

**Preliminary Operations:
Amphibious Special Operations
for the Counteroffensive against the Mainland
by the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense**

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the archival holdings of the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (IBMND), declassified Republic of China-United States records, and the diaries of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo, this article reconstructs IBMND-led amphibious special operations for the “counteroffensive against the mainland” between 1962 and 1969. It argues that the counteroffensive was not merely a political slogan, but also involved a series of “preliminary operations” carried out by intelligence agencies in conjunction with the Project National Glory or Project Guoguang. In the light of Chiang Kai-shek’s strategic principles of “30 percent military operations and 70 percent political maneuvering” and the “indirect approach,” the article examines how Chiang Ching-kuo integrated the mainland operation apparatus including the National Security Bureau and the IBMND, producing an operational repertoire centered on amphibious infiltration and network development, amphibious infiltration raids, and maritime attacks.

The article then examines a series of amphibious special operations, focusing on their operational concepts and outcomes in response to shifting battlefield conditions. Declassified records reveal that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency did participate in training and equipping these operations and was involved in several specific ones. Nevertheless, U.S. policy support remained limited to intelligence operations and did not extend to support for a regular military landing. The article also compares the Chinese Communist Party’s victory narrative of having “annihilated U.S.–Chiang armed agents” with Taiwan’s psychological-warfare propaganda, which used reports of operational successes and the death of agents to sustain support for the preliminary operations. It argues that these amphibious special operations not only reinforced internal repression and national mobilization within the PRC,

but also helped sustain the Kuomintang government's counteroffensive discourse within Taiwan.

Ultimately, these operations neither succeeded in provoking anti-communist resistance on the mainland nor created conditions conducive to a conventional landing. Instead, they exposed the widening military asymmetry across the Taiwan Strait and the operational limitations of the ROC armed forces. They also revealed the growing gap between political claims, psychological warfare, and practical military strategy that characterized the counteroffensive against the mainland. The rise and eventual decline of these operations not only shaped Taiwan's postwar strategic transformation but also illuminated the complex Cold War power relations and the evolving security order in East Asia.

Keywords: Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo, Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Guoguang Plan, Mainland Operations, Special Operations