China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process

David Shambaugh

ABSTRACT Over the past two decades China's international relations (IR) think tanks have come to play increasingly important roles in China's foreign policy making and intelligence analysis, as well as serving as an increasingly important liaison to officials and specialists in foreign countries. During this period China's IR think tanks have expanded in quantity as well as improving the quality of personnel and analytical product. Publications by, and discussions with, these think tanks often offer important indications of broader policy debates and competition among institutes and their staff. This article surveys the current organization and state of research in China's IR think tanks, offers historical perspectives on the evolution of this community, and provides current information of relevance to those who interact with these institutions and read their publications.

In 1987 I published a survey of China's international relations (IR) institutes (think tanks) in this journal, based on my interaction with these institutes during 1983–85.[1] At that time many of these analytical organs were just being established or were rebuilding after being closed during the Cultural Revolution. Some things have changed in the interim, while others have not.

The community of IR institutes/think tanks has certainly expanded over time – as China increasingly interacts with the outside world, as Chinese leaders have a greater need for better intelligence and knowledge about world affairs, as the academic discipline of international relations has developed,[2] and as increased financial resources have been made available (including funding from the private sector in China and from American philanthropic foundations). Ministerial-level officials also increasingly turn to their affiliated think tanks for policy research and advice. As Bonnie Glaser and Philip Saunders' contribution to this symposium elucidates, the "policy influence" of these think tanks is difficult to assess and the indicators are difficult to measure, but undoubtedly the decision-making system has become more consultative over

1. David Shambaugh, "China's national security research bureaucracy," *The China Quarterly*, No. 110 (June 1987), pp. 276–304.

2. In the growing study of the study of IR in China see Yuan Ming (ed.), *Kua shiji de tiaozhan: Zhongguo guoji guanxi xueke de fazhan* (*The Trans-Century Challenge: China's International Relations Scholarship and Development*) (Chongqing: Chongqing renmin chubanshe, 1993); Gerald Chan, "International studies in China: origins and development," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (February 1997), pp. 40–64; Gerald Chan, "Toward an international relations theory with Chinese characteristics?" *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 6 (June 1998), pp. 1–28; Gerald Chan, *Chinese Perspectives on International Relations: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); and Ren Xiao, *The International Relations Theoretical Discourse in China: A Preliminary Analysis* (Washington, DC: George Washington University Sigur Center for Asian Studies Asia Paper No. 9, 2000). For an earlier assessment see David Shambaugh and Wang Jisi, "Research and training in international studies in the People's Republic of China," *PS*, Vol. 17 No. 4 (Fall 1984), pp. 6–14.

© The China Quarterly, 2002

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

time, with an increased role played by the think tank specialists. The policy influence of some think tanks has been reduced over time (such as the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (*Zhongguo xiandai guoji guanxi yanjiusuo*) (CICIR)) while in some it has grown, (such as the China Institute of International Studies (*Zhongguo guoji wenti yanjiusuo*) (CIIS)), in others it is episodic depending on external events (such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) area institutes), in others it remains marginal (such as the Foundation for International Strategic Studies (*Guoji zhanlüe yanjiu jijinhui*) (FISS)), and still others which were formerly influential have ceased to exist altogether (State Council International Studies Research Centre). While some think tanks do possess policy influence, it is important to note that not all are policy-relevant, nor do they all aspire to be so. Many of those in the CASS system, for example, are more concerned with pure scholarship: building and disseminating knowledge and information about foreign countries to other similar organizations and the learned public. Their research agendas are not, on the whole, set or driven by contemporary policy concerns.

In addition to providing analyses for government officials, many think tank personnel simultaneously provide channels for information/intelligence collection and policy testing/dissemination for the Chinese government. They often meet foreign specialists and officials and provide a steady stream of information and intelligence feedback into the system. They also occasionally carry specific messages to foreign officials, specialists or public audiences (some of which cannot be so expressed in official channels), and try to use foreign specialists with whom they are familiar to try and influence the policies of their governments and publics (giving new meaning to the old stratagem of "using barbarians to control barbarians"). As the Chinese government has increasingly participated in so-called "Track II" policy dialogues, so too has it better understood the utility of such venues for floating policy ideas and possible initiatives, and to gauge the potential reaction of foreigners.

Historical Perspectives: Escaping the Soviet Shadow

The history of international relations research institutes/think tanks in the foreign policy process is an important context in which to judge their roles and influence today. Many of China's IR institutes are the stepchild of the imported Soviet system, although their development since the 1980s has been spurred by an increased appreciation of the role played by think tanks in the United States and other nations. Originally, they were few and entirely embedded in the institutional structure of the ministries and commissions of the State Council or the departments of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Their structure and roles paralleled those of the Soviet Institute of International Relations and World Economy and other IR institutes in the Soviet system.[3]

3. See William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969; and Richard Remnick (ed.), *Social Scientists and Policy Making in the USSR* (New York: Praeger Press, 1977).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The first initiative to build expertise on international affairs outside the Foreign Ministry and Investigation Department of the Chinese Communist Party came in the wake of events in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union in 1956. Chairman Mao was shocked at the events in Budapest and Warsaw (to say nothing of Khruschev's "secret speech"), which his own advisors had failed to predict, and so ordered Premier Zhou Enlai to establish the Institute of International Relations (*Guoji guanxi yanjiusuo*) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (subsequently renamed the China Institute of International Studies). In the same year, the State Planning Commission was instructed to establish a Bureau of World Economics (*Shijie jingji ju*) to track developments in the capitalist world, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences Philosophy and Social Science Department established an economics research institute under which existed a international economics section (by 1958 this included a world politics research section as well).[4] As the Sino-Soviet rift deepened in 1960, the Institute of International Relations was instrumental in co-ordinating the drafting process of the "Nine Letters" that inaugurated the polemics between the two countries.

As Chinese diplomacy became more oriented to competing with Moscow in the developing world, a new Afro-Asia Research Institute was established in 1961 under the auspices of the CCP International Liaison Department (*Zhong lian bu*) (ILD), which was joined in 1963 by the establishment of a Soviet-East Europe Institute and a Latin America Institute.[5] These joined the already extant international relations research section of the ILD, which was later elevated to full institute status (this entity is the forerunner of the CICIR). In the same year, the Foreign Ministry established a separate India Research Institute and International Law Institute.[6] Also in 1963 the Academy of Sciences elevated the Social Science Department to Division level and established a World Economics Institute, under which there was a World Politics Research Section. In 1964, after a tour of Africa, during which he was impressed by the diplomats he met, Zhou Enlai ordered the establishment of several colleges and university departments to focus on international affairs. The College of Foreign Affairs (*Waijiao xueyuan*) and First Foreign Languages Institute (*Yi wai*) were established to train staff for the Foreign Ministry and Xinhua News Agency, the College of International Affairs (*Guoji guanxi xueyuan*) was established to train intelligence personnel for the Investigation Department and (undercover) at Xinhua News Agency, and international politics departments were established at Peking University, Fudan University and People's University. There was a curricular division of labour established between these latter three: Beida (developing world), Fudan (developed world), Renda (socialist world).

4. Li Zong *et al.*, "Xin Zhongguo guoji wenti yanjiu 50 nian" ("New China's international studies research at 50"), in Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (ed.), *Xin Zhongguo shehui kexue 50 nian* (*New China's Social Sciences at 50*) (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2000), p. 611.
5. *Ibid.* p. 612.
6. *Ibid.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

This was essentially the institutional landscape prior to the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). During this chaotic time, all IR institutes and universities were closed, the Foreign Ministry essentially ceased to function, and personnel were sent to May 7th cadre schools in the countryside. Apparently the only institute that continued to function partially was CICIR (elevated to institute status in 1965), which continued as the current intelligence agency of the senior leadership and Central Committee (although it is unclear if it remained bureaucratically under the Investigation Department and/or the ILD). During these years the CICIR staggered the sending of staff to its May 7th cadre school, so that a core group continued to function at this delicate time in China's national security, and by 1969 – in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Ussuri Crisis – it had been restored in its entirety. CICIR staff apparently played an important role in helping the top leadership understand the Nixon Doctrine and America's reorientation of policy towards China, and the dangers of the Soviet threat of invasion, and prepare for Kissinger's and Nixon's visits to China.[7]

The Foreign Ministry's Institute of International Relations was officially reopened in 1973 and was renamed the China Institute of International Studies, so as not to be confused with the CICIR. In fact, the institute remained dormant until 1978 as most of its staff remained in the countryside.

The year 1977 was critical in the rehabilitation, reorganization and new development of IR institutes. This was when CASS was founded, as the successor to the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences. More or less since its inception, CASS has had a number of regional research institutes (*diqu yanjiusuo*) as well as the Institute of World Economics and Politics.

The Soviet influence on China's IR institutes was not simply organizational, whereby institutes were established within ministerial hierarchies (whether in the state or party *apparat*) and strictly served their ministerial masters; it was also analytical. Until the 1990s Chinese IR analysts still subscribed largely to categories of analysis and paradigms they had learned and adapted from the Soviet Union.[8] The "Sovietization" of Chinese international relations research and discourse began to change appreciably only in the early to mid-1980s, with a move away from the ideological dictates of Marxism-Leninism in favour of more empirical, neutral and descriptive analysis. This was particularly the case in the new study of the United States,[9] Japan[10] and the former Soviet Union.[11]

7. *Ibid.* p. 626.

8. See my "The Soviet impact on the Chinese worldview," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* (January 1992).

9. See my *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972–1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); "China's America watchers," *Problems of Communism* (May-August 1988), pp. 71–94.

10. See Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

11. See Gilbert Rozman, "China's Soviet watchers in the 1980s: a new era of scholarship," *World Politics* (July 1985), pp. 435–74; Rozman, *The Chinese Debate About Soviet Socialism, 1978–1985* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Nevertheless analysis still often had to support policy, rather than vice versa. In more than one instance, IR analysis had to justify policy initiatives that had been taken by the Chinese government on pragmatic rather then ideological grounds, such as in the extended polemic on imperialism which spanned much of the decade of the 1980s.[12] By the 1990s, however, in place of such Marxist-Leninist ideological analysis, the trend towards "thick description" has deepened, and – as Bonnie Glaser and Phillip Saunders' contribution to this symposium suggests – it has become more variegated, sophisticated and occasionally theoretical. There is a much greater awareness of the interaction of domestic and international systemic variables on foreign nations' foreign relations, a much more thorough understanding of international organizations (ranging from the World Bank to the World Trade Organization), an increased appreciation of political economy and globalization (*quanqiuhua*), and a considerably deeper understanding of functional issues in world politics (ranging from the environment to arms control).[13] This is not to suggest that Chinese international relations analysts and think tank experts do not still infuse their analyses with a strong dose of doctrinaire orthodoxy, as they still do, but it no longer derives from classic Marxism-Leninism. Rather, core concepts such as "multipolarism" and the critique of "hegemony" – both of which underpin and infuse most analyses – derive from more indigenous Chinese theories and concepts. In academic IR circles there is obsessive search to develop "IR theory with Chinese characteristics."[14]

The Institutional Universe of Civilian International Relations Think Tanks

The universe of China's IR think tanks must be understood in its bureaucratic context. First, it is important to understand that there is no such thing as an "independent" IR think tank in China, although many profess such independence. All (with the possible exception of the China Society for Strategy and Management) operate within administrative hierarchies under either a State Council ministry, a Central Committee department or one of the general departments of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). A few have more than one line of institutional authority. Such is the case, for example, with CICIR (under the Central Committee

12. See my *Beautiful Imperialist*, ch. 2.

13. See the contributions in David M. Lampton (ed.), *The Making of China's Foreign and Security Policy in the Reform Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg (eds.), *China Joins the World: Progress & Prospects* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999).

14. The former chairman of the College of International Relations at Peking University, Liang Shoude, has been at the forefront of this effort. See, for example, Liang's "Constructing an international relations theory with Chinese characteristics," *Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1997), pp. 23–39; "Lun guoji zhengzhixue de Zhongguo tese" ("On the study of international politics with Chinese characteristics"), *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (*Research on International Politics*) (January 1994), pp. 15–21; "Guoji zhengzhixue zai Zhongguo: zaitan guoji guanxi lilun de Zhongguo tese" ("The study of international politics in China: another discussion of international relations theory with Chinese characteristics"), *Guoji zhengzhi yanjiu* (January 1997), pp. 1–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Foreign Affairs Office and the State Council Ministry of State Security); the Institute of Taiwan Studies (under CASS, the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, the Central Committee Leading Group on Taiwan Affairs and the Ministry of State Security); and the Centre for Peace and Development Studies (*Heping yu fazhan yanjiusuo*) (CPDS) (under the PLA General Political Department and Ministry of State Security). But these are the exceptions to the rule that Chinese think tanks/research institutes remain creatures of the Soviet system, all nested firmly within vertically hierarchical bureaucratic systems (*xitong*).

This fact is fundamental to understanding the severe bureaucratic "stovepiping" that permeates the system. This is a system that structurally enforces extreme compartmentalization and redundancy of research and analysis, and impedes horizontal communication. Over the last decade or so, horizontal communication has increasingly taken place, as a result of analysts from different institutions meeting abroad or at international conferences, but this contact remains informal and personal rather than institutionalized. Thus, in effect, each main ministry involved in foreign affairs has its own think tank (CASS has nine), and many also have some solely devoted to exchange of personnel with foreign countries (such as the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (*Zhongguo renmin waijiao xuehui*) (CPIFA) and the China Association for International Friendly Contact (*Zhongguo guoji youhao lianhe hui*) (CAIFC)). Several others answer to the top-level Central Committee Foreign Affairs Office, a relatively small (around 25 professional staff) organ that staffs the Central Committee's Foreign Affairs Leading Group (FALG) and co-ordinates all the document and intelligence flow for the Politburo and principal civilian leadership (there is a similar organ under the Second Department of the General Staff Department of the PLA for the military leadership). It also co-ordinates meetings of the FALG or other sets of top leaders concerned with foreign policy issues.

The FALG itself is an organ that dates back more than 40 years, and is the senior most deliberative body of the Chinese leadership and foreign policy/national security establishment. It was founded on 6 March 1958 as a permanent Leading Group of the Central Committee (simultaneously the Foreign Affairs Office was established as its staff office).[15] Originally, the FALG was composed of second-echelon leaders (such as Chen Yi, Li Kenong, Wang Jiaxiang and Zhang Wentian), but over time it expanded and elevated its membership. Since 1997 it has been chaired by Jiang Zemin. The FALG must be thought of as simultaneously a policy-deliberative body, a policy-making organ and particularly a policy co-ordination institution. It is with regard to this last function that it is important for IR think tanks, insofar as it is the principal consumer of their analytical product, and co-ordinates and tasks studies to be done, occasionally arranging for individuals to brief senior leaders and FALG meetings.

15. Wang Jingsong, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo zhengfu yu zhengzhi* (*Government and Politics of the People's Republic of China*) (Beijing: CCP Central Party School Press, 1995), pp. 384–85.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Much of this logistical work is done by the Foreign Affairs office, but the FALG is the beneficiary.

Overall, Chinese IR think tanks have evolved in their functions, responsibilities and influence. Cumulatively, they have gained in importance (although there are exceptions to this generalization) and today they must be considered important actors in the foreign policy making process in the PRC. Their influence varies by issue area and the relative competence of the primary bureaucracies involved, and also as a result of the relative personal influence and connections (*guanxi*) of institute directors or occasionally individual staff members, as these connections often enable a think tank to circumvent normal bureaucratic channels and processes. Think tank influence has certainly grown commensurate with China's involvement in global affairs: ministries, localities, and even private companies and educational institutions have needed information on foreign countries and international affairs, and this demand has created important new revenue streams for think tanks, as their government "customers" have had fewer financial resources to provide.

The published journals (open and *neibu*) of IR think tanks provide very important insights into policy debates that are percolating inside bureaucracies, thus offering important "early warning indicators" of policies to come. One recent indication of this was the official publication of the 2000 China Defence White Paper,[16] which contained what many analysts considered to be a surprisingly harsh critique of the United States – but, in fact, the specifics of this critique had been previewed in numerous journals published by civilian and military IR think tanks over the previous year. The think tanks should thus not be dismissed as purveyors of propaganda or disseminators of disinformation. They are serious professional research institutions, both for current intelligence and for scholarly purposes.

The following survey does not seek to be comprehensive and cannot do justice to the roles, personnel or influence of various IR think tanks. But it does capture, as accurately as possible, both the totality of civilian IR think tanks and their internal organization (current as of late 2001).[17]

China Institute of Contemporary International Relations

In its organizational origins, CICIR is probably the oldest of China's IR think tanks.[18] Its roots are traceable to the Chinese Communists' intelligence operations during the Sino-Japanese War and the collection effort against the US Dixie Mission and Soviet Comintern presence in

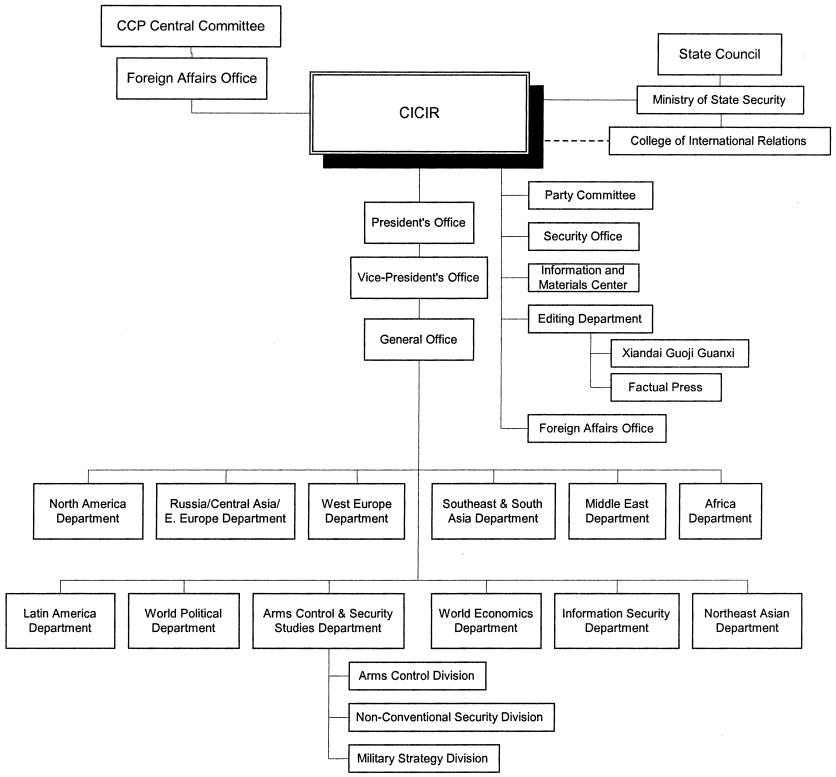
16. Information Office of the State Council, *China's National Defense in 2000* (Beijing: Xinhua News Agency, 2000).

17. This assessment is drawn from a number of sources, including my extensive personal interactions with these institutions. In addition a unprecedented cataloguing of these institutes has been published in Yang Jiemian, *Hou lengzhan shiqi de Zong-Mei guanxi* (*China–US Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2000), pp. 134–142.

18. For a fuller assessment of CICIR's history, see my "China's national security research bureaucracy."

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 1: **China Institute of Contemporary International Relations**



Yan'an.[19] Since its inception as an institute in 1965, CICIR has served the senior-most Chinese Communist leadership, and has always been bureaucratically subordinate to the FALG. In 1980 CICIR was designated an "open" (*gongkai*) unit authorized to have contact with foreigners,[20] so as better to facilitate its intelligence collection. Until 1982 the FALG was subordinate to the Central Committee, but then it was transferred (along with the Foreign Affairs Office) to the State Council. At the same time CICIR was administratively and fiscally put under the authority of the newly-created Ministry of State Security. This structure lasted until 1999, when both the Foreign Affairs Office and CICIR were transferred back under Central Committee auspices (see Figure 1). Thus, in 1999, the uppermost levels of PRC foreign policy decision-making undid a bureaucratic change of 1982 and reverted to the earlier system.[21]

For CICIR, this meant a decline in bureaucratic influence, although, in

19. For a state-of-the art assessment of the CCP's pre-1949 intelligence operations see Murray Scot Tanner's forthcoming monograph *Who Wields the Knife? A Historical-Institutional Analysis of Chinese Communist Police and Intelligence Organs, 1927–1950*.

20. Yang Jiemian, *China–US Relations*, p. 135.

21. One of the great unexplained reforms of the early Deng era was the total reorganization of the intelligence community, and the establishment of the Ministry of State Security, in 1982.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

fact, its influence began to wane in the mid-1990s. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but would seem related to at least two factors: the retirements or deaths of senior analytical staff without finding replacements of sufficient analytical quality; and the increased dominance of the Foreign Ministry in foreign policy decision-making. CICIR has yet to recover fully from its diminished role.

CICIR's comparative advantages remain its exclusive focus on current intelligence and its ability to manufacture instant analyses, its large staff (more than 400 including 150 "senior fellows"),[22] its multiple sources of information/intelligence, and its bureaucratic proximity to the Foreign Affairs Office, FALG, Ministry of State Security and senior leadership. These are not insignificant advantages. Many of CICIR's writings are related to prospective visits for foreign leaders or Chinese leaders' trips abroad: biographies of interlocutors, the current internal political situation of the interlocutor's nation, recent foreign policy interactions of interlocutors, and compilations of pronouncements concerning China/Taiwan by interlocutors.

To regain its status as China's leading IR think tank, CICIR needs new infrastructure (indeed a new office building is under construction), new personnel,[23] better staff morale, a high-level patron (which it hasn't had since Li Peng), and truly cosmopolitan senior management. Its current leadership all share lengthy and shadowy careers in the intelligence service.[24] The institution still suffers from its excessive connection to Soviet-style intelligence and a major identity crisis as to whether it should be an intelligence agency, a more independent think tank or a combination of the two. As long as the Ministry of State Security pays most of the bills and the FALG is CICIR's principal customer, this ensures the future of the institution as a Soviet-style intelligence organ.

CICIR uses a number of internal (*neibu*) and classified (*baomi*) channels to reach government audiences, and it publishes the influential journal, *Xiandai guoji guanxi*. It also has an association with Factual Publishers (*Shi shi chubanshe*) for book publishing.

China Institute of International Studies

As CICIR has been in relative eclipse in recent years, CIIS has seen its star rise. Although the oldest of all Chinese IR think tanks, the CIIS has never – until recently – been that important in terms of foreign policy influence. It is the Foreign Ministry's think tank (Figure 2), but historically has never been taken very seriously by the Foreign Ministry or Foreign Minister – under the bureaucratic assumption that everything that was worth knowing was already known "in-house." This has changed in the last five years. Clearly the appointment of former Ambassador Yang

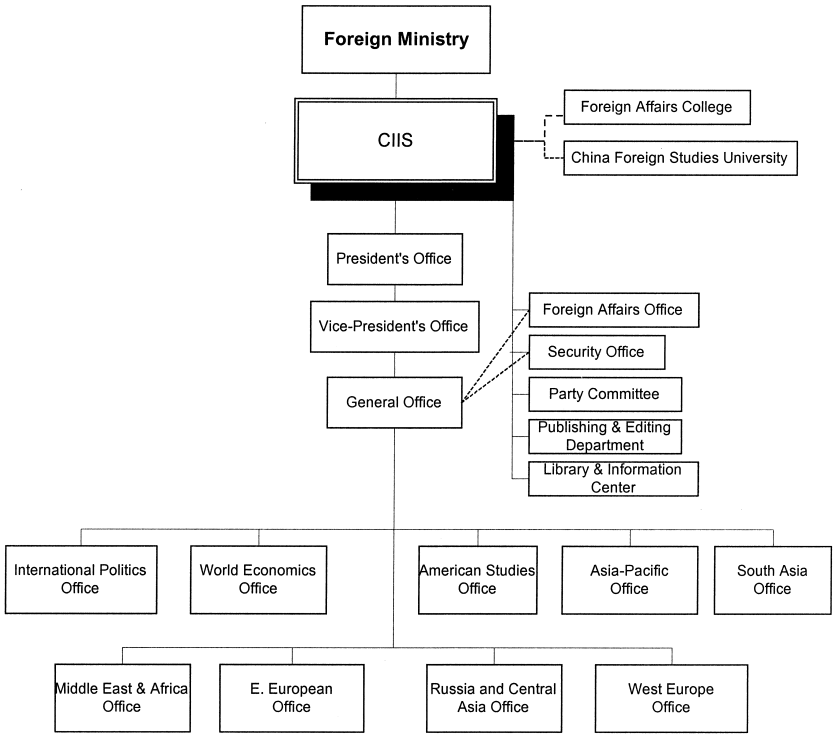
22. Yang Jiemian, *China–US Relations*.

23. Some of the best younger and middle-aged analysts, such as Yan Xuetong and Chu Shulong, have left CICIR – and there are many others who are desperately trying to leave.

24. The current President of CICIR is Lu Zhongwei, and there are three Vice-Presidents: Zhong Buwen, Tao Jian and Li Huiying.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 2: **China Institute of International Studies**



Chengxu as President, and the external entrepreneurial acumen as well as internal policy conformity he has demonstrated, made a major difference. (In March 2002 Ambassador Yang retired and was replaced by Song Minjiang, a former ambassador to the European Union.) New financial resources were also found in the Foreign Ministry and spent on CIIS; the Ford Foundation has also been a significant help. Disillusion in the Foreign Ministry (and perhaps among senior leaders) about CICIR may also have contributed to the recent relative rise of CIIS.

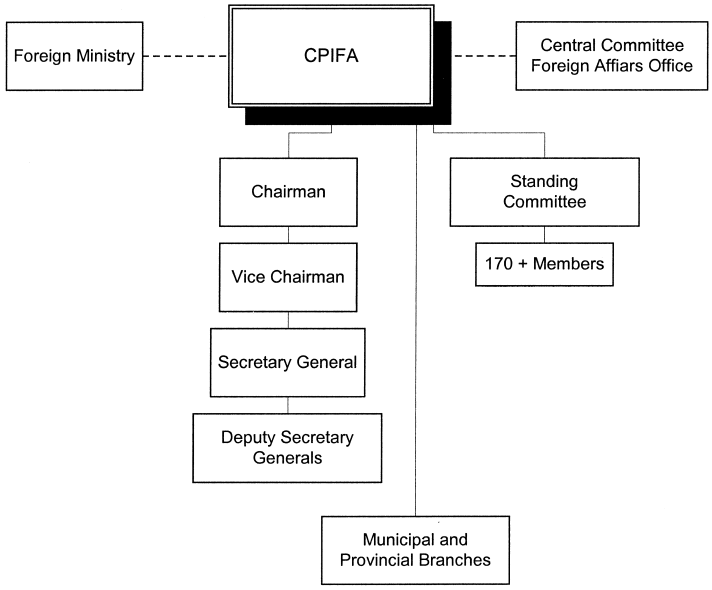
The CIIS staff is a mixture of junior and middle-aged personnel, and their analytical quality and training is quite high (including many who possess PhDs from American universities). The absorption of the best staff from the State Council's former Centre for International Studies (*Guoji wenti yanjiu zhongxin*), which was merged into CIIS in 1998, has helped to strengthen analytical expertise at the institute, although CIIS has also been astute at recruiting new graduates from Peking University's College of International Affairs and other universities, and sending them abroad for training.[25] The institute claims to be "focused primarily on medium and long-term issues of strategic importance,"[26] as opposed to

25. For example, CIIS has exchange relationships with the School of International Studies at Denver University and the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

26. CIIS brochure, 2000.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 3: **Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs**



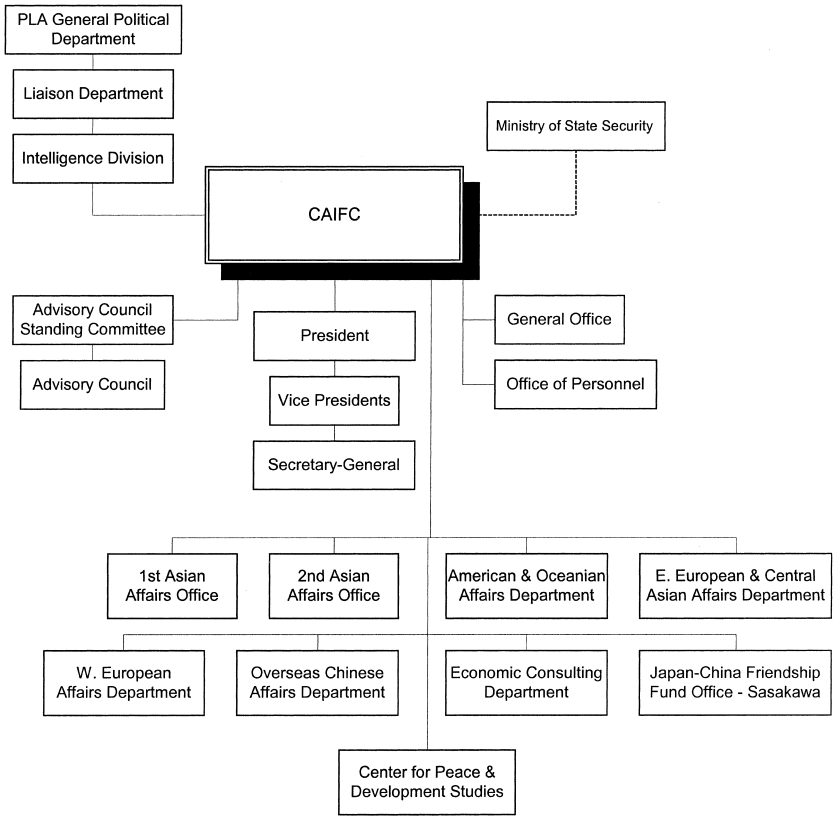
the current and short-term nature of much of CICIR's analysis. Their staff is also constantly infused by rotational assignments from the ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs increasingly utilizes their expertise, and has so designated CIIS as the key "Track II" organ to carry out such exchanges for China. On an international level, CIIS has now emerged as the full counterpart to the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), the Japan Institute for International Affairs or comparable research institutes attached to foreign ministries around the world. CIIS publishes *Guoji wenti yanjiu*, as well as a number of internal publications.

Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs

CPIFA is an arm of the Foreign Ministry and is not a think tank *per se* (Figure 3). It has a long history dating to December 1949 and is the Chinese government's principal institution devoted to "people-to-people diplomacy." During its first two decades CPIFA performed a valuable channel for informal exchanges with elites from nations with which the PRC did not have formal diplomatic relations. In the last two decades, though, its focus has been more on hosting former politicians and ex-diplomats. It is the principal institutional channel through which former heads of state, officials, and ambassadors visit China after leaving office. It is currently headed by former ambassador Mei Zhaorong. The institute also publishes the informative *Foreign Affairs Journal* (in English).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 4: **China Association for International Friendly Contact**



China Association for International Friendly Contact

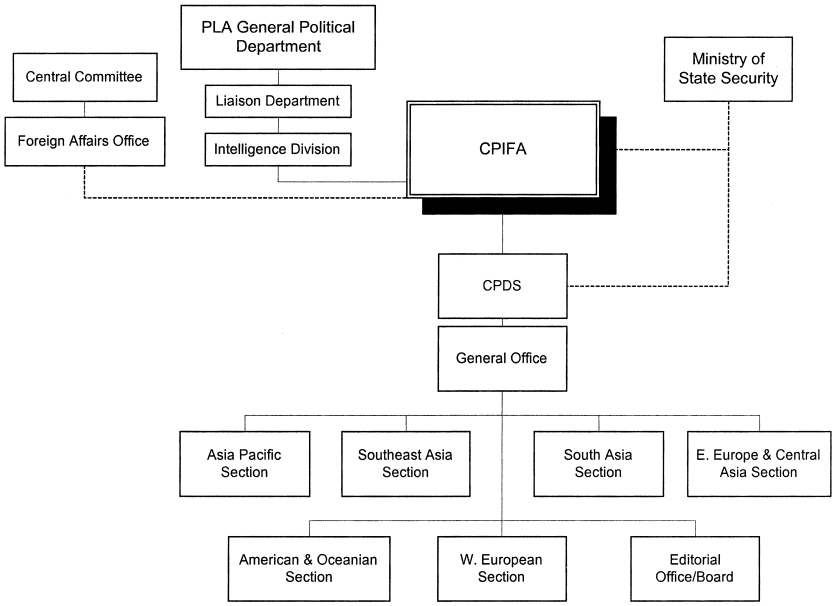
The CAIFC is something of a military counterpart to the CPIFA, although it has connections to the civilian foreign affairs establishment as well (Figure 4). This duality was evidenced in the fact that General Wang Zhen was its first honorary president while former Foreign Minister Huang Hua was its first president. On the military side, it appears that CAIFC is linked to the Intelligence Bureau of the Liaison Department of the PLA's General Political Department. On the civilian side, it appears to have ties to both the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its offices today are in a compound in north Beijing shared by other PLA units. CAIFC was founded in 1984, and is involved in bringing both retired civilian and military personages to China (although it was not as active in the 1990s as it was in the 1980s). One of its major responsibilities is to administer the Centre for Peace and Development Studies (see below).

Centre for Peace and Development Studies

The CPDS was also established in December 1984, assumed its current

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 5: **Centre for Peace and Development Studies**



name in 1989, and is described as "affiliated with" the CAIFC.[27] It too has ties to the PLA's General Political Department as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of State Security. As Figure 5 illustrates, CPDS has seven regional research sections and a staff of 20 full-time researchers (plus numerous affiliated research fellows). Its publications indicate that CPDS receives between five and ten international visitors per month.[28]

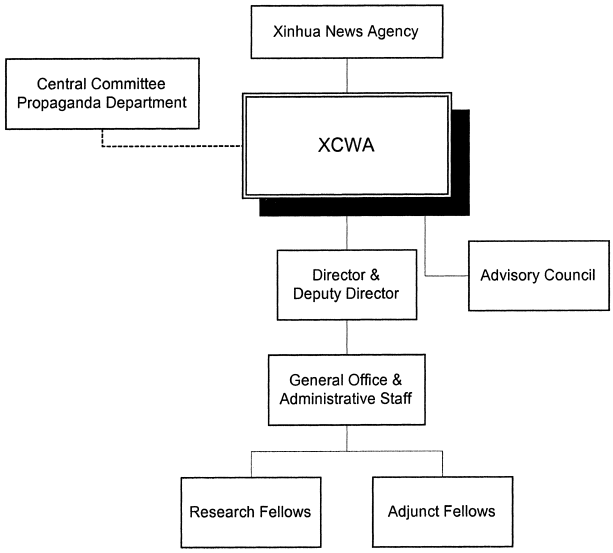
Perhaps the most important activity of the institute is its publication *Heping yu fazhan* (*Peace and Development*). This quarterly journal contains extremely high-quality analyses of international affairs written by civilian and military analysts, both permanent and associated research staff. It is a useful "window" into the thinking of PLA international security specialists, and is probably the highest-quality journal on current international relations topics published in China today. Its breadth and depth exceed that of the journals published by CICIR or CIIS, although articles in the journal of the CASS Institute of World Economics and Politics are more theoretical. Taken together, the journals of CPDS, CICIR, CIIS and the China Institute of International Strategic Studies (the think tank affiliated with the Second Department of the PLA General Staff Department) offer excellent insights into the analysis of contem-

27. CPDS brochure and author's meeting, 18 May 2000, Beijing.

28. Heping yu fazhan yanjiu zhongxin (Peace and Development Research Institute), *Guoji wenti xueshu jiaoliao dashiji* (*Chronology of International Scholarly Exchange*) (brochure 1996).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 6: **Xinhua Centre for World Affairs**



porary international affairs being carried out in China's civilian and military intelligence communities. The CPDS claims it is "mainly financed" by CAIFC,[29] which means its funds largely come from the Ministry of State Security and PLA's General Political Department.

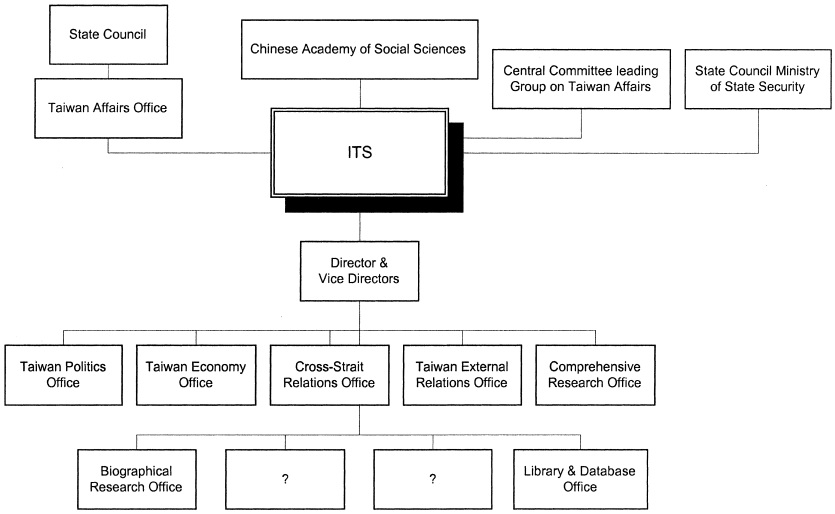
Xinhua Centre for World Affairs

The Xinhua Centre for World Affairs (*Xinhuashe shijie wenti yanjiu zhongxin*) (XCWA) was established in 1991 under the International Department of Xinhua News Agency (Figure 6). It only has about ten full-time research fellows (many of whom are also simultaneously working in the International Department) and a small secretarial staff, but a large number of affiliated fellows, mostly retired from Xinhua.[30] The Centre claims to focus primarily on "big powers and India." It plays an important role in the selection of materials to be translated and included in the daily Reference News (*Cankao ziliao* or *Da cankao*), not an unimportant task insofar as this publication is a critical source of information on international affairs for China's top leaders and officials. The XCWA also has several other *neibu* document channels to the leadership and other international affairs units.[31] Nevertheless, its influence should

29. CPDS brochure.
30. Interview, 17 May 2000, Beijing.
31. I gave a talk at the XCWA one day, and when I visited the CPDS the next day CPDS personnel already had a full typed readout of my lecture (stamped "internal reference, carefully protect").

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 7: **Institute of Taiwan Studies**



not be overstated, as it seems to be more a loose group of elderly Xinhua correspondents than an organized institution.

Institute of Taiwan Studies

Although not an international relations institute *per se*, the Institute of Taiwan Studies merits consideration in this survey. The institute is officially under CASS, but also falls administratively and budgetarily under several other key central-level bodies: the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council (*Tai ban*), the Taiwan Leading Group of the Central Committee (*Zhongyang Taiwan lingdao xiaozu*) and the Ministry of State Security (Figure 7). It is the principal organization for current intelligence on Taiwan affairs, and its staff also conduct some longer-range research projects. In addition to its intelligence and advisory roles, the institute also has an important role to play in the formulation of Taiwan policy. For example, it was largely responsible for drafting the 2000 Taiwan White Paper.[32] The institute's director is Xu Shiquan, a former Xinhua correspondent with connections to the Chinese intelligence community and senior Chinese leadership. The institute's location adjacent to the College of International Relations, and the fact that several of its staff come from the College, are further indications of its Ministry of State Security links.

China Society for Strategy and Management

The China Society for Strategy and Management (*Zhongguo zhanlüe yu guanli yanjiuhui*) (CSSM) is an unusual organization. It was founded in 1983 by several individuals affiliated with the PLA Academy of

32. Interviews, 17 May and 15 October 2000.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Military Sciences and Deng Xiaoping's former foreign affairs advisor Huan Xiang (who served as its first honorary chairman). Former Minister of Defence Zhang Aiping was the first president, and he was followed by former PLA Chief of Staff General Xiao Ke.[33] In 1989 CSSM became an "open" (*gongkai*) organization, permitted to have contacts with foreigners. Prior to that time its purpose was to bring together international security experts from the PLA and civilian intelligence community for discussions and to prepare special reports.

At its founding it affiliated with the State Council Foreign Affairs Office but later was transferred under the Economic Reform Institute of the State Council.[34] Since that institute was closed in the wake of Tiananmen in 1989, it is unclear what higher-level institution now sponsors CSSM. All Chinese think tanks require a sponsoring organ (*guakao danwei*), but CSSM's considerable financial support gained from consulting to private sector companies and government departments provide it not only with fiscal, but perhaps administrative, autonomy (Figure 8).

The Society's brochure falsely indicates that it was founded on 17 June 1989 – just two weeks after the Beijing massacre.[35] Its list of chairmen and vice-chairmen reads like a *Who's Who* of retired military and civilian personnel (Gu Mu, Zhang Aiping, Xiao Ke, Yuan Baohua, Du Runsheng, Wang Daohan, Han Nianlong, and even the former prime ministers of Australia and Japan!).

The CSSM has a relatively small permanent research staff of approximately ten, but operates principally as an association to draw together experts from across Beijing and the rest of the country. They have modest office space in the National Library of China's annex building, but clearly are fairly flush with funds. Only a minor degree of its sponsored research is on international affairs, and this comes to light in the important quarterly journal *Zhanlüe yu guanli* (*Strategy and Management*). These articles often break with the mould of more official and mainstream IR journals.

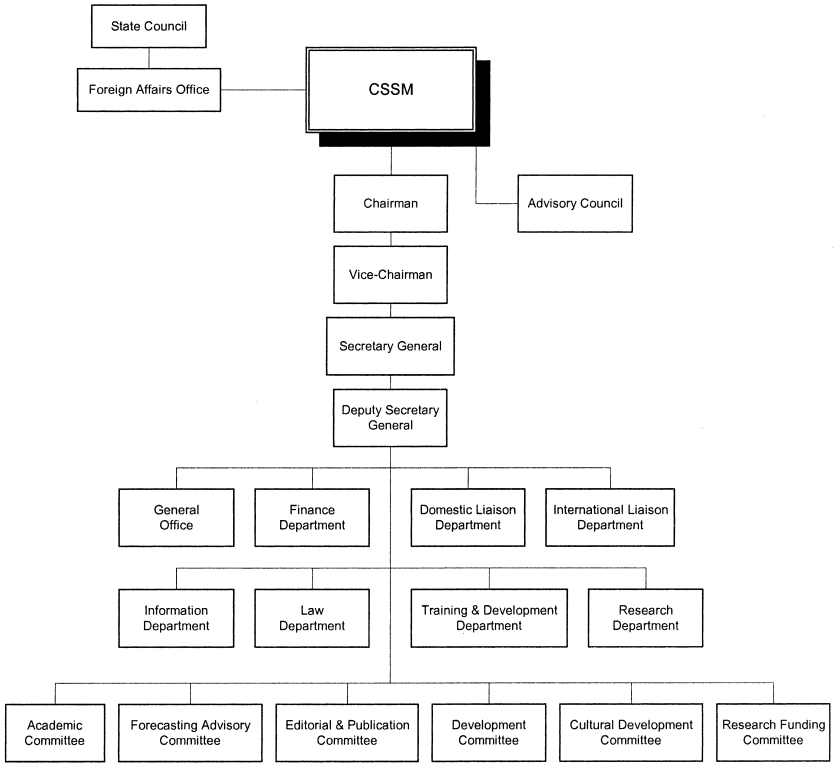
Foundation for International Strategic Studies

FISS was established in June 1989 and claims to be a "independent and non-profit institution."[36] It further claims to have "been approved by the People's Bank of China and registered at the Ministry of Civil Affairs."[37] But clearly, from its inception, FISS has had strong ties to the Second Department (Intelligence) of the PLA General Staff (Figure 9). Many of its staff members are active duty PLA colonels or senior colonels,

33. Interview, 6 May 1998.
34. *Ibid.*
35. CSSM brochure, 2000.
36. FISS brochure, September 1989. FISS is not to be confused with CIISS (the China Institute of International Strategic Studies), which is also affiliated with the Second Department of the PLA General Staff. Since the contribution by Bates Gill and James Mulvenon deals with CIISS, and because it is entirely a military organ (unlike FISS), I have intentionally not included it in this survey, despite its position and importance in China's IR community.
37. *Ibid.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 8: **China Society for Strategy Management**



although FISS was careful to appoint a number of retired diplomats and civilians to its advisory council. Even though it is termed a "foundation" (an unusual title in China) FISS does not appear to give grants for research; quite to the contrary, it actively cultivates funds from the private sector through contract research (it also conducts research for the PLA and Foreign Ministry). Despite a strong and promising start, FISS has not been that active in international exchanges in recent years, although it has served as the Chinese institutional counterpart for the Stanford-Harvard Preventive Defense Initiative. FISS publishes no journal, but occasional monographs.

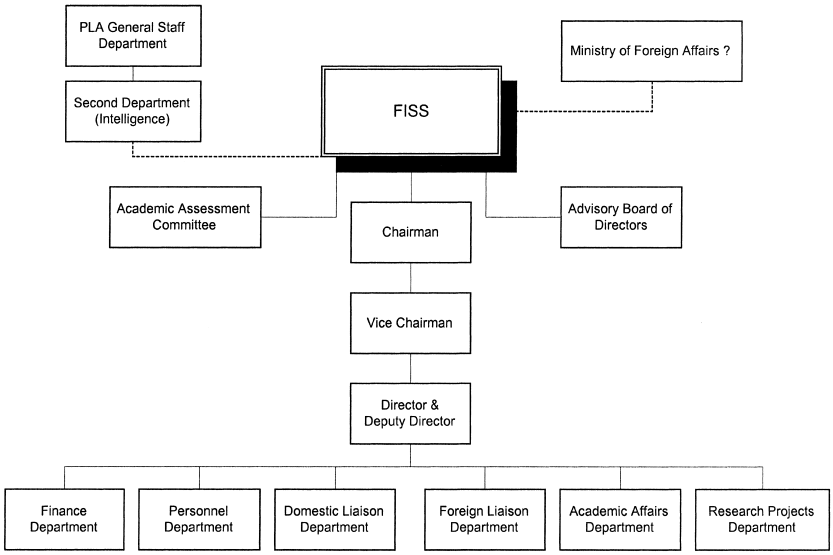
Shanghai Centre for International Studies

The Shanghai Centre for International Studies (*Shanghai guoji wenti yanjiu zhongxin*) (SCIS) is attached to the Shanghai Municipal Government's Office of Foreign Affairs, and has some administrative links to the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (Figure 10). It was established as an autonomous organ on 3 May 1985.[38] It also serves as the staff office

38. Yang Jiemian, *China–US Relations*, p. 140.

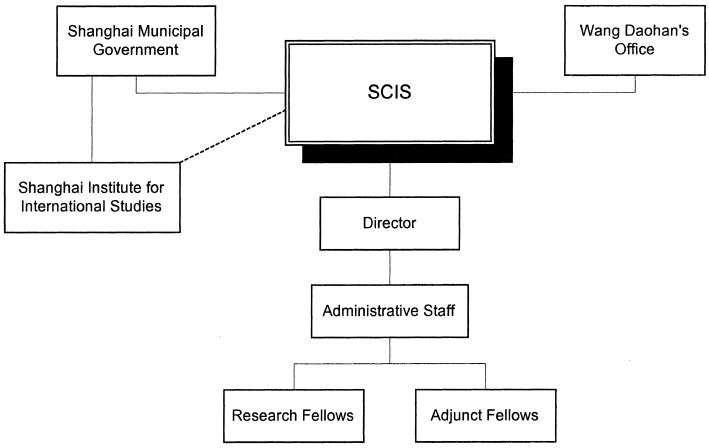
https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 9: **Foundation for International Strategic Studies**



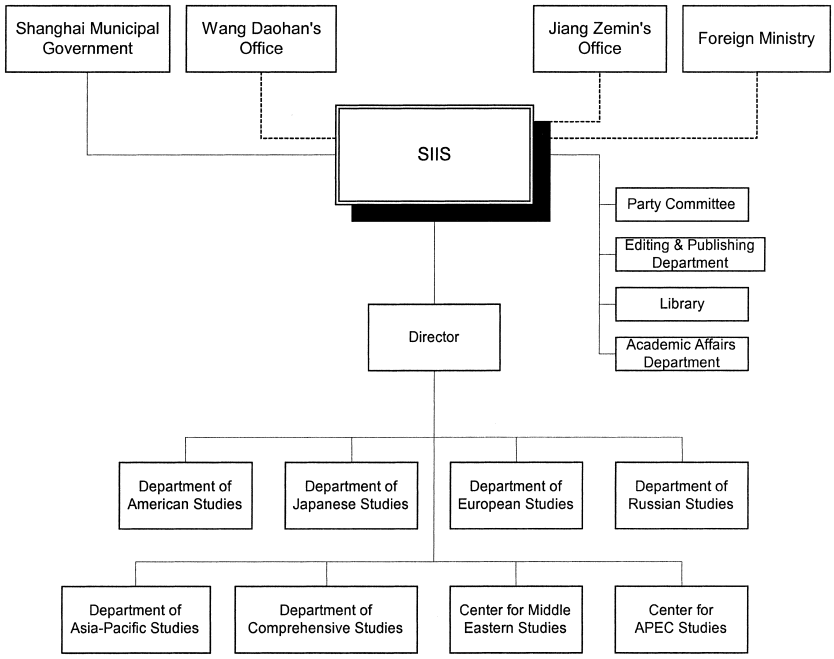
for former Shanghai Mayor Wang Daohan (who remains an influential advisor to President Jiang Zemin and a key figure on formulating policy toward Taiwan). The SCIS is also described as playing a leading role in assigning research projects to other IR institutions throughout Shanghai, in circulating intelligence and other information to these institutions, in

Figure 10: **Shanghai Centre for International Studies**



https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 11: **Shanghai Institute of International Studies**



formulating policy papers for leaders in Beijing, and in providing information to Shanghai companies on the international business climate.[39]

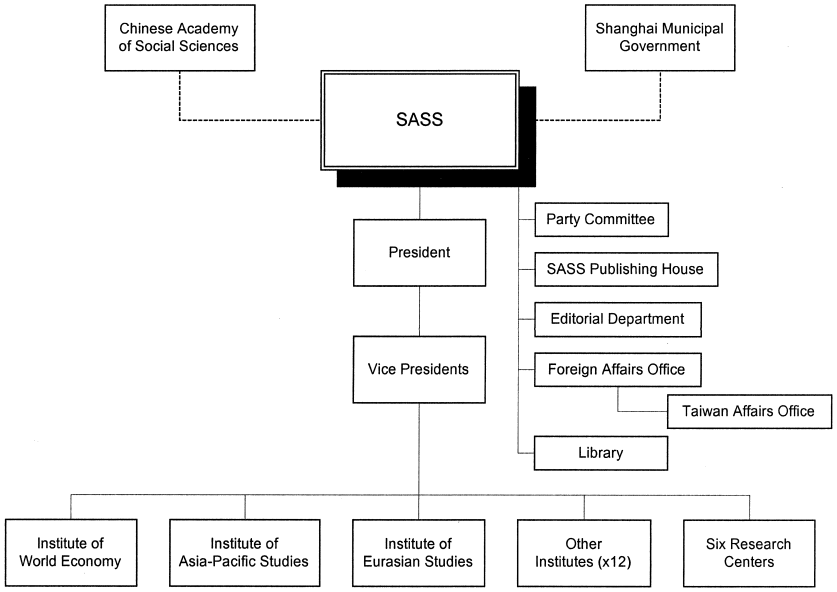
Shanghai Institute of International Studies

The Shanghai Institute of International Studies (*Shanghai guoji wenti yanjiusuo*) (SIIS) was established in 1960 and has subsequently maintained a strong research and analysis capability (Figure 11). While its staff has always been smaller than its counterparts in Beijing, its quality has generally been higher. Physical distance from Beijing also begets intellectual distance: SIIS researchers have long been noted for putting forward analyses and policy proposals at variance with the standard line in Beijing. Discussions with SIIS personnel have also always exhibited a more open and candid atmosphere than with IR think tankers in Beijing, who frequently parrot the Party line. SIIS has traditionally had particularly strong research capabilities on the Middle East and United States. Its publications – which include several journals and an annual summary of world affairs (*Shijie xingshi nianjian*) – are well worth reading. SIIS has traditionally recruited its younger staff from graduates of the International Politics Department at Shanghai's Fudan University (some of the best and brightest in the nation). SIIS is also a degree-granting institution, offering an MA in international affairs.

39. *Ibid.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 12: **Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences**



Today SIIS has about 80 full-time staff members, including 20 senior fellows.[40] Except for a period during the Cultural Revolution (when the SIIS building was taken over by Lin Biao's son Lin Liguo and was used in the coup plot planning), SIIS has operated continuously since its founding. It has always been administratively under the Shanghai municipal government, from where it gets most of its funding, but for many years it also had ties directly to the Foreign Ministry in Beijing (these seem to have been broken in the 1980s). While Jiang Zemin was Mayor and Party Secretary in Shanghai during the 1980s, he would frequently receive briefings from SIIS staff members, and SIIS has subsequently continued to have a direct channel to Jiang's office and Jiang personally in Beijing.

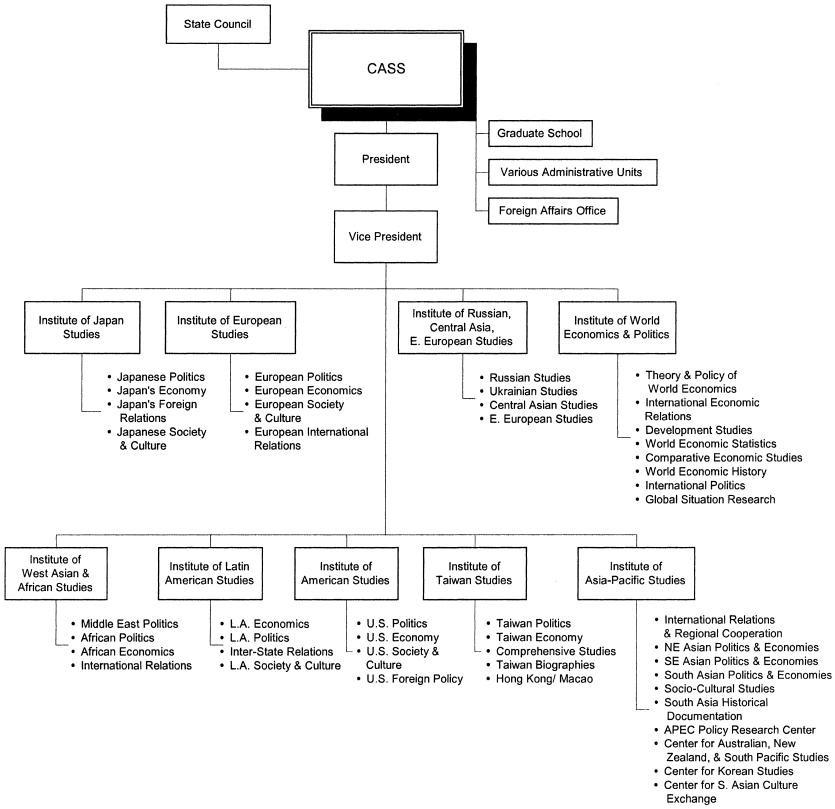
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

The Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (*Shanghai shehui kexueyuan*) (SASS) is very much a scholarly research institution, rather than a policy-relevant think tank. As detailed in Figure 12, it conducts research in several areas of international affairs, but, with the exception of Taiwan affairs, not much of it is of a current or policy nature. Nevertheless, from a scholarly perspective, SASS plays an important role in national research on IR.

40. SIIS brochure, 2000.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 13: **Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**



China Academy of Social Sciences

The above observations about SASS also generally apply to its much larger cousin in Beijing. CASS is a massive organization of ministerial status, now consisting of 31 research institutes, with 3,200 full-time researchers, over 4,000 total staff and an attached graduate school.[41] The research scope of CASS is comprehensive across the social sciences, humanities and legal fields. In the realm of international affairs, since its establishment in 1977 CASS has built up an impressive number of research institutes (Figure 13). This includes one comprehensive institute – the Institute of World Economics and Politics – as well as seven regional studies institutes, and the affiliated Taiwan Research Institute (see above).

Although each of these institutes can be considered think tanks in their own right, it is important to understand that policy relevance and policy influence is not their primary goal or function. Indeed, CASS researchers consider themselves and their research to be scholarly: if their work has

41. CASS brochure, 1999.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press

policy relevance/influence that is fine, but is not their conscious goal. The area studies institutes (including the America Institute) are all configured in more or less standard ways, having research sections on their given nation's internal politics and economies, society and culture, and external relations. Very little, if any, research is done on military or purely security affairs. To the extent it is done, the Arms Control Centre of the America Institute is an exception. The Institute of World Economics and Politics also maintains a world politics research section, which in the past has done some strategic research, but these days it seems more interested in IR theory.

Concluding Observations

China's IR think tanks have grown and matured considerably over the past two decades since relations with the Western and Asian countries began to grow. Much of the credit for the increased quality of research is owed to the role played by foreign institutions in educating and training Chinese researchers. While they still operate with their own distinctly Chinese paradigms, and also stubbornly cling to realist, state-centric and sovereign-based analysis, researchers are much more aware of foreign concepts and methodologies of research. While Westerners may not agree with their analysis of international affairs, at least they now come closer to speaking the same language. However, there remains a large "perception gap" between their analyses and those of American, European, Japanese or other Asian IR and security analysts – and there is minimal evidence that this gap is being narrowed.

Over time the policy influence of China's IR think tanks has fluctuated, but has generally grown. As a result, China's officials and leaders are now better informed about the world, which, it is to be hoped, means that they better understand the consequences of their actions before they take them. If they are performing this role, then China's IR think tanks are making an important and positive contribution to China's relations with the world.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360 Published online by Cambridge University Press