

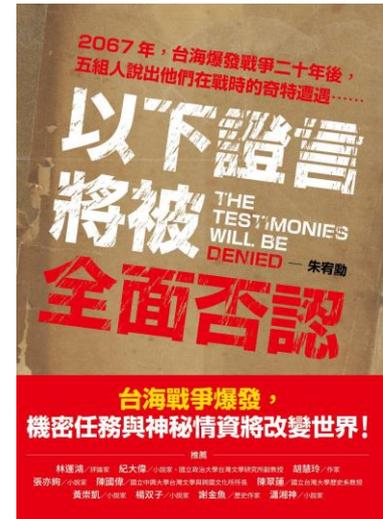
SECRET TESTIMONY

以下證言將被全面否認

Twenty years after a failed 2047 Chinese invasion of Taiwan, a historian records five unique perspectives on the war and its aftermath, producing a multiple-narrative that favors the truth of individual experience over officially sanctioned fact.

In 2067, twenty years after China's failed invasion of Taiwan, a historian embarks on an ambitious project to chronicle life during and after the war. Yet, even decades later, the fog of war hangs heavy over Taiwan, leaving the survivors with conflicting memories and feelings concerning the Taiwan Strait War. Faced with these contradictions, the historian interviews five individuals, and reconstructs their experiences of the war and its aftermath. The result is a multi-layered historical document that favors individual experience over official facts, and frequently runs counter to commonly accepted beliefs concerning the war.

The first account is the memoir of the last surviving member of the Taiwan People's Liberation Front, the Taiwanese who were secretly preparing to welcome the communist invaders, and who ended up captured when they believed the disinformation propagated by their own side. In "When Will You Return" a former elite soldier of the invading People's Liberation Army (PLA) adjusts to life in Taiwan, while secretly trying to uncover the truth behind the assassination mission he undertook during the war. "Last Day of a Private Art Museum" follows an employee at a rehabilitation center who experiences the war through the paintings of a taciturn patient. "News from the South" is the story of intelligence officers from opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait exchanging information ahead of the invasion. The final account describes the establishment of Chenan Temple for the purpose to attend to the spirits of the victims of a PLA massacre, but goes on to describe the hauntings and other supernatural incidents that are frequently observed at the temple.



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Impeccably researched, and freely mixing elements of reportage, future history, and military/espionage fiction, *Secret Testimony* confronts a question that hangs over the citizens of Taiwan, and is currently making headlines around the world: will China invade Taiwan? This collection of wartime “memories” is deeply intertwined with the defining issues of Taiwan’s political status and identity, while also holding a mirror to contemporary sentiments and the current dilemmas in cross-strait relations. As such, *Secret Testimony* is a nuanced and boldly imagined multiple-narrative that will appeal to fans of speculative and military/espionage fiction, as well as readers interested more generally in strategic and political affairs in the Taiwan Strait.

Chu Yu-Hsun 朱宥勳

Chu Yu-Hsun’s writing has been recognized with numerous awards including the Lin Rung-San Foundation Prize and the National Student Literature Prize. He has received funding from National Culture and Arts Foundation, and is a member of the Keng Hsin Youth Literary Association. His published works include short story collections *Incorrect Delivery* and *Visions in Chalk*, a collection of essays *Novels They Dare Not Teach in Schools*, and novel *The Shadow* and *The Ducks in the Lagoon*. In addition to writing, he is deeply interested in culture, education, and current affairs.

SECRET TESTIMONY

By Chu Yu-Hsun

Translated by Jim Weldon

Memoranda for the Taiwan People's Liberation Front

Everything we recount in what follows will be refuted by the organs of officialdom on the island of Taiwan. They will mobilize all their knowledge, all their theory and such scraps of evidence as they might piece together in their efforts to erase our memories. It is for precisely this reason we have resolved to compose this document. It only takes one star, be it never so faint, shining out in the vast boundless dark to draw the eyes of the many millions lost in uncertainty and confusion. Now, here in this remote temple hidden away in the mountain wilds, we elect to light one final candle. Heads swim at the scent of incense that fills this hall; the shadows of the spirit tablets of the martyrs fall across the page. It is as if all the history of the century past comes to show itself here this night. Their footsteps draw ever nearer; the sound of army boots on the march, the sound of rifles scraping against Kevlar vests, expose the commands they make such efforts to keep at a whisper. Yet we are almost entirely free of fear, afraid only that our remaining time may not be enough, not sufficient to produce the history of our side.

History was already being distorted from the instant the first guided missile fired from the Motherland fell on the island of Taiwan. As we were then, we were all unaware this was so; indeed we were instead elated, imagining the missile strike as the arrival of the first scheduled transport sent to carry history along the correct path. Not one of the generations since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 – no, since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 – has ever forgotten the Great Cause of the reunification of the nation. Now, at last, we had escaped the trammels of the Western powers to give full voice to the first clear, carrying note of our song. When it happened, one of the members of the Taiwan People's Liberation Front, our staunchest and most happy-go-lucky young warrior Ming, just nine years old, was living with his parents on the banks of the Tamsui River. He saw it all from the twelfth-floor balcony of the family's apartment and drew us a picture showing what the impact looked like – the missile like some long needle stabbed into the earth beside the river. The violent convulsions of the ground were visible to the naked eye as they spread outwards, even reaching the far bank of the river. Great waves billowed up along the Tamsui, like blood surging backwards through the veins, and the surrounding buildings collapsed one after the next.

Please excuse us for only being able to reproduce Ming's picture in text form. This delightfully naive picture was originally in the safekeeping of Ming and his parents, both long-standing TPLF activists. It became a nigh inexhaustible source of spiritual nourishment for us all during those long-drawn-out days of war. If a member of the TPLF met with some setback, they

would call out to Ming, “Come on, talk us through that picture you drew.” Then Ming, even if he had been on the march the whole day and his legs were gone to water, would screw up his courage, take the picture out from his backpack and start to describe that day. “The houses fell down one after another, getting closer and closer to us like ripples coming through the air. Then the ripples reached our house and the windows shook with a great boom, but they didn’t shatter. Dad was right when he said Chinese don’t attack Chinese, which is why we didn’t even lose a window in our apartment.”

That was the beginning and it was also an ending. Even Ming at just nine years old realized afterwards that the missile had hit a concealed strongpoint of the Taiwanese army stationed in Tamsui. He even knew enough to tell another TPLF member seeing his picture for the first time that it showed a glorious feint attack. Now, we have only to close our eyes and we can see Ming’s picture in our mind’s eye, yet never again will we set our flesh and blood eyes upon its childishly weak yet also fierce pen strokes. When Ming and his mother were hiding out in a mountain ravine to avoid a sweep by agents of the Taiwanese military, he accidentally put his foot into a venomous snake’s lair. His little body swelled and turned black and he fell there on a starlight night amid stands of mountain bamboo.

Whatever else it achieved, the feint attack certainly succeeded in throwing the battle array of the Taiwanese forces into disorder. Our intelligence suggested that the high command of the Taiwanese military spent the next six hours at least in such a state of confusion they were rendered practically incapacitated. This was because the splittists’ arrogant advance evaluation was that despite having detected signs of a major deployment from our forces, it was in their estimation largely for propaganda purposes rather than anything substantive, and they remained convinced that our military would not want to fall out entirely with the US and Japan. On the contrary, preparations for this necessary war had already been ongoing for more than a century and history now left no more room for delay. The Taiwanese high command received continuous reports of missile strikes from all around the island: Taipei, New Taipei, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Taichung, Tainan, Kaohsiung, Pingtung, Yilan, Hualien and Taitung. This kept them constantly on the run, unsure as to which was the true target of our forces and where reinforcements ought to be sent; all they could do was issue orders for their troops in all locations to take to their covered positions.

At this point in our report, we feel we must pause to express our admiration for the achievements of the Motherland’s intelligence agencies’ preparatory work over many years. Comrades from our forces were everywhere, among the highest echelons and the broader population at large. As a result, in the six hours after the first missile struck, these comrades were able to spread false reports among both high command and common folk, paralyzing Taiwanese forces under an avalanche of false intelligence. It was almost daybreak before the Taiwanese forces were able to determine which cities and counties had actually been subject to attack, which was in fact only half the places listed above. Still more spectacular was the use of both official and civilian channels to successfully fool the military commands in Taichung and Kaohsiung into

thinking that their counterparts had turned traitor, to the point that they squandered their forces in an armed standoff. Unconfirmed intelligence even suggests that the Kaohsiung command launched a multitube rocket barrage against positions on the Dadu Plateau, causing some losses to Taichung armored divisions even though our army had not targeted them with any missiles.

Yet it is precisely because we were here on Taiwan to witness the glorious spectacle of that night that we can only feel still greater regret at how events subsequently unfolded. It is by no means our intention to level criticisms at the Motherland, and as the clock ticks down against us on this chill night, we are certainly not in the business of seeking fame by nailing our colors to some unorthodox position. We are only deeply, deeply sorry. If only... if only the Motherland had launched an air and seaborne invasion to coincide with the missile barrage. Even a small force of crack troops parachuted into the key political and economic hubs in Taipei during those six hours of confusion may have been sufficient to capture Taiwan. That is how narrow history's windows of opportunity are, and also what makes the small strip of the Taiwan Strait seem as wide and sundering as it remains. This is of course hindsight, and it would be wrong to reproach our leaders for their decisions, for we too were prisoners of apprehension as all this occurred. Had the Motherland made preparations for an invasion? It was only about a month since the first reports in the Taiwanese media of a major mustering of the Motherland's forces, far short of the "minimum six months to prepare an invasion force" that was the common wisdom of popular legend.

Subsequent developments brought both anxiety and relief for most members of the TPLF, as if carrying a shoulder pole with two buckets of water, our moods swinging back and forth every day. Sometimes the worry weighed heavier, sometimes the relief. The worry was a concern that a hastily launched seaborne invasion might not succeed. The relief was seeing the Motherland adopt a strategy of "both attack and admonishment", continuing the missile and air attacks on Taiwanese forces while at the same time speeding up naval and land forces' preparations for invasion. This required judgement in the round rather than improper haste. Yet there were also concerns within this sense of relief: would such a leisurely pace not ultimately hinder any military action? Naturally, with our resolute faith in the Motherland, we strived to find relief in the midst of our concern; we needed to believe in this once-a-century historical moment.

In sum, the war entered a phase we had not in any way foreseen; weeks on end of missile barrages, aerial attacks, strategic bombing and naval exchanges. This was not an easy time for any of the members of the TPLF, with thoughts of the invasion we all longed to see gnawing away every day at our sense and reason. Of course, we were well aware that military measures are merely one means and sure that the Motherland must have some more far-reaching political plan. The Motherland clearly had no plans to overwhelm Taiwanese forces in a one-off application of its full firepower, seeking rather to impress upon the Taiwanese the futility of resistance through the use of surgical strikes. This showed both the intention to spare life where possible and a strategy of bringing the enemy to heel without actually engaging forces. Taiwanese society soon descended into chaos. No two days in succession with an electricity supply became the norm, the prices of foodstuffs, medicines, and clothing skyrocketed, and there were even those who sought

to price gouge potable water. One of our members witnessed a trader with a truckload of mineral water intended for a school turn around at the school gates and drive away. Rumor had it that someone else had offered the driver five times the price.

The member who witnessed this reported it at once on our secret website. We went to work on this material to create a video entitled “Cold-hearted officials snatch drinking water out of school kids’ mouths”, which we at once posted to the various social media websites and chat groups. The video drew an enormous response; at our last check it had received more than three million views. As we waited to receive further orders, this was the means by which we did our small bit for the Great Cause of the Motherland. While we would not claim that this video, and the texts, images and videos we released as follow-up, represented any sort of outstanding service on the battlefield, we remain convinced that they were shots fired that did indeed inflict casualties on the enemy. During that period, we continued with our monitoring of and intervention in Taiwanese public opinion, striking back hard against the splittists by using the methods they had once employed to defeat us in the elections. Thanks to the work of the thirty-plus members of the TPLF, we were able to establish more than one hundred online groups and succeeded in sparking off at least ten uprisings or near-uprisings. This was not in fact so difficult. All we needed to do was inform our starving compatriots that a civil society organization was going to be handing out relief supplies at some given time and place.

The daily missile attacks only increased the intensity of the admiration and longing our compatriots felt towards the Motherland, yet they also caused the splittists to lose all sense of reason and begin making daily calls for “Resistance to China to Preserve the Nation”. They arranged memorial ceremonies for soldiers and civilians killed in the attacks, set up websites and published a page of photographs they called the “Wall of Martyrs” – as we write these words, we must suppress the urge to vomit this theft of the word “martyr” induces – and in this way stirred up the simple and unsophisticated common folk of Taiwan to resist the Motherland. They employed the slogan “debts of blood will be paid with fire” and called on the Taiwan splittist party then in power to counterattack in full force.

There can be no argument that the then president Chiang Chih-yi deliberately turned a blind eye to the activities of these splittists. No, it was more than just a blind eye; when one considers the way they later repulsively pandered to each other in concert like partners in a waltz, there is every possibility that these splittists were a flank force established with all due care by Chiang herself to shape public opinion and work to prevent her losing any of her power to rule over the island. Chiang Chih-yi was Taiwan’s second woman leader, a poisonous and far more calculating figure, with greater ability to conceal her scheming, than her gloomy and mediocre predecessor Tsai Ing-wen. Chiang Chih-yi came from Yilan, which allowed her to claim she was a descendant of Chiang Wei-shui. Yet, our investigations into this matter reveal that while it cannot be said there is no connection at all between Chiang Chih-yi and her heroic namesake, she is at best the most distant of distant branch relations. Yet she was able to turn this flimsiest of links into political capital. When addressing splittists she would claim to be carrying on Chiang Wen-shui’s fight for democracy on Taiwan. When addressing our side, she would say that Chiang Wen-

shui had always understood, right back to the revolution of 1911, that “If we wish to save Taiwan, we must begin by first saving the Motherland,” and she too never forgot her roots. This two-faced ruse allowed Chiang Chih-yi to garner the support of the majority, winning her first contest for the presidency with over sixty percent of the vote and exceeding fifty percent when it came time for her to seek re-election.

Our duty to history compels us to confess that even among our staunch and steadfast TPLF members there were those, more than half our membership indeed, sufficiently befuddled by her way with words to vote for her at least once. It is our hope that by telling all to the historical record, we might alert future generations of patriots to the dangers of political trickery. Although the splittists have only a narrow vision that never escapes the confines of the island, we must never underestimate how hard they work to concoct their treacherous schemes. At the time, there were a good half of us disappointed in the long-standing weakness of the Kuomintang and their inability to do anything to suppress the ever more virulent clamor of the splittists. Chiang Chih-yi’s adherence to the “Chiang Wei-shui line” seemed to provide a shelter from the storm where we might pause to catch our breath. Looking back now, we can see how profound was the harm we did to our country! We began by thinking Chiang might restore order from the chaos and do something to change the pestilential atmosphere that had reigned in Taiwan for decades by that point.

“I even followed after her motorcade and called her ‘President Chiang!’”

Whenever Huang Cheng-min, one of the TPLF’s most honest and straightforward peasant warriors, recalled this incident, tears would well up, such was his regret.

This so-called President Chiang had in fact long harbored wicked ambitions for Taiwanese independence, it was just that she was careful to conceal this with crafty political showmanship. Right from first taking office, Chiang made a big show of abandoning the established practice of the president overseeing the annual Han Kuang live-fire military exercises in person, standing by her decision even when commentators criticized her for being lax about military preparedness. This only confirmed many members of the TPLF in their support for her. It was a welcome sign that the two sides of the Strait might be abandoning armed confrontation! Yet, after her first year in office, some observers noted that while Chiang might have stopped taking part in military activities in public, in private she had tightened her grip on powers of appointment in all three branches of the armed services, moving swiftly to put her own loyalists in place. When her second term came round and observers were evaluating what Chiang Chih-yi had achieved during her administration, an astonishing discovery was made: by using her “Special Presidential Budget” not subject to oversight from the Legislative Yuan and various measures that avoided outside attention, she had in fact instituted an enormous increase in military expenditure! In her first five years in office alone, her purchases of arms and the quantity of military materiel produced were more than double that of her spiritual mentor Tsai Ing-wen’s two terms combined!

Yet at the time none would ever believe that Chiang Chih-yi, short in stature, soft spoken, and always seen in public in women’s formal wear, might harbor the aspiration to fight a war for Taiwanese independence. In fact, her popularity had begun to waver at the end of her first term

because other factions within the Democratic Progressive Party suspected she was not sufficiently committed to independence and lacked a real will to stand up to the Motherland. They criticized Chiang for approving a number of trade accords that had been repeatedly delayed, and for joining the Greater East Asian Customs Union, dominated by the Motherland, which they called an act of bending the knee. From our point of view, things seemed to be going marvelously. How could we have known this was all just part of her trickery!

Sadly, it appears we were not the only ones taken in by her deceptions. Chiang Chih-yi's carefully-crafted feigning even succeeded in misleading the Motherland into erroneous judgements. The Motherland's initial prognosis was that continuing missile barrages would lead to an outbreak of anti-war sentiment on the island, meaning that Chiang would be compelled by irresistible weight of public opinion to sue for talks with the Motherland. The Motherland had all along planned only a limited military engagement, not just "both attack and admonishment" but also "both attacking and talking", hoping to avoid invasion unless absolutely necessary and instead concentrating on destroying popular resolve on the island. This was a line of thinking summarized as "driving popular will to swallow up democracy" – we are certain that the "judgements of the Motherland" outlined above will in future be repudiated in their entirety. Yet this truly was the strategic guidance we in the TPLF received from our superiors, as early as the third day after the first missile struck. At that time, we were making repeated calls to our superiors to set out for us a clear timetable for the invasion, until finally a cadre from the Taiwan Affairs Office speaking in a personal capacity informed us that so long as all went to plan, this was only going to be an air and sea war. Our disappointment at this is not something we are using as an excuse for the series of failures and defeats we subsequently suffered. Yet as the war entered its latter stages, we found ourselves hoping sincerely that this was merely an excuse invented by our handler and told to us by way of placation rather than the genuine plans of the higher command. Although of course we also reproach ourselves bitterly for our failure to see the impracticality of this scheme and for not offering warnings against it, as we should have.

We quite clearly misjudged where popular support on the island lay. There were those who called for a laying down of arms, but far more descended into a kind of primal fury. With popular morale of this sort behind her, Chiang Chih-yi had the confidence necessary to refuse any surrender. After the initial six hours of confusion passed, Chiang at once relocated to the Hengshan Military Command Center, the first time she had set foot in the place in her entire seven years in office, issuing orders for the various army groups to make an assessment of their losses and adopt a posture of entrenched defense and counterattack. People were astounded by how well versed she appeared to be in all the various protocols of military command. There was a story doing the rounds that Chiang had convened her first military council in the company of the chief of general staff Chung Shao-yi and immediately rebuked those present for the chaos of their handling of intelligence reports the previous night, demanding a reorganization of the process with the National Security Council taking the lead. The high-ranking officers present were all shaken by her display of authority from her first moment in command. Chiang followed this up by calling on the commander of the Kaohsiung military district by name and asking for his account

of the mistaken attack on the Taichung emplacement. Having had a few minutes to absorb the lessons of Chiang's previous admonishments, the Kaohsiung commander was aware that there was to be no shirking of responsibility, and he immediately offered his resignation via the video-link. Chiang however, neither accepted nor rejected this, calling instead on the Taichung commander. This commander was still furious, complaining of having lost two armored vehicles and suffering injuries to seventeen troops in the four remaining.

The Kaohsiung commander was now even more shamefaced. The atmosphere in the command center was tense.

To everyone's surprise, Chiang Chih-yi gave a slight smile then announced: the Taichung commander was right to adopt a strategy of concealment and was able to preserve the lives of the troops under their command in a time of crisis. This made apparent the quality of their regular training and the construction of their facilities. They were to be accorded two merits. As for the Kaohsiung commander, although he made an error in his reading of the intelligence, he was able to mount a counterattack within the space of two hours, evincing a desire to defend the nation which can only be approved of, and for which he too would be awarded a merit. That left the fact that that troops from the Kaohsiung command killed and injured their comrades from Taichung, and for this the merit awarded to the Kaohsiung commander would not be issued for the present. It would instead be held on hand to be issued alongside those the Kaohsiung command was sure to earn from its first victory against the enemy.

This story was written up so vividly we should naturally take it with a large pinch of salt. However, although Chiang Chih-yi was an expert at drumming up support through her use of the media, and we can assume the story was released through official channels, that does not mean it was entirely fabricated. And regardless of the extent to which it was true, the tale soon reached every corner of the island, being read more than ten million times and, as a result, Chiang Chih-yi was able to create an image of herself with both military and civilians as resolute in her resistance and sharp and straightforward in the way she handled affairs. When the commander of the Kaohsiung military district achieved outstanding successes in the subsequent fighting, the media portrayed it as repayment for the clemency shown to him. Though it be through clenched teeth, we must admit that this officer went on to become one of the major stumbling blocks to the Great Cause of national reunification.

How the situation subsequently developed is both painful to us yet also something we are obliged take up our pen to record. For more than a century now, how many people have done all in their power to avoid compatriots from either side of the Strait doing each other harm? All those painstaking efforts were blown to nothing in the tempests of that April. After she had restored the morale of her military high command, Chiang Chih-yi first pretended to make ready for talks, holding daily press conferences where she called for peace and announced that "war should not be employed as a means to resolving this conflict." Yet at the same time, the calls for the "debt of blood to be repaid in fire" were growing ever louder across Taiwanese society, with the more radical splittists parading through the streets of Taipei carrying large pieces of white cloth on which they collected signatures. Passers-by would cut their index fingers with a small knife, then

sign their name on the cloth in their own blood. The other side's propaganda claimed that within one week they had collected over 300,000 signatures in blood across the island. They were calling it their "Grand Petition in Blood and Iron for the Defense of the Nation". We made several attempts at counter-protests in the hopes of quelling their arrogant bluster, but were stymied by our inability to mobilize anything like comparable numbers. On top of that, there were incidents when TPLF members became isolated and were surrounded and beaten by splittists. Thus, we ultimately chose to retreat back to defend our position online, with words and propaganda becoming the core of our fight.

During this period, Chiang Chih-yi chose to sit on the sidelines and watch her opponents fight themselves to exhaustion, seemingly hesitant about whether or not to launch a counterattack. We know now, however, that this was all just part of Chiang's cunning strategy. She deliberately let us fight it out with the splittists without bans or restrictions. Coupled with the daily missile strikes, this left Taiwanese public opinion stewing in an increasingly poisonous brew of fury. Chiang was using us. She wanted us to protest, she wanted us to make our propaganda. Our every word and every action were all reckoned as fresh fuel to feed the flames of splittist sentiment. Chiang used her press conferences on each of the eleven days after the missile struck to win a reputation in the West for restraint and willingness to conciliate. Yet at the same time, the smoldering resentment of these eleven days was pushing Taiwanese society ever more rapidly into fascism, tearing it apart until it became a vicious beast that looked on the Motherland with burning enmity.

On April the 27th, Chiang Chih-yi gave the order to counterattack. A number of Taiwanese fighter aircraft traversed Japanese airspace to arrive unannounced near Shanghai where they conducted an air defenses suppression operation. Assailed by a wave of electronic attacks and a barrage of anti-radiation missiles, a temporary blind spot opened up in the Motherland's air defenses. At around two a.m., five Taiwanese-made Yun Feng cruise missiles were launched at Shanghai. Three were intercepted by our forces; two struck their target, the Oriental Pearl Tower. Other missiles of various types attacked naval facilities, ports and airfields all along the southeast coast of the Motherland.

Attacks on military infrastructure were to be expected and we will not discuss them here. But the two Yun Feng cruise missiles that targeted the Oriental Pearl Tower will, we expect, be a subject of controversy among historians for decades or even the entire century to come. Chiang Chih-yi's government did not offer any kind of warning, simply launching a direct attack on civilian infrastructure, and a national landmark at that. It was a move that no-one expected. Because the attack came in the small hours, actual casualties were few. Had it been in the daytime, it may well have been a major disaster involving the deaths of many thousands. The citizens of Shanghai were jolted from their dreams by the sound of an enormous explosion and a wave of tremors, to be followed by the sight of flames burning fiercely in the distance and the sound of fire engines blaring their sirens across the whole of the metropolis. International media reported live on the situation at the Oriental Pearl regardless of time differences with their home countries. The night passed and the images of indistinct darkness and flickering flames were replaced by a

full view of the scene in daylight. The tower had been snapped off in the middle and its prominent globe lay shattered in pieces across the ground like a dropped egg. The roads all around were covered by debris, and although the flames were by now extinguished, smoke still rose from the wreckage. The apocalyptic scene sent many of the people of Shanghai, who had imagined themselves far from any front line, into a state of shock and grief. The video sharing app Life-Live was filled with thousands of vlogs where people talked about the Oriental Pearl before looking blank or bursting into tears. For the Motherland, the pain was every bit as extreme as that felt in America after the attack on the World Trade Center. Every hour brought thousands more videos showing people crying, cursing and even beating their heads against walls. Our intelligence agencies at once determined that this was something abnormal. Life-Live was indeed the most popular video sharing platform, but did it make sense that the entire Internet seemed to be reduced to collective tears all at once? Could it be that this was also an operation conducted by Taiwanese forces?