Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7

65-6540

5 Nov 65

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT : CIA Assessment of the Chinese Communist Threat as Projected in the Army's Nike-X Deployment Study and DIA's Special Intelligence Supplement, "Communist China, Nuclear Threat"

1. Attached for your information is a CIA assessment of the two subject studies.

2. In general, we believe that both studies underestimate the economic and technological limitations facing China through the next two decades and conclude that the Chinese will not be capable of producing all the weapons systems projected. It is our view that the Chinese initially will direct more of their effort and resources toward improving their military position in Asia and less on developing a US-oriented strategic deterrent. Thus neither study can be used by the intelligence community as a point of reference for measuring the future Chinese threat.

3. We agree with the two studies that by 1976 the Chinese probably will have no more than half a dozen ICBMs deployed. In the interim, both papers state, the diesel G-class ballistic missile submarine will represent the primary Chinese nuclear delivery capability against the United States. Because of range limitations, we do not believe the G-class boat represents a significant threat to the continental US. It is a potential threat to Hawaii and Alaska and, more importantly, to US bases and allied nations in the western Pacific.

Army and DIA review(s) completed.

25X1

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7

Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7

4. The Nike-X Deployment Study is considerably more extensive than the DIA paper and, in recommending a deployment of the Nike-X system against the projected threat, examines several subjects not covered by DIA. One of these is world reaction to a Nike-X deployment. On this score, we believe the study overstates the favorable aspects by a rather considerable margin. It suggests among other things, that deployment of Nike-X would tend to curb nuclear proliferation and reassure US allies in Asia. It is our feeling that Nike-X deployment would probably have little effect on the desire of other nations to join the nuclear club and that deployment of an "anti-Chinese" defensive system in the US would tend to upgrade the Chinese threat in Asian eyes rather than to reassure friendly Asians.

5. Another subject covered by the Nike-X Study (but not by DIA) is intelligence lead-time. The study estimates that through the next ten years the US would have only two to three years lead-time after detection of a Chinese weapon before its deployment in the field. For some systems--new submarine classes, for instance--this time frame appears to be about right. However, we believe we would have better than four years lead-time on a Chinese ICBM program [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

W. F. RABORN

Attachment

25X1 O/DDI: [redacted] sfc (4 November 1965)
Distribution:
Original and 1 - Addressee w/att.
1 - Signer w/att.
✓1 - Executive Registry w/o att.
1 - O/DDI Chrono w/o att.
1 - Exec Chrono w/o att.

[redacted] 25X1

Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7

Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel .. hite

This is the letter for DCI signature referred to at the Morning Meeting today. I sent the original and the attached study directly on into the DCI's office. As you know, Applewhite is fully alerted to handle this with the Secretary.

STAT

H. Knoche
5 November 65
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED. (47)

Approved For Release 2003/12/19 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000400050008-7