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**CHINA'S MINORITIES: THE CASE OF XINJIANG AND THE UYGHUR PEOPLE**

**(Paper prepared by Dru C. Gladney, Professor, University of Hawaii)\***

\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Working Group or the United Nations

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Although the history of China's minority policy in Xinjiang is rather unique, it illustrates many of the challenges facing China's internal integration since the events of September 11, 2001 and the fall of the former USSR in 1991. As such, the situation in Xinjiang and the particular case of the Uyghur provide an excellent introduction into China's minority situation and the challenges it faces in this new millennium.

In the summer of 2002, both the United States and the United Nations supported China's claim that an organization known as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) should be recognized as an international terrorist organization.<sup>1</sup> It is important to note, however, that China makes little distinction between separatists, terrorists, and civil rights activists – whether they are Uyghurs, Tibetans, Taiwanese, or Falun Gong Buddhists. One person's terrorist may be another's freedom fighter. Are the restive Uyghurs of Xinjiang terrorists, separatists, or freedom fighters? How can the incidents of recent years be seen in terms of patterns of cooperation and opposition to Chinese rule in the region?

After denying the problem for decades and stressing instead China's "national unity," official reports and the state-run media began in early 2001 to detail terrorist activities in the regions officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the release of this document by the State Council, and the subsequent media reports, the term "Eastern Turkestan" was not allowed to be used in the official media, and anyone found using the term or referring to Xinjiang as Eastern Turkestan could be arrested, even though this is the term most often used outside China to refer to the region by Uyghurs and other Turkic-speaking people. In the northwestern Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, China's State Council and the official media an on-going series of incidents of terrorism and separatism since the large riot in the Xinjiang town of Yining of February 1997, with multiple crackdowns and arrests that have rounded up thousands of terrorist suspects, large weapons caches, and printed documents allegedly outlining future public acts of violence.<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International has claimed that these round-ups have led to hurried public trials and immediate, summary executions of possibly thousands of locals. One estimate suggested that in a country known for its frequent executions, Xinjiang had the highest number, averaging 1.8 per week, most of them Uyghur.<sup>4</sup> In his 16 April 2002 speech to the United Nations High Commission in Geneva, Enver Can, President of the East Turkestan (Uighuristan) National Congress based in Munich, claimed that in the two years, between 1997 -1999, there were recorded 210 death sentences.<sup>5</sup> Since September 11, 2001, claims have been made that arrests and executions have increased, but there is little accurate documentation. The Uyghur service of Radio Free Asia recently announced that there was a January 2002 roundup of 350 suspected Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang.<sup>6</sup>

Troop movements to the area, related to the nationwide campaign against crime known as "Strike Hard" launched in 1998 that included the call to erect a "great wall of steel" against separatists in Xinjiang, were reportedly the largest since the suppression of the large

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<sup>1</sup> Dru C. Gladney is Professor of Asian Studies and Anthropology at the University of Hawaii. Further background material and analysis relevant to the subject of the current paper can be found in the author's website: [www.hawaii.edu/dru](http://www.hawaii.edu/dru) and in *Ethnic Identity in China* (Fort Worth: Harcourt-Brace, 1998), *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, editor), *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic of China*, 2 ed. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

Akto insurrection in April 1990 (the first major uprising that initiated a series of unrelated and sporadic protests).<sup>7</sup> Alleged incursions of Taliban fighters through the Wakhan corridor into China where Xinjiang shares a narrow border with Afghanistan led to the area receiving increased Chinese security forces and large military exercises, beginning at least one month prior to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack. Under US and Chinese pressure, Pakistan returned one Uyghur activist to China, apprehended among hundreds of Taliban detainees, which follows a pattern of repatriations of suspected Uyghur separatists from Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.<sup>8</sup>

International campaigns for Uyghur rights and possible independence have become increasingly vocal and well organized, especially on the internet. Repeated public appeals have been made to Abdulahat Abdurixit, the Uyghur People's Government Chairman of Xinjiang in Urumqi. International organizations are increasingly including Uyghur indigenous voices from the expatriate Uyghur community. Notably, the 1995 elected chair of the Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (UNPO) based in the Hague is a Uyghur, Erkin Alptekin, son of the separatist leader, Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who is buried in Istanbul where there is a park dedicated to his memory.<sup>9</sup> Supporting primarily an audience of mostly expatriate Uyghurs, there are at least 25 international organizations and web sites working for the independence of "Eastern Turkestan," and based in Amsterdam, Munich, Istanbul, Melbourne, Washington, DC and New York. Following 11 September 2001, the vast majority of these organizations disclaimed any support for violence or terrorism, pressing for a peaceful resolution of on-going conflicts in the region. Nevertheless, the growing influence of "cyber-separatism" is of increasing concern to Chinese authorities seeking to convince the world that the Uyghurs do pose a real domestic and international terrorist threat.

In 1997, bombs exploded in a city park in Beijing on 13 May (killing one) and on two buses on 7 March (killing 2), as well as in the northwestern border city of Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, on 25 February (killing 9), with over 30 other bombings in 1999 and 6 in Tibet alone. Most of these are thought to have been related to demands by Muslim and Tibetan separatists. Eight members of the Uyghur Muslim minority were executed on 29 May 1997 for alleged bombings in northwest China, with hundreds arrested on suspicion of taking part in ethnic riots and engaging in separatist activities. Though sporadically reported since the early 1980s, such incidents have been increasingly common since 1997 and are documented in a recent scathing report of Chinese government policy in the region by Amnesty International.<sup>2</sup> A very report in the Wall Street Journal of the arrest on 11 August 1999 of Rebiya Kadir, a well known Uyghur business woman, during a visit by the United States Congressional Research Service delegation to the region, indicates China's random arrests have not diminished since the report, nor is China concerned with Western criticism.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, however, despite this history of ethnic tensions, unrest, and terrorism in the late 1990s, there has been very little documented activity since that restive period.

In addition, despite on-going tensions and frequent reports of isolated terrorist acts, there has been no evidence that any of these actions have been aimed at disrupting the economic development of the region. Most confirmed incidents have been directed against

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<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, *Peoples Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region* (London, 21 April 1999)

<sup>3</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, Ian Johnson, "China Arrests Noted Businesswoman in Crackdown in Muslim Region", 18 August 1999

Han Chinese security forces, recent Han Chinese émigrés to the region, and even Uyghur Muslims perceived to be too closely collaborating with the Chinese Government. Most analysts agree that China is not vulnerable to the same ethnic separatism that split the former Soviet Union. But few doubt that should China fall apart, it would divide, like the USSR, along centuries old ethnic, linguistic, regional, and cultural fault lines.<sup>4</sup> If China did fall apart, Xinjiang would split in a way that, according to Anwar Yusuf, President of the Eastern Turkistan National Freedom Center in Washington DC, “would make Kosovo look like a birthday party”. It should be noted that due to this fear of widespread civil disorder, Mr Yusuf indicated that the Eastern Turkistan National Freedom Center did not support a free and independent Xinjiang.<sup>5</sup> On 4 June 1999 Mr Yusuf met with President Clinton to press for fuller support for the Uyghur cause.<sup>6</sup>

The historical discussion of the Uyghur in Section 2 of this paper will attempt to suggest why there have been increasing tensions in the area and what the implications are for future international relations and possible refugee flows. The ethnic and cultural divisions showed themselves at the end of China’s last empire, when it was divided for over 20 years by regional warlords with local and ethnic bases in the north and the south, and by Muslim warlords in the west. Ethnicization has meant that the current cultural fault lines of China and Central Asia increasingly follow official designations of national identity. Hence, for Central Asia, the break-up of the USSR did not lead to the creation of a greater “Turkistan” or a pan-Islamic collection of states, despite the predominantly Turkic and Muslim population of the region. Rather, the break-up fell along ethnic and national lines. China clearly is not about to fall apart, not yet anyway. Yet it also has ethnic problems and it must solve them for other more pressing reasons.

## 2. HISTORY AND POLITICS OF THE UYGHUR

Chinese histories notwithstanding, every Uyghur firmly believes that their ancestors were the indigenous people of the Tarim basin, which did not become known in Chinese as “Xinjiang” (“new dominion”) until the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the identity of the present people known as Uyghur is a rather recent phenomenon related to Great Game rivalries, Sino-Soviet geopolitical manoeuvrings, and Chinese nation-building. While a collection of nomadic steppe peoples known as the “Uyghur” have existed since before the eighth century, this identity was lost from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.

It was not until the fall of the Turkish Khanate (552-744 C.E.) to a people reported by the Chinese historians as *Hui-he* or *Hui-hu* that we find the beginnings of the Uyghur Empire. At this time the Uyghur were only a collection of nine nomadic tribes, who, initially in confederation with other Basmil and Karlukh nomads, defeated the Second Turkish Khanate and then dominated the federation under the leadership of Koli Beile in 742.<sup>7</sup> Gradual sedentarization of the Uyghur, and their defeat of the Turkish Khanate, occurred precisely as

<sup>4</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “China’s Ethnic Reawakening”, *Asia Pacific Issues*, No. 18 (1995), pp. 1-8

<sup>5</sup> Anwar Yusuf, President of the Eastern Turkistan National Freedom Center, Washington DC. Personal interview, 14 April 1999

<sup>6</sup> Turkistan News & Information Network, “Press Release”, 8 June 1999

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent historical overview of this period, see Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, *Cambridge History of China: Volume 6: Alien Regimes and Border States (907-1368)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

trade with the unified Chinese Tang state became especially lucrative. Sedentarization and interaction with the Chinese state was accompanied by socio-religious change: the traditional shamanistic Turkic-speaking Uyghur came increasingly under the influence of Persian Manichaeism, Buddhism, and eventually, Nestorian Christianity. Extensive trade and military alliances along the old Silk Road with the Chinese state developed to the extent that the Uyghur gradually adopted cultural, dress and even agricultural practices from the Chinese. The conquest of the Uyghur capital of Karabalghasun in Mongolia by the nomadic Kyrgyz in 840, without rescue from the Tang who may by then have become intimidated by the wealthy Uyghur empire, led to further sedentarization and crystallization of Uyghur identity. One branch that ended up in what is now Turpan, took advantage of the unique socio-ecology of the glacier fed oases surrounding the Taklamakan and were able to preserve their merchant and limited agrarian practices, gradually establishing Khocho or Gaochang, the great Uyghur city-state based in Turpan for four centuries (850-1250). With the fall of the Mongol empire, the decline of the overland trade routes, and the expansion of trade relationships with the Ming, Turfan gradually turned toward the Islamic Moghuls, and, perhaps in opposition to the growing Chinese empire, adopted Islam by the mid-fifteenth century.

The Islamicization of the Uyghur from the tenth to as late as the seventeenth century, while displacing their Buddhist religion, did little to bridge their oases-based loyalties. From that time on, the people of “Uyghuristan” centred in Turpan, who resisted Islamic conversion until the seventeenth century, were the last to be known as Uyghur. The others were known only by their oasis or by the generic term of “Turki”. With the arrival of Islam, the ethnonym “Uyghur” fades from the historical record.

According to Morris Rossabi, it was not until 1760, and after their defeat of the Mongolian Zungars, that the Manchu Qing dynasty exerted full and formal control over the region, establishing it as their “new dominions” (*Xinjiang*), an administration that had lasted barely 100 years, when it fell to the Yakub Beg rebellion (1864-1877) and expanding Russian influence.<sup>8</sup> Until major migrations of Han Chinese was encouraged in the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing were mainly interested in pacifying the region by setting up military outposts which supported a vassal-state relationship. Colonization had begun with the migrations of the Han in the mid-nineteenth century, but was cut short by the Yakub Beg rebellion, the fall of the Qing empire in 1910, and the ensuing warlord era which dismembered the region until its incorporation as part of the People’s Republic in 1949. Competition for the loyalties of the peoples of the oases in the Great Game played between China, Russia and Britain further contributed to divisions among the Uyghur according to political, religious, and military lines. The peoples of the oases, until the challenge of nation-state incorporation, lacked any coherent sense of identity.

Thus, the incorporation of Xinjiang for the first time into a nation-state required unprecedented delineation of the so-called nations involved. The re-emergence of the label “Uyghur”, though arguably inappropriate as it was last used 500 years previously to describe the largely Buddhist population of the Turfan Basin, stuck as the appellation for the settled Turkish-speaking Muslim oasis dwellers. It has never been disputed by the people themselves or the states involved. There is too much at stake for the people labelled as such to wish to challenge that identification. For Uyghur nationalists today, the direct lineal descent from the

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<sup>8</sup> Morris Rossabi, “Muslim and Central Asian Revolts” in Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills Jr. (eds.), *From Ming to Ch’ing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)

Uyghur Kingdom in seventh century Mongolia is accepted as fact, despite overwhelming historical and archeological evidence to the contrary.<sup>9</sup>

The end of the Qing dynasty and the rise of Great Game rivalries between China, Russia, and Britain saw the region torn by competing loyalties and marked by two short-lived and drastically different attempts at independence: the proclamations of an “East Turkestan Republic” in Kashgar in 1933 and another in Yining (Ghulje) in 1944.<sup>10</sup> As Linda Benson has extensively documented,<sup>11</sup> these rebellions and attempts at self-rule did little to bridge competing political, religious, and regional differences within the Turkic Muslim people who became officially known as the Uyghur in 1934 under successive Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) warlord administrations. Andrew Forbes describes, in exhaustive detail, the great ethnic, religious, and political cleavages during the period from 1911 to 1949 that pitted Muslim against Chinese, Muslim against Muslim, Uyghur against Uyghur, Hui against Uyghur, Uyghur against Kazak, warlord against commoner, and Nationalist against Communist.<sup>12</sup> This extraordinary factionalism caused large scale depletion of lives and resources in the region, which still lives in the minds of the population. Indeed, it is this memory that many argue keeps the region together, a deep-seated fear of widespread social disorder.

Today, despite continued regional differences among three, and perhaps four macro-regions, including the northwestern Zungaria plateau, the southern Tarim basin, the southwest Pamir region, and the eastern Kumul-Turpan-Hami corridor, there are nearly 8 million people spread throughout this vast region that regard themselves as Uyghur, among a total population of 16 million.<sup>13</sup> Many of them dream of, and some agitate for, an independent “Uyghuristan”. The “nationality” policy under the KMT identified five peoples of China, with the Han in the majority. The Uyghur were included at that time under the general rubric of “Hui Muslims”, which included all Muslim groups in China at that time. This policy was continued under the Communists, eventually recognizing 56 nationalities, the Uyghur and 8 other Muslim groups split out from the general category “Hui” (which was confined to mainly Chinese-speaking Muslims).

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<sup>9</sup> The best “Uyghur nationalist” retelling of this unbroken descent from Karakhorum is in the document “Brief History of the Uyghers”, originating from the Eastern Turkestani Union in Europe, and available electronically at <[www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1730/buh.html](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1730/buh.html)>. For a recent review and critique, including historical evidence for the multi-ethnic background of the contemporary Uyghur, see Dru C. Gladney, “Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identity in China: Considering the Uyghurs and Kazakhs” in Victor Mair (ed.), *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age People of Eastern Central Asia: Volume II* (Washington DC: Institute for the Study of Man, 1998), pp. 812-34. For a discussion of the recent archeological evidence derived from DNA dating of the dessicated corpses of Xinjiang, see Victor Mair, “Introduction” in Victor Mair (ed.), pp. 1-40

<sup>10</sup> The best discussion of the politics and importance of Xinjiang during this period is that of an eyewitness and participant, Owen Lattimore, in his *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950)

<sup>11</sup> Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944-1949* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1990)

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

<sup>13</sup> Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 8. For Uyghur ethnogenesis, see also Jack Chen, *The Sinkiang Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), p. 57, and Dru C. Gladney, “The Ethnogenesis of the Uyghur”, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1990), pp. 1-28

A profoundly practical people, Uyghur and regional leaders actually invited the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the region after the defeat of the Nationalists in 1949. The "peaceful liberation" by the Chinese Communists of Xinjiang in October 1949, and their subsequent establishment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on 1 October 1955, perpetuated the Nationalist policy of recognizing the Uyghur as a minority nationality under Chinese rule. The on-going political uncertainties and social unrest led to large migrations of Uyghur and Kazak from Xinjiang to Central Asia between 1953 and 1963, culminating in a Central Asian Uyghur population of approximately 300,000. This migration stopped with the Sino-Soviet split in 1962 and the border was closed in 1963, reopening 25 years later in the late 1980s.<sup>14</sup>

The separate nationality designation awarded the Uyghurs in China continued to mask very considerable regional and linguistic diversity, with the designation also applied to many "non-Uyghur" groups such as the Loplyk and Dolans, that had very little to do with the oasis-based Turkic Muslims that became known as the Uyghur. At the same time, contemporary Uyghur separatists look back to the brief periods of independent self-rule under Yakub Beg and the Eastern Turkestan Republics, in addition to the earlier glories of the Uyghur kingdoms in Turpan and Karabalghasan, as evidence of their rightful claims to the region. Contemporary Uyghur separatist organizations based in Istanbul, Ankara, Almaty, Munich, Amsterdam, Melbourne, and Washington may differ in their political goals and strategies for the region, but they all share a common vision of a continuous Uyghur claim on the region, disrupted by Chinese and Soviet intervention. The independence of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics in 1991 has done much to encourage these Uyghur organizations in their hopes for an independent "Uyghuristan", despite the fact that the new, mainly Muslim, Central Asian governments all signed protocols with China in Shanghai in the Spring of 1996 that they would not harbour or support separatists groups. These protocols were reaffirmed in the recent 25 August 1999 meeting between Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin, committing the "Shanghai Five" nations (China, Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) to respecting border security and suppressing terrorism, drug smuggling, and separatism.<sup>15</sup> The policy was enforced on 15 June 1999, when three alleged Uyghur separatists (Hammit Muhammed, Ilyan Zurdin, Khasim Makpur) were deported from Kazakstan to China, with several others in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakstan awaiting extradition.<sup>16</sup>

That Islam became an important, but not exclusive, cultural marker of Uyghur identity is not surprising given the socio-political oppositions with which the Uyghur were confronted. In terms of religion, the Uyghurs are Sunni Muslims, practising Islamic traditions similar to their co-religionists in the region. In addition, many of them are Sufi, adhering to branches of *Naqshbandiyya* Central Asian Sufism. However, it is also important to note that Islam was only one of several unifying markers for Uyghur identity, depending on those with whom they were in co-operation at the time. This suggests that Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan will have only limited appeal among the Uyghur. For example, to the Hui Muslim Chinese in Xinjiang, numbering over 600,000, the Uyghur distinguish

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<sup>14</sup> The best account of the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia, their memories of migration, and longing for a separate Uyghur homeland is contained in the video documentary by Sean R. Roberts, *Waiting for Uyghuristan* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, Center for Visual Anthropology, 1996)

<sup>15</sup> CNN News Service, Rym Brahimi, "Russia, China, and Central Asian Leaders Pledge to Fight Terrorism, Drug Smuggling", 25 August 1999 (electronic format <[www.uygur.org/enorg/wunn99/990825e.html](http://www.uygur.org/enorg/wunn99/990825e.html)>)

<sup>16</sup> Eastern Turkistan Information Center, "Kasakistan Government Deport Political Refugees to China", Munich, 15 June 1999 (electronic format: <[www.uygur.org/enorg/reports99/990615.html](http://www.uygur.org/enorg/reports99/990615.html)>)



themselves as the legitimate autochthonous minority, since both share a belief in Sunni Islam. In contrast to the formerly nomadic Muslim peoples, such as the Kazak, numbering more than one million, the Uyghur might stress their attachment to the land and oasis of origin. Most profoundly, modern Uyghurs, especially those living in larger towns and urban areas, are marked by their reaction to Chinese influence and incorporation. It is often Islamic traditions that become the focal point for Uyghur efforts to preserve their culture and history. One such popular tradition that has resurfaced in recent years is that of the *Mashrap*, where generally young Uyghurs gather to recite poetry and sing songs (often of folk or religious content), dance, and share traditional foods. These evening events have often become foci for Uyghur resistance to Chinese rule in recent years. However, although within the region many portray the Uyghur as united around separatist or Islamist causes, Uyghur continue to be divided from within by religious conflicts, in this case competing Sufi and non-Sufi factions, territorial loyalties (whether they be oases or places of origin), linguistic discrepancies, commoner-elite alienation, and competing political loyalties. These divided loyalties were evidenced by the attack in May 1996 on the Imam of the Idgah Mosque in Kashgar by other Uyghurs, as well as the assassination of at least six Uyghur officials last September. It is this contested understanding of history that continues to influence much of the current debate over separatist and Chinese claims to the region.

### 3. MINORITY NATIONALITIES POLICY

The Uyghur are an official minority nationality of China, identified as the second largest of ten Muslim peoples in China, primarily inhabiting the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
**Population of Muslim Minorities in China and Xinjiang<sup>17</sup>**

Minority Ethnonym	Location	Language Family	Total 2000 Census Population	Total in Xinjiang
<b>Hui</b>	All China, esp. Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Hebei, Shandong*	Sino-Tibetan	9,202,978	844,211
<b>Uyghur</b>	Xinjiang	Altaic (Turkic)	8,414,431	8,605,575
<b>Kazak</b>	Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai	Altaic (Turkic)	1,321,718	1,319,219
<b>Dongxiang</b>	Gansu, Qinghai	Altaic (Turkic)	395,872	--
<b>Kyrgyz</b>	Xinjiang, Heilongjiang	Altaic (Turkic)	171,549	170,133
<b>Salar</b>	Qinghai, Gansu	Altaic (Turkic)	90,697	--
<b>Tajik</b>	Xinjiang	Indo-European	41,538	41,155
<b>Uzbek</b>	Xinjiang	Altaic (Turkic)	14,702	13,730
<b>Baonan</b>	Gansu	Altaic (Mongolian)	13,216	--
<b>Tatar</b>	Xinjiang	Altaic (Turkic)	4,977	4,728

\*Listed in order of size

Many Uyghur with whom I have spoken in Turfan and Kashgar argue persuasively that they are the autochthonous people of this region. The fact that over 99.8 per cent of the Uyghur

<sup>17</sup> *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook, 2002*, p. 110-111. *Renmin Ribao* [Beijing], "Guanyu 1990 nian renkou pucha zhuyao de gongbao [Report regarding the 1990 population census primary statistics]", 14 November 1991, p. 3; Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, p. 21

population are located in Xinjiang, whereas other Muslim peoples of China have significant populations in other provinces (e.g. the Hui) and outside the country (e.g. the Kazak), contributes to this important sense of belonging to the land. The Uyghur continue to conceive of their ancestors as originating in Xinjiang, claiming to outsiders that “it is our land, our territory”, despite the fact that the early Uyghur kingdom was based in what is now Outer Mongolia and the present region of Xinjiang is under the control of the Chinese State.

Unprecedented socio-political integration of Xinjiang into the Chinese nation-state has taken place in the last 40 years. While Xinjiang has been under Chinese political domination since the defeat of the Zungar in 1754, until the middle of the twentieth century it was but loosely incorporated into China proper. The extent of the incorporation of the Xinjiang Region into China is indicated by Chinese policies encouraging Han migration, communication, education, and occupational shifts since the 1940s. Han migration into Xinjiang increased their local population a massive 2,500 per cent between 1940 and 1982 compared with the 1940 level (see Table 2), representing an average annual growth of 8.1 per cent indeed, many conclude that China’s primary programme for assimilating its border regions is a policy of integration through immigration.<sup>18</sup> This was certainly the case for Inner Mongolia, where Mongol population now stands at 14 per cent, and given the following figures may well be the case for Xinjiang.

**TABLE 2**  
**Muslim and Han Population Growth in Xinjiang, 1940 - 1990<sup>19</sup>**

Ethnic group	1940 - 1941	1982	1990	% population increase	
				1940-1982	1982-1990
Uyghur	2,941,000	5,950,000	7,194,675	102.31	20.92
Kazak	319,000	904,000	1,106,000	183.38	22.35
Hui	92,000	571,000	681,527	520.65	19.36
Kyrgyz	65,000	113,000	139,781	73.85	23.70
Tajik	9,000	26,000	33,512	188.89	28.89
Uzbek	5,000	12,000	14,456	140.00	20.47
Tatar	6,900	4,100	4,821	-40.58	17.58
Han	202,000	5,287,000	5,695,626	2,517.33	7.73
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>4,874,000</b>	<b>13,082,000</b>	<b>15,155,778</b>	<b>168.40</b>	<b>15.85</b>

Note: Military figures are not given, estimated at 275,000 and 500,000 military construction corps in 1985. Minority population growth rates during the 1980s are particularly high in part due to reclassification and reregistration of ethnic groups.

The increase of the Han population has been accompanied by the growth and delineation of other Muslim groups in addition to the Uyghur. Accompanying the remarkable rise in the Han population, a dramatic increase in the Hui (Dungan, or mainly Chinese-speaking Muslim) population can also be seen. While the Hui population in Xinjiang increased by over 520 per cent between 1940 and 1982 (averaging an annual growth of 4.4 per cent), the Uyghur

<sup>18</sup> For China’s minority integration program, see Colin Mackerras, *China’s Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994)

<sup>19</sup> Table based on the following sources: Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims*, p 7; Judith Banister, *China’s Changing Population* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp 322-3; *Minzu Tuanjie* [Beijing], No. 2 (1984), p 38; Peoples Republic of China, National Population Census Office, *Major Figures of the Fourth National Population Census: Vol. 4* (Beijing: China Statistical Publishing House, 1991), pp. 17-25

population has followed a more natural biological growth of 1.7 per cent. This dramatic increase in the Hui population has also led to significant tensions between the Hui and Uyghur Muslims in the region, and many Uyghur recall the massacre of the Uyghur residents in Kashgar by the Hui Muslim warlord Ma Zhongying and his Hui soldiers during the early part of this century.<sup>20</sup> These tensions are exacerbated by widespread beliefs held among the exile Uyghur community and international Muslims that the Muslim populations of China are vastly underreported by the Chinese authorities. Some Uyghur groups claim that there are upwards of 20 million Uyghur in China, and nearly 50 million Muslims, with little evidence to support those figures.<sup>21</sup>

Chinese incorporation of Xinjiang has led to a further development of ethnic socio economic niches. Whereas earlier travellers reported little distinction in labour and education among Muslims, other than that between settled and nomadic, the 1982 census revealed vast differences in socio-economic structure (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**Occupational Structure of Muslim Minorities in China**  
**in per cent, 1982<sup>22</sup>**

Occupation	Hui	Uyghur	Kazak	Dong Xiang	Kyrgyz	Salar	Tajik	Uzbek	Bao An	Tatar	All Ethnic Groups
Scientific Staff	5.75	4.25	11.25	1.00	7.00	3.25	5.75	17.25	1.50	23.50	4.00
Administration	1.75	0.75	2.00	0.25	1.50	0.75	2.75	3.75	2.25	4.50	1.00
Office & related workers	1.75	1.00	2.00	0.25	1.75	0.75	2.00	3.25	0.75	4.25	1.00
Commercial workers	3.50	1.50	1.25	0.25	0.75	0.75	0.50	10.75	0.50	5.25	1.25
Service workers	4.00	1.50	1.50	0.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	6.50	0.50	4.50	1.25
Farming, forestry, fishing & animal husbandry	60.75	84.00	74.50	96.75	84.00	90.50	85.75	31.50	92.25	38.50	84.00
Production & transport	22.25	7.00	7.50	1.25	4.00	3.25	2.50	27.00	2.25	19.25	7.50
Others	0.25	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.25	--

Differences in occupational structure between the Uzbek and Tatar on the one hand, and the Uyghur and Hui, on the other, suggest important class differences, with the primarily urban Uzbek and Tatar groups occupying a much higher socioeconomic niche. This is also reflected in reports on education among Muslim minorities in China (see Table 4).

<sup>20</sup> Forbes, pp. 56-90

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion of population numbers in Eastern Turkistan Information Center, "Population of Eastern Turkistan: The Population in Local Records", Munich, n.d. (electronic format: <[www.uygur.org/enorg/turkistan/nopus.html](http://www.uygur.org/enorg/turkistan/nopus.html)>). A useful guide with tables and breakdowns is found in International Taklamakan Human Rights Association (ITHRA), "How Has the Population Distribution Changed in Eastern Turkestan since 1949", N.d. (electronic format <[www.taklamakan.org/Uyghur-L/et\\_faq\\_pl.html](http://www.taklamakan.org/Uyghur-L/et_faq_pl.html)>, where it is reported that the Xinjiang Uyghur population declined from 75 per cent in 1949 to 48 per cent in 1990. The problem with these statistics is that the first reliable total population count in the region did not take place until 1982, with all earlier estimates highly suspect according to the authoritative study by Judith Banister (Banister, *China's Changing Population*)

<sup>22</sup> Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, p. 32; table adopted from People's Republic of China, National Population Census Office, *Population Atlas of China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp.xx, 28

**TABLE 4**  
**Educational Level of Muslim Minorities in China in per cent, 1990<sup>23</sup>**

Educational Level	Hui	Uyghu r	Kazak	Dong Xiang	Kyrgy z	Salar	Tajik	Uzbek	Bao An	Tata r	All China
University Graduate	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.05	0.3	0.3	0.2	2.6	0.2	3.6	0.5
Undergraduate	0.9	0.4	0.7	0.08	0.5	0.3	0.3	1.9	0.1	2.5	2.4
Technical School	1.6	1.6	2.6	0.30	2.4	0.9	2.1	4.7	1.0	5.8	17.6
Senior Middle School	6.2	3.5	5.5	0.60	3.4	1.6	2.5	10.8	2.9	11.0	6.4
Junior Middle School	19.9	11.9	16.4	2.80	10.2	6.3	9.3	20.3	7.2	22.0	23.3
Primary School	29.1	43.9	43.9	12.00	43.4	18.8	40.4	33.7	16.2	32.7	37.2
*Semi-literate or Illiterate	33.1	26.6	12.3	82.60	24.9	68.7	33.5	8.3	68.8	4.9	22.2

\*Population age 6 and above who cannot read or can read very little

The Uyghur are about average in terms of university graduates (0.5 per cent) and illiteracy (26.6 per cent) as compared with all other ethnic groups in China (0.5 and 22.2 per cent respectively). The Tatar achieve the highest representation of university graduates among Muslims (3.6 per cent) as well as the lowest percentage of illiteracy (4.9 per cent), far below the average of all China (22.2 per cent). The main drawback of these figures is that they reflect only what is regarded by the state as education, namely, training in Chinese language and the sciences. However, among the elderly elite, there continues to be a high standard of traditional expertise in Persian, Arabic, Chagatay, and the Islamic sciences, which is not considered part of Chinese “culture” and education. Although elementary and secondary education is offered in Uyghur, Mandarin has become the language of upward mobility in Xinjiang, as well as in the rest of China. Many Uyghur have been trained in the thirteen Nationalities Colleges scattered throughout China since they were established in the 1950s. It is these secular intellectuals trained in Chinese schools who are asserting political leadership in Xinjiang, as opposed to traditional religious elites. Many Uyghurs in Urumqi point to the establishment of the Uyghur Traditional Medicine Hospital and *Madrassah* complex in 1987 as a beginning counterbalance to this emphasis on Han education.<sup>24</sup> However, most Uyghur I have spoken with feel that their history and traditional culture continues to be down-played in the state schools and must be privately re-emphasized to their children. It is through the elementary schools that Uyghur children first participate formally in the Chinese nation-state, dominated by Han history and language, and most fully enter into the Chinese world. As such, the predominant educational practice of teaching a centralized, mainly Han, subject content, despite the widespread use of minority languages, continues to drive a wedge between the Uyghur and their traditions, inducting them further into the Han Chinese milieu.

<sup>23</sup> People’s Republic of China, Department of Population Statistics of State Statistical Bureau and Economic Department of State Nationalities Affairs Commission, *Population of China’s Nationality (Data of 1990 Population Census)* [*Zhongguo Minzu Renkou Ziliao (1990 nian Renkou Pucha Shuju)*] (Beijing: China Statistical Publishing House, 1994), pp. 70-3, 76. See also Dru C. Gladney, “Making Muslims in China: Education, Islamicization, and Representation” in Gerard A. Postiglione (ed.), *China’s National Minority Education: Culture, State Schooling and Development* (New York: Garland Press, 1999)

<sup>24</sup> The late Uyghur historian Professor Ibrahim Muti’i in an unpublished 1989 paper provides an excellent historical synopsis of the role of the Central Asian Islamic *Madrassah* in traditional Uyghur education. Professor Muti’i argues that it was the *Madrassah*, more than religious or cultural continuities, that most tied the Uyghur into Central Asian traditions. Ibrahim Muti’i, personal communication, May 1989.

The increased incorporation of Xinjiang into the political sphere of China has led not only to the further migration of Han and Hui into the region, but opened China to an unprecedented extent for the Uyghur. Uyghur men are heavily involved in long-distance trade throughout China. They go to Tianjin and Shanghai for manufactured clothes and textiles, Hangzhou and Suzhou for silk, and Guangzhou and Hainan for electronic goods and motorcycles brought in from Hong Kong. In every place, and especially Beijing, due to the large foreign population, they trade local currency (*renminbi*) for US dollars. Appearing more like foreigners than the local Han, they are often less suspect. “We use the hard currency to go on the *Hajj*”, one young Uyghur in the central market square of Kunming, Yunnan Province, once told me, “Allah will protect you if you exchange money with me”. While some may save for the *Hajj*, most purchase imported or luxury goods with their hard currency and take them back to Xinjiang, selling or trading them for a profit - a practice that keeps them away from home six months out of the year. As Uyghur continue to travel throughout China they return to Xinjiang with a firmer sense of their own pan-Uyghur identity vis-a-vis the Han and the other minorities they encounter on their travels.

International travel has also resumed for the Uyghur. An important development in recent years has been the opening of a rail line between China and Kazakstan through the Ili corridor to Almaty, and the opening of several official gateways with the surrounding five nations on its borders. With the resumption of normal Sino-Central Asian relations in 1991, trade and personal contacts have expanded enormously. This expansion has led many Uyghur to see themselves as important players in the improved Sino-Central Asian exchanges. On a 1988 trip from Moscow to Beijing through the Ili corridor, I was surprised to find that many of the imported Hong Kong-made electronic goods purchased by Uyghur with hard currency in Canton and Shenzhen found their way into the market place and hands of relatives across the border in Almaty - who are also identified by the Kazakstan state as Uyghur.

#### **4. THE UYGHUR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE: RESISTANCE AND ACCOMODATION TO CHINESE RULE**

Though silenced within China, Uyghur voices can still be heard virtually, on the internet. Perhaps due to Chinese restrictions on public protest and a state-controlled media, or the deleterious effect of a war on domestic terrorism that this paper has documented began in the late 1990s, very few Uyghur voices can be heard today in the region critical of Chinese policies, at least not public ones. Supporting primarily an audience of approximately over 500,000 expatriate Uyghurs (yet few Uyghurs in Central Asia and China have access to these internet sites) there are at least 25 international organizations and web sites working for the independence of “Eastern Turkestan,” and based in Amsterdam, Munich, Istanbul, Melbourne, Washington, DC and New York. Estimates differ widely on the number of Uyghurs living outside of China in the diaspora. Uyghurs in Central Asia are not always well-represented in the State censuses, particularly since 1991. Shichor estimates approximately 500,000 living abroad, about 5-6% of the total world Uyghur population.<sup>10</sup> Uyghur websites differ dramatically on the official Uyghur population numbers, from up to 25 million Uyghur inside Xinjiang, to up to 10 million in the diaspora.<sup>11</sup>

Although the United Nations and the United States government have agreed with China that at least one international organization, ETIM, is a Uyghur-sponsored terrorist organization, the vast majority of the Eastern Turkestan independence and information organizations disclaim violence. Supported largely by Uyghur émigré’s who left China prior to the

Communist takeover in 1949, these organizations maintain a plethora of websites and activities that take a primarily negative view of Chinese policies in the region. Although not all organizations advocate independence or separatism, the vast majority of them do press for radical change in the region, reporting not only human rights violations, but environmental degradation, economic imbalances and alternative histories of the region. In general, these websites can be divided roughly into those that are mainly information-based and others that are politically active advocacy sites. Nevertheless, whether informational or advocacy, nearly all of them are critical of Chinese policies in Xinjiang.

Key informational websites that mainly provide Uyghur and Xinjiang related news and analyses, include the Turkestan Newsletter (Turkistan-N) maintained by Mehmet Tutuncu of SOTA, [www.euronet.nl/users/sota/Turkestan.html](http://www.euronet.nl/users/sota/Turkestan.html), the Open Society Institute's [www.erasianet.org](http://www.erasianet.org), The Uyghur Information Agency's [www.uyghurinfo.com](http://www.uyghurinfo.com), and the virtual library of the Australian National University based "Eastern Turkestan WWW VL" [www.ccs.uky.edu/~rakhim/et.html](http://www.ccs.uky.edu/~rakhim/et.html). An increasing number of scholars are building websites that feature their own work on Xinjiang and provide links to other sites and organizations engaged in research and educational activities related to the region. One of the best sites in this genre is that by Dr. Nathan Light of the University of Toledo, which not only includes most of his dissertation and useful articles on Uyghur history, music, and culture, but also directs readers to other links to the region: <http://www.utoledo.edu/~nlight>. While there are a plethora of internet sites and web-links to Xinjiang and Uyghur human rights issues, there is as yet no central site that is regularly updated. Information on Uyghur organizations and internet sites can be found at [www.uyghuramerican.org](http://www.uyghuramerican.org). An interactive question-and-answer site with a "Special Report: Uighur Muslim Separatists" can be found at the Virtual Information Center, an open-source organization funded by USCINCPAC, [www.vic-info.org](http://www.vic-info.org).

There are a growing number of Central Asia-related sites that increasingly contain information and discussion of events in Xinjiang, even though Xinjiang is often normally not considered a part of Central Asian Studies, and due to its rule by China, often falls under Chinese studies or Inner Asian studies. See for example, Harvard's Forum for Central Asian Studies, [www.fas.harvard.edu/~centasia](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~centasia), which run by Dr. John Schoeberlein, maintains the Central Asian Studies World Wide site, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/>, and the list-serve, CentralAsia-L: [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/CASWW\\_CentralAsia-L.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/CASWW_CentralAsia-L.html) that frequently reports on Xinjiang-related issues. An informational website for "For Democracy, Human Rights, Peace and Freedom for Uzbekistan and Central Asia," with links to Uyghur and East Turkistan sites is <http://www.uzbekistanerk.org/>. In addition, "Silk Road" sites, increasingly focus on the Uyghur issue. For example, The Silk Road Foundation, is a general information site for Central Asia, with sections on Xinjiang and a links page to other Uyghur issues: <http://silk-road.com/toc/index.html>. Interestingly, a NOVA/PBS website reports on the Taklamakan Mummies, an issue often used to establish claims of territorial history by China and the Uyghurs, particular page is a report research developments concerning the tracing of the mummies ethnicity: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/chinamum/taklamakan.html>.

While most of these sites do not claim to take a position on the Uyghur independence issues related to Xinjiang, most of them tend to report information that is more supportive of Uyghur claims against the Chinese State. An example is the GeoNative "informational site" [www.geocities.com/athens/9479/uyghur.html](http://www.geocities.com/athens/9479/uyghur.html) maintained by the Basque activist, Luistxo Fernandez, who seeks to report "objectively" on minority peoples less represented in the world press. Yet his site, which does provide a useful chart on English/Uighur/Chinese transliterated placenames, after providing a basic summary of the region, contains the statement: "Chinese colonization by Han people is a threat to native peoples."<sup>12</sup> Abdulrahim Aitbayev's Page is another so-called informational Website containing current reports of Chinese police action in

various areas of Xinjiang, as well as links to other sites and articles that are generally critical of China: <http://www.ccs.uky.edu/~rakhim/et.html>.

An important addition to “informational” websites is the site maintained by the Uyghur service of Radio Free Asia, as part of its regular broadcast to Xinjiang and surrounding regions, reportedly beamed from transmitters in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (see <http://www.rfa.org/service/index.html?service=uyg>). According to their site, Radio Free Asia (RFA) broadcasts news and information to Asian listeners who lack regular access to “full and balanced reporting” in their domestic media. Through its broadcasts and call-in programs, RFA aims to fill what is regarded as a “critical gap” in the news reporting for people in certain regions of Asia. Created by Congress in 1994 and incorporated in 1996, RFA currently broadcasts in Burmese, Cantonese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, the Wu dialect, Vietnamese, Tibetan (Uke, Amdo, and Kham), and Uyghur. Although the service claims to adhere to the highest standards of journalism and aims to exemplify accuracy, balance, and fairness in its editorial content, local governments have often complained of bias in favor of groups critical to the regimes in power. The Uyghur service has been regularly blocked and criticized by the Chinese government, and has been cited in the past for carrying stories supportive of so-called separatists, especially the case of Rebiya Kadeer, but despite the new cooperation U.S. and China on the war on terrorism, the site has continued its regular broadcasting. When I asked the Uyghur director of the service, Dr. Dolkun Kamberi, if the increased Sino-U.S. cooperation on terrorism and the labeling of ETIM as an international Uyghur terrorist group had led to any restriction on their funding or broadcast content, he said that there had been no changes in funding level or content. Frequent Uyghur listeners to the program, however, have complained to me personally that the site no longer criticizes China as strongly or frequently for its treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Funding for the informational sites are generally traceable to academic organizations, advertising, and subscription. It is much harder to establish funding sources for the advocacy sites. While most sites are supported primarily by subscribers, advertising, and small donations from Uyghurs and other Muslims outside of China sympathetic to the Uyghur cause, there is no evidence that the organizations and the sites they sponsor have ever received official government sponsorship. Other than the Radio Free Asia Uyghur service, which is supported by the U.S. government, there is no other government that officially supports dissemination of information related to Uyghur human rights issues. However, many Uyghur organizations in the past have claimed sympathy and tacit support from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Australia, Germany, France, Holland, and Canada.

Advocacy sites that openly promote international support for Uyghur- and Xinjiang-related causes. These sites and organizations they often represent take a strong and critical stance against Chinese rule in Xinjiang, giving voice they say to a “silent majority” of Uyghur in Xinjiang and abroad who advocate radical political reform, if not outright independence, in the region. These sites include the International Taklamakan Human Rights Association, which contains links to several articles and Websites concerning East Turkistan, Uyghurs, and Uyghuristan: <http://www.taklamakan.org/>; the Uyghur American Association, that contains links to articles and websites concerning issues of human rights and territorial freedom among Uyghurs in Xinjiang, as well as listing 22 other organizations around the world that do not have Websites: <http://www.uyghuramerican.org/>; the East Turkistan National Congress, led by Enver Can in Munich <http://www.eastturkistan.com/>.

An interesting U.S. based site includes the Citizens Against Communist Chinese Propaganda (with one page entitled “Free East Turkistan!”), which bills itself as a counter-propaganda site

(using the fight fire with fire approach), based in Florida and led by Jack Churchward who started the organization, Free Eastern Turkestan, that originally made its name for itself through a series of protests against a Chinese owned and operated theme park, “Splendid China”, located in Kissimmee, Florida that they found denigrating to especially Uyghurs and Tibetans (with its mini-replicas of mosques and the Potala Palace): <http://www.caccp.org/>.<sup>13</sup> The Uyghur Human Rights Coalition is a website reporting human rights abuses of Uyghurs in China and containing links to articles and other sites, <http://www.uyghurs.org/>. KIVILCIM is an East Turkistan Information Website advocating independence, but in Uyghur language: <http://www.kivilcim.org/> along with <http://www.doguturkistan.net/>.

Other advocacy sights include the East Turkestan Information Center [www.uygur.org](http://www.uygur.org), the Eastern Turkestan National Freedom Center [www.uyghur.org](http://www.uyghur.org), The Uyghur Human Rights Coalition [www.uyghurs.org](http://www.uyghurs.org) which publishes personal testimonies of human rights abuses, and other more popular sites including [www.taklamakan.org](http://www.taklamakan.org), [www.ugyur.net](http://www.ugyur.net), [www.turpan.com](http://www.turpan.com), [www.afn.org](http://www.afn.org), [www.eastTurkestan.com](http://www.eastTurkestan.com). As most of these sites are cross-linked, they often repeat and pass along information contained on other sites.

There are a number of publicly known Uyghur advocacy organizations, which grew to nearly 20 in the late 1990s, but seemed to have declined in membership and activities since September 2001.<sup>14</sup> In the United States, one of the most active information and advocacy groups in the Washington, D.C. area is the Uyghur American Association who chairmen have been Alim Seytoff and Turdi Hajji.<sup>15</sup> Founded like many advocacy groups in the late 1990s, it supports various public lectures and demonstrations to further raise public awareness regarding Uyghur and Xinjiang issues. The Uyghur Human Rights Coalition ([www.uyghurs.org](http://www.uyghurs.org)), directed by Kathy Polias, and located near the Georgetown University campus, tracks human rights issues and has organized several demonstrations and conferences in the Washington, DC metro area, especially pushing for the release of Rebiya Kadir.<sup>16</sup> The Eastern Turkistan National Freedom Center ([www.uyghur.org](http://www.uyghur.org)), whose leader is Anwar Yusuf, made a clear stand for an independent East Turkestan in his personal meeting with President Bill Clinton on 4 June 1999, on the tenth anniversary of the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen square massacre. By personal communication, Yusuf stated that there is no fear of launching a civil war in the region.<sup>17</sup> One of the earliest Uyghur advocacy organizations established in the U.S. in 1996 is the International Taklamakan Human Rights Association (ITHRA, [www.taklamakan.org](http://www.taklamakan.org)), whose president is Ablajan Layli Namen Barat, maintains the active list-serve, UIGHUR-L, as well as list-serv covering events in Inner (Southern) Mongolia, SMONGOL-L. In Europe, most the Uyghur organizations are concentrated in Munich where there are the largest number of Uyghur émigrés, including the Eastern Turkestan (Uyghuristan) National Congress ([www.eastturkistan.com](http://www.eastturkistan.com)) whose president is Enver Can; the East Turkestan Union in Europe led by Asgar Can, the Eastern Turkestan Information Center ([www.uygur.org](http://www.uygur.org)) led by Abduljelil Karakash which publishes the on-line journal, The World Uyghur Network News; and the World Uyghur Youth Congress ([www.uyghurinfo.com](http://www.uyghurinfo.com)) chaired by Dolqun Isa; in Holland, there is the Uyghur Netherlands Democratic Union (UNDU) led by Bahtiyar Semsiddin and the Uyghur House chaired by Shahelil; the Uyghur Youth Union in Belgium chaired by Sedullam and the Belgium Uyghur Association chaired by Sultan Ehmet; in Stockholm, Sweden the East Turkestan Association chaired by Faruk Sadikov; in London there is the Uygur Youth Union UK chaired by Enver Bugda; in Moscow the Uyghur Association chaired by Serip Haje; in Turkey organizations include the East Turkestan Foundation led by Mehmet Riza Bekin in Istanbul, the East Turkestan Solidarity Foundation led by Sayit Taranci in Istanbul, and the East Turkestan Culture and Solidarity Association led by Abubekir Turksoy in Kayseri; in Canada is the Canadian Uyghur



Association based in Toronto and chaired by Mehmetjan Tohti; in Australia is the Australian Turkestan Association in Melbourne chaired by Ahmet Igamberdi; in Kazakhstan there are several organizations based in Almaty listed on the internet, but they are difficult to contact in the region having met with recent government sanctions, including Nozugum Foundation, the Kazakhstan Regional Uyghur (Ittipak) Organization chaired by Khahriman Gojamberdie, the Uyghuristan Freedom association chaired by Sabit Abdurahman, the Kazakhstan Uyghur Unity (Ittipak) Association chaired by Sheripjan Nadirov, and the Uyghur Youth Union in Kazakhstan chaired by Abdurexit Turdeyev; and in Kyrgyzstan one finds in Bishkek the Kyrgyzstan Uyghur Unity (Ittipak) Association chaired by Rozimehmet Abdulnbakiev, the Bishkek Human Rights Committee chaired by Tursun Islam. While these are the main organizations listed on the internet, many of them are no longer accessible and there are several other smaller organizations that are not readily listed.

It is difficult to assess who the audience is for these websites and organizations, as they are all blocked in China, and mostly inaccessible in Central Asia due to either inadequate internet access or the high costs of getting on the net. Many Uyghurs I have talked with in China and in Central Asia have never heard of most of these sites. Interestingly, government officials in Xinjiang interested in the information provided on these sites also have said they do not have access. It is clear that Uyghurs in the Western diaspora, particularly in Europe, Turkey, the United States, Canada, and Australia are frequent readers and contributors to these sites. In addition, events in the region since September 11 have led an increasing number of journalists and interested observers of the region to begin visiting the sites more regularly. In terms of content, it is interesting to note that a cursory monitoring of these sites reveals very little that can be associated with militant or radical Islam, and almost no calls for an Islamic “Jihad” against the Chinese state. Most of the issues as noted above involve documenting the plight and history of the Uyghurs under Chinese rule in Xinjiang as opposed to their glorious, independent past and long history in the region. It is also important to note that few Chinese inside or outside of China have visited these sites so that they are quite unaware of these alternative histories. Although there are several sites available in Turkish and Uyghur, there is not one in Chinese. As such, like all internet groups, it is a self-selected audience and rarely reaches beyond those who already support and are interested in the agenda supported by the site.

Financial support for these organizations and websites come mostly from private individuals, foundations, and subscriptions (though these are rare). While it has been reported that wealthy Uyghur patrons in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, who became successful running businesses after migrating to these countries in the 1940s, have strongly supported these organizations financially in the past, there is no publicly available information on these sources. Many Uyghur who migrated to Saudi Arabia and Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s, became successful in construction and restaurant businesses, and were thus in a much better position to support Uyghur causes than the more recent Uyghur émigrés. Uyghurs in Central Asia and in the West who have been able to migrate from Xinjiang in increasing numbers in the last 20 years or so have generally been much poorer off than the earlier émigrés in the Middle East. This is starting to change, however, as they and their children become more well-established in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia. In a personal interview, Anwar Yusuf, President of the D.C.-based Eastern Turkestan National Freedom Center, once claimed that he had received substantial support from patrons in Saudi Arabia, but by the late 1990s funding had begun to dry up due to too many organizations and waning interest in the Uyghur cause.<sup>18</sup>

Although most of these websites have limited funding and circulation, they should not be dismissed as forming only a “virtual” community without any substantial impact on events within Xinjiang. Not only have these websites served as an important source of information

not available in the official Chinese media, but some scholars have begun to argue that internet sites often help to sway public opinion by virtue of their widespread availability and alternative reporting of important events.<sup>19</sup> While analysts are divided about the potency of the internet for swaying public opinion or influencing domestic events, there is an emerging consensus that it has clearly altered the way information is circulated and opinions are formed. Perhaps more importantly, scholars have concluded that the “virtual communities” formed by internet websites establish links and connections that can lead to broad social interactions and coalitions which have impacted political and socio-economic events. For example, it has been shown that social movements in East Timor, Aceh, Chechnya, and Bosnia have been given strong support through these internet communities, providing not only increased information but large financial transfers as well.<sup>20</sup> While “cyber-separatism” would never be able on its own to unseat a local government, it is clear that it does link like-minded individuals and raise consciousness about issues that were often inaccessible to the general public. For an isolated region such as Xinjiang, and the widely dispersed Uyghur diaspora, the internet has dramatically altered the way the world sees the region and the Chinese state must respond to issues within it.

It is clear that there are more than just internet organizations involved in separatist activities in and around Xinjiang. As noted above, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) was recognized by the United Nations in October 2002 as an international terrorist organization responsible for domestic and international terrorist acts, which China claimed included a bombing of the Chinese consulate in Istanbul, assassinations of Chinese officials in Bishkek, and Uyghur officials in Kashgar thought to collaborate with Chinese officialdom.<sup>21</sup> This designation, however, created a controversy in that China and the U.S. presented little public evidence to positively link the ETIM organization with the specific incidents described.<sup>22</sup> In 2001, the US State Department released a report that documented several separatist and terrorist groups operating inside the region and abroad, militating for an independent Xinjiang.<sup>23</sup> The list included “The United Revolutionary Front of Eastern Turkestan” whose leader Yusupbek Mukhlisi claims to have 30 armed units with “20 million” Uyghurs primed for an uprising; the “Home of East Turkestan Youth,” said to be linked to Hamas with a reported 2000 members, the “Free Turkestan Movement” whose leader Abdul Kasim is said to have led the 1990 Baren uprising discussed above; the Organization for the Liberation of Uighuristan” how leader Ashir Vakhidi is said to be committed to the fighting Chinese “occupation” of the “Uighur homeland;” and the so-called “Wolves of Lop Nor” who have claimed responsibility for various bombings and uprisings. The State Department report claims that all of these groups have tenuous links with al Qaeda, Taliban, the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (“Islamic Revival”), and the Tableeghi Jamaat. Many of these groups were listed in the Chinese report that came out in early 2002, but failed to mention ETIM. It came as some surprise, therefore, when at the conclusion of his August 2001 visit to Beijing, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage identified ETIM as the leading Uyghur group to be targeted as an international terrorist group.<sup>24</sup> At the time, very few people, including activists deeply engaged in working for an independent East Turkistan, had ever heard of the ETIM group.<sup>25</sup> Even the US military did not seem to be aware of the group, as the 28 September 2001 “Special Report: Uighur Muslim Separatists” issued by the Virtual Information Center in Honolulu which is funded by USCINCPAC (the Pacific Asia Command) not only did not mention ETIM, but concluded regarding separatist violence in Xinjiang that there is “no single identifiable group but there is violent opposition coordinated and possibly conducted by exiled groups and organizations within Xinjiang.”<sup>26</sup>

The main criticism raised by those critical of this designation is that, with so many identified groups, it has not been made clear why ETIM in particular was singled out, unless it was for the political purpose of strengthening US-China relations. Calling them “scapegoat

terrorists” the Oxford Analytica report on the ETIM issue concludes that ETIM and other groups are only a “dubious threat” and has been used as an excuse for increased repression.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, the Mukhlisi’s United Revolutionary Front was not included with ETIM, despite its frequent claims of responsibility for violent acts in Xinjiang, such as the 1997 train derailment and police station bombings.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, many Uyghur have complained to me that although there have been many reported terrorist bombings in Tibet and frequent organized protests against Chinese rule that have led to violence outside of Tibet, given the sympathy shown to Tibetans in the West, they do not see the U.S. ever siding with China in condemning a Tibetan independence organization as terrorist.<sup>29</sup> And, despite widespread international protests, on 27 January 2002 China executed a Tibetan monk found guilty of lethal bombings in Tibet.<sup>30</sup> Many feel that it is only due to the fact that they are Muslims that one Uyghur group has been singled out as being terrorist. The real issue for this paper, however, is that despite the designation of ETIM, there are active Uyghur-related activist groups which can be said to be supportive of terrorism, but have never been proved to be directly implicated in any specific incident. .

Following Armitage’s announcement and the State Department’s report, the Chinese State Council issued its own report on January 21, 2002, charging that from 1990-2001 various Uyghur separatist groups "were responsible for over 200 terrorist incidents in Xinjiang" that resulted in the deaths of 162 people and injuries to 440 others. The report, titled "East Turkestan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity," also dismissed allegations that Beijing had used the U.S.-led war on terror as a pretext to crack down on Uyghurs. The report condemned numerous Uyghur groups including Hazret's ETLO; the ETIM; the Islamic Reformist Party "Shock Brigade"; the East Turkestan Islamic Party; the East Turkestan Opposition Party; the East Turkestan Islamic Party of Allah; the Uyghur Liberation Organization; the Islamic Holy Warriors; and the East Turkestan International Committee.

It is important to note that an internet search of many of these organizations and their backgrounds reveals little information if any. In addition, these organizations and many of the internet news and information organizations discussed above have rarely if ever claimed responsibility for any specific action, though many are sympathetic to isolated incidents regarded as challenging Chinese rule in the region. Interestingly, there seems to be very little support for radical Islam and a search for the term “jihad” (holy war) among the various websites and news postings related these groups turns up almost no use of the term or call for a religious war against the Chinese. As noted by Jankowiak and Rudleson above, many of the Uyghur nationalists are quite secular in their orientation, and overthrow of Chinese rule is related to issues of sovereignty and human rights, rather than those of religion. By contrast, Uyghur expatriots with whom I have spent time in the U.S., Canada, Turkey, and Europe, however, tend to be quite religious, yet I have rarely heard them call for a holy war against the Chinese. Again, their concerns are more related to historic claims upon their ancestral lands, Chinese mistreatment of the Uyghur population, and a desire to return home to a “free East Turkestan”. A Uyghur family with whom I spent the Ramadan feast in Toronto in 2000 maintained a deeply religious life in Canada that they claimed was not possible in China. Although disavowing violence, their daily prayer was for a free “Uyghuristan” where their relatives could be free to practice religion. In Istanbul, the Uyghur community is quite active in the mosques in Zeytinburnu and Tuzla, and strongly advocate a “liberated East Turkestan,” but on several visits to these communities since 1993 I have never once heard them call for a jihad against the Chinese government, even in its most mild sense that John Esposito has described as “defensive jihad”, or protecting Islam from persecution.<sup>31</sup>

Since September 11, 2001, very few groups have publicly advocated terror against the Chinese state, and most have denied any involvement in terrorist activities, though they may

express sympathy for such activities. A case in point is East Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO), led by the secretive Mehmet Emin Hazret. In a January 24, 2003 telephone interview with the Uyghur service of Radio Free Asia, Hazret admitted that there may be a need to establish a military wing of his organization that would target Chinese interests, he nevertheless denied any prior terrorist activity or any association with the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). "We have not been and will not be involved in any kind of terrorist action inside or outside China," Hazret said. "We have been trying to solve the East Turkestan problem through peaceful means. But the Chinese government's brutality in East Turkestan may have forced some individuals to resort to violence."<sup>32</sup> Hazret, a former screenwriter from Xinjiang, who in the "Exit" pattern discussed in this section, migrated to Turkey in his 40s, denied any connection between his organization and al-Qaeda or Osama bin Laden. Nevertheless, he did see the increasing need for a military action against Chinese rule in the region: "Our principal goal is to achieve independence for East Turkestan by peaceful means. But to show our enemies and friends our determination on the East Turkestan issue, we view a military wing as inevitable...The Chinese people are not our enemy. Our problem is with the Chinese government, which violates the human rights of the Uyghur people." Once again, a common pattern to his response regarding Chinese rule in the region was not to stress Islamic jihad or religious nationalism, but to emphasize human rights violations and Uyghur claims on Eastern Turkestan.

Chinese authorities are clearly concerned that increasing international attention to the treatment of its minority and dissident peoples have put pressure on the region, with the US and many Western governments continuing to criticize China for not adhering to its commitments to signed international agreements and human rights. Last year China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Article 1 of the covenant says: "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." Article 2 reads: "All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence." Although China continues to quibble with the definition of "people", it is clear that the agreements are pressuring China to answer criticisms by Mary Robinson and other high-ranking human rights advocates about its treatment of minority peoples. Clearly, with Xinjiang representing the last Muslim region under communism, large trade contracts with Middle Eastern Muslim nations, and 5 Muslim nations on its western borders, Chinese authorities have more to be concerned about than just international support for human rights.

China's Uyghur separatists are small in number, poorly equipped, loosely linked, and vastly out-gunned by the People's Liberation Army and People's Police. And note that though sometimes disgruntled about other rights' and mistreatment issues, China's nine other official Muslim minorities do not in general support Uyghur separatism. Few Hui support an independent Xinjiang, and one million Kazakh in Xinjiang would have very little say in an independent "Uyghuristan". Local support for separatist activities, particularly in Xinjiang and other border regions, is ambivalent and ambiguous at best, given the economic disparity between these regions and their foreign neighbors, including Tadjikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and especially Afghanistan. Memories in the region are strong of mass starvation and widespread destruction during the Sino-Japanese and civil war in the first half of this century, including intra-Muslim and Muslim-Chinese bloody conflicts, not to mention the

chaotic horrors of the Cultural Revolution. Many local activists are calling not for complete separatism or real independence, but generally express concerns over environmental degradation, anti-nuclear testing, religious freedom, over-taxation, and recently imposed limits on childbearing. Many ethnic leaders are simply calling for "real" autonomy according to Chinese law for the five Autonomous Regions that are each led by First Party Secretaries who are all Han Chinese controlled by Beijing. Freedom of Religion, protected by China's constitution, does not seem to be a key issue, as mosques are full in the region and pilgrimages to Mecca are often allowed for Uyghur and other Muslims (though recent visitors to the region report an increase in restrictions against mosque attendance by youth, students, and government officials). In addition, Islamic extremism does not as yet appear to have widespread appeal, especially among urban, educated Uyghur. However, the government has consistently rounded up any Uyghur suspected of being "too" religious, especially those identified as Sufis or the so-called Wahabbis (a euphemism in the region for strict Muslim, not an organized Islamic school). These periodic roundups, detentions, and public condemnations of terrorism and separatism have not erased the problem, but have forced it underground, or at least out of the public's eye, and increased the possibility of alienating Uyghur Muslims even further from mainstream Chinese society. During the 2001 APEC meetings in Beijing, it was widely reported that Uyghur travelers were not allowed to stay in hotels in the city and often prevented from boarding public buses due to fear of terrorism.

## 5. GLOBAL DIMENSIONS

The People's Republic of China, as one of five permanent voting members of the UN Security Council, and as a significant exporter of military hardware to the Middle East, has become a recognized player in Middle Eastern affairs. With the decline in trade with most Western nations after the Tiananmen massacre in the early 1990s, the importance of China's Middle Eastern trading partners (all of them Muslim, since China did not have relations with Israel until recently), rose considerably. This may account for the fact that China established diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia in August 1990, with the first direct Sino-Saudi exchanges taking place since 1949 (Saudi Arabia cancelled its long-standing diplomatic relationship with Taiwan and withdrew its ambassador, despite a lucrative trade history). In the face of a long-term friendship with Iraq, China went along with most of the UN resolutions in the war against Iraq. Although it abstained from Resolution 678 on supporting the ground-war, making it unlikely that Chinese workers will be welcomed back into Kuwait, China enjoys a fairly solid reputation in the Middle East as an untarnished source of low-grade weaponry and cheap reliable labour. Recent press accounts have noted an increase in China's exportation of military hardware to the Middle East since the Gulf War, perhaps due to a need to balance its growing imports of Gulf oil required to fuel its overheated economy.<sup>25</sup>

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, China has also become an important competitor for influence in Central Asia and is expected to serve as a counterweight to Russia. Calling for a new interregional "Silk Route", China is already constructing such a link with rails and pipelines. The ethnicization of several Central Asian peoples and their rise to prominence as the leading members of the new Central Asian states, will mean that economic

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<sup>25</sup> James P. Dorian, Brett Wigdortz, Dru Gladney, "Central Asia and Xinjiang, China: Emerging Energy, Economic, and Ethnic Relations", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1997), p. 469

development and cross-border ties will be strongly influenced by ancient ethnic relations and geopolitical ties.

Since the early 1990s, China has been a net oil importer.<sup>26</sup> It also has 20 million Muslims. Mishandling of its Muslim problems will alienate trading partners in the Middle East, who are primarily Muslims. Already, after the ethnic riot in February 1997 in the northwestern Xinjiang city of Yining, which led to the death of at least nine Uyghur Muslims and the arrest of several hundred, Turkey's Defence Minister, Turhan Tayan, officially condemned China's handling of the issue, and China responded by telling Turkey to not interfere in China's internal affairs.

Muslim nations on China's borders, including the new Central Asian states, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, though officially unsupportive of Uyghur separatists, may be increasingly critical of harsh treatment extended to fellow Turkic and/or Muslim co-religionists in China. However, the April 1996 signing of border agreements between China and the five neighbouring Central Asian nations suggests that there is little hope that the Uyghur separatists will receive any official support from their Central Asian sympathizers. The text of the Mutual Declaration of the representatives of Kazakstan and the People's Republic of China signed on 5 July 1996 specifically prevents Kazakstan from assisting separatists in China. It also indicates that the Uyghurs within Kazakstan will receive little support from their government, and a number of suspected Uyghur separatists have in fact been returned to China from Kazakstan and Kyrgystan. As stated above, the importance of trade between Central Asia and China is the primary reason. In addition, none of the countries in the region wishes to have border problems with China. At a popular level, however, the Uyghurs receive much sympathy from their Central Asian co-religionists, and there is a continuing flow of funds and materials through China's increasingly porous borders.

Dorian, Wigdortz, and Gladney have detailed the growing interdependence of the region.<sup>27</sup> Trade between Xinjiang and the Central Asian republics has grown rapidly, reaching US\$ 775 million in 1996, and the number of Chinese-Kazak joint ventures continues to rise, now approaching 200. Xinjiang exports a variety of products to Kazakstan, as well as to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine. Increased economic co-operation with China is providing Central Asia with additional options for markets, trade routes, and technical assistance.

As noted in the discussion of the Uyghur people above, cross-border ethnic ties and interethnic relations within Xinjiang continue to have tremendous consequences for development in the region. Muslims comprise nearly 60 per cent of Xinjiang's population, and most of them are Uyghur. Being Turkic, the Uyghurs share a common Islamic, linguistic, and pastoralist heritage with the peoples of the Central Asian states (Table 5).

The Uyghurs and other Turkic groups in the region are also closer culturally and linguistically to their Central Asian neighbours than they are to the Han Chinese. This closeness was demonstrated most dramatically following the Sino-Soviet 1960 breakdown in political relations, that in part led to an Ili rebellion in 1962 which contributed to nearly 200,000

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 461-86

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480

Uyghurs and Kazaks fleeing across the border to the Soviet Kazak Republic.<sup>28</sup> The majority of the 160,000 Uyghurs in Kazakstan today stem from that original migrant population. Most scholars feel, however, that given the comparatively stronger economy in China and the recent border agreements signed between the two countries, a similar uprising now would not lead to such a large cross-border migration. Not only is the border much more secure on the Chinese side than in 1962, but the Kazakstan side would most likely refuse to accept them.

**TABLE 5**  
**Ethnic populations of Central Asia, Xinjiang (thousands)<sup>29</sup>**

	Kazakstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Xinjiang (China)
<b>Kazaks</b>	6,535	37	11	88	808	1,710.00
<b>Kyrgyz</b>	14	2,230	64	1	175	139.80
<b>Tajiks</b>	25	34	3,172	3	934	33.51
<b>Turkmen</b>	4	1	20	2,537	122	--
<b>Uzbeks</b>	332	550	1,198	317	14,142	14.46
<b>Russians</b>	6,228	917	388	334	1,653	8.10
<b>Ukrainians</b>	896	108	41	36	153	--
<b>Byelorussians</b>	183	9	7	9	29	--
<b>Germans</b>	958	101	33	4	40	--
<b>Tatars</b>	328	70	72	39	657	4.82
<b>Karakalpaks</b>	--	--	--	--	412	--
<b>Koreans</b>	103	18	13	--	183	1.00
<b>Uyghurs</b>	185	37	--	--	36	7,195.00
<b>Han</b>	na	na	na	na	na	5,696.00
<b>Hui</b>	na	na	na	na	na	682.00
<b>Mongolian</b>	na	na	na	na	na	138.00
<b>Dongxiang</b>	na	na	na	na	na	56.40

Opportunities in Xinjiang's energy sector attract many migrants from other parts of China. China's rapidly growing economy has the country anxiously developing domestic energy sources and looking abroad for new sources. In 1993, with domestic oil consumption rising faster than production, China abandoned its energy self-sufficiency goal and became a net importer of oil for the first time. During 1996, China's crude oil production reached a record high of 156.5 million tons, while imports of crude were up 37.5 per cent over 1995, to 22 million tons. China is expected to import as much as 30 per cent of its oil by the year 2000. As China develops into a modern economy, it should see a rise in demand comparable to that experienced in Japan, where demand for natural gas and other energy needs has quadrupled in the past 30 years. This is particularly why China has begun to look elsewhere for meeting its energy needs, and Li Peng signed a contract in September 1997 for exclusive rights to Kazakstan's second largest oil field. It also indicates declining expectations for China's own energy resources in the Tarim Basin. Estimated 10 years ago to contain 482 billion barrels, today, even the president of China National Petroleum Corporation admits that there are known reserves of only 1.5 billion barrels.

<sup>28</sup> The best documentation of this period and the flood of Kazaks and Uyghurs to the USSR from Xinjiang is to be found in George Moseley, *The Party and the National Question in China* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1966)

<sup>29</sup> Dorian, Wigdortz, Gladney, p. 465

China hopes to make up for its dependence on Kazakstan oil by increasing trade. China's two-way trade with Central Asia has increased dramatically since the Chinese government opened Xinjiang to the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. By the end of 1992, formal trade had jumped by 130 per cent; total border trade, including barter, is estimated to have tripled. Ethnic ties have facilitated this trading surge: those with family relations benefit from relaxed visa and travel restrictions. Large numbers of "tourists" from Kazakstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan make frequent shopping trips into Xinjiang and return home to sell their goods at small village markets. Xinjiang has already become dependent on Central Asian business, with the five republics accounting for more than half of its international trade in 1993.

Most China-Central Asia trade is between Xinjiang and Kazakstan (Xinjiang's largest trading partner by far). From 1990 to 1992, Kazakstan's imports from China rose from just under 4 per cent to 44 per cent of its total. About half the China-Kazak trade is on a barter basis. Through 1995, China was Kazakstan's fifth largest trade partner, behind Russia, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. China's trade with Kyrgyzstan has also increased rapidly. Through 1995, Kyrgyzstan was Xinjiang's third largest trading partner, after Kazakstan and Hong Kong. As early as 1992, China ranked as Uzbekistan's leading non-CIS trading partner. Since then, bilateral trade has increased by as much as 127 per cent per year, making Uzbekistan China's second largest Central Asian trading partner. This may be one of the most promising economic relationships developing in Central Asia. The large and relatively affluent Uzbek population will eagerly purchase Chinese goods once remaining border restrictions are relaxed and better transportation is built. Bilateral trade with Tajikistan increased nearly ninefold from 1992 to 1995. However, with much of Tajikistan recently in turmoil and the country suffering from a deteriorating standard of living, trade dropped by half in 1996. Trade between China and Turkmenistan has also risen rapidly. China is expected to eventually import Turkmen gas to satisfy the growing energy requirements in the northwest corner of the country. The sale of natural gas accounts for 60.3 per cent of the total volume of Turkmen exports.

While the increasing trade between Central Asia and China is noteworthy, it essentially is a reflection of China's rapidly growing trade with the entire world: trade with Central Asia increased by 25 per cent from 1992 to 1994; during the same period total Chinese trade increased almost twice as fast. In fact, during 1995, only 0.28 per cent of China's US\$ 280.8 billion overseas trade involved the five Central Asian republics, about the same as the trade with Austria or Denmark. Despite the small trade volumes, China is clearly a giant in the region and will play a major role in Central Asia's foreign economic relations. For example, China's two-way trade with Kazakstan is greater than Turkey's combined trade with all five Central Asian republics. This is so even though predominantly Muslim Central Asia is of a much higher priority for Turkey than for China.

Multinational corporations are beginning to play a larger role in the development of the region. In Kazakstan, for instance, foreign firms are estimated to control more than 60 per cent of electric power output. A proposed Turkmenistan-China-Japan natural gas pipeline, part of the envisaged "Energy Silk Route" which would connect Central Asia's rich gas fields with northeast Asian users, demonstrates the potential for co-operation among countries. But it also highlights the growing importance of international companies - in this case Mitsubishi and Exxon - in financing and influencing the course of oil and gas development in the region. With a potential price tag of US\$ 22.6 billion, this pipeline - as well as many smaller and less costly ones - would not be possible without foreign participation. Hence, the "new Great



Game” between China and Central Asia involves many more players than the largely three-way Great Game of the nineteenth century. Yet these new international corporate forces do not supersede local ethnic ties and connections that extend back for centuries.

There is a risk that unrest in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region could lead to a decline in outside oil investment and revenues, with such interests already operating at a loss. Exxon has reported that its two wells struck in the supposedly oil-rich Tarim basin of southern Xinjiang came up dry, with the entire region yielding only 3.15 million metric tons of crude oil, only a small fraction of China’s overall output of 156 million tons. The World Bank lends over US\$ 3 billion a year to China, investing over US\$ 780.5 million in 15 projects in the Xinjiang Region alone, with some of that money allegedly going to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), which human rights activist Harry Wu has claimed employs prison *laogai* labour. Already, Senate hearings in the U.S. on World Bank investment in Xinjiang have led Assistant Treasury Secretary David A. Lipton to declare that the Treasury would no longer support World Bank projects associated with the XPCC. International companies and organizations, from the World Bank to Exxon may not wish to subject its employees and investors to social and political upheavals. China also recently cancelled plans to build an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to Xinjiang and inland China, citing lack of outside investment and questionable market returns.

It is clear that ethnic separatism or Muslim complaints regarding Chinese policy will have important consequences for China’s economic development of the region. Tourists and foreign businessmen will certainly avoid areas with ethnic strife and terrorist activities. China will continue to use its economic leverage with its Central Asian neighbours and Russia to prevent such disruptions.

Landlocked Central Asia and Xinjiang lack the road, rail, and pipeline infrastructure needed to increase economic co-operation and foreign investment in the region. Oil and gas pipelines still pass through Russia, and road and rail links to other points are inadequate. A new highway is planned between Kashgar, Xinjiang, to Osh, Kyrgyzstan, to facilitate trade in the area. At the same time, China is planning a new rail link between Urumqi and Kashgar. New links from Central Asia could follow several routes west through Iran and Turkey, or Georgia and Azerbaijan, to the Black Sea or the Mediterranean; south through Iran to the Persian Gulf or through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea; or east through China to the Pacific. All the routes pass through vast, remote, and perhaps politically unstable regions, and those involving Iran face difficulties in gaining Western financing.

China’s international relations with its neighbours and with internal regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet have become increasingly important not only for the economic reasons discussed above, but also for China’s desire to participate in international organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Council. Though Tibet is no longer of any real strategic or substantial economic value to China, it is politically important to China’s current leadership to indicate that they will not submit to foreign pressure and withdraw from Tibet. Uyghurs have begun to work closely with Tibetans internationally to put political pressure on China in international fora. In a 7 April 1997 interview in Istanbul with Ahmet Türköz, vice-director of the Eastern Turkestan Foundation, which works for an independent Uyghur homeland, he noted that since 1981, meetings had been taking place between the Dalai Lama and Uyghur leaders, initiated by the deceased Uyghur nationalist Isa Yusup Alptekin. As previously mentioned the elected leader of UNPO (the Unrepresented Nations and People’s Organization based in The Hague), an organization originally built

around Tibetan issues, is Erkin Alptekin, the son of the late Isa Alptekin. These international fora cannot force China to change its policy, any more than the annual debate in the U.S. over the renewal of China's Most-Favoured Nation status. Nevertheless, they continue to influence China's ability to co-operate internationally. As a result, China has sought to respond rapidly, and often militarily, to domestic ethnic affairs that might have international implications.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Chinese government feared that the new independence of the neighbouring Central Asian Republics might inspire separatist goals in Xinjiang. It also worried that promoting regional economic development could fuel ethnic separatism by resurrecting old alliances. China, however, was reassured by an agreement reached in April 1996 with Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to avoid military conflict on common borders. It is also resting easier after assertions from Muslim states that they would not become involved in China's internal affairs. Thus, China's policy of encouraging economic development while keeping a tight lid on political activism seems to have the support of neighbouring governments, despite not satisfying the many demands of local and cross-border ethnic groups.

Despite increasing investment and many new jobs in Xinjiang, the Uyghurs and other ethnic groups complain that they are not benefiting as much as recent Han immigrants to the region. As noted above, this is a major factor in recent Uyghur Muslim activism. They insist that the growing number of Han Chinese not only take the jobs and eventually the profits back home with them, but that they also dilute the natives' traditional way of life and leave them with little voice in their own affairs.

## **6. FUTURE PROSPECTS**

To an extent never seen before, the continued incorporation of Xinjiang into China has become inexorable, and perhaps irreversible. The need for the oil and mineral resources of the region since China became an oil importing nation in 1993 means that Chinese influence will only grow. To be sure, the Uyghur are still oriented culturally and historically toward Central Asia in terms of religion, language, and ethnic custom, and interaction has increased in recent years due to the opening of the roads to Pakistan and Almaty. Certainly, pan-Turkism was appealing to some, but not all, Uyghurs during the early part of this century. Historical ties to Central Asia are strong. Turkey's late Prime Minister Turgut Ozal espoused a popular Turkish belief when, on his first state visit to Beijing in 1985, which sought to open a consulate there, he commented that the Turkish nation originated in what is now China. Yet separatist notions, given the current political incorporation of Xinjiang into China, while perhaps present, are not practicable. As noted above, this is predicated on the assumption that China as a nation holds together. If China should fail at the centre, the peripheries will certainly destabilize, with Xinjiang and Tibet having the strongest prospects for separation.

The problems facing Xinjiang, however, are much greater than those of Tibet if it were to become independent. Not only is it more integrated into the rest of China, but the Uyghur part of the population is less than half of the total and primarily located in the south, where there is less industry and natural resources, except for oil. As noted above, however, unless significant investment is found, Tarim oil and energy resources will never be a viable source of independent wealth. Poor past relations between the three main Muslim groups, Uyghur, Kazak, and Hui, suggest that conflicts among Muslims would be as great as those between Muslims and Han Chinese. Most local residents believe that independence would lead to significant conflicts between these groups, along ethnic, religious, urban-rural, and territorial

lines. Given the harsh climate and poor resources in the region, those caught in the middle would have few places to flee. Xinjiang Han would naturally seek to return to the interior of China, since Russia and Mongolia would be in no position to receive them. Yet given the premise that only a complete collapse of the state could precipitate a viable independence movement and internal civil war in Xinjiang, there would be few places the Han would be able to go. Certainly, the bordering provinces of Gansu and Qinghai would be just as disrupted, and Tibet would not be an option. Uyghur refugees would most likely seek to move south, since the north would be dominated by the Han and the western routes would be closed off by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. That leaves only the southern routes, and with the exception of Pakistan, no nation in the region would probably be equipped to receive them. Certainly, they would not be better off in present-day Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Given the on-going conflicts in Kashmir, even Pakistan, the most likely recipient of Uyghur refugees, would probably not wish further destabilization of the region. Note also that the main southern route to India and Pakistan, along the Karakorum highway through the Torghurat pass, is generally passable less than six months out of the year. India, despite its poor relations with China, would certainly not want to add to its Muslim population. During many conversations in Xinjiang with local residents, Muslim and Han alike, it became clear that this fact is well-known. Most think that in such a worst-case scenario, there would be nothing to do but stay and fight.

In the past 10 years, the opening of China to the outside world has meant much for the Uyghur who may easily travel beyond China's borders through Pakistan along the Karakorum highway, through the Ili valley into Kazakhstan, or by several CAAC flights to Istanbul from Urumqi. The number of Uyghur pilgrims travelling on the *Hajj* to Mecca has increased by 300 per cent. These contacts have allowed the Uyghur to see themselves as participants in the broader Islamic *Umma*, while at the same time being Muslim citizens of the Chinese nation-state. As they return from the *Hajj*, many Uyghur who generally travel together as a group have told me that they gained a greater sense of affinity with their own as one people than with the other multi-ethnic members of the international Islamic community. State promoted tourism of foreign Muslims and tourists to Muslim areas in China in hopes of stimulating economic investment is also an important trend related to this opening of Xinjiang and its borders. Urumqi, a largely Han city constructed in the last fifty years, is undergoing an Islamic facelift with the official endorsement of Central Asian and Islamic architecture which serves to impress many visiting foreign Muslim dignitaries. Most foreigners come to see the colourful minorities and the traditional dances and costumes by which their ethnicity is portrayed in Chinese and foreign travel brochures. One Japanese tourist with whom I once spoke in Kashgar, who had just arrived by bicycle from Pakistan across the Karakorum highway, said that a tourist brochure told him that the real Uyghurs could only be found in Kashgar, whereas most Uyghur believe that Turfan is the centre of their cultural universe. Yet many of these Kashgaris will in the same breath argue that much of traditional Uyghur culture has been lost to Han influence in Turfan and that since they themselves are the repositories of the more unspoiled "Uyghur" traditions, tourists should spend their time, and money, in Kashgar. This search for the so-called "real Uyghur" confirms that the nationality statistics and tourism agencies have succeeded. The re-creation of Uyghur ethnicity has come full circle: the Chinese nation-state has identified a people who have in the last 40 years taken on that assigned identity as their own, and in the process, those who have accepted that identity have sought to define it and exploit it on their own terms. The Uyghur believe they have a 6,000 year cultural and physical history in the region. They are not likely to let it go.

The history of Chinese-Muslim relations in Xinjiang has been one of relative peace and quiet, broken by enormous social and political disruptions, fostered by both internal and external crises. The relative quiet of the last 2-3 years does not indicate that the on-going problems of the region have been resolved or opposition dissolved. The opposition to Chinese rule in Xinjiang has not reached the level of Chechnya or the Intifada, but similar to the Basque separatists of the ETA in Spain, or former IRA in Ireland and England, it is one that may erupt in limited, violent moments of terror and resistance. And just as these oppositional movements have not been resolved in Europe, the Uyghur problem in Xinjiang does not appear to be one that will readily go away. The admitted problem of Uyghur terrorism and dissent, even in the diaspora, is thus problematic for a government that wants to encourage integration and development in a region where the majority population are not only ethnically different, but also devoutly Muslim. How does a government integrate a strongly religious minority (be it Muslim, Tibetan, Christian, or Buddhist) into a Marxist-Capitalist system? China's policy of intolerance toward dissent and economic stimulus has not seemed to have resolved this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Erik Eckholm, "U.S. Labeling of Group in China as Terrorist is Criticized" The New York Times September 13, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Chinese State Council. White Paper on Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Beijing, February 2002. (will need to check exact title and date). "China Also Harmed by Separatist-Minded Eastern Turkestan Terrorists," *People's Daily*, October 10, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> CNN News Service, Rym Brahimi, "Russia, China, and Central Asian Leaders Pledge to Fight Terrorism, Drug Smuggling", 25 August 1999 (electronic format <[www.uygur.org/enorg/wunn99/990825e.html](http://www.uygur.org/enorg/wunn99/990825e.html)>)

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, People's Republic of China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (London, 21 April 1999), p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Enver Can, speech to the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, Fifty-eight session, Item 11, 16 April 2002. In his speech, he claimed to represent "The Transnational Radical Party."

<sup>6</sup> Radio Free Asia, Uyghur service, "Separatist leader vows to target Chinese government (RFA)", 24 January 2003. <http://www.rfa.org/service/index.html?service=uyg>

<sup>7</sup> Hutzler, Charles, "Trade is China's Carrot to Muslim Separatists," *Wall Street Journal*, September 21, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Eckholm, Erik, Smith, Craig S., "Fearing Unrest, China Pressures Muslim Group," *New York Times*, October 5, 2001; Pun, Pamela, "Separatists Trained in Afghanistan, says Official," *The Standard*, posted at [hk-imaail.singtao.com/inews/public/article\\_v.cfm?articleid=30156&intcatid=2](http://hk-imaail.singtao.com/inews/public/article_v.cfm?articleid=30156&intcatid=2), October 22, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> See writings by Isa Yusuf Alptekin's son, Erkin Alptekin, which also present alternative histories of the Uyghur from that of the Chinese state: Alptekin, Erkin, *Uyghur Türkleri* [The Uyghur Turks]. Istanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1978; and 'Xinjiang a Time Bomb Waiting to Explode,' *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 29 May, 2002. For Alptekin's involvement with the Unrecognized Nations and Peoples Organization in The Hague, see their website: [www.unpo.org/member/eturk.html](http://www.unpo.org/member/eturk.html).

<sup>10</sup> See Yitzhak Shichor, "Virtual Transnationalism: Uyghur Communities in Europe and the Quest for Eastern Turkestan Independence." Unpublished paper, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, [www.Uyghur.org](http://www.Uyghur.org), the site supported by Anwar Yusuf, President of the Eastern Turkestan National Freedom Center in Washington, D.C. who has suggested there are up to 25 million Uyghurs worldwide. Shichor (*ibid.*) based on information from Enver Can in Munich, estimates there are about 500 Uyghurs in Germany (mostly in Munich), 500 in Belgium (mostly from Central Asia), 200 in Sweden (mostly from Kazakhstan), 40 in England, 35 in Switzerland, 30 in Holland and 10 in Norway. In addition, there are an estimated 10,000 Uyghurs in Turkey, 1,000 in the United States, 500 in Canada, and 200 in Australia (mostly in Melbourne).

<sup>12</sup> See [www.geocities.com/athens/9479/uighur.html](http://www.geocities.com/athens/9479/uighur.html). "The entire paragraph reads: Area: 1.6 million sq. km. Population: 14 million (1990 census), Uyghurs: 7.2 million (official), 14-30 million (estimates by the Uyghur organizations abroad). Capital: Urumchi. The Sinkiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region in China (Xinjiang Uyghur Zizhiqu in Chinese) is also known under the names Eastern Turkestan or Chinese Turkestan. Uyghur people prefer Uyghuristan. It is inhabited by the Uyghurs also known under names Uighur, Uigur, Uygur, Weiwuer, Sart, Taranchi, Kashgarlik. The other native peoples are [Kazak](#), [Uzbek](#), [Kyrghyz](#), [Tajik](#), [Tatar](#). Chinese colonization by Han people is a threat for the native peoples."

<sup>13</sup> For a comparative study of the role of theme parks in ethnic identity construction in China and the U.S., see Dru Gladney, In Press. "Theme Parks and Path Dependency: Comparing the Polynesian Cultural Center and the China Ethnic Cultural Park" in "Chinese Ethnology: Practice and Theory" Taipei: Academia Sinica.

<sup>14</sup> A list of some of the international Uyghur and East Turkistan organization can be found on <http://uyghuramerican.org/Uyghurorganiz.html> and [http://www.uygur.org/adres/uygur\\_organization.htm](http://www.uygur.org/adres/uygur_organization.htm).

<sup>15</sup> See their website introduction: <http://uyghuramerican.org/> "The Uyghur American Association was established on May 23, 1998 in Washington D.C. at the First Uyghur American Congress. The growing Uyghur community in the United States created a need for a unified Uyghur organization to serve the needs of the community here and to represent the collective voice of the Uyghurs in East Turkistan."

<sup>16</sup> See their organizational statement [www.uyghurs.org](http://www.uyghurs.org) "The Uyghur Human Rights Coalition (UHRC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to educating Americans, particularly university students, about the Chinese government's human rights violations against the Uyghur people

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of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China (known to the Uyghurs as East Turkistan). Through its educational efforts, the UHRC strives to build a broad base of support for the Uyghur people's struggle to obtain democratic freedoms and self-determination and to protect their culture and environment.”

<sup>17</sup> Email communication from Anwar Yusuf to the author, dated 14 March 2002: “I also said to you that China is afraid of civil war with the people of Xinjiang, and which is why China always brutally crush [sic] the every effort of the Uyghur Muslims which advocates independence for Xinjiang. In short, I said that it would be the most joyful event for the people of Xinjiang if China would disintegrate as his communist neighbor Soviet Union did. I said that the people of Xinjiang did not have fear of widespread civil disorder. The people of Xinjiang have fought against the Chinese for over two hundred years without any fear. Why are they supposed to fear a civil war? As a representative for those brave Uyghur Muslims, I and my organization Eastern Turkistan National Freedom Center do support a free and independent Xinjiang, and that is exactly what I told President Clinton when I met with him on June 4, 1999.”

<sup>18</sup> Anwar Yusuf, President of the Eastern Turkestan National Freedom Center, Washington DC. Personal interview, 14 April 1999.

<sup>19</sup> For studies of the influence of internet in influencing wider public opinion in Asia, see a recent collection of essays in the Asian Journal of Social Science edited by Zaheer Baber in a special focus on “The Internet and Social Change in Asia and Beyond”, Vol. 30, No 2, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> For studies related to the internet’s role in building community and mobilizing support for specific causes, see Derek Foster, 1997. “Community and Identity in the Electronic Village” in David Porter, editor. Internet Culture. New York: Routledge Press; Steven G. Jones, 1997. “The Internet and Its Social Landscape” in Steven G. Jones, editor. Virtual Culture: Identity and Community in Cybersociety. London, New Delhi: Sage; Tim Jordan, 1999. Cyberpower: The Culture and Politics of Cyberspace and the Internet. London and New York: Routledge; Douglas Rushkoff, 1994. Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace. New York: Harper Collins; and Mark A. Smith and Peter Kollock, editors. 1999. Communities in Cyberspace. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>21</sup> The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is known only as a shadowy group known only to be previously active in Afghanistan and founded in the mid-90s by Hassan Mashum. Mahsum had served three years in a labor camp in Xinjiang and who recruited other Uighurs, including his number three leader Rashid who was captured with the Taliban and returned to China in Spring 2001. See Hutzler, Charles, “China-Iraq Policy Is Risky For US” Asian Wall Street Journal, September 10, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> “China Also Harmed by Separatist-Minded Eastern Turkestan Terrorists,” *People’s Daily*, October 10, 2001; Eckholm, Erik, “U.S. Labeling of Group in China as Terrorist is Criticized,” *New York Times*, September 13, 2002; Hutzler, Charles, “U.S. Gesture to China Raises Crackdown Fears” Wall Street Journal, September 13, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> McNeal, Dewardic L. “China’s Relations with Central Asian States and Problems with Terrorism.” US Department of State, Congressional Research Service Report, 2001. See also



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Scott Fogden's excellent thesis, Writing Insecurity: The PRC's Push to Modernize China and the Politics of Uighur Identity. MscEcon Thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2002

<sup>24</sup> Conclusion of China Visit Press Conference, Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage, Beijing, China, U.S. Department of State, August 26, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Mehmet Hazret in a recent interview (see following discussion), claimed he had never heard of ETIM: "I hadn't even heard of ETIM until the Chinese government mentioned its name in a report in January 2002," he said. "But I knew the leaders of this group whom the report mentioned. For many years, they were in Chinese prisons for political reasons, and they escaped from China. We don't have any organizational relations with them because politically we don't share the same goals. But I cannot believe they carried out any terrorist attacks as the Chinese authorities say they did, because they themselves are victims of Chinese state terrorism." Radio Free Asia, Uyghur service, "Separatist leader vows to target Chinese government (RFA)", 24 January 2003.

<http://www.rfa.org/service/index.html?service=uyg>

<sup>26</sup> See a "Special Report: Uighur Muslim Separatists" Virtual Information Center, 28 September 2001, p. 6, [www.vic-info.org](http://www.vic-info.org).

<sup>27</sup> See "China: China Increases Suppression in Xinjiang" Oxford Analytica 20 December 2002. The report concludes: "Distinguishing between genuine counter-terrorism and repression of minority rights is difficult and the Uighur case points to a lack of international guidelines for doing so. In any case, Chinese policies, not foreign-sponsored terrorism, are the cause of Uighur unrest. China's development and control policy in Xinjiang is unlikely to stabilise the region as long as development benefits remain so unevenly distributed."

<sup>28</sup> "Exile Group Claims Bomb Blast in Xinjiang," *AFP (Hong Kong)*, 1 March 1997, FBIS, FTS19970513001183

<sup>29</sup> Bombings in Tibet and other "terrorist acts" have been frequently reported in the press, "Explosion Hits Tibet's Capital After China Announces New Regional Leader," *Agence France Presse (Hong Kong)*, 9 November 2000, FBIS, CPP20001109000079; "Explosion Hits Tibet's Capital After China Announces New Regional Leader," *Agence France Presse (Hong Kong)*, 9 November 2000, FBIS, CPP20001109000079; "London Organization - Migrants' Shops Bombed in Tibet," *AFP (Hong Kong)*, 27 December 1996, FBIS, FTS19970409001372; "Tibet Blames Dalai Lama for Bombing in Lhasa," *Tibet People's Radio Network (Lhasa)*, 27 December 1996, FBIS, FTS19970409001370; Che, Kang, "Bomb Explodes in Lhasa, Local Authorities Offer Reward for Capture of Criminals," *Ta Kung Pao (Hong Kong)*, 30 December 1996, FBIS, FTS19970409001371; "Suspect Detained for Bomb Attack on Tibetan Clinic," *AFP (Hong Kong)*, 14 January 1999, FBIS, FTS19990114000015; "AFP: Explosion Hits Tibet's Capital after China Announces New Regional Leader," *Agence France Presse (Hong Kong)*, 9 November 2000, FBIS, CPP20001109000079.

<sup>30</sup> See John Pomfret, "China Executes Tibetan Monk for Alleged Bombings" Washington Post Foreign Service Tuesday, January 28, 2003; Radio Free Asia reported that the government is silencing any reporting on the execution: <http://www.rfa.org/service/article.html?service=can&encoding=2&id=98250>.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the various meanings of "jihad" in Islam, see John L. Esposito, 2002. Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Pp. 26-35. For studies among Uyghur and other Turkic communities in Istanbul, see Dru C. Gladney, "Relational Alterity: Constructing Dungan (Hui), Uygur, and Kazakh Identities across China, Central Asia, and Turkey" History and Anthropology Vol. 9, No. 2: 445-77, and

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Ingvar Svanberg, 1989. Kazak Refugees in Turkey: A Study of Cultural Persistence and Social Change. Stockholm and Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell International.

<sup>32</sup> Radio Free Asia, Uyghur service, “Separatist leader vows to target Chinese government (RFA)”, 24 January 2003. <http://www.rfa.org/service/index.html?service=uyg>.