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In a mid-July comment that caused a small international media stir, Chinese Major-General Zhu Chenghu threatened that should the United States intervene in China-Taiwan affairs, China would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons.

“Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds...of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese,” he said.

General Zhu added that, “We ... will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xi’an”—an area that spans all of China’s major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.

In the days following General Zhu’s statements, Beijing refused to retract them despite strong protests from Washington.

Such comments are more than a little inconsistent with statements of improved U.S.-China bilateral relations, the smiles associated with state visits such as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Hu Jintao’s September trip to New York, and the mantra of “China’s peaceful rise.”

Thus arise several questions.

First, of course, we might ask: were these radical remarks truly uttered by a top Chinese strategist?

First the facts. The general made the statements openly to Hong Kong journalists. His comments were reported widely by respected media, such as Reuters and the Financial Times. And to top it off, Chinese diplomats confirmed his remarks.

Another set of similarly alarming statements recently came to light, in this case attributed to China’s Minister of National Defense, Chi Haotian. Chi’s declarations even surpass scenarios described by U.S. security hawks, giving new credibility to the “China threat” theory, as it’s called.

The statements, which appeared in a speech transcript that apparently was never suppose to leave China, described an eventual need to “depopulate” the

United States (even if it meant Chinese-Americans) with biological weapons so as to allow China to colonize North America. The takeover would solve China’s natural resource crisis and usher in “a Chinese century,” Chi claimed.

Some have speculated that the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is testing the waters, wishing to gauge international reaction to its new threats. Although Chi’s statements follow a logic similar to General Zhu’s, their authenticity has not been confirmed. Noteworthy, however, is that the CCP does not deny they were made.

A second question then follows: does the opinion that China should nuke hundreds of U.S. cities represent the position of the CCP itself, or is it just the personal opinion of one or two extremists?

CCP officials are extremely adept at choosing their words and closely following the party line. They must be skilled at self-censorship to climb the political ladder. Statements such as Chi’s or Zhu’s would not have been made without approval from superiors.

Moreover, after the statements were made they were actively circulated in China’s state-run media. This too wouldn’t happen without a clear directive from the CCP’s top brass. As such it indicates the party’s official endorsement of the remarks.

Finally we come to a third question: does this CCP view represent the opinions of most Chinese people?

This is of course harder to answer. A survey, as helpful as it would be, isn’t quite possible in this case: any and all survey questions in China need to be pre-approved by the CCP.

One could argue, however, that Zhu’s and Chi’s opinions are somewhat indicative of Chinese public opinion.

Feelings of nationalism have grown steadily in China since the early 1990s. Anti-U.S. protests following the Belgrade Embassy bombing in May of 1999 and the recent spate of anti-Japanese protests showed just how easily China’s

masses could be stirred up against a foreign power. In both cases the government fanned the flames of xenophobia and hatred.

Scholarship on the rise of nationalism and fascism in China indicates that it is no longer a question of whether this trend exists, but rather, of how volatile it might become.

It appears to be common belief in China that the U.S. is a global hegemon bent on ruining and humiliating China, and that the only way for China to go up is for the U.S. to go down.

The fact that many Chinese celebrated openly when the 9-11 tragedy took place bespeaks of just how strong such sentiments have grown. It didn’t help, of course, that China’s regime made video games and a video—set to opera music—glorifying the Twin Tower terrorist attacks.

Of course, it’s difficult to identify the true views of China’s public in a country where everyone has been “educated” in things like Marxist and Mao Zedong thought from cradle to grave. And most Chinese have little-to-no access to sources of information on world affairs outside the CCP’s strict control.

It is quite possible, however, that most Chinese don’t support General Zhu’s view, especially if they stop to think about it. Can you imagine a rich businessman in Shanghai really willing to sacrifice his own life, his new car, wife, and children for “reunification” with Taiwan?

Would residents in Guangzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin, Dalian, Shenyang and dozens of other huge cities be willing to die for this cause? Taiwan—the total population of which barely surpasses that of Shanghai—would do them little good when they are dead.

Would the CCP really be representing the views of the Chinese people and acting with their welfare in mind?

So is all of this just an empty threat, then? A bluff? Is there really any reason for Americans to worry that we are entering another Cold War?

Evidence suggests that the nuclear holocaust threat might not be so empty after all, and the Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party tells us why.

The seventh chapter of the Commentaries describes in full, sometimes graphic, detail how throughout its history the CCP has employed mass murder of its own people as a means to increase or maintain power. Mao Zedong openly declared violence and killing to be the only force capable of ensuring progress.

Mao’s disastrous Great Leap Forward policy led to a famine and civil unrest that spelled some 30 million deaths.

Under Deng Xiaoping, the CCP ordered China’s military to open fire on thousands of unarmed student protestors; many more were crushed gruesomely under tank treads.

Under Jiang Zemin, the CCP sent hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of Falun Gong adherents to labor camps where they are, to this day, tortured and killed.

In all, an estimated 60–80 million Chinese have been killed at the hands of the CCP. Still the Party claims to rule for the good of the Chinese people, of course.

The CCP has shown a willingness to kill whenever it perceives a threat to its power. Now, under the leadership of Hu Jintao, a mixture of factors combine to form what appears to Beijing’s military comrades a new, larger than ever “threat.”

Not the least of these perceived threats is the impact of the Nine Commentaries.

The book has set off a wave of public denunciations of the CCP the likes of which have never been seen in China. Chinese are now questioning long-held assumptions about the CCP. Many are beginning to realize they deserve better.

With people starting to abandon ship (China’s richest are already buying U.S. houses as “insurance”), the CCP feels vulnerable. Its threats, judging from its past record, thus shouldn’t be taken as idle.

Naysayers might argue it would be better for us all to bite the bullet, practice damage control, and help the CCP stabilize its power—even if it means millions of ordinary Chinese will continue to suffer under dictatorship. After all, haven’t we invested great hopes—and capital—in China and its promising market?

The answer, still, is no. At least, not if doing so would give the CCP space to continue following Deng Xiaoping’s strategy of “hide our capacities, bide our time.”

China’s military spending is growing annually at a rate that exceeds even its artificially puffed up GDP figures. Its threats are becoming increasingly bolder. A few years ago a Chinese general mentioned merely that Los Angeles would be wiped out if the U.S. intervened in an invasion on Taiwan. Now it’s hundreds of American cities.

What’s next, then? What might we hope for? And just who is it exactly that we’re dealing with? The Nine Commentaries tell us just this, and more, and not a moment too soon.