

approaches of the Soviet Union and the P.R.C. to this crisis situation coincide.”

The Muslims of Asia are a key reason why the Soviet and Chinese approaches coincide. The massive unrest in the Soviet Central Asian republics in 1989-90 was followed by an armed rebellion by Turkic-speaking Uighurs in China's Xinjiang province in April 1990. The revolt, in which hundreds must have been killed, considering the extent of the Chinese crackdown since, was a key item on the agenda when Li Peng was in Moscow in April 1990.

Xinjiang is one of the most strategically sensitive regions of China. Besides being one of the world's richest regions in mineral resources—including unexplored oil reserves—Xinjiang borders the Soviet Union, India, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It is also the center of the Lanzhou military region, China's strongest in both non-conventional and nuclear strategic terms. Lanzhou is the site of China's major defense industries, including aircraft, national defense research, and the base of China's main force of the strategic guided missile troops.

Disturbances in this region—which was only finally occupied by Beijing in 1949—is not something China would take lightly.

Empire building

For all the rhetoric about peace and rapprochement, there is no change of heart in Beijing. Since the Gulf crisis came to a head, the P.R.C. has made one move after another to assert its own imperial power, unhindered by any Western objections.

On Jan. 10, Foreign Ministry spokesman Li Zhaoxing unilaterally announced that China is taking control of the city of Hong Kong—six years before it is officially ceded to Beijing by the British. “China is handling Hong Kong's status within international organizations,” Li said. Five days later, the head of the Chinese delegation to talks with the British colonial authorities in Hong Kong on a project to build a new airport and other infrastructure, asserted that China would veto the project if all its conditions were not met. “Only the central People's government can speak for the people of Hong Kong,” Luo Jiahuan said. “If the Chinese side does not speak, who will? If the Chinese government doesn't get involved, who will? Surely not the government of the United Kingdom.” However, Her Majesty's Forces, now enmired in the Gulf, are not being deployed to bomb Beijing.

China is also making a show of force against Taiwan, including staging airborne maneuvers right across from the Taiwan-held island of Quemoy over the Jan. 19-20 weekend. Leave was canceled for Taiwan soldiers, and the Army is on alert. In addition, Beijing's naval command announced Jan. 10 that China's first aircraft carrier fleet is now operating. This will enable the P.R.C. to step up its military threat in the oil-rich Spratley Islands in the South China Sea, where Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, and the Philippines also have claims.

Taiwan leaders fear invasion by P.R.C.

by Lydia Cherry

Will the People's Republic of China take advantage of George Bush's Persian Gulf war to militarily impose its regime on Taiwan? This is the question raised by Beijing's menacing tone toward Taiwan since the Gulf crisis began. Some leaders in Taiwan think that Communist China may have been given a green light to do this, in reward for the P.R.C. not voting against the U.N. Security Council resolution supporting a U.S.-led war, sources report.

The Taiwan government is expecting the worst. Before Bush's genocidal bombing began, on Jan. 14, the government of the Republic of China readied itself by putting its Armed Forces on full alert “in order to safeguard the security of the Taiwan Strait,” Taipei Domestic Service reported.

Beijing had given indications it might use the crisis to go after Taiwan a month earlier, when Chinese Communist Party (CPC) Central Committee President Chien Wei Chang announced that if Taiwan would not open negotiations regarding the unification of the two Chinas, then Beijing would consider “accelerating” the unification process by military action.

The pro-Beijing Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po* also indicated that the Central Committee had taken a resolution to resolve the Taiwan question, asserting that the mainland's “stable situation” and “thorough development of reform” were conducive to resolving the problem of two Chinas. Taiwan alone bears responsibility for the division of China, the Central Committee stated, because it insists upon its demands that the Communist Party practice democracy and adopt a free economic system, that it give up force as an option for resolving the conflict, and that it restrain from obstructing Taiwan's foreign policy. The Hong Kong daily *Ming Bao* pointed out that the Persian Gulf war has “enlightened” the P.R.C. regime that a military solution may be the best way to “force” the opposing side into negotiations. As if to corroborate that report, in late December, the P.R.C. Air Force held a military maneuver in the Canton district, at the southern tip of the Formosa Straits.

The P.R.C. press is making an effort to show that Taiwan is seeking to overthrow the Beijing government. For example, on Dec. 29, the P.R.C. announced the arrests of several members of a group allegedly plotting to “overthrow the leadership of the CPC and subvert the socialist system.” The Kunming, Yunnan Provincial News Service reported that the group had “crossed over to Burma illegally to throw in their lot with the KMT [Taiwan's Kuomintang] secret service.” The press claimed that Taiwan had organized the group and appointed its leaders in Shanghai and Yunnan Province.