

1968 CINCPAC China Assessment

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CINCPAC's assessment for 1968 was almost identical to the previous year, indicating that Chinese force developments were modest. China only conducted one nuclear explosion, although this involved the first use of an H-6 bomber for a nuclear test. Only "a few" missile test firings took place, but the number of SA-2 surface-to-air missile sites increased from 24 to 37.

This modest development led CINCPAC to tone down his assessment from 1967 about an immanent Chinese nuclear operational capability. Instead CINCPAC said that the Cultural Revolution probably had some adverse effect on China's special weapons development, but that "an operational capability was expected in 1969." The assessment of China's intentions that CINCPAC presented to the U.S. Congress in April 1968 said:

- "During the past year, there has been no indication that Communist China has deviated from a militant, aggressive policy -- a policy dedicated to the elimination of the United States' influence in Asia and the extension of Chinese Communist domination...
On China's northern [sic] flank, we have an increasingly belligerent communist regime in North Korea... On the southern flank, we have North Vietnam aggressively testing the feasibility of so-called "Wars of National Liberation," a strategy championed by the Communist Chinese. We must meet this challenge successfully to convince the communists of its ultimate futility."

Due to the North Korean seizure of the USS Pueblo in 1968 and other events deteriorating the situation on the Korean Peninsula, CINCPAC allocated a large section of the threat assessment to the North Korean threat. Because the U.S. strategy toward China was so closely linked to the Korean scenario, the North Korean threat assessment (which also includes a detailed outline of the Pueblo incident) is included below. Despite increasing North Korean capabilities, however, CINCPAC concluded that to wage another "Korean" war, North Korea would have to have outside help from the Soviet Union and/or China.

These plans and operations are described in more detail in the selected pages from the 1968 CINCPAC history provided below:

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1968," May 8, 1969, Volume 1. Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (0.34 MB)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1968," May 8, 1969, Volume 2. Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (0.13 MB)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1968," May 8, 1969, Volume 4 (North Korean assessment, part 1). Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (1.27 MB)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1968," May 8, 1969, Volume 4 (North Korean assessment part 2). Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (1.27 MB)

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