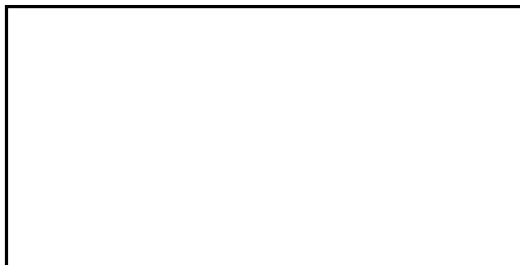


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9 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: SNIE 100-4-59: Chinese Communist Intentions and Probable Courses of Action in the Taiwan Strait Area

BACKGROUND

1. This estimate was requested by the Department of State, which wished such an SNIE for contingency planning purposes (letter of Mr. Arneson to the DCI, and attached Suggestions on Points to be Covered, of 23 January 1959). The USIB, on 27 January 1959, directed that this estimate be completed for USIB examination on 10 March 1959.

SUBSTANCE

2. No major differences of view were encountered in the preparation of the estimate. All the agencies are rather firm in their judgment that the Chinese Communists are not likely to initiate a major crisis in the near future. Short of such actions, however, the representatives did have difficulty defining just what tactics the Chinese Communists are likely to undertake. The thrust of the text (and Board) position is that

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the Chinese Communists will seek to keep the issue alive, and to this end may undertake various military actions from time to time such as shelling, limited sea and air operations, and, possibly an attempted seizure of some of the lesser offshore islands or more aggressive air action. State, while going along with this estimate, inclined more to the view that we were in for a rather extended period of relative quiescence in the Strait. State also pressed for a comparative estimate with last year's crisis, with the text to say rather precisely that Chinese Communist military pressures "will not approach the level of tension of last year's crisis." State has taken no reservations on these points, but may possibly raise them for discussion at the USIB. The Board considers that the text should stand.

3. The Berlin crisis is discussed (paras F and 28). State may reserve on these paragraphs, believing that they should say that it is unlikely that the Communists would initiate a Taiwan Strait crisis in conjunction with Berlin. The Board considers that the text should stand.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

NOTE re SNIE 100-4-59: Chinese Communist Intentions and Probable Courses of Action in the Taiwan Strait Area

Only significant changes at cleanup Monday, 9 March are:

1. Softening of estimates re MIG-19's and CCAF capabilities during 1959:

- a. p. iii, para. E
- b. p. 18, para. 33
- c. p. A16, para. A 21 (old para. A 20)
- d. p. A15, para. A 20

2. Noting increase in Nationalist artillery in Matsus,

p. A3, table.

3. Lessening of CCAF airlift capabilities against offshore islands, pp. A18 - A19, old para. A 25.

4. Upping of Nationalist Air Force equipment during 1959, p. A8, para. A 10.