

Main Article

实事求是—“Seek Truth from Facts”¹

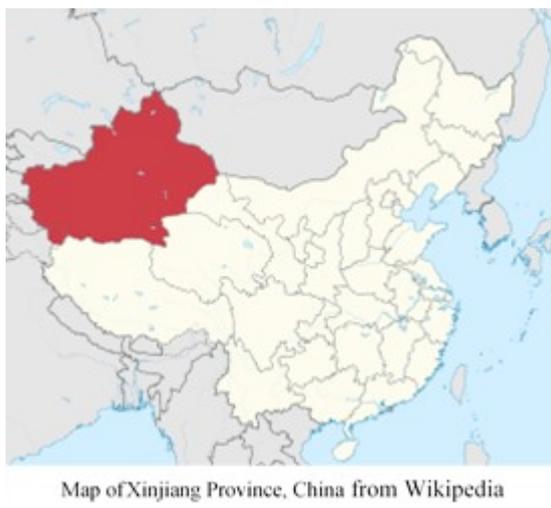
The East Turkistan Islamic Movement and the Uighurs in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China

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Abstract *The East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a separatist terrorist organization² within the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), a province of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Their main goal is to create a caliphate from lands in Central Asia and Western China. China, however, is doing all it can to prevent this from happening. A major focus of this paper is derived from the scholarly text, The ETIM: China’s Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat, written by J. Todd Reid and Diana Raschke. I intend to add onto the international knowledge of ETIM since the book’s publication in 2010 and to give recommendations for China’s next steps. The first section of the paper offers background information on China and the ethnic Uighur people. The second section tells of a brief Uighur-Xinjiang-PRC relationship. The next two sections are on terrorism in China pre and post-9/11. The fifth section contains research completed since 2010. The final part of this paper is composed of recommendations for China’s government and how to best approach both the Uighurs and ETIM in the future.*

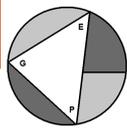
Keywords: East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China, Turkestan Islamic Party, terrorism, counterterrorism

Introduction: *Heqiqet égilidu, sunmaydu*—“A fact might be distorted, but it will never change”³



The People’s Republic of China is the third largest country in the world and encompasses 9.6 million km². This vast land holds a multitude of geographical features such as the Himalayas, the Tibetan Plateau, the great Gobi and Taklimakan Deserts, steppes, grand rivers, and fertile soils. Although the ethnic Han comprise approximately 92% of the people, its 55 minority groups are just as diverse as the land. Among these people are the Uighur⁴ (pronounced “WE-gur”)

and they make up the largest minority in China. They predominantly live in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), in China’s westernmost province. Unlike the Han, they speak a

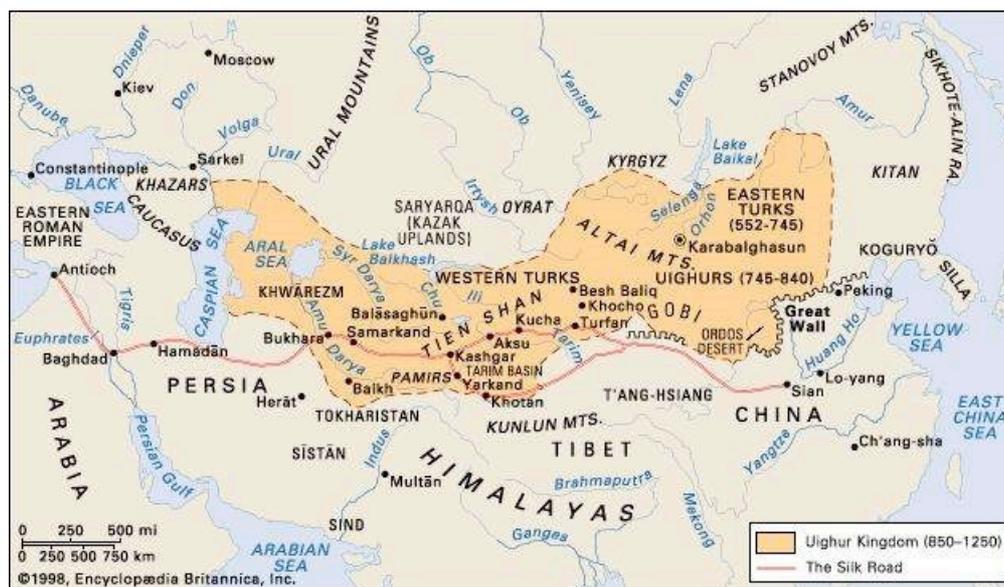


Turkic language and are typically Muslim. The Uighur history is complex for a couple of reasons. As Uighur historian Kahar Barat (2009) explained, “There is a phenomenon particular to Central Asia significant to world history that has been neglected by the historian community: in the two millennia from the Xiongnu to the Manchu, pastoral-nomadic powers of the grasslands and settled city-state powers existed in parallel” (para. 27). The former predominantly colonized the region while the latter established city-states and ruled. Uighurs today could possibly trace their lineage to a variety of groups including the Göktürk (a Turkic nomadic people), Húihú Uighur ⁵, Tocharian (an Indo-European people), Kipchak (a Turkic nomadic people), or the Mongols.

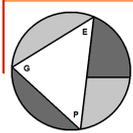
Several kingdoms and later Khanates controlled various regions. Another intricacy involves religion—depending upon the time period, they were either Buddhist or later Muslim. To classify the Uighurs as one ethnicity with one history would be incorrect.

The Göktürk controlled much of Central Asia during the 6th century CE. They were a tribal people and not completely unified. Two centuries later, the Húihú Uighurs, a group among the Göktürk overthrew the leadership and ruled under the Uighur Khanate. They originated in the Orkhan River Valley in what is Mongolia today. Further Húihú Khanates ruled until the Mongols invaded in the 13th century. These groups were predominantly Buddhist, although there were remnants of Tengrism i.e. local monotheistic and animist beliefs (Fergus and Jandosova 2003: 91). This was a lucrative time as the Chinese Silk Road was gaining in prominence.

The significance of the Silk Road is almost immeasurable in contemporary monetary and commodity value. At its height during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), China welcomed its Golden Age in art and literature; foreigners from Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East were abundant in Silk Road cities; and religious acceptance was at its best. Xian was the historical starting point of the Silk Road. As it travelled west, it stopped in several oasis locations in what is in current day Xinjiang. Without the Uighur stops, people, culture, and the spread of Buddhism, the Han would not have been as successful.



Islam spread into Central Asia in the 9th-10th centuries, although pockets existed centuries before. Barat



(2009) explained, “Islam first came through Kashgar via peaceful methods, through arriving missionaries, later, when expanding from Kasghar to Khotan, Turpan, and other places it was spread through holy war, brought with the sword” (para. 15).

Rival city-states vied for power and were eventually conquered by the Mongols. Although the Ming (1368-1644) defeated the Mongols in China proper, the Chagatai Khanate ruled the Xinjiang region through the 16th century (Millward and Perdue 2004: 27-62). Eventually, the Mongol elite assimilated into Turkic life (Barat 2009, para. 17). Religion may have changed, but their Turkic roots remained strong.

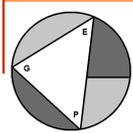
Uighur lands were finally subjugated by the Manchurian Qing Dynasty (1760-1912). In addition, the people were also pawns of the British and Russian “Great Game” of gaining land and leading to further international conflicts and scrutiny. The Opium Wars allowed for Christian missionaries to spread their beliefs inland and numerous foreign ports opened along the coastline; the devastating Taiping Rebellion killed millions of Chinese and allowed for more foreign influence. Chinese Muslims rebelled against Qing rule in addition to the millions already doing so; “In the second half of the 19th century a series of sizeable uprisings swept through Xinjiang, which culminated in establishment and existence in 1865-1878 of a theocratic state of Yettishar...with [the] capital in Kashgar City” (Babayan 2011: 14). In 1884, the Qing Dynasty fully incorporated the western territories as Xinjiang Province.

Being fully incorporated within China created significant tensions that are prevalent today. Throughout history, the Uighurs may have been conquered by different khanates, but their Turkic ethnicity remained important—even to the Mongols. Separatist movements began, but did not gain momentum until the collapse of the Qing.

According to Bhattacharji (2012), “Turkic rebels in Xinjiang declared independence in October 1933 and created the Islamic Republic of East Turkistan...” (Battachari 2012: para. 3). However, a year later, as China suffered through another civil war, the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi⁶, reabsorbed it into the Republic of China. In 1944, they tried again with assistance from the Soviet Union, and the Second East Turkistan Republic was formed. Reed and Raschke (2010) wrote that Uighur leaders died in a plane crash on their way to Beijing to discuss sovereignty (Reed and Raschke 2010: 114). When Mao Zedong and the Communists won in 1949, Xinjiang became part of the People’s Republic of China, and the Second East Turkistan Republic was no longer in existence. The Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was established in 1955.

一失足成千古恨，再回头已百年身—A single slip may cause lasting sorrow”⁷

The Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is significant to China for several reasons. First and foremost because it is the PRC’s furthest borders, it is of utmost strategic importance. It is bordered by eight countries (from East to West/Southwest: Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India). Historically, it found itself within the confines of the Cold War. There were Muslim Soviet satellites in Central Asia; Pakistan, was an often militarily-controlled and corrupt nation; India is the world’s largest democracy and major US ally; in addition, it bordered the proxy war in Afghanistan.



When Communism in some of these countries fell together with the Soviet Union, these newly formed nations succumbed to military rule and feigned democracy. Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan formed al-Qaeda and the country was overpowered by the Taliban. India and Pakistan have been enemies since the Subcontinent gained independence in 1947; they tested nuclear weapons in 1998, and the latter has supported and still supports numerous terrorist organizations; their continuous disagreement over Kashmir remains as well. For the PRC to maintain its firm grip over all its land, peace and stability are necessary for Xinjiang.

The province is also important for its vast economic resources. In 1954, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Company (XPCC) was created to build agricultural settlements in the region. Its goal was and is to both grow and protect. For more than fifty years, Han migrant workers moved to XUAR for these numerous opportunities. Reed and Raschke (2010) stated, “Xinjiang’s abundant natural resources—including oil, natural gas, coal, copper, and gold—have been a keystone of China’s economic growth strategy since then-President Jiang Zemin announced the ‘Great Western Development’ economic initiative in 1999” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 10).

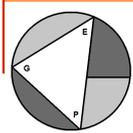
Jiang Zemin later created the “Open up the West” and “Go West” government sponsored programs as well (Bhattacharji 2012: para. 6). Seven years later, the XUAR is still an economic powerhouse. “Shokrat Zakir, chairman of the regional government, said Xinjiang’s GDP increased by 7.2 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2017, higher than the national level of 6.9 percent...This year alone, more than 50,000 companies have been established or set up branches in Xinjiang” (Zhao 2017: para. 2, 4). This is a dramatic increase that will bring both wealth and people to the region.

Independent from Chinese control, Uighur grievances partly stem from their vast economic resources, religious differences, environmental concerns, and human rights issues. The XPCC, or *bingtuan* “still serves as a paramilitary force, keeping order and managing prisons, and as an industrial group running farming, land reclamation, and construction projects” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 19). The *bingtuan* is predominantly made up of Han Chinese, not Uighur.

According to the 2006 Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 840 positions were open and only 38 went to minorities; 26 went to Uighur men and an additional “six positions are available for Uighur or Kazak men, while three positions are open for Uighurs, Kazaks, or Kirgiz of either sex” (para. 3-4). It is clear the Han Chinese dominate the *bingtuan*, not the locals whose land it is on.

Communism as a rule has no belief in a deity or deities. Nevertheless, if it does not threaten the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it is allowed. Reed and Raschke (2010) wrote, “Beijing frequently conflates Uyghur Islam with separatism and regulates the practice of Islam more strictly in Uyghur Xinjiang than elsewhere in the country” (as cited in Armijo 2006). Children under 18 years of age are not allowed to practice religion, and adults are not allowed to teach them (Reed and Raschke 2010: 23).

In 1996, XUAR was even limited in the number of people making the mandatory *hajj* to Mecca (Dillon 2004: 90). Other Muslim minorities, such as the Hui, are granted more



freedom, but they also speak Mandarin and are typically more Sinified (Reed and Raschke 2011: 22). Clearly there is a prejudice against the Uighur.

Uighurs are anxious about their environment for many reasons. First, it appears that the PRC is only concerned with removing valuable natural resources, and not its effects. Thus “Unfettered development in the energy and agricultural sectors raises serious questions about environmental sustainability and preservation” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 26).

Another worry is the region’s limited water supply as more people migrate and more businesses are developed; its dry, desert climate already produces a low water table. With an increasingly important cotton industry, more water is also used for irrigation, as well as pesticides (Reed and Raschke 2011: 27). Local Uighur farmers feel threatened by this.

Finally, the only nuclear site in China is in Lop Nor, located in the southeastern part of XUAR. Dozens of nuclear tests occurred and more than 300 of them were stronger than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima; cancer rates are higher here than anywhere else in China (Buncombe 1998: para. 8, 15). The once pristine Silk Road landscapes of the Uighur are reportedly disappearing.

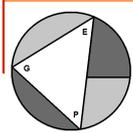
Human rights issues have always been a concern since the communist nation was established. According to Reed and Raschke (2010), “Uyghur advocates accuse the PRC of widespread and long-term human rights abuses in Xinjiang, particularly in connection with the ‘Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure’ campaign launched there in 1996” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 27). The two authors continue to explain that this is a specific campaign targeting separatists within XUAR. Indeed, “The campaign...has used mass arrests, hundreds of executions, restrictions on both religious and secular organizations, torture, and general curtailment of human rights to suppress most visible Uyghur opposition” (Starr and Fuller 2003: 21). This is just one example of the hundreds of abuses suffered by the Uighur at the hands of Beijing.

枪杆子里面出政权—“Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”⁸

Reed and Raschke (2010) describe at least 25 Uighur militant groups operating in Xinjiang, predominantly pre-9/11, although there are a few mentioned after al-Qaeda’s 9-11 terrorist attacks against and inside the US. Each Uighur militant group is simply explained in terms of their political beliefs, propaganda, and violent acts, if any.

Important to note, however, is the fact that Beijing is quite selective in what the Western world has learned or been able to learn of these groups: “In general, PRC officials and media outlets have focused closely on the ETIM since about 2002 and report little new information about other militant groups” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 35). As in their text, this paper will focus solely on the modern version of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)⁹ and its effects on China since 1997.

The ETIM is viewed by numerous countries as a violent separatist organization that seeks to create an Uighur-controlled East Turkistan incorporating the XUAR, as well as “parts of



Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan” (Xu, Fletcher and Bajoria 2014: para. 3). Hasan Mahsum, an ethnic Uighur, created the group in 1997 and made it what it is today—a jihadist terrorist group.

Reed and Raschke (2010) explained that ETIM would do whatever it took to expel the Han Chinese from the XUAR, as they are “infidels” and “invaders” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 50). Its grandiloquence sometimes closely mirrors the Uighur expressions of resentment, causing great alarm in Beijing. ETIM differs from most other jihadist organizations in that it is focused solely on the PRC and not Western nations at this time.

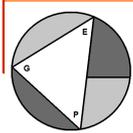
Before 9/11, ETIM was somewhat known by Russian and Chinese media sources. Between 1990 and 2000, it was mentioned in various Eastern newspapers (Reed and Raschke 2010: 46-47). The concerning connection was discovered by a Russian newspaper when it “reported that Osama bin Laden had pledged funds to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and ETIM during a 1999 meeting in Afghanistan” (Xu, Fletcher and Bajoria 2014: para. 2). This affiliation is what eventually solidified the Sino-American relationship in the War on Terror in 2001 and subsequent years.

ETIM is a descendant of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which was a more benign group that formed in 1940 under the direction of “Abdul Azeez Makhdoom, Abdul Hameed, Abdul Hakeem, and other scholars” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 47). It had various leaders, a couple of different names, and had violent interactions with the PRC; Hasan Mahsum organized it into a more violent group with ties to al-Qaeda.

Thus “In September 1998, ETIM moved its headquarters to Kabul, Afghanistan, taking shelter in the Taliban-controlled territory” (Stratfor Worldview 2008). The group established a training camp in the Tora Bora mountains from approximately November 2000 to October 2001 (Reed and Raschke 2010: 48).¹⁰ This movement allowed for a stricter training in jihadist ideals, both religious and militant in nature. Violent tactics were acquired, and propaganda was spread throughout Xinjiang.

Han antipathy eventually spurred violent separatist behavior in Xinjiang. Seemingly, much of this, however, cannot be traced to a particular group: “Although the Xinjiang authorities began to publicly acknowledge anti-state violence in Xinjiang in the mid-1990s, they generally suggested that it was carried out only by ‘a handful of separatists’ and stressed that the region was stable and prosperous” (Human Rights Watch 2005: para. 65). As tensions rose, Beijing cracked down on the region and closed schools and mosques. ETIM was becoming more violent as rights were stripped away from the Uighurs and Beijing was now blaming them for specific attacks. Reed and Raschke (2010) list several pre-9/11 attacks:

- A February 4, 1999 robbery and murder in Urumqi. At least five people were killed (as in the PRC’s Information Office of the State Council, 2002);¹¹
- A March 17, 1999 attack on a People’s Liberation Army (PLA) convoy in Changji City, 40 km west of Urumqi (as found in Stratfor, 2008);
- A June 18, 1999 murder of a police officer in Xinhe County in western Xinjiang (as found in (Xinhua, 2003);
- A December 14, 1999 murder in Moyu County, in southwest Xinjiang (as found in China Daily, 2003).¹²



It was the coordinated attacks on American soil on 11 September 2001 that cemented ETIM's existence as a terrorist organization.

一分耕耘， 一分收获—“Sow thin, reap thin”¹³

The post-9/11 War on Terror was felt worldwide, but especially in those regions that potentially harbored jihadist terrorists. The United States rapidly garnered international support to fight al-Qaeda, and China was quick to respond.

Washington DC was in an interesting position when it came to Chinese support—they needed the latter's assistance in fighting terrorism, but were wary of human rights abuses in XUAR:

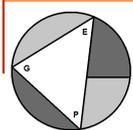
The United States has taken a moderate approach, placing the ETIM on two terrorism blacklists—one for finance and one for immigration—and lobbying for its inclusion on a UN blacklist, but keeping the narrow group off the State Department's high-profile list of FTOs [Foreign Terrorist Organizations] (Reed and Raschke 2010: 98).

A US blacklist still deems a group terrorist, as ETIM clearly is, but incorporates other disadvantages as well. For example, the US Department of Treasury added both ETIM¹⁴ and leader, Abdul Haq¹⁵ to its Office of Foreign Assets Control Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list. This froze his assets as well as his financial interactions with ETIM. The organization was placed on the Terrorist Exclusion List in April 2004, which restricts international travel. Finally, at the behest of several states, the UN placed ETIM on its own terrorist blacklist (Reed and Raschke 2010: 104).

In addition to its violence within China, ETIM's international affiliations have also condemned the group. The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the UN claimed that a “Turkestan Army” trained under Mahsum in Afghanistan: “This ‘Army’ has a special ‘China Battalion’ with about 320 terrorists from Xinjiang. The battalion is under the direct command of Hasan Mahsum's deputy Kabar” (Permanent Mission of the PRC to the UN 2001: para. 19). When their camp was destroyed by American forces, ETIM moved to Pakistan. “ETIM members have been captured or killed in Pakistan from 2002 to at least 2009” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 77). They have also been operational in Chechnya, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan (Gunitskiy 2009).¹⁶

As with many jihadist terrorist organizations, ETIM is notorious for its use of the internet. The main media site was called *Islam Awazi*, and translated into English it means “Voice of Islam.” It is now defunct, as with many of their established URLs. They also once had a YouTube channel and several videos (Reed and Raschke 2010: 78-79). When accessed in November 2017, the page stated the account was “terminated due to multiple or severe violations of YouTube's policy on violence”.¹⁷

Mahsum's role was discussed in the testimonies of 22 Uighurs that were captured and sent to the United States' Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp ('GTMO'). Their stories also shed light on the organizational strategies of ETIM. All were allegedly members of ETIM, when in



reality, “at a minimum, all of the GTMO Uyghurs either lived at an ETIM training camp, lived at an ETIM safe house, or admitted to belonging to the ETIM” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 73).

Some claim they went to the Tora Bora Mountains to learn fighting techniques to use against China; some were on the run from Beijing, others claimed they were doing business outside of China and ended up in the camps (US Department of Defense 2004).¹⁸ They did see Mahsum at the camp in Afghanistan, they trained only for a few days, and eventually fled when US troops began their bombing campaign. Although many detainees claimed they were willing to fight against China, the US released them to various countries. The PRC was not one of these countries out of fear for their safety.

Reed and Raschke (2010) also list the terrorist activities of ETIM post-9/11. The events before the 2008 Beijing Olympics include:

- A May 2002 failed plan to bomb the US Embassy at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (Reed and Raschke 2010: 62);
- An August 8, 2005 bombing in Fuzhou—in which ETIM claimed responsibility three years later;
- A March 7, 2008 attempted plane crash. A woman tried to start a fire in the bathroom shortly after the flight left Urumqi. The plane landed safely a couple of hours later (Ibid: 63);
- A March 13, 2008 bombing in Guangzhou. Seven died and 30 were injured (as found in Xinhua, 2008);¹⁹
- A May 5, 2008 bombing in Shanghai in which three were killed and 12 were injured (Ibid: 63);
- A May 7, 2008 bombing in Longwan Village, Zhejiang Province. Nineteen people were killed and 45 were hurt;
- A July 21, 2008 bombing in which two busses were attacked. One person was killed in each and 10 and four were injured respectively (as found in Reuters, 2008).²⁰

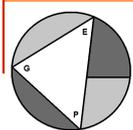
There was a series of four attacks in August 2008 in which ETIM claimed responsibility. These were:

- An August 4 stabbing attack on policemen in Kashgar. Sixteen died and another 16 were injured (Reed and Raschke 2010: 65);
- An August 7 shooting of a security guard (Ibid: 65);
- An August 8 bombing of a police convoy in Xinjiang—this was the same day as the Opening Ceremonies. Nine people were killed (Ibid: 65);
- An August 10 series of bombings. Sources vary with the number of bombs and the locations, but it was clear that two died and many were hurt (Ibid: 65);
- An August 12 stabbing of four security guards in Kashgar; three of them were killed.

China’s reaction was hard and swift, especially since they were already in the international spotlight of the Olympic Games. Reed and Raschke’s investigation of ETIM was quite thorough. However, it is seven to eight years old; there is already much more to examine. The following sections detail people, events, and ideas since 2010 and recommendations for how the PRC should proceed with counterterrorism strategies.

Findings Since Reed and Raschke’s Publication

In 2006, Uighurs who years earlier fled to Afghanistan and Pakistan reinvented the Turkestan



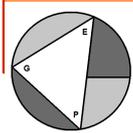
Islamic Party (TIP) (Xu, Fletcher and Bajoria 2014: para.4).²¹ Some sources consider this a splinter terrorist organization under the ETIM umbrella. Jacob Zenn (2014) claimed that “the TIP has approximately 300–500 militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also a network in Turkey and possibly Central Asia” (Zen 2014: para.3). He continued by describing the role of the TIP as one for Uighurs living and traveling abroad (Ibid; para.4).

Its leader, Abdullah Mansour, has connections to al-Qaeda and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and oversaw their jihadist newspaper, Islamic Turkistan. In it he listed grievances against Han Chinese in the XUAR, and compared Xinjiang to other struggling regions, such as Kashmir and Syria (Zenn 2014: para 5).²² TIP’s connections with the IMU is worrisome.

Thus “Abu Zar al-Burmi [is] a prominent anti-Chinese jihadist leader in Pakistan [who] has led to Xinjiang gaining more attention among jihadists” (Zenn 2014: para.6). In various YouTube videos and sermons, he preached about China being the enemy and praised any violence against the PRC.

There have been several ETIM/TIP publications and attacks since the 2010 publication of Reed and Raschke’s *The ETIM: China’s Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat*. The list shown below has been compiled from several sources:

- In July 2011 there were two separate attacks against XUAR government officials. The first involved a police station in Hotan where four were killed. The second was a knife attack in Kashgar, in which 12 died and more than forty injured (Xu, Fletcher, and Bajoria 2014: para. 18).
- An October 28, 2013 car crash at Tiananmen Square that killed five and injured 38. This was the first time Uighurs used violence in the nation’s capital (Global Terrorism Database 2017).
- An April 30, 2014 double suicide bombing attack in Urumqi. Besides the two bombers, at least one other died and at least 70 were injured (Ibid);
- There were two attacks on July 28, 2014 in Xinjiang. “In addition to 59 assailants, 37 people were killed, and 13 others were wounded across attacks” (Ibid);²³
- On December 19, 2014, TIP published pictures of Uighur soldiers in Syria—including women and children (Jihad & Terrorism Threat Monitor 2017);
- On March 12, 2015, TIP released a video honoring fallen Uighur militant members who were fighting in Syria (Ibid);²⁴
- On April 30, 2015, TIP released a video claiming responsibility for taking over In Idlib, Syria, a strategic town to the fighting (Ibid);²⁵
- On November 30, TIP “released a video featuring a message from Syria-based Saudi cleric Sheikh ‘Abdallah Al-Muhaisini, who urges Uyghur Muslims in East Turkestan (Xinjiang) to remain steadfast in face of China’s oppression, and to wage jihad against it” (Ibid);
- On May 2, 2016, TIP published an article praising Uighurs’ roles in Syria and encouraging their efforts against China (Ibid);
- On August 26, 2016, TIP released a video urging Uighurs not to travel abroad, but to stay and fight in China (Ibid);
- An August 30, 2016 suicide bombing at the Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. Three others were wounded (Global Terrorism Database 2017, June);²⁶
- On March 6, 2017, TIP published an article seeking “to raise awareness among Arabic speakers for TIP’s struggle against the Chinese government and to recruit jihadis for this struggle by calling upon jihadis throughout the world to attack Chinese targets” (Jihad & Terrorism Threat Monitor 2017);
- On June 15 and August 17, 2017, TIP released videos calling for jihad against China (Ibid).



A serious concern is TIP's involvement in the unrests and/or armed conflicts in foreign nations, especially the war in Syria. Uighurs have joined the former al-Qaeda affiliate al-Nusra Front to fight Assad's regime (see Appendix A). For instance, "TIP controls Jisr al Shoghur, Idlib province, Syria [and the estimated strength is] 10,000-20,000 including entire families" (TRAC 2017: para.1).

Militant Uighurs have been discovered in Southeast Asia as well. According to Soliev (2016), Uighurs were arrested in September 2014 when they were trying to connect with Mujahidin Indonesia Timor, an organization that pledged allegiance to Islamic State. On August 5, 2016, Indonesian police arrested five people who were associated with the TIP-funded terrorist group, Katibah GR (Soliev 2016: para.1).

Just recently, ISIS and TIP released two videos targeting citizens of the XUAR to take up arms. The first was released on the ISIS website called *Furat Media*. Botobekov, in his article entitled, "Al-Qaeda and Islamic State Take Aim at China" described the 30-minute video:

A bearded Uyghur militant wearing camouflage and surrounded by jihadists speaks in Uyghur promising to wage a "holy war" to the bitter end until sharia law has been spread throughout the world ... and addresses the authorities of Beijing, "Oh, you Chinese, who do not understand what people say! We are the soldiers of Allah, will make you understand Islam with the tongues of our weapons. We will come to you to shed blood like rivers and avenge the oppressed." After that, he brutally decapitates a prisoner dressed in red, who is hanging upside down. (Botobekov 2017: para.7, 9)

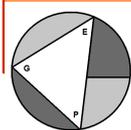
In contrast, the TIP video was not violent; being an al-Qaeda affiliate, they condemn the gruesome beheadings of ISIS. Clearly ETIM/TIP are major security concerns for the People's Republic of China (PRC) today. The following concluding section details recommendations for Beijing as they proceed with deterring terrorist attacks in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Conclusion: 父债子还—"A new generation can right the wrongs of the old" / "The debts of the father are the debts of the son" ²⁷

The Tiananmen Square attacks of October 2013 forced China to face up to a new level of terrorism—one in which the Han capital was purposefully attacked. Knowing that "the PRC has zero tolerance for separatist movements ... and suppressing separatism is a matter of national security," (Reed and Raschke 2010: 86), Beijing is at a significant crossroads.

Xinjiang's independence is not a realistic possibility; therefore, other viable options must be considered. These include: a gradual loosening of censorship, an acknowledgement of their denial of human rights in the XUAR; and steps to make amends, and transparency in terms of the PRC's stance on the ETIM.

Beijing passed the nation's first counterterrorism law on December 28, 2015 and it has provided some controversy as well—especially since the XUAR is the only provincial government to implement it. The US Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent



Extremism explained part of the law in brief:

The Central Military Commission's ability to authorize ... punishment of news media that report counterterrorism operations without approval from government authorities ... deletion of terrorism-related audio and video material from the internet ... and edicts to eliminate "religious extremism," including the "education and transformation" of terrorist offenders using "authentic" religious teachings (2016: para.38).

The PRC is willing to do whatever it takes to maintain its control over its borders, but more importantly its citizens. Although their might is unwavering, so it seems is ETIM/TIP's determination to survive and continue its separatist campaign(s). Beijing must be willing to make changes in favor of the Uighurs, otherwise their status quo will remain unchanged, and little will be solved.

Authoritarian nations, regardless if they are modernizing or implementing capitalist policies, still maintain strict control over information flows, or at least try to do so. The so-called "Great Firewall of China" is the nation's primary internet censorship tool. Since numerous jihadist organizations utilize social media to recruit supporters and promote their rhetoric, the PRC should use the internet to truly discredit terrorism, jihadism and other forms of extremism, and display what Beijing is doing to promote the well-being of Uighurs in XUAR.

A few years ago, the PRC used television to discredit TIP. Thus "On June 20, 2014, Chinese Central Television (CCTV), the state broadcaster, released a 24-minute documentary on the connection between online terrorist propaganda and terrorist training videos and the terrorist attacks within China" (Gohel 2014: 19). There are a couple of problems with this release.

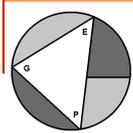
First, the Chinese people are already subjected to CCP propaganda all the time, so they might not view this with any caution.

Second, by airing this video, credence was given to ETIM/TIP, when Beijing's position of the organization wavered for decades. Educational programs about the violence and extremism of terrorists is fundamental in their demise and can be promoted via both the internet and television. This way the public will not disregard their importance as typical propaganda.

Several ETIM/TIP attacks in the last four years have been political in nature or coincided with an important governmental event. The October 2013 attacks at Tiananmen Square occurred in front of the portrait of Mao Zedong and nearby a plenary session was planned for the CCP (Gohel 2014: 16). The April 2014 attack took place on the same day President Xi Jinping was in the region to discuss counterterrorism (Blanchard 2014: para.1).

It does not take much expertise to conclude the fact that XUAR is unhappy with the current political state of China. Urumqi is the provincial capital, as well as the hub for terrorist activity in the region. The PRC can use Urumqi as a significant player in counterterrorism measures.

First and foremost, Beijing needs to understand the complex history of the Uighurs. They are a Turkic people, speak a Turkic language, and have a vast and separate political, religious, and social history. They are very different from the Han, and allowing Han migratory policies



has created multifaceted issues within Xinjiang. Once this past is acknowledged and celebrated, then understanding separatist and terrorist apprehensions can be addressed. Consequently, “Counter-terrorism efforts must be combined with economic growth and proper settlement of regional conflict” (Cui 2013: para.9). The policymakers in Beijing need to recognize the present discriminations found in daily life and why the Han way will not work. Corporate ethnic allotment percentages, especially those of the *bingtuan* i.e. XPCC should be significantly raised for the local Uighur.

Second, the PRC should continue to maintain an overt surveillance system within the city of Urumqi. No one likes being watched, but closed-circuit cameras are already present in hundreds of cities worldwide. This can help prevent regular crimes in addition to terrorist activities.

Third, implement educational and vigilance programs like those successes with the Muslim community in Dearborn, Michigan, United States.²⁸ When the people feel safe and trusted, they will be less likely to support dangerous behaviors.

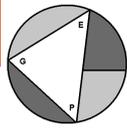
Since 2016, Beijing has enacted several absurd bans in XUAR that are ultimately a catalyst for separatist ideals. For instance, “The XUAR Regulation on De-extremification, adopted at the 28th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th People’s Congress for the XUAR on March 29, sets out much broader proscriptions that will have lasting effects on the Uyghur community” (Irwin 2017: para.7).

Common Muslim names, such as Muhammad and Medina, as well as 27 others have been put on a forbidden list. Irwin (2017) continues to state that beards had to be trimmed to a proper length to not appear to be a Muslim extremist (Irwin 2017: para 1, 10). No other autonomous region or ethnic group within the PRC is subjected to such treatment. These religious rights’ violations need to stop. If the Uighurs are viewed in a different light, perhaps they will feel less threatened and less willing to have separatist inclinations.

To maintain international credibility with its counterterrorism partners, the PRC needs to be clear on its stance on ETIM/TIP. Numerous experts have proven Chinese flip-flopping over a variety of topics throughout the years. Reed and Raschke (2010) have mentioned it as well; thus “The Chinese government emphasizes ETIM activity and the general threat of Uyghur separatism when those emphases serve the state’s interests more than silence on the subject” (Reed and Raschke 2010: 93).

Even before the 9/11 attacks, Beijing wavered its position on the terrorist group. Another example of this is before and after the Beijing Olympics. China has an image to uphold (whether realistic or not) within and outside of its borders. To appear strong and ready to take on the Olympics, Beijing did not credit ETIM with as many violent incidents as they did after the games.

This governmental laxity could lead to confusion, apathy, and possible disdain among international alliances and audiences. In the 2017 world of instant media and “fake news”, providing the correct explanations needs to be consistently applied. Transparency of ETIM/TIP is a must for two reasons. First, it will serve to initiate more trust between the Chinese citizens and the government. This is a relationship that would only benefit both sides. Second, it will warn ETIM/TIP that Beijing is serious about protecting its objectives all

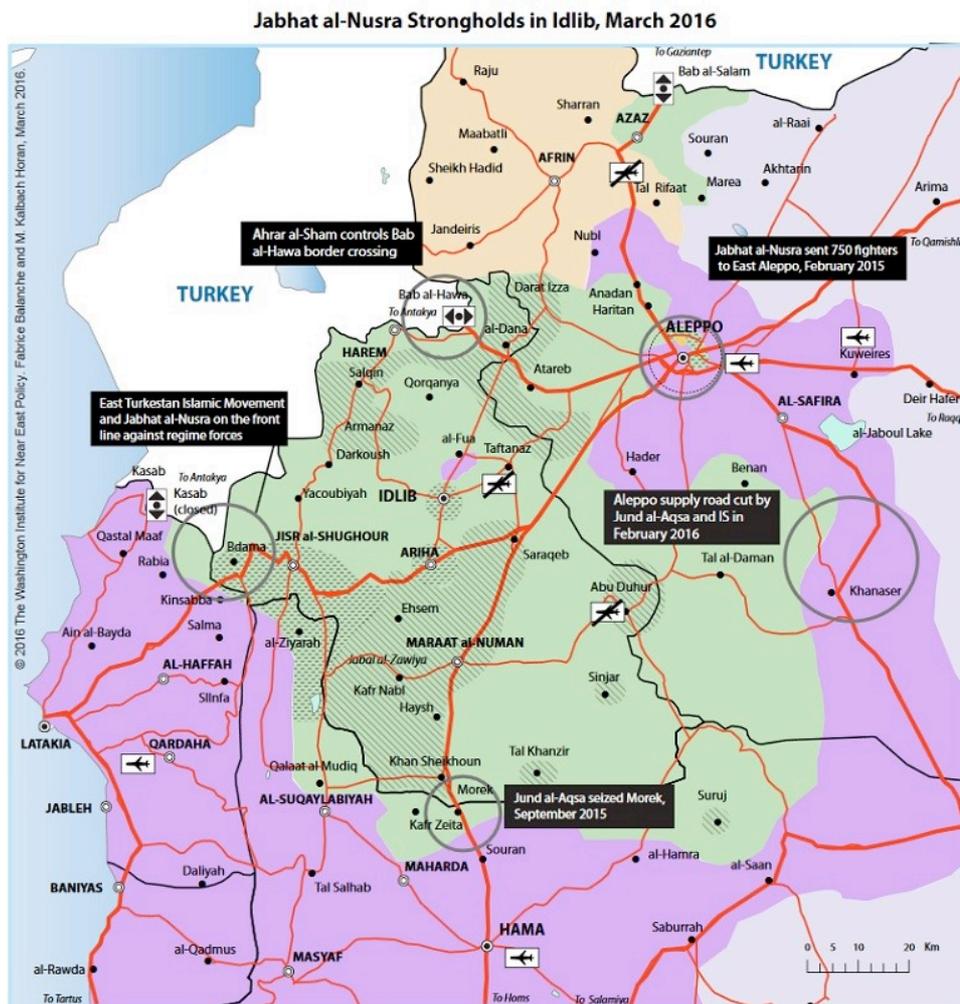


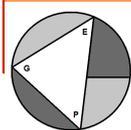
the time. This recognition will also help Chinese citizens realize the concern and could lend to more participation in civilian vigilance programs.

Presented are what the PRC might consider are some harsh recommendations. Still these should help to provide a unique opportunity to produce substantial economic gains and correct major historical misunderstandings and violations in the fields of religion and human rights. The PRC must take a hard look at itself and consider what is most important to the nation. As the concluding section's subtitle suggests, there could be a positive or negative connotation to how the PRC chooses to deal with countering terrorism in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

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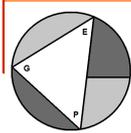
Appendix





Endnotes

1. Mao first used this phrase, but it became a solidified statement under Deng Xiaoping's rule. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_quotations.
2. Terrorism as I see it is often political in its purpose and exposes the public to fear, whether in words or violent actions.
3. This is a Uighur proverb meaning "a fact might be distorted, but it will never change." Retrieved from <http://nstar.blogcu.com/uyghur-maqal-temsilliri-uyghur-proverbs-3/127823>.
4. They are also known as the Uigur, Uygur or Uyghur.
5. According to Barat, Húihú is Old Chinese and represents the people who were Buddhist. Today, Uighur is used and represents those who are Muslim.
6. Also known as Chiang Kai-shek using the Wade-Giles spelling system.
7. This is a Chinese proverb meaning "a single mistake can lead to unending sadness." Retrieved from https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Chinese_proverbs.
8. This was a quote of Mao declared in 1927 when he realized that the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and Communists was imminent. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_quotations.
9. Also known as the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIP), as found in Thomas Joscelyn's article entitled, 'The Uighurs, in Their Own Words' (2009).
10. This testimony came from captured Uighurs held at the US's special prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, known as the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp (GTMO).
11. When this site was accessed on November 5, 2017, it was no longer in service (Ibid June 19, 2018).
12. Ibid. Yet when this site was last accessed on June 19, 2018, the site appeared to be in service.
13. This is a Chinese proverb which translates to "Sow thin, reap thin. You get out, what you put in." Retrieved from https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Chinese_proverbs.
14. ETIM was added on the list in September 2002.
15. Abdul Haq was added on the list in April 2009.
16. When this site was accessed on November 5, 2017, it was no longer in service and the CDI has since partnered with Project on Government Oversight (POGO). See <http://pogo.org/strauss/>.
17. <https://www.youtube.com/user/tipawazi>.
18. When this site was accessed on November 5, 2017, it was no longer in service. When it was again accessed on June 19, 2018, one is directed to the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff Freedom of Information Act Requester Service Center.
19. When this site was accessed on November 16, 2017, an error message stated, "The connection has timed out."
20. When this page was accessed on November 16, 2017, an error message stated, "File or directory not found."
21. Jacob Zenn, in his China Brief, "Beijing, Kunming, Urumqi and Guangzhou: The Changing Landscape of Anti-Chinese Jihadists," stated TIP began in 2008 (2014: para.8). TRAC also claimed the same (2017: para.2).
22. To be clear, some sources use TIP and ETIM interchangeably, whereas the organizations themselves typically specify responsibility for various attacks.
23. No group claimed responsibility, but the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) claims that sources point to ETIM.
24. The Middle East Research Institute (MEMRI) has data of several of these videos.
25. MEMRI has data of several videos discussing strategy in Syria.
26. No group claimed responsibility, but START claims sources that point to ETIM.
27. This is a Chinese proverb which loosely translated has two meanings. The positive is "a new generation can right the wrongs of the old generation", while the negative is "the debts of the father are the debts of the son." Retrieved from https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Chinese_proverbs.



28. See Michael Hirsh's article, 'Inside the FBI's Secret Muslim Network' (2016).

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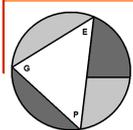
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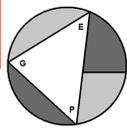
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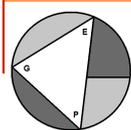
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Key recommendations on the paper ‘ “Seek Truth from Facts” ’

(Critical Response to Jennifer Loy’s ‘ “Seek Truth from Facts”: The East Turkistan Islamic Movement and the Uighurs in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China”)

After a keen perusal of the paper there are certain key recommendations that I would like to make. The paper does present itself as a great narrative which does not fail in capturing the attention of the readers in general and can have an appeal across several sections, not just