

ARTICLE

Intelligence and Security Services of the People's Republic of China: Structure, Reforms, and Oversight in the Xi Jinping Era

MARCIN HUBICKI

University of Warsaw

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1580-8200>

Abstract

The aim of the article is to examine the contemporary structure of the intelligence and security services of the People's Republic of China (PRC), with particular consideration given to the leadership and supervisory role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The study is based on a qualitative analysis of secondary data. The data was collected from documents, statements, expert reports, academic publications, and press materials. The article addresses the problem of defining the group of institutions classified as the PRC's intelligence and security services, and systematising the most recent literature on their tasks, structure, and the logic of their functioning within the party-state system following the reforms introduced under Xi Jinping as General Secretary of the CCP in the years 2013–2025. Due to the specific nature of the subject under analysis, the findings do not provide in-depth knowledge of operational activities of the Chinese services. At the same time, the study identifies the key mechanisms of their bureaucratic functioning and oversight over them, and enables to understand the role of these institutions within the security system of the PRC.

Keywords

PRC intelligence and security services, Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Ministry of State Security (MSS), Ministry of Public Security (MPS), intelligence studies

Introduction

In recent decades, the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a global power was accompanied by an increase in its international activities, including the operations of its intelligence and security services. At the same time, the institutions associated with these services play a significant role in the state's internal affairs. For this reason, an analysis of the contemporary services of the PRC, including their oversight by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP or Party), is important for understanding how present-day China functions.

The aim of the article is to examine the contemporary structure of the PRC's intelligence and security services¹, taking into account their role in the party-state system following the reforms carried out between 2013 and 2025 during the government of the General Secretary of the CCP – Xi Jinping². Despite the growing number of academic publications and expert reports devoted to Chinese services, the literature on the subject remains relatively scattered and often fails to reflect recent institutional developments. There is also a lack of studies in Polish on this subject. The article attempts to fill this gap by systematising the contemporary picture of the PRC's intelligence and security apparatus. Issues relating to the modus operandi of the Chinese services and the field of intelligence information analysis, both of which are extremely challenging as subjects of research, are not the main focus of this discussion and have been merely touched upon in places.

The research method employed is a qualitative analysis of secondary data. The data was gathered from documents, statements, expert reports, academic publications, and press materials. The article addresses questions such as what the institutional scope of the PRC's intelligence and security services is and how the reforms carried out during Xi Jinping's term of office have influenced the current structure of these services and the system of oversight exercised over them by the CCP.

The article adopts a research strategy based on a party-centric approach. This perspective is well established among scholars of communist China³, including the experts from think tanks and government-affiliated analytical centres. The authoritarian political system of the PRC and the resulting limitations on access

¹ The article deliberately avoids using the Polish term 'special services', instead, the term 'intelligence and security services' is used. It better captures the nature of the PRC's apparatus and the subject of the research, which does not focus exclusively on the traditional intelligence.

² Xi Jinping took up his most important position from the perspective of the PRC system, namely General Secretary of the CCP, in November 2012. His security reforms were initiated in 2013.

³ The researchers specialising in the PRC include, among others: Joseph Fewsmith, Joseph Torigian, Neil Thomas, Li Ling, Victor Shih, Li Cheng, Adrian Brona.

to sources make its adoption methodologically justified. This approach differs from the strategies often adopted by experts who engage with China on an ad hoc basis and who frequently lack a sufficient understanding of the logic underpinning the functioning of the CCP. In their publications, Chinese institutions are described through the lens of their legal and procedural competences or compared with their counterparts in democratic countries. This often leads to oversimplifications that reduce the analysis to a description of institutional facades, which, within the PRC system, are secondary to party mechanisms. Lack of discipline in a party-centric approach may lead to Beijingology⁴, however, while maintaining methodological rigour and refraining from drawing in-depth conclusions on the basis of fragmentary evidence, it remains a useful method of analysing the PRC, including its security structures.

State of research

The rise in the PRC's power and its political and economic activity has fuelled research interest in its services – both academic and expert in nature. There is a noticeable trend towards the publication of articles on this subject by former analysts and intelligence officers from Western countries⁵, as well as the expansion of research that was already underway within the fields of regional studies and intelligence studies⁶. Among the most important works of recent years, the study of Peter Mattis and Matthew Brazil entitled *Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer*⁷ holds a special place. The book provides an excellent introduction to the subject, as it offers a well-organised overview of key information on the history, personnel

⁴ As Michał Bogusz and Jakub Jakóbowski point out, in the case of the PRC, the equivalent of Kremlinology should rather be Zhongnanhai-ology referring to Zhongnanhai, that is the seat of the CCP leadership. See: M. Bogusz, J. Jakóbowski, *Zerkając za „bambusową kurtynę”: analizowanie ChRL* (Eng. A glimpse behind the 'bamboo curtain': an analysis of the People's Republic of China), in: *Uporządkować rzeczywistość. Poradnik analityczny Ośrodka Studiów Wschodnich*, W. Konończuk, M. Menkiszak (eds.), Warszawa 2025, p. 380.

⁵ These include among others: Nigel Inkster, David R. Shedd, Andrew Badger, Peter Mattis, Nicholas Eftimiades, Matthew Brazil.

⁶ The results of these studies are published in scientific magazines, including: "The China Quarterly", "The China Journal", "Intelligence and National Security", "International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence", "Studies in Intelligence", as well as in collective works, including: J. Mulvenon, "Secret Line, Open Line": *Inside China's Ministry of State Security*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, L.K. Johnson (ed.), Oxford 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxford-hb/9780197783160.013.0046>.

⁷ P. Mattis, M. Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer*, Annapolis 2019.

and contemporary structure of the Chinese services (although in this respect it has already partially outdated). It also includes concise descriptions of operations – both historical and contemporary, from the first and second decades of the 21st century. An additional advantage of the book is the authors' experience: in addition to their current work as experts, they have previously been professionally involved with the US intelligence community and have worked in a China desk⁸. It is also worth highlighting the older publications: *Chinese Intelligence Operations* by Nicolas Eftimiades and *China's Intelligence and Internal Security Forces (Jane's Special Reports)* by Howard DeVore⁹. It is also worth mentioning Guo Xuezhi's book entitled *China's Security State* on the evolution of the internal security apparatus¹⁰, as well as Joel Wuthnow's publication entitled *China's Other Army: The People's Armed Police in an Era of Reform* dedicated to the reform of the People's Armed Police (PAP)¹¹. There are also studies concerning the specific scientific and technical intelligence sector, industrial espionage as well as obtaining information for research and development purposes from open sources¹². At the same time, historical studies and popular science publications are being published¹³ that disseminate information about the PRC's intelligence and security services, although it should be borne in mind that they often contain oversimplifications¹⁴. The subject also features in publications devoted to China's strategic rivalry with the US, although discussions of the activities of the services form part of broader analyses of the state of relations

⁸ Mattis was a counterintelligence analyst in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), among others, whereas Brazil was an officer of the intelligence structures subordinate to the Department of Defence and a diplomat seconded to the US Embassy in Beijing. See: *Chinese Communist Espionage. About the Author*, U.S. Naval Institute, <https://www.usni.org/press/books/chinese-communist-espionage#-author> [accessed: 5 IX 2026].

⁹ N. Eftimiades, *Chinese Intelligence Operations*, Annapolis 1994; H. DeVore, *China's Intelligence and Internal Security Forces (Jane's Special Reports)*, Coulsdon 1999. The most recent publication comparing case studies of operations is: N. Eftimiades, *Chinese Espionage. Operations and Tactics*, [n.p.] 2020.

¹⁰ X. Guo, *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics*, Cambridge 2012.

¹¹ J. Wuthnow, *China's Other Army: The People's Armed Police in an Era of Reform*, Washington 2019.

¹² *China's Quest for Foreign Technology. Beyond Espionage*, W.C. Hannas, D.K. Tatlow (eds.), New York 2021; W.C. Hannas, J.C. Mulvenon, A. Puglisi, *Chinese Industrial Espionage: Technology Acquisition and Military Modernisation*, New York 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203630174>

¹³ M. Schoenhals, *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949–1967*, Cambridge 2013; R. Faligot, *Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping*, London 2019.

¹⁴ I. Smith, N. West, *Historical Dictionary of Chinese Intelligence*, Lanham 2012; D. Wise, *Tiger Trap: America's Secret Spy War with China*, Boston 2011.

between the two countries¹⁵. Publications concerning the surveillance system and the role of the services in its operation are also available¹⁶.

The scope of the Chinese publications on the contemporary PRC's services remains limited due to the censorship in this state. Nevertheless, memoirs and biographies of former officers, historical works, and departmental studies were produced¹⁷. There are also thematic works, including those published in Chinese industry journals, but access to them is limited¹⁸.

Articles by Dariusz Pożaroszczyk, Marcin Adamczyk and Kamil Baraniuk, among others, were published in Poland¹⁹. Unfortunately, some of them are now out of date, particularly with regard to the description of the organisation of the military apparatus. In turn, the publication by Adamczyk and Baraniuk entitled *The intelligence service of People's Republic of China – an outline of structures and methods of activity* uses the 'beach metaphor'²⁰ as a way of describing the modus operandi of the PRC's intelligence. Nowadays, this metaphor is sometimes criticised (for example by Mattis and Joske)²¹, although its supporters are still present in

¹⁵ For example: *Cold Rivals: The New Era of US-China Strategic Competition*, E.S. Medeiros (ed.), Washington 2023.

¹⁶ For example: M. Pei, *The Sentinel State. Surveillance and the Survival of Dictatorship in China*, Cambridge 2024.

¹⁷ D.I. Chambers, *The Past and Present State of Chinese Intelligence Historiography*, "Studies in Intelligence" 2012, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 31–46; Ch. Andrew, *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence*, London 2018, pp. 752–753.

¹⁸ For example: "Guojia Anquan Tongxun" (Eng. State Security Bulletin) – the PRC's Ministry of State Security monthly magazine with restricted circulation.

¹⁹ D. Pożaroszczyk, *Wywiad Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej – charakterystyka działalności i zagrożenia dla Polski* (Eng. Intelligence of the People's Republic of China – activity characteristic and threats to Poland), "Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego" 2017, no. 16, pp. 98–113; M. Adamczyk, K. Baraniuk, *Wywiad Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej – zarys struktur i metod działalności* (Eng. The intelligence service of People's Republic of China – an outline of structures and methods of activity), "Studia Orientalne" 2017, no. 2, pp. 34–58; M. Adamczyk, K. Baraniuk, *Wywiad jako instrument chińskiej polityki zagranicznej – przyczynek do badań* (Eng. Intelligence as a tool of Chinese foreign policy – contribution to research), "Studia Orientalne" 2017, no. 1, pp. 41–72. <https://doi.org/10.15804/so2017103>.

²⁰ 'Beach metaphor' (also known as 'thousand grains of sand') describes a view according to which the Chinese intelligence obtains information by making extensive use of a wide range of entities, including students, scientists, entrepreneurs and representatives of the diaspora. Although the PRC's intelligence and security services do indeed use the representatives of these circles, some researchers consider this metaphor misleading. In their opinion, it wrongly suggests that China's intelligence activity relies on the mass gathering of scattered information by amateurs, with a limited role for staff officers and without a clear focus on priority targets.

²¹ P. Mattis, *Assessing Western Perspectives on Chinese Intelligence*, "International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence" 2012, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 680–682. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2012.6>

the discourse (e.g. Eftimades). Works on the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) are also being published in Poland, but the issue of reconnaissance and military intelligence is only their secondary focus²².

Sources of information regarding the PRC's services also include public reports from counter-intelligence and intelligence services²³, as well as from government, parliamentary and investigative commissions of other countries²⁴. However, when dealing with this type of sources, the role of these entities and the context of their political relationships should also be taken into account.

Documents, court statements and media reports constitute a supplementary base. They usually provide fragmentary information, for example relating to operations that have been disclosed, and do not allow for the reconstruction of a broader picture of the activities. However, they may serve as sources indicating activity and provide basic information on the modus operandi of the officers of the PRC's services and their agents.

In recent years, the intensification of research into Chinese services has been evident among experts from think tanks and government-affiliated analytical centres. This applies in particular to Anglo-Saxon institutions, but also to others²⁵. In Poland, there is a lack of reports focused on the PRC's intelligence and security services. At the same time, studies by Polish analysts are being published, providing an introduction to the functioning of the CCP (including those by Michał Bogusz, Jakub Jakóbowski, Grzegorz Stec), which also translate into a greater capacity to analyse matters concerning the security sector in China.

An increasing number of publications on the influence operation or foreign interference are available, and some of them analyse the role of the PRC's services²⁶. Many, however, have a broader research scope, encompassing the activities

78745; A. Joske, *Spies and Lies: How China's Greatest Covert Operations Fooled the World*, Melbourne 2022, pp. 4–5.

²² R. Kwieciński, *W cieniu niepewności. Siła militarna Chin w erze Xi Jinpinga* (Eng. In the Shadow of Uncertainty. China's Military Power in the Era of Xi Jinping), Kraków 2023.

²³ For example: Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego, *Wybrane aktywności 2024–2025* (Eng. Polish Internal Security Agency (ABW) 2024–2025 Selected activities), Warszawa 2026, pp. 15–16; Bezpieczeństwi Informacji Służba, *Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2024, 2025*, p. 34.

²⁴ For example: US-China Economic & Security Review Commission, *Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference* (Canada).

²⁵ These include, among others: Jamestown Foundation, Hoover Institution, Australian Strategic Pacific Institute, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Royal United Services Institute. An example analysis of a non-Anglo-Saxon centre: P. Charon, J.-B. Jeangène Vilmer, *Les opérations d'influence chinoises*, Paris 2021.

²⁶ For example: A. Joske, *Spies and Lies...*, 2022; C. Hamilton, M. Ohlberg, *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party Is Reshaping the World*, London 2021.

of numerous PRC's party-state entities, rather than focusing solely on intelligence and security services. In addition to this type of work, there are also expert analyses and journalistic investigations that shed light on the ways in which the PRC influences internal affairs of other states²⁷.

Reforms implemented during Xi Jinping's government and the structure of the PRC's intelligence and security services

Between 2012 and 2013, the PRC saw an acceleration of reforms in the security sector. The official goal of the reforms was to build a state oriented towards national security²⁸. Over a decade during which this process unfolded, the definition of national security was progressively broadened, encompassing 16 areas in 2022²⁹ and 20 by the end of 2025³⁰. Political security remains a cornerstone of the system, acting as the ultimate guarantor of the CCP's power³¹. The reforms have been reflected in the drafting and amendment of legislation, including that affecting intelligence and security apparatus. For this reason, it is appropriate to provide a list of the relevant acts and their general description. Table 1 illustrates the process of expanding the legislation between 2013 and 2025³².

²⁷ These include, among others: J. Manthorpe, *Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada*, Toronto 2019; S. Czubkowska, *Chińczycy trzymają nas mocno. Pierwsze śledztwo o tym, jak Chiny kolonizują Europę, w tym Polskę* (Eng. The Chinese hold us tight. The first investigation into how China is colonising Europe, including Poland), Kraków 2022.

²⁸ In Mandarin, 'national security' and 'state security' are written using the same characters 国家安全 (*guojia anquan*), and so this translation remains the subject of debate. In this article, the term 'national security' in relation to the PRC is understood as a security of the party-state system, i.e. the effective safeguarding of the continuity of the CCP's government. See: S. Chestnut Greitens, *How Does China Think about National Security?*, in: *The China Questions 2: Critical Insights into US-China Relations*, M. Carrai, J. Rudolph, M. Szonyi (eds.), Cambridge 2022, pp. 171–177.

²⁹ See: the Table prepared by the analysts of the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS): K. Drinhausen, H. Legarda, *'Comprehensive National Security' unleashed: How Xi's approach shapes China's policies at home and abroad*, Berlin 2022, p. 11.

³⁰ *Xin shidai de Zhongguo guojia anquan* (Eng. China's national security in new era), The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 12 V 2025, http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/zfbps_2279/202505/t20250512_894771.html, section II [accessed: 9 II 2026].

³¹ J. Nyman, *Towards a Global Security Studies: What Can Looking at China Tell Us About the Concept of Security?*, "European Journal of International Relations" 2023, vol. 29, no. 3, p. 675. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661231176990>.

³² The full titles of the Acts are provided in the bibliography (editor's note).

Table 1. Selected changes to the law of the PRC during Xi Jinping’s reforms in the area of security.

Sector	Year of adoption and amendment	Legal act	Scope of regulation	Significance for intelligence and security apparatus
Intelligence, counter-intelligence, protection of classified information	2015	National Security Law	framework act for the security sector	ideological and legal foundation of the security system; umbrella law, which legitimises the subsequent broadening of the national security concept
	2017	National Intelligence Law	general framework for the functioning of the PRC’s intelligence structures	act codifying the intelligence law, which legitimises and confirms the duty to co-operate with intelligence authorities; the Act sets out the types of organs carrying out intelligence activities (state security organs, public security intelligence organs, military intelligence organs – however, it does not identify exhaustively specific services or define a detailed division of responsibilities among them), as well as general principles governing the management and coordination of their activities
	2014 (amendment in 2023)	Counter-Espionage Law	counter-intelligence	extension of the definition of espionage and the protected elements; expansion of the services’ powers regarding counter-intelligence, including – though not literally – the Ministry of State Security

Sector	Year of adoption and amendment	Legal act	Scope of regulation	Significance for intelligence and security apparatus
Intelligence, counter-intelligence, protection of classified information	1988 (amendments in 2010 and 2024)	State Secrets Protection Law	protection of classified information, counter-intelligence	strengthening control over the flow of information and accountability for violations; extension of the scope of protected information to include the category of 'work-related secrecy'; formalisation of the role of the CCP organ in shaping policy of protection of classified information
Supervision, anti-corruption	2018 (amendment in 2024)	Supervision Law	supervision, disciplining the elites, anti-corruption activities	institutionalisation of powers of the CCP Central Disciplinary Commission within structures of the National Commission of Supervision
The police and security apparatus	1995 (amendment in 2012)	People's Police Law	status and powers of the People's Police	basic regulation regarding the Police in the PRC; work is currently underway on an amendment, the draft of which was published in January 2026
	2015	Counter-Terrorism Law	combating terrorism and extremism	regulation regarding combating traditional terrorism; at the same time, legalisation of broad preventive measures; expanding the definitions of terrorism and extremism enabling their use against, e.g. political opposition or minorities

Sector	Year of adoption and amendment	Legal act	Scope of regulation	Significance for intelligence and security apparatus
The police and security apparatus	2009 (amendment in 2020)	Law on the People's Armed Police	subordination and tasks of the PAP	statutory subordination of the PAP solely to the Central Military Commission and elimination of dual supervision; previously, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) exercised operational control over the current use of the PAP in the area of internal security
Cybersecurity, external influences	2016	Law on the Management of the Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations' Activities within Mainland China	supervision of NGOs	in fact, the law against foreign NGOs; registration, supervision and sanctions against these organisations under the MPS control; previously this remained to a significant extent under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Affairs
	2020	Law on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	functioning of the security apparatus in autonomous region	legal neutralisation of a significant autonomy for Hong Kong; legalisation of the presence of the PRC services in Hong Kong; new crimes against the state's security and a possibility of transferring cases to the continental jurisdiction

Sector	Year of adoption and amendment	Legal act	Scope of regulation	Significance for intelligence and security apparatus
Cybersecurity, external influences	2021	Data Security Law	data	data as an element of the national security; facilitated administrative and regulatory supervision of data processing
	2016 (amendment in 2025)	Cybersecurity Law	networks, IT systems, critical infrastructure	formal inclusion of cyberspace to the national security system; formalisation of reporting obligations by operators

Source: own elaboration.

Within the framework of the PRC's system, law remains ultimately subordinate to the CCP's directives, however, it also serves the function of legitimising and organising the key mechanisms of the state's operation, as well as highlights the importance of a given sphere. One example is the National Intelligence Law, which neither assigns operational responsibilities nor defines exhaustively a catalogue of the services, but above all plays a normative and ideological role. It is worth emphasising that this act provides for an obligation of cooperation between Chinese citizens and economic entities with the country's foreign intelligence (Art. 7), which caused concern among some Western experts. However, similar provisions have already appeared in other acts, and enforcing of cooperation does not necessarily have to be based on the legal regulations in authoritarian system³³.

The PRC's legal acts do not indicate exhaustively the full names of intelligence institutions, limiting itself to an exchange of general categories of organs (state security, public security and military intelligence). This fact and the nature of the work of some units of the CCP contribute to the scope of the subject being interpreted too broadly in the discourse of the Chinese services. Criticism is therefore justified regarding an approach in which 'Chinese intelligence' sometimes includes the structures of the Central Committee (CC) – the United Front Work

³³ Obligations of cooperation have already been indicated, among others, in the Counter-Espionage Law (Art. 8) and in the Counter-Terrorism Law (Art. 9). See: J. Daum, *What China's National Intelligence Law Says, And Why it Doesn't Matter*, China Law Translate, 22 II 2024, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/what-the-national-intelligence-law-says-and-why-it-doesnt-matter/> [accessed: 9 II 2026].

Department³⁴ and the International Liaison Department³⁵, which is responsible for cooperation between foreign political groups, particularly communist and socialist.

The indicated units of the CC actually cooperate with the PRC's intelligence and security organs and can serve as cover institutions. However, it does not mean that they constitute the PRC's intelligence services in the strict sense. Firstly, although these entities play a crucial role in extending the PRC's political influence, and in some cases, in interfering in third countries, the main objectives of their activities are not limited to systematic acquiring information, including classified information, or to combating 'threats' with the use of specialised staff and technical measures. Expanding influence, party diplomacy or even lobbying in the so-called grey zone are not tantamount to conducting intelligence activity. Secondly, gathering and analysing information is not a sufficient criterion for regarding an entity as an intelligence service. These activities are natural for political institutions or their background, and expanding the definition of intelligence to all organs of this type would lead to a blurring of the meaning of the term and make research more difficult, among others.

Difficulties arise with 'total' definition of the PRC's intelligence, under which the following are sometimes included: cultural institutions, media, scientific institutes, enterprises and natural persons. There is no doubt that some of the cases that have come to light point to collaboration between these entities or operations involving undercover staff officers of the PRC's services³⁶. At the same time,

³⁴ The United Front Work Department of the CC manages the United Front system. In external dimension, it includes, among others, impact on diaspora, organisations, some media outlets, political circles and enterprises; in the internal dimension, it oversees, among others, licensed parties, religious and ethnic issues as well as Taiwan affairs. Although the Department plays a leading role and is responsible for coordination, other institutions also carry out activities within the scope of the United Front. See: A. Joske, *The party speaks for you: Foreign interference and the Chinese Communist Party's united front system*, Policy brief. Report No 32/2020, Canberra 2020; K.K. Gershaneck, *Political warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to "Win without Fighting"*, Quantico 2020, pp. 52–55.

³⁵ In one of its reports, the Czech counter-intelligence service described this department as intelligence service. See: Bezpečnostní Informační Služba, *Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2015*, 2016, p. 9.

³⁶ In the context of allegations that company employees from the PRC have collaborated with the Chinese intelligence or served as staff officer it is worth recalling the case of Weijing W., who worked at the Consulate of the PRC in Gdańsk and subsequently became the director at Huawei Polska. In January 2019, he was detained on suspicion of espionage for the PRC. The case was of a precedent-setting nature – it is believed to be the first instance in a NATO member state of a permanent Huawei employee being detained on suspicion of espionage. See: M. Mikowski, *Dyrektor z Huawei oskarżony o szpiegostwo ponownie zatrzymany* (Eng. Huawei director accused of espionage arrested again), PAP, 30 VII 2021, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C920081%2Cdirektor-z-huawei-oskarzony-o-szpiegostwo-ponownie-zatrzymany.html> [accessed: 9 II 2026]. For comparison,

however, some of the matters relating to the acquiring technologies, corruption or illegal lobbying are of grassroots nature (i.e. indirectly managed by the PRC's intelligence). For this reason, it is necessary to maintain analytical distance regarding the automatic attribution of every type of action to the Chinese intelligence services within the traditional understanding of intelligence concept³⁷.

Consequently, the author of the article advocates an approach that combines legal framework with the practice of party apparatus, which makes it possible to limit the concept of the PRC's intelligence and security services to institutions that actually carry out intelligence, counter-intelligence, police (including political police), anti-corruption, as well as supervisory and repressive tasks.

Table 2 groups the institutions that are part of a broadly defined PRC's intelligence and security apparatus, and indicates their basic tasks and the methods used.

Table 2. The PRC's intelligence and security services – tasks and operating methods.

Category	Institution	Tasks and operating methods
Civilian intelligence and security services as well as the police (including political police)	Ministry of State Security	civilian foreign intelligence and internal counter-intelligence; political security tasks, i.e. combating opposition and ideological threats
	Ministry of Public Security	protection of public order and internal security, including political police; activity inside the PRC, but sometimes also abroad (e.g. control of diaspora); sometimes carrying out or supporting counter-intelligence tasks; supervision of migration, foreign NGOs, some foreigners and their enterprises

Meng Wanzhou, vice chairwoman and daughter of Huawei's founder, was detained in Canada in 2018. See: *The Meng Wanzhou Huawei saga: A timeline*, CBC News, 25 IX 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/meng-wanzhou-huawei-kovrig-spavor-1.6188472> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

³⁷ Analysis of 595 cases that have come to light indicates that approx. 22% of cases (approx. 130 cases) concerned enterprises or people operating solely for commercial gain. See: N. Eftimiades, *Chinese Espionage...*, p. 8.

Category	Institution	Tasks and operating methods
Intelligence and reconnaissance services of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)	Intelligence Bureau of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission	military intelligence; using the network of defence attachés; integration of information from various sources for the purpose of the PLA and of the CCP leadership
	intelligence and technical reconnaissance units of the PLA (established following the dissolution of the Strategic Support Force in 2024) operating within Information Support Force, Cyberspace Force, Aerospace Force	reconnaissance; technical intelligence (SIGINT, IMINT and others), activities in cyberspace, informational and electronic support
Internal security forces	The People's Armed Police (gendarmerie, de facto internal security troops and coast guard)	preventive measures; combating terrorism, riot control, critical infrastructure protection; use of paramilitary forces for tasks within the scope of internal security
Anti-corruption service and the apparatus for supervising the party-state system	Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the CCP / National Supervisory Commission (NSC)	integrated apparatus for the control, anti-corruption and de facto disciplining of the elite; supervision of the Party and the entire public sector, including by disciplinary and quasi-investigative proceedings (e.g. <i>liuzhi</i>); the NSC is the state body responsible for institutionalising the CCDI (the practice 'one institution – two nameplates'); apart from combating corruption it is an actual tool of repression against staff of public sector and entities that are related to a state apparatus (e.g. tender contractors)

Source: own elaboration.

The Ministry of State Security (MSS) established in 1983³⁸ is an organ combining civilian intelligence and internal counter-intelligence. In addition to two

³⁸ Until its establishment in 1983, foreign civilian intelligence operated in a party cell, i.e. the Central Investigation Department of the CC. The MPS carried out counter-intelligence tasks.

basic functions, the MSS performs tasks related to combating political opposition (including abroad) and protection of political system³⁹. The activity of the MSS in the field of foreign intelligence remained limited until the end of the 1990s. This was due to the need to build structures (including postings at diplomatic missions) as well as dominant role of the military intelligence, which was preferred by key decision-makers of the CCP (the eras of Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin)⁴⁰. The actions of Jia Chunwang, who was a Minister of State Security between 1985 and 1998, enabled the development of the internal role through the expansion of the MSS's regional structures, encompassing provinces and cities with provincial status, as well as in some places lower levels of administration⁴¹.

At the beginning of the 21st century, there was an increase in activity of the MSS in foreign intelligence. This process was reflected in an increase in the number of conventional intelligence operations while simultaneously reducing the focus on combating opposition abroad. This was accompanied by the lifting of some restrictions regarding the presence of officers in some of the PRC's embassies and the recruitment of personal sources⁴². Since 1990s, within the MSS, specialised units for activities in cyberspace, operating in parallel to military cybernetic structures, have begun to be created. They achieved operational successes in the 21st century⁴³. During Xi Jinping's term in office, there is to be a noticeable expansion of the scope of competences and operation of the MSS, including the signals concerning a change in the management of regional structures. These processes are accompanied by the MSS's 'opening to the public', encompassing, among others, information campaigns and celebration of the Security Education Day, establishment of channels in social media, as well as a webpage to report threats⁴⁴.

³⁹ M. Pei, *Piercing the Veil of Secrecy: The Surveillance Role of China's MSS and MPS*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2024, no. 79, pp. 1–3.

⁴⁰ P. Mattis, E. Kania, *Modernizing Military Intelligence: Playing Catchup (Part Two)*, "China Brief" 2016, vol. 16, no. 19.

⁴¹ P. Mattis, M. Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage...*, pp. 54–55.

⁴² P. Mattis, *The New Normal: China's Risky Intelligence Operations*, *The National Interest*, 6 VII 2015, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-new-normal-chinas-risky-intelligence-operations-13260> [accessed: 27 II 2026].

⁴³ Examples include attacks on the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), as a result of which data of millions of current and former US administration workers were obtained. This information was intended to be used by the PRC's services to select people for recruitment. See: Ch. Wray, *The Threat Posed by the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party to the Economic and National Security of the United States*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 7 VII 2020, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/the-threat-posed-by-the-chinese-government-and-the-chinese-communist-party-to-the-economic-and-national-security-of-the-united-states> [accessed: 27 II 2026].

⁴⁴ S. Chestnut Greitens, *Counter-Espionage and State Security: The Changing Role of China's Ministry*

One element of the activities of the MSS is the use of support from universities and think tanks. The best-known is the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). Although formally, there is no confirmation of the CICIR's subordination, analysts indicate this centre as the 11th Bureau of the MSS⁴⁵. Geng Huichang, a former head of the MSS, was a director of the CICIR and its US analyst before assuming the post of the minister. Other centres, among others, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences⁴⁶, are to be used as a cover in operational activities by the officers. However, this practice is not characteristic of the PRC and exists also in democratic states, where similar institutions are the locations of intelligence officers.

Organisational structure of the head office remains classified, however, based on scattered information, some analysts attempt to reconstruct the MSS's organisational structure⁴⁷. Organisationally, the MSS consists of the headquarters in Beijing and regional units, where the MSS encompasses departments (regional offices) of the state security at the provincial level and offices in cities with provincial status⁴⁸, as well as lower level offices in prefectures and some districts. Unlike the common regional structure of the police, the MSS's system is more focused on district and prefecture levels. According to some experts, some of the regional offices of the MSS have international specialisations⁴⁹.

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is the largest PRC's civilian security organ, which carries out its tasks through an extensive police structure⁵⁰. The scope of the MPS's competencies goes beyond the traditional fight against

of State Security, "China Leadership Monitor" 2025, no. 83, p. 2.

⁴⁵ W. Zajączkowski, *Rozumieć politykę międzynarodową. Metody analizy źródeł otwartych* (Eng. Understanding international politics. Methods of open-source analysis), Warszawa 2025, p. 101.

⁴⁶ *Virginia Man Arrested and Charged With Espionage*, U.S. Department of Justice, 22 VI 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/virginia-man-arrested-and-charged-espionage> [accessed: 25 II 2026].

⁴⁷ In their book, Mattis and Brazil write about 18 cells comprising the MSS. In turn, an analysis co-authored by A. Joske, indicates that around 2018, the head office of the MSS underwent reorganisation and now comprises at least 20 cells. See: P. Mattis, M. Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage...*, p. 58; A. Joske, Y. Jeon, *Redesigning State Security: The 2018 Reorganisation of the Ministry of State Security*, "Deserepi: Studies in Chinese Communist Party External Work" 2025, no. 1, p. 1, 16–17.

⁴⁸ At the provincial level we are dealing with departments (*ting*). In cities with provincial status, despite their formally equal status, analogous units are referred to as bureaus (*ju*), for example: the Shanghai State Security Bureau (*Shanghai shi guojia anquan ju*).

⁴⁹ P. Mattis, *Everything We Know about China's Secretive State Security Bureau*, The National Interest, 10 VII 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/everything-we-know-about-chinas-secretive-state-security-21459> [accessed: 25 II 2026].

⁵⁰ E. Schwarck, *Intelligence and Informatization: The Rise of the Ministry of Public Security in Intelligence Work in China*, "The China Journal" 2018, vol. 80, p. 22. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697089>.

crime, encompassing the protection of decision-makers, anti-terrorist activities and political security. Due to historical, operational and technical conditions, the MPS carries out also some of the counter-intelligence tasks, performing an auxiliary function towards the MSS⁵¹. The Political Security Bureau (the 1st Bureau of the MPS) plays a key role in the sphere of combating opposition and counter-intelligence.

The MPS operates as a political police also outside China. These are both overt and covert operations aimed at surveillance and bringing into the PRC persons wanted by the security organs⁵². These activities are conducted within the framework of both official police cooperation and undercover operation⁵³. The MPS also represents the PRC in the Interpol, which enables it to initiate international procedures, including application for the issuance of red notes that can be used as a tool for the extradition of not only common criminals but also Chinese dissidents⁵⁴. Relevant literature and reports refer to the operation of illegal posts of the MPS, which are used for surveillance and monitoring of diaspora, combating opposition and gathering information outside the territory of China⁵⁵.

The MPS manages the control infrastructure in China, including CCTV (closed circuit television) systems, registers, databases (including hotels), oversight of cyberspace and systems of identification of the population. The National Immigration Administration, which reports to the MPS, is responsible for control of the borders and monitoring of population. In relation to China's population, the MPS is not a proportionally large structure, hence, a model of proactive police measures based on a systematic information analysis (intelligence-led policing) has been in place for years. As part of this, information obtained by the cells of the MPS

⁵¹ P. Mattis, M. Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage...*, pp. 40–41.

⁵² See: M. Walden, *Operation Fox Hunt and China's international efforts to force 'fugitives' back*, ABC News, 18 I 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-19/china-operations-to-force-fugitives-back/100747234> [accessed: 12 III 2026].

⁵³ For example: *Nine Individuals Charged in Superseding Indictment with Conspiring to Act as Illegal Agents of the People's Republic of China*, U.S. Department of Justice, 22 VII 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/nine-individuals-charged-superseding-indictment-conspiring-act-illegal-agents-people-s> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

⁵⁴ One of the main tasks of the Chinese intelligence and security apparatus is combating the activities of dissidents and other circles considered a threat for the leadership of the CCP, in particular the Five Poisons, including: democratic opposition, the Falun Gong movement, and the independence movements in Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang.

⁵⁵ *110 Overseas: Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild*, Safeguard Defenders, 29 X 2022, <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/publications/110-overseas> [accessed: 12 III 2026]; *Two Arrested for Operating Illegal Overseas Police Station of the Chinese Government*, U.S. Department of Justice, 17 IV 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-arrested-operating-illegal-overseas-police-station-chinese-government> [accessed: 5 III 2026].

is integrated for the purpose of carrying out not only preventive but also repressive measures⁵⁶.

Structurally, the MPS – just as the MSS – consists of the headquarters in Beijing and extensive network of regional public security departments at provincial level, security bureaus in separate towns (equivalent to provinces), as well as lower-ranking bureaus at prefecture and district levels, completed by police stations at the lowest levels. Regional units retain a certain degree of autonomy but remain dependant on local structures of the Party, and a local police chief is often a member of these structures. Given the size and scope of the tasks carried out, the MPS remains a much more visible element of the Chinese security apparatus than the MSS⁵⁷.

The PRC's **military intelligence components** were reorganised as a result of the reforms of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and the Chinese PLA initiated by Xi Jinping and carried out between 2015 and 2016, and then continued in 2024. Previously, the military intelligence structures served as General Staff departments⁵⁸. During the reforms initiated by Xi Jinping, the General Staff was transformed into the Joint Staff Department of all branches of the PLA armed forces and serves as the Department of the CMC. As part of this, the **Joint Staff Department Intelligence Bureau** was established. It is responsible for strategic military intelligence, integrates information from various structures of the PLA and collects information independently, including via the network of defence attachés. Military intelligence also oversees analytical centres performing the functions of think tanks, international contact institutions, and sometimes cover function⁵⁹. The best known are the China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CIISS) and the China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (CFISS)⁶⁰.

Military intelligence and technical reconnaissance were transferred to the newly established branch of the PLA armed forces – the Strategic Support

⁵⁶ E. Schwarck, *Behind the Golden Shield: China Reforms Public Security Intelligence*, "China Brief" 2017, vol. 17, no. 16. More on intelligence-led policing See: J.H. Ratcliffe, *Intelligence-Led Policing*, London 2016.

⁵⁷ Y. Ma, *The Police System in China*, in: *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Criminology*, L. Cao, I.Y. Sun, B. Heberton (eds.), London–New York 2014, pp. 64–67.

⁵⁸ According to classification: the Second Department (2PLA) responsible for HUMINT, strategic intelligence and IMINT; the Third Department (3PLA) carrying out SIGINT tasks and operations in cyberspace, and the Fourth Department (4PLA) dealing with electronic warfare and information activities. The activities of cyber units were supposed to partially overlap.

⁵⁹ P. Mattis, M. Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage...*, pp. 51–52.

⁶⁰ More on the history of these institutions, see: B. Gill, J. Mulvenon, *Chinese Military-Related Think Tanks and Research Institutions*, "The China Quarterly" 2002, vol. 171, no. 1, pp. 617–624. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000384>.

Force (SSF) in 2015⁶¹. These forces were responsible for, among others, SIGINT, cyberspace activities, electronic warfare and information support, carrying out tasks for the purpose of both the CMC and regional commands. In 2024, the SSF was dissolved and its tasks were distributed between: the Information Support Force, the Cyberspace Force and the Aerospace Force⁶².

The People's Armed Police (PAP) acts as gendarmerie and de facto the PRC's internal troops. Until 2018, the formation was simultaneously subordinate to the CMC and the MPS, with minister exercising political and party supervision over it and operational management regarding the public order protection⁶³. Reforms from the years 2017–2018 abolished dual management and subordinated the PAP to the CMC, in which general secretary of the CCP as its head plays a particular role. Reconnaissance and analysis units carrying out police and military tasks, and not strategic intelligence, operate within the framework of the PAP. The formation is focused on maintaining internal order, responding to mass unrest, counter-terrorist activities, supporting the PLA in case of armed conflict, reinforcing border security, as well as protection of territorial waters after the incorporation of the Coast Guard into its structures in 2018⁶⁴.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the CCP and its state-run extension in the form of the National Supervisory Commission (NSC) after the 2018 reform serves as: 1) party-state supervisory tool, 2) the main anti-corruption organ, 3) discipline tool and the instigator of the purges against the Chinese elites. Although in majority of the literature the CCDI is not classified as an internal security organ, the reforms carried out under the government of Xi Jinping justify such an approach in functional terms. This is supported by the current powers, scale and modus operandi of the CCDI.

The process of transformation of the CCDI into a quasi-organ of internal security was part of a broader trend of expansion of the party apparatus during the Xi

⁶¹ US–China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China's Intelligence Services and Espionage Threats to the US*, 2019, 3rd section, p. 290.

⁶² J. Dahm, *A Disturbance in the Force: The Reorganization of PLA Command and Elimination of China's Strategic Support Force*, "China Brief" 2024, vol. 24, no. 9.

⁶³ J. Wuthnow, *China's Other Army...*, pp. 6–10.

⁶⁴ T.W. Carberry, *China's People's Armed Police Presents a Significant Force Multiplier During Armed Conflict*, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2025, pp. 1–3. The article does not include the regular divisions of the PLA, which does not perform a key function of the internal security organ, although it constitutes the 'last line' of the CCP system in the event of, for example, large scale riots. The People's Militia (*minbing*) plays a role similar to the National Guard, reserve and supporting roles in the area of internal security. The Central Guard Bureau subordinate to the General Office of the CC has been excluded from the list. The Central Guard Bureau is responsible for the safety of the Party leadership.

Jinping era and institutional reforms of successive organs according to the practice called ‘one institution – two nameplates’⁶⁵, while downplaying the significance of formally autonomous bureaucratic mechanisms. The reform from 2018 changed distributed system of supervision and anti-corruption units into centralised organ operating as one structure with two names – CCDI/NSC⁶⁶.

Disciplinary and investigative competences, previously distributed between party and state modes, were unified in one regime, which – depending on the status of the person subject to the proceedings – operates as a party (CCDI) or state (NSC) organ. Jurisdiction includes not only the CCP’s members (more than 100 million) and administrative officials, but also the management of state enterprises and a part of a private sector meeting the statutory requirements (e.g. public procurement contractors). As a result, the CCDI/NSC apparatus includes potentially hundreds of millions of people, and its prerogatives and the scale of activities in the era of Xi Jinping go beyond the classic audit body, making it an anti-corruption tool, but also a tool of purges in factional struggles⁶⁷.

Its mode of operation speaks in favor of regarding the CCDI as a part of internal security apparatus. The institution has special quasi-investigative powers, including the *liuzhi* procedure which is used in the most serious cases, among others, relating to corruption offences or dereliction of duty⁶⁸. *Liuzhi* enables detention of a person without a court order, followed by their isolation for up to six or eight months (with a possibility of one-off restart of the proceedings should new allegations arise). A person subject to this procedure remains without access to a defence lawyer or contact with the outside world⁶⁹. Reports from former detainees held in connection with *liuzhi* indicate interrogations that went beyond standard administrative activities⁷⁰. Officially, the CCP, in response to reports of ‘abuses

⁶⁵ In this case the practice set out in the CCP’s documents as ‘one institution – two nameplates’ (*yi ge jigou liang kuai paizi*) means that the party organ (CCDI) and its state counterpart (NSC) are integrated in terms of staff and organisation, actually acting as one institution.

⁶⁶ As part of the reform, the Ministry of Supervision responsible for officials was dissolved, among others. Moreover, certain anti-corruption units within the People’s Procuratorate were transferred to the NSC.

⁶⁷ Ch. Carothers, *Xi’s Anti-Corruption Campaign: An All-Purpose Governing Tool*, “China Leadership Monitor” 2021, no. 67, pp. 1–3.

⁶⁸ After the year 2018, the *liuzhi* procedure replaced the earlier party disciplinary proceeding (*shuang-gui*) and the state proceeding (*liangzhi*).

⁶⁹ *Supervision Law 2024 Revisions – Comparison of new vs. old*, China Law Translate, 26 XII 2024, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/supervision-law-2025/> [accessed: 10 III 2026].

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, *2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet)*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/>, sections 2c and 3a [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

of power by supervisory authorities (i.e. CCDI/NSC), has implemented standards for the supervision of the process, among others, in the Supervisory Officers Law of 2021⁷¹ and in the amendment of the Supervision Law of 2024⁷². The changes have, in fact, expanded the range of out-of-court measures available to the CCDI/NSC, formally introducing new procedures alongside *liuzhi*. According to media reports, in recent years, the CCDI has been expanding its network of detention centres. These centres potentially strengthen the autonomy of action of the CCDI, as they are outside the jurisdiction of the MPS and the Ministry of Justice⁷³.

According to the official data, between 2013 and 2025, an average of 550 000 of the CCP members per year were subject to disciplinary sanctions under the disciplinary control system directed by the CCDI. The *liuzhi* procedure (or before 2018 measures of a similar nature mentioned above) was not applied in every case, and not every case concerned corruption offences or resulted in criminal proceedings and a conviction. A significant number of them resulted in disciplinary sanctions (admonition, reprimand, degradation, expulsion from the Party). Between 2020 and 2024, an average of 69 000 cases per year were referred to criminal proceedings. Whereas the number of proceedings against higher representatives of party-state apparatus amounted to 56 per year⁷⁴.

As for managing the apparatus, the CCDI is headed by the member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CC. After the 2018 reforms, the first deputy head of the CCDI serves as the director of the NSC, which illustrates the interconnection of the structures. Disciplinary commissions of the regional structures at province, prefecture and district levels are subordinate to the CCDI. Disciplinary cells also operate in other party-state units. They are built into these organs, but report and are primarily accountable to the CCDI. As part of the reforms, their scope of activities was expanded, and after 2013 the CCDI head office's supervision of the network of cells was gradually strengthened by limiting their dual reporting to local CCP's committees. The activity of the special

⁷¹ See: Supervisory Officers Law of the People's Republic of China of 20 VIII 2021.

⁷² J. Daum, *Keeping an Eye on the Watch Dog (2): Changes to the Supervision Law*, China Law Translate, 3 I 2025, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/supervision-law-amendments-overview/> [accessed: 9 II 2026].

⁷³ Y. Xiong, *China is building new detention centers all over the country as Xi Jinping widens corruption purge*, CNN, 28 XII 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/28/china/china-liuzhi-detention-centers-dst-intl-hnk> [accessed: 15 II 2026].

⁷⁴ Y. Cao, *China's anti-graft efforts deepen in 2025, with 115 senior officials probed*, China Daily, 17 I 2026, <https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/627253> [accessed: 11 II 2026]; M. Pei, *From Purge to Control: A Recent Pivot in Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Crackdown*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2025, no. 83, pp. 3–5.

inspection teams dispatched by the higher levels of the CCDI's organisational system has been stepped up⁷⁵. The culmination of the process was the Supervision Law of 2018, which formally centralised the system⁷⁶. Autonomous Commission for Discipline Inspection (CMCCDI) at the CMC operates in the structures of the PLA and the PAP. The head of the CMCCDI also serves as deputy head of the CCDI. Therefore, he has formally a 'dual responsibility'. This signifies de jure incorporation of the military division into the general control system of the CCP, while simultaneously maintaining autonomy⁷⁷.

During Xi Jinping's term in office, there was a movement of higher management staff between the CCDI and the civilian intelligence and security services. One example is a former Minister of State Security Chen Wenqing, who is now a member of the Political Bureau and at the same time the head of the committee overseeing the PRC's services. Even before taking up his ministerial post, Chen had held the position of the deputy head of the CCDI⁷⁸. Another example is Liu Jinguo, now the deputy head of the CCDI and a director of the NSC, who was previously a deputy Minister of the Public Security and a head of disciplinary cell inside this ministry.

The CCP's role and its supervisory tasks in the era of Xi Jinping

Control over the services remains in the hands of the CCP's management⁷⁹. Within the framework of the CC, there are specialised departments, party committees

⁷⁵ C. Carothers, Z. Zhang, *From Corruption Control to Everything Control: The Widening Use of Inspections in Xi's China*, "Journal of Contemporary China" 2023, vol. 32, no. 140, pp. 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2071885>.

⁷⁶ M. Bogusz, J. Jakóbowski, *Komunistyczna Partia Chin i jej państwo* (Eng. The Chinese Communist Party and its state), Warszawa 2019, pp. 89–91. The English edition of the book is available at: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/REPORT_The-Chinese-Communist-Party_net.pdf.

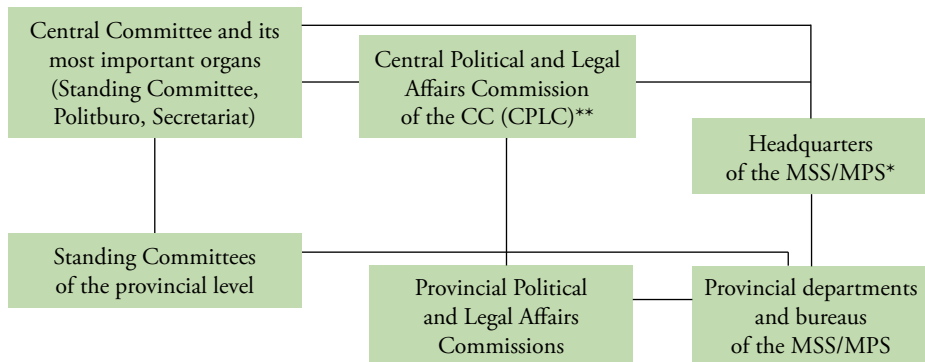
⁷⁷ Following further purges within the leadership of the Central Military Commission carried out at the turn of 2025 and 2026, General Zhang Shengmin – a secretary of the CMCCDI and a vice chairman of the CMC – secured a special position. He is the only one, apart from Xi Jinping, member of the organ managing the PRC's armed forces (as of the beginning of 2026).

⁷⁸ Chen Wenqing was initially a police officer in the MPS and then held various positions in the MSS structures.

⁷⁹ The highest position in the political system of the PRC holds general secretary of the CCP, who is at the same time a president of the PRC and a chairman of the CMC. Next in this system are: the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, the Political Bureau, and the Central Committee of the CCP. The Secretariat of the CC dealing with everyday operations of the CC and the General Office of the CC (a sort of 'chancellery' for the leadership) also play an important role. Numerous specialised departments, groups and party committees carrying out supervision and coordination tasks operate within the CC. More on the CCP's management – see: M. Bogusz, J. Jakóbowski, *Komu-*

and leading groups responsible for supervising and coordinating the activities of particular sectors of the state policy. Military sector, including the PLA intelligence, is under the authority of the CMC. When it comes to foreign activity, including intelligence, it is party coordination leading groups and committees (e.g. foreign affairs, Taiwan) that are significant. From the perspective of overall management and coordination of civilian security services, the following play key roles: the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (CPLC) and established after 2013 – as a result of Xi Jinping's reforms – the Central National Security Commission (CNSC). The CNSC is headed by the General Secretary of the CCP and it is primarily strategic in nature, it exercises party supervision and sets general directions of security policy. Its activities are largely non-public⁸⁰. In everyday management of civilian service apparatus – particularly in internal security sphere – the CPLC is of greater importance. It oversees the MPS, the MSS, public prosecution service and judiciary⁸¹.

Figure 1 presents the CCP's control over the MPS and the MSS.



* the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and the Ministry of State Security (MSS) are formally subordinate to the PRC's State Council (i.e. the government).

** The Central National Security Commission (CNSC) was omitted from the diagram – the commission is of strategic character, the precise management relationships are not publically known.

Figure 1. The CCP's control over the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Public Security – central and provincial level.

Source: own elaboration.

nistyczna Partia Chin..., pp. 18–22, 31.

⁸⁰ Z. Burdette et al., *Understanding China's National Security Decisionmaking*, Santa Monica 2026, p. 41; J. Wuthnow, *A New Chinese National Security Bureaucracy Emerges*, "China Brief" 2021, vol. 21, no. 23.

⁸¹ M. Pei, *The Sentinel State...*, pp. 79–80.

The CCP exercises ongoing control through its structures, system of party secretaries and hierarchy of the administrative apparatus. At the level of territorial units, the Party's power structures replicate the central model. That is why local secretaries and the CCP's committees, to which the political and legal affairs commissions and national security commissions responsible for the relevant level are subject, hold a significant position. Operating alongside these organs are local structures of the security apparatus, which simultaneously report vertically to their head offices and horizontally to local committees of the CCP⁸², which reveals the tension between vertical management (ministerial and upper party hierarchy) and horizontal management (relationships with local apparatus of the CCP in the provinces, cities with provincial status, prefectures, etc.)⁸³.

In recent years, there have been signs of a move towards centralising the management of the MSS. Edward Schwarck states that reforms of 2016–2017 led to strengthening 'vertical management', in which the CC apparatus and the MSS headquarters took over more control over staff policy, financing, supervision of operational activities of the MSS's regional offices. As a result, local offices of the MSS are subordinated to a greater extent to the priorities of the central authorities. Due to the high level of secrecy of the MSS's operation, the available data is limited. This makes difficult to fully reconstruct reforms, however, indications point to a strengthening of oversight. The situation is different for regional structures of the MPS, which, being less elite, more common and more deeply rooted in local networks, are more susceptible to the influence of local committees of the CCP⁸⁴.

The essence of understanding the PRC's system of party-state management – overlooked in studies analysing normative relationships – is the role of the CCP's secretaries and the primacy of a party position over the administrative position. As a rule, unit secretary of the CCP – who ranks higher in the party hierarchy than a minister – is considered a more important decision-maker, while a minister is responsible for day-to-day management⁸⁵. Whereas in the MSS and the MPS the positions of a minister and a secretary of the party's ministerial unit are being merged and it seems that this practice is continuing during the government of Xi

⁸² More on administrative division of the PRC and organisation of regional structures of the CCP see: M. Bogusz, *Podział administracyjny ChRL* (Eng. Administrative Division of the PRC), *Za Wielkim Murem*, 18 I 2018, <https://zawielkimmurem.net/2018/01/18/podzial-administracyjny-chrl/> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

⁸³ M. Bogusz, J. Jakóbski, *Komunistyczna Partia Chin...*, p. 38.

⁸⁴ E. Schwarck, *The Power Vertical: Centralization in the PRC's State Security*, "China Brief" 2024, vol. 24, no. 22.

⁸⁵ Rare exceptions are possible, when a minister holds at the same time a higher position in the CCP's structures than a secretary of the party cell in a department.

Jinping. Thanks to this, the security ministries avoid frequently encountered dual-track management. In the case of the MSS – with the exception of Chen Wenqing, who assumed the position of secretary in 2015⁸⁶, and the minister in November 2016 – since the ministry was established in 1983, ministries have held both posts for most of their terms of office. The analogous practice has been established at the MPS since at least the 1990s, with a short break in 2021–2022 when Wang Xiaohong first assumed party leadership of the ministry, and, after seven months, a position of ministry⁸⁷. Whereas the political control system in the PLA and the PAP is organised differently. There is a system of unit party committees as well as commissar and political officers system and political officers in both formations. Political commissars operate at higher levels of military structures (from regimental level upwards, right up to staffs and higher command levels), they hold a position equivalent to that of unit commanders and are responsible for discipline and ideological loyalty to the CCP. At lower levels (i.e. battalion and company), analogous tasks relating to party and political work are carried out by instructors and political officers⁸⁸.

Anti-corruption campaigns and staff purges of the Xi Jinping era also encompassed security and intelligence structures⁸⁹. A symbolic example is the case from 2013–2015 concerning Zhou Yongkang, a former Minister of Public Security and a Head of the CPLC, as well as a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CC, who gained enormous influence in civilian services, though this did not prevent him from losing his position⁹⁰. The beginning

⁸⁶ K. Lu Huang, *Graft-buster named as head of China's spy agency as anti-corruption watchdog extends its power*, South China Morning Post, 8 X 2015, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1865395/graft-buster-named-head-chinas-spy-agency-anti> [accessed: 10 III 2025].

⁸⁷ E. Xie, *China's Ministry of Public Security gets new party chief amid corruption drive targeting law enforcement*, South China Morning Post, 20 XI 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3156802/chinas-ministry-public-security-gets-new-party-chief-amid> [accessed: 6 VI 2026].

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024. Annual Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C. 2024, pp. 160–161.

⁸⁹ For example, Ma Jian – a former vice minister of the MSS – life imprisonment; Meng Hongwei – a former vice minister of the MPS (and a vice president of Interpol) – 13,5 years of imprisonment; Sun Lijun – a former vice minister of the MPS – suspended death sentence; Fu Zhenghua – a former vice minister of the MPS and a Minister of Justice – suspended death sentence; Gong Dao'an – a former director of the Shanghai Public Security Bureau – life imprisonment. More on the case of Fu and Sun – see: G. Wu, *Xi Jinping's Purges Have Escalated. Here's Why They Are Unlikely to Stop*, Asia Society Policy Institute, 26 II 2025, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/xi-jinpings-purges-have-escalated-heres-why-they-are-unlikely-stop> [accessed: 10 III 2026].

⁹⁰ His downfall was part of a factional struggle that also involved a former member of the Politburo of the CC – Bo Xilai. Report on this case – see: P. Ho, W. Huang, *Uderzenie w czerń* (Eng. A Death in the Lucky Holiday Hotel: Murder, Money, and an Epic Power Struggle in China), Wołowiec 2015. For an analytical description see: M. Bogusz, J. Jakóbski, *Komunistyczna Partia Chin...*, p. 70.

of the large wave of the purges and anti-corruption activities in civilian security structures dates back to 2018⁹¹. It should be emphasised again that disciplinary and anti-corruption campaigns serve not only to limit abuses in the PRC, but also to neutralise factional rivals and strengthen control over intelligence and security apparatus. Anti-corruption activities also encompassed the structures of the PLA, including the intelligence heads and supervisors. Before the Xi Jinping era, one such case was that of General Ji Shengde, a former Head of the 2nd Department of the General Staff (intelligence), who was convicted in 2000. During the government of Xi, the scale of the campaigns extended to the highest commanders of the PLA, including the members of the CMC, a vice chairman general Zhang Youxia and a chief of staff of the Joint Staff Department general Liu Zhenli, among others⁹².

Following the 20th Congress of the CCP, the Xi Jinping era has seen a marked increase in promotions for civilian officials and party cadres specialised in this sector. Chen Wenqing was promoted from his position as Minister of State Security to Secretary of the CPLC, a member of the Political Bureau and a member of the Secretariat of the CC and became the first former head of the MSS in history to reach such a high positions. Chen Yixin, a long-term collaborator of Xi Jinping and previously a member of the CPLC, assumed a position of the head of the MSS. Wang Xiaohong, a collaborator of Xi Jinping in the city of Fuzhou from back in the 1990s, was first appointed to the post of secretary of the committee of the CCP in the MPS (2021), and then became a Minister of Public Security (2022). After the 20th Congress of the CCP, he also became a member of the Secretariat of the CC. As a result, the management of the MSS, the MPS and the CPLC was staffed by people closely associated with Xi Jinping. It is worth noting that, in 2027, the leader of this group, Chen Wenqing, will be still below the unofficial retirement age threshold for the members of the highest management of the Party (i.e. 68 years). Although in the era of Xi Jinping, this rule is followed less consistently than before, Chen Wenqing's age may still be an asset in the context of potential promotion during the 21st Congress of the CCP⁹³.

⁹¹ M. Pei, *The CCP's Domestic Security Taskmaster: The Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2021, no. 69, p. 5.

⁹² More on the analysis illustrating the scale of the purges and anti-corruption campaign inside the PLA and the PAP – see: B. Lin et al., *The Purges Within China's Military Are Even Deeper Than You Think*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 24 II 2026, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-pla-military-purges/> [accessed: 9 III 2026].

⁹³ S. Chestnut Greitens, *New Leaders in "National" Security after China's 20th Party Congress*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2023, no. 78, pp. 2–16.

Conclusions

When answering the research questions, one should assume that determining the scope of institutions classified as the PRC's intelligence and security services requires the use of a party-functional criterion. Following Xi Jinping's reforms, this broader – still more limited than the 'total' approach – interpretation is justified, encompassing not only traditional intelligence and counter-intelligence organs (MSS), military intelligence, political police (MSS, MPS) and public security (MPS, PAP), but also anti-corruption and supervision apparatus in the form of the CCDI/NSC, which during Xi Jinping's term in office, established itself as an institution of repressive and disciplinary potential.

The reforms of 2013–2025 demonstrate the focus of the current management of the CCP on security, including intelligence and services. In the military sphere, there are signs of subsequent reorganisation measures, such as the establishment of the Intelligence Bureau of the Joint Staff, as well as intelligence and technical reconnaissance units (established after the creation and subsequent dissolution of the SSF in 2024). At the same time, civilian services (MSS and MPS) retain relative institutional stability, although anti-corruption campaigns have affected their leadership. Whereas the PAP was subordinate to the CMC, excluding operational supervision of the MPS, and became the entity subject to direct control of the General Secretary of the CCP as a chairman of the CMC. Therefore, four areas of reforms can be identified:

- 1) expanding and streamlining the legal framework, reforms of the structures of the intelligence and security apparatus,
- 2) signs of centralisation of the MSS management and strengthening a 'vector' model, based on a vertical control over regional offices,
- 3) expansion of the powers of the CCDI party organ, including by establishing its state-run extension (NSC),
- 4) potential growing importance of staff originating from civilian security and supervision apparatus in the Party.

The 21st National Congress of the CCP in October 2027 will be an important point of reference for the final assessment of these processes. Chen Wenqing is particularly worth keeping an eye on, as his promotion would mark the first time a former head of the MSS has joined the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CC.

Regarding research on the PRC's services, it should be emphasised that this is a field presenting significant challenges for researchers. It stems from both the sector secrecy as well as source-related and linguistic limitations. Nevertheless, given the growing the PRC's significance and activity, it is reasonable to attempt analyses, including comparative analyses involving the comparison of the structures

with analogous institutions of other states with similar systems (e.g. comparison of China and Vietnam).

To some extent, this can also be the field for Polish researchers with skills in analysing historical security structures of the communist states. These experiences make it easier to understand how the party system works also in the case of the PRC. It is also advisable to carry out analyses of reported instances of operations and *modus operandi* of the Chinese intelligence services. Cases related to the PRC's intelligence activity, or suspicions thereof, have emerged in Poland, including the case of Weijing W. mentioned earlier or the case which, as a result of cooperation between the Internal Security Agency (ABW) and its Swedish counterpart, resulted in the conviction of the agent in Sweden in 2018 for acting on behalf the Chinese intelligence. His handler was the MSS officer operating under diplomatic cover in the Embassy of the PRC in Warsaw, who was expelled from Poland⁹⁴. The combination of these factors, i.e. the experience of native researchers, activity of the Chinese services and the growing role of the PRC in the international system should serve as an impetus for further research for the Polish scientific community.

Bibliography

Adamczyk M., Baraniuk K., *Wywiad Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej – zarys struktur i metod działalności* (Eng. The intelligence service of People's Republic of China – an outline of structures and methods of activity), "Studia Orientalne" 2017, no. 2, pp. 34–58.

Adamczyk M., Baraniuk K., *Wywiad jako instrument chińskiej polityki zagranicznej – przyczynek do badań* (Eng. Intelligence as a tool of Chinese foreign policy – contribution to research), "Studia Orientalne" 2017, no. 1, pp. 41–72. <https://doi.org/10.15804/so2017103>.

Andrew Ch., *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence*, London 2018.

Bogusz M., Jakóbowski J., *Komunistyczna Partia Chin i jej państwo* (Eng. The Chinese Communist Party and its state), Warszawa 2019. The English edition of the book is available at: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/REPORT_The-Chinese-Communist-Party_net.pdf.

⁹⁴ Stanisław Żaryn: *polskie służby przyczyniły się do skazania chińskiego szpiega* (Eng. Stanisław Żaryn: Polish services contributed to the conviction of a Chinese spy), Polskie Radio 24, 30 X 2019, <https://polskieradio24.pl/artukul/2394461,stanislaw-zaryn-polskie-sluzby-przyczynily-sie-do-skazania-chinskiego-szpiega> [accessed: 6 IX 2026]; Stanisław Żaryn: *W marcu wydalono wicekonsula Rosji w Poznaniu* (Eng. Stanisław Żaryn: In March, the Russian Vice Consul in Poznań was expelled), Interia, 4 XI 2019, <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/kraj/news-stanislaw-zaryn-w-marcu-wydalono-wicekonsula-rosji-w-poznani,nId,3316751> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

Bogusz M., Jakóbowski J., *Zerkając za „bambusową kurtynę”: analizowanie ChRL* (Eng. A glimpse behind the 'bamboo curtain': an analysis of the People's Republic of China), in: *Uporządkować rzeczywistość. Poradnik analityczny Ośrodka Studiów Wschodnich*, W. Konończuk, M. Menkiszak (eds.), Warszawa 2025.

Burdette Z., Mei S., Bujwid E., Burns McCaslin I., Weaver L., Beauchamp-Mustafaga N., Gunness K., *Understanding China's National Security Decisionmaking*, Santa Monica 2026.

Carberry T.W., *China's People's Armed Police Presents a Significant Force Multiplier During Armed Conflict*, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2025.

Carothers Ch., *Xi's Anti-Corruption Campaign: An All-Purpose Governing Tool*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2021, no. 67.

Carothers C., Zhang Z., *From Corruption Control to Everything Control: The Widening Use of Inspections in Xi's China*, "Journal of Contemporary China" 2023, vol. 32, no. 140, pp. 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2071885>.

Chambers D.I., *The Past and Present State of Chinese Intelligence Historiography*, "Studies in Intelligence" 2012, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 31–46.

Charon P., Jeangène Vilmer J.B., *Les opérations d'influence chinoises*, Paris 2021.

Chestnut Greitens S., *Counter-Espionage and State Security: The Changing Role of China's Ministry of State Security*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2025, no. 83.

Chestnut Greitens S., *How Does China Think about National Security?*, in: *The China Questions 2: Critical Insights into US-China Relations*, M. Carrai, J. Rudolph, M. Szonyi (eds.), Cambridge 2022.

Chestnut Greitens S., *New Leaders in "National" Security after China's 20th Party Congress*, "China Leadership Monitor" 2023, no. 78.

China's Quest for Foreign Technology. Beyond Espionage, W.C. Hannas, D.K. Tatlow (eds.), New York 2021.

Cold Rivals: The New Era of US-China Strategic Competition, E.S. Medeiros (ed.), Washington 2023.

Czubkowska S., *Chińczycy trzymają nas mocno. Pierwsze śledztwo o tym, jak Chiny kolonizują Europę, w tym Polskę* (Eng. The Chinese hold us tight. The first investigation into how China is colonising Europe, including Poland), Kraków 2022.

Dahm J., *A Disturbance in the Force: The Reorganization of PLA and Elimination of China's Strategic Support Force*, "China Brief" 2024, vol. 24, no. 9.

DeVore H., *China's Intelligence and Internal Security Forces (Jane's Special Reports)*, Coulsdon 1999.

Drinhausen K., Legarda H., *'Comprehensive National Security' unleashed: How Xi's approach shapes China's policies at home and abroad*, Berlin 2022.

Dziak W., Pawiński M., *Chińska Armia Ludowo-Wyzwolenicza* (Eng. Chinese People's Liberation Army), Warszawa 2014.

Eftimiades N., *Chinese Espionage. Operations and Tactics*, [n.p.] 2020.

Eftimiades N., *Chinese Intelligence Operations*, Annapolis 1994.

Faligot R., *Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping*, London 2019.

Gershaneck K.K., *Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to "Win without Fighting"*, Quantico 2020.

Gill B., Mulvenon J., *Chinese Military-Related Think Tanks and Research Institutions*, "The China Quarterly" 2002, vol. 171, no. 1, pp. 617–624. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000384>.

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

Hamilton C., Ohlberg M., *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party Is Reshaping the World*, London 2021.

Hannas W.C., Mulvenon J.C., Puglisi A., *Chinese Industrial Espionage: Technology Acquisition and Military Modernisation*, New York 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203630174>

Ho P., Huang W., *Uderzenie w czerń* (Eng. A Death in the Lucky Holiday Hotel: Murder, Money, and an Epic Power Struggle in China), Wołowiec 2015.

Joske A., *Spies and Lies: How China's Greatest Covert Operations Fooled the World*, Melbourne 2022.

Joske A., *The party speaks for you: Foreign interference and the Chinese Communist Party's united front system*, Policy brief. Report No 32/2020, Canberra 2020.

Joske A., Jeon Y., *Redesigning State Security: The 2018 Reorganisation of the Ministry of State Security*, "Deserepi: Studies in Chinese Communist Party External Work" 2025, no. 1, pp. 1–19.

Kwieciński R., *W cieniu niepewności. Siła militarna Chin w erze Xi Jinpinga* (Eng. In the Shadow of Uncertainty. China's Military Power in the Era of Xi Jinping), Kraków 2023.

Ma Y., *The Police System in China*, in: *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Criminology*, L. Cao, I.Y. Sun, B. Heberton (eds.), London–New York 2014, pp. 64–67.

Manthorpe J., *Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada*, Toronto 2019.

Mattis P., *Assessing Western Perspectives on Chinese Intelligence*, “International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence” 2012, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 678–699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2012.678745>.

Mattis P., Brazil M., *Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer*, Annapolis 2019.

Mattis P., Kania E., *Modernizing Military Intelligence: Playing Catchup (Part Two)*, “China Brief” 2016, vol. 16, no. 19.

Mulvenon J., “Secret Line, Open Line”: Inside China's Ministry of State Security, in: *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, L.K. Johnson (ed.), Oxford 2025, pp. 634–651. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197783160.013.0046>.

Nyman J., *Towards a Global Security Studies: What Can Looking at China Tell Us About the Concept of Security?*, “European Journal of International Relations” 2023, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 673–697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661231176990>.

Pei M., *From Purge to Control: A Recent Pivot in Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Crackdown*, “China Leadership Monitor” 2025, no. 83.

Pei M., *Piercing the Veil of Secrecy: The Surveillance Role of China's MSS and MPS*, “China Leadership Monitor” 2024, no. 79.

Pei M., *The CCP's Domestic Security Taskmaster: The Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission*, “China Leadership Monitor” 2021, no. 69.

Pei M., *The Sentinel State. Surveillance and the Survival of Dictatorship in China*, Cambridge 2024.

Pożaroszczyk D., *Wywiad Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej – charakterystyka działalności i zagrożenia dla Polski* (Eng. Intelligence of the Peoples Republic of China – activity characteristic and threats to Poland), “Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego” 2017, no. 16, pp. 98–113.

Ratcliffe J.H., *Intelligence-Led Policing*, London 2016.

Schoenhals M., *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949–1967*, Cambridge 2013.

Schwarck E., *Behind the Golden Shield: China Reforms Public Security Intelligence*, “China Brief” 2017, vol. 17, no. 16.

Schwarck E., *Intelligence and Informatization: The Rise of the Ministry of Public Security in Intelligence Work in China*, “The China Journal” 2018, vol. 80, pp. 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697089>.

Schwarck E., *The Power Vertical: Centralization in the PRC’s State Security System*, “China Brief” 2024, vol. 24, no. 22.

Smith I., West N., *Historical Dictionary of Chinese Intelligence*, Lanham 2012.

Wise D., *Tiger Trap: America’s Secret Spy War with China*, Boston 2011.

Wuthnow J., *A New Chinese National Security Bureaucracy Emerges*, “China Brief” 2021, vol. 21, no. 23.

Wuthnow J., *China’s Other Army: The People’s Armed Police in an Era of Reform*, Washington 2019.

Zajączkowski W., *Rozumieć politykę międzynarodową. Metody analizy źródeł otwartych* (Eng. Understanding international politics. Methods of open-source analysis), Warszawa 2025.

Internet sources

Bogusz M., *Podział administracyjny ChRL* (Eng. Administrative Division of the PRC), Za Wielkim Murem, 18 I 2018, <https://zawielkimmurem.net/2018/01/18/podzial-administracyjny-chrl/> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

Cao Y., *China’s Anti-Graft Efforts Deepen in 2025, with 115 Senior Officials Probed*, “China Daily”, 17 I 2026, <https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/627253> [accessed: 11 II 2026].

Chinese Communist Espionage. About the Author, U.S. Naval Institute, <https://www.usni.org/press/books/chinese-communist-espionage#author> [accessed: 5 IX 2026].

Daum J., *Keeping an Eye on the Watch Dog (2): Changes to the Supervision Law*, China Law Translate, 3 I 2025, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/supervision-law-amendments-overview/> [accessed: 9 II 2026].

Daum J., *What China’s National Intelligence Law Says, And Why it Doesn’t Matter*, China Law Translate, 22 II 2024, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/what-the-national-intelligence-law-says-and-why-it-doesnt-matter/> [accessed: 9 II 2026].

Lin B., Hart B., Li L., Desai S., Tinsley T., Yang L., Hung F., Chang T.-H., *The Purges Within China’s Military Are Even Deeper Than You Think*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 24 II 2026, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-pla-military-purges/> [accessed: 9 III 2026].

Lu Huang K., *Graft-buster named as head of China's spy agency as anti-corruption watchdog extends its power*, South China Morning Post, 8 X 2015, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1865395/graft-buster-named-head-chinas-spy-agency-anti> [accessed: 10 III 2025].

Mattis P., *Everything We Know about China's Secretive State Security Bureau*, The National Interest, 10 VII 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/everything-we-know-about-chinas-secretive-state-security-21459> [accessed: 25 II 2026].

Mattis P., *The New Normal: China's Risky Intelligence Operations*, The National Interest, 6 VII 2015, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-new-normal-chinas-risky-intelligence-operations-13260> [accessed: 27 II 2026].

Mikowski M., *Dyrektor z Huawei oskarżony o szpiegostwo ponownie zatrzymany* (Eng. Huawei director accused of espionage arrested again), PAP, 30 VII 2021, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C920081%2CDyrektor-z-huawei-oskarzony-o-szpiegostwo-ponownie-zatrzymany.html> [accessed: 9 II 2026].

Nine Individuals Charged in Superseding Indictment with Conspiring to Act as Illegal Agents of the People's Republic of China, U.S. Department of Justice, 22 VII 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/nine-individuals-charged-superseding-indictment-conspiring-act-illegal-agents-people-s> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

Stanisław Żaryn: polskie służby przyczyniły się do skazania chińskiego szpiega (Eng. Stanisław Żaryn: Polish services contributed to the conviction of a Chinese spy), Polskie Radio 24, 30 X 2019, <https://polskieradio24.pl/artykul/2394461,stanislaw-zaryn-polskie-sluzby-przyczynily-sie-do-skazania-chinskiego-szpiega> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

Stanisław Żaryn: W marcu wydano wicekonsula Rosji w Poznaniu (Eng. Stanisław Żaryn: In March, the Russian Vice Consul in Poznań was expelled), Interia, 4 XI 2019, <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/kraj/news-stanislaw-zaryn-w-marcu-wydalono-wicekonsula-rosji-w-poznani,nId,3316751> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

110 Overseas: Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild, Safeguard Defenders, 29 X 2022, <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/publications/110-overseas> [accessed: 12 III 2026].

Supervision Law 2024 Revisions – Comparison of new vs. old, China Law Translate, 26 XII 2024, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/supervision-law-2025/> [accessed: 10 III 2026].

The Meng Wanzhou Huawei saga: A timeline, CBC News, 25 IX 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/meng-wanzhou-huawei-kovrig-spavor-1.6188472> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

Two Arrested for Operating Illegal Overseas Police Station of the Chinese Government, U.S. Department of Justice, 17 IV 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-arrested-operating-illegal-overseas-police-station-chinese-government> [accessed: 5 III 2026].

Virginia Man Arrested and Charged With Espionage, U.S. Department of Justice, 22 VI 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/virginia-man-arrested-and-charged-espionage> [accessed: 25 II 2026].

Walden M., *Operation Fox Hunt and China's international efforts to force 'fugitives' back*, ABC News, 18 I 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-19/china-operations-to-force-fugitives-back/100747234> [accessed: 12 III 2026].

Wray Ch., *The Threat Posed by the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party to the Economic and National Security of the US*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 7 VII 2020, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/the-threat-posed-by-the-chinese-government-and-the-chinese-communist-party-to-the-economic-and-national-security-of-the-united-states> [accessed: 27 II 2026].

Wu G., *Xi Jinping's Purges Have Escalated. Here's Why They Are Unlikely to Stop*, Asia Society Policy Institute, 25 II 2025, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/xi-jinpings-purges-have-escalated-heres-why-they-are-unlikely-stop> [accessed: 10 III 2026].

Xie E., *China's Ministry of Public Security gets new party chief amid corruption drive targeting law enforcement*, South China Morning Post, 20 XI 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3156802/chinas-ministry-public-security-gets-new-party-chief-amid> [accessed: 6 VI 2026].

Xiong Y., *China is building new detention centers all over the country as Xi Jinping widens corruption purge*, CNN, 28 XII 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/28/china/china-liuzhi-detention-centers-dst-intl-hnk> [accessed: 15 II 2026].

Legal acts

People's Police Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Renmin Jingcha Fa*), 28 II 1995; amendment 26 XII 2012.

National Security Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Anquan Fa*), 1 VII 2015.

Counterterrorism Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Fan Kongbu Zhuyi Fa*), 27 XII 2015.

Law of the People's Republic of China on the Management of the Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations' Activities within Mainland China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Jingwai Fei Zhengfu Zuzhi Jingnei Huodong Guanli Fa*), 28 IV 2016.

National Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Qingbao Fa*), 27 VI 2017.

Law of the People's Republic of China on the People's Armed Police (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Renmin Wuzhuang Jingcha Fa*), 27 VIII 2009; amendment 20 VI 2020.

The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Xianggang Tebie Xingzhengqu Weihu Guojia Anquan Fa*), 30 VI 2020.

Data Security Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Shuju Anquan Fa*), 10 VI 2021.

Supervisory Officers Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Jiandu Renyuan Fa*), 20 VIII 2021.

Counter-Espionage Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Fan Jiandie Fa*), 1 XI 2014; amendment 26 IV 2023.

State Secrets Protection Law of People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Baoshou Guojia Mimi Fa*), 5 IX 1988, amendment 27 II 2024.

Supervision Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Jiancha Fa*), 20 III 2018; amendment 25 XII 2024.

Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Wanguo Anquan Fa*), 7 XI 2016; amendment 28 X 2025.

Other documents

Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego, *Wybrane aktywności 2024–2025* (Eng. Polish Internal Security Agency (ABW) 2024–2025 Selected activities), Warszawa 2026.

Bezpečnostní Informační Služba, *Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2015*, 2016.

Bezpečnostní Informační Služba, *Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2024*, 2025.

U.S. Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024. Annual Report to Congress*, Washington, D.C. 2024.

U.S. Department of State, *2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet)*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/> [accessed: 6 IX 2026].

US–China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China's Intelligence Services and Espionage Threats to the United States*, 2019.

Xin shidai de Zhongguo guojia anquan, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 12 V 2025, http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/zfbps_2279/202505/t20250512_894771.html [accessed: 9 II 2026].

Marcin Hubicki

Graduate of the Jagiellonian University and the National School of Public Administration. PhD candidate at the Doctoral School of Social Sciences of the University of Warsaw.

Contact: m.hubicki@uw.edu.pl