



Alleged Uyghur Terrorism

Information for the Press

Uyghur American Association

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1. Uyghur American Association on Terrorism

1.1 Uyghur American Association Position on Terrorism

The Uyghur American Association (UAA) is unequivocally opposed to any form of violence and condemns all violent actions.

UAA believes that terrorist actions conducted will only serve to increase the suppression of the Uyghur people and exacerbate tensions between Uyghurs and Han Chinese.

UAA urges the international community to view Chinese government accounts regarding Uyghur terrorist acts with caution, as government authorities consistently fail to provide evidence to substantiate their claims.

UAA also urges deep skepticism with regard to Chinese government claims of a strong link between al Qaeda and alleged Uyghur terrorist groups.

UAA asserts that manufactured links between alleged Uyghur groups and al Qaeda, or other international terrorist organizations, serve to validate increased military and police repression throughout East Turkestan. Over the past seven years, Chinese government documents and statements have frequently implied that a unified and strong group of Uyghur terrorists exist, but many observers have questioned the legitimacy of these types of claims, and have argued convincingly that they have been used to deflect international criticism of egregious human rights abuses in East Turkestan.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has long sought to equate all Uyghur opposition to Chinese rule with terrorism. East Turkestan remains the only part of the PRC where people are still executed for non-violent crimes of political opposition to the Chinese state. China executes more people every year in East Turkestan for political reasons than the rest of China combined. Chinese government authorities consistently fail to provide corroborating evidence for terror claims made against Uyghur individuals.

Official PRC government documents and statements frequently use vague and generic terms such as "East Turkestan terrorist organization" or "East Turkestan terrorist force," implying that a unified and strong group of terrorists exists. Hundreds of official speeches, reports, and news articles discussing East Turkestan use the "terrorist" designation. However, almost all independent observers have rejected the legitimacy of the government claims.

1.2 Quotes by Ms. Rebiya Kadeer on Terrorism

"The goal of our organization, and of the vast majority of Uyghurs around the world, is to peacefully resolve the problems facing Uyghurs in East Turkestan."

"We advocate the principle of non-violence, and the promotion of freedom, democracy and human rights through peaceful means."

“We condemn all acts of violence. The Uyghur people do not support acts that engender bloodshed.”

“We abhor all forms of violence. The Uyghur people’s response to the ongoing brutality of the PRC government has always been peaceful.”

“We know that the Chinese government uses the threat of ‘terrorism’ to persecute and intimidate all Uyghurs. PRC authorities must allow independent scrutiny of any evidence they have for the claims they are making. We call on the leaders in Beijing to facilitate an investigation into the alleged terrorist activities in East Turkestan by an independent outside commission, such as a delegation from the United Nations.”

“In the era of the ‘global war on terror,’ PRC authorities have used the threat of ‘terrorism’ to justify the repression and forced cultural assimilation of the Uyghur people of East Turkestan.”

“Uyghurs should be tried according to international legal norms, in a free and transparent court system. They should have access to a lawyer, trials should be open to domestic and foreign press, and detainees should be well treated by government authorities while in their custody. Unfortunately, in the PRC, the legal system is often used as a tool of repression. Non-transparent trials, lack of independent counsel, forced confessions, and mistreatment of those detained by the government are all common.”

2. Uyghur American Association on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement

2.1 Designation by the U.S. government

On August 26, 2002, in Beijing, Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, declared the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) a terrorist organization with connections to al Qaeda. According to the Congressional Research Service, “China had issued a report on January 21, 2002, saying that ‘East Turkestan’ terrorist groups have attacked with bin Laden’s support since the 1990s, and ETIM was one of the groups in the report...The State Department designated ETIM as a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 (to freeze assets) but not as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (under the Immigration and Nationality Act).”¹

On April 29, 2004, the U.S. Department of State designated ETIM under the Terrorist Exclusion List². A U.S. Department of State press statement announced that: “As part of ongoing U.S. efforts against terrorism, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell has designated ten additional groups as terrorist organizations for immigration purposes, thus placing them on the so-called terrorist exclusion list... As a result of these designations, the U.S. Government excludes members and those providing material support to such entities

¹ Available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21995.pdf>

² Available at: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/2004/32678.htm>

from the United States...The following groups were designated under TEL, effective April 29, 2004...Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (a.k.a. Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party, a.k.a. ETIM, a.k.a. ETIP)”³.

On April 20, 2009, the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued a press release entitled *Treasury Targets Leader of Group Tied to Al Qaida*⁴. The press release detailed the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s decision to freeze the assets of Abdul Haq, and announced the additional measure of prohibition of financial transactions with Abdul Haq. The U.S. Department of the Treasury added that Abdul Haq “is the overall leader and commander of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIP), a.k.a. the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).” The press release quotes Stuart Levey, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, as stating “Abdul Haq commands a terror group that sought to sow violence and fracture international unity at the 2008 Olympic Games in China”.

2.2 Independent observers on ETIM

Since the appearance of ETIM as an alleged terrorist organization in the early 2000s, doubt has arisen as to the group’s strength and very existence. Observers from the U.S. government, academic community and human rights movement have gone on record regarding the lack of clarity surrounding organized terror in East Turkestan and ETIM.

Francis Taylor, U.S. State Department Counterterrorism Official, December 6, 2001, in *China: From Brutal Oppressor to Terrorist Victim*⁵:

“The legitimate economic and social issues that confront the people of western China are not necessarily terrorist issues and should be resolved politically rather than using counter-terrorism methods.”

Amnesty International, July 6, 2004, *Uighurs Fleeing Persecution as China Wages Its “War on Terror”*⁶:

“Amnesty International has been unable to obtain credible, independent information which corroborates allegations that ETIM has been responsible for acts of violence. However, the group is little known and is believed to be relatively small and unrepresentative of many within China’s Uighur community who have advocated respect for fundamental rights and freedoms or tried to exercise these rights peacefully.”

³ Available at: <http://www.iwar.org.uk/news-archive/2004/04-29-5.htm>

⁴ Available at: <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/tg92.htm>

⁵ Available at: <http://www.fff.org/freedom/fd0312c.asp>

⁶ Available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/021/2004/en/47e9cf33-d5cd-11dd-bb24-1fb85fe8fa05/asa170212004en.pdf>

Human Rights Watch, April 2005, *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*⁷:

“Chinese authorities have not produced extensive evidence of specific activities carried out by what it has termed ‘terrorist forces’ in Xinjiang over the past few years.”

Dru Gladney, President of the Pacific Basin Institute at Pomona College, January 9, 2007, in *Doubt raised over ‘terrorism’ in China’s restive west*⁸:

“The organization [ETIM] if it existed at all was never large and dropped out of sight with the death of its reputed leader, Hasan Mahsun, [who died in 2003]”.

Sean Roberts, Associate Professor of International Development at George Washington University, August 5, 2008, in *Lambs to the Slaughter: What is the East Turkistan Islamic Movement and is it really a Terrorist Threat at the Olympics?*⁹:

“In trying to find truth in the available information on ETIM, therefore, I have come to two possible conclusions about this organization’s threat to China, the Olympics, and the world. First, the organization either does not exist anymore, even if it once did, or it is merely a shell trying to claim credit for acts with which it has no connection. Second, it is a poorly organized group with meager resources that is unable to accomplish any serious acts of terror beyond some isolated violence in remote locations far from international or even Chinese attention.”

James Millward, Associate Professor in the School of Foreign Service and the History Department at Georgetown University, February 25, 2009, in *Regarding the Guantánamo Uyghurs*¹⁰:

“Stereotyped notions about Islam and a paucity of solid firsthand information about Xinjiang made plausible the idea that Al Qaeda-type Uyghur jihadis were ‘waging’ a ‘militant’ ‘resistance’ against Chinese authorities, even in absence of anything like a terrorist attack for over a decade. Because every ‘movement’ needs an acronym, concerns crystallized around ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement)...though Chinese sources themselves up to that point had not attributed any specific acts to ETIM”.

⁷ Available at: http://www.hrichina.org/fs/downloadables/Xinjiang%20Report?revision_id=21519

⁸ Available at: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/features/article_1241424.php/Doubt_raised_over_terrorism_in_China's_restive_west

⁹ Available at: <http://roberts-report.blogspot.com/2008/08/lambs-to-slaughter-what-is-east.html>

¹⁰ Available at: <http://thechinabeat.blogspot.com/2009/02/on-free-uyghurs.html>

2.3 Unaddressed concerns

On August 4, 2008, two days before the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing, Chinese state media reported that two Uyghurs, one taxi driver and one vegetable seller, attacked and killed sixteen policemen using a truck, homemade grenades and machetes in the city of Kashgar. However, a September 28, 2008 New York Times report¹¹ detailed the eyewitness accounts of three western tourists, one of whom had taken photographs of the attack, who had been staying in a hotel across the street from the events. The New York Times reported that the three tourists “heard no loud explosions and that the men wielding the machetes appeared to be paramilitary officers who were attacking other uniformed men.” Furthermore, according to the tourists, “[t]he men with the machetes mingled freely with other officers afterward”.

Following the attack, the party secretary of Kashgar, Shi Dagang, said that the two Uyghur men in custody for carrying out the attack were members of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

Chinese authorities have never explained the discrepancies raised by the New York Times reports, and no evidence has been presented on the men’s affiliation with ETIM since Shi Dagang’s statement. Initial Chinese-language reports from the official Chinese media regarding the Kashgar attack described the incident as a criminal attack, and did not make the terror angle a prominent feature, although English-language reports produced by Xinhua reported the incident as a terror attack.

34-year-old Abdurahman Azat and 29-year-old Kurbanjan Hemit were detained for allegedly carrying out the attack. They were sentenced to death in December 2008 for “intentional homicide and illegally producing guns, ammunition and explosives”¹².

According to an August 10, 2008 U.S. diplomatic cable¹³ “[t]he Albanian State Intelligence Service on 08/06/2008 provided information indicating that the two people arrested in connection with the 08/04/2008 attack against police in Kashgar, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, were not connected to the East Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIP), although ETIP supported the action. This information was reportedly obtained from an ethnic Uighur claiming first-hand access”.

The two Uyghurs were executed on April 9, 2009 at an unknown location after the announcement of their impending execution was read out in front of 4,000 officials and Kashgar residents in a local stadium. According to local sources, Hemit appeared to have been severely beaten while in custody. The two men were reportedly also denied access to legal counsel and were not allowed to see their families following their initial detention.

¹¹ Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/world/asia/29kashgar.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2

¹² Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/world/asia/18kashgar.html>

¹³ Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/165451>

2.4 Chinese government justifications for repression

“The war on terrorism must never be an excuse to persecute minorities.”
President Bush, Shanghai, October 2001.

“Being a valuable member of the coalition does not mean that China... can use terrorism as an excuse to persecute its ethnic minorities.”
U.S. Ambassador to China Clark Randt, January 2002.

Over the past nine years, using “terrorism” as a justification, Beijing has undertaken a renewed, systematic, and sustained crackdown on all forms of Uyghur dissent. As is common in the Chinese justice system, those arrested in these campaigns frequently suffer from physical abuse and other maltreatment while in government custody. In addition, they are often subject to nontransparent trials and denied access to independent counsel. Convictions are regularly obtained on the basis of forced confessions extracted through torture. Security forces target Uyghurs who express any type of dissent as they “strike hard” against the “three evil forces” of “separatism, terrorism, and extremism.”

Since 9/11, Amnesty International has documented that, under these types of campaigns, “tens of thousands of people are reported to have been detained for investigation in the region, and hundreds, possibly thousands, have been charged or sentenced under the Criminal Law; many Uighurs are believed to have been sentenced to death and executed for alleged ‘separatist’ or ‘terrorist’ offences.”¹⁴

The Chinese government undertook a particularly fierce campaign of repression in East Turkestan during the 2008 Olympic Games period, when the Kashgar attack took place. Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan announced a “life or death struggle” in East Turkestan in August 2008, as well as a hardening of measures designed to manage Uyghur issues¹⁵.

In the period following July 5, 2009 unrest in Urumchi, mass arrests and detentions of Uyghurs were carried out through security sweeps and targeted raids. Chinese authorities launched a 100-day campaign in September 2009 to capture suspects in connection with the July 2009 events, and a “Strike Hard” campaign two months later to continue detentions of people deemed suspects in the July unrest.

2.5 Conclusion of Uyghur American Association on the existence of ETIM

The Uyghur-American community, perhaps even more so than other immigrant groups, appreciates the opportunities and freedom they have been given in the United States. This

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/021/2004/en/47e9cf33-d5cd-11dd-bb24-1fb85fe8fa05/asa170212004en.pdf>

¹⁵ Available at: <http://www.uhrp.org/articles/1396/1/A-Life-or-Death-Struggle-in-East-Turkestan-Uyghurs-face-unprecedented-persecution-in-post-Olympic-period/index.html>

and the support of the United States government for Uyghur human rights issues places a debt of gratitude on Uyghurs, which the Uyghur-American community hopes it can repay through any assistance it can afford.

UAA urges caution on the part of governments worldwide regarding accusations of Uyghur terrorism, and asks that they independently verify the existence of ETIM. UAA encourages any impartial investigation into allegations of Uyghur terror and of the existence of ETIM. This conclusion is based on the belief that available evidence indicates a lack of definitive proof as to the existence of ETIM. UAA acknowledges that while some commentators¹⁶ have offered evidence that attempts to confirm ETIM's existence, there is enough doubt to warrant further investigation. UAA also urges deep skepticism with regard to Chinese government claims of strong links between al Qaeda and alleged Uyghur terrorist groups.

3. Uyghur American Association on the Guantánamo Uyghurs

On February 5, 1997, thousands of Uyghurs, mostly young men, took to the streets of Ghulja and marched to the Ghulja Municipal Government offices. They were demanding equal treatment, religious freedom, and an end to racial discrimination. Armed paramilitary police confronted the unarmed demonstrators with batons, tear gas and high-pressure water sprayed from fire trucks. Eyewitnesses report that Chinese police fired indiscriminately into the crowd, killing as many as 30 Uyghur demonstrators and wounding more than 100 on the spot¹⁷.

In the period immediately following February 5, 1997, thousands of Uyghurs were detained on suspicion of participating in the demonstration. In some cases, family members of those who had participated were also detained. Dozens and possibly hundreds of Uyghurs were executed, some in public, following summary trials. Many others were sentenced to lengthy prison terms, including life, on charges of 'hooliganism'. Other people simply disappeared, and are assumed to be either in prison or dead, their remains disposed of without their families being informed. Reports indicate that hundreds of Uyghurs suspected of involvement in the Ghulja demonstrations were executed between 1997-1999.¹⁸

After the Ghulja Massacre many Uyghurs fled abroad; primarily to the newly independent ex-Soviet Central Asian nations, Pakistan, Nepal and a small number to Europe. Just as Tibetans flee to the neighboring countries of Nepal and India to escape human rights abuses in Tibet, Uyghurs seek refuge in countries neighboring East

¹⁶ See the work of Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, Rohan Gunaratna, and Martin Wayne

¹⁷ See: <http://uhrp.org/articles/3535/1/Thirteen-years-on-the-victims-of-the-Ghulja-Massacre-remain-unaccounted-for-/index.html>

¹⁸ For more detailed information please see the comprehensive report issued by Amnesty International in 1999 titled: *China: Gross Violations of Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*. The report is available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/018/1999/en/dom-ASA170181999en.pdf>

Turkestan, often on their way to Turkey, Europe or North America. However, China's expanding political and economic influence in the region means that Uyghurs are far from safe in second countries neighboring East Turkestan, and even in some other countries.

Since the founding of the Central Asian states in the early 1990s, PRC leaders have feared that these nations, which are culturally and linguistically related to Uyghurs, would sympathize with the Uyghur situation and support their cause. The PRC government views the approximately one million Uyghurs living in ex-Soviet Central Asian countries as a threat, wary that this population might aid Uyghurs in East Turkestan to resist Chinese control of their traditional homeland.

Since 1991, China's economic, geopolitical and energy interests in the ex-Soviet Central Asian region have led the Chinese government to pursue relations with the Central Asian states aimed at increasing their influence in the region. The primary mechanism for these relations was the Shanghai Five organization, founded in 1996. The Shanghai Five became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2001.

China has forged close "anti-terror" links with several countries under the auspices of the SCO, and has signed extradition treaties with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Numerous Uyghurs have "disappeared" or been extradited from these countries. For example, in 1999, Kazakhstan forcibly returned Uyghur political activists Kasim Mahpir, Ilyas Zordun, and Zulfikar Memet to the PRC, where they were executed.¹⁹

Even those non-SCO neighboring states with which the Chinese government does not have formal extradition agreements are subject to intense pressure to return Uyghur asylum seekers. For instance, in late 2001 and early 2002, the Nepalese authorities forcibly returned at least two Uyghurs – possibly three – to the Chinese authorities in East Turkestan. One of these men, Shaheer Ali, who had already been recognized by the UN High Commission for Refugees in Kathmandu as a person in need of protection, and issued with a refugee reference number, was executed in or around October 2003. Prior to his execution, Shaheer Ali gave a comprehensive account of his torture at the hands of Chinese authorities²⁰.

In the late 1990s, especially after the Ghulja Massacre of 1997, Uyghurs in second countries feared repatriation to China and possible imprisonment or execution. Therefore, some of them sought refuge in Afghanistan, which due to its weak governance at that time offered shelter from China and hostile second countries.

On October 7, 2001, the U.S.-initiated Operation Enduring Freedom found the Uyghur refugees in Afghanistan in the wrong place at the wrong time. Once coalition bombing

¹⁹ Amnesty International, *China: Further information on Torture/Health Concern/Unfair Trial /Fear of Execution*, June 16, 2000.

²⁰ Available at:

<https://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=5301&article=Executed+Uyghur+Refugee+Left+Torture+T>

started, the twenty-two Uyghurs later detained in Guantánamo escaped to Pakistan. None of these men were picked up on a battlefield, and most of them were captured by Pakistani bounty hunters and sold to American forces for \$5,000 each.

The U.S. government determined that all of the Uyghurs in Guantánamo are non-enemy combatants. Five Uyghurs were released into Albania in 2006, four to Bermuda in June 2009, six to Palau in October 2009 and two to Switzerland in March 2010. No third country has expressed willingness to accept the five men remaining in Guantánamo, at least in part to Chinese pressure. As early as 2003, most of the Uyghurs in Guantánamo were cleared for release. In 2008, U.S. congressional representatives from both sides of the aisle called for the release of the Guantánamo Uyghurs to the United States. In a landmark ruling on October 7, 2008, U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina paroled the seventeen Uyghurs detained at Guantánamo Bay into the United States. On appeal, a temporary stay was issued on the ruling on October 8, 2008. On February 19, 2009, a federal appeals court consisting of a three-judge panel overruled Judge Ricardo Urbina, and blocked the transfer to the United States, stating that only the legislative and executive branches of the U.S. government reserved the power over immigration issues. In March 2010, the Supreme Court of the United States declined to review the cases of the Guantánamo Uyghur detainees. Lawyers for the Guantánamo Uyghurs submitted a new petition to the Supreme Court that may be reviewed in early 2011²¹.

4. Timeline of Events Since 2007

January 8, 2007: People’s Republic of China (PRC) authorities reportedly raid a “terrorist camp” near the village of Kosrap, in the mountainous region of the Pamir Plateau. This raid was said to have resulted in the death of 18 people. PRC authorities have yet to provide documentation of this alleged terrorist camp.

January 27, 2008: State-controlled Chinese media reports indicate that security forces killed two people and captured 15 others in a “terror” raid at the Happiness Garden Apartments in Urumchi. The reports state that those killed were members of an East Turkestan terrorist group planning an incident on February 5, the 11th anniversary of the Ghulja Massacre. No evidence to support government allegations has been provided.

March 7, 2008: The Ministry of Public Security states that a 19 year-old Uyghur woman, Guzalinur Turdi, confesses to the attempted hijacking of China Southern Airlines flight CZ6901. PRC authorities have yet to provide evidence regarding their claim.

March 26 to April 6, 2008: The Ministry of Public Security reveals the arrests of 35 people in raids conducted in Urumchi between March 26 and April 6. The ministry claims that those arrested had been plotting to kidnap athletes, foreign journalists and other visitors to the August Olympics. No evidence was given.

²¹ See: <http://www.scotusblog.com/2010/12/kiyemba-iii-reaches-court/>

April 10, 2008: The Ministry of Public Security announces the detention of 45 suspects, who had formed two alleged terrorist gangs with the intention of kidnapping athletes at the Beijing Olympics and attacking tourist hotels. The ministry claims that security forces seized explosives and firearms from the suspects in operations carried out in Urumchi. Calls for evidence of this raid are not provided by PRC authorities.

June 21, 2008: According to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, a total of 65 Uyghurs convicted on Olympics-related charges are sentenced in late June in East Turkestan. At least 20 of these Uyghurs reportedly face the death penalty. These 65 Uyghurs were arrested in four groups, and were indicted in the Intermediate People's Court in Urumchi, the regional capital, of having sought to sabotage the Olympics through terrorist activities. The organization reports that the four groups of Uyghurs were initially detained in January, late March and mid-April, in Urumchi, Beijing and Shanghai. They were charged with terrorism-related crimes, including "splittism" and plots to manufacture explosives and launch bombings at the Olympics.

July 9, 2008: Five young Uyghurs are shot to death without warning by police in Urumchi, in a raid on an alleged "holy war training group," where ten young men and five young women were gathered in a house. No evidence is produced to prove the youths belonged to a training group.

July 9, 2008: Following a mass sentencing rally in Kashgar, two Uyghurs are executed and 15 others are handed sentences ranging from 10 years in prison to death on terror-related charges. A Radio Free Asia report indicates that the 17 Uyghurs in Kashgar were accused of having been members of a terrorist camp in the Pamir Mountains in January 2007. However, PRC authorities never provide evidence to support their claims of terrorism associated with the Uyghurs at the alleged terror camp.

July 10, 2008: At a conference on Olympic security, authorities in the PRC reported that in the first half of 2008, they had cracked five alleged terrorist groups and arrested 82 suspected terrorists who were plotting to sabotage the Beijing Olympics. This appears to be a figure for the total number of alleged terror suspects detained in a series of previously reported raids this year. However, the new report does not appear to provide any new evidence, or support Beijing's claim that a significant terrorist threat exists in East Turkestan.

July 26, 2008: The Turkistan Islamic Party claim, via a video released on the Internet, credit for six bombings that have taken place in China over the last three months. The Turkistan Islamic Party threatens to stage more attacks in Beijing during the Olympics. Chinese authorities counter that Uyghur groups had nothing to do with the six attacks, and that Uyghur groups are not capable of doing any damage in Beijing during the Olympics.

August 4, 2008: Chinese state media reports that two Uyghurs, one taxi driver and one vegetable seller, attacked and killed sixteen policemen in Kashgar using a truck,

homemade grenades and knives in the city of Kashgar.²² However, a September 28 New York Times report casts doubt on the official Chinese version of events in a number of key areas.²³ The New York Times details the eyewitness accounts of three western tourists, one of whom had taken photographs of the attack, staying in a hotel across the street from the events. The New York Times reports that the three tourists said “that they heard no loud explosions and that the men wielding the machetes appeared to be paramilitary officers who were attacking other uniformed men.” The discrepancies between the tourists’ accounts and the reports of the official media challenge the credibility of the information the Chinese government provides to the world’s media.

August 9, 2008: In a rural area occupied largely by Uyghurs, fifteen Uyghurs launch a series of attacks in Kucha. Rifles and homemade bombs were used. One policeman, one civilian and ten attackers were killed. Two other attackers were captured. This is according to Chinese media reports.

August 12, 2008: At Yamanya, near Kashgar, a group of men attack a police checkpoint, killing three guards with knives. Credible Uyghur Human Rights Project sources indicate that these guards were young Uyghur villagers manned to check villagers’ IDs at a country road.

August 27, 2008: In Peyzawat [in Chinese, Jiashi] County near Kashgar, two unarmed Uyghur policemen were killed and at least two other Uyghur policemen were critically wounded in a knife attack.

October 21, 2008: Eight Uyghur men are accused of “plotting, organizing and executing various terrorist activities targeting the Beijing Olympic Games”. The eight men, according to Ministry of Public Security spokesman, Wu Heping, are all members of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

June 3, 2009: The China Daily publishes Kashgar party secretary Zhang Jian’s claim that Chinese authorities had “in just four months” uncovered seven terror cells in the East Turkestan city of Kashgar.

September 16, 2009: Xinhua News Agency issues a report detailing the arrest of six suspects in Aksu, alleged to be part of a “terror gang” plotting to carry out terror attacks. Xinhua stated that the “ringleaders” of the gang, now in custody, are Seyitamut Obul and Tasin Mehmet, indicating that the suspects are Uyghurs. The report added that police had seized “materials and tools to make explosives” and that the suspects “had made more than 20 explosive devices in three places in the suburbs of Aksu after the July 5 riot”.

February 15, 2010: Abdul Haq, the alleged leader of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party, is reportedly killed in a U.S. air strike in Waziristan.

²² Available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2008-08/05/content_6903211.htm

²³ Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/world/asia/29kashgar.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all&oref=slogin

June 24, 2010: Ministry of Public Security spokesman Wu Heping announces the breaking up of a terrorist ring of “East Turkistan” separatists. The terrorist group is alleged to be involved in a 2008 attack on border police in Kashgar.

July 1 2010: Two Uyghurs are jailed for 10 years in the United Arab Emirates for planning a bomb attack on a supermarket.

July 8 2010: Three terror suspects, including one Uyghur, are arrested in Norway.

5. Background on the Uyghur People and East Turkistan

Uyghurs (alternatively spelled Uighurs, Uygurs, etc.) are ethnically and culturally a Turkic people living in the areas of Central Asia commonly known as East Turkistan. The area is vast, constituting one-sixth of the total land area under the control of the PRC. The Uyghurs have a rich cultural history going back almost 4,000 years. Before embracing Islam in the eleventh century, Uyghurs believed in Shamanism, Buddhism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity. Today, Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Sunni Islam and lead predominantly secular lives.

East Turkistan has a rich and distinctive history, enhanced by its position along the Silk Road bridging Mainland China and the ancient Arabic, Persian and European cultures to the west.

The first recorded inhabitants of the region were Indo-Europeans. Many Uyghur scholars believe that present-day Uyghurs are descended from these early settlers, which explains the Caucasian appearance of many modern Uyghurs. The present Chinese government claims East Turkistan has been part of China since 60 BC, a claim which is generally contested by Uyghurs and western historians who note that from 60 BC to 1884, for nearly two millennia, China had no control over East Turkistan. Ruling dynasties in East Turkistan during this period were either Mongolian or Manchu, both of whom are non-Chinese peoples.



Furthermore, all historical settlements and cities, such as Kashgar, Hotan, Artush, Aksu, Kucha, Korla, Turpan, Urumchi, Ghulja and Qumul, etc., were established and populated

by Uyghurs. Cities such as Shihezi, Kuitun and Karamay were only established after the PRC annexed East Turkestan in October 1949. Indeed, the Chinese authorities are known to burn books and imprison Uyghur writers who present versions of East Turkestan's history different to the official version.

The imperial Manchu court in Beijing increased its influence in East Turkestan in 1884 when it stationed troops there as a buffer against Russian encroachment from Central Asia, and it was at this point that the Chinese-language name 'Xinjiang' was first applied, meaning 'New Territory'.

For the early part of the period between 1884 and 1949, East Turkestan was caught up in the 'Great Game' between the Russian, Chinese and British empires. Following a period of warlordism, an independent state of East Turkestan was founded first in 1933, and again in 1944. However, with the fall of the East Turkestan government in 1949 following withdrawal of Soviet support, East Turkestan was drawn into the PRC, becoming a province-level administration in 1955.

Since Chinese Communist Party administration, East Turkestan has become a nuclear testing ground for the Chinese military, it is home to large numbers of Chinese military and paramilitary units, and it is the site of numerous forced labor camps administered by the Chinese authorities.

The population of approximately 19 million includes several Turkic-speaking Muslim ethnic groups, of which the Uyghurs, numbering more than eight million, are the largest. As a result of Chinese government policies, the percentage of ethnic Chinese in East Turkestan has grown from four percent in 1949 to more than 40 percent at present, constituting some 7.5 million people. Some Chinese sources indicate that Han Chinese in East Turkestan have already become the majority population. Much like Tibetans, Uyghurs in East Turkestan have struggled for cultural survival in the face of a government-supported influx of Chinese migrants, as well as harsh repression of political dissent and any expression of their distinct identity, however lawful or peaceful.

Reports from East Turkestan document a pattern of abuse including political imprisonment, torture, and disappearances. With only a few extremely rare exceptions, Uyghurs continue to be the only population in China consistently subjected to executions for political and religious offenses. Mosques are summarily closed and the Uyghur language is banned from use in schools. Uyghurs are subjected to compulsory unpaid labor on infrastructures, such as oil or gas lines to transfer East Turkestan's resources to Mainland China.

6. Uyghur American Association

UAA works to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future.

In 2004, UAA founded the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), a human rights research, reporting and advocacy organization, with a supporting grant from the National Endowment for Democracy. The purpose of UHRP is to promote improved human rights conditions for Uyghurs and other indigenous groups in East Turkestan (also known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), on the premise that the assurance of basic human rights will facilitate the realization of the community's democratic aspirations.

UHRP is a part of the Uyghur American Association, which is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit, tax-exempt community membership organization.

7. Uyghur American Association Profiles

7.1 Ms. Rebiya Kadeer, President

Ms. Rebiya Kadeer, 62, is a Uyghur democracy leader, former businesswoman and former prisoner of conscience. An advocate for the rights of the Uyghur people in East Turkestan, she established a multimillion-dollar trading company and worked to provide opportunities for disadvantaged Uyghurs. Previously held up as a model of Uyghur success, she fell from government favor after she began calling upon the PRC government to change its repressive policies against the Uyghurs. She was arrested in 1999 while on her way to meet with a U.S. Congressional delegation that was visiting East Turkestan to investigate the human rights situation there. She was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in March 2000, following a secret trial. Forced to spend two years in solitary confinement, she witnessed brutal torture and abuse carried out on her fellow prisoners.



Ms. Kadeer's case received wide international attention as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch publicized her case and aggressively pursued her freedom. In 2000, Human Rights Watch awarded Ms. Kadeer its highest human rights award. In 2004, Norway's Rafto Foundation honored her with the Rafto Award. Then, on March 17, 2005, three days before an official visit to Beijing by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, she was released from prison, ostensibly on medical grounds, and sent to the United States, where she was given refugee status. Ms. Kadeer spent nearly six years in prison before being released to the U.S.

Ms. Kadeer has actively campaigned for the human rights of the Uyghur people since her arrival in the United States. A multiple nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, she is widely regarded as the "spiritual mother" of the Uyghur people. In September 2005, Ms. Kadeer founded the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation in Washington, D.C, which works to promote human rights for Uyghur women and children in East Turkestan. In May 2006, she was elected to the presidency of the Uyghur

American Association, also based in Washington, which works to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future.

In November 2006, she was elected as president of the World Uyghur Congress, which represents the collective interests of the Uyghur diaspora, both in East Turkestan and in countries throughout the world. PRC authorities, in retaliation for her human rights advocacy, have frequently persecuted Ms. Kadeer's children and other family members. Two of her sons, Alim and Ablikim Abdureyim, are currently serving lengthy prison sentences, and their punishments are widely seen as reprisal for Ms. Kadeer's human rights activism on behalf of the Uyghur people. Other family members have been detained, placed under house arrest and otherwise harassed.

Languages: Uyghur (translation to/from English and Mandarin Chinese for interviews with Ms. Kadeer can be provided)

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7.2 Mr. Alim Seytoff, General Secretary

Mr. Seytoff has been campaigning for the human rights and freedom of the Uyghur people since he came to the United States in 1996. He has written many articles on the political situation in East Turkestan. His articles have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the Asia Times, the Analyst (a publication of the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University), and the Berean Review, a publication of Regent University. Major newspapers and other media organizations frequently interview Mr. Seytoff. He has also testified numerous times before the U.S. Congress and briefed U.S. State Department officials on the situation in East Turkestan. Mr. Seytoff holds a B.A. degree in Chinese Studies from Xinjiang University, and another B.A. in Broadcast Journalism from Southern Adventist University. He holds an M.A. degree in Political Science from the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. He also has a Certificate of Graduate Studies in International Politics from the same school. Mr. Seytoff received his J.D. degree from Regent University School of Law.

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8. A Note on Terminology

The Uyghur American Association strongly recommends the use of “Uyghur” as opposed to “Chinese Muslim” or “Chinese Uyghur” in news reports. UAA believes that the descriptors “Chinese Muslim” and “Chinese Uyghur” are inaccurate and misleading, and would be akin to calling Tibetans “Chinese Buddhists”. Uyghurs are ethnically Turkic people, who possess a vibrant Central Asian culture and language. There are “ethnic Chinese Muslims” who reside primarily (but not exclusively) in western areas of the PRC - they are known as “Hui”. In addition, there would be scant basis to referring to members of the Uyghur Diaspora residing outside of the PRC as “Chinese Muslims” - almost without exception, these Uyghurs do not identify themselves as “Chinese”.

9. A Note on Independence Versus Autonomy

The Uyghur American Association does not advocate independence for East Turkestan. UAA seeks the fulfillment of Uyghurs’ right to self-determination, which PRC practices and policies have denied. UAA believes that, by virtue of that right, they should be able to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.



The Uyghur American Association (UAA) works to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future in East Turkestan.



The UAA launched the UHRP in 2004 to promote improved human rights conditions for Uyghurs and other indigenous groups in East Turkestan, on the premise that the assurance of basic human rights will facilitate the realization of the community's democratic aspirations.

UHRP also works to raise the profile of the Uyghur people and the plight of all “minority” peoples in East Turkestan by:

Researching, writing and publishing news stories and longer reports covering a broad range human rights issues involving civil and political rights, through to social cultural and economic rights;

Preparing briefings – either written or in person – for journalists, academics, diplomats and politicians on the human rights situation faced by the Uyghur people and others in East Turkestan.

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