

# RESEARCH

## **China's Public Security Intelligence *Progress, Challenges, and Prospects***

Zi Yang

---

The goal of this paper is to explain why China's public security intelligence apparatus continues to suffer from intelligence errors and failures despite the institution of major reform measures in the past two decades. As one component of China's domestic intelligence body, public security intelligence plays an indispensable role in fighting crime and terminating subversive activities. However, high-profile setbacks in recent years have raised questions about the real capability of public security intelligence. Although two rounds of comprehensive police reforms have been completed, additional reforms await leaders of public security intelligence. This paper argues that further institutional and ideological changes are necessary to maximize public security intelligence potential.

---

All was quiet in Chongqing during the wee hours of 14 August 2012. The mountain city's residents were sound asleep after another long, bustling day. Little did they know, Zhou Kehua, China's most wanted killer, was back in town. For eight years, Zhou, nicknamed "head-buster" for his precise aim, went on a cross-country rampage of robbery and murder that resulted in the death of ten people and the injury of five.<sup>1</sup> The police however, had a hard time tracking down the elusive silhouette that lurked among China's thick concrete jungles.

At six a.m., two police officers patrolling around the postal savings bank of Qinjiagang Town received a phone call alerting them to the possible presence of Zhou in the immediate proximity. Forty-five minutes later, a suspicious man with dark sunglasses

---

<sup>1</sup> “周克华首先掏枪射击警察 ‘爆头哥’被近距离击毙” [Zhou Kehua Shot First at the Police, 'Head-Buster' Shot and Killed in Close Quarters], *Xinhua News*, 14 August 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2012-08/14/c\\_123581834.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2012-08/14/c_123581834.htm) (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

slipped past the patrol partners. Noticing the odd figure, the officers tried to pursue him but were met with surprise when the man pulled out a handgun and fired toward their direction. The officers returned fire, sending the man crumbling to the ground—dead.<sup>2</sup> Upon close examination, the pair realized they hit the jackpot. China's most wanted, Zhou Kehua, the pistol-toting outlaw who embarrassed the police for eight straight years, was no more. It was a celebratory moment, not only for the Chongqing Public Security Bureau, but also for the entire country.

Years later, when reflecting on this case, a frequently asked question remains—why did it take so long for the police to track down Zhou? In 2014, an article in the *Journal of Beijing Police College* found a direct link between intelligence errors committed by agents of the Chinese Public Security Intelligence (*gong'an qingbao*; PSI) with the police's inability to apprehend Zhou.<sup>3</sup> Yet Zhou's case is not an exception. In recent years, a chain of failures to forewarn of terrorist attacks,<sup>4</sup> prevent ethnic killings,<sup>5</sup> and detect high-profile criminals<sup>6</sup> demonstrated the intelligence hurdles facing the Chinese police. PSI agents—who assist the Public Security Police in their public and state security duties through domestic intelligence work—are partially responsible for this trend.

Although intelligence error/failure is far from a Chinese phenomenon, it is worth asking: why, despite reform initiatives in the past decades, is the PSI still encountering obstacles that lead to intelligence error/failure and sap its overall efficiency? This paper, besides serving as an introduction to the PSI, contends that an ill-designed incentive structure, limited analytical capabilities, inefficient quality control, and unchanging ways of policing based on obsolete ideas are the main hindrances to improving the

<sup>2</sup> Xiaohua Huang and Zhijian Yu, “由‘8·14’击毙周克华案探析现代警用手枪技战特征及训练的发展趋势” [Investigating the Future Development of Modern Police Pistol Tactics and Training from the August 14 Shooting of Zhou Kehua], *公安教育* [*Police Education*], no. 11 (November 2012): 40–41.

<sup>3</sup> Xiruo Liu, “公安情报工作的失误与对策研究—基于周克华案件的反思” [The Study of Mistakes and Countermeasure in Public Security Intelligence Work in the Case of Zhou Ke-Hua], *北京警察学院学报* [*Journal of Beijing Police College*], no. 6 (November 2014): 67–68.

<sup>4</sup> The Chinese police failed to forewarn a spate of terrorist attacks in 2013 and 2014, with one car attack, orchestrated by the East Turkestan Islamic Movement striking Tiananmen Square, the most celebrated symbol of Chinese state power.

<sup>5</sup> You Ji, “China's National Security Commission: Theory, Evolution and Operations,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 98 (3 March 2016): 189–190; Harold M. Tanner, “The People's Liberation Army and China's Internal Security Challenges,” *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, ed. Roy Kamphausen et al. (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2010), 265.

<sup>6</sup> Police intelligence personnel have allowed numerous high-profile murderers to slip under the radar in the past several decades, the latest example being Gao Chengyong. Accused of raping and killing eleven female victims, Gao avoided police detection for more than thirty years until his arrest in August 2016. See: Jing Li, “End to Grisly Three-Decade Mystery? Chinese Police Arrest Suspected Serial Killer Accused of Murder and Rape of 11 Women and Girls,” *South China Morning Post*, 28 August 2016. For a list of Chinese serial killers that dodged police detection for extended periods of time, see: Eva Li, “China's Worst Serial Killers: A Litany of Evil through History,” *South China Morning Post*, 30 August 2016.

PSI. In addition, institutional and ideological changes are needed for the PSI to reach its greatest potential.

### Literature Review and Methodology

The value of this research lies in its distinctive contribution to the field of China studies. The development of China's intelligence agencies is an area of research that remains largely untouched; the pool of existing English literature on Chinese intelligence is very limited, and the focus is almost entirely on China's foreign intelligence or intelligence history. To date, there is no English-language academic writing dedicated specifically to the current state of China's domestic intelligence apparatus, let alone the PSI specifically. My intention is to fill this void.

Nicholas Eftimiades's 1994 classic *Chinese Intelligence Operations* is a prime example of the abovementioned tendency.<sup>7</sup> The book dedicates most of its attention to China's Ministry of State Security and military intelligence with solely one chapter on domestic surveillance. Despite revealing important facts about Chinese domestic security institutions, recent works on China's security state have not treated the present state of Chinese domestic intelligence with the attention it deserves. Michael Schoenhals's *Spying for the People* studies the secret agents and informants of the Mao Zedong era from 1949 to 1967.<sup>8</sup> The analysis of China's intelligence body in *China's Security State* is detailed in its historical account but ends at the beginning of the Deng Xiaoping era in the 1980s.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Michael Dutton's *Policing Chinese Politics* advances important theories regarding the Chinese police but concludes with its analysis of the Chinese police in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup> Information in the above readings about the PSI is scant. Although there have been more recent publications on the Chinese police, notably by Kam Wong, the quality of his *Chinese Policing*<sup>11</sup> and *Police Reform in China*<sup>12</sup> are barely up to academic methodological standards and say very little about police intelligence.

Since there is a lack of English-language sources on Chinese domestic intelligence, this paper rests its foundation upon secondary sources of mostly Chinese journal articles and monographs. The secretive nature of Chinese intelligence organizations poses a great challenge to researchers. Thus, the heavy use of journal articles is my way of offsetting this disadvantage. Chinese police and intelligence journals constitute a valuable pool of information because their intended consumers are professionals within the domestic security industry. However, due to the need to preserve state secrecy, very few

---

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Eftimiades, *Chinese Intelligence Operations* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Schoenhals, *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Xuezhi Guo, *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Robert Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics: A History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Kam C. Wong, *Chinese Policing: History and Reform* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Kam C. Wong, *Police Reform in China* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2011).

statistics regarding the PSI have been made publically available. Although Chinese journal articles and monographs provide useful insights into the inner workings of the PSI, the inadequacy of statistics places a limit on the quantitative richness of this research, which I consider to be an unfortunate flaw.

I employ knowledge gained from reviewing theoretical works by American and European police, intelligence, and security professionals in distilling the best information from Chinese research papers.<sup>13</sup> Since this paper will focus on the current state of the PSI, articles reviewed in this research are mostly published within the last five to six years. In addition, I have obtained access to a number of Chinese monographs on policing and intelligence that are marked “*neibu faxing*” (internal distribution only). These are excellent sources of information intended for an audience in sensitive government ministries.

The bulk of my paper is based on secondary sources. Online sources include legal and news sources. In reviewing online legal documents pertaining to China, the first item I search for is the website’s affiliation with the state. In this case, state affiliation gives a stamp of approval to the content, especially if translation is involved. Nonetheless, when quoting from official online law sources, I always verify the translated version with the original document to minimize inaccuracy. I prefer independent news outlets whenever possible given the degree of critical thinking involved and because government’s political agenda usually taints official media reporting.

When analyzing the content of Chinese journal articles, I look at the following four points specifically: 1) The nature of the journal. Is it professionally-oriented for police, security, and intelligence professionals? 2) The background of authors. Is he or she an industry insider or academic? What is the author’s institutional affiliation? 3) Is he or she well-published on the subject? 4) The author’s methodology and cited sources. I used a number of textbooks, written for Chinese law enforcement professionals, to substantiate claims in this paper. In addition to the author’s personal profile and institutional affiliation, I take note of the publisher of each book. In China, many

---

<sup>13</sup> I consulted the following works on criminal and domestic intelligence by American and European authors: Abram N. Shulsky, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2002); John Buckley, *Managing Intelligence: A Guide for Law Enforcement Professionals* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2013); Peter Gill, Stephen Marrin, and Mark Phythian, *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates* (Studies in Intelligence) (New York: Routledge, 2008); Peter Gill, *Policing Politics: Security Intelligence and the Liberal Democratic State* (Studies in Intelligence) (New York: Frank Cass, 1994); Jennifer E. Sims and Burton L. Gerber, eds., *Transforming U.S. Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005); Jonathan Randall White, *Defending the Homeland: Domestic Intelligence, Law Enforcement, and Security* (Contemporary Issues in Crime and Justice Series) (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2003); David L. Carter, *Law Enforcement Intelligence: A Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2012); Jerry Ratcliffe, *Intelligence-Led Policing* (Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2008); Darren E. Tromblay, *The U.S. Domestic Intelligence Enterprise: History, Development, and Operations* (Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis, 2016); Loch K. Johnson, *National Security Intelligence: Secret Operations in Defense of the Democracies* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012).

government and party organs have their own publishing house. For example, the Masses Publishing House (*qunzhong chubanshe*), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Public Security, published most of the textbooks cited, including two that are marked for “internal distribution only.” Accordingly, Masses Publishing House’s publications allow us to better understand the Chinese police state’s inner workings. In addition, books marked for “internal distribution only” provide greater insight into the more sensitive areas of Chinese policing with information that cannot be found on publicly available platforms—for example, detailed diagrams on security projects.

### Defining the PSI in Context

The PSI is one branch of China’s domestic intelligence apparatus along with the intelligence wings of the Domestic Security Guard (*guonei anquan baowei*) that deals with subversive elements without foreign connections, while the State Security Police (*guojia anquan jingcha*) handles subversive elements with foreign connections.<sup>14</sup> State Security Police is an umbrella term for intelligence organs under the Ministry of State Security (*guoan bu*).<sup>15</sup> Both PSI and the Domestic Security Guard are part of the Ministry of Public Security’s (*gong’an bu*) hierarchy. The State Council (*guowu yuan*) is responsible for both ministries on paper. Yet, characteristic of Chinese politics, state control serves as a front to mask the party’s role as the puppet master. In this case, the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (*zhonggong zhongyang zhengfa weiyuanhui*) is the true body governing the public and state security systems.<sup>16</sup> The newly formed Central National Security Commission (*zhonggong zhongyang guojia anquan weiyuanhui*), chaired by the Chinese Communist Party’s General Secretary Xi Jinping, has a role in coordinating the two ministries.<sup>17</sup> Unlike the Domestic Security Guard that is an independent bureau within the Ministry of Public Security<sup>18</sup> trained

---

<sup>14</sup> Hongyun Wan and Yongqing Li, eds., 警察法学 [Police Law Studies] (Beijing: 法律出版社, 2015), 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>16</sup> Chang Wang and Nathan Madson, Inside China’s Legal System (Philadelphia, PA: Chandos Publishing, 2013), 71–72; Jinyan Zhong, “中共政法委制度的历史考察” [A Historical Investigation of the CPC’s Political and Law Committee System], 中共党史研究 [CPC History Studies], no. 4 (April 2014): 116.

<sup>17</sup> The Central National Security Commission, established in November 2013, is a powerful party organ chaired by Xi Jinping that oversees work in “foreign affairs, national defense, intelligence, Taiwan affairs, public and state security, Internet and information control, anti-terrorism, non-traditional security affairs (disaster relief and rescue), and economic/human security matters (energy, resources, environment and public health).” Regarding the internal security sphere, the Commission, under Xi’s direct control, curbs the power of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, which had grown substantially during Zhou Yongkang’s tenure (2007–2012), for example by counterbalancing its control over the police and domestic intelligence. See: Ji, “China’s National Security Commission: Theory, Evolution and Operations,” 194.

<sup>18</sup> The Domestic Security Guard Bureau (*guonei anquan baowei ju*) is ranked first (*diyiju*) among the Ministry of Public Security’s twenty-seven bureaus, which signifies its importance. See: Chi-hou Chang, “中共公安部的序列號職能局” [The Study of Mainland China’s MPS Organization], 展望與探索 [Prospect & Exploration] 9, no. 3 (March 2011): 111.

specifically to suppress internal dissent,<sup>19</sup> PSI agents have a greater role as members of the Public Security Police (*gong'an jingcha*; hereafter “police” for simplicity)—the most common type of order and political police in China.

In order to clearly define the duties of the PSI agents, one must first examine the official expectations of the police. The Public Security Police constitutes the bulk of China’s national police force.<sup>20</sup> A top-down organization with presence in all administrative divisions, the police have three official roles: as an instrument for consolidating the People’s Democratic Dictatorship (a concept to be discussed later in this section), an administrative institution, and a criminal justice institution.<sup>21</sup> The police’s power is rooted in Article Twenty-Eight of the Chinese Constitution: “The State maintains public order and suppresses treasonable and other criminal activities that endanger State security; it penalizes criminal activities that endanger public security and disrupt the socialist economy as well as other criminal activities; and it punishes and reforms criminals.”<sup>22</sup>

The Chinese police, in addition to its primary crime control duties, have a secondary but significant political mission in safeguarding state security (*weihu guojia anquan*). The Chinese define public security (*gonggong anquan*) as the task to “maintain public order, protect citizens’ personal safety and freedom and their legal property, protect public property, and prevent, stop, and punish illegal and criminal activities.”<sup>23</sup> State security (*guojia anquan*), however, can be more straightforward (i.e. protecting the Chinese state against subversives). In fact, it can be argued that state security is prioritized over public security. Article Two of the “People’s Police Law” clearly assigns the safeguarding of state security as the foremost duty of the police.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the Public Security Police does not fall strictly into either the order or political police category. Rather, it is a state repressive apparatus of a dual nature; it simultaneously fights common and political crimes.<sup>25</sup>

Who is considered a criminal endangering public safety? What is considered a subversive act that threatens state security? The answer to the first question may be found in

---

<sup>19</sup> Qun Zheng and Chuncheng Wang, eds., 国内安全保卫 [*Domestic Security Guard*] (Beijing: 群众出版社, 2009), 12–15.

<sup>20</sup> China has six types of police forces: 1) public security police, 2) state security police, 3) prison administration police, 4) forced isolation drug treatment police, 5) judicial police, and 6) the People’s Armed Police.

<sup>21</sup> Wan and Li, 警察法学 [*Police Law Studies*], 35–36.

<sup>22</sup> “Constitution of the People’s Republic of China,” [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node\\_2825.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm) (date accessed: 9 May 2016).

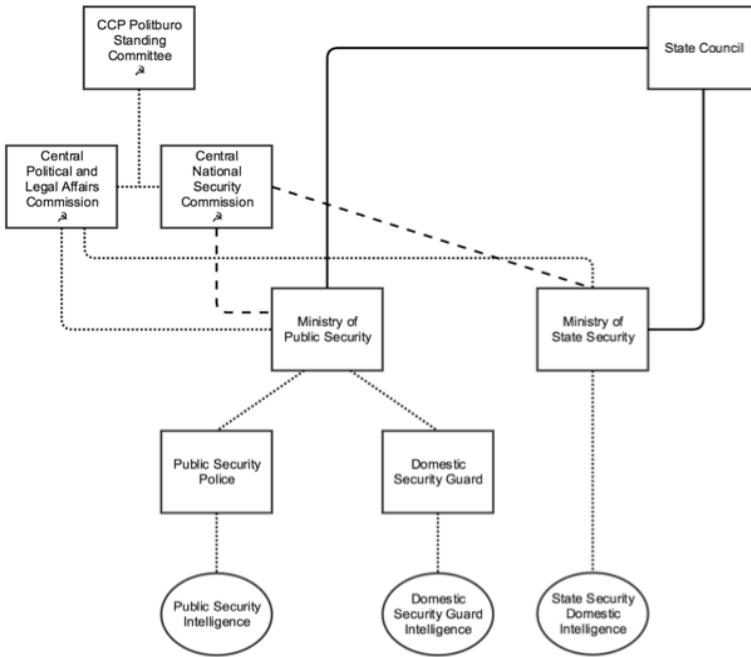
<sup>23</sup> “People’s Police Law of the People’s Republic of China,” [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content\\_1383708.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383708.htm) (date accessed: 9 May 2016).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> The Chinese Public Security Police is comparable to the Militsiya, the regular Soviet police that also combatted political crime. See: Louise I. Shelley, *Policing Soviet Society: The Evolution of State Control* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 25–30.

China's criminal law books. But one will frequently encounter nebulous legal generalizations when trying to answer the second question; understanding it requires a broader review of a series of legal documents.

**Figure 1.** China's Domestic Intelligence Apparatus



Source: by author.

\* The hammer and sickle sign indicates party organizations.

\*\* Solid lines show the State Council's *de jure* control.

\*\*\* Dotted lines show the party's *de facto* control.

\*\*\*\* Broken lines denote the Central National Security Commission's coordinating role.

The textbook definition of a subversive act is the crime of “inciting subversion of state power” (*shandong dianfu guojia zhengquan zui*). Defined openly as “anyone who uses rumor, slander or other means to encourage subversion of the political power of the State or to overthrow the socialist system,”<sup>26</sup> the basis for this code is established in the founding documents of the People’s Republic.

Article One of the Constitution states that “the People’s Republic of China is a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. The socialist system is the basic system of the People’s Republic of China. *Disruption of the socialist system by any organization or*

<sup>26</sup> Wei Luo, ed., *The 1997 Criminal Code of the People’s Republic of China* (Buffalo, N.Y.: W.S. Hein & Co, 1998), 73.

*individual is prohibited* [emphasis added].<sup>27</sup> Although acts considered “disruptive” are not clearly defined, the ambiguity allows the state to have the final say in what exactly constitutes a disorderly act. Recent crackdowns on human rights lawyers and activists<sup>28</sup> show a citizen can be deemed an enemy of the state even if he or she is exercising rights guaranteed by the Constitution.<sup>29</sup> While the state security apparatuses in liberal Western democracies remain wary of violating constitutional rights,<sup>30</sup> the Chinese Constitution gives the state an essential *carte blanche* in clamping down on whatever acts it considers “disruptive.”

In addition to the socialist system, the other half of the Chinese political system is the People’s Democratic Dictatorship (*renmin minzhu zhuanzheng*). Mao Zedong, in a 1949 essay, defined the People’s Democratic Dictatorship as a “democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries.”<sup>31</sup> In a People’s Democratic Dictatorship, “the state apparatus, including the army, the police and the courts, is the instrument by which one class oppresses another. It is an instrument for the oppression of antagonistic classes.”<sup>32</sup> Magnanimity is an afterthought since the state does “not apply a policy of benevolence to the reactionaries and towards the reactionary activities of the reactionary classes.”<sup>33</sup> State violence against individuals or groups is necessary and will be applied accordingly. The People’s Democratic Dictatorship forbids the “reactionaries” to “speak or act in an unruly way,” and they “will be promptly stopped and punished” if they dare to behave otherwise.<sup>34</sup>

The Chinese Communist Party has the final say in defining friends and enemies of the state. The composition of “the people,” similar to that of “antagonistic classes,” is subjected to the state’s shifting political needs.<sup>35</sup> Only one matter is constant: the state’s willingness to employ violence against any individual or group behavior that it might perceive as a threat.

Article Fifteen of the “National Security Law” (*guojia anquan fa*), passed in 2015,

<sup>27</sup> “Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.”

<sup>28</sup> “China: Latest Information on Crackdown against Lawyers and Activists,” *Amnesty International*, 6 January 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/08/china-list-of-lawyers-and-activists-targeted/> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Michael Forsythe, “China Is Said to Arrest 4 Human Rights Advocates,” *New York Times*, 12 January 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Darren E. Tromblay, *The U.S. Domestic Intelligence Enterprise: History, Development, and Operations* (Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 36-37.

<sup>31</sup> Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961), 4: 418.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>35</sup> The current composition of “the people” includes “all socialist workers, builders of socialism, patriots that support socialism and who support the reunification of the motherland.” The “antagonistic classes” encompass “a small number of hostile forces and elements at home and abroad belligerent to and seeks to undermine our socialist system.” See: Shengguo Zhang and Xiaoli Qi, eds., *宪法学 [Constitutional Studies]* (Beijing: 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2009), 74.

contains the most recent criteria on the state's definition of a hostile act:

The State guards against, stops, and lawfully punishes acts of treason, division of the nation, incitement of rebellion, subversion or instigation of subversion of the people's democratic dictatorship regime; guards against, stops, and lawfully punishes the theft or leaking of state secrets and other conduct endangering national security; and guards against, stops, and lawfully punishes acts of infiltration, destruction, subversion or separatism by foreign influences.<sup>36</sup>

The Chinese police, built to protect the country's ruling class headed by the Chinese Communist Party, are the main tool in preventing disorder and delivering punishments.<sup>37</sup>

Simply put, the PSI is a branch of China's domestic intelligence body that assists the police in fulfilling its public and state security duties. The PSI agents are members of the Public Security Police. Present at public security bureaus of all administrative divisions, teams of the PSI agents are comparable to intelligence units at U.S. police departments. PSI agents operate according to a philosophy modeled on crime intelligence theories, their main task being the gathering of information through overt and clandestine channels. PSI analysts screen, analyze, and process raw data to produce intelligence that may assist the police in solving criminal cases, terminating subversive activities, and maintaining the upper hand in general police work.

### The PSI in Action

The Chinese state has kept a sizable domestic intelligence apparatus since 1949.<sup>38</sup> However, the PSI was created only recently. Official discussions on the PSI started in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2005, the Ministry of Education designated PSI as a field of study, available for police cadets at a few selected universities.<sup>39</sup> Currently, 1.4 percent (28,000)<sup>40</sup> of China's two million police personnel<sup>41</sup> engage in PSI-related work. The PSI is a product of China's plan to modernize its police force. Although the institutional structure of the Chinese police remains top-down and based on the

---

<sup>36</sup> "National Security Law," *China Law Translate*, 1 July 2015, <http://chinalawtranslate.com/2015nsl> (date accessed: 21 February 2017).

<sup>37</sup> Wan and Li, 警察法学 [*Police Law Studies*], 35.

<sup>38</sup> Schoenhals, *Spying for the People*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Dehui Ma, "中国公安情报学的兴起和发展" [*The Rise and Development of Public Security Intelligence Studies in China*], 情报杂志 [*Journal of Intelligence*], no. 11 (November 2015): 10-11.

<sup>40</sup> This is a surprisingly low estimate of the total number of PSI agents, although this is the only publically available statistic. See: Xuemei Lü, "公安综合情报部门的发展困境与战略转向" [*The Difficult Position and Strategic Transformation of Integrated Police Intelligence Department*], 情报杂志 [*Journal of Intelligence*], no. 6 (June 2015): 16.

<sup>41</sup> Wang and Madson, *Inside China's Legal System*, 95.

traditional model of “combining the vertical and horizontal” (*tiaokuai jiehe*),<sup>42</sup> China has demonstrated commitment in reforming its police according to Western ideas.

One of the most important changes in the making is the adaptation of intelligence-led policing (ILP), one of five models of policing.<sup>43</sup> Jerry Ratcliffe identifies six key characteristics of ILP as:

[A] management philosophy/business model [that] aims to achieve crime reduction and prevention and to disrupt offender activity; employs a top-down management approach; combines crime analysis and criminal intelligence into crime intelligence; uses crime intelligence to objectively direct police resource decisions; [and] focuses enforcement activities on prolific and serious offenders.<sup>44</sup>

In essence, ILP is top-down, proactive and precise—three features that appeal to Chinese leaders. The traditional Chinese policing model is reactive. By adopting ILP, a model that compliments the top-down national police structure, China aims to make its police more efficient and professional.

The core of ILP is crime intelligence. In China, the definition is expanded to anticipate, monitor and prevent not only common crime but also subversive activities. The PSI’s intelligence cycle<sup>45</sup> is similar to that of its Western counterparts.<sup>46</sup> The demand for intelligence comes from the superior of each intelligence echelon after planning sessions that assess current intelligence needs and feedback on previous intelligence products. Information is then gathered, evaluated, compiled, and analyzed before distribution to appropriate agencies.<sup>47</sup>

There are two main methods of PSI information gathering—overt and clandestine—that employ a combination of open-source (OSINT) and human (HUMINT) gathering.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> *Tiaokuai jiehe* is a leadership system where the police “would be led by local governments and local Party committees at the same administrative level as the police units concerned (this was called horizontal leadership, or *kuai*). For professional leadership, however, they would look to higher-level public security organs (vertical leadership, or *tiao*.” See: Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics: A History*, 279.

<sup>43</sup> The other four models are: standard policing, community policing, problem-oriented policing, and CompStat (computer statistics).

<sup>44</sup> Jerry Ratcliffe, *Intelligence-Led Policing* (Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2008), 87.

<sup>45</sup> For an official diagram of the PSI intelligence cycle, see: 公安部政治部 [Ministry of Public Security Political Department], 犯罪情报学教程 [*Crime Intelligence Tutorial*] (Beijing: 群众出版社, 2007): 140.

<sup>46</sup> Loch K. Johnson, *National Security Intelligence: Secret Operations in Defense of the Democracies* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012), 38.

<sup>47</sup> Chunxia Zhang, “公安情报工作的两个基本环节: ‘收集’与‘搜集’” [Two Basic Links: “Gathering” and “Collection” in Public Security Intelligence Work], *辽宁警专学报* [*Journal of Liaoning Police Academy*], no. 3 (May 2014): 38.

<sup>48</sup> Zhihui Peng, “论公安情报收集渠道” [On Channels of Public Security Intelligence Gathering], *河北公安警察职业学院学报* [*Journal of Hebei Vocational College of Public Security Police*], no. 1 (March 2010): 5.

OSINT is probably the most economical and effective way of intelligence gathering when compared to other methods. As George Kennan once pointed out, around 95 percent of the U.S.'s knowledge about foreign countries could be "obtained by the careful and competent study of perfectly legitimate sources of information open and available to us in the rich library and archival holdings of this country."<sup>49</sup> China's PSI appreciates OSINT just as much. Books, newspaper, magazines, journals, radio, television, and the Internet are all sources of information scrutinized for intelligence value.<sup>50</sup> According to Peng Zhihui, professor at the PSI department of Chinese People's Public Security University, "large quantities of" police intelligence come from OSINT.<sup>51</sup>

But this is not the only method. HUMINT, although more expensive and time-consuming, can provide information unobtainable through open sources. Three types of agents provide HUMINT. The first is the patrol officer that engages the community on a regular basis or an officer that is assigned to monitor specific criminal suspects.<sup>52</sup> The second type of HUMINT agent—undercover agents—or "secret forces" (*mimi lilian*), penetrate places and groups that might pose a security threat, including crime syndicates, underground religious circles, nighttime entertainment establishments, and labor markets.<sup>53</sup> Civilian informers (*zhi'an ermu*) constitute the third variety. They have the numerical advantage but can be unreliable due to unprofessionalism; nevertheless, the Chinese police have a history of relying on informers.<sup>54</sup>

Information gathered is divided into three categories: police work information (*gong'an yewu xinxi*), social information (*shehui xinxi*), and special subject intelligence information (*zhuanqi qingbao xinxi*). Police work information is gathered from everyday professional engagement with the community, including information gathered from a household registration drive or during a criminal investigation.<sup>55</sup> Social information includes anything that helps raise the police's ability to prevent crime, serve the community, and maintain order. Examples are phone records and hotel guest information.<sup>56</sup>

Special subject information is divided into three subcategories: enemy intelligence information (*diquinglei qingbao xinxi*), stability maintenance intelligence information

<sup>49</sup> Thomas E. Copeland, ed., *The Information Revolution and National Security* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), 33.

<sup>50</sup> Yufeng Shan, "对公开情报收集相关问题的研究" [Study on Questions Related to Open Source Intelligence Gathering], 科技信息 [Science & Technology Information], no. 20 (July 2012): 70; 犯罪情报学教程 [Crime Intelligence Tutorial], 23-24.

<sup>51</sup> Peng, "论公安情报收集渠道" [On Channels of Public Security Intelligence Gathering], 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>53</sup> Jinpeng Di and Hui Zhao, "我国运用秘密力量侦查法律程序之构想" [Thoughts on Our Country's Legal Process in Employing Secret Forces Investigation], 江西警察学院学报 [Journal of Jiangxi Police Institute], no. 3 (May 2011): 26.

<sup>54</sup> Peng, "论公安情报收集渠道" [On Channels of Public Security Intelligence Gathering], 7.

<sup>55</sup> Zhihui Peng, "论公安情报的收集内容与方式" [On Methods and Contents of Public Security Intelligence Gathering], 公安学刊 (浙江警察学院学报) [Public Security Science Journal (Journal of Zhejiang Police College)], no. 2 (April 2012): 42.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

(*weiwenlei qingbao xinxi*), and public opinion intelligence information (*yuqinglei qingbao xinxi*). The first subcategory focuses on terrorist organizations, separatist groups, religious extremists, black society crime syndicates, and cults that altogether oppose stability (*wending*). “Secret forces” are usually employed to investigate, trail, monitor, and infiltrate these groups. The second subcategory, “stability maintenance intelligence,” includes information about factors that can lead to mass protests, strikes, unlawful gatherings, communal melees, and arson. Lastly, to obtain public opinion information, agents monitor views of the citizenry on the country’s sociopolitical state of affairs. The average citizen’s thoughts on the Communist Party, the state, local government, the police, existing policies, and elite politics are all within the bounds of gathering.<sup>57</sup>

Trained and knowledgeable intelligence analysts under a strict quality control regime must cautiously parse raw data in order for information to be transformed into intelligence. Although on paper China’s PSI information collection process is relatively sophisticated, its intelligence analysis and quality control lacks efficiency. But before we delve into these weaknesses, let us first review past efforts to modernize the PSI.

### PSI Modernization

The Cultural Revolution was a man-made political catastrophe with a scale of destruction unseen elsewhere in human history. Almost all government agencies ceased functioning during the violent phase of the Cultural Revolution. Chaos was the zeitgeist, embodied in the slogan: “smash public security bureaus, the procuratorate, and the court system to a pulp” (*zalan gongjianfa*).<sup>58</sup> Red Guards, high on revolutionary spirit, attacked institutions of public order and plunged the country into total mayhem.

The Cultural Revolution devastated China’s law and order agencies. According to one estimate, 34,481 public security officials were persecuted, 1,257 died by suicide or beating, and 3,624 were injured or disabled.<sup>59</sup> Public security organs were shut down for years. Red guard-led revolutionary committees (*geming weiyuanhui*) and the army’s military control commissions (*junshi guanzhi weiyuanhui*) usurped law enforcement power and dictated local security affairs with draconian measures.

With the dawning of reform and opening-up, the need for a professional modern police force to combat the rise of crime became ever more urgent. With assistance from Yugoslavia, China’s police modernization kicked off in the early 1980s with the introduction of a national police computer network.<sup>60</sup> Since that time, police modernization

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>58</sup> Xinyuan Xu, “我国公安机关和人民警察组织机构历史沿革” [Historical Organizational Changes in Our Country’s Public Security Organs and People’s Police], *公安研究* [Policing Studies] no. 3 (June 1999): 92–93.

<sup>59</sup> Min Cui, ed., *刑讯考论—历史, 现状, 未来* [Torture Interrogation—History, Status Quo and Future] (Beijing: 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2011), 159.

<sup>60</sup> Yiping Xie, ed., *公安信息化建设基础教程* [Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction] (Beijing: 群众出版社, 2009), 1.

efforts have been driven by the need to adopt state of the art crime fighting technology. In 1993, China unveiled the China Crime Information Center, a computerized database of criminal justice information based on the FBI's National Crime Information Center.<sup>61</sup> In 1998, the most ambitious informatization project was announced. Code-named the Golden Shield Project (*jindun gongcheng*; GSP),<sup>62</sup> it aimed to substantially upgrade police information technology.<sup>63</sup>

Phase One of the GSP (GSP-1) lasted from 2003 to 2006 and received a total investment of 3.71 billion RMB.<sup>64</sup> GSP-1 had six goals: First, upgrade police information networks that would connect all police agencies at the prefectural city level and above to the police private network (intranet).<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, fifty percent of county level police agencies, as well as ten percent of all grassroots (community-based) police organization would be connected to the intranet.<sup>66</sup> Second, upgrade computer operating systems, build secure databases<sup>67</sup> and internal communications network, and establish a centralized system of Internet surveillance—a task delegated to the Ministry of Public Security's Eleventh Bureau, with the objectives of combating hackers, viruses, and protecting data.<sup>68</sup> Third, the China Crime Information Center would be further enhanced as a national database that provides quick and accurate information to police agencies.<sup>69</sup> Fourth, standardize the use of technology for better information sharing. Standardization included 1,272 items, for example, the standardization of terminology, project quality, and electromagnetic compatibility.<sup>70</sup> Fifth, a system of information security that assists in troubleshooting, information recovery, network security, user authentication, and intranet resource protection.<sup>71</sup> Lastly, a professional system of operational management that establishes regulations, personnel training, and an efficient management model to ensure smooth daily operations of the police information

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>62</sup> For an official diagram of the GSP's structure published by the Ministry of Public Security, see: 公安部政治部 [Ministry of Public Security Political Department], 犯罪情报学教程 [*Crime Intelligence Tutorial*], 130.

<sup>63</sup> Xie, 公安信息化建设基础教程 [*Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction*], 2.

<sup>64</sup> Yanji Wang, ed., 中国公安科技发展简史 [*Brief History on the Technological Advancement of China's Police*] (Beijing: 中国人民大学出版社, 2009), 210.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>67</sup> We know that GSP-1 founded at least twenty-one national and regional databases covering the following areas: 1) criminal; 2) fugitive; 3) stolen vehicle; 4) major criminal cases; 5) fingerprint; 6) economic crime; 7) narcotics; 8) public security petition; 9) firearms; 10) explosives; 11) DNA; 12) traffic; 13) missing person and unidentified body; 14) public security internal affairs; 15) stability maintenance; 16) Interpol's China National Central Bureau; 17) bodyguards; 18) counterterrorism; 19) hotels; 20) secondhand cellphone sales; 21) high risk groups. See: Xie, 公安信息化建设基础教程 [*Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction*], 10-11.

<sup>68</sup> Wang, 中国公安科技发展简史 [*Brief History on the Technological Advancement of China's Police*], 191.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 191-192.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 191-193.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 195.

technology network.<sup>72</sup>

GSP-1 laid the technological groundwork for modernizing the PSI. By 2004, a nationwide police intranet<sup>73</sup> was completed covering thirty-two provincial-level public security departments, 478 city bureaus, 3,361 county sub-bureaus, and more than 70,000 dispatch stations. The connection speed was raised, and about 98.2 percent of China's public security organs were connected to the Internet. Public security organs received a total of 1.3 million computers that average to 89 per 100 police officers. Similar success manifested itself in database construction as well. The profiles of 1.38 billion citizens were managed using computerized methods with 41,000 public security dispatch stations handling household registration and establishing computerized population management systems. Criminal and noncriminal databases as well as information-sharing platforms were also up and running.<sup>74</sup> Overall, judging from official reports, GSP-1 seems like a success that equipped China's police with the technological tools for better policing. Yet it must be said that statistics reflect the typical official Chinese attitude that values quantitative over qualitative gains.

Leaders of the Ministry of Public Security considered GSP-1 a success in streamlining the police's centralized command, and enhancing rapid reaction and joint operations capabilities. In September 2008, planning began for GSP-2, and goals for the project were announced a year later in 2009. One of GSP-2's purposes was to serve as a carrier to position ILP as the leading management philosophy for China's police force.<sup>75</sup> In accomplishing this shift, the Ministry of Public Security believes that China's police will become more proactive and better aligned with international professional standards. An emphasis was also placed on "big intelligence" (*da qingbao*),<sup>76</sup> or using big data mining methods for intelligence work that is then stored and shared through information exchange platforms. Besides ideological changes, GSP-2 would continue police technological upgrades to fit the policing demands of the twenty-first century.<sup>77</sup>

Yet changing police philosophy is more difficult than technological reform in that it requires more than rhetoric and financial investment. GSP-2 was completed in 2014, but the project's success on transforming police ideology is debatable. Unreformed ideological and institutional factors have negatively influenced the analysis and distribution stages of the PSI cycle.

<sup>72</sup> Wang, 中国公安科技发展简史 [*Brief History on the Technological Advancement of China's Police*], 193.

<sup>73</sup> For an official diagram of the Chinese police intranet published by the Ministry of Public Security, see: 犯罪情报学教程 [*Crime Intelligence Tutorial*], 120.

<sup>74</sup> Xie, 公安信息化建设基础教程 [*Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction*], 9.

<sup>75</sup> Ke Wang, "我国情报信息主导警务的推进方法及实践状况" [Current Status and the Means to Impel Intelligence-Led Policing in Our Country], 湖北警官学院学报 [*Journal of Hubei University of Police*], no. 7 (July 2015): 25.

<sup>76</sup> Xie, 公安信息化建设基础教程 [*Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction*], 33.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

## Identifying Shortcomings

The Chinese government has a propensity to value quantitative growth over qualitative improvements. Although on paper the Chinese police have received substantial upgrades in technological infrastructure, the degree of usage is rarely reported in official summaries. In reality, the police, despite the GSP's achievements, still face problems in fully reaping the benefits of the modernization project. We may group these challenges into three parts: clogged intelligence sharing, limited analytical and quality control capabilities, and old ways of policing based on obsolete ideas.

Clogged intelligence sharing between public security bureaus is a major problem concerning PSI. However, it is not an entirely Chinese phenomenon. More recently, European intelligence agencies have also been found guilty of intelligence sharing failures amid the war against terrorism.<sup>78</sup> We have witnessed similar situations in China. Whether it was the eight-year long failure to capture Zhou Kehua or the inability to forewarn the string of terrorist attacks in 2013 and 2014,<sup>79</sup> researchers have identified a lack of intelligence sharing as the key impediment to successful police work in an era where criminals are becoming increasingly mobile and sophisticated.<sup>80</sup>

Nonetheless, the motivation to share intelligence is low. In fact, there have been instances where agencies intentionally created barriers to prevent intelligence collaboration. Although some have identified the lack of intelligence cooperation as a result of security concerns or the absence of a streamlined intelligence-sharing platform, a recent study by Wu Shaozhong of the Chinese People's Public Security University shows an ill designed incentive system is the chief culprit in obstructing intelligence sharing.<sup>81</sup> To be promoted in the public security system, one must have "achievements" (*chengji*); similar to the cadre evaluation system, police organs receive points for professional achievements.<sup>82</sup> Cracking criminal cases earns them a considerable number of points.

All police organs have imbalances in terms of intelligence.<sup>83</sup> Sharing intelligence there-

<sup>78</sup> Brunsten Jim and Chassany Anne-Sylvaine, "Europe's Failure to Share Intelligence Hampers Terror Fight," *Financial Times*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>79</sup> Dehui Ma, "论公安情报分析的案例研究与教学" [On Case Study Method in the Research and Teaching of Public Security Intelligence Analysis], *情报杂志 [Journal of Intelligence]*, no. 5 (May 2014): 5.

<sup>80</sup> Xiaoyan Bao, "京津冀协同发展战略视野下公安情报交流与协作问题研究" [Research on the Police Intelligence Sharing and Collaboration—From the Perspective of the Coordinated Development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region], *北京警察学院学报 [Journal of Beijing Police College]*, no. 6 (November 2015): 53–54.

<sup>81</sup> Shaozhong Wu, "公安情报整合共享中的利益格局及破解之道" [How to Break Interest Barriers in Compiling and Sharing Public Security Intelligence], *北京警察学院学报 [Journal of Beijing Police College]*, no. 4 (July 2015): 67.

<sup>82</sup> Yuhua Wang and Carl Minzner, "The Rise of the Chinese Security State," *The China Quarterly* 222 (June 2015): 8–9.

<sup>83</sup> Wu, "公安情报整合共享中的利益格局及破解之道" [How to Break Interest Barriers in Compiling and Sharing Public Security Intelligence], 66.

fore is important to iron out the differences that will make cracking cases easier for all parties. However, the current police evaluation system only awards the agency that cracked the case, without taking into account any other organs that participated in the process.<sup>84</sup> This causes strong resentment between agencies that should be working closely together. Moreover, it amplifies a “crab basket mentality” and creates an environment where agencies are indifferent about helping their colleagues create success—because there are no rewards for doing so.

Similarly, the current evaluation system overlooks the “foot soldiers” of intelligence, i.e. the information gatherers. Awards often fail to acknowledge them at all.<sup>85</sup> Such official neglect is bound to negatively influence their enthusiasm and the quality of information they submit to intelligence departments. Without changing the incentive structure, it is hard to break the vicious cycle of sluggish intelligence sharing. Chinese police organs, as one researcher sees it, will continue to face unaided battles.<sup>86</sup>

Beyond incentive structures, to be a generalist or specialist is the perennial question confronting government bureaucracies, and the PSI is also confronted with this problem. Not all PSI officers received specialized training, and the pro-generalist position seems to be winning the debate over how to train and staff China’s 28,000 PSI personnel.<sup>87</sup> Thus it is not surprising to see a shortage of intelligence specialists.<sup>88</sup> Currently, the dominant idea in intelligence gathering and analysis is the “human wave tactic,”<sup>89</sup> or as the Chinese would call it, “one officer with multiple talents” (*yijing duoneng*).<sup>90</sup> This problem is especially pronounced in certain provinces. Officers have to work a main job and pick up intelligence tasks on the side. There is no professional training or work stability.<sup>91</sup> Combined with a poor quality control mechanism, this regime

---

<sup>84</sup> Wu, “公安情报整合共享中的利益格局及破解之道” [How to Break Interest Barriers in Compiling and Sharing Public Security Intelligence], 67.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>86</sup> Wenli Bao, “吉林省信息情报工作新体系构建的相关问题研究” [Study on Questions Related to the New Structure of Jilin Province’s Information Intelligence Work], 吉林公安高等专科学校学报 [*Journal of Jilin Public Security Academy*], no. 1 (February 2010): 26.

<sup>87</sup> Lü, “公安综合情报部门的发展困境与战略转向” [The Difficult Position and Strategic Transformation of Integrated Police Intelligence Department], 16.

<sup>88</sup> Wang, “我国情报信息主导警务的推进方法及实践状况” [Current Status and the Means to Impel Intelligence-Led Policing in Our Country], 28.

<sup>89</sup> Gan Nie and Jing Huo, “情报导向警务背景下技术侦查的创新与运用—以武汉市‘12.1’爆炸案为例” [Application and Innovation of Technology Investigation under Intelligence-Led Policing—a Case Study of Wuhan “December 1” Explosion], 法制博览(中旬刊) [*Legality Vision*], no. 2 (February 2012): 116.

<sup>90</sup> Qifei Shi, “浅议公安机关中央事权与地方事权划分、警种、部门设置” [A Probe on the Division of Central Power and Local Governance in Public Security Organs, Police Classification and Department Setting], 政法学刊 [*Journal of Political Science and Law*], no. 6 (December 2015): 110.

<sup>91</sup> Bao, “吉林省信息情报工作新体系构建的相关问题研究” [Study on Questions Related to the New Structure of Jilin Province’s Information Intelligence Work], 27.

regime routinely produces substandard intelligence.<sup>92</sup>

We do not know whether a lack of funding or misconceptions of intelligence work were reasons behind a pro-generalist system. Nonetheless, placing additional intelligence gathering duties on ordinary officers, who are already poorly paid,<sup>93</sup> undermines the motivation to obtain quality information. As a result, Chinese officers fabricate information to fill quotas. In one instance, a drive for fingerprint collection turned slapstick when toe-prints were submitted to meet the set target.<sup>94</sup>

Technology also poses a challenge to the generalist system. It is hard for a generalist officer, whose main job is not intelligence, to work with a computerized intelligence system designed for specialists. According to a 2011 study, some officers with limited computer skills find the data entry system, built during the GSP reforms, very difficult to operate.<sup>95</sup>

Besides old ways of policing mentioned previously—quantity over quality, quotas, human wave intelligence—another debate that has influenced the effectiveness of PSI is the classification of PSI as a field of study. Quality education and training makes a quality workforce. However, for the past six years, there was confusion on where exactly to place PSI studies. Although PSI studies was created in 2005, its position in relation to other disciplines was hazy until 2011 when it was classified under public security studies, a sub-field of law studies.<sup>96</sup>

But debates linger on. One position argues that PSI studies should be classified as part of information science, or “the collection, classification, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of recorded knowledge treated both as a pure and as an applied science.”<sup>97</sup> The other position argues that PSI studies should remained part of public security studies that is “a field that studies questions of social and public safety.”<sup>98</sup>

Without a clear direction, it is hard for an enterprise to go anywhere. The result of this debate has, directly or indirectly, stunted the growth of PSI studies as a field. Currently,

<sup>92</sup> Shuhua Li and Yue Li, “公安情报产品评价研究” [Study on Public Security Intelligence Product Evaluation], *中国人民公安大学学报(社会科学版)* [*Journal of Chinese People's Public Security University (Social Sciences Edition)*], no. 3 (June 2012): 26.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>94</sup> Bao, “吉林省信息情报工作新体系构建的相关问题研究” [Study on Questions Related to the New Structure of Jilin Province's Information Intelligence Work], 26.

<sup>95</sup> Jing Chen and Juncheng Shao, “论公安情报人才培养” [On the Training of Public Security Intelligence Personnel], *湖北警官学院学报* [*Journal of Hubei University of Police*], no. 4 (July 2011): 53.

<sup>96</sup> Ma, “中国公安情报学的兴起和发展” [The Rise and Development of Public Security Intelligence Studies in China], 10.

<sup>97</sup> “Information Science,” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/information%20science> (date accessed: 9 May 2016).

<sup>98</sup> Ming Zhu, “公安情报分析的理论模式与创新” [Theoretical Model and Innovation of Public Security Intelligence Analysis], *图书馆学研究* [*Research on Library Science*], no. 3 (February 2015): 5.

there has been no theoretical breakthrough in PSI studies.<sup>99</sup> Given China's specific sociopolitical conditions, PSI research is partially reliant upon theories developed by Western scholars that operated on a different set of variables. PSI studies, at present, remain confined to police colleges. As of 2016, eleven years after it became a state approved field of study, there are only five schools in China teaching PSI, another possible explanation for the intelligence specialist shortage.<sup>100</sup>

### Prospects for Reform

Despite pockets of democratic experimentation—i.e. village elections—a review of China's legal statutes shows that the People's Republic is no more than a one-party authoritarian state. Self-referred to as a People's Democratic Dictatorship, a Chinese adaptation of the Marxist-Leninist Dictatorship of the Proletariat,<sup>101</sup> the Chinese Communist Party uses its coercive powers to assert dominance upon all remnants of a liberal democracy in China—the constrained personal liberty of its citizens, the rubber stamp parliament, the heavily censored press, government-controlled trade unions, and the non-independent judiciary.

The PSI, along with other branches of China's domestic intelligence body, is a tool of the authoritarian state that pursues the goal of social order and political stability. According to Brian Chapman's model, China has all the traits of a “modern police state.”

[T]he police services are centralized under effective national command...the political police service is built up into a national service with its own powers and chain of command...the political police service is amalgamated with the criminal police service, with the political police in command; the uniformed police services are then subordinated to the needs and special operational requirements of the unified political/criminal police service; and, finally, the uniformed police service is strengthened as an armed reserve force by the creation of a para-military force with its own weapons, intelligence and logistic support, under the command of, and loyal to, the central police command. The policies laid down by the central police command make the police apparatus as a whole into an offensive weapon of the state rather than protective force for society.<sup>102</sup>

Police reform in an authoritarian modern police state follows the decisions of political elites, in other words, the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. In contrast to a totalitarian police state where the police reign supreme above all state institutions, the

---

<sup>99</sup> Ma, “论公安情报分析的案例研究与教学” [On Case Study Method in the Research and Teaching of Public Security Intelligence Analysis], 5.

<sup>100</sup> Ma, “中国公安情报学的兴起和发展” [The Rise and Development of Public Security Intelligence Studies in China], 10-11.

<sup>101</sup> Zhang and Qi, 宪法学 [Constitutional Studies], 72-73.

<sup>102</sup> Brian Chapman, *Police State* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1976), 78-79.

power of the Chinese police is limited by state and party superstructures.<sup>103</sup> Mao Zedong was a strong proponent of a single source of power—a view widely shared by successive paramount leaders. Despite its esteemed status, the police suffered rounds of punishments in the recent political turbulence; agents of the Ministry of Public Security, regardless of their position within the hierarchy, were arrested under the pretext of anti-corruption.<sup>104</sup> The decision to clean house in the Ministry of Public Security, once a bastion of Xi Jinping's archrival Zhou Yongkang, is the new party leader's way of showing that he is the sole source of power.<sup>105</sup>

Yet given the authoritarian state's need for an efficient police force, reform is a priority. In fact, police reform, following the Xi party line of "comprehensive deepening reform" (*quanmian shenbua gaige*) has been ongoing since early 2015. Intelligence-led policing, with the PSI as the spearhead, is an area that will receive special attention.<sup>106</sup>

Although the authoritarian state might hinder reform in the political and economic sectors, as it might corrode the foundation of the state's power and legitimacy, bettering the police is an investment with guaranteed returns. Critical to the Public Security Police's ability to defend the state, the PSI has thus far enjoyed official blessing. Information imparted to the press tells an ambitious program with more than one hundred specific measures grouped into seven main missions, the first being, predictably, the improvement of "working mechanism for safeguarding state security."<sup>107</sup> At this point in time, it is still too early to tell whether the reform will fully address issues impeding the PSI's performance, but it is likely that by the reform's conclusion in 2020, the Chinese police state will emerge with greater capability in controlling an increasingly complicated society.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, intelligence is all about helping one gain the upper hand before the show-

---

<sup>103</sup> Brian Chapman, *Police State* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1976), 114.

<sup>104</sup> "公安部一次性立案审查22名现役干部2人被双开" [One Stroke, the Ministry of Public Security Investigates 22 Active Service Cadres and Expelled 2 from the Party and Public Office], *QQ News*, 3 November 2015, <http://news.qq.com/a/20151103/019766.htm> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

<sup>105</sup> Zhou Yongkang was the Minister of Public Security from 2002 to 2007. He then served as the Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Chinese Communist Party from 2007 to 2012. A prominent factional rival of Xi Jinping, Zhou was sentenced to life imprisonment in June 2015. See: Jun Mai, "What NOT to Learn from Zhou Yongkang and Ling Jihua: Fall of China's Corrupt Party 'gangs' a Lesson for Its Cadres," *South China Morning Post*, 16 February 2016.

<sup>106</sup> "《关于全面深化公安改革若干重大问题的框架意见》及相关改革方案已经中央审议通过 ['Opinions on Several Major Issues in Deepening the Reform of Public Security' and Relevant Reform Proposals Have Been Deliberated and Adopted by the Center]," Ministry of Public Security, 15 February 2015, <http://www.mps.gov.cn/n2255079/n4876594/n4974590/n4974591/c4976144/content.html> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

<sup>107</sup> "公安部负责人就全面深化公安改革有关情况答记者问" [Ministry of Public Security Spokesperson Answers Reporters' Questions Regarding the Deepening Reform of Public Security], *Xinhua News*, 15 February 2015.

down even begins. As Sun Tzu famously intoned: “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”<sup>108</sup> For an authoritarian modern police state like China that faces constant internal challengers to the existing order, having the aid of a sophisticated domestic intelligence apparatus is crucial to the maintenance of power. This paper, focusing on one branch of China’s domestic intelligence, shows why the PSI still encounters intelligence setbacks despite reforms. Technological advancement is not enough to modernize the PSI; forward thinking ideas, the right incentive structure and professionalization are just a few essential ingredients required to create an efficient intelligence organization.

As a youthful branch of China’s domestic intelligence, the PSI is set to expand in size and capability as China places greater emphasis on the internal facets of national security. The attention given to intelligence amid the current police reform is a sign that changes are already underway. Whether the reform program will bring long-term positive results for the PSI is yet to be seen. But as observers, we at least have an idea about the state’s commitment to better and more efficient police intelligence. The coming years will show whether the state has adopted the belief that changing technological “hardware” can only bring an intermediate modernization, but changes to the institutional and ideological “software” will be the catalyst needed to propel the PSI into modernity.

---

*Zi Yang is an independent researcher and consultant on China affairs. His research centers on Chinese internal security issues. He is a frequent contributor to Jamestown Foundation’s China Brief. His current projects include an analysis of political indoctrination in Chinese colleges and an investigation into the mental well-being of People’s Liberation Army servicemen. He holds an M.A. in Asian Studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in Global Affairs and History from George Mason University.*

---

---

<sup>108</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Lionel Giles (Mineola, NY: Dover), 5.

## References

- Bao, Wenli. “吉林省信息情报工作新体系构建的相关问题研究” [Study on Questions Related to the New Structure of Jilin Province's Information Intelligence Work]. 吉林公安高等专科学校学报 [Journal of Jilin Public Security Academy], no. 1 (February 2010).
- Bao, Xiaoyan. “京津冀协同发展战略视野下公安情报交流与协作问题研究” [Research on the Police Intelligence Sharing and Collaboration—From the Perspective of the Coordinated Development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region]. 北京警察学院学报 [Journal of Beijing Police College], no. 6 (November 2015).
- Buckley, John. *Managing Intelligence: A Guide for Law Enforcement Professionals*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2013.
- Carter, David L. *Law Enforcement Intelligence: A Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2012.
- Chang, Chi-hou. “中共公安部的序列號職能局” [The Study of Mainland China's MPS Organization]. 展望與探索 [Prospect & Exploration] 9, no. 3 (March 2011).
- Chapman, Brian. *Police State*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1976.
- Chen, Jing, and Juncheng Shao. “论公安情报人才培养” [On the Training of Public Security Intelligence Personnel]. 湖北警官学院学报 [Journal of Hubei University of Police], no. 4 (July 2011).
- “China: Latest Information on Crackdown against Lawyers and Activists.” Amnesty International. 6 January 2017. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/08/china-list-of-lawyers-and-activists-targeted/> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).
- “Constitution of the People's Republic of China.” [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node\\_2825.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm) (date accessed 9 May 2016).
- Copeland, Thomas E. *The Information Revolution and National Security*. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2000.
- Cui, Min, ed. 刑讯考论—历史，现状，未来 [Torture Interrogation—History, Status Quo and Future]. Beijing: 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2011.
- Di, Jinpeng, and Hui Zhao. “我国运用秘密力量侦查法律程序之构想” [Thoughts on Our Country's Legal Process in Employing Secret Forces Investigation]. 江西警察学院学报 [Journal of Jiangxi Police Institute], no. 3 (May 2011).
- Dutton, Michael Robert. *Policing Chinese Politics: A History. Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Eftimiades, Nicholas. *Chinese Intelligence Operations*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994.

## Research

Forsythe, Michael. "China Is Said to Arrest 4 Human Rights Advocates." *New York Times*. 12 January 2016.

Gill, Peter. *Policing Politics: Security Intelligence and the Liberal Democratic State*. New York: Frank Cass, 1994.

Gill, Peter, Stephen Marrin, and Mark Phythian, eds. *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

“公安部负责人就全面深化公安改革有关情况答记者” [Ministry of Public Security Spokesperson Answers Reporters' Questions Regarding the Deepening Reform of Public Security]. *Xinhua News*. 15 February 2015. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2015-02/15/c\\_1114379163.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2015-02/15/c_1114379163.htm) (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

“公安部一次性立案审查22名现役干部 2人被双开” [in One Stroke, the Ministry of Public Security Investigates 22 Active Service Cadres and Expelled 2 from the Party and Public Office]. *QQ News*. 3 November 2015. <http://news.qq.com/a/20151103/019766.htm> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

公安部政治部 [Ministry of Public Security Political Department]. 犯罪情报学教程 [*Crime Intelligence Tutorial*]. Beijing: 群众出版社, 2007.

“《关于全面深化公安改革若干重大问题的框架意见》及相关改革方案已经中央审议通过” [Opinions on Several Major Issues in Deepening the Reform of Public Security' and Relevant Reform Proposals Have Been Deliberated and Adopted by the Center]. Ministry of Public Security. 15 February 2015. <http://www.mps.gov.cn/n2255079/n4876594/n4974590/n4974591/c4976144/content.html> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).

Guo, Xuezhi. *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Huang, Xiaohua, and Zhijian Yu. “由‘8·14’击毙周克华案探析现代警用手枪技战术特征及训练的发展趋势” [Investigating the Future Development of Modern Police Pistol Tactics and Training from the August 14 Shooting of Zhou Kehua]. *公安教育 [Police Education]*, no. 11 (November 2012).

“Information Science.” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/information%20science>.

Ji, You. “China's National Security Commission: Theory, Evolution and Operations.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 98 (3 March 2016).

Jim, Brunsdan, and Chassany Anne-Sylvaine. “Europe's Failure to Share Intelligence Hampers Terror Fight.” *Financial Times*. 4 April 2016.

Johnson, Loch K. *National Security Intelligence: Secret Operations in Defense of the Democracies*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012.

Li, Eva. “China's Worst Serial Killers: A Litany of Evil through History.” *South China Morning Post*. 30 August 2016.

- Li, Jing. "End to Grisly Three-Decade Mystery? Chinese Police Arrest Suspected Serial Killer Accused of Murder and Rape of 11 Women and Girls." *South China Morning Post*. 28 August 2016.
- Li, Shuhua, and Yue Li. "公安情报产品评价研究" [Study on Public Security Intelligence Product Evaluation]. *中国人民公安大学学报 (社会科学版)* [*Journal of Chinese People's Public Security University (Social Sciences Edition)*], no. 3 (June 2012).
- Liu, Xiruo. "公安情报工作的失误与对策研究—基于周克华案件的反思" [The Study of Mistakes and Countermeasure in Public Security Intelligence Work in the Case of Zhou Ke-Hua]. *北京警察学院学报* [*Journal of Beijing Police College*], no. 6 (November 2014).
- Luo, Wei, ed. *The 1997 Criminal Code of the People's Republic of China*. Buffalo, N.Y.: W.S. Hein & Co, 1998.
- Lü, Xuemei. "公安综合情报部门的发展困境与战略转向" [The Difficult Position and Strategic Transformation of Integrated Police Intelligence Department]. *情报杂志* [*Journal of Intelligence*], no. 6 (June 2015).
- Ma, Dehui. "中国公安情报学的兴起和发展" [The Rise and Development of Public Security Intelligence Studies in China]. *情报杂志* [*Journal of Intelligence*], no. 11 (November 2015).
- . "论公安情报分析的案例研究与教学" [On Case Study Method in the Research and Teaching of Public Security Intelligence Analysis]. *情报杂志* [*Journal of Intelligence*], no. 5 (May 2014).
- Mai, Jun. "What NOT to Learn from Zhou Yongkang and Ling Jihua: Fall of China's Corrupt Party 'gangs' a Lesson for Its Cadres." *South China Morning Post*. 16 February 2016.
- Mao, Zedong. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961.
- "National Security Law." China Law Translate. 1 July 2015.  
<http://chinalawtranslate.com/2015nsl> (date accessed: 20 February 2017).
- Nie, Gan, and Jing Huo. "情报导向警务背景下技术侦查的创新与运用—以武汉市'12.1'爆炸案为例" [Application and Innovation of Technology Investigation under Intelligence-Led Policing—a Case Study of Wuhan "December 1" Explosion]. *法制博览(中旬刊)* [*Legality Vision*], no. 2 (February 2012).
- Peng, Zhihui. "论公安情报收集渠道" [On Channels of Public Security Intelligence Gathering]. *河北公安警察职业学院学报* [*Journal of Hebei Vocational College of Public Security Police*], no. 1 (March 2010).
- . "论公安情报的收集内容与方式" [On Methods and Contents of Public Security Intelligence Gathering]. *公安学刊 (浙江警察学院学报)* [*Public Security Science Journal*], no. 2 (April 2012).

## Research

- “People’s Police Law of the People’s Republic of China.” The National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content\\_1383708.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383708.htm). (date accessed: 20 February 2017).
- Ratcliffe, Jerry. *Intelligence-Led Policing*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan, 2008.
- Schoenhals, Michael. *Spying for the People: Mao’s Secret Agents, 1949-1967*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Shan, Yufeng. “对公开情报收集相关问题的研究” [Study on Questions Related to Open Source Intelligence Gathering]. 科技信息 [Science & Technology Information], no. 20 (July 2012).
- Shelley, Louise I. *Policing Soviet Society: The Evolution of State Control*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Shi, Qifei. “浅议公安机关中央事权与地方事权划分、警种、部门设置” [A Probe on the Division of Central Power and Local Governance in Public Security Organs, Police Classification and Department Setting]. 政法学刊 [Journal of Political Science and Law], no. 6 (December 2015).
- Shulsky, Abram N. *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2002.
- Sims, Jennifer E., and Burton L. Gerber, eds. *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005.
- Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Trans. Lionel Giles (Mineola, NY: Dover).
- Tanner, Harold M. “The People’s Liberation Army and China’s Internal Security Challenges.” In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China’s Military*, ed. Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, Andrew Scobell, 237–293. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute-U.S. Army War College, 2010.
- Tromblay, Darren E. *The U.S. Domestic Intelligence Enterprise: History, Development, and Operations*. Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis, 2016.
- Wang, Chang, and Nathan Madson. *Inside China’s Legal System*. Philadelphia, PA: Chandos Publishing, 2013.
- Wang, Ke. “我国情报信息主导警务的推进方法及实践状况” [Current Status and the Means to Impel Intelligence-Led Policing in Our Country]. 湖北警官学院学报 [Journal of Hubei University of Police], no. 7 (July 2105).
- Wang, Yanji, ed. 中国公安科技发展简史 [Brief History on the Technological Advancement of China’s Police]. Beijing: 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2009.
- Wang, Yuhua, and Carl Minzner. “The Rise of the Chinese Security State.” *The China Quarterly* 222 (June 2015).

- Wan, Hongyun, and Yongqing Li, eds. 警察法学 [*Police Law Studies*]. Beijing: 法律出版社, 2015.
- White, Jonathan Randall. *Defending the Homeland: Domestic Intelligence, Law Enforcement, and Security*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2003.
- Wong, Kam C. *Chinese Policing: History and Reform*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
- . *Police Reform in China*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2011.
- Wu, Shaozhong. “公安情报整合共享中的利益格局及破解之道” [Breaking the Interest Configuration of Public Security Intelligence Integration and Sharing]. 北京警察学院学报 [*Journal of Beijing Police College*], no. 4 (July 2015).
- Xie, Yiping, ed. 公安信息化建设基础教程 [*Tutorial on the Fundamentals of Police Informatization Construction*]. Beijing: 群众出版社, 2009.
- Xu, Xinyuan. “我国公安机关和人民警察组织机构历史沿革” [Historical Organizational Changes in Our Country's Public Security Organs and People's Police]. 公安研究 [*Policing Studies*], no. 3 (June 1999).
- Zhang, Chunxia. “公安情报工作的两个基本环节: ‘收集’与‘搜集’ ” [Two Basic Links: “Gathering” and “Collection” in Public Security Intelligence Work]. 辽宁警专学报 [*Journal of Liaoning Police Academy*], no. 3 (May 2014).
- Zhang, Shengguo, and Xiaoli Qi, eds. 宪法学 [*Constitutional Studies*]. Beijing: 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2009.
- Zheng, Qun, and Chuncheng Wang, eds. 国内安全保卫 [*Domestic Security Guard*]. Beijing: 群众出版社, 2009.
- Zhong, Jinyan. “中共政法委制度的历史考察” [A Historical Investigation of the CPC's Political and Law Committee System]. 中共党史研究 [*CPC History Studies*], no. 4 (April 2014).
- “周克华首先掏枪射击警察 ‘爆头哥’被近距离击毙” [Zhou Kehua Shot First at the Police, ‘Head-Buster’ Shot and Killed in Close Quarters]. *Xinhua News*. 14 August 2012. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2012-08/14/c\\_123581834.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2012-08/14/c_123581834.htm). (date accessed: 20 February 2017).
- Zhu, Ming. “公安情报分析的理论模式与创新” [Theoretical Model and Innovation of Public Security Intelligence Analysis]. 图书馆学研究 [*Research on Library Science*], no. 3 (February 2015).