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NUMBER 100-4-56

POSSIBILITY OF CHINESE COMMUNIST  
MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CERTAIN  
OFFSHORE ISLANDS

#88

Submitted by the

## DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

Concurred in by the

## INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*on 10 April 1956. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*

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## POSSIBILITY OF CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CERTAIN OFFSHORE ISLANDS

1. In NIE 13-56<sup>1</sup> we estimated that:

- While the Chinese Communists probably do not intend to attack Taiwan so long as the US maintains its commitments to the Nationalists, they will almost certainly conduct probing operations against the offshore islands. If the Chinese became convinced that the US would not assist in the defense of these islands with its own forces, they probably would attempt to seize them. Should Peiping's forces successfully occupy the Nationalist-held offshore islands without incurring US military retaliation, there would be an intensification of the campaign to obtain Taiwan.

We believe that this estimate is still valid. The Chinese Communists almost certainly continue to have as an objective the establishment of control over the offshore islands and have the capability of launching an attack against any of the islands with little or no warning.

2. The Chinese Communists probably believe that a major frontal attack on the main islands of the Quemoy and Matsu group would meet stiff resistance, might provoke US intervention, and would prejudice Peiping's "peaceful" pose elsewhere. However, in the case of such lightly-held and strategically less important islands as the Wuchijs and Yinshans, the Chinese Communists probably estimate that the chances of US intervention would be slight and that an attack would involve considerably less damage to their "peaceful" pose.

3. In these circumstances we consider the chances to be about even that the Chinese Communists will attempt to seize some of the minor offshore islands during the next six months or so. However, if during this period the Chinese Communists should come to estimate they are achieving significant progress by other means toward their announced foreign policy objectives, we believe that the chances of such action would be reduced.

<sup>1</sup> Chinese Communist Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Through 1960, published 5 January 1956.

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