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State security departments: The birth of China's nationwide state security system

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Abstract

China's Ministry of State Security (MSS) sits atop a national system of state security units, yet provincial-level state security agencies, a defining feature of China's intelligence apparatus, have attracted little research. Provincial agencies are subordinate to the MSS but have their own origins, cultures, networks and priorities. Today, they are also particularly active in foreign operations. This paper documents the establishment of the first 14 provincial agencies to provide a foundation for analysing the state security system and the creation of the MSS. Tracing their establishment and early development through official histories and biographies, this paper shows the diverse backgrounds and capabilities of provincial agencies, which originally combined counterintelligence, foreign intelligence and technical units. It also provides new findings on foreign intelligence agencies that were predecessors to the state security system. Finally, studying the birth of provincial security agencies offers new insights into the original priorities of the state security system and the founding of the MSS itself.

0 Introduction: Provincial organs in the state security system

The Chinese Communist Party's intelligence apparatus is spread across organs in several distinct bureaucratic systems on both the civilian and military sides.[0] Of these, the state security system (国家安全系统) is among the most prominent. It includes counterintelligence, political security, external influence work and espionage among its functions. The system is led by the Ministry of State Security (MSS, 国家安全部) but also incorporates agencies in all provincial-level governments. These provincial agencies deserve study in their own right because of their differing characters, priorities and so on. Absent authoritative analysis on centralisation in the state security system, they should be seen as individual actors within the system rather than simple appendages of the MSS.

The importance of provincial organs is illustrated by the fact that most of the state security system's foreign intelligence operations are carried out by the provinces rather than the MSS.[1] This is in part a reflection of resourcing. Provincial state security

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[0] For a systems-based analysis of influence work, see Livia Codarin, Laura Harth & Jichang Lulu, 'Hijacking the mainstream: CCP influence agencies and their operations in Italian parliamentary and local politics', Sinopsis, 20 November 2021.

[1] Nigel Inkster, *China's Cyber Power*, Routledge, 2016, p. 55. At the same time, some parts of the MSS are significant operational actors, such as the MSS Social Investigation Bureau.

agencies, combined, have far more personnel than the MSS, perhaps by ten times.[2] Naturally, they have some degree of geographical specialisation based on the international connections of their region, whether through trade, education and research, diplomacy or diaspora communities. For example, the Zhejiang State Security Department has a focus on operations targeting Europe, according to one analyst.[3] The exact nature and reasons for different specialisations generally remains unclear and it is not known how the MSS coordinates and controls provincial agencies.

Reflecting their leading role in foreign operations, provincial organs feature in most exposés or criminal prosecutions that implicate the state security system. The Shanghai State Security Bureau, for example, is known to aggressively recruit current and former government officials from foreign countries.[4] It was also involved in the development of China's international Buddhist college — the Nanhai Buddhist Academy — which trains monks from across Asia and uses religious networks to promote Chinese government policies.[5] Likewise, the Jiangsu State Security Department attempted to steal aviation technology from American and French companies, and one of its officers is currently imprisoned in America.[6] The Guangdong and Shandong State Security Departments allegedly handled an asset in New York's Chinese dissident community.[7]

Recent international interest in MSS cyber activity, which observers previously believed to be less significant than operations by the People's Liberation Army, has also highlighted the importance of provincial organs.[8] No cyber-attacks have been publicly attributed to the central MSS. Instead, governments and cybersecurity analysts have traced incidents to security organs in Sichuan, Guangdong, Hainan, Shandong and Tianjin — the latter allegedly responsible for the APT10 'cloud hopper' operation.[9]

In addition to their intrinsic significance, local organs are informative objects of study because their number and relative obscurity can make them easier to research. While few primary accounts of the MSS's founding are available, these can be supplemented with insights from how its provincial counterparts were established. The activities of provincial units can also reflect tasking and priorities from the centre (fig. 0). As this paper argues, the original structure of the state security system suggests that the MSS and the party leadership prioritised intelligence and security work related

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[2]Alex Joske, *Spies and Lies: How China's Greatest Covert Operations Fooled the World*, Hardie Grant, 2022.

[3]Inkster, loc. cit.

[4]The Shanghai Bureau used the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences as cover in one of these cases. See Compl., United States v. Kevin Patrick Mallory, E.D. Va., 21 June 2017; 'Germany charges man with spying for China', DW, 6 July 2021.

[5]Joske, op. cit., pp. 171–185.

[6]'Jury Convicts Chinese Intelligence Officer of Espionage Crimes, Attempting to Steal Trade Secrets', US Department of Justice, 5 Nov. 2021; Jordan Robertson & Drake Bennett, 'A Chinese Spy Wanted GE's Secrets, But the US Got China's Instead', Bloomberg, 15 Sep. 2022.

[7]'U.S. Citizen and Four Chinese Intelligence Officers Charged with Spying on Prominent Pro-Democracy Activists, Dissidents, and Human Rights Leaders', US Department of Justice, 18 May 2022.

[8]See Peter Mattis, 'China's New Intelligence War Against the United States', War on the Rocks, 22 July 2015; Inkster, op. cit., p. 76.

[9]See 'APT3 is Boyusec, a Chinese Intelligence Contractor', Intrusion Truth, 9 May 2017; 'Two Chinese Hackers Associated With the Ministry of State Security Charged with Global Computer Intrusion Campaigns Targeting Intellectual Property and Confidential Business Information', US Department of Justice, 20 December 2018; 'APT40 is run by the Hainan department of the Chinese Ministry of State Security', Intrusion Truth, 16 January 2020.
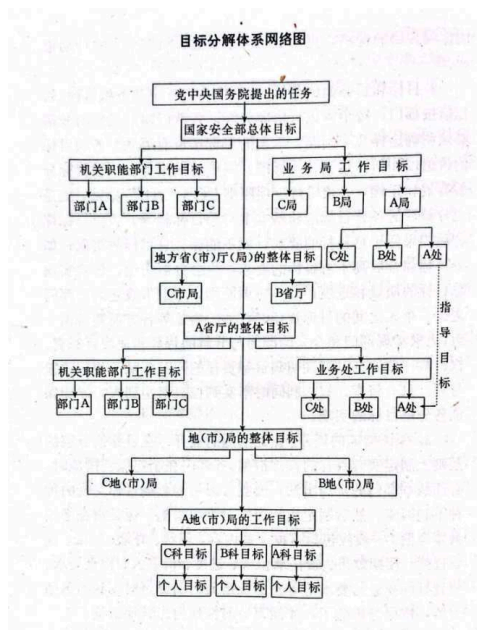
Figure 0: 'Network chart of the disaggregation of objectives' in the state security system, showing the basic structure of the system including how MSS units provide guidance to their provincial counterparts.[10]

to the Soviet Union and North Korea. Likewise, cover used by individual provincial state security organs may echo that used across the country. This paper includes evidence of foreign affairs offices, overseas Chinese affairs offices and united front work departments serving as cover for state security organs.

Individual state security organs therefore help elucidate the state security system as a whole. However, aside from some analysis of Minister of State Security Jia Chunwang's 贾春旺 (1985–1998) role in building up the nationwide state security system, no published literature has examined the origins, nature or activities of provincial state security agencies in their own right.[11]

To provide a foundation for understanding these actors, this paper documents and analyses the establishment of the first 14 provincial-level state security organs, in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Yunnan, Guangxi, Inner Mongolia and Liaoning.[12] This sample

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[10]Source: 罗祥意 & 陈尤文, eds., 国家安全行政管理, 时事出版社, 1995, p. 228.

[11]Peter Mattis, 'Assessing the Foreign Policy Influence of the Ministry of State Security', *China Brief* 11.1, 2011. Guo Xuezhi's otherwise detailed descriptions of China's security agencies including the MSS do not touch on provincial state security organs: Guo Xuezhi, *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics*, CUP, 2012. Other accounts may have confused the structure of provincial state security organs and the MSS. See Nicholas Eftimiades, *A Series on Chinese Espionage: Operations and Tactics*, Vitruvian Press, pp. 34 sq., which interprets the case of Xu Yanjun as showing that 'MSS Sixth Bureau officers are working at State Security Department', when Xu worked in the Sixth Bureau of the Jiangsu State Security Department and has not been accused of being an officer of the MSS itself. It is unclear how numberings of bureaus in provincial departments relate to those of the MSS.

[12]According to a former leader of the Liaoning State Security Department, Liaoning's state security department was the first established after an original batch of 13 that were set up together with the Ministry of State Security in 1983 and 1984. 见证辽宁：厅局长访谈录, vol. 2, 中共党史出版社, 2013, p. 179.

represents every provincial-level state security organ established by the end of 1984, the second year of the Chinese state security system's existence.

0.1   Key findings

The founding of provincial-level agencies, each of which is discussed individually in section 2, supports the following arguments:

Regional networks and specialisations were present at the founding of the state security system. Provincial organs were an important part of the state security apparatus from the very beginning. In all documented cases, the heads of the first 14 provincial-level state security organs were selected from within the region rather than the MSS or its predecessor agencies in Beijing. In Zhejiang, the state security chief was a close ally of the provincial party secretary and future Minister of Public Security Wang Fang 王芳. Uniquely among the 14 agencies studied in this paper, the government of Liaoning province purportedly organised the establishment of its state security department on its own initiative. These findings support the value of studying provincial-level organs for their own sake.

Investigation departments were an important foundation for the state security system across the country. Although several accounts have claimed that the founding of the MSS was motivated in part by party leader Deng Xiaoping's desire to neuter the Central Investigation Department and its leader, Luo Qingchang 罗青长, its legacy remains important to understanding the state security system. The state security system was built on a growing network of investigation departments, five of which are described for the first time in this paper. Investigation department personnel were well represented in the leadership of provincial-level state security organs, including one individual who was reportedly a close associate of Luo Qingchang. The first state security chiefs in Shanghai and Fujian came from investigation departments.

Public security organs contributed expertise in foreign intelligence operations, surveillance and technological research — not just counterintelligence and security work — to the state security system. They also supplied the majority of personnel in the state security system. Before the MSS's founding, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS, 公安部) carried out significant foreign intelligence operations and ran double agents in the Taiwanese and US intelligence communities. The security units that executed these operations were mostly incorporated into the state security system. Public security technology units — one of which lives on as a major MSS research institute — were also subsumed by state security departments in several provinces. In one province, as many as 80% of state security officers were probably transfers from public security agencies.

1   The birth of a nationwide state security system

The origin of China's state security system is far more complicated than generally understood.[13] Prior to the MSS's July 1983 founding, the MPS and the Central Invest-

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[13]For secondary literature on the MSS's founding, see Guo Xuezhi, op. cit., pp. 363 sq.; Inkster, op. cit., pp. 54–57; Roger Faligot, *Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping*, Scribe Publications, pp. 147–153; Peter Mattis & Matthew Brazil, *Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer*, Naval Institute Press, 2019, pp. 53–56.

Figure 1: The leadership of the MSS, probably photographed before Minister Ling Yun's 凌云 (2nd row, 7th from right) dismissal in 1985.[15]

igation Department (中央调查部) were the country's primary civilian intelligence and security agencies. The latter specialised in foreign intelligence work, and posted personnel to Chinese diplomatic missions around the world.[14] But the MSS, like the state security system as a whole, was not created through a simple amalgamation of the Central Investigation Department and counterintelligence units of the Ministry of Public Security (fig. 1).

Upon its creation, the MSS subsumed most if not all of the Central Investigation Department.[16] Then, several bureaus of the MPS, not just its political security bureau (responsible for counterintelligence and controlling counter-revolutionaries), contributed personnel to the MSS.[17] An October 1983 MSS directive indicates that personnel from 'intelligence posting' (情报派遣, possibly referring to the work of placing officers in undercover posts) and 'technological investigation' (技术侦查, e.g., electronic surveillance) areas of public security agencies were also moved into the state security apparatus.[18]

Other agencies contributed to the MSS too. An unknown number of United Front Work Department officials and military signals intelligence, communications and technology intelligence personnel (from the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence) were transferred into the MSS, according to an official source.[19] Although not specifically discussing the MSS's founding, an internal MSS textbook from 1995 stated that the military was a major source of state security personnel. The ranks of the MSS were also supplemented by new university graduates and

[14]Guo Xuezhi, op. cit., pp. 353 sq.

[15]Source: 王珺, 征程风云录, 博学出版社, 2012, pp. 22 sq.

[16]A detailed but unreferenced book by the Taiwanese researcher Kuo Jui-hua states that some Central Investigation Department personnel were transferred to the Committee for Organs Directly Subordinate to the Central Committee (中共中央直属机关委员会), a largely unstudied entity that oversees 'party-building work' within central agencies. 郭瑞華, 中共對台工作組織體系概論, 法務部調查局, 2004, p. 132.

[17]郭瑞華, op. cit., p. 133.

[18]'关于公安机构改革中的有关档案材料处理问题的通知', 公安部, 国家安全部, 司法部, 24 October 1983, in 张世进, ed., 中华人民共和国法律规范性解释集成, 吉林人民出版社, 1990, pp. 1495 sq.

[19]'Ministry of State Security of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国国家安全部)', 人民网, 31 July 2012. See also 郭瑞華, op. cit., p. 13.

individuals 'selected and transferred over from society' (probably referring to individuals from other government work units such as foreign affairs agencies).[20]

2 Provincial agencies

A similarly complex process of bureaucratic reforms led to the creation of the first state security departments[21] and bureaus at the provincial level (table 0).[22] They covered all nine regions with investigation departments — generally wealthier coastal provinces — as well as key border regions where no investigations departments are known to have existed (Xinjiang, Guangxi, Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia).

The State Security Department of Liaoning, bordering North Korea, was founded in late 1983. It was the first state security organ established outside the initial wave accompanying the MSS's creation. Jilin Province, bordering North Korea as well as the Soviet Union, established its State Security Department soon after in 1985. The Hainan State Security Department was created in 1989 after the island, previously administered as part of Guangdong, received provincial status.[23] The Tibet State Security Department was probably formed around this time too.[24] The remaining 14 provincial organs were established between 1993 and 1995.[25]

Table 0: **Predecessors of key provincial state security organs**

Region	Investigation department	Public security department / bureau	MPS intelligence office
Beijing	*	*	
Shanghai	*	*	*

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[20]罗祥意 & 陈尤文, op. cit., p. 157. Graduates of the University of International Relations (国际关系学院) in Beijing have been a major source of MSS personnel. Originally a Central Investigation Department training school, the university is managed by the MSS.

[21]Note that nomenclature can vary between provincial-level organs. Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing are provincial-level cities. However, their agencies follow the nomenclature of cities rather than provinces. This means that Beijing is home to a state security *bureau* (局), while provinces such as Guangdong are home to state security *departments* (厅). Autonomous regions such as Xinjiang and Guangxi are provincial-level units and follow the naming conventions of provinces. When this paper refers to 'provincial organs' or 'provincial-level organs', this should be understood to include provincial-level cities and autonomous regions. However, the Central Investigation Department's counterparts in both provinces and cities were all called investigation departments (调查部).

[22]See references to the 'Implementation Plan on Constructing Regional Organisations of the Ministry of State Security' (关于组建国家安全部地方机构实施方案) from the Central Security Leading Small Group (中央安全领导小组), sent out by CCP General Office in 1983 (numbered document 48), in 中国共产党内蒙古自治区组织史资料 1925.3–1987.12, 内蒙古人民出版社, 1995, p. 620; 广西壮族自治区地方志编纂委员会编；马禾, ed., 广西通志: 公安志, 广西人民出版社, 2002, p. 196.

[23]中国共产党海南省组织史资料, ed. by 中共海南省委组织部, 中共海南省委党史研究室, 海南省档案局（馆）, 2001, p. 214.

[24]In 1987, the Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee requested permission to establish a state security department with 600 staff. In August 1988, it issued a decision to establish the Tibet State Security Department, but it's unclear exactly when the department was actually created. In Ningxia, nearly two years elapsed between the Regional Party Committee's decision to approve the formation of the Ningxia State Security Department and the Department's establishment in November 1995. '12 月 22 日', 西藏在线; '8 月 5 日', 西藏在线; 中共宁夏历史大事记, 宁夏人民出版社, 2000, pp. 200, 279.

[25]Mattis, op. cit.

Tianjin	∗	∗	
Guangdong	∗	∗	∗
Zhejiang	∗	∗	
Jiangsu	∗	∗	
Fujian	∗	∗	
Shandong	∗	∗	
Inner Mongolia		∗	
Heilongjiang		∗	∗[26] (speculative)
Yunnan	∗	∗	∗
Guangxi		∗	
Xinjiang		∗	
Liaoning		∗	∗

Studying the state security system's creation sheds new light on its predecessors. This paper adds detail on provincial investigation departments. The Beijing, Tianjin, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Fujian Investigation Departments have not been documented in scholarly literature before, and this paper also identifies sub-provincial investigation departments in Changzhou and Qingdao.[27] It also raises the possibility that other investigation departments, perhaps including in Xinjiang and Heilongjiang, remain to be discovered in historical records.[28]

Setting up the first local state security organs meant first abolishing these investigation departments and essentially rebranding them as state security departments. Shortly after, personnel from public security organs were transferred to these state security agencies. Especially in provinces without investigation departments, state security organs were often only established months after the MSS's founding.

The movement of public security personnel and resources into state security organs was probably a gradual process fraught with bureaucracy. Only in 1984 did the MSS issue a directive on how provincial agencies should handle the transfer of budgets, facilities, equipment, vehicles and other capital from public security units.[29] An October 1983 directive provided guidance on whether and how public security units should transfer archives and files, such as records on foreign visitors to China, to the state security system.[30]

Although investigation departments were a foundation for at least nine provincial state security organs, they were relatively small. Public security organs contributed

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[26] Sources attest to the MPS Northeast Office having an intelligence station in Dalian. It is unclear where the headquarters of the MPS Northeast Office were, but Harbin, one of the northeast's largest cities and the capital of Heilongjiang province, would be a logical seat for the office, or at least a subunit of the office. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, Changchun, the capital of Jilin province, would be another possible seat for the Northeast Office. See 见证辽宁..., vol. 2, p. 182.

[27] Michael Schoenhals referenced the Shandong, Guangdong, Yunnan and Shanghai Investigation Departments in his 2010 paper on the department. 沈迈克, ' 关于中国共产党中央调查部的历史考察 ', 当代中国史研究 17.2, 2010, pp. 100 sq.

[28] However, in their memoir, former Central Investigation Department officers Hao Ting 郝汀 and Zhang Zhonge 章钟峨 criticised department chief Luo Qingchang 罗青长 for not establishing investigation departments in regions bordering the Soviet Union, so it's unclear whether such a policy was ever pursued.

[29] '关于做好国家安全厅 (局) 组建过程中的财务、物资等交接问题的通知', [1984] 国安 (管) 字 001 号, 国家安全部, 公安部 & 财政部 via 安徽省会计人员继续培训网.

[30] ' 关于公安机构改革中的...'

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more personnel and MPS 'intelligence offices' brought meaningful foreign intelligence experience. As detailed below, more than a fifth of provincial public security personnel in regions such as Shandong and Heilongjiang were transferred to the state security system. They included counterintelligence officers and technical personnel. Indeed, scientists and engineers from the public security system were probably an important part of the MSS science and technology program. For example, the MSS's Nanjing Institute of Information Technology was originally a Jiangsu Public Security Department unit.[31]

MPS intelligence offices were probably entirely incorporated into the state security system and made important yet overlooked contributions to its foreign intelligence work.[32] For example, the first head of the Guangdong State Security Department came from the MPS South China Office. While the MPS is mainly known for domestic security work, it has carried out foreign operations from its earliest days. The MPS maintained intelligence units in Yunnan, Liaoning, Guangdong, Shanghai and possibly Heilongjiang that specialised in cross-border clandestine operations and counterespionage. These units were based in the provinces, but were part of the central MPS rather than local public security organs.[33]

3 The first fourteen state security departments and bureaus

This section documents the founding of the first fourteen provincial-level state security organs, focusing on the organisations that contributed to their creation and relevant details about personnel.

3.1 The Beijing State Security Bureau

The Beijing State Security Bureau (SSB) was established from parts of the Beijing Public Security Bureau in May 1984.[34] However, some personnel appointments and reorganisations were made in 1983, in advance of the SSB's formal establishment. For example, Min Buying 闵步瀛 from the Beijing Public Security Bureau was appointed head of the SSB in December 1983.[35]

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[31]江苏省志: 公安志, 群众出版社, 2000, p. 39.

[32]No scholarly accounts of the state security system's creation mention these offices. They are usually referred to in Chinese as MPS offices or MPS-subordinate offices (公安部办事处). A 1984 MSS directive implies that these offices, like provincial investigation departments, were wholly incorporated into state security organs. Their size is unclear. See '关于做好国家安全厅 (局)...'

[33]On the activities of these units, see Alex Joske, 'Secret police: The Ministry of Public Security's clandestine foreign operations', Sinopsis, 25 January 2022.

[34]穆玉敏, 北京警察百年, 中国人民公安大学出版社, 2004, p. 2.

[35]' 北京市人民代表大会文献资料汇编, 1949–1993', 北京出版社, p. 1324. For a reference to Min's past, see '北京市公安局成立纪实', 公安部 via 近代警察史博物馆, 20 Mar. 2020.

A Beijing Investigation Department was established at some point before presumably being subsumed by the SSB.[36] At least one PLA signals intelligence officer moved into the Beijing SSB around the time of its founding.[37]

3.2 The Fujian State Security Department

The Fujian State Security Department (SSD) is first attested in the sources consulted in August 1983.[38] Although no documented sources describe its founding, it was probably formed from the Fujian Investigation Department and parts of the Fujian Public Security Department.

Jin Gong 晋巩 from the Fujian Investigation Department was the first head of the Fujian SSD.[39] Jin was a highly experienced officer with a long background in foreign intelligence work. After rising to the senior levels of the Central Social Department (中央社会部) during the Civil War, he was appointed to head the Foreign Investigation and Research Bureau (国外调查研究局) of the Central People's Government Intelligence Administration (中央人民政府情报总署), a short-lived central intelligence organ that was disbanded in 1952.[40]

Several other ex-Investigation Department officers served in the Fujian SSD leadership. Shi Zhichun 石智纯, a member of the Fujian SSD party committee in 1984, probably worked for the Central Investigation Department when he was posted to Tanzania as China's chargé d'affaires in the 1960s and to Tehran as the representative of China's civil aviation administration in 1974.[41] Shi may have been involved in the exfiltration of Japanese Communist Party leaders in 1950.[42] Former Fujian Investiga-

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[36]Yang Xin 杨欣 of the Beijing Investigation Department joined the Beijing State Security Bureau upon its creation. 杨锦国, ed., 天涯海角郧阳人: 第 1 集, p. 250. Liang Zhanxiang 梁占祥, a former public security officer, headed the Beijing Investigation Department. 解福谦, ed., 山西军事工业工人运动史通览, 山西人民出版社, 2008, p. 136.

[37]禹城市志 1986–2010 下, 方志出版社, 2017, p. 1230.

[38]中共福建党史人物社会主义时期, 中央文献出版社, vol. 2, 2007, p. 648.

[39]Ibid.

[40]According to Wang Jun 王珺, a former senior officer in the Central Social Department and Investigation Department, the Intelligence Administration (sometimes translated as 'Information Administration') was established in 1949 to provide cover for intelligence work and to facilitate coordination with PRC foreign affairs organs and local governments. Since most of the Central Social Department's intelligence functions had been taken up by an agency that did not officially exist and sat outside the civil bureaucracy — the Central Military Commission (CMC) Liaison Department — the Intelligence Administration may have been a channel for the CMC Liaison Department to engage with other party-state organs, local governments and everyday citizens. 王珺, '最可宝贵的因素: 在干部问题方面对李克农同志的一些回忆', in 纪念李克农文集, 1989, pp. 161 sq.

The Intelligence Administration was dissolved in early August 1952 and its remnants moved into military intelligence organs (probably the CMC Liaison Department, the immediate predecessor to the Central Investigation Department), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Intelligence Department (情报司, the predecessor to today's Information Department 新闻司) and Ministry of Public Security. Apart from its Central Office, the Foreign Investigation and Research Bureau (also translated as the 'External Investigation Bureau') is the only known unit within the Intelligence Administration. 构编制体制文件选编, 上, 劳动人事出版社, 1986, p. 6; 'Details concerning abolition of the Information Administration of the Government Administrative Council', Central Intelligence Agency, 6 Oct. 1952.

[41]Shi's SSD role is attested in a Fujian government document: '涉外机构 (中华人民共和国成立后)', 福建省志: 外事志, 2004, via 福建省人民政府外事办公室. His overseas postings are attested in state media reports. '坦桑联合共和国经济代表团启程来华', 人民日报, 10 June 1964; '我红十字会捐款支援坦桑水灾灾民', 人民日报, 19 May 1968; '中国赴伊朗友好参观团到达德黑兰', 人民日报, 28 Nov. 1974; '我赴伊朗友好参观团离开德黑兰回国', 人民日报, 9 Dec. 1974.

[42]An account describes Shi Zhichun 石志纯 as one of several individuals in the Tianjin Bureau of the CMC Liaison Department responsible for the 1950 exfiltration (although it gives the year as 1951). Although the middle character is different from that in the name of the Fujian SSD Shi Zhichun's, this may be a typo

tion Department deputy head Wu Jizong 吴纪宗 was also one of the original deputy heads of the Fujian SSD before becoming its leader in 1994.[43]

3.3 The Guangdong State Security Department

The Guangdong SSD was formed on the basis of at least three separate organs: the MPS South China Office, counterintelligence elements of the Guangdong Public Security Department and the Guangdong Investigation Department. Its relatively well-documented establishment provides an example of how public security units were gradually transferred to the state security system. The SSD's origins also show that it had substantial foreign intelligence capabilities from the beginning.

The first head of the Guangdong SSD, Zhang Youheng 张友恒 came from the MPS South China Office, which was probably entirely incorporated into the SSD.[44] The MPS South China Office was the most prominent MPS intelligence office and handled several assets inside foreign agencies, including Central Intelligence Agency linguist Larry Chin.[45]

As for the Guangdong Public Security Department, an official history states that its Imperialist Counterintelligence Division (帝国主义特务、间谍侦察处) was disbanded in July 1983 and placed under the SSD. The Public Security Department's Overseas Chinese Protection Division (华侨保卫处), a diaspora-focused counterintelligence and security unit that was also known as the provincial Overseas Chinese Affairs Office Protection Division (侨务办公室保卫处), was disbanded and its responsibilities (and staff, presumably) split between the SSD and the Public Security Department. An investigation force (侦查大队) directly subordinate to the provincial Public Security Department was also transferred to the SSD in December 1983.[46] Official histories do not mention whether technical surveillance staff were also moved to the SSD.

Guangdong probably had the largest investigation department of any province owing to its proximity to Hong Kong. An internal document stated that 200 Guangdong Investigation Department officers were sent to a 'May 7' Cadre School during the Cultural Revolution, whereas the Shanghai Investigation Department employed fewer than 50 staff in 1961.[47]

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or an alias. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, one 1963 *People's Daily* report also used the characters 石志纯 for the Shi Zhichun at the PRC Embassy in Tanzania. No other references could be found to a 石志纯 in the Tianjin Bureau or related intelligence organisations. The Fujian Shi Zhichun's foreign intelligence experience is consistent with a past in the Tianjin Bureau. '邹大鹏：被康生一个电话逼死的情报功臣', 炎黄春秋史 via 长城网, 17 Oct. 2019; '' 人民舰队 ' 的历史贡献——回忆我的父亲杨春松', 中国观网, 17 June 2020; ' 中坦互换文化合作协定批准书 ', 人民日报, 15 June 1963.

[43]中共福建党史人物: 社会主义时期, 中央文献出版社, 2007, vol. 2, pp. 200 sq.

[44]李时雨, 敌营十五年李时雨回忆录, 南海出版公司, 2015, p. 186; '于顺纲同志简介', 烽火 Home. Zhang Youheng led the Guangdong SSD until 1987: '人事任免', 省政府公报 via 广东省人民政府, no. 4, 1987.

[45]Joske, op. cit.

[46]The investigative force was established in 1980 to manage the investigation of major cases related to state security. 广东省志 1979–2000: 28 政法卷, 方志出版社, 2014, p. 452.

[47]' 沿着毛主席《五七指示》的光辉道路奋勇前进 ', 中共中央直属西苑机关, p. 1, in 中共重要历史文献资料汇编第二十辑第一百三十分册中共中央调查部问题之一, 中文出版服务中心, 2004. On the Shanghai Investigation Department, see '1962.4.29 中共上海市委调查部的编制机构情况和意见 (绝密)', 中共国史料, 29 Apr. 2015. Official histories contradict each other regarding the date of the Guangdong Investigation Department's reconstruction following the Cultural Revolution. One source states it was re-established in August 1973, while another claims it only happened in August 1978. The earlier date would be consistent with the Central Investigation Department's re-establishment earlier in 1973. 中国共产党广

3.4   The Guangxi State Security Department

The Guangxi SSD was established in September 1984 from parts of the public security department's technical investigation and counterintelligence divisions.[48] No investigation department is known to have existed in Guangxi.

3.5   The Heilongjiang State Security Department

The Heilongjiang SSD was officially established in November 1983 and allocated a total of 330 staff, making it just over half the size of the Heilongjiang Public Security Department. Of the SSD's initial staff, 124 were transfers from the Public Security Department.[49]

While there is no direct evidence of an MPS intelligence unit in Heilongjiang, it is highly likely that one existed and was incorporated into the SSD. The MPS North East Office (东北办事处) had a branch in Liaoning Province's Dalian city, and its name suggests that it had a presence across the region that includes Heilongjiang.[50]

3.6   The Inner Mongolia State Security Department

The Inner Mongolia SSD was established in May 1984 from the Inner Mongolia Party Committee Political Research Office (政治研究室) and parts of the Public Security Department's 1st and 8th Divisions (probably respectively responsible for counterintelligence and technical capabilities).[51]

3.7   The Jiangsu State Security Department

The Jiangsu SSD was established from the Jiangsu Investigation Department in September 1983.[52] Only in January 1984 were public security personnel, including a major technological research institution, transferred into the SSD.

The first Jiangsu SSD head, Qiu Lu 邱路, had been a deputy head of the provincial public security department.[53] At least two of the original Jiangsu SSD deputy heads, Zhou Xiaoliang 周效良 and Hua Hengshuan 花恒栓, came from the Jiangsu Investigation Department.[54]

An official history states that the Jiangsu Public Security Department, 'in accordance with the Central Committee's relevant regulations', transferred the entirety of its Technology Division (技术处) and Science and Technology division (科技处), and three sections of its Political Protection Division (政保处) to the Jiangsu SSD in January 1984.[55] The Public Security Department's Science and Technology Division

东省组织史资料, 下, 中共党史出版社, 1996, p. 140; 广东省志 1979-2000 25 党派·群众团体卷, 方志出版社, 2014, p. 114.

[48]马禾册, ed., 广西通志公安志, 广西人民出版社, 2002, p. 196.

[49]王培乐, ed., 黑龙江省志第 60 卷政权志, 黑龙江人民出版社, 2003, pp. 597 sq.; 高德林, 黑龙江省志公安志, 黑龙江人民出版社, 2001, p. 118.

[50]见证辽宁..., vol. 2, p. 182.

[51]中国共产党内蒙古自治区组织史资料 1925.3–1987.12, 内蒙古人民出版社, 1995, p. 620. See also biographical details of the SSD's Fan Tengbo 范腾波: 聊城人物大辞典, 山东人民出版社, 1998, p. 443.

[52]中国共产党江苏省组织史资料:1922 春–1987.10, 南京出版社, 1993, p. 847.

[53]Ibid.; 江苏省志: 公安志, p. 42.

[54]On their Investigation Department roles, see 中国共产党江苏省组织史资料..., p. 546.

[55]江苏省志..., p. 40.

was established in April 1979 with a staff of 75, and was outwardly known as the Jiangsu Province Public Security Science and Technology Research Institute (江苏省公安科学技术研究所).[56] This institute is now known as the Nanjing Institute of Information Technology (南京信息技术研究院) or the Nanjing 841 Research Institute (南京841 研究所), and may be directly subordinate to the MSS rather than the Jiangsu SSD.[57]

Jiangsu's Changzhou city also had an 'Investigation Group' (调查组) — probably a local station of the Jiangsu Investigation Department. The Investigation Group was disbanded upon the creation of the Changzhou State Security Bureau in June 1984. For cover purposes, it was externally known as the Changzhou Second Foreign Affairs Office (第二外事办公室).[58]

3.8   The Liaoning State Security Department

The Liaoning SSD was the first department established outside the initial tranche of 13 provincial state security organs. Its creation in July 1984 makes it older than one of the original 13 organs, the Guangxi State Security Department. But Liaoning's SSD was the first one created on the initiative of a provincial government, according to one of its founding officers, Lü Fu 吕复.[59] In other words, the first 13 organs appear to have been established as part of a central plan, while Liaoning was created outside of this plan.

Lü claimed that the decision to create the Liaoning SSD was driven in part by the province's strategic location for national defence and 'the complexity of the international environment in neighbouring regions' (i.e., North Korea and the Soviet Union). Another reason Lü gave was that the Liaoning Public Security Department was preoccupied with criminal cases and placed comparatively little emphasis on the 'covert battlefront'.[60]

Public security organs were the entire foundation for its creation. However, the Liaoning SSD was not without foreign intelligence experience. It subsumed the MPS Northeast Office's Dalian Intelligence Station, which probably engaged in operations targeting North Korea, South Korea and Japan.[61] The head of the Dalian Intelligence Station became a division chief in the SSD.[62]

3.9   The Shandong State Security Department

The Shandong SSD was created at some point in 1983 and is described by an official history as the successor to the Shandong Investigation Department. Upon its founding, the SSD had just 46 staff. It is most likely that all these officials came from the Shandong Investigation Department, which had 48 staff in 1982.[63]

By 1984, the SSD had grown to 238 staff. This was probably the result of an influx of personnel from the Shandong Public Security Department. In 1983 the Public Secur-

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[56]Ibid., p. 39.
[57]'Nanjing Institute of Information Technology', China Defence Universities Tracker.
[58]中国共产党江苏省常州市组织史资料 1926. 春–1987.10, p. 129.
[59]见证辽宁..., vol. 2, p. 179.
[60]Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 179 sq.
[61]Ibid., vol. 2, p. 182.
[62]王佩平, ed., 大连市志: 公安志, 方志出版社, 2004, p. 767.
[63]山东人事史志资料第三辑, 山东省人事局, 1987, pp. 54 sq.

Figure 2: MSS Vice Minister Wang Jun 王珺 speaking at the SSSB's founding (circa 1984).[68]

ity Department underwent an 'organisational reform' through which its staffing was reduced by 115, over a fifth of its workforce, compared to the previous year.[64]

Qingdao, a major port city in Shandong that had been under German and then Japanese colonial rule, also had its own investigation department. While no details are known about the Qingdao Investigation Department, it was disbanded upon the creation of the Qingdao State Security Bureau in April 1984.[65]

3.10 The Shanghai State Security Bureau

The Shanghai State Security Bureau (SSSB) was founded in January 1984 on the basis of the Shanghai Investigation Department, the MPS Shanghai Office and parts of the Shanghai Public Security Bureau (fig. 2).[66]

Ding Shenglie 丁升烈 was the first SSSB chief and had a background in the Central Investigation Department and Shanghai Investigation Department. An ethnic Korean, Ding was sent to Seoul to carry out clandestine operations during the Korean War.[67]

The Shanghai Investigation Department was created in 1955 from the Central Military Commission Liaison Department's Shanghai Liaison Bureau.[69] Despite being one of the oldest investigation departments, the Shanghai Investigation Department was probably relatively small. An online copy of a secret report from the department states that it had fewer than 50 staff in 1961.[70]

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[64]Note that public security organs across the country transferred labour camp (劳改) responsibilities to justice organs during the same year, so not all personnel losses from 1983 can be attributed to the State Security Department's creation. 山东人事史志资料..., loc. cit.

[65]See '青岛市志', 青岛政务网.

[66]中共上海党志, 上海社会科学院出版社, p. 155. For an example of a public security bureau officer who moved into the SSSB, see 宁夏年鉴 2008, 中国统计出版社, 2008, p. 555.

[67]See biography of Ding in 于晓峰 & 黄有福, eds., 中国朝鲜族百年实录第 10 卷人物英华篇, 中国文史出版社, 2016, pp. 268–73.

[68]Source: 王珺, 征程风云录, p. 31.

[69]岷江情深岷江读书社回忆录, 岷江读书社, p. 30; 中国共产党组织史资料第 5 卷过渡时期和社会主义建设时期 1949.10-1966.5, 中共党史出版社, 2000, p. 426.

[70]'1962.4.29 中共上海市委调查部的编制机构情况和意见（绝密）', 中共国史料, 29 Apr. 2015.

Figure 3: Japanese Communist Party leader Tokuda Kyūichi (left) in Beijing with CCP intelligence chief (and future Central Investigation Department head) Li Kenong, 1950.[74]

Perhaps speaking to Shanghai's important role in intelligence work, in February 1983, party leader Chen Pixian 陈丕显 held a meeting with representatives of the Shanghai political-legal system, the Shanghai Public Security Bureau and the Shanghai Investigation Department to 'hear their thoughts on establishing the MSS'.[71] Such consultative meetings have not been documented in other regions, but presumably took place in some.

3.11   The Tianjin State Security Bureau

The Tianjin SSB was established in December 1983 from the Tianjin Investigation Department and parts of the Tianjin Public Security Bureau.[72]

Tianjin was home to a substantial public security bureau and investigation department. Each had a prominent history of intelligence operations owing to Tianjin's longstanding international connections and proximity to Japan. For example, the predecessor to the Tianjin Investigation Department, the military's Tianjin Liaison Bureau, successfully exfiltrated Japanese Communist Party leaders Tokuda Kyūichi 德田球一 and Nosaka Sanzō 野坂参三 to China in 1950 (fig. 3).[73]

Both the Tianjin Public Security Bureau and the Tianjin Investigation Department contributed substantially to the Tianjin SSB, making it perhaps one of the largest state security system organs at the time. An official Tianjin history states that a total of 815 public security bureau officers were moved into the Tianjin SSB around the time of its creation in December 1983. They included the entirety of the public security bureau's 5th and 9th divisions, and parts of its 1st, 3rd and 4th divisions (the exact responsibil-

[71] 上海改革开放二十年政法卷, 上海人民出版社, 1998, p. 887.

[72] 来新夏, 天津大辞典, 天津社会科学院出版社, 2001, p. 175.

[73] '' 人民舰队 ' 的历史贡献——回忆我的父亲杨春松', 中国观网, 17 June 2020.

[74] Source: 王珺, 征程风云录, p. 31.

ities of each division are unclear, but 1st divisions were usually counterintelligence units).[75]

Zhao Shiwen 赵师文 from the public security system was the first head of the Tianjin SSB.[76] Zhao had experience in counterintelligence work as a deputy chief of the MPS 1st bureau in the 1960s.[77] Zhang Xiao 张晓, one of the original Tianjin SSB deputy heads, had been a division chief in the Tianjin Investigation Department.[78] Liu Feng 柳峰 was the last head of the Tianjin Investigation Department and may have been an original deputy head of the Tianjin SSB.[79]

3.12 The Xinjiang State Security Department

The Xinjiang SSD was founded in December 1983 on the basis of the Xinjiang Public Security Department's Political Protection Division.[80] No further details were available about the creation of the SSD.

3.13 The Yunnan State Security Department

The Yunnan SSD was officially established on 1 January 1984 with Sun Bozhen 孙伯箴 as its head and Tao Ruzhen 陶儒珍 as deputy head.[81] Shortly before this, in December 1983, the Yunnan Public Security Department's counterintelligence units were placed under the Yunnan SSD, although the SSD's creation hadn't been announced yet.[82] Official accounts omit two other components of the original Yunnan SSD: an MPS intelligence unit based in Yunnan and the Yunnan Investigation Department.

The MPS Yunnan Office (云南办事处) was an important source of personnel for the new Yunnan SSD. Outwardly known as the Yunnan Provincial Committee 1st Office, it was one of a handful of outposts established by the MPS for cross-border intelligence operations.[83] One biography of a former Yunnan SSD division chief states that she worked in the Provincial Committee's 1st Office until, in early 1984, the 1st Office and 5th Office were combined to create the Yunnan SSD.[84] A former MPS Yunnan Office official became the first head of the Yunnan SSD's Political Department.[85]

Likewise, there is strong evidence that Yunnan was home to an investigation department in the period immediately before the SSD's establishment. On the one hand, a provincial government history claims that the Yunnan Investigation Department only existed between 1955 and 1957.[86] However, the same official history references the Yunnan Investigation Department's role in having written a report in 1979.[87]

[75]郭凤歧, ed., 天津通志公安志, 天津人民出版社, 2001, p. 406.

[76]天津人大四十年–天津市人民代表大会及其常委会大事记, 天津人民出版社, 1994, p. 81.

[77]金色记忆, 群众出版社, 2014, p. 231.

[78]宋广义, ed., 天南地北鞍山人, 辽宁大学出版社, 2004, p. 80.

[79]辽阳公安历史长编, 辽阳市公安局, 1988, p. 68.

[80]新疆 40 年综合部分, 中国统计出版社, 1995, p. 62; 新疆百科全书, 中国大百科全书出版社, 2002, p. 306.

[81]宁超, 云南年鉴 1987, 云南年鉴杂志社, 1987, pp. 198 sq.

[82]云南省志卷 56: 公安志, 云南人民出版社, 1996, p. 237.

[83]Joske, op. cit.

[84]王汉文, ed., 开国将士风云录, 中国工人出版社, 2005, vol. 1, p. 438.

[85]郭大烈, ed., 中国少数民族大辞典纳西族卷, 广西民族出版社, 2002, p. 470.

[86]云南省志: 卷 43: 中共云南省委志, 云南人民出版社, 2000, p. 230.

[87]The provincial committee history references the Investigation Department's role in having written a report on policy towards Nationalist prisoners of war held by the PRC. Ibid., p. 746.

Figure 4: Huang Rongbo (L) and Wang Fang (R), undated.[94]

More evidence of Yunnan Investigation Department existence during this period comes from biographical details about Shi Erfu 施尔福. One short biography describes him as having served as deputy head of the Yunnan Investigation Department, when no such person is named in an official list of the department's leaders during the 1955–57 period.[88] Shi probably held this position in the early 1980s, because he is also recorded as 'concurrently' serving as a deputy head of the Yunnan United Front Work Department starting in June 1981.[89] This type of cover is typical of investigation department officers. In the final years of the Investigation Department, senior officers such as Shi were systematically covered as deputy heads of united front work departments at central and provincial levels.[90]

3.14   The Zhejiang State Security Department

The Zhejiang SSD was founded on 12 January 1984 with the dissolution of the Zhejiang Investigation Department.[91] In March 1984, counterintelligence units of the provincial public security department were placed under the SSD.[92] The biography of one officer indicates that some technology researchers from the public security department also moved into the SSD.[93]

Huang Rongbo 黄荣波 was selected as the Zhejiang SSD's first head, and may serve as an example of regional networks within the state security system because of his close ties to Zhejiang party leader Wang Fang 王芳. Huang had been secretary to Wang in 1965, and after the Cultural Revolution worked closely with him on the trial of the

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[88]云南地州市县概况: 楚雄彝族自治州分册, 云南人民出版社, 1988, p. 180. Cf. an official list of Yunnan Investigation Department leaders: 云南省志…, p. 230.

[89]Ibid., p. 224. This phenomenon can also be observed with senior CID officers in the post-Cultural Revolution period in Shanghai and Guangdong, as well as CID Deputy Head Xiong Xianghui's 熊向晖 concurrent appointment as a UFWD deputy head.

[90]Ibid.

[91]潘捷军, 蓬勃发展的进程纪实: 浙江 60 年大事记, 浙江人民出版社, 2009, p. 312.

[92]浙江通志: 第 20 卷: 公安志, 浙江人民出版社, 2018, p. 32.

[93]仙居中学八十年志 1925-2005, 2005, p. 124.

[94]Source: '王芳同志生平', 中国政府网, 10 Nov. 2009.

Gang of Four.[95] At the time of the Zhejiang SSD's establishment, Wang was Zhejiang's party secretary. In 1987, Wang was appointed head of the MPS (fig. 4).[96]

An MSS training college, the Zhejiang Second People's Police Academy (浙江第二人民警察学校), was established in 1985 in a ceremony attended by SSD chief Huang Rongbo.[97] This institution may be subordinate to the MSS itself, as it is sometimes referred to as the Hangzhou campus of the MSS's University of International Relations and trains personnel from across the country.[98]

4 Conclusion

Analysing the creation of provincial-level state security organs leads to several specific observations, in addition to the broad arguments presented in section 0.1 above:

- There is strong evidence for significant local culture and networks in provincial state security agencies. In all cases where sufficient biographical information is available, the first heads of provincial organs were selected from within the province. Zhejiang province provides an example of the close relationships between provincial SSD officials and their provincial government.

- The creation of the state security system built on an existing and growing network of investigation departments in at least nine provincial jurisdictions. The fact that provincial organs were already an important part of the intelligence apparatus before the MSS's founding is also supported by the fact that the Shanghai Investigation Department and Shanghai Public Security Bureau were consulted by a central party leader in the lead up to the MSS's creation.

- The transfer of personnel, facilities and capital from public security organs into the state security system was staggered and took many months in some provinces. However, the public security system ultimately contributed not only counterintelligence personnel but also technical specialists, including researchers, and foreign intelligence officers to the state security system.

- In many provinces, investigation departments were small and their personnel therefore made up a smaller share of the state security system. Despite this, investigation department veterans were well represented in the leadership of many state security agencies. Such veterans were chosen to lead the Fujian SSD and the Shanghai SSB.

- The vast majority of state security personnel came from the public security apparatus rather than investigation departments. Although information on staffing numbers is still scarce, one province's state security department was around half the size of its public security department in 1984.

- While an official source states some UFWD personnel contributed to the MSS's creation, no examples of this occurring at the provincial level were found. This

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[95]黄荣波, 追念, 浙江人民出版社, 2010, p. 176.

[96]'王芳同志生平', 中国政府网, 10 Nov. 2009.

[97]Ibid., p. 177.

[98]'University of International Relations', China Defence Universities Tracker, 25 Nov. 2019. For examples of state security personnel across the country receiving training at the Zhejiang Second People's Police Academy, see '罗江华', 靖西市委市人民政府网, '次旺边旦', 林芝市政府国资委, 27 June 2021.

suggests the number of UFWD personnel who were transferred to the state security system upon its creation was small. Nonetheless, there is evidence that investigation department officers used the UFWD as cover. In Guangdong, public security officers specialising in diaspora work (an aspect of united front work) were moved into the state security system.

- The Soviet Union, Mongolia and North Korea may have emerged as greater priorities for the state security system than they were under the Central Investigation Department. The Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang SSDs were among the first thirteen state security organs. Then, Liaoning and Jilin were the first provinces to establish SSDs after the original roll-out of the state security system. No evidence was found that the Central Investigation Department established units in any of these regions, something a former officer criticised the agency for.

- The fact that Tibet's SSD was only established around 1989, despite the region being an important area for security work, suggests that other agencies — perhaps in the military — took the lead on intelligence work in the region.

By the mid-90s, the MSS built up a comprehensive nationwide network of state security organs.[99] The state security system, however, faced further organisational challenges over the following years. General Secretary Jiang Zemin ordered military and security organs to end their involvement in commercial activity in 1998, which led to the MSS closing down, handing over or cutting ties with over 300 of its companies. Similar divestitures took place at the provincial level.[100]

This effort to assert more centralised party leadership over the activities of the security apparatus also manifested in a 2000 reorganisation of local state security agencies. State security bureaus at the city and prefectural level, previously under the leadership of governments at that level, were placed directly under the control of provincial state security organs. Funds for city state security bureaus were also handled by provincial governments. Before this, city governments exercised some control over leadership appointments and activities of local state security bureaus. Today, both provincial governments and the MSS exercise leadership over provincial state security organs.[101]

This description of leadership structures within the state security system also offers a partial explanation for some of the apparent specialisations and focuses of different state security agencies. Namely, that provincial state security work may reflect the priorities of provincial governments in addition to the MSS's. This could involve, for example, working to support the interests of local industry through intelligence collection efforts.

This paper is only an initial and partial piece of research on early state security organs. Their founding and key aspects of their operation remain poorly understood,

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[99]Mattis, op. cit.

[100]Michael S. Chase & James C. Mulvenon, 'The Decommercialization of China's Ministry of State Security', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 15:4, 2002.

[101]This arrangement where provincial state security work is carried out under the leadership of both provincial governments and the MSS is referred to as 'dual-level management' (两级管理). 湖南省财政厅、湖南省国家安全厅关于认真做好国家安全机关管理体制改革后经费上划工作的通知, 湘财行 (2001) 29 号, via 汇法网; 刘须群, 人民警察专业基础知识复习纲要, 江西科学技术出版社, 2011, p. 89; 王敏远, ed., 中国刑事诉讼法教程, 2nd ed., 中国政法大学出版社, 2012, p. 64.

and the same goes for MPS intelligence offices and provincial investigation departments. The extent of potential tensions between public security and investigation department personnel in the early state security system is unclear. Likewise, this paper provides little insight into how provincial agencies relate to each other and to the MSS in Beijing. A systems-based analysis also suggests that it would be valuable to disaggregate this question along functional lines: counterintelligence, Taiwan work, political influence work, technology acquisition and so on. The introduction of cyber capabilities has probably introduced new complexities to analysing provincial agencies and their relationship to the MSS.

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