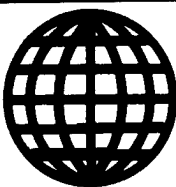


JPRS-CAR-90-052  
16 JULY 1990



**FOREIGN  
BROADCAST  
INFORMATION  
SERVICE**

# ***JPRS Report***

## **China**

### ***An Inside Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy***

19980506 122

REPRODUCED BY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE  
SPRINGFIELD, VA. 22161

**DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 3**

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A**

Approved for public release;  
Distribution Unlimited

# China

## An Inside Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy

JPRS-CAR-90-052

### CONTENTS

16 JULY 1990

[This report is a complete translation of the book *Zhonggong Haijun Toushi—Maixiang Yuanyangde Tiaozhan* (*An Inside Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy—Advancing Toward the Blue Water Challenge*), by Ai Hongren (5337 1347 0088). It was published in Hong Kong in October 1988 and is 185 pages long.]

An Inside Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy—Advancing Toward the Blue Water Challenge .....	1
Table of Contents .....	1
Chapter 1. New Moves in the Higher Levels of the Chinese Communist Navy .....	1
Chapter 2. Chinese Naval Actions Since the Beginning of the Seventies .....	7
Chapter 3. Trend Toward Combined Arms Training and Blue Water Exercises .....	14
Chapter 4. Blue Water Strategy Planning .....	21
Chapter 5. Liu Huaqing and the Chinese Navy .....	25
Chapter 6. Liu Huaqing—From Navy Commander to Deputy Secretary General of the Military Commission .....	30
Chapter 7. China's Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong .....	33
Chapter 8. The Chinese Communists' Plan To Recover the Nansha Islands .....	37
Chapter 9. An Inside Look at China's Largest Naval Port .....	41
Chapter 10. The Influence of the Chinese Navy on the Masses .....	43
Chapter 11. The Inside Story on the Building of the Station on Yongshu Reef .....	47
Chapter 12. Getting Set for the Recovery of the Nansha by Force .....	49

## **An Inside Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy—Advancing Toward the Blue Water Challenge**

8110560A Hong Kong Zhonggong Haijun  
Toushi—Maixiang Yuanyangde Tiaozhan [An Inside  
Look Into the Chinese Communist Navy—Advancing  
Toward the Blue Water Challenge] in Chinese Oct 88  
pp 1-185

### **Table of Contents**

[Text] Chapter 1. New Moves in the Higher Levels of the Chinese Communist Navy

Chapter 2. Chinese Naval Actions Since the Beginning of the Seventies

Chapter 3. Trend Toward Combined Arms Training and Blue Water Exercises

Chapter 4. Blue Water Strategy Planning

Chapter 5. Liu Huaqing and the Chinese Navy

Chapter 6. Liu Huaqing—From Deputy Navy Commander to Deputy Secretary General of the Military Commission

Chapter 7. China's Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong

Chapter 8. The Chinese Communists' Plan To Recover the Nansha Islands

Chapter 9. An Inside Look at China's Largest Naval Port

Chapter 10. The Influence of the Chinese Navy on the Peasants

Chapter 11. The Inside Story on the Building of the Station on Yongshu Reef

Chapter 12. Getting Set for the Recovery of the Nansha by Force

### **Chapter 1. New Moves in the Higher Levels of the Chinese Communist Navy**

[Text] Subtle Changes in the Higher Levels of the Chinese Navy

For a long time the Chinese Communist Navy was under the command of Senior Admiral Xiao Jinguang [5618 0513 0342], a high-ranking officer of the Chinese Communists' elder statesman class. During the Cultural Revolution, Li Zuopeng [2621 0155 7720], Lin Biao's trusted follower, controlled the Chinese Communist Navy. After Lin Biao was killed in an airplane crash in September 1979, Admiral Su Zhenhua [5685 2128 5478] took over. After the death of Su Zhenhua, Admiral Ye Fei [5509 7378] immediately assumed the post, taking on the task of "bringing order out of chaos" in the Navy. It is said that during his inauguration, Admiral Ye Fei pledged, "If the Navy's appearance does not change in three years, I will automatically resign and step down." Yet during the Cultural Revolution, the Navy was "in

deep trouble with unsolvable problems." Besides, because of his lack of work experience with the Navy, Ye Fei did not fully understand the Navy's situation either. Therefore, he did not have much success. After commanding the Navy for just two years, Admiral Ye Fei left the Navy to become a vice chairman of the NPC [National People's Congress].

### **Liu Huaqing Continued To Head the Navy's Work From the Military Commission**

After replacing Hua Guofeng as chairman of the Military Commission in June 1981, Deng Xiaoping reorganized to a great extent the personnel in the higher levels of the Chinese military and appointed Rear Admiral Liu Huaqing [0491 5478 3237], who was then deputy chief of the general staff, as commander of the Navy. During his period as commander of the Navy from August 1982 to January 1988, Admiral Liu Huaqing was determined to implement reforms and had outstanding achievements. He played a decisive role in the development of the Chinese Navy and received considerable recognition from Deng Xiaoping. In early 1988, Liu Huaqing was promoted to the important post of deputy secretary general of the CPC Central Military Commission [CMC], becoming "the first senior official on the Military Commission" with a Navy background. Before leaving the Navy, Liu Huaqing made careful personnel arrangements to allow a little-known newcomer, Zhang Lianzhong [1728 6647 1813], to take over the important post of commander of the Navy. In reality, Liu Huaqing was still in charge of the Navy's work, even though he was working for the Central Military Commission. [In November 1989, Liu became vice chairman of the CPC CMC. As of May 1990, Zhang was still commander of the PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy)]

Currently the Chinese Navy has four deputy commanders and one deputy political commissar. The personnel changes concerning the deputy commanders were contrary to people's expectations, in that both Nie Kuiju [5119 1145 5112] and An Liquan [1344 4539 5028], who were widely speculated to be contenders, were not selected. Instead, Xing Yongning [6717 3057 1380] and Chen Mingshan [7115 2494 1472], relative unknowns, were promoted to deputy commander in 1988, with the other two old incumbent deputy commanders, Zhang Xusan [1728 1645 0005] and Li Jing [2621 2529], remaining in their posts.

### **Zhao Guochen May Become the Navy's Chief of Staff**

It is not yet clear who will be chosen to be the Navy's chief of staff, the post held concurrently by Deputy Navy Commander Zhang Xusan. Some people have conjectured that Zhao Guochen [6392 0948 5256], commander of the Lushan Naval Base, will be picked to become chief of staff. Zhao was once China's commander in chief at the South Pole. In November 1987, he was elected by the 13th party congress to be an alternate member of the CPC Central Committee. However, as of now it is not

certain that Zhao will become the new chief of staff. [As of December 1989, Zhao was still the commander of the Lushun Naval Base.]

#### **Zhang Xusan May Be Promoted to Vice Admiral**

Zhang Xusan was born in 1929 in Rongcheng County, Shandong Province. After the War of Resistance Against Japan broke out, Rongcheng County became a base of the Chinese Communists' 8th Route Army. Thus, he was influenced by Chinese Communist ideology during his childhood. In 1945, he joined the CPC. When victory was won in the War of Resistance Against Japan, 16-year-old Zhang Xusan took part in local work in the Chinese Communist liberated areas. At precisely the time the KMT [Kuomintang] was attacking these liberated areas in 1947, Zhang joined the PLA [People's Liberation Army]. Since he had obtained both education and work experience in the liberated areas, Zhang soon became a company political instructor in the Jiaodong Military District. On the eve of the founding of the Chinese Communist regime, Zhang was transferred to the Navy. After liberation, he was sent to study in the Soviet Union.

In 1954, Zhang Xusan graduated from the Leningrad Naval Advanced Training School in the Soviet Union. He then became the captain of the 51st Destroyer Dadui of China's North Sea Fleet. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, he was promoted to commander of the dadui. During the Cultural Revolution, Zhang Xusan was pushed out of the North Sea Fleet by Li Zuopeng (member of the CPC Politburo and political commissar of the Navy) and transferred to the East Sea Fleet's Zhoushan Base as its chief of staff.

When Zhang Xusan first went to the Navy Headquarters in Beijing he was appointed director of the Military Department before being promoted to deputy chief of staff. For a while, Zhang left Beijing to become the commandant of the Naval Academy in Nanjing. In 1985, he was promoted to deputy Navy commander. In early 1988, he concurrently took the post of Navy chief of staff.

Zhang Xusan is one of the few high-ranking officers currently in the Chinese Communist Navy who received training in the Soviet Union. Because he worked for a fairly long time in basic-level units and higher-level organizations and accumulated a certain amount of experience in "theory and practice," he is considered to be a Navy combat officer with a command of the overall situation. When a large-scale personnel shakeup in the Navy took place in 1988, Zhang remained as deputy commander. Obviously, the Navy needed a deputy commander who was fairly familiar with and experienced in surface ships to take charge of its daily work, because it already had a commander who was a submarine expert and two deputy commanders with aviation backgrounds. Zhang, 59, has been a ship captain and a dadui commander and has a lot of experience at sea. Zhang has all

the required qualifications for being a senior commanding officer of the Chinese Navy. That Zhang remained in his important post as deputy commander of the Chinese Communist Navy and concurrently holds the post of the Navy's chief of staff is a guarantee that he will be promoted to the rank of vice admiral in October 1988. [As of January 1990, Zhang was still a deputy commander of the PLAN. Information on his position as chief of staff is unavailable at present.]

#### **Li Jing Values "Air Superiority at Sea"**

Li Jing was born in 1930 in Teng County, Shandong Province. Like many of the active high-level officers in the Chinese Communist Navy, he comes from Shandong Province. In 1945, when the KMT armed forces mounted a large-scale offensive against the Chinese Communist-occupied areas in Shandong, he joined the PLA. In 1949, he joined the CPC. Later, he was chosen to attend the Chinese Air Force Flying School in Manchuria for pilot training. In 1952, he graduated with outstanding achievement and became one of China's first fighter pilots.

Before being transferred to the Navy Air Force, Li Jing was a squadron commander in the Chinese Air Force. He served successively as a Navy Air Force dadui commander, regiment commander, deputy division commander, division commander, Navy deputy chief of staff, deputy commander of the Navy Air Force, deputy Navy commander, then as commander of the Navy Air Force.

Li Jing has had a definite impact on the building of the Chinese Communists' Navy Air Force. After being promoted to Navy deputy chief of staff, he was promoted to deputy Navy commander in 1982, and then concurrently to commander of the Navy Air Force in August 1983. All these signs indicate clearly that the Chinese Navy started then to be serious about the Navy Air Force. Li Jing is an all-round high-ranking officer with good qualifications and a good service record and, at the same time, is a master of both flying and command. In addition, he was once the commander of the Navy Air Force Division in Shanhaiguan, which was responsible for protecting the security of the CPC Central Committee. He was also flight division commander of the South Sea Navy Air Force, which was known to have maintained successful cooperation with ground forces in combat operations.

#### **Li Jing Is the First Vice Admiral With a Background as a Navy Pilot**

It is reported that after he had become deputy Navy commander, Li Jing repeatedly stressed the importance of the Navy Air Force. When interviewed by a reporter in 1987, he made a statement, "There is no command of the sea without air superiority." During the course of the conversation, he systematically expounded the important role of the Navy Air Force in modern sea warfare. He said, "How the participating navy's aviation forces are used in a battle will affect not only the navy's entire combat effectiveness, but also the outcome of the entire

battle." Now, when the Chinese Communists are again showing interest in plans to build aircraft carriers, a fairly large development of the Navy Air Force under the command of Li Jing is within sight.

Li Jing has been the deputy commander of the Chinese Communist Navy for six years, since 1982. In the October 1988 promotions at the CPC highest levels, he will become the Navy's first vice admiral with a background as a Navy pilot. [As of January 1990, Li was still a deputy commander of the PLAN.]

#### **Xing Yongning's Outstanding Service in the "1 Million Troop Cut"**

Xing Yongning is one of the admirals of the Chinese Communist Navy with comparatively solid qualifications and record of service.

Xing was born in 1924 in Ningxiang County, Shanxi Province. In 1937, when the War of Resistance Against Japan broke out in full scale, Xing, who was only 13 years old, joined the Communist Party at the Chinese Communists' first anti-Japanese base. In 1938, he was a little Eighth Route Armyman in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Military District's organization, whose center was in Wutaishan. Xing Yongning was, in succession, a copy clerk in an organization of the Dongbei District CPC Committee in Shanxi, chief of the Confidential Information Group of the 5th Dadui in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei 2d Military Subdistrict, and chief of the Confidential Information Section of the 2d Column in the same military district.

After the Chinese Communists had established their regime in Beijing, Xing, as a core member in confidential information work, was transferred to Air Force Headquarters in Beijing. He then served successively as deputy chief of the Confidential Information Office in Air Force Headquarters, political commissar of the Air Force's First Flying School, deputy director of the Military Affairs Department in the Air Force Headquarters, deputy chief of staff of the Air Force, deputy political commissar of the Wuhan Military Region [MR] Air Force, and political commissar of the Confidential Information Bureau and director of the Military Affairs Department in the PLA's General Staff Department. In 1985, Xing was promoted to political commissar of the Chinese Communist Navy Air Force. And in early 1988, he was promoted to deputy commander of the Navy.

The main reason that Xing Yongning was promoted to high posts in the Navy is said to be that his period as director of the Military Affairs Department in the General Staff Department coincided with the eve of the "1 million troop cut." As director of the Military Affairs Department, Xing managed to accomplish within a short period of time a lot of the preparatory work for the troop reduction throughout the PLA, which laid a good foundation for the smooth implementation of the project in the future. This was highly appreciated by the higher levels. Both he and Zhu Guang [2612 0342], then

director of the Cadre Department of the General Political Department, were promoted with new assignments. Zhu Guang was appointed deputy political commissar of the Air Force, while Xing Yongning, also with an Air Force background, was appointed political commissar of the Navy Air Force as a partner to Li Jing, who was concurrently commander of the Navy Air Force.

In early 1988, when personnel changes took place in the Chinese military, Zhu Guang was promoted to political commissar of the Air Force, before Xing Yongning assumed the office of deputy commander of the Navy. According to an analysis made by people concerned, Deputy Navy Commander Li Jing, who has a background as a pilot, was already in charge of the Navy Air Force, but Xing Yongning did not know much about the Navy Air Force. Therefore, it is quite possible that Xing's new assignment will enable him to display the experience he gained from the Military Affairs Department to promote a "smooth relationship" during the organizational readjustment as the Navy is transformed from a "coastal type" to a "blue-water type."

Because of his achievements and excellent service record, Xing was promoted to the high post of deputy Navy commander. And in October 1988, he will become a vice admiral without an authentic naval background. [As of June 1989, Xing was political commissar of the National Defense Science, Technology, and Industry Commission. Information regarding his position as a deputy commander of the PLAN is unavailable at the present time. As of April 1990, Zhu was still political commissar of the PLAAF (People's Liberation Army Air Force).]

#### **Chen Mingshan Was Once He Long's Bodyguard**

Chen Mingshan was born in 1931 in Pingyuan County, Shanxi Province. In 1946, when he was only 15 years old, Chen joined the 120th Division of the 8th Route Army commanded by He Long [6320 7893] as a security guard. In 1949, he joined the CPC.

Chen Mingshan was once the chief of bodyguards in the Administrative Office of the CPC Central Military Commission and acted as Marshal He Long's aide-de-camp. Later he was transferred to the Navy. In January 1955, he performed outstandingly in the battle to retake Yijiangshan Island. In 1956, he graduated from China's Third Naval School. While in the East Sea Fleet, he was successively political instructor of a torpedo fast attack craft zhongdui, dadui chief of staff, dadui commander, and commander of the 16th Missile Fast Attack Craft Detachment. Also he was once the deputy commander and then the commander of the Wenzhou Sea Garrison District.

In 1979, Chen was in the first group of advanced students to attend the PLA Military Academy, where he had an opportunity to pursue advanced studies. After graduation, he was promoted to deputy chief of staff of

the East Sea Fleet and then to deputy commander of the same fleet. In 1985, he was promoted to deputy commander of the Navy.

At Ningbo, where the East Sea Fleet was located, a colleague of Chen's told this writer that when Chen was working for the fast attack craft unit, Chen was good at getting things done and was known for his "vigorous and fast" work style. He was very strict, conscientious, responsible, and scrupulous. He would study a problem thoroughly before making his decision to attack the problem. Meanwhile, he was not only easy to get along with, but also very good to his subordinates. All these traits could be related to the fact that he once was Marshal He Long's aide-de-camp. During the period when the situation in the South Sea was tense, Chen Mingshan took personal command and directed the Chinese Navy's actions around the Nansha Qundao [Spratly Islands]. Although he has been promoted to Navy deputy commander, his main energy is still devoted to the South Sea. It is reported that he regularly attends to the affairs of the South Sea Fleet and does not often make public appearances in Beijing.

In commanding the Chinese Navy's actions around the Nansha Islands, Chen made notable contributions, for which he was appointed to the important post of deputy commander of the Navy. In October 1988, he has become another candidate for promotion to the rank of vice admiral. [As of January 1990, Chen was still a deputy commander of the PLAN.]

### Three Deputy Chiefs of Staff

There are three deputy chiefs of staff in the Chinese Navy. All three of them seldom appear on public occasions, therefore, the outside world knows little about them.

Deng Shuqi [6772 2885 3825] is the one with the longest service record. In the initial period after the liberation, he was a dadui leader of the cadet corps and chairman of the First Cadet Department at the First Naval School. He then served as commander of the Pingtan Sea Garrison District of the Navy's Fujian Base. He also served as deputy commandant of the Naval Engineering College and as deputy commander of the Navy's Shanghai Base. He is now one of the Navy's deputy chiefs of staff. He is famous in the Navy for being a stickler "for discipline, appearance, bearing, and neat formations." It is reported that as deputy chief of staff he has been very effective in maintaining "discipline, appearance, and bearing" at the Navy Headquarters in Beijing. [As of April 1989, Deng was still a deputy chief of staff of the PLAN.]

### Reinstatement of Shi Tianding

When the Xisha [Paracel Islands] conflict broke out in 1974, Shi Tianding [4258 1131 1353] was the commander of a certain ship dadui in the Navy's South Sea Fleet. Because of his unit's meritorious performance in the battle, he was promoted to Navy deputy chief of staff. Later he was demoted to deputy commander of the

Navy's Qinhuangdao Sea Garrison District and was subsequently appointed commander of the South Sea Fleet's Yulin Base. After 10 years of turns in events, Shi Tianding returned to the post of Navy deputy chief of staff.

Because of his meritorious performance in the Xisha conflict, Shi was promoted very quickly. He was considered a cadre who "rose by helicopter." Then, after a number of setbacks, he was reappointed Navy deputy chief of staff. This indicates clearly that the Chinese Communists are pinning their hopes on this high-ranking officer, who took part in the Xisha conflict and commanded the Yulin Base, and are planning to put his skills to a test in future Chinese Naval actions in the Nansha Archipelago. [Information on Shi's current position is unavailable at the present time.]

### Wang Zuyao Was Once Secretary to Xiao Jinguang

Of the three deputy chiefs of staff, Wang Zuyao [3769 4371 1031] is the only one who has no experience in basic-level ship units. While Wang was secretary to Senior Admiral Xiao Jinguang, he handled affairs with discretion and dependability, for which he was highly appreciated by Xiao Jinguang. For a long time Wang worked in the offices of the Navy Headquarters and became very familiar with this work.

It is said that in March 1988, after the outbreak of the Sino-Vietnamese 14 March naval clash, Wang Zuyao went to Zhanjiang (where the General Headquarters of the South Sea Fleet is located) and took over the command post of the front line, where he coordinated the organization and command work of the various military forces from different places after they were transferred there. [As of January 1990, Wang was still a deputy chief of staff of the PLAN. Xiao Jinguang died in March 1989.]

In view of their qualifications, duties, and achievements, the Chinese Navy's three deputy chiefs of staff are candidates for rear admiral of the Navy.

### An Liqun Takes Charge of the East Sea Fleet

The Chinese Navy has not had a chief of staff since former chief of staff An Liqun was appointed deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet in 1987. Thus, this quite talented Navy admiral will most probably lose his candidacy for vice admiral when ranks are conferred on 1 October 1988. To this day it remains a mystery to foreign military experts why An Liqun was demoted from Navy chief of staff to deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet.

In his early days when he was working under the famous admiral Tao Yong [7118 0516] (1911-1967), An Liqun was a ship captain, then later commander of the 18th Escort Ship Dadui of the East Sea Fleet. Before the Cultural Revolution, he was highly regarded by Vice Admiral Tao Yong. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, when Tao Yong was criticized, An Liqun

was sent down to the countryside to work at the Navy's farm in Chongming, Shanghai. After Lin Biao and Li Zuopeng had lost their power, An was reinstated and became director of the Training Department and subsequently head of a department in the Naval School in Dalian. In 1978, An was transferred to the South Sea Fleet to become commander of the 2d Destroyer Detachment. Later, because of his stellar performance, the Navy "made an exception to promote" him to deputy chief of staff before his subsequent promotion to Navy chief of staff. It is reported that An is a military man who studies assiduously. As early as when he was a ship captain, he was different from others. Every day he studied military works diligently until late at night. He was so assiduous that even when he was promoted to a higher level, his subordinates always considered him to be "the Navy's strongman" with a high level of theoretical knowledge. For this reason he was highly regarded by his superiors.

An's transfer to his new post could have been because he had skipped the levels of both the base and the fleet in his meteoric rise. By assigning him to work in the East Sea Fleet this time, it was meant to enhance the command strength of the fleet on the one hand, and to give him more experience for assuming higher posts in the future on the other. An Liqun's prospects in the Chinese Navy should not be underestimated. [As of mid-1989, An was still deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet.]

#### **Ma Xinchun Takes Command of the North Sea Fleet**

Ma Xinchun [7456 6580 2504], the current commander of the North Sea Fleet, joined the CPC as early as 1936, before joining the 8th Route Army in 1940. Later he worked in the anti-Japanese Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Base. In 1952, Ma was transferred to Navy Headquarters, where he served in succession as section chief and Operations Department director. After the Cultural Revolution, he was appointed deputy commandant of the First Naval School and then deputy chief of staff and chief of staff of the Yantai Base. Subsequently he returned to Navy Headquarters as Navy chief of staff. Ma is now commander of the Chinese Navy's North Sea Fleet and concurrently deputy commander of the Jinan Military Region.

Rich in experience, Ma Xinchun was a founding member of the Chinese Communist naval organizations. After becoming the North Sea Fleet commander, he became the first man to command the fleet in cutting across the "first island chain" and in carrying out a three-dimensional naval exercise in the air, on the sea, and under the sea in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. Afterwards, in the Yellow Sea, he organized a laser and electronic simulated field maneuver exercise. For these actions he was commended by the higher levels of the Chinese Communist military. In the current Chinese Communist military rank evaluations, it is predetermined that Ma will obtain the rank of vice admiral. [As of August 1989, Ma was still commander of the North

Sea Fleet. Information on his position as deputy commander of the Jinan MR is unavailable at the present time.]

#### **Nie Kuiju Was a Chinese Communist Combat Hero**

East Sea Fleet Commander Nie Kuiju joined the PLA after the victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan. On the eve of the founding of the Beijing regime, he was transferred to the Chinese Communists' East China Navy. As early as 1953, Nie was captain of the warship Guangzhou of the Chinese Navy's Sixth Fleet, one of the earliest warship captains in the Navy. Afterwards, he held in succession the posts of chief of staff and then commander of warship dadui, commander of the 6th Escort Ship Detachment, deputy chief of staff of the Yantai Base, commander of the Yulin Base, deputy commander and then commander of the East Sea Fleet, and concurrently Navy deputy commander and East Sea Fleet commander. He is now East Sea Fleet commander and concurrently the Nanjing Military Region's deputy commander. At the 13th party congress, Nie Kuiju was elected a member of the CPC Central Committee.

As early as when he was a ship captain in the East Sea Fleet, Nie was an outstanding combat hero. In a 1954 sea battle, Nie's warship was hit by a bomb from an enemy aircraft. Nie, the acting commander, was not intimidated by the danger. While the stern was sinking, he still directed gunfire from the ship's bridge against the enemy aircraft. He waited until the entire hull sank before leaving the ship. He swam alone until he was rescued. Nie Kuiju and An Liqun became the right-hand men of Vice Admiral Tao Yong, who was then the East Sea Fleet commander. Because of this, Nie was pushed out by the clique of Li Zuopeng during the Cultural Revolution. However, Nie has always been regarded by the outside world as a highly competent Navy admiral. In 1985, Nie led a fleet to visit three Southeast Asian countries. Since the mission was a complete success, Nie drew the attention of the higher levels in China, and for a time he was considered by people in China and abroad to be the popular choice to become commander of the Navy. Eventually, in the conferring of ranks taking place in October 1988, Nie Kuiju will be honored with the rank of vice admiral.

Some experts think that the fact that Nie Kuiju and An Liqun, the "old partners" of yesteryear, returned to the East Sea and took command of Ningbo reflects the great importance the Chinese Communists attach to the work in the East Sea, and that it could mean the East Sea Fleet will take great strides in future development. [As of September 1989, Nie was still commander of the East Sea Fleet. Information on his position as deputy commander of the Nanjing MR is unavailable at the present time.]

#### **Gao Zhenjia Was Commandant of the Submarine College**

South Sea Fleet Commander Gao Zhenjia [7559 2182 1367] is a native of Jinxian County, Liaoning Province.

After the victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan, he joined the PLA. In Lushun he received submarine training from the Soviet Navy. In succession he was a submarine captain and a submarine detachment deputy commander. During the later stage of the Cultural Revolution, Gao rose to become the Navy's deputy commander. Later he was demoted to deputy commandant of the Naval Academy in Nanjing. In early 1988, when a personnel readjustment in the Navy took place, Gao Zhenjia was promoted to South Sea Fleet commander and concurrently Guangzhou Military Region deputy commander. Gao was one of the first submarine captains in the Chinese Navy. During the final stage of the Cultural Revolution, as one who had been selected to be in the Navy's leading group, he was appointed deputy commander in charge of the Navy's colleges and schools. Gao, who had been regarded as a cadre who "rose by helicopter," was for a while demoted to doing just college and school work. In early 1988, when the situation in the South Sea was becoming tense, Gao was appointed to the important post of South Sea Fleet commander, with his prospects worthy of attention.

Like Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong, Gao has a background in submarines. At the beginning of August 1988, Zhang Lianzhong made a special trip to Guangzhou, where he conferred medals on veteran navymen. Gao Zhenjia appeared at this ceremony and made a speech in which he called on all officers and men of the South Sea Fleet to "dedicate themselves selflessly to building up and defending the Nansha Islands." Military experts in Beijing think that Gao's taking up this post is an indication that in the dispute over the Nansha Islands, China could give vigorous play to the submarine's raiding capability.

Gao's qualifications, service record, and the posts in which he has served indicate clearly that he will be another candidate for Navy vice admiral. [As of mid-1989, Gao was still commander of the South Sea Fleet. Information on his position as deputy commander of the Guangzhou MR is unavailable at the present time.]

#### **Li Yaowen Is the "Gifted Scholar of the Military"**

In early 1988, when personnel changes in the Chinese Communist Navy took place, Li Yaowen [2621 5069 2429], who was then over 70 years old, remained in his post as political commissar of the Chinese Communist Navy. This indicates clearly that the Chinese Communists, in considering Li's qualifications, service record, and talent, could bestow on him the honor of becoming the Chinese Navy's only full admiral.

Li Yaowen was born in 1918 in Rongcheng County, Shandong Province. In 1937, when the War of Resistance Against Japan broke out in full scale, warlord Han Fuju, who was entrenched in Shandong, fled instead of fighting. The Chinese Communist forces in Shandong called on the people to rise up and resist Japan. Li Yaowen, who then 19 years old, joined the CPC in the same year.

Because of his certain educational level and firm convictions, Li quickly became a political work cadre of outstanding ability in the 8th Route Army. In this army, he held in succession the posts of regiment and brigade political commissar before becoming acting secretary of a prefectural CPC Committee. After the victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan, Li served as director of the political department of a column in the East China Field Army under the command of Marshal Chen Yi and as military-political commissar of the 8th Regiment in the 3d Field Army.

After the founding of the Chinese Communists' Beijing regime, Li Yaowen became military-political commissar of the 26th Army. In November 1950, he led this army across the Yalu River to take part in the Korean war. In the winter of 1950, Li led his troops and took part in the Chosin Reservoir Campaign. In June 1951, he led his troops to block an offensive mounted by the U.S. forces and scored a marked military success. In the summer of 1952, the 26th Army, led by Li Yaowen, returned to China.

In 1955, Li Yaowen was appointed deputy director of the Political Department in the Jinan Military Region, and in the same year he was given the rank of major general. Among the high-ranking officers in the Chinese military at that time, few of those who had not been in the military in the Red Army period were generals, but Li was one of them. Thus, it is obvious that he was highly regarded. In 1958, he was promoted to director of the Political Department in the Jinan Military Region. Later, he went to an advanced military institute for advanced studies, graduating in 1963, before being appointed deputy political commissar of the Jinan Military Region. Although Li was not criticized and denounced during the Cultural Revolution, his golden years in military circles were destroyed. During the movement in which the army went to the localities to support the left, Li Yaowen became the first vice foreign minister in military uniform; the foreign minister who was being criticized happened to be his former supervisor, Chen Yi. Not putting his energy into the political struggle, Li began to study the experiences of diplomatic work. Later he was appointed Chinese ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania and concurrently ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Madagascar. When he was working in the Foreign Ministry, Li did not suffer the reproach that he was a "nonprofessional leading professionals." In the foreign affairs departments, where there are a multitude of tasks to perform and where policies are extremely sensitive, this lack of reproach is very rare. Afterwards, he was crowned with the title "Gifted Scholar of the Military."

After Deng Xiaoping regained the post of vice chairman of the Chinese Communists' Military Commission, Li Yaowen was recalled to military circles to become the political commissar of the National Defense Science and Technology Commission. In October 1980, he was appointed political commissar of the Navy, a post he has held up to the present day. Li Yaowen has always been



regarded as a very restrained military man. This point is proved by the fact that he was able to cooperate with Ye Fei, Liu Huaqing, and Zhang Lianzhong during their terms as commander of the Navy. It is said that during the period of his work in the Navy Li's behavior has been unconventional and that he often gives his subordinates the impression that he is modest, prudent, and easy to approach. According to well-informed sources, Li recently went to the South Sea and called on the officers and men to take part in the Nansha conflict, coining the slogan "Display the spirit of Nansha." Li Yaowen has had experience in the Korean war as well as in diplomatic work. He also has courage and insight concerning the issues in the Nansha dispute and will provide many valuable opinions and suggestions to newly appointed Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong. People will not be surprised if in October of this year Li Yaowen should become the only full admiral in contemporary China.

Li was an alternate member of the 11th CPC Central Committee and a full member of the 12th CPC Central Committee. [As of April 1990, Li was still political commissar of the PLAN.]

#### **Wei Jinshan Was Once Secretary to Xu Shiyou**

Wei Jinshan [7614 6855 1472] is currently the Chinese Navy's only deputy political commissar. Wei was born in 1927 in Penglai County, Shandong Province. In 1945, he joined the PLA and in 1946 the CPC. During the fighting between the CPC and the KMT armed forces, Wei served as a company political instructor, and as a staff officer and then deputy chief of the training and education section in a division headquarters.

After the founding of the Beijing regime, Wei Jinshan was transferred to the Military Training Office in the Nanjing Military Region Headquarters as a staff officer. Later he became a deputy and then full section chief in that office. Because he showed competence and ability in the military training departments, he was chosen by Xu Shiyou [6079 0013 0645], commander of the Nanjing Military Region and known to set great store on martial qualities, to be his secretary. Afterwards, Wei, who was highly regarded, served in succession as regiment commander, division deputy political commissar and full political commissar, army deputy political commissar and full political commissar, deputy director of the Political Department of the Nanjing Military Region, and director of the Political Department of the PLA General Staff Department. In 1985, after the "1 million troop cut," Wei Jinshan was promoted to deputy political commissar of the Chinese Navy.

Wei, who was once secretary to Xu Shiyou, has a solid base in military circles. Although in his adult years Wei worked in the Army and did not know much about the characteristics of the Navy, he is now the Navy's only deputy political commissar, most likely the hottest candidate to succeed Li Yaowen as the Navy's political commissar.

Wei Jinshan was a member of the 12th and the 13th CPC Central Committees. When ranks are bestowed in October 1988, he will be a popular candidate for vice admiral of the Navy. [As of April 1990, Wei was still deputy political commissar of the PLAN.]

#### **Chapter 2. Chinese Naval Actions Since the Beginning of the Seventies**

[Text] In August 1964 the United States began to attack North Vietnam. From that time on, the Chinese Navy and Vietnam, seemingly brought together by fate, have had contacts for more than 20 years. Beginning as friends, they later turned into enemies. Vietnam is not only the first country against which the Chinese Navy conducted operations outside China since the Navy was established, but it is also the only foreign country with which the Chinese Navy has had naval clashes. It may be said that, from one angle, Vietnam has occupied an important place in the history of the development of the Chinese Navy.

#### **Military Activities of the Chinese Navy's Antiaircraft Artillery in Vietnam**

In October 1966, the 3d Battalion of the 2d Regiment of the Chinese Navy's South Sea Aviation Corps Antiaircraft Artillery [AAA] and the Independent 1st Battalion successively entered Vietnamese territory. They were incorporated in the order of battle of the 29th Regiment of the 10th Antiaircraft Division of the Chinese Air Force. On 3 November 1966, the 3d Battalion, stationed at (Waisu) on the middle stretch of the Hanoi-Friendship Pass Railway, fought the Chinese Navy's first battle on foreign soil. This battle was extremely fierce. Qiao Xingyi [0829 5281 5030], commander of the 3d Battalion, organized his personnel to concentrate their fire at U.S. aircraft that were making a strong bombing raid against a transportation line, resulting in three U.S. aircraft being shot down or damaged. This was the first time that the Chinese Navy "struck a pose" in a foreign country and was a military success that showed the quality of the Chinese Navy's training and the flexibility and variability of its tactics. It made people look at the Chinese Navy with new respect. In later battles, the Chinese Navy's antiaircraft gun units used the method of quickly adding and then cutting off current to the gunfire control radar, which allowed them to ingeniously avoid the attacks of the U.S.-made Shrike antiradar air-to-surface missile. Data show that, over a period of two years and five months, the Chinese Navy's antiaircraft gun units shot down 175 U.S. aircraft and damaged 128 others—a brilliant military victory. A total of 51 officers and men of the Chinese Navy were killed in action, and 154 others were wounded. Of course in the era of friendship when Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh were "comrades and brothers" and had promised "not to stint at making any big national sacrifices," this price was "overlooked and discounted."

### Zhou Enlai's Tactics

In 1965, the Chinese Navy formed a huge convoy, comprising 29 transport ships with the South Sea Fleet as its main part, in response to a request from Ho Chi Minh. This convoy transported a large amount of equipment, supplies, and personnel from China to the northern part of Vietnam. After Ho Chi Minh died in 1969, due to certain international and domestic reasons and the evolution of the Vietnam hostilities, the Chinese side in principle no longer used its naval units in operations to aid Vietnam.

On 9 May 1972, the United States imposed a large-scale sea mine blockade of the coastal sea lanes, ports, and riverways of North Vietnam in order to cut off Vietnam's war supply. For the North Vietnamese regime, which at that time depended mainly on sea transport for material aid from abroad, this was, without a doubt, a heavy blow that was hard to bear. On that day, the Vietnamese ambassador to China urgently requested to see Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. He asked China to send a naval minesweeping fleet to sweep the mines and clear the sea lanes. It is said that at the beginning of the talks with the ambassador Zhou Enlai took a rather reserved attitude. He told the Vietnamese ambassador: The Chinese Navy's mine sweeping gear is fairly backward, but the Soviet Navy's gear is fairly advanced; can't you ask the Soviet Union to help sweep the mines? Looking back at this statement by Zhou Enlai, who was famous for striving to be thorough, it truly was a laudable statement and had a double meaning. On the one hand, what the Chinese premier said was the truth because the Chinese Navy's minesweeping units at that time really could not be compared with those of the Soviet Navy, either in scale or quality. But on the other hand, by the time of Ho Chi Minh's death, the personal friendship between Ho and Mao Zedong had already been lost forever. In particular, Vietnam's tendency to draw closer to the Soviet Union could have been the real reason for Zhou Enlai's negative attitude toward Vietnam's request. However, even if this were the case, because of Vietnam's urgent request and the situation at that time, that night Zhou Enlai called together the Navy's high-level officers to plan the minesweeping mission. On the morning of the next day he summoned Pan Yan [3382 8746] and Lai Guangzu [0171 0342 4371], the Navy chief of staff and deputy chief of staff at that time respectively, and issued a specific directive to "find, destroy, and clear mines." After this, Zhou Enlai for the most part responded readily to Vietnam's requests.

### Minesweeping in Vietnam

Coordinating with the South Sea Fleet, the Chinese Navy Headquarters came up with a plan for sweeping the mines in Vietnam within one week. After Zhou Enlai examined the plan, it was sent to Mao Zedong for his approval. Because Mao Zedong gave his written approval, the Chinese high-level officials immediately held a meeting and studied the plan. Attending the meeting were Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, Li Desheng, and

other important military and government figures. It was thus clear that China attached a high degree of importance to the matter of sending the Navy to Vietnam to sweep mines. It is said that some sober-minded officials in the Chinese military privately thought that there was a difference between minesweeping and military operations in that there would be no direct confrontation, and that the minesweeping capability of the naval units could be tempered and some new naval mine technologies could be acquired by this process. But, because of the domestic situation at that time, the main intent of this idea was not carried out in this minesweeping action.

Because of the extreme importance that the Chinese higher level attached to the action of sending naval units to Vietnam to sweep mines, the Chinese Navy immediately assembled from all the fleets in China 12 minesweepers of various types, four support vessels, and 318 officers and men. Beginning in July 1972, they went to Vietnam to sweep mines in five separate groups.

Statistics show that the minesweeping fleet of the Chinese Navy worked in Vietnam for one year and three months. By August 1973, using minesweepers built in the early sixties, it had swept 46 MK-52 and MK-42 new-model sea mines with which the U.S. Navy had begun to equip its units in 1967.

After the Paris peace talks, the United States pledged to clear all the mines it had laid in Vietnam in accordance with the agreement. But when the U.S. Navy's minesweeping units inspected the areas swept by the Chinese Navy's minesweeping fleet, they failed to discover even one mine. The U.S. Navy was amazed. Even though the Chinese naval units, in the course of sweeping mines in Vietnam, performed in outstanding fashion, achieved splendid battle results, and also summed up a set of operational experiences for modern naval mine warfare, the Chinese high-level officials were not very interested in making this a lesson for ascertaining a path of development abroad for the Chinese Navy to take, causing many experiences and lessons to be buried in empty slogans about the internationalist spirit!

During the Chinese Navy's minesweeping operation in Vietnam, many experienced officers and men were killed in action. However, "friendship sealed in blood" is unbreakable. The Vietnamese people, in reality, long ago harbored the evil intent of "nibbling" at Chinese islands in the South Sea. The bloodstains of the officers and men of the Chinese Navy were not yet dry when, in January 1974, the Chinese Navy exchanged fire with the forces of the fast-collapsing Saigon regime over disputed islands in the South Sea. Afterward, because of changes in the territorial issue, the dispute became an open one with the Hanoi regime. This point provides today's Chinese higher level with a profound lesson that is worthy of a good "rethink."

### The Xisha Sea Battle: "We Definitely Did Not Fire the First Shot"

On 19 January 1974, the Chinese Navy exchanged fire with the Saigon regime's Navy in the Xisha Qundao [Paracel Islands] in the South China Sea. This was the first time since its establishment that the Chinese Navy had fought the navy of another country. In this exchange of fire, the brave fighting morale and indomitable spirit displayed by the officers and men of the Chinese Navy who took part in the battle were never in doubt, and, because of them, victory was won. However, in strategic planning and tactical application, the higher level of the Chinese military at that time did not, from the angle of the overall situation, fully recognize the strategic position of the Xisha Islands for China's development. Preparations for battle were inadequate, and troop mobilization and operational command were not sufficiently scientific and strict. The principle of "keeping political struggle in mind and not preparing to resort to arms" caused the repeated loss of the best combat opportunities and led to heavy casualties. This attitude of not paying sufficient attention to island resources was related to China's "mainland-type" closed policy at that time and was also conditioned by the political situation during the Cultural Revolution.

As early as September 1973, the Nguyen Van Thieu regime had begun to covet the Xisha and Nansha Archipelagos. At that time DAN CHU [DEMOCRACY], South Vietnam's official newspaper, declared that the Xisha Islands were extremely important to the petroleum that was beginning to be recovered from under Vietnam's continental shelf. However, propaganda like this did not draw the attention of China's higher level; therefore, the Chinese Navy's deployment and reaction in the Xisha Islands were somewhat slow.

Prior to the battle for Xisha, a large number of ships of South Vietnam's Saigon Navy went to the Xisha sea area and harassed Chinese fishing vessels on many occasions. China made only a few protests through diplomatic channels. This attitude of restraint further emboldened the Saigon Navy in its savagery, and ships of the Saigon Navy proceeded to shell Ganquan Island [Robert Island], which flew the Chinese flag. On 17 January 1974, it sent Destroyer No. 4 with troops who occupied the two islands of Ganquan and Jinyin [Money Island], and also brazenly took down the Chinese flags there. These actions obviously infuriated the Chinese officials. However, since they occurred at this time, the Chinese higher level ordered the Navy's ships "to persist in struggle by argument and reasoning and not fire the first shot;" only if the Vietnamese Navy were to fire first were they to deal a resolute counterblow. This attitude of "trying peaceful means before resorting to force" was very unwise. The fast-changing battlefield is not an occasion for diplomacy. Taking action after the other side has attacked caused the Chinese Navy to lose the opportunity to forestall its opponent by a show of strength and also caused the Chinese to suffer grievous casualties at the opening of hostilities.

According to personnel who were on the scene at the time, before the naval battle began the warships of the two sides were in a state of confrontation. A Vietnamese warship fired one of its guns, but the Chinese naval commander decided that it "probably was an accidental discharge." This was another time that the Chinese Navy lost a good opportunity to forestall its opponent by taking quick action. "Do not fire the first shot" was the unrealistic slogan put forward by the former "successor" Lin Biao when he commanded the armed forces, a slogan that meant binding one's own hands and feet. Two years after Lin Biao's death, the empty dogma of "put politics in command" was still being "resolutely implemented." It is thus obvious that the Chinese Navy at that time was under a leadership that lacked a consciousness of modernized warfare.

On 19 January 1974, the South Vietnamese Navy made forced landings on the two islands of Chenhang [Duncan Island] and Guangjin, and for the first time opened fire on the Chinese militia on the two islands. This time, too, the Chinese Navy's warships "remained silent." At 1020 hours, four warships of the South Vietnamese Navy (Escort Ship No. 10 and Destroyers Nos. 4, 16, and 5) simultaneously opened fire on two submarine chasers (Nos. 271 and 270) and two minesweepers (Nos. 389 and 390) of the Chinese Navy. The Chinese Navy's ships were hit in succession. According to what was disclosed by the Chinese military, the Chinese Navy lost 18 killed and 67 wounded in this naval battle. It was said that the greater part of the casualties were suffered at the beginning of the battle. Due to the fact that the warships of the Vietnamese Navy had naval gun radar sights, the first round hit the command post of a minesweeper, and the political commissar of that ship, who was hit in the chest, was killed in action on the spot. According to concerned figures in the know, this disastrous lesson, after the event, had a great impact on the Chinese Navy's higher level.

After the officers and men of the Chinese Navy suffered the first blow, they displayed extraordinary bravery. Several ships, in order to avoid the large-caliber naval guns of the Vietnamese ships, closed in on them and launched a fierce counterattack. Because the ships of the two sides were very close to each other, the sailors on the Chinese Navy ships even used hand grenades and submachineguns. The battle lasted 1 hour 37 minutes. The Vietnamese ships succumbed to the Chinese Navy, which had a morale that disregarded life. Three damaged destroyers abandoned the heavily damaged Escort Ship No. 10 and separately fled in the southeast and northwest directions. This time, subchasers Nos. 281 and 282 of the Chinese Navy hurried after them. There was nothing left of the Chinese Navy's previous attitude of restraint. The two ships caught up with Escort Ship No. 10 and sprayed the hull of the heavily damaged ship with 57-mm shells until the ship caught fire, exploded, and sank.

On 20 January 1974, with air support from the Aviation Corps of the Chinese Navy's East Sea Fleet, a composite

force of naval surface vessels entered the Yongxing Island [Woody Island] theater of operations. After the naval ship formation's guns had bombarded the Vietnamese troop positions on the island, the South Vietnamese defenders, seeing the large force arrayed against them, laid down their arms one by one and surrendered. In this battle, the Chinese armed forces sank one Vietnamese escort ship and damaged three Vietnamese destroyers, killed or wounded a little over 100 Vietnamese military men, and captured 48 Vietnamese military men and 1 American. Minesweeper No. 389 of the Chinese Navy was hit and heavily damaged.

### **Xisha Battle Reveals Shortcomings**

Looking at the results and the price paid by China in the Xisha Islands Battle, it is obvious that the Chinese Navy did not completely display its strength. According to disclosures, Chinese naval fast attack craft equipped with Styx missiles had been dispatched to the Xisha sea area before the battle began, but because they could not rendezvous with an oil tanker and get refueled, they did not take part in the sea battle. The Navy's Aviation Corps also failed to make preparations for taking part in the battle. It sent only one Hong-5 aircraft to observe the battle, but because it was impossible for this aircraft to lower its flying altitude and due to the lack of advanced recording and photographic equipment, it could not clearly report back on the battle situation. If the Chinese Navy's missile fast attack craft had been able to take part in the battle, it would have been difficult for the three South Vietnamese Navy destroyers to escape.

In the Xisha Battle, the Chinese Navy, which was many times stronger than the South Vietnamese Navy, had to "vanquish strength with weakness" and face the enemy with inferior equipment. Not only was there no aircraft or submarine support or battle participation by missile ships, but the minesweepers and subchasers that took part in the battle had to do so on the spur of the moment. Some of them had just come out of the shipyard after a major overhaul, and others were on a transport mission. Even fishing vessels were thrown into the battle. This could not but illustrate the fact that this situation was caused by the Chinese Navy's lack of war preparations. Going one step further, it showed that the Navy lacked a deep understanding of modern warfare.

The battle for the Xisha Islands occurred during China's Cultural Revolution. At that time the Navy's training was basically in a state of stagnation. In addition, the commanders at sea were deeply influenced by the aim of "definitely not firing the first shot." So before the battle began, they were unable to make full preparations, and during the battle, they were unable to obtain the initiative. Although the Battle of Xisha ended in a Chinese victory, it also revealed many shortcomings of the Chinese Navy. First of all, the Chinese Navy lacked the modern warfare concept of "mastering the enemy by striking first and attacking with lightning speed." In a situation in which a battle is about to break out, it is

obviously stupid to conduct a futile "struggle with reasoning" and a "political offensive." After an enemy invades one's territorial waters, it is impossible to say clearly who fired the "first shot." Only by seizing the opportunity for battle and seizing the initiative can victory be won. What is more, the tonnage of the Vietnamese ships was more than four times that of the Chinese Navy's ships. If it were not for the extraordinary bravery displayed by the officers and men of the Chinese Navy, who fought the enemy at close quarters with hand grenades and submachineguns, the consequences would have been too dreadful to contemplate. Furthermore, the blue-water combat strength of the Chinese Navy at that time was inadequate, and very little combined-arms training had been given to the ships fit with Styx missiles and to the oil tankers. The result was that they could not arrive at the operational sea area on time and take part in the battle. Thus the Chinese Navy could only make use of comparatively primitive tactics in the battle. In addition, there were some problems in command and communications and in logistics support.

After the Battle of Xisha, some sensible officers at the higher level in the Chinese Navy privately expressed dissatisfaction with the events of the battle and the lack of consideration given the overall operation. However, the motherland's islands were, in the end, recovered. Under the restrictions of the political climate at that time and some other factors, it was impossible for some naval experts to conduct more in-depth analyses of the Battle of Xisha in order to come up with lessons useful to the Chinese Navy. With regard to strategic thinking that concerns the state's interests and tactical discussions that relate to the lives of enlisted men, the "ban was lifted" after Deng Xiaoping became vice chairman of the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee, which broke open the situation in which such topics were closed to discussion.

From an objective view, the Battle of Xisha helped the North Vietnamese regime defeat the Saigon regime faster. However after the battle, the diplomats of the Le Duan regime had the audacity to reveal their true intentions by saying "thank you for liberating the Xisha Islands for us." Obviously, this statement stemmed from the Le Duan regime's own considerations, namely, it indicated its satisfaction with the fact that the Chinese Navy had weakened Nguyen Van Thieu's Navy and hinted that in the future it would nibble at China's islands in the South Sea. At that time the Chinese Government was certain that the Le Duan regime had thrown its lot in with the Soviet Union, but was not sufficiently conscious of and vigilant against that regime's future nibbling at the islands in the South Sea, and so it gave the Vietnamese the time and opportunity to be the first to take the Nansha Islands.

### **The Shortsightedness of the Slogan, "Avenge the Vietnamese People"**

During the battle for the Xisha Islands, the officers and men of the Chinese Navy shouted the slogan, "Avenge

the Vietnamese People." Obviously, this slogan was shortsighted. The principal leaders of the Chinese Navy at that time were Senior Admiral Xiao Jinguang and Admiral Su Zhenhua. Because Xiao Jinguang was old and sick, Su Zhenhua was actually the man with real power in the Chinese Navy. Su Zhenhua was a man who faithfully followed Mao Zedong's line. At that time the people at the highest level in China excessively stressed the "unbreakable brotherly affection" between Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh when educating enlisted men on the Vietnam question, and, as a result, they forgot about the country's boundary lines and the nation's interests. According to materials not yet publicly disclosed, Mao Zedong, as early as the fifties and with extreme generosity, gave Bailongwei Island, which is located in the middle of the Gulf of Tonkin and which is in an extremely important strategic position, to the Ho Chi Minh government. Zhou Enlai was the representative who signed the agreement on this matter. This action by Mao Zedong was really not wise, and to this day, some officers still express great incomprehension over it.

Before the Battle of Xisha, there was a tendency for relations between China and the North Vietnamese regime to worsen. However, only some officials at China's highest level and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time knew about this subtle change in relations, and it was kept absolutely secret to outsiders, even to the extent that some high-level figures in the Navy were not clear about it. This made it impossible for some experts in the Navy to deploy forces in the South Sea and to give detailed consideration to the possibility of an outbreak of hostilities in the South Sea. The operational mission to "avenge the Vietnamese people" had ended, and in the minds of many officers and men of the Navy at that time was the idea that the South Sea was secure. Not until after the Sino-Vietnamese border war in 1979 did the Chinese Navy truly make the Hanoi regime's Navy an object of future operations and conscientious study.

On Christmas 1985, Hu Yaobang, then CPC general secretary, accompanied by Admiral Liu Huaqing, commander of the Navy, went to the Xisha Islands to visit the officers and men of the Navy. To the garrison there, he said that, "our national policy is that we do not want a single inch of any country's territory, but we also do not permit any country to invade and occupy a single inch of our great motherland's territory." Obviously, this statement of Hu Yaobang's had a point. He was encouraging Commander Liu Huaqing to prepare a plan of action for the South China Sea. The fact that the CPC leader at the highest level had gone to the Xisha Islands showed that the concern of the highest level in China for the Navy and for the islands in the South Sea was far greater than in the era of "avenging the Vietnamese people." Afterward, Admiral Liu Huaqing led the Chinese Navy in taking a series of actions in the South China Sea that made people look at it with new respect.

### Jiang Qing Meddles in the Navy

During the tense Xisha Islands situation in 1974, for a time there was a "red pole"; namely, Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, who although she had no post in China's armed forces, was nevertheless active in them. After the Xisha Battle Jiang Qing immediately designated a poet, Zhang Yongzhang, and a novelist, Hao Ran, to be her "special envoys" to Xisha, where they were to go and visit the officers and men who took part in the battle. Under Jiang Qing's directions, these two writers wrote a long poem and a novel, entitled *Sons and Daughters of Xisha*. These two literary works were circulated widely among the officers and men of the Navy and throughout China. These two literary works played up the bravery of the officers and men of the Navy, and described how they, with backward equipment and small ships, vanquished large ships, and how the South Vietnamese Navy had bullied and insulted fishermen. Thus the two works were imbued with the flavor of "class education." At that time some farsighted new workers and experts called for better reportage and analytical comment on the Xisha Battle, but Jiang Qing did not want to change the general direction of the struggle to "criticize Liu Shaoqi and Confucius," and she stifled this idea. As a result the publicity about the Battle of Xisha remained at the very low level of "revenge," and the far more important strategic and long-term interests of the country were ignored and forgotten.

### Much More Attention Paid to Nansha Than to Xisha

After the outbreak of the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict in 1979, the Chinese Navy obviously strengthened its guard in the South Sea against the Vietnamese. On 10 April 1979 the Vietnamese military dispatched three armed ships to Zhongjian Island [Triton Island], which is located at the southernmost extremity of the Xisha Islands. At that time a middle-level officer of the Chinese Navy had gone to the island to make an inspection. Under his command the Chinese Navy units on the island captured the Vietnamese enlisted men who had come to reconnoiter the area. Afterward this officer and the enlisted men on the island were commended by the Central Military Commission. It is very interesting that this officer later commanded the Chinese Navy's ships in the clash between China and Vietnam on 14 March 1988. The incident in which Vietnamese enlisted men were captured on Zhongjian Island was the first, but very small, clash between the Chinese and Vietnamese Navies since the Sino-Vietnamese border war began in February 1979. At that time the Chinese Government was more interested in tranquillity on the southern border and on the evolution of the Cambodian situation, and its attitude toward the South Sea islands was that they seemed unimportant.

### Navy's Interest in the Nansha Dispute

On 30 June 1980 the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a document entitled *China's Sovereignty Over the Xisha and Nansha Archipelagos Is Indisputable*, making

it clear that the two island groups had been Chinese territory since ancient times. In April 1983 the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a note to the Vietnamese Embassy in China strongly protesting the intrusion by Vietnamese armed ships into the sea area of China's Nansha Islands. By this time some officers in the Chinese Navy had already felt that this issue was serious, and they gave consideration from the military angle to future developments in the Nansha dispute. Actually, in November 1980 the Chinese Navy's Aviation Corps, in response to an order from the Central Military Commission, sent two operational aircraft to reconnoiter in the skies above the Nansha Archipelago.

In April and December 1987 and in February 1988, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued many statements reiterating Chinese sovereignty over the Nansha Archipelago. Not only did the tone of the statements gradually become harder, but at the same time, naval forces were also used to make threats. Two days after the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry's 2 December 1987 statement, the XINHUA NEWS AGENCY released the following news: "From the middle of October to the end of November, a combined formation of many types of ships, formed by the Chinese Navy's East Sea Fleet, conducted highly intense military exercises over a wide sea area in the western Pacific and the East China Sea." A look at the order of the arrangement and issuance of the statement and the news shows that the Chinese Government was obviously dropping a hint on the Nansha Archipelago issue that it was "trying peaceful means before resorting to force."

This action by the Chinese Navy was clearly focused on the Nansha Islands situation. According to disclosures by the military, four missile escort ships crossed the Nansha Archipelago sea area twice, and at the closest were only 0.4 nautical miles from islands occupied by Vietnamese forces. It was said that the Chinese Navy's enlisted men were highly indignant when they saw the unrepresentable appearance of the Vietnamese forces defending the islands and concluded that the entrenched Vietnamese forces would simply collapse at the first blow. They pledged to expel the Vietnamese forces. But China's higher level at that time did not issue an operational order, and the Chinese Navy's enlisted men, who were bursting with energy, were extremely sorry that they could not teach the Vietnamese a little lesson.

#### **The Nansha Issue Is Raised to the Height of Strategy**

During 1987, some high-level officers in the Chinese military brought up the Nansha Archipelago issue many times in speeches, which raised the issue to the level of transformation of naval strategy and adaptation to developments in oceanic undertakings. These officers expressed indignation at the loss of the Nansha Archipelago during the Cultural Revolution. Some military experts thought that the issue of the Nanshas was not like the issues of Hong Kong and Macao, in that there were no treaty restraints, thus making it impossible to employ the principles of mutual understanding and mutual

accommodation. The Navy's call for action in the Nansha Archipelago obtained the support of many experts in China. If there were a slowness in solving the problem of the Nansha Islands, they thought, it would be a major error in China's strategy.

Chinese military officers put special stress on the strategic position and economic value of the Nansha Archipelago. They maintained that over the past several years the economic development of the Asian-Pacific region has been very fast, noting that, in the three years before the eighties began, the average growth rate there was 4 percent, 2.6 percent higher than the world's average growth rate. Quite a large part of the Soviet Union's territory is in the Asian-Pacific region, and the United States borders on the Pacific Ocean. The two countries have enormous interests in this region. In this region not only is there the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, the world's biggest military powers, but also there is the swift expansion of Japan's strength. The Nansha Islands are a communications hub for sea lanes in the East China Sea, and are a major sea passage between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. A large part of the oil for the fleets of the Soviet Navy and for Japan must pass through this sea area. No matter whether it is now or in the future, this sea area is an important strategic line of communications that the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan want to control.

To draw the attention of the highest level of the government, naval experts and some scientists analyzed and surveyed the natural resources of the Nansha and their sea area. The Nansha sea area is extremely rich in seabed oil and gas resources. In addition, with regard to multi-metal nodules, phosphate fertilizer, and other minerals, and to fishery traffic, the Nansha Archipelago is of uncommon value. In an era of vigorous economic development, the call on the government by the officers of the Chinese Navy with regard to the Nansha Archipelago was certainly not regarded as unimportant.

#### **Reaction of the Chinese Communists' Higher Level**

The year 1987 could be said to have been the year in which the Chinese Navy had the greatest influence on China's national defense system. Notable was the fact that the Chinese Navy, no matter whether in academic discussions or training exercises, focused on scenarios for the Nansha Islands. It is said that the call by the Navy was powerfully supported at the strategic policy decision level in China's military. Faced with the military's positive attitude and after hearing many reports (including reports of scientific investigations by the State Oceanography Bureau and reports by personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and making some feasibility demonstrations, the Chinese government sent people to stay at four islands and reefs in the Nansha Archipelago at the beginning of 1988, where they were to "set up investigation points" and conduct scientific investigations.

On the Nansha Islands issue, the members of the Chinese Navy racked their brains in making plans and displayed their skills to the fullest. The Chinese Navy put a lot of manpower and financial resources into setting up observation stations, conducting aerial reconnaissance and protection, defending the islands and reefs, and ascertaining and surveying sea lanes. It is said that on the Nansha Islands the life of the officers and men of the Chinese Navy was extremely arduous. The enlisted men defending the islands and reefs each day could only eat some instant noodles and drink a little cold water; and the sailors on the warships nearby did not have fresh water for bathing or green tea for drinking. But the morale of the officers and men of the Chinese Navy remained high, showing that they were of good quality. On average the level of education of the officers and men of the Chinese Navy is higher than the levels in the other branches and arms of the PLA. Data recently released show that the great majority of the Navy's officers have at least a senior middle school education. In addition, the Education and Propaganda Department of the Chinese Navy gave the officers and men many education sessions on oceanic concepts and briefed them on the situation in the Nansha Islands, so that they were clear about their mission. Recently a Chinese periodical quoted what a naval officer, who had been to the Nansha Archipelago three times, had said. This naval officer, who has a university education, said that he is from Fujian and that he knows that Fujian marines once suffered a deep disgrace when their entire force on their own inland river was destroyed by the French. He said that when he and his comrades-in-arms did in Nansha "what Chinese ought to do," he felt extremely proud to be a member of the Navy. What is interesting is that, unlike the heroic models in the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict, he eagerly called for people "to understand." He quietly thought that in the Nansha Archipelago they had only done "the things" that the Chinese Navy "ought to do." From one aspect this report showed the educational level and high morale of the officers and men of the Navy who took part in the battle as well as showed that the solution of the Nansha problem early on got the understanding and support of the common people.

In the period when the Nansha Archipelago situation was tense, the Chinese Navy frequently contacted diplomatic and scientific organizations and very promptly and ingeniously made use of the news media, whose degree of attention was far higher than it was in the days of the Xisha Islands situation. The issue of the Nansha Islands made people in all circles of China and the world get a newer understanding of the Chinese Navy.

#### **The 14 March Trial of Strength**

On 14 March 1988 an armed conflict between China and Vietnam occurred at the Chigua Reef sea area of the Nansha Archipelago. In the course of this armed conflict, the Chinese broadcasting media came up with a unified approach and a low-key handling of it, and in this way added to the air of mystery surrounding it. However, just by looking at some trends in the Chinese and Vietnamese

naval forces before the outbreak of the conflict, one can discover that the conflict was difficult to avoid. It is quite obvious that the Chinese side made a big effort to take back the Nansha Archipelago peacefully, but no one would lightly abandon these valuable islands. On 13 March 1988 the Chinese Navy made a landing on Chigua Reef, a move which was obviously not expected by the Vietnamese forces. Early on the morning of 14 March 1988, when units aboard Vietnamese Navy Transport Ships Nos. 604 and 605 arrived at Chigua Reef, they discovered that the Chinese Navy had landed there first. Thereupon, the officers and men of the two sides began a confrontation. The Chinese said that 43 Vietnamese armed personnel carrying light machineguns and submachineguns had forced a landing on Chigua Reef. When the Chinese Navy personnel shouted to the Vietnamese armed personnel that this was Chinese territory and had demanded that they leave, the Vietnamese side's armed personnel had fired first, wounding an officer of the Chinese Navy, Yang Zhiliang. At the same time Vietnamese Navy Transport Ships Nos. 604 and 605 had opened fire at the Chinese side's personnel on Chigua Reef and on the nearby Chinese warships. However, the Vietnamese account said that the Chinese Navy had fired the first shot. In reality, in a situation in which the two sides confronted each other with guns, it was not of great significance who fired the first shot, and it was also difficult to state clearly who had done so. However, no matter what the case was, the Chinese Navy behaved very sensibly, and in grasping the opportunity for conducting military operations, it was much more agile than it had been at the time of the Xisha Islands clash.

According to information released by certain figures, the battle was conducted by the Chinese side in an "extremely agile and extremely brilliant" fashion, and, in only 28 minutes, it sank one and heavily damaged the other two of the Vietnamese side's three ships. A gunner who took part in the battle said that, "during the battle, with my feet planted on the firing step I fired without letup. One of our guns fired more than 400 rounds of 37-mm shells and hit the enemy ships. With the firepower of the gunners on the other ships, the Vietnamese really got their fill of shells."

From a look at the results of the battle that were made public, we see that this time the Chinese Navy scored what may be called a big victory. According to a report, before the battle the Vietnamese force's provocations were highly reckless. When they faced the officers and men of the Chinese Navy, they pissed and spat. When the Chinese side shouted to them in translation, the Vietnamese "took the safeties off their guns and drew out their daggers" to deal with the officers and men of the Chinese Navy who were defending the reef. The officers and men of the Chinese Navy were furious. The Chinese sailors on the reef and on the ships showed the Vietnamese no courtesy as they used light and heavy weapons to completely defeat them. Within several minutes Ship No. 604 was hit and sinking, and Ship No. 605 was hit and immobilized. What is interesting is that



China had given these two ships to Vietnam as aid in 1974. The fairly large Vietnamese Transport Ship No. 505, seeing things going badly for its side, fled in the direction of Liumen Reef, but on the Chinese Navy ships were 100mm naval guns that had a fairly long range. With accurate fire from these guns, the angry Chinese sailors hit Ship No. 505, causing dense smoke to billow from it and immobilizing it. This time the Chinese Navy had seized the right time to release their pent-up resentment.

### **Liu Huaqing Orders Full Preparations**

After this clash the Vietnamese side announced that many members of its Navy had been killed or wounded and that at least 74 of them were missing. Looking at the results we see that the Vietnamese losses were heavy, "wives were compensated for the loss of their servicemen husbands," and that the Chinese held all the initiative during the clash.

After the event the Chinese took a low-key approach and did not excessively play up this naval battle. Actually, in comparison with the Sino-Vietnamese border clashes that have gone on sporadically for more than 10 years, this clash at sea, which lasted 28 minutes, seems insignificant. However, it drew a lot of attention from the military's higher level. It is said that, after the naval battle broke out, Admiral Liu Huaqing, newly promoted deputy secretary general of the Central Military Commission, went to Navy Headquarters and expressed a great deal of interest in the fighting. Admiral Liu Huaqing gave his approval to the behavior of the Navy's officers and men during the clash, and he ordered the relevant organizations to make full preparations against possible retaliations by the Vietnamese. But the Chinese Government at the same time hoped that the situation would not escalate.

A relevant figure made the analysis that the Sino-Vietnamese Nansha clash occurred precisely on the eve of China's Seventh NPC and Seventh CPPCC [Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference] sessions, and thus the Chinese side was unwilling to make a big issue of it, which would adversely affect and detract from the publicity and reportage on the two sessions. This was reasonable. However, from the statements by NPC military representatives and from the new state President Yang Shangkun, China's higher level highly approved of the action by the Navy in the Nansha Archipelago. Half a month ago, China's military newspapers carried the news that the South Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy had held a meeting in which those who performed meritorious services during the Nansha Islands operations were commended. Among them, the wounded naval officer Yang Zhiliang received the highest award, namely, Merit Citation, First Class. Escort Ship No. 502, which dealt the fiercest blows to the Vietnamese Navy's ships, was given a Collective Merit Citation, Second Class. Of course, the Navy's higher level did not stop with giving its attention to widely publicizing this small victory, but rather fixed its eyes on the next action.

### **Would the Chinese Navy Follow Up Its Victory With Hot Pursuit?**

It is said that when the Chinese Navy's ships that had taken part in the battle returned to Shulin Base for repairs and maintenance and to sum up the fighting, the Navy's officers proposed that ammunition be stored up to guard against the Vietnamese force's waiting for a chance to retaliate and conduct many harassments. For several days after the fighting the Chinese Navy did not reduce in the slightest its forces patrolling the Nansha Archipelago and its ships. It set up a frontline command post where South Sea Fleet ships were berthed—Zhanjiang—and ordered ships transferred from the three fleets to patrol and guard the Nansha sea area. The Chinese Navy's combat readiness stand made figures in the outside world conjecture that China had a plan to take back the Nansha Islands by force. The Vietnamese, in quite a panic about this possibility, lost no time in requesting peace talks, and they also sent ships flying the Red Cross flag to the Chigua Reef sea area to search for missing officers and men. The Chinese Navy's ships kept a close watch on the Vietnamese ships, but did not attack them. It can be imagined that if Vietnam had taken the opportunity to retaliate, the Chinese side would have likewise taken the opportunity to strike violently and take back all the Nansha islands and reefs occupied by Vietnam.

The 14 March trial of strength between the Chinese and Vietnamese navies showed that the Chinese Navy had developed remarkably over a period of about a dozen years. In the future the Chinese Navy will play an even more important role in the international affairs of the Asian-Pacific region.

### **Chapter 3. Trend Toward Combined Arms Training and Blue Water Exercises**

[Text] Since 1980 the scale of the Chinese Navy's combined arms training and exercises has become larger and larger and their distance out to sea farther and farther. The deployment of the ships and submarines of the three fleets and the Navy's Aviation Corps signifies a change in their former coastal defensive posture and manifests the ambition of moving out to blue water.

#### **Liu Huaqing and Zhang Lianzhong Vigorously Initiate Blue Water Training**

Liu Huaqing has made many statements to the effect that he keenly feels that the Chinese Navy's capability for controlling "oceanic war zones" is inadequate. In 1982 the International Law of the Sea Conference passed the "United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty," under which the sea area under China's jurisdiction was set at 3 million square kilometers. For Liu Huaqing this was a very good opportunity for the Chinese Navy to fully display its capability beyond the 12-kilometer territorial waters boundary. It is reported that in one of his speeches Liu Huaqing stated that, "the Chinese Navy should exert effective control of the sea within the first island chain (the first island chain is defined as the area



from the Ryukyu Islands to the northern tip of Taiwan)," and he pointed out that the study of naval strategy is a problem that urgently requires solution in the peacetime building of our Navy. These two points are vastly different from past thinking in which the Navy stressed coordination with the Army, dependence on islands, and defense of the coast; and it gives prominence to the Navy's role as a "wartime force" that operates independently, which obviously creates public opinion for the Chinese Navy to move towards blue water.

In September 1988 Liu Huaqing was promoted to admiral. During his tenure as Chinese Navy commander he created conditions for the Chinese Navy to move towards blue water and developed a good situation in this respect. Zhang Lianzhong, who became Navy commander after Liu Huaqing, has "protected, carried on, and developed" the latter's practices. When making his first speech on the Chinese official radio after becoming Navy commander in 1988, Zhang Lianzhong put great stress on the importance of the Navy's blue water training. This shows that the Chinese Navy's active sea area will gradually be extended outward and that the object of its operations and the mode of its operations will be changed. It is said that in a recent speech Zhang Lianzhong commended the Chinese Navy units that were active in the Nansha Archipelago and that he summed up their successes in patrolling and fighting as the results of the enhanced blue water training in recent years. It may be predicted that for a period of time in the future the Chinese Navy's exercises and training will be centered on the sea blockade of Vietnam, on attack and defense in the reefs and islands of the Nansha Archipelago, and on sea support operations during sudden incidents that occur at sea.

In its early period the Chinese Navy conducted many exercises, but the greater part of them were characterized as "inshore defense" with land support. This made it appear as if the Navy was only acting as a supporting player; there was no way to give full play to its striking power. This kind of exercise actually continued until the 1984 exercise codenamed "804," which was to occur after the big exercise in North China, was canceled, thereby terminating this kind of exercise.

#### **Zhang Lianzhong Makes Frequent Public Appearances**

Zhang Lianzhong has always been considered a man of action, and when he became commander of the Navy he revealed his style of showing his face in public and "getting things done." Following the restoration of the Navy's reputation abroad, Zhang Lianzhong began to appear in public through the news media. It was just after the 4 March Nansha Islands clash between China and Vietnam that Zhang Lianzhong began to receive reporters for interviews and statements, a total of three times. Not long afterward this hitherto unknown new Navy commander became the object of close attention.

Since the beginning of the eighties, Zhang Lianzhong has been promoted at regular intervals and has been highly

regarded in the Chinese Navy. In these years many of Zhang Lianzhong's "schoolmates" and "comrades in arms" left or retired from posts at the division and regiment levels, but in October 1988 Zhang put on the insignia of a vice admiral of the Navy.

#### **Deng Xiaoping Criticizes "Political" Exercises**

In 1978 the latent struggle of the "two whatevers" was launched in the CPC's highest level. At that time supreme power in the Chinese Navy was in the hands of Su Zhenhua, the "faithful and steadfast executor" of the "two whatevers." Su was not pleased with the activities initiated by Luo Ruiqing [5012 3843 0615], the then secretary general of the Military Commission, to criticize the "two whatevers," the idea for which obviously had the tacit consent of Hua Guofeng, the then chairman of the Military Commission.

According to an article published by RENMIN RIBAO of Zhang Aiping's reminiscences of Luo Ruiqing, in a December 1977 session of the Military Commission, Luo Ruiqing, "speaking with the force of justice," rebutted Wang Dongxing and Su Zhenhua by publicizing Hua Guofeng's achievements in resisting and criticizing the "two whatevers" and Hua Guofeng, who was present at the session, "said not a word." Obviously this displeased Su Zhenhua.

Without the agreement of the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee and without authorization, Su Zhenhua decided to mobilize several dozen ships of the Chinese Navy to conduct a large military exercise at Lushun in April 1978, and this exercise obviously was to have a strong flavor of political demonstration. It is said that Hua Guofeng was prepared to take part in this exercise in order to expand his influence in the military. This move by Su was held back by Luo Ruiqing, Yang Yong [2799 0516], and others, the reason being given that it "would lead to pointless international tension." At that time Hua Guofeng refused to accept the opinions of Luo Ruiqing and others. In the end, Deng Xiaoping intervened, and the exercise was not held.

#### **Deng Xiaoping Says, "A Bad Thing Has Occurred in the Navy, Namely, the Idea of Holding a Large Naval Exercise at Lushun. This Is a Bad Idea."**

In July 1979, at an important meeting Deng Xiaoping severely criticized the organizing of this exercise. Deng said that, "a bad thing has occurred in the Navy, namely, the idea of holding a large naval exercise at Lushun. This is a bad idea. Politically it is mistaken, and its starting point is also incorrect." Deng Xiaoping also commended Luo Ruiqing for holding back this exercise.

Deng Xiaoping criticized Su Zhenhua for the idea of holding a large naval exercise that would be "political in nature," saying that this showed that the Chinese military was taking an "independent action" with regard to the Navy, and in particular, was highly circumspect about the organizing of a naval exercise by people who had "serious political problems." The stopping of the

large naval exercise at Lushun was in reality an important first step in Deng Xiaoping's reorganization of the Chinese armed forces.

#### Why the "804" Exercise Was Called Off

In 1983 many military experts noted with interest that the Chinese armed forces were preparing to hold a large-scale military exercise in the north on the Shandong Peninsula and Liaodong Peninsula. According to people in the know, this military exercise, codenamed "804," was to be held against a background of a Soviet naval attack on China. The exercise was divided into two stages: attacking formations at sea and opposing landings. It was reported that the designed scale for this exercise was not in the slightest inferior to that of the North China military exercise in 1982, and that it would be the biggest exercise that the Chinese Navy would take part in since its founding. For it the Chinese Navy mobilized a considerable portion of the ships, submarines, and aircraft of the East Sea Fleet and North Sea Fleet. The Navy's forces for the exercise were dispatched by Su Jun [5685 6511], the then commander of the North Sea Fleet, and Zhang Lianzhong, the then deputy chief of staff of the same fleet. The Chinese Navy's units taking part in the exercise were led by the Jinan Military Region and Shenyang Military Region, and their mission was to coordinate with the land units in wiping out the invading enemy. The units concerned made many preparations for this exercise and staged several previews. It could be said that "everything was ready and all that was needed was an east wind," that everything was ready except for what was crucial. However, at the beginning of 1984 the exercise command post suddenly received a notice saying that the exercise had been called off. Many military observers could not understand this. One interpretation at the time was that the timing conflicted with the grand parade in Beijing to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the founding of the PRC. In order not to disperse everyone and in order to concentrate the review troops well, crack troops were transferred to Beijing for training. But those in the know said that this was not the real reason.

Ideological differences between the leaders of China and the Soviet Union led to disputes and finally to border clashes and military confrontations, as a result of which the Chinese leaders were always on their guard and always worried about a large-scale Soviet invasion. Mao Zedong once said that, "the Soviet revisionists are bent on subjugating our country." This idea caused the Chinese military to make the Soviet Union the main object of operations and research for a very long time. However, the main goal of the Soviet Union's vigorous development of its Navy in the sixties was not focused on China, but on competing with America in the Pacific Ocean. At the time the Chinese government did not fully understand this point. In reality, the "804" exercise was conceived under the guidance of Mao's prediction that "a world war is unavoidable," which was exactly the reverse of the estimate of the world situation made by Deng Xiaoping in 1985. Therefore, this kind of exercise,

with its background of a Soviet large-scale sea invasion, was obviously, in strategic thinking, a continued implementation of the principle of coastal defense, which thereby delayed the development of a blue water-type Chinese Navy. It is said that the background to the conception of the "804" exercise was that the Soviets "could not take cities" on the Liaodong Peninsula so they switched to making landings on the Shandong Peninsula. Therefore, the exercise's main battleground was along the Yellow Sea coast. This conception was obviously unrealistic. It could not be said in 1983, when there appeared a trend toward relaxation in Sino-Soviet relations, that the Soviet Union would truly want to attack China. It was also entirely possible that if it were to attack, it would drive straight through along the land border of several thousand kilometers on which it "had deployed a million troops." There was no need to seek far and wide for what was close at hand by wasting time and effort in making any large-scale landing operation by sea. At the time many military experts clearly recognized this point. Therefore, the correct estimate of the international situation made by the Chinese Communists' highest stratum was the true reason for the suspension of the "804" exercise.

#### The Chinese Navy Changes the Pattern of Playing a "Supporting Role" at the Key Moments

It is said that in preparing for the "804" exercise some Chinese military officers did not take into consideration the tempering of the troops' operational ability. Further, the two forces in the exercise had both pre-set the times and places for "fighting" as well as foreordained combat gains. Therefore, the "804" exercise, like the "big exercise in North China," had the strong flavor of a "performance." This caused some military experts at the time to have many different views. According to what has been disclosed, a young officer in the Chinese military's General Staff Department wrote a letter to the Military Commission, in which he stated that in both the strategic and operational modes of the "804" exercise, there existed many malpractices. He called for a halt to this kind of military exercise, which he said wastes manpower and material resources and is outdated. Because the opinion of this young officer tallied with Military Commission Chairman Deng Xiaoping's strategic estimate of the international situation and his strategic assessment that "for a fairly long period of time it is improbable that a world war will occur," the opinion was heeded and accepted. Precisely at this time the Chinese government decided that because of the grand troop review in Beijing for the 35th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, it would call off the elaborately prepared "804" exercise.

It is reported that Liu Huaqing, then commander of the Navy, seemed to lack enthusiasm for the "804" exercise. It is not difficult to imagine that there was a contradiction between the conception of the "804" exercise and the naval strategy put forth by Liu Huaqing soon afterward. The calling off of the "804" exercise obviously tallied with Deng Xiaoping's idea that there should be a

strategic change in armed forces building during the period of peace. As a former trusted subordinate of Deng Xiaoping's, Liu Huaqing from that time on began to think of developing the Chinese Navy into a strategic armed service that could independently conduct operations. The cancellation of the exercise could be said to indicate that the Chinese Navy had already ended the era in which it played "supporting roles" in major exercises.

#### **The North Sea Fleet Enters the Northwestern Pacific Ocean for the First Time**

Liu Huaqing's strategic idea of the Navy going into blue water was formally implemented, and the Chinese Navy went on to complete the recovery of missiles in the Pacific Ocean, the tour of the Indian Ocean, and other long-distance navigation missions that attracted world-wide attention. On the evening of 13 May 1986, Ma Xinchun [7456 6580 2504], commander of the North Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy, led a long-range combined fleet out of the military port in Qingdao into the northwestern Pacific Ocean to carry out blue water training. It is said that this formation was composed of several destroyers and long-range supply ships and was the cream of the North Sea Fleet forces. This combined fleet sailed in fog for two days and nights, always maintaining radio silence. The concealment of its movements made the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, which was on the alert at the time, express amazement afterward.

#### **The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force Did Not Detect It**

It is reported that when the combined fleet of the Chinese Navy was quietly sailing in the Osumi Strait near the Japanese archipelago, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force did not detect it. Formerly, if a military vessel passed through the Osumi Strait, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force aircraft were bound to come up and reconnoiter, but it was not until after 7 or 8 hours of sailing in the strait by the combined fleet that two Japanese Self-Defense Force P2J patrol planes caught up with the fleet. According to the recollections of an officer in the combined fleet at that time, they clearly heard on reconnaissance instruments the voice of a Japanese pilot reporting back to base. He said: "Discovered Chinese formation. I am tracking and monitoring it." After the event a Japanese newspaper carried a commentary saying that "in the past the Chinese Navy was active only in the coastal regions. This was the first time that it carried out a formal exercise in blue water. The Chinese Navy is modernizing faster than the West has estimated." Allegedly, Navy Commander Liu Huaqing, who had assumed personal command of the combined fleet, was extremely happy on hearing this news.

Once the combined fleet of the Chinese Navy entered the Pacific Ocean it assumed the posture of combined troop training. It is said that the scale of this combined troop training exercise was unprecedented in size and number, causing the pilots in U.S. and Japanese aircraft flying in

the skies above the Chinese Navy's fleet to gasp in admiration. It is reported that during the exercise's preparatory period Liu Huaqing took an interest in the plan for the exercise and personally issued many specific instructions. The officers of the North Sea Fleet took the exercise very seriously; many exercise topics had already been repeatedly practiced at the "home doorway" and thus were drilled with high proficiency on the ocean.

The Chinese Navy's combined fleet first of all conducted formation drills in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. All warships of the formation, under the command of the flagship, constantly changed and drilled in all sorts of formations. Their movements were highly coordinated, showing the level of ship operation by the Chinese Navy ships' commanding officers. Subsequently, the reconnaissance formation of the Chinese Navy's combined fleet began a reconnaissance exercise on some islands and on the ships around the islands. It is said that this time, the Chinese Navy adopted many means of reconnaissance and, in the end, dispatched men to land on some uninhabited islands. According to a naval officer who took part in the exercise, when they landed on the islands, they saw many memorials of American and Japanese naval operations. Some young officers of the Chinese Navy, with a good deal of emotion, said that, "as early as World War II the American and Japanese navies conducted operations here; the Chinese Navy has come here today. Why weren't we able to come a little sooner?" It is thus obvious that the officers of the Chinese Navy fully understood Liu Huaqing's strategy of "going into blue water" and also had firm confidence in it.

The combined fleet also conducted many kinds of attack training, repeatedly holding exercises in gun and missile attacks. It is said that in this exercise the Chinese Navy for the first time demonstrated the use of helicopter guidance and carried out exercises in over-the-horizon missile attacks on fleet formations. Afterwards, the Chinese said that, "the actions of the Chinese Navy's combined formation in going far out to sea irrefutably show that the equipment of the Chinese Navy's ships, their blue water capability as well as the military and political quality of their commanders possess the capability for advancing toward a blue water Navy."

What is worth bringing up is that, from beginning to end, no submarines showed up in the Chinese Navy's combined fleet, and this fact drew a great deal of interest from international military experts and public opinion. During the exercise the Chinese Navy's surface ships repeatedly practiced live-ammunition attacks on submarines. This action especially amazed Japan. The Chinese Navy has more than 100 submarines, and once a war breaks out these submarines could pose an enormous threat to Japan, since Japan depends mainly on sea transport for its natural resources. Over the past several years, Japan's relations with China in trade and economics have grown with each passing day, and these relations are extremely delicate. Once a change occurs in Sino-Japanese relations, what worries Japan most is a

submarine blockade by the Chinese Navy. It is said that the antisubmarine patrol planes of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force were always flying around the Chinese Navy's combined fleet and that they searched for submarines many times, but from first to last they did not discover any. Afterward a Japanese newspaper disclosed that, "although there is information that several, as yet unconfirmed, submarines took part in the exercise, many people doubt it. They think that it is probable that the Chinese Navy has not reached that level of capability." But later, a well-informed source revealed that the Chinese Navy really had two conventional submarines taking part in this exercise, a fact which caused a big shock in Japan.

#### **Role of the B-6 Medium-Range Bomber**

It is reported that coordinating with the Chinese Navy's exercise in the northwestern Pacific Ocean were two B-6 medium-range bombers. At 11 AM on 22 May these two aircraft flew in the air above the Chinese Navy's fleet. This was the first time that the Chinese Navy's ships and aircraft had simultaneously taken a stance outside the "first island chain," and this showed that a very big breakthrough had taken place in the Chinese Navy's combined strength in the ocean. This time the Chinese Navy's operational aircraft flew more than 1,000 kilometers over the northwestern Pacific Ocean, practicing reconnaissance and simulated bombing. According to a naval officer who took part in the exercise, when Commander Ma Xinchun saw the aircraft of the Chinese Navy's Aviation Corps, tears of excitement streamed from his eyes, and he said that, "thirty years of planning, from the fifties to today, have finally culminated in a changed reality, and it indicates that our Navy's capability for blue water coordinated operations has reached a new level." From a look at the flight of and the topics trained in by the Chinese Navy's operational aircraft, it can be seen that once the Chinese government decides to recover the Nansha Islands, the Navy's B-6 medium-range bomber could play an important role.

The stance taken by the combined fleet of the Chinese Navy's North Sea Fleet during its first trip in the northwestern Pacific Ocean was obviously a specific action decided on by the Chinese Navy to promote the theory of naval strategy put forth by Liu Huaqing. This action obviously was also considered by many quarters. The northwestern Pacific Ocean is a "hot spot" in U.S.-Soviet contention, but for China, the northwestern Pacific Ocean is not as sensitive as the South China Sea. The North Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy is a strong, well-trained force. Liu Huaqing, Zhang Lianzhong, and Zhang Xusan of the Chinese Navy's highest stratum all came from this unit. Fleet Commander Ma Xinchun, who was once Navy chief of staff, is a highly qualified famous founding member of the Navy. An analysis by military experts was that although this action by the Chinese Navy did not have a clear focus, the exercise, on the foundation of existing equipment, displayed "intensity and vigor," "sought stability and perfection," and was a training session of a demonstration nature. By this

action the Chinese Navy showed to the government and the highest military stratum that the Chinese Navy's pursuit of naval strategy is feasible for serving state economic construction and foreign policy. Looking at the range, scope, and complexity of this exercise, we see that the Chinese Navy is perfectly capable of controlling the disputed island and sea areas in the South China Sea.

#### **"Photoelectric, Awe-Inspiring Air Shakes the Yellow Sea"**

On 23 August 1987, after the Chinese Army's and Air Force's laser and electronic simulated field maneuver exercise, the curtain opened on the Chinese Navy's "penultimate" laser and electronic simulation field maneuver exercise that took place in the Yellow Sea off Qingdao in China. According to what has been revealed by concerned figures, the Chinese military issued a call to the entire PLA, after the drop in military spending, to initiate simulation training in order to save expenditures as much as possible during training. An officer of the Chinese Navy said that this was a major change in the Chinese Navy's more than 30 years of training. The use of photoelectric simulation lowers the cost of an exercise from the former live-ammunition cost by ninety percent.

#### **Exercise Codenamed "8709"**

It is reported that this exercise was codenamed "8709" and that its background was that an "enemy" fleet planned to blockade the Chinese Navy's biggest military port at that time, namely, the "1204" Military Port in Jiaonan County, Shandong. From a look at the scale of the exercise, we see that the "enemy" fleet came from a certain naval power. According to an analysis by a military expert, this exercise by the Chinese very probably focused on Japan's proposed 1,000-nautical mile convoy line, but the Chinese side would not confirm this. After the exercise the Chinese side did not, as it did in the case of the Army and Air Force exercises, immediately publicize and report it. Allegedly, the Chinese side kept it secret precisely because Japan and South Korea were sensitive about it. This showed that the Chinese military had already taken seriously the international effect of the Navy's action and had adopted a cautious attitude, while confirming the deterrent role of a strategic armed service that Liu Huaqing had proposed for the Navy. The three armed services—Army, Air Force, and Navy—in succession held the same type of exercise, and the Chinese Navy, whose position had always been lower than that of the Army and the Air Force, had the greatest effect. This was something seldom seen in China's military circles.

According to data that has now been disclosed, the Chinese Navy's photoelectric field maneuver exercise in the Yellow Sea, no matter whether in scale, military forces employed, or degree of realism, was at a higher level than that of the Army and Air Force exercises. The military forces of the Chinese Navy in the exercise were: missile destroyer formations, missile escort formations, submarine formations, submarine chaser formations,

missile fast attack craft formations, torpedo fast attack craft formations, minesweeper formations, B-6 strategic bombers, B-5 bomber groups, attack plane groups, fighter plane groups, shipborne minesweeping helicopters, and sea bombers. Assuming personal command was North Sea Fleet Commander Ma Xinchun. The exercise used 9 systems and 26 kinds of laser and electronic simulation equipment developed by various departments of the Chinese Navy.

It is said that at the end of 1986 the Chinese Navy had not yet decided to hold this photoelectric field maneuver exercise. On a certain day near the end of that year, Navy Deputy Commander Zhang Xusan carried the exercise plan to the No. 12 conference room of the General Staff Department and reported the plan to Deputy Chief of Staff Han Huaizhi [7281 2037 2535]. After the plan was approved, the Research Department of the Chinese Navy took only half a year's time to develop a draft plan that practically encompassed all of the Navy's training outline. The plan actually used simulation equipment for all weapons, and the levels of training were all fairly high. A naval figure said that, "for about a dozen items developed by the Naval Engineering College at Wuhan alone, state awards and patent rights could be applied." It is thus obvious that the Chinese Navy's research forces are extremely powerful and that in scientific circles in China they have quite a reputation.

In the Chinese Navy's Yellow Sea photoelectric exercise, many devices and techniques showed up for the first time. The fast mine-laying capacity of the Chinese Navy's B-5 aircraft was a splendid sight, and its speed exceeded people's expectations. Also showing up for the first time was the B-6D strategic bomber. After this aircraft was refitted, it had the capability to launch YJ-8 air-to-ship missiles. According to a disclosure by knowledgeable persons, one of these air-to-ship missiles costs more than 1 million Renminbi, a sum that the Chinese Navy, with its limited funds, definitely hates to part with. But, after the aircraft was fitted with electronic missile attack simulators, live missiles were not launched, yet the same results were obtained at almost no cost. All of this makes it possible to hold such exercises at regular intervals. After the exercise, a naval figure revealed some numbers to show how funds were saved: one live ship-to-ship missile costs 480,000 to 590,000 Renminbi, but the cost of the same simulated missile is only a fourth that of the live missile; one 130-mm artillery shell costs more than 1,000 Renminbi, but a simulated shell that displays sound and light costs only a little over 40 yuan; and a 57-mm artillery shell costs more than 100 Renminbi, but if a laser-fired simulated shell is used, the cost is only 0.1 yuan. It is thus obvious that the Chinese Navy has made an effort both to insure training and to save funds. Saving money means that there will be more training sessions of shorter time durations, but that combat strength will be more powerful.

It is reported that the figures in the highest stratum of the Chinese military at that time who observed the naval

exercise were Yang Shangkun, Yang Dezhi, Qin Jiwei, Zhang Aiping, Hong Xuezhi, and Chi Haotian. These high-ranking officers with an Army background were profuse in their praise for the successes obtained by the Navy in recent years, which made Liu Huaqing, who accompanied them, extremely happy. Although at that time Liu Huaqing was over 70 years old, he was just a "boy" to Yang Shangkun, Yang Dezhi, Zhang Aiping, and Hong Xuezhi. Even though the exercise had a commentator, Liu Huaqing personally commented on it at regular intervals for the benefit of his elders in military circles. Liu Huaqing, who had once been the leader of the Navy's Research Department, seemed to be highly knowledgeable about the Navy's equipment. Many founding members of the military expressed joy at the grand scene that they saw. Waiting until after the commentary, they all nodded their heads in appreciation, obviously highly pleased. The officers and men of the Chinese Navy who took part in this exercise behaved in outstanding fashion. Sometimes there would be missile attacks, and sometimes there would be submarine attacks. There were dogfights between fighters in the air, and there were bloody battles beneath the sea. We and the "enemy" both sustained losses, and the scene was extremely lifelike. On seeing fighters of the Navy's Aviation Corps skimming over the sea at high speed, an Air Force officer observing the exercise could not help holding up his thumb to express his admiration.

In reality, laser and electronic simulated field maneuver exercises are events in which all of the Chinese armed services can participate. In the first half of 1985 the Chinese Army led off by holding a laser and electronic field maneuver exercise. In October 1986 the Chinese Air Force held a similar exercise on a large scale at a certain airfield in North China. In August 1987 the "Yellow Sea Battle" staged by the Chinese Navy had broadened the field of vision of the figures in the highest stratum of the Chinese military. All kinds of factors show that the champion of these events was the Navy. It may also be said that this was a discontinuity in the Navy's position in the Chinese military. The Chinese Navy's preparation time was the shortest, and its performance was the most outstanding; at both the technical and tactical levels it displayed enormous potential. The exercise showed that Liu Huaqing's efforts in the Navy over several years were not in vain. This photoelectric "sea battle" staged by the Chinese Navy in the Yellow Sea very likely will mean a vote at the end of the year for Liu Huaqing to be elevated to the important post of deputy secretary general of the Central Military Commission.

#### **The East Sea Fleet Again Displays Its Power in the South Sea**

At 1255 on 8 October 1987, an ocean fleet composed of two guided missile destroyers, four guided missile escorts, one ocean supply ship, and one ocean tug, all from the Chinese Navy's East Sea Fleet, slowly left the docks at the military port of Zhoushan in China's Jiangsu Province. This mighty contingent sailed toward the western Pacific Ocean. According to reports, this

ocean fleet's commander was East Sea Fleet Deputy Commander Wang Jiying [3769 4949 5391]. Nie Kuiju, the East Sea Fleet's principal officer, could not go along because he was in Beijing preparing to take part as a representative to the 13th CPC Congress.

This blue water exercise by the Chinese Navy was no ordinary exercise, and it was held precisely at a time of tension in the Nansha Islands situation. Some people said that this blue water exercise was the first step in the Chinese government's preparations to recover the Nansha Archipelago.

According to data that has been disclosed, the ocean fleet of the East Sea Fleet first of all passed between the islands of Kyuraku and Miyako in Japan's Miyako Channel. When it passed through this channel, two Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force aircraft circled above it for 20 minutes. The radars on the Chinese Navy's ships locked tightly on the Japanese aircraft, and their cannons followed the aircraft as they circled, but the two sides did not exchange fire. Subsequently, the Chinese Navy's fleet arrived in the Balintang Channel in the western Pacific Ocean, where it conducted an exercise in sea blockade and anti-sea blockade. For the exercise the fleet was divided into two sides: "Red" and "Blue." The "Blue" formation, composed of two guided missile escorts, imposed a firepower blockade at the eastern entrance to the Balintang Channel. The "Red" formation, composed of two guided missile destroyers and two guided missile escorts, tried to pass through the channel from the western side. The two sides conducted an exercise in missile and cannon attacks, but the momentum of the exercise was not very large. At the time some military experts thought that the Chinese government had dispatched the naval fleet to conduct an exercise in the Balintang Channel near Taiwan because it was the eve of the Kuomintang's 13th Congress when the tide for Taiwan's independence was surging, but it was impossible to confirm this supposition at the time. Because the scale of this exercise was not very large and there were no submarines and aircraft in it, and also because the formations were highly mobile, the exercise did not seem to imply that the fleet would linger in the area.

In reality, the Chinese Navy's fleet only made a gesture in the Balintang Channel in order to make others withdraw from the first island chain that leads directly into the South China Sea. It was at this time that the Electronic Scout Vessel V350 of the Chinese Navy's South Sea Fleet headed for the Nansha Archipelago. These two actions, which happened to coincide, showed that the Chinese Navy, after "brandishing the spear," in the end turned its strength toward the true target—the Nansha Archipelago. It is reported that the Chinese government and military, after close consultation, in the end decided to send men to the Nansha Archipelago to occupy a piece of the domain. This was the first large-scale action by Chinese naval forces in the Nanshas after the Chinese government's use of diplomatic means to proclaim its sovereignty over the Nansha Archipelago

failed to get results. At the same time as the Chinese Navy's fleet arrived in the Nansha Archipelago sea area, Electronic Scout Vessel V350 of the South Sea Fleet sent some investigators and surveyors of the Navy and the State Oceanography Bureau to the Yongshu Reef and other unoccupied islands and reefs in the Nansha Archipelago. The investigators made a reconnaissance and survey of the terrain, landforms, and geology of the islands and reefs, and used satellites to fix their positions. They made full preparations for the principal base in the Nanshas, called by China the "oceanic observation station." All of this was, of course, done under the cover of the Chinese Navy's ocean fleet.

According to disclosures by knowledgeable sources, after the Chinese Navy's ocean fleet arrived in the Nansha Archipelago, it moved with extreme caution. First, two guided missile escorts in turn searched and advanced, cutting across the archipelago. Two other ships, a guided missile escort and a guided missile destroyer, bided their time in the surrounding sea area, prepared for any contingency. For the Chinese Navy, the navigation lines in the Nansha Archipelago were totally unfamiliar, and the two guided missile escorts took five to six hours to cut across the archipelago. While sailing, the officers and men of the Chinese Navy stayed on full alert with their guns loaded. It is reported that when the ships sailed by islands occupied by Vietnamese troops, they saw a few scattered Vietnamese garrison troops who were in dire straits. Seeing Chinese Navy warships, they promptly hid themselves. The gun covers on the cannon on the islands had not been taken off, and the officers and men of the Chinese Navy breathed easier. A Chinese sailor who took part in a patrol said that, "given the shape that the Vietnamese were in, they would collapse at the first blow. If the higher level had given the order, we could have dispatched several men to clear them away."

After the Chinese Navy's ocean fleet passed safely through the Nansha Archipelago, six warships went to Zengmu Ansha, which is 1,600 kilometers from China's Hainan Island. On 25 October 1987, just when the 13th CPC Congress convened, the six warships of the fleet held a mammoth military review at Zengmu Ansha. A total of 2,000 officers and men lined up on the decks of the warships and were reviewed by Deputy Commander Wang Jiying and Political Commissar Wei Zhiguo [7614 3112 0948] of the East Sea Fleet. Although this military review at Zengmu Ansha was not immediately reported by the Chinese side, it was bound to draw interest in China and abroad. Afterward KYODO and AFP carried commentaries, and the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a protest to China. No matter how one looks at it, the Chinese Government saw clearly one point through this naval movement in the Nansha Archipelago, namely, that to be stronger, diplomatic means must be supported by a naval deterrent force.

After the Chinese Navy's ocean fleet finished its military review at Zengmu Ansha, it sent two guided missile escorts to make a voyage through the Nansha Archipelago. This time the Chinese naval warships passed not

quite 1000 meters from the islands occupied by Vietnamese troops. Presumably, they were there to conduct reconnaissance against these islands. The 100-mm cannon of the warships were trained against the Vietnamese-occupied islands, and the Vietnamese on these islands were clearly shaken by this. In reality, this action by the Chinese Navy was merely an experiment, and there never was any real intention of fighting. Looking at this action, we can see two successful points for the Chinese Navy. The first was to set off as if on an exercise, and in actuality, make a feint near the Balintang Channel off the southeast section of Taiwan, and then dash straight for the Nansha Archipelago in the South China Sea. This action possessed a definite element of surprise. According to analysis by concerned military experts, if the Chinese Navy had wanted to recapture the archipelago at this time, the firepower of their mobile formation would certainly have been able to create a successful surprise attack against the Vietnamese. The second point is the Chinese Navy's success in covering Electronic Scout Vessel V350's survey and inspection of part of the reefs and islands in the Nansha Archipelago. This included both conducting reconnaissance of Vietnamese-occupied islands, which obtained a great quantity of navigational experience, and attracting Vietnamese attention. It may be said that the Chinese killed two birds with one stone.

Data shows that this Chinese naval ocean fleet sailed for a total of 45 days; cut across the East and South China Seas; patrolled the Zhongsha, Xisha, and Nansha Archipelagos, all of whose sovereignty are disputed; passed through the Miyako, Balintang, Qiongzhou, and Taiwan Channels (Straits); and sailed to the five ports of Jingyulin, Beihai, Haikou, Shenjiang, and Shantou. In total, they navigated more than 54,000 nautical miles. During this ocean voyage while at sea, the Chinese Navy implemented 17 tactical tasks and 164 single-ship training items and organized multiship, multidirection comprehensive supply of ships more than 70 times. This event, following the North Sea Fleet Northern Pacific Ocean Exercise, was another example showing the strength of the Chinese Navy. AFP published the commentary of a Western diplomat which said that, "the Chinese Government organized this exercise in order to proclaim its sovereignty over these strategically important archipelagos as well as to keep a watch over those countries that express objections about Beijing's territory." This demonstrates that the naval strategy actively advocated by Liu Huaqing has already begun to serve the national interest and foreign policy.

It is reported that even though this ocean exercise by the blue-water fleet of the Chinese Navy took place during the 13th CPC Congress and the reshuffling of military leaders, the higher levels of the Chinese Navy still paid close attention (to this exercise). This was particularly so after the fleet arrived in the Nansha Archipelago, when at that time, Liu Huaqing, who was slated to rise to become the deputy secretary general of the Military Commission, inquired about the situation every day.

Related departments of the Chinese Navy also completed well various contingency plans for conflicts that might suddenly arise. The coordination of activities by the Chinese Naval Fleet and Electronic Scout Vessel V35 was clearly the result of thorough planning.

#### Chapter 4. Blue Water Strategy Planning

##### [Text] Beijing Eagerly Gets a "Foothold"

On 2 August 1988 a report made public the information that an oceanic observation station had been set up on the Yongshu Reef in the Nansha Archipelago. The report said that, "setting up an oceanic observation station in the Nanshas was a decision taken by the Chinese Government based on the requirements of UNESCO. This was an exercise of China's sovereignty. The first oceanic observation station in the Nanshas will play an enormous role in mankind's peaceful use of the seas." On 3 August 1988 the State Council and the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee issued an order of commendation to the units that had set up the station, in which it was said that the objective in setting up the station was "to defend China's territorial sovereignty over the Nansha Islands and its national dignity and to build in peace the Nansha Archipelago."

When China set up this oceanic observation station, not only did it dispatch a naval fleet to patrol the adjacent sea area, but it also used the Navy for most of the station's construction and defense tasks. The building of the Yongshu Reef observation station, besides being "a response to UNESCO's request," was primarily an initiative action taken by the Chinese Government based on its own strategic considerations.

##### In the Past the Chinese Communists Lamented Their Smallness Before the Vast Ocean Since the Nanshas Were "Beyond the Reach of Their Power"

The Nansha dispute started in the forties. However, for a period of time, because of many reasons in China and abroad and also because people had not fully realized the important significance of the Nanshas, each side that declared sovereignty over the Nanshas did not take any practical action to exercise this sovereignty. In 1946 the Kuomintang government at that time dispatched the warships Taiping and Chungyeh to the Nanshas, where they raised the flag and fired cannon, giving their names to the largest islands in the Nanshas—Taiping Island and Chungyeh Island. After this the KMT armed forces began to station troops on Taiping Island. In the seventies and eighties, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia in succession occupied some islands in the Nanshas. By the end of 1987, of the total of 230 islands and reefs in the Nanshas (about 25 of which are always above water), Vietnam occupied 13 in the western part and stationed troops of about one battalion in force on 10 islands; the Philippines occupied 9 islands and reefs in the eastern part and stationed troops of about one company in force on eight islands; and Malaysia occupied nine islands and reefs in the southern part and stationed troops of about



one platoon in force on three islands. Thus, of the 32 principal islands in the Nanshas, except for Taiping Island, the remaining 31 were in the hands of foreign countries. Nanshas' "footholds" have nearly all been seized, and the greater part of them are defended by troops stationed on them. At the end of June 1988, before the Chinese Navy made a landing on Chigua Reef in the Nanshas, Beijing as much as possible reiterated China's sovereignty over the Nanshas. However, in reality the Chinese Communists had not obtained a "place to sit" in this area, and thus Beijing's voice was treated as a matter of little concern and ignored. Seeing a large amount of petroleum resources being taken away by others, Beijing was naturally extremely anxious. However, because it did not have a place to stay in the Nanshas, when faced with the serious situation in which various countries were carving up the islands, the Chinese Communists could only lament their smallness before the vast ocean since the Nanshas were beyond the reach of their power.

Therefore, Beijing's purpose in setting up the station on Yongshu Reef [Fiery Cross Reef], besides to carry out "oceanic observation," was believed to be more importantly to squeeze into the Nanshas, to get a firm foothold, to establish a "bridgehead," and to begin to station troops to defend it. In exercising their sovereignty in the Nanshas, they would acquire a real position and, afterwards, make it an advance support base for a gradual move southward, which would further expand the scope of their control of the sea area and the exercise of their sovereignty and finally complete the recovery of all of the islands in the Nanshas.

Of course, the actual existence of Chinese forces in the Nanshas not only was more convenient and advantageous for Beijing's exercise of its sovereignty over the Nanshas, but also added more weight to Beijing's voice in the Nanshas. The countries concerned with this matter could no longer act unscrupulously, and they would have to consider carefully their own positions in the future.

#### **Understanding the Position of the Nanshas From a New Height**

In the Cultural Revolution period, because "problems became mountains and bad practices died hard," and even more because the line of opening up to the outside world was not pursued, when problems were considered, it was often a case of "closing the country to international intercourse." China was regarded as a closed system, and the attitude toward some things that occurred in the world was often one of indifference and unconcern. During worldwide economic and scientific and technological progress, China's reactions were slow, and it was not quick in getting information, thereby causing it to lose many good opportunities. Therefore, not only did this cause the very backward state of China's economy today as compared with the economy of its close neighbor, Japan, and the economies of the Asian "Four Small Dragons" [Hong Kong, Singapore,

South Korea, and Taiwan], but it also caused the situation in the Nanshas, in which China could not intervene, in which the islands were being divided up and occupied by other countries. A few small and weak countries were carving up the territorial waters and territorial land of a big and powerful country, stationing troops there, and extracting natural resources—all the while going unpunished. That the big country took a laissez-faire attitude and did not mount a punitive expedition really shows the sluggishness of Beijing at that time.

Beijing's practice at that time of only sitting and looking on no doubt had domestic reasons as well as the factor of the Navy's having limited forces, but what was more important was that there was insufficient understanding of the Nanshas' significance for China's future development.

At the beginning of the seventies, there were many rumors and anecdotes spread in Beijing about the then-premier, Zhou Enlai. One of them was that during then-U.S. President Nixon's visit to China, he gave Zhou Enlai a present of a rock that the Apollo moon-landing spacecraft had brought back from the Moon to show off the enormous U.S. progress in science and technology. He then inquired about China's spaceflight plans. It is said that Zhou Enlai replied with a laugh that, "we in China have many things on the Earth that we have not completed. How could we think of going to the Moon?"

In fact, if there had been no "Apollo," then there would be no "Star Wars" now. "Things on the Moon" are really far away, but they have a close relation to a country's security and development. The meaning of this story is that it showed Zhou Enlai's quick-witted and supple diplomatic ability and also saved China's face while protecting state secrets. This story could be true or false, but it is obvious that the higher stratum of the Chinese Communists at that time was concerned mainly with domestic affairs and was not sufficiently sensitive to things occurring in the outside world.

In 1974 there occurred a battle in the Xisha between the Chinese Communists and South Vietnam. The Chinese Communists' starting point was still that the "Chinese people could not be disgraced," and for this reason, they quickly woke up. From a strategic standpoint they gave further consideration to the Nanshas issue and used the remaining influence of their victory in this battle (to backup their further consideration of the Nanshas). At that time Vietnam had just ended its civil war and urgently needed an opportunity to rest and to build up its strength. Because the race goes to the swiftest to reach the Nanshas, this Chinese victory led to today's complex situation in the Nanshas, and Vietnam had to "make a defensive move."

After the eighties began, following China's return to the international stage, the Chinese Communists' consciousness of international strategy was greatly enhanced. They abandoned the past practices of "each family sweeping away the snow from its own doorstep"—minding one's



own business—and of self-closure, and participated more and more actively in international affairs. For example, with regard to the development of the South Pole, Beijing was no longer willing to attempt nothing and accomplish nothing, allowing other countries to develop and use the South Pole. It sent an ocean fleet to the South Pole, which set up a station there and left men there, thus obtaining the right to have a say in the South Pole. This kind of deep concern and posture of participation reflected both the growth in China's national strength and the opening up of its thinking.

From a look at its scale and mode, this landing in the Nanshas by Beijing and the clash with Vietnamese forces were not done on the spur of the moment, but rather had been planned for a long time, had been fully prepared, and had been tightly organized. Obviously, the Chinese Communists' highest stratum now attaches the utmost importance to the Nanshas and no longer regards them as several faraway islands that do not matter much. Nor do they regard the contention over the islands merely as an ordinary territorial dispute to maintain the dignity of a great country, but rather they look upon the recovery of the Nanshas as a key step in opening up to the outside world and in achieving their "coastal economic strategy."

#### **Recovery of the Nanshas and the "Coastal Economic Strategy"**

To achieve its "coastal economic development strategy," China must use the funds, technologies, and equipment of developed countries. For this China needs large amounts of foreign exchange. At present China's volume of trade is far from being able to satisfy the needs of development, but once the use of the Nanshas' petroleum deposits is obtained, their effect will go a long way towards ameliorating this problem.

In the 3.5 million square kilometers of the South China Sea, the Nanshas' sea area (about 800,000 square kilometers) is considered by oceanographers to be one of the three biggest petroleum reserves on the Asian continental shelf. Data show that in the South China Sea there are more than 45 billion tons of petroleum and natural gas reserves with a value of at least \$1.5 trillion. Among all this, the Zengmu Ansha sea area is 310,000 square kilometers, twice the area of the Zhujiang River basin; its petroleum geological reserves are as much as 15 billion tons worth \$500 billion. The Nanshas are also extremely rich in phosphate ore, having more than 3 billion tons. There are also abundant manganese and cobalt nodules in the Nanshas, which are important materials for manufacturing high-grade alloys and are of enormous value to sophisticated industries. Without the slightest doubt, this enormous wealth is extremely important to a China which is anxious to make an "economic takeoff."

However, beginning in the latter part of the seventies, Malaysia and Indonesia in succession began large-scale prospecting and mining in the sea area; in 1985 they mined 90 million tons, almost equal to the present

amount of petroleum that China extracts in one year. Seeing this enormous wealth being taken by others, how could Beijing continue to look on it as commonplace and turn a deaf ear to it!

In addition, the Nanshas are a vital maritime communications line between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and are on a route that must be passed through in order to get from East Asia to the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea. According to statistics, since the eighties began, as many as 270 ships pass through the Nanshas sea area every day, most of them U.S. or Japanese transport ships carrying strategic materials or petroleum. Now, following the expansion of China's foreign trade, more and more Chinese ships are going to the Middle East and Europe. If China controlled the Nanshas, it would ensure that this important sea passage remained unblocked. Otherwise, the Chinese foreign trade ships would face the threat of interception, raid, and blockade.

The Nanshas' fishery reserves are also extremely rich, and in recent years, fishing vessels from various countries have gone to the Nanshas fishing grounds to catch fish. For China, which is now "adjusting its food structure to improve its nutritional level," the Nanshas are an enormous "fish pond," which could make up for China's inadequacies in agricultural production, improve peoples' lives, and lessen the pressure created by the 1.1 billion population.

From this it can be seen that the recovery of the Nanshas as soon as possible would have an incalculable effect on China's economic strategy.

#### **Struggling Hard in the "Spirit of the Nanshas" To Overcome Difficult Situations**

Since August 1988 the Chinese broadcasting media have changed their low-key posture in their propaganda about the Nanshas, and their reportage on these islands has greatly increased. Also, the content has switched from single-theme propaganda about sovereignty to vigorous propaganda about the arduous struggle of the troops who built the station in the Nanshas and are garrisoning it, the self-sacrificing "fearless, heroic deportment and spirit of men of action who bear hardships and stand hard work." Indications are that the Chinese troops in the Nanshas are being set up as new "models."

The Chinese Communists have always been good at making use of "typical" deeds to boost morale and spur the will to fight, and they have maintained that the "force of models is inexhaustible." At the present time, reform has run into trouble, and the price problem has become a "stumbling block" causing many unstable factors to appear in society. Deng Xiaoping, Zhao Ziyang, and other high-level figures have many times frankly stated that there is a "risk" at the present time and that, to face squarely the "difficult situation," it is highly necessary for the people in China "with one heart and one mind to get over this difficult situation," and therefore it is necessary to educate the people to unite as one and to jointly dash across this thorny "minefield."

However, because of the weakness of "ideological work" and a lack of coherence, there has appeared among youths a "crisis of faith." In the former period there were "young teachers" who were famous in the time of red polarization and who "for half a lifetime had difficulties but in the end had no regrets, and whose hearts were as unselfish as the universe is wide" like Qu Xiao. Their speeches in Shenzhen were censured by the youths, who considered them to be "empty sermons." Thus, the speeches met with a rebuff. It looks as if the Chinese Communists now badly need to set up new models that possess the spirit of the times.

Over the past several years, the Laoshan heroes, who "only stressed giving, not taking," in their tour of Chinese institutions of higher learning to report on and to publicize their "foxhole spirit," gained the understanding of college students and got good results. The Nansha Islands are more than a thousand kilometers from the mainland. There the winds are fierce and the waves strong, the climate is burning hot, and fresh water and vegetables are scarce. In addition the troops there are on the frontline and are always under the threat of a raid by Vietnamese forces. Also, the officers and men of the Navy's Marines who garrison the island often have to conduct operations without aid. The arduousness of their situation surpasses and is not inferior to that of the troops on the Laoshan frontline at the Sino-Vietnamese border. Therefore, it is appropriate to make the officers and men in the Nanshas models to study in order to attain the goal of "arousing the national spirit." It is predicted that this propaganda will be gradually expanded, and in the days to come, it will certainly become a high tide.

#### **Using the Nanshas To Promote the "Great Cause of Reunification"**

Following the eastward movement of the world's economic regions, the Pacific region has become one of the world's regions in which the economy is most invigorated. China plans, after the "Four Small Dragons," to become a country in the Asian-Pacific region in which the economy takes off, to become a truly great Pacific power, and to play a more important role in this region. Whether it can recover the Nanshas has also become a gauge for judging Beijing's determination and capability. If the Chinese Communists can effectively recover the Nanshas, other countries will look at them with new respect, and their right to have a say in the Asian-Pacific region will increase. Conversely, if a great power's image is weakened, people will doubt its actual strength. The recovery of the Nanshas will make Chinese people abroad clap their hands with satisfaction and will increase their confidence in the Chinese Communists' position for "reunifying the motherland and developing China vigorously." Thus, it could promote dialogue between the two sides on opposite banks of the strait and the completion of the great cause of reunifying the motherland.

At the same time, the Chinese Communists also think that, because Vietnam's image is bad and it is extremely isolated, if they would strike at Vietnam in the Nanshas, they would get the sympathy, understanding, and support of international society and would make points in foreign affairs.

#### **The Nanshas and China's Military Strategy**

On 15 July 1988 Zhao Ziyang, general secretary of the CPC and concurrently first deputy chairman of the Central Military Commission, received the first graduating class of the National Defense University, who were all army- and division-level high-ranking officers of the Chinese military. General Zhang Zhen [1728 7201], commandant of the National Defense University, said that, "the high-level commanders of the armed forces must have strategic minds, and thus in school the students must study national defense strategy, national strategy, and world strategy." The Nansha Archipelago is an inseparable link in the "grand strategy" for China's national defense.

The Nansha Archipelago is located on the communications line between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. On their northeastern side is America's largest naval base in the area, Subic Bay in the Philippines; on their northwestern side is the Soviet naval base of Cam Ranh Bay, the largest one outside the Warsaw Treaty's sea area. They are sandwiched between two naval powers that stand in confrontation and between 3 of the 16 wartime strategic passages recently announced by the U.S. Navy (the Malacca Strait, the Sunda Strait, and the Banda Sea Strait). In addition, the Nanshas' enormous economic potential and the complexity of its situation make the area surrounding the Nanshas one in which many kinds of military forces cross and converge. Therefore, the Nanshas have already become a potential "hot spot" for the outbreak of a limited war.

#### **The Chinese Communists Decide on a Strategic Plan To Vigorously Develop a Blue Water Navy**

Since 1985 the Chinese Communists' military has completed the shift in strategic thinking from "fighting an advanced-strike, large-scale, nuclear war" to "building the armed forces in a period of peace." Moreover, the focus of strategy has changed from dealing with a world war to dealing with regional conflicts and forming "first units." Setting up a rapid strike force and guarding against sudden incidents will be the principal missions of the Chinese Communists' military in the future. Moreover, because in the north the Soviet military pressure has abated and in the Taiwan Strait the military confrontation has become a bit more flexible, the Chinese Communists' military can make room for giving consideration to their "backyard" in the south. As a place where the flames of war could be reignited at any time, the Nanshas naturally have become a focus of current military strategy.

The Chinese military newspaper, JIEFANGJUN BAO, recently carried an article that said that, "when

observing the national defense issue from the angle of the country's interests, we cannot just pay attention to the Chinese nation itself, but should also have a strong global consciousness." "To contend for natural resources and win a leading position in science and technology, the developed countries are putting out their feelers into the oceans and deep seas, the frozen ground zones, and outer space. For mankind the oceans today are not just paths to new continents or keys to the control of the world; of more importance is the exploration and exploitation of the oceans themselves. The struggle that has now appeared, with economic and military goals, to carve up and contend for the oceans should draw our sufficient attention. Under the circumstances in which the oceans and deep seas are gradually becoming practical, important spaces for mankind to exist, this struggle is bound to become more and more fierce, and thus unavoidably there will appear a worldwide competition to expand military forces at sea." This article clearly reflected the Chinese Communists' military's recent strategic plan to vigorously develop a blue water Navy.

Chinese Navy commander Zhang Lianzhong has disclosed that in the 8 years since 1980 the Chinese Navy had conducted blue water exercises on an enormous scale, in which a dozen or several dozen ships have taken part. He thinks that "to defend China truly and effectively from raids and attacks from the sea, we must strengthen the defense in depth at sea and possess naval forces that have the capability to intercept and wipe out the enemy." The distance from the Nanshas to the southern tip of the Chinese mainland is more than a thousand kilometers. If China controlled the Nanshas it would have a fairly impressive defense in depth that would be "well trained for its purpose," and the Navy, with its "blue water operational capability," would have scope for its abilities and attain the aim of stopping the enemy outside the country's gates.

#### Particular Caution About the "Strategic Issue"

With regard to the Nanshas—this intricate, complex strategic issue that involves political, economic, national defense, diplomatic, and other aspects—the attitude of the Chinese Communists is extremely cautious. On the one hand, they organize various experts and considerable proof to seek a "positively safe" solution, and they strive not to make big international waves; whereas on the other hand, they have begun to act in the Nanshas. The 14 March 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash and the 2 August 1989 successful building of the station were both probes of the nature of "dropping a stone to ascertain if anyone was about."

It is estimated that in Beijing's measures for recovering the Nansha Islands they will make full use of propaganda, diplomatic, and economic means. But people believe that the intervention by China's naval forces will be a decisive factor.

#### Chapter 5. Liu Huaqing and the Chinese Navy

[Text] In the newly organized group constituting the CPC Central Military Commission, which was announced after the 13th Party Congress, 71 year old Navy commander Liu Huaqing, although he had withdrawn from the Central Commission and entered the Central Advisory Commission during the party representative meeting held in September 1985, all of a sudden rose to become deputy secretary general of the CPC Central Military Commission. Later he was promoted to admiral. Observers all think it reflects the growing importance of the Navy in Chinese military strategy.

#### Mao Zedong's Demand in His Later Years To Develop the Navy

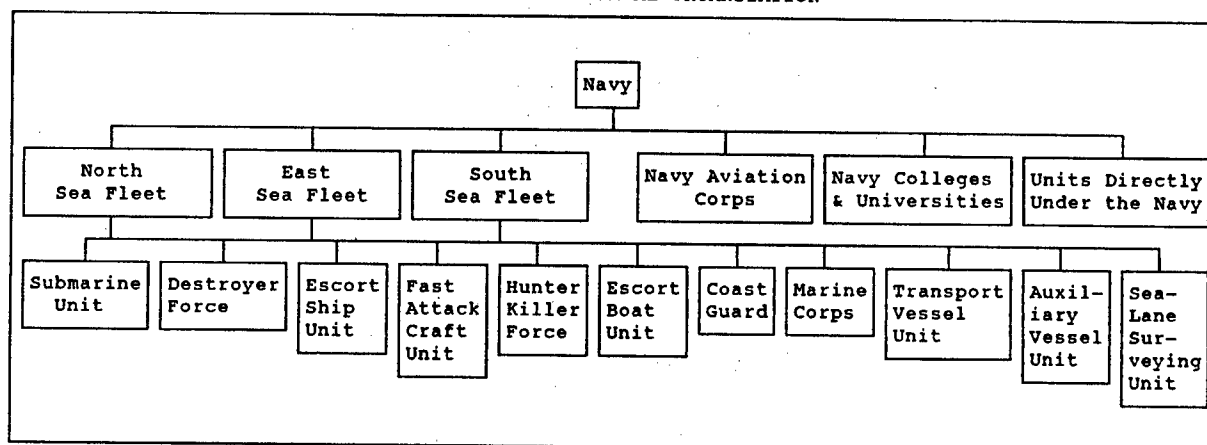
Mao Zedong had a well known saying that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. The Chinese Communists have historically attached great importance to the use of troops. However, because of historical factors, the development of Chinese military strength has not been balanced. For a long time, the "elder brother" of the three Chinese Communist armed services was the Army, whose service was relied on heavily. The Navy's position, equivalent to only a military region in the Army, was relatively low. The main reason for this is that during the long military struggle, the Chinese Communists relied mainly on the Army in their many-fronted fight to seize political power; whereas the Navy was established after the founding of the state and had no distinguished battle achievement. Further, the Navy in a modern military reflects not only national economic strength, but also scientific and technological strength. The cost of establishing it is astronomical, and the results are hardly instantaneous. In addition, the China mainland has for years practiced a closed door policy, and no one knew much about ocean development. Therefore since its establishment, the Navy has been expected to perform coastal defense only and to carry out the mission of "fishing protection and convoy service."

The development of modern world military technology encourages the senior level of the Chinese Communists to gradually realize the importance of naval construction to modernized national defense. In particular, the ever-existing situation along the Taiwan Strait impels the senior level to feel keenly the pressing need for establishing a strong navy. It is reported that during his later years when Mao Zedong was receiving Naval political commissar Su Zhenhua [5685 2182 5478], he stretched out the little finger from his right hand and said, "Our Navy is only this big;" then he stretched out his thumb and said, "It should be this big, so that our enemy will be scared."

#### Eye-Catching Recent Development of the Chinese Navy

However, Chinese Communist naval construction did not start to make a big step until the 1980's. On 18 May 1980, China launched her first long-range missile towards the South Pacific. In order to provide an escort

CHART OF CHINESE NAVAL ORGANIZATION



to the survey vessels participating in this test launch, the Chinese Navy dispatched a naval formation. The formation, led by a model "051" guided missile destroyer designed and built in China, traveled more than 8,000 nautical miles on the South Pacific Ocean in completing the convoy mission, which was a first for a Chinese fleet.

Between 7 and 16 October 1982, China conducted her first-ever flight test of a guided missile from a submerged submarine in the Yellow Sea. The launching of the SLBM towards predetermined waters was a success. This indicates a marked improvement in China's submarine strategic attack strength.

On 20 November 1984, China for the first time sent an inspection flotilla to the South Pole to conduct a scientific study. A "J121" ship from the Chinese Navy's North Sea Fleet joined this expedition. Within one month, the flotilla traveled diagonally across the Pacific Ocean, crossing 98 latitudes and 185 longitudes without docking at any port. Passing through six different wind zones as well as two typhoon-spawning areas, the flotilla had a voyage of more than 11,000 nautical miles, establishing a record in the history of Chinese navigation.

On 16 November 1985, the Chinese Navy sent a fleet to pay a courtesy call to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The fleet passed through the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea and crossed the Strait of Malacca before entering the Indian Ocean. They followed the trail of "Zheng He's [6774 0735] Voyage" and brought the dignity of the Chinese Navy to the countries of South Asia.

From mid-October to the end of November 1987, the Chinese Navy's East Sea Fleet held the largest military maneuvers since the establishment of the Chinese Navy in the vast waters of the West Pacific and South China Sea. A combined ocean fleet of many kinds of ships crossed, one after another, four large straits and reached as far south as Zengmu Ansha of the Nansha Islands. The overall voyage covered 54,000 nautical miles.

This series of facts clearly indicate that the Chinese Communist Navy has been following the path of blue water development during the recent years.

#### "The Second Island Chain" Naval Strategy

For years after the establishment of the Navy, the Chinese Communists advanced the strategic policy of "active defense and inshore warfare." Since mainland China was practicing a closed-door policy, its naval development was also conservative, the emphasis being placed on defense with no great ambitions for blue water development.

During recent years, the Chinese Navy has started working on blue water development, an indication of a new breakthrough in the strategic ideology of the senior level of the Chinese Communists concerning naval development. The person who gave a theoretical explanation to this breakthrough was Liu Huaqing, who became China's Navy commander in the beginning of the 1980's.

Soon after he had become China's Navy commander, Liu Huaqing wrote a paper claiming that the development of capitalism was closely related to prosperity in navigation, the opening of new sea routes, and the discovery of new continents. There did not seem to be an exception to the fact that economically and militarily important countries were great maritime nations. According to history, the center of civilization was shifted from the Orient to western Europe, and then to the United States. But now the new "Pacific Century" will soon arrive, and the center of civilization will be back again in the Orient. For China this is a new opportunity. Therefore, the Chinese Navy must shoulder this historical task to soon become an important force in the Pacific area to ensure the successful modernization of the country. Otherwise, China will again lag behind the waves of the "new technological revolution" and be eliminated by history.

This viewpoint, which connects the Navy's development with the nation's vitalization, has become grounds for the argument that China must devote major efforts to developing the Navy.

Meanwhile, Liu Huaqing made a new interpretation of the strategic policy of "active defense and inshore warfare." He pointed out that "inshore" should not be interpreted as "coastal" as we used to know it. "Inshore" is a concept relative to the "ocean." It means the vast sea waters within the "second island chain." In other words, sea waters for Chinese Naval operations should be not only along the line of the Japanese Islands, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia, but also along the shores of the entire Pacific Ocean. This will enable the Chinese Navy to engage in its blue water development step by step without having to change the original strategic program.

#### **Actively Pursuing the Policy of Opening to the Outside World**

In order to realize the objective of heading the Chinese Navy to blue waters, Liu Huaqing, after becoming the Navy commander, carried out bold and resolute reforms within the Chinese Navy. He thought that building a modern navy required both qualified personnel and good equipment. Therefore, he attached greater importance not only to naval colleges and institutes, but also to equipment departments. As the data indicates, during the recent years more than 60 percent of the basic level officers in the Chinese fleet have been college graduates, gradually realizing the goal of a "younger, more intellectual and more professional" officer corps. On the other hand, very rapid renewal of the Navy's equipment has taken place. Old equipment has been replaced gradually by new weapons, greatly enhancing the combat strength of the Chinese Navy.

Needless to say, Chinese Communist naval strength still falls far short when compared to that of the two other large world naval powers. Therefore, after taking office, Liu Huaqing, who had a good knowledge of this, laid due stress on the fact that the Navy must not only keep abreast of the world military situation, but also absorb the advanced experience.

In 1982, the United Kingdom and Argentina had an armed conflict in the Malvinas Islands (Falkland Islands) because of a territorial dispute. The British fleet had to travel all the way across the oceans to fight the battle, creating a modern example of having to cover a long distance to fight a war. Liu Huaqing, who was watching the development of the situation very closely, instructed all naval colleges, institutes, and scientific research units to study the war and to sum up their experiences. In order to strengthen the study of modern warfare, he decided in 1985 to establish research units in the Navy to engage in the study of military science and invited experts to study problems concerning naval warfare.

After taking the office of naval commander, Liu Huaqing vigorously supported the policy of opening to the outside and augmented international exchanges. Many a time he personally led delegations to visit naval powers, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and France, to inspect their naval development. Ranking naval officers from various countries have made frequent visits to China during the recent years. Warships from the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and the United States have made port calls in China. Besides, China has invited naval experts from foreign countries to deliver lectures in China. It is said that negotiations are underway between China and the United States concerning a program of exchanging military students.

#### **An Old Red Army Man With Modern Military Training**

The reason why Liu Huaqing was able to bring about the new breakthrough between strategic thinking and actual development after taking charge of the Navy is due to the inseparability of this breakthrough and the entire line of Chinese Communist reform and opening to the outside world. But it also had something to do with the fact that he was an old Red Army man with modern military training and had a long history of association with intellectuals.

Liu Huaqing was born in Dawu County, Hubei Province in 1916, and he joined the Communist Youth Corps early. In 1935, he became a member of the CPC. When he was 15 years old, he joined the workers' and peasants' Red Army to spy against the enemy. During the Red Army's Long March, he was the chief of the Confidential Information Section, 31st Army Headquarters, Fourth Front Army of the Chinese Red Army. During the Sino-Japanese War, he was chief of the Propaganda and Education Section and chief of the Political Section in the Department of Supplies, 129th Division (with Liu Bochong [0491 0130 2110] as its division commander and Deng Xiaoping as its political commissar), Eighth Route Army. Later, he was chief of the Organization Department of Jinan Military District, chief of the Organization Department of Pingyuan Military District, and deputy political commissar of the 6th Military Subdistrict, Jiluyu Military District.

#### **Fighting Under the Command of Deng Xiaoping for a Long Time**

After the War of Resistance was won, the Chinese Communists established on 20 August 1945 the Communist Central Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Henan Bureau (Handan Bureau) with Deng Xiaoping as its secretary, and the Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Henan Military Region with Liu Bochong as its commander and Deng Xiaoping as its political commissar. On 7 October of the same year, the Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Hebei Military Region decided to organize the main strength of the original Hebei, Shandong, Henan area, Jinan, Taixing, and Taiyue Military Districts into a field army in the form of four columns. The Second Column, with Chen

Zaidao [7115 0375 6670] as its commander and Song Renqiong [1345 0117 4522] as its political commissar, had the 4th, 5th, and 6th Brigades under its control. Liu Huaqing was the political commissar of the 6th Brigade (Wang Tianxiang [3769 1131 4382] was the brigade commander).

As soon as the Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Henan Field Army was organized, it clashed with KMT troops, who were in the midst of a large northern operation to enter Beijing and Tianjin. The Field Army won the revolt from Gao Shuxun [7559 2885 8113], deputy commander of the KMT's 11th Theater of Operations and concurrently army commander of the newly organized 8th Army and captured Ma Fawu [7456 3127 0063], another deputy commander of the 11th Theater of Operations and concurrently army commander of the 40th Army. After full-scale civil war had broken out in June 1946, the Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Henan Field Army repeatedly won its frequent clashes with KMT troops. In the summer of 1947, both Liu and Deng led the said army's 1st, 2d, 3d, and 6th Columns and organized them into a South Bound Field Army. They broke through the natural barrier of the Yellow River and came to Dabie [1129 0446] Mountain. Liu Huaqing displayed his military talents one after another on the battlefield.

In April 1948, the South Bound Field Army and the Chen Geng [7115 6342] and Xie Fuzhi [6200 1381 3112] clique merged into the Central Plains Field Army, with Liu Bocheng the commander, Deng Xiaoping the political commissar, Chen Yi the first deputy commander, Li Xiannian the second deputy commander, Deng Zihui [6772 1311 1863] and Zhang Jichun [1728 7139 2504] the deputy political commissars with the latter concurrently director of the Political Department, and Li Da [2621 6671] the chief of staff. The Central Plains Field Army had the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 6th, and 11th Columns and the 38th Army under its command. Liu Huaqing remained the political commissar of the 6th Brigade (with Zhou Fatian [0719 4099 3499] as the brigade commander), 2d Column (with Chen Zaidao as the commander and Wang Weigang [3769 4850 4854] as the political commissar). In September of the same year, the Central Plains Military Political University was established to train in rotation military and political cadres in order to meet situation developments. Liu Bocheng was its concurrent commandant and political commissar, Pan Zinian [3382 2737 1628] was the assistant commandant, Xu Lixing [1776 4539 5887] was the dean, Wu Chengxian [2976 2110 0341] was the director of School Affairs, and Zhang Youliang [1728 0645 0081] was the director of the Supply Department. Because of his marked achievement in troop political work, Liu Huaqing was transferred to this university to become the assistant director of the Political Department, enabling him to have direct access to Marshal Liu Bocheng.

In February 1949, the Chinese Communist Central Plains Field Army changed its name to the Chinese PLA 3d Field Army still under the reign of Liu and Deng, with Zhang Jichun and Li Da wearing the same hats, and

Duan Junyi [3008 0689 3015] as commander of the Logistics Department and concurrently political commissar. Under its control were the 3d, 4th, and 5th Army Groups, a Special Column, and the 58th Army. Liu Huaqing was transferred to the 11th Army (with Zeng Shaoshan [2582 4801 1472] the army commander, Bao Xianzhi [7637 0341 3112] the political commissar, Zheng Guozhong [6774 0948 0112] the deputy army commander, and Yang Guoyu [2799 0948 1342] the chief of staff), 3d Army Group (with Chen Xilian [7115 6932 5114] the army group commander and Xie Fuzhi the political commissar) to be the director of the Political Department.

In April 1949, the Chinese Communists launched and succeeded in the Campaign to Cross the Changjiang with the 2d and 3d Field Armies proceeding side by side. They then advanced southwest and made a clean sweep of the enemy troops. Liu Huaqing followed the troops in entering Sichuan.

After the founding of the People's Republic, a Southwest Military Region was established, based on the leading body of the 2d Field Army. He Long [6320 7893] became the commander, and Deng Xiaoping became the political commissar. Liu Huaqing was appointed director of the Political Department of the subordinate Southwest Military Political University (with Liu Bocheng as the commandant). By the end of 1950, the university was reorganized to become the PLA's 2d Advanced Infantry School.

Following is a chart showing the structure of the Navy's leading level when Liu Huaqing began to head the Chinese Navy. In the beginning of 1988, there was an overall reshuffle of the Chinese Navy.

#### The Leading Level of the Chinese Navy (1984)

Commanding General  
Liu Huaqing

Deputy Commanders  
Li Jing [2621 2529]  
Deng Zhaoxiang [6772 0340 4382]  
Yang Guoyu [2799 0948 1342]  
Fu Jize [0265 4949 3419]  
Nie Kuiju [5119 1145 5112]

Political Commissar  
Li Yaowen [2621 5069 2429]

Deputy Political Commissars  
Kang Zhiqiang [1660 1807 1730]  
Fang Zhengping [2455 2973 1627]

Chief of Staff  
Ma Xinchun [7456 6580 2504]

Deputy Chiefs of Staff  
Lin Zhen [2651 4176]  
Deng Shuqi [6772 2885 3825]  
An Lique [1344 4539 5028]  
Hu Weixing [5170 4850 5887]

**Ministry of Equipment and Technology**

**Minister**

Li Youbai [2621 0645 4101]

**North Sea Fleet**

**Commander**

Su Jun [5685 6511]

**Deputy Commanders**

Zhang Zhenchun [1728 7201 2504]

Zhang Shouqun [1728 1343 5028]

**Deputy Political Commissars**

Yan Yi [3601 5065]

Zhang Mushui [1728 1970 3055]

**East Sea Fleet**

**Commander**

Xie Zhenghao [6200 2973 3185]

**Deputy Commander**

Gao Xizeng [7559 1585 1073]

**Deputy Political Commissar**

Song Xianzhang [1345 3759 3864]

**South Sea Fleet**

**Deputy Commanders**

Lai Guangzu [0171 0342 4371]

Luo Wenhua [5012 2429 5478]

Huang Zhongcheng [7806 1813 6134]

Qi Yong [7841 0516]

Wang Jinzhen [3769 6855 3791]

Xu Peiren [6079 1014 0088]

Qu Zhenmou [2575 2182 0177]

**Deputy Political Commissar**

Xiao Ping [5618 1627]

**Naval Units Stationed in Shanghai**

**Commander**

Shi Yong [4529 0197]

**Deputy Commanders**

Su Rong [5685 2837]

Deng Shuqi [6772 2885 3825]

Yan Daozhang [7051 6670 3864]

Yu Shuwen [0060 2885 2494]

**Political Commissar**

Wang Yong [3076 3196]

**Deputy Political Commissar**

Lu Yunfang [0712 7189 5364]

**Naval Units Stationed in Guangzhou**

**Commander**

Gao Shirong [7559 6108 2837]

**Deputy Commanders**

Pan Jianghan [3382 3068 3352]

Liang Yixin [2733 0001 2450]

**Naval First Warship Academy**

**Commandant**

Zhao Zhong [6392 1813]

**Political Commissar**

Zhang Qin [1728 0530]

**Naval Submarine Academy**

**Assistant Commandant**

Luo Rongjiang [5012 2051 3984]

**Holding Various Positions in the Navy**

When the Chinese Communist Navy was first established, many Army cadres were reassigned to it. In the early 1950's, Liu Huaqing was appointed the assistant commandant and concurrently the deputy political commissar of the Naval Academy in Dalian. This academy, which was known to be the cradle of Chinese Navy officers, has nurtured numerous outstanding personages for the Chinese Navy. Former Navy commander Xiao Jinguang and former Navy chief of staff Rear Admiral Zhang Xuesi [1728 1331 1835] were the commandant and assistant commandant of that academy respectively.

In 1955, Liu Huaqing was promoted to rear admiral.

In the 1950's, the Chinese Communists were exclusively learning from the experience of the Soviet Union. Liu Huaqing and those holding important naval positions including Fang Qiang [2455 1730], Liu Daosheng [0491 6670 3932], and Zhang Xuesi were sent to the Soviet Union to study. They graduated from the Voroshilov Naval Institute in 1958. This experience not only enabled Liu Huaqing to grasp the theory of modern naval warfare, but also enabled him to have a profound understanding of the Soviet Navy. From then on, Liu Huaqing attached a greater importance to the study of Soviet Naval theories. The book, "The Nation's Sea Power," by former Soviet Navy Commander Gorzenkov was listed as required reading for ranking admirals of the Chinese Communist Navy.

After returning from the Soviet Union, Liu Huaqing subsequently held such positions as deputy commander of the North Sea Fleet, director of the Seventh Research Institute of the Ministry of National Defense, and deputy chief of staff of the Chinese Navy.

During the Cultural Revolution, he was transferred to be the deputy director of the National Defense Science, Technology, and Industry Commission, which was in charge of weapons and equipment development, and he further spent some time in the leading group of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Later, he was transferred to the Department of the Chief of General Staff first as assistant to the chief of general staff and then as deputy chief of general staff.

After the Cultural Revolution, China was under the policy of the "two whatevers" for several years without any basic change. The military's situation also had no basic change in this period. After the line of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th NPC had been defined, Deng Xiaoping replaced Hua Guofeng as the chairman of the Central Military Commission in June 1981, reorganized the military units, and installed numerous newcomers to head important positions. It was then that Liu Huaqing was appointed commander of the Chinese Navy.

#### **Hu Yaobang's Son-In-Law Was Secretary to Liu Huaqing**

For a long time Liu Huaqing had been working for the Third Field Army. Therefore, Deng Xiaoping knew him quite well. It was said that there was a good connection between Liu and Hu Yaobang too. As early as 1949 when Liu Huaqing was chief of the Political Department, Southwestern Military Political University, Hu Yaobang was a political committee member of its branch in northern Sichuan Province. They maintained contact because of their work. During the Cultural Revolution, Hu Yaobang was in charge of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, while Liu Huaqing was in charge of the National Defense Science, Technology, and Industry Commission. They cooperated because of their work. After Liu became the head of the Navy, he maintained a very close relationship with Hu Yaobang. In 1985, when Hu Yaobang had an inspection trip to Guangdong and Hainan Island, Liu Huaqing made a special effort to accompany him from the beginning to the end. It was said that one of Hu Yaobang's sons-in-law became Liu Huaqing's personal secretary before being recommended for an important position in the military's General Political Department.

#### **Transfers in the Navy Are Rather Rare**

After Liu Huaqing had become the Military Commission's deputy secretary general, Zhang Lianzhong succeeded him as the Navy commander in early 1988. Soon the battle between the Chinese Navy and the Vietnamese Navy took place in the Nansha Islands, resulting in a great victory for the Chinese Navy. The prestige of Liu Huaqing and Zhang Lianzhong zoomed in the military. Reshuffles and readjustments also took place later in the Chinese Navy.

Li Yaowen, the Navy's political commissar at 68 years old, became a member of the Central Advisory Commission after the 13th Party Congress and was expected to retire soon thereafter. Wei Jinshan, current Navy deputy political commissar, was working in the Nanjing Military Region under General Xu Shiyu [6079 0013 0645]. Because of his outstanding performance, Wei was later transferred to China's General Staff Department to become director of the Political Department. But he is the Navy's only political commissar at this moment. During the CPC representative conference held in September 1985, Wei was elected the additional member of the CPC Central Committee, and he was reelected

during the 13th Party Congress. It is reported that he is a hot candidate for political commissar of the Chinese Navy.

#### **Liu Huaqing's Is a Navy Family**

Although he no longer wore his Navy uniform by the end of 1987 and showed up in public in his Army general's uniform in October 1988, Liu Huaqing himself and his family have had a profound relationship with the Navy. Mrs. Liu Huaqing, Xu Hongxia [1776 3163 7209], a Navy Russian translator, worked for him as his translator while he was the base commander in Lushun. Currently she is still a Russian translator for the Systems Engineering Department at the head office of the China Shipbuilding Industry, contributing her efforts to the research, manufacturing, and demonstration of naval equipment. Liu's son, Liu Zhuoming [0491 0587 2494], a deputy director of one of the offices of the Navy's Equipment Demonstration Center, is one of the young regimental grade officers in the Chinese Navy. One of his daughters graduated from the Navy Electronics Engineering Institute before pursuing advanced study in the Air Force Political Institute. She is now working for the Navy.

#### **Chapter 6. Liu Huaqing—From Navy Commander to Deputy Secretary General of the Military Commission**

[Text] A Chinese Navy officer in charge of training claimed that the Chinese Navy already has a distant ocean voyage capability.

The source for this conclusion comes from the Chinese Navy's deep sea training during the recent eight plus years and the carrying out of the important task entrusted on the Navy by the country. Since 1980, Chinese warships have not only moved about freely and quickly in the vast Chinese coastal waters, but have also traveled many times to the southernmost Nansha Islands within the limits of Chinese territory. In addition, they have covered both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Their voyages often continued for scores of days, covering an overall distance of more than several tens of thousands of nautical miles.

As far as this writer knows, the Chinese Navy has annually organized deep sea training involving more than 100 warships since 1980. Eighty percent of the chief officers of each fleet took part in this type of training. The training not only familiarized the Chinese Navy officers with geographic, hydrologic, and meteorologic situations in the deep sea waters including straits, water routes, islands, submerged reefs, marks that facilitate navigation, weather, the sea situation, depth, and current velocity, but also improved their adaptability to deep sea voyages and combat skills.



### **New Arrangements by Liu Huaqing, the Military Commission's New Deputy Secretary General**

At the end of 1987, the Chinese Navy held maneuvers in the Western Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea. The maneuvers lasted quite some time and covered vast sea waters. The maneuvers' combined fleet commander Wang Jiying [3769 4949 5391] said that "the continental shelf and the edge of the marine economics zone will be the main sea areas in which future sea battles are going to take place. The maneuvers are just to get ready for them."

The Chinese Navy held the maneuvers in the vicinity of the sea waters where the majority of the events took place recently—the Nansha Islands. The fleet reached Zengmu Ansha close to the equator. It is less than 50 miles from the north shore of Borneo. It is far away from the Chinese coast, but it is the southernmost territory claimed repeatedly by China.

In the near future, the Chinese military could very well focus on the development of the Chinese Navy in its modernization program.

Clearly there are three major tasks for the Chinese Navy in the coming ten years:

First is how to deal with the situation of the Taiwan Strait.

Second is how to deal with the territorial disputes concerning Xisha and Nansha Islands.

Third is how to protect the petroleum facilities and development in the South China Sea.

These tasks are more pressing than those of the Army and Air Force.

It is quite interesting to observe the recent Chinese Communist changes of military personnel from this angle. The Chinese Communist Military Commission has nominated three new candidates for the chief of general staff, but none of them has entered the leading level of the Chinese Communist Central Military Commission. Old General Yang Shangkun continues to be the Military Commission's secretary general. In addition to keeping Hong Xuezhi as a deputy secretary general, Navy Commander Liu Huaqing has become a deputy secretary general in a by-election. Marshal Xu Xiangqian [1776 0686 0467] and Marshal Nie Rongzhen still remain in the Military Commission, while Yang Dezhi, Yu Qiuli [0151 4428 6849], and Zhang Aiping have departed from it. Among the armed forces, only the number one man from the Navy is admitted to the Military Commission's leading level. This suffices to indicate how important is the Navy.

### **A Valiant General in the Main Forces of Liu and Deng**

Liu Huaqing, the new deputy secretary general of the Central Military Commission, who came from the Red Fourth Front Army, is a veteran of the Long March.

Between 1946 and 1948, he was the director of the Political Department, Third Column (under the command of Chen Xilian and Peng Tao [1756 3447]) and concurrently the political commissar, 8th Division, Third Column, Central Plains Field Army (under the command of Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping).

Born in 1916, Liu Huaqing is a native of Dawu County, Hubei Province. He joined the Communist Youth League in 1930, the workers' and peasants' Red Army in 1931, and the CPC in 1935. During the period when the soviet area was established by the Communists in Jiangxi Province, he held the positions of secretary to the County Committee of the Young Communist Center; chief of the Enemy Operations Section, Political Department, 15th Red Army Group; and chief of the Confidential Work Section, 31st Red Army Headquarters.

The positions he held during the War of Resistance include chief of the Propaganda and Education Section, 129th Division, Eighth Route Army; chief of the Political Section, Division Supply Department; chief of the Organization Department, Jinan Military District; chief of the Organization Department, Central Plains Military Region; and deputy political commissar, 6th Army District, Hebei, Shandong, Henan Military Region.

He became well known throughout the Army due to his feats in battle at Dabie Mountain, Yangshanji [5017 1472 7162], and Gaoshanpu [7559 1472 6917].

In 1947, the positions he held were political commissar, 6th Brigade, Second Column and chief of the Political Department, 11th Army, Second Field Army.

Between 1948 and 1950, while he was deputy political commissar, 11th Army (under the command of Zeng Shaoshan and Bao Xianzhi), Second Field Army, he went through the bloody battles of Huaihai, crossing the Changjiang, and Sichuan.

### **Crossing Over to the Navy and Pursuing Advanced Study in the Soviet Union in 1950**

After the founding of our People's Republic, Liu Huaqing subsequently held the positions of chief, Political Department, Military Political University of the Southwest Military Region and army deputy political commissar in 1950.

In 1950, the 32d Division, 11th Army was reorganized to become a Navy asset. Liu Huaqing led the division's cadres, including Ma Zhongquan [7456 1813 0356] and Ma Guansan [7456 0385 0005], and shifted to work for the Navy.

In the 1950's, Liu Huaqing did go to the Soviet Union to pursue advanced study in modern naval technology and command operations.

In September 1955, he was promoted to rear admiral and received the grade one "Liberation" medal.

In 1958, he graduated from Voroshilov Naval Institute in the Soviet Union.

Subsequently he held positions including deputy commander of the North Sea Fleet, director of the Defense Ministry's 7th Research Institute, and deputy political commissar of the Navy.

In 1958, he became political commissar of Luda Naval Base (under Commander Zeng Shaoshan—Ma Zhong-quan).

In 1963, he was transferred to the South Sea Fleet as its deputy political commissar (under Commander Wu Ruilin [0702 3843 2651] and Political Commissar Fang Zhengping).

In 1965, he was promoted to deputy political commissar of the Navy (under Commander Xiao Jinguang and Political Commissar Su Zhenhua). In January 1967 right after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, he was concurrently a member of the Armed Forces Cultural Revolution Group (under Group Director Marshal Xu Xiangqian). In April 1967, he was removed from the Cultural Revolution Group and transferred to the National Defense Science, Technology, and Industry Commission to become its deputy director (under Director Nie Rongzhen). In August 1968, he represented this commission in attending an important conference held in Beijing.

#### As Navy Commander in 1982

In 1972, Liu Huaqing was transferred back to the Navy to become chief of staff at Navy General Headquarters.

After the fall of the Gang of Four in October 1976, he was transferred to become assistant to the chief of general staff. Soon afterwards, he was promoted to become vice chief of general staff.

In March 1980, he participated in the discussion between Hua Guofeng and Khieu Samphan on the issues concerning Kampuchea.

In 1982 Liu Huaqing was chosen to be a member of the 12th Session of the People's Congress of the Central Committee of the CPC. In 1985, he became a member of the Central Advisory Commission. In September 1988, he was promoted to admiral.

In 1982, he became commander of the Navy, taking over the important position once held by Xiao Jinguang and Su Zhenhua. By the end of 1986, he received the first visit to China made by the U.S. fleet. In November 1987, he was appointed to become the deputy secretary general of the Military Commission.

#### The Navy's Position and Function Have Become Increasingly Important

Located in the western suburb of Beijing, the shape of the tan Navy building is like that of an old battleship. Yet the naval leaders working in the building do not stick

to old ways. With the new technological revolution rising in the world, leading persons of the Navy, including Liu Huaqing, are studying together with the concerned experts and trying to find out the trend of this technological revolution as it pertains to the sea waters and its influence on naval construction.

During an interview that took place one summer morning, Liu Huaqing pointed out to a reporter that the world's new technological revolution would enable mankind to enter a new phase of opening up the oceans on a big scale, that the ocean's military value would be enhanced, and that the scramble between the superpowers over control of the oceans would also become fierce. Therefore, the Navy's position and function had become increasingly important. Expediting the construction of a modern navy strong enough to defend against any invasion from the sea to ensure the nation's sea rights and interests had become the pressing task of our country's national defense.

#### Liu Huaqing Has His Eyes on the Oceans in the 21st Century

The ocean's biological, mineral, and energy resources are extremely rich, some of its strategic resources are even richer than those of the land. Just the manganese nodule alone in the deep sea has a total reserve of more than one trillion tons of manganese, copper, cobalt, and nickel, the "resources of the 21st century."

Liu Huaqing thinks that China's offshore petroleum reserves may reach approximately 8 billion tons, one of the world's biggest petroleum reservoirs; that China's South Sea deep sea basin is an area rich in manganese nodules; and that almost 200 out of the more than 1,500 kinds of fish in our country's sea waters are of principal economic value. From now on, following the development of the deep sea and other biological resources, our countrymen will have to obtain the needed protein more and more from the oceans. Our country has a reserve of 110 million kilowatts of electricity which can be generated by tides, with an annual capacity of generating 87 billion kilowatts of electricity. However, only one three thousandth of this is exploited currently.

Liu Huaqing asks Navy personnel to pay particular attention to the struggles for control and against plundering, in relation to the problem of sea rights and interests, that always exist among maritime nations. Liu thinks that this is one of the focal points of consideration for our Navy for its future development.

Liu has also said that China is a big country with more than 18,000 kilometers of coastline, more than 6,000 islands, and a sea area of several million square kilometers. She needs a navy strong enough to resist any enemy invasion from the sea. No matter whether it is compared to this requirement or to the trend of opening the oceans on a big scale, he thinks that the Chinese Navy must be greatly strengthened both in scale and in the degree of modernization.

In fact, ever since he took over the Navy, the Chinese Navy has developed and improved at a fast speed.

[Possible missing text in original manuscript] We have made good progress in the fields of both torpedoes, the submarine's main weapon, and remote control mines, which are used to block gulfs, bays, and waterways as well as to hit large and medium-sized ships. This trend has aroused the attention of Taiwan.

#### **A Marine Corps Capable of Carrying Out Landing and Antilanding Operations**

The Chinese Navy is also equipped with bombers capable of carrying air-to-ship missiles to attack enemy ships at a distance. In addition, China also has a marine corps capable of carrying out landing and antilanding operations.

It is reported that the Chinese Navy has established a modern, large communications station, which can transmit and receive messages from all over the world. Phone conversations can be established at any time between Beijing and a ship that is 18,000 kilometers away at sea.

The Chinese Navy has the world's most powerful ultralong wave communications system and long-distance short wave communications system. New ultrashort wave transceivers suitable for internal use during sea formations have been allocated to naval units. All coastal units have subsequently installed relay communications lines with microwave relay and ultrashort wave relay equipment to effectively improve communications between islands and the mainland. Fiber optics communications, microwave transmission communications, and satellite communications techniques have already begun to enter the Navy's communications system.

During the past decade (from 1977 to 1987), the number of ships in the Chinese Navy's three sea fleets increased 14 percent. The current total number of ships is approximately 2,000, with half of them patrol boats and strike fast attack craft. The order of battle includes three strategic nuclear submarines, 114 other types of submarines, 52 main battle boats, about 200 missile fast attack craft, 57 amphibious warfare vessels, and three marine divisions. The total strength of the Chinese Navy is about 77,500 persons. And the Navy Air Force has about 780 fighters.

Since 1980, in order to coordinate with the renewed ICBM tests, China has deployed a special combined fleet with 18 vessels in the western Pacific waters. The Navy's ships have sailed to both the Indian Ocean and Antarctica. Its combat fendui often cruise in Southeast Asia waters. The South Sea Fleet patrols in the waters of the South China Sea, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The new strategic nuclear submarines have most recently been active in the vicinity of Hainan Island and the Xisha Islands.

China is currently building two new submarines, a diesel powered submarine and a nuclear attack submarine. A new steam turbine powered 4200-ton escort ship is also being built. Chinese naval strength is in a transition period towards modernization. It is believed that China is quietly establishing a base for future reunification with Taiwan.

#### **Chapter 7. China's Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong**

[Text] China's New Navy Commander, Zhang Lianzhong

At the end of January 1988, Deng Xiaoping signed an order for the 57-year-old former Chinese Navy Deputy Commander Zhang Lianzhong to replace the 71-year-old veteran Liu Huaqing as commander of the Chinese Navy.

#### **Promotion of Liu Huaqing and Li Yaowen to Admiral**

In September 1988, the Chinese Communists promulgated the military ranking system. Liu Huaqing and Li Yaowen, two top ranking officers of the naval system, were promoted to admiral, while Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong was promoted to vice admiral.

#### **Zhang Lianzhong's Curriculum Vitae**

Zhang Lianzhong was born in 1931 in Jiao [5231] County, Shandong Province. He entered China's PLA in March 1947 and joined the CPC in 1948. He participated in the Huaihai and Crossing the Changjiang Battles, received four awards for distinguished action, and successively held the posts of platoon leader and company commander.

After graduating from the PLA's Advanced Infantry School in 1958, he became a battalion chief of staff. In 1960, he enrolled in the Navy's Submarine School. After graduating from the Submarine School in 1965, he was a submarine commander, a deputy commander of a ship detachment, and a commander of a ship detachment. After graduating from the PLA's Military College in 1980, he was the deputy chief of staff, North Sea Fleet Headquarters before becoming a base commander. In 1985, he became the deputy commander of the Chinese Navy. In November 1987, he was chosen as alternate member of the Central Committee of the 13th NPC. In January 1988, he became China's Navy commander.

There were personnel changes in the CPC, government, and military high levels after the 13th NPC. At the end of November 1987, a readjustment of the members of the Central Military Commission took place. Chi Haotian succeeded Yang Dezhi as the chief of general staff. Yang Baibing replaced Yu Qiuli as director of the General Political Department. Zhao Nanqi replaced Hong Xuezhi as the minister of the Ministry of General Logistics. Hong Xuezhi and Liu Huaqing became deputy secretary generals of the Military Commission. At that time, people were predicting that Liu Huaqing would no

longer concurrently head the Navy and that the Chinese Communists would soon appoint a younger officer to that position.

Among the current Chinese deputy Navy commanders, Zhang Lianzhong was the youngest, with the shortest record of service. With just three years in the position of deputy Navy commander in Beijing, he was the least senior and least well-known among the deputy Navy commanders. In the 13th NPC, he was chosen alternate member of the Central Committee, a clear indication of his bright prospects. But many people did not think that he would immediately head the Navy because he had not been a fleet commander and because his time in covering the Navy's overall work was not long enough. Consequently, public opinion abroad gave better odds to Nie Kuiju, who participated in the Dongji [2639 4335] naval battle in the East China Sea in the 1950's and who had had to swim to survive after his ship was sunk by an enemy airplane. Nie, who is currently the East Sea Fleet commander, had held positions including commander of the Chinese Navy's Yulin Base and deputy commander of the Navy. He also led some naval ships to visit South Asia's Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in November 1985. He was also chosen a Central Committee member by the 13th NPC. Therefore, the odds of his getting promoted to the higher office were quite outstanding. In addition, deputy Navy commander Zhang Xusan participated in the leadership in China's South Pacific rocket test in 1980 and commanded the Navy's initial deep sea voyage to Zengmu Ansha in the Nansha Islands. Having held positions such as deputy chief of staff of the Chinese Navy, commandant of the Navy Academy, and the recent second hat as the Navy's chief of staff, Zhang also was once considered a potential candidate. Other candidates such as current deputy Navy commander Li Jing, who has been in charge of the Navy Air Force for a long time, is rich in experience. Former deputy Navy commander Fu Jize, who was removed from the office but "is waiting for a new assignment," is the founder of China's submarine unit. All of them are veterans with excellent qualifications.

Since the implementation of the opening to the outside world policy, there has been a marked change in China in devoting more attention to the oceans as well as to the Navy. During the 1980's, the Chinese Navy has become a new force suddenly coming to the fore, playing an increasingly important role in the Pacific area. The higher offices of the Chinese military thought that the rapid changes in the political and economic situations in the Pacific area during this period were gradually causing this area to become the focal point of the world and that the struggle for control and seizure of ocean rights and interests and ocean order continued to exist. The Navy is China's backup force to engage in this kind of struggle. Therefore, the Navy's development has changed from its previous position as 'youngest brother' among the armed forces to the high plane of national interests and international struggle, receiving twice the attention. Promoting Liu Huaqing to deputy secretary general of the

Central Military Commission from Navy commander justifies the Chinese Communists' strategic consideration. The most recent development on both shores of the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea has increased people's attention to the Navy. Consequently, the Navy commander has become the focus of attention.

#### **Zhang Lianzhong Is a Third-Generation Chinese Communist Soldier**

Zhang Lianzhong is the fourth Navy commander since the founding of the Chinese Navy 39 years ago. But according to the Chinese Communist military cadre records, he is a third-generation soldier.

The Chinese Communists have broken their military history into four periods, namely the Agrarian Revolution, War of Resistance Against Japan, War of Liberation, and After the Founding of the State. The cadres who joined the army during the Agrarian Revolution Period are called the Old Red Armymen. They include veteran generals such as Qin Jiwei, Hong Xuezhai, Liu Huaqing, and Zhang Zhen [1728 7201], who are still in office with long service records and outstanding service achievements. These first-generation soldiers are more than 70 years old. With the exception of a few of them who are still in office, the majority of the Old Red Armymen are either retired or working symbolically as advisors. Those who joined the army during the War of Resistance against Japan are called Model 38s. They have gone through hundreds of battles and accumulated lots of experience. But their age is around 70. These second-generation soldiers, who still hold leading positions in the front line, can be counted on one's fingers. The third-generation soldiers are called Liberation Brands. They are generally around 60 years old, have been tempered by war, and have actual combat experience. Since Liberation, they have received regular institute training, and thus, they now understand modern warfare theory. Therefore, they are knowledgeable in various aspects. Presently, the third-generation soldiers are the mainstay of the Chinese Communist Military. The fourth-generation soldiers are the new men who have all entered the military after the founding of the state, but particularly since the end of the Korean War. They are young, strong, and clever. They are enthusiastic about reform and willing to accept new things. They understand the world's new trends. They are called the Freshmen. Currently, more and more of them are holding important positions in the military, soon to become the pillars of the Chinese military. But apart from just a few who participated in the Sino-Vietnamese Border Clash, most of them do not have actual combat experience. They have more than enough enthusiasm for reform, but they are short in experience.

Zhang Lianzhong joined the army during the War of Liberation, so he would be typically one of the Liberation Brand according to his curriculum vitae.

### **A Navy Veteran With a Long Service Record**

Compared to his three predecessors, Zhang Lianzhong has the longest service record in the Navy.

China's first Navy commander, Senior General Xiao Jinguang, was one of the Chinese Communist founding members. He was commander of China's Navy for 30 years from January 1950, when the Chinese Navy was initially established, to January 1980. Yet if we calculate his length of service from the day he joined the Chinese Communist Party in the early 1920's, his time with the Navy still does not amount to half of his entire time with the revolution.

The second Navy commander, Admiral Ye Fei, was a brave general of the East China Field Army. He had been working in other military regions and places until February 1979, when he was transferred to the Navy to hold the position of political commissar before becoming commander. In October 1982, he left the Navy to become vice chairman of the NPC's Standing Committee, after only three and half years of service.

The third Navy commander was Rear Admiral Liu Huaqing. He was also transferred to work in the Navy from the Army in 1950, holding various important positions in the Navy. However, he was transferred out of the Navy before the Cultural Revolution. Successively he worked for the National Defense Science, Technology, and Industry Commission, the 6th Ministry of Machine Building, and the Office of the Chief of General Staff for about 20 years until he was appointed Navy commander in August 1982. In November 1987, he was promoted to deputy secretary general of the Central Military Commission.

Yet Zhang Lianzhong joined the Navy when it was established in the beginning of the 1950's, and he worked for a long time in the grass roots units. So far he has been with the Navy for more than 30 years. Though his service record is not as prominent as that of his predecessors, he is worthy of the name of "Navy veteran."

Another feature in which Zhang differs markedly from his three predecessors is that all three former Navy commanders are Old Red Armymen, who have worked in the Army for almost half of their lives. After their transfer to the Navy, they immediately held senior positions without having to go through the Navy's grass roots units and the tempering of sea life. But Zhang Lianzhong served for a long time in the submarine unit, starting as a grass roots officer and working together with the crew hand in hand. He knows what sea life is by heart.

### **A Gradual Rise in the Submarine Unit**

The Chinese Navy is comprised of five service arms, namely surface ships, submarines, aviation corps, coast guard, and marine corps. Zhang Lianzhong held a leading position in the grass roots submarine unit for a long time.

The Chinese Navy's submarine unit was established in April 1951. At that time, a submarine training group of 275 men led by Group Leader Fu Jize was organized to receive training from the Soviet Pacific Fleet's Submarine Fendui stationed at Lushun. In May 1952, China's first submarine base was built in Qingdao. In June 1954, the first submarine unit, the Navy's Independent Submarine Dadui, came into being and began to carry out various missions with two old submarines bought from the Soviet Union.

In March 1954, the Chinese Navy formally opened the Submarine School, headed concurrently by Commandant Fu Jize, to train leading submarine cadres and professional crews. Later, Zhang Lianzhong also received systematic training from the school in Navy military theories and submarine tactics.

After graduation from the Submarine School, Zhang Lianzhong held various positions in the submarine unit, rising step by step. In the Second Submarine Detachment of the North Sea Fleet's Qingdao Base, he successively held such positions as submarine commander, chief of staff, deputy detachment commander, and detachment commander. He is quite familiar with submarine warfare and training.

### **An Outstanding Performance in Deep Sea Training**

From the 1950's to the 1960's, the Chinese Navy was in its initial stage. With intense situations along the coast and frequent combat operations, training operations could take place only along the coast. There was no capability for deep sea operations. During the Cultural Revolution, the armed forces concentrated on "putting politics in command" and the "four firsts;" military training was neglected and even criticized until after the end of the Cultural Revolution, when the Chinese Navy's combat training actually began to be on the right track.

Following the development of China's maritime transportation, scientific research, and ocean resource exploitation, the demand for the Navy to carry out deep sea missions became very pressing. And with the submarine force being the important and prominent strength of the Navy, having features including good concealment, good endurance, and strong self-sufficiency, it is more suitable for deep sea operations. By the end of 1976, the Chinese Communist Central Military Commission approved the Navy's submarine No. 252 to cross the first island chain (indicating the chain of islands formed by the Aleutian Islands, the Kuril Islands, the Japanese Island Chain, the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, the Philippine Islands, and the Greater Sunda Islands) and to enter the Pacific Ocean. This voyage lasted 30 days and covered 3,300 nautical miles, was the first stride for the Chinese Navy in future deep sea voyages, initiated a route for future development, and established a role model for successors. The commander of this voyage happened to be deputy detachment commander Zhang Lianzhong.

A submarine on a deep sea voyage faces many hardships and hazardous situations. During the above mentioned voyage, the submarine encountered a typhoon with winds stronger than Force 10. It was said that the waves were 10 meters high and that each stretched about 200 meters long. With the submarine rocking at 50 degrees, none of the crewmen could stand firm. It was very difficult to steer the submarine. Despite danger and vomiting, Zhang Lianzhong, who was cool and steady, had the entire situation under control as he held onto a certain fixture with both hands for support. The submarine struggled with the stormy sea for three days and three nights before pulling through. The deep sea adventure being accomplished, Zhang Lianzhong received citations from both the Central Military Commission and the Navy.

At present, the Chinese Navy's submarine unit has been developed into a formidable strike force with about 100 conventional submarines and several nuclear submarines, capable of underwater launching long-range SLBMs in concealment to attack enemy ships and ground targets. It has become a trump card of the Chinese Navy in combat operations. Therefore, during this crucial time it was only logical that someone with a submarine background become commander of the Navy.

#### **Assuming Personal Command of Lushun Base**

Because of his hard work and excellent management skills, Zhang Lianzhong received due promotions one after another. He was transferred from the Submarine Detachment to the Lushun Naval Base to become the base's chief of staff, before being transferred to the North Sea Fleet to become the fleet's deputy chief of staff. Before long, he was transferred back to the Lushun Base as the base commander.

Lushun is a well-known natural port, with strategically important terrain. The port never freezes. Lushun, together with the Miaodao Islands and Shandong Peninsula's Cape of Penglai, hold and defend the Bohai Strait, constituting a natural defense for Beijing and the North China industrial area. Known as the "Gate to Tianjin and Beijing," Lushun is strategically located. Therefore, it has been a place contested by all strategists throughout history. The Navy pays special attention to the importance of the Lushun Base.

Because the government of the Qing Dynasty was corrupt and incompetent, Lushun subsequently came under the control of tsarist Russia and Japan. Before the end of the Second World War, the heads of the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union reached an agreement in Yalta allowing the Soviet Union to lease it as a naval base. On 22 August 1945, the Soviet Union occupied Lushun, and it was under Soviet military control thereafter.

After the founding of the People's Republic, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai led a delegation to visit the Soviet Union in December 1949 and held talks with Stalin to discuss the issue of returning Lushun to China.

In 1954, the Soviet Union and China issued a "Joint Communiqué Concerning the Issue of Lushun Naval Base," which stipulated that "both the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and the turning over of the facilities in the Lushun Naval Base to the People's Republic of China should be completed by 31 May 1955."

In May 1955, the Chinese Communists, taking the original leading organ of the railroad public security unit as a foundation, formally organized the Lushun Naval Base. The roster of the initial leaders was as follows: Base commander Luo Huasheng; political commissar Peng Lin; deputy commanders Liu Changyi and Shao Zhen; deputy political commissar Song Jinghua; chief of staff Xie Zhenghao; and chief of the Political Department Deng Keyun.

In August 1960, the Navy established its North Sea Fleet. The roster of the initial leaders was as follows: Fleet commander Liu Changyi; political commissar Ding Qiusheng; deputy commanders Liu Huaqing, Yi Yaocai, Zhang Yuanpei, and Deng Zhaoxiang; and deputy political commissars Lu Rencan and Huang Zhongxue. At that time, Liu Huaqing was also concurrently the commander of Lushun Naval Base.

Since Lushun was an important naval base for holding and defending the sea passages to both Beijing and Tianjin, its forces stood above all other Navy units. All of the Navy's major combat strength, including submarines, destroyers, escort ships, minesweepers, mine-layers, submarine chasers, the Navy Air Force, anti-aircraft artillery, and coastal artillery, converged within the harbor to form a perfect defense system. Its nickname, "City of the Navy," became well known abroad. In September 1983, Democratic People's Republic of Korea President Kim Il Sung, accompanied personally by then Chinese Communist General Secretary Hu Yaobang, visited the Lushun Naval Base and highly praised the troops' good training and combat effectiveness. The host who received the VIP visitors was none other than Base commander Zhang Lianzhong.

#### **Displaying Effective Leadership in Equipment Development**

In the beginning of 1985, Zhang Lianzhong was promoted directly from base commander to deputy commander of the Navy in charge of Navy logistics and equipment construction. Because in the 1985 Military Commission Conference, Deng Xiaoping, based on his analysis of the world situation, made a strategic prediction that no world war would start within the near future, the focus of national defense construction during "time of peace" was on both personnel training and construction of equipment and logistics installations. As Zhang Lianzhong's style of work was honest and meticulous, construction of the Chinese Navy's logistics and equipment was quite remarkable during this period. For instance, he paid particular attention to equipment for modern simulated maneuvers. In November 1986, he submitted a program concerning the establishing of a

Navy laser electronic system for simulated tactical maneuvers to the Navy's General Staff Department. In December 1986, he gave the relevant scientific research unit the task of studying, manufacturing, and testing the said system. Six months later, the test was a success, and the system was put into use. In summer 1987, large scale multi-arms joint operations maneuvers took place within the North Sea Fleet and succeeded. Even the experts were impressed by the quick results. Another example was the Navy's recently finished modern large naval port, which covers a total area of 10.7 square kilometers, enough room for scores of ships simultaneously. With construction up to world standards, it was the biggest man-made port in the Far East. All these could not have been realized without the endeavors of Zhang Lianzhong.

Zhang Lianzhong has had plenty of grass-roots unit experience. Having been in some senior positions, he attended the PLA Military Institute (now called the National Defense University). Therefore, the overall macro-strategic problems are not new issues to him. In a recently published article, "Intensify Reform and Thoroughly Raise Training Standards of Navy Troops," he indicated, "The basic purpose in conducting a strategic change in the guiding ideology of PLA construction lies in facilitating both the modernization and the standardization of PLA construction by fully taking advantage of the current, relatively peaceful international situation. It is necessary to improve the troops' overall combat capability under modern combat conditions." He went on to say, "All Navy officers and men must further realize how important military training is during peacetime, realistically place both education and training in a strategic position, and fully understand that it is military training, not war, that we must engage in at all times."

#### **Zhang Lianzhong's Age Advantage**

It was said that Zhang Lianzhong was not expecting to head the Navy. Being a native of Shandong Province, he did not relocate his family during the few years he was working in Beijing. In introducing Zhang Lianzhong to his subordinates, former Chinese Navy Commander Liu Huaqing said that among the deputy navy commanders and few fleet commanders, those who had the qualifications to be promoted to Navy commander were not many, but that being the youngest of all, Zhang Lianzhong had an age advantage which would allow him to keep on working for more than a decade to ensure the Navy's stability by avoiding frequent personnel changes. As to whether Zhang Lianzhong may continue to be the Navy commander in the year 2000, we simply have to wait and see.

#### **A Big Reshuffle of Ranking Navy Officers**

In addition, Chinese Navy political commissar Li Yaowen is already more than 70 years old. He joined the Central Advisory Commission after the 13th NPC and is not yet retired. It is thought that after providing Zhang Lianzhong with assistance for a period of time, he will

turn over the position to current Navy deputy political commissar Wei Jinshan. Not too long ago Navy chief of staff became the second hat of deputy commander Zhang Xusan, while former chief of staff An Liquan was appointed deputy commander of the East Sea Fleet. These important personnel changes will certainly push forth the reform and development of the Chinese Navy.

After becoming commander of China's Navy, Zhang Lianzhong mentioned the issue of deep sea voyages many times. Most recently he said, "During peacetime, the navy symbolizes a country's strength. In order to protect the country's territorial integrity, to deal with a sudden incident on the sea, and to deal with limited war, the Chinese Navy must carry out ocean training to get accustomed to spending long periods of time at sea and to construct naval combat strength." He added, "For the Chinese Navy to carry out deep sea training has been the wish of the Chinese people for generations."

### **Chapter 8. The Chinese Communists' Plan To Recover the Nansha Islands**

#### **[Text] Beijing Comes From Behind Among Five Claims From Four Countries**

The claims of sovereign rights over the Nansha Islands by China, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines entered a new phase following the Chinese Navy's 1988 February landing on Chigua [6375 3900] Reef to the north of the Nansha Islands and the August 1988 establishment of an "ocean observation station" on Yongshu [3057 2540] Reef. Especially after the 14 March 1988 battle against the Vietnamese Navy in Chigua Reef waters for the legitimate rights to the Nansha Islands, China laid a further foundation for a foothold in the Nansha Islands. This has enabled China to become the fifth power backed by military strength to physically occupy an island and control the waters in the Nansha Islands. The actual presence of the Chinese in the Nansha Islands changed the Chinese government's previously held passive position, in which they merely unceasingly declared sovereignty over the Nansha Islands without taking any action against other countries that sent their troops to occupy some of the islands. This has greatly enhanced China's right to speak in this area. Now the Nansha Islands are controlled separately by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, establishing the situation of "five claims from four countries."

Notwithstanding the fact that China had sovereignty over the Nansha Islands historically, China is, in fact, their new visitor. The situation facing the Chinese is as such: Among the 32 main islands and reefs, with the exception of Taiping [1132 1627] Island which is currently occupied by the Taiwanese KMT, the rest of them are all in the hands of foreign countries. According to the data, Vietnam owns thirteen islands and reefs; the Philippines own nine; and Malaysia owns nine. Of the total area of 800,000 square kilometers, Vietnam controls



approximately 80,000 square kilometers; Malaysia controls more than 200,000 square kilometers; and the Philippines control about 400,000 square kilometers. The carving up of the main territories and waters of the Nansha Islands has already finished. Yet both Chigua Reef and Yongshu Reef, currently controlled by Beijing, are two small reefs that are normally just several feet above water and that are submerged by a big rising tide. They have neither fresh water nor a wharf. It is difficult for ships to berth. It is very difficult to station people there. Obviously the Chinese Communists are a late arrival in the Nansha Islands.

Yet most observers think that based upon the latest trends between China and Vietnam, Beijing will never settle for the "leftovers." The 1988 establishment of a station on Yongshu Reef was just the Chinese Communists' first step of the Long March in their plan for recovering all of the Nansha Islands. It not only symbolized that China was formally exercising her sovereign rights there, but also indicated the strategy for the eventual recovery of all the Nansha Islands by securing an actual position first before expanding the sphere of control step by step. Beijing's apparent intention is to close the door after the horses have been stolen and to try to come from behind to become the real master of the entire Nansha area. Therefore, the concerned departments of certain countries and areas, including Taiwan, have all attached great importance to this action taken by Beijing.

#### **Possible Chinese Communist Models for the Recovery of the Nansha Islands**

The dispute over the Nansha Islands involves the interests of many countries. There are common interests as well as mutual conflicts among those occupying different parts of the Nansha Islands. The situation is very complicated. Therefore, Beijing must be well prepared with different scenarios if the recovery of the Nansha Islands is to take place. It is said that Beijing's current attitude towards those countries is to take advantage of mutual conflicts and to deal with each case on its merits. As for when and how the recovery is going to take place, Beijing will move in sequence, advancing step by step. Beijing is not going to attack in all directions at once and have enemies coming from all directions. Beijing authorities estimate that it probably will take a long time to materialize the noble ambition to recover the entire Nansha Islands.

There are two possible methods to recover the Nansha Islands, namely by force or by negotiation. They may be broken down into three models, the Guadalcanal model, the Malvinas model, and the Hong Kong and Macao model.

#### **The Guadalcanal Model Is Too Costly**

On 7 August 1942, after victories over the Japanese fleet in the Coral Sea and at Midway Island, the U.S. Navy sent its marines to land at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. At that time, the Japanese were building an air

force base there to get ready to attack Australia. A fierce jungle battle that lasted 6 months took place between the U.S. troops and the Japanese troops. Having paid a heavy price, the U.S. troops gained control of the entire island on 9 February 1943. Afterwards, the U.S. troops adopted the strategy of "targeting the islands one by one" in attacking individual strategic outpost positions of the Japanese troops' main force, thus destroying the Japanese tentacles that were advancing at all directions in the Pacific Ocean. The U.S. troops pushed the theater of operations northward and used the newly occupied islands as bases to launch an attack on Japan itself.

In order to recover the Nansha Islands, Beijing must consider the use of military force. However, presently, if China and Vietnam go to war at sea, who will be able to guarantee that another battle similar to the U.S. troops' battle at Guadalcanal of 1942-43 will not arise again. The Nansha Islands lie more than 1,000 kilometers from the Chinese mainland, and the islands are scattered over approximately 500 or so nautical miles. Distances between the individual islands are great, and the area of the islands (reefs) is not large. If Beijing wants to take back the Nansha Islands by force, they will have to, at the same time, recover all of the islands occupied by the Vietnamese and that will bring definite difficulties. Also, Beijing will have to divide its forces to launch attacks in different directions. However, to split one's forces to attack in different directions does not conform to Mao Zedong's and other strategists' traditional strategic principle of "concentrating a superior force to destroy the enemy forces one by one." Therefore, the future probable strategy may be to first capture one of the Vietnamese-occupied islands, which can be made into a base, and to then expand the controlled area by recovering the islands one by one.

However, Vietnam is a country where nationalism goes to extremes. When the Japanese troops were fighting against the U.S. troops in the latter's attempt to seize the islands one by one, the Japanese troops relied on the spirit of bushido, fought desperately against the superior U.S. troops using "a Pacific embankment built with their lives," and made the U.S. troops pay dearly. Today, Vietnam is also using the slogan that her troops will "use their blood and lives to defend their sovereign rights." If an island-by-island battle should take place, the Vietnamese troops may very well follow the method used previously by the Japanese to put up last-ditch resistance. It is said that the Vietnamese marines are an experienced "maritime dare-to-die corps," capable of going to extremes in fighting, especially when the target is an isolated small island. They often act as pirates in launching attacks against this kind of island. Therefore, if a war over the Nansha Islands should break out, the Chinese Navy not only would have to sacrifice many lives in the process of seizing each island, but also would have to stand the chance of losing a seized island if the Vietnamese troops launched a counteroffensive to retrieve the lost island. This kind of back and forth



fighting could develop into a seesaw battle, or even into a full scale Sino-Vietnamese confrontation.

#### **Will It Be a Stalemate?**

As far as actual strength is concerned, the Chinese Navy has had a marked improvement in deep sea combat operations, as has the Marine Corps in combat effectiveness. There should not be any problem in routing Vietnam's main naval and air force strength, wiping out its troops stationed on the islands, and capturing all the islands occupied by Vietnam. But, it will be necessary to pay an extremely heavy price. As Beijing is currently concentrating its efforts in pushing forth economic reform and construction, it definitely would not like to get involved in a costly and long naval battle. Therefore, Beijing will certainly try its best to avoid the Guadalcanal model, which is known to be a drain on both money and manpower.

However, from another point of view, Vietnam normally refuses to be convinced until she is faced with grim reality. After the naval battle that took place on 14 March 1988, Vietnam not only did not withdraw her troops from the occupied islands, but on the contrary, sped up her activities to seize new islands. This indicates that a tiny lesson is not going to have an effect on Vietnam. On the contrary, it will kindle her determination to retaliate. Therefore, if China intends to recover the Nansha Islands, China cannot help but prepare herself for a protracted war. If Vietnam should be stubborn enough to keep on fighting, the Chinese Communists would have to continue fighting at all costs.

#### **The Feasibility of the Malvinas Model**

In April 1982, the negotiations for the sovereign rights of the Malvinas Islands (or Falkland Islands) between the United Kingdom and Argentina broke down. The Argentine troops captured the Malvinas Islands by disarming the handful of defending UK troops. The government and the public of the United Kingdom were so furious that the government sent an enormous and powerful expeditionary force to cross the Atlantic Ocean to launch a surprise attack on the Malvinas Islands. During the battle over the Malvinas Islands, the British fleet sank one of the Argentine Navy's heavy cruisers and several light ships and stopped Argentine reinforcements by using submarines to block off the Argentine ships in the harbor. The British special forces launched a surprise attack on the barracks of the defending Argentine troops, cut off their supplies of ammunitions and provisions, and forced the Argentine troops to surrender due to their loss of combat capability. After the war was lost, Argentina was forced to start negotiating with the United Kingdom. As a result, the United Kingdom recovered control over the Malvinas Islands.

#### **Concentrating a Superior Force To Win a Decisive Battle**

The United Kingdom's model of recovering the Malvinas Islands was that of concentrating a superior force to

win a decisive battle. It was the use of overbearing power to overwhelm an opponent, causing the latter to lose its counteroffensive capacity. This brought about a fait accompli not only in chasing the opponent out of the Malvinas Islands, but also in gaining a superior position during negotiations. Within a considerable period of time, it would have been very difficult for the Argentine troops to rally their forces to recapture the Malvinas Islands.

Some observers think that Beijing could draw lessons from the Malvinas model in handling the issue of the Nansha Islands, by not engaging in an island-by-island battle with Vietnam, and that Beijing should instead seek an opportunity to engage in a surgical battle to excise once and for all the Vietnamese Navy's main battleships and transport ships and to block off the other ships in each harbor so that they would lose their confidence and capacity to launch a counteroffensive. In addition, Beijing would cut off Vietnam's contact and supply of provisions to her troops on each island, so that these troops would be destroyed without a fight. Beijing would use its military pressure to force Vietnam to come to the negotiating table to discuss with China a solution to the Nansha Islands issue.

If Beijing should use the tactic properly, they could settle the issue in one battle, getting twice the results with half the effort. Beijing could recover the Nansha Islands within a short period of time, without having to fight a protracted seesaw battle. It would not only display China's national prestige and military prowess, but also reduce considerably the impact and shock to the world created by the use of military action. This would kill more than two birds with one stone. Of course, whether this model can work smoothly depends on whether the Chinese Navy is strong enough.

#### **Choosing Submarine Experts To Be in Charge of South China Sea Defense**

The Chinese Communist military authorities recently chose a submarine expert to become Navy commander and a former submarine commander to become the South Sea Fleet commander in charge of the Nansha Islands defense. In view of this, the Chinese Navy seems to have attached greater importance to the use of attacking and blocking forces in the South China Sea. Obviously Beijing has plans which make use of the Malvinas model.

#### **A Remote Chance of Using the Hong Kong and Macao Model**

The Guadalcanal model involves only combat operations, not negotiations. Combat operations run from the beginning to the end. Therefore, it may be considered recovery by force only. The Malvinas model begins with combat operations, but ends with negotiations. Negotiations are brought about by combat operations. Therefore, it may be considered recovery partially by force.

The Hong Kong And Macao model involves only negotiations, without combat operations. It means that recovering the Nansha Islands is like China's recovery of the sovereign rights of both Hong Kong and Macao, entirely through the method of peaceful negotiations, or defeating the enemy troops without having to participate in a battle.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on 12 May 1988, Beijing suggested starting negotiations with Vietnam concerning the issue of the Nansha Islands. This reflects that Beijing does not intend to use force in the Nansha Islands. After the truce between Iraq and Iran was announced, the PEOPLE'S DAILY published an editorial on 10 August 1988 stating that as for divergence and conflict between two countries, especially third world countries, using military measures would only create grave calamities instead of solving the problem(s). The only way to solve divergence and conflict is through peaceful negotiations. If certain problems cannot be solved at a certain time, it is necessary to give the matter further thought and to discuss it later. Peace will benefit both sides, while war causes only damage. The longer a war drags on, the more damage it causes both sides. Only stopping war and making peace can tally with the current tide of world peace and development.

However, this may just be wishful thinking. In view of the present situation, the Chinese Communists' hope to recover the Nansha Islands peacefully is rather remote. Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines have occupied the Nansha Islands separately for more than 10 years. They not only have assigned troops to be stationed on the islands, set up signs, and constructed fortifications, but they also have incorporated their occupied islands into their territory. Therefore, they are not going to hand those islands over to China so easily. On the other hand, the Nansha Islands are rich in petroleum and natural gas. Each country has exploited and taken advantage of these resources. They have drawn a considerable benefit from them. In this kind of situation, it is impossible to ask them to give up voluntarily this ready source of money, without having to go through the bargaining table by making certain concessions. The dispute over the Nansha Islands is completely different from that over Hong Kong and Macao because there are no previous treaties that may be used as a criteria for negotiations. Therefore, if separate negotiations by both friendly persuasion and reasoning with the said countries are going to take place, the chances of convincing them to withdraw from the Nansha Islands are next to nothing. Thus, despite the fact that Beijing has suggested settling the issue peacefully, the possibility of using this model is, indeed, quite low. Beijing naturally knows this quite well.

#### **Vietnam Will Be the First To Bear the Brunt**

Reliable sources disclosed that after the clash in the Nansha Islands on 14 March of this year, Beijing organized several experts to study the issue of how to recover

the Nansha Islands and prepared several policy decisions and plans from which the higher level is to make a selection.

In view of the current relations between the Soviet Union and China and Vietnam's military activities in the Nansha Islands, the hope of asking Vietnam to peacefully turn over the occupied Nansha Islands is almost nil. In the days to come, Vietnam, under the influence of adventurism, will assume the posture of hostility to China. Military confrontations between the two countries are very probable. Therefore, Beijing's measures against Vietnam will be based on either the first or the second model. In view of history, as well as both their national and military strength, the Philippines and Malaysia can hardly contend against Beijing in the Nansha Islands once the dispute becomes acute. Therefore, Beijing will more likely consider favorably the second or even the third model.

The assessment of Beijing's foreign military observers indicates that Beijing has made up its mind to recover the Nansha Islands with a clear-cut policy, and that no matter which model is to be used, Vietnam will be the first to bear the brunt. Should Vietnam be defeated in a military confrontation, it would be a lesson for both the Philippines and Malaysia, whose naval strength is not on a par with Vietnam's. This would force them to face the Chinese Communists at the negotiating table. If the situation should force Vietnam to agree to withdraw from the Nansha Islands, both the Philippines and Malaysia would lose their confidence in having a contest of military strength with China.

Some analysts also think that current world trend indicates that economic pragmatism is replacing military adventurism. In addition to the INF Treaty signed by the Soviet Union and the United States, many belligerent countries in different areas have also ceased fighting and started peaceful dialogues. At present, the economy of Vietnam is on the verge of disintegration, with an insufficient supply of staple food and a serious situation of corruption. The military involvement in Cambodia, which has dragged on for 9 years, has become a heavy burden. People all over are tired of the war. They still cannot get away from it. The heavy burden of opening up a naval battleground in the Nansha Islands against China will be difficult to carry out. Besides, once war breaks out, the moves that the Soviet Union takes, seemingly in harmony but actually at variance with Vietnam, would be worth pondering. Therefore, under strong military and diplomatic pressure, there is a gleam of hope that the negotiating method will be used to solve the issue of the Nansha Islands.

#### **The Destiny of Taiping Island**

News from Zhongnanhai indicates that Beijing is currently not very anxious to recover Taiping Island, the largest among the Nansha Islands occupied by Taiwanese KMT troops, because it prefers to incorporate it with the Taiwan issue. Beijing sticks to the principle that

as long as it is in Chinese hands, it is easy to settle the issue. Therefore, in the plan to recover the Nansha Islands, Beijing not only will not try to capture Taiping Island by force, but also will expect the cooperation of Taiwan to avoid internal strife which could provide easy spoils to the Vietnamese. It is reported that when the naval confrontation between China and Vietnam took place on 14 March 1988, Taiwan's troops stationed on Taiping Island were told to be on the alert, but with their spearheads not directed at the Chinese Communists. This indicates that when the issue is territorial sovereignty, not only is the stance on both sides of the Taiwan Strait not contradictory, but there is even a tacit understanding.

### **Chapter 9. An Inside Look at China's Largest Naval Port**

#### **[Text] China Completes the Largest Artificial Harbor in the Far East**

China has completed the largest artificial harbor in the Far East. This was disclosed by China's official newspaper, the PEOPLE'S DAILY, on 11 February 1988.

The PEOPLE'S DAILY that day also said that the seaport is China's biggest comprehensive naval port, which with a mountain range at its back and an ocean in the front has a total acreage of 10.7 square kilometers including 3.9 square kilometers of water area. The port has four different types of piers and two docks capable of handling ships of over 10,000 tons. The entire length of its wharf almost equals the total length of all the naval ports in China at Liberation. The port has room for scores of ships to anchor simultaneously. Its construction technique has reached contemporary international standards with facilities to provide naval vessels with prompt supplies of fuel, water, electricity, heat, and ammunition.

#### **Inquisitive Foreign Military Experts**

Once this news became public, it caught the immediate attention of western defense experts. On the very day the news became known, a foreign diplomat who was assigned to Beijing commented, "Making this news public has puzzled everybody, naval attaches from every country are talking about it today." The REUTERS reporter in Beijing considered it "very unusual." Japan's KYODO commented, "China is reducing the PLA by one million men on the one hand, but she is modernizing various types of equipment and facilities on the other, especially the Navy, which is expanding the deep-sea combat capability of its submarine units and fleets."

Since the Chinese Communists decided to open to the outside world after the Third Session of the 11th NPC in 1979, their leaders at the senior levels have gradually begun to realize the importance of the ocean.

During recent years, China has aggressively been developing her shipbuilding industry and ocean-going transportation industry to become a new force in the international market, bringing in a large volume of foreign exchange for the country's modernization.

In addition, China has abundant mineral reserves along the coast. For instance, the petroleum reserve is estimated to exceed 10 billion tons. At the present moment, oil and gas fields have been discovered in the continental shelves of each sea area, with some of them already under commercial exploitation. By the year 2000, it is estimated that China's offshore petroleum and natural gas production will reach one third of her gross national product. It is evident that the development of the maritime industry will play a very important role in China's realizing the four modernizations and in becoming a comparatively well-off society. It is said that China's higher levels think that the Pacific area will become the political, economic, and military center of the world in the 21st century. Therefore, China's positive efforts in participating in the affairs of this area have already been brought to the world's attention.

#### **China's Unique Maritime Problems**

China's current and unique maritime problems are her existing disputes over rights and interests with neighboring countries. For instance, Vietnam, which has occupied some of China's Nansha Islands, declares that those islands belong to her. At the end of January 1988, when China sent a scientific inspection ship to the Nansha Islands to inspect and patrol the area, Vietnam sent a ship to interfere. When both sides sent reinforcements to the Nansha Islands the following month, each side reiterated separately its sovereign rights over the Nansha Islands, using diplomatic and propaganda measures. This eventually led to the naval confrontation on 14 March 1988.

#### **Why Are the Chinese Communists Announcing the Completion of the New Port?**

China announced the completion of the largest naval port in February 1988. This undoubtedly was to tell the world that under the guiding ideology of building up the troops during time of peace, China would not slow down her naval development. A strong naval force is China's most reliable backing in protecting her ocean rights and interests.

This writer has learned that China's newly completed port is located in Jiaonan [5231 0589] County, to the south of the Shandong Peninsula. It faces Qingdao to the north across Jiaozhou [5231 1558] Bay. Shijiusuo [4258 5273 2076] Harbor is just 50 kilometers to the south. Facing the Yellow Sea directly in the front with convenient transport facilities, the port's terrain is strategically situated. There are wide sea lanes outside for easy access to the port, which is never frozen during the entire year. It is an ideal ship base for both supplies and berthing. The completion of this port has greatly enhanced the Chinese Navy's support and supply capabilities.

China is late in building up her Navy. In the early 1950's, what China took over from the KMT Navy was just old port facilities. There were only 13 berth points with a total wharf line of 4,312 meters. Most of them were in large cities and had simple and crude equipment. With the majority of them used by both the military and civilians, only a handful could be called naval bases. Certain data indicates that during the first three years of the 1950's, the Chinese Navy spent more than 20 percent of its military expenditures on construction projects. However, it was mainly used to repair the outdated facilities; the capacity to construct a big port was out of the question.

After 1956, the Chinese Navy's construction projects gradually began to be systematized, due to the fact that its construction force was getting stronger and stronger day by day. Then, the Chinese Navy set up five guidelines regarding the construction of bases as well as naval ports:

First, the berths of combat vessels should be widely scattered to prevent them from being attacked by atomic weapons. Yet there should be guaranteed flexibility to allow timely concentration of forces.

Second, the main bases should be constructed as a system with focal points, no part being too isolated.

Third, a base should not be a simple harbor. It should be a defensive nucleus with air defense, coastal defense, and ground defense.

Fourth, attention should be directed to the construction of simple and flexible bases. At the same time, key fixed bases and underground bases should be constructed.

Fifth, while naval bases are to be constructed, it is necessary to consider the use of commercial ports during time of war.

Under these guidelines, the overall arrangement of China's naval ports was as follows: A detachment was considered the basic unit for naval forces while constructing a base. A dadui was considered the basic unit while dispersed berth points were being constructed. During this period, the Chinese Navy's port construction was quite effective. But in principle, the focal point was still on coastal defense. It was rather conservative, because deep sea development was not in the program.

#### **"Build More Shelters" Was Mao Zedong's Instruction to the Navy**

In the mid 1960's, Mao Zedong instructed the Navy to "build more shelters." Since then, the Chinese Navy has concentrated on building large sheltered bases. The main installations of these bases are underground with good concealment and are also capable of withstanding atomic shock waves. But there was more construction work, and technical requirements were more complex. In the mid 1960's, the Chinese Navy consecutively started 26 such projects. For instance, the sheltered berth base started in June 1966 for the North Sea Fleet was a large base for

both submarines and torpedo boats. "Dig tunnels deep, store grain everywhere, and never seek hegemony" was Mao Zedong's famous saying at that time, when strategic considerations were closed, conservative, and non-aggressive.

During the Cultural Revolution when Lin Biao was in charge of the Central Military Commission, the guidelines concerning construction of China's naval bases lacked long-term planning and evolved into "mountains, dispersion, and tunnels." [shan, san, dong 1472 2414 3159] Many projects did not have enough justification and forethought. Equipment was not complete. Neither quality nor quantity was up to standards. All these factors greatly affected the speed of the Chinese Navy's development.

#### **The 1970's—Age of the Nuclear Submarines**

The Chinese Navy's ships did not have a marked development until the 1970's. Guided missile destroyers, nuclear submarines, escort ships, large deep sea supply ships, and deep sea scientific investigation ships entered into active service one after another. Therefore, constructing bases for large ships became a pressing task at that time.

#### **1984—Beginning of the Second Construction Phase**

In the mid 1970's, the first construction phase of China's first nuclear submarine base was completed. The second construction phase began in 1984. Yet the construction of the "number-one port in the Far East" formally started in January 1977.

#### **1024th Construction Area!**

It is said that construction of this large naval port was listed as a major national project once the construction started. In 1976, China's State Council and the Central Military Commission formally approved the construction project and set up a construction committee. The project's leaders were: chairman, Ma Zhongquan (deputy Navy commander) and vice chairmen, Tao Qi [7118 3823], Xiong Zuofang [3574 0155 5364], Duan Yi [3008 3015], and Zhao Jiangchuan [6392 3068 1557]. The project was named the 1024th Construction Area.

In order to build this project, the Chinese Communist military massed a large contingent of human resources. A total of 25,000 men, including four engineering regiments and four independent engineering battalions from the Navy, the Ministry of Communications' Ship Project Bureau, and local civilian laborers, participated in the construction project.

This imposing naval port is broad in scale. It is reported that in building the dike and pier, 203 caissons weighing 3,000 tons each and a larger number of caissons weighing less than 2,000 tons each were used. This port led other ports in China in the number of caissons used. The water in the port is deep enough for various large vessels to berth. In the port's land portion, there are row upon row

of buildings and a network of roads. All kinds of sheltered warehouses are everywhere in the mountains. There are all kinds of facilities on the pier including an open-air theater with a seating capacity of more than 7,000, a large military club, an educational building, an office building, a sports ground, a hospital, and an aircraft parking area.

The revelation of the news concerning China's biggest naval port attracted the attention of the military and industrial circles of such countries as the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Taiwan. As a matter of fact, this all symbolized that the Chinese Navy's base construction had entered another new phase!

#### **Appendix. Curriculum Vitae of Admiral Ma Zhongquan**

In 1918, Ma Zhongquan was born in Huang'an [7806 1344] (presently called Hongan [4767 1344]) County, Hubei Province. He joined the Red Army when he was young. During the Long March, he was under the command of the Fourth Front Army of the Red Army, which eventually joined forces in Yanan. Hongan, originally called Huang'an, located in the northeast of Hubei Province, was the old base area of the Chinese Communist revolution. In 1928, the Chinese Communists organized the Huang (An) Ma (City) riot here, before moving the base area to the Dabie Mountain area of Hubei, Henan, and Anhui Provinces, where the Fourth Front Army of the Red Army under the command of Xu Xiangqian, Li Xiannian, and the defector Zhang Guotao [1728 0948 3614] reigned. Several high ranking Chinese Communist generals, including Wang Shusheng [3769 2885 5116], Xu Shiyu, Zhou Chunquan [0719 4783 0356], Guo Tianmin [6751 1131 3046], Qin Jiwei, Chen Zaidao, Li Tianhuan [2621 1131 3562], Li Chengfang [2621 2052 5364], Wang Hongkun [3769 1347 0981], Zheng Weishan [6774 4850 1472], Zhou Xihan [0719 1585 3352], Zhan Caifang [6124 2088 5364], and Du Yide [2659 5030 1795], are natives of both Huang'an and Ma City, with more of them coming from Huang'an County. Ma Zhongquan is also one of them.

During the War of Resistance Against Japan, both the KMT and the Chinese Communists fought hand in hand against Japan. Ma Zhongquan was a regimental level cadre in the Eighth Route Army's Taixing [1132 5887] Military Area Command Battalion.

In 1947, the civil war between the KMT and the Chinese Communists resumed. Ma Zhongquan was a member of the main forces under Liu and Deng. In the same year, he became commander of the 8th Brigade (later the 8th Division), Third Column (under the command of General Chen Xilian), Central Plains Field Army (under the joint command of Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping).

At the end of 1948, Ma Zhongquan participated in the Huaihai Battle (to surround the KMT's Huanghuai [7806 3232] Army) at Shuangduiji [7175 1018 7162] and gained a total victory.

In 1949, Ma Zhongquan became the commander of the 32d Division (Ma Guansan was the deputy division commander), 11th Army (Zeng Shaoshan and Bao Xianzhi were the officers in charge), Second Field Army. He led his troops directly towards the north of the Changjiang and the southwest, participated in the river-crossing battle in April 1949 and the battle of Chongqing in Sichuan Province in December of the same year. Eventually his troops captured Chongqing.

In February 1950, Ma Zhongquan was concurrently the commander of Leshan [2867 1472] Military Sub-District in Sichuan Province.

In 1951, when the 32d Division was stationed in Shandong Province, Ma Zhongquan participated in the Korean War. Soon after, he was transferred to the Navy in the same way as Liu Huaqing and Ma Guansan.

In September 1955, Ma Zhongquan was promoted to rear admiral.

In 1957, Ma Zhongquan became the deputy commander of the Yellow Sea Fleet.

In 1961, he was transferred to become commander of the North Sea Fleet's Lushun Base.

After the Cultural Revolution, he became deputy commander of the Chinese Navy and was secretly in charge of the construction of China's biggest naval port, which was called by the code name, 1024th Construction Area.

#### **Chapter 10. The Influence of the Chinese Navy on the Masses**

##### **[Text] The Steep Gain in Stature of the Chinese Navy**

For historical reasons, the Chinese military has relied more on the Army, which was considered the elder brother of the armed forces. The Navy has always held the position of youngest brother. Aside from the fact that it took a huge expenditure to build it up, the Navy has a relatively short history and little achievement in battle to deserve as much attention as the Army gets. The Navy's moves have been considered mainly to support the Army in combat operations. And the Navy's rank as a service arm is only equal to one of the Army's military regions. However, following the opening up of China's coastal cities in the last ten years and the development of China's maritime enterprises, especially the outstanding achievement of the Chinese Navy in recent years, people both at home and abroad have begun to focus their attention on the Chinese Navy. Observers have noticed that during recent years, the Chinese news media coverage concerning the Navy has increased considerably, despite the fact that neither in quantity nor in scale can it be compared to the elder brother Army, which was involved in the border clash with Vietnam. Yet the moves the Chinese Navy makes often affect many crucial and sensitive issues. This kind of latent influence is quietly percolating down to the Chinese people.

### Beijing University's Intense Popular Interest in the Navy

Beijing University is the top ranking educational institute in China, most easily touched off by sensitive issues. In 1985, the Student National Defense Society was established in the university, with four research groups: the War Theory and Military History Research Group; Nuclear Strategy and Star Wars Research Group; Military Applications of Science and Technology Research Group; and Navy Group. It is reported that the Navy Group was the only group devoted to a military service established after university students and students of the graduate school who were members of the Student National Defense Society had repeatedly discussed the topic. Beijing University never has a lack of patriotic and hot-blooded young men. All sorts of feelings well up in their minds when they discover that the majority of China's contemporary invaders have come from the sea. They keenly feel that if China does not have a strong Navy, China cannot say she has a national defense. The university's students claim that China has an ultra-stabilized, closed system. Since the Ming Dynasty, the ban on maritime trade with foreign countries has caused China to lag far behind the western countries. In order to break away from this closed situation, it is necessary that China attach greater importance to exploiting the ocean. The ocean remains the only economic treasure that has not yet been fully exploited. There will be a life-and-death struggle over it. Therefore, a strong navy plays an important role in the country's economic construction. Following the development of the situation during recent years, we may predict that being the pioneers of Chinese student thinking, the university's students, with a passion for the Navy, may very well bring about an intense popular interest in the Navy in China.

It is reported that the university's Student National Defense Society has gained confirmation and support from the Chinese military authorities. China's military newspaper, JIEFANGJUN BAO, has praised the university students' concern about national defense construction many times. In 1986, a Navy expert from the highest military institute, the National Defense University, gave a presentation at Beijing University on "World Naval Development and the Current Situation of the Chinese Navy." Since distinguished personages and scholars often gave academic presentations at Beijing University, and even foreign presidents often would speak there, Beijing University, which did not give the said presentation serious consideration, assigned only a classroom with a capacity of some 200 seats. Unexpectedly the classroom was packed with students. In addition, many of them had to stand in the hallway to listen to the presentation. The Navy expert's presentation was a real eye-opener to the university students. At the end of the presentation, the students' feelings ran high. They either asked questions verbally or sent brief notes to the expert with their suggestions concerning the current situation of China's national defense.

### The Navy's Antiaircraft Artillery Division

In 1984, China's military authorities were preparing the big plan of reducing the military forces by one million men. It is reported that even though the military authorities had begun to give the Navy special consideration for a smaller proportion of reduction in force, in order to achieve the disarmament objective, a decision was made to cut a part of the Navy's logistics and antiaircraft artillery (AAA) units. Some naval officers had a different view. The Chinese Navy's AAA units had repeatedly distinguished themselves in action against the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam. Moreover, they are also effective in carrying out air defense along the coast, when China's ground-to-air guided missiles cannot fully meet requirements.

Coincidentally at that time, some Chinese military authorities proposed implementing the reserve service system used by western countries and the Soviet Union to make up for the defense vacancies resulting from the reduction in forces.

In 1984, the Chinese Navy's Shenyang Military Region commander, based on the approval from the General Staff Department, organized a reserve division for the Navy's AAA unit in Dalian, Liaoning Province. On 30 August of the same year, in Dalian's Stalin Square, Deputy Chief of the General Staff He Zhengwen [0149 2973 2429] personally gave a "1 August" military flag to the commander of the Navy's AAA Reserve Division. Three thousand five hundred reserve officers and men in uniform participated in the military review, surrounded by thousands of spectators. Afterwards, the Chinese government had this event broadcast as a major news item on television. This clearly increased the influence of the Chinese Navy among the people. According to the analysis of military observers, the initial implementation of the Navy reserve service system by the Chinese military authorities was not undertaken without prior consideration. During the founding of the country, Mao Zedong did suggest organizing a "navy capable of protecting both the river banks and the coast line." As a matter of fact, a considerable portion of the coastal defense then was under the command of the Army. Although the Navy took over part of it with its coastal defense units later on, the Army, with cooperation from the local militia, was still in command over the rest. After taking office as Navy commander, Liu Huaqing attempted to change the previous situation of having too many (military) ports with defense installations all along the coast by reorganizing the Navy into a crack, practical force capable of engaging in deep sea combat. The Navy's reserve force could be used to defend the coastal area, which has been rather safe during recent years.

It is reported that the Navy's AAA Reserve Division in Dalian belongs to the Chinese military organic order with a designation and a military flag. The reserve division has priority in selecting well-educated and well-trained demobilized soldiers. Officers above the battalion level must be on active duty. During war, this

reserve division will be switched to active duty in accordance with orders. The combat capacity of this Navy reserve division obviously will be stronger than that of the militia. Organizing this Navy reserve force along the coastal area reflects the new strategic considerations regarding utilization of the Navy by Chinese military authorities. Consideration number one is to maintain the Navy's combat mobilization capability while the reduction of forces is taking place. Consideration number two is to make the Chinese Navy organize ocean-going combat units and, at the same time, to rid itself of the "fear of disturbance in the rear" concerning coastal defense. This reserve service system is undoubtedly similar to that of western countries.

#### **The Navy Air Force Helped Civil Aviation Crush a Hijack Attempt**

A reliable source revealed that someone hijacked a civil aviation IL-14 departing Hangzhou, China, in 1984. The hijacker was a worker from China Civil Aviation. When the airplane was above Sanmenwan [0005 7024 3494], the hijacker, holding a Type 54 pistol, charged into the cockpit and forced the chief pilot to change course toward Taiwan. The chief pilot refused to do so. The hijacker shot and killed the chief pilot, before turning to the copilot. In order to protect the passengers' lives, the copilot could only follow the demand to change course toward the Taiwan Strait. At that time, the Chinese Navy's East Sea Air Force had already received the notice sent from the airfield in Hangzhou and had turned on its radar to closely monitor the flight. When the officials from the head office of China Civil Aviation requested help from the Navy, the Navy's senior level, which was paying the closest attention to the case, immediately instructed the East Sea Fleet Air Force to help the Civil Aviation flight return to the mainland at all costs.

It is reported that Navy Air Force pilots have to undergo very strict training. When the hijacked airplane was right above Taizhou [0669 1558] Bay, two top-notch pilots of the Chinese Navy's East Sea Aviation Corps got ready to take off in a very short period of time. It was reported that these two top-notch pilots took off in high-speed fighter planes in very vile weather. When they were looking for the hijacked Civil Aviation plane, several airplanes of unknown nationality and model suddenly came from the Taiwan Strait to intercept the Civil Aviation plane. The Chinese Navy's two top-notch pilots, not at all scared, charged toward the oncoming planes and assumed the position for mid-air combat. The pilots of the oncoming planes, who seemed to have been intimidated by the actions of the Chinese Navy planes, turned around and left. At that time, one of the Chinese Navy planes got to the right of the Civil Aviation plane, covered it, and kept watch on the latter's flight, while the other Chinese Navy plane waited closeby to fight. After the hijacker was killed by the flight crew, the two Chinese Navy planes guided the flight

copilot to land. Reportedly the copilot had to fly over the East Sea Fleet's airfield in Fujian Province six times before landing.

Later analysis by those concerned indicated that the planes of unknown nationality most probably were from the Taiwanese Air Force. The pilots of the Chinese Navy Air Force undoubtedly rendered outstanding service during this anti-hijack activity. They managed to take off within a very short time. They flew in vile weather. They took resolute actions to face down the enemy. All these things indicate that the Chinese Navy Air Force's combat capacity should not be underestimated. We cannot tell what the fate of the hijacked plane would have been without the coverage provided by the Chinese Navy Air Force. Although this incident was not disclosed domestically in China, people within China's Civil Aviation system were full of praise concerning the outstanding performance of the Chinese Navy Air Force during this hijack incident.

#### **Disturbances Caused by the Magazine OCTOBER**

In the second half of 1987, Chinese literary circles set off a craze for reportage. It was different from the previous one in that the subject matter was mainly important historical incidents, which aroused the attention of many domestic readers. Due to the fact that there were many restrictions observed by China's official news media, readers could learn more details only indirectly from the reportage. But reportage on military subjects was very rare. However, in 1987 one report on a military subject did give rise to a storm.

A reliable source revealed that OCTOBER, a well known literary magazine in Beijing, planned to publish by the end of 1987 a report entitled "The Chinese Navy's Nuclear Submarine." This report was to describe some happenings during the process of building the nuclear submarine in China. The magazine's editor, known to be sharp-sighted, did organize and publish many articles that evoked much repercussion domestically. It was learned that the magazine's editors understood thoroughly that the Chinese Navy most probably would become the center of the people's attention, because it was becoming more interesting and influential in national affairs. In an attempt to attract readers, they selected a loud and clear title, "The Chinese Navy's Nuclear Submarine," for the report and placed it in an eye-catching position. But when the magazine's issue No. 6 of 1987, which carried the said report, was finished printing, it caught the attention of the Chinese military authorities. One ranking military officer, who was rather sensitive to the article, instructed the Navy's concerned department to stop the publication of this report. According to what a Navy officer from Beijing said, the article, "The Chinese Navy's Nuclear Submarine," did not divulge any confidential information. But the higher level did not think it was appropriate to publish the article while the discussion of a medium-range missile agreement was going on between the United States and the Soviet Union.



### Probers Making Queries

The officers of the Chinese Navy discussed the issue with the officials of OCTOBER magazine, and they decided finally to destroy the printed issue. Since the author was an active duty Navy officer, the Navy had to pay an indemnity of thousands of RMB. It is reported that this incident caused a great shock in Beijing literary circles. Certain people indicated in private that they would not publish any articles concerning the Chinese Navy. This induced some probing authors to query the Navy about the issue.

In May 1988, a literary periodical in Nanjing, QINGCHUN [7230 2504 SPRING], published a long report entitled "The Surface Above Belongs to Another Country," which stated that a Chinese Navy submarine sailed deep into the territorial waters of country N and was blockaded by that country's mines. They were pinned down underwater for about 500 hours, and seven of her crew of 28 were killed. Finally, the submarine managed to get away with help from some industrialists and businessmen from both Taiwan and Hong Kong. It is learned that the Chinese Navy did not mention anything about it. According to someone who knew of it, the Chinese Navy's submarine did get blockaded in a certain harbor, but the details were quite different from what was published by the periodical QINGCHUN.

### The Work of the Former Chairman's Son-in-Law, Liu Yazhou, Has Not Yet Been Published

Those with access to the information disclosed that after the Sino-Vietnamese clash on 14 March 1988, the Chinese Navy did suggest to the Chinese Communist propaganda organization that China take appropriate action in telling all her people the actual situation, the important strategic meaning and the economic value of the Nansha Islands, since Vietnam gave wide publicity domestically to the issue of sovereign rights over the Nansha Islands.

After the 1959 Sino-Indian border clash, China's biggest border clash took place in 1979 with Vietnam. Chinese literary circles propagated the subject of this clash to a great extent, so that not only domestically, but also externally (in Hong Kong and Macao), people knew about it. One of the most representative works was military author Li Cunbao's [2621 1317 5508] creative work, "Wreath under the Mountain," which was made into a motion picture with the famous director Xie Jin [6200 2516] (it was renamed "Unknown Soldiers" when it was shown in Hong Kong). The film's main implication was to extol the selfless spirit of the Chinese soldiers. But its manifestation of Sino-Vietnamese relations was not much better than that of the "Naval Battles at the Xisha Islands." In the film, one actor's lines, "We gave them rice before, but now they turn around and attack us," were used to indicate the ideology of revenge or retribution for evil doing. It never touched the true meaning of the political warfare controlled only by the highest level figures. It is reported that in the beginning

of 1988, the former Chairman's son-in-law, Air Force writer Li Yazhou [0491 0068 3166], did plan to write a report on the problems of this clash. However, his work has not yet been published. It is thus clear that it is not an easy thing to even touch on what is behind this clash. As of today, China's domestic propaganda has given wide coverage to the Sino-Vietnamese border clash, including such works as "The Spirit of Mao Erdong," "Long Live the Understanding" and "Model Hero Reporting Group at the Front Line of Laoshan." This tendency has yet to decrease. In addition, citations given to the participating officers and men were usually signed by chairman of the Military Commission Deng Xiaoping. Yet no corresponding efforts were made in propaganda for the Chinese Navy officers and men, who had to undergo many hardships to give a severe blow to the Vietnamese forces on the Nansha Islands. Many men of insight could hardly understand it.

Hu Qili, the Chinese government official who was in charge of propaganda, recently proposed using the slogan "Enhance the national spirit." This indicates that not too long ago, the Chinese Communists were still immature in proposing the use of the Spirit of Laoshan to join in the reform. One Chinese naval officer said, "If we want to enhance the national spirit, both the truth about the Nansha Islands and the history of the development of the Chinese Navy during the last 100 plus years could easily tell where the problems were. When China recovers the Nansha Islands, the enhancement of the national spirit will be complete." It is reported that after the Sino-Vietnamese clash had taken place on 14 March, a CPC member proposed, in his letter to a party periodical, that each party member contribute money to the Chinese Navy to build an aircraft carrier for the recovery of the Nansha Islands. It is thus clear that the dispute over the Nansha Islands aroused the attention of a considerable number of people domestically.

The Chinese Navy has been actively involved in the problems of the Nansha Islands. It is reported that after the Sino-Vietnamese clash in the Nansha Islands took place on 14 March 1988, the Chinese Navy organized, under the personal supervision of the incumbent deputy secretary of the Military Commission Liu Huaqing, experts and scholars from various fields to study the issue of the Nansha Islands. Many high level officials also participated in the study. During the study, personalities of various circles keenly felt that it was a pressing and important issue, which involved the national interest. Obviously the Chinese Navy was attempting to push this issue to the high level of national strategy and interest. This was an unprecedented example in the Chinese military. As to the Sino-Vietnamese border clash, the participating Army officers and men and their higher level offices did not make an effort to study the purpose and characteristics of the clash academically.

### New Moves Involving the Issue of the Nansha Islands

Something worthy of our attention was that in July 1988, the Chinese military newspaper published an article

entitled "Long Live the National Interest," which cited the actual situation of the Nansha Islands as an example to explain that the armed forces should aim their service at the national interest. On 3 August of the same year, China's State Council and Central Military Commission jointly cited the Navy's officers and men in the Nansha Islands in a telegram. These two moves clearly indicated that China's higher level had paid ample attention to the Nansha Islands.

One reporter from the Chinese military newspaper JIEFANGJUN BAO gained considerable fame among his contemporaries for completing a report entitled "The Tangshan Earthquake." Recently the same reporter, who was studying the history of the development of the Chinese Navy in the past 100-some years, was contemplating writing a highly reminiscent report to tell the people about the importance of the ocean to the nation. Some news indicated clearly that on 1 October 1988, the Chinese military authorities held a public exhibit on the Nansha Islands. We may thus predict that once the clash in the Nansha Islands expands, people will switch their attention to the Chinese Navy and the Nansha Islands. It is also very probable that the Nansha Craze will replace the ongoing Laoshan Craze.

### **Chapter 11. The Inside Story on the Building of the Station on Yongshu Reef**

#### **[Text] Evaluation of an Unusual Congratulatory Telegram for Rendering Meritorious Service to the Nation Forever**

On 2 August 1988, China openly published the news of the completion of an ocean observation station on Yongshu Reef in the Nansha Islands, asserting that this was mandated by UNESCO. On the following day, China's State Council and the Central Military Commission jointly cited the Navy's officers and men working on Yongshu Reef in a telegram, which praised them for rendering meritorious service to the nation forever. According to the analysis made by the concerned military experts, Yongshu Reef would become China's most forward base for the recovery of the Nansha Islands. This base, built by the Chinese Navy with amazing speed, will undoubtedly be a dagger pointing at Vietnam.

#### **Looking for a Foothold**

In 1987, the Chinese Communists began to sense that the issue of the Nansha Islands could not be resolved through diplomatic measures alone. Between April and May 1987, the Chinese Navy's South Sea Fleet organized a flotilla to patrol the Nansha Islands, accompanied by the scientific inspection ship Xiangyang Hong 05 from China's National Oceanic Bureau. Inspectors of Xiangyang Hong 05 and Navy officers had inspected and surveyed both Yongshu Reef and Huayang [5478 7122] Reef, before setting up a cement sign indicating sovereignty on each. On 9 June 1987, the PEOPLE'S DAILY disclosed this news, without mentioning the establishment of an oceanic observation station or its location. This move was rather clever. Evidently, the inspectors

from the said Oceanic Bureau and Navy officers already had control of all the data concerning the two reefs; they used the data to justify the constructing of the project and the determination of combat terrain in their effort to find a solid foothold in the Nansha Islands for the Chinese Navy.

In October 1987, the Chinese Navy's East Sea Fleet dispatched a large flotilla to Nansha waters. At the same time, a Chinese Navy V350 electronic reconnaissance ship was also there examining Yongshu Reef, and it used the satellite localizer to fix positions. Inferences can be drawn that this time the Chinese Navy carried out a concrete survey of Yongshu Reef so as to have a good basis for setting up a base.

#### **China's Ship No. 552 Serves as a Dagger**

In early 1988, the Chinese Navy began the base construction on Yongshu Reef, where one of the East Sea Fleet's missile escorts—Ship No. 552—served as the first dagger.

After receiving the assignment, Ship No. 552 headed directly towards Yongshu Reef in spite of wind and wave. While the ship was approaching the waters close to Yongshu Reef, crew members were sent to land on the reef with a light boat. It is revealed that the Chinese Navy made a very quick move this time in reaching the reef more than 10 hours earlier than the Vietnamese, who were close at hand.

The following morning after the Chinese Navy's Ship No. 552 had arrived at Yongshu Reef, Vietnam's armed ship with construction workers and equipment showed up at a leisurely pace to find Ship No. 552 waiting respectfully. Facing a helmeted Chinese naval unit and 100-mm gun muzzles, the Vietnamese could not but follow instructions and leave the reef.

#### **China's Establishment of a Foothold on Yongshu Reef Surprises Vietnam**

As for China, from the inspection of Yongshu Reef to the dispatching of Ship No. 552 to stick a dagger in the reef, it was obviously well planned. Yet the Vietnamese never thought that the Chinese Navy would establish a permanent base there. Geographically, the reef was not the closest one to the Chinese mainland. On the contrary, it was surrounded by reefs occupied by Vietnam. The Chinese Navy had two reasons for selecting her foothold on this reef. The first was to take Vietnam by surprise. The second was to achieve the effect of "sticking a dagger into the enemy's heart." Actually, the latter was the kind of tactic frequently used by the Chinese Communists during ground combat before seizing state power.

#### **189 Days of Arduous Struggle**

After seizing Yongshu Reef, the Chinese Navy began construction in a big way. According to the news published by the Chinese Communists on 2 August 1988,

"The Navy officers and men who started the construction project on Yongshu Reef went through 189 days of arduous struggle in completing a rare man-made island."

During August 1988, the Chinese Communist news media made numerous reports on the heroic deeds regarding the establishment of the oceanic observation station on Yongshu Reef. It was reported that in the construction process China employed a tremendous amount of manpower and many engineering ships to overcome difficulties such as a lack of equipment and the hard life.

In April 1988, this writer had the opportunity to observe Yongshu Reef from above and afar. The reef had become 8,000 square meters of man-made land. Within two short months, the Chinese Navy's engineering unit demonstrated its efficiency and decisiveness in creating a huge piece of land by using the rocks dug up from the coral reef. A reporter from the Chinese military newspaper JIEFANGJUN BAO said while visiting the construction site on Yongshu Reef that the working conditions were very hard because the daytime temperature hovered around 50 degrees Celsius and more than 100 laborers had to crowd in one cabin to sleep at night.

It was reported that during construction, a Chinese Navy escort bumped into something and tore a big hole in its hull, but that the ship was repaired immediately. Further, during construction a few workers were injured, and one died. After the Sino-Vietnamese conflict had taken place on 14 March 1988, the Chinese Navy's officers and men who were participating in the construction obviously tried to increase their speed by working around the clock. All the officers set an example for the men in the work. Yulin Base deputy commander Xu Zhenzhong [1776 2182 1813], who was in charge of the project, often commanded the construction with his life jacket on. It was reported that this army-level officer was swept into the water several times by the waves. Without help from both the officers and men around him, he could have lost his life.

#### **Chen Mingshan Visits Yongshu Reef**

It was revealed that Chinese Navy deputy commander Chen Mingshan presided over the completion ceremony of the oceanic observation station on Yongshu Reef and that he paid high tribute to the Navy's officers and men who participated in the construction.

#### **The Urgent Task Gains Support from All Directions**

It was learned that during the process of constructing the oceanic observation station on Yongshu Reef, China's local engineering departments provided the Chinese Navy with enormous support. Shanghai's Rescue and Salvage Bureau also dispatched to the reef a jumbo diving lighter and crane barge, which could earn big money if used commercially. A person from the bureau said that for this project they gave up many profitable construction projects, both domestic and foreign. The bureau sent a batch of project technicians and divers to

take care of such tasks as hoisting, transporting, and placing the wharf caissons and prefabricated houses and blowing up the reefs underwater.

All the cement parts used to build up the station on Yongshu Reef were shipped over from the Chinese mainland. It was reported that one of the contractors in Guangdong Province had to have almost 100 workers working overtime to finish the cement parts. In building the station the Chinese Navy received support from more than ten provinces and cities.

#### **An Inside Look at the Base on Yongshu Reef**

According to reliable sources, the base on the reef now has a two-story building with separate rooms for radar operation, ocean observation, astronomy and meteorology, and the Navy's temporary command and communications. Not too far from the reef we could see that the construction of a house of 1,000 square meters, a temporary oil depot, and a reservoir was in progress. In addition, a 100-meter wharf was almost completed.

A foreign military expert said that the completion of the base on the reef by the Chinese Navy presented a big threat to the Vietnamese force in the Nansha Islands. The Chinese Navy could use the communications support facilities on the base to control the entire Nansha Islands.

#### **Huayang Reef as an Observation Post**

The southernmost reef among the Nansha Islands is Huayang Reef, where the Chinese Navy has stationed some troops to monitor the movements of the Vietnamese Navy in the vicinity of the islands, so as to safeguard the construction project on Yongshu Reef.

It was reported that at the time the Chinese Navy dispatched Ship No. 552 to seize Yongshu Reef, Missile Destroyer No. 162 and Engineering Ship No. 147 were also dispatched to the vicinity of Huayang Reef on 17 February 1988 to monitor the Vietnamese Navy. The Vietnamese Navy also had dispatched two mine sweepers to Huayang Reef. Ships from both sides were pitted against each other. Obviously both sides understood very well the importance of Huayang Reef.

According to reliable sources, the ships from both sides received similar orders on 18 February 1988 from their respective superior commands to race to seize Huayang Reef. A contest to seize an observation post had begun. The Chinese Navy's propeller-equipped boat beat the Vietnamese Navy's wooden rowboat. The officers and men from both sides stood facing each other on the reef for more than four hours. Since the Chinese officers and men were on the reef and their counterparts were in the water, the Vietnamese had to withdraw, because the firepower of the Chinese ships far exceeded that of the Vietnamese.

The Chinese Navy's rush to seize both reefs one after another indicated its decision to permanently station

forces in the Nansha Islands, laying the foundation for the recovery of the islands in the future. It is thus clear that the base on Yongshu Reef and the observation post on Huayang Reef will play an important role in future Chinese Communist moves for the recovery of the Nansha Islands.

## **Chapter 12. Getting Set for the Recovery of the Nansha by Force**

### **[Text] Building a Station on Yongshu Reef Is Preparation for Recovery by Force**

Since the 14 March Nansha clash between Vietnam and China in 1988, all signs clearly indicate that China is obviously considering force in achieving her major objective of recovering the Vietnamese-occupied islands. Geographically, the six reef islands currently occupied by China are like "nails" planted among the Vietnam-occupied islands, forming a very favorable position for China to recover the Vietnam-occupied islands by force. This indicates that China had been well prepared earlier when she dispatched ships to build a station in the Nansha Islands.

Among the islands occupied by China, Yongshu Reef is not the closest one to the Chinese mainland; in fact, it is very close to Vietnam. It is located in the western Nanshas, which are close to Vietnam. About 200 kilometers to the northeast of Yongshu Reef is Zhubi [6175 4310] Reef, which is occupied by the Chinese Navy. About the same distance to the east of Yongshu Reef are Chigua Reef, Nanxun [0589 5651] Reef, and Dongmen [2639 7024] Reef, which are occupied by the Chinese Navy. About 100 kilometers to the south of Yongshu Reef is Huayang Reef, also occupied by the Chinese Navy. These positions divide the Vietnamese-occupied islands into four pieces. In addition, they constitute a pincer attack formation against both the Jiuzhang [0046 4545] Reef group and the Yinqing [1438 1987] Reef group, where the Vietnamese Forces are concentrated.

### **Strategy of the Chinese Navy**

After the 14 March 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash, Vietnam did seize the opportunity to recapture several reefs. But if Vietnam intends to use them to check China's recovery of the Nansha Islands by force, it will not work because the Chinese Navy has already occupied Huayang Reef, located to the south of those islands occupied by Vietnam. This gives the Chinese Navy a greater depth to carry out the maneuvers of her ships and boats. The depth is so great that it could cover all Vietnamese-occupied islands. Since the current Vietnamese naval forces do not stand a chance in competing against China, the situation undoubtedly gives China a most favorable condition for recovering the Nansha Islands by force.

### **It Is Too Late for Vietnam To Stop China's Deployment From Taking Place**

Yongshu Reef is located at the "waist" of the western Nansha Islands. It is less than 200 kilometers away from both Nanwei (0589 1218) Island and Jinghong (2529 1347) Island, which were occupied by Vietnam in 1975 and have quite up-to-date military facilities at present. Once China decides to recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands by force, Yongshu Reef can be used not only as a temporary base for the supply of oil and water, but also to monitor the moves of the Vietnamese units on the said islands. This oceanic observation station is capable of providing China's naval vessels with information on the approach of Vietnamese aircraft, should the Chinese Navy choose to install soon an air defense system on Yongshu Reef. Since the Chinese Navy was the first one to have landed on Yongshu Reef and since they worked tenaciously for a total of 189 days at an alarming speed in building a rare man-made island, China has obviously planned well ahead of time for her attempt to recover the Vietnamese-occupied Nansha Islands by force. In view of the current situation, it looks as if it is rather late for Vietnam to stop China's moves in trying to recover the Nansha Islands by force.

### **The Combat Area for Chinese Communist Attempts To Recover the Nansha by Force in Near Future**

After the 14 March Sino-Vietnamese clash, the Vietnamese Navy never attempted to get even with the Chinese Navy. But following the Chinese Navy's frequent activities in the Nansha and the moves to expedite the base buildup there, it is very difficult to predict that Vietnam will not engage in armed harassment and terrorist activities against the Chinese Navy. Should Vietnam once take such actions, it could very well turn out to be the catalyst for China to make up her mind to recklessly start her move to recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands by force in the near future.

### **Cutting Off Vietnam's Communications by Electronic Interference**

In view of the geographical position of the islands currently occupied by both sides, China must adopt the simple, practical, and traditional tactics of "concentrating a superior force to destroy the enemy one by one," if it intends to recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands by force in the near future. Military experts have pointed out that at first the Chinese Navy might dispatch a certain number of ships and submarines to block off the support route between Vietnam and Nanwei Island, the closest island to Vietnam, and between Nanwei Island and Jinghong Island. In addition, the Chinese Navy would adopt electronic interference, a measure that proved very effective during the Sino-Vietnamese border clash, to cut off communications between the Nansha Islands and the Vietnamese mainland, so that there would be no reinforcement from the Vietnamese Air Force. Then, the Chinese Navy would need only the 130-mm guns from one or two Luda-class missile destroyers to destroy the Vietnamese defense positions

on Jinghong Island. After capturing Jinghong Island, all Vietnamese-occupied reefs to the north of Chigua Reef would collapse by themselves.

#### Secure Tactic of Consolidating at Every Step

According to the current strength of the Chinese Navy, although it is possible to recover all the Vietnamese-occupied islands in the near future, defending the recovered islands would become a serious problem. Apart from the threat of attack from the Vietnamese Air Force, just the sending of personnel and supplies to these 20 some islands will be a task too difficult for the Chinese Navy's logistics support system to manage. However, it is still very possible for China to partially recover the Nansha Islands by force in the near future. According to the geographical position of the islands occupied by both sides, all Vietnamese-occupied islands north of Chigua Reef are surrounded by Chinese-occupied islands, the Chinese mainland, and the Xisha Islands. Therefore, if China decides to use force in the near future, partial recovery is not impossible. The Chinese military has "never fought a battle without being properly prepared," therefore, if the Vietnamese military suddenly engaged in harassing and terrorist activities, the Chinese Navy would be well prepared to fight a battle of quick decision to recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs to the north of Chigua Reef. Then, China would act the same as she did after the 14 March 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash in the Nansha Islands in "being willing to discuss the incident as it stands." At the same time, China would assume a posture of unwillingness to fight a full-scale war, but would be interested in negotiating with Vietnam through diplomatic channels. The Vietnamese Navy, in awe of the powerful Chinese submarines, would not send its ships out without careful consideration, while the Vietnamese Air Force, with problems in both training and equipment, would not dispatch aircraft hastily in the near future. Thus, success is in sight if China attempts to recover part of the Vietnamese-occupied Nansha Islands by force.

#### Improvement in the Quality of the Chinese Navy's Officers and Men

The result of the 14 March Nansha clash indicated that the quality of the Chinese Navy's officers and men is much better than it was during the Sino-Vietnamese naval battle in the Xisha. Chinese Navy gunners are very accurate. The officers and men are no longer intimidated during close combat; they have become very valiant. It can be predicted that if the Chinese Navy should start to attack and recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands, her moves will be very swift, and the fight will be just as "neat and tidy" as the 14 March clash.

#### Chinese Navy Troop Disposition

One U.S. military observer pointed out that since the Chinese military most recently specifically emphasized joint operations, if China decides to recover the Vietnamese-occupied Nansha Islands by force in the near

future, the Chinese Communist main force would consist of branches from the Navy. The submarine force would be in charge of blockading, reconnaissance, and transport of personnel. Destroyers and frigates would be in charge of fire support, security, air defense, transport of personnel, and blockading. Navy Aviation would be in charge of reconnaissance and bombarding the Vietnamese-occupied islands and Vietnamese ships. The Marine Brigade would be the Dagger Force for landing operations.

According to this expert's estimate, in recovering the Vietnamese-occupied islands to the south of Chigua Reef, the military strength available to the Chinese Navy is as follows:

- Luda-class missile destroyers: 4
- Jianghu-class missile frigates: 7
- Changsha-class surface-to-air missile frigates: 2
- Hainan-class submarine hunters: 5
- Han-class nuclear attack submarines: 1
- Romeo-class conventional submarines: 10
- Landing ships: 3
- Support ships: 3
- Fuel and water suppliers: 3
- Electronic reconnaissance ships: 1
- Hospital ships: 1
- Landing craft and rubber boats: 30
- Fighter aircraft: 20
- Marine Brigade officers and men: 600

It is estimated that a deputy commander of the Chinese Navy would be in charge of the ground command, while a commander of either the East Sea Fleet or the South Sea Fleet would be in charge of the surface front line command.

#### Disposition of Surface Vessels

There will be six combat groups consisting of surface vessels including destroyers, frigates, submarine hunters, landing ships, fuel and water suppliers, support ships, and electronic reconnaissance ships. The First Combat Group will consist of one to two Luda-class missile destroyers, one to two Jianghu-class missile frigates, one Changsha-class surface-to-air missile frigate, three Hainan-class submarine hunters, one landing craft, and 25 small landing boats or rubber boats. Its major task is to set up a base on Nanxun [0589 5651] Reef to capture Jinghong Island, Guihan [7607 0815] Reef, Dapao [2192 4276] Reef, Hongma [7703 7802] Island, Bolan [5306 5695] Reef, and Dunqian [2415 6197] Shoal. The Second Combat Group will consist of two missile escorts, one surface-to-air missile escort, two submarine hunters, one landing ship, and five landing craft or rubber boats. Its major task will be to capture Nanzi [0589 1311] Island and Nailuo [1143 5012] Reef.

The other four combat groups are in charge of such tasks as security, blockading, interference, and support. In the vicinity of Yongshu Reef there are one missile destroyer, one to two missile frigates, one electronic reconnaissance ship, one support ship, and one hospital ship. In the

vicinity of Huayang Reef there are one to two missile frigates and one electronic reconnaissance ship. Between the Xisha Islands and the Nansha Islands there are one missile destroyer, one to two missile frigates, one support ship, and two fuel and water suppliers. At the exit of the Gulf of Tonkin there are one missile destroyer, three missile frigates, one support ship, and one fuel and water supplier.

#### **Disposition of Submarines**

The submarine force will be divided into four combat groups to blockade the waters in the vicinity of the Nansha Islands. The First Combat Group, consisting of three Romeo-class conventional submarines, is in charge of blockading the waters between Yongshu Reef and Nanzi Island. The Second Combat Group, consisting of two Romeo-class conventional submarines, is in charge of blockading the waters between the Yongshu Reef and Nanwei Island. The Third Combat Group, consisting of five Romeo-class conventional submarines, is in charge of blockading the waters to the south of Nanwei Island. The Fourth Combat Group, consisting of one Han-class nuclear submarine, will cruise in the vicinity of Vietnam's major naval ports to monitor the movements of the ships of the Vietnamese Navy along the Vietnamese mainland.

#### **Disposition of Navy Aviation**

China's Navy Air Force will be divided into two combat groups. The First Combat Group, consisting of five fighters and five bombers, will blockade the ships of the Vietnamese Navy leaving from Haiphong. The Second Combat Group, consisting of 10 medium-range bombers, will coordinate with ships and landing units in capturing Nanzi Island and Jinghong Island.

#### **Disposition of the Marine Brigade**

It is estimated China's Marine Brigade will send out 60 [sic, probably 600, see previous section on Chinese Navy Troop Disposition] officers and men in eight combat groups. They will be shipped to the combat zone by a landing ship, before they board the landing craft and rubber boats to capture the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs. With the exception of the two combat groups assigned to capture Jinghong Island and Nanzi Island, which consist of 120 men each, the other six combat groups consist of 60 men each.

#### **Combat Time and Method—the Opportunity Is in the Spring**

Since the Chinese Navy has the upper hand over the Vietnamese Navy in the Nansha, recovery operations will certainly take place in daytime during the season when there will be no typhoons. In view of the weather changes in the South China Sea, it is very probable that the Chinese Navy will launch its recovery operation in the spring.

If the Chinese Communists decide to recover part of the Vietnamese-occupied islands (islands north of Chigua Reef) by force in the near future, a sudden and violent attack will most likely be used. Since the 1988 14 March clash, Chinese Navy ships have maintained frequent activities in Nansha waters. The Chinese ships have also often patrolled the Nansha Islands. Although Vietnam's defending forces are on the alert, it is still very difficult to tell when the attack is going to take place. A western military expert has commented, "The Chinese ships have the most powerful close-range firepower in the world." Actually, THE WORLD ALMANAC OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS and THE WORLD ALMANAC OF FIGHTING SHIPS have proved this point. A Luda-class missile destroyer has four 130-mm guns and four 57-mm guns. A Jianghu-class missile frigate has two 100-mm guns and twelve 37-mm guns. With firepower such as this, obviously the Chinese Navy has the capacity to launch an assault on a small place such as the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs. If the Chinese Navy's ships use all their guns to bombard the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs, it will take only a few minutes to destroy the defense positions. Then, the Marine Brigade may accomplish the landing operation immediately.

#### **Analysis of the Recovery of All Vietnamese-Occupied Islands by Force**

When the situation in the Nansha Islands was tense, western military experts unanimously felt that "air cover" and "permanent stationing of troops" were two difficult problems the Chinese Navy would have to face if it intended to fully control the Nansha Islands. The completion of the base on Yongshu Reef indicated that the Chinese Navy had established the technique and support capacity for the permanent stationing of troops in the Nansha Islands. "Air cover" seems to be the only tough nut left for the Chinese military to crack in the near future. Once the Chinese Communists have completed building or have bought an aircraft carrier, refueling aircraft, and long-range fighters, the complete recovery of the Vietnamese-occupied islands in the Nanshas will become an easy job. Since the Chinese Navy will face many difficulties in obtaining this equipment in the near future, no affirmative answer concerning the total recovery of the Vietnamese-occupied Nansha Islands in the near future can be made.

In fact, it is not impossible for the Chinese Navy to fully recover the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs in the near future with its present strength. Yet it still will be limited by other factors. If the Chinese Navy plans to recover all Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs in the Nansha Islands overnight, it must use a lot of troops. This will cause the early exposure of the move and allow the Vietnamese Air Force to wait at ease for the exhausted enemy. Even if China could do it in a very short period of time, it still would need to keep a considerable amount of troops there to defend the place. This would lead to a long-lasting war of attrition. This is not what China would like to happen.

If the Chinese Communists intend to recover all of the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs in the Nansha Islands, they have to be driven "beyond tolerance." But prior to resorting to arms, China most likely would try to mediate with the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels to ensure that the Soviet Union would not provide the Vietnamese Air Force with assistance. In addition, she might try to use Taiwan's troops on Taiping Island to stabilize ASEAN's Malaysia and the Philippines. Should all above-mentioned conditions begin to materialize, China would not lose the opportunity to capture the Vietnamese-occupied islands and reefs.

### **Armed Blockading**

One of the measures the Chinese Communists may use is to blockade the Nansha Islands by force, so that the defending Vietnamese troops will collapse by themselves. There are approximately 600 kilometers between the Nansha Islands and the closest port on the Vietnamese mainland. Because of a shortage in basic food resources, it is necessary for Vietnam to dispatch ships periodically to transport supplies to its air force troops stationed there. Otherwise, there is no way its air force can survive. If, at an appropriate time, China should adopt the method the United Kingdom used in 1982 with the Malvinas Islands of announcing a 200 nautical mile off-limits zone around the Nansha Islands, it would place Vietnam in a passive position.

The most recent news reveals that not too long ago a Chinese Navy Han-class nuclear attack submarine was carrying out diving, high speed cruising, and torpedo launching tests in the South China Sea. The Chinese Navy currently has at least three Han-class nuclear submarines. Together with the great number of conventional submarines, they have enough strength to blockade the ports in both the Nansha Islands and Vietnam. The Vietnamese Navy's antisubmarine strength is weak, therefore it does not constitute a threat to the Chinese Navy. Thus, it will not cost China a single shot in causing the defending Vietnamese troops in the Nansha Islands to lose their combat effectiveness and in forcing them to make concessions.

The Chinese Communists may face some international protests if they decide to blockade the Nansha Islands by force. First, they have to have approval from both the Philippines and Malaysia. Then they must reach a tacit understanding with Taiwan. They have to assure the others that their submarines will limit their attacks to Vietnamese ships. There are many international routes in the Nansha waters, therefore China still has to guarantee safe passage for other countries' ships. The biggest obstacle China will have to face in the armed blockading of the Nanshas is the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has more than 30 ships stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. If the Soviet Navy is going to escort the Vietnamese ships, the Chinese Navy's submarines will find it difficult to approach the Vietnamese ships.

### **Cooperation From the Ground Forces**

If China's move to recover the Nansha Islands should develop into a permanent war of attrition, her strong Army would not "regard it as unimportant." The 1979 Sino-Vietnamese border clash proved that the Vietnamese Army could not withstand the Chinese Army's fierce offensive. Once the Chinese Navy encounters resistance in the Nansha Islands, the Army would very probably launch a land attack against Vietnam so as to pin down the Vietnamese forces. This would cause the Sino-Vietnamese border clash to go on indefinitely. If the Chinese Communists decide to recover the Nansha Islands before Vietnam withdraws her troops from Cambodia, the situation of the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict will change.

### **Moves of the Marine Brigade**

In May 1988, China disclosed that it was going to establish a scientific inspection station in the Nansha Islands. Although China did not reveal any details concerning the troops defending the reef, the published snapshot indicated that the troops would come from the Fist Force, or the Chinese Navy's Marine Brigade mentioned recently by Zhao Ziyang.

It was learned that this unit is well trained and well equipped. It is quick to react, to deploy, and to fight. This unit is very anxious to engage in combat operations. Whenever someone meets its officers and men in the rear, they will tell him firmly, "We want very much to go to war." But what was reported in China indicated that the unit had gone through a lot of hardship in the Nansha Islands. Just a handful of men had to guard the so-called "elevated house" above the sea water thousands of kilometers away from the mainland. One can imagine the hardship. To face hardship is one of the problems, but the biggest threat is attack by the Vietnamese.

During the Sino-Vietnamese border clash, the Vietnamese troops often adopted guerrilla warfare tactics using small fendui to launch surprise attacks. A Chinese military expert once said, "The Chinese taught the Vietnamese the guerrilla warfare invented by Mao Zedong, and eventually, the Vietnamese used it to deal with the Chinese." In view of the current military situation in the Nansha, it is impossible for the Chinese fleet to be stationed in Nansha waters permanently. Yet Vietnam has the advantage of maintaining its troops in the Nansha Islands. Besides, it has occupied many islands, covering a much wider area. Its troops stationed on its occupied islands outnumber the Chinese troops defending the Chinese-occupied reefs by at least one battalion. So long as the Chinese Navy's ships are cruising among the occupied islands and reefs, the Vietnamese Navy is not going to dispatch its ships to harass those islands and reefs. But no one is going to guarantee that the Vietnamese are not going to use the same tactics over the sea as they used over the land.

In the Gulf area, Iran often tried to avoid the big U.S. naval ships by using small unflagged boats to launch



surprise attacks on passing tankers. This method of pursuing terrorist activities on the seas was invented by the countries that did not have a strong navy. The Vietnamese know perfectly well that allowing China to have a foothold in the Nansha Islands is not going to do them any good. The lesson of the 1988 14 March clash will teach the Vietnamese Navy not to act rashly in confronting the Chinese Navy. But other signs clearly indicate that Vietnam may send a small fendui to launch surprise attacks against the Chinese officers and men who are defending the reefs when the Chinese ships are

not close by. If Vietnam should do that without giving itself away, it would definitely deny everything. Thus, the Chinese side will certainly be in the passive position. It is reported that since the 14 March clash, the Chinese Navy's ships have kept a close watch over the occupied islands and reefs. The defending officers and men from the Marine Brigade have also continuously practiced their marksmanship and fighting skills. This indicates that the Chinese Navy has taken extra measures against possible terrorist activities at sea, which Vietnam may assume to be acts of revenge.

NTIS does not permit return of items for credit or refund. A replacement will be provided if an error is made in filling your order, if the item was received in damaged condition, or if the item is defective.

*Reproduced by NTIS  
National Technical Information Service  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Springfield, VA 22161*

**This report was printed specifically for your order from our collection of more than 2 million technical reports.**

For economy and efficiency, NTIS does not maintain stock of its vast collection of technical reports. Rather, most documents are printed for each order. Your copy is the best possible reproduction available from our master archive. If you have any questions concerning this document or any order you placed with NTIS, please call our Customer Services Department at (703)487-4660.

Always think of NTIS when you want:

- Access to the technical, scientific, and engineering results generated by the ongoing multibillion dollar R&D program of the U.S. Government.
- R&D results from Japan, West Germany, Great Britain, and some 20 other countries, most of it reported in English.

NTIS also operates two centers that can provide you with valuable information:

- The Federal Computer Products Center - offers software and datafiles produced by Federal agencies.
- The Center for the Utilization of Federal Technology - gives you access to the best of Federal technologies and laboratory resources.

For more information about NTIS, send for our *FREE NTIS Products and Services Catalog* which describes how you can access this U.S. and foreign Government technology. Call (703)487-4650 or send this sheet to NTIS, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, VA 22161. Ask for catalog, PR-827.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

*- Your Source to U.S. and Foreign Government  
Research and Technology.*