

Introduction

On July 5, 2009, Urumqi, the capital of the province of Xinjiang, China, exploded into violent protests, culminating in the death of almost 200 people and constituting the worst violence in the region for decades. The violence garnered much international news coverage and brought the Uighurs, a relatively less well-known Chinese ethnic minority, onto the world stage. The protests have sparked endless debate between Chinese and Western news sources and have brought in to question China's rightful sovereignty over the region. On an international level, the Chinese government has had to answer unprecedented questions about Xinjiang and defend its claim to the region. China's relationship with Xinjiang is not only relevant in the context of China's nationhood, but also of the current trend of nationalism in China. In particular, the rise of nationalism among Han Chinese has had an arguably sizable effect on Han Chinese relations with minorities in China. In China, nationalism tends to be associated with the predominant ethnic group, the Han Chinese, and an intense closeness of Chinese people to the land, history, and culture of China. Thus, for Chinese nationalists, the Uighur separatist movement appears as a direct threat to the unity of China. As such, government and popular response to the riots provide insight into the current state of Chinese nationalism. The overarching goal of this thesis is to analyze Chinese nationalism as reflected through Uighur-Han relations since 1990. I plan to do this by looking at government and societal interactions between Han Chinese and Uighurs in Xinjiang.

Despite many Chinese news reports that the region is, for the most part, peaceful and harmonious, there have been a series of protests over the past eight years, which culminated in

the summer 2009 riots in Xinjiang. My thesis will analyze the causes of the July riots and how media representation of the riots has both reflected and reinforced Chinese nationalism. In particular, I will analyze the manner by which the Chinese government has “extremified” Uighurs in Xinjiang, and even more so Uighurs living abroad, in order to justify its hard-line policies and quell any semblance of separatist movements. In addition, I argue that state-run media and the government have externalized ethnic problems in hopes of uniting Chinese people behind a common enemy.

Much of my research focuses on post-2001 events and in particular on the time following the riots in Urumqi in the summer of 2009. State-run news in China, as well as analysis of government policy toward Uighurs on a national and local level over the past ten years regarding the Uighurs also provide a crucial aspect to the study of Han-Uighur relations, as does China’s involvement in international organizations like the Shanghai Cooperative group. An analysis of the agenda the government has pushed in the Shanghai Cooperative group, for example, gives insights into the government’s means of controlling Xinjiang’s borders and preventing Uighurs from colluding with groups in the surrounding countries.

In reference to the July 5 riots in Xinjiang, I analyze news from state-run media, in order to gain a Han Chinese perspective on each aspect of the riots. State-run media provides insight into the information that Han Chinese garner about the riots and about the state of ethnic affairs in China. In addition, the government’s view of an ideal state of affairs among ethnic groups in China can be discovered. International press and Chinese press have reported opposing and contradictory articles on unrest in Xinjiang, as well as on the history of the region.

By analyzing Chinese sources and stacking them against both Uighur personal accounts and international news sources, the Chinese government's aims can be uncovered, as can any Chinese or international bias regarding the plight of the Uighurs.

The three body chapters of this thesis address national and regional government policies in Xinjiang, newspaper coverage of the 2009 Urumqi riots, and newspaper coverage of Rebiya Kadeer. The first chapter relies heavily on secondary sources and government White Papers concerning recent policies toward Xinjiang, and more particularly toward Uighurs, primarily since 2001. Policies addressed extend to paramilitary organizational power, educational policies, and religious policies.

The second chapter analyzes articles in state-run media in the wake of the riots in Urumqi, in an effort to show an undercurrent of Han nationalism as seen through the eyes of the media. The rhetoric of news accounts describing the aftermath of the riots shows a clear tendency toward victimizing the Han Chinese, as well as other ethnic groups in Xinjiang, against predatory terrorist and separatist groups, emphatically described as headquartered outside of China. In addition to bias shown in state-run media implicitly promoting and reflecting Han Nationalism, I also analyze individually led movements showing the strength of current Han nationalism.

The third chapter hones in on Rebiya Kadeer, the reputed mastermind of the riots, and analyzes Chinese state-run media's condemnation of Kadeer. Kadeer began being blamed for the riots in just two days following the July 5 protests. Chinese media has dealt with her severely, stating that she sought to destroy the unity that Xinjiang had been enjoying with

China. Media coverage of Kadeer shows clearly that, in having Kadeer as a scapegoat, the government and Chinese people could externalize the ultimate cause and unite against Kadeer as a clearly defined source of blame. As a scapegoat, Kadeer simplifies the riots, from a complex culmination of long-established ethnic tension, to the separatist workings of a malevolent terrorist.

Background of Xinjiang

Uighurs are a relatively isolated Muslim ethnic minority centered in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, the largest such region in China.¹ Their language, culture, and ethnicity are historically more closely related to Turkic peoples than to ethnic Chinese. As a crucial part of the ancient Silk Road, Xinjiang has been a historically vital piece of territory, and has been subject to much disputes of sovereignty. Despite the regions clear historical status as a disputed territory with periods of self-governance and governance by various dynasties and empires, Chinese government policy states that Xinjiang has been an “inseparable part of China” since the Han Dynasty, from 206 BC to 220 AD.²

Recent territorial disputes are most relevant to this thesis, most notably since the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, from which time Xinjiang has experienced periods of independent rule. The most recent of these periods can be divided into two stages, the first beginning in 1933 and lasting only a year before the Chinese Nationalist government reabsorbed Xinjiang. The second phase lasted from 1944 to 1949, when the PRC declared Xinjiang a part of China

¹ Preeti Bhattacharji, "Uighurs and China's Xinjiang Region." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 6 July 2009. Web. 9 Sept. 2009. <http://http://www.cfr.org/publication/16870/Uighurs_and_chinas_xinjiang_region.html#p5>.

² "History and Development of Xinjiang," The Information office of the State Council, The Government of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China. www.xinjinag.gov.cn.

once again. In a government White Paper that outlined the brief periods of independence in Xinjiang that existed in the 1930s and 1940s, the government holds that members of the movement were “creating many disturbances and even wantonly slaughtering innocent people in their attempt to split the motherland and set up an illegal regime.”³ This language, using terms like “motherland,” bolsters the notion that Han Chinese have a very defined sense of a unified nationhood. Therefore, since Xinjiang has historically shared ties with China, when western regions were ungoverned for periods during China’s civil war, Han Chinese still do not see this as periods of independence. Rather, they view the independence attempts as further attacks on the peace and unity between Xinjiang and the rest of China. The article further states that, “Since the founding of the PRC, Xinjiang has entered a new stage, enjoying ethnic unity and social stability.”⁴ In the 1940s the CCP proposed a system of regional autonomy for certain ethnic groups in China, including the Uighurs, by granting them sovereignty over their own affairs. This policy came to fruition in October 1955, with the establishment of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, or XUAR. The government also divided the region into 13 “subautonomies,” each belonging to a separate *minzu*, or ethnic group.

Despite the establishment of autonomous regions and the historic connection between Uighurs and Xinjiang, China lacks policies related to “indigenous” peoples. As such, minorities are recognized and allowed autonomous administration, but there is no policy designating indigenous people or rights.⁵ This policy resonates poorly with the Uighurs, who have strong

³ “East Turkistan forces seriously disrupt Xinjiang’s Development, progress: white paper.” CCTV. 21 September 2009. <http://english.cctv.com/20090921/104623.shtml>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dru Gladney. “Chinese Program of Development and Control, 1978-2001,” *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*. (New York: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2004) 102.

cultural and historical ties with Xinjiang, and affects the interaction and understanding between Han Chinese and Uighurs. Whereas many Uighurs feel that Han Chinese are encroaching on their culture and homeland, from the perspective of Chinese history, “Recent Han migrants to Xinjiang are simply filling in a sparsely populated realm of China, not displacing ancient inhabitants or overwhelming an indigenous culture—much like the ‘empty lands’ thesis of American settlers in the West.”⁶

From the perspective of the Chinese government, establishing the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region allowed the government to limit the actual autonomy of the Uighurs and prevent the Uighur majority in Xinjiang from uniting against the Han Chinese.⁷ As such, during both the Great Leap Forward, 1958- 1961, and the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, Uighur culture was attacked and state policy focused on assimilating Uighurs into the dominant Han Chinese culture.⁸

In addition to assimilation policies and in part to quell further independence movements, the government provided incentives for Han migration into Xinjiang after the establishment of XUAR, as well as economic development policies, as a method of integrating Xinjiang with the rest of China. As a result of these policies, Han Chinese migration into Xinjiang has been growing rapidly since the 1940s. The ethnic makeup of Xinjiang has morphed from just 5% Han in the 1940s to approximately 40% today. The influx of Han Chinese has not been met with peace from all sides. Uighur groups, as well as members of the twelve other minorities in

⁶ Starr, Fuller. 27.

⁷, Gardner Bovingdon. “Heteronomy and Its Discontents.” *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers*. (Seattle: University of Washington, 2004)117-118.

⁸ Ibid, 124.

Xinjiang, have expressed resentment at the resulting strain on resources and the perception of cultural and economic colonialism. Many Uighurs feel that their homeland is being occupied; their distaste for Han émigrés is further heightened by the feeling that Han Chinese receive the best jobs and the highest salaries in the region.⁹

Though Xinjiang has been an autonomous region since 1955, guaranteeing a limited level of self-governance, in the 1990s the Chinese government began dramatically increasing its presence in Xinjiang, in order to combat separatism and terrorism and establish Xinjiang as an irrefutable part of China. Government-reported separatist movements began to rise in the early 1990s, after the fall of the USSR. Newly independent nations across Xinjiang's borders arose in Central Asia with ethnicities and cultures very similar to those of the Uighurs arose. This caused among some Uighurs a desire for genuine autonomy and independence from China. Between 1990 and 2001, separatists in Xinjiang were accused of orchestrating 200 terrorist attacks in an effort to gain freedom from China. The largest of these attacks was in 1997 and caused the death of up to 100 people.¹⁰

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks took place in New York and the Bush administration's "War on Terror" began, hard-line policies against potential terrorist threats have become far more acceptable across the globe. The Chinese government, in particular, has used the cover of the "War on Terror" to suppress perceived threats to China's stability. The East Turkestan Islamic Movement, or ETIM, was placed on terrorist lists in the United States in

⁹ Bhattacharji

¹⁰ Cheng

2002,¹¹ after which Chinese media and government reports repeatedly used the group's international classification as a terrorist group to justify the crackdown on Uighurs in Xinjiang.¹²

On July 5, 2009, the aforementioned riots broke out between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang and lasted several days in Xinjiang's capital city of Urumqi. The riots were the worst in years and involved violence perpetrated by both Uighurs and Han Chinese. The catalyst, according to most sources, was the murder of two Uighurs in response to the accused rape of a Han Chinese woman in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong. However, international news has reported that the violence springs from a deeper issue of ethnic tension between Uighurs and Han Chinese. Uighurs in Xinjiang began protesting the murders in Guangdong and lashed out against Han Chinese in Xinjiang through both violent and nonviolent protests. The violence culminated in the death of at least 197 people and over 1,600 injuries, most of whom were Han Chinese.¹³ The Chinese government claims that the violence was premeditated through international channels and was not related to the murders in Guangdong.¹⁴ The government's primary scapegoat for blame in orchestrating the riots has been Rebiya Kadeer, chairwoman of the World Uighur Congress.

Rise of Han Nationalism and its Effects on Ethnic Relations

In discussing the origins of contemporary Han Nationalism, Henrietta Harrison notes that reform and opening up policies in the 1980s led to a "crisis of cultural identity."¹⁵ In part as a backlash to the feverish extremism of the Cultural Revolution, and in part to fill the spiritual

¹¹ Bhattacharji

¹² *History and Development of Xinjiang* <http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/10018/10008/00015/2005/22699.htm>

¹³ Michael Wines. "More than 200 to be Tried in China for Ethnic Rioting." *New York Times* 23 Aug. 2009.

¹⁴ "Lying Opposes Second Strike of Murder Victims" *People's Daily*. 24 August 2009.

¹⁵ Harrison, 242.

vacuum left when true communist policies were, for all practical purposes, left behind in favor of market economies and capitalism, new ideas and ways of thinking became popular throughout China. Among these, religion, democracy, and nationalism became increasingly popular sentiments. The government quickly began to promote nationalism, or “patriotism,” as a way to increase its own legitimacy. This promotion was primarily streamed through dramatized television programs, government statements in newspapers, and the national media.¹⁶ Anniversaries of the Japanese defeat in World War II and memories of the Nanjing massacre, for instance, were used to further intensify Chinese unity and nationalism.¹⁷ This growing sense of nationalism, especially strong among Chinese youth, has intensified the efforts to suppress Uighur identity and make Xinjiang and other regions, like Tibet, more cohesive parts of China.

The cleft between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities can also be seen in Tibet, a province which has also experienced a long, contentious, and much publicized struggle for both independence from China and for expanded autonomy within China. In March of 2008, protests were staged in Lhasa, creating a decisive parallel to the riots in the following year in Urumqi. Hundreds of monks protested through Lhasa and other cities in Tibet and set cars and buildings on fire in a wave of rioting. Hundreds of Tibetans were quickly arrested, detained, and denied food for days, during which Tibet entered a stage of military lockdown. State-run media blamed the riots on the Dalai Lama and sought to externalize the roots of the riots as much as possible in an attempt to restore unity and stability in Tibet, just as the government did in blaming

¹⁶ Ibid. 252

¹⁷ Ibid 253

Kadeer in the aftermath of the 7.5 riots in Xinjiang. In the wake of the Tibet riots, intensive “patriotic education” was implemented for religious figures; this re-education campaign has also been implemented throughout Xinjiang.¹⁸ The parallels between Tibet and Xinjiang are used by Chinese government to both justify and rationalize their actions in Xinjiang, and to further externalize the roots of ethnic tension. Just as the Dalai Lama is seen as the ultimate perpetrator for protests in Tibet, Rebiya Kadeer, also living outside China, is seen as the scapegoat for Xinjiang’s problems.

¹⁸ Warren Smith, “Chronology of Revolt,” *Tibet’s Last Stand?*, (Lanham, MY: Roman and Littlefield, 2010) 11-31.

Chapter I

Chinese Nationalism as Reflected through Government Policy in Xinjiang

In the immediate aftermath of the 1911 Revolution and during the initial stages of the Republic of China, the question of China's new flag brought the issue of nationalism to the fore. In order to foster a feeling of unity among the people of the so-called "five-nation republic," consisting of Han, Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, and Muslim people, the flag finally chosen bore five colors, each representing a republic, or minority group in China, as well as the Confucian five virtuous relationships. However, when folded, the flag's red stripe, representing Han Chinese, was meticulously arranged on top, so as to be the only part of the flag showing. The ritual of the flag folding shows that, though China has long been a multi-ethnic society, the history of Han nationalism and implicitly pro-Han Chinese government policies is equally long and equally rife with ethnic tension.¹⁹

This chapter will analyze national and provincial government policies toward Uighurs and toward Xinjiang from the late 1990s onward, after the fall of the USSR and subsequent rise of separatism, and on into the era of the "War on Terror," two events which have had major influences on the rise of Uighur nationalism and have corresponded with the rise of Han nationalism since the late 1980s. In recent years, the government has vastly increased its presence in Xinjiang since the Xinjiang Autonomous Region was first established in 1955. This broadening of power and bureaucracy was largely accomplished through Han migration into the region, but also consisted of economic, education, and infrastructure policies for the native Uighur. These economic policies have succeeded in raising per capita income in Xinjiang to

¹⁹ Henrietta Harrison, "Creation of Modern Nationalism," *China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). 144

twelfth among China's thirty-one provinces, making it the wealthiest per-capita non-coastal province.²⁰ However, the policies have also met with considerable animosity among Uighurs, who feel that their culture and land are being overwhelmed by the influx of Han Chinese culture and people. Language, religion, history, and culture all separate the Uighurs from the Han Chinese in Xinjiang. Perhaps most prominent is the language barrier, which in many cases segregates the two ethnic groups, and inhibits mutual understanding.

Governing Bodies and Cultural Restrictions in Participation

"The Xinjiang Problem" describes Mao's reasoning for establishing the Xinjiang Autonomous Region as,

The Communist Party's transitory recognition of local identities that would eventually become obsolete under socialism, and of independent cultural identities that would soon be assimilated in an all but a folkloric sense. The creation of autonomous regions was therefore merely a tactic, as the idea of national autonomy would itself ultimately become a meaningless political concept under Communism."²¹

Thus, Mao established the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region with the understanding that autonomy was a stepping stone toward a cohesive, united China, in which Uighurs would ascribe to the same cultural patterns as Han Chinese. After Mao's death, policies endorsing assimilation with Han Chinese were moderated, and Uighurs were allowed more cultural and religious autonomy. The 1989 Tiananmen riots were the definitive turning point, and hard-line policies, condemning freedoms of press and speech in favor of public order, were enacted.²²

²⁰ Graham Fuller, Frederick Starr "The Xinjiang Problem," (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute) 4.

²¹ Ibid, 6.

²² Justin Rudelson, William Jankowiak, "Acculturation and Resistance: Xinjiang Identities in Flux," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute: New York, 2004) 307.

The State Ethnic Affairs Commission is the government entity responsible for the majority of the economic incentives and for the crackdowns on religious activity in Xinjiang, as well as for most government policies toward Uighurs and, more generally, toward the federal governance of the five autonomous regions in China.²³ Most particularly, the voice of Xinjiang's government for the past fifteen years has been Wang Lequan, a member of the Chinese Politburo and widely considered a hardliner on ethnic policy, by Western media. Whereas most such leadership posts have a strict term limit of ten years, Wang Lequan has been the Regional Secretary of Xinjiang for fifteen years. The *New York Times* describes Wang Lequan as,

Iron fist and velvet glove, he has suppressed Islam, welcomed industry, marginalized the Uighur language, built roads and rail links to the outside world, and spied on, arrested and jailed countless minority citizens in the name of stopping terrorism and subsuming Uighurs into a greater China." His rather telling nickname is 'the Stability Secretary.'

His rather telling nickname is the "Stability Secretary." In the wake of the Uighur riots in 2009, the origins of his nickname became evident, when Wang Lequan stated that citizens must "point the spear toward hostile forces at home and abroad," rather than blaming those physically close to them and thus prolonging ethnic tension. This statement was part of a larger effort to externalize ethnic tension in order to mobilize and unite people in Xinjiang against foreign evils. Wang Lequan's success in Xinjiang has largely been due to his method of "combining relentless economic development with punishing social policies to remake Turkic Xinjiang in Han China's image."²⁴

²³ Dru Gladney, "Chinese Program of Development and Control, 1978-2001," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucases Institute: New York, 2004). 104

²⁴Michael Wines, "A Strongman is China's Rock in Ethnic Strife," *New York Times*, 10 July 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/11/world/asia/11xinjiang.html?pagewanted=2&_r=1, 22 March 2010.

Within the regional government of Xinjiang, there are also certain cultural and religious restrictions on Uighur participation. Although the Chinese constitution allows for religious freedom, it also states that members of the CCP must ascribe to Marxist-Leninism, and as such should be atheist, thus largely negating practice of Islam among members of the CCP and restricting the numbers of Uighurs willing to join the CCP, since most Uighurs practice Islam.²⁵ Uighurs must choose between adhering to their religious beliefs or joining the CCP. Premier Li Peng further solidified this notion in 1992 when he stated that, “As for CCP members, no matter what their nationality all should support materialism and atheism.”²⁶

In addition to restricting Uighur cultural practices, the government wields control over Xinjiang’s resources. Although an autonomous region, Xinjiang’s economy is still predominantly controlled by the central government. More than 80 percent of Xinjiang’s industrial assets are comprised of state petroleum companies, the military and state-run construction companies. Many international news sources claim through first-hand accounts that Han Chinese are generally preferred for the government positions, giving them an upper hand in the Uighur homeland and causing tension between the two groups.²⁷

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, or XPCC, has also played a considerable role in governing and protecting the borders of Xinjiang. The corps was established in 1954 by the CCP, and was composed largely of veteran PLA soldiers.²⁸ The XPCC now operates as a

²⁵ Colin Mackerras, “Han-Muslim and Intra-Muslim Social Relations in Northwestern China,” *Nationalism and Ethnoregional Identities in China*, Ed. William Safran, (Portland, 1998) 29.

²⁶ Ibid.29-30

²⁷ Ibid, 101.

²⁸ Stanley Toops, “The Demography of Xinjiang,” *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucases Institute: New York, 2004),246

“hybrid military-civilian organization”²⁹ A white paper on the XPCC stated that the mission of the corps was to “carry out both production and militia duties, and cultivate and guard border areas.” The corps is comprised of 2,453,600 people, and is dually governed by the central and provincial governments of China and Xinjiang. By 2001, the XPCC constituted 13.2% of the region’s total GDP. The white paper states that over 250,000 members of the corps are Muslim, and that the “XPCC handles religious affairs in accordance with the law, and has become a large, united, multi-ethnic family.”³⁰ However, this number constitutes only 10% of the Corps population, while the Uighurs, over 60% Muslim, still comprise the majority of Xinjiang’s population as a whole.³¹

A government White Paper on the XPCC states that,

It has set up in frontier areas a ‘four in one’ system of joint defense that links the PLA, the armed police, the Bing Tuan and ordinary people, playing an irreplaceable special role in the past five decades in smashing and resisting internal and external separatists’ attempts at sabotage and infiltration and in maintaining the stability and safety of the borders of the motherland.³²

This statement affirms that the XPCC has played a sizable role in suppressing Uighur rights and waving the flag of Chinese nationalism. In “History and Development of Xinjiang,” the Chinese government states that the XPCC is meant to promote economic development, work toward unity among ethnic groups, defending borders, maintaining stability in society, and “shoring up

²⁹ Donald McMillen “Xinjiang and the Production and Construction Corps: A Han Organization in a Non-Han Region,” *The Australia Journal of Chinese Affairs* No. 6, No. 6 (Jul., 1981) 65.

³⁰ “Role of Xinjiang Production, Construction Corps important: White Paper, *Xinhua News*, 26 May 2003.

³¹ http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/vol3num1/2_xinjiang.php

³² Mark O’Neill, “The Conqueror of China’s Wild West,” *Asia Sentinel*. 13 April 2008, http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1148&Itemid=31, 23 February 2010.

the unification of the motherland.”³³ As can be seen by the sheer size of the corps, its influence in Xinjiang is vast, and is composed of primarily Han Chinese workers. The power of the paramilitary-quasi governmental organization implicitly shows the success with which the paramilitary-quasi governmental organization has infiltrated Xinjiang and overtaken the means of production, oversight of infrastructure, and security within the region.

While the XPCC functions to protect stability within Xinjiang’s borders, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has played a serious role in countering separatist attempts on an international level. Established in 2001 among Central Asian republics, Russia, and China, the organization allows China to combat the “three evils” of separatism, extremism, and terrorism beyond the scope of the national government. In 2002, the group created its own Anti-Terrorism Center and agreed on China’s ability to intervene militarily in bordering countries, if deemed necessary. This organization’s goals are largely an effort to crack down on terrorism and give China increased control over its borders, but it is also in part an attempt to curb U.S. influence in East Asia and Central Asia, as they have risen since the war in Afghanistan.³⁴ Entities such as the XPCC and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization show clearly that government policies toward Xinjiang on a national, international, and regional level have all influenced the relationship between Han Chinese and Uighurs in Xinjiang.

In a statement to the United States Congress, Starr stated that “Islamic extremism does exist in Xinjiang and the government of China would be irresponsible if it were to ignore it...But Beijing’s uncompromising response is rendered counterproductive when it coincides with such

³³Shum Desai, “A Study of Infrastructure in Xinjiang,” 2005, http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/SRR/Volume12/desai.html#_edn13, 15 February 2010.

³⁴ Chien-Peng Chung, “The Defense of Xinjiang,” *China* Ed. 11, (Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill, 2006) 193.

harsh measures against the mainstream population.” Starr goes on to note that the “Strike Hard” campaign successfully eradicated separatist groups from Xinjiang a decade ago, which makes the fierce continuation of the campaign moot.³⁵ It seems that the rise of Chinese nationalism coincided with the backlash against greater cultural and religious freedoms in Xinjiang, and the ensuing crackdown through strict government policies and campaigns show that both Han Nationalists and Uighurs see themselves as the victim of the Uighur-Han relationship. Han Chinese feel that Uighurs are attacking Chinese unity and trying to break from their historical status as a part of China, and Uighurs feel that Han Chinese are colonizing them and forcing assimilation upon them. The fact that the “Strike Hard” campaign is still in place shows that Han Chinese still feel threatened by the small minority of radical Uighurs among China’s population as a whole, both at home and abroad.

Education

Education has proved an invaluable tool for cultural assimilation and “patriotic education” in Xinjiang. Primary students in Xinjiang are all required to study Mandarin Chinese, and in the 1990s “minority students at the college and university level were also required to read the approved history of the Xinjiang region... and pass an examination on its contents.” Without passing this test, which claimed at best a disputed history, students could not graduate.³⁶ These policies show a clear intention to make all Uighurs fluent in Mandarin, and to accept the Chinese historical narrative regarding Xinjiang, teaching Xinjiang as a historically

³⁵ Frederick Starr, “China’s Changing Strategic Concerns: The Impact on Human Rights in Xinjiang,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 16 November 2005, <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/111605/Starr.php>, 23 February 2010.

³⁶ Linda Benson, “Education and Social Mobility Among Minority Populations,” *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*, (New York: Central Asia-Caucuses Institute, 2004) 198.

inherent part of China, and thus forcing many Uighurs to abandon their cultural heritage. Even when given the choice, maintain Uighur culture must often be achieved at the cost of forfeiting material success in Xinjiang. In an effort to allow their children greater opportunities while still preserving their culture, Uighur families often send their sons to Mandarin-speaking schools and their daughters to Uighur-speaking schools when given the choice in secondary school, thus widening the gender gap by offering females less chance of social mobility.³⁷ Parents know that their children must learn Mandarin to succeed financially and elevate themselves socially, so they allow their sons to learn Mandarin and set their daughters forth as guardians of their culture, through their study of the Uighur language. This practice discourages any woman from climbing the career ladder in Xinjiang.

Education has also played a large role in both promoting Han nationalism and acculturating minorities in the wake of protests and displays of ethnic tension, including the July 2009 protests. The Patriotic Education Campaign, in 1996 was instituted in Tibet and other regions of China, including Xinjiang, in an effort to promote nationalism among religious figures as well as to cement the link between nationalism and party lines. Children and religious figures were “reeducated” through patriotic literature and required reading.³⁸ After the riots in Urumqi, the Chinese government stated that their primary goal would be to “isolate and crack down on the tiny few” and “unify and educate the majority of the masses.” This rhetoric implies that the problem that led to mass participation in the riots was that Uighurs had not been educated in the right manner, and as such had begun to adhere to false ideologies, rather than

³⁷ Ibid, 177.

³⁸ Warren Smith, *China's Tibet?* (Roman & Littlefield: 2008) 174.

the problem being a deep-seated ethnic and autonomy-based issue. The top publicity official of the CCP further emphasized that education, patriotism and ethnic unity efforts must be redoubled, in anticipation of the 60th anniversary of the PRC.³⁹

“Develop the West” and “Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure!” Campaigns

The 1996 campaign known by its motto, “Strike Hard! Maximum Pressure!” shows a concerted effort to weed out certain aspects of Uighur culture.⁴⁰ The campaign is seen as a major turning point in policies toward Xinjiang, as fear of “splittism” caused hard policies restricting Uighur religious activity to overtake the soft policies that had been focusing on economic growth and development. The “Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure” campaign has included restrictions on religious practices and separatism of any kind and served to justify the government’s policies in Xinjiang.⁴¹ Between 1997 and 1999 alone, Amnesty International reported over 200 executions of Uighurs in the fight against the “three evils” of separatism, extremism, and terrorism. The campaign was intensified after the “War on Terror” began in 2002, and China agreed to help the United States in its efforts to weed out terrorists and extremists. The Chinese government officially identified eight terrorist Muslim subsets in Xinjiang at this time, consisting of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement and the East Turkistan Islamic Party among the eight.⁴²

In 1999, the Chinese government launched the “Develop the West” campaign geared toward promoting economic development in Xinjiang and other region in western China. The

³⁹ “China leadership vows to punish outlaws in Xinjiang riots,” <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/t572435.htm>

⁴⁰ Fuller. 21

⁴¹ Joshua Kurlantzick. “The Unsettled West.” *Foreign Affairs* June/July (2004).

⁴² Rudelson, Jankowiak, 317.

government also exempted Uighurs from the One-Child policy and allowed minorities tax cuts, as a way to promote development among minority groups in China. The “Develop the West” campaign has, according to the central government, afforded Xinjiang increasing wealth, literacy, and quality of life,⁴³ and allowed the government to take more control over the region while ostensibly improving the living standards and quality of life for everyone in Xinjiang through infrastructure and communications investment.⁴⁴ The improvement in infrastructure also allowed for easier military intervention and control over separatist groups, due to better roads and railways.⁴⁵

These two campaigns, “Develop the Great Northwest,” and “Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure!” exemplify how the Chinese government rules Xinjiang with a combination of “soft” and “hard” policies. The “soft” policies are intended to ingratiate Uighurs into Chinese society and strengthen the relationship between the central government and people living in Xinjiang, and the “hard” policies are intended to crack down on potential threats to the central government. “Hard” policies have included a number of strict regulatory policies against Uighurs’ practice of Islam and against any form of separatism. As a consequence, ethnic tensions have exacerbated as Uighurs perceive state policies and migration of Han Chinese as a form of internal colonization.

Many Han Chinese contest the argument that Uighurs have been unfairly treated by pointing out that they were given their own autonomous region and granted a certain level of

⁴³ Graham Fuller, Frederick Starr, “The Xinjiang Problem,” (New York: Central Asia-Caucuses Intitute) 27.

⁴⁴ Dru Gladney, “Xinjiang: China’s Pre- and Post-Modern Crossroad,” *The Silk Road*, Vol. 3 #1, .

⁴⁵ “Go West, Young Han,” *The Economist*, 21 December 2000.

<http://www.be.wvu.edu/divecon/econ/trumbull/china/PrinterFriendly.htm>

autonomy. In addition, Uighurs are awarded important benefits, such as exemption from China's One Child Policy and certain tax breaks. In addition, the government has endeavored to promote economic development in the region, leading some Han Chinese to feel as if Uighurs are awarded excessive benefits.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Dru Gladney, "Pre- and Post- Modern Xinjiang," *The Silk Road Crossroad*, http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/vol3num1/2_xinjiang.php

Chapter II

Media as a Conduit for Chinese Nationalism in Xinjiang, China

Chinese Newspaper Reportage on 2009 Urumqi Riots

In July of 2009 riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. The riots constituted the deadliest outbreak of violence in Xinjiang in many years and brought the current state of Uighur-Han relations into question on the world stage. Han Chinese in China and Uighurs living outside of China appear to hold nearly opposite opinions about the origins and significance of the riots. Due to government crackdowns on transport and communication in and out of Xinjiang since the riots, it has been difficult to determine the opinions of Uighurs living in Xinjiang. Uighurs living outside China and Western media generally claim that the riots were driven by ethnic tension and a subjugation of Uighurs in Chinese society.⁴⁷ Conversely, Han Chinese hold that the riots were an isolated event orchestrated by extremist Uighurs living primarily outside of China. CCTV and *People's Daily* articles, as well as official statements in the wake of the riots, clearly show that the externalization of the origins of the riots is government-endorsed. This externalization serves the purpose of uniting Han Chinese and possibly other minorities in Xinjiang, as well as the rest of China, in protecting themselves from the “terrorists” attacking China’s stability.

In this chapter I will analyze the July 5, 2009 riots in Xinjiang through the lens of the state-run media in China. Analysis of the rhetoric and the positions taken by state-run media will provide insight into the Han Chinese perspective on the riot and of the Uighurs. The

⁴⁷“Times Topics: Uighurs. *New York Times*. www.nytimes.com. 10 Nov. 2009.
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/uighurs_chinese_ethnic_group/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=uighurs&st=cse.

primary sources used are the *People's Daily* and CCTV, two of the biggest news outlets in China and the primary manner through which many Han Chinese people get their news. *People's Daily* is self-avowedly the Chinese Communist Party's "mouthpiece."⁴⁸ Therefore, the articles from these publications show not only government-backed opinions regarding the riots, but also the opinion most likely garnered by the majority of Chinese people.

Summary of the Events

Guangzhou was the actual origin of the protests that broke out in Urumqi in July of 2009. Trouble began in the southern coastal Chinese city when a rumor, later declared untrue, was posted on the internet claiming that six Uighur men working in Guangzhou had raped two Han Chinese women. The rumors precipitated violence on June 25, when fighting erupted in Guangzhou between Han Chinese and Uighurs, culminating in the death of two Uighurs and 120 injured people. According to the Chinese government, the majority of injured were non-Uighur.

News of the violence in Guangzhou reached Xinjiang quickly via internet reports and web-based communication. On July 5, protests broke out among Uighurs in Urumqi. Most international news sources and Uighurs living outside China agree that the protests were caused by a feeling among Uighurs that law enforcement officials had not vigorously pursued their investigation of the Guangzhou events. According to the Chinese government, the

⁴⁸"People's Daily urges lawful punishment for outlaws in Urumqi." CCTV. 7 September 2009. <http://english.CCTV.com/20090709/100722.shtml>

protests in Urumqi quickly turned violent and ended in the death of at least 192 people, upwards of 1000 injuries, and much damage to vehicles and buildings.⁴⁹

Following the violence, the Chinese government instituted a comprehensive crackdown on Urumqi and Xinjiang. This included a shutdown of all telecommunications, in order to prevent further organization of protests via the internet. Despite the crackdown, in September a wave of needle stabbings and subsequent protests broke out among Uighurs toward Han Chinese. These attacks, too, were quickly brought to a halt by the central government.⁵⁰

Since the violence ended, the government has moved quickly to restore normal economic activity and to charge and sentence those responsible. In October 2009, the Intermediate People's Court in Urumqi sentenced six men to death and one to life in prison. In November, subsequent to the trials, nine people were executed. China News Service released no details, other than commenting on the legality of the executions.⁵¹

News Coverage regarding the Riots

With regard to the riots, Chinese state-run media seems to be balancing a system of openly disseminating certain facts while also meticulously avoiding reference to ethnic tension as a cause of the riots. The government's strategy was highlighted in a CCTV article entitled "Let the facts speak': Official," published three days after the riots began in Urumqi.

⁴⁹Andrew Jacobs. "At a Factory, the Spark for China's Violence." *New York Times*. 15 July 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/16/world/asia/16china.html?pagewanted=2&_r=1&sq=uighur%20guangzhou&st=cse&scp=1

⁵⁰Wong, Edward. "3 Uighurs Convicted of Syringe attacks, Heightening Tensions in Western China." *New York Times*. 12 September 2009.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/world/asia/13xinjiang.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=syringe%20uighur&st=cse

⁵¹"Times Topics: Uighurs," *New York Times*, 10 November 2009, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/uighurs_chinese_ethnic_group/index.html, 12 February 2010.

Government officials report that details of the violence will be disseminated to the press as soon as they are determined by the government, in an effort to “let the facts speak for themselves.” The article reports that this mindset is vastly different from the one held in the March 2008 riots in Lhasa, Tibet, which was considered by most Western media as comparably censorious on the part of the government. The article deems the open dialogue supported by the government in regard to the 2009 Urumqi riots as infinitely more beneficial to all parties.⁵² The frankness promised by the Chinese government does signify a new attitude in reportage on riots and protests. However, it is already evident that the increased reportage allowed reflects the state-party lines promoting a return to stability and no ethnic tension, and is in no way unbiased coverage.

Coverage of the riots carefully sidestepped explicitly defining the riots in ethnic terms, stating that the violence was unrelated to “any religion” or China’s ethnic policies or relations between ethnic groups, but was instead “schemed and fabricated by the ‘three forces’ of extremism, separatism, and terrorism both at home and abroad.” Wu Shimin, vice-president of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, conceded that “Increasing exchanges between different ethnic groups and the differences in language, customs, and religions have indeed caused some conflicts and frictions, but the problems have been solved in quite timely and appropriate ways.”⁵³ No article in state-run media addressed the notion that there might actually be ethnic tension at the root of the riot, and that the incident in Guangzhou was simply a catalyst that set off a long-brewing problem. Instead, state-line held that the riots, involving thousands of

⁵² Lu Anqi, Ed. “Let the Facts Speak: Official,” CCTV. 8 July 2009. <http://english.CCTV.com/20090708/103212.shtml>, 13 February 2010.

⁵³ “Official: Real purpose of Urumqi riot Xinjiang’s Independence.” CCTV. 21 July 2009. <http://english.cctv.com/20090721/105567.shtml>

people, were the result of mistake and deceit, and were wholly the fault of orchestrators outside of China.

People's Daily reported that rather than being caused by ethnic tensions within China, the riots were a product of the World Uighur Congress's plan to "create chaos" from a simple factory brawl in Guangdong Province. The World Uighur Congress, which China considers to be an international separatist and terrorist organization, is portrayed as using an ordinary event among workers in a factory to spark a full blown separatist protest. *People's Daily* describes the method by which "the Congress" planned the riots using lines of communication, like Internet and telephone, to stage the riots. Articles frequently refer to emergency meetings set up by the WUC in order to plan the riots in Urumqi. One article in *People's Daily* contends that "some people" inside the country spread messages via Internet telling people to gather in protest in Urumqi "to support separatists abroad."⁵⁴

Externalizing the riots and promoting Han victimization was further evident in a *People's Daily* article quoting Huang Yabo, the deputy director of the Urumqi Public Security Bureau, stating that "It was like a war zone here, with many bodies of ethnic Han people lying on the road."⁵⁵ Another article states that the riots consisted of cars being set on fire and random passersby being attacked. However, articles are careful to leave all tension externalized, outside of China and in the hands of extremists. The article states that, "such criminal acts have nothing to do with ethnic habits or customs, religious beliefs and way of life, since they violate the common ethical value of a modern society by rule of law." It also emphasizes the fact that

⁵⁴"Inside the July 5th Riot in Urumqi: Western Media's Bias Against China remains unchanged." *People's Daily*. 14 July 2009. <http://english.people.com.cn/90002/97493/6700139.html>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

perpetrators must be dealt with according to the law in order to maintain social order and humanity at large.⁵⁶

Aftermath of the Riots

In discussing the aftermath of the riots, state-run news assures the public that the ultimate goal of separatists, creating an independent state of East Turkistan, will be forever unrealized. Articles also address what they claim to be the underlying cause of the riots, separatism, and claim that it is an unrealistic goal conceived by terrorists living outside of China. In one public statement, Wu Shimin, vice minister in charge of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC), assured a press conference held by the State Council Information Office that the rioters' purpose 'would never be realized.'" News articles acknowledge the separatist movements, yet are careful to provide a crucial aside that the separatist movements are based outside of China, and that they are doomed to fail.

To bolster the notion that separatist movements will fail to break up the ethnic harmony in Xinjiang, news reports state that "We are all brothers and sisters," and "the Uighur people and the ethnic Han Chinese belong to the same family," were two of the most-heard phrases during the riots. One article even says that the riots bore witness to the strength of ethnic unity in Xinjiang, rather than the presence of profound ethnic problems and described stories of Uighurs sheltering Han Chinese during the riots.⁵⁷ An expert from the China Islamic Association further reinforced this notion by avowing that, "the Urumqi riots have nothing to do with the

⁵⁶He Zhenhua. "Lying poses second-strike murder of innocent victims." *People's Daily*. 14 July 2009. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90780/91342/6700299.html>

⁵⁷"Spirit of ethnic unity flowing in people's blood. *People's Daily*. 17 July 2009. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90780/91420/6703479.html>

religion,” and that “the unrest contradicts the Islamic spirit of peace and stability. Haji Kerem, vice president of the China Islamic Association, is quoted saying, “There are over 10 million Muslims in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, and about twenty-five thousand mosques. No religious figures were involved in the riots. They were nothing more than riots, and we must punish them severely.”⁵⁸ This manner of praising the Uighurs’ progress reflects a subtle undercurrent of paternalism on part of the Han Chinese toward the Uighurs.

Instead of dealing with the ethnic issue head on, the articles fail to include dialogue from a Uighur perspective. Therefore, the primary commentary on Uighurs is negatively directed toward those living outside of China. There seems an attempt to divide Uighurs into the “good” Uighurs who adhere to the notion of ethnic unity and the “bad” Uighurs who promote separatism and terrorism. This theme of dividing Uighurs into “good” and “bad” can be seen throughout news coverage of the riots.

China’s reaction to International Perspectives

State-run media has responded to international condemnation of China’s heavy-handed response to the riots by adopting a hard line. Reports in both the *People’s Daily* and CCTV repeatedly criticize Western media and the U.S. government for supporting Rebiya Kadeer, the exiled Uighur leader, whom the Chinese government has targeted as the mastermind of the riots, and for sympathizing with Uighur separatists. In particular, the media rails against those who claim that the riots spring from deep-seated ethnic issues and human rights violations on the part of the Chinese government. In Chinese media, for instance, express strong disapproval

⁵⁸ Expert: Urumqi riots not ethnic conflict” CCTV. 17 July 2009.
<http://www.CCTV.com/program/newshour/20090717/105569.shtml> 10 November 2009

of a resolution introduced by the U.S. House of Representatives condemning the “violent repression” of Uighurs in China.⁵⁹

Chinese state-run media tends to criticize what it describes as the double-standard that the United States applies, fiercely guarding its security while criticizing China’s attempts to restore stability and security in Xinjiang. Editorial remarks criticizing the U.S. extend far beyond what the government would be likely to state point blank, going so far as to suggest that the U.S. “has some ulterior motive behind [its support] to ensure its supreme position will not be challenged or altered...”⁶⁰ In a similar article entitled “Inside the July 5 riot in Urumqi: Western media's bias against China remains unchanged,” regarding a resolution set forth by U.S. House of Representatives condemning the “violent repression” of Uighurs following the riots, Chinese media stated, “...The absurdly baseless outcry siding with the secessionist forces against China has already aroused a general indignity among the Chinese communities both at home and abroad.” Furthermore, the article contends that “to the Chinese people, it is nothing new that the U.S. tacitly or openly fan the winds of resentment against China. From the Dalai Lama, evil cult leader Li Hongzhi, the leader of the Falun Gong movement, to Rebiya Kadeer, now seeking political asylum in the U.S., the U.S. indiscriminately embraces all those forces hostile to China.” The article also stated that President Obama “risked the global security declaring the release of the terrorist-suspects held at Guantanamo Bay,” referring in large part to the Uighurs detained there. The article goes so far in criticizing the U.S. response as to say, “Perhaps, it is already a customary practice for the U.S. to adopt the double-standard when weighing its interests

⁵⁹ Li Hongmei. “Why is the U.S. giving tacit consent to separating Chinese forces.” *People’s Daily*. 13 July 2009. <http://bbs1.people.com.cn/postDetail.do?view=1&id=93229586&bid=45>, 15 November 2009.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

against others'. Or perhaps, it has some ulterior motive behind to ensure its supreme position will not be challenged or altered by splitting to weaken others."⁶¹

Criticisms of Western opinions about the riots are not limited to the U.S. "Experts: UN speech on Xinjiang biased," *People's Daily* reports that statements released by the United Nations regarding Xinjiang and recent violence in the region are notably biased. According to the article, Chinese experts have deemed UN language on Xinjiang as biased. In particular, the article criticizes Navanethem Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who gave a speech claiming that China was failing to uphold human rights in Xinjiang.⁶² In a rebuttal to the accusations leveled by the UN Commissioner, reports emphasize that there is an inherent prejudice of the West against China and that Western views on China's human rights are outdated and reflect a paternalistic attitude toward China. The vice-president and secretary-general of the China Society for Human Rights Studies buttresses this claim and states that western countries criticize China for human rights violations and treatment of minorities based on a fragmented understanding of the history of China. The article goes further to express the opinion of the UN representative for China in Geneva, Li Baodong, who expressed criticism over Pillay's words, saying that conflicts in Xinjiang and Tibet are "not about human rights." He did not reflect on what the origin of the riots actually was, but did emphasize his disappointment in Western nations meddling with and misunderstanding China's internal affairs.⁶³

⁶¹ Inside the July 5th Riot in Urumqi: Western Media's Bias Against China remains unchanged." *People's Daily*. 14 July 2009. <http://english.people.com.cn/90002/97493/6700139.html>

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "Experts: UN speech on Xinjiang Biased." *People's Daily*. 17 September 2009. <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6759883.html>

Such rebuttals are not uncommon in articles regarding western criticism of the riots. “Many countries say Xinjiang riot China’s internal affair” is an effort to subtly criticize nations who condemned China’s treatment of the Uighur violence. Chinese media has emphasized statements by foreign governments which support the Chinese government’s view that Xinjiang is an inalienable part of China. This article quotes a spokesman from the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, who claimed that Xinjiang is an “inalienable” part of China, and the violence is solely China’s concern. The article also quotes a Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman stating that Pakistanis “deplore any attempt to hinder China’s progress,” including criticism of China’s internal affairs. Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos were also quoted as giving their assent to the Chinese government’s handling of the riots.⁶⁴

The criticism is not limited to the West. The article “Does Japan put itself in China’s place?” criticizes the Japanese government for having allowed Rebiya Kadeer to visit Japan in the wake of the riots. The article claims that “Rebiya's Japan trip was aimed to go on assaulting or slandering the Chinese government deliberately through fabricating rumors, creating disturbances and shirking off the responsibilities for their crimes. ” The article expresses outrage that the Japanese government granted Rebiya Kadeer permission to visit Japan, and flatly disputes the notion that the government was unable to prevent her entry to Japan. The article states that Japan has not yet garnered an understanding of the seriousness of the riot and its repercussions. Furthermore, the article contends that if the Japanese government fails to support the Chinese government’s efforts to reestablish peace in Xinjiang, then “it will bring serious consequences to the Sino-Japanese relationship.” This article can be seen as a double-

⁶⁴ Ibid.

pronged attack, in that it both fans anti-Japanese sentiment and rails against the atrocities of Rebiya Kadeer. The strongly-worded rhetoric serves to incite animosity toward both parties and to garner support for nationalism within China by rallying people behind the outrage toward Japan and Kadeer.⁶⁵

Chinese media's perspectives on international coverage of the riots are relevant because they are defensive. They contain the justifications and the explanations for why Han Chinese believe that Western support for Uighur separatism is ludicrous, absurd, and extremely one-sided. Although some of this defense is simply rhetorical and necessary taking of umbrage in light of severe criticism leveled by China's biggest trading partners, much of it is an earnest attempt to repudiate Western support, as well as a clear example of the current strength of Chinese nationalism

Blame

Blame for the riots also provides very telling insight into Han Chinese perspectives on Uighurs, in that it is the clearest way that the media differentiates between Uighurs and Han Chinese. Articles placing blame for the riots tend to either focus on East Turkestan forces as a whole or on Rebiya Kadeer individually as a mastermind. A government White Paper, entitled "Development and Progress in Xinjiang," emphasize that East Turkistan forces have been disrupting Xinjiang's security and development since the 1990s. The paper stated that "According to incomplete statistics, from 1990 to 2001, the 'East Turkistan' forces both inside

⁶⁵ "Does Japan put itself in China's place?" CCTV. 31 July 2009. <http://english.cctv.com/20090731/111136.shtml>, 15 November 2009.

and outside China created more than 200 bloody incidents of terror and violence in Xinjiang, by means of explosions, assassinations, poisoning, arson, attacking, riots and assaults.”⁶⁶

In describing the historical influence of the notion of East Turkistan as its own entity, separate from China, news reports describe it as, “A tiny number of separatists and religious extremists in Xinjiang further politicized the term ‘East Turkistan’, and fabricated an ‘ideological and theoretical system’ about the ‘independence of East Turkistan.’”⁶⁷ Many articles obliquely place blame on hostile forces outside China, yet place no specific blame on anyone, seemingly as a way to have an object of blame, but carefully externalize it so as to prevent further ethnic disunity. Articles emphasize that the movement is not limited to or even centered Xinjiang; rather, its actions are fostered on both international and domestic levels. This rhetoric fuels the intense nationalism in China. The focus on externalizing the source of the riots serves to intensify nationalism and unite the Chinese people against the outside “evils,” while also downplaying possible internal dissent. This behavior can be seen throughout China’s modern history, with the term “foreign devils” being used to describe imperialists in the wake of the Opium War, the rising anti-Japanese sentiments among Chinese youth, and focusing all blame for problems in Tibet on the exiled Dalai Lama. As long as the problem is outside China, the Chinese populace can be made the victim, and thus have a cause to rally behind.⁶⁸

State-run media holds that Uighur rhetoric is merely a tool to garner support among western nations like the United States, rather than a genuine plea for democracy. One article

⁶⁶ “East Turkistan forces seriously disrupt Xinjiang’s Development, progress: white paper.” CCTV. 21 September 2009. <http://english.cctv.com/20090921/104623.shtml>, 19 October 2009.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Peter Gries. *China’s new Nationalism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 50-51.

addresses the argument that Uighurs are trying to liberate and democratize their homeland from China and reports that, “In recent years, the ‘East Turkistan’ forces have continued separatist activities under the banners of ‘democracy,’ human rights,’ and ‘freedom,’ trying to escape strikes against them or to clear themselves of the name of terrorism.” These banners are implicitly understood to be empty ideals, used as means to an end in terms of garnering Western support and empathy, rather than actually being rooted in the ideas of the people.

Conclusion

Paul Cohen’s study of the Boxer Rebellion led him to conclude that present-day Chinese historians “draw on [the past] to serve the political, ideological, rhetorical, and/or emotional needs of the present.” In particular, Cohen cites the *People’s Daily*.⁶⁹ This treatment of history can certainly be seen in articles covering the July riots in Xinjiang. The articles published in CCTV and *People’s Daily* regarding the Urumqi riots reveal a sense of victimization portrayed by the Han Chinese. Chinese state-run media’s past sense of victimization, by both Japan, Great Britain, and other Western Powers, in order to further their current agenda of victimizing Han Chinese in Xinjiang and the Chinese government when facing harsh media criticism regarding human rights violations in Xinjiang. They avow that the Chinese government in Xinjiang has not violated any human rights, and that the government’s priority in Xinjiang is economic development; the riots are seen as a tragedy in both human terms and for having disrupted this development, both economic and social, of Xinjiang. Han Chinese seem to feel that their crucial sense of stability has become unbalanced, and there is an urgent need for a return to normalcy and order.

⁶⁹ Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) 213, 221.

The central government attitude holds that Han Chinese are trying to effectively promote economic development in Xinjiang, yet their efforts are thwarted by international terrorists plotting against the Chinese government. International organizations and other nations that support these “terrorist groups” like the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, are seen not only as infringers on China’s internal policy, but also as offenders of China’s attempt to improve the quality of life among Xinjiang’s residents. Outside claims that the riots are ethnically driven are viewed as illogical and untrue. On the one hand, the riots are seen as an isolated misunderstanding that must be moved past as quickly as possible. On the other hand, the casualties, injuries and government treatment of families involved are discussed at length. It seems that media has been reported in this way so as to downplay the root of the problem by focusing on a return to stability, while also noting the suffering endured by Han Chinese during the riots, so as to emphasize the generosity in spirit of forgiveness and the victimization of the Han Chinese.

Chapter III

Rebiya Kadeer: Human Rights Champion or Extremist Separatist Leader?

An Analysis of Kadeer in terms of Popular Opinion and Media Representation

When looking at Chinese perspectives toward Uighurs in the 1990s and 2000s, it is impossible to ignore the story of Rebiya Kadeer, a Uighur woman whose status from the perspective of the Chinese government, Chinese media, and public opinion has evolved from that of ambitious and admired Uighur businesswoman, to the richest woman in Xinjiang and member of CCP, to enemy of the state and widely recognized symbol of terrorism among Han Chinese. The majority of Han Chinese people now identify her as a separatist leader who has spread lies and promoted terrorism in Xinjiang. The Chinese government and state-run media have fueled and supported the anti-Kadeer movement. In addition to government condemnation, anti-Kadeer sentiment has brought forth a considerable display of Han nationalism among ordinary citizens, in terms of protesting and mobilization. Perhaps the most significant forum through which the strength of Han nationalism has become evident due to hatred of Kadeer is the internet. Website hacking and blogging have allowed individual people, unconnected to the government, to express their anger toward Kadeer.

Kadeer was born and grew up in poverty. She worked as a laundress before founding and directing a trading company in Xinjiang. Her astute business prowess, which led her to become the richest woman in Xinjiang caused her to be lauded as a model businesswoman by the Chinese government.⁷⁰ Her business success also caused the Chinese government to appoint her to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. In addition, she

⁷⁰ "China Frees Rebiya Kadeer," *Radio Free Asia*, 17 March 2005, http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_kadeer-20050317.html, 02 February 2010.

participated as a delegate to the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women.⁷¹ As Kadeer's prominence in China grew, she increasingly began promoting Uighur rights and culture in Xinjiang. By 1997, Kadeer had opened a Uighur language school in Urumqi and an organization to help Uighur women. Kadeer also led an anti-drug initiative in Urumqi, due to increasing numbers of opium users in the 1990s. She began an organization called Thousand Mothers Associate, based on Mothers Against Drunk Driving in the United States.⁷²

In 1996 Kadeer's second husband was condemned as a separatist leader and fled to the United States, causing suspicion to surge about Kadeer's own pro-Uighur independence stance. When Kadeer's husband fled to the United States in 1996, her reputation rapidly declined. Kadeer was arrested in 1999, on her way to visit a U.S. congressional delegation.⁷³ Though charged and convicted of passing state secrets onto foreigners, her supporters insisted that she was imprisoned for championing the rights of Uighurs and denouncing their oppression by Han Chinese.⁷⁴ Jay Dautcher states that Kadeer's propensity toward grassroots initiatives, seen as dangerous by the state, contributed to the lengthy prison sentence she was given.⁷⁵

Kadeer was imprisoned in 2000; according to the *New York Times*, the state secrets for which she was convicted of consisted of clippings from *Kashgar Daily*, Kashgar's primary

⁷¹ "Profile: Rebiya Kadeer," BBC News, 8 July 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4357607.stm>, 20 February 2010.

⁷² Jay Dautcher. "Public Health and Social Pathologies," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, Ed. Frederick Starr,

⁷³ "Dragon Slayer Still Fearless," *The Toronto Star*, 6 December 2009, <http://www.thestar.com/news/world/china/article/734993--siddiqui-dragon-slayer-still-fearless>, 03 February 2010.

⁷⁴ "International: Urumqi unrest: The Uighur Dalai Lama" *The Guardian*.

⁷⁵ Jay Dautcher. "Public Health and Social Pathologies," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, Ed. Frederick Starr,

newspaper, regarding ethnic tensions and Uighur subjugation.⁷⁶ After a secret trial was conducted, Kadeer was sentenced to eight years jail time, with two years in solitary confinement. After serving five years in prison, Kadeer was released to the United States under terms with the Chinese government that she would be seeking medical treatment and would cease all separatist activities.⁷⁷ Kadeer and her husband now live in the U.S., but five of her eleven children still live in China, two of whom are in prison, for “engaging in separatist activities,” “tax evasion” and “attempting to split the state.”⁷⁸

After Kadeer was convicted, media reports successfully and comprehensively altered her biography, from that of Uighur success story and businesswoman extraordinaire, to that of a usurping and lawlessly corrupt businesswoman, stating that she “made a fortune illegally from the 1980s on through tax evasion and fraud.”⁷⁹ In addition to condemning her business practices, state-run news also tried to discredit Kadeer’s efforts to improve the lives and opportunities for Uighurs in Xinjiang. Articles noted, if Uighurs were suppressed, then how did Kadeer experience such great successes? One article claimed that “Human rights abuse accusations by Kadeer, including religious repression and removing Uighur-language teaching from schools, fall flat as achievements made by both local people and the government are a matter of record.”⁸⁰ Such statements were made in an effort to point out that Kadeer’s own

⁷⁶ Erik Eckholm, “Beijing Jails Muslim Woman for Sending Newspapers Abroad,” *New York Times*, 28 April 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/28/world/beijing-jails-muslim-woman-for-sending-newspapers-abroad.html?pagewanted=1>, 05 February 2010.

⁷⁷ Kate McGeown, “Fighting the cause of China’s Uighurs,” BBC News, 24 June 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4618995.stm>, 12 February 2010.

⁷⁸ “Rebiya Kadeer Family Case Outline,” Amnest Internationala Group 30, 2008.

⁷⁹ “Evidence shows Rebiya Kadeer behind Xinjiang riot: Chinese government,” CCTV, 7 September 2009, http://english.cctv.com/20090709/100182_1.shtml, 12 February 2010.

⁸⁰ Commentary: Rebiya Kadeer’s past exemplifies China’s policy on ethnic harmony,” CCTV, 7 October 2009, <http://english.cctv.com/20090710/108205.shtml>, 14 February 2010.

economic success in the eighties and nineties disproves claims of Uighur repression. The articles pose the paradox that if such ethnic tension existed, Kadeer would never have been able to rise through the ranks as she did. This media turnaround has been in sharp contrast to western media, who have lauded Kadeer's plight and made her into a hero. This reverential treatment was typified by Kadeer's 2009 nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁸¹

After her release to the United States, Kadeer became the leader of the World Uighur Congress and the Uighur American Association.⁸² From these roles she has sought to gain independence and support the rights of Uighurs. However, she remained largely under the radar for many Westerners and even Chinese people, until 2009, when Kadeer was back in the spotlight after the Uighur riots in Xinjiang. Rebiya Kadeer was almost immediately pinpointed as the primary conspirator behind the riots. Two days after the riots, news was released claiming Kadeer to be the mastermind, and four days after the riots, CCTV released a definitive government statement accusing Kadeer.⁸³ The article states that the World Uighur Congress (WUC), which Kadeer heads, "held a special meeting, plotting to instigate unrest by sending messages via the Internet, telephones, and mobile phones." The article called the WUC "wholly dedicated to masterminding secessionist activities in the name of human rights and democracy."⁸⁴

⁸¹ "Dragon Slayer Still Feareless" *The Toronto Star*. 6 December 2009 December 2009

⁸² Uyghur American Association, www.uyghuramerican.org. The Uyghur American Association and the World Uyghur Congress are both headed by Kadeer and have mission statements geared toward promoting Uyghur rights in China and on a global level.

⁸³ "Mastermind behind Xinjiang violence: Rebiya Kadeer," CCTV, 7 July 2009, http://www.cctv.com/program/cctvnews/20090707/100654_2.shtml, 20 February 2010.

⁸⁴ "Evidence shows Rebiya Kadeer behind Xinjiang riot: Chinese government," CCTV, 7 September 2009, http://english.cctv.com/20090709/100182_1.shtml, 16 February 2010.

In a *Wall Street Journal* article that Kadeer wrote, she denied the accusation that she had orchestrated the riots in Urumqi. She instead insisted that students had organized the protest. She also stated that she “unequivocally [condemned] the use of violence by Uighurs during the demonstration as much as [she does] China’s use of excessive force against protestors.”⁸⁵ She emphasized that she promotes only peaceful protest among Uighurs and that violent means are unequivocally flawed.⁸⁶ After the *Wall Street Journal* published this article by Kadeer, the online newspaper was banned in China for two days, and an editorial was published in *People’s Daily* stating that the editor would no longer read the *Wall Street Journal*, due to Kadeer’s condemnation of the Chinese response to the riots. One journalist published an article in the *Global Times* stating that “The Journal may not care if it loses one reader, but I do care about my own dignity and that of the Chinese nation.” This quote, condemning the *Wall Street Journal*’s pro-Uighur stance on the riots, was reprinted on hundreds of other websites in China after its initial publication.⁸⁷ The editorial and the brief ban of the *Wall Street Journal* in China shows the decisive and outright anger felt at Western support for Kadeer.

As explanation for why the Chinese government and media have pinpointed her as the scapegoat for the riots, Kadeer notes that “The Chinese government is well-known for encouraging a nationalistic streak among Han Chinese as it seeks to replace the bankrupt communist ideology it used to promote.” She states that this “reactionary nationalism” is a huge obstacle for Uighurs in Xinjiang and the reason why the outcry and blame placed against

⁸⁵ Rebiya Kadeer, “A real Uighur Story,” *Wall Street Journal*, 8 July 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124698273174806523.html>, 12 February 2010.

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ “Chinese paper ‘opinion’ spreads online to refute Western reporters,” BBC, 13 July 2009.

her was so fierce.⁸⁸ Her argument is supported by government incentives such as the Patriotic Education Campaign in 1996 as well as through the vastly increased government rhetoric endorsing nationalism, as can be seen through state-run media and government statements since the early 1990s.⁸⁹

China's media blitz against Kadeer certainly intensified after the July riots, but that is not when it began. News articles condemning Kadeer's meetings with foreign diplomats and her travel abroad were criticized severely by media in China. Media reports framed her pleas for support among foreign governments as an affront to China's image and built on a stack of fallacies and falsehoods. Reports claimed that Kadeer sought to engage in "activities aimed at separating China or undermining national unity," by trying to harm the relationship between Han Chinese and Uighurs in Xinjiang.⁹⁰ Just as Kadeer sought to increase support for the Uighur cause abroad, China sought to make sure she lacked all support within the nation's borders.

Many articles about Kadeer in the Chinese state-run media express outrage at her actions. One article begins with the line "Rebiya Kadeer is a regular liar and a bald-faced one at that."⁹¹ In reference to the cause of the riots, Wang Lequan, secretary of the Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Committee of the CCP, stated that Rebiya Kadeer and the WUC "fabricated stories after two Uighur migrant workers died in a brawl in the southern Guangdong

⁸⁸ Kadeer

⁸⁹ Henrietta Harrison, "Creation of Modern Nationalism," *China*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2001). 144

⁹⁰ "FM spokesman: U.S. should not provide platform for any separatist remarks," *People's Daily*, 16 December 2006, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200512/16/eng20051216_228322.html, 02 February 2010.

⁹¹ "Rebiya Kadeer lies again," CCTV, 8 December 2009, <http://english.cctv.com/20090812/100959.shtml>, 13 February 2010.

Province on June 26, and fanned ethnic hatred which led to the tragedy in Xinjiang.”⁹² Further criticism was aimed at Kadeer by state-run media emphasizing ties between Kadeer and the National Endowment for Democracy, thus implying that Kadeer is attempting to establish democracy in Xinjiang and is thus taking part in separatist activities.⁹³ The National Endowment for Democracy, a private organization promoting democracy around the globe, supports four pro-Uighur non-governmental organizations related to Xinjiang, two of which Kadeer heads (the Uighur American Association and the World Uighur Congress. The NED has given a total of over \$500,000 in financial support to these organizations, which are all implicitly supporting separatism in Xinjiang, if not explicitly doing so.⁹⁴

In addition to criticizing Kadeer’s funding sources, the government has also sought to distance Kadeer from other Uighur leaders. One article also quoted the president of the Kazakh Uighur Culture Association as stating that Kadeer had been and the WUC had been planning and taking part in separatist movements for years.⁹⁵ *Xinhua News* even published an article written by family members of Kadeer, condemning the riots and begging Kadeer to stop her separatist actions.⁹⁶ These articles are meant to diminish Kadeer’s credibility as both a leader of Uighurs and as a mother. In this sense the government is able to dehumanize her. Kadeer’s own children begging her to stop her separatist actions, and her measured refusal to stop

⁹² “Economic growth still Xinjiang’s focus, while riot poses stability challenge: top regional official,” *People’s Daily*, 10 August 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6722740.html>, 15 February 2010.

⁹³ “Kadeer’s US sponsor has ulterior motives,” *People’s Daily*, 12 August 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6725622.html>, 2 February 2010.

⁹⁴ National Endowment for Democracy. <http://www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang>, A bipartisan, private, non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, and founded in 1983.

⁹⁵ “Rebiya Kadeer not entitled to represent Uighurs: Kazakh social activist,” *People’s Daily*, 20 August 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6734407.html>, 13 February 2010.

⁹⁶ “Full text of letter to July 5 riot victim families from Rebiya Kadeer’s family,” *People’s Daily*, 3 August 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6717462.html>, 13 February 2010.

promoting the Uighur cause, makes Kadeer seem heartless and ruthless, rather than heroic.

Kadeer responded to the letter through western media publications, claiming that her relatives were coerced into writing it.⁹⁷

The barrage against Kadeer has not been limited to the media. The Kadeer and Akida Trade Centers built and named by Kadeer in Urumqi were slated for demolition in the wake of the 2009 riots, an act which Kadeer states is an “act of revenge against [her] and against Uighurs over July 5.”⁹⁸ The government reported through state-run media that the building was being demolished due to structural concerns. However, the buildings are less than thirty years old, and the demolition was announced less than a month after the riots.⁹⁹

Part of the public and media condemnation of Kadeer after the riots was highlighting the partnership between Kadeer and the Dalai Lama, as well as paralleling the respective situations between Tibet and Xinjiang. This parallel was useful because a strong case has already been made among Han Chinese against the Dalai Lama and the notion of an independent Tibet, most recently in light of the March 14, 2008 protests in Tibet. In addition, the Dalai Lama’s long history of campaigning abroad for Tibetan self-determination has caused him to become an extremely unpopular figure among many Han Chinese. Therefore, establishing a link between Kadeer and the Dalai Lama is no doubt a successful means of heightening Kadeer’s unpopularity and reinforces the image of an “outside agitator” bent on a separatist agenda. Both Kadeer and the Dalai Lama were forced to flee China, and both have

⁹⁷ Hugo Restall, “China’s Public Enemy,” *Wall street Journal*, 7 August 2009.

⁹⁸ “Uyghur Leader’s Family Evicted,” Radio Free Asia, 20 August 2009, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/evicted-08202009145157.html>, 14 February 2010.

⁹⁹ “Rebiya building to be demolished over security concerns,” *People’s Daily*, 8 September 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6751716.html>, 12 February 2010.

utilized Western media and Western sympathies to further their causes.¹⁰⁰ One article sought to detract from the Dalai Lama's credibility by emphasizing his implicit support for Kadeer. The article states that 2009's "7.5 event" in Urumqi was the same as the "3.14" event in Tibet in 2008, and it disparagingly referred to the Dalai Lama as Kadeer's teacher and mentor.¹⁰¹ Kadeer makes many Han Chinese angry because, like the Dalai Lama, she is popular in the United States and Europe, and she has garnered much support and awareness for the Uighur cause.

In an aptly titled article, "Unveiled Rebiya Kadeer: a Uighur Dalai Lama", Chinese media lashes out against Kadeer by comparing her to the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet and states that her claims of a peaceful beginning to the riots are arbitrary and untrue. The article states:

Most ridiculously, the so-called 'peaceful demonstration' was staged on the Urumqi streets in the form of the most inhuman atrocities too horrible to look at. However, the Kadeer group abroad quickly washed clean themselves, pleading ignorance of the beating, smashing, looting, and burning incidents which have so far claimed 156 innocent civilian lives, and even recalibrated their gun muzzle toward the Chinese government chiding it for using the same template of accusations as it did in the Mar. 14th Lhasa riots.

Through this comparison the article manages to externalize the roots of the violence, victimize the Chinese people and the Chinese government, and establish a comparison of violence with the March 14th riots in Tibet, which the media presented as an assault on Han Chinese in Lhasa. The article even calls the Dalai Lama Kadeer's "much admired tutor." The significance of the tutor-tutee analogy between the Dalai Lama and Kadeer is bolstered by government reports on separatism in Tibet and the notion of the Dalai Lama as a separatist leader.

¹⁰⁰ "Tibet and Xinjiang independence forces colluding," China Tibet Online, 17 July 2009, <http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/6703569.html>, 15 February 2010.

¹⁰¹ "Internal strife pierces Dalai's nonviolent resistance," CCTV, 11 May 2009, <http://www.cctv.com/english/special/tibet/20091105/101813.shtml>, 18 February 2010.

Robert Barnett, director of the Tibetan Studies program at Columbia University, described the East-West juxtaposition in relation to Tibet-China relations as very applicable to the current problems in Xinjiang, stating,

The Tibetans are being caught up in what is turning into a rather ugly positioning of certain Chinese intellectuals, particularly those living in the West and trained in the West, who feel that China is being pushed around too much, by a West which has lost the authority to speak out and impose these values.¹⁰²

This anger toward Western judgment and support of separatist movements has only intensified since the riots in July, when Chinese people bore witness to western governments and media supporting a woman who they saw only as a Uighur separatist and orchestrator of the killings of scores of Chinese people via the violent riots.

Justifying the crackdown on Uighurs and emphasizing Kadeer's status as a malevolent separatist, Tomur Dawamat, a Uighur and the former vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, stated that, "Only by maintaining stability [in Xinjiang] can we fight back against Rebiya Kadeer, the scum of her own ethnic group."¹⁰³ Some articles cited the efforts of the WUC and Kadeer to promote unrest and act bravely in the face of Han suppression—an idea, which, to most Han Chinese, would seem ludicrous, since it seems at face value that Uighurs are allowed more perks than Han Chinese, like exemption from the one-child policy.¹⁰⁴ The backlash toward Kadeer can be understood in part by the fact that, in the eyes

¹⁰²"Can China's Tibetan Crisis Be Resolved?" Council on Foreign Relations, 6 March 2009, http://www.cfr.org/publication/18707/can_chinas_tibetan_crisis_be_resolved.html, 15 February 2010.

¹⁰³ "Former NPC Vice-Chairman: 'Great Wall of ethnic unity' remains firm," CCTV, 15 July 2009, http://english.cctv.com/20090715/101178_1.shtml, 13 February 2010.

¹⁰⁴ "Gov't: violence in Urumqi masterminded," CCTV, 6 July 2009, http://www.cctv.com/program/newshour/20090706/106347_1.shtml, 17 February 2010.

of most Han Chinese, she has done unspeakable things in the name of promoting separatism in what they see as historically an integral part of China.

Harsh media and popular criticism of Kadeer is part of a larger movement of anger toward what Chinese consider to be Western bias against China.¹⁰⁵ Western media's sympathy for Kadeer has sparked fury and protesting among Han Chinese. State-run media has taken advantage of this anger by focusing articles and news reports on the unfairness of Western news reportage toward China, thus implicitly stoking the embers of nationalism throughout China. Their efforts have clearly worked. Two Han Chinese filmmakers boycotted the Melbourne film festival in 2009, for having screened a biopic, *The 10 Conditions of Love*, about Kadeer. The Chinese filmmakers withdrew their own films from the festival as a protest against Australia's implicit support of Kadeer. The two directors' decisions sparked immense support among the Chinese populace, and many directors avowed that any Chinese director would have done the same thing. Thousands of comments were listed in support of the directors on news websites. The outpouring of support for the directors and the widespread anger toward Kadeer showed definitively how angry Chinese people were at Western support for Kadeer.¹⁰⁶

In addition to directors' decisions and the public support, hundreds of attempts were made to hack into the festival's website, and one well-known Chinese hacker was successful. He changed the film's website page to a picture of the Chinese flag and posted English denouncements of support for Kadeer and demanded apologies. The director of the festival

¹⁰⁵ Jayshree Bajoria, "Nationalism in China," Council on Foreign Relations, 23 April 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16079/>, 12 February 2010.

¹⁰⁶ "Kadeer film prompts hacker attack on website," 28 July 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6711783.html>, 14 February 2010.

said of the Chinese reaction to the Kadeer film, "We have received over the last two weeks virtually a mini tsunami of e-mails that I can only describe as being vile...It's part of a concerted campaign, and I think people who are behind it will try to ramp it up even more."¹⁰⁷ The statement shows that the mere decision to show a biopic of Kadeer outraged Chinese people enough to act out in anger beyond the scope of government and toward a strong partner of China.

Much to the dismay of mainland China, Kadeer's biopic was also screened at Taiwan's Kaohsiung Film Festival in September, 2009. The same Chinese hacker who had successfully changed the Melbourne Film Festival site broke into the Kaohsiung site and replaced the Film Festival page with an image of the People's Liberation Army, with China's national anthem playing. The site also contained the message, "Against Xinjiang separatists, against Tibetan separatists, and Happy 60th birthday to the People's Republic of China! Perhaps Oldjun!" Oldjun being the name of the hacker. When asked why he hacked the sites, Oldjun responded, "I hacked into their website because I simply want to express people's anger about the screening of the film... It is the same reason why I hacked into the Melbourne Film Festival's website."¹⁰⁸

The two film festivals showed that the internet has become a new and larger than ever forum for nationalists, particularly young nationalists, to unite against Western support for Kadeer, the Dalai Lama, and support for separatist movements in China in general. This has

¹⁰⁷ "Kadeer film prompts hacker attack on website," *People's Daily*, 28 July 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6711783.html>, 17 February 2010.

¹⁰⁸ "Hacker attacks website over Kadeer film," CCTV, 22 September 2010, <http://english.cctv.com/20090922/102402.shtml>, 19 February 2010.

been partly supported, partly feared by the Chinese government. On the one hand, the unification aspect is seen as indisputably positive. On the other hand, China tries very carefully to balance indignation with the assurance of continued stable and harmonious relations between China and western nations. Thus, giving the large voice of internet networking sites has taken the power out of the government's hands.¹⁰⁹ It also proves that much of the hatred and anger is real, and not purely media rhetoric.

The importance of Kadeer in uncovering contemporary Chinese nationalism does not necessarily lie in her actions, but rather in Han Chinese perception of both her and of Western media's admiration for her. These two factors are far more revealing in terms of Han Chinese uniting and acting out against supporters of Kadeer. Kadeer's work, aimed toward peaceful protest and stewardship of an independent or autonomous Xinjiang, goes fundamentally against the nationalist sentiment that envisions a unified and harmonious nation. Scapegoating Kadeer makes it easier for Chinese people to unite against her; it gives them an identifiable evil against which they can work.

¹⁰⁹ "Don't Feed China's Nationalism," *Newsweek*, 21 April 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/131751/page/2> 23 January 2010.

Conclusion

Even though there is nothing predestined or metaphysical about the shapes of countries on the map, nation-states and ethnic groups tend to treat this territory as iconic—the connection between a people and its place is felt to be sacred and can inspire feats of courage, acts of violence, and works of art.¹¹⁰

After the Tiananmen riots in 1989, and again after the fall of the USSR in 1992, it became undeniably clear to the Chinese government that, in order to sustain a stable China, Chinese people needed a guiding ideology to replace the defunct communist ideals that had once united them. Promoting nationalism alongside rampant economic reform and opening up proved to be a winning combination and seeming guarantor of stability, at least insofar as economic development is sustained. However, though this nationalism has served well to unite the 92 percent of the Chinese population who are of Han ethnicity, as this thesis shows, the rise of nationalism has seen a coinciding buildup of ethnic tension, with particular regard to Uighur and Tibetan relationships with Han Chinese.

The nationalism shown in the wake of the Uighur riots Government policy in Xinjiang is complex, multi-layered, and clearly has conflicting end-goals at times. However, two rather broad generalizations can be made about policy aims in the region, which are that they seek to promote economic development in the region, while also promoting assimilation among Uighurs. Current policies fit well into the overarching emphasis seen on maintaining stability, both economic and social, within Chinese policy on a national level. As the effects of current policies set in, and increasing numbers of Uighurs study Mandarin in school rather than Uighur,

¹¹⁰ | James Millward, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucases Institute: New York, 2004). 27

and give up certain practices of Islam in order to allow themselves greater career opportunities and expanded mobility, Uighur identity will inevitably begin to fade.

However, more stringent policies, like the “Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure,” campaign, may prove to be the undoing of an otherwise peaceable Xinjiang, as they create resentment toward Han Chinese, particularly since most serious threats of terrorism and separatism were weeded out in the early 2000s, and yet the policy stayed in place, creating animosity where there had been no separatism. The riot could even be seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy on part of the government, who fought so violently against separatism that they fostered resentment and violent protest among Uighurs. The 2009 riots in Urumqi were a melting point, after which China, and indeed the world, could no longer ignore the tension in Xinjiang.

In discussing the future of Xinjiang, Frederick Starr refers to the region as a possible “Bantustan,” in which Uighurs are “gradually confined to certain traditionally Uighur oases and oasis centers.”¹¹¹ Under this scenario, Uighurs cultural role in society would seem to be that of preserving the parts of their culture that do not affect cultural unity, and that are able to be commercially exploited for tourism. This cultural exploitation can already be seen in other parts of China, as in Kunming, Yunnan province, where a theme park has opened in which a group of dwarves live and work and put themselves on display for visitors.¹¹² These theme parks, many of which feature minorities, reinforce the notion of Chinese diversity with the underlying understanding that the Han Chinese are the ultimate rulers of China. The theme

¹¹¹ Gladney, 102.

¹¹² “Dwarf theme park open to tourists in China condemned as modern day ‘freak show’,” *Daily Mail*, 2 October 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-1217380/Dwarf-theme-park-opens-China-tourists.html>, 3 March 2010

parks and treating ethnic minorities as exotic are a form of orientalism, which reinforces Han Chinese sense of cultural superiority vis-à-vis the “other.” The most prominent of these parks, in Beijing, is called the Nationalities Park and features ethnic peoples dressed up in traditional outfits from each of the 55 minority groups. For a period of time, English signs read “Racist Park,” a rather telling mistranslation.¹¹³

In addition to exploiting certain facets of Uighur culture, the Chinese government and state-run media have made China’s history, and more particularly Xinjiang’s history, malleable in order to support the aims of the government and ensure national stability, as can be seen in the “re-education campaigns” following the Tibetan and Uighur riots.¹¹⁴ The media often uses this malleability to promote a narrative of victimization in China, starting with the Opium Wars and carrying on into the Sino-Japanese war and beyond.¹¹⁵ Now, with the Uighur riots, people can see these narratives coming to life again. State-run media is making China seem victimized by outside extremist forces and by the international media.

By uniting against these “hostile foreign forces,” Chinese people are strengthening their own inherent connections to each other and to their own notions of China. James Millward solidified this idea in his statement that, “Nationalism is about people, land, and the relationship between them. Nationalistic projects seek to define a special relationship between a unique people and a particular piece of the earth’s surface.”¹¹⁶ This statement also gives insight into the ultimate root of the tension between Han Chinese and Uighurs, which is the

¹¹³ Edward Wong, “China’s Han Flock to Them Parks,” *New York Times*, 23 February 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/24/world/asia/24park.html>, 10 March 2010.

¹¹⁴ Peter Gries, *China’s New Nationalism*. (Berkeley, University of California Press: 2004) 46

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 49-51.

¹¹⁶ Millward, 27.

differentiation with respect to their definition to themselves and the land with which they are historically associated. The identity of Uighurs is closely tied with Xinjiang, the Uighur language, Islam, and Uighur history. Han Chinese view Xinjiang as an inherent part of a larger and unified China. Without surmounting the problem of differing perspectives on identity and nationalism, it seems unlikely that the tension between Han Chinese and Uighurs will abate.

When looking at the ethnic tension and conflicting nationalisms in Xinjiang, it is crucial to note a fact that Gardner Bovingdon emphasized, “Nationalists invariably contend that their nations are ancient, tracing their origins into deep antiquity. They often back-date the incorporation of peripheral territories into the core, thus reducing the heterogeneous and conflictual past of modern states to a unilinear narrative of national becoming.”¹¹⁷ This theory can be applied to both Uighurs and Han Chinese in reference to Xinjiang, where both ethnic groups trace their presence and control over the region as sizeable, and as outweighing the other group’s right to sovereignty. The language barrier only intensifies problems, and also greatly influences the histories that each ethnic group learns.¹¹⁸

One of the most interesting facets of the rise of Han nationalism and its reflection in the wake of the 2009 riots is that, though these government policies reflect nationalism and often implicitly encourage it, nationalism in China has clearly taken on a life of its own. Peter Gries cites the definitive shift in Chinese nationalism during and after protests in 1999, in reaction to NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Serbia, stating that “Popular nationalists

¹¹⁷ Gardner Bovingdon, “Contested Histories,” *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucases Institute: New York, 2004)354

¹¹⁸ Dru Gladney, “Chinese program of Development and Control, 1978-2001,” *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland*, (Central Asia-Caucases Institute: New York, 2004) 102.

gradually shifted from supporting the CCP to making demands of it.”¹¹⁹ It will be important to note in the next few years whether the CCP can keep abreast and in control of the nationalism, or whether these nationalist displays will at some point turn against the party. As Gries notes, since the 1980s, popular nationalism in China has already shifted from a focus on the CCP to a focus on the “motherland” and the “Chinese-race.”¹²⁰

The Urumqi riots brought to the forefront an idea that Gries emphasizes, the phenomenon in contemporary China in which, “Popular networks are challenging the state’s hegemony over nationalism, threatening to rupture the Chinese nation-state...At a time when, given the bankruptcy of communist ideology, nationalism has become even more central to state legitimatization. Both the Party and the people are recognizing that the people are playing a greater role in Chinese politics.”¹²¹ The actions of the Han Chinese hackers during the Melbourne and Taiwan film festivals show that the government has little control in regulating the actions of Chinese nationalists even on an international sphere. If the government is unable to maintain hegemony over the force of Chinese nationalism, its own sustainability could be at stake.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 128-129.

¹²⁰ Ibid 133.

¹²¹ Ibid 134

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