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# **China Strengthens Its Forces on the Soviet Front**



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**An Intelligence Assessment**

NGA Review  
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*EA 82-10145  
December 1982*

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# China Strengthens Its Forces on the Soviet Front

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office of  
East Asian Analysis [Redacted]

[Redacted] Comments  
and queries are welcome and may be addressed to the  
Chief, China Division, OEA, [Redacted]

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**China Strengthens Its Forces  
on the Soviet Front**

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**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 1 December 1982  
was used in this report.*

Despite cuts in defense spending and reductions in the size of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), China since 1979 has steadily strengthened its defenses opposite the Soviet Union. The Chinese have acted in response to a continuing Soviet military buildup along the Sino-Soviet border and in Mongolia, which has become a worrisome security concern for China. This may be one of the reasons for Beijing's willingness to resume talks with Moscow.

The Chinese effort has added new units and has resulted in a 30-percent increase in major weapons in the border regions, with the northeast receiving the most attention. The improvements of defenses are reminiscent of the larger Chinese augmentation that occurred following the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969.

China's primary aim is to strengthen fortifications at the first defensible terrain along traditional invasion routes by forming new garrison units and improving the firepower and mobility of existing units. China also is strengthening the combat capabilities of main-force units located farther back.

The improvements reflect Beijing's strong commitment to its strategy of defense in depth. Beijing believes that these changes would buy additional time for it to move reinforcements into secondary defensive positions and block advancing Soviet forces.

We doubt, however, that the Chinese could stop a concerted Soviet attack, but they could make it potentially more costly for Soviet troops to break through the outer perimeter of China's defensive network. We believe that a stronger defense in the north may give Beijing greater flexibility in considering military operations against other neighboring countries by making it costly for the Soviets to retaliate.

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We expect the Chinese buildup opposite the Soviet Union to continue, but its pace and size will depend on the outcome of the current Sino-Soviet talks. The Chinese are now in a stronger bargaining position and might be willing to withdraw a few infantry divisions from border regions as a reciprocal though largely symbolic gesture of conciliation. We believe in any case China will continue to modernize its forces in the north with new and better defensive weapons as they become available.

We foresee little change in Beijing's war-fighting strategy during the 1980s. China will continue to lack the modern weapons needed to stand up to the well-equipped Soviet forces, but as more advanced Chinese weapons come on line over the next few years, China should be able to partially redress its serious deficiencies in antitank and air defenses.

We believe that by maintaining a strong and largely self-sufficient defensive capability against the Soviets, Beijing also accrues greater maneuvering room in negotiations for foreign weapons and technology. Most importantly, in our judgment the greater strategic independence resulting from this strengthened defensive posture will make Beijing increasingly unwilling to acquiesce to a high level of US arms sales to Taiwan as a means of securing its own supply relationship with the United States.

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iv

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**Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Introduction	1
The Soviet Threat	1
As Seen From Beijing	1
Its Effects	2
China's Knowledge of Soviet Forces	2
The Chinese Response	3
The Decision To Reinforce	4
The Buildup	4
In the Northeast	4
In the Northwest	8
Air Forces	8
Training	12
Implications	12
For Defense Strategy	12
For Defense	14
For Policy Options	14
Prospects	15

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Figure 1  
Military Regions and Districts Along the Sino-Soviet Border



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## China Strengthens Its Forces on the Soviet Front

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### Introduction

Despite 13 years of relative quiet, the Sino-Soviet border remains a potential source of instability. Interest in reducing the possibility of a major confrontation along that frontier and improving China's security are key elements of Beijing's decision to seek warmer relations with Moscow. The resumption of talks between the two that began in October could lead to some reduction in tensions on the border. Both sides have significantly expanded and improved their military capabilities since 1969, and although hostilities seem remote, a new confrontation could have far more serious consequences than the earlier ones.

China's alternative to foreign assistance in military modernization is to continue renovating and improving its defenses against a Soviet attack—the same course that it has doggedly followed for the past few years. This paper examines those preparations, relates them to Soviet military developments opposite China, and assesses their place in traditional Chinese strategy. It also provides an assessment of what those preparations give the Chinese in the way of an improved military position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and projects the trend of China's border forces through the 1980s.

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Soviet forces on the border—an issue that Beijing has insisted on discussing in the renewed round of talks—are a serious security concern for Beijing. Chinese officials argue—we believe with good reason—that Soviet forces far exceed the level necessary for the security and defense of the frontier. The Chinese also contend that the Soviets use military activity along the border and in Mongolia as a means of pressuring China and influencing Chinese policies.

### The Soviet Threat

#### As Seen From Beijing

Beijing views Soviet military power as the major long-term threat to Chinese security. It regards Soviet military power as the pillar of Soviet foreign policy and draws a direct correlation between what it perceives as the Soviets' growing political assertiveness in Asia and their expanding military strength. The Chinese see Soviet strategy in Asia as "offensive," with the goal of driving out the United States, controlling northeast Asia, and encircling China both politically and militarily. In that regard, they link together Soviet military aid to India, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the ongoing Soviet military buildup and modernization on China's northern border, the expansion of the Soviet Navy in the Pacific, and the Soviets' support of Vietnam and their expanding presence in Indochina.

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We believe the steady expansion of Soviet military power on China's northern border poses a serious dilemma for Beijing. The Chinese know that they cannot compete in numbers and quality of weapons with the Soviet military. China lacks the infrastructure, technology, and capital to match the modern air and ground force weapons of the Soviets. Beijing wants technology from the United States and other Western countries. The Deng Xiaoping leadership, however, appears determined to pursue a more nationalistic foreign policy that gives China greater independence in the conduct of its relations with other nations. This independent stance could limit Beijing's access to foreign military technology, forcing China for the most part to rely on its own efforts to meet the Soviet military threat.

As a hedge against further Soviet gains in the region, China has strengthened its already close ties to North Korea and has improved relations with the United States and Japan by stressing common strategic interests. In keeping with its long-held goals of self-sufficiency and independence, however, Beijing has eschewed military alliances.

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China plays down the likelihood of a Soviet attack any time soon. The Chinese, moreover, appear confident that their small, concealed missile force deters a preemptive nuclear attack by the Soviets who, we believe, cannot be certain of eliminating China's ability to retaliate and destroy major population centers in the Soviet Far East. Former Chinese Defense Minister Geng Biao told [redacted] that China's nuclear arsenal is so well hidden that it would survive a first strike and still have the capability to inflict intolerable damage on the Soviets. The Chinese also believe that Soviet conventional forces currently available along the Sino-Soviet frontier are insufficient to mount successfully a major conventional attack against China and that Moscow would be reluctant to weaken its defenses opposite Europe or in volatile South Asia to reinforce the China front. [redacted]

The Chinese reiterate that their strategy of "people's warfare" would ensure that a Sino-Soviet conflict would be protracted—a situation the Soviets would want to avoid. The Chinese also cite the advantages that accrue to them as a result of their vast territory, large manpower resources, and determination to endure great hardships if a war with the Soviet Union develops. [redacted]

#### Its Effects

Evidence [redacted] indicates that the Soviet threat pervades virtually all of China's military development and force planning. We believe the threat helps give Chinese military leaders a high political stature and serves as an incentive to improve Chinese forces. [redacted]

[redacted] military training is oriented toward developing tactics and doctrine for countering Soviet offensive advantages. [redacted] last year's Zhangjiakou exercise—the country's largest-ever joint-service maneuvers—was designed specifically to test the armed forces' capability to counter a major Soviet attack aimed at the capital:

- The threat also has forced Beijing to maintain a large standing Army—currently some 3.7 million combat troops in ground, air, and naval forces—which represents a considerable burden on China's meager economic resources. China stations nearly

half of its ground and air forces—about 1.6 million men and some 2,700 combat aircraft—in the military regions bordering the Soviet Union and Mongolia.

- The need to counter Soviet advantages, particularly those in armor and tactical air forces, heavily influences China's selection of new weapons for the services. Concern about Soviet superiority also affects the development of China's war-fighting strategy and force deployment.
- The threat also has stimulated military modernization. The sophisticated equipment that the Soviets have massed on their side of the border contrasts sharply with the obsolescent Chinese hardware and adds to the demand from military leaders for newer and better weapons. [redacted]

Military officers have expressed disappointment at China's inability to supply its armed forces with modern weapons produced locally or imported from the West. [redacted]

#### China's Knowledge of Soviet Forces

China is well aware of the steps the Soviets have taken over the past few years to improve their military posture along the Sino-Soviet frontier. Whatever other intelligence may be available to Beijing, the Chinese have sharpened their knowledge of Soviet military developments through greater contact with the West, including participation in conferences on strategic issues, and through access to unclassified publications on the military balance. High officials, military officers, and analysts at the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies all tell a consistent story about the Soviet buildup, and the strength

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figures they provide on Soviet forces are reasonably accurate. There are no indications that the Chinese deliberately distort the data in order to exaggerate the threat. [redacted]

Beijing clearly perceives an acceleration in the rate of improvement of Soviet military capabilities since the late 1970s and attributes this primarily to Soviet concerns about improved relations between China and Japan—the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in 1978—and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979. The Chinese specifically tie the Soviet buildup to the visit of former President Leonid Brezhnev to the Soviet Far East in 1978. [redacted]

[redacted] since the late 1970s the Soviets have:

- Formed new commands to improve control of military operations in the Far East. Last year a Beijing Institute official cited as “an important strategic measure” the Soviets’ reestablishment of the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East in 1978. He also showed concern over the creation in 1980 of a new theater-level air army—a reorganization of existing Air Force assets designed to improve control of Soviet air operations. The Chinese evidently view such measures as indicative of Moscow’s efforts to improve its control over military campaigns in the region.
- Built SS-20 IRBM bases and deployed Backfire bombers to the area. Xu Xin, a Deputy Chief of the Chinese General Staff, told [redacted] that China is worried about these deployments, and Beijing Institute analysts have stated that the two weapon systems greatly improve the Soviets’ ability to attack strategic targets in Asia.

‘Although China’s estimate of 1-1.2 million Soviet troops along its northern border is over twice the CIA estimate, Chinese figures probably represent the strength of Soviet forces after full mobilization for war. If Moscow were to flesh out all its understrength units on the border, we believe our current estimate of some 435,000 troops would more than double and thereby approximate the Chinese figures. [redacted]

- Established new ground force divisions and moved others closer to China’s borders. Deng Xiaoping, commenting [redacted] on the Soviet “danger to China” last June, noted that the Soviets had some 50 divisions on the border. A year earlier during a Beijing seminar on Sino-Soviet relations, Wu Xiuquan, the President of the Beijing Institute and a Deputy Chief of the General Staff, cited the increased number of Soviet troops along the frontier and in Mongolia “especially in the last two years” as an example of the growth in Soviet military strength opposite China.
- Modernized the equipment in air and ground units on the border. Beijing Institute assessments accurately note the arrival of advanced combat aircraft such as MIG-23s, -25s, -27s, and attack helicopters, and modern ground force equipment such as T-72 tanks, BMP infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled artillery. [redacted]

#### The Chinese Response

China has reacted to the Soviets by renovating and improving its northern defenses. The program, which began in 1979, involves primarily the ground forces but, we believe, almost certainly will involve the air and air defense forces more extensively as more modern weapons become available. The buildup has proceeded at a steady, moderate pace within the framework of the existing military structure and in a defensive context. [redacted]

The new program is reminiscent of the large-scale augmentation of China’s northern defenses that occurred after the Chinese and Soviets clashed on Damanskiy Island in 1969. [redacted] China shifted whole armies and hundreds of thousands of troops northward over the ensuing two to three years and realigned its forces to meet the new threat from the Soviet Union. Following that massive buildup, the Chinese made only gradual improvements to their forces during the mid-1970s when they concentrated on filling out units in other areas of the country. [redacted]

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**The Decision To Reinforce**

We believe Beijing apparently decided in 1978-79 that its defenses in the north were no longer adequate to deter a Soviet attack. The decision probably resulted from two factors: Beijing's initial perception that the Soviets intended to augment their forces along China's northern frontier and a deep concern over the deteriorating situation on China's southern flank where the Soviets were forging a strong relationship that threatened Chinese interests in Southeast Asia. Extensive coverage in the Chinese press indicated China was well aware of the increased Soviet presence in Vietnam and the large deliveries of military supplies from Moscow after Hanoi and Moscow had concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in November 1978. China openly interpreted the treaty as a military alliance. After Hanoi invaded Kampuchea in December 1978, China branded Vietnam the "Cuba of the East" and publicly portrayed it as a pawn of Soviet expansionism engaged in the encirclement of China. [redacted]

Chinese preparations for attacking Vietnam in February 1979 disclosed a deep concern about their vulnerability to Soviet retaliation on behalf of Vietnam.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] China's perception of a growing vulnerability in the north was heightened in March 1979 when the Soviets moved forces into Mongolia and staged the largest exercise [redacted] in the Soviet Far East. [redacted]

**The Buildup**

[redacted]

**Changes in China's Ground Force Weapons Inventories, 1978-82**

Military Region	Tanks		Artillery		APCs	
	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,230</b>	<b>5,020</b>	<b>6,550</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1,250</b>
Shenyang	1,500	2,000	2,700	3,000	100	500
Beijing	2,200	2,300	2,700	3,400	300	600
Lanzhou	450	560	800	1,300	50	100
Urumqi	80	160	350	800	25	50

In aggregate, the Chinese effort has increased the number of major weapon systems—tanks, armored personnel carriers, field artillery—in the border military regions by about 30 percent over the levels existing there in 1978 (table). The size of the increase varies by weapon system and region, and some of the equipment increases result from the creation of new units. [redacted]

Over the same period, the Soviets have also increased the number of tanks, APCs, and artillery pieces in the four border military districts opposite China. Between 1978 and 1982, the number of artillery pieces increased by 1,700, the number of APCs by 2,600, and the number of tanks by 1,200. [redacted]

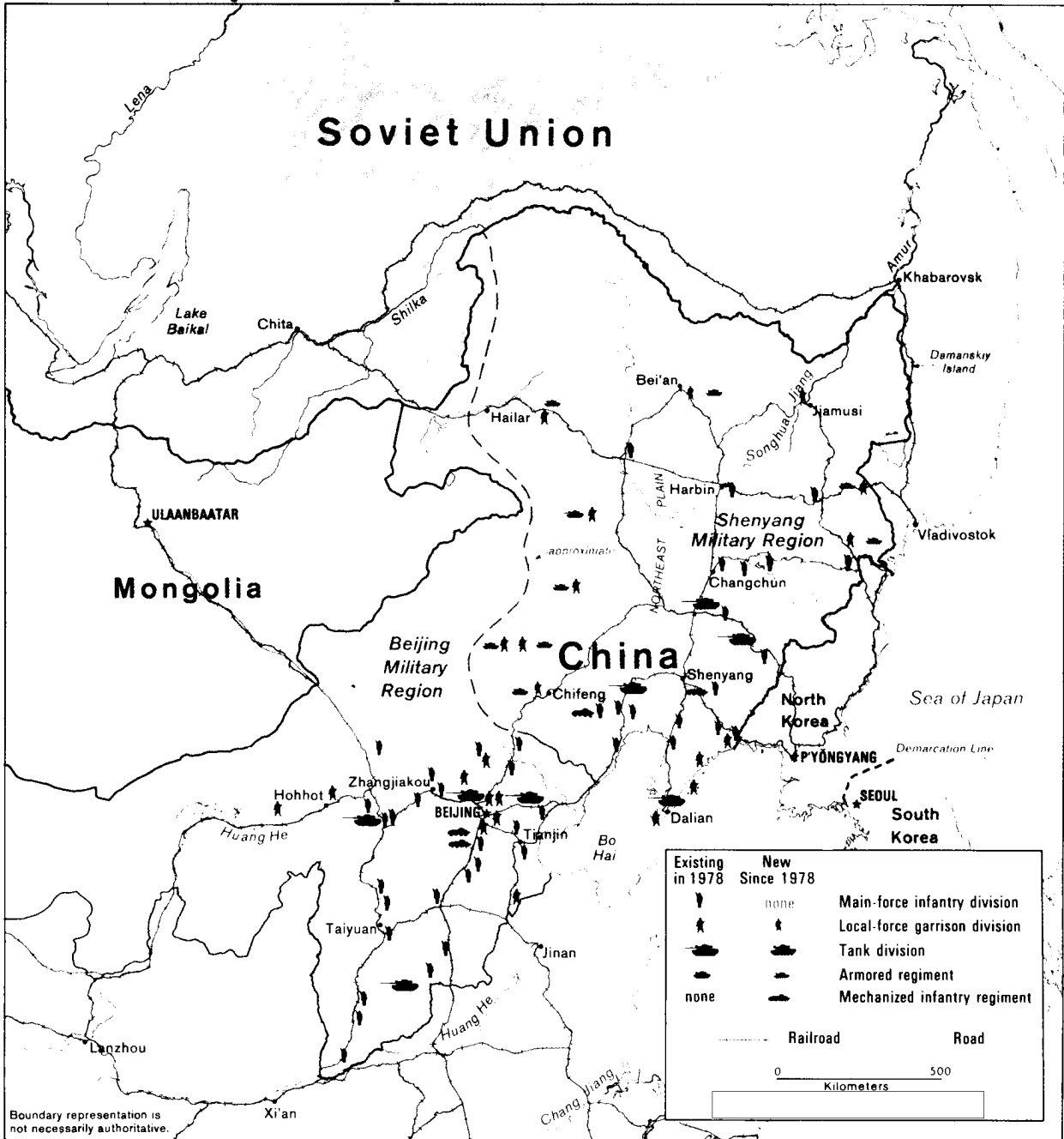
**In the Northeast.** China's expansion and improvements of its northeastern defenses rival the buildup and reorientation of military forces that occurred in the region after the 1969 clash when China shifted its focus from the coastal and southern provinces to the northern border (figure 2). The new effort relies largely on upgrading the equipment of existing units, arming newly created garrison units for defense of invasion corridors, and increasing the mobility and firepower of main-force units. [redacted]

We believe the defensive nature of the buildup is reflected in the priority that Beijing has assigned to strengthening the ring of garrisons [redacted]

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**Figure 2**  
**Northeast China: Major Defense Improvements Since 1978**



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Figure 4. Chinese troops training to fight mechanized forces using preconstructed defensive areas. [redacted]

Liberation Army Pictorial ©

- Armored regiments have been added to eight garrison divisions. Only one garrison had an armored regiment before 1979. The new units are equipped primarily with old tanks, which, while no match for modern Soviet tanks, do provide increased firepower and tactical mobility to the garrisons.
- Artillery inventories of garrison divisions have grown significantly and are highlighted by an emphasis on antitank weaponry. The Chinese have brought in 122-mm howitzers, 130-mm field guns, truck-mounted 130-mm multiple rocket launchers, and added to the garrisons' inventories of 85-mm antitank guns (figure 5). Small numbers of China's new mine-scattering rocket launcher have also appeared for the first time in the region. [redacted]

China's main-force divisions in the northeast have received less attention but have not been ignored in the current program. [redacted]

[redacted] We believe this may be a trend for other main-force divisions. This will substantially improve the mobility of these forces even though they will still be outclassed by Soviet tank and motorized rifle units [redacted] China is forming a new tank division in southern Shenyang, and some tank units may be

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Figure 5. Chinese garrison divisions are armed with heavy artillery, such as these 130-mm guns, to defend traditional invasion corridors leading from the Soviet Union and Mongolia.



Chinese People's Liberation Army Today ©

receiving the newly developed Type-69 tank—an updated version of China's Type-59 medium tank equipped with a larger gun and an improved fire-control system (figure 7).

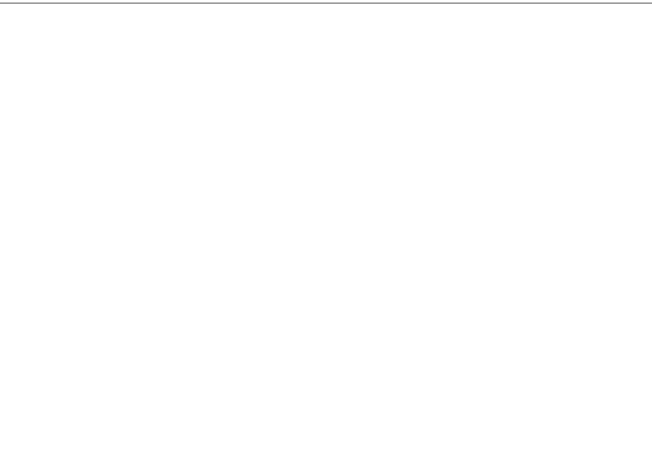
China also evidently is strengthening its antitank defenses. Small numbers of the Chinese-produced Sagger antitank guided missile are being deployed with units along the Sino-Soviet border (figure 8). The Sagger is effective from all sides against the Soviet T-54/55 and T-62 tanks and against the T-72 except from head on. We believe the Sagger, when widely deployed, would substantially bolster China's defenses in offsetting the Soviets' massive edge in armor.

Chinese defense plants have had difficulty manufacturing the Sagger, however, and it has not yet been produced in large numbers. Military publications show that the Chinese have had more success in developing and producing a 62-mm light antitank rocket, which reportedly is now being deployed with infantry units in the northeast.

**In the Northwest.** A substantial reinforcement of Urumqi Military Region has been under way since 1979 and probably results from Beijing's assessment that this region was most vulnerable to a Soviet strike in retaliation for its invasion of Vietnam (figure 9). The Urumqi area is largely desert wasteland and would be difficult to defend using China's preferred

strategy of defense in depth.

Chinese combat units occupy positions around the city of Urumqi and in the line of mountains extending westward to the Soviet border.



**Air Forces.** Beijing is providing its best fighters to air units opposite the Soviet Union.



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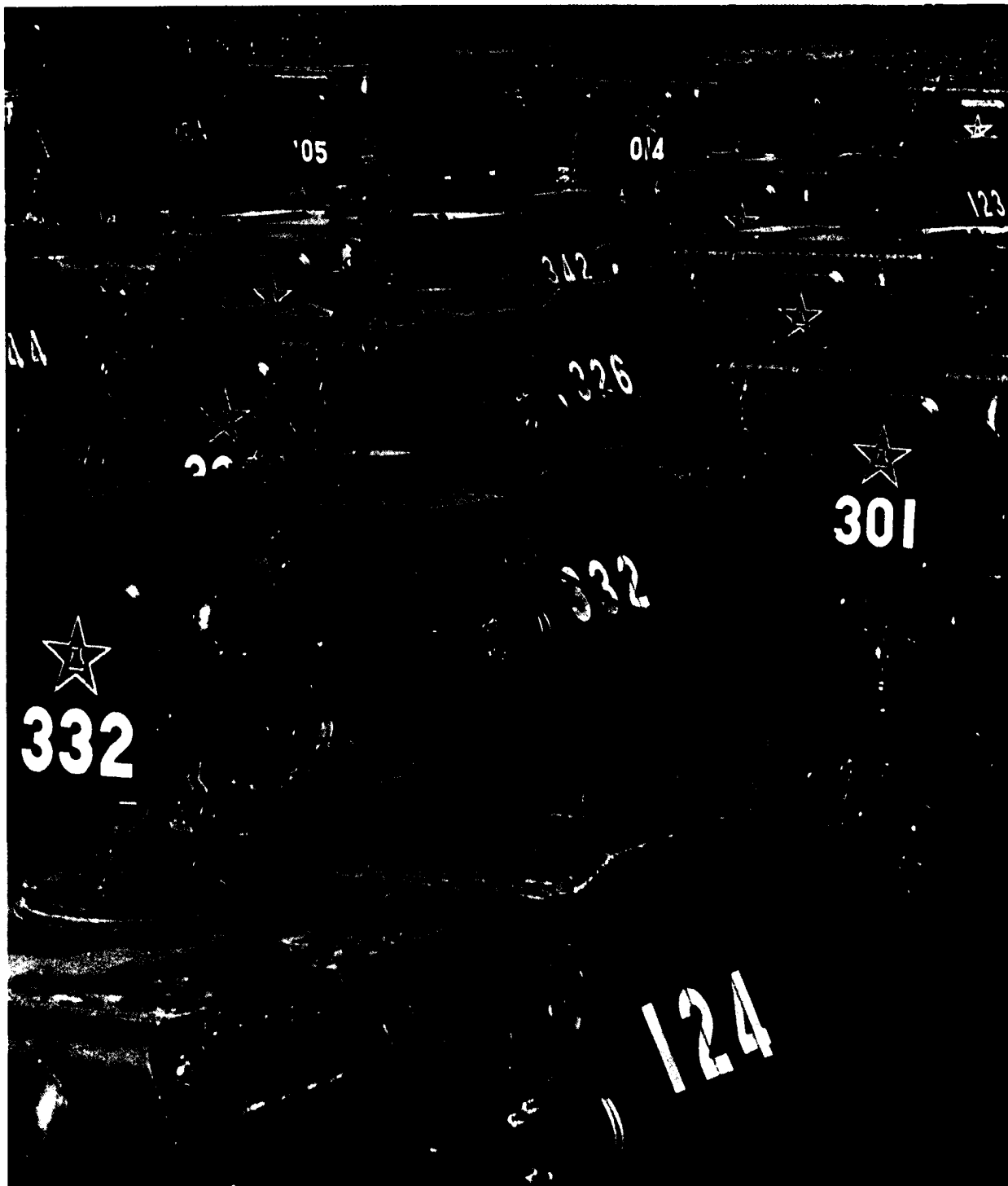
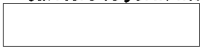


Figure 6. Beijing has increased production of armored personnel carriers to form mechanized infantry units in the northern regions.

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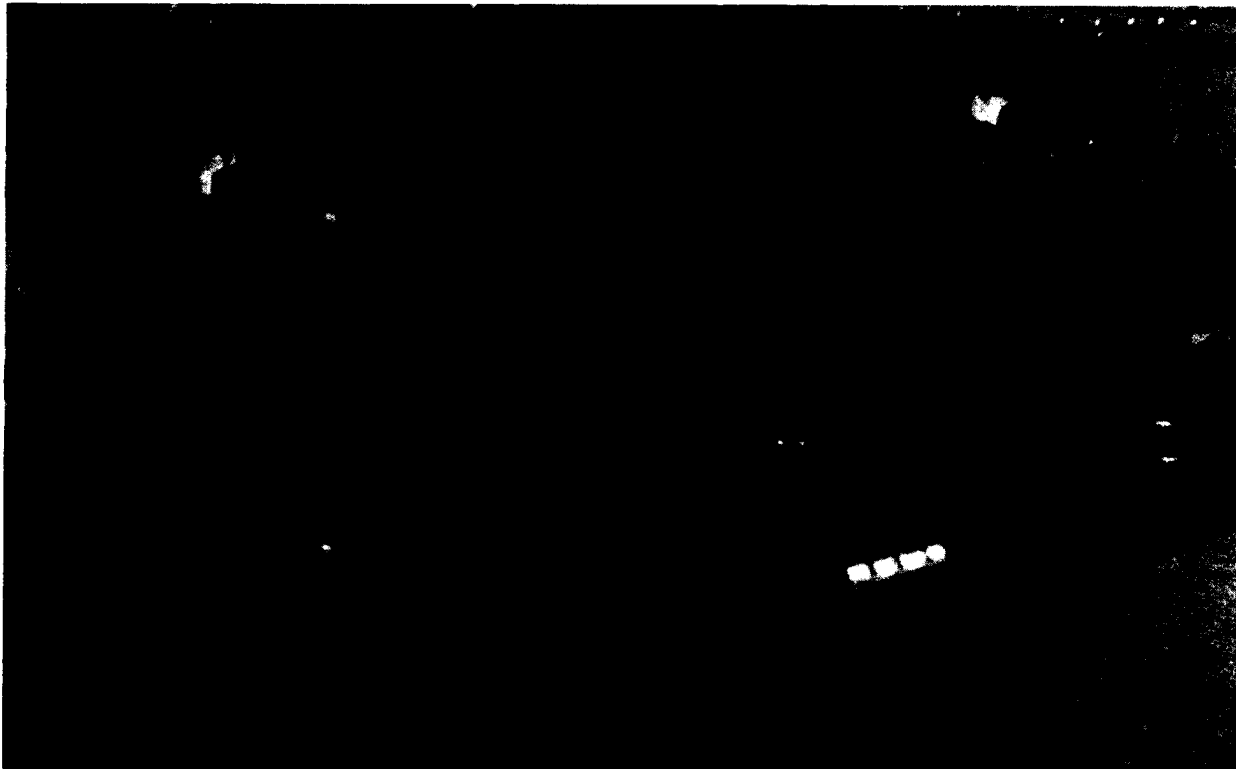


Figure 7. The new Type-69 tank, seen here in a parade after the Zhangjiakou exercise, will upgrade main-force units along the northern border.

Liberation Army Pictorial ©

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Figure 8. Chinese-produced Sagger antitank guided missile deployed with units near the Sino-Soviet border.



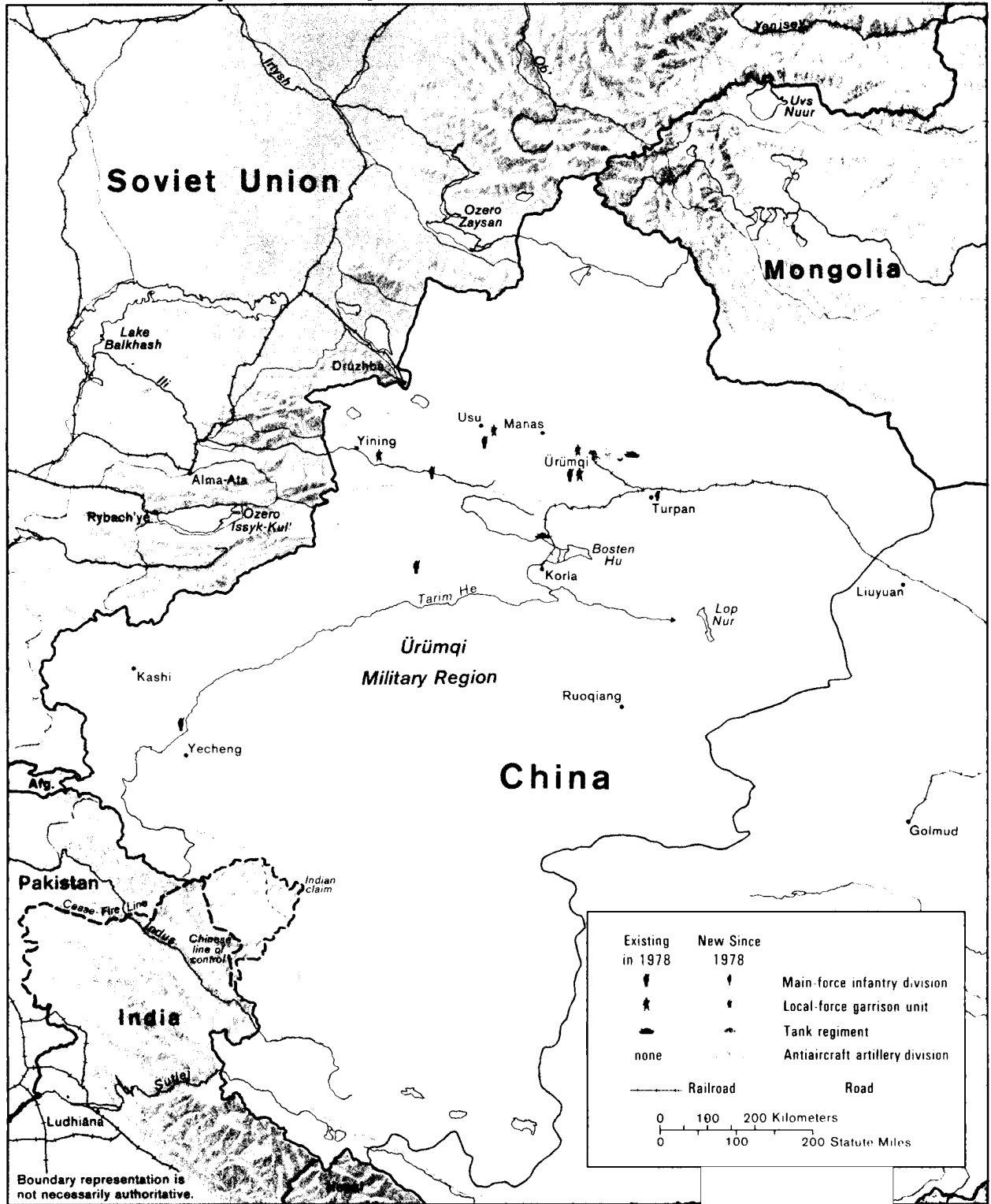
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Figure 9  
Northwest China: Major Defense Improvements Since 1978



Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

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On the whole, however, Beijing's Air Force improvements pale in comparison to those made by the Soviets in recent years. According to our estimates, they have added hundreds of advanced fighters, fighter-bombers, and bombers to units in the Far East. Chinese industry officials admit that China lacks the technology to design, develop, and produce high-performance combat aircraft that can compete with the newest Soviet models. China's combat aircraft still outnumber Soviet combat aircraft in the border regions—2,700 to 2,400—but the margin has been greatly reduced in recent years, and, as we have noted, the quality of China's aircraft is low. As China does acquire new aircraft and weapons for the Air Force, we expect them to go first to units in the north. [redacted]

**Training.** China is redirecting its military training in order to better prepare its forces for the conditions they would face in a war with the Soviets. The Chinese press has discussed the Army's "new task" of training under modern conditions, and, during the past three years, military maneuvers have become larger and more realistic based on scenarios that simulate combating an opposing force having the firepower and mobility of Soviet units. [redacted]

This trend in training is epitomized in the joint-service exercise held last year at Zhangjiakou, which sits astride a major invasion corridor leading to Beijing from the Soviet Union and Mongolia (figure 11). That exercise was China's largest ever and involved as many as 50,000 troops and 500 combat aircraft. In that heavily publicized exercise, Beijing tested coordination between air and ground forces in joint operations and used "aggressor" units to add realism to the maneuvers. The exercise scenario also included practice in defensive chemical, biological, and radiological warfare; airborne and paratrooper operations; and low-level bombing attacks [redacted]

This year the Chinese mounted a large combined-arms exercise in Lanzhou MR involving infantry, artillery, and tank units. Press reports stated that the training emphasized combat against a Soviet-modeled force equipped with armed helicopters, tanks, self-propelled artillery, and motorized infantry units. [redacted]

[redacted] the Chinese are paying increased attention to maneuvers in which tank units train with mechanized infantry units, suggesting that Chinese ground forces are developing tactics for mobile, combined-arms operations in open country. We believe this could mean that China plans to provide more infantry divisions with armored personnel carrier regiments as equipment becomes available. [redacted]

### Implications

#### For Defense Strategy

The improvements opposite the Soviet Union are largely defensive in nature, and this suggests to us that China remains committed to its strategy of defense in depth to counter any Soviet attack. The new and strengthened garrison divisions are located some 100 to 300 kilometers back from the border, suggesting that China is resigned to the necessity of trading space for time in any conflict with the Soviet Union. [redacted]

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Figure 11. The Zhangjiakou combined-arms exercise simulated conditions China would experience in combat with Soviet forces.

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Beijing recognizes that it cannot keep pace with the Soviets in designing and producing modern weapons needed to meet the Soviets head on at the border. China's strategy acknowledges Soviet advantages in firepower and mobility and concedes that Soviet forces probably would break through any defenses that China can now establish along the frontier. Some Chinese main-force units might deploy forward to reinforce garrison units in wartime, but they probably would fall back to form successive lines of defense in areas where the Soviets breach the defenses. The strong emphasis on antitank weapons and tactics, on combined-arms training, and on simulating modern combat conditions indicate, however, that the Chinese intend to defend their territory aggressively. [redacted]

#### **For Defense**

Although the improvements in defenses would not stop a concerted Soviet attack, we believe China's force augmentation and modernization program has made it potentially more costly for Moscow to mount a military operation against China. We continue to believe that Soviet forces currently stationed on the frontier could seize major portions of Chinese territory along several fronts—especially in the northwest—and probably could break through a few corridor defenses and move deeper into China. The Soviets, however, would require substantial reinforcements or the use of nuclear weapons to permit overrunning and seizing Shenyang MR and the northernmost portion of Beijing MR. China's reinforced garrison divisions, especially those in the northeast, occupy defensive strongpoints on high ground and could use their antitank traps, antitank weapons, and artillery to make an attack costly to the Soviets. Moreover, in our judgment, China's strategy of withdrawing to successive lines of defense before suffering heavy casualties and its plans to use the militia in guerrilla warfare virtually assure that any conflict would be protracted.

[redacted]

We believe the Chinese force augmentation program enhances Chinese security, because it combines a nonprovocative posture with the prospect of a tough protracted conflict if attacked. By preparing only for a "worst case" Soviet conventional invasion—a major attack with strategic goals—the Chinese have reduced the potential impact of less ambitious Soviet military actions against China. Because China is

prepared to absorb hit-and-run attacks or punitive strikes, those Soviet options would have relatively little strategic value but high political cost and would carry a risk of military retaliation—such as artillery shelling or a limited attack across the border—and escalation to a larger conflict. [redacted]

#### **For Policy Options**

The reinforcement of China's defenses—and the resulting improvements in its military position—have important benefits for Beijing. We believe the force augmentation can buy time for the Chinese to modernize their military forces at the slow pace dictated by the country's overburdened economy and its limited technology base. Prolonged stability on the northern border is an important condition for China in its long-range plans for modernization. Given stability, China can continue to develop its own weapons without undue reliance on foreign sources of advanced military technology, and it has maneuvering room to pick and choose among the available systems that it wants. [redacted]

The strengthened defense posture also helps Beijing continue its policy of self-reliance. China can thus forgo substantial foreign assistance or strategic alliances in defending its borders against the Soviets. In our judgment, the increased independence accruing from China's strengthened defensive posture will make Beijing increasingly unwilling to acquiesce to a high level of US arms sales to Taiwan as a means of securing its own arms supply relationship with the United States. [redacted]

China's military preparations in the north do not make it immune to Soviet pressure, but Beijing's deployments would permit military operations against other neighbors—for example, Vietnam or India—without massively reinforcing in the north to guard against Soviet retaliation. Beijing would, however, carefully assess the likelihood of a Soviet intervention before taking action in order to preclude fighting on two fronts. [redacted]

Beijing may also have strengthened its bargaining position with Moscow on the issue of mutual withdrawal of troops from the border. We believe the

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addition of three garrison divisions in the northeast and the large increases in the firepower of other garrisons would allow Beijing to withdraw a few main-force units without significantly affecting the capabilities of China's first line of defense. Beijing could argue that its strong but largely immobile garrison divisions have little offensive capability and should not be included in force reduction talks. [redacted]

### Prospects

The pace and size of continued Chinese augmentation of border defenses will depend on the outcome of Beijing's current talks with Moscow. Beijing raised the issue of Soviet troop withdrawals in the first round of talks. [redacted]

[redacted] We believe that Beijing would agree to mutual force reductions, although lengthy negotiations would probably be required to achieve a reduction regarded as balanced by both sides. In such talks China at a minimum also probably would seek an agreement to slow down the expansion of border forces. [redacted]

The Chinese may be willing to withdraw a few main-force units from border areas if the Soviets agree to pull back a similar number of units from Mongolia or from positions along the Chinese frontier. Soviet motorized rifle divisions are virtually identical in size, organization, echelon, and combat mission to Chinese main-force infantry divisions but possess greater mobility and firepower. Thus Beijing would benefit from a 1-to-1 withdrawal of such divisions. Moreover, Beijing's move of main-force divisions deeper into China would have little effect on its capabilities because China's strategy is to defend in depth. Furthermore, Chinese units could be quickly loaded onto trains and returned to the border region. By relocating divisions deeper into China, Beijing would strengthen its strategic reserve, thereby increasing the forces available for redeployment to threatened areas. [redacted]

Sino-Soviet negotiations over mutual troop reductions and a slowing in the pace of military modernization almost certainly would be protracted. During this period, we expect the Chinese to continue to strengthen existing units and positions in the north. The Chinese efforts would be directed specifically at countering Soviet expansion and modernization and would be kept in a defensive context. If the Soviets continue to expand their forces at the rate of one division a year, the Chinese would probably keep pace by creating a few more garrison divisions in Shenyang and Beijing MRs and by adding additional tank units in the Urumqi MR. In addition, they would probably improve the tactical mobility and firepower of units stationed opposite the Soviet Union by providing them more tanks, armored personnel carriers, and artillery. [redacted]

We believe the Chinese will continue to emphasize the development and deployment of relatively low-cost defensive weapons such as antitank missiles and air defense systems to counter Soviet advantages in armor and aircraft. The Chinese will continue to mechanize infantry divisions and will deploy newer aircraft such as the F-8 and follow-on models and new generation surface-to-air missile systems as they become available. [redacted]

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