



*Eyes and ears
of the
dragon*

**Chinese intelligence services
Organisation and activities**

1. Introduction

- Cultural misperceptions are quite often the reason for misunderstanding and in consequence for wrong actions and reactions.
- This is especially the case in the intelligence world. Till 1990 the Western intelligence world was well organized:
- „A dragon sitting in Moscow was the target. Now we are in a snakepit not knowing which snakes are poisonous“ – as a Western intelligence chief characterized the new scenario.

- After the end of the Cold war new global threats are coming up: energy shortage, climate change, drugs, money laundry, organized crime, terrorism.
- Especially the last threat – islamistic terrorism – increased its importance and danger for the world in 2001.
- New global threats demand new methods of action, of fighting these threats – also from intelligence services. Now there are different enemies and a different security scenario.
- Especially Asia and here China – for a long time more or less neglected by Western intelligence services – is coming back on the global arena where China makes every effort to become (again) a top global player.

- It's another dragon appearing – the Chinese dragon. And the Chinese intelligence services are the „eyes and ears of the dragon“.
- For obvious reasons the knowledge about Chinese intelligence services is rather limited, not much is known; it's kept as secretly as the making of porcelain
- So after giving a brief survey on the Chinese intelligence services – both in the PR China and on Taiwan – I will concentrate on the activities of the Chinese intelligence services of the PR China, of Western services towards China and finish with a short conclusion.

2. Historical and cultural background

- The reason for keeping intelligence services secret is not because of the organisation itself but because of the target and the actor (spy), that is to cover the espionage action and to protect the spy. Otherwise all activity would be unsuccessful, fruitless.
- Espionage is one of the eldest „trades“ in the world and is used to obtain secret informations to help governments to make decisions.
- This especially applies to the Chinese intelligence services in a country with a 5000 years history and therefore also corresponding experience and mentality of secrecy (porcelain – secret).

2. Historical and cultural background

- Intelligence activity in China started already in prehistoric times but the first concrete instructions were given by Sun Ze (600BC at the time of Confucius).
- Sun Ze gave a definition of espionage, the kind of spies and the way of using them in his book „The art of war“.
- And since that time only little has basically been changed, only modernized especially in the technical field.
- During the imperial time Chinese intelligence services under the leadership of the senior eunuch at the imperial court were mainly active in the surveillance of oppositional groups in the country (especially the triads).

2. Historical and cultural background

- Only minimal or few activity was directed in gathering informations abroad.
- This changed after the revolution 1911, the overthrow of the emperor and the establishment of the „Republic of China“ under Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek.
- Sun Yatsen had his connections with the triads to gather infromations against the ruling Mandchus and the emperor. He founded his own secret society „Xin Zhong Hui“ („New China Society“) which later was transformed into a party – „Guo Min Dang“ (KMT).

The KMT was structured and organized modelling itself on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁷

2. Historical and cultural background

- With the founding of the People's Republic of China by Mao Zedong in 1949 the Soviet Union again played the „godfather“ of the new Chinese intelligence service which was organized after the model of the KGB, the Soviet secret service.
- The founder of the Chinese service was Kang Sheng, also nicknamed the „Chinese Dserschinskji“, named after the founder of the Soviet secret service, the Tscheka, „precursor“ of the KGB.

Kang Sheng established the first Chinese intelligence apparatus „Central department for social affairs“. Later it was renamed „Central Investigating Department“.

2. Historical and cultural background

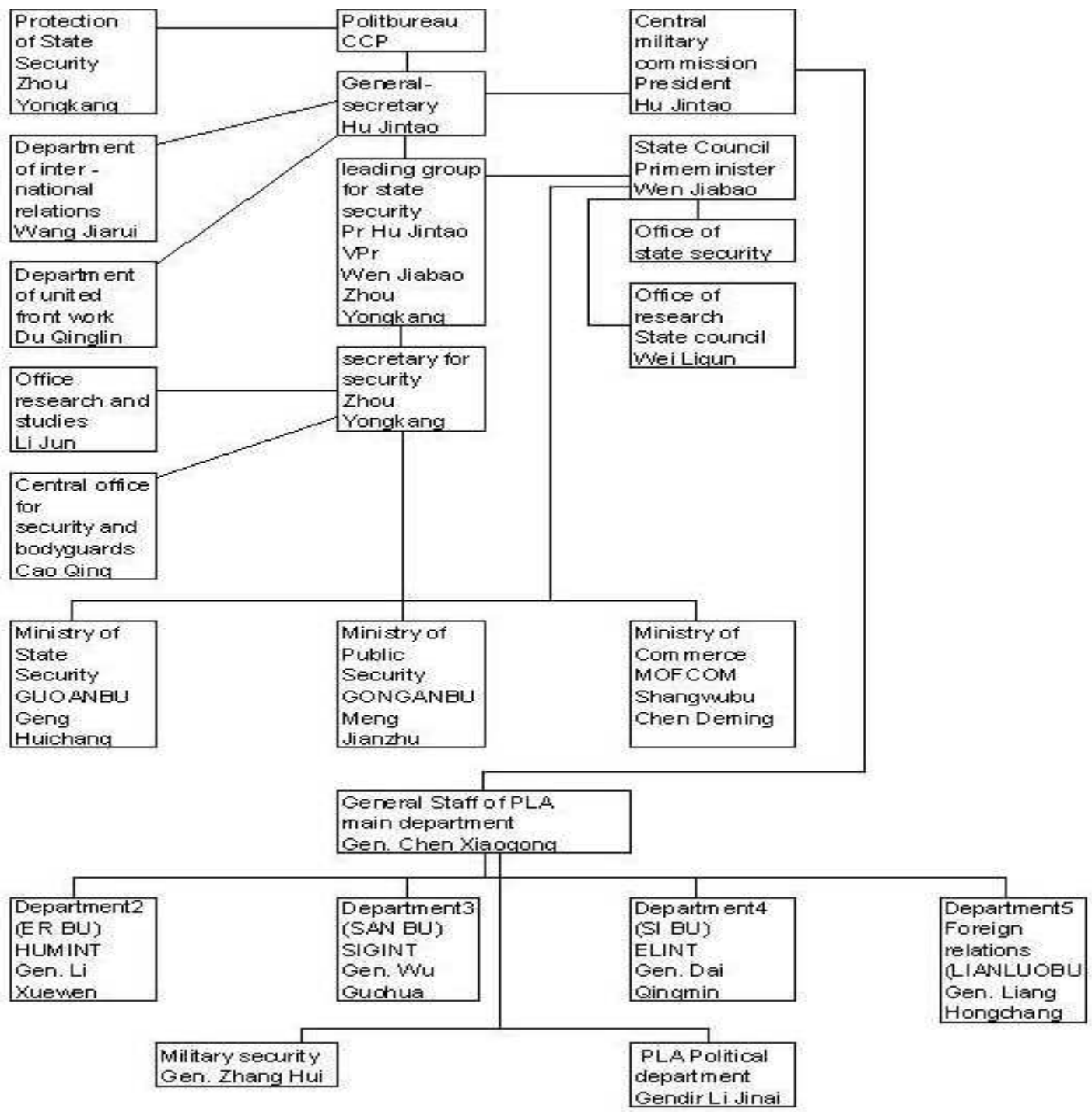
- In this department the „Offices for investigation and research“ existed which in the 1950th were responsible for collecting informations at every Chinese embassy abroad.
- Evaluation and analysis of the informations were carried out at the 8th office of the Central Investigation Department. This office is known as „Institute for contemporary international relations“ since 1978.
- In the 1960th during the cultural revolution in China the Central Investigating Department was dissolved. Personnel and material were taken by the General staff, department 2.

2. Historical and cultural background

- In 1970 the Central Investigating Department was refounded. But Deng Xiaoping ordered that the embassies abroad no longer served as cover for the intelligence service, instead reporters and businessmen were „employed“.
- In 1983 the Central Investigating Department was combined with the counter espionage departments of the ministry of public security and in June 1983 transformed into the Ministry of State Security (MSS), directly under the State Council.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- In the PR China (PRC) quite a number of intelligence and secret services exists.
- But the most important are the Ministry of State Security (Guo Jia An Quan Bu) (MSS) and the military intelligence service (MID) under the Ministry of Defense:
 - General Staff Department 2 (HUMINT)
 - General Staff Department 3 (SIGINT)
 - General Staff Department 4 (ELINT)
- These two organizations are the main actors abroad.





Nachrichtendienste der Volksrepublik China mit Zielbereich Wirtschaft / Wissenschaft

	MSS Guojia Anquanbu (Ministry of State Security)	MID Zhong Chan Er Bu (Military Intelligence Department)	3 VBA Zhong Chan San Bu (Electronic Interception Department)
Aufgaben	Ziviler Inlands- und Auslands- Nachrichtendienst	Militärischer Inlands- und Auslands- Nachrichtendienst	Fernmelde- elektronische Aufklärung
Leiter	Minister GENG Huichang	Generalmajor HUI Yang	Generalmajor SHI Quan

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- Talking about Chinese intelligence services one should not forget the services on Taiwan.
- Sun Yatsen, the founder of the Republic of China (ROC), had sent Chiang Kaishek to Moscow to study the Soviet secret service and build up a similar one in China: National Security Bureau (Guo Jia An Quan Ju) (NSB).
- NSB had the nickname „Taiwan KGB“ and in 1994 became by law a legal institution, very efficient and active all around the world.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- The activity and actions of the Chinese intelligence services can be divided in three periods:
 - 1. 1945 - 1980
 - 2. 1980 - 1990
 - 3. 1990 - till now
- The **first period** is characterized by a concentration of intelligence work inside the country: surveillance, counterespionage and to a certain extent espionage operations against Taiwan. Information-gathering abroad was more or less neglected.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- Main actor was the „Central Department for Social Affairs“ under the famous Kang Sheng; later renamed „Central Department of Investigation“.
- Intelligence activities abroad were mainly performed by the MID, Department 2.
- 1945 - 1949 civil war, victory of PRC, ROC on Taiwan; USA advisors with Mao Zedong and Chiang Kaishek; mainly supporting Mao till the beginning of the Cold War, then on the side of Chiang = cultural misperception
- 1949 - 1971 domestic security, mutual operations PRC and ROC, neglecting the rest of the world
- 1971 - 1980 change of policy ROC – PRC, post-Mao, Deng Xiaoping – birth of the new China

- The **second period** shows a change in intelligence activity and espionage operations. They are still the traditional espionage- and counter-espionage-activities and operations, but slowly enlarging from domestic actions to operations in the international area, especially after the „replacement“ of the ROC by the PRC 1971.
- China's main principle is non-interference in domestic affairs of foreign countries (Bandung).
- With the opening policy proclaimed by Deng Xiaoping (1980) China entered the global arena. To support and speed up China's fast and surprising development and economic growth the assistance of intelligence was and is still needed. This led to the founding of the MSS 1983 and to more activity of the MID abroad.

2. Exes and ears of the dragon

- China used in a more and more aggressive way the means of intelligence for gathering secret informations. The target fields were mainly hightech, armaments industry to help China to catch up in these fields with Western industrial countries. A vast reservoir in helping to reach this goal was and still is the huge number of overseas Chinese.
- The **third period** shows a new scenario – more dangerous with global dimensions. Intelligence services are more important, more needed than before.
- Till 1990 the Chinese intelligence services supported their country by collecting secret informations in the traditional way – espionage.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- But after the end of the Cold War, especially after the disaster of 2001 China saw itself like- the rest of the world- confronted with new threats and dangers that could not be fought the old way, but needed new methods and particularly cooperation with other nations' s secret- and intelligence services.
- Not only its intelligence services but China itself is quite unknown in the West. The picture of China drawn in Western media is sometimes very different from the „real“ China.
- China sees itself as the „empire of the middle“ („Zhong Guo“), the centre of the world as it once has been in his 5000 years long history.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- Now China strives to return to this position by all means. What all Chinese around the world unites for reaching this goal is the ever present nationalism, a cultural nationalism and patriotism. This includes all Chinese – in the PR China, on Taiwan and abroad. They are proud of the achievements of China and its return to a world power. Overseas Chinese are the biggest investors in the PR China. They invest mainly in areas where their ancestors came from.
- Relations („guan xi“) are the most important element in Chinese society stretching around the world. Even after taking a foreign country's nationality Chinese still remain Chinese with strong bonds to their mother-country China.

- Bound to tradition and history Chinese can cope with their own identity and cultural conception but lack experience and knowledge of foreign mentality and culture.
- This applies also to intelligence services who have the psychological knowledge and experience concerning the mentality of their „country-men“.
- These facts are well known to Chinese intelligence services and used for their purpose. The „relation-network“ of the Chinese society at home and abroad also serves this purpose.
- The target groups for the services are therefore ethnic Chinese around the world: overseas Chinese, Chinese students and scientists, businessmen, tourists.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- The necessary „infrastructure“ consists of diplomatic missions, news-agencies, companies and restaurants.
- In this way cultural misperceptions are not occurring and intelligence failures can be avoided.
- The motive for agents recruited are patriotism and loyalty which also can be used as means of pressure.
- Recruiting foreigners, especially Westerners is still rather seldom and only for very important targets.
- Not being familiar with Western culture and behaviour (moral) Chinese intelligence services try to avoid mistakes and failures.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- Chinese intelligence services are also using secret organizations, the Chinese triads which changed from former political opposition groups in China to global organized crime organizations with international relations.
- Last but not least the almost 2500 years long history of Chinese intelligence guarantees successful work. Following the advice of Sun Zi helps avoiding mistakes.
- Foreign intelligence services, including counter-espionage services quite often lack the real understanding of China, its historical, cultural and social background.

2. Eyes and ears of the dragon

- Recruiting Chinese agents is possible, but never a safe affair: a „double agent“ might be the result who finally works for his country. This aspect is often forgotten by counter-espionage services.
- Chinese citizens with USA nationality remain Chinese during all their life willing to help their country China to regain its historical position. They can be regarded as „sleeper agents“ willing or forced to be activated in a target country anytime.
- (2005 – 2007 in USA 30 Chinese were arrested, some with US citizenship, because of economic and military espionage; 2005 Chi Mak (50 years USA), 2008 Chung Dongfang (72 years old)).

3. Conclusion

- Still regarding China as the last „bulwark“ of communism in the world is indeed a (cultural) misperception which leads inevitably to intelligence failures.
- Nationalism is the strong tie to hold the nation (China) together but it is a cultural nationalism, sometimes leading to an extreme patriotism.
- Combined with an intensive global network of relations (guan xi) this phenomenon gives Chinese intelligence services a big advantage over Western services.

3. Conclusion

- Not knowing Western culture the Chinese services try to avoid cultural misperceptions and in consequence intelligence failures. They therefore concentrate on Chinese people where ever they are in target areas to be recruited as agents and work for the Chinese services, willingly or forced to collect secret, needed informations.
- All Chinese abroad – with Chinese or foreign nationality – are a kind of „fifth column“ for China’s intelligence services.
- In combination with Chinese triads China has to its disposal a vast reservoir of potential „sleeper-agents“ in a very efficient global „relation-network“.

- In the traditional intelligence field China can by using agents of the same culture easily avoid cultural misperceptions and intelligence failures
With the new scenario however Chinese intelligence services are confronted with new targets in unknown areas: terrorism, especially islamistic terrorism is based on a culture/religion almost unknown to the Chinese.
- „Religion“ in the Western sense (monotheism) doesn't exist in China. Social life is based on rules of conduct initiated by Confucius and Buddha.
Cultural misperceptions are the consequence.

3. Conclusion

- Chinese intelligence services have indeed a hard time to cope with the new danger and depend on cooperation with other services. But especially the USA war against terrorism „helps“ China to fight all oppositional groups in China (Xinjiang, Tibet) by just calling them „terrorists“.
- Chinese intelligence services are one pillar of power in China besides the Communist Party and the military.
- The „eyes and ears of the dragon“ have an important share in central control and surveillance to keep the „empire“ with 1,3 billion people together and to help China on the way to its „appropriate“ place in the world.

- But it would be a mistake to put the blame on the „communist“ system. This system is regarded as a „foreign dynasty“ like the Mongols or Mandschus.
- The ideology is generally unknown to the Chinese people.
- „Zhong Guo“ is the symbol and target for all Chinese around the world.