

OIR Contribution to:

SE-50: PROBABLE REACTIONS TO A CHINESE NATIONALIST INVASION
OF HAINAN WITH DIRECT US AIR AND NAVAL PARTICIPATION

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Conclusions

1. The Communists could not accurately determine either the exact target or the scope of identifiable preparations for a US supported Chinese Nationalist invasion. Chinese Communist reaction to such preparations would be to intensify coastal defense measures and press for additional Soviet commitments and aid but would probably avoid actions that might precipitate hostilities.

2. Once the invasion commenced, the Communists would bring maximum force to bear against the attack, probably including air and naval attacks against Taiwan and operating forces. Peiping would perhaps seek to invoke the Sino-Soviet treaty.

3. The USSR would exert pressure to localize hostilities and to restrain Communist China from adopting any position or taking any action that would lead to full-scale war. The USSR would bring charges of aggression against the US in the UN, would provide maximum logistic support to Communist China, and might publicly commit itself to the defense of Manchuria and north Korea. If, despite Soviet pressure, Peiping insisted on regarding the Hainan attack as an act of full-scale war, the USSR would probably, although reluctantly, fulfill its commitments, including, if necessary, full-scale participation.

4. The Chinese Communist regime would view the loss of Hainan as a severe psychological defeat, a blow to its military prestige, and a threat to its position in South China. It would continue to take counter-

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actions after the completion of the invasion. In addition to defensive measures against a possible mainland invasion, it would prepare for counterattacks in Hainan, Taiwan, and/or Indochina. Its moves would be determined largely by military considerations.

5. There would be little popular reaction in mainland China or Hainan to preparations for the invasion. With the invasion itself, strongly anti-Communist elements on the mainland would be encouraged to believe that liberation was imminent and would attempt to organize their forces, but would not precipitate action. Spontaneous uprisings would be likely only in isolated instances. The regime would intensify its control measures to the degree necessary to prevent organized opposition.

6. In general, non-Communist countries would view the operation as a threat to world peace. Neutralism and hostility toward the US would increase, and cooperation with the US by pro-Western governments would become increasingly difficult. Prior consultation might soften the adverse reaction in a few special cases, such as the Philippines and Thailand, and might prevent disruptive unilateral action against north Korea by the ROK.

7. Developments elsewhere would not alter these reactions significantly. In general, the reactions would be aggravated if at the time of the operation the Communists were following conciliatory policies and ameliorated if Communist actions were intensifying international tensions. But even in the latter case, the operation would be viewed as a needless and reckless precipitation of hostilities.

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I. Probable Communist Reactions

A. Probable Chinese Communist Reactions

1. To Preparations of Chinese Nationalist and US Forces for
an Invasion

The Communist reaction to identifiable preparations for an invasion would be characterized by uncertainty as to the intended target, the scope of the operation, and the role of the US. Even if it were public knowledge that preparations were being made for an amphibious assault against Communist China, the Communists could not be certain as to the intended target. The Fuchou-Swatow area or possibly Shantung peninsula would probably be regarded as a more probable target than Hainan. Even if the Communists, through leaks or espionage, were apprised of the actual target, they would probably regard the Hainan operation as a phase in an attack on the mainland or one to be undertaken concurrently with an assault by ROK forces against north Korea. The US role in the projected amphibious assault would presumably become increasingly apparent as preparations proceeded. However, the Communists could not be certain that US participation would be limited to that outlined in the assumptions above.

Under the above circumstances, the Communist reaction to the initial preparatory phases would probably involve:

a. Propaganda. Communist propaganda concerning US "aggressive" plans would be stepped up with efforts to play upon Western desires to avoid world war.

b. Military actions. The Communists would accelerate their defensive build-up of possible target areas, particularly in the Swatow-Fuchou area. Even if the target were known to the Communists, the build-up would not be limited to Hainan.

It is unlikely that the Communists would launch preventive military operations against Taiwan itself during this phase. The Communists would want to avoid engaging US forces or accepting the political losses were they to precipitate hostilities. Nor would the Chinese Communists be likely to seize Indochina and other parts of Southeast Asia since this would spread their military commitments in the face of impending attack. The Chinese Communists probably would step up aid to Indochina and might encourage Southeast Asian Communist movements to create diversionary pressures.

c. Pressure for Soviet aid. As an amphibious assault against China became increasingly probable, the Chinese Communists would seek increased Soviet military aid and specific Soviet guarantees under the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1950. Chinese Communist propaganda would probably point up the role of the Soviet alliance in the defense of the China coast, much as that role was pointed up in regard to Manchuria and Port Arthur during the Korean hostilities. Peiping would probably attempt to obtain a Soviet commitment, preferably public, for the defense of north Korea and possibly Manchuria in the event of a resumption of Korean hostilities. This would enable the Chinese Communists to concentrate their specialized forces along the China coast.

d. Popular reaction. It is unlikely that the preparatory phase would evoke any significant popular reaction within China. Chinese Communist propaganda has played the theme of US "aggressive" intent

against China so long and so intensively that actual preparations for an attack would add little to previous Communist charges, so far as mainland Chinese are concerned.

2. To the Operation Itself

Once the invasion of Hainan commenced, the Chinese Communist reaction would probably involve:

a. Counteraction. The Chinese Communists would bring a maximum of force to bear against the invasion. Chinese and possibly Soviet air and submarine units would probably attack convoys and shipping as soon as it became certain that they were headed for a Chinese target. After the landing started, air attacks would probably be directed not only against the beachhead, but against Taiwan itself.

b. Intensification of pressure for Soviet aid. At a minimum, the Chinese Communists would attempt to gain further guarantees from the Soviets regarding the defense of Manchuria and north Korea. If the Soviets made no public commitments in these areas during the preparatory phase, the Chinese Communists would press for a public statement from the Soviets after the invasion of Hainan commenced, in order to minimize the risk of further attacks. They would also be likely to press for increased Soviet air and naval support for the defense of Hainan and possibly for counterattacks against Taiwan and US bases involved in the operation.

Peiping would expect the USSR to bring charges of aggression and to obtain sanctions against the US and the National Government of China in the United Nations.

It is possible that at some phase during the operation, Peiping will attempt to invoke the Sino-Soviet Treaty, either on the basis that Japan is involved in the attack or on the basis of some hitherto unpublished provision of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

c. Mainland popular reaction. An invasion of Hainan would probably be viewed in mainland China as the initial operation in a planned invasion of the mainland. Strongly anti-Communist elements on the mainland would be encouraged to believe that liberation from the Communist yoke was imminent, would attempt to organize their forces, but at this stage would probably avoid precipitant action. Spontaneous uprisings would be unlikely except in isolated instances. The Communist regime would intensify its control measures to the degree necessary to maintain order and prevent organized opposition to the regime.

d. Reaction on Hainan. While the degree of popular support for the Communists on Hainan is believed to have decreased, it is not likely that any significant proportion of Hainan's 2,800,000 inhabitants would actively welcome the invasion. Most of the population and particularly the 350-400,000 non-Chinese (Li and Miao) would remain passive, at least until the invasion was firmly secured. Most of the population would flee into the hills as the attack commenced, to reappear only when fighting had ceased. The reaction of the Hainanese would not be a reliable measure to the popular reaction to an invasion of the mainland.

The Korean experience would seem to indicate that initially no significant military defections on the part of Communist troops should be expected on Hainan, particularly since these troops will be defending

what they consider to be a part of China against an attack they will believe to be in large part foreign inspired. Even in the last phases of battle, CCF troops would be more likely to take to the hills or attempt to merge in the population than to surrender.

e. Diversionsary action. One of the strong deterrents to Chinese Communist intervention in Southeast Asia has been the threat of retaliation against China. The attack on Hainan would to a large degree remove that deterrent. However, the Communists may avoid expansion of open hostilities to Southeast Asia during the initial phases of the attack in order to concentrate their military resources for the defense of China and to avoid actions that might tend to unify the West. The Communists probably would increase their aid to Communist military movements in the area and would encourage more active Communist resistance in an attempt to increase pressure on the West.

The Chinese Communists would conduct maximum air and naval operations against Taiwan and lines of communication.

3. To US Air Strikes Against CCAF Bases in South China as Part of the Hainan Operation

Air strikes against the China mainland as part of an operation against Hainan would not materially alter the reaction to the attack itself. The considerations that imposed self-restraint on both sides in Korea would, so far as the Chinese Communists are concerned, not operate in the case of Hainan, since the Chinese regard Hainan as an integral part of China and would in any case view the Hainan operation as part of a more general attack against China. (It should be noted

that even in Korea at the time of the Chinese intervention the Chinese Communists apparently expected air strikes against the mainland, judging from the tempo of air defense preparations in Manchuria and on the coast. This did not deter Peiping from intervening.)

If it became clear to the Communists that the US would not strike against Chinese mainland bases and cities, the Communists might avoid actions that would precipitate such strikes. However, they would not withhold attacks against Taiwan, merely because of fear of retaliatory air strikes.

4. To the Successful Completion of the Invasion

The Communist regime would view the loss of Hainan as a severe psychological defeat, a blow to its military prestige, and a threat to its position in South China. It would therefore continue to take counteractions. In addition to defensive measures against a possible invasion of the mainland, it would prepare for counterattacks in Hainan, Taiwan, and/or Indochina. Its moves would be determined largely by military considerations.

Local uprisings could be anticipated, particularly in South China and in regions where anti-Communist resistance has been developing. In general, however, the popular reactions would be determined by indications of whether the loss of Hainan was to be followed up by an invasion of the mainland.

B. Probable Soviet Reaction

The USSR, in dealing with the problem of the Hainan attack, would probably exert pressure to keep hostilities localized and to restrain its Chinese partner from adopting any position or taking any counteractions that would lead to full-scale war (such as an attack on Japan, for example).

The Soviets would be concerned at the outset that the Hainan action might lead to a situation in which the USSR would have little or no initiative and which it might not be able to control. However, so long as military actions remained localized, the USSR would probably view the Hainan attack as an opportunity for exploitation by Soviet propaganda, UN action, and diplomacy. The Soviets would further view the action as a source of serious fissures in the Western alliance, as a move of desperation, and as a serious drain on Western military resources. In these respects, the Kremlin may view the Hainan attack as potentially more favorable to the Communist bloc than the Korean war, since the latter involved an area of direct security significance to the USSR.

The USSR would introduce the question of US aggression in the UN and demand UN action. It would support Peiping in its countermeasures at each phase of the operation by providing maximum logistic support and limited air and naval assistance on the Korean pattern. The USSR would assume such military responsibilities in Korea and Manchuria as required to release Chinese Communist forces for the defense of South China. The USSR might make its commitment public either in veiled propaganda statements playing upon Western fears of world war, or in an explicit "greater sanctions" statement.

If Peiping despite Soviet pressure to the contrary insisted upon regarding the Hainan attack as an act of full-scale war and if Peiping insisted that it be so treated under the Sino-Soviet alliance, the USSR would probably, no matter how reluctantly, fulfill its commitments, including if necessary full-scale participation.

Soviet reactions and the belief that hostilities can be localized would not be seriously altered by US air strikes against South China.

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C. Developments, Particularly in Asia, That Might Alter Communist Reaction

The principal development affecting Communist reactions, would be the prior outbreak of hostilities in Asia or elsewhere. If war already existed, the Chinese Communists would probably take stronger preventive measures against the preparations for the Hainan attack, including air attacks on Taiwan and attacks on shipping.

Most other conceivable developments would not greatly affect Communist reactions. Communist concern over the possibility that the Hainan invasion represented merely one phase of military operations including a ROK attack on north Korea would prevail regardless of Korean developments, unless unification was achieved at the political conference.

In general, Communist reactions might be more decisive if a situation of great tension existed in Asia at the time the build-up for the Hainan invasion became apparent. Conversely, if Asian problems seemed to be on the way toward a political settlement, Peiping would be more likely to restrain itself, giving greater weight to psychological factors and leaving the initiative for breaking the peace to the US and the Chinese National Government.

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II. Probable Non-Communist Reactions

A. Republic of Korea

The primary objective of the ROK is to unify Korea under its control. For this reason it would support a war against Communist China that would force the Chinese Communists to withdraw from Korea. But it would fear any US-backed operations that would tend to divert US military supplies to an area other than Korea.

The ROK would probably press for an enlargement of the Hainan operation through a concurrent invasion of north Korea. The ROK would probably oppose the invasion if it was to be confined to Hainan alone, since it would view the operation as tying up anti-Communist strength without contributing to the objective of unifying Korea. (It is significant, in this connection, that the ROK reaction to the Formosan deneutralization order was generally negative.)

Whether Rhee would unilaterally initiate an attack on north Korea at the time of the Hainan operation would depend upon his calculation of the balance of Western and Communist strength in Korea. Rhee might be deterred by a firmly-pronounced Soviet "greater sanctions" statement.

Because of close ROK-KMT relations, it would be practically impossible to maintain security against ROK knowledge of preparations for an invasion of Hainan. Prior consultation with Rhee might prevent Rhee from precipitating action in Korea, but consultations might lead to a leak of information on the part of the ROK with the intention of agitating for a broader war.

The principal development that would alter the nature of the ROK reaction would be the prior achievement of unification in Korea, in

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which case the ROK would strongly oppose the operation as jeopardizing peace in Asia and the security of Korea's newly-found unity and independence.

B. Japan

The prevalent reaction in Japan would be one of uneasiness and apprehension over what would be generally considered a reckless and provocative action, especially as it might lead to invocation of the Sino-Soviet pact, which is directed specifically against Japan. The Japanese Government would be likely to disassociate itself publicly from the attack once it occurred. Intensified neutralist and left-wing attacks would make it difficult for the government to continue its policy of over-all cooperation with the US, unless it could point to prior consultation with the US as basis for assurances that Japan would not be directly affected. However, prior consultations would not affect the nature of the Japanese reaction. While Japan would probably refuse the US the use of Japanese bases in connection with the operation, Japan would be willing to fulfill orders for military supplies and equipment.

Japan would continue to be concerned at the danger of war even after the completion of the invasion. If the successful occupation of Hainan was not followed by Communist counter-measures, Japanese fears would be assuaged, with a boost in the morale of right-wing groups and possibly a general stiffening of attitudes toward the Communist bloc.

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C. South and Southeast Asia

Reaction in South and Southeast Asia to the Hainan operation would range from apprehension to acute fears and to opposition on grounds of principle as well as expediency. The apprehension would be based on a concern lest the initiation of any military action directed against Communist China lead to a general Asian war.

The reaction would be tempered, in the Philippines and Thailand, by the existence of a general anti-Communist orientation and pro-Western policy, and given prior consultations the Philippine Government might look with favor on such an operation. These factors would not, however, dissipate the concern over possible repercussions of offensive action, which would stem in part from (1) uncertainty over the Chinese Nationalist and US objective; (2) uncertainty about the nature of Chinese Communist and Soviet responses, particularly in the case of the Philippines if US bases in the Philippines were used to stage the attack; and (3) in Thailand by concern about the fifth-column potential of the Chinese minority of almost three million.

In Malaya, the anxiety of British authorities would be compounded of concern over the vulnerability of Hong Kong and uncertainty over the reaction of the Chinese in Malaya who constitute almost fifty percent of the population. Tension in Malaya would be increased by revelation that Hainan was the target; a significant proportion of Malayan Chinese are Hainanese and this group, particularly those working the tin mines, have been susceptible to Communist influence in the past.

In India, Burma, and Indonesia, the operation would be interpreted, by all politically significant sectors of the population, as confirmation of an existing suspicion that the direction of US policy is toward

aggressive action in the Far East. All three countries recognize the Chinese Communist regime and would not approve a Chinese Nationalist claim to either the mainland or to Hainan; they would view such action as preparation for aggression and consider it both dangerous and wrong.

In Indochina, there would probably be grave apprehension -- among both French and Vietnamese leaders -- that an aggressive attitude toward Communist China might precipitate Chinese Communist intervention in the Indochina war in order to eliminate French power and establish more firmly the security of its southern flank. This general fear would be an extension of existing French uneasiness that even the prospect of an imminent victory in Indochina might result in Chinese Communist intervention. To it would be added some concern lest US preoccupation with an operation directed toward Communist China would reduce American ability or willingness to provide the substantial assistance which the French believe necessary to preserve their present position in Indochina or to assist in the defense of Indochina if the Chinese Communists attacked as a result of operations against Hainan or the mainland.

If the attack should result in a Soviet appeal to the UN for collective action, India might support a Soviet-sponsored resolution and the governments of Burma and Indonesia would be under heavy pressure from leftist opposition elements to do so. It seems probable, however, that Burma and Indonesia would abstain, ~~as they did in the case of Korea,~~ on the ground that a condemnation of "aggression" would not contribute to restoration of peace. Soviet UN moves would not receive support from Thailand or the Philippines. It is possible that India might introduce a "compromise" UN resolution, in which case Burma and Indonesia would probably follow the Indian lead.

D. Western Europe

The Western European reaction, like that of most non-Communist Asia, would be one of concern at the American "adventurist" policy, worry over the possible dispersal of Western military resources, and fear of world war, neutralism would be encouraged and support for the US lessened.

The most extreme reaction would be that of France. Except for a few militant anti-Communists, the French would fear the adverse affects of the operation on Indochina including the danger that it might invite a Chinese Communist invasion. Even the complete success of the operation and Chinese Communist acceptance of defeat without counter-action would serve to encourage French opinion only to a limited extent if this success were not accompanied by a solution in Indochina.

Western European governments however, would probably support the US in UN discussions of the subject, but they would do so reluctantly and over strong domestic opposition.

E. Latin America, the Near East, and Africa

The reaction in Latin America, the Near East, and Africa would not differ significantly from that in Western Europe, although -- as in Asia -- most countries would regard the operation as evidence not only of US recklessness but of US "imperialism." In the UN Guatemala might vote with the Communist bloc and others might abstain, but most countries even if reluctantly would side with the US. The most nearly favorable reactions would probably be those of Greece and Turkey, particularly if these governments had been reassured concerning their own safety.

F. Developments Elsewhere that Might Affect the Above Reactions

In general, the non-Communist reactions to the Hainan operation would be aggravated if at the time of the operation the Communists were

following a conciliatory policy, and conversely, the reaction would be ameliorated somewhat if the Communist policies were provoking increased international tension. But even in the latter case, most countries would view the invasion as a needless and reckless precipitation of hostilities. More widespread approval of the operation would probably be forthcoming only if Communist China was already involved in open warfare in Asia.

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