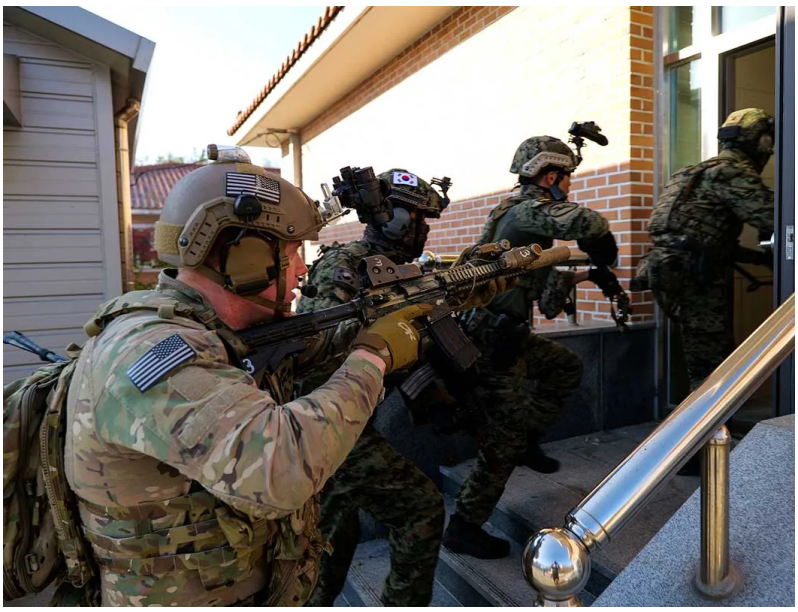

US Denial of Special Forces Presence in Taiwan

Published on 22/03/2024

On March 20, an official denial came from Washington regarding the alleged permanent presence of US special forces on the island of Kinmen, a territory belonging to Taiwan and located in close proximity to mainland China. Admiral John Aquilino, head of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, clarified the situation during a hearing at the *U.S. House Armed Service Committee*, categorically denying the rumors indicating a stable deployment of American Green Berets to train Taiwanese troops on the island.

The speculations arose following an article published by the authoritative American military news portal SOFREP in early March, suggesting that US Army Special Forces instructors had begun establishing permanent positions in the amphibious command centers of the Taiwanese army in Kinmen and Penghu. It was claimed that the missions of the American forces included regular training and exercises with Taiwan's elite forces, in line with the 2023 United States National Defense Authorization Act.

https://youtu.be/tV0c5A_ciGw?si=XPz3jbH48GiA92Fa

During the hearing, however, Admiral Aquilino promptly refuted this information, describing it as inaccurate. "*Let me tell you that the article is wrong. There is no permanent presence of US forces there*" he stated in response to lawmakers' questions, adding that further details could be discussed in a classified setting.

Additionally, during the hearing, Republican Representative Matt Gaetz expressed concerns about a possible infiltration of the Taiwanese army by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the consequences of such a scenario. Gaetz asked for information on the existence of specific plans by the US Department of Defense to assess the situation and ensure effective deterrence against a potential Chinese invasion.

To these questions, Admiral Aquilino responded affirmatively, confirming the existence of contingency plans, while preferring to reserve more specific details for a confidential context.