

1974 CINCPAC China Assessment

Recommended Citation

"1974 CINCPAC China Assessment", Nuclear Strategy, January 31, 2000,
<https://nautilus.org/projects/nuclear-strategy/1974-cinpac-china-assessment/>

The "limited-range ICBM," which had been under development in 1973, was operationally deployed in 1974. The missile, which may have been the DF-4/CSS-3, was capable of reaching all of Russia and part of Alaska. China was not expected, however, to have an operational full-scale ICBM until late in the 1970s. According to CINCPAC:

"The nucleus of the PRC strategic threat in the Pacific was its medium and intermediate range launchers. They could cover Soviet Far East targets or strategic U.S. bases in the Western Pacific. Three ICBM sites were under construction, but problems with the program indicated that a full-range ICBM would not be operational before at least 1977."

As of 1974, China had deployed 51 surface-to-surface missile sites with 87 launchers, including three ICBM sites with five launchers, and 21 IRBM sites with 35 launchers. One nuclear test was conducted and military research and weapons production continued "at a moderate pace" with military capabilities continuing to improve. Although the Chinese Navy was limited to coastal defense, CINCPAC concluded that a "blue ocean" capability was under development, and added that, "the intent of a future high seas capability was in evidence."

Overall, CINCPAC concluded that China's long-range goal, rather than military dominance, was to "supplant" the influence of the Soviet Union and the United States in the Third World. The Chinese policy was to play off the U.S. against Russia, with the dominant factor being distrust and fear of the Soviets. CINCPAC stated that this policy explained China's advocacy of NATO, its support of Pakistan against India, its encouragement of splits in the Warsaw Pact, and its toleration of the U.S. presence (military, economic, and political) in Asia.

Preparations for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Taiwan continued. National Security Decision Memorandum 248 was issued in the spring of 1974 and ordered the removal of all nuclear weapons from Taiwan by the last half of calendar year 1974. As a result, the Quick Strike force at Tainan Air Base, consisting of the F-4 Phantom Commando Domino squadron, was removed along with its nuclear armament in July. A second and final F-4 squadron would be withdrawn by May 30, 1975.

Selected pages from the 1974 CINCPAC history are provided below:

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1974," September 25, 1975, Volume 1. Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (1.15 MB)

Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, "CINCPAC Command History 1974," September 25, 1975, Volume 2. Only selected pages. Partially declassified and released under FOIA. (0.17 MB)

Funding for this project was provided by the [The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) and [Ploughshares Fund](#). For information about the Nuclear Strategy Project contact [Hans M. Kristensen](#).

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/projects/nuclear-strategy/1974-cinpac-china-assessment/>

Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org