

HUMAN RIGHTS IN XINJIANG: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

ROUNDTABLE

BEFORE THE

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN XINJIANG: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2009

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The roundtable was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room 628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Charlotte Oldham-Moore, Staff Director, presiding.

Also Present: Douglas Grob, Cochairman's Senior Staff Member; Kara Abramson, Advocacy Director; and Toy Reid, Senior Research Associate.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHARLOTTE OLDHAM-MOORE, STAFF DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Good morning. My name is Charlotte Oldham-Moore and I am Staff Director of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China [CECC], which is chaired by Senator Byron Dorgan. I am joined by Douglas Grob, Senior Staff Member to Cochairman Representative Sander Levin.

Today we are very fortunate to have an expert panel to discuss "Human Rights in Xinjiang: Recent Developments." We also have in the audience Ms. Rebiya Kadeer. We welcome her and thank her so much for attending this morning.

Today our panel of witnesses will examine recent developments in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, an area inside China's northwest border, which is home to a Muslim Turkic Uyghur population and several other ethnic groups.

As many of you may know, human rights abuses in the region have long been severe. The CECC has noted in its Annual Reports that the government has used anti-terrorism campaigns as a pretext for enforcing repressive security measures and for controlling expressions of religious and ethnic identity, especially among the Uyghur population.

Last year, in our annual report on human rights and rule of law developments in China, we noted an increase in repression in Xinjiang amid security preparations for the summer Olympic Games in Beijing and elsewhere in China. This involved intensive anti-terrorism campaigns in the region and heightened social controls following protests among ethnic minorities in China.

In Commission monitoring of news in the aftermath of these events, in part based on reports by the Uyghur Human Rights Project and, of course, the Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service, which

does fine work, we have found the government continues to implement an array of security measures in Xinjiang while maintaining policies aimed at promoting ethnic assimilation.

I am going to turn to Doug Grob, who will introduce our distinguished guests, and then after they have made their statements, we will turn to the audience for the question-and-answer session. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS GROB, COCHAIRMAN'S SENIOR
STAFF MEMBER**

Mr. GROB. Thank you very much, Charlotte, and thank you all for joining us here today. It is a great pleasure to introduce our distinguished panel to you. First, I have the honor of introducing you to Ms. Amy Reger. Ms. Reger is Researcher at the Uyghur Human Rights Project. She has authored numerous reports and publications on Uyghur human rights issues, and also has spoken on these issues at government forums, both in the United States and abroad. Her reporting has significantly raised awareness of Uyghur issues both among congressional staff and Members of Congress, as well as among staff and officials within the Executive Branch. We are very pleased and honored to have her here today to speak on recent developments in Xinjiang, including information on education policies and security campaigns in the region.

Also, to my left, is Mr. Nury Turkel, an attorney with the law firm of Kirstein & Young, PLLC. Mr. Turkel is a gentleman with extraordinary expertise in Uyghur human rights issues, and many years of experience working to promote the rule of law in China and Central Asia. He has written commentaries on public policy and legal matters in major U.S. publications, and has appeared on numerous news and public affairs programs. His testimony today will focus on current trends affecting the Uyghur people in areas including freedom of religion, cultural rights, freedom of movement, and China's global influence.

To my right, I have the privilege of introducing to you Professor Katherine Palmer Kaup, Associate Professor of Political Science and the Chair of the Department of Asian Studies at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. Professor Kaup is also the Director of China Programs at the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics, and Public Leadership. Professor Kaup is the author of the book "Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China," and she is the author of several articles on the impact of state policy and of administrative divisions on ethnic identity and mobilization in China's southwest regions as well as in Xinjiang. And in 2005, she served as a Special Adviser on Minority Nationality Affairs at the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. So we are very pleased to have you back today to provide us with information on the Chinese Government's ethnic minority policies in general, and toward Xinjiang in particular, and to discuss broader, long-term trends in the region.

Finally, also to my right, I have the honor of introducing to you Ms. Louisa Greve, who is Program Director for East Asia with the National Endowment for Democracy. The National Endowment for Democracy makes grants to democracy and human rights organizations in more than 80 countries. Ms. Greve has studied, worked,

and traveled in China since 1980, and has testified before congressional committees on human rights in China and democracy promotion in Asia. Her work has been of extraordinary importance and impact, and has made a significant contribution to this Commission's understanding of conditions in China. She will speak today on the connection between developments in Xinjiang and China's broader human rights and rule-of-law development, and also will look at issues including China's rights defense movement and ethnic claims in transitioning societies.

So, with that, I would like now to turn the floor over to Amy Reger. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF AMY REGER, RESEARCHER, UYGHUR HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

Ms. REGER. I would like to thank the CECC and Charlotte Oldham-Moore and Doug Grob for holding this panel and providing such a rare opportunity for us to have a public forum to discuss Uyghur human rights issues. And I especially want to thank Kara Abramson, who I know has worked really hard on putting this together, and who is always very helpful to us in our work, and it is really an honor for me to speak on this panel with Kate Kaup and with Louisa and Nury, both of whom I consider as great mentors.

Members of the Chinese Government delegation asserted during this week's Universal Periodic Review process that there is no ethnic conflict in the People's Republic of China [PRC], except for conflict stemming from a very few individuals backed by foreign forces aiming to split China. However, the reality for the Uyghur people is much different from this rhetoric. The past year marked a period of extreme oppression for Uyghurs, marked by a sharp increase in arrests for state security crimes and security crackdowns aimed at the broader Uyghur population.

The Chinese Government intensified its use of the war on terror to persecute Uyghurs through mass arrests, detentions, and executions, the mobilization of armed police and security forces to the region, and ideological campaigns aimed at stamping out the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism.

Remarks in just the past two months by top officials in East Turkistan indicate a stepped-up security drive and an intensified crackdown on peaceful expressions of Uyghur identity and dissent. On January 11, Provincial Party Secretary Wang Lequan told members of the People's Armed Police Forces that the "three evil forces" appeared to be preparing a series of attacks in the region. Deputy Communist Party Secretary Nur Bekri was quoted in official Chinese media as telling 500 government delegates on January 7 to be on guard against the "three evil forces" and to be prepared for a long-term battle against these elements.

In September of last year, Nur Bekri delivered a lengthy speech accusing Western countries of instigating terrorism, separatism, and extremism in East Turkistan. Bekri's remarks are consistent with previous Chinese Government assertions linking outside forces with alleged domestic terrorism. In line with earlier official claims regarding Uyghur terrorism, Bekri did not offer any evidence to substantiate his assertions.

Chinese officials, led by Wang Lequan, have consistently attempted to link human rights organizations with terrorism and alleged terrorist groups in order to discredit their human rights efforts. In recent months, both Nur Bekri and Wang Lequan have also frequently resorted to character assassination with respect to Uyghur democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer in a clear attempt to demonize her and discredit her human rights advocacy. In his speech in September, Bekri directly targeted the World Uyghur Congress, a German-based organization led by Ms. Kadeer that promotes democracy, human rights, and freedom for the Uyghur people.

Following a series of violent attacks in and around the cities of Kucha and Kashgar that took place during the Olympic period, Wang Lequan announced a life-or-death struggle in East Turkistan. While PRC authorities claimed the security measures implemented in the pre- and post-Olympic period were aimed at punishing individuals involved in the violent attacks that occurred, the scope of the crackdown represents a broad, far-reaching campaign of intimidation and fear aimed at the Uyghur community.

Security measures carried out during this period included the arrest of 160 Uyghur children aged 8 to 14 years old for participating in so-called illegal religious activities. Religious restrictions were implemented during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2008 at an unprecedented level. Students and government employees were not permitted to fast during Ramadan this year or attend mosques in general. Restaurants were also forced to open during fasting hours.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, PRC authorities have used the war on terror as a pretext for cracking down on religious and political dissent in the region. Tens of thousands of Uyghurs are believed to have been detained and hundreds executed in the years since 2001. Individuals caught up in this campaign include Tohti Tunyaz, a Ph.D. scholar who was released this past Tuesday from prison after serving an 11-year sentence for conducting historical research in East Turkistan deemed subversive by government officials; and Nurmemet Yasin, a young Uyghur poet and intellectual who was imprisoned for writing an allegorical story that was viewed as separatist.

Uyghurs in East Turkistan suffer a broad scope of abuses to their civil, political, economic, and social rights, including the fierce suppression of their religion; arbitrary detention, torture, and execution; PRC Government support of the influx of huge numbers of Han Chinese economic migrants into East Turkistan; the forced transfer of young Uyghur women to inland China to work in very poor conditions; discrimination in hiring practices; unequal access to healthcare services; and the elimination of Uyghur language schools under the current "bilingual education" policy.

"Bilingual education" is a very symbolic aspect of a government-driven project to assimilate Uyghurs by attacking and diluting their culture. Drives to expand "bilingual education" have paralleled heightened campaigns to promote security and battle separatism. The recent announcement of a plan to train another 16,000 bilingual teachers for elementary schools over the next six years coincides with the recent remarks made by Wang Lequan and Nur Bekri regarding the need to battle the "three evil forces."

According to Chinese Government propaganda, “bilingual education” is being put into place throughout East Turkistan to improve educational and employment opportunities for Uyghur children. One of the major problems with this type of justification is that “bilingual education” is not bilingual at all but, rather, monolingual. Another factor that challenges the Chinese Government’s official assertions regarding its motivations of providing a truly bilingual education is the removal of Uyghur children from their cultural environment and placement into Chinese language “Xinjiang classes” located in 12 inland Chinese cities. This program is widely viewed in the Uyghur community as an attempt to Sinify young Uyghurs.

The “bilingual education” policy has been pursued for the past decade, but with increasing intensity since 2002. The ultimate goal of “bilingual education” appears to be to replace Uyghur language instruction with Chinese language instruction in all areas of East Turkistan and to phase out the use of the Uyghur language among young Uyghurs. From 2002 to 2005, “bilingual education” was implemented in universities, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. And in 2005, the “bilingual education” push was expanded into East Turkistan’s preschools.

The motivations behind the Chinese Government’s implementation of the “bilingual education” policy and the Xinjiang classes are varied and complex. While Wang Lequan himself is quoted as saying that the chief goal of Xinjiang classes is political thought training, not academic preparation, the Chinese Government likely hopes to eliminate any sense of a unique identity on the part of Uyghurs that it perceives would contribute to opposition to government policies. Because of the centralized nature of this and other Chinese Government policies, Uyghurs remain excluded from planning and decisionmaking processes in East Turkistan. This is extremely convenient to the government in a region that has vast mineral wealth, which is exploited for the benefits of China’s eastern boomtowns.

Without working toward the mitigation of growing social, economic, and political challenges that face Uyghurs in East Turkistan, and without implementing any mechanisms by which Uyghurs may address their grievances, the “bilingual education” policy will not create stability in the region, nor will it improve the livelihood of Uyghurs. The continued application of this policy will have the inevitable result of further alienating the Uyghur people.

Mr. GROB. Thank you very much, Amy. Now I would like to turn the floor over to Mr. Turkel.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Reger appears in the appendix.]

STATEMENT OF NURY A. TURKEL, ATTORNEY WITH KIRSTEIN AND YOUNG, PLLC

Mr. TURKEL. First, I would like to commend the Commission for placing a strong emphasis in its 2008 report on the worsening human rights situation in East Turkistan. The Uyghur people greatly appreciate any efforts that contribute to promoting and protecting their democratic freedoms, including the right to be Muslim.

In January 2003, Chinese Communist Party Xinjiang Secretary Wang Lequan said, “Xinjiang will always keep up the intensity of its crackdown on ethnic separatist forces and deal them dev-

astating blows without showing any mercy.” As promised, Chinese leaders have ruthlessly punished the Uyghurs, even those who have peacefully expressed dissent and opposed China’s ongoing onslaught against Uyghurs’ ethno-national identity. These aggressive policies are mostly targeted at Uyghurs’ religious and cultural identity.

China’s Constitution and many of its laws contain guarantees of religious freedom, but Uyghurs only have as much religious freedom as local and national authorities allow at any given moment. A primary purpose of this highly repressive regulatory framework is the enforcement of loyalty to the Communist Party and the Chinese state. On the one hand, Uyghurs believe in freedom of worship and don’t care for Communism. Public expression of dissent or deviance from the Party line can be grounds for charges such as “harming national unity,” “disuniting nationalities,” or even “harming state security.” These charges carry very heavy penalties and punishments under China’s criminal law.

China implements much stricter religious policy with respect to Uyghurs compared to other Muslims, particularly Hui Muslims. Also, non-Uyghur groups in East Turkistan aren’t perceived as presenting a secessionist threat, as Uyghurs are. The reason for this is that China sees Uyghurs’ ethno-national identity as a threat and Islam is perceived as feeding Uyghurs’ ethnic identity. So the subordination of Islam to the Chinese state is used as a means to ensure the subordination of Uyghurs as well. As such, China strictly controls and manages all mosques and stifles religious traditions that have formed a crucial part of the Uyghur identity for centuries.

As a result, devout Uyghur Muslims experience harassment in their daily lives. Observing religious holidays, studying religious texts, or showing one’s religion through personal appearance are strictly forbidden in schools, government offices, and even public places. The government has instituted controls over who can be a clergy member, what version of the Qur’an may be used, where religious gatherings may be held, and what may be said on religious occasions. For example, government officials, state employees, children under 18, and women are prohibited from entering mosques and conducting religious activities. Violations of these regulations can result in expulsion, heavy fines, negative entries into Uyghurs’ personal dossiers, and administrative punishment, including detention and imprisonment.

Religious figures with the leadership qualities, separatist tendencies, or disloyal political views had faced harsh punishment, including imprisonment. For example, a number of young and progressive-minded imams have been removed or even imprisoned because of their refusal to use mosques to praise the motherland and the Party. In June 2008, a mosque near Aksu city was demolished because of its refusal to put up signs in support of the Beijing Olympics.

According to the media reports, including ones reported by Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service broadcast during the month of Ramadan in 2008, prayer in public places outside the main mosque was forbidden and imams’ sermons were limited to a half-hour. Local authorities required some Uyghur-owned restaurants to remain open

during the day, when Muslims normally fast. Free lunches forced Uyghurs to break their fasting and, most importantly, identified believers. Government employees were told to shave their beards, and police ordered women to remove their veils.

For most Uyghurs the overriding issue isn't religion per se, but the perceived threat that religious repression poses to their distinct identity, coupled with their acute feeling of being colonized. Uyghurs view the tight restrictions placed by the Chinese authorities on Uyghur Islam as an attempt to debase their very identity, as Islam is an essential component of their traditional identity and values.

China's attempt to suppress Islam as a motive force for separatism by confining it to tight state control not only profoundly violates human rights principles, but also further alienates the Uyghurs, drives religious expression further underground, and encourages the development of more radicalized and oppositional forms of religious identity. If the current trend continues, moderate voices that could mediate tensions between the Chinese state and Uyghurs are likely to shrink.

China effectively exploited the post-9/11 climate that followed the attacks in the United States. The arrests of some Uyghurs in Afghanistan/Pakistan helped China to consistently and successfully portray Uyghurs as the source of a serious terrorist threat in China. This perception seems to have now become dominant among the Chinese public. The lack of a free media has made it almost impossible to compare sources of information and to make independent judgments about these claims. It is mind-boggling that some Western media organizations also helped to further this perception with reports that lacked a careful examination of Chinese claims.

The hasty designation of East Turkistan Islamic Movement [ETIM] as a terrorist organization gave a "green light" to China to intensify its crackdown on political dissent in the region. China has used the ETIM designation as a propaganda tool to "confuse" the Uyghur populations by suggesting that the United States is helping China to destroy Uyghurs' ethno-separatist aspirations. Also, China opportunistically used the post-9/11 environment to make the outrageous claim that individuals disseminating peaceful religious and cultural messages in East Turkistan are terrorists who have simply changed tactics. Many devout Uyghur Muslims have been subjected to arrest, imprisonment, torture, and even execution.

China's cultural repression of the Uyghurs is not reactive—it is rather a deliberate policy to control, monitor, and sterilize Uyghur culture so that it cannot be a vehicle for self-rule. Late last August, Wang vowed "preemptive strikes" on Uyghurs. He has been also advocating a "reeducation" drive to enhance Uyghurs' "identification with the Chinese nation and culture." Han Chinese people treat Uyghurs as inferiors and look down on Uyghur culture. Two top Chinese officials in Urumchi have helped to create a public perception that Uyghurs' cultural heritage is "outdated" and inferior to that of the Chinese, saying that, "Uyghurs must embrace the Han Chinese culture and language." For example, Wang said that the adoption of Chinese will "improve the quality of ethnic minorities, because indigenous languages are out of step with the 21st

century.” Uyghur education is under the current “bilingual education” policy, which is in theory a monolingual/Chinese-language-based education system. The program is designed to assimilate Uyghurs by attacking and diluting their culture.

The Chinese Government arbitrarily detains and imprisons Uyghur historians, poets and writers; burns books on Uyghur history and culture; and shuts down Uyghur publishing houses, for example, closure of the Kashgar Uyghur Publishing House. Targets also include “terrorism in the spiritual form”—which targets Uyghur intellectuals, writers, and musicians. Journalists are arrested for “advocating separatism.”

Funding for Uyghur cultural reservation and promotion programs have been limited or reduced. Discriminatory hiring practices are implemented that openly discourage Uyghur applicants who otherwise possess the necessary education, experience, and skills. Some Uyghurs feel that being a Uyghur isn’t such a great thing.

Some Uyghurs share the sentiment, expressed by the Dalai Lama, that a form of cultural genocide is taking place in East Turkistan akin to that of Tibet. The apparent problem is that China lacks the appreciation of a culturally diverse society. Eventually, China will create a new generation of Uyghurs who won’t appreciate their own cultural and ethnic heritage.

The Chinese Government has restricted Uyghurs’ domestic and international freedom of movement. Large numbers of Uyghurs were evicted from major Chinese cities before the Olympics, and most of them were not allowed to return after the Olympics. Racial profiling and targeting of Uyghurs because of their ethnicity, appearance, and origin are common in inner Chinese cities. Basic services such as lodging, transportation, and even public bathhouses are not available for the Uyghurs in inland Chinese cities. For example, “No Uyghurs in our Hotel and Bathhouse” “[I]n compliance with a request from the local PSB substation, starting today, investigations will be carried out on the lodging circumstances of all individuals of Tibetan and Uyghur ethnicity residing at inns and bathhouses of the Haidian District. Reinforce inspection and verification of any lodger matching the description above and report all cases to the local dispatch station.”

China discriminatorily implements its passport law. Uyghurs’ passports have been almost universally confiscated since early 2007. Chinese citizens can obtain passports through a fairly simple process, but Uyghurs and Tibetans face much greater hurdles obtaining a passport. Article 1 of China’s passport laws, enacted on January 1, 2007, guarantees PRC citizens the rights of exiting and entering China and promotes international travel and cultural exchange with foreign countries. Article 6 instructs the authorities to process and issue a passport within 15 days after receiving an application. If an application is not approved, the authorities should give the applicant a written explanation and inform him of his right to apply for an administrative review or to lodge an administrative lawsuit. Also, authorities deny the issuance of a passport if they believe that the person leaving China will do harm to state security or that their departure will result in serious losses to the benefit of the state. This has prevented family unifications and visits overseas. For example, parents could not attend significant

events such as weddings and funerals. The restriction on Uyghurs' freedom of movement and travels reminds us of the Jewish experience in Nazi Germany in the late 1930s.

China has dissuaded governments historically sympathetic to Uyghurs. Case in point, Uyghur democracy leader Rebiya Kadeer's visa issues—at the request of the Chinese Government, Turkey has rejected her visa applications, even for attending National Endowment for Democracy's [NED] democracy conference in Istanbul in spring 2006. Last week, a Turkish MP requested an explanation from the Foreign Minister on this issue. South/Central Asian countries have participated in the deportation, extradition, or rendition of Uyghurs to China. Most of them have been executed and many are serving long prison terms. For example, Uzbekistan deported a Canadian Uyghur to China in 2006. He was sentenced to life in prison in 2007. To date, the Canadians don't have access to him.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization [SCO] assists China in suppressing Uyghurs' aspirations for self-rule. The SCO fights against the “three evil forces”—separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism. Uyghur citizens of central Asian countries cannot openly sympathize with the Uyghur freedom movement, because of concerns for their own safety. This has effectively created Uyghur resentment toward and disappointment in other Turkic peoples in Central Asia.

China has effectively pressured and stopped countries that may have provided humanitarian assistance to Guantanamo Uyghurs. Despite being cleared for release as early as 2003, the Guantanamo Uyghurs are still languishing in prison because no country is willing to take them. Reportedly, the U.S. State Department reached out to over 100 countries, but none agreed to accept the Uyghurs. The economic and diplomatic threat of straining relations with China by accepting the Uyghurs has been enough to scare a number of governments away from taking them.

I would like to make a quick recommendation to wrap up my testimony. First, China should revisit and acknowledge failed minority policies, particularly in East Turkistan and Tibet. Second, recognize that harsh treatment will not help achieve security. It never worked in world history. Stop the propaganda campaign against Uyghurs and provide channels for legitimate grievances to be heard. Last, restore Uyghurs' religious and cultural rights, and stop coerced abortions carried out on Uyghur women.

The role of the United States is extremely important in that she needs to be the Uyghurs' main source of hope. To do that: President Obama should publicly express serious concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in East Turkistan and allow the 17 Guantanamo Uyghurs to resettle in the United States. The emptying of the Guantanamo prison cannot be achieved without the cooperation of America's allies, and that cooperation cannot be realized without America's firm leadership. And President Obama is in a very good position to do so. Freeing the 17 Uyghurs in the United States primes the pump and removes Europeans' reluctance to help. It also gives tremendous hope and sends a positive message to the Uyghurs in East Turkistan that the United States is not helping the Chinese Government to suppress Uyghurs' democratic aspirations. Also, a senior State Department official should

visit the region to meet with dissidents and family members of political prisoners. The United States should appoint a Special Coordinator for Uyghur affairs at the State Department. The United States should also encourage China to grant Uyghurs cultural and religious rights.

Uyghurs rightfully could ask “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” But they shouldn’t fall into the traps that the Communist leadership has intentionally set up. They should continue to condemn all acts of violence. Uyghurs should remember Ghandi’s quote: “There is a limit to violent action and it can fail. Non-violence knows no limits and it never fails.” Continuing to build grassroots support among youth is critically important. They should carry out public education through media. They should also work with Western democracies to prevent China’s misuse of its global influence. Uyghurs should also encourage critical thinking about CCP messages regarding Uyghurs and other minorities. Most importantly, Uyghur should work to raise awareness among Chinese democratic activists and democratic-minded Chinese about PRC policies.

Thank you very much.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Turkel.

For those of you who are interested, the full text of Mr. Turkel’s remarks will be included in the roundtable record, and any points you want to address with him, you can do it in the Q&A session.

Mr. GROB. Thank you very much, Mr. Turkel.

Now I would like to turn the floor over to Professor Kaup.

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE PALMER KAUP, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN STUDIES, FURMAN UNIVERSITY

Ms. KAUP. Thank you. And my thanks also to the Commission for inviting me to speak today.

There is no doubt in my mind that there are serious flaws in the Chinese Government’s minority policies. Policies in Xinjiang need to be changed. Unfortunately, however, there are no simple solutions to resolving ethnic tensions in Xinjiang. There are numerous competing interests at stake in the region.

Numerous human rights organizations, including those presenting here today, have well documented the extensive human rights violations occurring in Xinjiang. Precisely because the impacts of these policies are felt so dramatically by individuals living within the region, discussion of human rights conditions in Xinjiang often turns polemical. The Chinese Government hurls accusations of widespread international terrorism activity among the Uyghurs, while critics of the regime accuse it of using terrorism purely as a pretext to annihilate the Uyghur culture. There is a tendency on both sides to oversimplify the situation and assume that the other is simply intransigent and unwilling to implement or accept proper policies.

Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions to resolving ethnic tensions in Xinjiang. Nor is there agreement on what proper policies might be. There are, instead, numerous competing interests at stake in the region. Failure to recognize the complexity of the issues facing the Chinese Government and failure to place these policies into broader context hinders human rights activists’ ability

to engage the Chinese Government in any kind of constructive dialogue.

Though the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law is supposed to guarantee the minorities a number of rights, even properly implemented the law alone cannot protect minority rights in Xinjiang. Only mutual trust can enable the minorities and the central government to co-exist.

China is a self-proclaimed, unitary, multinational state, and autonomous areas are required, as noted by Article 7 of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, to “place the interests of the state as a whole above anything else.” Natural resources throughout the country belong to the central government. Though the head of the government of each autonomous area must be a member of the titular minority, as elsewhere in the country, these leaders are not popularly elected at the county or the provincial level, nor are there mandates for ensuring minority representation within the Communist Party, where most power remains.

It is, therefore, only through building mutual trust that the minorities and the central government can learn to co-exist and recognize any mutual interest. The current policies, along with widespread rhetoric equating ethnic activism and international terrorism, are weakening whatever trust exists, even as Xinjiang’s economic indicators as a whole are improving. The Chinese Government’s current policies in Xinjiang are working at odds with its own goals.

In my time remaining, I would like to divide my comments into three parts. First, I will address why resolving ethnic tensions in Xinjiang is at once so important and yet so challenging to the central government. I will then illustrate how two fundamental assumptions inform all of the Chinese Government’s minority policies and lead to policies that tend to exacerbate rather than alleviate ethnic tensions in the region. Finally, I will conclude with some brief recommendations for improving ethnic relations in Xinjiang.

First, why is resolving ethnic tension in Xinjiang at once so important and yet so challenging to the Chinese Government? It is important to remember that the Xinjiang question is much bigger than just Xinjiang. Mishandling policies in Xinjiang could have dramatic impact throughout the country. More than 125 million residents of the PRC are officially classified as ethnic minorities. Integrating them and ensuring their loyalty to a unified Chinese state has not been easy.

Minorities are spread across two-thirds of China’s land mass, often in the most resource-rich areas of the country. Despite living in these resource-rich regions, minority educational levels fall overwhelmingly below those of the Han Chinese, as do numerous other socioeconomic indicators. Income levels are, on average, less than half that of the Han Chinese.

Many of the minorities do not speak Mandarin Chinese and have traditions as well as legal and customary practices that at times conflict with state laws. Finding a proper balance on how best to protect individual citizens and minority groups while developing the nation as a whole has been a complex challenge for the central government.

Resolving ethnic tensions in Xinjiang has been particularly challenging for the central government. Xinjiang accounts for one-sixth of China's total land mass and is home to vast coal, oil, and natural gas reserves. Though there was a period of relatively loose control in Xinjiang in the 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 alarmed the Chinese Government and heightened its interest in keeping the minority territories under control.

Xinjiang borders eight countries, several of which were once ethnic republics under the Soviet Union. The expansion of oil exploitation in the region in the early 1990s only increased tensions over exactly who should benefit from these state-owned resources. Han Chinese were sent to the region in increasingly large numbers to exploit the oil, which Uyghurs were arguably not positioned to do yet due to the dearth of trained Uyghur technicians and engineers.

Two large-scale protests against restrictive ethnic policies in 1990 and 1997 further strained relations and resulted in increased government crackdowns over expressions of Uyghur ethnic identity. The government responded to these protests by cracking down harshly on dissent, further fueling ethnic tensions.

Chinese efforts to alleviate these ethnic tensions and integrate the country are grounded on two key assumptions: First, the government assumes that economic development is the key to resolving all ethnic problems; and, second, that Han Chinese are inherently more politically reliable than minorities. Grounded in Marxist theory, the Chinese Communist Party has continuously asserted that development is, in the words of Hu Jintao, "the key to solving all problems of China and the key to solving the difficulties and problems in ethnic regions."

The Chinese Government is wary of minority leaders' intentions and has sent by its own admission tens of thousands of Han cadre into minority territories specifically to combat what it calls "domestic and foreign forces' vain attempts to stir up ethnic separatism."

Rapid economic development in Xinjiang and exploitation of the vast natural resources requires more technically trained personnel than the local population can currently provide. In order to rush economic development in hopes of solving ethnic tensions, the government offers incentive packages to educated personnel from the interior, predominantly Han, territories. The intent may be to increase the region's economic development as a whole, but the fact remains that the best positions in Xinjiang are overwhelmingly dominated by Han Chinese, and the government pays those coming from the interior more than locals holding similar positions. This is specifically mandated by government policy. Central government intentions may not be pernicious but the policies, nonetheless, lead to ethnic resentment and increased tensions in the region.

So where do we go from here?

First, it is crucial to recognize that there are no clear-cut solutions on how best to protect minority rights while simultaneously ensuring the territorial integrity of a unitary Chinese state. Better acknowledging the challenges facing the Chinese Government while continuing to urge the government to ease restrictions on Uyghur identity may lead to a more constructive dialogue.

I would like to propose four recommendations that the U.S. Government might encourage the Chinese Government to consider.

First, the Chinese Government should consider reducing its encouragement of mass migration to Xinjiang. Until educational levels in Xinjiang are raised and Uyghurs are able to compete more equally with Han Chinese, the Uyghurs will only resent those offered higher salaries and better positions and will discount any of their contributions.

Two, the Chinese Government should consider further increasing investments in the educational system within Xinjiang. Long-term success in Xinjiang depends on providing the Uyghurs the tools they need to participate fully in the region's economic development. The pace of development needs to be better managed, probably even slowed, until Uyghurs can play a more crucial and central role in the process.

Three, the Chinese Government should consider offering incentives to well-educated Uyghurs willing to remain in Xinjiang. Policies encouraging the transfer of skilled labor from Xinjiang to the interior should be halted immediately.

Four, the Chinese Government should recruit more minorities into the Chinese Communist Party and promote them to positions of real leadership. Though the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law requires the head of each autonomous area to be drawn from the titular minority, real power in the country remains in the hands of the Communist Party. Policies barring religious believers from party membership should be waived to encourage greater minority participation and enable those with real ties in the local communities to succeed within the party.

In conclusion, properly recognizing the complexities facing the Chinese Government may enable more constructive dialogue on human rights issues in Xinjiang. The Chinese Government hopes to ease ethnic tensions through rapid economic development and assuring that Han Chinese retain control of key government and party positions. These two policies, however, are exacerbating rather than alleviating tensions. Combined with strict security policies, these policies may eventually radicalize a currently peaceful minority.

Thank you.

Mr. GROB. Thank you very much, Professor Kaup.

And now I would like to turn the floor over to Ms. Louisa Greve. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF LOUISA GREVE, PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR
EAST ASIA, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY**

Ms. GREVE. Thank you. My topic today is the relationship of the situation in Xinjiang to that in the rest of China. In a word, it is a yawning chasm. The gulf between trends in Xinjiang and trends elsewhere in China is dramatic, particularly in the areas of rule of law, civil society development, personal freedoms, transparency, and governance, as you have heard.

I will give several illustrations of this gulf and then go on to give some forward-looking observations.

The first illustration is the subjective or experiential dimension of living as a Uyghur and, in some cases, other minorities in Xinjiang. If you talk to Uyghurs about any of the human rights abuses that are common in China, throughout China, that the

CECC frequently documents in its reports, the Uyghurs will talk about it differently, the experience differently. They are a distinct minority. The things that threaten their families, their choices in life, their personal freedoms, are not just violations of individual rights, but in many cases they feel it threatens their existence as a national group, that is, an ethnic group, their ability to choose their own cultural development.

Several have been mentioned today. I will mention one more: the one-child policy. Of course, the one-child policy applies throughout China, and as an officially designated minority, Uyghurs technically are able to live under a more lenient provision, where, for example, they might be able to have two children, where a Han in the same situation would be able to have one child. But the Uyghurs experience this not, again, as a limitation on individual autonomy but, rather, as a state-sponsored policy that limits people's choices about family and, in fact, effectively limits the growth of the people who belong to this identity and, as a way to control the ethnic group as well as individuals.

Another example of this subjective dimension is to look at freedom of information and political discussion in China. We know that despite all kinds of Internet censorship, nonetheless a very lively discussion of very interesting ideas goes on, partly because of the Internet and blogging. You talk to Uyghurs and they say, "There is just no comparison between what intellectuals and students and activists are able to do in heartland China compared to what we would be able to do." The same thing goes for the "*weiquan*," or rights defense, legal movement, networks of environmental NGOs—nothing like that is possible for Uyghurs who would like to organize on any of these public policy issues that affect their lives.

The second dimension of the gulf is the prominence of ethnicity. Government-supported racism is a daily fact of life for Uyghurs and other minorities, with openly discriminatory job announcements and the rest. Restrictions on Uyghurs' ability to check into hotel rooms in inner China, heartland China, is a blatant example, and quotas restricting hiring of Uyghurs in government positions as well, in the party and the government. There are even lists indicating the ethnicity of the chairman and the deputy chairman positions, which should be Han, which should be Uyghur, and vice versa, in different cases. These last are not open but "*neibu*," confidential documents.

The third dimension is government rhetoric. The PRC's "patriotic education" campaigns have been fairly intense, especially since 1989. But the content of "patriotic education" has a very different flavor in Xinjiang compared to other places in China and other minority regions. Great emphasis, of course, on ethnic unity. Great emphasis, of course, particularly since 9/11, on anti-terrorism and the military imagery that goes along with that. And, third, overall, the language just feels very old. When you look at the billboards, you read what the newspapers say, it will feel like China of 15 or 20 years ago with lots of language about the "motherland," as was quoted already.

One example: In 2004, Xinjiang celebrated the 50th anniversary of the "liberation" of Xinjiang, and below the statues featuring lots of Mao, displays featuring Mao as, you know, a wonderful figure

in Xinjiang's history and China's history—that doesn't occur very much elsewhere in China. The slogan was, "Fifty years of harmony between the Uyghur and Chinese people." In other words, a very Orwellian flavor to public propaganda.

Fourth, I wanted to mention some structural things about Xinjiang governance that make it stand out and are not found elsewhere. Of course, people know about the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, which is a frontier mechanism modeled, of course, in part, on some historical means used by Chinese empires in settling and cultivating and securing, garrisoning frontier land. This happened after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Few people know it was actually abolished in 1975 and was brought back in 1981 with the explicit objectives of countering Soviet encirclement, countering the East Turkistan independence movement—remember, this is 1981 and therefore, long before the 1990s incidents that we all think about—countering Islamic fundamentalism and, of course, the cultivation of frontier lands and economic development not found elsewhere. The Corps employs 2 or more million people out of a population of over 18 million.

Governance. Wang Lequan, Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China, and first political commissar of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, has been in that office since 1994. Students of elite politics in China can tell us a little bit about what it means that he has been in that position for 14 years and is not subject to the same rotation rules as governors elsewhere or party chairmen.

And the fifth dimension really is about the scale and types of human rights violations. This has been mentioned already this morning. I will just mention the statistic reported in January in the official Chinese press, that almost 1,300 state security-related arrests had been carried out in Xinjiang from January to November 2008. The Dui Hua Foundation's research shows that about one-half of all trials in China related to the crime of endangering state security takes place in Xinjiang. The crime of "endangering state security" includes trafficking in state secrets, separatism, espionage, subversion, and so on, and it does carry the death penalty. If half of these arrests take place in Xinjiang, that is another dimension where you are seeing something very different happening in Xinjiang than the rest of China.

Now, I did promise to give some forward-looking observations. I will make them brief. More Han Chinese need to acknowledge the gulf. Things really are different. Too often you talk to Chinese human rights activists, and they say, "Well, Han suffer human rights violations, too." And that is true. But there are differences, and that needs to be acknowledged.

Related to that, even very active Chinese democrats, liberal thinkers, people who want constitutionalism in China, are infected by the propaganda and think that any Uyghur who is an activist, politically active, is advocating for an independent country. In a public presentation, a Uyghur will say, "We are looking for human rights," and give all kinds of details, and the question from a Han audience member will begin, "Well, since you're asking for independence, . . ." and they cannot hear the difference.

Second, Han and Uyghurs have to think more about the future: federalism, governance, how to resolve tensions.

Third, those who are outside China, Chinese and international human rights NGOs, should focus on where they can make a difference, and I am afraid to say that recommending things to the Chinese Government is a very long-term project. In the shorter term, it is possible, as Nury mentioned, to do more to enable Uyghurs who are not in China to receive protection. For example, it is important to ensure that third-party governments are not bullied by the Chinese Government into returning Uyghurs who have applied for political asylum or have refugee status to China, to face terrible mistreatment, imprisonment, and even execution.

And then, finally, I do want to say that raising international awareness, as the CECC has done so much to do, I think, again, in the long term can make a big difference. People who have the courage to speak should do so. People in China cannot. And many Chinese intellectuals have blinders on that make it hard for them to look at it. Eventually, with more discussion and careful documentation, I believe that this will filter through and enable Chinese activists who themselves are intellectuals and lawmakers who are the ones who are going to have to force the solutions, we want to help them by getting the information out there so that they can eventually learn from it.

Mr. GROB. Thank you very much, Ms. Greve.

And now, as we turn to the question-and-answer period of today's roundtable, I have the great pleasure of introducing to you Ms. Kara Abramson, senior staff specialist on Xinjiang with the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. I would like to thank you, Kara, for your hard work putting this program together. And just so all of you know, aside from being a Harvard-trained lawyer and a historian, Kara also is a linguist who reads, writes, and speaks Mandarin, Japanese, and Uyghur. I would like to turn to her to kick off the Q&A session—in English. [Laughter.]

Ms. ABRAMSON. Dr. Kaup discussed several strategies for engagement in her testimony, and I'd like to continue discussing this issue. Given the political sensitivities of this issue, given that the government has ramped up rhetoric against "Western hostile forces" infiltrating China in the name of human rights, and given that Xinjiang authorities continue to vilify Uyghur rights advocate Rebiya Kadeer, is there even an opening to begin to talk about these issues and engage with the Chinese Government? In addition, could some type of engagement also come from within China? I'd like to pose this question to all the panelists.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Brief answers so we can go right back to the audience. Thanks.

Ms. KAUP. I agree with Louisa that this is certainly a very long-term strategy, and the Chinese Government is extraordinarily reluctant to talk about these issues, particularly to talk about Xinjiang. I am not suggesting we are going to sit down and say "we feel your pain" and, the Chinese Government is then going to ask to sit down to chat about what to do in Xinjiang. That is just not going to happen.

That said, I think that presuming to understand the intentions of the Chinese Government and accusing it of using terrorism sim-

ply as a pretext to annihilate Uyghur culture is, frankly, just not productive. Whether or not you believe it to be true, it is simply not productive to make such harsh accusations, and the tone immediately puts the Chinese Government on the defensive.

It would be much more constructive to say instead that the current policies are working at odds with the central government's own goals, and are driving into a corner those who would otherwise not find violence at all appealing.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Just very quickly, for those who did not hear the question, Kara asked: How can the United States and others constructively engage China on this issue?

Ms. ABRAMSON. And the second part—and these questions are for all of the panelists—if it is hard to engage from our end, or in addition to doing it from our end, is this type of engagement possible from within China and by whom?

Ms. GREVE. It is a very good question. In fact, at the National Endowment for Democracy [NED], we have thought this needs a lot of encouragement. We ourselves have conducted a series of meetings, starting in about 2004, with people of various ethnicities coming together. It is very hard, even when you get a group of committed, pro-democracy activists who have sacrificed their own lives, some of them served time in prison, they still find it very hard. So, one, realize that multi-ethnic dialogue is important and is going to be difficult, and it can start with anybody. Nobody can do it—if you get it started anywhere, those people can then be ambassadors in an otherwise very bleak picture of people willing to listen and truly engage with people from another point of view.

Second, the blogosphere, the alternative press, is one place to start things that can filter through, and certainly NED has been encouraging the more than half a dozen Internet-based publications which are not subject—which are maintained on servers outside of China so they cannot be literally shut down, and then readers inside China can access them through using proxies. That kind of people, people are trying to push the boundaries of freedom of expression and getting away from the constraints of censorship inside China. This has to be one of the topics that is on the agenda for them.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Nury, please.

Mr. TURKEL. There are a lot of things that the United States can do. The fundamental problem is that the leaders of the free world have not expressed strong concerns publicly over Uyghurs sufferings, particularly on the ongoing onslaught against Uyghurs. People just mention Uyghur issues in passing and, as far as I know, no one yet brought up a list of specific issues to the Chinese and asked them to make improvements. President Obama and Secretary Clinton could say to the Chinese that it is okay to be Muslim and Uyghur, there is nothing wrong with it, and you need to respect their religious and cultural rights. I don't think anyone has said that to the Chinese yet. And the United States is in the best position to do that. It has been done on behalf of the Tibetans in the past. As a result, the Chinese Government is fairly careful in their dealing with the Tibetans inside China.

Number two, the United States should send a high-level official, perhaps Secretary Clinton, to East Turkistan and deliver a speech

that the United States cares about the Uyghurs. That would be very powerful because it will give Uyghurs a hope that there will be a light at the end of the tunnel. We have heard President Obama's message of hope to the nation in the last two years, and some of that hope needs to be delivered to the Uyghurs.

Finally, the State Department and the other government offices here in Washington need to have someone with a full-time responsibility working on the Uyghur issues. Again, the Chinese are not taking Uyghur issues seriously because there is not much work done on behalf of the Uyghurs.

Ms. REGER. I would just like to say it is very important for American officials to consistently raise Uyghur issues, like Nury was talking about, both inside China and in the United States when we have a forum to talk with Chinese officials. The U.S. Government should consistently raise Uyghur human rights issues. At the very least, this will bring hope to the Uyghur people, and despite the difficulty of perhaps effecting broader policy changes in the PRC or in East Turkistan, at the very least we can hope to achieve small victories.

For instance—and perhaps this is not a small victory, but without the intervention and the pressure exerted by U.S. officials, Ms. Kadeer would not have come here a few years ago. Just a few months ago, U.S. Congressmen and other officials raised the issue of forced abortion in East Turkistan, particularly focusing on the case of Arzigul Tursun. She was six months' pregnant, and in contravention of Chinese law, local officials attempted to force her to have an abortion. But after U.S. officials raised concerns about her case, she was allowed to return home and continue with her pregnancy.

And I also would like to point out—I am not normally in a position to comment on U.S. policy issues, but I believe it would be in the best interests of the United States to foster support and engagement with Uyghurs considering that they are among the most pro-American and pro-Western Muslims in the world, since they live across the border from a very volatile region. So it would make sense if the United States would express support for this population.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Nury has one more comment, and then I want to say something, too.

Mr. TURKEL. I forgot to mention that there is a large Uyghur population outside China, and how the United States handles the Uyghur issue, how much support the U.S. Government gives to the Uyghurs have a direct impact on the lives of the Uyghurs living in Central Asia, Europe, and other parts of the world. To me, the countries that have Uyghur populations have been shaping up their Uyghur policies based on the United States' Uyghur policies. So it is, like Kate said, the Uyghur issue is not a simple domestic issue in China. Rather, it is a cross-broader and geopolitical issue. So the United States should also actively engage in and talk with other players, particularly countries in Central Asia that have a sizable Uyghur population, to urge those governments to grant civil rights to their own Uyghur citizens and stop harassing the Uyghurs residing or visiting their respective countries. That would be a tremendous help.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. I want to follow up on what Nury said because it is important to note the efforts of some Members of Congress who have worked on the Uyghur issue. They include Senator Sherrod Brown, who has introduced a resolution concerning Uyghurs, Senator Inhofe, and Representative Ros-Lehtinen, among others.

[Inaudible, off microphone.]

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Okay. Thank you very much. Nury, please?

Mr. TURKEL. On the issue of self-determination, it is very hard to get a real sense of what people really want for their nation because there is no freedom of expression in China. It is hard to poll public opinions among the Uyghurs to find out what they really want.

But the pressing issue for the Uyghurs both inside and outside China is how to save the Uyghurs as a distinct ethnic group or nation, if you will. That is the most important, paramount issue. And, of course, Uyghurs would like to run their own national, political, and economic affairs. But prioritizing what needs to be done, the Uyghurs are highly focused on preservation of their cultural heritage at the moment.

On your second question, the answer is yes and no. Yes, because Tibetans have built such a strong, worldwide grassroots movement. That is something that the Uyghurs can and should learn. And no, because, in my view, Tibetans should know it better, but I do believe that Tibetans' genuineness, offers, and efforts are not being appreciated by the Chinese. And I think that is a good lesson to learn, but I do not think it is something good for the Uyghurs to follow.

The Chinese Government did not show any good intentions. Some Tibetans believe that the dialogue is something that should be continued and it helps to further publicize Tibetan issues. Of course, it gets lots of media attention, media coverage. But I have not seen and/or heard specific improvements made as a result of the ongoing dialogue with the Chinese. As for the last question, the concerns about the other minorities are well understood, but as I point out in my statement, the Chinese Government's policy toward those minorities, including the Kazakhs and others, are not as nearly oppressive as they have been to the Uyghurs. So the Uyghurs always have been a target for China's oppressive policies. So-called minority conflict in East Turkistan is a modern phenomenon. As you may know, in 1944 there was a multi-ethnic, republican system of government established in East Turkistan, and the head of the government was Uzbek, and some of the most senior military leaders were Kyrgyz and Kazakh. It is fair to say that there was no ethnic conflict between various groups in East Turkistan before the Chinese took over the region.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Great. Thank you very much.

Please, in the back.

Ms. MCCOY. Jenny McCoy, China Aid. Thanks for your comments. I have a question about how to advocate on behalf of political prisoners in Xinjiang.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Excellent.

Ms. GREVE. Again, an often overlooked element of your press list would be the Chinese language publications that try to reach Chi-

nese readers so that they, too, can become aware of how to speak about political and religious prisoners in the ethnic minorities area, whether it is Mongol or Tibetan, Uyghur or Kazakh, Uzbek, and so on, in universalistic human rights terms. In general, that is something that Chinese civil society and intellectuals are still learning, and certainly about people in Xinjiang. So I would say always please include on your list all Chinese language publications.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. That is great.

Ms. PERKINS. This is a question for all panelists. What do you think about the approach of empowering Uyghur minority groups on the ground? Can we provide funding? I understand that we have some restrictions on U.S. funding to groups on the ground in China. But we also have some exceptions, including funding programs that preserve culture and environment for other ethnic groups, such as Tibetans. Do you think this approach would work well in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region?

Ms. GREVE. It has been done. The Congress has taken up for Tibetans this kind of funding to support education and entrepreneurial grassroots economic development that is well distributed and so on. And it is absolutely to be encouraged to have the Congress explore this for Xinjiang. I think Nury would be able to speak better to the particular circumstances. And, in fact, in Tibet, it is very hard, as you know, to get the work done, lots of blocking of programs and very suspicious local government wanting to check everything, and that would go probably 10 times for Xinjiang. But it is absolutely worth trying.

Mr. TURKEL. What immediately can be done? I agree with Louisa. What immediately can be done is that the U.S. Congress sets up a scholarship for Uyghur college graduates to come here to enroll in graduate programs and return afterward. And that would be tremendously helpful.

Ms. REGER. I just wanted to add one thing—it is, of course, important to foster civil rights for Uyghurs in East Turkistan. One additional thing that the United States and other governments can do that have ethnic Uyghur populations is provide programmatic and financial support for groups that are—or Uyghur organizations forming to preserve and maintain the Uyghur language and culture and historical documents and materials. I believe that there is one such organization that is forming in the Washington area, so that is another sort of program that could be developed.

Ms. KAUP. I wonder if I could combine a couple of the questions to frame my comments. I think the question that was raised about how many Uyghurs want self-determination illustrates the importance of recognizing the complexities facing the Chinese Government while pressing it to change its treatment of minorities in Xinjiang. Current policies clearly repress and prohibit any discussion of claims for self-determination, but there is a legitimate concern on the Chinese Government's part about what happens when those controls are loosened. And if we just discount that, whether "we" be the U. S. Government or international rights organizations or scholars, if we just discount it and continue to claim that the Chinese Government is being entirely unreasonable and has no legitimate concerns and is just interested in annihilating the Uyghur culture, I think we miss an opportunity to engage in dialogue. We

miss an opportunity to discuss with the Chinese Government how we have handled dissent, or how other countries have, or indeed how any nation can handle demands for self-determination without exacerbating the tensions and inequities inspiring such demands. How can the Chinese Government protect freedom of expression and, precisely through protecting such freedoms, therefore show Uyghurs that they can flourish within a unified state? This is the question we want to address.

I would also like to respond to the earlier question of what can be done by those working within China. Security is so tight right now that one can barely even talk about issues in Xinjiang in China.

So I think that if movement is going to come from within China, it has to be done in areas that the Chinese Government is going to find acceptable. It can be very difficult to cooperate with the Chinese Government in this area, particularly if one objects strongly to its policies. But there are certain policy arenas, education, for example, in which the Chinese Government is willing to allow international participation. I think Nury's recommendation that the U.S. Government provide scholarships to Uyghur students to study in the United States is an excellent idea. It is also important to work with NGOs strengthening educational opportunities for minorities within Xinjiang. The central key to alleviating ethnic tensions in Xinjiang is not breakneck-rate economic development, but enabling and empowering the Uyghurs to participate in their own cultural and economic development within the PRC. Improving educational opportunities can move us one step in this direction.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Great. Anybody else? Yes, please.

[Inaudible, off microphone.]

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. She asked: How have other Muslim minorities responded to the persecution—persecution by whom? I am sorry.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT. Of the Uyghurs.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Of the Uyghurs.

Mr. TURKEL. I would love to respond to that question. Muslim countries have been unfavorable and they don't seem to care about their fellow Uyghur Muslims. It is ironic. The Uyghurs have been persecuted by the Chinese in China and ignored by the West mostly because they happen to be Muslim. You know, being a Muslim is not such a great thing in these days. And Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and many others, to that extent, are collaborating with the Chinese. For example, Pakistan has rounded up Uyghurs who were sympathetic to the Uyghur cause or involved in Uyghur political activities. Pakistanis repatriated many of those Uyghurs to China where they were tortured, imprisoned, or executed.

Another Muslim country, Uzbekistan, arrested a Uyghur Canadian, a Canadian citizen in Tashkent. And he was deported to China and sentenced to life in prison. To date, Canadians have not been granted counselor access to him despite personal involvement of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

And other countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia politicized pilgrimage issue. Saudis will not issue visas to the Uyghurs unless they have pre-approval or clearance from the Chinese. That has

subjected the Uyghurs to Chinese harassments and humiliations. As far as I am concerned, Saudis don't apply the same restrictions to the Muslims from other countries. Last year, nearly 1,000 Uyghurs in Pakistan demonstrated in front of the Saudi Embassy and applied for visas. Their applications were denied and one individual died during the demonstration. With the help of U.S. Government officials and Members of Congress, Saudis allowed the Uyghur Muslims to travel to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage. I mean, the situation for the Uyghur cannot be worse than this. Often times, people think, "Oh, Uyghurs are Muslims, so they are getting all the help from the other Muslim states or Arab states or Middle Eastern states." That's not the case at all. Actually, it is the opposite.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Thank you.

Yes, sir, please?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT. I'd like to ask panelists to discuss educational and cultural issues, including the threats we face through "bilingual education" and the challenge of protecting our culture.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. The CECC agrees with you that the education issue is an extremely important one, and I want to draw your attention to our Xinjiang reprint from the 2008 report. An extended addendum is dedicated to bilingual education in Xinjiang and goes into quite a lot of depth on the very issues you are raising. So thank you very much for your point.

Kate, please?

Ms. KAUP. I would like to pick up on your mention of cultural issues. We have been talking quite a bit about what might be done both within and outside of China to help protect Uyghur rights and the Uyghur culture. One very important contribution that I think the Uyghur diaspora movement could make is to introduce the world to Uyghur culture rather than focusing almost exclusively on human rights violations in Xinjiang. The Tibetan movement has drawn more attention than that of the Uyghur people in part because people are interested in Tibetan culture. They think it is "cool," to use Nury's word. I think very few Americans, very few people outside of Xinjiang, in fact, know what Uyghur culture is. We certainly need good monitoring of human rights issues and violations in Xinjiang. But instead of hammering on human rights atrocities exclusively, let's learn instead about Uyghur food, or Uyghur short stories, or Uyghur art. Let's hear more about why it is so important to preserve Uyghur culture, not just that it is difficult to do so.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Yes, thanks. Dennis Halpin, and then Toy Reid, and then I think we may need to close.

Mr. HALPIN. [Off microphone]. [Inaudible].

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Dennis, it should be noted, does an enormous amount of heavy lifting in the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of human rights issues that concern China, so it is an honor to have him here today.

Do any of our panelists want to take his question—yes, please?

Mr. TURKEL. From what we know, the Uyghur issue is already on President Obama's desk because of the Guantanamo Uyghurs. There are some valid criticisms that have been made on Bush's overall detention policies but we should acknowledge the fact that

the Bush Administration successfully resisted the pressure from the Chinese on their request to repatriate the Guantanamo Uyghurs. While maintaining close relations with China, the United States did not give into the pressure to ship the Uyghurs back to China. That worked.

Also, one other thing that the United States did in the last several years was to refuse to designate additional Uyghur groups as terrorist organizations. That also worked.

And President Obama is in a very good position to do something for the Uyghurs at the moment; that is to release the Uyghurs into the United States. It would be a symbolic step that would eventually help Obama to empty the prison camp in Guantanamo. Also, by doing that, he can show to the Chinese that he knows what is right and what is wrong. He can explain to the Chinese that his administration did whatever was necessary after careful review and investigation, along with judicial process and found no evidence that the Uyghurs pose a security threat to the United States. That would be a very specific and important thing that the U.S. Government can do in the foreseeable future for the Uyghurs.

The other benefit is that it will help President Obama to encourage other governments in Europe, European allies to help to take the rest of the cleared detainees who cannot return to their countries. There are about 60 detainees out of 250 prisoners in Guantanamo who cannot go back to their country. Of those, 17 are Uyghurs.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Thank you.

Toy Reid, you have the last remark—a question, I hope.

Mr. REID. It is a question. Thank you. I am Toy Reid with the CECC. The prominent question is this: why should we allow the Chinese Government to define the terms of this discussion and set limits on what topics it is willing to discuss? As I was listening to some of the views expressed, there were a couple of themes that I picked up on.

One thing I noticed was when we talk about this issue within the Chinese framework, the Uyghur people, along with many other nationalities, are typically referred to as “ethnic minorities.” I often think about whether or not these groups perceive of themselves in those terms. To the best of my knowledge, even in Chinese, the term “ethnic minorities” or “*shaoshu minzu*,” is a relatively new invention. The 1920s is the earliest reference that I know of to the term. And so, I wonder if there aren’t historical and political reasons that might cause us to reflect critically on the use of that terminology.

In addition, it was also mentioned that getting the Chinese to talk about these issues at all is quite difficult. It is regarded as a non-starter. And I understand that frustration and difficulty. But I also wonder, are we giving up too much by allowing the Chinese authorities to unilaterally set the terms of what is and is not a proper subject for dialogue? Does our use of PRC Government terminology reinforce their claim that Uyghurs are an ethnic minority within China, that Xinjiang is completely a domestic issue, and therefore, we have no right to get involved?

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. There is a question in there. I know there is.

Mr. REID. The question is: should we allow the PRC Government to set the terms of what they are willing to talk about? And should we be more careful about adopting various terms that they use to describe the situation—terms that may not be universally embraced by those who are being described by such terms?

Ms. KAUP. Good questions. You have clearly been very well trained. [Laughter.]

I actually hope that is not the message you took from my comments, though. I am not at all suggesting that we should let the Chinese Government set the parameters of our discussion with them. I am saying that it is dangerous within China to raise Uyghur issues. There are just certain topics that can be discussed safely and others that cannot. One can raise certain issues about minorities. One can talk about economic development strategies for minorities. One can talk about minority languages within certain frameworks. It is just not wise, however, within China to be publicly raising questions about Uyghur rights at this moment. But I am not at all suggesting that we should let the Chinese Government tell those of us outside of China what topics are taboo to raise, discuss, or promote.

You also asked about the use of the term “*minzu*” and whether we should use the Communist Party’s classification system of labeling minorities. The term “*minzu*” has been used for at least 100 years, and the concept has been adopted by most *minzu* themselves. I actually wrote a book called “Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China,” that looks exactly at this question of how many minorities have adopted and utilized the state’s classification categories to promote their own interests.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Yes, Amy, please.

Ms. REGER. I just wanted to make a short comment, which is that “*minzu*” has been used, as Kate noted, for a long time to describe so-called ethnic minorities, among them Uyghurs. But in Chinese, it has a rather ambiguous meaning, which could mean ethnic minorities or ethnic nationalities. And what we have been seeing in recent years is that they are sticking with—the Chinese Government is sticking with the use of the word “*minzu*” in Chinese, but in English, they are being very sensitive to using “nationality” instead of “ethnic minority.” So, for instance, the Central Minority Nationality University in Beijing—I hope I got that right—they just recently changed the name to Central *Minzu* University. It seems like they are trying to ward off any sort of perception that the people, you know, the students attending the school or the nationalities being learned about at that school are, in fact, a unique nationality as opposed to a minority in the context of the greater PRC. And I think it is important for us to—it is important for any nation or any people to be able to define themselves according to their own definition.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. A last remark.

Mr. TURKEL. Thank you. This is not completely related to what we have been talking about this morning but I would like to make something really clear here on the name of the Uyghurs. The Uyghurs have only one name: Uyghurs. No adjective, no adverb is needed. It is not Chinese Muslims, not Muslim Uyghurs. We have been hearing or reading a bunch of different descriptions of the

Uyghurs. But I believe they are all unnecessary. Uyghurs are Uyghurs. Again, no adverbs or adjectives are required. And as all of you know, there is another separate Muslim group called Chinese Muslims in China. Sometimes they are also called Hui Muslims. Uyghurs do not represent them or the other Muslim groups in China. We are just Uyghurs. I want to make that very clear, especially to the people from the press.

Ms. OLDHAM-MOORE. Okay. Thank you so much. I want to thank all the panelists for coming today and offering us unique perspectives and information on this issue. Amy Reger, Nury Turkel, thank you for your overview of recent developments; Katherine Kaup and Louisa Greve, thank you for providing a broader context, and also for some excellent recommendations on moving forward.

Have a great day.

[Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the roundtable was concluded.]

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENT

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMY REGER

FEBRUARY 13, 2008

During this week's Universal Periodic Review of China at the UN, a member of the Chinese delegation asserted that there is no ethnic conflict in the People's Republic of China. Chinese ambassador Li Baodong emphasized what he called "preferential policies" for Uyghurs and other minority nationalities, citing lower score requirements for university entrance exams. According to the Chinese delegation, the only discontent that exists among Uyghurs is sown by hostile foreign forces aiming to split China—and this discontent does not represent the happy majority.

Unfortunately, the reality for Uyghurs in the PRC is much different than the Chinese delegation's rhetoric would have us believe. It is hard to reconcile these remarks with security clampdowns that have been ongoing in East Turkestan (also known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) in the past year, and a human rights situation for Uyghurs that is more severe than it has been in many years. The year 2008 was one of disappointment for those who hoped that the Olympics might expand freedoms for Uyghurs. Underlining the PRC's massive campaign against Uyghurs in 2008 was a rise in reported arrests for terrorism, extremism and other state security charges in East Turkestan. According to an official Chinese newspaper report, nearly 1,300 people were arrested in East Turkestan on state security crimes in 2008, marking a steep increase over previous years. The 2008 figures marked a very sharp increase over 2007, which saw only 742 people arrested on state security crimes throughout the entire PRC. Under Chinese law, individuals can be prosecuted for "endangering state security" if they are believed to have engaged in subversion, "splittism," and "illegally providing state secrets to overseas entities," all charges that are of a highly subjective nature in the PRC.

The PRC government has undertaken a fierce campaign of repression in East Turkestan since the Olympic Games period, when a series of violent attacks took place in and around the cities of Kashgar and Kucha. Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan announced a "life or death struggle" in East Turkestan on August 14, as well as a hardening of measures designed to manage Uyghur issues.

One of these measures, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, was the deployment of around 200,000 public security officers and armed police to East Turkestan to "prevent terrorist attacks" in the post-Olympic period. News reports have indicated the implementation of intensified ideological campaigns throughout the region in subsequent months.

While PRC authorities claim the security measures are aimed at punishing individuals involved in the violent attacks that took place during the Olympics period, the scope of the crackdown represents a broad, far-reaching campaign of intimidation and fear aimed at the Uyghur community.

Security measures carried out in 2008 targeted large numbers of Uyghur civilians, including many not suspected of involvement in any crime, in contravention of both Chinese law and international law. Particularly in the period leading up to and during the Olympics, UHRP noted a widespread clampdown among Uyghurs and a corresponding rise in arrests and detentions. These included the arrests of more than 1,000 individuals in security sweeps in the cities of Kashgar and Kucha, and the arrest of 160 Uyghur children, aged 8 to 14 years old, for participating in "illegal religious activities." Authorities also used the tactic of detaining family members and associates of alleged attackers in an attempt to bring in suspects.

Emerging evidence has undermined the basis for the PRC's government's repression in East Turkestan. Chinese Government officials accused a number of Uyghurs of conducting the attacks in the Kashgar and Kucha areas, adding that the suspects had received substantial assistance from international terror groups. However, no evidence has ever been produced to support the allegations of international assistance in the attacks.

A September 29 New York Times article cast doubt on Chinese Government claims about the deadliest of the attacks, in which 16 people reportedly died in Kashgar. Independent photographs suggest that events did not occur as the Chinese Government claims. The photographs show men in police uniforms carrying out the attack against other policemen, casting doubt on Chinese Government claims that a vegetable seller and a taxi driver were responsible.

In the first half of 2008, the PRC government issued a series of specific Olympics-related terrorism claims, without providing evidence to support its accusations. These included an alleged plot by a young Uyghur woman to blow up or crash an airplane on its way to Beijing on March 7, and the arrest of some 45 people in April on suspicion of planning to kidnap athletes and carry out suicide bomb attacks to sabotage the Olympics.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, PRC authorities have used the “war on terror” as a pretext for cracking down on religious and political dissent in the region. Tens of thousands of Uyghurs are believed to have been detained in the years since 2001, and hundreds are believed to have been executed. Individuals caught up in this campaign include Tohti Tunyaz, a Ph.D scholar who was released this week from prison after serving an 11-year sentence for conducting historical research in East Turkestan deemed subversive by government officials, and Nurmemet Yasin, a young Uyghur poet and intellectual who was imprisoned for writing an allegorical story that was viewed as separatist.

Uyghurs in East Turkestan suffer a broad scope of abuses to their civil, political, economic and social rights, including the fierce suppression of their religion, the use of the legal system as a tool of repression against Uyghurs who voice discontent with the government; PRC government support of the influx of huge numbers of Han Chinese economic migrants into East Turkestan; the forced transfer of young Uyghur women to work in poor conditions in eastern China; discrimination in hiring practices; unequal access healthcare services; and the elimination of Uyghur language schools under the current “bilingual education” policy.

“Bilingual” education in East Turkestan has evolved in an increasingly repressive political environment, as one aspect of a government-driven project to assimilate Uyghurs by attacking and diluting their culture. It was conceived around the time of the founding of the post-Soviet Central Asian states in 1991, a turning point in the PRC’s view of East Turkestan, when the government began to become obsessed with “security” and “stability” in the region. Drives to expand “bilingual education” have paralleled heightened campaigns to promote security and battle separatism. For instance, in 2004, the year in which a particularly harsh “strike hard, extreme pressure” campaign aimed at repressing “the three evils” of “separatism, extremism, and terrorism” resulted in the arrest of hundreds of Uyghurs, the rate at which “bilingual” education was eliminating Uyghur from East Turkestan’s schools increased dramatically.

A recent Xinhua news article described the policy as aiming “to encourage Xinjiang native teachers to teach both languages as a way to safeguard culture and promote the national standard.” According to Chinese Government propaganda, “bilingual education” is being put into place throughout East Turkestan to improve educational and employment opportunities for Uyghur children. One of the major problems with this type of justification is that “bilingual education” is not “bilingual” at all, but rather monolingual. Another situation that challenges the Chinese Government’s official assertions regarding its motivations of providing a truly bilingual education is the removal of Uyghur children from their cultural environment and their placement into Chinese-language “Xinjiang classes” located in 12 inland Chinese cities. This program has not been well-received among Uyghurs in East Turkestan, who view “Xinjiang classes” as an attempt to Sinify young Uyghurs, while there exists no parallel effort to educate young Han Chinese students in the Uyghur language and culture. A third challenge to the official portrayal of the “bilingual education” program lies in the relative lack of access to English-language instruction for Uyghur students at the high school and university level. Uyghur high school students who study at “minkaomin” schools (schools in which they receive Uyghur-language instruction) are not given any English-language instruction, while English-language instruction is widespread at “minkaohan” schools (schools in which courses are all taught in Chinese). Uyghur university students are required to study Chinese as their second language, and not English.

The “bilingual education” policy has been pursued for the past decade, but with increasing intensity since 2002. Past policies were more egalitarian and allowed Uyghur parents more of a choice in their children’s languages of instruction. Over the past seven years, government efforts at eliminating Uyghur language schools have accelerated dramatically, as compulsory Chinese language education has been expanded at every educational level and every township in East Turkestan. The ultimate goal of “bilingual” education appears to be to replace Uyghur language instruction with Chinese language instruction in all areas of East Turkestan, and to phase out the use of spoken Uyghur among the young Uyghur population.

Since 2002, with the exception of Uyghur languages and literature, classes at Xinjiang University have been taught solely in Chinese, virtually removing Uyghur as a language of instruction at the region's most prestigious university. Local governments have committed to eliminating Uyghur language instruction, even in areas with large majority Uyghur populations. "Bilingual education" was implemented in high schools, middle schools and elementary schools, and in 2005, the "bilingual" education push was expanded into East Turkestan's preschools.

At least one official newspaper reported that the number of students in "bilingual education classes" in East Turkestan grew from 5,533 students in 1995 to 294,000 in 2007, and the number of schools offering "bilingual classes" grew from 220 in 1995 to 8,788 in 2007. Official sources reported recently that within the next five years, the state would provide free training to 11,264 bilingual pre-school teachers, and within the next six years, the XUAR would recruit around 16,000 teachers to supplement the current pool of bilingual primary school teachers. Xinhua reported that since 2003, China has invested 130 million yuan, or 19 million U.S. dollars, to train bilingual teachers for elementary and high schools. Xinhua also reported that there were 18,000 "bilingual teachers", 5,000 bilingual classes and 150,000 bilingual pupils in East Turkestan in 2008.

The bilingual teachers who are set to be trained in the next several years will almost certainly be drawn from the Han Chinese population, and many Uyghur teachers who cannot pass stringent language tests may be expected to lose their jobs. Many Uyghur teachers throughout East Turkestan have already been fired from their jobs, and many others have been forced to completely stop teaching their students in Uyghur and use only Chinese, even if all of the students are Uyghurs.

Remarks by Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan at the National Party Congress in March 2008 indicate that provincial authorities, with the support of the central government, plan to invest 3.7 billion yuan in order to implement "bilingual education" programs in 85% of the region's kindergartens in the next three to five years.

As the Han population has increased, Han individuals have also received a greater share of the economic benefits from East Turkestan's growth, including economic and employment opportunities not available to Uyghurs. While the Chinese Government asserts that "bilingual education" will provide ethnic Uyghurs with the Mandarin language skills necessary to succeed in China's competitive job market, many Uyghur graduates who are fluent in Mandarin Chinese report facing employment challenges due to rampant ethnic discrimination among employers. As one former Uyghur teacher recalled, when he traveled with his Chinese-speaking Uyghur students to job fairs, they observed signs flatly stating 'we don't want minority people'.

The program of the "Xinjiang classes" mentioned above was established in inland Chinese cities in 1997. "Xinjiang classes" remove top minority students in East Turkestan from their cultural environment and enroll them in classes with Chinese language instruction in high schools in large inland Chinese cities. Parents of such students report being pressured into sending their children.

Official media have quoted Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan as saying that the chief goal of "Xinjiang classes" is "political thought training", not academic preparation, and other government officials have described the program as a way to "deepen national feelings" and "strengthen correct political attitudes" as part of a "long term important strategic policy decision... to protect the unity of the motherland and safeguard the nation's long and peaceful order".

In some of these schools speaking Uyghur is prohibited, even in student dormitories, where pupils are watched by an on-site monitor. Children from one "Xinjiang class" in Qingdao were forbidden to communicate in Uyghur, even when visited by an officially approved ethnic Uyghur journalist. By 2006, "Xinjiang classes" had been expanded from 12 to 26 Chinese cities and had a total enrollment of over ten thousand students.

By forcing Uyghur children to study in a language other than their mother tongue, the PRC government is in clear violation of its own laws and agreements, including Article 4 of the PRC's Constitution, Compulsory Education Law and Ethnic Regional Autonomy Law. The PRC is also a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which guarantee minorities protection of their language rights. In addition, the PRC's "bilingual education" policy, as it is being implemented, serves to increase tensions between Han Chinese and Uyghurs in East Turkestan.

The PRC should end its current policy of eliminating Uyghur language education from East Turkestan and, at a minimum, return to the policy of allowing for both Uyghur and Chinese language education systems. "Bilingual education" will work only if authorities support schools in which both Uyghur and Chinese are recognized as important regional languages and serious academic classes are offered in both

languages. Government support of the Uyghur language would both improve ethnic relations and contribute to economic growth in East Turkestan. Many observers have noted that language issues play a large role in the ethnic tensions of the region. A commitment to Uyghur language on the part of the government would ultimately contribute to the goal of stability by easing an area of serious Uyghur discontent.

