**People's Liberation Army** **(PLA) Internal Security**

In general, the PLA's main job is the military defense of the People's Republic of China and is only rarely been used for internal security or police functions. Most such issues in the country however are handled by the [paramilitary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paramilitary) [People's Armed Police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Armed_Police). The instances in which the PLA has been used for non-military internal security duties have included several incidents during the [Cultural Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution) in the 1960s, Tibet in 1989, and with the [Tiananmen Protests of 1989](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Protests_of_1989).

Many times, the PLA is involved in flood relief operations in the [Yellow River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_River) region. National media portrays these operations as courageous rescues are frequently broadcasted on national TV, and performed admirably well in the eyes of the [citizens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizen). Public opinion rates the military higher than the [Communist Party of China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_China) or the PRC government.

**The PLA and commercial enterprises**

Until the mid-1990s the PLA had extensive commercial enterprise holdings in non-military areas, particularly real estate. Almost all of these holdings were allegedly spun-off in the mid-1990s. In most cases, the management of the companies remained unchanged, with the PLA officers running the companies simply retiring from the PLA to run the newly formed private holding companies.

The history of PLA involvement in commercial enterprises begins in the 1950s and 1960s. Because of the socialist state-owned system and from a desire for military self-sufficiency, the PLA created a network of enterprises such as farms, guesthouses, and factories intended to support its own needs. One unintended side effect of the Deng Xiaoping reforms was that many of these enterprises became very profitable. For example, a military guesthouse intended for soldier recreation could easily be converted into a profitable hotel for civilian use. There were two factors which increased PLA commercial involvement in the 1990s. One was that running profitable companies decreased the need for the state to fund the military from the government budget. The second was that in an environment where legal rules were unclear and political connections were important, PLA influence was very useful.

By the early 1990s party officials and high military officials were becoming increasingly alarmed at the military's commercial involvement for a number of reasons. The military's involvement in commerce was seen to adversely affect military readiness and to cause corruption. Further, there was great concern that having an independent source of funding would lead to decreased loyalty to the party. The result of this was an effort to spin off the PLA's commercial enterprises into private companies managed by former PLA officers, and to reform military procurement from a system in which the PLA directly controls its sources of supply to a contracting system more akin to those of Western countries.

The separation of the PLA from its commercial enterprises was largely complete by the year 2000. It met with very little resistance, as the spinoff was arranged so that few lost out.

**Military Intelligence**

The intelligence gathering for the military is carried out under the Second and Third Departments of the Headquarters of the General Staff.

By ensuring that these report to the CPC Central Military Commission and the PLA General Staff Headquarters, this unit effectively monitors all external and internal military communications.

**Second Department**

The Second Department coordinates military human intelligence (HUMINT)and imagery intelligence data. The Second Department does not conduct Signals intelligence (SIGINT), which is conducted by the Third Department.

**Units of the Second Department**

* Analysis Bureau - operates the National Watch Center
* Institute for International Strategic Studies - is its research institute which publishes an internal publication *Wai Jun Dongtai* ("Movement Of Foreign Armies").
* First Bureau - responsible for intelligence on [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan) and [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong). Of particular note in this bureau was the "Autumn Orchid" intelligence group which was awarded a Citation for Merit, Second Class, in December 1994, and further another Citation for Merit, Second Class.

**Third Department**

The Third Department is charged with monitoring the telecommunications of foreign armies.

Third Department headquarters is located in the vicinity of the GSD First Department (Operations Department), AMS, and NDU complex in the hills northwest of the Summer Palace.

**Units of the Third Department**

* PLA Foreign Language Institute at Luoyang - responsible for training foreign language specialists for use in monitoring foreign transmissions.