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CHINA'S POLICY IN XINJIANG AND INDIA'S
EXPERIENCE IN KASHMIR

K. WARIKOO

SEPARATISM, EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM:
CHALLENGE TO CENTRAL ASIA'S SECURITY

XING GUANG CHENG

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO UYGHUR
SEPARATISM IN XINJIANG

MAHESH RANJAN DEBATA

MONGOLS OF XINJIANG

SHARAD K. SONI

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
XINJIANG IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A REPORT

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

Editor : **K. WARIKOO**
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Editor's Page

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) on the northwestern part of People's Republic of China borders three Central Asian Republics (CARs) - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as Russia, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In terms of geographical territory, Xinjiang is the largest province of China with Uyghur Muslims being the majority. A sizeable Muslim population in almost all the countries (except Mongolia) bordering this region, a complex geography, history, ethno-cultural and religious diversity as well as abundant natural resources like oil, natural gas and other minerals have catapulted the region into one of the most important and strategic regions of China. The Uyghurs' demand for a separate homeland out of China, which has been very vocal in the recent times, has further brought this restive region into the centrestage.

The problem in Xinjiang seems to be a mix of historical, political, socio-economic, ethnic and religious factors. Historically, Xinjiang became part of China after being conquered by the Manchu Qing rulers in 19th century. During the republican era, the Uyghurs had tried twice to establish an independent East Turkistan Republic, but were finally absorbed in China in 1949 and Xinjiang became an Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China in October 1955.

It is against this background that this study seeks to analyse the Chinese policies towards the Uyghur minority nationality in Xinjiang and its repercussions. Following the take over of power by the Communist Party of China (CCP) in 1949, the Central Government with its policy of developing the underdeveloped regions encouraged massive migration from Mainland China to the sparsely populated northwestern part of the country, which brought about structural changes in the region's demographic profile. The policies followed during the Great Leap Forward period (1958-1966) provided impetus to the migration process, radically altering the demographic character of the region. The large scale Han migration and their predominance in every field created a sense of alienation among the local Uyghurs, which later resulted in simmering discontent among the Uyghurs further leading to violent activities against Hans as well as the Chinese Government. With Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which provided an

important thrust to the radical Islamic forces in Xinjiang, the religious factor became significant.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed numerous acts of violence in Xinjiang. To name a few, riots occurred in Aksu in April 1980 and the Uyghur Provincial Committee members revolted against the Chinese authority in 1981 issuing warning to the Chinese authorities. In May 1989, Muslim students in Xinjiang University at Urumqi protested against the imposition of Chinese policy of birth control on non-Han people. Besides, the bomb blasts were carried out in Urumqi in 1997 as a means to demonstrate the Uyghurs' dogged determination to secure a separate homeland independent of China. 5 July 2009 riots in Urumqi sent shock waves across China, which has taken calibrated steps to consolidate its physical and political presence in Xinjiang.

China has been able to integrate the minorities economically, educationally and socially. Even China's most populous minority, Zhuang and the most populous Muslim minority, Hui have been well integrated with the Hans. The Central government believes that a prosperous economy and higher standard of living in the minority regions will result in a more stable and integrated nation. Whereas the ongoing economic development under the Great Western Development Programme is poised to change the overall economic conditions of the Uyghur community, Uyghur separatism and ethno-religious irrenditism continue to pose challenge to China's sovereignty and security in this strategic frontier region of China.

K. Warikoo

CHINA'S POLICY IN XINJIANG AND INDIA'S EXPERIENCE IN KASHMIR*

K. WARIKOO

While China is rising as a major international power eager to assume and assert a bigger role in world affairs, Chinese leadership is attaching equal rather even more importance to address domestic concerns simultaneously with the expansion and consolidation of its infrastructure, industry, economy, science, technology, education and health sectors. Social cohesion, national unity, political stability, sustainable development, energy security, financial stability, containing price rise, employment, better education and health services and ecological protection are on the constant agenda of the Chinese leadership. New approach is to turn Chinese economic growth from quantity based to quality oriented development by promoting indigenous scientific and technological innovations. While retaining its basic structure, functions and doctrines the Chinese Communist Party is adapting to the new social, economic and political realities to meet the challenges of modernization and globalization. The Chinese are acutely conscious of their history and importance as a major power and they never let their country's interests down, with Han nationalism binding the nation together.

Late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's saying *tao guong yang hui* meaning "build up capabilities and maintain obscurity or avoid speaking about the capacities just to attract attention"¹ is followed in letter and spirit at various levels of Chinese government and administration, be it at the Centre or at the provincial level. This author experienced it in the course of his interaction with some Chinese experts and officials in Xinjiang who stated that they believed in action and results rather than publicity

* This paper is based on extensive field study by the author in Xinjiang, China in May-June 1994 and May-June 2010.

and sloganeering. Chinese organize intensive in-house deliberations to discuss any issue/problem and to work out its solutions, which leads to a concerned action plan. This is what the Chinese leadership did in the aftermath of Urumqi riots in July 2009. Xinjiang problem in its social, ethnic, religious, economic and political dimensions was discussed threadbare at various levels and finally a comprehensive action plan was presented before a high level conference held in Beijing in May 2010.

China has overtaken Japan to become the world's second largest economy having recorded a GDP of 5,365 billion US dollars in the year 2010 (Japan recorded GDP of 5273 billion US dollars), though its per capita income of about 3,800 US dollars is still way behind Japan and USA.² China has emerged as world's top exporter of manufactured goods and by organizing Shanghai World Expo-2010, China has showcased its economic prowess to the outside world.

China is investing 700 billion yuan for building 13,000 kms high speed rail network from north to south and east to west China, so that it would take only five hours to travel from Beijing to Shanghai or Beijing to Guangzhou.

Notwithstanding all round and fast development of infrastructure-highways, railways, airports, buildings, industries etc., continued inter-ethnic conflict in Xinjiang and Tibet and the questioning of Chinese sovereignty by ethnic-religious minorities in these regions is seen as a major challenge to the nation-building process in China. Chinese scholars now advocate reconsideration of Chinese nationalities policy, which they believe is based on the Soviet (Marxist-Leninist) theory of nationalities and which proved a failure with the disintegration of the former USSR.³ They argue that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) adopted the Soviet nationalities policy, recognizing various ethnic groups of China as nationalities. Following the Soviet Union, which was established as a multi-national federation of various nationalities controlled by Moscow, "China launched a campaign in the 1950s that recognized 56 nationalities having common territory, language, economic mode and culture,"⁴ and established various autonomous regions. However, the China model does not offer the formal right of political secession to its nationalities, as was provided in theory by the Soviet model.⁵ Chinese scholars believe that the special policies and concessions in terms of family planning programmes, university admissions, administrative positions in autonomous areas and dual school system for local minorities favouring ethnic minorities in China, are the roots of ethnic conflicts today as these have only "strengthened and politicized minority group identity"

CHINA'S POLICY IN XINJIANG

A. Consolidating Chinese Presence by elaborate Communication Network

Soon after the incorporation of Xinjiang into China in 1949, the outlying periphery was brought close to the mainland by building roads. In fact work on Kashgar-Aksai Chin-Tibet highway was started in 1950s. China has through history been acutely conscious of building large highways to connect cities and towns, this tradition being traced back to Chin emperor (270 BC). Chinese government has started a large scale project to upgrade air, rail and road transport infrastructure costing billions of dollars in Xinjiang and Tibet regions, with a dual purpose of integrating the two peripheral regions with the mainland, reducing both distance and time of travel, speeding up development along the new tracks, and enhancing Peoples Liberation Army (PLA)'s mobility and capacity to bring troops to border areas. PLA is also building a "digital great wall" (a network of fibre optics which would improve the PLA's command and control mechanism and communication) along the borders in Xinjiang and Tibet.⁶

Roads/Highways

Roads and highways are wide and elaborately laid out, with separate provision for pedestrians, cycles, scooters/bikes on each side of the highway. One did not notice any case of accident during 15 day extensive travels in Xinjiang. Cameras have been installed along the highways to identify and fine the over-speeding automobiles.

- (i) Main road from Kashgar airport to the town is wide and well built in a manner that aircraft/planes can land on this road in case of an emergency security situation.
- (ii) The road to Tashkurghan, Pamirs which passes from Kashgar through Kyrgyz district, is well built and under constant repair due to damage caused by landslides, overflowing nullahs or shifting rocks. Big and long trucks (with 22 tyres) ply along this route to ferry ferrous metallic ore/stones from the mountains towards Kashgar, and also to carry goods towards Taskhurghan.
- (iii) Another Express Highway connects Kashgar with Aksu, about 500 kms. away. This National Highway which connects Turfan with Khunjerab Pass, is 1880 kms. long and was completed in 2006. This highway is in excellent state, except for a few rough

patches here and there caused due to desert storms or overflowing water. And it is under constant repair. Entire 500 kms. road from Kashgar to Aksu passes through desert and barren sand mountains.



Kashgar-Aksu Express Highway

- (iv) Another Express Highway about (200 kms) connects Urumqi with Turfan, and it takes only two and a half hours to cover the distance. This highway was built in 1990 with World Bank loan of 150 million US dollars. Parallel to this highway, runs old Urumqi-Turfan road, which is also in use.



Urumqi-Turfan Express Highway

- (v) Urumqi has been connected to Changji Hui Autonomous District by a 80 kms long express highway, which takes only 30 minutes from Urumqi to reach Changji. It has been done as part of the new Changji - Urumqi Development Zone, created to ensure speedy development of Changji.

Donkey, the traditional mode of transport in vogue earlier in Xinjiang, has given way to motor driven cars /carriages. Bicycles have been replaced by motorcycles, battery run small bikes and cars Foreign brands like Honda, Daewoo, Toyota, Wolkswagon, Mazda, Mitsubishi cars manufactured within China are order of the day. Even in southern Xinjiang, one finds these cars plying the roads.



A street in Kashgar Town



Motor driven carts have replaced donkey



Uyghurs use modern means of transportation

Airports

- (i) Urumqi airport is the most modern and spacious airport, with 3 terminals. Terminal 3 is for international flights. There are direct flights from Urumqi to Islamabad, Tehran, Dushanbe, Tashkent, Baku, Novosibirsk, Moscow and other international destinations. In the domestic sector, there are regular and too many flights

from Urumqi to Beijing, Xian, Chengdu, Shanghai, Kunming and almost all destinations in China. Besides at the provincial level, flights operate from Urumqi to Kashgar, Khotan, Aksu, Kuqa, Korla, Ining, Altai etc. The Urumqi airport is full of activity, and provides the evidence of easy mobility of Han Chinese to and from various provinces of China into Xinjiang and vice versa. Over 15 flights to Beijing operate per day, and similarly to other destinations in China. Beijing to Urumqi takes 4 hours by flight. The flights are almost full, with Han Chinese constituting about 85 to 90% of the passengers. Air China, Southern China, Henan Airlines, Shenzhei Airlines run their flights to and from Urumqi.



Urumqi International Airport

- (ii) Kashgar Airport is modern though not newly built Southern China, Henan Airlines fly from Urumqi to Kashgars about 12 times a day, which reflects the mobility of people. The flight was almost full with Hans and non-Hans in equal proportions. Since Kashgar is considered to be a strategic point connecting Xinjiang to South Asia (Pakistan) and Central Asia, there are plans to upgrade this airport. Road leading from the airport to Kashgar city is wide, and has been built to serve as a runway for landing of aircraft in emergency situations.
- (iii) Kuqa and Aksu airports are small, but well organized. So government is planning to build a new modern and big airport at Baicheng, i.e. midway between Kuqa and Aksu. Under new

Xinjiang Development plan, six new airports are proposed to be built in Xinjiang. Kuqa to Urumqi takes 1.15 hrs. by air. A small 87 seater plane flies on this route.



Kuqa airport

- (iv) That China opened a new high attitude airport at Ngari in Tibet (4300 metres) claimed to be the highest airport in the world, demonstrates China's determination to integrate and consolidate its physical presence in outlying provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet, by building quick and efficient means of air communication. Air China flight (Airbus 831) flew from Chengdu to Ngari. It is proposed to have flights between Ngari and Lhasa and Southern Xinjiang soon.
- (v) Southern China Airlines signed agreement with Xinjiang government on 28 May 2010, for further developing communication in Xinjiang.

Railways

China has linked the mainland with outlying and distant province of Xinjiang through rail link, thus overcoming the huge distance and Taklamakan desert. A rail route connects Beijing, passing through Lanzhou, to Urumqi, and further the railway line goes across the border into

Kazakhstan and beyond via Alashankou, which has been developed as a big port to facilitate cross-border trade. At present, it takes about 40 hours to cover the distance between Urumqi and Beijing by train. Both goods trains (conveying about 40-60 wagons) and passenger trains run on this route. A new express high speed train track costing 21 billion yuan is being built from Urumqi to Lanzhou to connect it onwards with Beijing. The new express train will take only 12-14 hours from Urumqi to Beijing. It is a giant step towards integrating Xinjiang with the mainland.

Railway line has been extended from Urumqi to Kashgar in southern Xinjiang. Whereas it takes only over one hour from Urumqi to Kashgar by air, it takes 32 hours by a normal passenger train to reach Kashgar from Urumqi. However, the high speed express train covers the distance in 23 hours only. From Kashgar railway station, trains go to Urumqi, Korla, Aksu, Turfan and Daochi (in Shaanxi province). People can change their trains at Urumqi for their onward journey to Beijing, Shanghai etc. Well organized security system is installed at the railway stations. X-ray machines are installed for scanning the baggage, and level hand bags etc. of people, when they go to buy their tickets at the counter. Work on extending railway from Kashgar to Khotan is going on at fast track. Train service on this route is expected to be started in the year 2011. It will take only two to two and a half hours from Kashgar to Khotan by this high speed train. By 2020, Xinjiang will have 8,000 kms of railway network, as it is being connected with Central Asia and Pakistan.



Kashgar Railway Station

B. Economic Development Process

China has followed a well calibrated policy of development - railways, roads, telecommunications, buildings, high rise residential apartments, industries, oil refineries and so on in Xinjiang.

Even though vast deserts intervene between the settled oasis towns and cities, a number of settlements, small industries, hotels, restaurants and other service centres have come up along the railway line and highways (wherever there is some settlement/oasis). Most of these businesses, shops, hotels, services etc. are manned by Han Chinese or even Hui Muslims. Even at the Karakol lake (13,000 ft), there is one restaurant, which is a branch of main restaurant in Beijing, being run by Han Chinese. Many travel agencies and even taxis etc. are also run by Han Chinese.



A Chinese restaurant at Karakol Lake (13,000 ft)

China Mobile, China Telecom, Sinopek, Petro China, major Chinese companies and banks have set up big establishments/high rise buildings in various parts of Xinjiang. And Han Chinese run most of those offices, shops and establishments, with some Chinese and English speaking educated Uyghurs also working there.



Xinjiang Science and Technology Centre, Urumqi



Some high rise buildings in Urumqi

Whereas Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang is highly developed with massive industrialization, Uyghur dominated southern Xinjiang like Kashgar, Khotan etc are also developed. High rise buildings are seen everywhere. Wide highways, amusement parks, and public facilities have been well built. Kashgar is nearly rebuilt, with old mud houses having given way to modern high rise residential and commercial buildings. Public transport is very good and cheap.



New Uyghur house, Kashgar

China has evolved a policy of involving various Provinces/Counties outside Xinjiang, in the socio-economic development of various areas in Xinjiang. For instance, one county of Kashgar has been developed with the support of Tianjin province of China. It meant direct involvement of experts, officials and other Hans from Tianjin in giving their professional expertise and economic support to develop/implement various projects in Xinjiang. This practice not only enables other provinces/Han experts to acquire direct first hand knowledge of Xinjiang affairs, but also promotes cross-regional contacts, besides paving the way for Han penetration into the Uyghur dominated areas.

In Kashgar old city, about 2,200 Uyghur families (about 10,000 people) are still living in old mud houses. Several mud houses are falling. Government is demolishing some to create open space and some multi-storeyed residential apartments have already been built, which are being allotted to the Uyghur families in old city. Beijing has plans to develop Kashgar as second Shenzhen (which is the most advanced region in China). The face of South Xinjiang is going to change into an-ultra-modern city by 2020. This region being Uyghur dominated will thus be converted into a modern multi-ethnic territory (like what has been achieved in Urumqi, Korla and other parts of north Xinjiang). More importantly, Uyghur Muslim ghettos/clusters in various cities and towns of South Xinjiang will be eliminated altogether.



Houses in dilapidated state in old Kashgar



Old houses in old Kashgar town being demolished



New multi-storeyed apartments in front of old Kashgar town

A revisit to Idgah mosque in Kashgar (after 16 years) revealed that all old and crowded Uyghur shops and slums around this mosque have been cleared. Now it has clean, calm and peaceful surroundings, with new shops/houses and multi-storeyed commercial complexes having been built in a systematic manner. Beijing spent about 1.8 billion yuan in building a big artificial lake and park in Kashgar city. It serves as a place of amusement for the people.



Beautified compound in front of Idqah mosque



Idqah Mosque, Kashgar



New market complex near Idqah Mosque, Kashgar

In Aksu, there are several construction material industries. A big cement factory near Aksu produces cement for exclusive export to Pakistan. Aksu is more modernized than Kashgar. It has about 40% Uyghur

population, rest being Hans, Hui and Kyrgyz. Korla is even more modernized than Aksu, and has even more proportion of Hans. Korla, Turfan and Karamai are oil producing districts in Xinjiang.

Baicheng is the wholesale market for supply of coal to southern Xinjiang. Kuqa is 90% Uyghur, and here too new buildings, commercial centres and newly built shops are lining the streets. All along, roads, highways and even link roads are well built and maintained. Cameras are installed at several places to check and control speed of the vehicles.

Jolted by July 5, 2009 riots in Urumqi, Chinese government has been taking direct and serious interest in Xinjiang affairs. China has taken all round view of the Uyghur unrest, social, educational and economic issues in Xinjiang. Chinese central government held comprehensive high level conference on 17-19 May 2010 at Beijing to assess the socio-economic situation in Xinjiang and finalize the new development plan for Xinjiang. The conference was addressed by President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jia bao. The President stressed the need to reduce gap in GDP growth in Xinjiang and rest of China. He emphasized the importance of social stability and national unity in Xinjiang. He urged the national banks in China to invest in Xinjiang. After the conference, China announced a new development policy for Xinjiang. China has implemented its decision to charge new Resource Tax of 5 per cent on oil and gas produced in Xinjiang, which is expected to boost Xinjiang's physical revenue by 25 per cent (i.e. about 5 billion Yuan) for oil and 2 billion yuan for gas per year, which will be used for development projects in Xinjiang. Total oil produced in Xinjiang is over 27 million tons.

China's largest petroleum company Petro China, operates in Xinjiang. Petro China with a market value of 329 billion US dollars has emerged as number one in the global 500 companies. Out of these top 500 companies, 21 are from China and all are state owned /supported. However, Chinese government accords priority to social stability and feels that development will come with it. China plans to inject 1.5 billion US dollars into Xinjiang starting 2011, to remove economic disparity and social instability. Kashgar is going to be developed as Special Economic Zone, in order to forge close ties between Kashgar and other regions of China, which in turn will mean settlement of more Hans in Southern Xinjiang. May 2010 Beijing conference on Xinjiang marks a new thrust in China's policy towards Xinjiang, by increasing investment, pace of development, technological innovation, ethnic-religious stability, employment and security.

China opened a new 1833 kms. long gas pipeline on 14 December

2009 connecting Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan with Xinjiang. This pipeline will deliver 40 billion cum of gas per year, more than half of China's current annual gas consumption, once it reaches full capacity by 2013. The gas will be pumped from Saman-Depe in Eastern Turkmenistan and delivered all the way to Xinjiang. China's President Hu Jintao and Presidents of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan opened the new pipeline together, by turning a symbolic wheel to open a valve on the pipeline. This gas will reach Shanghai through another pipeline (over 4500 kms) between Urumqi and Shanghai.



Oil exploration in Turfan

Foreign companies investing in Xinjiang get more trade concessions than these can get in Shanghai. Carrefour (a French departmental store chain), which has opened several stores in Beijing and other parts of China, has also opened several stores in Xinjiang. Super 8 Hotel chain, which is one of the world's largest economy lodging operators with almost 2100 hotels worldwide, has 3 hotels in Xinjiang.



Carrefour (French Departmental Store), Urumqi

UYGHUR SEPARATISM IN XINJIANG AND CHINA'S RESPONSE

July 5, 2009 Urumqi riots, in which many Hans were killed, still haunt the Chinese authorities. Though there is an aura of peace in Xinjiang, relations between Uyghurs and Hans or elsewhere in Xinjiang are not cosy. Rather both communities maintain adversarial race relations. They do not eat together and have separate restaurants/eating places. Even in the Central

Nationalities University, Beijing, Uyghur students do not interact with their Han counterparts, even though they reside in the same campus. However, Hans and Hui Muslims (who speak Chinese language and eat Chinese food excepting pork) maintain good relations. Hans do eat in Hui restaurants in Xinjiang and elsewhere. Hui, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz communities of Xinjiang are reported to have remained aloof from the July 5, 2009 Urumqi riots, which involved mainly Uyghurs and Hans. As such, mutual distrust between Uyghurs and Hans remains. Majority of the Uyghurs in Southern Xinjiang (Kashgar, Khotan, Aksu) do not know Chinese. However, as compared to the past, many Uyghur parents now send their children to cities to learn Chinese languages, as it provides them higher education, jobs and better opportunities. One found Hans and Uyghur shopkeepers conversing in Chinese language, at various places. Uyghurs now seek to adapt to new reality. However, there is shortage of teachers to train Uyghurs in Chinese language. Central government realizes the urgency of this problem and seeks to resolve it at an earliest. New government policy is to encourage the Hans to learn Uyghur language. Those Hans who understand Uyghur language are given preference for jobs. Similarly from kindergarten onwards, bilingual education (Chinese and Uyghur) is imparted to children.

Security Situation/Arrangements

One did not notice any police or security personnel patrolling streets in Urumqi, Kashgar, Aksu, Turfan or other places, where I visited. Being wary of the anniversary of July 5, 2009 Urumqi events coming close, the Chinese authorities were maintaining strict vigil. Internet services which were suspended soon after the July 5, 2009 riots, were resumed in mid-May 2010. Only few traffic police personnel were seen regulating the traffic as the system of traffic lights and cameras installed on the highways to check speed of vehicles is functioning properly. There is hardly any traffic violation and hardly any accident involving vehicles was noticed during my travels. There are well organized and newly constructed buildings for police and security personnel at various places in each town, county, district etc.

There exist several check posts in various counties, districts to check the entry/exit of people from one county/district to another. However, only a few security personnel man these check posts, where the persons entering/leaving the county/district are registered with their identity card numbers being recorded in a small computer machine. In case of foreigners,

their passport details are recorded. On entering Baicheng County (about 70 kms. from Aksu city), there is a police check-post. All vehicles (cars, taxis, buses, trucks etc.) stop while reaching the check-post. All passengers and drivers get their Identity cards scanned by the computer at the post, and then board their vehicles for onward journey. Another check-post was found while reaching the border of Kuqa town, and similar process of registration/recording of Identity Cards is done. Every citizen in China including Xinjiang has an Identity Card, which records the details of name address, date of birth, nationality (Han, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongol etc.). This card is multi-purpose having one registration number, which remains the same even if the person concerned changes his place of residence. This Card is the most important document, used for all transactions/activities in China.

Everybody going towards frontier territory (Pamirs, Tashkurghan etc.) from Kashgar is required to register oneself at the local police/registration office in Kashgar city. There is a long queue of people, mainly Han workers, who are working at the new hydro-power plant being built at Taskurghan. Local Uyghurs, Hans or other citizens of China are provided formal official permit to enable them to travel to the frontier. In case of foreigners, their passport details are recorded. While travelling from Kashgar to Karakol lake (13,000 ft) near the Pamir mountains one has to stop at Gezcun Frontier post, where all travelers including drivers of the vehicles disembark to show their official permits to the police at the frontier post. Interestingly only one or two police personnel man this post, and they first scan the official permit in their computer. In case of foreigners, their passport details are recorded. In this manner, Chinese authorities maintain the record of people moving from one place to another, particularly in Southern Xinjiang.

Another important measure taken is the policy of eliminating the Uyghur Muslim ghettos/clusters, which are the centres of religious extremism and separatism. Many old houses in Southern Xinjiang have been demolished to create big public spaces, parks, roads and for construction of high rise residential buildings. Then the concerned families are allotted flats in these buildings in a proportionate manner, so that the particular high-rise building has an admixture of various communities, which have equal stake in the safety, security and welfare of their residential complex. Thus this complex remains immune to any riots outside the complex.

To cite yet another example, some Uyghur boys were found picking pockets of pedestrians using an over foot bridge, opposite National Library

in Beijing. The problem persisted in spite of two police personnel being deployed at the two ends of the bridge. This was mainly because many Uyghur families lived in a cluster nearby around Xinjiang Street (near the Central University of Nationalities, Beijing), as this was a cheaper area to live in for Uyghur students and families. The authorities resolved this law and order problem by acquiring land/houses in and around Xinjiang Street and built new multi-storeyed residential buildings, which were expensive and thus out of reach of the Uyghurs to buy or rent. Now Xinjiang Street does not exist anywhere and the problem has been rooted out.



Police Warning against Uyghur pickpockets at Goutou footbridge near National Library, Beijing

Religious Extremism and Separatism

China considers religious extremism, separatism and terrorism as three evil forces, and has taken a set of elaborate, practical and concrete steps to root out these evils. Southern Xinjiang, which has the majority population of Uyghur Muslims, has been the cause of concern. There are about 24,300 mosques in Xinjiang (90% of these being located in South Xinjiang). There are about 26,000 Imams and Khatibs. Whereas a big mosque has 1 Imam and 1 Khatib, smaller mosques have 1 Imam. Hui, Kyrgyz and Kazakh Muslims seldom visit Uygur mosques and vice versa. There are different graves for Kyrgyzs and Kazakhs (on the yurt style).

Chinese scholars and authorities are conscious of the potential threat from the conservative and extremist sections of Uyghurs. Their policy is to isolate the extremist and separatist elements from the general Uyghur population, by removing the economic disparities between Southern Xinjiang and rest of China. Since economic development is accompanied by the ingress of Hans, Huis and other nationalities, plans for changing the face of South Xinjiang have been set in motion. Kashgar is expected to be developed into an ultra-modern city like Shenzhen by 2020.

Chinese specialists are clear in their distinction of Uyghur and Tibetan separatism. Whereas Uyghur Muslims are considered to be conservative, secessionist and even believers in political trans-national Islam, Tibetan Buddhists though conservative are viewed to be moderate in their politics. So Southern Xinjiang is the Achilles Heel of China. But China is highly alive to the potential threat and is determined to nip the problem in the bud through economic development, assimilation and settlement of more Hans in Southern Xinjiang, as has been done in various parts of Northern Xinjiang. Chinese scholars believe that pan-Islamist Uyghurs are against indigenous traditions, culture, music and Sufi shrines.

Chinese government shifted Wang Lequan (Secretary, Communist Party of China in Xinjiang from 1985-April 2010), from Urumqi to Beijing, as he was seen by the Uyghurs as a hardliner following a military approach towards the separatists. He is now the Deputy Chairman, Supervision & Inspection Committee of CPC, in Beijing. Wang has been replaced by Zhang Chunxian as the new CPC Secretary in Xinjiang. Zhang was earlier CPC Secretary in Hunan province of China. Zhang is known as open-minded, soft and ready to hear out the local problems. He is called as Internet Party Secretary, as he interacts through internet as well. His wife is a famous TV anchor. Wang's shift from Urumqi to Beijing and new development plan for Xinjiang, represent a calculated policy aimed at containing religious extremism and separatism in Xinjiang, and promoting socio-economic stability.

China's Cultural Policy

China and its people have through history been conscious of its history and civilisational importance. Xinjiang remains embedded in Chinese memory and consciousness since ancient times, as various Chinese annals have recorded numerous episodes of China's forays and feats in this remote north-western outlying border area. Chinese cultural policy in Xinjiang has the following main features:

- (i) To preserve, sustain and promote all those objects, historical and cultural sites and episodes in Xinjiang's history which demonstrate China's administrative and political jurisdiction in this area.
- (ii) Accordingly numerous sites in Xinjiang which have been ascribed cultural and national importance, are appropriated and presented as treasured part of ancient Chinese civilization and its presence in Xinjiang.



Chinese inscription describing ancient history of Heaven Lake (Urumqi)



Wooden Banner at Heaven Lake (Urumqi)



Entrance to Grape Valley, Turfan



Entrance to Flaming Mountain Resort, Turfan



Flaming Mountain, Turfan

- (iii) To promote Uyghur shrines and tourist spots as places of cultural tourism, which attract both Chinese tourists from the mainland and also from Hong Kong, Taiwan etc, beside the Uyghur pilgrims.
- (iv) Xinhua Book Store in Kashgar and Urumqi are housed in well organized multi-storeyed buildings, with books in Chinese accounting for most of its books. However, books in Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian and Xibe are also available in substantial quantities. These books are mainly translations of Chinese works, local literature etc.



Xinhua Bookstore, Kashgar

- (v) Uyghur handicrafts such as brassware, musical instruments, knives, wooden articles, besides dance are promoted. Typical Central Asian bazaars (local markets) are functioning and catering to the needs of the local people, in every town and city in Xinjiang. The Central Asian bazaars in Kashgar and Urumqi have developed as centres of international trade with adjoining countries in Central Asia and trade with adjoining countries in Central Asia and South Asia (Pakistan and Afghanistan).



Local Market, Kuqa



Shop in Kashgar selling brass products



Uyghur Musical Instrument Store, Kashgar

(vi) Through there are very few Uyghurs in other administrative and political structures, there are numerous Uyghur representatives in the Islamic Council and Council of Nationalities in Beijing.

- (vii) Uyghur music and dance is sought to be promoted at the national level, in a bid to bring it nearer to the mainstream and also to create better social and cultural understanding between the Uyghur and Han communities. One Uyghur athlete, Adil, has been performing his rope walk every day, in the National Stadium at Beijing, drawing applause from the audience. Besides, Uyghur girls and boys perform their dance in several forms at intervals at the National Stadium. Even after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the National Stadium presents a lively atmosphere every day, with thousands of visitors particularly on holidays.



National Stadium, Beijing



Uyghur artistes performing at the National Stadium, Beijing



Uyghur artistes performing at the National Stadium, Beijing



Uyghur artistes performing at the National Stadium, Beijing

- (viii) China follows a unified All China Entrance Examination for entrance to college level, which is held each year on 7-8 June. This year (2010) 9.5 million students sat for this examination. About 1,10,000 students from minority areas (Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Yunan, Sichuan, Kansu) had the facility of

special test papers in minority languages, besides some preference points for getting admission to college. In this manner, the Uyghurs and other minorities are drawn into the national mainstream through a uniform system of entrance examination and certain weightage points.

Chinese cuisine has been introduced into Xinjiang in a big way. Apart from the Hui Muslim restaurants (which follow Chinese food style), a number of Chinese hotels and restaurants are existing everywhere. Quan Ju De, the famous roast duck restaurant of Beijing, has opened its branch in Urumqi, which is the exact replica of the original one in Beijing. Peking ducks served in the Urumqi restaurant are brought in from Beijing. This is the unique Chinese way of Sinicising the local food.

INDIA'S EXPERIENCE IN KASHMIR

Since Xinjiang has close parallels to Kashmir in terms of its geographical and ethnic-religious setting, besides the political history of religious extremism and separatism, it is instructive to examine Indian experience in Kashmir.

1. Due to its geo-strategic location, and abutting the borders of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Xinjiang is the important strategic frontier of China in its northwest. With the main overland trade routes connecting China with Central and South Asia passing through Xinjiang, it is China's bridge to Central Asia and South Asia. Xinjiang is also vital for China's quest for energy security. Peoples Republic of China has ensured that Xinjiang functions as its vibrant bridgehead to Central and South Asia. So much so, it built a highway across the Aksai Chin territory of Ladakh in 1950s to connect Xinjiang with Tibet.

Due to its geo-strategic location, abutting the borders of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and being in close proximity to Central Asia, Jammu and Kashmir is the strategic frontier of India in its north. Jammu and Kashmir offers India the only overland access to Central Asia. However, independent India lost the opportunity of having direct overland access to Xinjiang and Central Asia after it allowed Pakistan to illegally occupy the vital strategic territory of Baltistan and PoK in 1947-48.

2. Xinjiang region of China presents a case of geo-cultural diversity. Whereas the lofty mountain ranges of Altyn Tagh, Kuen Lun, Karakoram,

Pamirs, Ala Tau and the Altai, virtually encircle the region, the great Takla Makan desert to the east cuts it off from the mainland of China. And the Tien Shan range of mountains cuts the region into two distinct but unequal parts, the northern region traditionally dominated by the pastoral nomads and the southern region or the Tarim Basin possessing numerous fertile oasis settlements dominated by the Uyghurs.

Different ethnic groups are settled/concentrated in different geographical areas such as Uyghur Muslims dominating southern parts of Xinjiang (Alty Shahr), Kyrgyz settled in Kyzilsu Prefecture in the south, Tajiks living in the mountainous Tashkurghan county, and Mongols, Kazakhs and Huis living in their distinct traditional habitats in northern Xinjiang, with the Chinese Hans dominating both the northern and eastern parts of Xinjiang. These ethnic groups retain their distinct ethno-cultural identity which has been consolidated by the creation of separate Autonomous Prefectures, regions and counties for respective ethnic groups in their respective territorial loci, within the overall framework of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. These ethnic groups speak different languages - Uyghur, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Kazakh, Mongol and Chinese Mandarin.

From the geo-cultural perspective, Jammu and Kashmir State of India presents a heterogenitic mix of geography and ethno-cultural groups. Jammu plains which are an extension of the plains of India, move upwards the Shivalik hills till Pir Panjal range divides the Jammu region from the Valley of Kashmir, which is encapsulated /encircled by various mountain ranges. From the Valley one has to cross the Zojila Pass to enter Kargil and Ladakh. From Kargil and Ladakh, which is bounded by the Karakoram and Kuen Lun mountain ranges, one moves ahead into Baltistan and Gilgit areas. Similarly, the Baramulla gorge and Kishan Ganga river divide the Valley of Kashmir from Muzaffarabad and Mirpur ranges. All these distinct geographical zones are inhabited by distinct ethno-cultural groups like Hindu Dogras in Jammu, nomadic Gujjar tribes in the hills, Kashmiris in the Valley, Baltis (Shia Muslims) in Kargil and Baltistan, Ladakhis (Buddhists) in Ladakh, Dards in Gurais and Dardistan (Gilgit, Hunza etc.), Mirpuris/Potoharis in Muzaffarabad-Mirpur region. Different ethnic groups speak different languages - Dogri, Gojri, Kashmiri, Balti, Ladakhi and Mirpuri/Potohari/Punjabi.

3. From the historical point of view, mainland China has had a tenuous relationship with its distant periphery in Xinjiang. While its Chinese connection dates back more than 2,000 years, Xinjiang remained

under the effective control of the imperial China only intermittently for about five centuries. Long distance, intervening Takla Makan desert and lack of adequate means of communication besides the shifting balance of power in the mainland, were the contributory factors for China's weak control over Xinjiang for a considerable period in history. Whenever the centre was strong in China, it exerted its control over Xinjiang. Whenever the centre was weak, local chieftains, Mongol Khans, Khojas, Muslim chiefs and warlords assumed control over their territorial strongholds. However, the chiefs of Hami and Turfan in eastern part of Xinjiang being in proximity to China, maintained a sort of tributary relationship with the Centre, while retaining their autonomy.

Kashmir has remained an inalienable part of Indian civilisational and political system since ancient times. Kashmir remained a Hindu kingdom till 14th century and as such was an integral part of Indian/Hindu historical past. In fact, Kashmir acted as the fountainhead of Indian civilization as most of the classical Indian works on art, aesthetics, religion, philosophy, literature, poetics, dramaturgy, history etc. were written and produced in Kashmir. Kashmir has been the main centre of Buddhism and Shavism. Even after the introduction of Islam, Kashmir produced its indigenous Rishi order synthesizing the local Buddhist and Shaivite traditions with the new Sufi thought brought in by the immigrant Syeds and Sufis from Central Asia and Persia. Even in medieval times, Kashmir was part of the Mughal empire in India.

4. From the cultural and racial point of view, Uyghurs and other Muslim groups like Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs belong to the Turkic Islamic groups and they see Chinese Hans and even Chinese Hui Muslims as the other/alien ethnic group and race. The local Muslims speak Turkic (Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz) languages, whereas Chinese Hans and Huis speak Mandarin. There is a communication gap between the Han Chinese and local Turkic racial groups. The Han Chinese are seen by the locals as colonialists and even today the local Muslims eat in their own Muslim restaurants/chaikhana, as they abhor pork. Chinese Hans are not uncomfortable in eating at the Chinese Hui Muslim restaurants, as the Huis though Muslim by faith, speak Chinese language and have Chinese cuisine. However, pork and beef are openly sold in the bazaars/markets, though in south Xinjiang (Kashgar etc), one finds lamb meat predominating the cuisine. Over 300,000 Uyghurs and Kazakhs are scattered in mainland China (Beijing, Henan and some other places) working mainly in restaurants, bakeries and labour. They continue to live in ghettos even

while staying outside Xinjiang. Some have been found involved in petty crimes and also in extremist and terrorist activities.

From the cultural and racial point of view, except for their religious differences, Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Hindus speak the same Kashmiri language and have had same dress and cuisine. A sizable number of Kashmir Muslims still retain the Kashmiri Pandit surnames like Kaul, Raina, Mattoo, Bhat, Kichloo, Kaw, Bakshi, Durrani, Wangnoo and so on. However, since the resurgence of Islamic revivalism in the Valley of Kashmir, many Muslims have been adopting more Arabicised names under the influence of radical Wahabi Islamic groups. And after the forced expulsion of over 450,000 Kashmiri Hindu minority population in 1989-90, the Valley has been turned into a mono-ethnic territory with Islamic radicalism ruling the roost. Whereas in the recent past, the local Muslim population abhorred eating beef, in the same manner as Kashmiri Hindus shunned eating pork, now beef is openly sold in the markets across the Valley, as a symbol of Islamic triumph over the secular and composite ethno-cultural heritage and traditions. Over 300,000 Kashmiri Muslims are living, working/studying in various parts of India particularly, Delhi, Gurgaon, Kolkata, Chennai, Goa, Kerala, Mumbai and other metropolitan cities doing thriving business in sale/export of handicrafts, travel and tourism, services and other professions. In fact, after the onset of militancy in Kashmir in 1989, Kashmiri Muslim professionals have chosen to work in various places of India, thereby becoming part of the Indian mainstream. Vibrant and resurgent economy of India and large number of educational professional institutions coupled with encouraging policies towards the Muslim minorities, offer a big attraction to Kashmiri Muslim youth availing of these avenues. However, some secessionist elements among these floating Kashmiri Muslim population have been found involved in terrorist and anti-state activities in various parts of India.

5. China has declared Xinjiang as its core strategic area, which is non-negotiable. China brooks no international interference in its internal affairs in Xinjiang.

India considers Jammu and Kashmir State including its territory under the occupation of Pakistan and China as its integral part. Indian Parliament Resolution of 22 February 1994 firmly declared that "the State of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and shall be an integral part of India and any attempts to separate it from the rest of the country will be resisted by all necessary means; India has the will and capacity to firmly counter all designs against its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity."

6. Way back in 1955, China declared Xinjiang as Uyghur Autonomous Region, in cognizance of its main Uyghur nationality. It also established Autonomous Prefectures for Kazakh, Hui, Kyrgyz, Khalkas and Mongol nationality areas; Autonomous Counties for Kazakh, Hui, Mongolian, Tajik and Xibo, besides numerous Autonomous townships for other nationalities settled in other minority clusters. In this manner, China has set up necessary administrative mechanisms to take care of other non-Uyghur minority nationalities in Xinjiang. However, China has encouraged the immigration and settlement of Hans, Huis and others from mainland China, which has resulted in the increase of the share of the Han population from 6 per cent in 1953 to 40 per cent in 2000 and sharp reduction of the Uyghur population from 80 per cent in 1941 to 45.2 per cent in 2000. China has successfully followed the policy of Han settlement in Xinjiang as a means towards social and political stability and territorial integrity. Despite several attempts by the local Uyghur Islamic radicals to intimidate and shoe away the Han settlers in Xinjiang, the authorities have not only foiled all such attempts but even reinforced the Han presence in Xinjiang.

Jammu and Kashmir State enjoys unique autonomy in India through Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Jammu and Kashmir also has its own separate constitution. Under this special constitutional arrangement, J&K state enjoys more executive and legislative powers than any other state in India. The Centre's jurisdiction is confined to security, defence, currency, foreign affairs, telecommunications and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and Election Commission of India. Under Article 370, no non-state subject can buy or own land or any property in Jammu and Kashmir. As such, there has been no immigration from other parts of Indian into the Jammu and Kashmir State. However, there has been out-migration of Hindu minorities from the Valley to other parts of India due to economic and political deprivation. The population of Hindus in Kashmir province registered only 6.75 per cent decadal growth during 1971-81, as against the growth rate of 27.29 per cent for the Valley as a whole. Notwithstanding the presence of Indian security forces, over 85, 000 Kashmiri Hindu minority families comprising over 4,50,000 persons were forced to leave the Valley during and after 1989-90 due to terror strikes and violent hate campaigns. Those Hindu and Sikh refugees who migrated from Pak-occupied Kashmir to the state in 1947-48, have not been accorded the status of State Subject. Ironically several hundred Muslim refugees from Tibet and several thousand Afghans (presently clustered in Gotli Bagh, Kashmir) have been granted state subjects status by the J&K

government/authorities. As such, the Valley has turned into a mono-ethnic Islamic stronghold, which only breeds and sustains separatism and extremism.

The people of Ladakh and Kargil have been granted Leh and Kargil Autonomous Hill Development Councils, which have proved successful in promoting socio-economic development of these remote areas. However, similar arrangement for the people of Gurais, Bandipora, Kishtwar, Poonch and also for Rajouri is yet to be instituted. Besides, Muslim nomadic Gujjars and Bakarwals and the indigenous Buddhist and Balti (Shia Muslims) population in Ladakh and Kargil have been granted Scheduled Tribe status, which provides them enormous opportunities through quotas in admission into colleges, professional institutions and jobs.

7. Xinjiang is very rich in oil, gas and mineral resources. It possesses high quality oil reserves which accounts for 30 per cent of China's oil reserves. It has natural gas reserves of trillions of cubic metres, accounting for 34 per cent of China's natural gas reserves. Xinjiang has coal reserves of 2 trillion tons, accounting for 47 per cent of China's coal reserves. Xinjiang ranks second in China's wind energy resources. In 2008, Xinjiang ranked second in China by producing 27.22 million tons of crude oil, and first by producing 24 billion cubic metres of natural gas.⁷ Xinjiang produced 3 million tons of cotton in 2008, ranking first in China.⁸ Wine making industry is making rapid progress in Xinjiang. Local revenue of Xinjiang crossed 36 billion yuan in 2008.⁹ With the revised resource tax of 5 per cent being levied on prices instead of production volume, from mid-2010, CNPC and Sinopec, China's top two oil companies, expected to generate additional 5 billion yuan (732 million US dollars) in annual tax revenue for Xinjiang.¹⁰ Per capita income of rural households in Xinjiang was 3,503 yuan in 2008, which was less than the national average of 4,140 yuan. Per capita income of urban residents was 11,432 yuan as compared with the national average of 15,780 yuan. Chinese government has acknowledged the imbalance due to the lower standard of living in Xinjiang than in other parts of China.

As regards Jammu and Kashmir, no such rich natural resources like oil, gas, minerals etc. have been found there, which coupled with the ban on purchase of land by the non-state subjects are the main causes of lack of major industries in the state. Local economy is mainly based on agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts and tourism sectors. The J&K state has the distinction of receiving largest provincial assistance (90 per cent as grants-in-aid) from the Central government. In 2009-10, J&K received

Rs. 13,252 crore from the Centre, which constitutes nearly 60 per cent of the state's total expenditure. During the past two decades, J&K has received grants amounting to Rs. 94,409 crore between 1989-90 and 2009-10, which is much above J&K's share of India's population, which is a mere one per cent.¹¹ The state government employs about 450,000 people making it a ratio of over 50 government employees to every thousand persons. The total bill for salary, pension and other allowances of the State's employees amounts to Rs. 11, 525 crore, which is more than three times the state's total annual income of Rs. 3,600 crores.¹² Jammu and Kashmir has achieved the distinction of having the lowest rate of poverty in India. Only 3.7 per cent of rural Kashmiris and 1.19 per cent of urban residents in Kashmir live below the poverty line as against 27.09 and 23.02 per cent respectively in the rest of India.¹³ An average household in the State owns assets worth over one million rupees, which is the highest in India.¹⁴ The income tax revenue in Kashmir crossed 200 crore rupees in the financial year 2009-10.¹⁵

8. Xinjiang, being the only Muslim majority province in China, has been home to ethnic-religious separatist movement for a long time. While the Uyghur resentment against the Han Chinese presence in Xinjiang is increasing, China's sovereignty is also being challenged by Uyghur Muslim separatists. July 5, 2009 riots in Urumqi in which over 150 persons, mostly Hans, were killed, sent shock-waves across China. Uyghur diaspora settled in USA, Europe, Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries, with the backing of some foreign agencies, keep on raising the issue of the violation of human rights of Uyghurs and the independence of "Eastern Turkestan." The Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami, Hizb ut-Tahrir, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other organizations have been training and funding the Uyghur separatist cadres to wage armed struggle against the Chinese in Xinjiang.

On its part, China is quite conscious of this threat to its territorial integrity. China has secured its frontiers and neutralized this threat by consolidating its military presence and Han settlement in Xinjiang. However, very few security forces are visible in the streets in affected areas in Xinjiang. China recently installed 40,000 CCTVs in Urumqi to monitor the movements of suspected Uyghur activists. Earlier, China secured the arrest of 12 Uyghur separatists from Pakistan, who were later tried and awarded death sentence. More recently, China secured the extradition of 20 Uyghur suspects from Cambodia. On the diplomatic front, China has not only warded off any Islamic criticism of its policies in Xinjiang, but

has succeeded in having its position legitimized and endorsed by Muslim countries like Iran, Pakistan, Central Asian Republics and other Middle Eastern countries. The Central Asian countries have even undertaken not to allow any anti-China movement by the Uyghurs living within their respective countries. China sees religious extremism, international terrorism and separatism as the main challenges to its security. China is firm in its resolve to maintain its territorial integrity by all means - diplomatic, social, economic or political.

Jammu and Kashmir is the only Muslim majority province in India. The state has been the focus of national and international attention ever since October 1947 when Pakistani raiders launched an armed attack on the state in 1947. The Kashmir issue remained at the centre stage of UN Security Council debates, particularly due to deep Anglo-US involvement and biased approach against India during the height of Cold War. However, things settled down in 1972 after the creation of Bangladesh and the conclusion of Shimla Agreement between India and Pakistan in 1972. But after 1989-90, Kashmir has witnessed the rise of Islamic extremism, armed insurgency and terrorism bringing the issue once again into the limelight. Since after 9/11 terrorism and violent religious movement are not accepted by the international community, the new strategy of the separatists is to transform the Kashmiri Muslim separatist movement from the violent Islamist movement to a mass civil disobedience movement. This explains the recent upsurge in Kashmir with stone throwers coming out in streets across the Valley, as a means to seek international attention and support. And Pakistan has been using the good offices of OIC and some Muslim countries to drum up support for the Muslim separatist movement in Kashmir.

9. In Xinjiang, Uyghur extremists used modern means of communication, internet services etc. to spread anti-Han hate mails and separatist agenda during the course of Urumqi riots in July 2009. Soon after, China snapped all communication links in Xinjiang, which has 7 million internet users, to prevent the expansion and recurrence of violence as the riots were fanned and orchestrated by the Uyghur separatists via internet, text messages and long distance telephone calls. Internet and mobile services were resumed in Xinjiang in May 2010, that is ten months after the July 2009 riots. In China, very few commentators write on Xinjiang affairs, and its reporting is done with official consent. As such, no public discussion or debate of Xinjiang affairs can be seen, except for projection of official position, as was done during the May 2010 Beijing Conference

on Xinjiang's Development and also to highlight peaceful anniversary of July 2009 Urumqi riots.

In Kashmir too, internet, mobile text messages and telephone communication have been used by the Muslim separatists to send provocative messages, agendas for agitation and violence. Twelve private channels (11 being run from Pakistan and one from Dubai) have been running openly in Kashmir, through the local cable service network, airing provocative and anti-state programmes. Besides, both the local and national media have been used skillfully by their local correspondents to project the local pro-separatist and more often anti-government reports, thereby feeding and sustaining the secessionist movement.

Ironically, the Right to Information Act (RTI) which was passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on the lines of the Central Act (in practice in other parts of India) is being used as an effective instrument to put public pressure on the state and central government agencies on various counts. The Jammu and Kashmir Right to Information Movement comprises numerous Kashmiri RTI activists has been active in pursuing the cases of human rights violations against the security forces.¹⁶ In India, Kashmir issue has become a sort of industry, with every Tom, Dick and Harry commenting, writing and publishing provocative, and often pro-separatist views, without any knowledge of history, language, culture and politics of the region.

10. China allows legitimate and normal religious activities in Xinjiang, which has about 25,000 registered mosques and 29,000 Imams etc. About 3,000 Muslims from Xinjiang go to Haj pilgrimage each year. However, all religious activities including speeches/sermons of Imams are monitored by the government under its law on "Prescriptions on the Management of Religious Activities in Xinjiang", which stipulates that all religious groups and activities should be undertaken within legal norms, maintaining social stability and the unity and integrity of China. Misuse of Islam for politicization and for interfering in the government, society, administration, judiciary and other activities is not allowed. Xinjiang Islamic Institute has been established to train Imams and religious preachers for various mosques in Xinjiang within the prescribed norms.

In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, there exists absolute freedom of religion which has been grossly misused by vested political interests to the detriment of social stability, peace and harmony. The number of mosques, madrassas and preachers runs into tens of thousands in the Valley. The number of Kashmiri Muslims making Haj pilgrimage each year is over

6,000 each person receiving hefty government subsidy in travel and other expenses. In fact, Islam in Kashmir is thriving having transformed from a traditional form into a resurgent and radicalized Islam. Ironically, over 600 traditional and local Kashmir Muslim Imams (preachers) of various mosques across the Valley, were gradually and systematically replaced in 1980s by extremist non-Kashmiri Imams who were trained in radicalized Islamic institutes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, through the network of Jamaat-e-Islami mosques, madrassas and cadres. This ushered in a process of radicalization of Islam at the grassroots in the Valley leading to the Islamisation of politics in Kashmir, as these Imams have been utilizing the pulpit of the mosques to propagate hate and anti-government venom to their followers. Now open calls for the establishment of Nizam-e-Mustafa (Islamic government based on Sharia) are made, as has been witnessed in the recent spate of violent demonstrations by the stone pelting mobs. The Islamic radicals have used the Indian democratic system of free press, judiciary and other mechanisms to propagate their radical and separatist ideas freely and without any fear of deterrent punishment by the law and order machinery.

11. As in the case of other provinces, Xinjiang region of China is governed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Though Uyghurs are members of the CCP, the Party Secretary, who wields authority at provincial or the district level has always been a Han. However, the Chairman of the Autonomous Region, the executive of each Autonomous Prefecture and head of each Autonomous County are from the local nationalities. Though Han Chinese are predominant, Uyghur and other minor minority cadres are part of the government and administration. At the centre, Uyghurs have been inducted in the Islamic Council and Council of Nationalities, in Beijing. Besides, there are representatives from Xinjiang in the National People's Congress and also in the regional Peoples' Congress.

Jammu and Kashmir has been holding elections to 87 member Legislative Assembly every five/six years right from 1951. Though there have been complaints about rigging of elections in the past, elections of 1977, 2002 and 2008 have been widely acclaimed as free, fair and transparent. The State government is headed by the Chief Minister, who is elected from the party winning majority of seats. Right from 1947-48, State Chief Minister has invariably been a Muslim from the Valley, with some of his Cabinet ministers representing Jammu and Ladakh provinces. Similarly, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been electing six members through ballot, to the Indian Parliament. The Muslim dominated

Valley of Kashmir has had a fairly large share of political presence in the Central government at Delhi. Heavy weight politicians like Syed Mir Qasim, Mohammad Shafi Quereshi, Mufti Mohammad Syed, Omar Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Saifudin Soz and Dr. Farooq Abdullah have held key portfolios of Home Affairs, External Affairs, Tourism, Civil Aviation, Food Supplies, Environment, Renewable Energy etc. in the Central government at various points of time. In effect, these Kashmiri politicians have successfully moulded Indian government policies in tune with the interests of their constituencies in the Valley. That the Central government has been catering to the interests of regional satraps from the Valley, rather than dealing with the masses of Jammu and Kashmir covering all ethnic, regional and religious groups, has been the bane of India's policy in Kashmir.

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SEPARATISM, EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM: CHALLENGE TO CENTRAL ASIA'S SECURITY

XING GUANG CHENG

Counter-terrorism is a key issue which has become the common concern of the whole international community. China is one of the countries suffering from terrorism, so China has been sparing no effort to cooperate with other countries in fighting against terrorism for the sake of effectively keeping terrorism at bay.

CENTRAL ASIA'S SECURITY SITUATION AND THREE FORCES OF TERRORISM, SEPARATISM AND EXTREMISM

Central Asia is the main region in which the three forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism arise. The low level of social and economic development as well as the influence of historical, cultural, ethnic and religious factors contributes to the spread of the Three Forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism in Central Asia. So far, the terrorist forces are rampant in the region, therefore, the task of anti-terrorism is arduous.

Since the Andijan incident in Uzbekistan in 2005, the security situation in Central Asia has not worsened; on the contrary, it has improved to some extent. The threats from the color revolution has reduced, political situation in Central Asian states has stabilized relatively. The political turbulence in Kyrgyzstan makes the Central Asian states to keep vigilance against the color revolution. The unfavorable consequences of the color revolution have made the people in Central Asia realize its danger. The regimes in Central Asia start to change their attitude towards religions, do their utmost to alleviate the contradictions between state and church. As the economies in Central Asian states more or less grow, and the

economic situation has improved in recent years.

At present, the main security threats in Central Asia are unconventional security threats. Intensifying unconventional security threats make the Central Asia security situation to be more complex. Now terrorism and religious extremism is at the stage of strategic adjustment in the Central Asian region: The terrorist organizations start to build up their underground network, penetrate from Pakistan and Afghanistan into the border area between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as well as the Ferghana Valley. The *Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami* (Party of Islamic Liberation) urged its members to strengthen itself, move towards the countryside. Although *Hizb ut-Tahrir* doesn't pose real threat to the political order in various Central Asian states, it has been developing at fast pace because of its covert and deceptive nature. In addition, the increasing narcotic problem, the ecology problem etc. pose security threat to Central Asia. The problems that affect the Central Asian security at the deep level have not solved, as the geopolitical situation and rivalry among great powers are intricate and complicated.

Measures and International Cooperation in the Fight against the Three Forces

Leaders in Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan called for intensifying efforts to fight against the three forces, in particular the threats from terrorism and extremism. Kyrgyzstan appealed to strengthen coordination and exchange, especially in the field of information and intelligence, in order to jointly maintain the security and the stability in Central Asia region. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan called on Central Asian states to enhance international cooperation in fighting drug-trafficking and maintenance of security, so as to safeguard security in sizable areas from China to Caucasus, from India to Siberia. In recent years, various countries in Central Asia have strengthened border control to contain illegal guns and illegal immigration. These have also improved the law enforcement departments' capacity to jointly fight terrorism, strengthened regional and international cooperation in the field. As such, the terrorism activity is confined to certain areas, though the terrorist forces are dormant.

The Central Asian states retain a high-handed posture towards terrorist organizations, as law enforcement departments upgrade their intensity in the fight against organic terrorist organizations, punish terrorists and the extremists with severe penalty, ban some underground

sermon spots, especially take joint action to fight the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*. At the same time, they make the religious education and promulgation back to track so that it benefits political stability in these countries. Furthermore, The Central Asian states attach importance to cooperate with the neighboring countries in fighting the three forces. Most of the Central Asian states emphasize anti-terrorist cooperation within the framework in CIS Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Central Asian states actively consolidate resources within the law enforcement departments and develop effective cooperative, for example, they hold bilateral and multilateral anti-terrorist exercises, advance the capacity of the law enforcement departments in jointly fighting terrorism.

The Role of SCO in Central Asian Regional Security

The security cooperation in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is at initial stage. It is also one of the four orientations of cooperation within SCO. From Shanghai Five mechanism to Shanghai Cooperation Organization, from building up mutual trust in the border regions to joint exercises, from signing of Shanghai Convention for fighting the three forces to the establishment of regional anti-terrorist structure, from anti-drug cooperation to joint law enforcement, the security cooperation within the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization has expanded gradually, and has made a series of achievements.

Founded in 2001, Shanghai Cooperation Organization while regarding fight against the three forces as its main task, plays an important role in the struggle against terrorism in Central Asia. Before the events of September 11, member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization signed the Shanghai Convention against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, which provides a legal framework for the anti-terrorist cooperation for Central Asia and the world, marking a major step in strengthening security cooperation among the six countries. Hereafter, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization formed anti-terrorist center, organized two joint anti-terrorist exercises, which demonstrated the determination and capacity of the member states to combat terrorism.

Chinese government is always concerned about the development of terrorism. China has taken active and effective measures to prevent and cope with terrorism. Contrary to the unilateral approach in some Western countries, which emphasizes anti-terrorism solely by the use of force, China pushes the formation of the multilateral security cooperation mechanism

based on the new security concept, making Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a security mechanism to be a mature organization. China conducts effective cooperation in fighting terrorism with Asia and Pacific states. Some neighboring countries are willing to invite China to take part in regional anti-terrorist cooperation. Six member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, including China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, signed Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism 15 June 2001. The Standing Committee of National People's Congress ratified the convention in October 2001. In order to consolidate the achievements of anti-terrorism from the Shanghai Convention, China signed separately bilateral cooperation agreements on combating the three forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Based on these agreements, China will cooperate fully with the Central Asian states in fighting the three forces, at the request of Central Asian states. They are allowed to be present at the hearing according to the laws, put question to related party in litigation. China and the Central Asian states can conduct joint investigation on some cases or assist each other in the process of investigation. Related ministries and departments from both sides will conduct routine contacts and exchange information. Both sides will strengthen the cooperation and exchange in the field of police technology. Mongolia became the observer nation of the SCO in 2004, while as Iran, India and Pakistan received observer status in SCO in 2005. Therefore, the multilateral security mechanism of the organization becomes more mature, makes great contribution to the improvement of anti-terrorist situation and social stability in the Central Asian states.

Prospect of the Central Asian Security Situation

After the Kyrgyzstan "Tulip revolution" and Andijan incident in Uzbekistan, the United States changed its strategy of pushing democratic reform, focused on its economic influence and cultural influence. Russia wishes to maintain stability in Central Asia, as Russia has important security interests in Central Asia, Central Asia has direct influence on Southern Russia. China as an important neighbor of the Central Asian states and as a power, seeks to preserve stability in Central Asia. Shanghai Cooperation Organization plays an important role for the stability in the Central Asian states. Thereby, from the perspective of international factors, the world as well as major regional powers wish to maintain regional stability in Central Asia taking into account their security and strategic interests, in order to

bring security and stability in Central Asia.

At present, the Central Asian states have capability to keep the activities of the three forces within limit, ensure regional security and stability. At the same time, the tendency of international terrorism's penetration in Central Asia continues, as the soil that breeds terrorism and religious extremism exists in Central Asia. Some problems such as slow economic development and pauperization have not fully solved, and there is a long way to go for the anti-terrorist task in Central Asia. In addition, external environment is far from stable, as the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran is very complicated. The effect of Afghanistan situation on Central Asian security should not be underestimated, as the Taliban forces are still there in Afghanistan. If Iraq's situation continues to worsen, if the tension between Iran and the West heightens, possible war may break up, which will inevitably affect the stability and security in Central Asia. Russia and the United States continue to increase their influence in Central Asia. In the long term, this will be a test for Central Asia Security.

CHINA'S FIGHT AGAINST THE "THREE FORCES"

Counter-terrorism is a key issue which has become the common concern of the international community. China is one of the countries suffering from terrorism, so China has been sparing no effort to cooperate with other countries in fighting against terrorism for the sake of effectively keeping terrorism at bay.

Changes of the "Eastern Turkistan" Separatist Forces

In the aftermath of the 9/11 incident, China, by taking advantage of the positive development in the international community characterized by greater efforts to fight against terrorists, succeeded its efforts to integrate in the fight against the "Eastern Turkistan" terrorists into the international counter-terrorism effort. Moreover, China's efforts to expose, by a variety of means, the true face of the "Eastern Turkistan" terrorists have been effective. On the other hand, China closely cooperated with the international counter-terrorism forces and urged the UN Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) to pass a resolution in which the *Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement* (ETIM) was added to the list of banned terrorist groups. At the same time, China substantially strengthened its efforts to develop its friendly cooperative relations with some countries in

South Asia and West Asia, thus significantly reducing the living space and scope of action of overseas "Eastern Turkistan" forces and resulting in the internal organizational confusion and differentiation of the "Eastern Turkistan" forces.

Within the "Eastern Turkistan" forces, their internal divisions have become evident: the political influence of the so-called "violent" faction, which advocates taking violent actions, is constantly on the decline while the influence of the so-called "moderate" faction, which advocates fighting in a "non-violent" way is gradually on the increase. ETIM is the representative force of the "violent" faction, but its influence is weakening. Currently, the mainstream of the "Eastern Turkistan" forces is undergoing a strategic adjustment, i.e., giving up using violence in their struggle and pushing the issue of "Eastern Turkistan" to develop along the path of politicization, internationalization and coalition. Moreover, the "Eastern Turkistan" forces are adopting different means in their attempt to have an internal integration and elect an accepted leader to establish a unified organization which will have greater influence. Under the banner of fighting for "human rights" and "national self-determination", they attempt to achieve the goal of splitting Xinjiang from China and establishing the state of "Eastern Turkistan" by non-violent means. This shows that, although the "Eastern Turkistan" forces are using different means, their goal remains the same.

Moreover, during 2001 and 2003, a consensus in thinking was seen to be in place among "Eastern Turkistan" groups in different overseas places. In terms of organization, the *Eastern Turkistan Uyghur Congress* was established in order to boost the internationalization of the issue of "Eastern Turkistan". On 18 April 2004, the two major groups of the "Eastern Turkistan", *Eastern Turkistan National Congress* and *World Uyghur Youth Congress*, held a conference in Munich, Germany and established the *World Uyghur Congress* (WUC). In this conference, the separatists replaced the sensitive phrase of "Eastern Turkistan" with the word "Uyghur" and changed the goal from striving for the full independence and freedom of the "Eastern Turkistan" to striving for the democracy, human rights and the right of self-determination of Uyghurs in the whole world. Moreover, such contents as practicing the separation of church and state and opposing religious extremism were added. It is very clear that this was meant to cater to Western anti-China forces, so it is more deceptive now. US-based *Eastern Turkistan National Liberation Center* actually established a so-called *Eastern Turkistan Exile Government*. On the one hand, it strives

for the independence of the “Eastern Turkistan” by all means; on the other hand, it contends the leadership of splitting Xinjiang from China with the *World Uyghur Congress*. What is noteworthy is that this is the first exile government established by the “Eastern Turkistan” forces outside of the Chinese territories, indicating a significant step on the path of politicization, coalition and internationalization.

Impact of the “Three Forces” on China and China’s Countermeasures

The impact of the “three forces” on China is mainly evident in the following respects:

1. The threat posed by international terror forces to China’s security cannot be underestimated. After the 9/11 incident, the international community strengthened counter-terrorism cooperation and international terror forces were attacked. However, the pattern in which the area in China’s periphery is characterized by the high incidence of terror activities, has not fundamentally changed. The Afghan-Pakistan-Central Asia-South Asia region is still one of the areas where international terror activities are rampant.
2. With China’s increasing opening up to the outside world and Chinese enterprises’ implementation of the “go-out” strategy, China will definitely experience bigger overseas risks in the future. How to protect those Chinese people living and working overseas from being physically harmed and keep their property safe has become a very big challenge, which has to be taken seriously.
3. The United States has been practicing double standard in respect of counter-terrorism, that is, it opposes terrorism targeted at the United States, but it tolerates, acquiesces and even gives loose rein to other terrorist groups, thus making China’s effort to fight against the “three forces” more difficult.
4. The development trend of politics in Central Asian countries has a direct bearing on the stability of Xinjiang region of China. Central Asia is in the vicinity of Xinjiang, China, and it also serves as an important security barrier for the western region of China. The number of “Eastern Turkistan” separatists is comparatively large in Central Asia, and they are well established in that region. By taking advantage of the special geographical location of Central Asia, they are infiltrating into Xinjiang, thus posing threat

to Xinjiang's security and stability. Therefore, Central Asia is the outpost of China's fight against the "Eastern Turkistan" forces. With the intensification of the contention among great powers, unstable and uncertain factors in the development of situation in Central Asian countries will further increase, thus having a direct impact on the stability and security of Xinjiang.

5. The Islamic extremists continue to pose great threat to China's stability and security. In recent years, the Wahabi School of Islam has gain strongholds and developed in Xinjiang, and the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* have been secretly developing itself in Xinjiang and carrying out underground activities. All these have posed threats to Xinjiang's stability. If a new wave of religious extremist movement occurs in Central and West Asia regions, it will no doubt find its way into China, thus putting the stability of Xinjiang at great risk.
6. The "Eastern Turkistan" forces are evil forces which advocate terrorism, extremism and separatism. In the fight against the "Eastern Turkistan" forces, we have to properly deal with the relations between these three factors. Terror is the means, and religion is the carrier and separation is the goal.

Responding to the influence of the "three forces", the Chinese government has been taking a range of measures to contain them.

- 1. To properly deal with issues related to nationality and religion:** On the one hand, religion has become the cover of the "Eastern Turkistan" forces in their efforts to split Xinjiang from China and resort to violence. On the other hand, religion can be guided to serve as a positive factor in counter violence, counter separation and maintain social stability. China is vigorously promoting the mutual respect, dialogue and communication between different civilizations and advocating "a harmonious world". We not only need to conduct religious exchanges with other countries in a planned way, but also guard against overseas religious extremists' infiltration into China. Freedom of religious belief of minority groups in border areas should be respected, and a distinction has to be made between freedom of religious belief and the three forces. Advanced culture should be used to play a guiding role so as to promote social development, national progress and the stability of the border areas. Freedom of religious belief is

essentially different from the three forces. Freedom of religious belief is one of the rights of citizens; however, the advocates of the three forces all have their own "faith" and philosophical strongholds, and they are subject to strictly organized institutions which aim to overthrow the national government and splitting Xinjiang from China so as to establish an independent state of their own.

- 2. Economic development is the most important task for China** in mind, besides disseminating science and developing cultural education, China is developing the economy so as to lift the people in border areas out of the backwardness and ignorance, thus improving the living standards of people in border areas as much as possible. The occurrence of the three forces has deep historical reasons, but this is largely due to their low living standards which make them wrongly believe that "everything can be changed as long as independence is achieved." Therefore, military attacks alone will not achieve our genuine goal. If we want to eradicate the roots of these three forces, we have to start from the economic base and make efforts to improve the scientific and cultural quality of people in the border areas. Only in this way one can make the three kinds of forces become something like water without a source, thus creating a good social environment for China's frontier defense effort.
- 3. To strengthen cooperation with the international community:** On October 31, 2006, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in China ratified the cooperative agreement on cracking down terrorism, separatism and extremism signed by China and Turkmenistan. On the part of China, this is not the first time to sign such cooperative agreements in cracking down the three forces with Central and South Asian countries. China signed similar agreements with such countries as Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan before. Given the fact that the "three forces" are very active in Central Asia and for the sake of maintaining national security and stability, China deems it necessary to strengthen cooperation with Turkmenistan in the area of security and construct a legal mechanism between the two countries in cracking down the "three forces", thus necessitating a cooperative agreement with Turkmenistan to crack down terrorism, separatism and

extremism. At the same time, the friendly neighbor cooperative agreement signed between China and Afghanistan, which stipulates that the two parties will join hand in hand in cracking down terrorism, separatism and extremism on a bilateral and multilateral basis, was also ratified. According to the ratified agreement, China and Turkmenistan will cooperate with each other in cracking down the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism. As stipulated in the agreement, the two parties shall deem related actions listed in the agreement as crimes whose perpetrators should be extradited. The agreement also stipulates the scope of cooperation between the two parties, including the mutual provision of technologies and material assistance etc. China will continue to cooperate with countries in Central and South Asia to crack down the "three forces". China will also strengthen the construction of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to ensure that regional counter-terrorism institution of the SCO will play a substantial role in cracking down the "three forces", thus enabling it to become an important force in ensuring the peace, stability and development of the area. China will actively develop the friendly cooperative relations with countries in Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia to construct a security barrier in China's western region and a zone of friendly neighbors, thus reducing the living space and scope of action of the "Eastern Turkistan" forces.

4. **To strengthen Xinjiang's strategic role in countering terrorism:** Xinjiang, located in the northwest frontier of China, has a very complex peripheral environment. It can be said that Xinjiang is a place where international terror forces are concentrated. Xinjiang has to undertake a very heavy task of countering terrorism, so it is necessary to be well prepared for all contingencies. In Xinjiang, counter-terrorism is the most important thing. To start with, we need to inform the masses of the hazards terrorism has brought and will bring to the society and let the masses play an active role in the process of countering terrorism, thus removing the foothold of terrorists in Xinjiang. No one will provide terrorists with tools to facilitate their criminal activities. All departments concerned should strengthen coordination in managing explosives, guns and ammunition. In counter-terrorism, it is essential to rely on support and assistance

from the masses. In this sense, counter-terrorism is a task of all people in China. All departments in Xinjiang should strengthen the implementation of measures aimed at counter-terrorist activities and make active use of the coalition and coordination of international counter-terrorism forces.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO UYGHUR SEPARATISM IN XINJIANG

MAHESH RANJAN DEBATA

Since 1949 China's northwestern region of Xinjiang has been witnessing separatism by the Uyghur minorities, which turned into violent terrorist activities¹ in the post-Cold War period resulting in the loss of several innocent lives and public property. In the 1990s, as one document released by the Information Office of the State Council of China puts, "under the influence of extremism, separatism and international terrorism, part of the East Turkistan forces, inside and outside the Chinese territory, turned to splittist and sabotage activities with terrorists violence as the main means, even brazenly declaring that terrorist violence is the only way to achieve their aims."² Further, two major incidents in Xinjiang in the recent period, one in August 2008³ and the other in July 2009⁴, shook China.

Against this backdrop, this paper argues that the Uyghur efforts by any means, peaceful or violent, to create a separate homeland out of China have so far achieved nothing substantial, except the internationalization of their cause – an independent state out of China - by several Uyghur organizations⁵ across the globe through propaganda, lobbying, fund raising etc. This paper delineates the response by the international community, particularly the European Union, the USA, Russia, the Muslim world, Central Asian Republics and India, to the problem of Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang. Terrorism, not only in Xinjiang, but also in any part of the world, is considered as a common problem faced by the world community. The international community understands the strength and stature of China in the global corridor⁶ and hence does not want to meddle in its internal affairs. China, the second largest economy in the world, is a major investor with investments across the globe amounting to a whopping 219.5 billion US dollars in the last five years, out of which 56.5 billion

dollars were invested in 2010 alone.⁷

CHINA'S OVERSEAS INVESTMENT, JANUARY 2005 TO DECEMBER 2010

Countries	Investment (Billion US dollars)
United States of America	28.1
Arab World	37.1
Europe	34.8
Iran	15.1
Kazakhstan	11.4
Russia	6.7

Source: Derek Scissors, "China's Investment Overseas in 2010", 3 February 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/02/Chinas-investment-overseas-in-2010>

EUROPEAN UNION AND THE XINJIANG PROBLEM

The European Union (EU), representing 27 countries of Europe, has been taking little interest in the Uyghur problem in Xinjiang. The EU does not want to curry the disfavor of China, the major investor in Europe with an investment of 34.8 billion US dollars.⁸ And the 13th EU-China Summit in Brussels on 6 October 2010 is a testimony to this, where Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy and President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso expressed satisfaction that the bilateral relations had strengthened even during the crisis situation. Further, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975, the two sides expressed their commitment to open a new phase in the EU-China relations, by advancing their comprehensive strategic partnership in a spirit of equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit.⁹ The EU expressed its strong concern over the Urumqi riots in July 2009. EU deplored the loss of life and expressed its sympathy with the families of the victims. The EU called for restraint on all sides and for the situation to be resolved peacefully.¹⁰ However, the EU did not utter a single word against the Chinese action against Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Even Germany, an important member of the EU and home to over 1,000 Uyghurs and their global face, *World Uyghur Congress*¹¹, does not want to incur the wrath of Chinese authorities on the issue of Uyghurs. It is crystal clear from the fact that Germany does not show any interest to resettle the Uyghur detainees at Guantanamo Bay despite several requests made by the USA. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

expressed concern that taking the Uyghurs would cause a diplomatic spat with China, which considers these men to be terrorists and has been demanding their extradition. In May 2009, a senior German Foreign Ministry official, Reinhard Silberberg intimated the US administration about Germany's reservations during his visit to Washington. He stated that Germany could accept Uyghur detainees only if other European countries also take some of them. He further stated that by this, at least China's anger would not only be focused on Germany. Berlin only wants to accept some of the nine Uyghurs and would like to take prisoners of other nationalities in addition, he added.¹² Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder issued a note of warning against accepting the Uyghurs and said that such a decision would put a serious strain on Germany's relations with China.¹³

AMERICAN RESPONSE TO UYGHUR SEPARATISM

The United States has distinct policies towards all the major territorial or ethnic conflicts in China, except for the conflict in Xinjiang.¹⁴ However, there is passive support in the USA for the Uyghurs and their movement for a separate motherland out of China. Two Uyghur organizations in USA, one is the *Uyghur American Association (UAA)*¹⁵ and the other is *The Government in Exile of East Turkistan Republic*,¹⁶ have been trying to promote the Uyghur movement. The National Endowment for Democracy¹⁷, an independent organization funded by the US Congress, supports the Uyghur Human Rights Project, which documents and disseminates information about Chinese excesses against Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Radio Free Asia¹⁸ broadcasts in Uyghur language one hour everyday. Besides, the *International Religious Freedom Report*¹⁹ published under the aegis of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of the US Department of State brings about the stories of religious repression in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The First International Conference of the Allied Committee of the Peoples of Eastern Turkestan, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia was held at the Columbia University in New York on 16 October 1998. Some officials of the Bill Clinton administration and some pro-Dalai Lama members of the US Congress were amongst the 100 delegates. Rinchen Darlo, the New York representative of the Dalai Lama, opened the conference and read out messages from the Dalai Lama and late Isa Yusuf Alptekin. Erkin Alptekin, son of the Late Isa Yusuf Alptekin, and the first Chairman of the

Allied Committee urged the US government to put pressure on the Chinese government for defusing tensions in Xinjiang, besides calling upon the UN to send a fact-finding mission to Xinjiang.²⁰

As a sympathetic gesture towards the Uyghurs, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice helped secure the release of Uyghur leader Rebiya Kadeer in March 2005. Rebiya Kadeer was allowed to give her testimony before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC) of the US Department of State on 27 April 2005 in Washington DC, where the Representative of CHRC, Susan O' Sullivan was present, besides the representatives of two premier human rights organisations - *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch*.²¹

However, the USA does not actively support the cause of Uyghurs, particularly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Since both the US and China face the common challenge of international terrorism, they are now strengthening their resolve to fight this menace. Realizing the importance of China as a global power with astounding economic development and military might, the US is holding its hands out for a meaningful partnership with the communist giant. At the leaders' meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Shanghai on 21 October 2001, US President George Bush described China as an important partner in the global coalition against terrorism.²² The Law Enforcement Cooperation signed between the US and China on 6 December 2001 paved the way for setting up a Legal Attache office of the US intelligence agency Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at the US embassy in Beijing. Besides, they have agreed to hold counter-terrorism consultations semi-annually and for setting up a Financial Counter-Terrorism Working Group. This entailed coordination on intelligence sharing, law enforcement liaison and monitoring of financial networks.²³ To further boost the Chinese standpoint against separatism, extremism and terrorism, the APEC leaders sent a clear and strong message on the collective resolve of the Asia-Pacific community to counter terrorism.²⁴

As part of its cooperation with China against international terrorism, the US government not only labelled the separatist Uyghur cadres of *East Turkistan Islamic Movement* (ETIM) and the *Home of East Turkistan Youth*²⁵ as terrorists, but also urged the UN to designate ETIM as a terrorist organization under UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 and 1390.²⁶ Top US officials issued several statements in this regard. On 26 August 2002, Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage and State Department Spokesman, Richard Boucher announced that the US had listed the ETIM

as a terrorist organisation. Armitage said that the ETIM had committed acts of violence against unarmed civilians without any regard for who was hurt. Boucher designated the ETIM as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224²⁷ and ordered the freezing of its assets. Francis Taylor, State Department Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism, confirmed on 25 September 2002 in Washington that Uyghurs from Xinjiang, who were captured by the US military in Afghanistan and then sent to Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba, are involved in terrorist activities of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Further on 10 October 2002, US State Department Spokesperson, Philip Reeker dubbed the ETIM as a violent group believed to be behind numerous acts of terrorism in China including bombings of buses, movie theatres, department stores, markets and hotels and assassinations and arsons.²⁸ A report by the Rand Corporation in 2004 urged a programme of security management with China that includes counterterrorism as its major component.²⁹

The issue of resettlement of Uyghur detainees at Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba has highlighted the US ambivalence towards the Uyghur cause. Both the Barrack Obama administration and that of George W. Bush have spent months trying to find homes for the Uyghur detainees. Though Albania, Bermuda and Palau have agreed to receive the Uyghur detainees, other countries like Germany have fallen through. Even the Obama administration gave up on the idea of resettling the Uyghur detainees in the US. Many US policy makers are also against the resettlement of Uyghur detainees in the US. Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, described the Uyghur detainees at Guantanamo Bay as "trained mass killers instructed by the same terrorists (Al Qaeda) responsible for killing 3,000 Americans on 11 September 2001."³⁰

However, Uyghurs have not lost all hopes. Now that the US military has established its presence in Central Asia, Uyghurs believe that the US will not hesitate to lend unstinted support similar to that given to Tibetans in the past - military training and arms transfers that assisted Tibetans against Chinese in Tibet. Uyghurs hope for a Kosovo-style humanitarian intervention by a US-led military force into Xinjiang. Even pro-Uyghur forces urge the US government not to sacrifice Uyghur human rights in its cooperation with Beijing in the war on terrorism.³¹

RUSSIA'S RESPONSE TO UYGHUR SEPARATISM

During the 20th century, the USSR had always served as a refuge for Uyghurs as they fled Chinese rule. This accounts for the approximately 500,000 people in the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia, which till 1991 was under the rule of former Soviet Union. Today, Russia is less sympathetic and more concerned that the Uyghur emigres who were hosted during the Soviet period had become increasingly Islamicized and radicalized by forces from outside the region during the 1990s. During a meeting on the fringes of the APEC Summit in 2001, Jiang and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed that "Chechnya and East Turkestan terrorist activities are part of international terrorism."³² Russia as a prominent member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation denounces separatism, extremism and terrorism in any part of the world. Russia, which had a bitter relationship with China during the Cold War period, now seeks to maintain friendly relationship with China. After the Urumqi riots in July 2009, Russia came out with a statement confirming that it "views the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China and considers that events there are purely the internal affair of China."³³ Russian Foreign Ministry expressed hope that the actions, taken by the Chinese authorities within the bounds of the law to support order in Xinjiang will allow the situation to be swiftly normalised.³⁴

MUSLIM WORLD'S STAND ON THE UYGHUR ISSUE

In spite of a heightened awareness of the Uyghur predicament, most Muslim countries, particularly that of Arab countries in the Middle East with a vital stake in maintaining friendly relations with China, have observed silence, which reflects the importance of China as a key regional and global actor. For many Middle East countries, China is a crucial source for investment and a reliable customer of their natural resources, particularly oil and gas.³⁵ The Arab world is a beneficiary of a huge Chinese investment of 37.1 billion US dollars in the recent years.

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations having membership of 57 Muslim countries spread over four continents, has not been so vocal about the Uyghur freedom movement. As the collective voice of the Muslim world, it is always believed that the OIC would look after the needs and interests of the Muslims of the world, including the Uyghurs.

But, it has not done anything substantial in promoting the Uyghur cause. Even during the Urumqi riots in July 2009 the OIC condemned the use of “disproportionate” force by China against the Uyghurs and called upon China for an “honest” inquiry into the incidents.³⁶ It seems, like any other country or organization, the OIC too understands the importance of China in the present day world and hence does not intend to confront China by raising the Uyghur issue.

A delegation of the *Muslim World League* (MWL)³⁷, comprising scholars and officials from Sudan, Indonesia, Jordan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kuwait, Turkey and the Arab League, visited mosques in Kashghar and Urumqi and some Islamic scripture schools in Xinjiang, under the leadership of its Secretary General, Abdullah bin Abdulmohsen Al-Turki.³⁸ However, they did not utter a single word about the Uyghurs, their problem, their freedom movement and even about the Chinese repression in Xinjiang as often alleged by the Uyghurs.

The most striking fact is that even key Muslim countries, including Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim state, tried to distance themselves from any association with the Uyghur cause. A statement issued by the Indonesian Ambassador to China H. E. Sudrajat on 12 July 2009, just a week after the Urumqi riots in Xinjiang, illustrates this trend: “What happened in Xinjiang is China’s internal affair. We respect China’s sovereignty over the region and will never meddle in the problem.”³⁹ This clearly shows that the Islamic world does not want to incur the displeasure of China by raising the Uyghur issue.

Turkey’s Response to Uyghur Problem in Xinjiang

Turkey, which has long been the asylum ground for the Uyghur exiles from Xinjiang, is an important cog when there is discussion on the Uyghur problem. It not only gave asylum to its Turkic speaking cousins from Xinjiang, but also patronized them and tried to highlight their cause at the international fora. Uyghur leader, late Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who sought asylum in Turkey just after China’s independence in 1949, was accorded state patronage to carry out pro-independence East Turkistan movement from the Turkish soil. Turkish President Turgut Ozal and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel extended support for the independence of the ancient homeland of the Turkic people. They not only dreamt of a Turkic homeland stretching from the Balkans to the Great Wall of China to the east of Xinjiang, but also tried to promote this goal. Under their inspiration, Isa Yusuf Alptekin led the East Turkistan delegation at the World Turkic

Conference, which was organised by the Turkish government on 20-23 March 1993 in Antalya, Turkey. During the Conference, Isa Yusuf Alptekin was able to garner support from Turkish President Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel and Vice Premier Erdal Inonu to liberate Xinjiang from Chinese suzerainty. The Conference denounced Chinese atrocities against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang.⁴⁰

Isa Yusuf Alptekin's commitment to pan-Turkism earned him accolades on personal basis and also compelled the Turkish authorities to encourage and advance the Uyghur cause. Isa was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Selchuk University in 1994. A park was named after Isa Yusuf Alptekin in the high profile Sultanahmet (Blue Mosque) section of Istanbul. Until the mid-1990s, Turkey's mainstream political parties sympathized with the Uyghurs, besides being personally committed to Isa Yusuf Alptekin, and hoped to restore Turkish influence in the region. During his visit to Turkish capital Ankara in 1994, the Chairman of the Turkish Parliament and leaders of several political parties in Turkey - Chairmen of the *Motherland Party* and the *Welfare Party* and Bulent Ecevit, the Chairman of the *Democratic Social Party* - accorded him a ceremonial welcome. Even the Turkish National Television telecast live the funeral ceremony of Isa Yusuf Alptekin on 17 December 1995.⁴¹

However, after Isa Yusuf Alptekin's death, Turkey's pro-Uyghur stand and support for Uyghur activism underwent a change. Ankara chose to come closer to Beijing, sidelining the Uyghur issue, and a new era of Sino-Turkish relationship ushered in, which is backed by increased trade and growing military collaboration between the two countries. China's veiled threat of providing support to Kurdish nationalism⁴² could be a factor which compelled Turkey to change its earlier stand on Uyghurs and to make a favourable tilt towards China.

Turkey, as part of its state policy, became indifferent to the Uyghur cause. Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz sent a confidential circular order in 1998 to the Turkish government officials instructing them not to participate in any activities organized by Turkey based East Turkistan and Uyghur organisations. In that order, Yilmaz emphasized that the Uyghur community's activities might affect Turkish-Chinese relations.⁴³ In February 1999, Yilmaz while declaring Xinjiang as an integral part of China, stated that expatriate activities were stumbling blocks on the path of growing Sino-Turkish relations.⁴⁴ He even exerted pressure on an unidentified number of Uyghurs in Turkey in the early 2000s.⁴⁵ And now Turkey has forged a military cooperation with China.⁴⁶ Both the countries

have cooperated on counter-terrorism, especially during the time of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.⁴⁷ Since 2003, the Turkish security forces have been very vigilant about Al Qaeda activities and their possible connections with Uyghurs. Even one Turkish security official informed that “some of the recent immigrants, particularly Uyghurs and Chechens, who have spent some time in Afghanistan, then migrated to Turkey have had contacts with the Al Qaeda and links with local Al Qaeda cells in Turkey.”⁴⁸

Turkey’s Reactions to Urumqi Riots, July 2009

However, the ethnic riots in Urumqi on 5 July 2009 and the subsequent military crackdown by the Chinese security forces in Xinjiang prompted Turkey to change its pro-Chinese stand and sympathized with Uyghurs. Even one year after the Urumqi riots, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, while speaking at a press conference on 10 July 2010, not only described Chinese action against the Uyghurs as “nearly genocide”, but also threatened to raise the issue at the G-8 Summit.⁴⁹ Since Turkey is a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, the issue assumed much significance. Even Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan asked Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to take stock of the situation and keep him informed. As a Special Envoy of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish State Minister Zafer Caglayan visited China on 31 August 2009, the first Turkish Minister to visit China after riots in Urumqi in July 2009.⁵⁰ The Turkish Foreign Ministry even issued a statement emphasizing Ankara’s concerns over the Chinese actions in Xinjiang.⁵¹

Political leaders from various mainstream parties in Turkey expressed solidarity with the Uyghurs and vehemently criticized Chinese action against Uyghurs. The *Nationalist Great Union Party* (BBP) leader, Yalcin Topcu urged the Turkish government to reconsider its relations with China and requested the Parliament to condemn the Chinese actions against Uyghurs. As many as 500 members of the nationalist *Alperen Ocaklari* group marched to the Chinese Consulate in Istanbul to lodge protest against Chinese action. The leader of the group appealed to the protesters to boycott Chinese commercial products. Even the Turkish Trade Minister, Nihat Ergun gave a clarion call to his fellow countrymen to boycott Chinese goods. The Turkish Education Personnel Union also called up on the government to act and asked Prime Minister Erdogan to communicate their concerns to Chinese authorities.⁵² Devlet Bahçeli the leader of the *Nationalist Action Party* (MHP) criticized the Turkish government for not

summoning the Chinese ambassador to the foreign ministry to protest against, what he described, “massacre against the Uyghurs.”⁵³

Turkish media went one step ahead and did not hesitate to air its view condemning the Urumqi attacks. The *Hurriyet* alleged that the Chinese security agencies were responsible for the death of Uyghurs. The pro-government daily *Yeni Safak* accused the Han Chinese of burning Uyghur shops and dubbed the response by the international community against the Chinese government as inadequate.⁵⁴

Though the pro-government Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (MUSIAD) in its statement called upon Turkish investors to refrain from doing business with China, the Turkish business community is eager to invest in China. The Vice Chairman of the Turkey-China Business Council, Yavuz Onay criticized the protests against China and accused Uyghurs of being terrorists.⁵⁵ Since China is an important export market for Turkish companies, it is believed that business with China can create hundreds of thousands of jobs all across Turkey. Turkish business groups identified textiles, leather goods, telecommunications, contracting services, agro-industries and spare parts production as suitable sectors for investment or joint ventures. During President Abdullah Gul’s recent official visit to China, eight Turkish companies signed contracts worth 3 billion US dollars.⁵⁶

Amidst ‘sometimes strong’ and ‘sometimes strained’ Sino-Turkish relationship, Uyghur pleas for greater recognition are likely to remain a major cause of concern. Yet, the Turkish government seems determined not to let the Xinjiang issue spoil growing economic and political ties. The recent statement by the Turkish Foreign Ministry could be a pointer in this regard. On 6 July 2010, just a day after the first anniversary of the Urumqi riots, the Turkish Foreign Ministry stated that: “It is our expectation that the persons who are responsible for these incidents will be found as soon as possible and brought to justice. We believe that the necessary measures will be taken to prevent this kind of incident in the future in China, a country on the way to becoming more stable and prosperous. We extend our condolences to the people of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in particular and to the people of China in general, to the families of those who lost their lives and wish speedy recovery to those who were injured”.⁵⁷

Iran’s Stand on Xinjiang

Following the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1991, Iran’s active interests in Central Asia made China to fear that Iran’s active interest

in Central Asia could, directly or indirectly, affect the situation in its Xinjiang region. However, Iran has not been evincing keen interest over the issue of Uyghur movement in Xinjiang. May be the Shia faith dominated Iran does not bother about the Sunni Uyghurs or Iran does not want to poke its nose in the internal matters of China. Though Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Xinjiang in September 1992 had raised many eyebrows and even led many Uyghurs to believe that their fight for a separate homeland out of China could now be realized with Iran's support, the Iranian leader's visit focused only on meaningful Sino-Iranian relations. Rafsanjani met the regional Governor of Xinjiang, Tomur Dawamut and discussed economic, commercial, scientific and technological and cultural exchanges, including talks on Iran-Xinjiang projects. Further, Iran has further stayed away from the controversial Xinjiang issue, while appreciating China's role in the resolution of the crisis over Iran's nuclear enrichment programme.

However, there is some degree of tension between Beijing and Tehran over China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang province, particularly after the July 2009 riots in Urumqi. Tehran sided with its Muslim brethren in Xinjiang. On 14 July 2009, Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani called for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and other international institutions to intervene on behalf of the Uyghurs. He also added: "We just thought that only the bullying West violates Muslims' rights and deprive them of their basic rights, but reports from China indicate that in that part of the world the unprotected Muslims are being mercilessly suppressed by yesterday's communist China and today's capitalist China."⁵⁸ When Iran's Foreign Ministry expressed support for "the rights of Chinese Muslims," a Chinese diplomat in Tehran issued a counter-statement saying that the Xinjiang riots were encouraged by foreign separatist groups and were not connected to religious or ethnic issues, both Iran and China sought to defuse tensions. Later, an Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman clarified saying that Tehran balanced its concern for Muslims with bilateral relations with China.⁵⁹ Further, during a telephonic conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi on 12 July 2009, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki took a moderate stand on the issue stating that the meddling of "Western governments" was to blame for the crisis in Xinjiang, without mincing a single word against the Chinese authorities.⁶⁰

Pakistan's Viewpoint on the Uyghur Problem

Pakistan has not only been accused of imparting training, aiding and abetting the Uyghur separatists, but has also been dubbed as the major source of Islamic literature swarming Xinjiang, which has resulted in the radicalization of Uyghurs. However, the Pakistani government has maintained a sympathetic, yet never openly friendly, posture toward the Uyghurs from the earliest stages of Pakistan's relationship with China. No Pakistani government official has ever met publicly with Uyghur leaders or promoted their cause.⁶¹ But, since the late 1990s, Pakistan, as a true all weather friend of China, has taken stern measures like closing the Uyghur settlements in Pakistan, arresting and deporting Uyghurs and killing Uyghur terrorist suspects. On 5 May 1997, Pakistan handed over to the Chinese authorities 12 Uyghurs, who were wanted in connection with bomb explosions in Xinjiang. They had entered the Gilgit area and got enrolled in the local *madrassas*.⁶² In December 2000, Pakistan army closed two Uyghur religious seminaries called Kashgarabad and Hotanabad near Rawalpindi that had for decades provided shelter to Uyghur immigrants in Pakistan. Islamabad also put pressure on religious leaders running *madrasas* not to accept any Uyghurs. During his visit to China in 2001, Pakistan's President, General Pervez Musharraf urged all Chinese Muslims, especially Uyghurs, to be patriotic, to shun violence, and to "work for the good of China." General Musharraf assured the top Chinese leadership that "Pakistan would wholeheartedly support Chinese action to strike against the East Turkistan terrorist forces."⁶³ During a visit to China in November 2003, General Musharraf reportedly told Chinese President Hu Jintao that Pakistan would never allow anyone, including the terrorist forces of East Turkistan, to use Pakistani territory for carrying out anti-China activities. As a goodwill gesture, Pakistani security forces killed the *East Turkistan Islamic Movement* (ETIM) Chief, Hassan Mahsum on 2 October 2003 during a military operation in South Waziristan.⁶⁴

A Pakistan's Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Abdul Basit, in a recent interview with Xinhua said that "we are committed not to allow any element in Pakistan to work against the interests of China because China's interests are Pakistan's interests. We cannot allow any activity that will damage China's interests." Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, in a statement issued shortly after the Urumqi riot in July 2009, applauded the efforts of the Chinese leadership to promote the concept of harmony both at home,

in Asia and the rest of the world.⁶⁵

Afghanistan and the Xinjiang Problem

After Afghan support for Islamic militants in Xinjiang was confirmed, Chinese authorities did not hesitate to make peace with Taliban. The Chinese intention was very clear – to keep the Uyghur militants at arm's length and to secure peace and stability in Xinjiang. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) concluded an agreement with Taliban at the end of 1998.⁶⁶

Afghanistan's Taliban government after usurping power in 1998 did not initially support the Uyghurs in achieving their dream of a separate state out of China. The Taliban promised not to "provide any training to Chinese Muslims in China's Xinjiang province and that it will assist the Chinese authorities maintain places of worship and *madrassas* as in China".⁶⁷ On 26 July 1998, Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan assured a Chinese delegation that no groups would be allowed to operate against China from the territory of Afghanistan.

After the Hamid Karzai government took over power in Afghanistan after the ouster of the Taliban by the Coalition Forces led by the USA, China was one of the first countries to pledge donations for the reconstruction process of the war torn country. At a Conference on "Reconstruction Aid to Afghanistan" in Tokyo, on 21 January 2002, China pledged 1 million US dollar, in addition to humanitarian goods worth 3.6 million US dollars. In 2003, China offered 47 million US dollars and in 2004, 15 million US dollars.⁶⁸ Afghanistan urged the UN to designate ETIM under UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 and 1390 besides freezing its assets.⁶⁹ Afghanistan kept its silence over the Urumqi riots in July 2009.

THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS AND THE ISSUE OF XINJIANG

Ever since their independence in 1991, the five Central Asian Republics, which have a religious, language, historical and racial affinity with the Uyghurs, have so far endorsed China's position in Xinjiang. These republics together have the largest Uyghur population outside China's Xinjiang province.

UYGHUR POPULATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

Country	Uyghur Population
Kazakhstan	372,000
Kyrgyzstan	53,000
Uzbekistan	50,000
Turkmenistan	2,100
Tajikistan	800
Total	477,900

Source: Tian Guang and Mahesh Ranjan Debata, "Identity and Mobilization in Transnational Societies: A Case Study of Uyghur Diasporic Nationalism", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2010, p. 66

Like the countries in the Middle East and other major Muslim countries such as Indonesia, the Central Asian Republics are firm in their support for China on the issue of Uyghurs.⁷⁰ In addition to prioritizing their growing economic and diplomatic relations with China, the Central Asian Republics fear that their own Uyghur citizens may one day follow in the footsteps of their kith and kin in China and agitate for more rights. It is a fact that the Uyghur demand for a separate state was intensified after the emergence of five independent republics of Central Asia. Some Uyghur leaders demanded that if small states, both area and population wise, like the Central Asian Republics can achieve independence, then why cannot the Uyghurs, who have a big area like Xinjiang, with a population of over 11 million worldwide (10 million in Xinjiang and 1 million in other parts of the world) and huge natural resources including oil, natural gas and minerals, be independent. This notion had made the leadership in Central Asia to fear that the Uyghurs of Central Asia might get inspiration from this and demand separate statehood.

Kazakhstan's Position on Uyghurs

Kazakhstan, which has the second largest population of Uyghurs in the world after the Xinjiang region, has been following a cautious approach on the sensitive issue of Uyghur separatism. Out of the total number of Uyghurs living in Central Asia, over seventy per cent (approximately 372,000) live in Kazakhstan alone, mostly in Almaty, Zhambyl and southern Kazakhstan region. Uyghurs in the Almaty region on numerous occasions have sought to draw attention of the Kazakh government to the Chinese persecution of Uyghurs. But Astana seems to put long-term

economic partnership with China in priority as against the protection of ethnic minorities in the neighboring country.⁷¹ The waning interest of Kazakh authorities in the plight of Chinese Uyghurs is obvious as Kazakhstan, like any other country, wants to pursue its own interests and does not want to confront a big power like China.

Kazakhstan is China's largest trading partner in Central Asia and also the largest recipient of Chinese investment (11.4 billion US dollars) in the region. Kazakhstan finds China important and huge market for its raw materials, energy resources (especially natural gas and crude oils), minerals etc. Kazakhstan needs Chinese economic assistance and policy guidance for its domestic economic growth. So, Kazakh authorities give priority to the national interest (Kazakhstan's economic prosperity) than the interest of a particular people (Uyghurs), hence paying little regard to the Uyghur movement.

Besides, Kazakhstan harbours the same fear as other Central Asian Republics do have – demand by Uyghurs for separate homeland in Central Asia on the line of East Turkestan. So, Kazakh government wants to avert any possible ethnic extremism or demand from Uyghurs for a separate nation. There is also a valid Kazakh concern for the substantial number of Kazakh minorities living in Xinjiang. Kazakhstan feels, support of any kind provided to Uyghurs from the Kazakh side will boomerang, that means over 1 million Kazakhs living in Xinjiang will have to face the wrath of the Chinese authorities.

Kyrgyzstan and the Xinjiang Issue

Kyrgyzstan has the second largest population of Uyghurs in Central Asia after the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the official statistics in 1999, there were 46,700 Uyghurs in Kyrgyzstan, but unofficial sources say that the total may be about 100,000. Uyghurs are on the fifth place after the Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian and Dungan (Hui) minorities in Kyrgyzstan.⁷² But, Bishkek has not been so supportive of the Uyghurs at all. *Ittipak*, which is under the close scrutiny of the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry, was officially warned by the Kyrgyz government to avoid undermining Kyrgyzstan's relations with China.

Demonstrations against Beijing's actions against Uyghurs in Xinjiang took place in Bishkek in July 2009 just after the Urumqi riots, but received little attention from the government as well as the local media.

On 10 August 2010, Kyrgyz authorities detained Dilmurat Akbarov, the leader of the *Ittipak* Uyghur society, and his deputy Jamaldin Nasyrov,

who were organizing demonstrations calling for an independent investigation into the Urumqi riots in July 2009.⁷³ According to the Kyrgyz authorities, approximately 500 people participated in the event in Bishkek.

Kyrgyzstan considers Uyghur cadres of *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU) to be mercenaries and terrorists. Following orders of the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry, the Kyrgyz security forces raided the hideout of *East Turkestan Liberation Organization* (ETLO)⁷⁴ and recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunitions. Besides, they found evidence of the ETLO's hand in the assassination of *Ittipak*⁷⁵ leader Nigmat Bazakov in March 2000. Bazakov had resisted a plan to assassinate Chinese Security Ministry officials visiting Bishkek. Kyrgyz authorities handed over to Beijing the two Uyghurs in connection with the assassination of a Chinese diplomat in Bishkek in June 2002. Kyrgyzstan has been exchanging views with China on cracking down on the Uyghur separatist forces, besides conducting joint military exercises since October 2002 involving several hundred troops and dozens of armoured vehicles and helicopters aimed at combating cross-border terrorist activities. Kyrgyzstan demanded the enlisting of the *East Turkestan Islamic Movement* (ETIM) as a terrorist organization and freezing of its assets.⁷⁶ A top advisor to former Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev issued an order in December 2004 stopping a Uyghur Congress being organized at the main state opera theatre.⁷⁷

Uzbekistan Approach towards Uyghur Problem in Xinjiang

Uzbekistan, which has a Uyghur population of 50,000, has not shown any sympathy towards Uyghur cause for a separate nation. The Uzbek government has prohibited pro-Uyghur and anti-Chinese messages in the state and any other media outlets. The Uzbek media refuses to publish papers which mention the political problems of the Uyghurs. Furthermore, the importing of books and newspapers and any other publications concerning East Turkestan, or Xinjiang, which are published in Turkey, Germany and other countries, is now prohibited. Hence, there is no publishing house in Uzbekistan that publishes literature in the Uyghur language. Only a short Uyghur service is allowed on Uzbek Radio and is strictly controlled. Actually the Uyghur radio service was created in 1947 and used as a tool for anti-China propaganda, but the situation has changed. The current Uyghur radio service is the continuation of that old service but it operates under a very different mandate. Anything about Uyghur human rights issues or political problems in East Turkestan, or Xinjiang, is not allowed to be broadcast.⁷⁸

On the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit meeting in Tashkent on 16 June 2010, Uzbek President Islam Karimov signed a joint statement with Chinese President Hu Jintao, which states that, "China and Uzbekistan agreed that terrorism, separatism, and extremism still pose a major threat to regional security and stability. China and Uzbekistan will, in accordance with Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreement on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and the China-Uzbekistan Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, further strengthen coordination and cooperation among relevant agencies of both countries and continue to adopt powerful measures to fight all forms of terrorism, including terrorism perpetrated by the East Turkestan terror groups. The two countries agreed that the crackdown on the terrorist forces of East Turkestan is an essential part of the international anti-terrorism campaign."⁷⁹ The republics of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are also not different from its Central Asian neighbours in their approach towards the Uyghur problem.

INDIA'S RESPONSE TO SEPARATISM IN XINJIANG

China eyed India with suspicion after some Uyghurs, including two top Uyghur leaders, Mohammad Amin Bughra and Isa Yusuf Alptekin, had left Xinjiang for the Indian State of Kashmir in 1949 following the Communist takeover of China. Since both Bughra and Alptekin were spearheading the Uyghur movement in Xinjiang, the Communist leadership in China suspected Indian patronage to these two Uyghur leaders. However, this was proved wrong after Bughra and Alptekin left for Turkey in 1950 without getting any patronage or help from India. Even today, the Uyghur separatists do not curry India's favour or sympathy for their cause – a separate Islamic republic exclusively for Uyghurs. India, having its own problems of separatism and terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, deplores any kind of separatist and terrorist violence not only in Kashmir or Xinjiang, but also anywhere across the globe.⁸⁰

The problem of separatism, religious extremism and terrorism faced by China in Xinjiang has certain similarities with that faced by India in the Punjab in the past and in the state of Jammu and Kashmir presently. The first similarity relates to the role of some members of the diaspora in fomenting terrorism. In India, Sikh terrorism in the Punjab was initially

started by some members of the Sikh diaspora in Canada, the USA, the UK and other Western countries, with support from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the USA's Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) during the Richard Nixon government, but it could never gather much support from amongst the Sikh population of Punjab. This facilitated the counter-terrorism operations by the Punjab Police. On the contrary, terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir was initially started by indigenous elements with the support of the Kashmiris in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), with involvement of the Kashmiri (essentially Mirpuri) diaspora in the West. In Xinjiang, the role of the Uyghur diaspora in the Central Asian Republics, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the West in fomenting terrorist violence and political destabilisation has been as considerable as in the case of the Sikh diaspora in the Indian Punjab.⁸¹ Just as in Jammu and Kashmir, in Xinjiang too, there are two distinct terrorist/extremist movements - one resorting to violence on ethnic grounds to assert the Uyghur ethnic identity against the perceived Han Chinese domination and the other using religious and pan-Islamic arguments to justify violence for the establishment of an independent Islamic State. While the ethnic separatist elements have been the beneficiaries of sympathy and support from the Dalai Lama's set-up and the Tibetan diaspora abroad, and the US, Taiwanese and Turkish intelligence agencies, the religious fundamentalist elements have been in receipt of support from the ISI-backed jihadi groups in Pakistan, the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front for Jihad.⁸²

Since India and China face a common challenge of international terrorism, both now join hands to fight this menace. The first India-China joint anti-terror military exercise, known as Hand-in-Hand, was held at Kunming in the Yunnan province of China from 19 to 27 December 2007, which involved 103 troops each from the armies of both countries.⁸³ Both the countries have further conducted joint military exercises in 2008 and 2010.

CONCLUSION

The Uyghur endeavor to carve out a separate state out of the People's Republic of China has found few takers, even no takers at some point of time. The world community does not at all support any kind of separatist activity and there is a clear cut consensus among its members against terrorism.

Inside Xinjiang, relations among the major Turkic groups are not so cordial. Local Kazakhs do not have fraternal ties with the Uyghurs and vice versa. Thus, there is hardly any hope of pan-Turkic solidarity among the Turkic Muslims within or outside Xinjiang. There is no support from domestic neighbours like Tibet and Inner Mongolia, where the local ethnic minority nationalities have been demanding their separate homelands. Unlike the Tibetans, Uyghurs have not so far benefitted from a well-defined U.S. policy supporting their political rights, autonomy and cultural identity.⁸⁴

The Tibetan supreme leader The Dalai Lama has been airing his views on East Turkestan movement. His message being read out at the First International Conference of the Allied Committee of the Peoples of Eastern Turkestan, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, which was held at the Columbia University in New York on 16 October 1998 describes that “our ties to the people of Eastern Turkestan are no less than our ties with Mongolia. Our three peoples are tied together by geography and history, and these days unfortunately by the Chinese occupation of our countries. During the last few years we have seen momentous changes come to the world. The Soviet empire has collapsed, and in its wake many formerly oppressed nations have regained their freedom and independence... In view of these changes, I remain optimistic that not too far in the future the true aspirations of the peoples of Eastern Turkestan, Inner Mongolia and Tibet will be fulfilled, and I am confident that the people of Eastern Turkestan, Inner Mongolia and Tibet will contribute to peace, prosperity and stability of not only China, but Asia as a whole.”⁸⁵ However, the present conciliatory stance of the Dalai Lama, who now demands economic and cultural autonomy of Tibet within China instead of the earlier demands of a separate homeland for Tibetans, has dealt a blow to the aspirations of Uyghurs. Amidst this situation, it is really difficult for the Uyghurs, who constitute just 1.5 per cent of the total population of China, to realize their goal – an independent East Turkistan.

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3. On 4 August 2008, just four days before the Beijing Olympics 2008, a terror

- strike in the Kashghar city of Xinjiang left 16 policemen dead (14 on the spot and 2 later) and 16 others injured.
4. On 5 July 2009, an ethnic riot in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi resulted in the death of 197 people and left over 1,600 people injured.
 5. See Mahesh Ranjan Debata, *China's Minorities: Ethnic Religious Separatism in China*, New Delhi: Pentagon, 2007, pp. 221-226.
 6. With a land mass spanning from Russia in the north to Vietnam and Thailand in the south, from India and Pakistan in the west to Korea and Japan in the east, China has the world's third biggest territory, with a total land area of 9.6 million sq. kms, next only to Russia and Canada. One out of five people in the world lives in China (1.2 billion people). China is also the second largest economy in the world after the USA. Any country desiring to compete in the global market cannot ignore the gigantic and increasingly prosperous Chinese market. Besides, China is a big military power with the largest army in the world.
 7. Derek Scissors, "China's Investment Overseas in 2010", 3 February 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/02/Chinas-investment-overseas-in-2010>
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 10. "Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union following developments in Xinjiang, China", Brussels: Council of European Union, 9 July 2009.
 11. The *World Uyghur Congress (WUC)*, which was established on 16 April 2004 in Munich, Germany, after the *East Turkestan National Congress* and the *World Uyghur Youth Congress* merged into one united organisation, is an international organisation that represents the collective interest of the Uyghur people both in East Turkestan and abroad. The main objective of WUC is to promote the right of the Uyghur people to determine the political future of East Turkestan. Rebiya Kadeer is the President of WUC now. For more details see World Uyghur Congress homepage, <http://www.uyghurcongress.org>
 12. "Fears of Angering China, German Foreign Minister Opposes Taking Uyghur Guantanamo Inmates", 18 May 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,625453,00.html>
 13. Ibid.
 14. USA has been taking interest in Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Tibet's importance in US policy began with its support for the Tibetan movement in the 1950s and 60s, and is now in the form of support for the Dalai Lama and his Government-in-Exile in India. Even a high-level post of Special Coordinator for Tibet was created at the State Department in 1997. Taiwan has a defence commitment from the US, and unofficial but substantive relations through a quasi-diplomatic entity, both of which are underwritten by the Taiwan Relations Act, 1979. Hong Kong benefits from US law lending support for its autonomy, rule of law and limited democracy, as well as the considerable interest of the American business community. For more details, see Ellen Bork, "The Right Way to Help the Uyghurs", *Washington Post*, 10 July 2009.
 15. The UAA works to promote the preservation of Uyghur culture, and to support the rights of the Uyghur people living in different parts of the world including Xinjiang to determine their own political future through peaceful and democratic means. The UAA has undertaken the Uyghur Human Rights Project since 2004

- in order to discuss human rights of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and find out measures towards improving their human rights conditions. See Uyghur American Association's home page for more detailed information, <<http://www.uyghuramerican.org/>>(August 15 2009)
16. The Government in Exile of East Turkistan Republic is a Washington based organization of Uyghurs, which tries to educate the American public on the history, culture and current political situation of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Anwar Yusuf Turani, who now serves as Prime Minister of this organization, established it on 14 September 2004. It has a constitution composed of 14 parts and as many as 70 articles. Turani writes newsletters, press releases, and letters that generate news coverage and national and international publicity on the Uyghur issue. For details, see Tian Guang and Mahesh Ranjan Debata, "Identity and Mobilization in Transnational Societies: A Case Study of Uyghur Diasporic Nationalism", *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2010, pp. 70-71.
 17. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, non-profit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Each year, with funding from the US Congress, NED supports more than 1,000 projects of non-governmental groups abroad who are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries. For more details, see <http://www.ned.org/>
 18. Radio Free Asia (RFA) is private, non-profit corporation that has been broadcasting news and information since 1997 in nine native Asian languages, including Uyghur. The purpose of the RFA is to provide a forum for a variety of opinions and voices from within these Asian countries. For more details, see <http://www.rfa.org/english/about>
 19. The *International Religious Freedom Report* is submitted to Congress annually by the Department of State in compliance with Section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. This report supplements the most recent Human Rights Reports by providing additional detailed information with respect to matters involving international religious freedom. See, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/index.htm>
 20. B. Raman, "US & Terrorism in Xinjiang", *SAAG Paper No. 499*, 24 July 2002, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers5/paper499.html>
 21. This author had attended Rebiya Kadeer's testimony at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC) briefing on "The Human Rights Situation of the Uyghurs in the People's Republic of China" in Washington DC on 27 April 2005.
 22. Shirley A. Kan, "US-China Counterterrorism Cooperation Issues for US Policy", CRS Report for Congress, 6 August 2008, p.4
 23. Ibid.
 24. "Meeting New Challenges in the New Century", APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration in Shanghai, China, 21 October 2001. For details see, http://www.apec.org/en/Meeting-Papers/Leaders-Declarations/2001/~/_media/Files/LeadersDeclarations/2001/2001_LeadersDeclaration.ashx
 25. This group is known as Xinjiang's " Hamas " and has as many as 2,000 fighters operating along Xinjiang's border with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. For details, see Mahesh Ranjan Debata, p. 212.
 26. Shirley A. Kan, op. cit, p. 5
 27. Executive Order 13224 was issued by the White House on 23 September 2001. To qualify as a terrorist organization a group must have committed, or pose a

- significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States; be owned or controlled by, or to act for or on behalf of those persons; be determined to be a terrorist organization by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General and with consultations with foreign authorities; assist in, sponsor, or provide financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, such acts of terrorism or be otherwise associated with people listed in the Order's Annex. The U.S. State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations is more restrictive in that it requires approval by Congress. For details see, Kevin Pollpeter, *US-China Security Management: Assessing the Military-to-Military Relationship*, Rand Corporation Monograph Series, 2004, p. 32.
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 29. Kevin Pollpeter, op.cit, p. 30.
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MONGOLS OF XINJIANG

SHARAD K. SONI

Xinjiang province, often known as the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous region (XUAR), is westernmost region of the People's Republic of China. Under the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) it was just called Xiyu or the Western Region that referred to the land west of Dunhuang (nowadays known as Gansu province) which covers one sixth of China's territory.¹ Occupying some 1.6 million square kilometers of area, Xinjiang, literary meaning "New Frontier", "New Land", "New Dominion" is equal to the size of Iran, twice the size of Pakistan and thrice the size of France. Significantly, it shares its borders with eight countries such as Mongolia, Russia, Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as well as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, thus becoming a region of geostrategic importance. Even American Sinologist Owen Lattimore recognized the importance of strategically located Xinjiang by describing it as the "Pivot of Asia", which was the title of one of his books published in 1950.² It was in 1884 that the Qing Empire (1644-1911) brought Xinjiang within China's regular administrative structure and made it a full-fledged province.³ During the period of warlordism following the Chinese revolution of 1911, Xinjiang was ruled by the warlord Sheng Shihtsai, whose "exploitative policies acted as a catalyst for a series of Muslim uprisings" that rocked Xinjiang until 1949 when it was completely brought under control of Chinese communists and was made a part of the People's Republic of China.⁴ Today, being next to Pakistan, Afghanistan or Tajikistan, Xinjiang is exposed to poverty, religious radicalism and various forms of illegal trafficking, including narcotics. However, at the same time Xinjiang also presents a unique case study of its ethno-cultural diversity, in which the Mongols too are a part for a long time now and whose historical legacy has left a distinct identity for them to carry on further.

It is in this context that this paper seeks to trace the historical legacy

of the Mongols of Xinjiang, who are often referred to as descendents of Western Mongols, the other two being Northern Mongols (the inhabitants of modern Mongolia) and the Southern Mongols (the inhabitants of China's Inner Mongolia). While doing so the paper also draws attention to the triangular relationship among Tsarist Russia, Manchu China and the Western Mongols who made failed attempts to unify the Mongols ever since the Mongol fragmentation took place following the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China. Besides, it also highlights the Mongol inhabited areas of Xinjiang where they still preserve their ethno-cultural identity.

MAJOR AREAS OF MONGOL CONCENTRATION

Before dealing with the historical legacy of the Western Mongols, particularly in Xinjiang, it would be worthwhile to know about the major areas of Mongol concentration not only in China but other regions as well.⁵ The majority of Mongols today live in Mongolia proper, the huge, land-locked country sandwiched between China and the Siberian part of the Russian Federation. They mostly belong to the Khalkha tribe. Outside Mongolia, the Mongols, mostly of Chahar and Tumet tribes, live in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. In all, the population of ethnic Mongols in Inner Mongolia today stands at 4.2 million which is larger than the total population of Mongols in the independent State of Mongolia.⁶ There are several thousand of Mongols who live in other regions of China. The Mongols, who live in the western Liaoning province of China, are mostly Kharchin Mongols. They form two Mongol autonomous counties there. Mongols also live in the western Jilin province, most of them being Khorchin Mongols who form one Mongol autonomous county there. The Mongols, who live in the southwestern Heilongjiang province, are mostly Khorchin Mongols, and they form one Mongol autonomous county there. However, there are also Kalmyk Mongols (*Oirat*) living in Yimin county (formerly known as the Ikh Mingan Banner), who moved to their present settlement in the early eighteenth century. Ethnic Mongols in China's Henan province are mainly concentrated around Nanyang prefecture. They are descendants of the Mongol army serving during the Yuan dynasty rule. Despite the fact that they now hardly speak Mongolian, they are officially recognized as Mongols.

A significant number of Mongols are scattered in other Chinese provinces as well. Some of them form their own nationalities such as the Dagurs, the Dongxiang (Sarts), the Bao'an etc. with their languages

remaining quite distinct from the modern Mongolian. There are quite a few Mongol communities who reside in Qinghai (modern Chinese name of what used to be known previously as Huhnuur or Koko-Nuur, meaning Blue Lake in Mongolian and Chinese due to its being in the Amdo region of Tibet). They can be divided into two groups: (a) The Mongols who live in the northern part of Qinghai-Tibet plateau and the western part of Qinghai province, i.e., Haixi Tibetan and Mongolian autonomous prefecture where they speak Mongolian (Hoshot dialect); and (b) The Mongols who live in Henan prefecture where they speak Tibetan. But they are still regarded and officially recognized as Mongols.

In the north Gansu province, there is a Mongol community which belongs to a mixed Khalkha-Hoshot origin. Some of them are said to be the descendants of the Khalkha migrants who fled Mongolia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Besides, Mongols also dwell in Russia's Siberian republic of Buryatia, which is located in the north of Mongolia proper and south and south-east of Lake Baikal. A sizeable number of Mongols, who are known as the Kalmyks, live in Russia's Kalmykia Republic. The Kalmyks are also identified as Oirats, the "forest people".⁷ The earliest reliable record of the *Oirats* can be traced in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the legendary book about Chinggis Khan, in which the *Oirats* were said to have lived around Lake Baikal.⁸ *Oirats* are often referred to as the Western Mongols. In Xinjiang, Dzungaria region is particularly important, as it is also the homeland of the Kalmyks who are holding strong ties with their brethren in Kalmykia. There are also some Chahar Mongols inhabiting Xinjiang, but they do not consider themselves belonging to the mainstream *Oirat*, and are living mostly in Inner Mongolia.

HISTORICAL LEGACY

The Mongols of Xinjiang form a minority, principally living in the northern part of Xinjiang. They are primarily descendants of the Oirat Mongols. According to 2003 Census, their total population in Xinjiang stands at 169,900 people, i.e., 0.86 per cent of the regional total. They are divided into three main tribes: The Dzhungar tribe who has been living in Xinjiang for many centuries, the Turgut who came back from the Volga River or Kalmykia at the end of the eighteenth century, and the Chahar tribe who moved from Inner Mongolia and Hebei province. In fact, some Mongols were moved to the north of the Tian Shan Mountain as a result of Chinggis Khan's western expedition in the early thirteenth century. In the early

fifteenth century, these Mongols fell into the Woyela and Eastern Tartar groups.⁹ The Woyelas living north of the Gobi desert included the tribes of Durbet, Turgut, Khoshot and Dzungar.¹⁰ These tribes, who were nomadic herdsman residing in the area from northern Xinjiang to southeast of Lake Balkhash, were together called *Oirat* or *Oleuth* by the Qing Dynasty that ruled China from 1644 to 1911. After the Qing Empire put down rebellions staged by Dzungarian nobles in 1758, the *Oirats* were enrolled as the Oirat Camp in the Manchu-Qing's "eight banner" military system.¹¹ In 1771, the Turgut tribes had moved centuries before into the lower reaches of the Volga River (Kalmykia) and had a population of over 100,000 returned to China. The majority of their descendants currently live in areas such as Bayangolin, Bortala and Jinghe.¹² In 1764 and 1813, some of the Chahar Mongols were moved to Xinjiang by the Qing government and their descendants now mainly live in two counties, i.e., Bole and Wenquan, in Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang.¹³

Historical records suggest that at the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 BC- 220 AD), the Xinjiang region was subservient to the Xiongnu (Huns), a powerful nomadic people based in modern Mongolia. Other empires that controlled some of the Xinjiang area included the Han, Göktürks, Tang, Turkic Uighurs, and Mongols.¹⁴ As regards Mongols, their emergence, transformation, and development in Xinjiang reflect the formation of complex multi-ethnic pattern in this region. The Mongols emerged and became strong after Chinggis Khan unified the Mongol tribes in 1206.¹⁵ While Mongol advance to the west was going on, the Uighur state in the Turpan-Urumchi area offered its allegiance to the Mongols in 1209 by contributing taxes and troops to the Mongol imperial effort.¹⁶ In return, what the Uighur rulers gained was to retain control of their kingdom. However, in sharp contrast, Chinggis Khan's Mongol Empire conquered and destroyed the Kara-Khitans of Central Asia in 1218. Significantly, the Mongols were welcomed as liberators in the Kashgar area as the Kara-Khitans were alleged to have persecuted the people there. In the fourteenth century, during the civil war among the Mongols, the Empire of the Great Mongol Khan (Yuan Dynasty) handed over the protection and administration of affairs of the western area to the Chagatai Khanate of Central Asia, one of the four Khanates of the Great Mongol Empire.

Yet, the break-up of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in 1368 had serious repercussions as the empire as a whole fragmented into smaller Khanates. As a result the western region too got fractured, while at the same time

being ruled by various different Persianized Mongol Khans, including the ones of Mogholistan with the assistance of the local Dughlat Emirs, Uigurstan (later Turpan) and Kashgar.¹⁷ These leaders got engaged in numerous wars with each other which led to the succession crises as well. Moreover, internal divisions among the Mongols, particularly in the fifteenth century were exploited well by the rulers of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) for their own benefits.¹⁸ In fact, the division among various Mongol tribes towards the beginning of fifteenth century led to the split into two distinct branches - Eastern and Western or Oirats. The eastern Mongols included Khalkhas, Buryats, Chahars and Tumets, while the western Mongols were a group of Derbets, Oirats and Olets. Later on, in the seventeenth century, the eastern branch too got divided into northern Mongols (Khalkhas, Buryats) living north of the Gobi desert and southern Mongols (Chahars, Tumets) occupying the area south of the desert.¹⁹ So far as northern Mongols are concerned, Khalkhas were brought into submission to the Manchu rule in China towards the end of the seventeenth century, whereas Buryats were conquered by the Russians and politically separated from the Khalkhas in 1689 after the Nerchinsk treaty was concluded between Tsarist Russia and Qing rulers of China.

After the division among the Mongols the “divide and rule” policy seems to have become a key weapon for the Ming rulers in their pursuit of an ambitious policy particularly with regard to the Mongols. Ming strategy now was to play off both the eastern and western Mongols against each other, though the latter were favoured most to counteract the former. However, it did not work out properly and the *Oirats* (western Mongols) who played a major role in Mongolian political developments especially between 1423 AD and 1530 AD, even went to the extent of advancing against the Ming power.²⁰ Earlier, the Ming emperor Yung-lo (1403-1424) who is said to have risen to power by leading expeditions against the Mongols, in fact led five such campaigns against both the eastern and Oirat Mongols. But his aggressive tactics against the Mongols did nothing to ensure China’s security and Mongol threat remained intact so much so that China’s economy too got weakened due to large expenses occurred during campaigns.²¹ Throughout his reign, Yung-lo remained baffled and disturbed by the unwillingness of the Mongols to accept the Chinese world order because his five campaigns did not result in a peaceful relationship between the Ming and the Mongols.²² With his death in 1424 AD the expansionist stage of the Ming dynasty came to an end, and for much of the rest of the period Ming rulers pursued “defensive policies” both in

terms of territory as well as economy.²³

It was more so because campaigning against the Mongols could also have entailed vast government outlay for the Mings. Instead, in order to preserve their exchequer and also to have a strong border defence, the Ming court took a conciliatory approach and decided to “permit more Mongol tribute missions to reach China, so that their demand for Chinese products would not provoke incursions on Chinese frontier areas.”²⁴ This policy of the Mings in one way or the other benefited the Mongols as well, particularly the *Oirats* who were quick to dispatch a large number of tribute missions. It has been revealed that whereas the *Oirats* had sent only nine tribute missions in the twenty-one years of the Yung-lo reign, the number of such missions reached up to thirty-one in the twenty-one years following the death of the emperor.²⁵ Around this time the Ming-Mongol relations followed a slightly different pattern that can be characterised as being a mixture of border raids and tribute missions.²⁶

The problem, however, started with the rise of a new *Oirat* chieftain Esen in the 1430s,²⁷ which not only posed a serious challenge to the Mings but also brought the whole of Inner Asian frontier under a violent recrudescence of the Mongol threat. The incident that precipitated the final show down occurred on the issue of existing tributary system under which the Mings curtailed the value of the gifts bestowed on the Mongol tribute missions. This outraged Esen who mobilised both the eastern and western Mongols across China’s northern frontier and launched a massive attack on China in 1449 AD.²⁸ Though he succeeded initially and even defeated the Mings force pushing them back inside the Great Wall, his hopes of establishing a unified Mongol rule over China faded soon “when his principal ally resumed tributary relations with the Ming”.²⁹ Besides, Esen himself was blamed for his failure due to his adoption of the title of Khan in 1454 AD, which gave rise to rebellion within his own domain finally resulting in his death in 1455 AD. According to Rossabi, “his demise ushered in a lengthy period of disunity and inter-tribal warfare. The western Mongols [now] lacked unified leadership and thus did not pose a threat to China’s security until the seventeenth century.”³⁰ But the lesson that the Mongols had learnt from Esen’s failure are no less significant. Firstly, the Mongols came to understand that the unity was of paramount importance if they wished to have their presence strongly felt in East Asia, and secondly, the leadership of such a unified Mongol confederation required to be in the hands of either a descendant of the Mongol royal family or a “grand marshal” (*tayisi*) like Esen,³¹ who could dream of an

empire and try to make it a reality. After Essen, Western Mongols remained unable to give a powerful leadership until seventeenth century when the Mongolian Dzungars established their Khanate over Central Asian nomads including part of the Xinjiang region, now known as Ili.

As already mentioned above during the sixteenth century the four Oirat Mongol tribes living in Xinjiang region included the Durbet tribe, moving about in the upper and middle reaches of the Ertix River; the Turgut tribe, roving around in the area near today's Tacheng; the Khoshot tribe, roaming the pastures near Urumqi; and the Dzungar tribe, grazing their sheep and cattle around Lake Balkhash and in the valley of the Ili River. In the middle of the seventeenth century the Dzungars annexed the three other tribes and made Ili the center of their activities. Since then Dzungars represented the collective identity of all the Oirat tribes that formed and maintained one of the last nomadic empires that existed from early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century. The Dzungar Khanate covered the area called Dzungaria and stretched from the west end of the Great Wall of China to present-day eastern Kazakhstan, and from present-day northern Kyrgyzstan to southern Siberia.³² Most of this area was renamed to be included in Xinjiang after the fall of the Dzungar Khanate to the Qing empire who conquered the former in 1758 and named the area as Xinjiang.

MANCHU CHINA'S SUCCESS OVER WESTERN MONGOLS

As regards triangular relationship among Western Mongols, Tsarist Russia and Manchu China (Qing Empire), the Manchu success in destroying the authority of Western Mongols or Oirats can be attributed to the existing divisions among the Mongols as a whole. So far as Inner Mongolia was concerned, the Manchus organised it as part of their military reserve and brought the region under their protection exercising strict control over its government. This organisation was the origin of the institutional and administrative concept of "Inner" Mongolia, which was markedly different from the other part of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia being much more closely integrated with China resulting in its becoming a Chinese province. However, the tribal war between the Outer Mongols (inhabitants of modern Mongolia) and the Western Mongols continued and finally it was in the year 1688 that the Dzungar Khanate of Western Mongols under the leadership of Galdan Boshigt (1651 AD -1696 AD) invaded Northern or Outer Mongolia.³³ After some time in order to fight back the Western

Mongols, the Khalkha nobles held a special conference to discuss whether to seek the help of Russians or the Manchus to counter the forces of Galdan Boshigt. While one group insisted on seeking assistance from Russia, the other wanted to get help from the Manchus. At the conference the first Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu (1635 AD -1723 AD), a religious leader exerting great political influence on Outer Mongols, pleaded: "the Manchus have the same kind of religion [Buddhism] and wear the same clothing as the Mongols. However, the Russians have a different religion. Therefore it would be a good idea for us to submit to the Manchus."³⁴ The Manchu rulers of China quickly responded as the prevailing situation was conducive to their expansionist designs. Thus Outer Mongolia came under Manchu overlordship in 1691. Since China, Dzungar Khanate under Galdan Boshigt and Russia strived to establish control in Central Asia, the end of the seventeenth century witnessed a fierce rivalry among them, which finally led to Galdan's defeat at the hands of Manchus and simultaneously in his death in 1697. Thus came an end to the creator of the last powerful nation of the nomads in Central Asia.

However, the struggle between the Manchus and the Western Mongols continued, and it was not until 1750s that the Manchus finally dealt a crushing blow to the Western Mongols. Whereas the main body of the Western Mongols still remained in the northern part of what is today Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, a portion of their territory was annexed to the north western part of Outer Mongolia. After conquering Western Mongolia, the Manchus ruled the two Mongolias-Inner and Outer till 1911, though Outer Mongolia was administratively ruled more loosely and indirectly as compared to Inner Mongolia. According to Joseph Fletcher, three main factors combined to reinforce the decline of the Mongols' once-glorious military power and the decay of economy: Firstly, it was the banner system which the Manchus employed to divide the Mongols and sever their traditional lines of tribal authority; secondly, in the taming of the once terrible Mongols, the Tibetan Buddhist 'Yellow Church' was used for Manchu gain, and lastly, the role of Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia was to support Chinese trade which ultimately led to Mongolia's socio-economic decline.³⁵

The success of Manchus in establishing their dominance over Mongols was due in part to their adept manipulation of the Mongol political situation as well as the absence of significant Russian strength in East Asia. Earlier, the Mongols were in possession of a vast buffer zone between the Manchu and Russian empires. Both the Manchus and Russians

endeavoured to exert their influence over as much area as they could in order to protect their borders against incursions. But the Mongols were too quick to escape these imperialist designs and started working for the Mongol unity which could confront the two powers from a position of strength. The prospect of such a unity frightened both Russia and China, so they followed a policy of divide and rule.³⁶ Whenever a strong and hostile Mongol group appeared on the scene, other Mongol groups were provoked to overpower the former. This was one of the main reasons as to why Mongols had not become united and later their future remained either in the hands of China or Russia. Sino-Russian relations got a boost in 1728 when the Treaty of Kiakhta was concluded between the two sides which aimed at ensuring peace and promoting mutual understanding between the two contracting parties.³⁷ It was in this treaty that Russia recognised Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia and adopted a position of “armed neutrality” when China became embroiled in a war with the Dzungars.³⁸ The last ruler of the Dzungar Khanate, Davaach was packed down by the Qing army which consisted of Mongols themselves such as Khalka, Alasha, Chahar and Barga. However, Dzungar’s rebellion against the Manchus under the leadership of Amarsaana continued until 1758 when three years of last desperate fight of a Khanate, met with a crushing blow.

MONGOL INHABITED AREAS IN XINJIANG

With a total population of 19.25 million, Xinjiang presents a unique case of geographical and ethno-cultural diversity with a distinction of being the only autonomous region of China where Muslims are still in majority.³⁹ In terms of ethno-cultural diversity, Xinjiang is home to 12 ethnic minorities out of the 55 officially declared minorities living in China. Among them, the Uyghur, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Mongol and Tajik minorities make up more than half of Xinjiang’s total population. Table 1 shows the population of main ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Nearly 2.6 per cent of China’s Mongol population lives in Xinjiang.⁴⁰ As compared with other provinces in China, Xinjiang is only next to Yunnan province which is ethnically more diverse because of having room for those belonging to 25 different minorities.

TABLE 1
POPULATION OF MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS IN XINJIANG (2000 CENSUS)

Ethnic Group	Population	Percentage
Uyghur	8,345,622	45.21%
Han	7,489,919	40.58%
Kazakh	1,245,023	6.74%
Hui	839,837	4.55%
Kyrgyz	158,775	0.86%
Mongol, Dongxiang, Daur	194,891	1.14%
Pamiris	39,493	0.214%
Xibe	34,566	0.19%
Manchu	19,493	0.11%
Tujia	15,787	0.086%
Uzbek	12,096	0.066%
Russian	8935	0.048%
Miao	7006	0.038%
Tibetan	6153	0.033%
Zhuang	5642	0.031%
Tatar	4501	0.024%
Salar	3762	0.020%

Total population of Xinjiang = 19.25 million (2000 Census)

Source: *Xinjiang Statistical Year Book 2001*, Hong Kong: China Statistics Press, 2001

Following the founding of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in May 1947, autonomous prefectures and counties were established in China's other provinces, where Mongols live in large communities. These include the two Mongolian Autonomous Prefectures of Bayangolin and Bortala in Xinjiang, the Mongolian and Kazak Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai, and the seven Autonomous Counties in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning. The Mongols enjoy the same rights as all other nationalities in China.⁴¹ In Xinjiang, the Mongols live mainly in Bayangolin and Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefectures and Hoboksar Mongolian Autonomous County.

Bayangolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture

Bayangolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture is situated in the southeast of Xinjiang, with neighboring provinces Gansu and Qinghai to the east. It is separated from Tibet by the Kunlun mountains in the south. Within Xinjiang, Bayangolin Prefecture is bordered by Khotan in the west, and is in the neighborhood of Ili, Changji, Urumqi, Turpan and Kumul with the Tian Shan mountains in the north acting as the boundary between Bayangolin and these regions. When Korla was brought into the prefecture in 1960, it became the capital city. Bayangolin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture was established on 23 June 1954. It is the largest autonomous prefecture of China with an area of 462,700 km². Table 2 shows the nationality structure of ethnic minorities in Bayangolin.

TABLE 2
NATIONALITY STRUCTURE IN BAYANGOLIN (2000 CENSUS)

Nationality	Population	Percentage
Han	607,774	57.5%
Uyghur	345,595	32.7%
Hui	52,252	4.94%
Mongol	43,544	4.12%
Others	7,805	0.74%

Source: *Xinjiang Statistical Year Book 2001*, China Statistics Press, 2001

Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture

Bortala is a Mongol Autonomous Prefecture in Xinjiang with an area of 27,000 square kilometers. The word "Bortala" comes from the Mongol language meaning "brown grasslands".⁴² Bortala is located in the southwestern part of the Dzungarian Basin. It borders Kazakhstan to the north and west, and has an international border of 385 kms. To the east it borders Wusu City and Toli County of Tacheng Prefecture; to the south it borders Nilka County, Yining County, and Huocheng County of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture. The prefecture has two large lakes, Ebi-Nur and Sayram Lake. The Tang Dynasty created the Shuanghe Protectorate in this area. During the periods of Yuan and Ming Dynasties the area was the territory of the Oirats. During the Qing Dynasty, Chahar Mongols were moved here from Kalgan, besides the Torgut Oirats moving eastwards from the Volga.

Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture was established on 13 July 1954 with its capital at Bole city. Bortala is divided into one county-level city, Bole, and two counties Jinghe County and Wenquan County. In addition, it is home to the Fifth Agricultural Division of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and its 11 regiment-level farms/ranches. Alashankou is a port of entry with both railroads and roads linking China with Kazakhstan; it is also one of China's national first-class port of entry. The volume of imports/exports passing through Alashankou accounts for 90 per cent of the total for all of Xinjiang, and has been second to only Manzhouli in Inner Mongolia among land ports-of-entry in China.

Hoboksar Mongol Autonomous County

Hoboksar Mongol Autonomous County is a county situated in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Tacheng Prefecture. It has an area of 28,799 square kms with a population of 50,000. This Mongol autonomous county was established on 10 September 1954.

Nowadays in these prefectures and counties, most of the Mongols are engaged in animal husbandry and some of them in farming. Their national costume is the Mongolian robe with broad trimmings, tied with a red, yellow, or green satin sash around the waist, and a Mongolian knife hanging from it. Some even like to carry a saddle-bag across their shoulders. Their annual *Nadam* festival is a major event which is a combination of recreational sports, entertainment and commodity fair where activities such as horse-horse racing, archery, wrestling, singing and dancing take place. As regards religion, Shamanism used to be the Mongols' predominant religion. In the sixteenth century, they converted to the Yellow Sect of Lamaist Buddhism, but the influence of Shamanism can still be seen. Another factor that strengthened the Oirats was their final acceptance of Tibetan Buddhism and close relationship with the Tibetan hierarchy in the sixteenth century. Oirats became involved in Tibetan politics and the sphere of Oirat control was drawn south into Tibet. Even Oirat ruler Galdan Boshigt undertook religious training under Dalai Lama in Tibet. The Khoshot ruler, Gushi Khan, became a defender of the dGe-lugs-pa (Gelug pa) sect of Tibetan Buddhism, which protected the Dalai Lama's authority in Tibet. Moreover, Oirats have a long tradition of written language. Oirat scholar Zaya Pandita (1599-1662) created the script, known as clear script, *Todoo Bichg*.

CONCLUSION

Considering the forgoing discussions it seems that the Mongols of Xinjiang or more precisely the Dzungars (Western Mongols or Oirats) were the last real Inner Asian threat to Qing rulers of Manchu-China. It may be pointed out that until the middle of the eighteenth century, they not only had a strong military force with a superior cavalry but also possessed dynamic, resolute and honest leaders who gradually overpowered neighbouring nomads and oasis states. In fact, there was a pressing economic motive for their conquest of new territory as they needed additional grazing land for their animals. Such economic interests clashed with a sedentary civilization like Manchu-China because the latter sought to control and limit commercial and tributary contacts with the Dzungars. Yet, the Dzungars tried to maintain cordial relations with the Manchu Chinese almost up to the very time when they under the leadership of Galdan Boshigt finally challenged the Qings. The principal weakness of the Dzungar Khanate, and the one that finally destroyed it, was the lack of unity not only among the Mongols as a whole but also among the Dzungars themselves. Galdan indeed was the first to encounter this difficulty, though by 1689 when he confronted the Qing rulers, he had already conquered eastern Turkestan, including Hami and Turpan. But he could not attract the Khalkha of Outer Mongolia to participate in the common cause of the Mongol campaign against the Qings. Already in 1688, he defeated the Khalkha but their leaders instead of seeking peace with their Mongol brother Galdan, sided with the Qing ruler which in the long run resulted in wiping out the Western Mongols completely and taking over their region to make it a Chinese province, i.e., Xinjiang. Today in Xinjiang, the Mongols of Western Mongol stock reside mainly in Bayangolin, Bortala and Hoboksar where they maintain their distinct ethno-cultural and religious identity.

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INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR XINJIANG IN THE 21ST CENTURY *A REPORT*

Prof. K. Warikoo, Director of, the **Central Asian Studies Programme** of the Centre for South, Central, South-East and South-West Pacific Studies, School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, organised an International Seminar on **XINJIANG IN THE 21ST CENTURY** on 3-4 March 2010 at the School of International Studies. The Seminar was well attended with over 100 participants including ten delegates from China, Taiwan and Russia, eight Indian academicians, faculty members and research scholars of the SIS.

In his welcome address, **Prof. K. Warikoo**, threw light on the importance of Xinjiang and India's long historic connection with the region. Close historical commercial and cultural linkages since ancient times make Xinjiang significant for India, said Prof. Warikoo. Moreover, Xinjiang shares direct border with Kashmir. Prof. Warikoo pointed out that there are lots of similarities in features among Uyghur population and the people of northern India. Khotan in Xinjiang was the last to embrace Islam and had fiercely resisted Islamic incursion till the eighteenth century. He also drew attention to the intellectually stimulating work done on the region by the Central Asian Studies Programme of JNU. However, he added that research on Xinjiang in India is still very less and a lot needs to be done. He deeply appreciated the enthusiastic response from the delegates from abroad and India for their participation in the two-day deliberations.

The seminar was formally inaugurated by **Prof. R. Kumar**, Special Advisor to the Vice Chancellor, JNU. Welcoming the delegates he gave an overview of the Central Asian studies conducted in JNU. He described Xinjiang as a bridge connecting China and Central Asia. Much is known about the past significance of Xinjiang and its connection with India but

not much is known about the present day Xinjiang. A seminar on Xinjiang dealing with various contemporary issues would be greatly beneficial to scholars working on the region, said Prof. Kumar. He expressed the hope that the deliberations would surely stimulate more interest in the region and would be able to come out with some recommendations to address the crisis facing the region today.

Prof. K.R. Sharma sharing the same sentiments as Prof. Kumar agreed that very less is known about Xinjiang. He stressed that even in China not much is known about Xinjiang. A seminar on Xinjiang would indeed provide a good platform for scholars to share their views on the region. He highlighted that the present century belongs to Asia and the major powers in Asia include China, India and also Japan. Europe or U.S.A. would not dominate the world in coming years but Asia would emerge as a major power in the world. Here, he also pointed out that there are areas of conflict between India and China but there are also significant areas like climate change where both can cooperate. Both China and India are assertive of their identity, which provides yet another ground for cooperation.

Mr. Rajiv Sikri, former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan presided over the first session of the seminar on 3 March 2010. The session dealt with the ethnic and religious issues in the region. The four speakers of the session were- **Ms. Mrinalini Saran**, a travel writer who has extensively travelled throughout the region, **Prof, K.R. Sharma**, former Head of the Department of East Asian Studies, Delhi University, **Prof. Natalia Ablazhey**, National Research Institute of Novosibirsk, Russia and **Dr. Sharad Soni**, Central Asian Studies Programme, SIS, JNU.

Ambassador Sikri introduced Xinjiang to the audience, highlighting its significance in the present world and also the problems facing the region. Xinjiang, not Taiwan, is the main security threat to China, pointed out Amb. Sikri. Taiwan problem is a problem within the same family whereas the people of Xinjiang have different culture, features and practice Islam unlike the majority Han population. Han as a nation itself is an attribute of ethnicity. Though China has history of thousands of years but it has had no experience of dealing with diverse cultures. Chinese response to external stimulus has always been simple, said Sikri.

Xinjiang is a problem for China, which has aggravated in the last twenty years. Cultural autonomy denied to the Uyghur people by China created resentment among the local population, intensifying the Uyghur nationalism. Sikri emphasised that the question of ethnicity is a primordial

attribute of the problem in Xinjiang. Moreover, Chinese policy of settling Han population in the region was also disliked by the local population who feared the consequences of the demographic change in the region. Amb. Sikri posed the question as to who is benefiting from the development in the region-the local people or the Han settlers. Here, he also emphasised that the railway development in the region by China was more to establish Chinese control in the region. Years of economic development have failed to resolve and quell Uyghur resentment against China. Moreover, Xinjiang is not homogenous. Kazakhs are mainly concentrated in the north while the Uyghurs are dominated in the south. Han migration is more in the north and regional divide in Xinjiang is widening, cautioned Amb. Sikri.

Psychological factor has also augmented the Uyghur nationalism. Awareness among the minorities about their rights has increased as a result of globalisation. Post- independence development in Central Asian Republics also triggered Uyghur nationalism. For the newly independent Central Asian Republics (CARs), nationalism lies in cultural identity. Amb. Sikri pointed out that the Uyghurs are the most developed and sophisticated after the Turks among the Turkic speaking population and hence when they see the cultural autonomy being enjoyed by the people of the CARs, it further gives rise to Uyghur nationalist sentiments and aggravates their feeling of resentment. Moreover, resurgence of Islam gives a sense of kinship to Uyghur population to associate with the Muslim world. In contrast , the Chinese authorities see rise of Islamism as threat to China's national integrity. Environmental degradation in Xinjiang and Tibet would have serious security implications for the world, which would also give rise to conflicts. Ambassador Sikri also pointed out the negative image about China among the population of the CARs. Economically, China has made major inroads in the region but the local people of Central Asia still do not see China as a friendly country.

Ambassador Sikri also threw light on the ancient connections between India, Xinjiang and the Central Asian region. Tarim basin had long contacts with India. Kashghar and Yarkand have long being the central point of trade between India, especially Ladakh and Xinjiang.

The first speaker of the session was **Ms. Mrinalini Saran** who gave a fascinating first hand account of the region through her presentation *Xinjiang: Buddhist Past and Islamic Present*. She blended the past and present through her experience as a traveller in the region, especially the route travelled by Hieun Tsang to reach India in seventh century AD. Buddhism emerged in India and spread all over the world under the patronage of

various rulers. Silk Route helped in further spreading Buddhism far and wide. She reflected how Buddhism became a unifying factor and how the Buddhist monk Hieun Tsang travelled to India to study the roots of Buddhism during the unfriendly terrain. Before the advent of Islam in the region, it was primarily a Buddhist region. She stated that the spread of Islam in western China in modern day adds to the richness of the country. While travelling through Xinjiang, the divide between the Hans and Uyghurs in the region was clearly evident, stressed the speaker. The two cultures-the Han and the Uyghur view each other with lot of mistrust today. She also highlighted the similarities existing between India and the Uyghur culture and language.

Prof. K.R. Sharma gave a detailed analysis of the ethnic issue in Xinjiang in his presentation titled *Ethnic Tangle in Xinjiang*. While discussing the issue of ethnicity in Xinjiang, Prof. Sharma highlighted the developments in China also. He said China should be looked at from three different perspectives in order to understand the minority issue-China as a civilization, an Empire and as a Nation. Before nineteenth century there was no Han nationalism, it was Han Empire. Prof. Sharma also stressed that China is a nation in making. China is economically getting stronger but it too has its fault lines like lack of democracy, huge gap between the rich and poor, regional imbalances, problem of ethnic minorities etc.

Xinjiang is posing serious problem to China, said the speaker. Development in Xinjiang in the past several years has been remarkable but it has failed to resolve the grievances of the local Uyghur population of Xinjiang. The GDP and the per capita income have increased. The region ranks in the middle among the 31 provinces of China and literacy rate has also improved. For China, Xinjiang is important in more than one ways. Xinjiang is located in a strategic area, it is the western gate for China and Xinjiang is China's Muslim face, stressed Prof. Sharma.

With Han migration in the region, local language has received a set back, Uyghurs prefer to learn English than Mandarin, as it is a global language. Prof. Sharma argued that ethnic identity in Xinjiang is strong. Religion of the region has undergone change four times in different phases. Religious *Maulvis* do not have credibility in the region whereas secular intelligentsia hold important place in the society, pointed out the speaker. Political Islam is not strong in Xinjiang and September 11 has further discouraged separatism in Xinjiang, argued Prof. Sharma. China after 9/11 has portrayed the Muslim minority as a problem and has justified the use of force as a means to tackle terrorism and separatism in the country.

Only a very small section of the Uyghur population promotes separatism and the majority is demanding autonomy. Prof. Sharma opined that China by acknowledging the people of Xinjiang as citizens and not as mere subjects of China would be able to resolve the crisis to a great extent.

Prof. Natalia Ablazhey gave an overview of the *Kazakh Diaspora in Xinjiang: History and Perspectives of Ethnic Migration in Kazakhstan*. Prof. Natalia gave a detailed overview and the historical perspective of the cross-border migration. During the Soviet period, Kazakhs migrated to Xinjiang to escape Soviet repression and now the change is in the other direction, underlined the speaker. Kazakh government's incentives for repatriation also play a role in encouraging Kazakhs to go back to their motherland. Today migration to Kazakhstan is legal. She also pointed out the difference between the Kazakhs migrants from Xinjiang who have more Chinese influences and the Kazakh migrants from Kazakhstan who have more Russian influences.

The final speaker of the session was **Dr. Sharad K. Soni**, who gave a detailed description of the Mongols of Xinjiang in his paper *Mongols of Xinjiang in Historical Perspective*. Dr. Soni threw light on the history of the Mongol ethnic minority in Xinjiang. Mongols in Xinjiang are known to be the descendents of Western Mongols. Dzungars had tried to unify the Mongols but Manchu China's campaign against Dzungars led to the gradual fading away of the Western Mongols.

The Mongol ethnic areas in Xinjiang are mainly concentrated in Bayangolin and Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefectures and Hoboksar Mongolian Autonomous County. Dr. Soni stated that the emergence, transformation and development of Mongols in Xinjiang shows the complex multi-ethnic pattern of Xinjiang. The Uyghur state in Turpan-Urumchi supported the Mongols in 1209 AD. The western region of China broke up after the collapse of the Yuan dynasty in China in 1368. The Ming dynasty utilised the internal divisions within the Mongols to serve their own interests. Ming rulers played off the eastern and western Mongols against each other. However, the Ming rulers failed to control the Oirats or the Western Mongols and in 1449 Oirats attacked China. Again in seventeenth century Mongolian Dzungars established their stronghold in Central Asia and Xinjiang. However, internal divisions within Mongols helped the Manchu dynasty to destroy the power of the western Mongols. By the Treaty of Kiakhta in 1728 AD, Russia recognised Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia and followed 'armed neutrality' during China's war with the Dzungars. By eighteenth century, the Dzungars were

completely vanquished. Oirats or Dzungars were the last real inner Asian threat to Manchu-China. However, Dr. Soni also pointed out that the western Mongols never completely submitted or accepted allegiance to the Manchu rulers.

The **Session II** of the seminar was chaired by **Prof. Evgeny Vodichev** of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences. It dealt with the natural resources of the Xinjiang region and Chinese policy towards the region. The three speakers of the session were **Ji Zhen Tu** of Central Asian Regional Development Research Centre, Urumqi, China, **Wang Jianming** of Minority Groups Development Research Institute, Beijing and **Chen Xi**, Central Asian Regional Development Research Centre, Urumqi, China.

The first speaker of the session **Ji Zhen Tu** gave a detailed overview of the natural resources of the region in his presentation *Energy and Natural Resources in Xinjiang: Development and Utilisation*. He stated that the region is rich in various natural resources, which mainland China does not possess. Ji Zhen Tu called the area a “resource and energy conglomeration area” with abundant reserves of oil, natural gas, coal, wind, water energy and various mineral resources. “Xinjiang possesses 30% and 34% of the Chinese continental oil and natural gas resources respectively. It ranks first in coal reserves and second in wind reserves in China. Annual runoff of Xinjiang’s surface water is 8.82 billion cubic metres; surface water consumption per capita is 5,146 cubic metres.” China has invested heavily to explore oil and gas in the region, pointed out the speaker. Since the implementation of the Western Development Strategy, China has invested 120 billion Yuan in the Eastern-Transmission of Western-Gas project. Ji Zhen Tu stressed that China is trying to transform the resource advantage in the region into economic advantage that would benefit all nationalities in Xinjiang by fast economic development of Xinjiang driven by exploration of the natural resources. He opined that the exploration and utilization has developed significantly, which is benefiting the local population. He stated that Chinese government would soon announce major industrial policies to augment investment in Xinjiang and facilitate proper exploitation of the resources, which would economically benefit all nationalities in Xinjiang.

Mr. Wang Jianming gave an insight into *China’s Western Development Ethnic Programme in Xinjiang (2000-2009)*. He mentioned that Xinjiang in the past was Western China’s economic ‘depression’. But with development taking place during the last ten years under the Western Development Programme, Xinjiang became China’s ‘bridgehead’ to Central Asia, South

Asia and Eastern Europe. Rich natural resources makes Xinjiang the most attractive 'treasure land' for the large domestic enterprises. Xinjiang has become China's major base for oil and natural gas production and petrochemical industry. Under China's Western Development Programme, Xinjiang has attracted large investment and high growth, which have helped the people of Xinjiang.

Mr. Jianming gave an overview of the expenditure made by Chinese government for the development of Xinjiang during the period 2000-2009. The social expenditure in Xinjiang's general budget expenditure increased from 3.7 billion Yuan (40% of the total budget) in the year 2000 to 94 billion Yuan (70% of total budget) in 2009. The general living standard of urban and rural residents has also improved. The average income of urban and rural residents was 11,432 Yuan in 2008 as against only 5,645 Yuan in 2000. He commended the government for developing the transport infrastructure by investing 66.4 billion Yuan during the past 10 years. The new highway mileage has increased from 65,000 kms to more than 150,000 kms during the period 2000-2008. Railway construction in Xinjiang is also in full swing and with the completion of 145 billion Yuan 'Lan(Lanzhou)-Xin(Xinjiang)' second railway project, the travel time from Beijing to Urumqi will be reduced from the existing 42 hours to 12 hours only.

Xinjiang has attracted many enterprises and groups for investment through the 'strategy of advantageous resources conversion'. At present there are 89 enterprises with a total investment of almost 100 billion Yuan, highlighted Mr. Jianming. He pointed out that Xinjiang has maintained the balance between development and environmental protection during the implementation of Western Development Programme. Several ecological landmarks have been achieved through this programme, like comprehensive improvement of Tarim, return of cropland to forestland, restoring natural grasslands, ban on logging in Tianshan and Altai mountains, reduction in sand desertification, etc. He also stated that Xinjiang has achieved success in the education sector. The government is trying to protect, develop and expand the traditional culture of ethnic minority groups.

Though lot of developments have taken place, the 5 July 2009 incident in Urumqi shook Xinjiang. However, he pointed out that the incident could not change the stable situation and derail the ongoing reform and development process in Xinjiang.

The last speaker of the day was **Chen Xi**. He gave an in depth

overview of the development in the region in his paper *Economic and Social Development in Xinjiang*. Xi said that constant efforts for the last sixty years have resulted in “sustainable, rapid and healthy development” of Xinjiang’s economy. Xinjiang is the resource production and reserve base of energy and minerals in China, said the speaker. He also pointed out the problem of Xinjiang’s economy, which is heavily reliant on natural resources like oil, natural gas and coal. Lack of funds has affected the development of the medium and small scale enterprises and there is wide gap between rural and urban population.

Chen Xi stated that the living condition of the people in the last sixty years have improved and that “all nationalities in Xinjiang are stepping towards better life and quality of life has improved”. Education sector has also improved. He pointed out that nine years of education has been made compulsory and the region has no illiterate youth today. He mentioned that several important policy speeches were made to direct Xinjiang’s reform, development, stability and the treatment of the “7.5” Accident. Indicating the problem faced by Xinjiang’s social development, the speaker said, “rebuilding a harmonious nationalities’ relationship and promoting government’s public belief after the “7.5” Accident has assumed urgent attention”. The Central Working Conference on Xinjiang being held in 2010 will provide a unique opportunity for Xinjiang’s economic and social development. Xinjiang still has certain problems that need to be addressed- it is still vulnerable to group accidents, the employment situation, problem of labour migration and difference among various minorities, pointed out the speaker.

The **Session III** of the two day Conference held on 4 March 2010 was presided over by **Prof. Qiu Yonghui** of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing. The Session dealt with Xinjiang’s relations with its immediate neighbours. The main speakers of the Session were **Prof. K. Warikoo**, Director, Central Asian Studies Programme, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, **Prof. Evgeny Vodichev** of the National Research University of Novosibirsk, Russia and **Senge Hasnan Sering**, who is from Baltistan region.

Starting the Session, **Prof. K. Warikoo** gave a detailed analysis of the significance of Xinjiang for China’s policy towards Central Asia. In his paper *Xinjiang: China’s Bridge to Central Asia*, Prof. Warikoo highlighted the pivotal position Xinjiang holds in Asia as a crossroad between Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia. Xinjiang has its borders touching Mongolia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Jammu and Kashmir

State of India. Historically, the northern part of Xinjiang shared close affinity with the nomadic tribes of Kazakhstan while the southern part had closer ties with the adjoining areas of Kokand, Bukhara, Afghanistan and Northern India. Xinjiang played an important role since ancient times connecting China with the outside world.

For China, Xinjiang region in the past helped China to protect itself from tribal incursions from the west. It provided China with first line of defence against foreign incursions and facilitated China to have its domination over Mongolia. Chinese trade with Central Asia and beyond flourished through this region, which became more prominent during the Silk Road days. Trade as a means to increase political influence across the border was frequently utilised and China under various dynasties encouraged trade with the Central Asian region. Xinjiang helped in connecting mainland China with the periphery.

China under Ming dynasty sent several missions to distant cities of Central Asia like Samarkand, Bukhara etc and also encouraged Central Asian principalities to send their missions to China. Mings also encouraged tributary relationship with the principalities of Central Asia by offering trade concessions as baits. The Ming rulers also accepted private traders from Central Asia as a part of their diplomatic missions to China. Central Asian chiefs also found it profitable to send such missions to China as it facilitated their commercial adventures. Later the Manchu Ching rulers also followed the Ming practice of fostering trade cum tributary relationship with Central Asia. By 1768 the whole area was designated as Xinjiang. By 1884, the region became a full fledged province of China but it maintained trade and cultural contacts with the Russian Turkistan. China also maintained close cooperation with the Central Asian region even after the Soviet rule was established. The Sino-Soviet Friendship border helped in cross-border movement of people. However, with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations during the Cold War, border movement also became restricted.

While describing the importance of Xinjiang as a bridge connecting China and Central Asia, Prof. Warikoo also briefly dealt with China's liberal policy towards the Muslim world since 1980s. China forged closer cooperation with the Middle East countries after its trade with west suffered after the Tiananmen Square incident. China also started developing closer ties with the neighbouring Muslim countries. China encouraged local Uyghur Muslims to visit other Muslim countries as a gesture to improve its relations with the Muslim world. China and the CARs after

their independence amicably resolved their border disputes, which were a legacy of Sino-Soviet border demarcation issue. China developed closer ties with the CARs, as it feared that the growth of Pan Turkic consciousness in the region would spread to Xinjiang. China feared that the Islamic movement in Central Asia would further trigger the Uyghur movement in Xinjiang, which is a matter of grave concern for China. China, however, has been successful in garnering support from the CARs not to allow their soil for organising secessionist movements against China.

Xinjiang holds an important place, being the largest province of China and rich in natural resources. Border trade with Central Asia through Xinjiang is increasing. The speaker highlighted that the bulk of China's trade with CARs take place through Xinjiang. It provides China with a huge market in Central Asia and also helps it to access wider markets in Pakistan, Iran and through Iran to Persian Gulf. Prof. Warikoo indicated that China hopes to reach South and gain access to sea route through this region. China brought Xinjiang closer to Central Asia by building railways, pointed out Prof. Warikoo. Moreover, Prof. Warikoo, while reflecting on the Chinese presence in Central Asia also indicated the negative image China has in the region. He said, China may have made a strong economic presence in the region and has been successful in establishing close ties with the government officials of CARs but China's image is negative among the population in these Republics.

The second speaker of the Session was **Prof. Evgeny Vodichev**. He gave an interesting view of the "Big Altai" approach in his presentation on *Xinjiang and South of Siberia in the Paradigm of Interactions in Central Asia: The Big Altai Approach*. He stated that the "idea of the integrated trans-Altai cooperation paved the way to further conceptualization of advantages of the Altai region in large", which gave birth to the "Big Altai" concept among scholars. Altai region, a part of South Siberia borders Xinjiang (China), Mongolia, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries. The speaker also emphasised that South Siberia is not just a bridge to Central Asia: it is Central Asia, both geographically and historically. And Xinjiang is the interface to Central Asia for China.

Trans-border trade in the last decade has marked a quantum jump. About three-fourth of Xinjiang's trade is with the frontier regions. Prof. Vodichev also pointed out that frontier cooperation is dependent on "interregional and international mechanism of balancing interests of all the parties involved". Chinese goods are delivered to Russia, Kazakhstan and further to Europe through Xinjiang. Similarly, Xinjiang also transports

energy and other raw materials from other countries to mainland China. Though Xinjiang is important for China, the region remains less developed. The trans-border cooperation, in principle could have been used to reduce the economic imbalance but it has not happened so far, stressed Prof. Vodichev.

Prof. Vodichev indicated that the “Big Altai” approach needs to be studied further as it has good potential to balance the needs of all the countries involved. The success of the project, however, depends on the political will, intention to harmonize central and regional economic policies and overcome the centre-periphery differences in the decision making process. The speaker pointed out that Xinjiang for China proves to be the most difficult case as the Chinese central authorities are suspicious about the region and, therefore, China practices a strict control over the region. To make the project successful, Prof. Vodichev suggested that a common communication forum for intellectual regional elites be established, and economic cooperation be encouraged along with science, education and cultural contacts among the countries involved. Harmonization of regional laws and practices to encourage trade and people to people contacts should be initiated.

The last speaker of the session **Senge Hasnan Sering** spoke on the *Impact of Sino-Pakistan Friendship on Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan*. The construction of Karakoram Highway connected Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan region and started barter trade between China and Pakistan. The speaker highlighted that Sino-Pak alliance matured at the cost of the rights and assets of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. Chinese interference in Gilgit-Baltistan region increased with the increase in interaction between the Wakhi ethnic communities on both sides of the Karakoram Highway.

However, the road also led to some negative consequences, as it facilitated clandestine supply of weapons between China and Pakistan and also facilitated the movement of Uyghur militants to POK for arms training. Nevertheless, the rise of religious extremism in Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan has negative consequences among the local people. This development ruined the secular cultural base, helped in spreading Afghan religious customs, polarise and weaken the society on sectarian lines and interfered in local politics, emphasised Senge.

Pakistan under ISI chief, General Javed Nasir supported the religious movement in Xinjiang, which matter was taken by China with Pakistan. Sering argued that the Uyghur movement’s shift from secular to religious nationalism cost them their international support base. This helped China

to suppress the movement and establish its control in the region.

According to Senge Sering, benefits of land connectivity and trans-border trade have failed to percolate down to the local population. The per capita income and literacy rate in Gilgit-Baltistan is low. Transit trade is primarily controlled by the Pakistanis and Hans and local people do not benefit from this trade. Moreover, the local markets are flooded with cheap Chinese products, which are posing major threat to the local cottage industries. The Karakoram Highway has also served as a conduit supplying drugs to Xinjiang and Gilgit-Baltistan region. The speaker indicated that Xinjiang ranks first in China regarding HIV/AIDS infected cases and most of the infections are a result of drug intake.

Sino-Pak Extradition Treaty of 2003 has further increased Chinese interference in Gilgit-Baltistan region. Both countries also held counter-terrorism military exercises in 2004 and 2006 in Xinjiang and along the Karakoram Highway in Pakistan. This has affected the fight for political freedom in Gilgit-Baltistan region and the people fear that Pakistan might secure Chinese assistance to thwart the movement in Gilgit-Baltistan region.

Chinese economic presence in Gilgit-Baltistan region is also increasing. China has invested more than US \$10 billion in energy and mineral sectors of the Gilgit-Baltistan region. More than 2,000 Chinese are engaged in building infrastructure projects in the region. The expansion of the Karakoram Highway will increase the number of Pakistanis and Hans in the region, thereby threatening the demographic composition of the region. It would also lead to stiff competition over the natural resources and destroy local cultures and religious identities. The economic benefits would not reach to the local population. The population of Gilgit-Baltistan region is apprehensive of Chinese disregard for local customs, cultures, work ethics and environment rules, highlighted the speaker. The local people are sceptic about the way the Chinese have treated the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and the Chinese policy of settling the Hans in the Xinjiang region that has altered the demography of the region in favour of the Hans. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan fear that similar fate awaits them with the completion of the several mega projects undertaken by China and Pakistan in the region.

The **Session IV** of the Seminar on 4 March 2010 discussed China's nationalities and religious policies in Xinjiang, re-emergence of Uyghur nationalism and Uyghur separatism from within and outside the region, China's ethnic minority policies in Xinjiang, the 5 July 2009 incident in Urumqi, etc. The session was chaired by **Prof. K. Warikoo**. The distinguished speakers of the session were- **Prof. Qiu Yonghui** of the

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, **Mr. Wang Qinji**, Deputy Director of Central Asian Regional Development Research Centre, Urumqi, China, **Prof. Jen-Kun Fu**, Director of Graduate Institute of Central Asian Studies, Ching Yun University, Taiwan, **Mr. Debasish Chaudhuri** of Department of Chinese Studies, University of Delhi, **Mr. Shih Chien-Yu** of the Europe Asia Research Centre, Taiwan and **Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata** of the Central Asian Studies Programme, School of International Studies, JNU.

Starting the session, **Prof. Qiu Yonghui** dilated on the theme *Rethinking Theory and Practice of Nationalities Policies in China*. There are different views on the nationality issue in China especially after the Lhasa event in 2008 and Urumqi incident on 5 July 2009. The government officials particularly in charge of the minority affairs publicly said that “violence and crimes that occurred in Urumqi have no links with the policies towards the minorities”. However, the views of ordinary Chinese contradict the official statements. At the same time, the Chinese academicians criticised and called for a “rethinking of the theory and practice of the nationality policies over the last 60 years.” Eminent sociologist of Beijing University, Prof. Ma Rong, stated that “up to now, the issue of nationality has become a momentous matter for the central government and the whole society. It is the concern for the very core interests of our Chinese Nation”.

Prof. Yonghui evaluated the theoretical confusion in general and in particular examined the harmful effects of the unwise policies related to the minorities in China. She compared India’s success story in its state formation with the Chinese experience. India became successful in redrawing the territorial boundaries keeping intact the identity of regions, sub-regions and of various communities and groups etc., said the speaker. India was also successful in reorganising new states on the basis of linguistic-cultural distinctiveness, economic viability and geographical unity along with the federal political and administrative rationale. However, China created two-tiers of nationality, the Chinese Nation and the 56 nationalities. Chinese policy has created sharp line of differences between the majority and the minorities, between the provinces and the autonomous regions, which could lead to fragmentation of China in future, cautioned Prof. Yonghui.

Mr. Wang Qinji spoke on *China’s Nationalities and Religious Policies in Xinjiang*. Xinjiang has always been home to multiple nationalities and religions since early days. The Hans are one of the earliest nationalities that came to the region in 101 BC. The Russians, Uzbeks and Tatars entered

Xinjiang and settled down during the late 19th century until the early 20th century. By 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established, there were 13 nationalities in Xinjiang. However, according to Mr. Qinji, though there are 55 nationalities in Xinjiang, Uyghurs are highest in numbers followed by Hans in the region. The population movement driven by economic, social and educational consideration changed the composition and distribution of nationalities in Xinjiang, which led to increase in the number of nationalities. The population of top four nationalities (Uyghur, Han, Kazakh and Hui) increased by 74%, 61%, 81% and 78% respectively during the period 1978-2007. Several religions such as- Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, Taoism, etc have co-existed in Xinjiang. Before the advent of Islam in the region, several other religions like Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Manicheism, Jingoism, etc came to Xinjiang along the Silk Road. These religions existed along with the local indigenous religion and Shamanism.

However, after the establishment of New China, nationality and religious policies were introduced to ensure territorial integrity and to achieve stability and development in Xinjiang. All the nationality policies of the central government are implemented in Xinjiang to provide fundamental benefits to all nationalities. The basic aim of these policies is to form, develop and consolidate the new-type of nationality relationship based on equality, unity and mutuality. He also pointed out that the freedom of religious belief has been implemented fully in Xinjiang. Mr. Qinji stressed that these policies have received support from all nationalities and have laid the foundation for a sustainable, healthy and long-term development in future.

Prof. Jen-Kun Fu analysed *Uyghur Nationalism and 5 July 2009 Incident in Chinese Xinjiang*. He discussed the formation of Xinjiang and how this region has been renamed in different times in Chinese History like Xiyu or Western Region, Xinjiang (province), East Turkistan (Islamic State to Republic), Doganstan, Khotan Emirate, Three District Revolution, and the current Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Prof. Fu highlighted the creation and development of modern Uyghur nation and nationalism particularly in the early 20th century. He also described the national unity versus "three evil forces" - religious radicalism, separatism and terrorism, in the context of the East Turkistan Independence Movement.

Prof. Fu referred to the two ways of achieving independence, such as- the national self-determination through peaceful means and national independence through violent revolt. He discussed the Uyghurs of East

Turkistan versus Hans of Xinjiang in different perspectives. The 5 July 2009 incident in Urumqi revealed the real situation and conflict between Uyghurs and Hans in Xinjiang and other parts of China. The Xinjiang Independence Movement (XIM) was conceptualized so that internationally and globally Xinjiang was contextualized as Palestine, Balkans, Afghanistan under Taliban and Al-Qaeda, etc. He stated that the current policy priority of China should focus on national unity instead of labelling and identifying the potential dissent. The present situation in the region needs proper settlement of political and ethnic issues to avoid further radical confrontation in the future, emphasised Prof. Fu.

Chinese Ethnic Minority Policies and Local Autonomy Movement in Xinjiang was discussed by **Mr. Debasish Chaudhuri**. In the past, there were many failed attempts to establish an independent state by the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region. Since 1930s and 1940s, contemporary Uyghur activists of the Eastern Turkestan Movement have been continuing their struggle against the Chinese rule. Mr. Chaudhuri stated that the present autonomy movement in Xinjiang mainly occurred during the reform period and basically as a result of the State policies in the region. He further described various ideological bases and analysed impact of these policies on the Uyghurs and the nature of their movement. He added that the main concerns of the Chinese leaders are 'nationality policies' or 'nationality work'. Mr. Chaudhuri argued that limited autonomy and other state policies could not meet the aspirations of the Uyghurs in the region.

Huge economic disparities existed between the Hans and minority dominated regions due to excessive importance for economic activities in coastal provinces of the east and south China during the early reform period. Inequalities in economic development caused the inter-regional imbalance, which encouraged Uyghur resistance during the 1990s. He further stated that the Eastern Turkestan Movement is not a unified Uyghur national identity even though there is widespread discontent among the majority of the Uyghurs. He also explained various ideological shades within the movement and in the process of uniting different Uyghur diaspora organisations at the international level.

Mr. Shih Chien-Yu, in his presentation threw light on the *Re-emergence of Trans-border Uyghur Nationalism in late 20th Century*. He highlighted the development of the Uyghur leadership-in-exile since the 1949 when the Chinese communist came to power. Mr. Chien-Yu analysed the aim behind establishing the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) in 2004 and explained how this Congress has helped in uniting various groups of Uyghur

diasporas with distinct socio-political orientations. The WUC played a major role in amalgamating Uyghur diasporas against China's rule in Xinjiang in a peaceful manner. He also stressed another role of this Congress, i.e., to reconstruct a new leadership with better organisational efficiency in claiming their territory.

The WUC became successful in portraying ideal leadership to the Uyghurs in China and worldwide like Erkin Alptekin, Dolkun Isa and Rebiya Kadeer, who are presently serving at the WUC. These leaders' perspective on Uyghur nationalism is also changing while confronting the Chinese government both domestically and internationally. Mr. Chien-Yu discussed various strategies adopted by WUC since its establishment and particularly after the 5 July 2009 incident in Urumqi, and also highlighted the strength and limitation of these strategies.

Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata, in his paper on *Uyghur Separatism in Xinjiang: International Response*, gave an overview of the Uyghur separatist movement in Xinjiang and outside the region, and the international support it could garner. Dr. Debata stated that the efforts made by Uyghurs to create a separate homeland out of China have been a failure. Their worldwide propaganda could not become successful as it failed to internationalize the issue. Uyghurs could not garner support from major powers including the USA. The USA does not actively support the cause of Uyghurs as it remains engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq. The global terrorist list of the UN and USA includes many Uyghur terrorist groups including the 'Home of East Turkistan Youth', 'East Turkistan Islamic Movement' (ETIM), etc. Though the Uyghur diaspora in some European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Belgium have been trying to internationalise the Uyghur movement through propaganda, lobbying, fund raising etc, however, they have failed to achieve the desired result for this cause.

China has been successful in narrowing down the support of other countries for Uyghur movement through its diplomatic initiatives. China's warm relations with the Muslim world have affected support from these countries to the Uyghur cause, in spite of being a predominantly Muslim province. China has also been successful to secure support of the CARs. He also mentioned that India having its own problems of separatism and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, has kept itself away from the Uyghur issue. The global "war on terror" after 9/11 incident strengthened the Chinese position in crushing the movement in Xinjiang, which it portrays to the world as a Islamic extremist problem. Besides, the relations among

the major Turkic groups are not so cordial within Xinjiang. There is hardly any hope of pan-Turkic solidarity among the Turkic Muslims within or outside Xinjiang. There is also no support from domestic neighbours like



From left, Ms. Mrinalini Saran, Prof. K. Warikoo and Prof. R. Kumar



Some Chinese delegates at the Seminar



Some Foreign delegates at the Seminar



Participants of the Seminar posing for a group photograph

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