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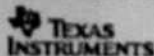
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## U.S. Navy responds to Chinese operations

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. (AP) — China's complex military maneuvers are essentially a dry run for an operation to gain control of the air and seas around Taiwan, the top U.S. military officer said Tuesday.

Gen. John Shalikashvili also said a possibility exists that miscalculation by either side could lead to actual conflict.

But Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told The Associated Press the Chinese operation, which began last week with missile test firings, was "most probably designed to be just an exercise."

Hours later, a U.S. guided missile cruiser, the USS Bunker Hill, steaming south of Taiwan, monitored another Chinese missile test into a landing zone southwest of Taiwan. The firing of the unarmed M-9 medium-range missile broke a four-day hiatus of missile launchings. Last Friday, the Chinese military launched three M-9s in test firings. Those missiles also carried no warheads.

At the White House, spokesman James Fetting called the latest missile test "reckless" and "provocative." He said China's government has told the United States it intends to fire several additional missiles during the course of the exercise.

"We expect them to continue through the Taiwanese elections on March 23," Fetting said. He said President Clinton had been informed of the new test while aboard Air Force One en route to the Middle East for a summit meeting on terrorism.

Dressed in camouflage battle fatigues, Shalikashvili reviewed military exercises by Marines at Camp Lejeune on Tuesday as China's military launched war games off Taiwan's coast, and the island's government threatened to destroy any attackers.

Shalikashvili said the Chinese are demonstrating the versatility of their military by combining air, sea and amphibious movements. "It's as complex or more complex than any they had done before," he said.

He said they were demonstrat-

ing how they would "go through the stages of gaining air superiority and control of the seas."

As the Chinese exercises pick up steam, the Pentagon is mounting an unmistakable show of force by adding a second aircraft carrier battle group to one already deployed off the coast of Taiwan.

"Those are very important signals to the Chinese that we hope the situation will return back to normal very soon," Shalikashvili said.

The Chinese have told U.S. officials that the United States has nothing to fear from the exercises.

A State Department spokesman begged to differ.

"You know we're concerned, on one level — call it the macro level — about the fact that these exercises are meant for political purposes, to intimidate Taiwan," the State Department's Glyn Davies said.

"You know, I mean, ordnance can go astray. There's shipping in that area, very important commercial shipping. There are 21 million people on the island of Taiwan. We're very concerned, obviously, that there be no accidents."

Davies said U.S. officials were trying to set up a meeting soon between Secretary of State Warren Christopher and China's foreign minister, Qian Qichen.

At the Pentagon, Navy Capt. Michael Doubleday described what he called a "carefully orchestrated" shifting of Navy ships in order to strengthen the U.S. military presence near Taiwan.

The nuclear-powered carrier USS Nimitz and its accompanying battle group will cross the Indian Ocean and join the carrier USS Independence and its battle group off Taiwan by next week. Nimitz has been on patrol in the Persian Gulf.

Its move toward Taiwan will begin only after another carrier, the USS George Washington, moves from the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal and into the U.S. Central Command's area of operations, the Persian Gulf region.

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