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AIR OPERATIONS IN THE TAIWAN CRISIS OF 1958

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Feb 6th/85 call to Office Air Force History

composite air strike force.

XR-TANGO units

US based TAC force.

Feb 13th/85

By

Jacob Van Staaveren

Hist'al Center.
Navy Op'al Archives?

- CINCPAC Ops Plan.
  25-58.
  16 May 58.

November 1962

USAF Historical Division Liaison Office

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FOREWORD

Air Operations in the Taiwan Crisis of 1958 is one of a series of studies on air operations in international incidents, prepared by the USAF Historical Division Liaison Office at the request of the Directorate of Plans, Headquarters USAF. This historical narrative, by Jacob Van Staaveren, is based on primary source materials available in 1960—messages and correspondence—and on histories from many levels of the Air Force, including units, commands, and the Air Staff. Originally prepared in a very few copies, the study has been in great demand by the Air Staff, major commands, and Department of Defense agencies and is now being published for wider dissemination.

The defense of Taiwan has been and will continue to be a source of major concern to the United States and especially to the U.S. armed services. It is likely that there may be more military crises involving Tāiwan and its related islands. The crisis in 1958 provided a test of American military planning concepts that should prove of value for future planning. Occurring in the Pacific almost simultaneously with the Lebanon crisis of July-August 1958, it created certain planning, operational, and logistic problems that had not been anticipated.

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I. THE TAIWAN CRISIS OF 1954-55

Lying about 100 miles off the mainland of China is the island of Taiwan, also known to the Western world as Formosa. Its 13,429 square miles roughly equal the combined area of the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Taiwan is 243 miles long and from 60 to 80 miles wide. With the U.S.-held island of Okinawa 350 miles to the northeast and the Philippine Islands 225 miles to the southeast, Taiwan is one of the most important military bastions in the western Pacific. About 25 miles from the island, in the Taiwan Strait, are the Penghus, a cluster of islets also called the Pescadores. Historically an appendage of Taiwan, they too are important because of their strategic position.

Penghus

The people of Taiwan are primarily of Chinese stock, derived mostly from Fukien and Kwangtung provinces, although some come from the south China plateau. About 2 percent are aborigines. During the twentieth century the population of Taiwan expanded rapidly, from about 3.6 million in 1920 to about 10 million in 1956. The latter figure included some 2 million refugees who fled from the mainland in 1946-49. About 480,000 Japanese were repatriated to Japan in 1945.

China ceded Taiwan and the Penghus to Japan at the end of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, but 50 years later these territories were again in Chinese hands. In the Cairo Declaration of November 1943, the United States together with the United Kingdom and the Republic of China called for the return to China of all territories taken from that country by

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the Japanese. At the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 the United States and the United Kingdom, with the concurrence of China and the subsequent adherence of the Soviet Union, signed a declaration stipulating that the terms of the Cairo Declaration be carried out. With the defeat of Japan, China assumed administrative control over Taiwan and the Penghus. In September 1951, as a last formality, Japan and 26 other nations (not including the Soviet Union) signed a treaty of peace wherein Japan renounced all title and claim to these islands.

At the end of World War II the civil war that had been smoldering since the late 1920's broke out anew between the Chinese Nationalist government under President Chiang Kai-shek and Chinese Communist forces entrenched in north China. By March 1948 the Communists controlled Manchuria; by year's end they had seized virtually all of the country north of the Yangtze River. Defeat followed defeat until the Nationalists were driven off the mainland of China. They fled to Taiwan, the Penghus, and a number of offshore islands, primarily the Kinmen (Quemoy), Matsu, and Tachen groups.* In December 1949, Taipei became the provisional capital of the remnants of the Republic of China. Meanwhile, in Peiping on 1 October 1949, the Chinese Communists established a new People's Republic of China, a regime recognized by the Soviet Union two days later.

*The Kinmen group consists of Big and Little Kinmen plus four other islands, all within 10 miles of Fukien Province. Big Kinmen, about 13 miles long and 8 miles across at its widest point, lies only five miles from Fukien Province and Communist-held Amoy Island. The Matsu group consists of seven islands also about 10 miles from Fukien Province. They lie just outside the Min River estuary at the northern entrance to the Taiwan Strait and are about 155 nautical miles northeast of the Kinmens. The Tachen group consists of 2 main islands, Shang and Hsia, about 10 miles from Chekiang Province, plus 23 smaller islands. The Tachens lie about 250 nautical miles north of Taiwan.

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U.S. Policy toward Taiwan, 1949-54

During the immediate postwar period a United States mission, headed by Gen. George C. Marshall, made an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the Chinese civil war. After the Nationalists lost mainland China, the U.S. State Department attributed the defeat to internal political, economic, and military weaknesses that had been beyond the power of the United States to remedy save through outright intervention. Although sympathetic to the Nationalists, the United States initially avoided a policy that would risk involvement in the Chinese civil war. President Truman stated on 5 January 1950 that the U.S. Government would provide no military aid for Chinese forces and desired no special rights, privileges, or military bases on Taiwan.[1]

The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 ended this policy and led to the military neutralization of Taiwan. Observing that its loss to the Communists would threaten the security of the Pacific area and U.S. forces serving in that area, President Truman directed the U.S. Seventh Fleet to prevent an attack on Taiwan. At the same time the fleet was ordered to prevent any sea or air operations by the Nationalist government against the mainland. In July the JCS affirmed the strategic value of the island to the United States. Their recommendations resulted in renewal of military assistance to the Nationalists in February 1951 and the establishment of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Taipei in November 1952.[2]

In February 1953, shortly after assuming office, President Eisenhower altered U.S. policy toward Taiwan when he declared that the U.S.

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Seventh Fleet would cease to shield Communist China from the Nationalists.[3] However, the "unleashed" military forces of the Chiang government did not attack the mainland, and the action had no major impact on the Korean War.

The cessation of hostilities in Korea in July 1953 eased tension in the Far East only temporarily. The Chinese Communists renewed their assistance to the Indochinese revolutionaries who were fighting French rule. French defeats led to the establishment of a Communist government in North Vietnam. This prompted the United States to enter into new military defense arrangements. It took the lead in concluding a seven-nation Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, signed in Manila in September 1954. Then, on 2 December, it signed a bilateral mutual defense treaty with the Chinese Nationalist government, assuring the defense of Taiwan and the Penghus and such "other territories" as might be determined by mutual consent--an allusion to the small, offshore islands.[4]

In an exchange of notes between the two governments on 10 December 1954, the United States recognized that the Nationalists possessed the inherent right of self-defense not only for Taiwan and the Penghus but also for "other territory" under their control (i.e., the offshore islands). On their part the Nationalists accepted a limitation on their freedom of action. The use of force in this area by either the Nationalist government or the United States would be a joint decision except in an emergency when the Nationalists clearly might have to defend themselves.[5] The notes reflected U.S. fear that conflict with the Communists might arise from unilateral action by the Nationalists who fervently wished to repossess the mainland.

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By this time the status of the Nationalist-held offshore islands had become an increasingly acute problem for the United States. The Communists made unsuccessful attempts to invade the Tachens in May and August 1954, Big Kinmen in September, and Wuchiu Island, about 60 miles northeast of Big Kinmen, in November. In addition, the Communists on the mainland engaged in periodic artillery duels with the Nationalists on the Kinmens and Tachens. Against this background of tension, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, on 1 December 1954, publicly discussed the U.S. commitment to defend the "other territories" referred to in the mutual defense treaty. Explaining that the status of the offshore islands was not affected by the treaty, he said that their defense by the United States would depend on the nature of the specific islands under attack and whether this attack was deemed part of the defense of Taiwan. On this matter the President would probably make the final decision.[6]

U.S. Air Operations during the 1954-55 Crisis

Meanwhile, Chinese Communist forays against the offshore islands and limited air action by both the Nationalist and Communist air forces spurred U.S. military preparations in the area. On 4 September 1954 the JCS warned the Commander-in-Chief Far East (CINCFE), Gen. John E. Hull, in Tokyo, and the Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), Adm. Felix B. Stump, in Hawaii, that it might be necessary to implement the latter's Ops Plan 51-53.* This plan called for augmentation of CINCPAC's air and naval units and for U.S. participation with Nationalist forces,

OPLAN 51-53

*The JCS had transferred responsibility for the defense of Taiwan, the Penghus, and the Philippines from CINCFE to CINCPAC on 15 March 1952.

[redacted]

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if authorized, in the defense of Taiwan, the Penghus, and some of the offshore islands. In approving the plan the JCS had directed the establishment of a USAF component of the Pacific Command, and, on 1 July 1954, the Air Force had formed the Pacific Air Force primarily for this purpose. Its commander was subordinate to the commander of the Far East Air Forces (FEAF)—a major command of CINCFE—in matters pertaining solely to the Air Force and subordinate to CINCPAC in matters relating to the defense of Taiwan, the Penghus, and the Philippines.

In November, JCS directed the Air Force to designate a fighter wing within FEAF for dispatch to Taiwan on short notice. For FEAF, the possibility of deploying a wing posed manifold logistical, maintenance, communication, and fuel problems. FEAF was also mindful of CINCFE's concern lest the transfer of too many military units to Taiwan jeopardize the defense of other areas (Korea, Japan, and Okinawa). It was finally determined that a show of force, if necessary, could be made from Taiwan by rotating squadrons of FEAF's 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing (F-86's) from Japan to the island as part of a training and familiarization program. The State and Defense Departments concurred in the rotation plan on 22 January 1955 during another period of rising tension in the Taiwan Strait.[7]

On 17 January, Ichiang, a small island northwest of the Tachens, had fallen to Communist forces. On 24 January, President Eisenhower asked Congress for a resolution to authorize him to employ the armed forces promptly and effectively to assure the security of Taiwan and the Penghus. The President's request was approved by overwhelming

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majorities in the House and Senate late in January. The resolution passed by the Congress read as follows:[8]

> Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That the President of the United States be and he hereby is authorized to employ the Armed forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, this authority to include the securing and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands and the taking of such other measures as he judges to be required or appropriate in assuring the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores.
>
> This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, and shall so report to the Congress.

Also on 24 January, JCS, with State and Defense approval, ordered the entire 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing to Taiwan. The change in plans resulted from a sudden U.S. decision to evacuate about 40,000 Chinese Nationalist soldiers and civilians from the Tachen Islands, which were considered indefensible. Ships and amphibious elements of CINCFE's naval forces joined the U.S. Seventh Fleet in assisting the evacuation. Following preliminary air deployments on 26 January, three squadrons of the 18th Wing flew from Japan and the Philippines to bases at Chiayi, Tainan, and Taoyuan on Taiwan. Transports of the Fifth Air Force's 315th Air Division lifted personnel, supplies, and equipment.[9]

To direct air operations from Taiwan, the Fifth Air Force established Headquarters, Air Task Force Fifth (Provisional) at Taipei. Its mission was to cover the Navy's evacuation of the islands, protect the carrier Princeton, and, in coordination with the Chinese Nationalist Air Force (CNAF), provide for air defense, search, and rescue in an area south and west of a line 27°N 125°E to 28°N 121°E.[10]

[redacted]

On 3 February the 18th Wing had on hand 65 combat-ready aircraft and 78 combat-ready pilots. For a brief period it flew training and familiarization missions. During the evacuation of the Tachens, which began on 9 February and continued until the 13th, the 18th flew 206 sorties, 184 of them over the Tachen and Nanchi islands* in direct support missions. The CNAF, jointly responsible with the U.S. Navy for antisubmarine patrol south of 27°N, flew P4Y aircraft at 1,000 feet and maintained top cover with their F-47's and F-84's. All forces were cautioned to remain at least three miles from the Chinese mainland. In accordance with JCS instructions, operational control of the 18th Wing passed from CINCFE (FEAF) to CINCPAC (Pacific Air Force).[11]

Thus, what had been initially planned as a show of force through a training exercise became a tactical operation. After the successful completion of the evacuation without Communist opposition, the Taiwan Strait crisis began to wane. By the end of February the 18th's aircraft returned to their home stations, ending CINCPAC's control over the wing. The United States continued to display its air strength on Taiwan, however. CINCPAC's squadron rotation plan was put into effect by JCS directive. The first unit to rotate, the 69th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, temporarily stationed at Clark AB, flew to Chiayi AB in February 1955. Other fighter-bomber or fighter-interceptor squadrons followed, initially at about two-week intervals and after 1 July 1955 for longer periods.[12] In January 1958 units again began to deploy more frequently for shorter periods.

*On 24 February the Nationalists also voluntarily abandoned the Nanchi group, midway between Taiwan and the Tachens and 25 miles from the China coast.

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The Tachen evacuation focused attention on the ability of U.S. and Chinese Nationalist forces to defend Taiwan, the Penghus, and the offshore islands and to conduct joint air operations from Taiwan. The operational problems were formidable. The major deficiency was communications, for U.S. forces had to rely on inadequate and unreliable Nationalist on- and off-island telephone, teletype, radio, and radar systems. The Joint Operations Center (JOC), a Chinese agency, was almost inoperable, and the use of Chinese installers, operators, and maintenance men created a language barrier that compounded communication difficulties. An important logistical deficiency was the severe shortage of F-86 drop tanks—sufficient for only two days of sustained operations. An intricate U.S. command structure on Taiwan complicated both logistical support and liaison with the Nationalists. There was also an urgent need for closer U.S. and Nationalist defense planning. And the CNAF needed more and better aircraft.[13]

To rectify some of the deficiencies, plans were prepared for improved communication and radar systems and air-base facilities. A U.S. section of the Chinese JOC was established in June 1955. Meanwhile, U.S. and Chinese Nationalist representatives held a series of defense coordination conferences in March and April.* As a result of the latter conference, Admiral Stump established a Formosa Liaison Center in May as an integral part of the Formosa Defense Command, permitting more intimate U.S. and Chinese working relationships in planning, opera-

*Previous defense coordination conferences had been held in May and December 1953 and October 1954.

tions, and training. The CNAF was also strengthened by the acquisition of F-86F fighter-interceptors. Contrary to U.S. military advice, the Nationalists bolstered the defenses of the Quemoy group with an additional division of troops from Taiwan.[14]

Interval between Crises

Nearly three and a half years elapsed before Chinese Communist pressure against the offshore islands created a new crisis in August 1958. During this interval the United States and the Nationalists made numerous changes in their defenses in the area. The U.S. Air Force offset a decrease of units and personnel by introducing more modern aircraft, capable of carrying a variety of nuclear weapons, and by stationing a Matador missile squadron on Taiwan in February 1958. The expansion of the CNAF also helped to offset the decrease in USAF's numerical strength. By the middle of 1958, Pacific Air Forces* possessed 879 aircraft, including 129 bombers and 401 fighters. The CNAF had nearly 500 jet aircraft, largely F-84's and F-86's. As it grew, air facilities on Taiwan improved, but many inadequacies remained. The communication net was especially weak, since U.S. plans for major expansion of the net had been rejected as too costly.[15]

The period also witnessed the development of a new role for the Tactical Air Command (TAC). In 1955, Headquarters USAF directed TAC to develop a mobile Composite Air Strike Force (CASF) with an atomic capability, to be used in small localized wars. Earmarked for CASF under TAC's plan Blue Blade (subsequently renamed Double Trouble) were fighter, fighter-bomber, reconnaissance, troop carrier, refueling, communication,

*FEAF was redesignated Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) on 1 July 1957. The Pacific Air Force was dissolved at this time.

and supply units. Assigned to the Nineteenth Air Force for specific operations, CASF units made practice deployments, including one in November 1957 to the Far East under the code name Mobile Zebra. A PACAF-TAC agreement signed in May 1958 set forth the conditions under which TAC forces would deploy to the Pacific.[16]

The U.S. command structure in the Pacific also underwent change. The U.S. Navy emerged as the executive agent for the entire area on 1 July 1957 when the Far east Command with headquarters in Tokyo was disestablished and its responsibilities were transferred to the Pacific Command in Hawaii. In the realignment of subordinate commands, FEAF was redesignated the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), also with headquarters in Hawaii. PACAF was the principal USAF command in the entire Pacific area.[17]

At JCS direction, service commanders sought ways to further streamline arrangements on Taiwan. Here three separate headquarters existed: Taiwan Defense Command (TDC), Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), and Air Task Force (ATF) 13 (P). The Air Force and the Army wanted to eliminate TDC and consolidate all military activities on Taiwan under a Chief, MAAG, who would be an Army lieutenant general, but Admiral Stump considered such an arrangement impractical and politically infeasible at the time. He cautioned against a change that might imply a decline in U.S. interest in Taiwan. Early in 1958, with JCS approval, TDC and MAAG were combined into a single headquarters under a vice admiral. The commander of ATF 13 also served as chief of Air Force Section MAAG. This centralization of command provided one rather than three

points of contact between U.S. and Chinese military authorities and also permitted reduction of the U.S. headquarters staff and facilities on Taiwan.[18]

Admiral Stump had major responsibility for overall operational planning. On 16 May 1958 he published Ops Plan 25-58 to guide his major subordinate commanders in updating their respective operational plans.* These subordinates were Gen. Laurence S. Kuter, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF); Vice Adm. Herbert C. Hopwood, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT); and Gen. Isaac D. White, Commander-in-Chief Army Pacific (CINCARPAC).[19]

OPLAN 25-58. Stump.

Between 1955 and 1958 the United States made no basic changes in its Taiwan policies. This country would insure the military security of Taiwan and the Penghus (the defense of the offshore islands a matter of Presidential discretion), and it would support the Nationalist government as a free alternative to the Chinese Communist government. Maintaining Nationalist morale was deemed essential. However, frustrations on Taiwan mounted as Nationalists saw their hopes of recapturing mainland China fade, their position in the international community decline, and their national existence continue to be dependent on the United States. The determination of the Nationalists to hold the Kinmen and Matsu islands, now defended by more than 100,000 of their 450,000 regular ground troops, troubled U.S. policy planners. On the eve of a new Taiwan crisis, the nature of U.S. reaction to a Chinese Communist attack or an air and sea blockade of the offshore islands was still under discussion by the National Security Council.[20]

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*For command channels in May 1958, see chart following p 32.

II. THE RENEWED COMMUNIST THREAT TO TAIWAN

There were signs of renewed trouble in the Taiwan Strait in July 1958 following the overthrow of the Iraqi government and the sudden dispatch of U.S. and British troops to Lebanon and Jordan, respectively, to stabilize the situation in these countries.*[1] In China, the Communists restricted western diplomats to the city of Peiping and intensified the propaganda war, especially their threats to "liberate" Taiwan. After four days of secret talks, Premier Khrushchev and Mao Tse-tung added to the tension by their joint communique from Peiping on 3 August demanding the withdrawal of U.S. and British forces from the Middle East.[2]

More ominous were signs of Chinese Communist military preparations. Heretofore unoccupied airfields in Fukien Province, across the strait from Taiwan, soon held an estimated 200 fighters, including Mig-17's. Air defense against CNAF reconnaissance and fighter sorties over the mainland became more effective. Between 23 June and 8 August, 10 CNAF aircraft were shot down, 7 in air engagements and 3 by AAA fire. Communist overflights of the Kinmen and Matsu islands began. Across from the Kinmens the Communists augmented their artillery strength; on 18 August they fired about 100 shells at the islands. Three days later

*For a discussion of this operation, see study by USAF Historical Division Liaison Office: Air Operations in the Lebanon Crisis of 1958.

[redacted]

the war of nerves was intensified by the Soviet Union's public pledge to assist the Peiping government's efforts to free Taiwan.[3]

Initial U.S. and Chinese Nationalist Reactions

Reacting to the Communist military buildup, the Nationalist government early in August declared a state of emergency for the offshore islands.[4] It asked the United States to speed up military assistance, particularly F-86F aircraft and Sidewinder missiles, and reconsider a previously denied request for F-100D aircraft. The Nationalists also urged the deployment of USAF units to Taiwan.[5] President Chiang Kai-shek, in a meeting with American Ambassador Everett F. Drumwright and the new Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Adm. Harry D. Felt, stressed the gravity of the crisis, decried U.S. and British failure to act decisively in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, and warned that this would encourage an attack on Taiwan. Reminded of his treaty commitments with respect to military action against the Communists (i.e., the 10 December 1954 notes), Chiang resentfully promised that his government would honor them.[6]

Improvement of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force, which now had 87,000 men and 826 aircraft (497 of them jets), had previously been under consideration by U.S. authorities. On 7 August the Department of Defense approved sending 60 rehabilitated F-86F's to the CNAF, and on the 15th the JCS decided that the CNAF "should be built up and maintained in such a condition that it is qualitatively superior to the Chinese Communist Air Force." Pending approval of this decision by the Secretary of Defense, commanders were directed to take all practicable steps to provide the CNAF

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with suitable aircraft and necessary pilot training. A week later the Secretary of Defense approved the diversion to Taiwan of six F-100D aircraft earmarked for NATO.[7]

On 15 July, the day U.S. troops began debarking in Lebanon, the Air Force had placed all of its commands on alert. Ten days later, when the Middle East crisis appeared to have subsided, Headquarters USAF authorized field commanders to decrease their alert status and resume crew and combat-readiness training. PACAF intelligence, meanwhile, concluded that the next most likely trouble spot would be in the Taiwan area, a prediction given substance by the movement of Mig aircraft to airfields opposite Taiwan and the growing belligerency of the Chinese Communists. On 6 August the Air Force directed commanders concerned to reexamine their plans to support CINCPAC's Ops Plan 25-58. Gen. Otto P. Weyland, TAC commander, was asked to review his command's capability to deploy CASF X-Ray Tango to the Pacific, while Lt. Gen. William F. Tunner of MATS and General Kuter of PACAF were asked to determine their capabilities to support this deployment. Weyland responded by transferring planning and operational responsibility for deployment of CASF X-Ray Tango to the Twelfth Air Force because the Nineteenth was preoccupied in the Middle East with its CASF Bravo force.[8]

MATS. Military Air Transport Service.

Kuter distributed the main portions of PACAF's interim Ops Plan 25-58 to his subordinate commanders on 7 August. It provided for U.S. military assistance to the Chinese Nationalist forces in three phases: Phase I, patrol and reconnaissance activities (already under way); Phase II, the defeat of the attacking force; Phase III, air operations to destroy

the Chinese Communist capability to make war. The last phase would be conducted primarily by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) with the support of CINCPAC forces. Most important to Kuter was Phase II. Assuming conditions short of a general war and the use of atomic weapons by both sides, PACAF would be responsible for striking 32 of the 62 pre-planned targets. Initial atomic strikes would be launched from Clark AB in the Philippines and Kadena AB in Okinawa, with additional strikes as the situation dictated. The Thirteenth Air Force at Clark AB would handle detailed planning of air operations for both PACAF and Chinese Nationalist air units. The Fifth Air Force, with headquarters in Japan, would provide tanker, tactical, and reconnaissance support to the Thirteenth during the early stages of operations.[9] Phase II was amended on 18 August when the Air Force alerted five Guam-based B-47's that had Mark 6 weapons with C cores to insure the most effective instantaneous retaliatory strikes against coastal airfields. This move gave SAC a role in limited war. It was uncertain, however, whether these plans could be fully implemented because the American ambassador to Japan, Douglas MacArthur II, warned that the Japanese government might ask the United States not to use Japanese bases in a war against the Chinese Communists.[10]

PACAF's Ops Plan 25-58 was completed with little time to spare. Kuter distributed Annex F, the logistical part, on 14 August. It required air units moving to forward bases to deploy only the minimum equipment essential to the success of their missions and to make maximum use of prestocked equipment.[11] The plan itself was not published until 20 August, only three days before the Taiwan crisis broke into full force.

Bombardment of the Kinmens

On 23 August the Chinese Communists, using an estimated 300 guns, unleashed a tremendous artillery bombardment against the Kinmen islands, firing more than 40,000 rounds on the first day. Communist planes strafed the islands and sank a Nationalist LST. Artillery fire on the second day was equally severe; for each of the succeeding five days it averaged about 10,000 rounds, sufficient to impose a tight artillery blockade. Stepping up its propaganda war, Peiping radio urged the Nationalist garrisons to surrender. Leaflets dropped on Little Kinmen boasted that the defenders were isolated and that the People's Republic of China had an atomic stockpile.[12]

When the bombardment began, Secretary Dulles warned the Peiping government not to seize the Kinmens or Matsus lest such an attempt threaten the peace. To back up his warning, the JCS on 24 and 25 August ordered the carriers Essex in the Mediterranean and Midway at Pearl Harbor and their destroyer escorts plus other ships to speed to the Taiwan Strait to reinforce the Seventh Fleet. The Army was ordered to expedite the shipment of a Nike battalion to Taiwan and more modern equipment for seven Nationalist army divisions on the offshore islands. Air commanders were directed to be ready to assist Nationalist forces by striking coastal air bases if a major attack threatened the principal offshore islands.* They were cautioned that probably

Nikes

*The principal islands were defined as Big Kinmen, Little Kinmen, and five islands of the Matsu group.

only conventional weapons would be initially authorized, but they were also instructed to be prepared to make atomic strikes deep into Chinese Communist territory.[13]

U.S. intelligence concluded initially that the Communists were testing U.S. and Chinese Nationalist reaction and might try to seize one or more of the islands if not convinced that the United States would intervene. However, an amphibious force for possible invasion of Big or Little Kirmen had not yet been observed. Intelligence sources did not anticipate an immediate strike at Taiwan or the Penghus, for they did not believe that either the Peiping government or the Soviet Union wanted a major war. But they warned of the danger of a Nationalist attack against the mainland if pressure against the offshore islands became too great.[14]

Meanwhile, the United States prohibited retaliatory aerial strikes against the Communists. Chiang Kai-shek vigorously protested against this injunction as inhuman and unfair. Although he promised to consult with the United States before taking any military action, the Generalissimo doubted whether he could control the morale of his armed forces and the public for more than a few days unless he was granted authority to bomb Communist gun positions, airfields, and communication centers.[15] When the bombardment continued into the second week, Secretary Dulles announced that the United States had not decided whether the artillery attack on the islands related to the defense of Taiwan and the Penghus pursuant to the joint congressional resolution of January 1955.[16] This

served to keep both Chiang and the Communists guessing as to whether the United States would assist the Nationalists in defense of their offshore islands.

Deployment of USAF Units

Shortly after the bombardment of the offshore islands began, USAF field commanders requested additional air strength in the Pacific, especially on Taiwan. On 23 August the commander of ATF 13, Brig. Gen. Fred M. Dean, asked for the Fifth Air Force's 16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, stationed on Okinawa. Two days later General Kuter urged the immediate deployment of part of TAC's CASF X-Ray Tango force* from the United States, specifically an advance command element, an F-100 squadron, a C-130 squadron, and part of a communication and control group. Six RF-101's already on Taiwan on rotation were included in the CASF.[17]

These requests were not immediately approved. U.S. military forces were still in the Middle East, and the meaning of the Chinese Communist bombardment was still uncertain. Washington authorities did not authorize any major air deployments within or to the Pacific for several days until they had evaluated all intelligence data and the international consequences of possible U.S. involvement in the Taiwan area.[18]

As a result, about five days elapsed before the 16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron was authorized to move. On the 29th, all but two

*The CASF force for the Pacific was initially composed of two segments, CASF X-Ray Tango and CASF Yankee. Only CASF X-Ray Tango deployments were made during the 1958 Taiwan crisis.

[redacted]

of its F-86D's flew from Kadena AB, Okinawa, to Tainan AB, Taiwan, and were combat-ready seven and a half hours after the movement order. On the same day TAC began the CASF X-Ray Tango deployment. Preceded by tankers sent to staging bases en route, part of the force departed from George and Hamilton AFB's in California. Brig. Gen. Alvin P. Tacon and members of his advance command element were the first to reach their destination, Clark AB, in the Philippines, on 1 September.[19]

Since the JCS had indicated that only nonnuclear weapons probably would be initially authorized to counter a Chinese Communist attack on the offshore islands, Kuter asked on 31 August for additional CASF units. Noting that one B-36 could carry more 1,000-pound HE bombs than an F-100 squadron, he also recommended alerting one SAC B-36 squadron. The JCS disapproved a portion of Kuter's request and the alert of a B-36 unit, but on 2 September it authorized the deployment of the remaining force known as CASF X-Ray Tango (Balance). Finally, Kuter received permission on 6 September to deploy one F-101A squadron to Okinawa and 12 Air Defense Command (ADC) F-104's to Taiwan. Although neither had been previously identified as CASF X-Ray units, the F-101 squadron was designated CASF X-Ray Tango (Augmented) because it belonged to TAC.[20]

The entire CASF deployment,* beginning on 29 August and ending on 12 September, took place in three distinct stages, following each other

*For a list of CASF X-Ray Tango units and their home stations see App 1.

[redacted]

so closely in time that they blended into one continuous operation. Because of the great distances, one or two air refuelings were required for F-100, F-101, and RF-101 aircraft flying from California to Hawaii, then to Midway or Guam en route to Okinawa or the Philippines. The Twelfth Air Force controlled overall deployment from an air operations center at its headquarters in Waco, Texas.[21]

The movement of CASF X-Ray Tango from the United States to Taiwan, Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan was generally successful. Travel times varied from about two to six days, depending on a variety of circumstances. The tropical storm Grace which swept through Guam on 2 September delayed initial F-100 and C-130 flights for 24 hours. Eight aircraft aborted or were delayed en route for maintenance, some not arriving until 26 September.[22]

This large-scale deployment was not achieved without overcoming obstacles. B-57 and C-130 flights were hazardous because there was only one permanent weather-reporting station for the 2,200 miles between the California bases and Hickam AFB, Hawaii. Without accurate upper-air data, aircraft had to buck high-altitude winds and arrived with only minimum fuel reserves. Some arrived and departed without proper cargoes, in part because of insufficient information concerning the cargo-personnel load and destination of each plane. Seaweed equipment prestocked at en route bases was either inadequate or in poor condition. Time was lost during deployment because refueling tankers had to be sent first to forward bases. Finally, limited cryptographic and other communication facilities at these bases hampered security, coordination, and control.[23]

[redacted]

[redacted]

While the CASF X-Ray Tango fighter and reconnaissance aircraft flew all the way with the aid of refuelings, the ADC F-104's had to be disassembled and transported in C-124 transports. Under the code name Jonah Able the first F-104 Starfighter left Hamilton AFB, Calif., on 8 September, was reassembled at Taoyuan AB, Taiwan, and made its first flight on 12 September. All 12 aircraft were not in place and operational, however, until 19 September. Their mission was to fly combat air patrol.[24]

ADC had not anticipated this deployment, which was primarily for psychological purposes. Although the Starfighters had departed in great secrecy, their arrival on Taiwan quickly became a matter of public knowledge. Kuter believed that this type of publicity would firmly convince both the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists that the United States would support the former with the latest weapons.[25]

Support airlift for CASF X-Ray Tango was provided by MATS Ops Plan 115-58 Double Trouble. Like TAC, MATS received orders on 29 August to begin the CASF deployment. Its original plan called for support of the CASF in a single "package" of 36 airlift trips. But the deployment in three stages rather than one and the inclusion of an additional F-101 unit made this plan inapplicable. MATS C-118's, C-121's, and C-124's made 81 trips (19 for the first stage, 52 for the second, and 10 for the third). In all, 1,472 passengers and 860.1 tons of cargo were carried. One C-124 was lost, crashing near Guam and killing its 6-man crew and 12 passengers. Although numerous changes in plans considerably increased transport needs, MATS was able to provide TAC with the necessary support.[26]

[redacted]

To airlift the F-104's, including personnel and essential cargo, it was necessary to make 20 C-124 and 4 C-97 trips. Only the wings, tail, and nose assembly of the Starfighter had to be detached in order to fit it into the maw of the giant Globemaster. This was the first large-scale movement of high-performance aircraft by C-124's to a troubled area.[27]

After the deployment,* PACAF had 68 more tactical aircraft available: 42 offensive fighters, or an increase of 24 percent; 14 bombers, or an increase of 28 percent; and 12 defense fighters, or an increase of 6 percent. Adding reconnaissance, transport, tanker, and other supporting units, the augmentation totaled 123 aircraft. The number of PACAF atomic aircraft reached 183. On Taiwan, the center of activity, there were about 4,400 USAF officers and airmen on 29 September.[28]

Deployment of Navy, Marine, and Army Units

The major U.S. naval deployments to the Taiwan area consisted of the super carriers Midway and Essex and their destroyer escorts. The Midway, under JCS directions of 25 August, left Pearl Harbor on the 27th, arrived northeast of Taiwan, and commenced operations on 4 September, about 10 days later. The Essex, ordered to the Pacific on the 24th, passed through the Suez Canal on 29 August ("escorted" by Soviet submarines) and joined the Seventh Fleet on 16 September, about 22 days after the movement directive was issued. The arrival of the two carriers, their destroyer escorts, plus other reinforcements, made this

*For a list of USAF units available to PACAF after deployment, see App 2.

fleet the largest naval force assembled since the Korean War.* During the augmentation period the Seventh Fleet changed its position in the Taiwan Strait to cover general war targets farther north, requiring PACAF units to cover as many former Navy targets as possible. The Navy maintained peak strength in the Strait only briefly, for some elements, including carriers, were soon withdrawn in accordance with the fleet rotation plan.[29]

The Marines deployed 56 aircraft of Marine Air Group 11 (MAG-11) from Atsugi NAS, Japan, to Taiwan. The Seventh Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Wallace M. Beakley, recommended this move after the JCS, on 25 August, instructed Admiral Felt and the TDC commander, Vice Adm. Ronald N. Smoot, to reinforce the air defense of Taiwan. MAG-11 had been alerted on 24 August but most of the unit did not move to Taiwan for nearly two weeks awaiting the selection of a suitable airfield. An advance Marine party spent several days surveying airfields and negotiating with USAF representatives over the use of one to meet Seventh Fleet requirements. Naval and Marine commanders rejected the first two that were suggested because they did not have an 8,000-foot runway and their selection would create logistical problems. The Navy also insisted that MAG-11 be located in an area where it could not only help

*The Seventh Fleet now had 6 carriers, 3 heavy cruisers, about 40 destroyers, a submarine division, and about 20 other supporting craft. Carriers, in addition to the Midway and Essex were the Hancock, Shangri-la, Lexington, and Princeton. Their aircraft included Skywarriors, Skyhawks, supersonic Crusaders, and Tigers; about 96 could deliver atomic weapons. The heavy cruisers were the Helena, Los Angeles, and Columbus.

defend Taiwan but also provide air cover and support for the fleet and augment its carrier strike force. On 29 August, agreement was finally reached on a third airfield, Pingtung North, which could meet requirements.[30]

MAG-11 deployment began partly to support a previously scheduled Marine training exercise, Land Ho. Twelve aircraft of the initial MAG-11 squadron left Atsugi on 31 August and arrived that day at Tainan AB to participate in Land Ho, but six, scheduled for Pingtung, were delayed for nearly two days because of mechanical difficulties or typhoon Grace. The other two squadrons of the group flew from Atsugi to Pingtung nonstop on 6 and 7 September, respectively.[31]

The support airlift between 29 August and 11 September carried about 500 men and 205 tons of cargo in 54 trips—43 by Marine transports, 6 by Navy, and 5 by Air Force. A sealift from Yokohama brought an additional 1,150 men and 3,900 tons of cargo. The gap created in Japan's air defenses by the departure of MAG-11 was quickly filled by the transfer of MAG-13 from Hawaii to Atsugi NAS.[32] MAG-11 was ready for limited air defense operations on 8 September,* and on the 11th it began flying night cover sorties for the Nationalists and the U.S. Navy, who were resupplying the offshore islands. The 12 aircraft at Tainan rejoined the main Marine unit at Pingtung North, and MAG-11 became fully operational about 18 September. Taking into account all the obstacles encountered, the Marines

*With the arrival of the Marine aircraft on Taiwan, 10 FJ4, 30 F4D, 2 TV-2, and 2 R4D aircraft were stationed at Pingtung North and 12 FJ4 temporarily at Tainan.

considered most noteworthy the deployment of MAG-11 and its achievement of a limited operational status 10 days after the selection of an airfield.[33]

The JCS instructions of 25 August called for the expeditious shipment of a Nike-Hercules battalion to Taiwan. Certain types of modern equipment for the seven Nationalist divisions stationed on the offshore islands were also required within 60 to 90 days. As operational plans had not provided for the deployment of a Nike-Hercules unit, a month passed before it left Fort Bliss, Texas. Meanwhile, a battalion headquarters and four firing battery sites were selected and construction of semipermanent facilities began at Taoyuan on 15 September. The advance party of the 71st Artillery, 2d Missile Battalion, arrived by air on 17 September, and the remainder of the battalion arrived by ship on 9 October. It did not become operational until 25 October.[34]

III. U. S. MILITARY PREPARATIONS ON TAIWAN

The heavy influx of aircraft, personnel, supplies, and equipment into Pacific bases during the first half of September created some initial confusion. Some air units did not arrive at their assigned destinations, upsetting logistical arrangements. Since more USAF aircraft went to Taiwan than planned, such as the ADC F-104's, air bases were overtaxed, requiring expensive crash improvement projects. Under TAC's operational plan for CASF X-Ray Tango, the command element under General Tacon would have exercised operational, administrative, and logistical control. Because the CASF units had to be widely dispersed, General Kuter scrapped this plan, split up the command element, and integrated its personnel into the Thirteenth Air Force. Only a small CASF headquarters, redesignated the Thirteenth Air Force Command Element, Ryukyus, remained at Kadena AB, Okinawa.[1]

Planning for Nonnuclear Operations

Some of these adjustments reflected in part the lack of firm operational plans at the beginning of the Taiwan crisis. There was insufficient time after the PACAF-TAC agreement of May 1958 to exchange information. The delay in obtaining JCS approval of PACAF's Ops Plan 25-58 prevented Kuter from completing and distributing this plan until shortly before the Communists began their bombardment on 23 August, and subordinate commanders had little or no time for detailed planning. More important, however, was the belated formulation of U.S. policy on

defense of Taiwan, the Penghus, and the offshore islands. Operational planners were not prepared for the JCS instruction of 25 August that required them to assume more responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan and the Penghus than they had anticipated and also to assist the Nationalists in defending the principal offshore islands, initially without nuclear weapons. This led to changes in plans, modification of the command structure, and a new disposition of air units.[2]

On the same day—25 August—Admiral Felt informed his major subordinate commanders that he intended to prepare a special nonnuclear Annex H to his Ops Plan 25-58, and he asked them to take similar action. Observing that his original plan envisaged the employment of nuclear weapons and that the accompanying logistical system would be inadequate for nonnuclear operations, he requested an immediate appraisal of the nonnuclear capabilities of his commands.[3]

The possible U.S. injunction against nuclear weapons caused Felt and his subordinates much anxiety. They believed that the Communists had sufficient aircraft to stop the resupply of the offshore islands, U.S. airpower would be necessary to prevent their capture, and a U.S. nonnuclear defense might not be successful. Kuter was particularly apprehensive about conducting nonnuclear operations that would require a high sortie rate and weaken his ability to support his emergency war plan. He believed insufficient effort had been made to convince the National Security Council that the most effective way to deal with the enemy's numerical superiority was to use nuclear weapons. However, if nonnuclear operations had to be undertaken, he recommended that U.S.

participation be limited to striking Communist coastal airfields opposite Taiwan.[4]

The fears expressed by field commanders concerning a U.S. nonnuclear policy in the Taiwan area were to no avail. On 29 August the JCS defined three new intermediate phases of possible Chinese Communist action against the offshore islands, Taiwan, and the Penghus, and it forbade the use of atomic weapons during each phase. President Eisenhower made a more definitive statement of this policy on 6 September when he granted the JCS emergency authority to order the use of only conventional weapons against any major Communist assault on the offshore islands.[5]

Meanwhile, Felt informed the JCS on 5 September that his nonnuclear forces consisted of four F-100 and one B-57 USAF squadrons, stationed at Clark, Kadena, Naha, and Chiayi Air Bases, and aircraft on four Navy carriers. The squadrons could fly 170 sorties and deliver 400,000 pounds of bombs daily, and each carrier could launch up to 64 sorties and deliver 265,000 pounds of bombs daily, but in bad weather each could manage only 12 sorties per day. The Air Force units had a 30-day supply of POL, spare parts, support items, nonnuclear or "iron bombs," and 20-mm ammunition but only a 15-day supply of external fuel tanks and pylons for F-100's. Bomb supplies aboard Navy carriers were sufficient for only 24 to 48 hours but were backed by an 18-day reserve in the Pacific area. A substantial amount of aircraft ammunition was available, and logistical support for the carriers was adequate. The

CNAF could fly 650 bomb-carrying sorties daily. In his assessment of his nonnuclear strength, CINCPAC did not specify the nature or location of Communist targets or the expected aircraft attrition.*6

On 11 September, Felt issued his nonnuclear Annex H. This document and similar annexes prepared by subordinate commanders sought to define more precisely possible Communist action and U.S. and Nationalist reaction in the Taiwan area in order to control, if possible, a threatening military situation without resort to nuclear weapons. CINCPAC's original Ops Plan 25-58 had included Phase I (patrol and reconnaissance) and Phase II (defeat of the attacking force). It had anticipated a possible "transition phase" between the two. Annex H spelled out three intermediate phases of conflict between Phases I and II as defined by the JCS on 25 August.

In Phase I-H, when there was no indication that the Communists would attempt to capture the principal offshore islands, U.S. forces would provide only logistical assistance to the Nationalists. In Phase II-H, when the Communists would attempt to capture one or more of the principal offshore islands, U.S. forces would assist the Nationalists in attacking Communist invasion forces, artillery positions, and airfields in the vicinity of the islands under attack. In Phase III-H, when the Communists would extend the battle to Taiwan and the Penghus or to international waters close to both areas, U.S. and Nationalist aircraft would attack Communist airfields, GCI sites, military control

*CINCPAC's hastily assembled report on USAF capabilities appeared unduly optimistic in the light of subsequent analyses of the supply reserves in the Pacific. See below, pp 34-36.

centers adjacent to coastal airfields, and fixed targets. They would attack the airfields on a carefully controlled basis in a gradually expanding arc until they had destroyed all bases in an 800-mile radius capable of supporting Russian-built IL-28 Beagle aircraft.[7]

To coordinate the three intermediate phases of action, Admiral Felt designated the TDC commander, Admiral Smoot, as his subordinate unified commander on 11 September. Felt had maintained that the command structure on Taiwan had to be changed from a highly centralized control of a limited mobile nuclear force to less centralized control of nonnuclear units. To Kuter, such a change seemed unnecessary since it might break up the integrity of PACAF units. He also noted that the command structure would again need revision if nuclear weapons were authorized at a later date. On 10 September, however, JCS authorized the establishment of a subordinate unified command on Taiwan.[8]

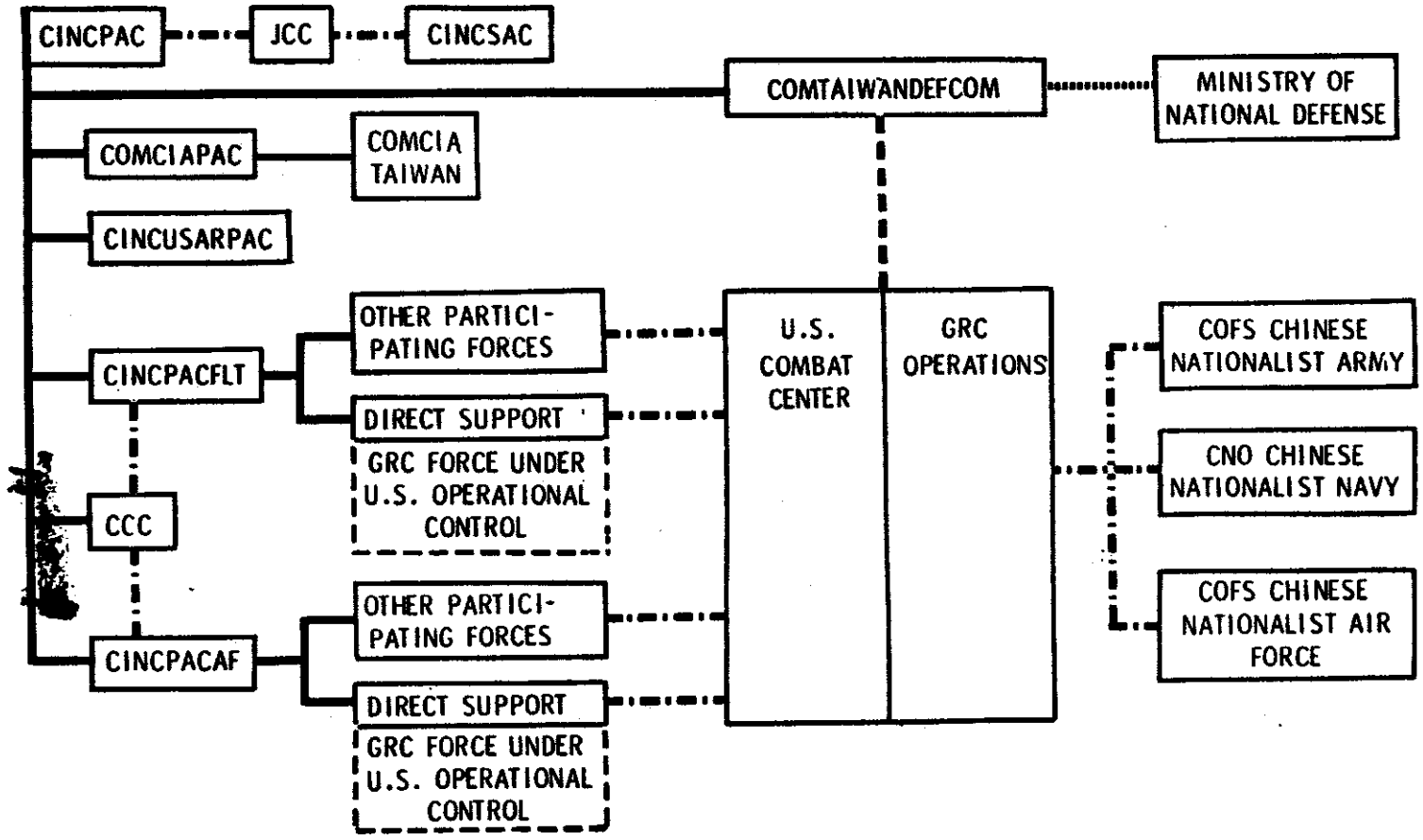
Smoot would guide the Nationalists on current or projected military operations, establish and operate a combined operations center (COC) on Taiwan, and assume operational control of specified U.S. forces. He would also conduct patrol and sea and air reconnaissance in coordination with Nationalist forces. His three major subordinates on Taiwan were the commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Taiwan (who was also chief of MAAG Taiwan); the commander of the Taiwan Patrol Force (Navy); and the commander of ATF 13 (Air Force).

As the designated air defense commander under Smoot, the commander of ATF 13—General Dean—would carry out air defense measures (includ-

[redacted]

U.S. AND CHINESE NATIONALIST COMMAND RELATIONS IN THE TAIWAN AREA

12 MAY 1958



Source: CINCPAC Ops Plan 25-58, 16 MAY 58.

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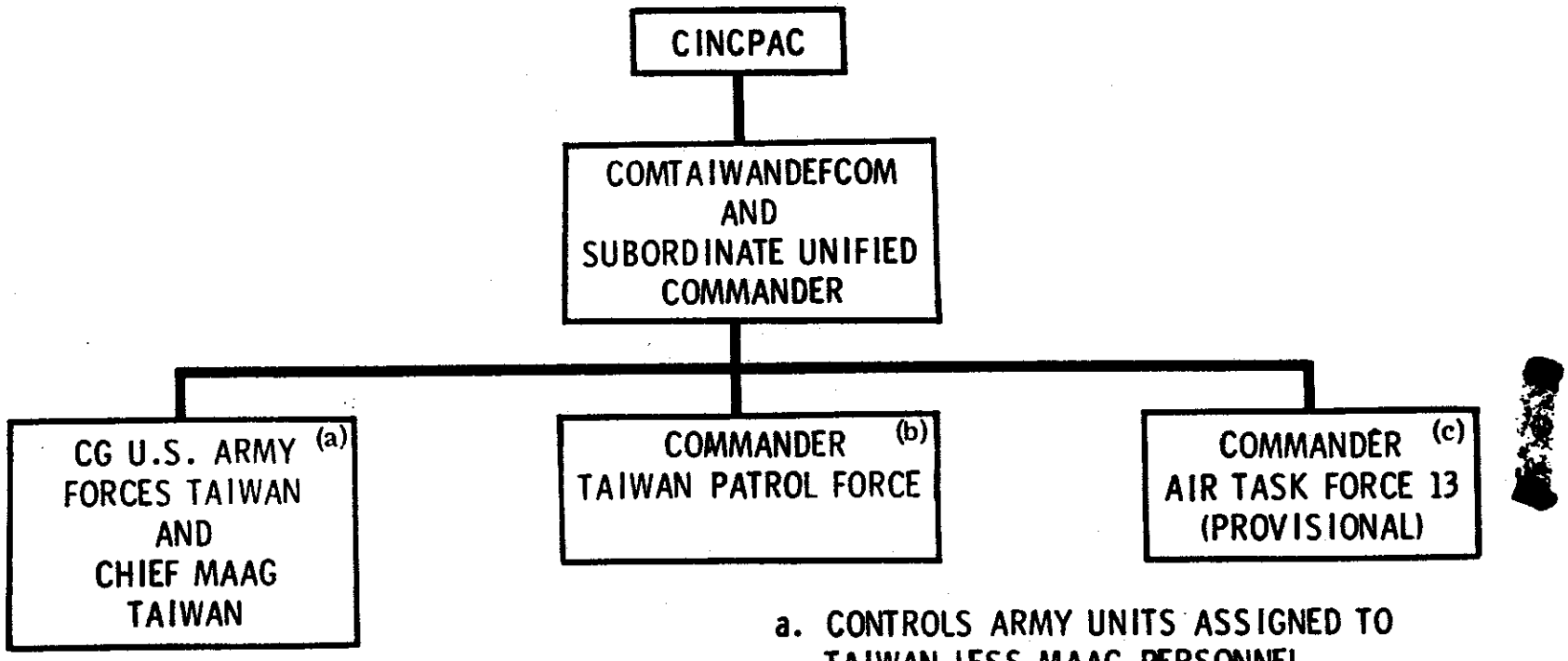
COMMAND RELATIONS ON TAIWAN AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF
A SUBORDINATE UNIFIED COMMAND
11 SEPTEMBER 1958



a. CONTROLS ARMY UNITS ASSIGNED TO TAIWAN LESS MAAG PERSONNEL

b. CONTROLS UNITS ASSIGNED TO TAIWAN PATROL FORCE PLUS MARINE CORPS UNITS DEPLOYED TO TAIWAN

c. CONTROLS UNITS ASSIGNED TO ATF 13 (P). ALSO DESIGNATED AIR DEFENSE COMMANDER OF TAIWAN-PENGHUS EFFECTIVE 16 SEP 58.

ing defense of naval units on request) and protect Nationalist ships resupplying the Kinmens and Matsus. These operations would be conducted in accordance with limitations imposed by the U.S. policy of avoiding hostilities except as necessary to support the Nationalists and in self-defense. Operations conducted with any other forces of the Pacific Command in support of the Nationalists and by any Nationalist forces placed under U.S. operational control would also be coordinated through the Taiwan COC.[9]

Kuter and his Army and Navy equivalents relinquished to Smoot the operational control of their units. They were responsible, however, for providing emergency logistical support to these units and to Nationalist forces and for furnishing facilities and personnel to the U.S. sector of the COC. Kuter's manifold duties also included augmenting the CNAF's ground environment system, providing personnel for ACW systems and other communication nets on the island, and bringing to operational readiness the coordination-centers in the Philippines and Japan.[10]

Strengthening Air Defenses

The Taiwan crisis did not expand beyond intermediate Phase I-H. Overt conflict was limited to Nationalist and Communist artillery exchanges, occasional aerial battles over the Taiwan Strait, and small sea engagements as the Nationalists tried to resupply the offshore islands. Free from direct participation in military action, the U.S. forces could spend the critical weeks of September and October in advising and assisting the Nationalists and in strengthening their own military posture in the Taiwan area.

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On 16 September, Admiral Smoot assumed responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan and the Penghus and designated General Dean as his air defense commander. An exchange of letters between Smoot and the chief of the general staff of the Ministry of National Defense, Gen. Wang Shu-Ming, confirmed previous U.S. and Nationalist verbal agreements on air defense arrangements. Most of the CNAF could be used to defend the offshore islands against attack, provide aerial cover for surface resupply efforts, or strike at Communist mainland targets, if necessary. About 121 aircraft were eventually assigned air defense missions: 49 USAF F-104's, F-86's, and F-100D's; 56 Marine FJ4's and F4D's; and 16 CNAF F-86's and F-84G's. These planes were stationed at Chiayi, Hsinchu, Tainan, Taoyuan, and Pingtung Air Bases on Taiwan.

Dean did not exercise complete control of the Marine aircraft, however. The commander of the Seventh Fleet, Admiral Beakley, insisted that they remain an integral part of his fleet because his carrier strike force, tailored for a nuclear conflict, was deficient in escort aircraft for nonnuclear strikes. After some controversy, MAG-11 was given a three-fold mission: air defense, which would have overriding priority only if Taiwan and the Penghus were attacked or in imminent danger of attack; air support and cover for the Seventh Fleet; and augmentation of the fleet's strike force.[11]

The air defense of Taiwan called for 8 USAF, 2 Marine, and 8 CNAF aircraft to be placed on 5- and 15-minute day alerts and 8 USAF and 2 Marine aircraft on 5- and 15-minute night, all-weather alerts. Fortunately, there was sufficient time to train those pilots who had not yet attained the desired standard of operational readiness.[12]

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Communication and Logistic Problems

The concentration of airpower on Taiwan quickly drew attention to the most critical U.S. deficiency in the Pacific--communications. U.S. air units, depending largely on the Chinese communication net, faced formidable problems of language, security, and reliability. Overclassified messages, nearly all dispatched as "operational immediate," created lengthy delays. Circuits from Taiwan to the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan were woefully inadequate. The lack of sufficient on-line teletype communications alone could have made it virtually impossible to conduct combat operations.[13]

So how can a N-weapon retain control?

Because U.S. plans for major improvements had been rejected as too costly, crash communication projects had to be undertaken. During September and October about $4 million worth of Army equipment and about $2 million of USAF equipment were flown in. Between 25 August and 25 October, communication circuits on Taiwan increased from 25 to 200, including 120 voice and 30 teletype on-island circuits and 20 and 30 teletype off-island circuits. About 655 CASF, AACS, and other personnel arrived for temporary duty on Taiwan during the critical period to assist in manning communication facilities.[14]

The prospect of engaging initially in nonnuclear operations also required immediate adjustments in logistical requirements. During the crisis PACAF could make limited use of the Seaweed stocks earmarked for its emergency war plan, but Kuter was apprehensive about the adequacy of the stocks. Up to August 1958, stockpiling of Seaweed items was only 75 to 77 percent complete and of "absolute essential equipment" items only about 63 percent complete. Some very essential items were not

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stocked at all. The critically short items included certain types of conventional ammunition. Because of these shortages and the prospect of a nonnuclear war, the Air Materiel Command's supply retrenchment program in the Pacific was halted.[15]

To meet the urgent need for supplies and equipment, the Fifth Air Force airlifted about 1,100 tons of essential items to Taiwan during the first two weeks of the bombardment. Thirteenth Air Force transports also brought vitally needed items. And large quantities of supplies were dispatched by sea. Starting and refueling units, war consumables, housekeeping supplies and equipment, and a tactical hospital comprised the bulk of these items. From PACAF and the United States came Sidewinder and other nonnuclear rockets, ammunition, and conventional bombs. External fuel tanks were also needed, and at least 3,500 tanks were flown from Korea and Japan to Okinawa and the Philippines, while some were airlifted from the United States.[16]

Prestocked items were not only insufficient but some were in poor condition. Some were also at the wrong bases and had to be airlifted to where they were most needed. This required considerable intratheater airlift and time, and there was no assurance that both would always be available in a crisis. USAF officers on the scene believed that USAF units could not have sustained more than three days of nonnuclear operations, and that the Navy's carrier strike force was in a similar predicament.[17]

While MATS was diverting much of its effort in early September to support the deployment of CASF X-Ray Tango and other units, a serious

[redacted]

backlog of channel airlift* items accumulated at Travis AFB, Calif., the main departure point. To improve this situation, about the middle of the month, MATS began to use commercial airlift, letting contracts to 10 commercial lines for 807 tons but not for an additional 179 tons because of excessive costs. Through commercial airlift and the gradual return of many MATS aircraft to the regular runs the backlog at Travis was reduced, but the problem persisted until the end of October. By then, 5,554 tons had been moved to the Pacific.[18]

The backlog at Travis reflected certain deficiencies in airlift planning and operations for the Taiwan crisis. All the services had failed to inform MATS fully of their greatly increased supply requirements. Units constantly upgraded their supply requisitions because of new priorities. MATS delayed procurement of commercial airlift and, occasionally, items were brought by air that should have gone by sea.[19]

*A regular supply airlift as distinct from the airlift of the aircraft, supplies, and equipment of a tactical unit.

IV. THE CONTROLLED CONFLICT

The "War" in the Air

The deployment of U.S. air units to the Pacific and augmentation of base facilities and supplies occurred against a background of limited air and sea clashes between Chinese Nationalist and Communist forces in the Taiwan area. Under the rules of engagement laid down by the United States for Phase I-H, the CNAF, in self-defense, could only attack Communist aircraft while they (CNAF) were on patrol and reconnaissance missions or defending the offshore islands and the convoys engaged in resupply operations.[1]

Whether the United States could retain control over CNAF's operations was uncertain. Nationalist frustrations because of military restrictions increased early in September when the United States and Communist China agreed to discuss the Taiwan crisis through their representatives at Warsaw, Poland. Aware that the Nationalists feared possible U.S. concessions, American authorities continued to anticipate some unilateral action such as CNAF bombing of Communist artillery positions. Both Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Assembly in Taipei strongly advocated such action.[2]

Happily, the U.S. fears were not realized. It was conjectured that the lack of a firm U.S. commitment on the defense of the offshore islands kept the Nationalist government generally amenable to the restrictions on its air operations. This restraint was matched by the

numerically superior Chinese Communist Air Force, which flew primarily defensive patrols. Thus the anticipated struggle for aerial supremacy over the Taiwan Strait did not materialize but was limited to occasional air clashes between the two Chinese air forces.

The results were surprising. During the period of crisis, the CNAF, in about 25 separate air engagements, destroyed 32 aircraft, probably destroyed 3 others, and damaged 10. It lost only 2 F-86F's and 2 F-84G's. Most of the encounters were between CNAF F-86's and Communist Mig-17's.[3]

The first major air battle occurred on 8 September when 12 F-86's fought 12 Mig-17's, destroying 7 and possibly 2 others. In three separate engagements on 24 September, the CNAF destroyed 10 and damaged 3. This victory was highlighted by the destruction of 4 Migs by Sidewinder missiles with which 20 CNAF F-86's had recently been equipped. A third significant air battle on 10 October resulted in the destruction of 5 Migs, 1 of which was rammed by an F-86. The larger encounters occurred when escorted CNAF reconnaissance flights were dispatched to photograph mainland or coastal targets, and the smaller ones during routine air patrols.[4]

Analyses of the air-to-air clashes indicated that neither side employed unusual fighter tactics; their tactics were similar to those used during the Korean War. CNAF routine patrols normally flew at 35,000 to 37,000 feet whereas Communist patrols flew at 40,000 to 42,000 feet. When anticipating action the CNAF used four flights made up of four aircraft each and kept other patrols in the area on call if needed.

Migs generally outnumbered the F-86's by about 3 to 1, but the Communists usually dispatched only a single flight to engage. Although possessing an altitude advantage, Mig pilots frequently demonstrated a lack of skill by permitting F-86's to get on their tails. Nor were Communist pilots very aggressive; CNAF pilots could shake pursuing Migs by making six or seven turns at lower altitudes. The Communists were also reluctant to pull more than two and a half or three and a half G's. They always tended to make left turns at higher altitudes. Their steeper turns (two or three G's) were made at lower altitudes, likewise to the left. Their discipline and teamwork were poor, permitting CNAF pilots to attack stragglers. Communist pilots used an afterburner on one and possibly two occasions to escape. Their inferior showing are generally attributed to poor Soviet training and to a Communist decision to limit operations to their coastal areas. CNAF pilots, by comparison, were well trained, confident, flew excellent combat formations, were eager to make "kills," and pressed every advantage. Clearly, the Chinese Communist Air Force had been highly overrated.[5]

The CNAF reconnaissance force consisted of seven RF-86F's, 25 RF-84F's, and one RB-57A. At the insistence of the United States late in September, the CNAF curtailed the activities of this force to lessen the provocation arising from flights too near or over the Chinese Communist mainland.[6]

Meanwhile, during the period of crisis, the CNAF received or was in the process of receiving two additional RB-57's, six F-100F's originally earmarked for NATO, many F-86F's that [redacted] scheduled for Korea and

[redacted]

Japan, and 16 C-119 transports. Many of these aircraft, such as the transports, were on loan. By the time most of the transfers were effected and the pilots trained, however, the Taiwan crisis had passed.[7]

The "War" at Sea

Considerably less successful than CNAF operations was the Nationalists' initial naval effort to break the artillery blockade of the Kinmens. These islands, inhabited by 40,000 civilians, were defended by 86,000 troops and 56 medium artillery, 252 light artillery, and 160 AAA weapons. With the Nationalists outgunned about 4 to 1, the JCS on 29 August expedited shipments of 8-inch howitzers from the United States and Okinawa to the offshore islands. On the same day the JCS ordered elements of the Seventh Fleet to convoy Nationalist resupply ships to the offshore islands when necessary. These convoys would be limited, however, to Big and Little Kinmen and the five principal islands of the Matsu group.* The Navy was also advised to be ready to turn over to the Nationalists up to 8 LCM's and 28 LCVP's.[8]

On the basis of these instructions, the United States and the Nationalists quickly prepared a convoy plan providing for U.S. air and surface escort to within three nautical miles of the Kinmens if Communist batteries could be avoided within that range. Admiral Felt

*The Matsu islands, not under seige, were inhabited by 10,000 civilians and defended by 23,000 troops and 8 medium artillery, 84 light artillery, and 108 AAA weapons.

indicated that the immediate objective was to lift the seige of the Kinmens and to increase the Nationalists' counterartillery fire. To forestall resupply, the Peiping government announced its sovereignty over the territorial waters to a distance of 12 nautical miles, a claim promptly ignored by the U.S. State Department.[9]

Between 23 August and 15 September the Nationalists made only four organized attempts to resupply the Kinmens. The first attempt on 6 September, during a lull in the bombardment, was successful, but three others in the following week were not. Communist artillery fire (averaging about 6,675 rounds per day), hazardous sea conditions, poor equipment, lack of skills in handling supplies, incompetent logistical planning, and "utterly unbelievable" military command relationships combined to defeat their effort. CNAF C-46's made a few airdrops, but these provided only token supplies since about half the items initially dropped were either lost or severely damaged. By the third week in September USAF Headquarters estimated that the total Nationalist deliveries by sea and air amounted to no more than one day's requirement, then estimated at 700 tons.[10]

To U.S. authorities on the scene, it was apparent that the Nationalists were exerting less than an all-out effort to break the artillery blockade. In Washington, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the JCS, and the State Department were deeply concerned over the Nationalists' failure to resupply the Kinmens. Suggesting that the Nationalists were being deliberately inept in order to draw the United States into conflict with the Communists, the JCS insisted that they demonstrate an

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ability to resupply the islands or prove that their difficulties were insurmountable despite U.S. training, advice, and assistance.[11] Underlying this insistence was the belief that the Warsaw talks would provide no solution to the Taiwan crisis, that the United States faced another "Berlin blockade" with Peiping applying limited but sustained military pressure to exact political and diplomatic gains, and that the Nationalist government would probably collapse if forced to withdraw from the offshore islands. Meanwhile, the Nationalists continued to threaten unilateral action to prevent the loss of the offshore islands by default, demilitarization, or neutralization.[12]

With JCS prodding and U.S. advice and assistance, the resupply picture began to improve. On 19 September, three Nationalist ships successfully completed their missions under heavy fire, the largest number to reach the islands in one day. Shortly afterward, Admiral Felt reported that a U.S. Navy beachjumper unit and a beach master, plus organized beach parties for receiving supplies, had helped improve supply-handling. Better underwater demolition work opened up additional beach areas and permitted greater dispersion of arriving vessels. With U.S. Marine air cover, Nationalist C-46 airdrops increased in frequency and in deliveries. As with the resupply success at sea, the CNAF's improved airdrop performance was due principally to U.S. advice and assistance. The picture further brightened when estimated supply requirements for the Kinmens were revised downwards to 300 tons and then 200 tons per day. In view of these developments, on 26 September, Admiral Felt instructed Admiral Smoot to undertake a massive resupply effort using all types of fishing boats, junks, and CNAF and Civil Air Transport* aircraft.[13]

*A Chinese Nationalist civ[redacted]

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Although Communist land-based artillery and gun and torpedo boats inflicted losses on the Nationalists,* resupply during the last week of September proved highly successful. By month's end a total of 3,400 tons had been delivered to the beleagured islands—2,560 tons by surface ships, 210 tons by native junks, and 630 tons by air. The CNAF appeared able to airdrop more than the 200 tons required daily. When the first large-scale daylight airdrop drew Communist aircraft and an intense bombardment, U.S. and Nationalist officials agreed to nighttime aerial resupply, with daytime missions to be conducted only at irregular intervals.[14]

Early in October the chief of the U.S. Army Section, MAAG Taiwan, verified the fact that the Nationalists had exaggerated the critical nature of the supply situation. On a visit to Big Kinmen he found no grave supply problem; surprisingly little damage from 430,000 rounds of artillery except in the area of Nationalist batteries; low casualties; spectacular improvements in beach operations, with junks proving very successful; and morale, activity, and appearance of the Nationalist soldiers better than before 23 August.[15] This encouraging report and the advent of a temporary cease-fire in the Taiwan Strait presaged the end of the resupply problem.

The Communist Cease-Fire

Expectation that the Chinese Communists would resist the successful resupply efforts proved unfounded when the Communist Minister of

*Between 23 August and 24 September these losses were as follows: LST's—1 torpedoed, 2 damaged; LCM's--3 sunk, 1 swamped; PC's—2 damaged; LVT's—estimated 3 sunk, 5 damaged.

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Defense, Marshal Peng Teh-huai, on 6 October, suddenly ordered a one-week suspension of shelling "out of humanitarian considerations." Calling for a reconciliation with the Nationalists, he "authorized" them to resupply the offshore islands provided they did not use U.S. Navy escorts. The United States quickly agreed to halt its convoying operations but warned they would be resumed if the Communists reopened fire on the islands. The Nationalists also reluctantly agreed to stop firing* but considered the suspension only the calm before a new storm.[16]

In effect, the Communists were acknowledging that the artillery blockade of the offshore islands had been broken and that they were not prepared to reimpose it or to capture the islands. U.S. intelligence believed that the Communists, motivated by psychological and political considerations, were attempting to elicit U.S. proposals concerning the offshore islands in order to strain U.S. and Nationalist relations. They were also tacitly urging defection to the Communist cause and emphasizing the civil war nature of the conflict. On 13 October the cease-fire was extended for a week, permitting the Nationalists, who were strongly protesting U.S. suspension of convoy service, to continue unhampered resupply of their islands.[17]

The cease-fire gave U.S. authorities an opportunity to exert greater pressure on the Nationalist government to evacuate or at least reduce military garrisons on the offshore islands, particularly on smaller rocks like the two Tans (of the Kinmen group) regarded as indefensible,

*In the artillery duels between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists from 23 August to 6 October the following rounds were fired: against all the Kinmens, 558,000; from the Kinmens, 88,045; against the Matsus, 183; from the Matsus, 13.

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of little strategic value, and logistical burdens.[18] When Secretary Dulles conferred with Chiang Kai-shek in Taipei during 20-22 October, he emphasized the Nationalists' loss of Free World support because of the continuing strife and urged Chiang and his government to display less belligerency. Dulles secured Chiang's consent to reduce the military forces on the offshore islands in exchange for two battalions of 240-mm howitzers that would improve considerably the counterfire capability of the Nationalists. Dulles envisaged a reduction of 15,000 to 20,000 Nationalist troops after Communist pressure subsided.[19] In a joint communique issued at the end of their conferences, Chiang also agreed to forego the use of force to restore his government on the mainland,[20] another significant concession in the light of his previous utterances.

The arrival of Secretary Dulles in Taipei had coincided with the end of the cease-fire, allegedly because a U.S. Navy ship had "violated" the "truce terms,"* a charge quickly denied. Communist antiaircraft fire against the Nationalist airdrops was only moderate, however.[21] Five days later the Communists placed the bombardment of the Kinmens on an every-other-day schedule and "permitted" the Nationalists to replenish their offshore islands on even-numbered days. Taking full advantage of Communist concessions, the Nationalists delivered some 43,200 tons of supplies during October—40,300 by surface ships, 1,500 by junks, and 1,400 by air. Total CNAF resupply losses because of ground fire were two C-46's destroyed and two damaged.[22]

*Dulles believed that the Communists were prepared to use any pretext to break the cease-fire.

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Redeployment

With the artillery blockade broken and the danger of an enlargement of the conflict decreasing, U.S. commanders began to consider redeployment of their forces from the Pacific. The withdrawal began at the end of October when Adm. Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, authorized Admiral Felt to reduce his naval strength in the Taiwan Strait. Felt was instructed to leave two aircraft carriers and supporting ships on station and send the others to Subic Bay in the Philippines or to Yokosuka, Japan.[23] Major redeployment of air units did not begin until December.

Both Navy and Air Force authorities in the Pacific recognized the political and psychological implications of this withdrawal. They were certain that the Chinese Communists would play it up as evidence of U.S. abandonment of the Chinese Nationalists and that the Nationalists would probably feel militarily weakened. They agreed, therefore, to couple any reduction of air strength with improvement of the CNAF, especially its air defense and all-weather capability. Kuter believed that Mig-19's, Mig-21's, and a Soviet version of the Sidewinder would surely appear in the Chinese Communist air force inventory at an early date.[24]

The Air Force and Navy did not agree, however, on publicity for the return to the United States. Kuter strongly recommended a highly publicized movement of TAC B-57's, F-101's, and F-100's through Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines to show that the United States was withdrawing with confidence and strength. He believed this would also rectify a previous imbalance in service publicity since the movement of Navy carriers to the Taiwan Strait at the beginning of the crisis had received much public coverage and the Air Force deployments

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relatively little. Although Kuter was supported in principle by Headquarters USAF,* Felt recommended no country tour by units and as little publicity as possible. The issue was resolved early in December when the State Department supported Felt's position.[25]

In preparation for the redeployment, Felt transferred responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan and the Penghus, assumed by the United States in September,† back to the Nationalist government.[26] PACAF and TAC agreed late in November on a Twelfth Air Force redeployment plan (Ops Plan 37-58). CASF F-100 and F/RF-101 units would fly to Andersen AFB, Guam, where the Twelfth Air Force would assume operational control of the units. B-57's would go directly to Wake Island and from there to Hickam AFB, Hawaii. CASF tactical units, redeploying according to a prearranged order of precedence, would be supported by two C-130 troop carrier squadrons and a KB-50 air refueling squadron.[27]

The movement of CASF units to the United States began on 9 December. As in deployment, the F-100's and F/RF-101's passing through Pacific bases had one or two air refuelings. The C-130 transports carried military coordinating teams and the command element in addition to unit support equipment and personnel. MATS aircraft also provided airlift. Redeployment of the tactical units was completed on 18 December.[28]

The redeployment was successful but it pointed up a number of problems. There was not enough time to distribute the Twelfth Air Force's

*Hq USAF believed that the country tours should be limited, however, to Thailand and the Philippines.

†See above, p 33

Ops Plan 37-58. No provision had been made for weather reconnaissance aircraft between Hickam AFB and air refueling areas. Military coordinating center units were undermanned for 24-hour duty. The receiving base for B-57's had to be changed from Moffett NAS, Calif., to George AFB, Calif., because of unfavorable weather conditions and inadequate facilities at the former base. The Twelfth Air Force operations center at Waco, Texas, had trouble encrypting messages to PACAF, and many "launch" messages arrived either with little time to spare or too late for implementation. The problem was sufficiently acute to warrant waiving the encryption requirement in order to insure a reasonable efficiency in redeployment.[29]

Meanwhile, F-86D, F-104, and MAG-11 units remaining on Taiwan were soon subject to rotation. An F-86D squadron from Okinawa and elements of another from Tainan AB replaced a redeployed F-100 unit at Chiayi AB. A Starfighter squadron on Okinawa replaced the F-104 unit at Taoyuan AB. Both Felt and Kuter desired F-104's on Taiwan for psychological reasons, and they hoped that the CNAF would soon receive these fighters. MAG-11 units began to return to Japan on 1 February 1959, and by mid-March only a small Marine squadron remained on Taiwan.[30]

The redeployment underlined anew the importance of modernizing the CNAF in accordance with JCS decisions. In addition to aircraft transferred or being transferred during the Taiwan crisis, further progress in 1958 and early 1959 included approval and funding under the Military Assistance Program (MAP) of 6 F-100F's, 80 F-100A's, 4 RF-100A's, and 4 RF-101's. Several of the reconnaissance aircraft were delivered by the

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end of 1958. The Air Force also considered transferring under grant aid the 16 C-119 transports on loan to the CNAF. No immediate action was taken on recommendations by Felt and Kuter to further augment the CNAF with 10 RF-84F's, one F-104 squadron, one F-86D squadron, or other MAP-financed aircraft.[31]

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V. AN APPRAISAL

The Taiwan crises of 1954-55 and 1958 were both preceded by numerous indications of Chinese Communist pressure against the offshore islands. The initial U.S. response in each instance reflected an ambiguous policy toward the islands. In January 1955, this country hastily decided to evacuate Nationalist military and civilian personnel from the Tachens only two days after making a decision to meet the Chinese Communist threat by a show of air strength from Taiwan. In mid-August 1958, despite considerable evidence of renewed Communist pressure, the U.S. Government still debated what its military response and its public policy should be in the event of a blockade or an attack against the islands. Not until 25 August, two days after the artillery bombardment of the Kinmens began, did the JCS direct U.S. forces in the Pacific to prepare to assist in the defense of only the principal offshore islands. Almost a week elapsed after the beginning of the Communist artillery bombardment before Washington authorized the deployment of USAF units within or to the Pacific. Meanwhile, the military initiative was left in the hands of the Communists.

U.S. policy was based on the recognition that the importance of the offshore islands was political and psychological (to the Chinese Nationalists) rather than strategic[1] and that their defense was a matter of Presidential discretion. Whatever the merits of this policy, it made military planning difficult. USAF commanders, understandably,

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chafed at the slowness of the "decision making machinery" in Washington after there was ample evidence, in their opinion, of an impending military threat in the Taiwan Strait. They were uncertain whether they would be required to "fight or bluff." The JCS subsequently agreed that political guidance had been inadequate for developing defense plans for the offshore islands.[2]

In the area of diplomacy, the United States followed the policy of keeping the Japanese government fully informed during the crisis about this country's utilization of military bases in Japan. This assuaged Japanese feelings sufficiently to make unnecessary a request for "permission" to use them.[3]

The 1958 Taiwan crisis underscored a need for more expeditious and more definitive operational planning. PACAF did not issue its operations plan until shortly before 23 August, thus precluding detailed implementation by subordinate commands. Planning between PACAF and TAC was incomplete on the eve of the crisis. PACAF believed that TAC's failure to provide sufficient detail (such as the type of equipment and the number of people required) did not enable the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces to plan for adequate support.[4]

The unexpected JCS instruction not to use nuclear weapons during the initial stage of conflict upset previous planning assumptions, for air units were operationally and logistically tailored primarily for nuclear warfare. USAF and Navy commanders viewed the injunction with apprehension for they were dubious of the success of nonnuclear operations against a Chinese Communist air force of unknown quality but formidable size. Air Force commanders were particularly concerned lest such operations affect their emergency war plans. They considered

a nonnuclear requirement as a step backward in the art of warfare and a retrogression in national defense policy.[5]

If U.S. policy makers intended to authorize only a few nonnuclear strikes in order to warn the Chinese Communists against enlarging the conflict, it might be argued that this anxiety was overdrawn and that there had been no change in U.S. weapon policy.[6] However, the JCS directive of 29 August strongly suggests that relatively extensive nonnuclear operations were envisaged. In Phases II-H and III-H, U.S. airpower would make only iron bomb attacks against a widening range of coastal airfields, GCI sites, military control centers, and fixed targets plus certain other airfields up to a radius of 800 miles. Unless the Chinese Communist air force and antiaircraft defenses proved woefully weak, it appears doubtful that available airpower in the Pacific could have engaged in such sustained operations.*[7]

Whether adequate and timely augmentation of aircraft, supplies, and equipment would have been forthcoming is questionable. General Kuter thought not. Certainly the field commanders believed that neither their military planning assumptions nor their prestocked assets were compatible with the concept of operations for the Taiwan Strait area directed by

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*Based on established USAF war planning factors, PACAF concluded that it would require four squadrons of F-100's (or B-57's) or 20 squadrons of F-101's operating from Kadena or Clark Air Bases to neutralize one Communist airfield with bombings every fourth day to sustain neutralization. The aircraft requirement was based on the assumption that the Chinese Communists had more than 200 jet interceptors on coastal airfields and concentrations of heavy- and medium-type antiaircraft defenses.

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Washington authorities. They also agreed that the most important "lesson learned" during the 1958 Taiwan crisis was the need for a firm U.S. nuclear weapon policy.[8]

U.S. authorities banned early use of nuclear weapons undoubtedly because they were determined to keep military activity localized in the Taiwan Strait while working for a cease-fire. They believed that a U.S.-Chinese Communist conflict could be kept from expanding into an all-out war if U.S. forces limited themselves to using only conventional bombs. The goal of localizing the conflict was achieved, but since there was no test of the concept that the use of nonnuclear weapons would minimize the danger of all-out war, its validity can only be conjectured. That the United States belatedly modified its weapon policy for the Taiwan area appears borne out by the strong reaction of military commanders to the prohibition against the initial use of nuclear weapons. It is also indicated in Admiral Felt's query in midcrisis about his nonnuclear capability, his decision to prepare a nonnuclear annex to his operations plan, his establishment of a subordinate unified command on Taiwan to conduct nonnuclear operations, and his subsequent decision to amend all contingency operations plans to provide for nonnuclear warfare. For the JCS the iron bomb policy reemphasized the need for an awareness by military planners of political objectives and by political authorities of the implications of their decisions on military planning.[9]

Whether the command structure on Taiwan should have been altered in preparation for possible iron bomb operations remains debatable.

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Felt believed the need for a subordinate unified command was confirmed by subsequent events, but Kuter did not.[10] Once the change was made, it functioned satisfactorily, and the appointment of the commander of ATF 13, General Dean, to head the air defense system on Taiwan created no important difficulties. The major objection to the subordinate unified command was that in the event of nuclear war there would be insufficient time to revert to a more centralized command.[11]

Unit movements to and within the Pacific theater were achieved without major difficulty. TAC's Twelfth Air Force believed that the CASF concept of deploying substantial, mobile, tactical forces to a troubled area in a short time appeared confirmed, although Kuter thought the deployments were not quite as rapid as advertised.[12] The Marine commander of MAG-11 believed that his unit displayed much greater mobility in the transfer from Japan to Taiwan than did CASF X-Ray Tango.[13] This seems a highly questionable comparison in view of the greater problems inherent in flying tactical aircraft over vast distances of the Pacific.

The deployments did not follow original operational plans in every respect, largely because the Air Force had earlier diverted some tactical and support untis to the Middle East following the outbreak of the Lebanon crisis in July. For example, TAC reassigned responsibility for deploying X-Ray Tango units from the Nineteenth Air Force to the Twelfth Air Force; X-Ray Tango units left the United States in three closely related stages rather than in one stage; and the movements of 12 F-104 Starfighters and MAG-11 to Taiwan were not provided for in initial planning.[14]

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MATS airlift for both CASF and non-CASF units was adequate, but its channel airlift was not and had to be augmented by commercial carriers.* Even this did not eliminate the substantial backlog of supplies that existed at the MATS Pacific coast terminal, Travis AFB, during September and October. The backlog varied, but a contributing cause was the failure of commands to inform MATS in time of their increased requirements. The supply problems also confirmed the need for high-speed surface transportation to the Pacific outposts.[15]

The U.S. injunction against early use of nuclear weapons gave renewed importance to the possession of well-equipped, well-stocked, forward bases. Military assets at these bases were seriously inadequate, with iron bombs, ammunition, and auxiliary fuel tanks topping the list of critically deficient items in addition to insufficient spare parts and equipment. Many logistical experts believed that preparations for iron bomb operations would require a partial reversal of the trend toward direct resupply from the United States.[16]

Even more serious was the communication problem in the Pacific, especially on Taiwan. Fully recognized during the 1954-55 Taiwan crisis, deficiences had not been greatly remedied by 1958. The Hardtack high-altitude nuclear tests of August 1958, which resulted in widespread disruption of radio signals, also pointed up the inadequacy and the vulnerability of the military communication net in the Pacific.[17]

*Excessive costs precluded MATS from contracting for as much commercial airlift as was needed.

The Air Force conceded that in public relations the U.S. Navy was more successful during the Taiwan crisis, primarily because command responsibility in the Pacific gave it a preferred position. News media representatives were cleared by Navy officers. Navy information offices were also generally better staffed. USAF information officers claimed that releases on units and personnel were either withheld or "pared to the bone" by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). The Air Force believed many of its informational problems could be alleviated by raising the professional standards of its career information officers.[18]

The 1958 Taiwan crisis provided a good test of the relations between the United States and the Chinese Nationalists. Politically, the Nationalists proved more amenable to U.S. advice and practiced greater restraint than expected. The willingness of President Chiang Kai-shek to agree to a reduction of his Army forces on the offshore islands (in exchange for more artillery from the United States) and his "renunciation of force" statement with Secretary Dulles in October 1958 were milestones in U.S. efforts to ameliorate the problem of the offshore islands.

In Nationalist military operations there were pluses and minuses. The CNAF was tactically much superior to the Communist Air Force, and its pilots were quick to learn how to fly later-model aircraft and use more advanced weapons such as the Sidewinder missile. Its limited airlift capacity also contributed to alleviating the artillery blockade of the Kinmens. The CNAF demonstrated how a force that had been reasonably modernized and well trained under the U.S. Military Assistance Program

could aid in the attainment of U.S. objectives in a localized conflict. The CNAF was also overgenerous in providing USAF forces on Taiwan with supplies and facilities. Deficiencies were most apparent in Nationalist counterartillery-fire and in logistical planning for and surface resupply of the offshore islands. The Nationalist navy, in contrast with the CNAF, performed poorly at first and required much U.S. urging, training, and guidance before demonstrating effectiveness. A need for more compatible Nationalist and U.S. military planning was also evident.[19]

In summary, the Taiwan crisis of 1958 remained a localized conflict and subsided without loss of Nationalist-held territory to the Chinese Communists. The reasons given for the success of U.S. policy were varied and inevitably reflected service and command viewpoints. In Kuter's opinion, the full-speed convergence of the "massive Seventh Fleet" toward the Taiwan Strait and the deployment of TAC's and ADC's Century fighters scored the greatest psychological impact on the Communists. The naval movement had the most immediate influence only because it was the most publicized.[20] The U.S. Navy believed that its attack carriers and combat Marines were principally responsible for keeping the conflicts in both the Taiwan Strait and in Lebanon from spreading. This view was strongly challenged by the USAF Chief of Staff, Gen. Thomas D. White, who gave primary credit to the Strategic Air Command.[21] Regardless of service claims, it seems likely that the U.S. tactical show of force, backed by strategic airpower, deterred the Chinese Communists from enlarging the conflict after the artillery blockade of the Kinmens was broken. Other factors that undoubtedly contributed to U.S. success included

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intelligence assessments of Chinese Communist probing operations and the diplomacy used to prevent the Chinese Nationalists from taking unilateral military action.

The ultimate success of U.S. policy in 1958 did not obviate the fact that the United States was confronted with great risks in the Taiwan Strait area. These risks were intensified by the requirement that tactical forces be prepared to conduct nonnuclear operations for which they were ill prepared from the standpoint of aircraft, supplies, equipment, and facilities. There was evidence that U.S. weapon policy was not firm and that a balance in tactical and logistical strength to conduct nonnuclear as well as nuclear operations remained to be achieved. Failure to achieve this balance could deprive the United States of a choice of weapons—nonnuclear or nuclear—to deal with a future military crisis. In view of the possible, even likely, recurrence of trouble in the Taiwan Strait, the lessons of the 1958 crisis held great significance for U.S. political and military leaders.

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23. Hist, 12th AF, Pt I, p 28, & Pt III, pp 2, 20-21.

24. Hist, ADC, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, p 173; Barns Briefing, p 4; Kuter Presentation.

25. Hist, ADC, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, p 173; msg, PACAF to 13th AF (personal Kuter to Moorman), 8 Sep 58, App 43 in Special Rpt, Fifth Air Force in . . . Crisis.

26. Hist, MATS, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, Chap IV; Chief of Staff's Policy Book, 1959, Items 140 & 140-2.

27. See sources in n 26; msg 3295, CINCPAC to JCS, 15 Dec 58, in JCS files.

28. Anx B, in Hq PACAF, Report of Taiwan-Quemoy Operation, Dec 58, in D/Plans; Kuter Presentation; Air Force Operational Readiness Report, 29 Sep 58.

29. Msg 9876, COMSEVENTHFLT to CINCPACFLT, 4 Sep 58, in Marine Historical Archives (MHA); msg JCS 947046 as cited in n 13; Kuter Presentation; Barns Briefing, p 5; New York Times, 17 Sep 58; New York Herald Tribune, 25 Sep 58; CINCPACAF's Conclusions as cited in n 20; msg 6359, CINCPACFLT to COMSEVENTHFLT, nd, in MHA; msg 66987, CINCPACAF to COFSUSAF, 15 Sep 58, in D/Plans, Ops 20-5, 22 Aug-17 Sep 58.

30. Msg JCS 947046 as cited in n 13; msg 7094, COMSEVENTHFLT to CINCPACFLT, 27 Aug 58; msgs, First MAW to CG FMFPAC, 011640Z & 170820Z Sep 58; CO MAG-11 Rpt, 29 Aug-11 Dec 58, p 21; Command Diary, Narrative Account of MAG-11, 1-30 Sep 58, Sec II, p 1, all in MHA; Anx B, pp 3-4 in PACAF Rpt of Taiwan-Quemoy Op.

31. MAG-11 Comd Diary, Sep 58, App G; msg, CG FMFPAC to CMC, 26 Aug 58; msg, First MAW to CG FMFPAC, 170820Z Sep 58; CO MAG-11 Rpt, p 12, all in MHA.

32. MAG-11 Comd Diary, Sep 58, Sec II, p 1; msg, CINCPACFLT to CG FMFPAC, 11 Sep 58, in MHA.

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5. Msg 2159 (JCS 247298), JCS to CINCPAC & COMTDC, 29 Aug 58, in D/Plans; memo for Gens Taylor, White, Pate, & Adm Burke from Chmn, JCS (Twining), subj: Authority for Emergency Action on Defense of Taiwan and the Offshore Islands, 15 Sep 58, in D/Plans, Ops 20-9, 26 Aug-18 Sep 58, Sec 2.

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12. Hist, ATF 13, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, pp 19-20, 129-30.

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13. Barns Briefing, p 3, & Tacon Briefing, pp 9-11, both at Senior Ops Officers Conf, 29-30 Jan 59; Hist, 12th AF, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, Pt 1, pp 37-38.

14. 13th AF Rpt, Taiwan Straits Ops, pp 63-64; Hist, 12th AF, 1 Jul-31 Dec 58, Pt 1, pp 37-38.

15. Anx F, 20 Aug 58, to CINCPACAF Ops Plan 25-58; Briefings for Gen Kuter by Lt Col Wm. D. Morrison, 26 Sep and 5 Nov 58, Apps 47 and 48 in Rpt, Fifth Air Force in . . . Crisis; Kuter Presentation, 20-21 Nov 58; AU Evaluation Staff Study of Taiwan Crisis, dtd 1959; 13th AF Rpt, Taiwan Straits Ops, p 75.

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17. AU Eval Study of Taiwan.

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19. Kuter Presentation; 13th AF Rpt, Taiwan Straits Ops, pp 79-80; AU Eval Study of Taiwan; PACAF Rpt of Taiwan-Quemoy Op, pp 17-19; Briefing by Tac Div, D/Ops, USAF Lessons Learned in Lebanon and Taiwan—1958, p 40.

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3. Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 150127Z Sep 58, in D/Plans; msg 2295, Hq USAF to AIMAJCOM, 4 Sep 58, in FRC; PACAF Rpt of Taiwan-Quemoy Op, p 6; DAF Journal of Mutual Security, XII (Nov 58), p 67.

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5. AIIS IR-734-58, 7 Oct 58; Fifth Air Force Commander's Briefing by Capt G. N. Earnhart, Jr, 25 Sep 58, Doc 15 in Special Rpt, Fifth Air Force in the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1958; AU Evaluation Staff Study of Taiwan Crisis.

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8. Memo for JCS from Dept/Navy, subj: Resupply of Govt of Republic of China-Held Offshore Islands, 15 Sep 58, in D/Plans, Ops 20-5, Sec 4; msg, COMTDC to CINCPAC, 21 Sep 58, in FRC; msg 2159 as cited in n 1; msg 8090, COMSEVENTHFLT to CTF 72, 30 Aug 58, in MHA.

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G L O S S A R Y

AACS	Airways and Air Communications Service
ACW	Aircraft control and warning
AFMTC	Air Force Missile Test Center
AIIR	Air Intelligence Information Report
AlMAJCOMs	All major commands
Anx	Annex
AOC	Air operations center
ATF 13 (P)	Air Task Force 13 (Provisional)
ATIC	Air Technical Intelligence Center
CASF	Composite air strike force
CCC	Combat control center
CINCARPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Army, Pacific
CINCFE	Commander-in-Chief, Far East
CINCPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
CINCPACAF	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Air Forces
CINCSPECOMME	Commander-in-Chief, Special Command, Middle East
CMC	Commander, Marine Corps
CNAF	Chinese Nationalist Air Force
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
COC	Combined operations center
COMCIAPAC	Commander, Central Intelligence Agency, Pacific
COMNAVPHIL	Commander, Navy, Philippines
COMSEVENTHFLT	Commander, Seventh Fleet
COMTAIWANDEFCOM	Commander, Taiwan Defense Command
COMTDC	Commander, Taiwan Defense Command
COMUSJAPAN	Commander, United States in Japan
DA	Department of Army
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FEALF	Far East Air Logistic Force
FEC/UNC	Far East Command, United Nations Command
FMFPAC	Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
FRC	Federal Records Center
GCI	Ground control intercept
GRC	Government, Republic of China
HE	High explosive
JCC	Joint communication center
JOC	Joint operations center

MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAG	Marine air group
MAW	Marine air wing
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
MHA	Marine Historical Archives
NAS	Naval Air Station
OCB	Operations Coordinating Board
RP	Republic of Philippines
TDC	Taiwan Defense Command

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Appendix 1

CASF X-Ray Tango Units and Their Home Stations

Parent Unit	Unit Deployed	Type Acft	Home Station
312th TF Wg	388th TF Sq	F-100	Cannon AFB, N Mex
312th TF Wg	477th TF Sq	F-100	Cannon AFB, N Mex
27th TF Wg	522d TF Sq	F-101	Bergstrom AFB, Tex
345th TB Wg	499th TB Sq	B-57	Langley AFB, Va
314th TC Wg	50th TC Sq	C-130	Sewart AFB, Tenn
463d TC Wg	773d TC Sq	C-130	Ardmore AFB, Okla
837th AD	17th TR Sq	RF-101	Shaw AFB, S C
837th AD	20th TR Sq	RF-101	Shaw AFB, S C
4505 AR Wg	429th AR Sq	KB-50	Langley AFB, Va
507th Tac Control Gp	Comm & Control Ele		Shaw AFB, S C
2d Tac Depot Sq	Comd Ele		Langley AFB, Va

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September 1958

Appendix 2

USAF Units Available to PACAF after Deployment

Country	Bases	Unit	Type & Nr Acft	Mission
Taiwan	Taoyuan	83 FIS (NORAD)	12 F-104	Air defense
	Hsinchu	26 FIS (13th AF)	6 F-86D	Air defense
	Tainan	16 FIS (5th AF)	25 F-86D	Air defense
	Chiayi	388 TFS (CASF)	16 F-100D/F	Air defense and HE offense
	Tainan	868 TMS (13th AF)	20 TM-61	Offense (atomic)
	Tainan (dispersed)	507 Comm & Control (Xray Tango)		Comm & elct
	Taiwan-Kadena	Command Ele		Command aug
Philippines	Clark	1 WMT (CASF)		Atomic weapon maint
	Clark	26 FIS (13th AF)	7 F-86D	Air offense
	Clark	72 TFS	25 F-100D/F	Offense
	Clark	50 TCS (CASF)	15 C-130	Airlift
	Clark	17 TRS (CASF)	6 RF-101	Recon
	Clark	4505 ARW (CASF)	5 KB-50	Refueling
Okinawa	Naha	25 FIS (5th AF)	29 F-86D	Air defense
	Kadena	522 TFS (CASF)	13 F-101	Offense
	Kadena	477 TFS (CASF)	16 F-101D/F	Air defense
	Kadena	499 TBS (CASF)	14 B-57	Offense
	Kadena	20 TRS (CASF)	6 RF-101	Reconnaissance
	Naha	429 ARS (CASF)	5 KB-50	Refueling
Japan	Ashiya	773 TCS (CASF)	16 C-130	Airlift
			236	

[redacted]

483 TAW [redacted] 48 C-130

FS = fighter squadron.
ARW = Airborne Refueling Wing.

5th = Japan
13th = Philippines

B-47 Stratojet
B-57 Intruders