

**“COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT
OF SECURITY”: A STABILITY
MAINTENANCE METHOD IN CHINA**

XIE Yue

EAI Background Brief No. 585

Date of Publication: 16 December 2010

Executive Summary

1. China's rapid economic growth in the past three decades was accompanied by surging crimes and social protests. In 2008, crime cases reached over seven million, while the number of collective protests went up from 8,700 in 1993 to 127,000 in 2008. The many crimes and confrontational incidents have become a serious challenge to governance capacity.
2. In response to instability caused by crimes and collective protests, an approach known as "comprehensive management of security" (CMS) created in early 1981 has been reutilized by the Chinese Communist Party since the 2000s particular after Hu Jintao came to power in 2002.
3. CMS includes measures such as launching hard strike against crimes, building prevention networks, installing mediation system and monitoring special groups and areas.
4. The hard strike campaign originated from the 1980s when the CCP was expected to maintain order in the post-Mao era. The campaign follows the principle of "severe and quick punishment", that is to say, particular types of offenses should be handled as quickly as possible and offenders should be sentenced at or near the maximum allowed by laws.
5. Campaigns practice the "joint handling of cases" among the public security, the procuratorate and the court, which are all under the leadership of the local Party committee. The campaigns borrow tactics from previous campaigns, such as the Anti-Right Campaign (1956) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), in the form of parading and public meeting for arrests and execution.
6. Another measure is to build prevention networks. At the grassroots level, the prevention system relies heavily on autonomous organs, village committees in rural areas and resident committees in urban areas. Both of them are required

to monitor “focal population” like grievors and “key areas” like urban outskirts.

7. Mediation is for settling “contradictions within the people”; it was institutionalized and put into practice as early as 1954. It composes of “the people mediation committee” and “judicial mediation committee” in rural and urban areas. They are integrated with formal and informal mediation organizations to form “centers of grand mediation”.
8. Although these measures have since been modified, some core features remain. There is continued emphasis on the “mass line”, the need for party domination, and the overriding importance of stability. These “new wine in old bottle” measures, in fact, only bring about short-term effects rather than long-term stability.