



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

China

China – CHN40255 – National Security
Bureau – Falun Gong – Public Security
Bureau
30 April 2012

1. What is known about the NSB?

The National Security Bureau (NSB) is most commonly associated with the national intelligence organisation of Taiwan. The NSB is a Taiwanese agency established on 1 March 1955. According to the official website of the NSB, the agency has “a mandate to carry out intelligence activities of national security concern in addition to planning and conducting presidential and VIP protection”.¹

There are conflicting reports concerning the existence of a NSB in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Examination of the Chinese language versions of several media reports that refer to a NSB in China, show that they use a variety of Chinese characters for NSB, but the most common are: 国家安全², 国安局³, 国安⁴, 国保⁵. These characters can be translated as “State Security” and are used for the Ministry of State Security (国家安全部 or 国安部). It is noted that the same characters 国家安全 are used by both the Taiwanese National Security Bureau and the PRC Ministry of State Security. It is concluded that the term National Security Bureau could be an alternative translation of State Security organs or officials (responsible for international operations as previously discussed) or in some cases of Public Security bodies, such as the police or the 6-10 Office, who are responsible for domestic security. See the next section for further discussion.

Reports by open source global intelligence providers and government agencies on the PRC’s various intelligence agencies omit any reference to the existence of a NSB. Rather, these reports maintain that the Ministry of State Security (MSS) has responsibility for carrying out foreign intelligence operations, including reporting on Chinese students abroad who were Falun Gong practitioners or who engaged in pro-democracy activities.

An assessment of Chinese intelligence agencies by the military news provider, GlobalSecurity.org, describes the MSS as the Chinese government's intelligence arm, responsible for foreign intelligence and counterintelligence operations, including taking action against the Falun Gong. The assessment states that the MSS favours non-professional intelligence agents such as travellers, businessmen, academics and overseas Chinese students and that MSS officers are generally assigned to overseas postings for terms of at least six

¹ National Security Bureau (R.O.C), n.d, *History of NSB* < http://www.nsb.gov.tw/En/En_index01.html > Accessed 27 April 2012

² <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/5/12/27/n1168126.htm>

³ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/6/9/29/n1470521.htm>

⁴ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/5/12/27/n1168126.htm>

⁵ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/6/9/2/n1442076.htm>

years.⁶ According to GlobalSecurity.org, the MSS's Second Bureau (also called the Foreign Bureau) has particular responsibility for carrying out foreign intelligence operations. The Second Bureau is described as being responsible for:

...sending clandestine agents abroad using covers such as cadres posted to foreign trade companies, banks, insurance companies, ocean shipping companies abroad. Chinese embassies and consulates also have senior Bureau personnel working under diplomatic cover while performing intelligence functions.⁷

In an entry on foreign intelligence agencies around the world, dated 30 March 2011, the news blogsite *nxtnews* describes the MSS as the Chinese government's largest and most active foreign intelligence agency. The entry states that:

One of the primary missions of the MSS is undoubtedly to gather foreign intelligence from targets in various countries overseas. Many MSS agents are said to have operated in the Greater China region (Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) and to have integrated themselves into the world's numerous overseas Chinese communities. At one point, nearly 120 agents who had been operating under non-official cover in the U.S., Canada, Western and Northern Europe, and Japan as businessmen, bankers, scholars, and journalists were recalled to China, a fact that demonstrates the broad geographical scope of MSS agent coverage.⁸

The MSS's responsibility for foreign intelligence operations is also referred to in an intelligence threat assessment handbook published by the US government which describes the MSS as the "preeminent civilian intelligence collection agency in China." In a description of the MSS's activities abroad, the handbook states that:

The Overseas Bureau, also known as the Second Bureau, is responsible for operations abroad. It provides tasking, and receives, analyses and reports to higher levels intelligence collected by its operatives and agents. The Overseas Bureau is responsible for sending clandestine agents abroad using covers such as cadres posted to foreign trade companies, banks insurance companies, ocean shipping companies, etc.⁹

Although no information was located that referred specifically to MSS activities in Japan, it is widely accepted that Chinese authorities monitor and interfere with pro-democracy adherents and other groups perceived as dissident in many countries outside of China, including Australia. In 2009, former MSS officer Li Fengzhi told the US Congress that China was running a vast intelligence operation domestically and internationally to suppress dissent.¹⁰ Li claimed the PRC government uses "lies and violence to suppress people seeking basic human rights", and "uses huge expenditure of funds to suppress ordinary citizens and even extend their dark hands overseas".¹¹

⁶ Global Security website 2011, *Ministry of State Security (MSS)*, 28 July

<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/china/mss.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

⁷ Global Security website 2011, *Second Bureau*, 28 July <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/china/mss-org_02.htm> Accessed 27 April 2012

⁸ „Top Spying Agencies’ 2011, *NXTnews*, 30 March <<http://www.nxtnews.com/top-spying-agencies/>> Accessed 27 April 2012

⁹ Interagency OPSEC Support Staff (IOSS) 2004, *Intelligence Threat Handbook*, June, p.71

<<http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/handbook/supplement.pdf>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹⁰ „China has vast dark spy network: defector’ 2009, *ABC News*, 20 March

<<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/20/2521919.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹¹ „China has „vast dark spy network’: defector’ 2009, *ABC News*, 20 March

<<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/20/2521919.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

According to Chen Yonglin, the former Political Consul at the PRC Consulate-General in Sydney who defected from his post in 2005, PRC officials in Australia actively monitor the activities of particular groups in Australia, including Falun Gong adherents and pro-democracy activists. Chen said during his time at the mission, he was responsible for monitoring these groups. Chen would take photos of public gatherings and report on these activities to Beijing, providing information such as the number of attendees, the keynote speakers and general information about the content of speeches. Chen further claimed some students and other PRC nationals in Australia would monitor individuals and report on their activities to the PRC missions.¹² Chen's claim that there was a network of up to 1,000 Chinese spies in Australia has been criticised by some as exaggerated; however, if the claim was to be interpreted as referring to informants rather than professional, trained intelligence officers, the figure is considered to be more plausible.¹³

National Security Bureau

In contrast to reports by global news providers and government agencies that omit any reference to a NSB, a number of predominately pro Christian and Falun Gong sources were located that referred to the existence of a NSB in China and claim that it has been responsible for harassing and detaining religious leaders, human rights activists and Falun Gong practitioners in China and abroad. For example:

- In November 2011 an article in *Radio Free Asia* reported that officers from the NSB had detained a cyber-dissident in Anhui province,¹⁴ and in June 2010 an article by *Asia News* claimed that officers from the local NSB were involved in the disappearance of a human rights defender in China.¹⁵
- In September 2007, the Christian news agency *Compass Direct* related claims made by China Aid that officers of the NSB had warned a house church leader in China to stop practicing his faith outside of the government-sanctioned church, and that the NSB was "China's equivalent of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency".¹⁶ The NSB was also noted in two reports by China Aid.
- In March 2007, the organisation related claims by a house church member residing in Shanxi province that he was kidnapped and detained by officers from the NSB,¹⁷ and in August 2006 the same organisation claimed that officers from the NSB had arrested a local house church leader.¹⁸

References to the NSB were also located in reports by two pro Falun Gong media sources.

¹² „Chinese defector details spy claims' 2005, *ABC*, 20 June

<<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1396471.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹³ „Chinese defector offers information on secret agents' 2005, *ABC*, 6 June

<<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1385487.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹⁴ „Dissident Detained Over Torture Report' 2011, *Radio Free Asia*, 22 November

<<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/detain-11222011183541.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹⁵ „Beijing, arrests and threats on the eve of the Tiananmen anniversary' 2010, *Asia News IT*, 3 June

¹⁶ Sellers, J 2007, „Chinese house church leader Cai Zhuohua released', *Compass Direct*, 18 September

<http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/china/2007/newsarticle_5040.html> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹⁷ China Aid Association 2007, *Escaped Persecuted Church Leader Denied Refugee Status in Thailand by UN, CAA Appeals for International Intervention*, 1 March <<http://www.chinaaid.org/2007/03/escaped-persecuted-church-leader-denied.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

¹⁸ China Aid Association, 2006, *Government Intervenes into a Three-Self Church in Shanxi Province, Pastor Evicted*, 9 August

- The allegedly pro Falun Gong news agency *Epoch Times*¹⁹ published five articles between 2006 and 2007 that make reference to the activities of the NSB in repressing Falun Gong activists in China.²⁰
- The NSB was also referred to in an article by the Falun Gong news source, *Clearwisdom.net*, in November 2005. The article claims that officers from the Baoding branch of the NSB had arrested a couple for practicing Falun Gong, and that the NSB Baoding branch was located at:

Baoding National Security Bureau:

Address: No.385 Tianezhong Road, Baoding City, Hebei Province, 071000²¹

As noted previously, an examination of the Chinese language versions of these reports, show that they use a variety of Chinese characters for National Security Bureau, but the most common are: 国家安全²², 国安局²³, 国安²⁴, 国保²⁵. These characters can be translated as “State Security” and are used for the Ministry of State Security (国家安全部 or 国安部). It is noted that the same characters 国家安全 are used by both the Taiwanese National Security Bureau and the PRC Ministry of State Security. It is concluded that the term National Security Bureau could be an alternative translation of State Security organs or officials (responsible for international operations as previously discussed) or in some cases of Public Security bodies, such as the police or the 6-10 Office, who are responsible for domestic security. See the next section for further discussion.

2. On what is known, does it have a role in overseas intelligence gathering?

Reports by the *Epoch Times* claim that the NSB has been active outside of China through the 6-10 Office²⁶, an extra judicial organisation established in 1999 by the Chinese government to conduct operations against the Falun Gong and other spiritual groups.²⁷ In January 2006, two

¹⁹ *The Epoch Times* is a New York-based news service which provides reports on current events in China in print and on the internet. Although *The Epoch Times* claims to be an independent voice, it has been criticised for being biased against the Chinese Government and for being pro-Falun Dafa.

²⁰ „Falun Gong Practitioner Who Met With VP of European Parliament Sentenced’, 2007, *The Epoch Times*, 19 February <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/7-2-19/51909.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Chow, M 2007, „Chinese Agents Forced Me to Spy’, *The Epoch Times*, 15 February <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/7-2-15/51731.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Dazhi, Y 2006, „I Was Arrested for Appealing for My Wife Who Was Raped’, *The Echo Times*, 10 October <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-10-11/46877.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Xiao, D 2006, „Police Detain Nephew of Human Rights Attorney’, *The Echo Times*, 4 September <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-9-4/45627.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Shanmei, L 2006, „Radio Taiwan International hosts former 610 Office agent’, *The Epoch Times*, 4 January <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-1-4/36523.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

²¹ „Mr. Wei Haiwu and his family endure immense suffering while seeking his release from illegal detention’2005, *Clearwisdom.net*, 21 November

²² <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/5/12/27/n1168126.htm>

²³ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/6/9/29/n1470521.htm>

²⁴ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/5/12/27/n1168126.htm>

²⁵ <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/6/9/2/n1442076.htm>

²⁶ Also known as the 610 Office and the Leading Bureau for the Prevention and Procession of Evil Cults.

²⁷ Cook, S. & Lemish, L. 2011, „The 610 Office: Policing the Chinese Spirit’, *China Brief*, Vol. 11, Issue 17 <http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38411&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=74e885364935de9c32e5aae19921ea6a> Accessed 27 April 2012; US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, *Annual Report 2010*, May, p. 113 <<http://www.uscirf.gov/images/ar2010/china2010.pdf>> Accessed 27 April 2012 Chinese Human Rights Defenders 2008, *A Civil Society Report on China’s Implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, 10 October, p. 22 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/ngos/CHRD_China_41_new.pdf> Accessed 27 April 2012

articles by the *Epoch Times* related claims made by a Chinese asylum seeker, Hao Fengjun, that he had been a spy based in Taiwan for the 6-10 Office and that this organisation was part of China's NSB.²⁸ The claims made by Mr Fengjun concerning the 6-10 Office were also reported in an earlier article by the *Sydney Morning Herald* which describes Mr Fengjun as having worked for "the 6-10 Office in the National Security Bureau in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin".²⁹

A more recent article by the *Epoch Times* claims that the 6-10 Office continues to have an active role in harassing Falun Gong practitioners living outside of China. In June 2011, the *Epoch Times* reported that a Chinese agent working for the 6-10 Office had been convicted in Germany for spying on Falun Gong practitioners and that the organization was active both abroad and within China.³⁰

Public Security Bureau

There is circumstantial evidence that pro Christian and Falun Gong sources may be confusing the NSB with the Chinese Governments, Public Security Bureau (PSB), when reporting on the harassment and detention of religious leaders, human rights activists and Falun Gong practitioners in China. In the above cited article by the *Echo Times* the asylum seeker, Hao Fengjun, uses the terms NSB and PSB interchangeably. In the article he initially refers to the 6-10 Office as part of the NSB and then later as part of the PSB.³¹

In addition, a number of reports were located that indicate the PSB has responsibility for many of the activities attributed by pro Christian and Falun Gong sources to the NSB. The military news provider GlobalSecurity.org maintains that the PSB is part of the Ministry of Public Security, which is responsible within China for "intelligence, police operations, prisons, and political, economic, and communications security".³² In a 2007 report on the treatment of House Church members by the PSB, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) writes that:

Several 2006 and 2007 press releases by China Aid Association (CAA), a United States (US)-based non-governmental organization (NGO) that investigates and advocates for religious freedom in China, report on Public Security Bureau (PSB) raids of house church meetings. According to the press releases, during house church raids, PSB officials have detained and interrogated house church leaders and members; conducted searches; confiscated property); handed out fines; taken pictures of house church members and asked for their identity. PSB officials have also reportedly beaten house church members during interrogation.³³

²⁸ Hurley, B 2006, „Taiwanese businessmen blackmailed into spying for China', *The Epoch Times*, 2 January <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-1-2/36393.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012; Shanmei, L 2006, „Radio Taiwan International hosts former 610 Office agent', *The Epoch Times*, 4 January <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-1-4/36523.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

²⁹ Hughes, G & Allard, T 2005, „Fresh From the Secret Force, a spy downloads on China', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 June <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/National/A-spy-downloads-on-China/2005/06/08/1118123901298.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³⁰ Robertson, M & Yu, T 2011, „Man Convicted of Spying on Falun Gong in Germany', *The Epoch Times*, 13 June <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/world/man-convicted-of-spying-on-falun-gong-in-germany-57571.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³¹ Shanmei, L 2006, „Radio Taiwan International hosts former 610 Office agent', *The Epoch Times*, 4 January <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-1-4/36523.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³² Global Security website 2011, *Ministry of Public Security*, 28 July <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/china/mps.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³³ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *Treatment of ordinary Christian house church members by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) (2005-2007)*, CHN102491.E, 13 June <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?l=e&id=451316> Accessed 27 April 2012

Other sources maintain that the PSB has also been responsible for harassing and detaining human rights activists and Falun Gong Practitioners in China. The State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 notes that non sanctioned religions groups are "vulnerable to coercive and punitive action by the PSB"³⁴ and in its 2010 annual report the Congressional Executive Commission on China found that:

Lawyers and rights defenders who took on „sensitive” cases or who became involved with „sensitive” issues during the past year were harassed, abducted, or beaten by public security officers or unidentified personnel working under the direction of, or with the knowledge of, the public security bureau.³⁵

Similarly, in respect to the harassment of Falun Gong practitioners in China the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief noted that a Falun Gong practitioner in Shanghai was arrested and detained by officers from the PSB.³⁶ The PSB's role in harassing Falun Gong practitioners was also noted by pro Falun Gong news sources. In an article on the removal of the Director of Beijing's Public Security Bureau, dated 8 March 2010, the Chinese news website *Kan Zhong Guo* stated that:

...the Director of Beijing Public Security Bureau Ma Zhenchuan was also in charge of the operation to persecute Falun Gong in Beijing. Under the name of security for the Olympics, he illegally arrested many Falun Gong practitioners.³⁷

In a more dated report on the investigation of Falun Gong practitioners and confiscation of their property by the Chinese authorities, the Australian Falun Dafa Information Centre website stated in 2004 that:

On July 21, 1998, the First Division of the Public Security Bureau issued a circular – No. 555 – “Notification Regarding Starting an Investigation of Falun Gong.” The notification adopted the procedure that first determines guilt, then makes investigations.

The notification also mentioned that the departments of police, politics and security in each area should begin a thorough investigation to get inside information on Falun Gong activities and find evidence of crimes committed by core practitioners of Falun Gong.³⁸

The role of PSB officers in harassing and detaining Falun Gong practitioners was also noted in a research response by the IRBC in February 2002. Addressing whether the PSB had increased its focus on the Falun Gong the IRBC states that:

Falun Gong organizations report on individual arrests and detentions by authorities in Guangzhou. Practitioners are arrested by the police or by members of the Public Security Bureau (PSB).

³⁴ US Department of State 2011, *2010 International Religious Freedom Report (July- December)*, 13 September <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168351.htm> Accessed 27 April 2012

³⁵ Congressional Executive Commission on China 2010, *Annual Report*, 10 October, p.87

<<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt10/CECCannRpt2010.pdf>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³⁶ UN General Assembly 2011, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt: addendum*, 14 February, A/HRC/16/53/Add. p.13

<<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category/COI.UNGA...4d74d7162.0.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

³⁷ Yuanhan, L 2010, „The Removal of Beijing Public Security Bureau Leaders Deals a Heavy Blow to Zhou Yongkang”, *Kan Zhong Guo*, 8 March, <http://en.kanzhongguo.com/realchina/3696.html> Accessed 27 April 2012

³⁸ Australian Falun Dafa Information Centre 2004, *On the Fifth Anniversary of the April 25 Appeal – Remembering April 25, 1999 (Part 1)*, 27 April <<http://www.falunau.org/archivesArticle.jsp?itemID=1232>> Accessed 27 April 2012

Punishment takes the form of imprisonment, in labour camps or "rehabilitation" hospitals or sending the practitioners to "brainwashing" or "reform" class.³⁹

³⁹ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002, *China: Reports of Falun Gong-related events in Guangzhou City and environs (including Long Gui Village) since the self-immolations on Tiananmen Square on 23 January 2001; whether the Public Security Bureau (PSB) has increased its crackdown; reaction of members; current situation; types and lengths of punishments meted out to persistent practitioners; whether a profile of a typical local Falun Gong practitioner is ascertainable (23 January 2001-2002)*, CHN38346.E, 20 February <<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=country&docid=3df4be1f0&skip=0&coi=CHN&querysi=public%20security%20bureau&searchin=title&display=10&sort=date>> Accessed 27 April 2012

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<<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2005/s1396471.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012
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<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/7-2-15/51731.html> Accessed 27 April 2012 (CISNET China CX171519)

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<http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38411&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=74e885364935de9c32e5aae19921ea6a> Accessed 27 April 2012

Dazhi, Y 2006, „I Was Arrested for Appealing for My Wife Who Was Raped’, *The Echo Times*, 10 October <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-10-11/46877.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012 (CISNET China CX163238)

Global Security website 2011, *Ministry of Public Security*, 28 July
<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/china/mps.htm>> Accessed 27 April 2012

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<<http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/handbook/supplement.pdf>> Accessed 27 April 2012

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Shanmei, L 2006, „Radio Taiwan International hosts former 610 Office agent’, *The Epoch Times*, 4 January <<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-1-4/36523.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012 (CISNET China CX143871)

UN General Assembly 2011, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt: addendum*, 14 February, A/HRC/16/53/Add. p.13 <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,COI,UNGA,,,4d74d7162,0.html>> Accessed 27 April 2012

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