What is the Chinese Communist Party doing in Xinjiang and why are they doing it?

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The PRC assault on non-Chinese culture in Xinjiang: timeline and evidence

“Break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections and break their origins.”

--Maisumujiang Maimuer, PRC religious affairs official

NYT, 5 January 2019
1759: Qing empire conquered Xinjiang in course of Junghar Wars

1912-1944: Imperial break-up: Chinese and Uyghur warlords and contending forces; strong Soviet influence

1945-1949: Eastern Turkestan Republic as Soviet satellite, in northern Xinjiang; Guomindang in southern Xinjiang with local Uyghur admin

1949: PRC takes control from GMD in south, from USSR / ETR in north. ETR leaders die in plane crash en route to Beijing

1955: “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” proclaimed
Recent PRC ethnic policy and Xinjiang watersheds:

• 2002: PRC brands Uyghur ethno-nationalism as “terrorism” within Global War on Terror; US lists ETIM to gain Chinese approval on UN resolution for US invasion of Iraq
• 2009: Urumchi race riots following repression of demonstration
• 2013-15: Jihadist-style terrorist acts Urumchi, Kunming, Beijing
• May 2014: “Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism” (严厉打击暴力恐怖活动专项行动) announced
• 2014: Central Ethnic Work Conference (beyond economic development: spiritual / psychological 精神上的 measures needed)
• 2015: Broad new national security, counter-terrorism laws passed
• 2016: Chen Quanguo transferred from Tibet to be Xinjiang First Party Secretary
Arrests in Xinjiang Compared to Total in China

The Rising Rate Of Prosecutions In Xinjiang

The annual number of criminal cases tried by the regional government of Xinjiang has risen faster than China's national total.

- Xinjiang prosecutions
- All other Chinese prosecutions

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, Supreme People’s Procuratorate Annual Work Report, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, TianShan Net, Xinjiang People’s Procuratorate, Xinjiang Yearbook, Xinjiang High People’s Court

Credit: Amy Cheng, Emily Feng and Daniel Wood/NPR
Number of new security facilities detected in Xinjiang province, 2011-2018

Source: GMV
NUMBER OF KINDERGARTENS

Source: Statistics Bureau, Hotan Prefecture
The assault on Uyghur culture is not new. Its current phase dates from early 2000s; the ethnocidal aspects of CCP policies have been masked by “anti-terrorism” discourse, despite little such violence in Xinjiang.

Razing of old Kashgar, from early 2000s
where has this mosque gone? Keriya Aitika Mosque. more than 800 year history, disappeared in early 2018 despite selected as Chinese architectural heritage in late 2017.
The Sultanim Cemetery in the center of Hotan City is one of the most famous ancient cemeteries in Xinjiang. It was destroyed between January to March 2019.

“Project Beauty” 新疆女性 “靓丽工程” from 2011 involved intensive propaganda, forced “education” of veiled women, violence sparked by forced public de-veilings. Which CCP then labeled “terrorism”
“PRAYER IS FORBIDDEN IN PUBLIC PLACES”

(photo from 2015)
Er Dao Qiao mosque, Urumchi, Summer 2018. Arabic *shahada* (testament of faith) removed from above the entrance.
Erasure of Uyghur script (modified Arabic). Romanized Uyghur is left, but the original Uyghur for “hello” has been covered over on this poster outside a primary school in Urumchi, 2018. (Photo Jo Smith Finley)
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Credit: Amy Cheng, Emily Feng and Daniel Wood/NPR
Anthropologist and Uyghur Folklorist, Xinjiang University, Rahile Dawut

Mambet Turdi, Xinjiang Normal University, Kyrghyz scholar of the epic Manas and author of *A History of Kyrghyz Literature*

Xinjiang University President, Tashpolat Teyip

Poet and literature Professor, Xinjiang Normal University, Abdulqadir Jalaleddin,

Chimengul Awut, leading voice In Uyghur modernist poetry
Tashpolat Tiyip, geographer, specialist on Xinjiang river ecology, former president of Xinjiang University. Disappeared in 2017, reported sentenced to death in a secret trial:

Tashpolat Tiyip in Paris receiving an honorary doctorate from the Sorbonne in November 2008.

https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/58903839_Tashpolat_Tiyip
In the “Becoming Family” 接亲 program since December 2017, c. 1 million Han party members and officials are sent to Southern Xinjiang for periodic extended stays in Uyghur homes. Though the propaganda stresses how the visitors eat, work and even sleep in the same bed with Uyghur hosts, a manual given to the dispatched Han instructs them to look out for such signs of “extremism” as the Quran and DVDs, and to “ask the children. They do not lie.”

https://www.apnews.com/9ca1c29fc9554c1697a8729bba4dd93b
Neighborhood Convenience Police Stations, Urumchi
A map of “convenience police stations” in the center of the Uyghur district in Ürümchi (Darren Byler, with Google Earth)
A face scan checkpoint to exit the high-speed train in Turpan. The line on the left side which goes through a simple metal gate held open by an officer is for Han people. (Darren Byler, April 2018)

https://livingotherwise.com/2018/05/10/navigating-checkpoints-uyghur-homeland/
Police can scan faces and match with IDs, using apps linked to the “integrated joint war operations platform”

Source: Emily Feng, *Financial Times*
Red Flags for Detainment in Xinjiang

Owning a tent
Telling others not to swear
Speaking with someone who has traveled abroad
Owning welding equipment
Telling others not to sin
Having traveled abroad yourself
Owning extra food
Eating breakfast before the sun comes up
Merely knowing someone who has traveled abroad
Owning a compass
Arguing with an official
Publicly stating that China is inferior to some other country
Owning multiple knives
Sending a petition that complains about local officials
Having too many children
Abstaining from alcohol
Not allowing officials to sleep in your bed, eat your food, and live in your house
Having a VPN
Abstaining from cigarettes
Not having your government ID on your person
Having WhatsApp
Wailing, publicly grieving, or otherwise acting sad when your parents die
Not letting officials take your DNA
Watching a video filmed abroad
Wearing a scarf in the presence of the Chinese flag

Wearing a hijab (if you are under 45)
Going to a mosque
Praying
Fasting
Listening to a religious lecture
Not letting officials scan your irises
Not letting officials download everything you have on your phone
Not making voice recordings to give to officials
Speaking your native language in school
Speaking your native language in government work groups
Speaking with someone abroad (via Skype, WeChat, etc.)
Wearing a shirt with Arabic lettered writing on it
Having a full beard
Wearing any clothes with religious iconography
Not attending mandatory propaganda classes
Not attending mandatory flag-raising ceremonies
Not attending public struggle sessions
Refusing to denounce your family members or yourself in these public struggle sessions
Trying to kill yourself when detained by the police
Trying to kill yourself when in the education camps
Performing a traditional funeral
Inviting multiple families to your house without registering with the police department
Being related to anyone who has done any of the above

Based on data from Human Rights Watch report, September 2018
Leaked documents from Xinjiang tell us about arrest by algorithm with the “Integrated Joint Military Operations Platform” 一体化联合作战平台:

In June 19-25, 2017, in four districts and prefectures of southern Xinjiang, the “integrated joint operations platform” identified 24,412 people it labeled suspicious, including 16,354 in Kashgar, 3,282 in Khotan, 2,596 in Kezhou (Kizil Su) and 2,380 in Aksu. Of these,

--706 were criminally detained

--15,683 were “sent to education and training”

--2,096 were “put under preventive surveillance”

--5,508 were “temporarily unable to be detained” (details on why this was were not in leaked documents, but discussion of problems suggests it is because they were not in their place of hukou registration.)
The Re-education concentration camps: A photo posted to the WeChat account of the Xinjiang Judicial Administration shows Uyghur detainees listening to a 'de-radicalization' speech at “Lop county transformation education center #4,” Hotan
In order to thoroughly implement the relevant decision-making arrangements of the party committee of the autonomous region, **further strengthen and standardize the work of the vocational skill training centers (hereinafter referred to as ‘training centers’)**, ensure the absolute safety of the training venue, improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, maximize education, save and protect key personnel, and promote the social stability and long-term stability of the whole of Xinjiang, based on relevant laws and regulations and based on Article 12 of the previous guidance on education and training, we again bring up the following opinions. First, ensure that the training venue is absolutely safe.

1. Adhere to the comprehensive combination of personnel defense and technological defense to strictly implement measures meeting requirements **to prevent escape, noise, earthquakes, fire, and epidemics. It is strictly forbidden for police to enter the student zone with guns**, and they must never allow escapes, never allow trouble, never allow attacks on staff, **never allow abnormal deaths**, never allow food safety incidents and major epidemics, and they must ensure that the training center is absolutely safe and free of risk.

2. **Prevent escapes.** Adhere to zone separation and individual unit management, and improve the installation of **police stations at front gates, security guard duty rooms, high guard posts, security guard posts and patrol routes, etc.,** perfect peripheral isolation, **internal separation, protective defenses, safe passageways** and other facilities and equipment, and ensure that security instruments, security equipment, **video surveillance, one-button alarms** and other such devices are in place and functioning.
Have a strict security check system on personnel, vehicles, and goods entering and exiting, and strictly control the entry of vehicles. For vehicles that need to be parked, the front of the vehicle has to be pointed inwards, and it has to be locked from people. **Strictly manage door locks and keys - dormitory doors, corridor doors and floor doors must be double locked, and must be locked immediately after being opened and closed.** Strictly manage and control student activities to prevent escapes during class, eating periods, toilet breaks, bath time, medical treatment, family visits, etc. **Strictly manage students requesting time off,** if they really need to leave the training center due to illness or other special circumstances, they must have someone specially accompany, monitor and control them.

3. **Prevent trouble.** Implement inspection systems for key personnel, key parts, key time periods, and key items, discover and dispose of behavioral violations and abnormal situations in classrooms, dormitories and other areas in a timely manner, and evaluate and resolve students’ ideological problems and abnormal emotions at all times. **Roll out secret forces and bring information officers into play to prevent people from joining forces to cause trouble.** Students are not allowed to participate in labor outside class, and may not contact the outside world apart from during prescribed activities. It is strictly forbidden for the students to have their own cellphones or for staff to hand over cellphones to students, so as to prevent the staff from interacting with students and collusion between inside and outside. There must be **full video surveillance coverage of dormitories and classrooms free of blind spots**, ensuring that guards on duty can monitor in real time, record things in detail, and report suspicious circumstances immediately.
10. Strengthen examinations. Adhere to the combination of written exams and oral tests, establish an examination system with one small test per week, one medium test per month, and one big test per season, and check learning progress in a timely manner. The education departments of prefectures, states, and cities are responsible for the scoring and classification of exam papers. **The test scores, especially the national language (Mandarin) test scores, are entered into student records, and the learning points are aggregated to form study points, which are used to evaluate the effect of the education and training and form the main basis to determine whether a student has completed (their course).**

. . . Take the cultivation of manners as an important part of educational transformation and establish a strict life management education system, starting from daily life, health, etiquette and manners, strengthening management constraints and habits, and cultivating students' health, civility and courtesy, compliance and obedience, and unity and friendship behaviors and habits. **Strengthen the hygiene management of students, ensure timely haircuts and shaves, regular change of clothes, and arrange bathing once or twice a week, to develop good life habits.**

14. Classification management. In the training center, set up a strong (very strict) management area, a strict management area, and a general management area. According to the screening review, the trainees will be placed in one of the three management areas, and different education and training methods and management systems will be adopted accordingly. **According to their actual performance and point situation, after evaluation and review, the student’s management and education classification can be dynamically adjusted.**
Tender notice for a “Legal System Education Transformation School” in Maralbeshi (Bachu), found by Adrian Zenz.
Calls for “security fencing, hardened isolation, security doors and windows; security nets; safety nets, isolation fences; and related installations.”
Xinjiang ‘training centres’

“Vocational education and training centres” have come under international scrutiny, with rights activists describing them as political re-education camps.

Up to 1 million ethnic Uighurs and other Muslim minorities believed held

Number of facilities
According to a survey of government records

Beijing claims to counter spread of separatism, terrorism and religious extremism through “free” training

Government tenders show orders by facilities including:
- Surveillance systems
- Razor wire
- Stun guns
- Electric batons
- Handcuffs
- Spiked clubs

Equipment purchases by one county in Hotan
- 2,768 police batons
- 550 electric cattle prods
- 1,367 pairs of handcuffs
- 2,792 cans of pepper spray

Facilities run by XPCC*
Located throughout the region
reeducation camps

- 39°21'38.1"N 75°51'50.0"E
- 39°25'54.0"N 76°03'20.7"E
- 39°21'29.2"N 76°03'04.1"E
- 37°55'00.4"N 77°21'05.3"E
... 55 more
The satellite image above is Yining Vocational School. We can compare images in 2017 (left) and 2018 (right).
Specialists in prison design and architecture, Retained by BBC News, have estimated that the Dabancheng re-education camp could house up to 130,000 inmates.
Shawn Zhang located the address of this "neighborhood center" re-education camp. Artush industrial park: 39°38'37.9"N 75°59'34.5"E.
The outside of a newly built internment camp in Turpan, Xinjiang. Picture by Wall Street Journal reporter Josh Chin.
Names for internment camps in Chinese government tender notices cited by Zenz

- 去极端化教育转化基地 (July 19, 2016)
  - Eliminating extremism education transformation center
- 教育转化中心 (November 14, 2016)
  - Education transformation center
- 司法局教育转化培训中心 (March 9, 2017)
- 法制教育转化培训中心 (April 17, 2017)
  - Legal system education transformation training center
- 集中封闭教育培训中心 (June 12, 2017)
  - Concentrated closed education training center
- 法制教育转化学校、职业技能培训学校 (August 15, 2017)
  - Legal system education transformation school and vocational skills training school
- 教育培训转化及矫治中心 (February 7, 2018)
  - Transformation training education correction center
- 教育转化培训基地 (December 12, 2017)
  - Education transformation training base
- 职业技能教育培训中心 (April 25, 2018)
  - Vocational skills education training center
Qarakash (Moyu), Sept. 2016. Poster of Xi Jinping with Uyghurs, next to the gate of the Moyu County Concentrated Educational Transformation Training Center.
The Uyghur sign reads:
Qaraqash nahiylik (sic! should be nahiyilik) merkezleshturup terbiyilesh (sic! should be terbiyilesh) özgertish merkizi.

Qaraqash county based centralized educate-changing (change by educating) center.
Khotan (2017)
Khotan re-ed center and detention camp
Alarming expansion of the same Hotan camp since spring 2018

- Second re-education camp: 114,000 sqm
- First re-education camp: 80,000 sqm
- New compound (factories?)
- Second detention center (identified by Planet Labs satellite images, August 2018)
和田县集中教育转化培顺中心

“Hotan County Concentrated Education Conversion Center”

(2017)
24 Jan 2019  Perhaps due to foreign attention and criticism of the re-education camps system, the sign has been changed to read:

和田县行政学院分院

“Hotan County Administrative Academy Branch Campus”

A screening wall has been erected, perhaps to cover the old sign or block observation of activity at ground level within.
Foreign journalists invited on prepared and closely supervised tours of certain re-education camps.
ICE’s chief called family detention ‘summer camp.’ Here’s what it looks like inside.

Women and children walk across a field at a family detention center. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

By Maria Sacchetti
August 25, 2019 at 8:23 a.m. EDT

DILLEY, Tex. — More than a year after he drew criticism for comparing family detention to a “summer camp,” the nation’s top immigration enforcer stood in a clean hallway in America’s largest family detention complex and gestured around himself.

“Take a look,” said Matthew Albence, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s acting director.

Across the hall was a dental office, with a reclining chair and sterile instruments. The cafeteria was serving hot dogs, lime-cilantro chicken, tortillas and green salad — all you can eat.

Kindergartners sat on a colorful mat in a schoolhouse trailer and learned to sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It.”

ICE allowed news photographers and television cameras into the family residential center on Friday because, they said, some news reports and members of Congress have confused the Border Patrol’s cramped, short-term jails — criticized by immigration attorneys and Democratic lawmakers for their “horrendous” conditions — with the comprehensive family detention centers that ICE is attempting to expand.
Photo of a re-education classroom released by Chinese media in Kashgar. Note the fence to separate instructor from the students—here open. The slogan above the blackboard reads “Good days come from the Party’s good policies.” There is a TV camera in the bottom left—this may be an event held for the press.
“Chairman [of XUAR Shohrat Zakir] said trainees [in Re-education Centers] will have to learn the common language of the country, gain modern science knowledge and enhance their understanding of Chinese history, culture and national conditions through standardized plans and textbooks. . . .

Liu Caiyu. “Xinjiang stability on the rise.” Global Times 2018/10/16
“... They need to learn legal knowledge, including the content of the Constitution, Criminal Law and Xinjiang's counter-extremism regulations, as well as acquire at least one vocational skill during their study to suit local conditions and the job market. Courses on clothing and footwear making, food processing, electronics assembly, typesetting and printing, hairdressing and e-commerce have been set up.”
Photo of the inside of a cell in a “detention center” or kanshousuo. (看守所 is written on the back of the vest of a man in the bottom left.) It was sent anonymously via WeChat to a Xinjiang researcher with a claim that it was a center in Xinjiang; others have identified it as from interior China, possibly Anhui.

Kazakh and Uyghur former detainees have confirmed that the general layout of this cell is similar to places they were held. One woman commented that the cell pictured here is cleaner, newer and less crowded than the detention cell she was held in.

Note “distance learning” set-up, with video screen and reading materials; security camera to the top left of the video screen; bare light bulbs. Detainees sleep on the bench that they are sitting and writing on.
Internees in the “Hotan Vocational Skills Educational Center,” in still from video released by CCTV.

Clothing made by Xinjiang camp internees are reportedly forced to work for little or no wages. Some were identified in the supply chain for Badger Sportswear sold in USA, until pulled off the shelves by the manufacturer. Other companies, including H & M, Target, Nike, Muji and Indiqlo are still investigating their sourcing.

Suspected factories next to a “re-education” facility in Khotan (Yutian)
14 July 2019


ABC Australia
Dilnur Abdurehim, a trained nurse, is forced to work making textiles for a Shengshi Huaer Culture Technology Co, in a technology park 30 kilometres north of Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi. Workers are brought to the site in shackles and handcuffs from internment camps.

Gulzira Auelkhan, Chinese citizen of Kazakh ethnicity, was forced to work in another factory making gloves.

"Cotton On and Target investigate suppliers after forced labour of Uyghurs exposed in China's Xinjiang"

Shirts for Work and Leisure

With over a hundred years of history, Oxford Shirts are common to find in any men’s wardrobe. Made of organic cotton delicately and wholly handpicked in Xinjiang, the men’s Oxford Shirts of MUJI are soft and breathable with a clean design, fitting well as a shirt or as an outer. For ladies’ shirts made of washed cotton, the natural texture is accompanied by different collar designs such as stand collar and button down for flexible daily coordination.
At Muji, on Newbury St. in Boston, 12 November 2019
The Xinjiang Production Construction Corps (Bingtuan) is the largest producer of cotton in Xinjiang.

China produces up to 30% of the world’s raw cotton. Xinjiang grows 80% of China’s cotton. The XPCC, a massive SOE, grows most of Xinjiang’s cotton.

Xinhua News report 17 Feb. 2019
Volkswagen CEO Diess 'not aware' of China's Uighur camps | DW News

Volkswagen runs auto plant in Xinjiang
Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019 (Senate)

Uighur Intervention and Global Humanitarian Unified Response Act (UIGHUR Act) (House)

Bipartisan support for both House and Senate versions.

Calls for Global Magnitsky Sanctions against officials implementing repressive policies

Calls for FBI to investigate intimidation of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrghiz PRC citizens in the US.

Calls for Uyghur rights to be monitored with a dedicated official as Tibetan affairs are currently
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