

CHINA'S ROLE IN WAR ON TERROR: AN ANALYSIS OF XINJIANG REGION

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Abstract

Terrorism being the primary threat to China's national security therefore counter terrorism has turned out to be the main point of China's domestic and foreign policy. The major terrorist threat that China faces is posed by Uyghur separatist fighters of Xinjiang. They claim and fight for a separate independent state called "East Turkistan". The Xinjiang issue is the major anxiety and the focal point of China's war on terror. To stop extremism and terrorism in Xinjiang China has adopted a multi-dimensional approach i.e. Strike Hard Campaign, diplomatic actions to isolate terrorists and get the help of other countries, religious, economic and social anti-terrorist policies to eradicate the roots of terrorism from society. China is also cooperating with the countries including US, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asian Republics, and many others in fighting against terrorism. From the platform of Shanghai Cooperation Organization China is also playing important role in counterterrorism. China major interest in war on terror is to stop the spread of extremism and terrorism within her borders particularly in Xinjiang province, as well as to make sure that neighbouring countries not become safe haven and base camp for the Uyghur militants. The main objective of this paper is to analyses the phenomena of terrorism in Xinjiang and China's role in war on terror.

Keywords: China, Xinjiang, separatism, terrorism, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), war on terror.

Introduction

Terrorism is the most violent threat to life and property of human being. It is the most serious threat not only because of killing people but because of the power and influence it provides to its associates. The major terrorist threat that China faces is posed by Uyghur separatist of Xinjiang.

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They claim and fight for a separate independent state called “East Turkistan”, or at the least wide authority than the presently allowed.¹ Their agitation is recorded since the 1949 communist revolution but on April 5, 1990 a group of militants of East Turkistan Islamic Movement launched a severe attack in Baren Town of Xinjiang and advocated a “holy war”, in order to gain “East Turkistan”.² This event was the beginning of Uyghur’s aggression and violence. At present many Uyghur’s organizations are operating in China among which the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is identified as a Terrorist organization, which the U.S government has also declared as a terrorist organization.³ This organization fight for an independent state called “East Turkistan”. The militants of East Turkistan movement launch attacks in order to pressurise and terrorise the government of China for their political objectives. The criminal laws of People’s Republic of China defines terrorism as “whoever implies any idea, talk or action that by method of violence damage or danger, intends to create social fear and anxiety, impact national strategy and policy making, formulate ethnic dislike and intensely, challenge state power, or part the state”. Terrorists hurt non-combatants to move forward their cause. Intentional and deliberate killing of non-combatant is not allowed even in war, that’s why terrorism is unjust and unfair, and such is the case in Xinjiang region of China. Terrorism is an effective strategy for the weaker group in a conflict. It is a criminal and illegal act that affects the society and its citizens more than immediate victim.

Literature Review

Few scholarly works on China’s role in war on terror. The analysis of the literature show gaps in the related academic scholarship on the issue concerned. First, there is lack of quality literature on China’s domestic war on terror, second, most of the available works cover either ethnic or religious dimensions of the Uyghur community living in Xinjiang, and third, there is also lack of quality literature on cooperation of China in war on terror with other countries. Yoram Evron says that the primary threat of terrorism that China faces is from Uyghur separatists, living in China’s Province Xinjiang.⁴ Basically, they are separatists, but their activities fall in the categories of terrorism. Martine I. Wayne examined the causes of Uyghur’s uprising and counter uprising policies and initiatives. He says that the issue is local but has foreign support and links with international terrorist organizations.⁵

¹ Yoram Evron, “China’s Anti-Terrorism Policy,” *Strategic*, 10(3), (2007): 76.

² Davide Giglio, *Separatism and the War on Terror in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*, (UN Peace Operations training Institute), 13.

³ *Ibid*, 76.

⁴ Yoram Evron, “China’s Anti-Terrorism Policy,” *Strategic*, 10(3), (2007): 76-83.

⁵ Martine I. Wayne, *China’s War on Terrorism Counter Insurgency, Politics, and Internal Security*, (London: Routledge, 2008).

Richard Weitz study shows the links of Taliban with extremist groups active in Xinjiang who are involved in attacks against on government assets, officials and civilians in China. Therefore, Beijing supported NATO operations to eliminate terrorism in Afghanistan, and providing for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.⁶ As concerned Chinese cooperation with other countries against terrorism, Xu Xin analysed the China-US cooperation in war on terror after the 9/11 attacks. It says that China casted her vote in favour of the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and supported the US attack on Afghanistan. The US Department of States also declared East Turkistan Islamic Movement active in Xinjiang as a terrorist organization.⁷ The study of Anthony H. Cordesman and Brandon Fete highlighted the China and U.S policy differences in war on terror, and China's diplomatic efforts against terrorism. They are also agreed to cooperate in anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism.⁸ Pan Guang studied that combating terrorism has become a significant feature of China's domestic policy. Beijing counter terrorism strategy at home started even before 9/11 attacks when in April 1990, Uyghur separatists launched an attack in Baren district of Xinjiang in which about 60 citizens and policemen were killed. It was the beginning of terrorism carried out by the East Turkestan activists. Due to this threat China become to be an active country in the international anti-terrorism efforts.⁹

History of Xinjiang

The word "Xinjiang" literally means "new territory" or "new frontier" was coined during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). It is the North-Western province of China having an area of 1.6 million sq. km. i.e. 1/6 (one sixth) of the total area of China.¹⁰ It has 5,600 km long border shares with eight countries; Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and Mongolia.¹¹ Its population is approximately 19 million.¹² Among the 47 ethnic groups living in China in which 13 are officially recognised, many are living in Xinjiang including, Han, Hui (The

⁶ Richard Weitz, "The Limits of Partnership: China, NATO and the Afghan War," *China Security*, 6(1), (2010): 21-35.

⁷ Xu Xin, "Harmonization of NTS Securitization in U.S.-China Security Cooperation," *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, 19, (2004): 1-28.

⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman and Brandon Fite, *US and Chinese Cooperation in Counterterrorism in the Middle East and Central Asia*, (Washington DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011).

⁹ Pan Guang, "East Turkestan Terrorism and the Terrorist Arc: China's Post-9/11 Anti-Terror Strategy," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4(2), (2006): 19-24.

¹⁰ James Millward, *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*, (Washington DC: Policy Studies East-West Center, 2004): 52.

¹¹ Lillian Craig Harris, "Xinjiang, Central Asia and the Implications for China's Policy in the Islamic World," *China Quarterly*, 133, (1993): 111.

¹² Yoram Evron, "China's Anti-Terrorism Policy," *Strategic*, 10(3), (2007): 76.

Hun are Muslim), Uyghur, Kazaks (1 million), Mongolian (159,000), Kyrgyz (150,000) and small number of Uzbeks and Tajiks are also living there.¹³



Figure 1: Map Showing Xinjiang Neighbours.

Uyghurs are Sunni Muslims, followers of Hanafi school of thought. They are racially Turk arrived Xinjiang region in 8th and 9th century from present day Mongolia. They founded a kingdom in this region in late eighth century and held the control of this area until Genghis Khan captured in 13th century. The present Chinese control of Xinjiang dates back to 1870s when a Muslim revolt led by Yaqub Beg was suppressed by Qing dynasty and thus in 1884 Xinjiang became a province of China.¹⁴ After the communist revolution and establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949 the Xinjian region became an autonomous region of China enjoying wide autonomy. In fact, Xinjian is Chinese territory since ancient time and an integral part of China.

Importance of Xinjiang Province for China

Xinjiang region has huge economic, political as well as strategic importance for China. It has extensive hydrocarbon and under soil mineral resources including approximately 30% of China's oil reservoirs, 40% of coal reservoirs and 34% of gas reservoirs. Likewise, huge amount of oil and gas are imported by pipelines from Central Asia to China through this province. The province is also one of the China's biggest gas generating and second biggest oil generating regions. It is estimated that only the Tarim Basin oil reservoirs has 74 billion barrels oil and 282 trillion cubic feet gas. These reservoirs are too much significant as China's indigenous energy needs. This province has also 115 out of total 147 kinds of minerals found in China. It also ensures the supply of 1/3 of total cotton production of the

¹³ Davide Giglio, *Separatism and the War on Terror in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*, (U.N Peace Operations Training Institute): 7.

¹⁴ Ibid. 9-10

country.¹⁵ Xinjiang also enlarges China's boundaries to Central Asia and South Asia. It has 5,600 km long border shares with eight countries: Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and Mongolia. China has also important military installations in this region and also conducted her nuclear weapons tests in Xinjiang.¹⁶ There are six air bases, 12 army divisions and the majority of her ballistic missiles and other weapon stores are situated in Xinjiang.¹⁷

Terrorism in Xinjiang

Since very long many ethnic groups are living here, communicated each other, mixed together, living together, working together, living in harmony, learning together, having fun together, working together and developed the society in harmonious manner, but since 1990 some groups started uprising based on their political objectives. They started a separatist movement to establish "East Turkistan". Terrorist attacks are taking place in China particularly in Xinjiang with growing number since the 1990 as the outcome of the objections of Uyghurs. They say that their cultural and religious hold on Xinjiang is under attack through strict religious, social, educational and economic policies of Chinese central government. The major tensions between them and central government of China are provincial autonomy, cultural and religious freedom and their claim for separate state. A report issued by the government of China in January 2002, titled "East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity" stated that Osama had financed and planned with the leaders of the Central and Western Asian terrorist organizations to help the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in Xinjiang to start holy war against China. The report further says that Osama meet with the head of ETIM in 1999 and told him to make coordination with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Afghan Taliban and assured economic assistance. Osama and Taliban offered funds for the training of the East Turkistan fighters, bear the costs of the operations, offered them weapons, bullets, vehicles and telecommunications equipment. It further elaborated that Uyghurs terrorists had launched more than 200 attacks in which 162 persons died and 440 injured from 1990 to 2001.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid, 72-73.

¹⁶ Lillian Craig Harris, "Xinjiang, Central Asia and the Implications for China's Policy in the Islamic World," *China Quarterly*, 133, (1993), 111.

¹⁷ Dana Carver Boehm, "China's Failed War on Terror: Fanning the Flames of Uyghur Separatist Violence," *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*, 2(3), (2009): 72.

¹⁸ China State Council Information Office, "East Turkestan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity," (Government of China, January 21, 2002) <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/23949.html>, accessed on 11/3/2018.

Leading Terrorist Attacks in China

Bombing and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) are the common weapons of terrorists in China. They not only target security forces but also target public places. The leading attacks were the following.

1. Separatists launched an attack in Baran in Akto district of Xinjiang region on April 5, 1990 in which about 60 civilian and police personals were killed. This Violent attack symbolized the starting of terrorist aggression carried out by the “East Turkestan” activists.¹⁹
2. In March 2003, a bus was attacked by terrorist in Xinjiang in which 21 passengers and 19 other citizens were killed.²⁰
3. On January 22, 2005, thirteen people were killed and eighteen others wounded in 2 separate blasts in Xinjiang during Eidal Adha.²¹
4. In 2007, total 19 terrorist attacks took place in which 38 people were killed and 127 others injured.²²
5. At the time of Olympic Games in 2008, two Uyghur women did suicide attacks in which 31 people died in Xinjiang.²³
6. On August 4, 2008, 16 policemen were died and 16 others were injured in a terrorist attack. In another attack on August 10, 2008 in Kucha district by Uyghurs on a police station and other government offices with explosive devices 31 people were killed.²⁴
7. In July 2009, an uprising was started in Urumqi in which many vehicles and shops were burned, 200 people were killed and more than 1600 injured.²⁵
8. On August 19, 2010, a terrorist drove an explosive tricycle into a mass in Aksu city. In the blast 18 people killed included three security officials and 15 others injured.²⁶
9. In July 2011 terrorist launched an attack in Kashgar city which took the lives of some three-dozen people.²⁷

¹⁹ Pan Guang, “East Turkestan Terrorism and the Terrorist Arc: China’s Post-9/11 Anti-Terror Strategy,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4(2), (2006): 19-20.

²⁰ Michael Clarke, “China’s ‘War on Terror’ in Xinjiang: Human Security and the Causes of Violent Uyghur Separatism,” *Griffith Asia Institute*, 11, (2007): 16.

²¹ Raman, “Explosive Situation in Xinjiang,” *Asia Times*, 28/01/2005.

²² Anthony H. Cordesman and Brandon Fite, *US and Chinese Cooperation in Counterterrorism in the Middle East and Central Asia*, (Washington DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2011): 6.

²³ Richard Lloyd Parry, “Female Suicide Bombers in Uyghur Separatist War in Xinjiang Province,” *Times Online (UK)*, 11/08/2008.

²⁴ Dana Carver Boehm, “China’s Failed War on Terror: Fanning the Flames of Uyghur Separatist Violence,” *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*, 2(3), (2009): 112-113.

²⁵ Richard Weitz, “The Limits of Partnership: China, NATO and the Afghan War,” *China Security*, 6(1), (2010): 23.

²⁶ *The Guardian*, 19/08/2010.

10. In 2011, 197 people including 4 policemen had lost their lives in different terrorist attacks.²⁸
11. On February 28, 2012, a terrorist group attacked with knives and killed 10 innocent persons in Yecheng city.²⁹
12. On April 23, 2013 in an attack 21 people died. On another occasion, the Tiananmen Square which is the political heart of the Beijing, jeep crashed into crowd in which 5 people were killed and at least 38 wounded.³⁰
13. The year 2014 saw two worst terrorist attacks. In March, a violent group armed with knives attacked on travellers at the Kunming Railway station in Yunnan in which 29 people died and 140 injured. Another deadly attack took place in May 2014 in Urumqi, in which 43 civilians died and other 90 injured.³¹
14. On October 12, 2014 in Kashgar city in an attack 22 people were killed and on November 18, 2014 in another bomb blast and knife attacks in Shache 15 people were killed.³²
15. On October 28, 2014, a Jeep blasted by ETIM in Tiananmen Square in which 5 people were killed and 40 injured.³³
16. In the last week of June 2014, within Xinjiang 100 were killed in different terrorist attacks and 50 more died in aggression in Luntai district in September 2014.³⁴
17. On June 24, 2015 Uyghur terrorist attacked with hand grenades on Police Station in Xinjiang in which 18 Policemen were killed and many injured.
18. On September 18, 2015 terrorists launched an attack at the Sogan Colliery in Aksu city in which 50 people were killed.³⁵
19. On December 28, 2016 in a terrorist attack in Moyu county caused 2 death and three people injured and five people were killed in another attack Xinjiang on Communist party office.³⁶

²⁷ Dirk Van Der Kley, *China's Foreign Policy in Afghanistan*, (Australia: Lowy Institute, 2014): 4.

²⁸ *The Guardian*, 18/07/2011.

²⁹ "The Xinjiang problem and Pakistan," *The Express Tribune*, 05/03/2012.

³⁰ Malcolm Moore, "Tiananmen Square on lockdown after car explosion kills five," *The Telegraph*, 28/10/2013.

³¹ Gartenstein Ross Daveed, *et al.*, *China's Post-2014 Role in Afghanistan*, (Washington D.C: Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2014): 13.

³² Yuwen Wu, "China hails crackdown on terror in Xinjiang," *BBC News*, 27/05/2015.

³³ Nick Holdstock, *Islam and instability in China's Xinjiang*, (Norway: Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre, 2014): 6.

³⁴ Dirk Van Der Kley, *China's Foreign Policy in Afghanistan*, (Australia: Lowy Institute, 2014): 3.

³⁵ *The Guardian*, 01/10/2015.

³⁶ Government of China, "White Paper: Xinjiang's Anti-Terrorism, De-radicalization Struggle and Human Rights Protection," Information Office of the State Council,

20. On February 16, 2017, eight people were killed in Xinjian during a knife attack.³⁷

Since 2018 there is comparatively stability and no major terrorist attack recorded. Last year more than 150 million local and foreigner tourist visited Xinjiang. This is a positive sign of peace and stability in the region.

Uyghur's Links with Al-Qaeda and Taliban

There is considerable evidence that show Uyghurs relations with Al-Qaeda and Taliban which increased their operational capabilities in China. For instance, ETIM ex-leader Hasan Mahsum took shelter in Afghanistan during Taliban rule in 1997 and founded its base camp near Khost city and a training camp for Uyghurs militants to wages *Jihad* against China with the consent of Osama. With the help of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, ETIM founded three more training camps in Afghanistan between 1997 and 2001.³⁸ In May 2002, it was reported that 1000 Uyghur terrorists had received training in the training camps of Taliban in Afghanistan and came back to Xinjiang to take part in the separatist movement. About 20 Uyghurs were killed and 300 had been arrested in Afghanistan by US army. In June 2002, the representative of China's armed forces stated that some 400 Uyghurs fighting in Afghanistan against US and NATO forces.³⁹ In October 2009 Abu Yahya Al-Libi, the Libyan Al-Qaeda leader called on Uyghurs to fight holy war against China. In 2012 in a US Drone attack Abdul Shakoore Turkistani killed who was the leader of ETIM and a key figure of Al-Qaeda in FATA area of Pakistan. However, after July 30 and 31, 2011, attacks in Kashgar area a video had been released by the East Turkistan Islamic Movement showed one of the attacker getting training in a training camp of Taliban.⁴⁰ In 2013, Al-Qaeda chief Al-Zawahiri showed his support with the militants fighting against China.⁴¹ These are some evidence that shows Uyghur's links with Al-Qaeda and Taliban.

China's Counter Terrorism Campaign

In order to cope the terrorist challenge that threatened China's security and unity, she launched an anti-terrorism strategy fighting terrorism at three level: militarily, diplomatically and socially. The first dimension is related

March 18, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-03/18/content_5374643.htm accessed on 19/8/2020.

³⁷ South China Morning Post, 15/02/2017.

³⁸ Michael Clarke, "China's 'War on Terror' in Xinjiang: Human Security and the Causes of Violent Uyghur Separatism," *Griffith Asia Institute*, 11, (2007): 20.

³⁹ Daveed Gartenstein Ross, Daniel Trombly & Nathaniel Barr, *China's Post-2014 Role in Afghanistan*, (Washington DC: Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2014): 12.

⁴⁰ Philip B. K. Potter, "Terrorism in China Growing Threats with Global Implications," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter, (2013): 75.

⁴¹ Dirk Van Der Kley, *China's Foreign Policy in Afghanistan*, (Australia: Lowy Institute 2014): 5.

with preventing and suppressing terrorists through anti-terrorist legislation and law enforcement agencies actions, second dimension is related with diplomatic actions against terrorists to isolate them and get international support against them and the third dimension is related with religious, economic and social policies.

Domestic Suppression

In 1996, the government of China started "Strike Hard Campaign" to counter separatism, extremism and terrorism.⁴² China also deployed army on the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan to stop terrorists coming from those countries. In Xinjiang from March 2002 to February 2005, 325 people were sentenced due to their involvement in terrorist activities.⁴³ On December 15, 2003, China Ministry of Public Security make public a list of the 11 most wanted persons belonged to East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).⁴⁴ In January 2007 during an operation 18 terrorists killed and detected and confiscated 22 bombs and 1,500 others which were in making process, as well as rifles and explosives devices.⁴⁵ On April 10, 2008 law enforcement agencies arrested 45 persons and disclosed a plan arranged by terrorists to kidnap the foreign countries citizens and launch suicide attacks in Beijing during the Olympics games.⁴⁶ In response to the uprising and terrorism took place on July 5, 2009 in Urumqi, about 4,000 insurgents were detained within 15 days of the incident among whom at least death sentences were given to 26 militants.⁴⁷ Moreover, in June 2014, thirteen terrorists had been sentenced in Xinjiang for terrorist acts. Twelve more were given death sentences in October 2014 for the attacks in which 100 people killed in Shache in July 2014.⁴⁸ The government of China has also increased too much the defence budget of Xinjiang. The official sources show 90 % increase in the Xinjiang defence budget reached 2.89 billion Yuan equal to 423 million U.S dollars.⁴⁹ The government of China opposing all type of

⁴² Bhavna Singh, *Separatism in Xinjiang between Local Problems and International Jihad*, (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), (2012): 3-4.

⁴³ Dana Carver Boehm, "China's Failed War on Terror: Fanning the Flames of Uyghur Separatist Violence," *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*, 2(3), (2009): 117.

⁴⁴ Bhavna Singh, *Separatism in Xinjiang between Local Problems and International Jihad?* (New Delhi India: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), (2012): 6.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, *Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China*, (Hawaii: Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2008): 5.

⁴⁶ Richard Weitz, "The Limits of Partnership: China, NATO and the Afghan War," *China Security*, 6(1), (2010): 22-23.

⁴⁷ Sean Robert, *Imaginary Terrorism? The Global War on Terror and the Narrative of the Uyghur Terrorist Threat*, (Washington DC: PONARS Eurasia, George Washington University, 2012): 15.

⁴⁸ Yuwen Wu, "China Hails Crackdown on Terror in Xinjiang," *BBC News*, 27/05/2015.

⁴⁹ Philip B. K. Potter, "Terrorism in China Growing Threats with Global Implications," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter, (2013): 73.

extremism and terrorism. Terrorist assaults have occurred repeatedly, affecting the property and lives of all racial factions. On March 18, 2019, the State Council Information Office of China issued a white paper on “Xinjiang’s Anti-Terrorism, De-radicalization Struggle and Human Rights Protection”. According to this white paper the Xinjiang region has been severely affected by ethnic separatists, religious extremists and terrorists also referred in China as “three forces”. The separatism and terrorist militants in Xinjiang region are involved in violent attacks and sabotage movements, caused great destruction to peace, security and social stability in the Xinjiang region and also the cause of pain of other ethnic sects. For countering these three evils the government formulated anti-terrorism and de-radicalization campaigns which are always carried out under the rule of law to ensure peace, security, stability and national unity.⁵⁰ It also not only fully respects and protects freedom of religious belief of Uyghurs but also permit and ensure legal religious activities and meets the normal religious needs of religious minorities.

China’s Anti-Terrorism Legislation

To tackle the issue and punish terrorists China has made strict anti-terrorist laws. On December 29, 2001, National People’s Congress amended the article 120 of Criminal Laws of the state which enhanced penalties to minimum ten years and maximum life prison for those who runs terrorist organizations or having its membership. It also determined five years imprisonment for those who finance terrorist organizations.⁵¹ In addition, a “Counter Terrorism Law” has been passed on July 1, 2015 created “counter terrorism bodies” at centre and all provinces under the Ministry of Public Security.⁵² Apart from these, other significant measures introduced by this law are including; article 3 makes stronger the preventing measures of terrorism, article 4 improves the information sharing mechanism by state intelligence agencies, article 7 authorized law enforcement agencies to conduct anti-terrorist operations and article 15 bound both local and foreign telecommunication and internet service providing companies to set up “backdoors” to report encryption keys to the concerned authorities. These new laws are the combination of military, judicial and administrative means to tackle the problem of terrorism. As most of the people in Xinjiang region are not aware of legal knowledge therefore government popularize the legal

⁵⁰ Government of China, "White Paper: Xinjiang's Anti-Terrorism, De-radicalization Struggle and Human Rights Protection," Information Office of the State Council, March 18, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-03/18/content_5374643.htm accessed on 19/8/2020.

⁵¹ Amnesty International. “People’s Republic of China: China’s anti-terrorism Legislation and Repression in the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous Region,” 22/03/2002. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGASA170102002>, accessed on 11/3/2018.

⁵² Zunyou Zhou, “China’s Draft Counter-Terrorism Law,” *Global Research and Analysis, Jamestown Foundation*, 15(14), (2015).

knowledge and improve awareness about the rule of law.⁵³ People in rural areas have lack of legal understanding and weak sense of the rule of law. Therefore, they are vulnerable to easily misguide and exploited by terrorist organization to do offenses. The government gives immense importance to propagation of law and introduced the “Rules on Publicity and Education of the Legal System of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region” to help people in this regard.

China Educational and Social Anti-Terrorism Policies

To tackle the issue of separatism and terrorism Chinese policy makers also introduced considerable educational and social reforms in Xinjiang. Since the emergence of this issue in the early 1990s, social restrictions and control made tight in Xinjiang than elsewhere in China. After the 1990 protest in Baren city of Xinjiang against which lead to terrorism, the provincial government approved new rules regarding protests in the province. These regulations determined that for all types of protests official permission will be necessary. In addition, the applicant must determine the protest objectives, method, slogan, number of participant and assurance that it will not endanger public security and unification.⁵⁴ Wearing such clothes having a falcate moon and star (symbols appearing on the East Turkestan freedom flag) is also prohibited. On December 24, 2014 the provincial government promulgated and implemented telecommunication regulations, seeks to make stronger the administration of Internet security to stop the use of the Internet to produce, photocopy, distribute, propagate or store data related to terrorism and separatism in order to protect social order and national security”.⁵⁵ Moreover, in recent years as a result of efficient precautionary anti-extremism and anti-terrorism measures social atmosphere in Xinjiang has experienced considerable positive changes. Morality and justice have risen, malevolent feelings have deteriorated, legal awareness among people has significantly increased, the quest for modern technological and scientific knowledge and a civilized lifestyle adopted massively and integration of ethnic groups at local level is significantly improved as Xinjiang is the home of many ethnic groups.

Development for Peace

Chinese policy makers have the opinion that economic development can weaken Uyghur's freedom movement and terrorism and can resolve the

⁵³ Government of China, "White Paper: Xinjiang's Anti-Terrorism, De-radicalization Struggle and Human Rights Protection", Information Office of the State Council, March 18, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-03/18/content_5374643.htm accessed on 19/8/2020.

⁵⁴ Nick Holdstock, *Islam and Instability in China's Xinjiang*, (Norway: Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre, 2014): 4.

⁵⁵ Yang Tao, "Xinjiang People's Government Notice on Strengthening the Management of Internet Information Security," *Xinjiang Daily*, 07/01/2015.

issue. Therefore, she is spending a huge amount on developmental projects in Xinjiang. Huge investments worth of \$300 billion have been done in this province till 2015.⁵⁶ In addition, the central government has announced the investment of 100 billion Yuan on 70 most important developmental programs in the province during next 5 years. China has also officially attempted to decrease the gap between per-capita income of Uyghurs and Hans in Xinjiang. Since 2010 a new 5% reserve tax has been charging on gas and oil producing in Xinjiang to increase local income by 25%.⁵⁷ Such policies are very helpful to counter terrorism, extremism and separatism in Xinjiang. In recent years, focus on improving people's living standard the government has done a good job in improving and safeguarding people's living standard which is related to the welfare, peace, stability and social harmony. In Xinjiang government executed the people-centred development ideology which concentrated on safeguarding and developing living standard and strongly supported such schemes that benefit citizens in the areas of health, education, employment and social security. Implemented the three years developmental plan (2018-2020), employment scheme for 100,000 citizens and employed 75,000 laborers from extremely needy families, promoting job opportunities through the development of industries and encouraging entrepreneurship to encourage employment and create more opportunities. Only from the year 2016 to 2018 total 1.4408 million new jobs were created in Xinjiang.⁵⁸ For enhancing people capabilities teaching and training centres have been established focusing on different vocational skills seeking, legal knowledge, national language and de-radicalization.

China's Anti-Terrorism Diplomacy

China is also fighting terrorism at diplomatic front. Its anti-terrorist diplomatic efforts are successful. Soon after 9/11 attacks, Beijing effectively lobbied to declare ETIM as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State in August 2002. It was a big diplomatic success of China as before this U.S. was continuously criticizing Chinese policies in Xinjiang for human rights violations. Moreover, it is also the result of China effective diplomacy that the government of Pakistan and its political parties, especially religious parties support China's stand on Xinxiang issue. It is playing positive role in the solution of Muslim uprising and separatist movement in Xinjiang province and trying to convince its supporters and propagators to turn away from the separatist campaign. In this regard the

⁵⁶ Sebastien Peyrouse, "Security and Islam in Asia: Lessons from China's Uyghur Minority," *Policy Brief-N-87*, (2011): 2.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Government of China, "*White Paper: Xinjiang's Anti-Terrorism, De-radicalization Struggle and Human Rights Protection*," (Information Office of the State Council, March 18, 2019), Retrieved from: http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-03/18/content_5374643.htm accessed on 19/8/2020.

visit of chief of Jamiatul Ulema-i-Islam (F) Mulana Fazlur Rehman and Amir Jamaat-i-Islami Qazi Husain Ahmad to China at the invitation of the Chinese government was an effective diplomatic success.⁵⁹ In past Uyghurs were coming to Pakistan to take shelter and for religious education. It was another China diplomatic success that Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf in his visit to China in November 2003 declared that “his state will never permit any one including activists of East Turkestan to exploit the Pakistani territory for the accomplishment of anti-China activity”. Both the countries signed extradition treaty to make possible the exchange of detainee in 2003. Ismail Kadir who was third chief leader of East Turkistan Islamic Movement was arrested by Pakistani agencies and handed over to China. Another East Turkistan Islamic Movement founder and an important figure, Ismail Samed was extradited to China by Pakistan in October 2005.⁶⁰ Islamabad also bound the administrators of religious Schools (Madrassa) not to enroll any Uighur student. Furthermore, China and Pakistan conduct joint anti-terrorist armed exercise from time to time.

China's Anti-terrorist Cooperation with Other Countries

China's official post 9/11 policy is “terrorism is a worldwide evil threaten international peace, security and stability”. After 9/11 attacks China voted in United Nation Security Council in favour of Resolution 1368, aimed to fight against terrorism.⁶¹ It is also cooperating with the US in the war on terror. China is fighting war against terrorists at home and also cooperates with such state fighting terrorism. It is also playing a very important indirect role in Afghanistan by assisting its security agencies, providing huge economic aid, doing investment, political support and facilitating peace talks between Afghan government and the Taliban with the collaboration of Pakistan. The talks were hosted in the Xinjiang capital Urumqi and Pakistan's City Murree. On many occasions the Afghan government appreciated China's role in peace process. Moreover, it is also providing training facility to Afghan officials and armed forces to build its capacity and strengthen administration in Afghanistan to protect it from falling again. For instance, China trained 300 Afghan army officers under defence agreement signed on June 6, 2012.⁶² Under this agreement China has also provided 1.5 million dollars grant to the government of

⁵⁹ Rashid Ahmad Khan, “Pakistan and China: Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism,” *Strategic Studies*, (2012): 77.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, *Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China*, (Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2008): 6.

⁶¹ Shirley A. Kan, *U.S.-China Counter-Terrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy*, (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010): 2.

⁶² Daveed Gartenstein Ross, Daniel Trombly & Nathaniel Barr, *China's Post-2014 Role in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Foundation, 2014): 16.

Afghanistan.⁶³ It provides economic aid to Afghanistan as the government is facing economic difficulties in order to protect it from collapse. China's investment and aid are as significant as that of US and NATO troops for stability in Afghanistan. Economic development can probably resolve the issue of terrorism, militancy and conflict in Afghanistan as well as in other such countries facing terrorism, where poverty appears to be one of the most important cause of hostility, aggression, instability, violence and terrorism.

China is also closely cooperating with Pakistan in fighting terrorism. She has strong collaboration with Pakistan to crack down against the three evil forces "separatism, extremism and terrorism" to maintain the security and solidity of both states as well as the surrounding region.⁶⁴ With the help of Pakistan it has killed and arrested many key figures of ETIM. Pakistan had extradited 14 East Turkistan Islamic Movement members to China in 1997, 7 in 2002 and 9 in 2009.⁶⁵ Pakistan Army killed the leader of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement Hasan Mahsum in December 2003 during an operation in South Waziristan area of ex-FATA. On June 15, 2009, the then Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik visited China. During his visit China announced to provide 280 million dollars security equipments to Pakistan to build capacity of its law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism. These security equipments were included mobile and vehicle scanners and some other types of tools. Only between June 2009 and May 2010 Beijing provided 470 million dollars in material support to curb terrorist activities in Pakistan.⁶⁶ China considers Pakistan as an important state in international anti-terrorism campaign and recognises that it has contributions more than any other state. Beijing and Islamabad playing important role in war on terror and bringing peace and stability in the region.

China is also closely working with Central Asia Countries in fighting Terrorism. Since 1990 one of the main focuses of cooperation among China and Central Asian Republics is anti-terrorism. The terrorist organizations of Central Asia and Xinjiang also have links. Terrorism is a common security threat to both People's Republic of China and CARs therefore it needs their close collaboration and joint struggles with other regional and extra regional countries. China and Central Asia Republics individually as well as from the platform of SCO cooperating with each other to fight terrorism and eradicate this evil from the region. Main support to Xinjiang based organization is also from the Central Asian terrorist organizations.

⁶³ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Post-2014 Afghanistan Policy and the Limitations of China Global Role," *Central Asian Affairs*, 1, (2014): 137.

⁶⁴ Ma Zhaoxus "China-Pakistan Counter-terrorism Cooperation," Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, August 3, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://pk.chineseembassy.org/eng/zbgx/t845496.htm> (Accessed on 23/10/2020).

⁶⁵ *Daily Dawn*, (Karachi, August 10, 2011)

⁶⁶ Brigadier Najeeb Ahmad, "Sino-Pak Anti-Terrorism Collaboration," *NDU Monograph*, 4(1), (2013): 23-24.

Mainly China, Central Asian Republics and Russia are cooperating with each other in fighting terrorism from the platform of SCO. One of the main aims of the creation of the SCO was also to fight terrorism, separatism and extremism in the region. At present, the major concern of SCO is the terrorism in the member countries therefore SCO has significantly strengthened anti-terrorist cooperation among its member countries. In this regard, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization is playing significant role in fighting terrorism, extremism and separatism. Shanghai Cooperation Organization has offered People's Republic of China with an influential regional counterterrorism, extremism and separatism platform. Under the "Shanghai Spirit," of Shanghai Cooperation Organization China is working with its member most importantly Central Asian Republics to ensure its internal security situation, stabilise Xinjiang and strengthen cooperation in other related fields of mutual interests with its neighbours. Being the leading member of SCO the "three evil forces" in Central Asian countries and Xinjiang province, it became essential for People's Republic of China to improve anti-terrorism collaboration in the organization. Therefore, since 2001, many important agreements and MoUs have been signed regarding counterterrorism by the members of cooperation Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In June 2001 the member countries adopted Shanghai Convention of Counter-Terrorism, Counter-Extremism and Counter-Secessionism, in 2004 signed an agreement about Counterterrorism Database, in 2006 adopted the Cooperation Guideline of Counterterrorism, Counter-extremism and Counter-secessionism, in 2008 signed an agreement for Counterterrorism Exercises of member countries, in 2009 an agreement signed between Shanghai Cooperation Organization members and Afghanistan about crack down smuggling and drugs Trafficking, and also hold many convention from the platform of SCO against terrorism.⁶⁷ According to the 2001 agreement and the SCO 2009 Convention against terrorism all members of the organization were greed that extremism, separatism and terrorism create serious threat to international security and peace, establishment of good relations among countries and insurance of human rights. In addition, in 2004, a special office for counterterrorism was established in Tashkent aimed to facilitate intelligence cooperation and sharing of related information among the member countries of the organization. China and other members of the organization are also closely cooperating in numerous multilateral counterterrorism exercises. China taking parts in all these military exercises. Alongside, counterterrorism collaboration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has extended to other related fields to curb the economic

⁶⁷ Wang Jin and Kong Dehang, "Counter-Terrorism Cooperation between China and Central Asian States in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, 5(1), (2018): 71.

sources and funding of the terrorist organizations not only in the member countries but in the whole region. For instance, drugs smuggling is a main source of funding of terrorists therefore China highlighted this issue and with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member countries signed an agreement about fighting illegal traffic of drugs in 2004.

Conclusion

History records Uyghur's peaceful freedom movement since October 1949, but since 1990 their movement has assumed the shape of terrorism, because its activists started launching attacks in public places against military personals and also started targeting civilians. Xinjiang is the major concern and the focal point of China's present anti-terrorism strategy. In Xinjiang province extremist and terrorist activities promoted intolerance among different cultural and religious sects and challenged human security, undermine peace, caused violation of human rights and affected socio-economic development. Though by the efforts of government the three evils in Xinjiang are now under control but threat is yet not fully eliminated. Terrorism and extremism are worst enemy of humanity and threat to international peace and stability. For its complete defeat further improving the international consciousness by the Chinese approach of "Community with a shared future for mankind" the world can retain peace and can more effectively combat extremism and terrorism. In this regard China has also established anti-terrorism collaboration with the neighboring countries, including intelligence information sharing about terrorist activities, joint boundary control; countering terrorist's funding and fighting the cyber terrorism. Long term and most feasible solution of Xinjiang problem would be to eliminate the terrorist organizations like Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and also tackle the fundamental grievances and doubts of the Uyghurs about the religious and socio-economic policies to fully eradicate the socio-economic causes of terrorism in region. Terrorism is an ideology therefore it needs a counter ideology to defeat. China should adopt a counter-ideology and best counter-ideology for China is, to address the religious, political and socio-economic grievances of Uyghurs.

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