized for coastal surveillance rather than operations against a foreign military force.

(6:82-9) This is to some extent misleading, however; it is estimated that most Chinese Communist naval surface vessels could be concentrated within a 48 hour period in the Taiwan Strait area in order to support an invasion of Taiwan or the offshore islands.

7/ The bulk of the Chinese amphibious force is now over fifteen years old, although the Chinese have recently constructed a number of small landing craft patterned after United States World War II designs. There is little effort being made to modernize the amphibious force, nor to build it up to a level sufficient to support a large scale assault on Taiwan. Analysts estimate the troop lift capacity of conventional landing ships under naval control to be three

infantry divisions (about 48,000 troops) with organic armor and artillery. (18:17) Even if landing ships were augmented by up to 10,000 motorized junks with varying individual trooplift capabilities, a recent estimate of Chinese potential, the lack of major support craft would seriously hamper a full-scale amphibious operation. (18:17)

For the last fourteen years the Chinese navy has been charged with maintaining an amphibious capability to support an invasion of Taiwan, but it has never developed that capability. The relative unreadiness of the navy to accomplish the mission of invasion is illustrated by a Rand Corporation analysis which estimates that it would require at least 4,000 Chinese invasion craft to take just one of the offshore islands, and that even that number would not insure success against strong Nationalist opposition backed by United States surface and air units. (3:13) It seems probable that the navy's rudimentary amphibious force is being maintained currently not to assault Taiwan or the major offshore islands directly, but to probe Nationalist defenses and keep them off balance, and to provide the skeleton for an expansion of the amphibious force when conditions for invasion become more propitious.

8/ The obverse of this situation is that the People's Liberation Army must maintain sufficient forces in the Taiwan Strait area to protect China from an invasion by the Nationalists. Chiang's raison d'etre is conquest of the

mainland, an eventuality that grows more remote each year. Nevertheless, Mao probably shares the opinion of the analysts in this country that Chiang's fear of a United States drift toward a "two Chinas" policy might prompt the Nationalists to attempt an invasion of the mainland, even without United States support. (16:3) The concentration of Chinese army units on the mainland opposite Taiwan without a corresponding concentration of amphibious vehicles to transport them to Taiwan or to the offshore islands indicates that the army's presence is for the protection of China rather than for the invasion of Taiwan.

Naval Training and Material. Since 1949 the size of the Chinese Communist Navy has grown steadily, quickly at first, more slowly in recent years. It now numbers 66,000 men in fleet and shore-based assignments and 15,000 in the naval air arm. (6:82-7,12)

The state of training of naval personnel is spotty; in some aspects it is apparently good, in others poor. The training of submariners in particular reflects Russian thought and doctrine, but the level of training is not up to that of the Russians and is considered to be far below that in Western navies. (6:82-26)

Chinese submarines have comparatively little at-sea time, due in part to spare parts shortages and material deficiencies. When at sea they usually operate in 20-40 fathoms of water against opposition provided by the escorts

and obsolescent destroyers, a practice which denies them experience in deep water seamanship and in countering able antisubmarine forces. Reports have indicated that not all submarines are operable because of deficiencies in training and material, and that all operable boats are not capable of submerging. One submarine is known to have sunk. (20:146)

Few Chinese submarines have been observed operating in the ocean area south of Taiwan. This may be attributable both to a desire to avoid encountering units of the United States Seventh Fleet and to an unwillingness to risk being sunk by Nationalist antisubmarine forces. However, as operating proficiency improves and better bases and support facilities are developed in the South China Sea, the level of submarine activity to the south of China may increase. (11:10)

The amphibious force has conducted few practice landings, and those only on a small scale. There has been some increase in emphasis on amphibious training, and landing exercises have included close support by naval and air forces in addition to landing tanks and artillery with the infantry. (5:102) Most landing exercises have taken place in the southern part of China.

Torpedo boats practice frequently with other fleet units in coordinated attacks on merchant shipping. The torpedo boats sent into action against Nationalist shipping around Taiwan and the offshore islands have displayed a

high degree of readiness. (18:12)

Many of the older Chinese ships, especially those captured from the Nationalists, were outfitted with foreign armament that has become inoperable and for which there are no spare parts. Defective armament has been removed from some Chinese ships without replacement. The navy is also experiencing difficulty in obtaining spare parts for the more modern items of armament received from Russia. (20:146) Except for these shortcomings material received by the Chinese from Russia is reported to be satisfactory, although not of the latest design. (22:149)

In summary, the composition of the Chinese navy and its size, both absolute and relative to the People's Liberation Army, suggest that it is intended primarily to sustain a defensive strategy, to protect the flank of the army against enemy attack from the seaward, and to control and regulate coastal shipping. It is incapable of long withstanding an enemy task force armed with modern conventional and nuclear weapons, but should be sufficient to defend China's coastline from invasion by any Oriental nation.

## CHAPTER III

## THE NAVY'S ROLE IN CHINA'S EXPANSIONIST STRATEGY

Constraints on Chinese Expansion. To maintain communist strategy in Asia in perspective it is necessary to review the constraints imposed upon it by United States support for non-communist countries in their resistance to Chinese expansion. By means of the SEATO Pact and other bilateral and international agreements the United States has served notice that it will provide signatory countries around China's perimeter with varying degrees of military assistance in the event they are attacked by the communist bloc. That the United States intends to stand behind these agreements is evidenced in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, South Vietnam, and Laos. Without question the expansion of Chinese influence and/or control in these countries would have been much more rapid had they not been buttressed in their determination to resist by United States military forces.(12:3)

Of particular importance is United States policy toward Taiwan. The United States has announced that it would intervene in any Chinese attack on Taiwan or the Pescadores, and implied that it would support the Nationalists in any Chinese attack on Quemoy or Matsu. One of the most recent expressions of policy was made on September 28, 1959 by the then Undersecretary of State, Douglas Dillon. He said, "...an attempt by Communist China to seize Taiwan and off-

shore islands is likely to embroil the world community in total war." (10:55)

Although China has for years advocated a more aggressive approach to the expansion of communism than has Russia, it is noteworthy that Peiping has been careful to guard against any "adventurism" that might lead to general war. (25:8-31) Moscow has announced that Russia would assist China militarily if China is attacked by the United States, but has not committed Russia to directly support the furtherance of China's ambitions in Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Moscow's threats to use deterrent forces in assisting China to check "capitalist aggression" have never been tested; thus, the conditions which might prompt such usage leave much latitude for conjecture by both East and West. Regardless, Russian support for China, and United States support for the non-communist Asian countries is a paramount consideration in all strategy. (12:5)

Despite the shortcomings of the communal system, Chinese leaders feel with some reason that they have made significant advances in improving the material well-being of the Chinese people. They have also developed a political and social framework that gives some assurance that the communist regime will be perpetuated. Consequently, as the tangible results of communism in China continue to favor the government it becomes less credible that Peiping would risk all gains to acquire territories which would reward

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them with little more than additional millions of hungry mouths. Except for Japan there are no states in eastern Asia whose resources are so great or whose industries are so well developed that they could long alleviate China's deficiencies in foodstuffs and problems of overpopulation.

The development of a minimal nuclear capability would not greatly alter this situation. Even if China solves the technical problems inherent in building nuclear warheads, it would take her decades to build a weapons stockpile that would put her on a par with the major nuclear powers today. Moreover, she would still lack delivery systems of the sophistication or magnitude to elevate her to the rank of a first-rate military power.

In such a limbo of nuclear weaponry China would still be reluctant to ignite a general war with the United States or a general war between the United States and Russia. In the first instance the Chinese population would be annihilated by superior United States arms...despite Peiping's repeated contention that a few hundred million Chinese will always survive as victors in a nuclear conflict. In the second instance, that of a general war between the United States and Russia, nuclear fallout would probably kill a large percentage of China's population whether nuclear weapons were dropped on China proper or not. The surviving country, be it the United States or Russia, would at least depose the Chinese regime in its existing form. (25:S-32)

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Therefore, although China would gain power and prestige among the smaller nations of Asia by developing a nuclear force of her own, she would be prevented from becoming a decisive factor in the world power balance by the inadequacy of her nuclear stockpile and delivery capability, and by the inability of her primarily agricultural economy to long sustain or equip a modern army.

Offensive Potentials of the Chinese Navy. Within the parameters established by the foregoing considerations the following potentials of the Chinese navy may be inferred:

1/ Taiwan is the perennial thorn in China's side. The relative prosperity of the island under the Government of the Republic of China, prosperity that is damaging to Peiping's prestige at home and abroad, and the ability of the Nationalists to stage an invasion of the mainland from a base within spitting distance are unsettling influences that require continual communist attention. But the underlying problem for China is the United States, without whose support Taiwan would have lost its autonomy long ago. On September 30, 1950 Premier Chou En-lai said that the United States was the "...most dangerous enemy of Communist China, and that the Chinese Army must wrest Formosa from United States control." (10:2) He voiced essentially the same thought following the fall of North Vietnam in 1954, and has repeated it at intervals since then.

China might strengthen her amphibious force and attempt

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to take Taiwan by storm under two conditions; first, that Russia would assist in transporting the invasion troops and equipment and, second, that the United States would withdraw its military support of the Government of the Republic of China. (25:S-32) Neither condition is a probability; therefore, the status quo will obtain in the immediate future and even beyond. It is not inconceivable that the Nationalist regime in Taiwan will be toppled two or three generations hence by the absorption of the refugee Chinese in the Taiwanese society rather than by a military invasion from the mainland.

Why, then, does China maintain even a vestigial amphibious force? Is it hoped that an unforeseen eventuality will permit its use against Taiwan, the Pescadores, or even the major offshore islands? The fact that Peiping is making little effort to enlarge its amphibious force to a size adequate to mount an invasion of Taiwan and/or the Pescadores indicates that no large-scale military action is contemplated against the principal Nationalist territories. The offshore islands are a different matter. The larger islands, Matsu and Quemoy, are well fortified and heavily garrisoned to resist an invasion, but the smaller offshore islands are not so well protected. Perhaps the Chinese amphibious force is maintained to attack and invade some of the lesser islands which are more within the capa-

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bilities of the force, a premise supported historically by the Chinese capture of a small island from the Nationalists in 1956 by classic amphibious assault involving air and ship bombardment. (19:4)

It is also possible that the amphibious force is intended for use in projecting Chinese military power to landing sites on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. Unless such a maneuver was supported by massive junk formations it is unlikely that it would be attempted on other than a small scale. Nevertheless, if United States aid to South Vietnam was withdrawn, the Chinese amphibious force would suddenly develop a great tactical potential for depositing guerrillas and regular soldiers on the shores of Southeast Asian countries as far south as Singapore. (25:S-30) A similar situation might develop in South Korea if United States aid was withdrawn. It is considered improbable that Chinese technology in the intermediate future would permit a large scale invasion of Indonesia, the Philippines, or Japan. (25:S-30),

2/ The navy's minelaying capability provides Peiping with a flexible weapon that can be used in a variety of situations, including harassment and low-order local wars. China has the ships to lay mines surreptitiously as far away as northern Japan and the entrances to the Indian Ocean, and could densely mine the Taiwan Strait and the more proximate ports of Indo-China under favorable circum-

stances. Chinese-laid mines in the ports and approaches of South Vietnam would seriously hamper United States aid to South Vietnam and Laos; at the same time it is unlikely that such mining would provoke the United States to drastic retaliatory action against China. Mines might also be laid in such profusion as to halt Nationalist ships carrying supplies to the offshore islands.

Yet another gambit might be for China to donate a few minelayers and a supply of mines to some of her Asian satellites--presently only North Vietnam--with the expectation that the recipient government would employ them to mine the waters of their mutual enemies. Peiping's reasoning might logically be that the cause of international socialism could thereby be served with very little risk to China.

This writer considers it improbable that the Chinese themselves would resort to the mining of any ports frequented by United States warships for fear that the sinking of such a ship would invite retaliatory measures against Chinese territory and the Chinese navy. However, if there is a marked shift in the balance of deterrents in Russia's favor, or if China develops a small-scale tactical nuclear capability, then offensive mining of certain Asian ports by the Chinese would become a more credible gamble for them, regardless of the threat to United States warships.

The 150 torpedo boats in the Chinese navy could be employed in much the same manner as offensive minelaying, that is, to interdict enemy shipping along China's coast.

Chinese torpedo boats have proved their readiness to do so by frequent and successful raids on Nationalist shipping in and around the Taiwan Strait. (12:9) It is considered that the same reasons that militate against the Chinese use of offensive mining, except against the Nationalists, make it unlikely that they will use torpedo boats against shipping. Torpedo boats, per se, are too vulnerable to retaliatory air attack.

It is noteworthy that Chinese torpedo boats and other surface vessels would probably not venture far from mainland China, even in the event of general war. Chinese doctrine apparently follows that of the Russian navy in placing defense ahead of offense and in not permitting surface units to operate beyond shore-based air cover. (11:10)

3/ The naval air arm, which consists of 515 aircraft, including 200 Beagle and Bat bombers and 270 Fresco and Fagot fighter-bombers (6:109), could conduct short-range conventional strikes against enemy shipping in China's sea area of interest, but it is probable that any large-scale bombing of Asian land areas would be undertaken by the Chinese Communist Air Force. Although Chinese naval aircraft practice strafing and torpedo attacks on shipping, their employment to attack the troops or shipping of anti-communist forces in Asia other than the Nationalists is considered to be as unlikely as Chinese offensive mining and torpedo attacks at this juncture.

4/ The greatest offensive potential of the Chinese navy in relation to Western navies reposes in the W class submarines. The seriousness of the latent threat of the Chinese submarine force may be inferred from the United States Chief of Naval Operations' Anti-Submarine Warfare Summary, 1962. It observes, "The use of submarines by a third power against our forces in a limited objective area is the most probable type of conflict short of general war that our ASW forces will encounter." (8:I-10)

All Far Eastern waters lie within the unrefueled range of China's submarines, a fact undoubtedly considered fully by Russia before presenting the M-V and S-1 class to her, or before assisting her with the construction and outfitting of the W class submarines. The concensus of most writers on the subject is that Russia gave the submarines to China as a part of a general military assistance program in order to better enable China to foster the expansion of communism in Asia and to strengthen China's defences against seaborne invasion. Other plausible reasons for Russia's largesse could be that she expected China to use the submarines to support a larger communist bloc effort, either offensive or defensive, against the West. Such an effort might take the form of assisting Russia in a general war with the United States, or of assisting Russia, under the protection of a deterrent umbrella, to conduct a submarine

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blockade of Western-oriented island powers such as England, Taiwan, or Japan.

Although the Office of Naval Intelligence leans to the viewpoint that the Chinese submarine force forms an integral part of a strategically defensive concept, it concedes that it could pose a serious offensive threat to Western naval power in the Far East. (6:82-12) A number of arguments support the premise that the Russians, at least, originally expected the Chinese submarines to be used for offensive purposes, offensive here being interpreted to mean the protection of the Chinese army's seaward flank during aggressive land campaigns. Included among the arguments are: first, China's shallow coastal waters (see Figure II) are generally unsuitable for submarine operations in defence of the mainland; second, Russia can control the readiness of Chinese submarines simply by providing or withholding replacement parts and technical assistance, thus denying the Chinese freedom of action in committing the submarines to any campaign in opposition to Moscow's will; and third, the large submarine force must have been intended to be employed against the warships and commerce of a very large nation or against the forces of countries under its protection, for the construction of such a large submarine force solely for employment against one of the smaller non-communist Asian countries would be a waste of China's slender industrial resources.

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The Chinese submarine force is already becoming obsolescent as a tactical force vis-a-vis the major Western naval powers, and will suffer a further decline in effectiveness until the aging submarines can be better maintained or replaced. At the same time, the introduction of large numbers of submarines into the fleets of other communist-oriented nations has served to slow the rate of strategic obsolescence of China's submarines. In the Far East both Russia and Indonesia, of the Bloc countries, have submarines which could be expected to conduct routine patrols in the South China Sea. If Western shipping were attacked by a submarine in the absence of a declaration of war by some one of the communist powers there might easily arise a situation in which the offended nation would be reluctant to take retaliatory action for fear of attacking the wrong country. Unless a submarine can be forced to surface and its crew interrogated its nationality is difficult to determine. Conceivably it could be used for some time in support of guerrilla type war at sea without its parent country being forced to an accounting. To make matters worse, in waters well suited to mining, such as those bordering China, the impression might easily be conveyed that torpedoings were minings, a ruse attempted by the Germans in World War II to mislead Allied analysts.

The employment of submarines as previously described could not be justified under the provisions of the London

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Naval Treaty, Article 22, which provides that the submarine must insure the safety of the passengers of a merchant ship before sinking it (2:808-811), nor the provision that a warship must show its own flag before attacking. (24:6-7) But in the unrestricted submarine warfare practiced by both sides in World War II these conventions were largely ignored as being impractical for the submarine, a standpoint justified by postwar juridical decisions.

Any action on the part of a communist state that multiplies the number of quasi-autonomous communist navies with operable submarines greatly magnifies Western naval problems. China might resort to the expedient of providing a limited number of submarines to one of her satellites, such as North Vietnam, in the expectation that the recipient country would employ the boats to further indirectly Peiping's ends. China has already improved on North Vietnam's capability to carry on clandestine and small-scale operations in South Vietnamese waters by providing her with three subchasers, twelve torpedo boats, and other small craft. (20:149) Presumably the same gambit could be adopted with larger ships and submarines.

Other Offensive Potentials of the Chinese Navy. In the last decade the Chinese navy has been used in conjunction with other displays of Chinese military force and propaganda to probe United States determination to stand behind the Nationalists. (12:1) The August, 1958 Chinmen incident

is a case in point. The Chinese shelled the Chinmens and planned naval harassment of the Chinmens and Matsus, as well as attacks on Nationalist aircraft. The action was accompanied by a propaganda barrage, which included the assertion in a communist newspaper in Hong Kong that the South China Fleet was prepared to attack Nationalist ships. Although a reinforced United States Seventh Fleet called Peiping's bluff before the adversaries were irretrievably committed, the Chinese achieved their immediate goal, the testing of United States determination. (7:38) It is not improbable that similar probing actions will take place at intervals in the future.

In addition to the foregoing employment potentials of the Chinese navy, China also derives immeasurable strategic advantages from its size and location. It gives her prestige in the eyes of the Oriental peoples, it is tangible evidence for the have-not nations of Asia of what communism can accomplish, and, as a part of the larger Chinese military establishment, it is useful in intimidating China's smaller neighbors. Moreover, in the current Peiping-Moscow contest to arrogate the allegiance of Asian countries for themselves, China's proximate naval strength could hardly fail to dispose the Southeast Asian countries, and possibly North Korea, toward Peiping. In short, the Chinese navy is tailored to capitalize on strategic opportunity in a number of ways despite its tactical inferiority compared to Western

naval forces.

Implications for the United States Seventh Fleet. As discussed previously, the employment of Chinese submarines in a local war anti-shipping role could hinder United States assistance to anti-communist forces in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. The duration of such hinderance might be prolonged if the depredations were masked and unaccompanied by other military actions. Ultimately, however, Chinese submarines could be sunk at sea or in port by the anti-submarine forces currently assigned to the Seventh Fleet. Augmentation of Seventh Fleet antisubmarine forces would be required against a maximum strength Chinese submarine anti-shipping offensive if it were considered necessary to keep ship sinkings to an absolute minimum.

Chinese submarines present a very real threat to United States carrier operations in the Far East, especially in the South China Sea where the deeper waters are more favorable to submarine operation. In the event of a local war in which carriers were being used for close tactical support of ground troops in (say) Southeast Asia, the mere presence of Chinese submarines in the objective area would undoubtedly necessitate additional protective measures, and might even deny more cautious carrier admirals freedom of movement in the landlocked seas.

The capability of the Chinese to concentrate submarines and naval aircraft to saturate expected carrier launching

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positions in the event general war is anticipated should give the prudent Western naval commander cause for concern. Furthermore, the ingress of carriers to the shallow, land-locked seas could be inhibited by surreptitiously-laid mines. The fact that analysts discount the probability of a general war in the near future in no manner diminishes this threat to United States naval deterrent forces in the Far East.

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## CHAPTER IV

## PROSPECTS FOR THE CHINESE COMMUNIST NAVY

The overall stability in size of the People's Liberation Army suggests that no major military campaign is contemplated by China in the near future. In a ten year period the size of the army has increased only ten percent, and now stands at 2,650,000. (5:99) There are also some 700,000 troops in the Public Security Forces. The strength of the Chinese Communist Air Force--about 3,000 aircraft, mostly jets--has been relatively stable. Both the army and the air force are phasing in more modern equipment as it becomes available, but making no order of magnitude increase in their military competence. The navy is by far the smallest service arm, although it has enjoyed the greatest relative increase in size since 1953. The slowdown in the Chinese military and naval building program since 1960 is due, in part, to the retarding effects of Peiping's staggering agricultural mistakes; it may also be due, in part, to Peiping's having achieved programmed force levels necessary to implement an expansionist strategy based upon massive land campaigns.

Although the size of the Chinese navy is being increased very slowly by the construction of additional Chinese-designed patrol vessels, no vessels of submarine or destroyer size are known to be under construction. Relatively, the Chinese navy is losing ground in the international naval

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competition because of her lack of tactical nuclear weapons, and because of the rapidity with which the navies of the major powers are being outfitted for nuclear war.

Briefly, while comparatively large numberswise, the Chinese Communist Navy is not yet the "powerful navy" once called for by Mao Tse-tung. (20:145)

The Central Intelligence Agency estimates that the Chinese Communists are likely to have a modest stockpile of domestically-produced nuclear weapons, short-range and probably medium-range missiles, and even submarine-launched missiles by 1971. (14:1) A resumption of Russian aid to China might include the donation of newer, more modern submarines to the Chinese navy, but, in the absence of a nuclear delivery capability, it is unlikely that the augmentation of the submarine force by more modern boats would greatly alter China's naval strategy. (14:4)

China will probably continue to develop her port and logistics facilities, especially in the South China Sea, where a submarine base at Yulin on Hainan Island is being expanded. (26:10) She could then move some of the concentration of submarines at Port Arthur and Tsingtao to the south of Taiwan, where they would be more valuable for the support of operations in Indo-China. An intelligence estimate of 1961 speculated that, "Should the Chinese Communists attack, launching a limited war in Southeast Asia or

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against Taiwan, Red Chinese submarine elements would participate, possibly supplemented by "volunteer" subs from the U.S.S.R." (11:10) The construction of more adequate submarine facilities in the South China Sea, especially at Yulin, would give Russian submarines an advanced base in the area and greatly enhance their effectiveness.

Several technical shortcomings of the Chinese navy will probably continue to detract indefinitely from the navy's striking power. The Chinese inability to produce long-range bombers probably extends to their inability to produce advanced bombers for the navy. In naval construction, Chinese engineers lack expertise in high-speed propulsion systems and in advanced electronics installations. (18:17) The country does not yet have the capability to produce copies of foreign-designed systems of any complexity, but may ultimately have the knowledge to copy Soviet missiles if permitted to do so. So far, the Chinese have designed and built small hydrofoils and patrol craft along Soviet parameters. (5:85-86) Nevertheless, barring the resumption of Russian technological assistance, it is probable that the overall Chinese naval tactical capability will decline somewhat in the near term, due in part to obsolescence and a shortage of replacement parts, and in part to lack of operational proficiency. (18:17)

The Shape of Future Aggression. Recent Rand Corporation studies indicate that the Chinese are not likely to

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provoke a deliberate confrontation with the United States before 1970 unless they are assured of Russian support. But China cannot rely on more than nebulous Russian support for the offensive use of Chinese military power unless Western retaliatory power becomes clearly inadequate, unless the survival of the communist regime in China is at stake, or unless Russia believes herself to be threatened. (3:v) Contrary to appearances, Rand analysts believe that

"...Chinese behavior and doctrine place great emphasis on a cautious and rational approach to the use of military force. The difference between Chinese pronouncements, which create the image of a reckless and irresponsible China, and Chinese practice, which is cautious and rational, appears to be motivated by the internal and international value that they derive from creating and maintaining the image." (3:2)

The Soviet Union shows an obvious nervousness about being involved in a conflict resulting from Chinese adventurism, the underestimation of enemy strength. The Soviets reportedly have refused to be drawn into a joint Sino-Soviet naval command in the Pacific for fear of being implicated in a war over Taiwan. (22:153) Rand analysts believe that the Chinese conquest of Taiwan rates very low on the Soviet scale of importance, and that Soviet and Chinese designs on Japan, India, and Indonesia may be in conflict. In that case, the Russians would hardly support a Chinese invasion of those countries. (3:4) The reluctance of Russia to support China's invasion of India's frontier in 1962 tends to support this reasoning.



Although China may avoid a hot war because of the risk to her material accomplishments, she realizes that the United States has a "...puzzled tolerance for ambiguous challenges, as in Laos." (22:55) In the near future China will draw upon her diverse tactical arsenal, which includes diplomacy, "peoples' democracy," propaganda, subversion, military pressures, and economic inducements. (15:6) She can do so with little fear of retaliation by the United States against China proper.

By 1971 lack of lebensraum for China's exploding population of 850 million will have greatly increased the pressure on her relatively inadequate agricultural resources. Population stresses, a large standing army, and a more highly developed industrial climate may make Peiping less tractable to Russian pressures and more apt to chart its own political and military destiny. (14:2) Peiping will continue to look to the rice-rich croplands of Southeast Asia as a palliative for China's food problem, and may embark on a limited war either to acquire croplands, or to rally support from a discontented populace at home. (14:5) At the same time, Chinese leaders will exercise caution to avoid a head-on military clash with the United States.

In summary, the Chinese navy is likely to retain its present structure during the 1960's, and will probably suffer technological antiquation before it is ever called upon to join a major action.

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## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND BROAD CONCLUSIONS

Although the Chinese Communist Navy is the largest in the Orient, compared to the navies of other major powers it is relatively small. Basically it is a defensive rather than an offensive navy, and can project only a fraction of its strength much beyond a few score miles from mainland bases. To the extent that it is visualized as being a flanking support for the army's land campaigns for territorial expansion and as an element in the larger communist bloc offensive/defensive framework, it is a strategic navy.

The strategic implications of the Chinese navy are greatest vis-a-vis Taiwan. It assists in preventing a Nationalist landing in force on mainland China. At the same time it poses a continuing threat of invasion to Taiwan and the offshore islands, which are keystones in Western resistance to communist expansion in Asia. The Chinese navy has a competence to disrupt shipping by submarine action, naval air strikes, torpedo boat raids, and mining, but, unless such action was taken under cover of the endemic wars of liberation and nationalism in Southeast Asia, Peiping would be chary of initiating it because of almost certain United States retaliatory measures.

If, through error or design, China sets out on a lim-

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ited war involving the United States, the military effectiveness of the Chinese navy, except for its land-based aircraft and some submarines, could be reduced rapidly to zero. Therefore, except in a general war in support of Russia or with Russian support, China's employment of her navy in an offensive capacity must be within very narrow limits, i.e., China must achieve her objectives without provoking a higher level conflict with the United States.

In the communist world, in which means are closely tailored to ends, the Chinese navy is considered to be of sufficient value to Peiping's goals to justify according to it a substantial fraction of China's industry and technology. In the Southeast Asian area of interaction its tactically obsolescent surface vessels are ample qualitatively to support a foreign policy of "under-the-counter" insinuation of communist influence. In the broader contest between East and West the Chinese navy is sufficient to keep Nationalist Taiwan off balance, to intimidate China's neighbors in Asia, and to tie up large numbers of United States troops and equipment. Macroscopically, the West cannot ignore the possibility that the Chinese navy--particularly the submarine fleet--may be transformed into a very real threat by a change in Moscow's foreign policy stemming from a sudden tilting of the balance of international deterrents in favor of the communist bloc. The Chinese Communist Navy is not a paper tiger.

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