**Ezra Vogel:** Welcome to our critical issues confronting China. This'll be our last session before the holidays. We'll resume late in January, and we're very fortunate to have with us Jim Millward, who on the Xinjiang question has distinguished himself both as a historian who's been working on the issues for a long time with a lot of general background in Qing history, a great linguist who not only does work in Chinese, but also in Japanese reads Russian and Spanish and keeps up with all those issues. After he was an undergraduate at Harvard in East Asian languages, he went on to Stanford where he... for many years. He worked on Qing history and he's been working on Xinjiang for a long time. Some people have said that his "Eurasian Crossroads" is still the... He's written a more recent book on the Silk Road and a number of other important books in between. He's often now quoted in issues related to Xinjiang because he's kept up with the issue, very passionate in defending Uyghur intellectuals. And so we're very fortunate that considering how important the issue is how much he's in demand now as the Uyghur issue is on the front burner. ... Uyghur has been a very sensitive work for a long time. In 2004, a group of historians working on Xinjiang combined through a book written by Frederick Starr, and already all the people who have been working, met who some various scholars including John Littman and Gardner Martin, others have all interrogating the Xinjiang ever since that time. So, amidst all this great difficulty, James has kept up his scholarship, kept up as informing. And so, we're very pleased that he took the time to be with us, Jim it's yours.

**Nick Drake:** Just excuse me Professor Millward if I could just jump in real quick. Because I assume people have plenty of questions. The way to do it is to enter them in the Q and A tab at the bottom of your screen. If you want to identify yourself please put your name and your institution so we know where you're coming from. And then if you don't there's an anonymous question function. Alright take it away.

**James Millward:** Well, thank you very much Ezra. And thanks to the Fairbank Center for having me. I know Ezra was trying to get me come speak about Xinjiang at the center for many years now. And I always said no because I didn't have anything new to say I'd written my book and there were other people coming along. Unfortunately now, there's just so much to talk about for kind of the wrong reasons that I couldn't say no. So.

**Ezra Vogel:** Thank you, thank you.

**James Millward:** For whatever reasons it is nice to be able to I guess I can say return to Harvard and to speak about this and then what I'll try to do today is to put some historical perspective and try and explain from a longer point of view what's going on now and why I think it's going on now and what the problems are. So I'm gonna, I have a PowerPoint. So, I'm gonna share my screen and pull that up, all right. So, that's visible right again Ezra.

**Ezra Vogel:** Yeah so visible.
James Millward: Okay, all right. So I won't spend a lot of time on to going over what's been happening there's in Xinjiang since the last four or five years, or yeah I guess since 2016, 2017 or so I think everyone here is well aware. You can kind of break it down into the surveillance regime, into the arrests and internments. And I say arrests and internments because a lot of the media attention has been on these camps, which are have been the system of camps which has been built out since 2017. But along with that and very much part of the same system have been people put into prisons at an unprecedented rate including a lot of intellectuals and so on. The birth suppression campaign via the family planning policies but which are aggressively enacted and pursued in Xinjiang, while they're actually being retreated from in many ways in Han regions of the PRC. Recently, most in the news has been the issue of forced labor or non-voluntary labor in factories involving sending of people from Southern and other parts of Xinjiang to factories all around Xinjiang and even in Eastern China. In many ways, family separations both because of internments and arrests. because of sending people to remote factories to work, because of the boarding school system, all really amount to an attack on the family and much more broadly an ongoing assault on Uyghur culture, cultural patrimony, the Uyghur language and so on. So, all of these things really come together to a situation which is increasingly being talked about as genocide or ethnocide or cultural genocide, certainly crimes against humanity and certainly things that we really wish we weren't talking about in regard to the People's Republic of China in the year 2020.

So, this paragraph here kind of pulls together, what I'm trying to say in this talk. We're looking at something right now that really is unprecedented but not unrelated to the trajectories of both development and assimilationist or ethnic policies in Xinjiang by the CCP over the years. There's been a heightening of the assimilationist at an abandoning of pluralist approaches to diversity at these cultural diversity or cultural autonomy in favor of outright assimilation. And of course this has been justified in the name of counter terrorism and also increasingly poverty alleviation. So, I won't read this out to you. Hopefully you have been able to skim it while I've been talking but that's the sort of the general point. And I will say if anyone's interested, I can make available a PDF version of this of my slides. And I have actually a much longer version which has links to a lot of studies and news accounts and stuff. So if you, I don't have time to kinda go into all the sourcing about what we're talking about today. But I can provide the PDF, which has all the information in it through I guess the Fairbank Center, all right.

So, we're not gonna linger in this next set of slides but I did want to sort of simply point this out because this is again the issue about imprisonment through the legal system such as it is, as opposed to the extra legal internments which have gotten most of the attention. And so, this is all from Chinese sources, statistical yearbooks, judicial sources and so on, gathered and collated by various groups. And you can see that in 2017 suddenly, the number of people going through the legal system and being imprisoned in Xinjiang went from a baseline of like 27,000 or so in previous years suddenly up to over 200,000. And then with another additional increase of 360,000 in the next year. The 2019 figures are roughly comparable. They haven't been tabulated into a graph, unfortunately I don't have them here. So, we're talking about this mass imprisonment as well as the camps.

And of course this how we got to know about what was going on. We suddenly could see from websites all of the allocation of funding the tenders for bids to build out the security system. Echoing that same trend in a really kind of terrifying way. You see, this is just from the Bureau of Hotan in the South. You see this sudden uptick in building of Youeryuan. Actually this is
kindergarten, but it's for children from as young as I guess, 18 months up through the lower school. Suddenly see new facilities needed, house children because their parents were taken away. There's been a lot of work concluding by Rian Thum, a PhD himself, about the destruction of architecture, in particular dome and minaret, gateways on mosques and in many places whole mosques. And this has been going on for some years and we've confined it again quite easily through before and after satellite photos.

There's been a really full scale attack on the Uyghur language in particular the script in which it's written. Uyghur publications there're no longer being books published in Uyghur; the textbook system in the what's called bilingual education which is actually Han medium education with a Uyghur language and culture class. A new set of textbooks were rolled out starting around 2010 and they're old Uyghur texts that had been examples of old Uyghur writing were replaced with old Chinese writing that is old Chinese wenyen materials translated into Uyghur, that's just one example. And then here in this banner poster, outside of a school in Urumchi in 2018, you can probably figure out what it would be, right? It says nin hao on the left romanization in Chinese for hello. And then on the right, it also has Yahximu siz which is the romanization. And it would have been the Uyghur script above it Yahximu Siz as well, but that's been literally cut out of the poster in 2018. And that's just emblematic of this kind of erasure across the board. You may have read about the anti-halal movement in Xinjiang but also in Northwest China and other places where you could no longer write halal in Arabic script on restaurants. It's a similar anti-Arab script kind of movement. And then the forced labor issue which ought to be talking about a little bit more later.

All right so, I think it's really and I'm guilty of perhaps not using the word colonial that much before I haven't entirely as shoot it but I haven't made it front and center simply because it raises hackles so much. But I think at this point it really is worthwhile examining the colonial nature of Xinjiang within the Qing empire and within the republics the Chinese republics in the 20th century. And there's a perennial problem which is still with us. This is something I pointed out in my first book "Beyond the Pass" that Xinjiang was managed through huge central government subsidies or actually through huge subsidies coming from Eastern China the way the Qing get it is they made individual rich provinces, directly finance Xinjiang by sending silver overland themselves. They didn't take it from the Qing treasury. But this was always necessary to subsidize the maintenance of control in the region. And from the beginning, there was an effort to mitigate some of those costs by investing in settlements, agricultural development for Han and Hui coming from Northwest China also for some Manchu or Solon and Sibe peoples in the North, Mongols were settled there, on state farms and state pastoral organizations. But this was combined in the Qing as the new Qing history has talked about a lot with a pluralistic approach to administration. Mongol princes ruling Mongols. Uyghur Begs and Hakim Begs in charge of Uyghur regions and so on. Excuse me. And there were in fact strong restrictions on Han settlement in Southern Xinjiang. It was a very much a part of the policy which has maintained through the 1830s.

So, that was sort of the initial Qing approach onto this issue. And then Gong Zizhen in a famous essay on making Xinjiang a province in 1820. And this was kind of a policy paper that he wrote after a series of border intrusions in the Kashgar area. So, in the early 1800s and he said the solution to this was to make Xinjiang a province. So, Xin Sheng was the term. Now that was really a coded way of saying, put Xinjiang under the Han style that is Jun Xian style administration, not under Uyghurs and Manchu and Mongols and so on, but make it a province
like Sichuan, say, and doing so investing in agriculture, moving Han out there to grow crops to thereby raising the tax base. And of course there was an assumption there that Han would be better at farming than the Xinjiang natives would be. And of course it is unbalanced and assimilation strategy, which had this ethnic edge which also actually impinged upon or have challenged Manchu governance in the peripheries.

And so it was politically untenable in 1820 but after the big rebellion, the Hui rebellion in Gansu area that spread out into Xinjiang. Zuo Zongtang and then the actually the first new governor of Xinjiang, Liu Jintang, they came up really suggested the same sorts of things. First of all, famously Zuo suggested that Xinjiang should be reconquered and shouldn't be left, it belonged part of the empire and so that was the first big investment. But then it would be followed up. He argued by Han settlement, agricultural development, transport development. He planted rows of willow trees along the roads and set up water depots. Some of those willows, where their continuation was still visible in the 20th century, in order to integrate the region. And again to make it bloom increase the tax base and thereby make it secure. This was the idea. And Zuo and Liu Jintang, in this first post reconquest periods, they implemented efforts at Confucian education in Confucian academies for a really very small number of Uyghur elites. But Eric Schluesseal has written about this recently as well and it wasn't terribly successful. They gave these Uyghur students Chinese names, all of us who studied Chinese have had the experience of it being given a Chinese name. Sometimes they can be quite ideological. One of the Chinese names given to a Uyghur boy on this system that I encountered in the archives was, "Ai Du Shu," loves to read books. It was the name that they gave to his name is began with A consonant. So, in any case we see here, Zuo and Liu were trying to do here. And ultimately Xinjiang was made a Sheng. There was this big administrative remake of the region and not entirely but a beginnings of a move away from Qing style pluralist administration to a more Han focused. And so the official who came in, the governor in Urumchi and so on they were after Han there was still a general in the North, a Jiangjun and who would be a Manchu for a while, all right.

So, that's sort of the deeper history. I'm gonna jump ahead though to the PRC period. So that we can talk more about contemporary issues. So, I would say that the Chinese Communist party does have a colonial problem in Xinjiang or in the Uyghur region. And that problem begins with not admitting it's a colonial problem. I asked one of my younger colleagues who works a lot on de-colonial studies or post-colonial studies. And, of course there's a very vast literature which I don't claim to have read very much of and it gets quite theoretical sometimes, but I was asking what's the difference between studying colonialism and post-colonialism and her response was well you first have to recognize that there was colonialism before you can get into the post-colonial kind of period.

So, I think that's what we're sort of facing here. Xinjiang remains expensive to rule and that it continually absorbs subsidies from the central government. And now as I'll mention in a moment from other provinces and rich cities of the East just as in the Qing period. It has a non-Chinese native population that is persistently still non-Chinese. Although I would argue that not losing one's identity as a Uyghur does not mean one can not be, a good PRC citizen obviously, right? And there are in fact there was at least a flourishing Uyghur middle-class the idea that Uyghur don't speak Chinese across the board is completely untrue and so on and so forth. So, there has been plenty of adoption too and acceptance of life in China by the Uyghurs. But at the same time they haven't given up cultural Islam or even religious faith in Islam or many of the other characteristics of being Uyghur or Kashgar or Kyrgyz and so on. But of course it's, the one
problem that has emerged over the past decades has been that ratcheting up of pressure, I'm
calling it repression, ratcheting up of that tends to produce more resistance or more or at least
more acts of resistance which then reproduces more broad spread repression and then we get into
this kind of a cycle. And I think if you simply look back over the past decades in Xinjiang it's
really very easy to see that cycle working.
And then right now we've seen and all along, but in particular recently, attempts to deal with
these problems. I say with by putting forward a false historical narrative and saying Xinjiang has
been part of China since the Han dynasty. And the reason I say that's an attempt to address the
problem is because. With recent international criticism of the policies in the Uyghur region. One
of the first official responses, the very first response was to deny that the camps existed. And
then the next one was to argue that they were vocational training centers. But right along that
time the PRC rolled out another white paper which began with this narrative about the Han
dynasty. And we've seen the mayor of Urumchi has written or published an op-ed saying that
Uyghurs are not Turks. They're not descended from the Turkic Khaganate. There have been
academics sucking up to authorities by writing papers, linguistic papers, that report to show that
Uyghur is actually derived from the Chinese language. It's not a Altaic language. So, this attempt
to write a narrative that writes this region in and denies its central Asian character and history.
It's really ridiculous extremes right now.
And yet that's meagre response to this kind of criticism. Well, Xinjiang belongs to China, right?
Stop repressing the minorities of Xinjiang. The response we gets very often is Xinjiang belongs
to China, right? And that just doesn't work cause it doesn't address the basic fundamental issues,
all right. So, the more material ways in which the PRC has attempted to address the difference
nature of the colonial issues of Xinjiang has been through broadly speaking two policy
trajectories, one of which is development, the other is diversity management. And now the
argument here is a reasonable one, developing the region can of course make people happier to
be part of the PRC. It can reduce the set that way. It can also reduce the costs of management of
the region. And so it's a good thing to try to do. And then the other approach has been through
diversity management. And this of course is one corner of ethnicity policies of the minzu policies
all across the PRC. The famous identification of 55 minority minzu along with the Han the
celebration at some periods of that difference to use our contemporary vocabulary, we could see
this as really a multicultural policy or kind of a form of diversity management diversity regime
that has been at some times at some periods in particular the 1950s and 1980s in China. Really
very liberal and open at least on paper and in public expressions of inclusiveness of non-Hans
peoples but without challenging their ethnic difference, right? And so I mean you can't get more
inclusive than putting people on the currency, putting people on the stamps, putting people on the
spring festival television gala show, right?
And it's very easy as a westerner to look at that and see it's kitschiness. Which it is and certainly
in the 2008 Olympics, when minority people, when children, mainly Han children, were dressed
up as minorities and paraded around in that display of diversity that got some sort of criticism
from international bodies saying that there was cultural co-optation and so on, but at the same
token that is a kind of state celebration of diversity and very different from denial of diversity or
attempts to assimilate it out of existence. And we've seen both extremes and China and now
we're very much at a assimilationist extreme. Now, kind of inherent in certain ways in well, or
not separate from either development or diversity approaches is this settler colonialism approach
to development but also as a form of trying to deal with ethnic difference, right? Because if you
can flood the zone with people from the metropole then that of course arguably can or from the point of view of authorities can help secure the region, secure the frontier. But of course it also exacerbates the problem by creating a sense precisely a sense that one is being flooded. Okay, so I'll talk both about development and about the ethnic policies in a little bit more detail but still in a very kind of broad outline way. All right, so very broadly sketched from in the 1950s, the Uyghur region was really tied to the USSR. And at that point actually Uyghur was transliterated into Cyrillic script that's just one symbolic example of this. The USSR was investing in oil production in Northern Xinjiang and they got a cut of that. That all ended of course after the Sino-Soviet split. And for the next roughly 20 years, the reason was pretty much left as a strategic buffer. There wasn't much development there. Of course there are other things going on all over China, which slowed down development, but again one emblematic aspect of that, and this is something I experienced in 1990, is that for all that time the real way going from Lanzhou in Gansu out to Urumchi and this is the only rail line, it was single track, single-line. So, that the eastbound train had to pull over onto a siding to let the westbound train go by and it took 24 hours or something like that to make that trip. if not more, not like 48, I guess, yeah. So, I've been that some of this audience might have as well, it's a steam train and there was no train all the way to Kashgar until 1999 and again that's telling. Incidentally in 1899, the author Jules Verne wrote an adventure story about a trip all the way across Eurasia on a new train line. And this was science fiction when Jules Verne wrote that at the end of the 19th century, and his train line went all the way from the Caspian sea through Kashgar all the way to Beijing. So, he imagined a hundred years before thinking about the kind of cutting edge or new technology of the 19th century. He imagined this and it wasn't really for a century until that train was actually built there.

Okay so in 2000, Xinjiang was a big part of the Xibu Dakaifa program, the Great Development of the West. And some of the economists who've looked back on that program have criticized it in regards to Xinjiang for focusing on resource extraction on building of transportation which has been very useful. And this led to other kind of multiplier effects, but generally for neglecting the poorer parts of Xinjiang particularly the rural South. So, from Kashgar to Hotan and around in that area in particular where most of the Uyghurs are concentrated. And for neglecting human capital investment in favor of brick and mortar and big projects. And one sign of this emblematic example of this that was pointed out by the Uyghur economist, Ilham Tohti in his writings about this before he was arrested for separatism and given a life sentence. He was an economist at Minzu Daxue, but he pointed out that the lack of public education in the countryside in Xinjiang or for-free public education, lament that poor farmers were forced to decide between educating children or just bringing them back onto the farm to work. And so this, really limited the ability of poor rural Uyghurs to learn Chinese at a level which would allow them to participate in the market and be entrepreneurs and so on. And it also restricted education of girls in particular. I guess this is a problem in other parts of China as well. I don't know about the education system generally but this is very relevant in Xinjiang given the argument of the PRC state that so-called vocational training schools to worst education is necessary given the fact that people are ignorant. They haven't provided free education up until very recently. And then since 2010, there's been the counterpart assistance programs or the pairing or partner assistance program. And this began to be amplified after the Urumchi events of 2009.

And this is a very interesting. I don't know if it was intentional or not but a very interesting echo of the Qing period because rather than providing assistance and directly from the central...
government in Beijing, this calls on 19 rich provinces and municipalities of Eastern parts of the PRC to create direct relationships with sister counties and cities in Xinjiang and to allocate a small percentage of the rich provinces annual revenue to Xinjiang development and also send out consultants and plan group projects to round up companies to invest and so on. And so this program has been critiqued as well for having many of the same kind of mistakes that the big development projects around the world have often had. Being project-based, being top-down for insufficient consultation with local people about what they really need. And in particular if you're asking Shenzhen to go help develop Kashgar, well Shenzhen has been very good at developing Shenzhen right? With a combination of export led model and investment coming in from Hong Kong and elsewhere, building industrial parks, commercial free trade zones and so on. And that's what Shenzhen has tried to do in Kashgar. But there have been news stories recently about some of these new developments, these trade cities and so on becoming ghost towns within a couple of years of their construction in Kashgar, because of the conditions that are just not the same there. And so that's been one of the problems of this. Yuhui Li has written a really good book about this program in Xinjiang which gets into a lot of the data.

Now more recently though, one of the results of this partnership program is that it has connected the Eastern provinces and cities and then the companies that they have kind of brought in often their own local Guangzhou companies or Beijing based companies they've brought them in. They're now directly connected to local administrations and to securitization and this whole carceral regime and many of the factories in which we first identified Uyghur or forced labor, were in fact factories built by Eastern provinces and cities in the new industrial zones in Xinjiang, which are constructed since 2010 under this assistance program. And factories run by again companies, Eastern companies that were corralled into this whole thing by their local authorities back East. And so this has really created a huge tangled mess with regard to the tainting of supply chains. And again I'll get to this in a moment and the tainting of really anything to do with factory labor in Xinjiang. You start following these threads through you'll see that responsible parties behind some of these factories aren't only based in Xinjiang, but they're also based in Guangzhou and Shenzhen and Beijing and the whole 19 of them. So, it's really a mess that has been created by embroiling these partners, the sister cities the sister provinces entangling them in the carceral regime in Xinjiang. Let's see, wanna make sure I don't talk too long, all right.

So, related to this is the issue of the Bingtuan or Xinjiang production construction Corp. Or as we probably should translate it to the Xinjiang production construction soldier Corps. There's another term that's used the big AI database system. And Xingjiang now the acronym is IJOP, integrated joint operations platform but that word operations is in Chinese zuozhan. So, it's military operations platform. So, we drop the military and the soldier out of this. I'm putting it back into this Xinjiang production construction Corp. In any case, this is a very interesting organization. It's like a state within a state, a kind of state owned enterprise on steroids within Xinjiang, it's independent of the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous regional government, and answers only to the party. It was established in 1949, 1950, as a way to deal with 80,000 Guomindang troops, who were stranded there when the Guomindang surrendered. And so they were settled there on the model of old Han dynasty tuntian and made soldier militia farmers. They were given wives brought out from Shanghai. Someone once told me that Shanghai prostitutes who were arrested for rehabilitation was shipped out to Xinjiang to marry Guomindang people which of course gave, you a really good class background unfortunately. Then I'm not sure how I haven't
seen that documented anywhere but that doesn't make sense. And so on the model of tuntian these militia were meant to settle their region to open up its agriculture. And I'm quoting here from Bao Yajun, a man from the organization department who was embedded with the Bingtuan in 2010 for a year and wrote a big study about it. And there's a couple articles that have come out in English from this. It's a really revealing study with a lot of calls for reform of the Bingtuan which would be important to look at it I think now.

Xi Jinping, the Bingtuan has been sort of anomalous that there were Bingtuan in other parts of China, also peripheral areas all of which have been dissolved in the Cultural Revolution. The Bingtuan was particularly violent, a source of instability in Xinjiang. A lot of the members see themselves in a very strongly nationalistic way as defending the frontier as the bulwark of China against barbarism. And they get quite heated about this as it did in the Cultural Revolution. So, the Bingtuan was actually dissolved after the Cultural Revolution and then reinstated in the 1980s I believe. In his recent speech in September, the third Xinjiang work forum, Xi Jinping reiterated party support for the Bingtuan. And in kind of interesting phrase to strengthen its organizational advantage and mobilization ability, so that it may be better able to achieve its special function that special function, which he didn't define but which everyone knows is basically protecting the frontier, right? One arm on the pick axe, one hand on the gun has been their slogan. So, this organization built its state farms very often on the best land. They got the river headwaters in the terrain basin so, that they get first crack at runoff water coming out of the mountains leaving what's left for Uyghur farmers. They've been more recently highly involved in city building, building new settlements. They've gone into all sorts of industry construction materials and so on. They now apparently recent study they have many, many subsidiaries and shell companies all over the world, which the kind of financial forensic folks are just beginning to sort of understand, but they still run at a huge loss.

And many people think while so much money has been invested in Xinjiang, why are the Uyghurs and Kazaks and others not grateful so much it's important to it, because really much of what has been poured into Xinjiang has been poured into the Bingtuan and not diversify to local peoples. So, something like 80 and 90% of their budget comes from the center this is according to Bao Yajun study in the 2010s. They have a huge overhead of pensioners because the people that they brought out and settled, they promised pensions, they promised education, they promised healthcare. And so, they're paying for a population of 2.8 million with only 700,000 productive employees. This is a couple years old but I don't think anything has really changed in the general ratio there. So, this is really ironically akin to the Manchu banners system, which became a really heavy burden on the Qing empire, when there were so many bannermen dependence, who had to be supported in order to maintain the military viability for the banners. So, it's a similar problem with any kind of colonial organization right, occupation.

Now, one of the interesting and most targeted and potentially most effective directions of recent sort of flurry of sanctions which the US government has applied to China in regard to the Xinjiang situation. Most interesting ones are directed at the Bingtuan. This relative little known organization has shown up in several of these listings and these sanctions. The public security Bureau of the Bingtuan was on the first entities listing. Bingtuan officials have been sanctioned through the Global Magnitsky law, the huge Esquel group, which is a huge wholesale manufacturer, vertically integrated wholesale manufacturer of clothing. They grow cotton or buy cotton from farmers directly in Xinjiang and then take it all the way up to chain to producing garments which are then internationally marketed, under international fashion brands all the
biggest names, Tommy Hilfiger and so on and so forth. So, they had a joint partnership with a subsidiary of the Xinjiang production construction Corp until I believe 2019 when they dissolved it. And they say they dissolved it because it was changes in the way in which they were supplying cotton, I believe is their reason. I've suggested maybe they saw the writing on the wall that it would not be useful to continue to be in bid with the Bingtuan but you can look on their website and actually see how they explain this. It's my speculation that was the reason. But that was the Esquel group was also listed on this Bureau of industry and security entities lists by the US. Now that's very interesting because this entities list it's export control entities. So, the entities there are those that are subject to special review when someone wants to export particular technology to those entities.

So, I don't believe there's anything that Esquel technologically needs that might be exported from the United States. Someone suggested perhaps robotics maybe so. But they're in the business of spinning cotton, making textiles, making apparel. So, the US is using the entities list I think to name and shame here. And it's interesting that they singled out a scale for this. Just last week there's a much broader ban has put in place. The CBP issued a detention order or withhold release order. And the customs and border patrol will detain all cotton and cotton products including textiles originating with the Bingtuan in Xinjiang. It used to be just concerns about Xinjiang, now they're singling out the Bingtuan as well. How exactly one is going to determine that given the fact that goes into everything and is spread out through supply chains. That's an interesting question. Xinjiang produces 85% of China's cotton now. And this has been the culmination of a movement of cotton growing and also cotton spinning from Eastern China into Xinjiang over the last 20 years. It's been progressively increasing doubling down and Xinjiang as sort of the cotton bowl of China has been clearly a policy. And perhaps also cotton or lower level processing of cotton and production of cotton products in textiles in general. One could also argue has been moving out to Xinjiang as well perhaps as part of this process of chasing remaining cheap labor, sort of deeper and deeper into the PRC hinterland. As the stock of peasant girls willing to work for very little in factories in the East is depleted. So, there seems to have been a policy to kind of move all of this further and further out into Xinjiang. So, 85% of China's cotton comes from Xinjiang. We don't know how much of that or I haven't found the figures that perhaps could be found by tabulating and comparing different statistical yearbooks. But we don't know exactly how much of that is grown by the Bingtuan, but the Bingtuan itself claims to grow a lot of it. It certainly probably both buys up supply grown from communes or from independent growers and processes that it also grows its own on these huge state farms, mechanized, cotton harvesting in Xinjiang using the most advanced harvesters which now can harvest cotton in a way that maintains high quality. It used to be until quite recently that handpicked cotton was a better quality, cause automated harvesting would break up the fibers. Now they've got the most advanced harvesting and they advertise it as one of their great comparative advantages here the XPCC, right? So, it's claiming it's reaching new Heights in the harvest of cotton. I think this is in 2019, perhaps 2018, 2019 yeah. So, some large amount of Xinjiang's cotton, comes from the Bingtuan. And that of course is a large amount of China's own 85% of cotton. China also imports cotton from outside to use in clothing. So, I don't know how exactly all of this is going to be sorted out but what the regime in Xinjiang has now done has really implicated the Bingtuan and with it all of Xinjiang and with it potentially all of these partners in this whole regime with the camps and forced labor and birth suppression and everything else. And the Bingtuan is still recruiting people from Eastern China, advertising
education, housing, guaranteed high salary jobs for people with navy registration and good political character. All right, so it's almost 1:20. I want to leave time for.

**Ezra Vogel:** Well Jim, one of the tough questions I would like to ask is why do you think in 2017, there was this kind of added new push? What were the circumstances that led to that push at that time?

**James Millward:** So, I think. So, two things what obviously, I haven't talked about terrorism yet. In 2013 and 14, there were four events which are clearly Jihadi style attacks on civilians to make a political point. We don't know a great deal about it. And that includes the Kunming attacks, two attacks in Urumchi and then this Beijing vehicular assault, did some weird things about some of them we'd like to know more than we do, but simply from seeing what happened, I'm comfortable calling those terrorism. But, contrary to very widespread belief in the think tank world and outside of China as well, much of what else has been going on, I would categorize as unrest rather than as terrorism. A lot of it involves the police. A lot of it comes out of police action in going into people's houses looking for Qurans or taking veils off of women, or chasing down groups of people who were praying in the desert. A lot of it seems to be mass incidents not that different from the kind of mass incidents that we are told. There's tens of thousands of in the rest of China every year, right? Villagers upset at a local policy land appropriation, appropriation of pension funds, environmental damage. So, they converge on the local government office or family planning issues. And then things get very violent. And the difference between how these issues are treated in Eastern China and how they're treated in Xinjiang, is that in Xinjiang everything is terrorism and the police shoot first. As they did in the Urumchi in 2010, excuse me 2009 in Urumchi the demonstrations there. They were violently repressed in a way it was not even terror men or certainly Hong Kong recently have been violently repressed immediately that is on the very day of the first demonstration, right? But that's what happens in Xinjiang, because of this terrorism label. So, in 2013 2014 there were these events. The entire issue of Uyghur nationalism had been characterized since the early 2000s, as one of terrorism separatism and extremism. And that branding and approach still applied because of unrest of all kinds was continuing. Xi Jinping transferred Chen Quanguo from Tibet, where he was known for having stabilize the situation through various kinds of policies including good policing and other things like that. And so he was transferred over in 2016 and right away began implementing the policies that we've seen. So, I would say the proximate reasons is the continuing unrest in Xinjiang in the years before 2016, 2017. But the longer-term reasons are that unrest was itself the result of increasingly oppressive approaches to Uyghur culture really which were triggered in turn by the events of 2009, the Urumchi riots and so on. So, it's sort of this escalation again, this repression resistance repression kind of cycle and Xi Jinping after coming into office decided to do something about it. Now I mean there's an interesting angle on this which I haven't really looked into and I don't know. I mean Ezra maybe if you wanna write another big biography of a Chinese. One interesting thing about Xi Jinping here his father, Xi

**Ezra Vogel:** Zhongxun yes.

**James Millward:** Zhongxun right?
**Ezra Vogel:** Yes

**James Millward:** Was closely involved with the United Front and is known as someone who worked closely with the Tibetan people in particular and as sympathetic to kind of indigenous Tibetan elites and others. And was someone who was well-liked by minzu. Now so, again I'm speculating here with absolutely no evidence other than this, but if what we wanted to go all kind of psycho biographical about this and to think about Xi Jinping's approach to ethnicity versus that of his father, maybe there's something there because I think one of the most notable things that Xi Jinping has done has been to push the idea of the Zhonghua minzu of a kind of super minzu that all of its characteristics are those of Han Chinese, but that everyone really should follow it on. So, in addition to the Xinjiang policies there's the so-called anti-Arabization or the scientization of religion policies. Which again are literally going around knocking down domes and replacing them with Chinese style roofs on mosques. There's been a big push to people to speak only Chinese in schools including most recently in the Inner Mongolia. And why are they pursuing that particularly right now, given all of the international criticism that the PRC is getting for Xinjiang policies it would seem to be just kind of asking for more trouble, and yet he does seem to be pursuing it.

So, there was this discussion really from the 2010s and something which Mark Elliott has written about in this wonderful article on the search for the missing indigene in China, the so-called second generation minzu policy. And in that discussion there were sort of two sides. One was that the current minzu policies were good. They needed actually to be fulfilled to the letter of the constitution and various laws. And then there was a counter argument that no-no that approach the celebration of the different minzu was in fact bolstering national divisions and that China might break up like the Soviet Union had over those nationals divisions. And that debate went back and forth surprisingly openly in party journals and anthropological literature and so on. Xi Jinping very early on in his tenure weighed in at an ethnic work conference. And James Leibold has written about this. And didn't really come down directly in favor of the so-called second generation or deterritorializationing, in other words taking away the so-called autonomous regions of Xinjiang, Tibet, and so on.

But the policies that he's implemented very much trend in that direction. And he has been very much pushing emphasis on a national study, on the national language. In Xinjiang now, the word for Chinese that is officially used it's not putonghua so much it's not hanhua which many people used to use colloquially it's guoyu, right? The old term we used to know from Taiwan and in Singapore and so on but they're using national language and national studies and the nation that sense of guo is increasingly being defined by Xi Jinping, along to fit Han mold right, Chinese mold. We should open up to the sort of general questions. I don't want to get into the people might've been seeing, what I put up here this thing about ETIM. There really was a big mistake made by the Bush administration in agreeing to list this organization. Sean Roberts at George Washington university has a new book called, "The War on the Uyghurs." He goes into all of the history of this. He's talked to Uyghur groups, he's talked to the supposed terrorist groups into some who really are violent people. And he untangles is very clearly, but the long and the short of it is just a couple of weeks ago, so-called ETIM was officially delisted. And this was announced by Secretary Pompeo. And this is really a phenomenal admission on the part of the US that this was a mistake in the first place. But what's kind of what's tragic about it, is that this was a mistake in particularly the use of Chinese language from the Chinese white paper. This US
mistake created the sense that there was a unitary, international, organized terrorist organization responsible for everything that happened in Xinjiang. And literally the US statement said that. And so that has spawned a thousand think tank studies, ever since which can look back to the US putting its imprimatur on PRC propaganda to say that there is such an organization when there really wasn't. There was not that kind of thing. So, we're coming out of global war on terror as a framework in which we've seen this. And well overdue that this has happened. So maybe, I think I've talked enough. There's more that I could say, but let me just leave this. I'll leave this screen up for a minute if you wanna go to questions.

**Ezra Vogel:** Yeah one person who's wants to ask a question is Paul Heer who has been a national intelligence officer for many years working on China and also works with foreign relations. I wonder Mark, if you could call on Paul Heer to let him ask the question himself. Paul is that possible? If not then I would just read those questions.

[Speaker]: Yeah I'm trying to promote them now.

**Ezra Vogel:** Okay, Paul does that work. Yeah, here he comes Paul.

**James Millward:** He may be muted okay there we go.

**Paul Heer:** Okay no, I didn't realize there was gonna be the option here. One of the question was a very succinct one. And I think Dr. Millward due you addressed it in part. My question was basically would it be correct to characterize Beijing's policy in Xinjiang as clearly an outrageously excessive overreaction to what is nonetheless a legitimate however marginal but real terrorist threat?

**James Millward:** I think it's far, far more marginal than even reasonable people say. I mean, literally we can point to those four events in 2013 and 2014. Before that it was early 1990s there were a couple of bus bombings but really this it's been the dog that hasn't barked. And again, this is a little unfair to point this out but I think it's worthwhile that the Kunming, the Kunming the railway station was obviously a horrific event. 31 people were killed by 8 or 9 assailants. Exactly why they were there, though. It seems that they're trying to get out of China and were blocked at the border. This was in the middle of a movement when a lot of people were being smuggled, out of China through Southeast Asia. So, again there's weird things about it. Nonetheless, a horrible event but almost around exactly that same time, a Han man on a bus in Fujian lit a can of kerosene on fire, over an overpass and killed himself and 46 other people. And so, that's not treated as terrorism. None of these other mass incidents in rest of China treated as terrorism. And I think an awful lot of the unrest could be put down to the same kinds of problems that we see in other parts of China with local corruption and so on as I said before. And I actually, I mean in Sheila Gittens and coauthors have written an influential article recently where they advocate sort of how we should talk about the terrorism issue with China. And there's a lot that's really good in that article, I have assigned it myself but I think we are well beyond usefulness of terrorism as a framework for discussing it. The degree of the problem is very small and they have a much larger other problem. Obviously I'm not gonna have a lot of fans in Beijing right away by calling it a colonial problem with more time and I'm actually thinking of writing something along these
lines. I would want to compare it to other colonial issues to other issues of racism in the United States and with the United States, US... European expansion across North America. Provides many very very parallel situations, Canadian and US boarding schools and religious endeavors to convert native peoples or first nations to white ways. I mean there are many very striking parallels. So, when we talk about the camps in Xinjiang and concentration camps and people bridle at that word concentration camp, I think it's appropriate. The reference point shouldn't be the Holocaust so much as the first uses of concentration in Cuba and in South Africa and in frankly in the US with Japanese-Americans putting a group in a state of exception in a government's terms on the basis of their ethnic identity. Because they are seen on the basis of that ethnic or religious identity as a threat to society, therefore should not be treated with the same rights. That's precisely what's going on and the wheel has been reinvented in Xinjiang in recent terms. So, that's why I use this kind of terminology. And I think the terrorism frame has been very destructive for everything. And I think frankly it's very useful for China to hear from other voices that it's not terrorism they're dealing with. It's another kind of problem. So, that's why I object quite strongly to well maybe it's a little problem and they have so firmly overreacted to have illegalized aspects of mundane aspects of religious practice owning a Quran is effectively illegal can get you put in the camps in Xinjiang. That's how far they've gone by following this terrorism frame and it's time for, I think for their own good and for the good of Xinjiang's exports and everything else for all of our good. So, you kind of recognize that that's not the source of this problem.

Ezra Vogel: Here's a question from (indistinct). So, I was wondering if you could address the Uyghur crisis how it plays the international relations with China. And back to some multinational corporations seem to be hindering the efforts to address the problem. Nike and US grounding lobbying against bills to address this situation seems morally dubious. So, who are the people who are working on this issue? What do you think the next Biden administration, might be able to do that would be helpful? I mean that's my editor onto the end.

James Millward: Right right and it's all a part of that bigger question. So, to get to the start with the specifics then I'll broaden it out. The specifics are Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola it's recently been reported and thereby well be other companies, have been lobbying against a law that is moving through Congress now. A Uyghur forced labor law that there has been a law that did pass called the Uyghur human rights policy act. That law initially had forced labor provisions in it. It stalled in Congress although it had strong bipartisan support in the middle of the Trump administration is very little else did. Installed in Congress I think, because it was supposed by secretary I've been told by secretary Mnuchin and also from the white house who believed that it could overturn efforts. It could hinder efforts to reach this massive trade deal with China. Which is ironic because of course the billions in tariffs, hundreds of billions of tariffs which the Trump administration put on, or a more serious kind of economic problems now in case. That human rights bill was held up it eventually passed when they stripped out the labor provisions. So, now a new bill with those labor provisions is working its way through. That's what the corporations are worried about because it is very similar to what I just mentioned the listing of the of the Bingtuan and then withhold release order. This could make a rebuttable presumption. In other words, it could put the onus on corporations wanting to import goods from China or Xinjiang or perhaps China more broadly to prove that they have nothing to do with the Bingtuan or nothing
to do with forced labor. As opposed to the onus being on anyone accusing them of being connected to forced labor. And obviously switching that burden of proof over to the importer is something that companies are very concerned about.

But they're essentially I somewhat sympathize with them, because for the reasons I just pointed out and the reasons I went into this level of detail about the partnership assistance program, when you start looking if you start pulling out some of these threads, you see how involved, so many hundreds, thousands of corporations, hundreds of local administrations, all of Xinjiang, the Bingtuan and then now all of their Eastern partners in the partnership program are all involved in this. Everybody has been tainted by this. And now increasingly international corporations are now having to worry about it. So, I do sympathize with them as I sympathize in particular with the Esquel group that I mentioned before. They were in Xinjiang 20 years ago. They were setting up factories hiring Uyghur workers before any of this happened and they've been involved in it too. So, it's just a big mess that has been created by these policies and the international corporations are upset by it too. I think it's important for the next administration. Even as it should adjust its general China policies to avoid gratuitous provocations of China and to become much more strategic in the types of actions that it takes. I don't think the Trump China policy overall has been chaotic and very mixed. But I think these targeted approaches, Magnitsky sanctions, these kinds of entities listings, particularly when they've been able to frankly scare the monkey to kill the chickens or scare the chicken to kill the monkeys, I can never remember which it's causing reverberations through the entire global apparel industry and it's being picked up and young people in making their fashion consuming choices are aware of this. This is applying. This is a way to apply real pressure, which is much better than secretary Pompeo wagging his finger. And I think points out the fundamental problems and should encourage China to try to resolve them. Whereas if these issues are dealt with purely politically without paying attention to the global commercial aspects of them, then the Xinjiang and the issue of Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kyrgyz and other native peoples in Xinjiang that simply becomes another thing that US and China yell at each other about. And what about Islam comes into this and so on and so forth? So, I hope the Biden administration will continue this kind of careful targeted well-researched sanctioning of corporate and political entities that are involved with this. Even though they're going to get pushback from global corporations that find this very inconvenient.

Ezra Vogel: I wonder if you wanna add a little more if the Biden administration were wise enough to come to you and say what we should do about the Xinjiang problem? In addition to that targeted program for dealing with businesses, do you have an overall perspective or how would you deal with some of the Uyghur dissidents that come to the United States? And how would you approach China on these issues?

James Millward: So Uyghur, I don't know how many Uyghur dissidents, have ever come to the United States. Some become dissidents when they're here, I suppose some have. But mainly what we have right now, is not a large number, but we have exiles or refugees who have not been able to go back since all of this since their family members, started being interned and incarcerated. So I think, an easy step and a good step to make. And one that is beneficial for the United States in many ways would be to simply speed up the asylum process or to give a kind of amnesty to Uyghurs who are left high and dry in the United States because of all of this. Again I don't know the absent numbers it can't be more than a few hundred but the analogy to this is what the US did
after the Tiananmen events for Chinese students. Some of whom as I recall were given a kind of amnesty from immigration concerns. So, I think that would be a good first step. Many Uyghurs have been trying to work their way through the immigration system. Many have not wanted to claim asylum but they've had no choice. And they've been stymieing simply because the Trump administration has understaffed and has just thrown a spanner in the works for all of that. So, there've been people who've been waiting for years for an initial interview that the websites the US immigration service websites, say you will get within two weeks. There's still people who haven't gotten that. So anyway, that's an easy one I think which could be done. It won't please Beijing but, that's I think these are mainly professionals, speak many languages good thing. More broadly though, I think continuing these sort of targeted policies but the US really needs to for its foreign policy in general try to recover. Recover may not even be the right word, but try to establish a well to treat these issues with some humility given our own problems with regard to racism at home, with regard to xenophobic policies. The make America first approach of the Trump administration has really eroded a lot of us credibility internationally over these issues. And so, to suddenly come right back and start lecturing other countries about their diversity issues, it's probably not the most practical way to do it.

Unfortunately, how do you do this? It's an urgent situation that with people literally in camps and be in forced labor situation. I think some humility and recognition, and maybe even beginning to discuss, why the West is so appalled by what's going on in Xinjiang? Not just by analogy as I said before to the Holocaust, which I think is not really the good analogy but analogy to treatment of indigenous peoples in our own history and kind of gently pointing out these parallels and to show that this is seen as a great failure in our nations, in our societies. It's a failure globally. The legacies of colonialism as the black lives matter movement has shown really resonate and are of great concern particularly to young people all over the world. And that was actually very moving to me to see the kind of the global echoes of the black lives matter demonstrations in the United States following the death of George Floyd to see them in France and UK and Australia and even I think that Japan and so on. So, this is a global issue, right? And so, China now has been perpetrating some of these same kinds of sins of colonialism. Our hands are not clean, but we do have experience in this and experience of regret of this. And celebration of diversity is something which the first-generation minzu policies, the 1950s with its internationalist, Marxist, but the internationalist approach to the idea of the nation, the PRC came up with a really interesting not the same as liberal democracy history but an interesting approach to diversity regime. One which we I think many other countries could learn from. And so recognizing that in 1950s, it was you were better off as a minority in China than you would have been in the United States. It might be a kind of place to start this conversation. So, maybe this isn't something necessarily, which diplomats can do around the table in their first meetings. But I think it could be part of a broader society to society conversation. And that might help kind of explain where we're coming from on this and why it's such a bad idea to pursue those policies in Xinjiang.

Ezra Vogel: I had to apologize for so many people who've asked questions. I've been slowing scrolling down but one question from Ambassador Stapleton Roy, can you say a few words about separatism in Xinjiang? And then the final question, unfortunately Mark Elliott had to run to a meeting, but this is the question from Mark Elliott. So, if you could address these two questions as the final comments. And here's what Mark said, "We can readily see the move toward policies
in Xinjiang that are more aggressively assimilationist. And as you say, the shift has been counts mainly in terms of counter-terrorism or poverty amelioration. Have you seen any evidence of a broader shift in nationalities policy in China, as minzu tuanjie? Is it now being reinterpreted to minzu ronghe or assimilation or some similar redefinition of the Zhonghua Minzu? There's still a questioning of the model of duoyuanyiti established by Fei Xiaotong that has been in place for 40 years. So, those two questions for your final comments.

James Millward: Yeah okay, so on the issue of separatism. Just the other day I was reading an otherwise good news account. And in that kind of basic explanatory paragraph that so many articles in there have to have. It said something like as separatists have been waging a long-term campaign to achieve autonomy or to achieve independence for Xinjiang. Statements like that are quite commonplace. But if you actually think about, we have absolutely no evidence of that. We have no evidence of why any of this unrest happens, right? We are told endlessly by PRC propaganda, that it's due to the three evils of separatism extremism and terrorism. They're blending together religious motivations with nationalistic motivations as if they're inseparable. And I think there's an argument can be made for nationalistic desires in addition to or maybe even more than religious motivations. But I actually only realized this myself the other day we have very little evidence of even separatist impulses. We really don't, there are writings, there are people outside of China who want to have a independent East Turkistan organization, or East Turkistan republic, but all the main exile Uyghur political groups of the world, Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur America Association, the most influential ones renounced their open calls for independence or dropped them. Sometime ago, in return for being able to function as mainstream advocacy organizations, working with the EU, working with the US government in Australia and other places like this. And their concerns now are for protection of the people for cultural autonomy, for cultural preservation those kinds of things as with Tibet as well. So, there really is nobody who is except for very small numbers of Uyghurs outside of China, who's calling for an independent East Turkestan. And we have no evidence that there is any. And as I said before there is no group that is pursuing this. There is no organized international group of any size. There's definitely nothing that is organized within Xinjiang that's. So, I think obviously there are, I think people that are angry, people are concerned, people are terrified about what the Chinese state might do. There's great interests in preserving Uyghur culture. And I think now after what's going on, I think many people say the only way that which Uyghurs can be safe, is if they're free of the Chinese Communist Party. I wouldn't be surprised that those sediments have spread over the last few years. But I think before we talk about, is one of these things we've taken for granted without actually looking at it, that there is a separatist movement behind this. So, as for Mark Elliot's question, has there been signs of a shift towards, away from unity of the nationalities to mingling or even fusing of the nationalities? And Mark obviously knows the answer to this question. I can tell from the way he asked it. That there has been, the rhetoric has shifted and he's more expert on this than me having done this work study this but, the rhetoric has shifted in significant ways. And we've seen this in Xi Jinping's speeches at various ethnic work forums and so on. One thing that really struck me from the most recent, and this hasn't really been picked up that much in the press but the most recent Xinjiang, it was a Xinjiang work forum held in September. I referenced it in my talk. Xi repeated a phrase which has been in some earlier political announcements as well. That saying that the bloodlines of all the nationalities in Xinjiang are linked to those of the Zhonghua minzu. So, he used this with xuemai. Right so, and
this is as far as I can tell, I searched that phrase and I found it coming up here and there over the past couple of years, but not before that. But this seems to be hinting even at this racialist argument of unity, right? It's not the facial tone kind of anthropological argument that the various peoples come together and through their combined efforts and labor and aspirations will give birth to the Zhonghua minzu as a kind of super identity. That's what kind of Fei Xiaotong's duoyuanyiti, many origins, one essence, one substance, one body that's his argument. This is different from that. This is more a kin to what Chiang Kai-shek argued in China's destiny, that all the peoples of China and his peoples were divided into five, the Manchus, Mongols, the Muslims, the Han, and the Tibetans. But he said all of them came from the same stock all were signs of the Yellow Emperor. They just deviated from the core, from the root stock because of historical and geographical regions but they really were all the same people. So, he was thinking these racial terms. So, Xi Jinping introducing this term bloodlines. and maybe that's kind of a way of putting it but it does seem to add this kind of racialist sense to it. And certainly arguments that Uyghur language is actually Chinese, the Uyghurs are not descended from the Turkic Khaganate but rather from ancient Zhonghua minzu. The increasing treatment of Zhonghua minzu as a historical entity rather than as an ideological artifact, which we see across the board in these statements is likewise pushing towards this kind of racialized notion of a inherent Chinese group. And of course whenever you see, what are the characteristics of this Zhonghua minzu? They celebrate Chinese New Year. They speak Han, they speak Northern Mandarin and they are very loyal to the Chinese Communist Party, right? So, that's part of this state's cult. and this might be yeah we were talking before about the biography of Xi Jinping, I think this ties it together. This ties the China dream together, is kind of Confucianistic approach the efforts to create a state focused ideology and how minorities or so-called shaoshu minzu in China seems to challenge that homogeneous vision of a loyal Chinese identity, Zhonghua identity.

Ezra Vogel: Jim we're very grateful for your taking the time and sharing your extremely deep broad knowledge and thought and sympathy and understanding of what's going on in a very broad way. And we're very pleased and finally you have been willing to help us in the issues related to Uyghur. So, thank you very, very much.

James Millward: Well, it's been my pleasure and thanks to everybody who joined in. I wish I could have seen your faces at least, but thanks for sticking with me while I sort of rambled on solo.

Ezra Vogel: You didn't rumble, you informed us. Thanks a lot Jim, bye-bye.

James Millward: Thank you