THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNIST CHINA'S ATTITUDES TOWARD NUCLEAR WEAPONS: 1945-1957

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I.

Communist China exploded its first nuclear device on October 16, 1964. The very years during which the Chinese Communists were gaining and consolidating their power on the mainland were marked by nothing less than a revolution in weaponry and strategic doctrine beyond China's borders. However, for a few years after 1949 there was little to indicate that the new regime was aware it had emerged into a nuclear environment in which an enemy might in theory destroy its cities, industrial complexes, communication centers, and transportation facilities by air attack with nuclear weapons.

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of Communist China's attitude toward nuclear weapons during the period beginning from its response to the explosion of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima to its grand debate on a strategy to cope with nuclear attacks in 1957. More specially, the purpose of this study is to examine Communist China's pattern of behavior to a nuclear environment; to identify the problems that the nuclear environment posed for the Chinese Communists, and how the Chinese Communists debated on these problems.

The principal argument of this paper is that Chi-
inese Communist attitudes toward nuclear weapons during this period can be best understood as dependent on certain major constraints affecting Chinese Communist regime's foreign policy behavior. Since the establishment of the Peking regime, Communist China's overriding objectives have been the preservation of its national security, the achievement of independent great power status, and the filling out of its territorial boundaries in Taiwan and Tibet. None of these objectives could be realized unless China was militarily strong and economically resourceful—a proposition that had become greatly complicated in the nuclear age. There appear to be four such constraints: (1) Considerations of American and Soviet military superiority—particularly nuclear superiority; (2) Considerations of Sino-Soviet relation and the perception of the American threat; (3) Considerations of the pressure of the economic development; and (4) The considerations of the political-military relations.

In this study of the military thinking of Communist China during the period, I have relied principally on published materials from Communist China. Pertinent information on these sources is contained in the bibliography. I have made use of these materials in the
originals of the Chinese language. Since Chinese Communist military publications presently and publicly available are popular rather than professional, the material examined is so lacking in specific detail that much of the analysis necessarily stays in the realm of conjecture. Some of my findings must therefore remain tentative until confirmed by future development.

The present study consists of five chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter deals with Communist China's disparagement of nuclear weapons during the period of 1945-1954. Communist China's treatment of the Atom and Hydrogen Bombs is examined and the reasons of its disparagement are reviewed. The third chapter analyzes Communist China's growing awareness of the implication of nuclear warfare during the period of 1954-1957. A shift in the attitude toward nuclear weapons is reviewed and the beginning of an open discussion of nuclear weapons is identified. The fourth chapter deals with the debate within the military on means to meet the threat of nuclear war. In tracing and identifying the agreement of the military, I shall point out the military's acknowledgement of the Soviet revision in the military doctrine. The areas of debate among the military and alternative strategies pro-
posed are also included in the examination in this chapter. The fifth chapter summarizes the tentative findings of this study.
II. 1. Communist China's Treatment of the Atom and Hydrogen Bombs

On August 13, 1945, one week after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Mao Tse-tung in a speech to the cadres in Yanan, made the first known Chinese Communist reference to this new weapon. At that time, he attributed Japan's surrender to the entry of the Soviet Union into the war and sought to minimize the impact of the atomic bomb:

"...Can atom bombs decide wars? No, they can't. The atom bomb could not make Japan surrender. Without the struggle waged by the people, atom bombs by themselves would be of no avail. If atom bombs could decide the war, then why was it necessary to ask the Soviet Union to send its troops? Why didn't Japan surrender when the two atom bombs were dropped on her and why did she surrender as soon as the Soviet Union sent troops? Some of our comrades, too, believe that the atom bomb is all-powerful; that is a big mistake..." The theory that "weapons decide everything," the purely military viewpoint, a bureaucratic style of work divorced from the masses, individualist thinking, and the like—all these are bourgeois influence in our ranks.1

The following year, in an interview with Anna Louise Strong, Mao predicted that the atom bomb would not again be used in warfare:

Its great bursting over Hiroshima destroyed it. For,

the people of the whole world turned against it... The birth of the atom bomb was the beginning of the end of the American imperialists. For they began to rely on the bomb and not on the people... The basic question is the consciousness of the people. It is not explosives or oil-fields or atom bombs but the man who handles them... In the end the bomb will not annihilate the people. The people will annihilate the bomb.

In the summer of 1950, frequent mentions of the atomic bomb was made in Communist China's mass-communication media in connection with a signature campaign for the Stockholm Peace Appeal. The references were largely limited to demands that such weapons be banned and their first user considered as a war criminal. In late October, at the time when Chinese Communist troops were truly concerned about the atomic bomb, attributed to it a destructive capability greater than that of the atomic bomb used at Hiroshima, and feared that it might be used against them. In October 1950, Chinese Communists adopted an official position on atomic warfare that can be summed up as follows: The atom bomb is a cruel weapon that should be prohibited, but it is a weapon of limit-

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3 Herbert Goldhamer, *Communist Reaction in Korea to American Possession of the H. Bomb and Its Significance for US Political and Psychological Warfare* (The Rand Corporation, Research Memorandum, RM-903, August 1, 1952), pp. i-ii. This study is based on interrogations of Chinese and North Korean prisoners of war in May, 1951.
ed effectiveness. Its power is equal to 2000-3000 tons of high explosives, a power excessive for battlefield use. It becomes less effective the more extensive the territory and the more scattered the population of the enemy. The bomb is not a decisive weapon; ground forces still remain the most effective means of destroying the enemy. Finally, the Soviet Union also has the atom bomb. This propaganda line was also used in troop indoctrination, with the added theme that the atomic bomb had been outlawed by international agreement. It is questionable whether the Chinese Communists had developed at this time any appropriate doctrine with respect to the use of atomic weapons in warfare except to undermine their impact for reasons of stabilizing internal military morale.

President Truman suggested in his press conference of November 30, 1950 the possibility that atomic weapons might be used in Korea. There was a virtual silence of all references to the atomic bombs in Chinese media. However, the authorities continued to be concerned about the possibility that the United States

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5Ibid., p.3.
might use the bomb, and apparently felt that the troops should be prepared for this eventuality rather than persuaded that it would not occur. A mimeographed propaganda pamphlet dated June 10, 1952, apparently issued for distribution within the armed forces, bore the title "Smash the New Plot of the American Imperialists to use the Atom Bomb." The pamphlet expressed the position that the brutal enemy was planning to use the atom bomb, but that the bomb was not dreadful and that the enemy could be outwitted.7

Aside from these activities within the armed forces in Korea in 1952, statements about the use of the atomic bomb in warfare, even those disparaging its effects, were virtually absent from the mass media between 1950 and 1955. Strict censorship seems to have been imposed on the discussion of almost all atomic subjects.

In mid-1953, the Soviet hydrogen-bomb tests were

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6The virtual blackout seems to suggest an effort in official quarters to forstall the public anxiety that further discussion of the subject might arouse. The extent to which the Communist Chinese authorities were prepared to counteract any such anxiety among the populace was suggested in Lt. Col. Robert B. Rigg's statement that "on August, 1951, Tseng Chung-jen was executed in Lokcheng, South China for 'exaggerating the power of the A-Bomb.'" See Lt. Col. Rigg, Red China's Fighting Hordes (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1951), p. 48.

7Cited by Goldhamer, op. cit., pp. 5-6
acknowledged by the Chinese Communists. Again comment centered on the assertion that United States plans to intimidate and blackmail the world—particularly the Soviet Union—had been foiled; the myth of a United States atom-bomb monopoly, had been exposed as nonsense; and the Soviet Union was manufacturing these weapons merely because the United States refused to destroy its own.®

Beginning in late December 1953, the volume of Communist China's comment of atomic matters went up slightly. However, there were careful restraints on content. On December 26, both Jen-min Jih-Pao and Kuang-ming Jih-Pao disparaged President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace plan, while commending the Soviet Union for its leadership in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and its efforts to ban atomic, hydrogen, and other weapons of large scale destruction. Jen-min Jih-Pao noted that President Eisenhower had set no limits to the growing production to atomic weapons; Kuang-ming Jih-Pao pointed out that the Soviet Union now possessed many types of atomic bombs, as well as hydrogen bombs of still greater power, and added that the Soviet Union's


discovery of the secret of producing hydrogen weapons had
dealt a telling blow to the American bellicose
elements who dreamed of relying on their 'mono-
poly' of atomic weapons for their aggressive
schemes.\textsuperscript{10}

The full extent of the censorship on atomic sub-
jects in Chinese Communist propaganda was further un-
derscored during March 1954, with respect to the Biki-
ni incident. Since 1952 Communist China had sought in-
creasingly to attune its propaganda to Japanese senti-
ment and attitudes, exploiting indigenous developments
unfavorable to the United States. The radioactive
dusting of the crew of the Fukurya Maru in March 1954
came to the Japanese public as a profound shock and for
a time caused a wave of resentment against the United
States unprecedented in the postwar period.\textsuperscript{11} The Jap-
anese not only were deeply concerned about the moral
aspect of the event, but felt that the incident had
raised the legal question of freedom of the seas as
well as the economic issue related to the effects of
tests on Pacific fisheries. In early April the Japa-
nese Diet passed a unanimous resolution in favor of
prohibiting the manufacture, testing, and use of atom-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{11} A.M. Halpern, \textit{Changing Japanese Attitude Tow-
ward Atomic Weapons} (The Rand Corporation, Research
Memorandum, RM-1331, September 1, 1954.)
\end{itemize}
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ic and hydrogen weapons. Also, fear of fallout and apprehension concerning Japan's fate in case of war were heightened by the incident.

In contrast with the established pattern, Communist China in this case did little to exploit the Japanese reaction. The Chinese Communist comment was sparse, and much of what appeared in the propaganda media consisted of condensed report on the Japanese popular demand for prohibition of atomic weapons, and on protests against testing raised in India and elsewhere. A Jen-min Jih-Pao editorial on April 3 almost hid the Bikini incident in a jargon of Marxism and more general attacks on the United States:

Dulles' efforts to create an atmosphere of enmity are made to order by the American monopolists, who are bent on maintaining and increasing world tension at all costs, in their desire to avoid the economic crisis which is coming nearer and nearer and to keep up maximum profits from armaments. Among the recent activities of the political leaders of the United States are the publicizing of their so-called "new look" military policy, the boosting of the atomic threat, the mad spreading of war hysteria, the hydrogen bomb experiments on the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, the naval maneuvers in Iwo-shima, and the air maneuvers in South Korea. 12

In the Chinese Communists' treatment of the Bikini incident there are three points worth noting:

12Jen-min Jih-Pao, April 3, 1954.
(1) The Chinese public had no clear concept of what had happened at Bikini.

(2) The Chinese authorities deliberately avoided exploiting two important aspects of the Japanese reaction—fear of radiation and fear of Japan's vulnerability in the event of nuclear war, and

(3) Communist China's first comment on the subject coincided with the issuance of propaganda line by the World Peace Council Bureau, thus suggesting that Chinese media was following Moscow's lead in the matter.

Twice again during 1954 atomic matters came to the fore. In July all three major newspapers—Jen-min Jih-Pao, Ta Kung Pao, and Kuang Ming Jih-Pao—applaud the Soviet Union's commissioning of the first atomic power station, praising the Soviet's effort in the peaceful use of atomic energy as well as their demand for the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, and accusing the United States of using atomic energy for war and as a means of blackmail in international affairs.¹³

In late 1954, in connection with the Soviet Union's proposals in the United Nations on the conclusion of an international convention for the reduction of armaments

and the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, there was a slight shift in tone. *Jen-min Jih-Pao* vigorously supported the Soviet proposals, emphasizing the one that called for Communist China's participation in negotiations leading to a joint declaration wherein the Soviet Union, the United States, France, and Communist China would renounce the use of atomic hydrogen and other weapons of mass destruction.\(^{14}\) The editorial characterized the Soviet position as being designed to eliminate the "menace of atomic warfare" to prevent "atomic attack," and to limit atomic energy to peaceful uses. The United States, on the other hand, was accused of blocking agreement on the prohibition of atomic weapons, preparing for "atomic warfare," practicing "atomic blackmail," and planning to use atomic weapons for "strategic purposes and for tactical purposes."\(^{15}\) Again in late December, an article in *Jen-min Jih-Pao* contrasted Soviet efforts to limit atomic energy to peaceful purposes with the objectives of the United States, accusing the latter of producing and stockpiling large quantities of atomic weapons to threaten and provoke the camp of "peace and

\(^{14}\) *Jen-min Jih-Pao*, October 4, 1954.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
democracy." At the same time, the article assured its readers that the so-called United States superiority in atomic and hydrogen weapons had long since vanished.

Thus in the years 1951 through 1954, Chinese Communist statements, except for the few casual hints that began to appear in October 1954, deliberately avoided dealing with the implications of atomic and hydrogen weapons for modern warfare. The basic propaganda strategy of these years is quite evident. The Chinese Communists commented on nuclear developments only when the Soviet Union provided a lead. Otherwise, they were consistently silent on the subject, with the exception of the Bikini incident which could not be ignored and thus received qualified attention. All Soviet developments were characterized as contributing to the defense of peace. The United States was consistently described as a military menace without citing facts. However the menace was presented as largely a matter of blackmail which was being rendered ineffective with the disintegration of the American atomic monopoly.

\[16\text{Jin-min Jih-Pao, December 23, 1954.}\]
2. Why Communist China Disparaged Nuclear Weapons

It is necessary to account for Communist China's failure to develop a public position on a new approach to nuclear war before 1955. One can argue that since Communist China was a nonatomic power, it was in her national interest to disparage the effects of atomic and hydrogen weapons, to deny the impact of such weapons on warfare, or to avoid the question entirely. But in 1955, when certain Chinese Communist military leaders began publicly to adjust their strategic thinking to the new weapons, Communist China was still a nonatomic power, and it is therefore necessary to look to other factors to explain the earliest reticence on nuclear matters.

One key to this reticence appears to lie in the fact that it was not until after Stalin's death that Soviet military leaders began to discuss openly the implications of nuclear warfare for Soviet military thinking. Herbert S. Dinerstein has traced the course of the debate on Soviet military thinking that began with an article by General Talensky in the September 1958 issue of Military Thought.17 Talensky had questioned the vali-

dity of Stalin's doctrine of the "permanently operating factors" as the basis for military thought in the 1950's. Emphasizing the armed conflict as the crucial aspect of warfare, Talensky had insisted that the same laws of war applied to both sides and suggested the possibility that given the use of nuclear weapons, the first phase of a war could determine its final outcome. The debate thus initiated was not to be concluded until April 1955 when the editors of Military Thought had officially endorsed the bulk of Talensky's position. Two months earlier, Marshall Rotmistrov, writing in Military Thought had stated the Soviet position that surprise attack with atomic and hydrogen weapons could determine the outcome of a war, and at the same time he had advanced the concept of a pre-emptive blow as the means to frustrate a surprise attack by the enemy.

Until the Soviets had formulated a military doctrine appropriate for an era of nuclear weapons, the Chinese Communists were not likely to voice any views that went beyond the narrow confines of their own experience. The

18 They are (1) the stability of the rear, (2) the morale of the army, (3) the quantity and quality of division, (4) the armaments of the army, and (5) the organizational ability of the army commanders.

19 Dinerstein, op. cit., pp. 9-12.

20 Ibid.
soldiers during the Korean war can be presumed to have extended to the political and military elites. However, even though the atom and hydrogen bombs might be recognized as having greater destructive power than ordinary bombs, it was inconceivable that the Chinese Communists without the aid of the Soviet initiative, would accept the premise that the new weapons could have any major strategic or doctrinal significance for a country possessed of vast manpower, extensive territory and few industrial centers. Moreover, just as adherence to Stalin's "permanently operating factors" had retarded the Soviet Union's restatement of its official military doctrine, so also did adherence to the principles embodied in Mao Tse-tung's military thinking make it difficult for the Chinese Communist military and political leaders first to grasp and then to assert the strategic import of nuclear weapons.

The core of Mao Tse-tung's military thinking is found in four works: Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War (1936); On the Protracted War (1938); Strategic Problems of Guerrilla Warfare Against Japan (1938); and the third part of the Present Situation and Our Tasks (1947). The first of these works sets forth Mao's strategy and tactics for the Chinese Red Army in
the First Kuomintang-Communist War; the second and third deal with those in the Sino-Japanese War; and the fourth discusses the situation in the Second Kuomintang War.

Mao's so-called military writings are not solely military treatises; they contain also the outline of a revolutionary program in which political, psychological, economic, and diplomatic means are utilized in addition to the military.

To Mao, war was not only the "highest form of struggle," but also the totality of a situation, the "intimate knowledge of all aspects of the situation between us and the enemy." Success or failure in war was "mainly determined by military, political, economic, and natural conditions of both sides." Mao defined war in terms of the characteristics of China's Revolutionary War, that is, an inferior force contending for power against a superior force. As the concept of a quick, decisive war, achieved largely by overwhelming military force, lay outside his experience and the terms of reference within which he viewed the problem of war, he


22 Ibid., p. 11.

23 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
rejected a concept of a quick, decisive war conducted on the basis of purely military considerations. As he put it:

The four leading characteristics of China's Revolutionary War are: a politically and economically unevenly developed semi-colonial country of great size that has gone through a great revolution, and a great and powerful enemy, a weak and small Red Army, and the agrarian revolution. These condition the directive for China's Revolutionary War and numerous principles of its strategy and tactics. From the first and fourth characteristics ensue the possibilities for the Red Army to develop and defeat its enemy. From the second and third characteristics ensue the possibilities of the Red Army's slow development and delayed victory over its enemy. This means the possibility of a protracted war, and with bungling there is the possibility of failure.  

Important in this context was Mao's opposition to the "purely military point of view" for he considered the Red Army "as a propagandist and organizer for the Soviets." This does not mean that Mao renounced the use of military techniques or denied their interdependence with political techniques; he however, denounced the narrow outlook of the professional military, so often marked by conservatism, which he feared might obstruct the broad political-military objectives of the revolution. It was Mao's intent to define the role of the

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24 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
25 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
army within the framework of the larger military organization, the Chinese Communist Party.

With respect to actual military strategy and tactics, Mao acknowledged his debt to Sun Tze's *The Art of War*, written about 500 B.C. Mao recognized that the Chinese Red Army was inferior to its powerful enemy in size, training, and equipment. Consequently, his strategy and tactics not only fell back on traditional Chinese deceits and ruses, but were designed first of all to ensure survival and preservation of strength and only then to exhaust the enemy so as to achieve victory.

Mao made a clear distinction between the general strategy of war and the strategy and tactics of a battle or campaign. As to the general strategy, he insisted on a protracted war and opposed quick decisions; only through a protracted war, combined with a number of nonmilitary factors, could the Chinese Communist hope to exhaust the enemy and increase their own strength. Mao divided the war into two general phases, the strategic defensive and the strategic offensive, the former to be an "active defensive" as distinct from a "passive defensive." During this period, the Red Army was to make strategic withdrawals if necessary, exhaust the enemy by counterattack or other methods, and constant-
ly add to its strength. The strategic offensive required concentration of troops, maneuverability, quick decision in specific campaigns, and annihilation (seizure) of the enemy; it was to be initiated only when victory was assured.

In both phases Mao called on the Chinese Red Army to practice three types of warfare: mobile warfare (or war of maneuver); guerrilla warfare; and in exceptional circumstances, positional warfare. Mobile warfare was to be carried out by large groups of the regular army that remained constantly on the move with a view to attacking the enemy's weak spots. Guerrilla warfare, which employed the masses, was considered an auxiliary to mobile warfare, with the function of harassing and distracting the enemy, securing intelligence, and interfering with enemy transportation and communication systems. Positional warfare was least important to Mao, for this main emphasis was on the accretion of manpower and weapons, rather than on the conquest of territory, particularly of cities.

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26 Ibid., pp. 38-45.
27 Ibid., pp. 77-81.
28 Ibid., pp. 88-95.
In a battle or a campaign, Mao insisted on quick decisions. He favored decoying the enemy, through temporary retreat, into territory where conditions with respect to people, terrain, and manpower were favorable to the Red Army, where it would be possible to discover the opponent's weak spots, and where the enemy, having become fatigued, and demoralized, would begin to make mistakes. In the counterattack that would follow, Mao emphasized the importance of a successful initial engagement, the concentration of superior forces in one direction, the use of mobile warfare, the attack on the enemy's weak spots, and a quick decision, and annihilation (capture) of the enemy to obtain equipment and prisoners who would add to the manpower of the Red Army.29 Thus at least in certain respects, Mao's thinking closely followed conventional military principles.

In much the same way as had thus described the nature of the First Kuomingtang-Communist War, Mao analyzed the characteristics of the Sino-Japanese War.30 He argued: "Our strategy and tactics must aim to avoid great decisive battles in the early stages of the war,

29 Ibid., pp. 77-101.
and gradually to break the morale, the fighting spirit, and the military efficiency of the living forces of the enemy.\textsuperscript{31} Mao insisted that a change in the balance of strength between the warring parties, taking into account morale considerations as well as material resources on each side, would inevitably take place.\textsuperscript{32} Thus he condemned the so-called theory of "weapons mean everything."\textsuperscript{33}

Mao underlined the political nature of war when, in commenting on Lenin's rendering of Clausewitz to the effect that "war is the continuation of politics," he wrote:

\begin{quote}
In this sense war is politics and war itself is a political action...The Anti-Japanese War is a revolutionary war waged by the whole Chinese nation, whose victory is inseparable from its political aim, namely the ousting of Japanese imperialism and the building up of a new China of freedom and equality; and it is inseparable from the overall policy of persistently carrying on the War of Resistance and maintaining the united front; from the mobilization of the people of the whole nation; from such political principles as the unity between the officers and men, from the unity between the army and the people and the disintegration of the enemy forces; from an excellent execution of the United front policy; from cultural mobiliza-
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., pp. 51-54.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 56.
\end{itemize}
tion; and from the efforts to win the support of international forces, including the people of the enemy's country. In a word, war cannot for a single moment be separated from politics. Any tendency among the anti-Japanese soldiers to belittle politics, isolate war from it, and become advocates of "war is everything" is erroneous and must be corrected. 34

Mao's strategy and tactics were effective in the wars against the Japanese and the Kuomintang. In the war against the Japanese, the Chinese controlled enough territory and disposed of sufficient manpower to make it possible for guerrilla forces to confine the Japanese to the big cities and to cut their lines of communication and transportation. The Kuomintang forces were gradually worn down as a result, in part of mobile war, maneuver, and surprise, followed by annihilation. In the Korean War, however, the Chinese Communists lacked both territory for maneuver and a vast local population on which to draw for recruitment and intelligence, and were thus forced to engage in positional warfare. They still employed such Maoist methods as tactical withdrawal, probing the enemy's weak spots, attack on enemy force while the latter were on the move, infiltration behind the enemy's front in order to cut his line of supply and communication, and night fighting.

34Ibid., pp. 72-73.
Between 1949 and 1955, a totally new set of strategic problems emerged for the Chinese Communists. The Korean War caused them to recognize the importance of modernized, regular forces. Even more important, the Chinese Communists after 1949 were no longer a fluid force operating from the countryside; they were now in control of cities and were rapidly developing a vested interest in industrial complexes, communication centers, and transportation facilities. The wars in which Mao's strategic thinking had been developed had been civil wars or wars fought against an invading force. Against a future enemy intent on invasion and occupation, even if he were armed with nuclear weapons, Mao's preferred strategy of protracted war and mobility might still prove operative to a limited extent. But what of an enemy, armed with a powerful delivery system and nuclear weapons, who would be content with eliminating China as a threat, without seeking to control Chinese territory through invasion and occupation?

In order to pinpoint the factors in Mao's military thinking that might have tended to impede the Chinese military leaders' grasp of warfare in the nuclear era and their acceptance of new strategic concepts, it may be worth recapitulating here the essentials of Mao's
thought as they bear on my analysis:

(1) Rejection of the concept of a quick, decisive war, based on purely military considerations, in favor of a view of war as the totality of political, economic, psychological, and military factors.

(2) Emphasis on the concepts of strategic withdrawal, avoidance of decisive battles, and even temporary abandonment of territory in the early stage of the war, in the interest of eventual victory.

(3) Belief in initiation of the strategic offensive only when the balance of total strength was in the Communists' favor and their victory certain.

(4) Subordination of the strict military viewpoint of the professional soldier to the political-military objectives of the revolution, of the army to the party, of weapons to man, and of short-term success to long-term victory.

The men who had been schooled in these principles and were experienced in their successful application might well have been slow in grasping the fact that nuclear weapons and modern delivery systems were revolutionizing the nature of warfare. Even if they had grasped the implications of nuclear weapons, the realization that they were not in a position to do much about
it independently or quickly may well have contributed to their reticence on the subject. There is also a slight possibility that they may have hoped that the atom bomb would be banned either tacitly or formally, or that Soviet possession of it would indeed cancel out any serious United States consideration of its employment.

Whatever the extent to which Mao's military thinking made it difficult for the Chinese to grasp the strategic importance of nuclear weapons, certain of Mao's precepts, in particular those that emphasized the long-term political point of view at the expense of immediate military considerations, were bound to color the manner in which the Chinese chose to react to the threat of nuclear war, once the matter of responses came under discussion.
By early 1954, a Chinese Communist re-evaluation of the United States base structure in the Far East appeared to be in progress. American proposals for security arrangements in South and Southeast Asia came under increasingly severe criticism. As in the past, United States installations abroad were referred to as "military bases," with a strong implication of American exploitation of indigenous manpower; but more and more frequently these references then included explicit descriptions of United States naval and air power. In January, the Chinese Communists publicly equated the United States' proposal both with the building of a strong air force equipped with atomic and other new weapons and with American reliance on foreign armies. In January, the Chinese Communists publicly equated the United States' proposal both with the building of a strong air force equipped with atomic and other new weapons and with American reliance on foreign armies.35

The following month, note was taken of a report that the United States had dispatched F-86's to Clark Field and a number of B-29's to Singapore, was extending its airfields in the Philippines to accommodate heavy jet bombers, and was negotiating for new bases in the Philippines so as to permit it to "strike quickly."36

March Chinese Communists accused Dulles of having bragged about a "massive atomic airforce." That same month, the Communists alleged that the United States was negotiating pacts and setting up military bases and was building permanent air bases in Okinawa with a view to establishing a "global air force ring" with which to encircle China and the Soviet Union. Jen-min Jih-Pao, in describing United States military base in Asia, placed unusual emphasis on the presence of actual or alleged United States airfields in Okinawa, the Philippines, Thailand, and Japan, and attributed to American military leaders a statement that Okinawa had been converted into "a potential springboard for mighty American atomic attacks" against China and the Soviet Union. In April, Jen-min Jih-Pao castigated the American military policy and accused the United States of boosting the atomic threat and engaging in hydrogen bomb experiments in the Pacific, naval maneuvers in Iwoshima, and air maneuvers in South Korea. A few months later, both

40 Jen-min Jih-Pao, April 3, 1954.
Chu Teh in his August 1 Army Day speech and Chou En-lai in his August 11 report on foreign affairs to the thirty-third meeting of the Central People's Government Council emphasized the role of United States air and naval forces in the Taiwan Strait area.41

One can not underestimate the significance of a Chinese Communist re-evaluation of the United States base structure and air power in the Far East, especially in view of the inadequacy of Communist China's air defense and early warning systems in light of the enhanced United States striking power which had been triggered off by the Korean War and which by the 1954-1955 period included B-47's and B-54's. It is difficult to determine whether this new concern with United States air power grew directly out of the Communists' awareness of a growing United States striking power or whether it reflected the Communists' reaction to the Soviet debate on strategy of 1953-1954.

It is within this general context that we can best explore the relationship between the settlement of the

war in Indochina and the United States strategic nuclear posture. To what extent Communist China’s calculation of United States intervention on this or that level of violence entered into her planning remains a moot question. Nor is it clear whether and to what extent the Chinese Communists may have been relying on the Soviet "umbrella." The heavy action against Dien Bien Phu that followed the Dulles-Nixon warning statements suggests that the Chinese Communists were not greatly concerned over the possibility of United States action at any level. It is true, however, that the Chinese Communists chose to end the war short of having gained complete control of the country. Although conceivably they were prompted by purely military-logistic considerations, other factors may well have been responsible for the decision to push only far enough to solidify the Communist position, and deliberately to give up the possibility of going further. Such a factor may have been, if not the threat of United States intervention, possibly an over-all bloc estimate of the existing balance of power that recognized the superiority of the United States nuclear stockpile and delivery capability.

Between April and July of 1954, the period encompassing the Geneva Conference on Indochina and Korea, a
major strategic shift became evident in Communist China's implementation of its foreign-policy objectives. Priority in target areas appeared to shift from Northeast Asia to South and Southeast Asia. Chinese Communist abandoned the "two world" theory and adopted an approach in foreign affairs that acknowledged the nationalistic stand of certain Asian government leaders, supported neutralism, and advocated the creation of an "area of collective peace" containing both Communist and noncommunist states. This effort to capitalize on strong Asian sentiment in favor of nonalignment and against bilateral defense and military assistance pacts was exemplified in the joint statements issued by Chou En-lai and Nehru and Chou En-lai and U Nu respectively in June 1954, confirming their adherence to the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" which had been set forth in April in the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet.

In connection with the Chinese Communists' campaign for the liberation of Taiwan that followed the Geneva Conference, there were increasingly frequent hints that the Communists were feeling out Soviet deterrent capabilities but that the Soviet Union was reluctant to back Communist China's moves. Chou En-lai at Geneva had sought to identify Communist China's in-
terests with those of the nationalist-neutralist states of Asia. In contrast, by August 1954, when the propaganda campaign for the liberation of Taiwan was at a high pitch, he was employing the slogan that the solidarity of the socialist countries would be successful in maintaining peace:

It is our conviction that with the ever-growing might and prosperity of all the brother countries headed by the Soviet Union...all acts of aggression and threats of war can certainly be defeated. 42

At the same time he sought to link the Asian and European scenes, noting that the Chinese people are "as much concerned about peace in Europe as about peace in Asia" 43 and referring to the recent Sino-East Germany communique that expressed opposition to both West German and Japanese rearmament. 44 The point was also made by Su Yu, then a Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the People's Revolutionary Military Council, that "together with the Soviet armed forces" the People's Liberation Army was "defending the peace of the East and the rest of the


43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.
world." Both Su Yu and another Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Chang Tsung-hsun, called on the PLA to "share the glorious task of safeguarding peace in Asia and the rest of the world with the armed forces of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies." 46

In early September, the Chinese Communists began military operations against the off-shore islands. It is against this background that Khrushchev arrived at Peking later that month. Despite Communist China's obvious interest in securing Soviet support for the operation against the off-shore islands as well as for its general objective of liberating Taiwan, a careful reading of Khrushchev's statement of September 30 at Peking suggests that the Soviet Union was reluctant to commit itself on either score. Khrushchev went no further than to say that the "Soviet people" sympathized with and supported the determination of "the Chinese people" to liberate Taiwan. 47 The October 12 Sino-Soviet declaration on foreign policy did not mention the liberation of Taiwan at all, although it reaffirmed Sino-Soviet co-

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45 *Jin-min Jih-Pao*, August 1, 1954. This was an August 1 Army Day article.


operation as "a reliable guarantee for peace and security in the Far East" and noted that United States occupation of Taiwan was "incompatible with the tasks of maintaining peace in the Far East."

If the Soviet Union was not itself prepared to support Communist China’s military operations in the Taiwan Strait, it was no doubt anxious to convince the Chinese Communists that any military campaign should be handled cautiously and adjusted to the kind and the degree of United States response that could be anticipated. Whatever the original intention of Communist China may have been, it is possible that at the time of the Khrushchev visit the 1954-1955 Chinese Communists operation in the Taiwan Strait were downgraded to no more than a probing action, a testing out of United States intentions in the area with a view to determining what could be gained on a riskless basis.

A number of factors could have dictated the negative Soviet position toward action in the Taiwan Strait. The most decisive among them would appear to have been the struggle for power between Malenkov and Khrushchev.

49 Ibid.
which also involved important differences on military, political, and economic questions; the transitional state of Soviet weapons development; Soviet estimates of the United States strategic posture; and the still unresolved debate over the implications of nuclear war for Soviet military science. There is the possibility that the Soviets, in order to induce the Chinese Communists to accept a cautious approach, gave them more definite information on the last three points, even though this may have involved the admission by the Soviets of their own immediate, but temporary weakness vis-a-vis the United States.

If this conjecture is correct that Moscow, in order to convince Peking of the necessity of caution in its external moves, was compelled to share with the latter its estimate of the military balance, the Chinese Communists search for a Soviet commitment on the Taiwan question may have resulted in exposing Communist China to the realities of modern war. This in turn could not but lead the Chinese Communists to seek still further assurances from the Soviet Union. In December 1954, Communist China's observer at the Moscow European Conferences, Chang Wen-tien, enunciated in its clearest form the "indivisibility-of-peace" theme, when he stated that
"the present struggle for Asian peace and that for European peace are a common struggle, integral and indivisible." At this time he also announced that Communist China would be bound by the provisions of the Sino-Soviet alliance to join in the active defense of Europe. The implication that the purpose of this commitment was to obtain a reciprocal Soviet commitment in Asia is suggested.

Khrushchev's visit to Peking in September-October of 1954 resulted in a series of Sino-Soviet communiques. The agreements reached provided for a new Soviet loan to Communist China, transfer to the Communist of Soviet shares in four joint-stock corporations, scientific, and technical co-operation, construction of two railroads and withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from Port Arthur.

Joint declarations were issued also on the international situation and on Japan. In the statement on Japan, both parties expressed "their readiness to take steps to normalize their relations with Japan."

51 Ibid.
Earlier statements of Communist China suggest the possibility that Communist China during this period was not as fully prepared as the Soviets to accept a position that would permit the restoration of diplomatic relations with a conservative Japanese government, especially one that continued to adhere to the United States-Japanese security alignment. Again, it is possible to view that the shift in the Soviet posture toward Japan as stemming from both military and political factors: from a reevaluation of the United States strategic position, from new thoughts about the implications of nuclear war, and from a growing Soviet awareness of the need for political flexibility. Although Communist China undoubtedly recognized that resumption of Sino-Japanese relation was illusory because of the Taiwan question, they may have been prepared to swallow the Soviet approach in the light of the broader security calculation.

Among significant developments in 1954 that might cast light on the time at which China began to assimilate the new Soviet strategic thinking are the reorganization and modernization of its armed forces. With the adoption of the Constitution the First National People's Congress, on September 20, 1954, the People's Revolutionary Military Council was replaced by the larger
National Defense Council, and a Military of National Defense, headed by Peng Teh-huai, was established in the State Council. Some question exists as to (1) whether the General Staff became a subordinate part of the Ministry of National Defense; (2) whether the General Staff enjoyed parallel and equal authority with the Ministry of National Defense; and (3) whether the Chief of the General Staff, concurrently head of the General Staff Department, assumed a leading role over the several other departments formerly designated under the Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army, that is, the General Political Department, the Military Training Department, the Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, the General Personnel Department, the General Rear Services Department, and the Finance Department. Though recognizing that ambiguity exists on this score, for the purpose of this study, I shall refer to these departments collectively as the "General Staff."

These moves were accomplished or followed by the introduction of compulsory military service, the establishment of an elaborate hierarchy of ranks and a system of functional classification for the Chinese Communist officer in line with the Soviet model, and the shift of officers from supply to the salary system.
These changes in the organization of Communist China's armed forces represented a victory for those elements within China's military leadership that, capitalizing on the experience gained during the Korean War, sought a total and rapid regularization of the PLA on the Soviet model. This victory of professionalism was gained at the expense of those who would have had the PLA maintain its traditions as a liberation army and cling to the ideological line of the class struggle and the army's close relations with the masses.\footnote{For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Kiang Hui-chi, "The Development of the Chinese Communist Military Power," \textit{Chi-yu Chen-hsien (Freedom Front)} Hong Kong, Vol. 38, No. 2, November 10, 1958.} Discord within Communist China's political and military leadership may have revolved around more than simply questions of formal reorganization and military training. It may have extended to such related issues as the priority to be accorded to military-defense activities over more general, economic development, the role of the political commissar in relation to the military commander, and the use of the PLA for other than military duties such as aiding in economic development.

The shape of things to come was hinted at during the Communist China's Army Day celebration of August 1.
1954, when for the first time not only Chu Teh but also Su Yu, who in November was to become Chief of the General Staff, issued a major commemorative statement. Su Yu followed Chu Teh's line in emphasizing the liberation of Taiwan but at the same time he stressed the importance of learning advanced Soviet military science, citing the Soviet armed forces as the model for the PLA's modernization. Su Yu's insistence on following the Soviet example, when viewed against his call for the Chinese Communists and Soviet armed forces to share the task of defending peace in Asia, would tend to suggest that Su Yu was well aware of the weakness in Communist China's existing military capability vis-a-vis that of the United

54 New China News Agency, Peking, July 31, 1954. This author does not mean to imply that this emphasis was new and sudden. In 1952, Hsiao Hua, Deputy Director of the General Political Department, People's Revolutionary Military Council, had deviated from other speakers at the Army Day celebration, who laid stress on Mao's military thinking and the theory of armed class struggle, when he placed greater emphasis on studying the advanced military science of the Soviet Union and described the Soviet army of today as the model for the PLA of tomorrow (Hsiao Hua, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army Marching toward Modernization," report to the People's Political Consultative Conference, National Committee rally celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the PLA on July 31, 1952, New China News Agency, Peking, July 31, 1952.) Chu Teh omitted almost all reference to Mao's military thinking and the armed class struggle, but his rather short speech made only the briefest reference to the example of the Soviet army (Chu Teh, speech at the twenty-sixth anniversary of the PLA, on August 1, 1953, New China News Agency, Peking, August 1, 1953.)
In November 1954, Su Yu was appointed Chief of the General Staff and Director of the General Staff Department with the following deputies: Chen Keng, Chang Tsung-hsun, Chang Ai-ping, and Peng Shao-hui. The other departments were staffed as follows:

**General Political Department:** Lo Jung-huan
- **Deputies:** Kan Szu-chi, Tang Cheng, Hsiao Hua, Fu Chung

**Military Training Department:** Liu Po-cheng

**Inspectorate of the Armed Forces:** Yeh Chien-ying

**General Personnel Department:** Lo Jung-huan

**General Rare Services Dept.:** Huang Ko-cheng

**Finance Department:** Yang Li-san

Of the heads of departments, Yeh Ching-ying, Liu Po-cheng, and Lo Jung-huan were concurrently Vice-Chairmen of the National Defense Council, while Su Yu and Huang Ko-cheng were members. In late 1954, Huang Ko-cheng was one of the seven Deputy Ministers of National Defense under Teng Teh-huai, the other being Hsiao Ching-kuang, Tan Cheng, Wang Shusheng, Hsiao Ko, Liao Hancheng, and Li Ta.
It is important to note these two lines of military authority: that of the General Staff under Su Yu, and that of the Ministry of National Defense under Peng Teh-huai. In November 1954, Huang Ko-cheng was the only person to be both a member of the Ministry of National Defense and the head of a department connected with the General Staff. Time was to reveal several officers associated with the General Staff (Su Yu, Liu Po-cheng, and Yeh Chien-ying) as "professional types" more interested in the regularization and technological advancement of the PLA than its political basis. It may not be surprising that they were also among those who were to prove particularly alert to the implications of the revisions in Soviet military doctrine.

The precise interrelationships among these various political, military, and foreign policy trends and events remain obscure. However the forgone brief review permits us to draw several tenable conclusions.

First, concerning a date for the first serious consideration of nuclear warfare by the Chinese Communists, there is indirect evidence, in particular in the apparent Sino-Soviet calculation of the risks inherent in the Taiwan campaign, pointing to September-October 1954 as the latest possible date when the impli-
cations of new Soviet thinking on nuclear warfare began to be appreciated by the Chinese Communists. Second, during the latter half of 1954, professional elements within Communist China's military structure, favoring a rapid and total modernization of the PLA after the model of the Soviet army, scored at least a partial victory over those who would maintain the tradition of the liberation army.
2. The Beginnings of a More Open Discussion of Nuclear Weapons

There was, for several months after January 1955, an unprecedented volume of comment on nuclear matters, designed for both foreign and domestic consumption. Early in the year Communist China publicly endorsed the Khrushchev position that nuclear war would mean not mutual destruction, but the end of capitalism. Along with such statements, the Chinese Communist seemed prepared to give greater publicity to the danger that the United States might use nuclear weapons against them. At the same time, the Chinese Communists resorted to threats of nuclear retaliation, that is, threats of Soviet nuclear retaliation on Communist China's behalf.

The significance of Communist China's comment at this time is not clear. In part, a more open discussion of nuclear warfare may have been prompted by the imminent resolution in the Soviet Union of the controversy on military doctrine in favor of Khrushchev's war-fighting posture. It may have been stimulated in part by United States declarations of intent to use tactical atomic weapons should Communist China attack Tai-

wan. In any event, the general impact of the various statements gave the impression that Communist China was making an initial attempt to reconcile its own military weakness vis-a-vis the United States with their desire to exploit what they conceived to be at least the evolving Soviet nuclear posture. Although laboring under major inhibitions, the Chinese Communists appeared to be undertaking the process of formulating their policies for the nuclear era.

A. Publicity on Possible United States Use of Atomic Weapons

In the context of the Taiwan situation, the line was that the United States was preparing to use atomic weapons against Communist China. On January 16, Jen-min Jih-pao accused the United States of regarding atomic weapons as conventional arms. On January 24, Chou En-lai asserted that the United States was using war threats and "brandishing atomic weapons" in an attempt to maintain its occupation of Taiwan. A few days later, Jen-min Jih-pao intimated that the United States congressional resolution on Taiwan included the threat to use atomic weapons against the "Chinese peo-

56 Ibid.

On March 8, following his return from the first council meeting of the Manila Pact powers, Secretary of State Dulles announced that "open armed aggression" by the Chinese Communist would be interpreted as a decision to initiate "general war in Asia." He described United States sea and air forces in the area as "now equipped with new and powerful weapons of precision which can utterly destroy military targets without endangering civilian centers," and counted "atomic missiles" among conventional weapons. When it became clear that the United States was prepared to use atomic weapons in the area, Communist China's comment entered a new and confused state. Problems appear to have arisen in two points: (1) whether it was the threat of the tactical use of atomic weapons or the threat of "general war" that should be publicized and (2) whether or not the existence of tactical atomic weapons as distinct from those for strategic use should be acknowledged.

Already on March 6, a Chinese Communist commentator had cited a Reuters report on Dulles' statement at


the Bangkok Conference to the effect that United States strategy in the Far East was to use atomic bombs as long range defense weapons and that atomic weapons would be employed to prevent Communist China from liberating Taiwan. The commentator also noted Dulles' emphasis that atomic weapons were to be used for tactical purpose and not employed for strategic assaults, though the writer attempted to refute this differentiation by recalling President Eisenhower's statement in January that there was little difference between use of atomic weapons for tactical purposes and their strategical use. On March 12, "Observer" of Jen-min Jih-pao shifted toward treating the threat as that of general war. After reporting Dulles' reference to "new and powerful weapons of precision," he said:

Today when the Chinese people are mightier than ever before and China is closely united with the Soviet Union and the People's democracies, the fact that Dulles still attempts to frighten people with so-called "new and powerful weapons" and a "general war" only show to what depths he has sunk in his war mania.

Communist China, on March 20, returned to the Pres-

60 Jin-min Jih-pao, March 6, 1955.
ident's statement, but introduced a new element, not previously used by either the Soviet or the World Peace Council propagandists. It declared that if the United States rulers believed that the United States alone had such tactical atomic weapons that it could use to achieve a quick victory in a war of aggression, they were obviously daydreaming, for the United States had already lost its superiority in atomic weapons. On March 31, it was reported that Mrs. Li Te-chuan, President of the National Red Cross Society as saying:

"No amount of sophistry can change the destructive nature of atomic weapons which devastate a wide area and contaminate the atmosphere with deadly radiation."

Again on April 4 a Chinese Communist nuclear physicist was quoted to the effect that atomic weapons, used "tactically" or otherwise, were weapons of savage mass destruction and that once they had been used in a "tactical" way there would be no way of preventing their large-scale, indiscriminate use.

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B. Resort to Nuclear Retaliatory Threats

As early as February 1955, in the course of the intensified ban-the-bomb campaign, Kuo Mo-jo, a spokesman for the Peking regime, had warned the United States: "If you dare to use atomic weapons, you shall receive counterblows ten times as powerful." Shortly after the Dulles statement to the Manila Pact powers, the Chinese Communists found an appropriate opportunity to alert the Japanese to the threat of nuclear retaliation. In an off-the-cuff remark at a press conference on March 14, Ichiro Hatoyama, the Japanese Prime Minister, suggested that Japan might be forced to acquiesce in atomic stockpiling by the United States if that appeared the only road to national safety. Communist China immediately picked up the news. Commenting on the Hatoyama remark, Communist China asked the Japanese: "Does he really want to turn the Japanese islands into a battle field for the United States atomic war?" Ta Kung Pao was even more explicit when it posed to the Japanese the following questions:

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Just think that when Hatoyama offered Japan to the United States as a base for atomic war against China and the Soviet Union, would China and the Soviet Union just sit and not even return tit for tat? Even a simple-minded fool would not think so. The fact is that the United States is no longer the sole owner of atomic weapons, nor is she in any better position than other nations as far as the atomic weapons are concerned. Just think of it. The four Japanese islands are concentratedly located in the Pacific and are easily spotted. What would be the consequences, once Japan is plunged into an atomic war? Will the Japanese people allow you, for the war purposes of the United States, to drive Japan into the abyss of destruction, Mr. Hatoyama?

Jen-min Jih-pao came out with concrete terms of the generalized comment that the Soviet Union also had tactical atomic weapons.

This use of nuclear threats toward Japan, even if they could only be carried out by the Soviet Union, was in decided contrast with the reticent position taken by the Chinese Communists at the time of the Fukurya Maru incident the previous year. While these threats were no doubt triggered by United States statements with respect to the use of atomic weapons in defense of Taiwan, they, at the same time, probably reflected a belated response to the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement that had been signed between the United States and Japan in March 1954.

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69 Ta Kung Pao, March 29, 1955.
Soon a new approach to the Taiwan question came under consideration, there was evidence of greater latitude in discussing the military implications of the revisions in Soviet military science in Communist China. The first hint of this development was the appearance, in late March 1955, of a Jin-min Jih-pao editorial on the occasion of the First Congress of the Heroes and Models of the PLA Air Force. After accusing the United States of threatening Communist China with "massive retaliation" and atomic war, of preventing the liberation of Taiwan, and of building military bases in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, the editorial declared:

To win eventual victory in this struggle and to cope with sudden emergencies arising from possible enemy action, we must strengthen our army and navy considerably and must strengthen our air force considerably.70

This appears to have been the first time that the term "sudden emergency" was used in this context.

However, it was only after Bandung Conference that Communist China began to refer directly to "sudden at-

tack." The first such reference occurred on May 12 in a speech by Minister of National Defense Peng Teh-huai, who had been sent as an observer to the Warsaw Conference. After asserting that the United States had threatened to use atomic weapons against Communist China, and that America aimed to lead the world into a "new world war," Peng Teh-huai warned:

It is possible that they will start a sudden attack at any time and precipitate the world into war. All peace-loving countries, therefore, should heighten their vigilance and be prepared.\(^7\)

By July 1955, it became increasingly evident, particularly from the speeches on the Military Service Law at the second session of the First National People's Congress, that the more immediate consideration that had previously inhibited discussion of the revisions in Soviet military thinking no longer existed, and that a fundamental reassessment of Communist China's security position in an era of nuclear weapon was in progress among certain Communist China's military and political leaders. This was revealed, for example in remarks of Liu Po-cheng.\(^7\) After charging the United States with


\(^7\)General Liu Po-cheng was appointed head of the Military Training Department of the Ministry of National Defense in November 1954.
preparing for a new and large-scale aggressive war and with clamoring for the employment of atomic weapons, Liu Po-cheng observed:

With the emergence of atomic weapons and jet weapons, military science has registered a new development. It is anticipated that war in the future will be a combined operation by the land forces, air forces, naval forces, parachutists, and air defense units carried out on the land, at sea, and in the air. The extent of the fronts, the size of the armies, and the use of material supplies will all be greater than heretofore. We must have high vigilance against the plots of the imperialist aggressive bloc for starting a new war, we must be prepared for the suddenness of war launched by the imperialists; therefore, we must be materially and spiritually alert.\(^{73}\)

A similar concern was voiced by Yeh Chien-ying:\(^{74}\)

We cannot in the least underestimate the aggressive ambitions of imperialism... The ruling group of the United States, under various pretexts of "peace" is intensifying its preparations for war... It continues to expand its Air Force. Atomic weapons are being made regular weapons for the army, in active preparation for an atomic war. To expand its aggressive influence, the United States has established a large number of military bases on foreign soil... the Chinese people... in preparation against a sudden attack by the aggressor, must adopt all possible measures to continue to strengthen the Chinese People's Liberation Army. That is to say, there must be procured a sufficient quantity of the most modern equipment to arm the Chinese People's Liberation Army... However, measured with the standards of modern warfare, it must be admitted


\(^{74}\) Yeh Chien-ying was appointed to the Inspectorate of the Armed Forces in November 1954.
that in the grasping of modern military technique, and the employment of modern combat skills, our army is still in a comparatively backward position... Only with our understanding of the art of directing operations and combat skill demanded by modern warfare, and only with adequate ideological and material preparations to cope fully with a sudden incident, shall we be in the position to deal a vital blow to the enemy attacking us at any time and any place.  

These speakers, unlike Chinese Communist spokesmen in the first three months of 1955, made no attempt to disparage the effect of nuclear weapons: it would appear that for the moment, less attention was being given to purely political or ideological qualities, such as fighting spirit and morale, and such factors as large territory, vast manpower, and decentralized industry were being downgraded. Instead, there was an evident willingness to acknowledge the main doctrinal aspects of the new Soviet military thinking. The emergency of atomic weapons was recognized as having led to a new development in military science. The speakers made specific reference to the "suddenness of war" and the danger of "sudden attack" or "sudden incident," and placed a new emphasis on the procurement of "modern weapons." Communist China's backwardness in the arts of modern war-

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fare was freely admitted. Also worthy of note was Yeh Chien-ying's reference to the fact that atomic weapons were "being made regular weapons of the army."
2. Disagreement Within Chinese Communist Military Regarding the Response to Nuclear War

The impact of the development of nuclear weapons on Communist China was different from that on the Soviets, and Communist China's reaction to an appreciation of the implications of nuclear warfare and the type of doctrinal discussion was also different from that in the Soviet Union. The military tasks confronting Communist China were more diversified and more difficult than those confronting the Soviets. Not only did Communist China lack the scientific-technological basis for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, but it was also engaged in a major program of economic development that placed severe demands on its scarce resources, but which over a period of time could be expected to form the basis for rapid scientific and technological advance. In this economic program the organizational and technical skills possessed by the military were an important asset.

The willingness on the part of certain Communist Chinese military leaders to acknowledge in mid-1955 some of the key implications of nuclear war appears to have been related to a much broader debate within Communist China's military circle. This debate revolved
around such questions as its military posture in the immediate future, the type of defense measures required to meet the threat of nuclear war, the likelihood of war, the degree of priority to be accorded economic development, and the extent of political controls within the PLA. Despite the complexity of the debate, it is possible to identify two schools of thought: the approach advocated by the Ministry of National Defense and voiced principally by Peng Teh-huai, and the viewpoint advanced by the General Staff and expressed variously by Liu Po-cheng, Yeh Chien-ying, and Su Yu. Both schools of thought represented a basically defensive mentality and disagreed only on the manner in which Communist China was to cope with its weakness.

Although the key issues of the debate are interrelated, I shall for the purpose of this analysis first state the various points of disagreement and then see to what extent an underlying intent or pattern emerges on the part of each school.

Peng Teh-huai, speaking at the Warsaw Conference in May 1955, had seen the first Chinese Communists' military leader to make a direct reference to "sudden attack." However, he subsequently gave no indication of what changes in force composition and strategy should be
undertaken to adjust to the danger of sudden attack. In his July 16 speech to the National People's Congress, he avoided any reference to the possibility of "sudden attack" and appeared to envisage the war of the future as one whose outcome would depend on what manpower and resources could be mobilized after the outbreak of hostilities—the concept of an extended war or long war of attrition. This approach permitted him to support a decrease in Communist China's defense expenditures through a reduction in the standing army and greater dependence on trained reserves, and to argue that the saving in military expenditures should be applied to economic development. In voicing his approval of the new Military Service Law, which provided for compulsory military service and a system of trained reserve, he said:

To have powerful armed forces does not mean relying on the numerical strength of an over-sized peace-time standing army; for this is not only disadvantageous to the productive pursuits of the people and to national construction but is also of limited military significance. Powerful armed forces primarily depend on a combination of strong active units and strong reserves...

With large, well-trained reserves and a sufficient number of reserve officers, with the material support guaranteed by our growing Socialist state-owned industry, we can defy aggression by any enemy. If imperialism dares to launch an aggressive war against our country, we will be

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able, on this solid basis, to assemble swiftly an army of sufficient numerical strength to deal resolute counterblows and defend the security of our country. It is precisely in this way that we can in peace-time appropriately reduce the number of military personnel in active service and save the manpower and financial resources to be concentrated on Socialist industrialization, which will lay down a strong technical and economic foundation for modernizing our national defense.77

This strategic concept was similar to Mao's defensive-offensive theory and of Stalin's permanently operating factors. That the Ministry of National Defense of Communist China was prepared to back its position by referring to Soviet experience in World War II was suggested in an article written in September 1955 by Tan Cheng, one of Peng's deputies in the Ministry of National Defense, justifying reliance on a huge reserve force in the following terms:

Upon the outbreak of war unleashed by imperialism, new divisions can rapidly be organized in answer to the call of the fatherland and rushed to the front to assist the army units in the first front in combattting and defeating the enemy. That the Soviet Union could rapidly defeat the fascist armies of Germany, Japan, and Italy during the great Patriotic War was due, among other things, to the fact that the Soviet Union had trained huge numbers of reserve servicemen before the war.78

77 Tang Cheng, "Defending the Fatherland is the Sacred Duty of Youth," Chung-kuo Ching-nien (China Youth), Peking, September 1955, p. 17.
Evidence that a strategy involving mobilization after the outbreak of war was not in accord with the views of the General Staff was present in the speeches of General Liu Po-cheng and Yeh Chien-ying to the National People's Congress in July 1955. As already noted, both men were ready to acknowledge revisions in Soviet military thinking and appeared concerned over the strategic implications of surprise attack. Both must have looked more directly at the military significance of a nuclear capability and weapons effect. Both were silent on the point of reducing the personnel of the armed forces and expenditures for defense. Both appeared more concerned than Peng over the United States military posture in the Far East, and laid considerable emphasis on Communist China's national defense requirements and on the continued development of Communist China's armed forces in terms of equipment and training.\(^7\)

It would appear, that Liu and Yeh, as representatives of the more professional outlook (or as Chinese Communists call it, "the exclusively military point of view") predominant in the General Staff, were dissatisfied with a posture limited to a reliance on the mobil-

\(^7\)Liu Po-cheng, *op. cit.*; Yeh Chien-ying, *op. cit.*
ization of manpower and resources after the outbreak of hostilities and were advancing a strategic approach that would give greater weight to the immediate development of well-trained and well equipped forces to a strong airforce, and to an adequate air defense system. In short, the General Staff would give greater weight to some type of an interim defense posture that would reduce Communist China's vulnerability to a first blow. Although neither Liu nor Yeh were very explicit in their public statements as to just what those interim capabilities might be, it was clear that they envisaged the purchase of modern weapons from abroad. In sum, their approach was consistent with their silence on the possibility of reducing the standing army and national defense expenditures and their de-emphasis of the role of the reserves.

The divergence of attitudes on policy within the Chinese Communist military may have reflected different estimates of Soviet deterrent capabilities and of the likelihood of war. When Peng Teh-huai, at the Warsaw Conference in May made his one direct reference to "sudden attack," he did so within the context of security arrangements between the Soviet Union and its satellites, under which violations of an "indivisible peace"
called for bloc-wide action. By July 1955, when he outlined his strategic preference for relying on post-attack mobilization and argued in favor of diverting military expenditures to economic development, he no longer made any reference to "surprise attack." It is possible that Peng believed that behind the Soviet nuclear shield Communist China was immune from attack and that its own conventional forces were adequate to support local political objectives. Or he may have believed that war could be avoided and the danger of it so controlled that Communist China need not divert resources into an interim capability, but could gear the development of its military forces for a long-run period.

On the other hand, the remarks of Liu and Yeh, who made specific reference to "surprise attack," did not minimize the external threat posed by the United States, and called for an indigenous national defense posture based on the well-equipped, well-trained forces, permit one to infer that these men were perhaps not prepared to downgrade the likelihood of war or to place undue reliance on the Soviet deterrent where Chinese territory

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was concerned.

The scope of the debate within the Communist Chinese military carried over into other equally fundamental issues with various attitudes forming around such related problems as the relative priority of "socialist economic construction" and "national defense construction," and the role of the Party in the PLA. Opinions may also have been divided on the extent to which the PLA should be mobilized in the interest of economic development. An examination of these interrelated issues may throw some light on rationale behind each of the two schools of strategic thinking.

Liu Po-cheng, in his speech of July 21, not only had referred to the "suddenness of war" but had also taken the position that "socialist economic construction and national defense construction for the protection of Socialism should be carried out in co-ordination." He favored the Military Service Law because "in this way we may concentrate more manpower, material resources, and financial resources to carry out economic construction, and at the same time accumulate national defense strength to meet the needs of national defense in time of war."  

82 Liu Po-cheng, op. cit.
83 Ibid.
The relationship between his appreciation of the implications of nuclear war and his insisting that socialist economic development and national defense activities be carried out in coordination was clearly set forth in his speech:

State organs and departments connected with national economy in their normal construction activities should also take into account the need for service in a war for the protection of the motherland. Only thus should we be suddenly attacked in a possible aggressive war launched by the imperialists, can we put the political, economic and cultural departments of the whole country on a wartime basis and meet the demands of war.84

Yih Chien-ying, for his part, argued that in order to be prepared against a sudden attack, the Communist PLA must be provided with the most modern equipment. However, he then went on to complain:

But more people do not seem to appreciate this point. They consider that it is now only necessary to concentrate all forces by socialist economic construction, and there is no need for attaching such great importance to national defense construction. They do not realize that, while it is true that national defense construction must rely on the industrialization of the state, simultaneously with the promotion of socialist economic construction we must maintain a sufficient national defense force or we shall be placed in a weak position. If the imperialists launch a war of aggression against us, we shall face the danger of losing our national independence, and having our socialist cause destroyed.85

84 Ibid.
85 Yeh Chien-ying, op. cit.
Who were the people whom Yeh Chien-ying was accusing of wishing to concentrate all forces on socialist economic development? It would appear that one person who was not fully sympathetic with the position taken by Liu and Yeh was Minister of National Defense, Peng Teh-huai. In his report of July 16 on the Draft Military Service Law, Peng at no time referred specially to national defense construction. Rather, he took the position that priority should be given to socialist industrialization, which in turn, he claimed would lay the foundation for modernizing national defense. 86

Peng who adhered to the concept of a postattack mobilization of manpower and resources supported the Military Service Law with its reduction in military expenditures, in the expectation that the savings from such reductions could be channeled into the country's industrialization. Liu and Yeh, on the other hand, who remained silent on the proposed reduction of the standing army, more likely preferred to see any savings applied to national defense activities and the immediate procurement of modern weapons.

There is a suggestion that those military leaders

86 Peng Teh-huai, op. cit.
who favored the immediate adoption of measures that would tend to meet some of the requirements of modern war at the expense of socialist economic development were also at that time assessing the role of political controls in the PLA in the light of new demands on training and specially, the co-ordination between military training and political training, went so far as to say that "questions relating to the actual enforcement of training should be dealt with by the competent departments in charges of its various phases."

That the disagreement over the views among Communist military leaders may have extended to the degree of political control within the PLA is suggested even more clearly in an article by Lo Jung-huan. He wrote:

"With the founding of the People's Republic of China, our army has entered the new stage of modernized construction. We must raise our level and victoriously fulfill all the tasks in modernized construction. Unless we do so, our army will not march forward, will not defeat imperialist aggression, and our socialist construction will be deprived of its reliable protection. There must be a high degree of standardization in equipment, establishment, training, system and discipline."

87 Liu Po-cheng, op. cit.

88 Lo who concurrently headed both the General Political Department and the General Personnel Department was a long time political commissar, but he nevertheless appeared to have been sympathetic toward the professional outlook that prevailed in the General Staff."
The whole army, from the highest ranks to the lowest, must thoroughly abide by regulations and orders, and be subjected to more rigorous disciplinary training. In the course of modernized construction, there must be enforced reforms in many important systems, such as the obligatory military service system, the military rank system, and the military pay system...

Thereafter, Lo went on to expound the thesis that none of this modernization should be permitted to weaken the glorious traditions of the PLA, the Party's leadership of the army, the principle of unanimity between army and civilian population and between officers and men. He noted that tendencies had developed in the army that prejudiced these principles. For those who might consider modernization incompatible with tradition and principle, he called attention to the fact that the Soviet army's high degree of modernization, organization and discipline had not affected the relationships between officers and men. He also pointed out that some comrades attached importance only to cultural and technical attainments and belittled politics. He argued that modernized construction could not be carried out to the neglect of politics, for only by understanding both would the men be prepared to "prevent emergency inci-

dents."90 Lo assured the superiority of man over weapons in a rather unusual manner:

The modernized army we are to build does not absolutely rely solely on the superiority of armed equipment, but more important still is its reliance on personnel with a high degree of political consciousness.91

Lo's removal a year after he had written this suggests that he had some difficulty in reconciling the two aspects of his article.92

Clearly, by mid-1955 the Communist military was divided in its assessment of the implications for Communist China's military posture of the revisions in Soviet military thinking. Members of the General Staff apparently were prepared to acknowledge some of the implications of nuclear war, and to give public warning that the impact of the first blow must not be underestimated. Therefore, they insisted on the development

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 That more misgivings existed at Peking as to the effects of the regularization of the PLA was apparent from a Jin-min Jih-pao editorial of September 28, following the conferment of military titles and honors on army leaders, for the editorial writer felt compelled to raise such moot questions as "Why must the People's Liberation Army adopt the system of military ranks at the present?" and "Will this (the adoption of military ranks) affect the close unity of the officers and the men and of the officers of the upper and lower rank?"
of well-equipped and well-trained standing forces, in particular a strong air force and an air defense system, and argued for the "co-ordination" of economic and defense activities; by logical extension, they may have questioned the role of the Party in the army and possibly even the use of the army as the laborers for the economic development. On the other hand, the school of thought headed by Peng Teh-huai was not prepared to acknowledge publicly the implications of nuclear war except in the context of Soviet deterrent capabilities; it espoused a strategic view based on the mobilization of manpower and resources subsequent to the outbreak of hostilities, gave priority to economic development and emphasized the role of political controls in the army. Both schools of thought represented a basically defensive mentality and disagreed only in the manner in which Communist China was to meet her weakness.

The existence of this conflict within the Communists military was confirmed in mid-1959, when the campaign against professionally oriented officers reached a climax.
At the beginning of 1955, nuclear weapons suddenly and almost drastically came into prominence as a subject of public discussion in Communist China. Until then, there had been a conspicuous silence in such discussions, especially speculation on the impact of nuclear weapons on modern military operations and strategic concepts. Such statements as appeared were uniformly disparaging of the significance of nuclear weapons. The pattern of silence and disparagement give grounds for concluding that for many years the Chinese Communists had only a partial understanding of the meaning of nuclear weapons for modern warfare. Soviet military leaders, on whom Communist China may be presumed to depend were slow in evolving a doctrine on the subject and such new strategic concepts as the Soviets did develop were difficult to reconcile with the traditional Chinese Communist doctrine as embodied in Mao Tse-tung's military thinking.

The impact of the development of nuclear weapons on the Chinese Communists was rather unique. They took more time to appreciate the implications of nuclear warfare. During the Korean War, there was some evidence of concern over the possible employment by the United States
of atomic weapons against Communist China's troops. Nevertheless, because of the difficulty of reconciling traditional military doctrine and experience with modern military weapons, the Chinese Communists failed to come to serious grips with the changes brought by nuclear weapons. However, the reappraisal of Communist China's vulnerability to nuclear attack was eventually made after 1953 when Soviet military publications began to discuss the implications of nuclear weapons for military doctrine. During this period the United States greatly expanded its stockpile of nuclear weapons and increased its long-range delivery capability.

A careful look at the course of Communist China's foreign and military policies from 1949 to 1960's suggests that two major shifts in Chinese Communists' foreign policy have coincided closely with major developments in Soviet military thought and weaponry. Its adoption in 1954 of a policy of peaceful coexistence in relation to its Asian neighbors occurred shortly after the initiation in the Soviet Union of a debate on the implications of nuclear weapons for modern warfare. Similarly, Communist China's apparent loss of interest in peaceful coexistence and her renewed bellicose political approach to Asia followed within a matter of months after
Soviet Union's testing of an intercontinental ballistic missile and launching of earth satellites in the second half of 1957. The period of peaceful coexistence was marked by a gradual abandonment of Communist China's overt military moves in Asia; and the period beginning in late 1957 was marked by the renewal of probing operations.

In 1954-55, the Chinese Communists gave signs of reacting more directly and openly to the changing military environment. The reaction of Communist China and the ensuing doctrinal discussions both differed from those of the Soviet Union. The military tasks confronting Communist China were more diversified and more difficult than those confronting Soviet leaders. China lacked the scientific-technological basis for the manufactures of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Communist China was engaged in an enormous program of economic development which placed severe demands on its scarce resources. Moreover, preparation to meet the threat of nuclear war was only one of its military objectives. Its conventional power was still viewed as playing an important role in support of its foreign policy objectives.

Communist China's growing appreciation of the implications of nuclear warfare brought a new and major
complication to the process of military decision making. It also introduced a new and inescapable dimension into the security calculations underlying Communist China's external policies. The 1950's were marked by the considerable development of United States and Soviet nuclear capabilities and a greater reliance on nuclear weapons. Therefore, it became increasingly impossible to Communist China to develop her external policies, particularly where they affected United States interest in the Far East, without reference to American and Soviet nuclear capabilities and to the Sino-Soviet political-military relationship.

The year 1954 was marked with Communist China's perception of increased external threat. The reexamination of the perceived external threat may have involved the issues of military strategy in the minds of Peking's decision makers. In 1955 the more professionally oriented military officers proposed that Communist China attempt to secure a quick, partial improvement in its defenses even though this might necessitate the purchase of modern equipment from abroad. The debate over this proposal involved such critical issues as the following:

(1) whether increased emphasis on measures that
would still fall far short of securing for China an adequate and independent defense posture should be permitted to prejudice the assignment of priority to economic development; (2) whether purely military requirements should be allowed to affect economic goals by absorbing technical and organizational skills and disciplined manpower; and (3) whether military professionalism could be tolerated at the expense of Party control and direction.

In 1956 a high-level internal decision reaffirmed economic development as the critical need. Significantly, at this time, a new emphasis was placed on the raising of scientific and technological levels in China. In part, the decision to give priority to economic development was made on the grounds (1) that Communist China would not meet all the competing demands on its limited resources, (2) that the interim measures advanced by the professionals were inadequate in terms of Communist China’s long-term requirements for an independent defense posture, and (3) that in the long run only the full development of China’s industrial production capabilities would form the basis for her scientific and tech-
nological advance, and thus, for an enhanced and independent military posture.

The decision to give priority to economic development followed on the shift to a more cautious foreign policy in 1955. Realization of the security calculations underlined Communist China's evaluation of the Soviet nuclear posture in relation to the United States and the degree of Soviet commitment to Communist China. It is quite probable that in the 1945-1955 period Communist China concurred in an over-all bloc estimate of the existing balance of power which recognized the superiority of the United States nuclear stockpile and delivery capability and was reflected in an unwillingness to run expanded risks. But this evaluation was probably coupled with the expectation of a rapid closing of the gap between the United States and the USSR.

Whether one looked at Communist China's security in the period from 1954 to mid-1957 from the viewpoint of the Ministry of National Defense or from that of the General Staff, the result was an admission of Communist China's growing military dependence on the Soviet Union. Although the nature of this dependence varied somewhat in the position taken by the two groups, several basic factors were common to both.
First was the obvious fact that Communist China did not possess nuclear weapons. Though steps had been taken during and after the Korean War to modernize Communist China's armed forces in conventional terms, the effect of such steps was minimal in the light of the widening military-technological gap not only between Communist China and the United States but also between Communist China and the USSR. The advantages derived from conventional modernization as well as from such traditional military assets as large territory and immense manpower, were largely cancelled out by nuclear weapons and modern methods of warfare.

Secondly, Communist China lacked the scientific and technological basis as well as the skilled human resources that might have permitted it to achieve atomic parity, and its need for major assistance from the Soviet Union in establishing its own atomic energy program further underlined its military dependence on Moscow.

Thirdly, recognition of Communist China's military dependence on the Soviet Union was implicit in the statements of both schools of thought. Both found it expedient to allege the Soviet Union's superiority over the United States in weapons development, and to bring
up frequently the indivisibility-of-peace theme.

The manner in which Communist China should meet the weakness was the issue at stake between the contending schools of thought within the Communist military. The position of the Ministry of National Defense tended to downgrade the urgency of interim defense measures in favor of a slower, but fuller development of its industrial production capabilities and to rely instead on Soviet deterrent capabilities. In other words, whatever nuclear posture Communist China assumed, or whatever deterrent is evoked, would depend primarily on the support and good will of the USSR.

The General Staff, though it did not ignore the role of the Soviet deterrent, took a different line. It may be that a purely military evaluation of Russia's deterrent capabilities had caused its members to question their full effectiveness, or possibly there was some uncertainty as to the extent of the Soviet political commitment to Communist China; or perhaps it reflected the professional soldier's normal desire to be as strong as possible, through weapons under his direct control. Whatever the reason, the General Staff argued the necessity of interim defense measures such as the development of well-trained and well-equipped standing forces, a strong
air force, and an air-defense system, even if this involved the purchase of modern equipment from abroad.

It should be noted that the position advocated by the Ministry of National Defense, that of relying on the advancement of Communist China's own industrial and technological capabilities as the basis for an enhanced national defense posture, implied a short-term dependence, particularly if there was a possibility of Soviet assistance to Peking's nuclear weapons production program. On the other hand, the position of the General Staff could have implied a long-term dependence both in terms of material and insofar as the allocation of substantial sums for the purchase of equipment from abroad could have prejudiced the funds available for the country's economic and scientific development.

The eventual decision to develop its own nuclear capability included heated debate among civilian leaders and between civilian and military leaders in Communist China. The decision also contributed to the tension in the relations between the Soviet Union and Communist China. However, these events are not the scope of the present study.
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NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

Many studies have been made on Communist China’s nuclear capability and strategy; however no published study has been found on the development of Communist China’s attitude toward nuclear weapons. The present study is primarily a content analysis of Communist China’s official publications and statements. Thus no reference is made on Western publications in this bibliography.