

## Chinese Strategic Forces

~~(S/NF)~~ China's nuclear strategy is defensive in nature. It is a strategy of minimal deterrence, founded on the belief that sufficient missiles of its small nuclear force would survive an enemy first strike to be able to inflict unacceptable damage to the aggressor.

- o ~~(S/NF)~~ China's missiles lack the accuracy and are insufficient in number to be employed in any counterforce attack against hardened military targets. They are best suited for striking soft targets.
- o ~~(S/NF)~~ A mobile systems concept, resulting in a relocatable targets problem, has been the foundation for creating uncertainty in the minds of potential adversaries about Chinese capabilities. In addition, the Chinese have dispersed missile bases throughout the country in rugged terrain in an attempt to conceal them and their functions. This, together with the extensive camouflage, concealment, and deception procedures employed, continues to complicate both our own and Soviet efforts to clearly identify and target many missile facilities. It is highly probable that the US, as well as the Soviets, have failed to identify all Chinese deployments.

~~(S/NF/WH)~~ The current assessment of the operational force size is 52 CSS-2 IRBM launchers, eight CSS-3 ICBM launchers, and two CSS-4 ICBM launchers.

- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ China's 52 CSS-2 launchers probably will remain in the inventory through the early 1990s. The recent sale of CSS-2s to Saudi Arabia could reduce the number of refire missiles and launchers. Refire missiles are available for most CSS-2 and CSS-3 launchers, but not for the CSS-4.

148



- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ China's first ICBM, the 7,000 km-range CSS-3, is operational at two elevate-to-launch silos. In addition, there are 11 horizontal roll-out-to-launch sites. Although these sites are as yet unoccupied, six operational CSS-3 units are garrisoned in nearby support facilities and could deploy in a crisis. Additional CSS-3 deployment has probably been curtailed in favor of the more versatile CSS-4.
- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ The CSS-4 ICBM can strike all of the US and USSR. Two CSS-4 silos are already operational, with at least eleven more under construction.

~~(S/NF/WH)~~ The Chinese are in the process of developing a new generation of solid-propellant ballistic missiles.

- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ The country's first solid propellant IRBM, the CSS-X-5, is a land-based, mobile variant of China's only SLBM. Problems with the 1985 SLBM test cycle probably delayed deployment of the CSS-X-5. The CSS-X-5 will likely become operational this year or next. It requires significantly less personnel and equipment than the current liquid-propellant systems it will replace, making deployments even more difficult to detect in the field and further enhancing their survivability.
- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ A solid-propellant, limited-range ICBM, now under development, probably will become operational around 1995. It will be the late 1990s before the Chinese are likely to begin developing a full-range, solid-propellant ICBM as a replacement for the CSS-4.
- o ~~(S/NF/WH)~~ China is now developing a series of solid-propellant SRBMs, known collectively as the "M Family" of missiles. Most of these systems are intended for export to third world nations. However, we expect at least one SRBM system to be deployed to the Chinese armed forces within about five years. There is insufficient evidence to confirm that China is developing a nuclear warhead small enough to fit these missiles.

~~(S/NF/WH)~~ China has launched one nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine, the XIA, which has launch tubes for 12 SLBMs. The Chinese have attempted to develop an SLBM, the CSS-NX-3, for the XIA, but test failures in 1985 delayed



deployment of this system. Construction of additional XIA-class submarines has been curtailed, and efforts are underway to solve the problems of the CSS-NX-3. Renewed flight testing for the XIA is expected in September-October 1988. However, Beijing probably will develop an improved SLBM for a successor submarine.

~~(S/NF/UN)~~ China has some 120 intermediate-range Tu-16 bombers, 325 IL-28 medium-range bombers, and 425 A-5 fighter-bombers which are all capable of delivering nuclear weapons. The Chinese have stockpiled an estimated 75 nuclear bombs for delivery by aircraft.

~~(S/NF)~~ Chinese strategic forces have not been exempt from budgetary constraints imposed on the entire PLA. However, economic retrenchments that have occurred since 1980 have had less impact upon China's nuclear programs than on conventional forces. Current missile forces are receiving modest enhancements to sustain their usability while procurement of new strategic missiles is delayed. However, state funding has been delayed for the R&D of new, follow-on missile systems and warheads. The profits earned from the sale of IRBMs to Saudi Arabia will be used, in part, to make-up for funding cuts in the state budget.

~~(S/NF)~~ The deployment of new Soviet or US ballistic missile defenses would undermine Beijing's strategic retaliatory capability. Beijing will be forced to take whatever steps necessary to ensure its independent nuclear deterrent either in the form of additional missile deployment or specific anti-ABM strategies.