

communists wisely did not attempt to interfere with these operations. Their completion without warlike incident does show at least that hostilities can be avoided in operations of this kind if restraint is exercised on both sides.

There is naturally much concern in all our minds - and that concern has been voiced in the House - as to what the Chinese communists have in mind regarding Formosa and those few coastal islands which still remain in the hands of the Chinese nationalists. It is devoutly to be hoped that the Chinese communists do not, by the use of force, renew the war over those islands, the consequences of which might spread further. Yet their words do not give us much comfort in this regard, if we are to judge their future actions by their past words.

It has been argued, especially by some of our Asian friends, that the leaders of the Peking Government are inspired more by Chinese than by communist aspirations; more by the desire to work out a national revolution than to precipitate an international one by interference in the affairs of their neighbours. True, they have embarked - that is the Peking government - upon an enormous programme of industrial and agricultural development, and it would seem foolhardy for them to risk all this in military adventures. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to count upon the wisdom or restraint of a regime of this kind. The combination of national revolutionary fervour with the messianic delusions of communist ideology have in the past and can in the future prove dangerous. The Chinese communists may not be intent upon a career of Asian aggression and expansion, but their determination to pursue what they claim to be their legitimate interests has already led them to ignore the legitimate interests and security of other peoples, and may do so again. And that possibility certainly contains a serious threat to peace.

And so we cannot ignore in this connection the communist intention, loudly and frequently proclaimed, to attack and occupy Formosa and the islands. We can, however, having regard to declared United States policy to help in the defence of Formosa, retain strong doubts about their capacity to achieve this objective in the near future by any direct assault. To maintain an amphibious or airborne attack 100 miles across the Formosa straits would be a hazardous operation for a land power like communist China and would certainly strain its as yet limited resources, much more than did the operations in Korea.

The Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford, was asked in an interview a few weeks ago what he thought of the Chinese communists' ability to carry out their threat to, as they put it, liberate Formosa. Admiral Radford's reply was:

"They cannot do it at this time. They just do not have the military capability to carry out an amphibious operation of the scale required, particularly in view of the announced United States position and the immediate availability of United States naval and air forces to counter such an operation."