

Europeans Doubt

By Kingsbury Smith

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ROME — Red China is unlikely to risk war with the United States over the present American military move into Cambodia, despite Peking's angry words and threats.

Such is the gist of British and French diplomatic reports from Peking, which express doubt that the Chinese Communist regime will resort to any massive military intervention in Indochina in answer to President Nixon's decision to send American troops into Cambodia.

However, China is expected to increase its military aid to the North Vietnamese and other Communist forces in Indochina, and Peking may call a halt to secret diplomatic talks with the United States which were resumed in Warsaw early this year.

If the new American war effort eventually threatened the security of North Vietnam, or if American troops moved through Cambodia to northern areas of Laos, thus approaching China's southern border, Chinese Communists would, the European Asiatic experts believe, intervene just as they did in Korea.

Short of such a threat to China's own security, it is doubted that Peking will send any large number of troops into Indochina.

Fear of American nuclear power and doubt that China could rely on Russia to honor a Sino-Soviet military alliance is believed likely to curb any reckless move by Peking.

Johnson Warning

Former President Johnson let Peking know that if it intervened massively in the Vietnam conflict, he would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons. Presumably President Nixon has reaffirmed this warning.

Johnson also assured Peking that if it did not inter-

vene directly in Vietnam, the United States would not attack Red China. President Nixon was, in effect, reassuring Peking on this point when he said American actions in Cambodia "are in no way directed at security interests of any nation."

While Peking has in the past offered to send Chinese troops into Vietnam if Hanoi requested it, and has repeatedly promised Communist China's 700 million people will "resolutely support" the Vietnamese Communist struggle until "final victory" is achieved, Mao Tse-tung has to date pursued a very cautious policy towards the American military presence in Southeast Asia.

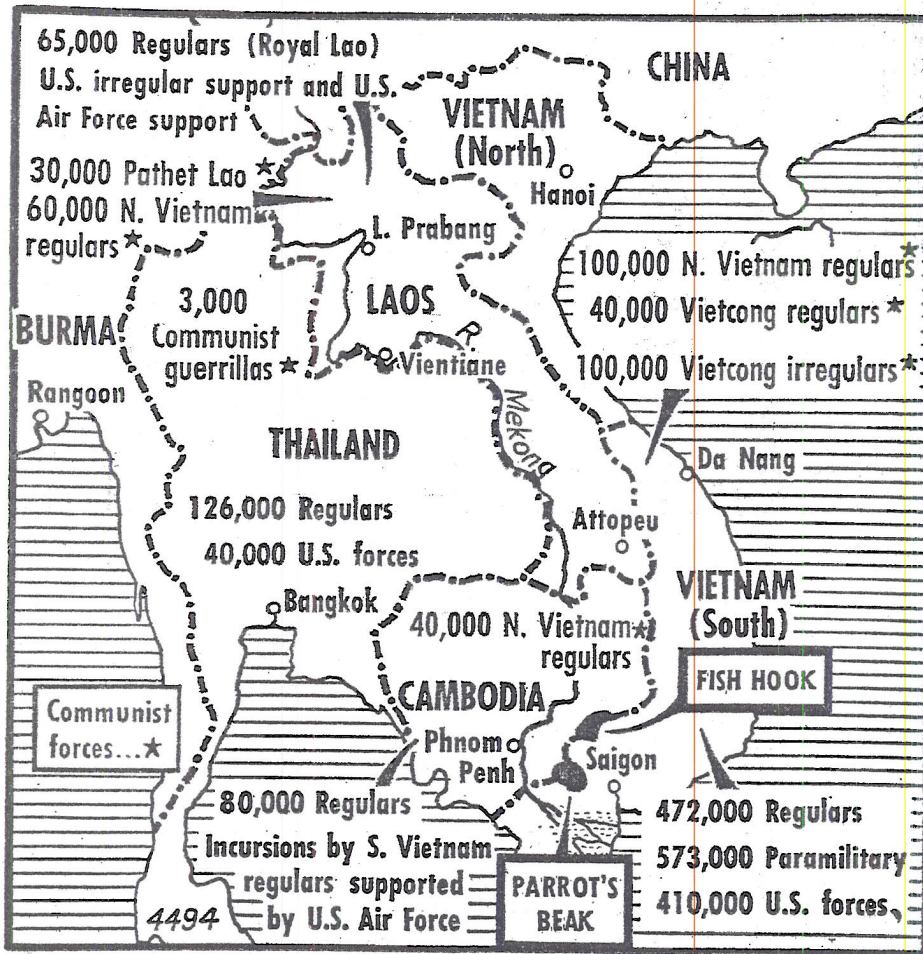
A recent report of the British Institute of Strategic Studies, points out that all available evidence shows the Chinese Communist leaders have been keenly aware of the importance of nuclear weapons and of the possibility the United States might use them.

Specific Threat

Recalling that President Eisenhower used a nuclear threat to end the Korean War, and Secretary of State Dulles later threatened use of tactical nuclear weapons against China during the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1954-55, the BISS report said:

"They (the Chinese Communists) have had, after all, the highly educative experi-

China War Threats



Comparative strength of forces in Indochina

—Times of London Map

ence of being threatened with them (nuclear weapons), not in the general sense in which we all live under a nuclear threat, but quite specifically.

“They do not want a head-on clash with the imperialists. They are fully aware of the destructive power of nuclear weapons.”

Thus, while Red China will undoubtedly continue urging North Vietnam and new pro-Communist united front forces in Indochina to fight on, and will help them to do

so with increased military and economic aid, Peking is not expected to risk direct military intervention, espe-

cially now that President Nixon has shown that he will not hesitate to fight when pushed too far.