

Five Lessons from China's War on Terror

Kunjerab Front Defense Company patrols high country



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By MARTIN I. WAYNE

Since the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, China has been fighting an increasingly sophisticated campaign against violent extremists in its northwestern Xinjiang region. China's "war on terror" there has focused on preempting a nascent insurgency before it could militarily challenge the state. While China has kept its counterinsurgency actions in Xinjiang secret for fear of "internationalizing" the conflict, Chinese leaders are now seeking to gain international acceptance for their counterinsurgency campaign as part of the larger war on terror.

Critics accuse Beijing of needlessly and brutally repressing a predominantly Muslim

ethnic minority group—the Uyghurs—and cynically casting the campaign after 9/11 as part of the war on terror to gain political cover. China's actions in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are poorly explained by officials, likely because the effectiveness of the campaign and its components is poorly understood by the leaders themselves. The actions in Xinjiang are governed by the party-state's worst fears of social unrest removing the final critical pillar upholding the regime: the Chinese people's belief that the party-state, however ideologically bankrupt and locally corrupt, is still holding the country together.

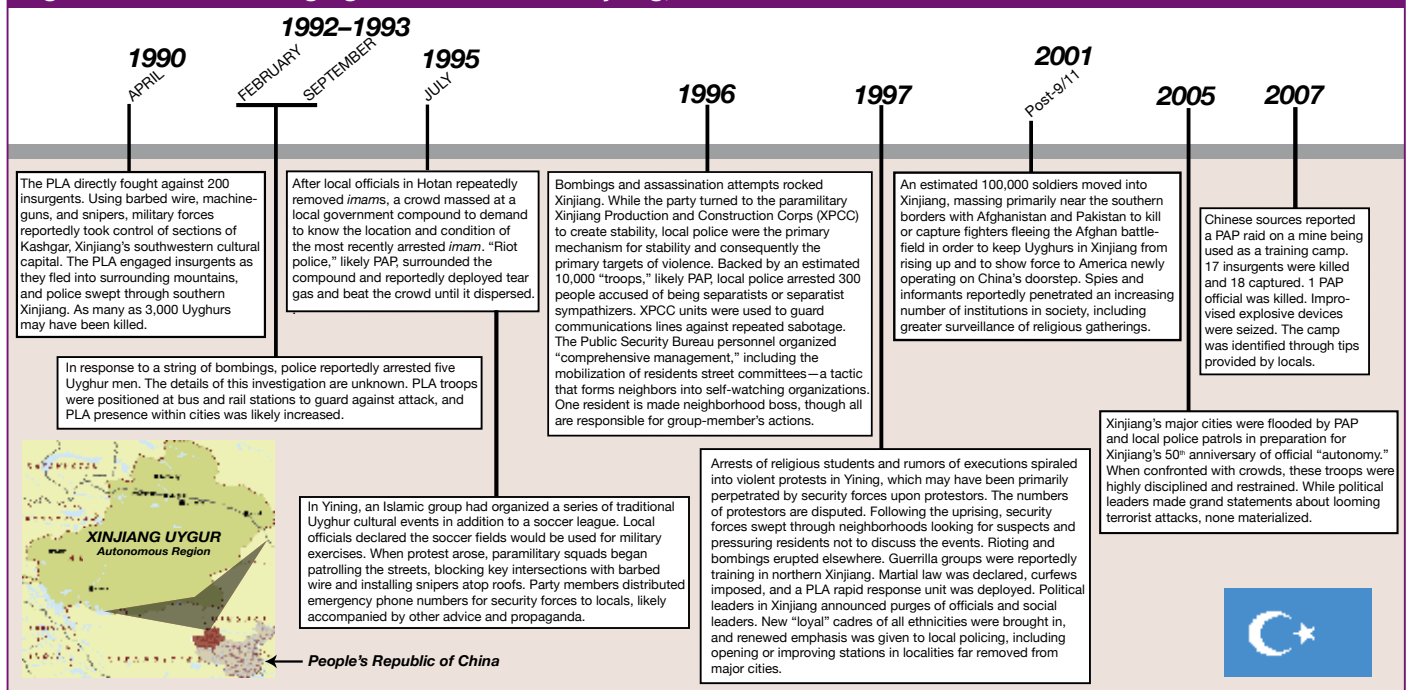
In countering Xinjiang's insurgency, China acted early, forcefully, and comprehensively and prevented a nascent insurgency from maturing. Chechnya and Kosovo are worst-case scenarios often invoked by Chinese sources,¹ yet Afghanistan and Iraq have now taken over as the unstated but ever-present comparison when assessing the threat of insurgency. With borders on both Pakistani and Indian Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and several Central Asian

republics, China would have reason enough to worry about cross-border problems, yet it claims that it too has suffered from the indigenous phenomenon of what it terms "religious extremism, separatism, and terrorism." Chinese sources claim that over 160 people have been killed and 440 injured in more than 200 attacks by forces seeking to split the Alaska-sized Xinjiang region from Chinese control.

Xinjiang, literally "new frontier," is technically an autonomous region for the Uyghurs, a primarily Turkic Muslim ethnic group that comprised nearly the entire regional population when Mao and the Communists took over China in 1949. Today the Uyghurs are officially a minority in their own autonomous region due to decades of Communist-led population movement of Chinese from the east.

Xinjiang's violence peaked in the late 1990s, with steady small-scale attacks against officials accused of caprice and corruption at a level similar to the Basque experience. China's changing use of force in Xinjiang traced through major incidents of unrest is presented

Figure 1. China's Changing Use of Force in Xinjiang, 1990–2007



in figure 1. Today, because China not only employed a mix of security forces but also engaged in broad political action, society in Xinjiang increasingly if begrudgingly is turning away from insurgency as the path forward.

From studying the campaign in Xinjiang, including strategy, tactics, and tools, U.S. military decisionmakers can learn five lessons about the nature of China today and about crafting more effective counterinsurgency policies.

- The response targeted indigenous support for a nascent insurgency with links to the global jihad. While leaders worked to diminish external support for the insurgency, they recognized that a counterinsurgency must primarily be locally focused to be effective.

- The government acted early, forcefully, and comprehensively, employing a new mix of security forces and political tools.

- China crafted a security meaningful to society. Security forces progressively grew more effective against the insurgency as they reduced brutality.

- The government countered the insurgency from the bottom up, using deep knowledge of local society. Employing society-centric warfare turned the groupings in society against the insurgents and the idea of insurgency itself.

- China's priority on stability engendered an effective counterinsurgency in Xinjiang. Leadership took the threat seriously. Of necessity, the response to instability had to be not only quick but also complete.

Some of these lessons might be uncomfortable for decisionmakers because they often contradict previous views. Nevertheless, this article reflects the perspective of people across China today—especially those in Xinjiang. Simply put, the country is changing due to internal policies aimed at creating a modern and powerful state. It is also changing internally because it is following the example set by the United States and Europe, however slowly and incompletely. While China's political evolution appears glacial to outside observers, a key reason Xinjiang's insurgency has been greatly reduced in scope and scale is the positive pull-factor of relative freedom and increased living standards, with the promise

of more radiating out from eastern China into the west and from the big cities into the countryside.

Counterinsurgency requires turning societies against the idea that violence can achieve political goals. Before analyzing the strategy, tactics, and tools that China employed to varying effect against the insurgents and the ideas of insurgency, let us first set the stage by assessing the threat, both potential and actual, of insurgency in Xinjiang.

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Targeting Indigenous Support

While leaders recognized the international dimensions of Xinjiang's insurgency, their response focused primarily on the insurgency's internal components. Since the Soviet-Afghan war began in 1979, China has been effectively confronting an indigenous insurgency with links to the global jihad in its far northwestern Xinjiang region. The government has used political and military tactics, which together turned society against the idea of violence influencing politics. While political violence, including revolts, rebellions, and jihads, has rocked Xinjiang throughout history, the latest unrest flowed directly from the lessons of the Soviet-Afghan war, which included the idea that men with the help of Allah and armed with AK-47s could defeat a superpower. If the Soviet occupiers were expelled from Afghanistan, the struggle elsewhere must also be possible. State power no longer seemed so great, and communism had proven itself bankrupt at governing across China.

In eastern cities, dissent flowed out from the universities or up from families, neighborhoods, villages, and workforces swindled by corrupt and capricious local officials. In Xinjiang, dissent gained additional traction through the mosques and religious social groups.

Causes espoused in Xinjiang are many: the search for autonomy promised but never truly delivered; simple ethnic nationalism,

whereby the Han should leave Xinjiang to its "rightful Uyghur owners"; freedom for religious practice beyond that sanctioned by the state as not politically threatening; the hope of self-determination and perhaps even democracy; the goal of Central Asia's "colored" revolutions of the mid 2000s and a hope harbored in Xinjiang throughout the previous decade; the search for human rights denied by a repressive and brutal regime; and, in some cases, the desire to use religious identity as a direct challenge to state power. With so many grievances espoused, searching for one all-encompassing explanation may be fruitless. As counterinsurgency scholar David Kilcullen argues, contemporary insurgencies are "complex conflict ecosystems" in which multiple actors, groups, and ideologies independently pursue their own agendas without necessarily having a formal or unified organizational structure, or indeed any substantive operational coordination.²

Insurgency in Xinjiang has been no different from insurgency elsewhere in some respects. While there were many purported reasons for resistance, perhaps the most important driver of the conflict was state weakness. The greatest threat for China came as its state institutions were found incapable of responding adequately. Because the security forces were the only institutions capable of moving effectively within society, brutality was perceived to be the only option. Brutality is a recipe for alienating and inflaming society, resulting in strategic failure. Xinjiang's governance, social, educational, and religious institutions similarly were deemed to be infiltrated with separatists. These key institutions were purged and filled with loyal cadres, an increasing number of which were and are Uyghurs.

Xinjiang's insurgency is not isolated from developments beyond its borders; indeed, while the activities there are carried out by local actors based on local societal and political circumstances, the region fits into the contemporary global jihad that has evolved at least since the Soviet-Afghan war. Explicitly, concerning Xinjiang's place in the global jihad, the threat today is diminished because of an increasingly effective counterinsurgency campaign.

Al Qaeda was once a group of individuals joined by common beliefs and motivated to violently press their political views and multiply their power through instilling fear and awe. Today it is the vanguard organization of like-minded groups and individuals internationally.³ Moreover, it has become an inspirational base upon which a global jihad can rise. This social

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movement is likely to shape life for the worse globally for at least a generation and probably more. Training in Afghanistan and Pakistan, at first against the Soviets and later in camps at home and abroad, has provided tactical knowledge on weapons, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and small group skills.

Two types of training occurred in Afghanistan's camps, terrorist and insurgent. This tactical distinction divides the minority of fighters, who honed the skills to blend into societies either in their home country or abroad and prepare methodically for spectacular attacks, from the vast majority, who trained to fight as warriors in irregular battles against security forces.

While formal connections to established terrorist organizations (al Qaeda foremost among them) were important to the first generations of extremists, a rising generation shows less need for such formality. Today, terrorists are increasingly able to wrap themselves and their local fights in al Qaeda's banner without formal institutional links. After successful attacks, al Qaeda's leadership can then take credit—even postmortem. While we struggle for the appropriate vocabulary to categorize our current threat, al Qaeda has placed itself at the forefront of a global social

different officials, this variation is more easily explained by “misstatement” than by deliberate recalibration. To date, Western scholars have been unable to account for the majority of these figures using open-source reporting or fieldwork. The White Paper intended to explain China's terrorism problems and the government's response did little to reduce the arena's obscurity for the rest of the world.

Beyond attack statistics, the potential for insurgency can be discerned through at least two other measures: the number of fighters receiving training, and the support in society for insurgency as a viable path forward (or the only path, chosen by approbation, fear, or both). China asserts that over 1,000 Chinese Uyghurs were trained in Afghanistan's camps in the 1990s. Additionally, East Turkestan Islamic Movement leader Hasan Mahsum was reportedly killed in a firefight in northwest Pakistan in December of 2003 along with other al Qaeda and militant suspects. According to press reports, China continues to press Pakistan to eliminate or repatriate Uyghur militants taking refuge across its southern border.⁵

While the reliability of this information is difficult to assess from open sources, 22 Chinese Uyghurs were imprisoned at

Acting Early, Forcefully, and Comprehensively

Raw brutality alone is not what has prevented the insurgency from embroiling and dissolving China's control of Xinjiang. Even the most brutal force can achieve ephemeral tactical victories, yet strategic effectiveness is ultimately achieved through political measures that deeply reshape society. Scholars looking back through history's long list of failed counterinsurgencies highlight the need for dealing with insurgencies before they take hold and before society perceives that the forces of order might lose.⁸ China's early efforts against the nascent insurgency in Xinjiang were military affairs because no other forces existed which were seen as capable of responding to the threat.

As the insurgency progressed, China quickly built up forces capable of moving down the spectrum of violence—away from military actions in favor of paramilitary and then police forces more capable of moving in society. The government acted forcefully and found more appropriate and effective levels of force to interact with society. Political tools were implemented that fundamentally altered the social environment. Consequently, society in Xinjiang today is far less receptive to insurgency. In short, China drove change in society through a bottom-up approach.

At first China responded brutally, using military force directly against society, suppressing riots and protests with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As the campaign progressed through the 1990s, the People's Armed Police (PAP), the paramilitary Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), the Public Security Bureau (PSB), and local police were stood up and became able to assert their presence not only throughout the region's cities but also in towns and villages. These organizations increasingly recruited Uyghur cadres, though Uyghurs assert that trust, responsibility, and promotion to higher ranks have been slowed if not outright prevented because of racist fears and Chinese worries about training future insurgents (as in Chechnya and numerous other insurgencies where resistance leaders were once members of the security forces).

Chinese sources speak of a “four-in-one defense” of Xinjiang: the PLA, PAP, XPCC, and the Chinese people (see figure 2).⁹ Here the term *Chinese people* refers primarily to Xinjiang's growing Han population that moved in from the eastern provinces. When the Communists took control of China circa 1949,

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movement building on many local insurgencies as well as sympathetic individuals and societies abroad. Insurgencies are primarily indigenous affairs, and the contemporary global jihad is no exception. Whatever the cause, security forces and political leaders often assert external support for their local problems. External connections are present in nearly every insurgency, but these fights will have no traction or significance without the support of the local population, solicited through approbation or fear.

In Xinjiang, insurgency and counterinsurgency simultaneously evolved; as the insurgency changed character, the counterinsurgency adapted. However, the Xinjiang counterinsurgency differs from others in that it evolved along its own trajectory, separated from the influences of the insurgency's tactical ebb and flow.

The official statistics for casualties in Xinjiang between 1990 and 2001⁴ have not been amended since 2001. While there are slight fluctuations in particular numbers when recited by

Guantanamo, according to the Congressional Research Service.⁶ Of these, five were reportedly determined to be there by mistake. After lengthy international diplomacy and Chinese condemnation, they were released not to China but to a United Nations refugee camp in Albania. The fear, and not an unreasonable one, was that China would likely torture and then execute them if they were repatriated, even though reportedly they were abducted by bounty hunters and sold to American forces as “terrorists” for the equivalent of \$5,000. After long denying any training in Afghanistan, the Albanian five now say they went to a Uyghur camp outside of Tora Bora because the food was free. They learned to fire an old assault weapon and did not ask questions.⁷ Ten of the Chinese Uyghurs at Guantanamo were deemed to be receiving military training in order to return to China and put their new paramilitary insurgent skills to use. The remaining seven were deemed to be hardcore al Qaeda operatives, willing to fight wherever the next jihad might take them.

ethnic Han represented about 6 percent of the population in Xinjiang; by 2005, an estimated 50 percent of the population was Han. In 2005, there were roughly 10 million Han in Xinjiang, 9 million Uyghurs, and a few million of other predominantly Muslim ethnic minority groups including Hui, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Mongol, Tajik, and Uzbek.

China's mix of security forces in Xinjiang expanded and improved in quality. They grew more professional and locally knowledgeable, and the presence of these improved forces was expanded into more localities, thus giving prestigious employment to local men in service of the state's project. These tools moved down the spectrum of violence from military through paramilitary to internal intelligence agencies and finally local police. Together, China's mix of security forces grew more capable of dealing effectively with society without escalating levels of violence. Security forces are inherently imperfect; brutal excesses occur in even the freest societies, and Xinjiang's forces today stand accused of torturing suspects even over petty theft. Strategically, keeping these excesses to a minimum is a key to preventing escalation from incident to protest to repression to riot or bombing.

Crafting Meaningful Security

Security is more than military force alone. For a campaign to be more than momentarily tactically effective, the counterinsurgency must both use the least force

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possible to dominate the battlespace and engage and reshape society into an environment inhospitable to the insurgency. Beyond building more capable forces, China initiated a comprehensive campaign to transform society using governance, educational, religious, and economic tools.

As the insurgency escalated and reached its high-water mark in the late 1990s, China found its grip on Xinjiang increasingly threatened, not from raw violence but from the perceived infiltration of local institutions by

separatists and their ideology. While bombings can powerfully motivate society against a state through fear or approbation, the campaign in Xinjiang was perceived as heavily weighted in favor of political-ideological penetration of society and grass-roots institutions. If successful, this would effectively have severed the state from local society. Feeling itself in a precarious situation, China's military presence in Xinjiang purged its institutions not only of those suspected of separatism but also of ideas considered separatist. Thus, the soft policies in Xinjiang ranged from coercion through cooptation to genuine incorporation, a project still in process.

Governance in Xinjiang is achieved at each level with paired government and party officials where, locals explain, the official with overriding weight to make policy will be Han Chinese and the lesser official will be an ethnic minority, primarily Uyghur. For example, at a university, the president might be a Han and the party secretary a Uyghur; a prefecture would have a Uyghur governor and a Han party secretary. The key to knowing who holds the power at each level, locals in and out of leadership say, is looking at which post is controlled by the Han. Though Xinjiang is a deeply and fundamentally racially divided society with self-perceived discrimination ever-present, the party-state has been making a concerted effort to incorporate "loyal" Uyghurs increasingly into the governance structure since the purges of the 1990s. These cadres are largely university educated within the region and secularly minded.

Today, Uyghur officials hold power greater and more genuine than at any time since the founding of the People's Republic. Nevertheless, minority officials fear that if they use this power they might overstep and suffer severe consequences. The actions of minority cadres in government and in the party will determine the strategic longevity of China's hold on Xinjiang; the greater the power devolved to capable local minority cadres, the more effective the effort will become. In the wake of the Tiananmen era, loyalty to the party-state was relatively easy to assess: in many cases the individuals later judged to be loyal had remained noticeably silent when protests rocked Xinjiang's universities and government centers.

Education is a primary concern for counterinsurgents, for a society's view of its history and its future is at stake. In Xinjiang, local schools were opened offering education in either Uyghur or Han (Mandarin) languages, where educated Uyghurs could find prestigious work

Figure 2. Xinjiang's Four-in-One Defense



1. People's Liberation Army (PLA)—50,000 to 100,000. China's military in Xinjiang is of questionable quality and readiness. Missions include backing the People's Armed Police if necessary in internal security and border defense missions.



2. People's Armed Police (PAP)—50,000 to 100,000. Paramilitary police primarily responsible for internal security and border defense. Many PAP units were demobilized from the PLA. In Xinjiang, the PAP's most visible units are more professionalized than elsewhere in China; PAP troops can be seen marching in units as small as five men through Xinjiang's cities. Like the PLA, the PAP in Xinjiang engages in construction and other activities that are not strictly military.



3. Xinjiang Production and Construction Corp (XPCC)—2,453,600 (933,000 workers). Paramilitary farming group established under Mao to populate Xinjiang, cultivate the land, and provide a loyal population in case the region was invaded by the Soviet Union, making People's War necessary. The XPCC ran prison labor camps.

4. Han Residents and Immigrants—9,000,000 to 10,000,000. In 1949, ethnic Hans represented an estimated 6 percent of Xinjiang's population; today, Hans likely constitute a solid 50 percent.

Unmentioned in China's Accounting of Xinjiang

Uyghurs in Xinjiang—8,000,000 to 9,000,000. While the last census was in 2000, the demographic shift in Xinjiang has been pronounced. The year 2005 may be the first time that Hans outnumbered Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Public Security Bureau (PSB)—Strength in Xinjiang unknown. The vanguard policing and domestic intelligence organization, the PSB in Xinjiang is reputed to resort to violence against suspects first and, perhaps, ask questions later. In 2005, China announced the creation of 36 antiterrorism groups in key cities, likely within the PSB. Other prominent PSB missions include counternarcotics, countersubversion (political and religious, including countering nonviolent challenges to state power), and acting as antiriot shock troops. The PSB is perceived to have penetrated all of Xinjiang's above-ground social institutions with spies and informers.

teaching Beijing's lessons in their local languages. In China's perspective, this campaign was perceived to be so successful at incorporating Uyghurs into the system that in 2004 the use of their language in higher education was curtailed in favor of the next step: education primarily in *Hanyu* (the Chinese name for Mandarin, literally the language of the Han). The content of education is similarly controlled by the party-state, and spies and informants are believed to police classroom compliance.

Religious practice in Xinjiang is far less constrained than is popularly reported by Western media accounts. Mosques abound and attendance is reportedly unhampered for normal people. Constraints are placed on individuals in positions of authority because, China argues, nonreligious cadres can represent everyone while those who openly espouse particular religions will represent only that religion. The content of religion is similarly curtailed: while spirituality may be expressed, when the content of religion is perceived as political, the offending leader or group is pres-

staffed nearly completely by Han, and the most materially developed towns have the largest percentages of Han.

Countering Insurgency Bottom-up

"Responsibility begins at home" might be China's counterterrorism motto if its system allowed critical investigation and analyses of the campaign and its effectiveness. While the most recent U.S. counterinsurgency manuals, military and civilian alike, rightly highlight the non-military aspects of counterinsurgency, China implemented what is here termed *society-centric warfare*. Beyond the population-centric approach advocated in U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, China's approach assigned responsibility for working against the insurgency to all of the groupings in society. Internationally and internally, China holds groups accountable for the actions of its members. Through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as bilateral relationships, Beijing pressures Central Asian countries to control their Uyghur populations and prevent them from working against

forces if a husband, father, or son failed to turn himself in after an incident of unrest.

Thus, where population-centric warfare can be (perhaps mis-)construed as working to protect the population from external actors, bad apples, or evildoers, a society-centric approach targets those who act violently, as well as the *idea* of violent resistance by creating multiple, often overlapping consequences for resistance. In China, the social power structure is designed around geographic, familial, and economic groups. While the groupings in every society are different, an approach that focuses on turning the groupings of society against an insurgency can be implemented broadly.

Beyond the military, PLA, and PAP, China increasingly stood up security forces capable of moving within society, before and during incidents of unrest. The Public Security Bureau and local police forces together found spies and informers for every occasion. Schools, mosques, workplaces, and neighborhoods were all perceived to be penetrated, under the state's watchful eye.

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Pervasive surveillance has an exponential effect on society beyond the simple collection of information: reporting to authorities is additionally driven by individuals afraid of being accused of participating or supporting illicit activities because they failed to report. Furthermore, China's security forces held social groups responsible for the actions of their members. Not only were these negative tools implemented, but also the positive policy tools of governance, education, economic development, and religion described above drew society's support away from the insurgency and opened a path, however slow and bitter, toward a better future incorporated into a new, evolving China.

Engendering Counterinsurgency

The counterinsurgency in Xinjiang was enabled by seemingly infinite political will: the Chinese people demand internal stability and give the regime freedom of action to remove threats from the periphery. The Communist Party, concerned primarily with self-preservation of its position atop the one-party-state, drives and assists state responses



Left to right: Xinjiang Production and Construction Corporation members on patrol; PLA memorial service for policeman killed in raid on terrorist camp in Xinjiang; People's Armed Police train in Xinjiang; People's Armed Police guard train station in Xinjiang

sured or removed—at times through heavy-handed measures. Locals assert that mosques and other religious settings, like educational ones, are infiltrated and monitored for political dissent by security forces.

Economic development is, President Hu Jintao asserts, "the key to solving all of China's problems." Nevertheless, while Xinjiang radiates visible material development from city centers outwards, locals perceive that they are receiving none of the benefits and are largely shut out of the economy due to pervasive ethnic discrimination. Even though economic development is a statistical reality in Xinjiang, its effects on society's support for insurgency are inflammatory: Uyghurs perceive this development as an increasingly visible sign of Han invading from outside the region to take local natural resources and jobs. Spot surveys made while traveling through Xinjiang confirm this perception. For instance, road construction crews in several locations were almost entirely composed of Han workers, banks were

its interests. China reportedly has intelligence operatives working within these countries, yet primary responsibility rests with the governing authorities to police their own domain.

In Xinjiang, using this strategy of society-centric warfare, every grouping of society is held accountable for its rank and file. The region's government, as well as prefectures, villages, neighborhoods, and families, are responsible for their members. Employers, especially those directly controlled by the government, must account for their employees. The limited opportunities for moving or for obtaining new employment in Xinjiang throughout the 1990s greatly facilitated this strategy. Consequences for failing to prevent problems or respond appropriately range from stigma and stern warnings from the seemingly ever-present security forces, in uniform or plain clothes, to loss of employment (to which the entire family's housing, health care, and income may be tied) and perhaps worse. Some families reportedly have been threatened by security

to instability on the periphery. The state, directed by the party, must produce the perception of stability that the people demand. Internal stability is primary among China's strategic interests because it enables all other goals, including prospects for economic development.¹⁰

The priority on stability facilitated an effective counterinsurgency in two ways. Firstly, the regional leadership quickly understood that they had to quiet the unrest quickly and completely, and that they had the full support of national leaders along with the core population silently backing official actions—whatever they might be. Secondly, like peoples elsewhere in China, the population of Xinjiang increasingly if grudgingly bought into the idea that stability across China leads to a better future. Acceptance of this vision of Xinjiang benefiting from increasing incorporation into China undercut passive support for insurgency and drew Uyghurs and Uyghur society into active stabilizing roles in governance, business, religion, and education.

The prospect of unrest in Xinjiang shook the regime's veneer of stability and catalyzed government action with the full if uninformed backing of the Chinese people. Simply put, the Chinese people demand stability because they survived the bad days of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. For the core, these self-inflicted wounds of the past buy today's regime time as it attempts to build a new economic and political order across the country. China's reform strategy is east, then west; economics, then politics.

While the Communist Party's concern is for self-preservation atop the state, the state must produce the perception, and perhaps the reality, of internal stability. The party-state is operating on time purchased by the negative push of previous sociopolitical tumults and the positive pull of the gradual but significant changes perceived by society. Paradoxically, while society craves stability and credits the current national leadership for positive works, the local application of power is often unchecked, capricious, corrupt, and caustic. Riots, often violent and large, arise across China as local officials clumsily and heavily assert themselves, in many instances needlessly escalating property disputes and family-planning practices into social unrest.

Across China, political protests increased dramatically during the 1990s and

this trend more than continued, spiking at 74,000 "mass incidents" in 2004¹¹ and 87,000 "social order" crimes in 2005.¹² Officials' statements and Chinese media reports assert that the statistics may have dropped nearly 20 percent in 2006, yet this numerical change is likely produced by altered methodology for counting and reporting by officials and the media, and not from social changes created by deliberate policy. Furthermore, open source data on incidents of unrest¹³ correlate closely with the spectrum of press access across China and may thus reflect access rather than facts on the ground.

Fundamentally, Chinese leaders must enable and produce substantive changes in society before the spell wears off—before the older generations' fears of unrest fade and new generations rise to maturity, fearless. Threats from the periphery (for example, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan) are subsiding as dissent and unrest are beginning to shake the core in myriad localities. In Xinjiang, China has purchased time with a firm hand accompanied by the promise of a great and prosperous future; the next national challenge is to reform local governance before corrupt and capricious officials discredit and undercut the entire Chinese project. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Chinese Communist Party, author unknown (2005), *Zhongguo Gongchandang Yu Xinjiang Minzu Wenti*.

² See, for example, David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux," *Survival* 48, no. 4 (Winter 2006–2007), 117, 122. See also James Millward, "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment," *Policy Studies*, no. 6 (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2004), 9–10; Omar Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad: My Life with Al Qaeda* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Networks: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001).

³ See Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Michael Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam and the Future of America* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

⁴ Information Office of State Council, "East Turkistan' Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity," January 21, 2002; Andrew Scobell, "Terrorism and Chinese Foreign Policy," in *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign*

Policy, ed. Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Yitzhak Shichor, "The Great Wall of Steel: Military and Strategy," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Fredrick Starr (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004).

⁵ For example, see *Daily Times* (Pakistan), "China Demands 20 Insurgents Hiding in Pakistan," March 17, 2007.

⁶ Shirley A. Kan, *U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated June 27, 2006).

⁷ Tim Golden, "Chinese Leave Guantanamo for Albanian Limbo," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2007.

⁸ Bruce Hoffman, "Does Our Counter-Terrorism Strategy Match the Threat?" Statement before the Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, U.S. House of Representatives, September 29, 2005.

⁹ Xinhua News Agency, "Role of Xinjiang Production, Construction Corps Important: White Paper," May 26, 2003.

¹⁰ Phillip C. Saunders, *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools*, Occasional Paper 4 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, October 2006); Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000); Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Suisheng Zhao, ed., *Debating Political Reform in China: Rule of Law vs. Democratization* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006); Xinhua News Agency, "Building of Political Democracy in China."

¹¹ Murray Scot Tanner, "China Rethinks Unrest," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2004), 137; Edward Cody, "A Chinese City's Rage at the Rich and Powerful," *WashingtonPost.com*, August 1, 2005; Howard W. French, "Land of 74,000 Protests (But Little Is Ever Fixed)," *The New York Times*, August 24, 2005.

¹² The *Military Power of the People's Republic of China in 2006* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006) asserts that these figures may not be directly comparable; however, media reporting asserts otherwise. For example, see Chris Buckley, "China to 'Strike Hard' Against Rising Unrest," *Reuters*, January 26, 2006; Sarah Jackson-Han, "China Struggles to Keep Lid on Popular Unrest," *Radio Free Asia*, January 31, 2006; Anthony Kuhn, "Inside China's Angry Villages," *The Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 2006.

¹³ For example, Open Source Center, "Statistics, Summaries of PRC Civil Disturbances in 2006," March 5, 2007; Open Source Center, "Highlights: Reports on PRC Civil Disturbances for 2005," February 2, 2006; Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, "Highlights: PRC Civil Disturbances 1 Jan–15 Dec 04," December 23, 2004.

plans, these preparations do not necessarily reflect national strategic intentions.

Former Secretary Rumsfeld's disingenuous assertion that "no nation threatens China" is inconsistent with the reality of American global military capabilities. Chinese civilian and military leaders have long understood that U.S. military deployments and capabilities have the potential to threaten their country. This point was made specifically by Colonel Larry Wortzel, USA (Ret.), in a recent monograph published by the U.S. Army War College: "China's leaders and military thinkers see the United States as a major potential threat to the PLA and China's interests primarily because of American military capabilities, but also because of U.S. security relationships in Asia."³⁰

Wortzel bases his conclusion on information that was available long before Rumsfeld's speech in 2005. The U.S. Government would categorize America's potential to use military force as part of its overall deterrence posture. This year's report illustrated the continuing relevance of U.S. deterrence in a textbox entitled "Factors of Deterrence," which begins: "*China is deterred* on multiple levels from taking military action against Taiwan. First, China does not yet possess the military capability to accomplish with confidence its political objectives on the island, particularly when confronted with *the prospect of U.S. intervention* [emphasis added]."

At the same time, the Pentagon report actually describes a parallel approach by China toward Taiwan, but without using the word *deterrence*:

Beijing appears prepared to defer unification as long as it believes trends are advancing toward that goal and that the costs of conflict outweigh the benefits. In the near term, Beijing's focus is likely one of preventing Taiwan from moving toward de jure independence while continuing to hold out terms for peaceful resolution under a "one country, two systems" framework that would provide Taiwan a degree of autonomy in exchange for its unification with the mainland [emphasis added].

Instead, the report categorizes the PLA's "sustained military threat to Taiwan" as part of an "overall campaign of persuasion and coercion." By China's own definition, deterrence includes the threat of force through demonstration of actual military capabilities, which is exactly what has been observed over the past

decade—and U.S. deterrence theory would not disagree. From Beijing's perspective, however, this threat does not contradict its official preference for peaceful reunification.

Military professionals can operate in an environment of deterrence and potential threats, seeking to lower the possibility for conflict while preparing for the worst. The Pentagon report does not characterize the United States as a potential threat to China, but there is no doubt the potential is well understood in Beijing.

The modernization of the Chinese armed forces is a topic of utmost importance to the United States, its allies, and Asia. The U.S. Congress and public deserve a reliable, comprehensive evaluation that can be used as the basis for informed discussion about a subject that will be critical to the course of history in Asia for the 21st century. While this year's report was an improvement over previous efforts, the Pentagon can do much better. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ The requirements for the report are found in Section 1202 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106–65), October 5, 1999, available at <www.dod.mil/dodgdc/olc/docs/2000NDAA.pdf>.

² Department of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2007*, Annual Report to Congress (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2007), available at <www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/070523-China-Military-Power-final.pdf>.

³ "PRC Law on National Defense," Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, March 18, 1997, trans. Open Source Center (OSC).

⁴ Percentages are based on estimates found in the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2006* (London: Routledge, 2006), 264. The PLA does not control the Chinese civilian defense industrial complex, which is overseen by the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

⁵ The PAP and militia have no direct equivalents in the U.S. Armed Forces. The PAP is similar to the French *Gendarmerie* or the Italian *Carabinieri*.

⁶ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense in 2006*, December 29, 2006.

⁷ Xinhua News Agency, "CMC Promotes 28 Armed Police Officers to Major General 28 Aug," Beijing Xinhua in English, August 29, 2006, trans. OSC (CPP20060829057005).

⁸ *The Military Balance 2006*, 264.

⁹ PLA reserve units and militia are known collectively as China's "reserve force." PLA reserve

units most closely resemble state-based U.S. National Guard units and, to a lesser extent, U.S. Reserve units, though U.S. Reserve forces are much more interchangeable with Active duty units than are their PLA counterparts.

¹⁰ The PLA marine force is part of the navy and consists of two brigades. Technically, these marines are not part of the ground force. The army, on the other hand, has two amphibious mechanized infantry divisions, which add up to at least twice the size of the marine force.

¹¹ "Introduction to Gong'an Frontier Defense Units," Ministry of Public Security Web site, July 18, 2006, available at <<http://www.mps.gov.cn/cenweb/brj/cenweb/jsp/common/article.jsp?infoid=ABC00000000000033760>>.

¹² People's War is called a "strategic concept" in the 2006 White Paper and "a fundamental strategy" in *The Science of Military Strategy*, ed. Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, English ed. (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2005), 117. All quotations from *The Science of Military Strategy* are from the English edition.

¹³ *Science of Military Strategy*, 426.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 230–231.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 454–455.

¹⁶ *China's National Defense in 2006*.

¹⁷ *Science of Military Strategy*, 224.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 213–215, 228.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 222. The book's use of the term *limited* nuclear deterrence would probably be more accurately described as "a credible nuclear deterrent force" as stated in the 2006 White Paper.

²⁰ Al Pessin, "U.S. Commander Calls Chinese Interest in Aircraft Carriers 'Understandable,'" Voice of America, May 12, 2007, accessed at <<http://voanews.com/english/2007-05-12-voa5.cfm>>.

²¹ *China's National Defense in 2006*.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Science of Military Strategy*, 258.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 468.

²⁵ "JFJB: Promote Innovation in Military Work Using Scientific Development Concept," *Jiefangjun Bao* (Beijing), August 6, 2006, 1, trans. OSC (CPP20060811720002).

²⁶ "JFJB: Scientific Development Concept as Guidance for Building Modern Logistics," *Jiefangjun Bao* (Beijing), August 6, 2006, 1, trans. OSC (CPP20060814715022).

²⁷ The United States–China Policy Foundation, "Defense-Related Spending in China: A Preliminary Analysis and Comparison with American Equivalents," May 2007, 30.

²⁸ *China's National Defense in 2006*.

²⁹ Edward Cody, "U.S. Aims to Improve Military Ties with China," *The Washington Post*, May 16, 2006, A14, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/15/AR2006051500413_pf.html>.

³⁰ Larry M. Wortzel, *China's Nuclear Forces: Operations, Training, Doctrine, Command, Control, and Campaign Planning* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 2007), vii.