CHINA'S CHANGING STRATEGIC CONCERNS: THE IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN XINJIANG

ROUNDTABLE

BEFORE THE

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CHINA'S CHANGING STRATEGIC CONCERNS: THE IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN XINJIANG

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2005

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The roundtable was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 480, Ford House Office Building, David Dorman (Senate Staff Director) presiding.

Also present: John Foarde, House Staff Director; Carl Minzner, Senior Counsel; Steve Marshall, Senior Advisor; Katherine Palmer Kaup, Special Advisor on Minority Nationalities Affairs; and Pamela N. Phan, Counsel.

Mr. DORMAN. On behalf of our Chairman, Senator Chuck Hagel, and our Co-Chairman, Representative Jim Leach, I would like to open this roundtable of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China on how the Chinese Government's changing security concerns in Central Asia may be having an impact on the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

Before we get started, please note that this room has no microphones and therefore neither the voices of our staff panel nor our expert panel will be amplified. Each of us on the dais, and our panelists as well, will try to speak up, but please feel free to raise your hand during the course of the next 90 minutes if our volume begins to drop and you cannot hear. I will try to indicate politely to whomever is speaking to raise the volume level of his or her voice.

I would like to make a short opening statement, then we will get right into today's discussion. As has been our practice, I will introduce each of our panelists first and then give each, in turn, 10 minutes to make an opening statement.

When all panelists have made their opening statements, each staff member on the dais will have five minutes to ask a question and hear an answer from our panelists, and we will continue this for 90 minutes or until we run out of questions.

Over the past years, we have never run out of questions, so I am sure that we will have to end things at 90 minutes with a last question and hold the remaining conversation until the next roundtable.

So with that, I would like to make a short statement and we will get started.

The Chinese Government continues to strictly regulate Muslim practices, particularly among members of the Uighur minority. All mosques in China must register with the state-run China Islamic Association. Imams must be licensed by the state before they can

practice and must regularly attend patriotic education sessions. Religious repression in Xinjiang is severe, driven by Party policies that equate peaceful expression of Uighur identity and religion with terrorism and extremism. Since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991 and independent states were established in Central Asia, the Chinese Government has tightened controls over expressions of ethnic identity, particularly among the members of the Uighur ethnic group in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the Chinese Government has equated peaceful expressions of Uighur identity with "subversive terrorist plots."

In this regard, I would like to highlight the Commission's deep concern about the recent sentencing of Uighur editor Korash Huseyin for publishing an article by Uighur writer Nurmemet Yasin. Mr. Yasin is currently serving a 10-year sentence for writing the article. I would point to a line I just saw in Professor Millward's written statement that says "literature is not terrorism."

The Xinjiang Government has increased surveillance and arrested Uighurs suspected of "harboring separatist sentiments" since popular movements ousted Soviet-era leaders in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.

This roundtable will address the treatment of minorities in Xinjiang, particularly the Uighur ethnic group, and explore how China's security concerns in Central Asia and western China affect human rights.

In its 2005 Annual Report, the Commission recommended that the President and the Congress should continue to urge Chinese officials not to use the global war against terrorism as a pretext to suppress minorities' legitimate, peaceful aspirations to exercise their rights protected by the Chinese Constitution and the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law [REAL].

With that, I would like to introduce Dr. James Millward, who is Associate Professor of History at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. Professor Millward is the author of several books and articles on Xinjiang, including "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment," "A History of Chinese Kyrgyzstan," yet to be published, and "Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity and Empire in Qing Central Asia: 1859–1864." Dr. Millward holds a B.A. from Harvard University, an M.A. from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Professor Millward, please take 10 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF JAMES A. MILLWARD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. MILLWARD. Thank you, Mr. Dorman. I would like to thank you and the Commission for the opportunity to come down and talk with you today.

The draconian policies, which I think in most of our eyes are also counterproductive policies, of the Chinese Government in Xinjiang today, I think, derive from several factors. One of these, I think,

is the lessons taken by the Chinese leadership, particularly hard-line members of the Chinese leadership, from the relaxation, or relative relaxation, of restrictions on religion and expression in the 1980s.

With the emergence of a number of popular demonstrations, and in particular with the events of the early 1990s, the 1990 Baren incident and other violent acts, the leadership, I think, took the message that a little bit of relaxation can unleash a lot of dissent and a lot of problems in the area. I think in many ways they have continued under that understanding right up to the present, even while relaxing political controls to a certain degree in other parts of China.

But there are other reasons underlying the current policies in Xinjiang. Another of those, of course, is fear of organized terrorism, terrorist groups, or perhaps other sorts of violent separatism. As I have argued in the publication which you just cited about violent separatism, I think the public statements and the public assessment of that danger by the PRC Government is somewhat exaggerated. However, I hasten to add that I only have access to open-source materials on which to judge and I can only go from my analysis of what is publicly said and available. So it may be that, in fact, the threat of violence of one sort or another is worse than it appears to me, and that might explain the intensity of the PRC Government's concern about Xinjiang.

But I think that there is yet another reason underlying the current policies, and that is a fear of foreign involvement, a deep and abiding insecurity—and perhaps to our eyes an irrational sense of insecurity—about China's control in the region. I think, to a great degree, that sense of insecurity arises from how Chinese see the history of Xinjiang, particularly the modern history from the 18th century conquest during the Qing period.

I have given in my written statement a little history lesson. It is a history lesson through a fairly narrow frame, a narrow lens. What I have tried to do is outline the history of the last 250 years or so in Xinjiang as it is very often portrayed in China, in Chinese materials, in history texts, in statements by political leaders, even in schoolbooks, on Web sites, and so on. Basically, it is a long list of "foreign interference in China's internal affairs," a Chinese term we all know for foreign involvement in military and other sorts of events in the region. I do not think I should go over it all here, except to say that the lesson that one should take from that view of history is not that current policies are justified. I am not trying to say that current policies are justified by this history, but rather that Chinese scholars, Chinese leaders, to a certain extent Chinese citizens, particularly Han Chinese citizens in the region, do in fact believe this history, do in fact believe that there have been a long chain of attempts by foreign powers to undermine Chinese control of the Xinjiang region. And in particular, since the 1980s and 1990s it has been routine for Chinese officials to blame the United States, either through insinuation, or occasionally through outright statements, for supporting separatism by lending aid and moral support to separatist groups. This is always described in Chinese sources in very shady and murky terms. But the effects of decades of this kind of propaganda are real and I think it is often forgotten that

in authoritarian, non-transparent regimes, people often come to believe their own propaganda. People come to believe their own versions of history. In this case, moreover, there is at least a certain factual core underlying this view.

Against that background, recent events in Central Asia—in particular, the post-9/11 advance of U.S. military interests, the arrival of U.S. military bases in the region, as well as renewed military arrangements with both Pakistan and India, and of course the "color revolutions," all of these new factors on the strategic scene fit into this historical framework, this historical narrative of foreign threat to China's control over Xinjiang.

I think that narrative is the framework within which Chinese leaders and thinkers are predisposed to see these events. They remember, much more than we do here, that there was a CIA agent, Douglas MacKiernan, on the scene in Urumqi in 1949 who went off to meet Osman Batur among the Kazakhs, fled to Osman's camp when the PLA took over Urumqi. And they see MacKiernan's activity as the seeds of a CIA plot to undermine PRC control and to support a guerrilla insurgency in Xinjiang, much as the CIA later sponsored Tibetan guerrillas in Tibet.

This is a very present part of their historical consciousness, and therefore it is not nearly as unreasonable to Chinese as it seems to us that the United States would use sympathy for Uighurs and support for Uighur human rights as a shield or a cover for nefarious purposes.

I point this out, I suppose, to encourage those who are in the business of expressing concern about human rights in China to try to do it in ways that take into account these Chinese anxieties, to try to assuage those anxieties as much as possible.

This is difficult, I think, given the current U.S. efforts to expand its military foothold in Central Asia, but I do not think it would be impossible.

I believe I have used up my time.

Mr. DORMAN. You have two minutes.

Mr. MILLWARD. All right. In two minutes, I can go into more Qing Imperial period history for you. The Zuo Zongtang conquest is a fascinating subject!

Mr. DORMAN. You have raised plenty for questions.

Mr. MILLWARD. All right. Well, then I will leave it and more can come up in the question period.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Millward appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Next, I would like to introduce Dr. S. Frederick Starr, who is Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Dr. Starr is the author or editor of over 20 books and 200 articles on Central Asian and Russian affairs, including "Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland," published in 2004. He is a trustee of the Eurasia Foundation and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

Dr. Starr, we welcome your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF S. FREDERICK STARR, CHAIRMAN, CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS INSTITUTE, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (SAIS), WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. STARR. Thank you, Mr. Dorman. I should say that Jim Millward contributed to that Xinjiang volume the most concise and comprehensive short history of the region in any language. Before beginning, I would just note that Chinese sensitivities in this are, it seems to me, indistinguishable from Russian-Soviet sensitivities with regard to Ukraine and the Baltic countries and the Caucasus. The same language is used; the same high historical evidence is brought forward. Chinese concerns are real, but we should keep them in perspective. I should also note that during the 1960s the Chinese were very glad to cooperate with the United States and the CIA in Xinjiang in their armed struggle with the Soviet Union that occurred on the western border. This, too, is also part of the history.

I would like to speak of 10 areas concerning democratization and human rights, and characterize their condition in Xinjiang today; and then draw some very quick conclusions.

First, are there free and fair elections? No.

Two, does there exist a parliamentary body or any form of representative government? No.

Three, does the Turkic population enjoy equal legal or economic rights with the Han Chinese? No. The number of Uighurs in top government jobs has actually shrunk and they have clamped down on Turkic entrepreneurship. Health indicators are far better for Han Chinese than for Turkic peoples, et cetera, et cetera.

Four, is the court system free of governmental interference? No, no more than it was free in the USSR, from which Maoist China borrowed most of its judicial institutions.

Five, does the government observe minimal international standards for persons held in jail and labor camps? No. In fact, the government has managed very successfully to prevent information on this from getting out.

Six, do the Turkic peoples of Xinjiang have reasonable access to income-producing employment and social services? To some extent, but their access is worse than for Han Chinese.

Seven, is the practice of religion free from governmental interference? You yourself have spoken to that, Mr. Dorman.

Eight, are domestic or international NGOs able to function in Xinjiang? No. The most successful ones that have been set up locally have all been closed down by legal action. These actions have been very harsh, and in one instance, several hundred people were killed as you know.

Nine, are there free media? No.

Finally, do citizens of Xinjiang have access to international travel and contacts through which they could air their concerns in relevant international forums? No, obviously.

That is the context. This is the result of Beijing's very successful policy, "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure." There is nothing subtle about it. Just this week that policy was reaffirmed. It dates from prior to 9/11.

The impression of most of the scholars with whom I am in contact is that most Turkic peoples in Xinjiang would be quite content if rights implied in the name of the province, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, were applied in practice. They do not seek separatism. If separatism ever existed, it is certainly dead within the territory of Xinjiang today. What does exist is a moderate movement toward some kind of autonomy that most people, I suspect, would be quite content with.

The point I want to raise, is this: since the collapse of the USSR, we have been concerned with the fate of human rights in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Our focus, and the focus of your Commission, has been overwhelmingly on the independent states that were formed out of the collapse of the USSR: three in the south Caucasus and five in Central Asia.

But, of course, these countries are only part of their respective regions. The North Caucasus includes Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, et cetera. The greater Central Asian Region includes Afghanistan and Xinjiang. Bluntly, we react very differently to the circumstances in the two situations. When any of the new, small, relatively weak, relatively poor but independent states stumble in the area of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom, we editorialize against them, pass censure motions, and heap public abuse on their leaders, whom we then refuse to receive in the White House. We threaten to suspend or de-certify them from our favor, and even bar humanitarian assistance to them.

By contrast, when larger, rich and powerful states—specifically Russia and the People's Republic of China—impose their rule over other parts of the same regions with brutal and primitive force, in the process assaulting the principles of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom, we continue to receive their leaders as honored guests. We rap their knuckles but otherwise do nothing.

My point is that the United States, by its very founding, placed itself on the side of national self-determination and those seeking freedom from imperial rule. Now we seem to be supporting the imperial powers. Our response to mischief in struggling new states is much harsher than our response to more serious offenses in large states. True, we are not giving a pass to China and Russia in these respective regions as is clear from the President's speech yesterday. But we are certainly not pursuing these matters with anything near the same intensity that we are pursuing less grave matters in the new states.

Let me stress that I am not arguing against engagement with the People's Republic of China, nor am I proposing that we give a pass to governments in other parts of Central Asia and the Caucasus when they commit abuses in the areas that we are concerned with. Instead, I am suggesting that it is time that we take our finger off the scales and start acting on our values in a consistent manner. At the very least, let us stop allocating rewards and punishments, engagement and rebukes on the basis of whether a country is large or small, secure or vulnerable, powerful or weak.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Starr appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Next, I would like to introduce Mr. Daniel Southerland, who is Vice President of Programming and Executive

Editor at Radio Free Asia. Prior to joining RFA in 1996, Mr. Southerland was a foreign correspondent in Asia for 18 years. He served as the Washington Post Bureau Chief in Beijing from 1985 to 1990. Mr. Southerland was awarded the Edward Weintal Prize for distinguished reporting in 1995 for a series on the Mao Zedong years in China, and was nominated for a Pulitzer Price in 1990 for his coverage of Tiananmen. He holds a B.A. from University of North Carolina, an M.S. in East Asian Studies from Harvard, and an M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University.

Mr. Southerland, please take 10 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL SOUTHERLAND, VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMMING/EXECUTIVE EDITOR, RADIO FREE ASIA, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. The Chinese Government has for many years tightly controlled information reaching the Uighur people in Xinjiang. But the government's controls over the media and freedom of expression in Xinjiang appear to have grown even stricter since the 9/11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

I agree, by the way, with Jim Millward that the Baren incident, which I tried to cover from Beijing in, I guess it was, 1990, was a kind of a turning point which needs to be put in the record, because that had a real sharp effect in Beijing.

We had a great deal of trouble getting the story straight because they barred foreign correspondents from going into the area. There was one guy from Agence France-Presse who was there who was escorted out of the area, so it did relate to restrictions on mosque-building, I believe, which is still an issue. So, that is very important.

This goes back a lot farther than the changes in Central Asia and the 9/11 attacks. They just made things worse. There was already a great deal of paranoia about weapons getting into Xinjiang, and so forth, and there were some deaths that were involved in that Baren incident.

The media is more tightly controlled in Xinjiang than in any other part of China that I can think of, and I think that would include Tibet, although perhaps it is equally tightly controlled in Tibet. But the atmosphere certainly is more repressive in Xinjiang than in any other part of China, perhaps even including Tibet. As a result, broadcasting to the Xinjiang Autonomous Region has constituted one of the most challenging tasks undertaken by Radio Free Asia.

When it comes to Uighur-language broadcasting, RFA is the only broadcaster that attempts to provide accurate and objective news. We have some Saudi Arabian broadcasting, but it is almost exclusively on religious matters. Taiwan, as far as I know, stopped broadcasting in Uighur. There are Central Asian broadcasts in Uighur, but these are edited so as not to offend the Chinese Government.

The government itself broadcasts in Uighur, but censors the information that is of most importance to the Uighur people, that has the greatest relevance to the Uighur people. Foreign correspondents do travel to Xinjiang, but rarely, and when they go, they are

on guided tours. So, RFA covers stories that no one else covers, and the Chinese Government is doing things in Xinjiang that it no longer does in many other parts of China.

Executions of political prisoners occur in Xinjiang. Books are banned routinely, and they do not just ban the books, they burn them. There is forced labor in Xinjiang that is not occurring elsewhere in China. Restrictions on religious education, of course, were mentioned. Textbooks are rewritten so that Uighurs cannot recognize their own history. I actually have two broadcasters working for me who were historians who were trying to write the true history of the region, and they had to flee because they were in danger.

Educational reform is another thing that we cover, where the Uighur language has been replaced by the Chinese language. This started at the university level and is now moving down to the elementary level.

In this kind of an environment, it was mentioned that literature is off limits, in many ways. Uighur writers are particularly vulnerable. A writer who is promoting non-violent dissent can be accused of advocating terrorism. In mid-2005, RFA reported on the author that we mentioned, the author of a first-person narrative, a fictional narrative or fable about a young pigeon who commits suicide rather than sacrifice his freedom. The authorities apparently read that story as an indictment of China's heavy-handed ruling over Xinjiang and, as you mentioned, gave the writer, Mr. Yasin, a 10-year jail sentence.

As you can imagine, it is no wonder that we are under heavy jamming from the Chinese Government. They use loud noise and music to jam our broadcasts. The U.S. Government and the FCC complain to the Chinese Government about this, and China denies it is doing any jamming. Three years ago, officials of the Xinjiang radio, a state-run radio broadcaster, and state-run television revealed that they were investing nearly $40 million in a new project designed to even more heavily jam international broadcasts, and obviously we were a target. They began building up their own Uighur broadcasting capability.

They also, in the year 2004, began trying to disrupt our Mandarin, Tibetan, and Uighur call-in shows by using a certain modem-driven automatic system to bombard us with calls so that legitimate calls could not get through. We have managed somehow to overcome that problem.

We get tips through this hotline, the call-in show from Xinjiang, from people in remote villages who tell us stories that would never get out unless they called us. One such story came from a farmer, a herdsman who called to say that he had gone to the local Uighur radio station in Ili to tell the journalist there that there was a very lethal disease that was killing cows and sheep, and they said they could not broadcast it. Finally, somebody told one of the farmers, "Why don't you go to Radio Free Asia and give them a call and get the story out?"

We have a Web site, which is heavily blocked by the Chinese Government, but we do know that our news does get through via proxy servers and "human proxies" who e-mail our reports or post them. The stories get through in rather creative ways. In March, when Uighur businesswoman Rebiya Kadeer arrived in Wash-

ington following her release from prison—and I am sure you all know that story. She spent five years in prison after protesting against China's mistreatment of Uighurs. She arrived at Reagan National Airport, and embraced her husband. We had a photo of that embrace which went out via Internet to Xinjiang, where the Internet police promptly blocked it, but not in time to prevent someone from cutting and pasting and removing the banned RFA address and moving the story along, so that when Kadeer, within hours, called her children up, they had seen the photo. So, information does get through, despite the challenges.

Based on studies done by RFA's research department, the atmosphere in Xinjiang is the most repressive of any region in China that I know of. One study concludes, not surprisingly, that the authorities have used the global war on terror to justify harsh measures designed to stamp out dissent. In contrast with other parts of China where people now feel free, in private, to discuss personal matters, more so than when I first went to China, certainly, and even political issues if they do not challenge the Communist Party, many Uighurs dare not discuss sensitive issues even with friends or family members.

Internet usage is gradually spreading, chat rooms are increasing in number, but accessing the Web sites of international broadcasters remains an activity too risky for most Uighurs to try, based on our research.

But for many Uighurs, RFA broadcasts remain a lifeline in a hostile media environment. International broadcasts are the only means for many Uighurs to get reliable news of the outside world, as well as news about developments inside their own region.

I think I went over the 10 minutes. I borrowed a minute from Professor Starr.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Southerland appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Well, good. Thank you very much for excellent opening statements. There is plenty of material for us to have, I think, a good discussion.

As all of you know, the Commission staff has a responsibility to report to our members, both in the Executive Branch and Legislative Branch, on human rights and rule of law issues in China. We attempt to do that in a way that is as balanced, factual, and constructive as possible. One of the areas that we have had a particular challenge in completing this task involves Xinjiang, due to a lack of information. We rely to a great extent on RFA and the work that Dr. Millward and Dr. Starr, among others, have done in this regard.

Mr. Southerland noted in his opening statement that over time, particularly over the last 5 to 10 years, there has been less and less information on what is happening in Xinjiang. I do not think I am misquoting Mr. Southerland. Yet, at the same time, the sorts of reports and analyses we see on Xinjiang suggest that the situation there continues to get worse. Could each of you comment on the relationship, if any, between these two phenomena? How is the lack of information impacting our analyses of the current situation in Xinjiang?

A second and related question that I would ask each of you to address concerns the issue of violent extremism. Both Dr. Starr and Dr. Millward discussed this in their opening statements. What is your assessment regarding the existence of violent extremism in Xinjiang? Realizing that we do not have solid numbers or percentages, but based on what we have and what you have seen and heard, how good, how accurate can our assessments be without more information? How would you assess statements by the Chinese Government on this subject?

I will ask Dr. Millward to start.

Mr. MILLWARD. Yes. I did some work on this question, I guess, a year and a half ago. It is contained in my publication that you mentioned before. My methodology in doing that was to gather whatever I could from a search via Nexis and other sources, and also to read Chinese official reports, white papers, and some supposedly internal materials that have nonetheless gotten out and were widely circulated in the West, and analyzing these things against each other, looking for internal consistencies and inconsistencies, particularly with regard to the white paper on terrorism that was released in January 2002.

I found a lot of inconsistencies, in particular, in the long list of terrorist acts that the Chinese released in January 2002, which was the first such ostensibly comprehensive catalog that we've had. In this document, which contained lists of past acts and lists of supposedly terrorist groups, did not link up the two. In other words, there are many acts listed and then there are names of, supposedly, many groups. But the list does not—with a couple of exceptions—accuse particular groups of committing particular acts. One of the exceptions was, in fact, the 1997 Ili incident, which as we know from a good deal of other reporting, was not a planned terrorist act at all, but rather a demonstration and a clash between the state and Uighur civilians in Ili that got out of hand. So from that and other work with these sorts of sources, I determined that as far as I can tell, the threat of organized militarist or militant resistance or of terrorist acts has been exaggerated.

Now, I am always nervous saying that, because all it takes is one big bomb somewhere to shoot a hole in my theory. So I am very cautious. Of course, we recently had a release of a little video by a group calling themselves the Lions of the Tianshan in which they threatened Chinese military and intelligence and other sort of state targets in Xinjiang and in China proper and urged Uighur and Han civilians not to come out to the ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It is very hard to know what to do with a press release such as that video from a group we have not heard of before, and there are various ways to interpret it. We have not seen any action by this group, is all that I can say.

Now, I need to say one more thing. You prefaced your question with the comment that "it seems things are getting worse and worse" in the region. Now, that is perhaps true from a certain point of view, but I am not sure that it is entirely true. I will not go into my reasons for that, since the thrust of your question is——

Mr. DORMAN. We base much of what we do here on what people like you help us understand. I am referring to reports pointing to

a worsening situation—and not that I am disputing them—just asking for your impressions and analysis of how we should look at these reports.

Mr. MILLWARD. I see. All right. Well, then, very quickly, Professor Starr himself referenced, at the beginning of his written statement, that when you go to Xinjiang you see increasingly modernized cities, you see the results of oil revenue and of development efforts, and so on. I have not been there, for a year, year and a half or so. The Chinese Government is not routinely granting me visas at this point, which I think is not smart on their part because of what I am about to say, which is that, when I was there a year and a half ago, many of my views about the state of things in Xinjiang were moderated by what I actually saw on the ground. Just as one example: I had heard before I went that the old city of Kashgar had been virtually razed and people had been moved out, and so on. This had been portrayed as a plot or a planned government campaign to clear out this old city, which was hard to control and hard to police, and was seen as a source of dissent. Now, when I got to Kashgar, yes, there had been some demolition, particularly around the area of the Idkah mosque, but the demolition was nowhere near as widespread as I had been led to believe.

Moreover, I found that other places that had been slated for demolition and urban renewal, had in fact been saved. The reasons both for the planned demolition and for not demolishing these areas had to do with local business interests, local government, and plans for development and various deals going on. I have heard similar stories for other cities besides Kashgar. Hotan was one example.

In other words, what is actually going on here is a common problem of local government in cahoots with developers, of local government officials having some sort of idea of what the city should look like, but not necessarily thinking through all of the implications of that. In the Kashgar case, I heard it was another company, a tourist company—a Chinese domestic tourism company which itself had a deal for tourism in Kashgar—which got in touch with local authorities there and said, "What, are you crazy? If you tear down this old town, that is it for this kind of tourism." And the local government retreated from some of its plans for demolition and rebuilding in the old city of Kashgar. So, these situations on the ground are much more complicated than one can learn from abroad.

Finally, a slight impression I got, which was that, although relations between Uighur and Han continue to be very tense on an interpersonal level, you can feel this almost palpably, and it is worse than 10 years ago—on the other hand, the "embourgoisment" effect, the middle class effect, that we see in many parts of China, of people—indeed, as was predicted—becoming better off, who are beginning to benefit from the economic reforms, are in turn moderating, tempering some of their discontent as a result of that. This is affecting, certainly, some Uighur urban dwellers as well as Han dwellers.

Now, this development is anecdotal. I have no survey evidence to back this up unfortunately. Indeed, a survey to that effect would not be possible in the current climate in Xinjiang. Nonetheless, one

gets these sorts of impressions. So, very cautiously then, I would suggest that the impression of a ticking time bomb, or a bubbling cauldron, or whatever metaphor you use to imply that things are ramping up to some sort of inevitable crisis—that may not be the case. Of course, none of this is to downplay the severity of human rights abuses that are going on, or the extent of religious controls, and other things mentioned in the press and the CECC report.

Mr. DORMAN. Thank you. I have used more than my five minutes, but if either of you would like to comment on the original question, you will have that time and I will pass on my next round.

Dr. Starr.

Mr. STARR. First, on the information, I think your proposition is right: no news is bad news. Second, on violence, there has been a good deal over the last decade. There are people blowing up Communist Party headquarters, offices, and doing that sort of thing, and it is not at an end.

I think, though, what one has to do here is make a serious distinction. First of all, there is, and has been, some violence, terrorism, if you will, of the Islamic and Al Qa'ida flavor, not surprising considering that Xinjiang borders Afghanistan and Pakistan. Neither of these seem to be on the rise. On the contrary, the Chinese authorities seem to have put a pretty firm stop to it.

With Afghanistan, of course, after 2001, we did a huge favor to the Chinese interests in Xinjiang as we took that in hand. But also, many Pakistanis who were heading up to Xinjiang, trading along the Kharkoram Highway, selling plastic bottles and chadors, generally did not get a very good reception, and they generally have not had a good reception because they have a bad habit of drinking everything in sight and messing with local Turkic females, which does not endear them to the local Turkic peoples. So, I would not say that that is a major issue.

What is a concern, is the other kind of violence. That is, to use old Communist rhetoric, related to national liberation movements. Now, this sort of thing will be back. It is not dead. This has been the concern. I think we really have to make a distinction that we have blurred in recent years between those who, in various parts of the world, are seeking legitimate forms of autonomy within a given state or who are seeking independence.

What happened here in America at Concord Bridge in 1775 was an act of violence against a legitimate state. We as colonists claimed it was illegitimate. North Carolinians, during the Revolution, regularly practiced what we would have to call terrorism. And the very style of American warfare during the Revolution certainly did not comport well with what was considered civilized fighting in that day.

I think the same issue exists, of course, in the north Caucasus. Just to say that someone has acted violently is not the end of the issue. I mean, it seems to me we can reasonably say, "Look, you have got a serious problem on this autonomy issue. You promised it in name, but there is no functioning administrative decentralization and autonomy. Deal with it." Mao Zedong himself gave the region that name.

Finally, as to the question of general prosperity, I would just remind you that it is the urban moderates who have been the leaders

of this movement—they always are, of national independence movements—and not the really poor in the countryside. If that is the case, you can expect more trouble, not less.

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Southerland.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I would just add a word. You mentioned at the beginning of your question that there is less and less information available. I think that is partly because people have grown more fearful. I mentioned earlier that the atmosphere has not gotten better.

I think another reason for this might be that some of the most articulate and intelligent Uighurs have actually fled, managed to get out, so we are beginning to see how we have a significant population of Uighurs in the United States. These are people who might be able to describe a situation from inside that they simply could not survive in Xinjiang. So, it does not tell you very much, except that it is harder to get information.

On the violent extremism, I think Jim Millward has really made a very good contribution in documenting that it has not shown an upward trend. I hope I am quoting him correctly. I also suspect that once he looks more deeply into this, or others look more deeply into it, we are going to find that a lot of these groups that make grand declarations and so forth are very divided among themselves. I think there is an incredible amount of factionalism in these groups, which means that they may be very small indeed.

We are gratified that in the countryside, where a lot of people have really been left behind by this economic boom, the oil wealth, and so forth, that we do have quite a few listeners. We get these calls, as I mentioned, from farmers. It takes a lot of guts for a farmer to get the number. There was a Reuters reporter or a wire service reporter in one of these earthquake-stricken areas once who had a Uighur come up to him, and he had written the RFA phone number down and he said, "I am going to call these people, get the story out."

So, I am not putting down the courage of people. I think there are still a lot of courageous people. But there is an atmosphere of fear. I think the boom is real, but it has benefited mostly Han Chinese. It is always a question of relative deprivation. There is a gap. Some Han Chinese are indeed getting very wealthy. When a Uighur gets too wealthy, he or she is likely to be co-opted, or put under a lot of pressure. Rebiya Kadeer is perhaps the perfect example of someone, a moderate, but her wealth and her influence were too much for the government to bear and so she was jailed for spurious reasons.

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you. I would like to thank all of my colleagues on the dais for their understanding. I will not ask a question in the second round.

I would like to turn things over to my colleague, John Foarde, who is Staff Director for Mr. Leach, our Co-Chairman.

John.

Mr. FOARDE. Thank you, Dave.

Thanks to all three of our panelists for coming this morning to share your expertise with us on this important issue.

I was struck by a comment that Dr. Millward made during his presentation about a longstanding perception in China of U.S. involvement in supporting, for lack of a better term, "splittism" in Xinjiang. I wondered—and I would address this to both Dr. Millward and Dr. Starr—when you travel to Xinjiang or travel to China and discuss these issues with your counterparts, do you hear them play these themes, and is there a difference between the types of things that you might hear from an ethnic Han interlocutor or an ethnic Uighur, or an Uzbek or a Kazakh in Xinjiang?

Mr. MILLWARD. Yes, there is a difference between what you will hear from an ethnic Han or an ethnic Uighur, and it breaks down along the lines you would expect. In talking with Chinese scholars, including a director of an institute that deals with frontier issues with whom I am well acquainted, I think there is sort of a question of etiquette here. They do not bring this up directly in your face, and we are quite friendly. Where you see it is in their writings, and particularly in more policy-oriented writings, of which we have a few that have come out recently. Reading these, I am struck by the frequency with which the NATO intervention in Kosovo has been brought up, and I am sure once the history of the "color revolutions" filters through into these writings in a year or so, I am sure they will be brought up in the same light. I hear that, in fact, the color revolutions are being discussed in conferences as well. It is these sorts of things that make me take the position I have taken today.

Also, I gather impressions from conversations with Chinese graduate students here in the United States, those working in humanistic fields and social sciences who are reading Chinese news on the Web, who are reading Web sites, and so on. A comment from one student really struck me. He thoroughly believed that the entire body of American-Sinological research, particularly research on modern Chinese history, had been conducted with a goal of undermining the Chinese state. He said, "Oh, well, of course it is all about strategic goals and strategies." He believed this. Now, part of this comes from the fact that in China, history is very much the handmaiden of politics. But another part of it, I think, comes from very strong underlying nationalistic belief—which this generation of young Chinese holds perhaps more than the Cultural Revolution generation—a nationalistic feeling and a distrust of foreign motives, when we are presenting what we see as friendly, or perhaps stern but friendly, concerns.

Mr. FOARDE. Dr. Starr.

Mr. STARR. Obviously, this is the official line, and we are dealing with a state where that counts. We should not be surprised at expressions of high indignation and outrage. The official policy of China today is very akin to the official policy of the Soviet Union toward minority peoples in its last 20 years, namely, that with prosperity you will bring about a kind of "merging of peoples" of their different cultures might continue as a kind of ethnographic museum, but on all things that count their cultures would have merged with free imperial people. Yet this will not happen. The percentage of Han Chinese in Xinjiang is less than the percentage of Slavs in Kazakhstan at the time of independence. Even if that percent greatly increases, as I believe is now inevitable with the

expansion of the railroad to Kashgar and beyond, there will be a crisis.

Stanley Toops, a scholar at Miami University in Ohio, has proven beyond any doubt that when you build a railroad in China it leads to large-scale migration, no matter what the government's policy is. That being the case, I think you can realistically expect that the percentage of Han Chinese will increase, the polarization of incomes will increase. I think you can expect also, increased tension over water usage, which is more severely limited in Xinjiang than anywhere else in Central Asia, and national and ethnic tensions will grow. Whether it has a religious flavor or not, I am confident that this "national liberation current" will not go away. If Beijing's rule trips or stumbles at any future point, of course, then it could become a problem that embraces all China.

Mr. FOARDE. Thank you. I know my colleagues want to ask the panel questions, so I am going to pass the questioning on at this point.

Mr. DORMAN. I would like to turn over the questioning to Dr. Kate Kaup. Before I do that, I think each of you know that Kate is responsible for setting up the roundtable. You have each met her.

I would like to mention that, just over a year ago, our Chairman tasked John and me with finding someone to assist the Commission to better understand minority and autonomy laws and policy in China. Kate has been with us just a year now, and unfortunately she will be leaving the Commission at the end of this month, so this is her last roundtable. I wanted to publicly say thanks to Kate for doing a great job over the past year.

Ms. KAUP. Thanks very much.

Mr. DORMAN. With that, I would like to pass the questioning to you.

Ms. KAUP. Thanks, Dave, and thanks to the Commission. It has been a very productive year. I would like to thank our three panelists for participating today and for providing such useful testimony.

I would like to start by asking Dr. Millward a question, and then ask the other panelists to also comment.

Jim, in your written statement you make four recommendations. Your second recommendation notes that many of the human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang may actually be a result of local corruption rather than being mandated or encouraged by central policy. You recommend, therefore, that the U.S. stance should be cooperative, and that we might consider engaging in more local development initiatives, granting minorities' business grants, and aiding in Chinese state programs to defend minority interests and ethnic civil rights. I have two related questions for you, and would be interested in hearing comments from our other panelists also.

First, are there any signs that the central government is trying to step in to stop local corruption and local governments' violations of minority rights? Second, as Dr. Starr pointed out in his testimony, the Chinese Government has cracked down on local NGOs and on foreign NGO initiatives in Xinjiang to such a degree that it is practically impossible now for international NGOs to enter into Xinjiang. Given this type of repressive environment, I am wondering if you could expand a bit on your recommendation and give

us some idea of how the United States and the international community, as well as minorities in Xinjiang themselves, might try to strengthen local initiatives and cooperative programs.

Mr. MILLWARD. All right. First of all, let me slightly modify the way you characterized my statement. I was not implying that human rights violations, in general, are purely a local phenomenon. In that comment, I was speaking primarily about more economic issues, issues of hiring, perhaps, issues of urban renewal, for example, as I said before, that sort of thing.

So to answer the first part of your question then, again, my sense is based on anecdotal information. One thing we have to remember in dealing with China is the very real tension between the locality and the center, the region and the center. The dynamic is often that things go wrong on a local level, and if they go wrong enough, then the center will step in and do something about it. But, generally, the center is limited in what it can find out about events on a local level because it is listening to information that is filtered up through the chain of command, which is precisely the Party and the government itself. So any sense that China has some kind of totalitarian control over what is going on is false, particularly in a region as far away as Xinjiang with such particular local problems—that is not the case at all.

One example I can give is the one that I already mentioned of urban renewal and development efforts in the city of Kashgar, which were finally slowed down when the center found out some of the ethnic implications and the extent of local concern about this plan. I believe that there are other cases like that. Certainly it is not in the central state's interests to let the urban populations of Xinjiang's cities become too alienated over this sort of thing. I do not have enough information to really go any further than that.

Now, as far as the willingness of Xinjiang authorities to allow foreign initiatives and NGOs to operate there, obviously this is a big problem. I think the current situation has become extremely tense and the Xinjiang authorities, in particular, are very concerned about interacting with foreign entities unless they are simply investors. This may or may not last.

I know there was some disagreement between Xinjiang officials and Beijing over the treatment of the Rebiya Kadeer case, and I think that is an indication of disagreements at a high level in China over Xinjiang policy. So, it may be that other sorts of foreign initiatives and contacts may become possible in the future; certainly, if presented in a more cooperative manner, they are more likely to go through.

Environmental issues might be a good way to start this because this is an issue that Xinjiang authorities recognize as very serious. If there are ways, in a scientific or non-political way, by which environmental issues can be dealt with and in which NGOs or U.S. organizations can offer assistance, then that might be a way into this problem.

Mr. STARR. I would not be too sanguine. I think your point that many of the specific problems trace to clumsy actions by local administrators is obviously true. This is always the case.

In the independent parts of Central Asia, the training of local administrators offers a great opportunity to bolster human rights and

democratization. Unfortunately, the United States has not undertaken this, nor have the Europeans.

The people with the greatest capacity to mess up democracy and human and civil rights are the local administrators assigned there by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The United States has refused to work with ministerial bureaucrats in many countries of Central Asia because we thought we could solve all problems by working through NGOs. Yet NGOs are perceived in terribly negative terms in many places now, because they are hiring a lot of rich kids from the capitals, giving them Toyota Land Cruisers with radio telephones, and then those NGO staffers flaunt their foreign wealth before the local civil servants, all of whom are miserably paid, totally untrained, and in dead-end jobs to which there is no alternative. Naturally, local officials come to hate these people from NGOs.

Now we have a great opportunity, in all the independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus, to work with the ministries of internal affairs, train its local administrators, and give them better pay, as we in fact are doing in Afghanistan. This will fundamentally change the environment. It is our utter refusal to do this in Uzbekistan that is largely responsible for the mess that we have helped create there.

Now, in Xinjiang, the situation is totally different, unfortunately. You still have a Communist Party that has de facto and de jure control. Normal citizens' rights do not exist in Xinjiang. The whole web of juridical and other institutions that now exist in the rest of the region are absent here. Therefore, I would suspect that not only would Chinese officialdom be unwilling to engage in the kind of collaboration I have mentioned, but would see it as extremely risky.

What I am suggesting is, that at the end of the day, the fundamentals do count. Even though there is a lot of money flowing in Xinjiang today, thanks to oil and gas; the old fundamentals remain. The Chinese Government understands that its citizens' rights are limited, which accounts for its extreme sensitivity.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I agree with Professor Millward, that there is no unified, totalitarian approach. I think the influence of the military and the state security forces in Xinjiang has grown over the years, so anything you try to do could be partially negated by their influence.

Since the recent events in Central Asia, the presence of these heavy-handed types has grown in Xinjiang. You see more military, more displays of force, such as you saw recently during the anniversary of the, what was it, 50th year founding of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. They are a big factor in all of this. So, I would not be optimistic at all that you could engage in—I mean, I think it is a good idea to try to share in development initiatives, but I would not be optimistic, partly because of the suspicion of the United States and so forth.

I think that you are not going to see an improvement in the rule of law, which is partly what you are talking about, with the local administrators, because I noticed, for the media, which is what I study, that you do not have cases such as you have in the rest of China, where people are wrongly accused of committing a crime and then are somehow redeemed when the father or the wife goes

on the petitioning trail. You do have cases elsewhere in China where they actually can get a guy out of jail who was totally wrongly accused. I do not see that happening in Xinjiang. So, again, this rule of law, which is a very good area to work in, I do not think is susceptible to our influence, or anybody else's influence from the outside.

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you. Next, I would like to recognize Steve Marshall, who is a Senior Advisor to the Commission. Steve.

Mr. MARSHALL. Very interesting. I cover Tibet and I see a lot of interesting parallels, and some very important differences, too.

I would like to ask a question about security versus rights, and then tie that into the existing structure of autonomy law in China. On one hand, you have China, a nation, a state, that ideally would probably like to do anything they think is necessary to protect the security interests of the state, their ability to promote policy, and so on. On the other hand, you have individuals, groups of individuals, ethnic groups, who would probably equally like to do whatever they could to promote what they feel are their interests. So, on one hand, you could have tyranny on the part of the state, or you could have anarchy or a broken state on the other hand.

Now, ultimately you are going to have something in the middle, trying to protect the interests of the state, and trying to protect the interests of groups and individuals. In China, in areas like Xinjiang, the main law addressing that is the Autonomy Law. Do you see any part of what that law covers that could provide some relief—realistically provide some relief—in either the civil or the religious part of life that Uighurs could enjoy, and that other ethnic groups could enjoy there, that would not endanger—realistically endanger—state security and therefore draw pressure from the Chinese Government? Is there anything within that law that you perceive as a means by which Uighurs could, for example, have some space?

Mr. STARR. The flip-flops of Chinese policy are really a caricature of our notion of Chinese policy as a rather stately and long-term affair.

It has not been this way in Xinjiang. The older generation remembers the tough old times. A middle generation, now in full bloom of advanced adulthood, has known a relatively open situation. And then you have those who considered the very grim circumstances of the past seven, eight years to be normal.

Chinese officials are worried—and I think with some reason—that better governance and greater autonomy will not elicit a burst of gratitude, but rather will elicit much more explicit demands for the political and ethnic autonomy that is embodied in Xinjiang's official name. That is the terrible paradox the Chinese have created for themselves.

Mr. MILLWARD. I agree that it is a paradox. In the 1950s, when initially promulgated, before the leftward lurch from the late 1950s and the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution after that, the way in which the autonomy law was initially implemented left open a possibility of a real autonomy in the region, more or less as it is implied by the word "autonomy" and in terms of the law. There were numerical quotas stated for numbers of nationality—non-Han—cadres in government. The number of

Uighur cadres in south Xinjiang Government, for example, was meant to exceed that of Han Chinese. So, there was a very idealistic program. Obviously, that was never fully implemented, and the Chinese Government, particularly since the 1980s, has been retreating very quickly from that. Some Han scholars are writing in appalled tones that such quotas were ever even suggested.

I read one re-interpretation of the autonomy law. The Chinese term for autonomy is "zizhi," self-rule. This scholar wrote that in the past this term was completely misinterpreted in China by Chinese authorities. He now argues that a "Zizhiqu," or a self-governing region, does not mean it is going to be governed by the predominant "nationality" there in that region. Rather, it means it is to be governed by all the "nationalities" of that region. In Xinjiang, as we know, the Han are now 40 percent. So, with that kind of sleight of hand, he turned the whole initial rationale of the autonomy system on its head.

Ultimately, this goes back to a Stalinist approach to nationality issues. The very term "nationality," which has always been a tricky one to translate, was semantically borrowed from Russian. We see another way in which China is retreating from its early policies toward minority peoples in how they are now translating the Chinese term "minzu," which they used to call "nationality" and infused with political meaning. They are now translating the same term as "ethnic" or "ethnic group." The official name of what used to be the State Nationality Affairs Council is now the State Ethnic Affairs Council.

Well, what does this mean? This means, to me, I think, that they are adopting a more American-style approach to ethnic difference within a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society and retreating from the political implications of the nationality system—with the implicit promise of certain rights to a certain territory, which they initially borrowed from the Soviets. That being the case, although I like the idea of autonomy as perhaps a solution to the problems in Xinjiang today, if only they would implement it as promised, I see that as unrealistic, given how quickly the Chinese have been retreating from the earlier meanings and uses of the concept.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thanks. Dan?

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. Nothing to add to that.

Mr. STARR. Just a note. What we are discussing is a problem of imperial policy, bluntly put. It must be understood to the broader framework. In the Soviet case, after a very tough period of rule under Stalin, in the 1970s and early 1980s Moscow told all the non-Russians to rule themselves. They did. This produced grand corruption, and a not bad life for many. Then Gorbachev showed up and declared that "we have got to clean this up." The ensuing purge created that genuine passion for independence that we observe all over the region today.

I do not see a comfortable dynamic here. If there is any ray of hope from the Chinese perspective, it is that Xinjiang as an autonomous region, has some legal grounds for asking to be treated differently from the rest of the PRC society. It is not clear that the Chinese will perceive this possibility. So far, the answer is definitely no. But this constitutes a legal rationale for offering Xinjiang

a degree of autonomy that is not possible for other provincial units of China.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you.

Mr. DORMAN. I would like to recognize Pam Phan, who is a Commission Counsel and handles the Commission's criminal law portfolio. Pam.

Ms. PHAN. Thank you to the panelists for coming this morning.

Actually, I am interested in, and would like to pose questions broadly to the entire panel regarding, two processes. The first is the defining of crimes. The second is the punishing of criminal activity. I am going to go more specifically into those questions.

Dr. Starr, you had mentioned that as recently as this week, there has been a reaffirmation of the "Strike Hard"—yan da—campaign in Xinjiang. The question that I would like to pose with respect to that is: is this "Strike Hard" campaign focusing on ordinary crimes of rape, murder, arson, etc., or is the focus on activity that the Chinese Government chooses to characterize or define as crimes of terrorism, crimes of subversion, crimes of disruption of public order? So in other words, is the "Strike Hard" campaign really being used as a pretext to crack down on activities that are being engaged in by Uighurs?

With respect to the punishing of criminal activities, Mr. Southerland, you had mentioned that in Xinjiang we have seen executions of political prisoners, as well as forced labor, not occurring elsewhere. I would just like to see if anyone on the panel could elaborate on those developments.

Mr. STARR. A further note on the "Strike Hard" policy: it is focused above all on separatism, with only a subordinate role for religious extremism.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I would agree. The yan da campaign is obviously aimed at suspicious characters, not at what we would normally consider, let us say, ordinary crimes such as rape cases and so forth. I do not think there is any doubt of that. I think it is also meant to instill a certain amount of fear and trembling on the part of people that it is aimed at, so it is like a show of force, partly. There is a constant "Strike Hard" campaign going on anyway, it is just that they make periodic announcements. I know there was an earlier one, and now we had trouble figuring out whether the latest one is a totally new campaign or just a continuation. I see it as sort of a steady part of this atmosphere.

On the forced labor issue, we know that this is happening from villagers, who call us up and tell us that they are being told to turn out for a certain period of time and work on a road, or work on a construction site, or a development site, some of which results in Uighur villagers being displaced or basically thrown off their land. It also extends during the summer months, during the cotton harvest, even to schoolchildren.

We recently got a story about kids being sent out to these camps where they have to work, not quite the same as the adult forced labor, but another version of this which I had never seen occurring elsewhere in China, since the Cultural Revolution, anyway. So, it is just all part of the pretty harsh atmosphere that I think we have tried to lay out for you.

Ms. PHAN. Thank you.

Mr. DORMAN. Next, I would like to turn the questioning over to Carl Minzner, who is a Senior Counsel on the Commission. Carl.

Mr. MINZNER. Thanks very much to all three panelists. I have a two-part question. First, often when people talk about Xinjiang, there is a focus on the Han and the Uighur populations. While those two are the largest populations, there are also Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and a large number of other minorities as well. How are they faring in the current climate? To what extent is the crackdown that you have all mentioned directed primarily at Uighurs as opposed to other minorities?

My second question, which is both for Professor Millward and for Professor Starr, is: you were talking about improved implementation of the autonomy laws as perhaps one possible solution toward addressing some of the problems occurring in Xinjiang. What would this imply for these other minorities?

One thing that you saw in the Soviet Union was that as Georgia moved toward more of an autonomous, independent status, there were groups such as the South Ossetians that started making claims that their rights were not being protected. So what would a move toward autonomy, under the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, mean for these other minorities, and what would their attitudes be toward this type of move?

Mr. STARR. With regard to these other minorities, first of all, they, like the Uighurs, have been pushed out of the trade with neighboring countries with which they would normally have had close links. All such trade is in the hands of the Han Chinese today. I know the owner of the biggest market in Central Asia, Dardoi Market in Bishkele, Kyrgyzstan. He reports that all the traders from the PRC there now are Han Chinese.

Second, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has, as part of its mandate, constrained the sovereignty of the three adjoining states, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, to the degree that citizens with full rights in those states have actually been imprisoned and turned over to the Chinese for activities on their territory. This is not a complete answer, but I would say the evidence is that there is a kind of equal opportunity control here.

Now, with regard to your allusion to Ossetia, I do not think that is quite the case. The South Ossetian crisis exists because the Russians have used it as a lever against Georgia, just as the Russians handed out Soviet passports to Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in Xinjiang in the 1960s, as a way of getting at the government in Beijing. For example, in Germany, in Saxony, there is a very ancient, partly Slavic people called Sorbs. Anybody with an I-E-T-Z-S-C-H-E in his name is a Sorb. Nietzsche was obviously a Sorb, and they were totally absorbed into the German people. There is something like that happening among Turkic peoples of Xinjiang, in that the term "Uighur" is coming to have, almost, a meaning of "Turkic." Now, I do not know how far this will go. Clearly, though, "Uighur" has become a kind of organizing label for Turkic peoples of the region. There are even Tajiks who call themselves "Uighur" and they are not even Turkic. In the process, certain identities and ethnicities are being marginalized.

Mr. MILLWARD. Just talking about Central Asia generally, I think there is a phenomenon we might call "crypto-Uighur." Par-

ticularly in Uzbekistan, where, unlike Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the Uighur groups and minorities in Soviet times and since were not as well treated, the Uighur identity was not as well recognized. Everyone there is Uzbek. Then something about Xinjiang or Uighurs will come up and they will say, "Oh, well, actually I am a Uighur." There is a famous singer for whom this was the case—it suddenly emerged that she was Uighur, despite being a famous Uzbek singer who sung the national anthem at public events. I notice this quite a bit. So, that may be part of what Fred is noticing here. Besides Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, other groups in Xinjiang in general, this is an area where we do not have a great deal of information, in part because I think everyone is looking at the larger population group of the Uighurs and has been, to be honest, neglecting the situations of the smaller groups.

The general impression is that most of the tension is reserved for Uighur, or is a question of Uighur-Han relations. In private, random conversations with some Kazakhs, I heard negative comments: "Oh, the Uighurs do this, the Uighurs do that, the Uighurs do not have culture," and so on, in a way that surprised me, or would have surprised me if I had expected a Turkic solidarity or a Muslim solidarity. Indeed, there have been state policies aimed at dividing these groups.

This leads me to the second half of your question, which is the implication of autonomy laws for other minorities. Even as it was initially designed, the autonomy law in Xinjiang, whose inauguration 50 years ago we just celebrated, was gerrymandered in such a way as to undermine the potentiality of Uighur control. Although it is officially called "the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region" but, there are no county-level districts which are Uighur autonomous counties. The autonomous districts were created in the 1950s from the bottom up, with each district of the county, prefectural, and other levels given the names of other groups—not "Uighur." It is only the region as a whole that is called "Uighur."

Now, obviously if you were to fully implement this, and if each autonomous district was supposed to be governed by the name on the doorplate, then in fact you would have no Uighur counties at all, no local level government by Uighurs at all. In fact, that is not the case—there are many Uighur local officials, but it shows how the system, as it was designed, was never really intended to be implemented in such a way that a geographic region named for a "nationality" is administered predominantly by that nationality. In fact, the system was used very strategically by the state to play off one minority against another. In this regard, actually, the nationality autonomy system has structurally been to the benefit, at least to certain members of other minority groups, at certain times.

Mr. SOUTHERLAND. I really cannot add much to that, except that I would agree that the government has tried to play off one minority against another. I would like to see a study of how the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Tajik have done in Xinjiang. I suspect we would not see any great success stories in their case either, because historically, if you look at people leaving the Xinjiang region, it includes also a number of Kazakhs, for example, who have left because it was more comfortable to go to another country. I suspect that Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik government positions in Xinjiang that have

any real power, are pretty limited. So, I do not think it is a great success story, although it may be that in some of these autonomous counties they have done a little better than others.

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you.

We have just five minutes left. But based on the notes that are being passed to me, I think we could easily fill 90 more minutes with questions.

What I will do, is turn the last five minutes to Dr. Kaup, and that might be enough time for a question or two.

Ms. KAUP. I would like to get two questions in. The State Ethnic Affairs Commission [SEAC] Web site devotes an entire section to explaining the government's policy of shipping Han cadres into the border areas. The first priority of the policy, as stated by the SEAC, is for these Han Chinese to "combat domestic and foreign hostile forces' vain attempts to split the motherland." It also justifies sending Han Chinese into the border regions to help lead economic development and to assume leadership positions for which there are not enough educated minorities to fill.

So I have two related questions. The first is that I gather from your testimony thus far that you think perhaps the economic development strategy that these Han cadres are being sent in to lead is not successfully integrating the minorities as the government proposed. What changes or additions would you recommend, and why?

Relatedly, is the government doing all that it can to promote education among ethnic minorities to ensure that they get an even chance to secure good jobs in an effort to weaken major ethnic tensions?

Mr. STARR. Well, I should not use the word "paradox" again but this situation is full of paradoxes. On the one hand, as was said earlier, this is a government that has extraordinary power on the ground, de jure and de facto. Yet, at the same time, it does not control some very obvious things, such as the movement of peoples within its borders. It would be nice if one thought migration to Xinjiang is under the control of government forces, but it is not.

These forces are so big that government cannot control them. Again, I cite Toops on the demographic impact of railroads. To repeat, I think the potential for a new flood of immigrants to Xinjiang is very real. I do not think this is something the government has created or that it would be able to stop it.

Similarly, I think that the basic policy changes that are needed are those that are required in any larger polity that is extraordinarily centralized. I think that the fate of the Uighurs will remain a subset of the fate of China as a whole.

No one here has argued for the likelihood that Beijing will make an exception of Xinjiang and grant it greater autonomy, even though it has a rationale for doing so readily at hand. No one is arguing this, and I do not know anyone who does so.

Therefore, the subject that you are convening here today is no longer just the fate or governance in Xinjiang. It concerns the future of government as such in the People's Republic of China. Will there even be a degree of decentralization and self-government? If so, the natural result of such a change in Xinjiang that would be along the direction of your question. If decentralization and self-

government go nowhere in China as a whole, do not expect for Beijing to make an exception of Xinjiang.

Mr. MILLWARD. Two very fraught issues here, and the word "paradox" comes to my mind again.

First of all, on the question of population flows, it is a complicated situation. Xinjiang, on the one hand, suffers from brain drain, to the extent that those people, be they Uighur, or particularly Han, with the economic and intellectual wherewithal to move east to China proper, tend to do so. This is a problem on which they have commented. It does affect the ability to develop the area. On the other hand, Xinjiang also suffers—or benefits, depending on how you look at it—from the flow of labor from the east into Xinjiang. This is the aspect of this issue that Western commentators have most focused on. We tend to decry such immigration as a deliberate attempt to submerge the Uighur population in a grand sea of Han Chinese.

I, too, have enough sense of Uighur culture and of the region's particular characteristics to feel wistful at the changes you can see happening to a city like Kashgar, since the railroad has been opened, with an influx of Han population. But I think the United States really has to think about how we express concern over this issue, because we have wanted free movement of people in China. We want a free labor market. We do not advocate controls on people moving around. This was the bad, old China, now we are seeing the results of the good, new China. We do not maintain in this country, any more, ethnic regional enclaves.

Mr. STARR. Well, there are the Indian territories.

Mr. MILLWARD. Well, I should say we do not create them any more. But if something like that were to come up again, it might be a question. I am not sure that the model of Indian territories is one that we would necessarily want to suggest to China. It is a question. This is a problem.

A very similar problem concerns that of education. Chinese officials would answer your question about whether or not they are doing their best to raise the standards of living, the educational level of people in Xinjiang, and they would say, "Look, we have a new program to render more uniform the educational system so that all people in Xinjiang are literate in Chinese." Well, as we know, this has been a very controversial change in the educational system. But again, we have had the same debates in the United States over bilingual education.

By and large, over the last 50 years, China has been, if "liberal" is the word you could use, very liberal in permitting and encouraging bilingual education and a multilingual system at the official level, something which the United States has not done.

There are, of course, arguments both ways. Obviously, knowledge of the majority language, the language of official business, the language of commerce, is important to members of any society if one is to get ahead. On the other hand, no one wants to have the language forced upon you or your children.

I do not have an easy answer to this, except to say that by ratcheting up tensions over these issues and in an automatic sort of way implying that these policies are aimed at some sort of cultural genocide, I do not think those kinds of accusations are going to be useful.

Mr. DORMAN. I think, with that, we will have to, unfortunately, call the roundtable to an end. I will apologize to our panelists for keeping you five minutes longer than 90 minutes. It was certainly a very important conversation. So, with that, I will call this roundtable to a close.

Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m. the roundtable was concluded.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES A. MILLWARD

NOVEMBER 16, 2005

One of the many international repercussions of the events of 11 September 2001, was a shift in the official PRC public position with regard to separatism in Xinjiang. From a stance generally playing down the threat of violent unrest in the region (no doubt in the interest of encouraging foreign investment), PRC and Xinjiang authorities instead chose to highlight possible linkages between Uyghur separatism and international Islamist movements and Al Qa'ida. While this shift has been widely seen as an attempt to seek "cover" for a crackdown on Uyghurs in Xinjiang that has resulted in many human rights abuses, in fact, that crackdown had been ongoing for several years before 9–11. Less often noted is the fact that the shift occurred at the precise moment when the United States inaugurated a robust and unprecedented military presence in former-Soviet Central Asia—and China's backyard. Though the official Chinese reaction to the advent of U.S. military bases in Central Asia was muted, Beijing and Urumchi almost certainly greeted this development with great alarm.

Outside of China, many scholars and observers of Xinjiang believe that the PRC has exaggerated the extent of the current terrorist threat in Xinjiang and mischaracterized the nature of Uyghur separatist dissent as exclusively Islamist and terrorist. I myself have argued that while several violent separatist incidents and demonstrations that turned violent occurred between 1990 and 1997, the situation since then has been calmer, probably due to the effectiveness of security operations in Xinjiang. Likewise, while some Uyghur groups organized and publicized their cause from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the 1980s and 1990s, the formation of the SCO and China's growing trade, diplomatic and security arrangements with the Central Asian states have largely curtailed Uyghur freedom of organization in the region, and effectively eliminated the threat of cross-border separatist enclaves.

Nevertheless, the PRC remains extremely concerned over the region, ratcheting up restrictions on the practice of Islam in Xinjiang (but not elsewhere in China), policing Uyghur cultural expression, prohibiting even peaceful expression of dissent, and in other ways continuing a crackdown that produces obvious disaffection among Uyghur and other non-Han ethnic groups in the region, not to mention continuing criticism from abroad.

The question, then, is why, given robust economic growth and ostensible stability in Xinjiang, the PRC remains so worried about it that its policies there invite international opprobrium and exacerbate the very ethnic tensions it hopes to diffuse? One answer may be that the threat of a militant separatist or terrorist campaign is actually greater than it appears. There may be secret information shedding light on this, but from the open source materials available to me, it does not seem to be the case.

Here I wish to focus on another possible answer. Chinese insecurity about Xinjiang is based on a 200-year history of outside involvement and intervention in this frontier region. The Chinese view of the region's history stresses foreign interference above all else as the source of trouble in Xinjiang from the 18th century to the present. Against this background, and viewing Xinjiang's past as they do, Chinese see both the U.S. military presence in Central and South Asia, and the precedent of the "color revolutions," as a real threat to security in Xinjiang.

HISTORICAL REVIEW: A FOCUS ON FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN XINJIANG

The modern epoch of Chinese control over the Xinjiang region began in the mid-eighteenth century with the Manchu Qing dynasty's conquest of the region. At the time, the Qianlong emperor justified Xinjiang conquest as a defensive necessity arising from a decades-long war with the Zunghar Mongols. Following the conquest, the Qing established an administration in Xinjiang and encouraged settlement and agricultural reclamation by Han and Hui Chinese. In this respect, Beijing's approach to Xinjiang in the 18th and 19th centuries more resembles Russian eastward expansion into Siberia, or even the westward expansion of European settlers across North America, than it does the episodes of Chinese projection of power into the Xinjiang region from over a millennium earlier.

Though it is often stated in western writings that the Muslim occupants of Xinjiang chafed under and frequently rebelled against Qing rule, troubles in the region in imperial times resulted more often from invasion than from local rebellion.

From the early through mid-nineteenth century, Qing rule in Xinjiang was disrupted several times by invasions from Khokand (in modern Uzbekistan). The spark for a major rebellion in the 1860s–1870s was domestic and ethno-religious; but this movement by local Chinese Muslims (Hui) and Uyghurs was soon taken over by Yaqub Beg, an adventurer from Khokand, who imposed a regime largely with his own Central Asian troops. The Ottoman empire and British empire opened contacts with Yaqub Beg's emirate, and London attempted to broker an agreement between the Qing and Yaqub Beg's representatives to establish an independent buffer state under Yaqub Beg's rule in Xinjiang. Meanwhile, Tsarist Russia took advantage of the disruption to annex much of northern Xinjiang.

In late nineteenth-century Qing court debates over whether to reconquer Xinjiang, advocates of reconquest echoed the earlier arguments of the Qianlong emperor that control of the Xinjiang was vital to the security of the capital. This point of view won the day, bolstered by the growing threat from Russia, which had expanded into Manchuria and only returned northern Xinjiang to the Qing after concerted diplomatic efforts backed up by a Qing threat of force. Russia nonetheless extracted many commercial concessions, and over subsequent decades aggressively expanded its economic interests in Xinjiang.

The transition from Qing imperial to Chinese republican rule was accompanied in Xinjiang, as elsewhere in China, by devolution to warlord control after 1911. Two decades of misrule led to rebellion in the 1930s and the formation in 1933 of the short-lived Eastern Turkestan Republic in Kashgar (southwestern Xinjiang). This was a local, largely secularist republican movement, the culmination of years of Uyghur intellectual ferment inspired by Islamic modernist trends emanating from Russia and Turkey and disseminated through new schools in Xinjiang. Turkey expressed solidarity with the new ETR, but provided no tangible aid. Still, this Turkish connection has led Chinese scholars ever since to brand Uyghur separatist movements "pan-Turkic."

Other states likewise took interest in Xinjiang during the tumultuous 1930s. Japan followed events there closely, and its Kwantung Army even drew up a personnel roster for the puppet government it hoped to establish in Xinjiang. This was mere fantasy, but Soviet intervention was very real: Soviet air power, advisers and troops helped quell the various warring factions in Xinjiang and establish a client, Sheng Shicai, in the Governor's office in Urumchi. Soviet ties with Xinjiang continued to expand, especially in the north, which grew increasingly integrated economically with the Soviet Union.

The Nationalist (Guomindang) Chinese government managed to reestablish some influence in Xinjiang in the early 1940s. However, northern Xinjiang was soon roiled by an anti-Chinese rebellion that gave birth to another separatist government. This movement began Islamic and strongly anti-Chinese; however, it soon fell under Soviet influence if not outright control, and turned secular and socialist and scaled back its initial anti-Chinese vitriol. This new government, initially also known as the Eastern Turkestan Republic, governed northern Xinjiang from 1944 until 1949. PRC scholars and ideologues officially treat this "Three Districts Revolution," as it is known, as a chapter in the Chinese revolution, and represent the Soviet role as fraternal and secondary to the efforts of Chinese revolutionaries. Privately, however, Chinese who know about it regard this second ETR as a Soviet effort to collude with separatists to carve a pro-Soviet client state much like the Republic of Mongolia out of China's Xinjiang flank.

Communist Chinese assumption of power in Xinjiang in 1949 was uncontested, as the ETR in the north was a socialist ally, and the Guomindang general in charge of southern Xinjiang opted to surrender the region and his troops. The one group that did openly resist, however, were Kazakhs under Osman Batur. Chinese scholars and politicians make much of the fact that the last U.S. official in the Ti-hwa (Urumchi) consulate, CIA agent Douglas MacKiernan, met with Osman before the Communist takeover and fled to Osman's camp on the eve of the PLA arrival in Urumchi. Though the PLA easily defeated Osman, MacKiernan's involvement is seen as a U.S. plot to support an anti-Communist guerilla resistance in Xinjiang similar to the later CIA-sponsored resistance in Tibet.

During the 1950s, PRC minority nationality policies in Xinjiang were remarkably liberal and in theory culturally pluralistic. During the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution eras, however, and especially following the Sino-Soviet split, pluralistic policies gave way to a wave of Han chauvinism and the lurch toward radical Maoism. Even as Uyghur and other ethnic cadres were being purged for alleged Soviet sympathies, the USSR seemed to lend credence to those charges by massing troops and sponsoring a "Xinjiang Minority Refugee Army" to engage in maneuvers along the Sino-Soviet frontier. There were nearly continuous skirmishes, and some serious clashes, on the Xinjiang border from the late 1960s through the early 1970s.

CONCLUSION

It is a cliché, but nonetheless true, that the Chinese pay more attention to history than we do in the United States. The narrative I have presented above is factual, if one-sided (a more nuanced version of Xinjiang's past, one that includes a Uyghur perspective, would of course be more accurate). It represents how Chinese view the region's history, and in China more polemical versions of this narrative, stressing ceaseless foreign efforts to "split Xinjiang from the great family of the motherland," are staple fare in history texts, on web sites, and in the speeches of political leaders. Through the 1980s and 1990s Chinese officials routinely insinuated that U.S. machinations underlay Uyghur separatist sentiment. Many Chinese believe this. Chinese scholars writing on contemporary Xinjiang regularly reference the NATO intervention in Kosovo and, now, the "color revolutions," in discussing the international context of Xinjiang separatism. I have no reason to doubt their sincerity on this point either.

I do not intend to justify draconian policies in Xinjiang by saying they derive from a skewed understanding of history. Nevertheless, if we recognize the long history of foreign involvement in the Xinjiang region, and understand that many Chinese leaders believe their own propagandistic polemics of foreign threat, we may better understand what seems like intransigence with regard to Xinjiang. Moreover, we may see how the advent of U.S. military bases in Central Asia and Afghanistan, enhanced U.S. military cooperation with Pakistan and India, together with the example of American involvement in the "color revolutions" in former Soviet lands, could exacerbate Chinese anxieties. Finally, by understanding how Chinese view Xinjiang security against this historical background of foreign involvement and intervention, we may learn to shape our expressions of concern in more effective ways.

What might some of those ways be?

• Human rights: Continued vocal, high-level expressions of concern over human rights, civil rights, religious rights and cultural autonomy for Uyghurs and other groups in Xinjiang, such as those expressed in the reports of the Congressional Executive Commission, are important and effective. Efforts by the U.S. State Department and NGOs have achieved real successes both in helping individual prisoners of conscience (Rabiya Kadeer) and in informing an international public about Xinjiang conditions. Tursunjan Emet, who has recently been imprisoned for ten years for writing a story about a blue pigeon, might be a good next candidate for special attention. Literature is not terrorism.

• Development: Uyghurs in Xinjiang and their supporters abroad frequently complain about inequalities arising from the rapid development of Xinjiang, in particular regarding allocation of jobs and resources to Han versus other ethnic groups and the urban renewal efforts. Many of these problems involve racial discrimination and local corruption, and are deplorable, if not alien to our own experience in the United States. By treating them as part of a master plan emanating from Beijing, however, we do not help the situation. The U.S. posture here should be constructive: sharing experience in local development initiatives, minority business grants and other state programs to defend minority and ethnic civil rights will be more effective than broad accusations.

• Chinese migration into Xinjiang: reports by human rights groups and by this Commission have pointed out examples of the recruitment of Han laborers and settlers to move to Xinjiang. Insofar as these are official policies, they merit criticism as counterproductive to the very goals of development and raised standards of living for all Xinjiang residents that the PRC espouses. But expressions of outrage at the very fact that Han Chinese are moving into Xinjiang may be misplaced. It is common to cite the statistic that Han now represent over 40 percent of the Xinjiang population, compared to only 5 percent in 1949. However, Uyghurs are not dying out. While their relative proportion of the Xinjiang population has declined, in absolute numbers they have nearly tripled since 1949. The United States supports the lifting of Chinese controls on residence, the rights to internal travel, and the creation of a free labor market. In the United States, we would not now advocate or create exclusive ethnic or racial territorial enclaves—would we suggest that the PRC do so in Xinjiang? We cannot reasonably insist that Han be excluded from a province comprising a sixth of PRC territory. There are, however, severe environmental restraints on development in many parts of Xinjiang, and on these grounds we could suggest that a rational development strategy would not involve massive in-migration to a desertifying, water-poor region.

• Security: It is not constructive to accuse the PRC of a lack of transparency or excessive military budgets while the United States is simultaneously expanding its military presence in Central and South Asia. We must recognize that from China's

point of view, the United States appears to have been working since 9–11 to build a new arc of bases and allies in their backyard, and that this seems consistent with a policy to "contain" China. If the United States wishes to collaborate on terrorism, reassure China of our intentions and simultaneously reduce perceived threats in Xinjiang, it would be wise to engage with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a body, rather than pursuing a series of bilateral arrangements with its members.

Notes:

James Millward, Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment, Policy Studies # 6 (Washington: East-West Center, 2004).

PREPARED STATEMENT OF S. FREDERICK STARR

NOVEMBER 16, 2005

A visitor to Xinjiang today will find much to admire. The land is austere but beautiful, and the great oases that ring the Taklamakan desert are verdant. Thanks to oil and gas production it is a prosperous territory, at least in a statistical sense, with more production than any other non-coastal province of China. Oil wealth has turned the once somnolent Turkic town of Urumchi into a humming metropolis. The newly opened railroad to Kashgar will doubtless produce the same result in that historic center of Turkic and Muslim life.

The problem is that nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the new Urumchi are Han Chinese who have only recently settled in a province whose population was 98 percent Turkic only three generations ago. The same process is beginning in Kashgar, Xinjiang's second city. Meanwhile, the oases on which the majority Uyghur and other Turkic peoples live are very poor by comparison.

This is a common problem of development and has certain parallels in the expansion of Russia, Australia, Brazil, and the United States. What is noteworthy is how the Chinese government has dealt with it. For a generation and a half after 1949 Beijing took a hard line to impose its control, using tough top-down controls whenever necessary. After 1985 it shifted to a softer approach, focusing on economic incentives, affirmative action in education, and a respectful place for the Turkic Uyghur language in public life. Then in the late 1990s, concerned over what it terms "splittism" or separatism and radical Islam, China's government shifted back to a policy that is harsh to the point of brutality, as is implied by the very name of its campaign in the region, "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure!"

This policy continues today, and with devastating consequences. Thousands have died in confrontations with the police, including some 300 young people in the northern town of Ili who, in 1997, dared to mount an independent campaign against alcohol abuse. In terms of nearly all the commonly accepted indexes of democracy and human rights, the situation in Xinjiang is lamentable.

Permit me to touch briefly on ten areas that should be of concern to your committee. I do so as the editor of a multi-year study of Xinjiang funded by the Luce Foundation and carried out by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Some eighteen scholars, most of whom know Uyghur and other local Turkic languages as well as Han Chinese and all of whom have carried out research in Xinjiang, contributed to the study, available as a book entitled Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland (M.E. Sharp). The comments that follow are based on research findings of this book but I take sole responsibility for their contents.

So, let us ask:

1. Are there free and fair elections in Xinjiang? No, any more than there are in other areas of China with the partial exception of Hong Kong.

2. Does there exist a parliamentary body or other form of representing public opinion at the governmental level? No. The Communist apparatus is alive and well in Xinjiang and is safely controlled from above from Beijing. At its best, the Party is capable of discerning public discontent and even acting on it. But even this minimal form of responsiveness is done for the Turkic peoples and not by them.

3. Does the Turkic population, which is still a slight majority, enjoy equal rights with the Han Chinese? For a decade after 1985 something approaching this occurred, but by 2000 political, economic, social, and religious rights of the Turkic peoples were again being systematically repressed. The number of Uyghurs in top government posts has shrunk, the government has clamped down on Turkic entrepreneurship, health indicators are far better for urban

Han Chinese than for Turkic peoples, and Muslim practice is severely restricted.

4. Is the court system free of governmental interference? No, any more than it was free in the USSR, from which Mao's China borrowed many of its judicial institutions and practices.

5. Does the government observe minimal international standards for the maintenance of persons held in jails and labor camps? No. Worse, Xinjiang's jails are subject to so powerful an information blackout that information on even the most egregious instances of brutality can takes years to leak out, or may go totally unreported.

6. Do the Turkic peoples of Xinjiang have reasonable access to income-producing employment and social services? No. Nearly all the most remunerative employment in Xinjiang is in Han Chinese hands, and when Uyghur businesswoman Rebiya Kadeer become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in China she was jailed for eight years. Higher education is now conducted entirely in Han Chinese, and any Turkic parent wishing for younger children to get ahead will avoid placing them in those lower schools that teach in Uyghur.

7. Is the practice of religion free from governmental interference? No. The return to "hard" policies toward the Muslim majority in Xinjiang after 1985 gave rise to a very small but active strain of Islamic extremism in Xinjiang. Moreover, during the 1990s the province was subjected to influences from Taliban Afghanistan and fundamentalist areas in Pakistan. The effort to suppress these led to a general and indiscriminate crackdown on Islam in Xinjiang, including mainstream and traditionalist Sunni practice and the Sufi orders that once flourished there. One of the latter was suppressed only this August.

8. Are domestic or international NGOs able to function in Xinjiang? Nearly every attempt at self-organization and voluntarism by indigenous Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks has been suppressed, in some cases with the loss of hundreds of lives. Foreign NGOs do not operate on the territory of Xinjiang.

9. Are there free media in Xinjiang? No. Not only that, but Beijing, through its Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other forms of diplomatic pressure, has successfully stifled free expression on Xinjiang-related issues in the neighboring sovereign states of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

10. Do citizens of Xinjiang have access to international travel and contacts through which they can air their concerns in relevant international media and forums? No. International travel and communications by Turkic citizens of Xinjiang is severely restricted. Even the border trade with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is now largely in the hands of Han Chinese. Internet access in Turkic towns is extremely limited or nonexistent. As a result, Xinjiang's indigenous population has no way of projecting its voice to the world. The émigré community of Xinjiang Uyghurs, Kazakhs, etc. is active but the small number of its members and pressure from Beijing assure that its voice is barely audible.

Beijing believes that its "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure" campaign is a prudent response to a genuine threat of religious extremism and separatism and only this August has reaffirmed it. Let us recognize that Islamic radicalism does exist in Xinjiang and the government of China would be irresponsible if it were to ignore it. Two radical Islamist groups in Xinjiang were recognized by the United States and the United Nations as terrorist organizations. But Beijing's uncompromising response is rendered counterproductive when it coincides with such harsh measures against the mainstream population as those outlined above.

These in turn are rationalized in terms of the campaign against separatism. Yet the "Strike Hard" campaign has long since wiped out whatever separatist currents may have existed in Xinjiang a decade ago. Those few voices still calling for Xinjiang's independence arise from abroad and are audible mainly on the Internet.

Today, the overwhelming majority of Xinjiang Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks would be quite content with a greater degree of autonomy, as opposed to outright independence. Their plea is simply for the current Chinese government to fulfill the expectations that Mao Zedong himself generated when, after conquering the province, named it the "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" (emphasis mine).

The U.S. government, other western countries, and the EU have rightly been concerned with the state of democracy, human rights, and religious freedoms in the Caucasus and Central Asia. With the collapse of Soviet imperial rule eight new states were created in these regions. At independence, all of them were weak and poor, with small populations ranging from four to 24 million. They were inaccessible to trade and those lacking oil and gas were poor in resources. None had any real experience with democracy and the rights that citizenship should confer. Our efforts

in behalf of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom have concentrated above all on these eight states.

However, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia constitute only a part of the Caucasus. The rest of the region—Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Chechnya, and Kabardino-Balkaria—remains under Russian rule. Similarly, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are only part of Central Asia, the rest being Afghanistan and Xinjiang.

Merely to mention this raises an obvious point. It cannot be denied that the independent countries I just listed are guilty of many and at times serious lapses in the areas of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. So, of course, were the newly independent United States of America. But even at their worst, their record in all three areas of concern to your committee is far better than is the record of Russia's rule in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia, and of China's rule in Tibet and in Xinjiang.

And yet how different is our response to the two situations! When the small, weak, relatively poor, but independent states stumble in the area of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom we editorialize against them, pass censure motions, heap public abuse on their leaders, threaten to suspend aid, and decertify them even for humanitarian assistance. But when large, rich and powerful states impose their rule over other parts of the same region with brutal and primitive force—in the process assaulting the principles of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom—we continue to receive their leaders as honored guests and otherwise remain silent.

By the act of its founding the United States placed itself on the side of national self-determination and those seeking freedom from imperial rule. Recently, however, it appears that we have reversed this age-old stance. We seem to acquiesce in serious abuses committed by those who are the heirs of empires acquired by force, and instead focus narrowly on the shortcomings of independent states that have no understanding of how to apply the values we hold high.

The word "engagement" is a resonant term in this city's discussion of foreign affairs. Applied to the Caucasus and Central Asia, we seem more willing to engage with those in Moscow who rule the North Caucasus and with those in Beijing who rule Xinjiang, than we are with those in the eight newly independent states who are trying, against formidable odds, to govern their countries under conditions of great insecurity and to build their still fragile economies in a globalized world with which they had little or no direct contact until very recently.

Let me be clear: I am not arguing against engagement with the Peoples Republic of China, nor am I proposing that we "give a pass" to governments in Central Asia and the Caucasus when they commit abuses in the area of democratization, human rights, and religious freedom. Instead, I am suggesting that it is time that we take our finger off the scales, and start acting on our values in a consistent manner. At the very least, we must stop allocating rewards and punishments, engagement and rebuke, on the basis of whether a country is large or small, secure or vulnerable, powerful or weak. Removing what appears to many as a double standard will go far toward promoting the noble ends we seek to promote.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL SOUTHERLAND

NOVEMBER 16, 2005

"The [RFA] programs speak to my heart. . . .The world must hear what is going on here."—RFA Uyghur service listener.

The Chinese government has for many years tightly controlled information reaching the Uyghur people in Xinjiang. But the government's controls over the media and freedom of expression in Xinjiang appear to have grown even stricter since the 9/11 attacks in the United States in 2001.

The Chinese government currently controls the media in Xinjiang even more tightly than in other parts of China, except perhaps for Tibet. As a result, broadcasting to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has constituted one of the most challenging tasks undertaken by Radio Free Asia (RFA).

RFA broadcasts in 12 languages and dialects to listeners in Asia who primarily have access only to state-run media. RFA's purpose is to deliver accurate news, information, and commentary, and to provide a forum for a variety of voices from within Asian countries that do not tolerate free media. RFA, by broadcasting objective news, seeks to promote freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any medium regardless

of frontiers. This principle is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When it comes to Uyghur language broadcasting, RFA is the only broadcaster that attempts to provide accurate and objective news. Saudi Arabia does some broadcasting in the Uyghur language, but only on religious matters. Taiwan stopped broadcasting in Uyghur several years ago. Central Asian broadcasts in Uyghur are edited so as to avoid offending the Chinese government.

The Chinese government itself broadcasts in Uyghur but censors the information that is of the greatest relevance to the Uyghur people. Foreign correspondents rarely travel to Xinjiang. When they do go, it is mostly on guided tours. RFA covers stories no one else covers. And the Chinese government is doing things in Xinjiang that it no longer does in many other parts of China. Executions of political prisoners are common. Officials don't just ban books in Xinjiang. They burn them. They force Uyghurs to work on roads and construction projects without pay. School-age children are forced to pick cotton. They restrict religious education, even in the home. They rewrite textbooks so that Ugyhurs cannot recognize their own history. Perhaps most significant, the government is now imposing the latest of many educational "reforms" that will largely replace the use of the Uyghur language with the Chinese language. This started at the university level is now being implemented at lower levels of the educational system.

RFA has reported extensively on the forced labor and language issues in recent months. Over the last year, RFA has also covered such taboo subjects as environmental pollution in Uyghur villages, land disputes involving the forced displacement of Uyghur villagers, and restrictions on religious sermons, religious attire, and mosque-building.

In such a repressive environment, Uyghur writers are particularly vulnerable. They can easily be accused of engaging in "separatist thought." A writer promoting non-violent dissent can be accused of advocating terrorism. For instance, in mid–2005, RFA reported that the Chinese authorities had arrested Nurmuhemmet Yasin, the author of a fictional first-person narrative of a young pigeon—the son of a pigeon king who is trapped and caged by humans when he ventures far from home. In the end, the pigeon commits suicide by swallowing a poisonous strawberry rather than sacrifice his freedom.

The authorities apparently read the story, titled "Wild Pigeon," as an indictment of China's heavy-handed rule in Xinjiang. They gave Yasin a 10-year jail term for inciting Uyghur separatism. RFA later learned that the chief editor of the Kashgar Literature Journal, which published the fable, was given a three-year prison sentence. The fate of these two men might have gone unreported had RFA not learned about the prison sentences from sources inside Xinjiang.

No wonder, then, that the Chinese government heavily jams RFA broadcasts to Xinjiang. Jamming consists of heavy noise, loud music and co-channeled Chinese programs. China typically jams any new frequency that RFA selects within 30 to 40 minutes of the first broadcast. Every month, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) files a complaint against Chinese jamming of U.S.-supported broadcasts with the International Telecommunications Union. China consistently denies that it is jamming.

Three years ago, the Chinese government-run Xinjiang Radio and Television station revealed that the government had invested 300 million yuan (nearly $40 million) in a new project designed to more heavily jam international broadcasts. The targets were obviously RFA Uyghur and RFA and Voice of America Mandarin broadcasts. At the same time, the government began building up its own Uyghur broadcasting capability.

In late July 2004, the Chinese government began trying to disrupt RFA's Mandarin, Tibetan, and Uyghur call-in shows. Chinese operators told callers that the regular access number to RFA was dead. Meanwhile, persons apparently working for the government bombarded RFA day after day with hundreds of automated phone calls in an apparent attempt to block out legitimate regular callers. Callers complained about busy signals eight out of 10 times when seeking 800-number access. Fortunately, dedicated RFA callers were able to overcome these problems. And callers continue to give RFA tips that once checked out lead to important stories.

One such tip came late last year from a farmer in Xinjiang who had been trying together with other farmers to get a state-run TV and radio station to run a story on a disease that was killing livestock in the Ili prefecture.

"We went to the local media to ask them to inform our herdsmen about the disease, but all of them said that without approval from a supervisor, they couldn't report it. Finally we sent someone to Ili City, to the Uyghur radio station, and their answer was the same—but they told us to inform Radio Free Asia's Uyghur service. So we called you."

RFA could obviously not use this story based on a phone call from an anonymous farmer, but eventually we got confirmation from an official in the regional animal husbandry bureau. The disease turned out to be hoof-and-mouth disease, a highly contagious virus affecting cows and sheep.

The Chinese government heavily blocks RFA Web sites directed at China in Mandarin, Cantonese, Tibetan, and Uyghur. But we know that our news does get through via proxy servers and "human proxies" who e-mail our reports or post them on different Web sites.

The Uyghur Web site has now become the only Web site that is updated continuously in all three scripts used by the Uyghurs: Arabic, Cyrillic, and Latin. All three are immediately available at the click of a button. An innovative feature, launched on August 5, 2005, allows the reader to switch instantly from one script to another. In addition to providing accurate and timely news reports, the site also functions as a collective memory for the Uyghurs' besieged culture. It carries regular features on Uyghur history and cultural and artistic life, and on the works of Uyghur scholars and scientists. RFA recently added a message board. The Uyghur community around the world uses it to post poems, short stories, personal thoughts, and announcements of events.

The RFA Uyghur Web site received an Edward R. Murrow award last year for its innovation, functionality, interactivity, and design.

An RFA story earlier this year showed that news sent via the Internet can reach Xinjiang in creative ways. On March 17, Uyghur businesswoman Rebiya Kadeer arrived in Washington following her release from prison in China. Kadeer had spent more than five years in prison after protesting China's mistreatment of the Uyghurs. After Kadeer reached Reagan National Airport, her husband, Sidik Rouzi, held her in a tight embrace. An RFA story and a photo of this embrace went out via the Internet to Xinjiang, where the Internet police blocked both story and photo. But before the police could do their work, someone managed to cut and paste, remove the banned RFA address, and move the story and photo along. When Kadeer called her children in China, they were able to tell her that they had seen the photo of their father and mother embracing each other after five years apart.

But the challenge of getting such images and information into Xinjiang remains a daunting one. Based on studies done for RFA's research department, the atmosphere in the XUAR is clearly the most repressive of that of any of the regions in China. One study concludes that the PRC authorities have "used the 'global war on terror' to justify harsh measures in the XUAR designed to stamp out political and social dissent, with little distinction between acts of violence and acts of passive resistance."

In contrast with other parts of China, where people now feel free in private to discuss personal matters or even political issues when they do not directly challenge the Chinese Communist Party, many Uyghurs dare not discuss sensitive issues, even with friends or family members.

Although Internet usage is spreading gradually in the XUAR, particularly the use of Internet chat rooms, accessing the Web sites of international broadcasters remains an activity too risky for most Uyghurs to try.

But for many Uyghurs, RFA broadcasts remain a "lifeline" in a hostile PRC media environment. International broadcasts are the only means for many Uyghurs to get reliable news of the outside world as well as news about developments inside the XUAR.

"RFA broadcasts, like an educator, have brightened our hearts," one listener commented recently. "They have opened our eyes. China always wants to keep the Uyghurs ignorant of the world. But now we understand democracy, human rights, and freedom. RFA broadcasting means more than food, drink, and air to us, because it gives us hope and inspiration. We hope RFA increases broadcasting time in the Uyghur language."