

An Analysis of the Chinese Communist Party's Ethnic Cleansing of the Uyghurs Under Xi Jinping

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Abstract

In the northwest corner of China lies the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, a province of vital importance to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This province beholds the valuable resources of: coal, gold, tungsten, copper, in addition to the crucial resources in oil and natural gas that is integral to the nation. Moreover, this province spans across the most territory in the nation, and borders the nations of: Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan; in which these borders are quintessential for the Communist Party to disperse their trade routes across. Noticing this proximity to Central Asian and Muslim majority nations, it is evident that the province of Xinjiang holds sociocultural and ethnic similarities to their neighbors, which is problematic for the Han majority Chinese Communist Party (Erum, 2020). Since President Xi Jinping's rise to power within the CCP, he has proliferated a vicious campaign and rhetoric against the Uyghur minority group due to distraught within the region for decades. Jinping and the CCP implemented a strawman tactic in which they over-exaggerated the violence and extremism in the region, which would justify their overbearing surveillance and human rights violations of Uyghurs. Due to this fallacious perspective of the Uyghur minority, Jinping and his colleagues have employed drastic tactics to diminish the social, theocratic, and cultural uniqueness of the Uyghurs. This practice is considered to be ethnic cleansing, which is defined as, "The expulsion, imprisonment, or killing of an ethnic minority by a dominant majority based on their ethnicity, social construct and culture" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). The CCP are currently ethnically cleansing the Uyghur minority group via the gradual elimination of their native language of Uyghur in daily life, destroying mosques, constructing schools that prioritize the state, sterilization centers targeted at women, in addition to establishing internment and "re-education" camps (Gunter, 2021).

Keywords: Uyghur, ethnic cleansing, Islam, human rights violations, Xinjiang province, Xi Jinping, Chinese Communist Party (CCP), internment camps.

Methodology

In order to decipher the mens rea of the Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping, this essay implements the case study method, with an emphasis on the documentation and records regarding both the CCP's tirade against the Uyghurs and the Uyghur society. The primary sources implemented for the discoveries in this research hail from educational sources such as, *War on the Uyghurs: China's Internal Campaign Against a Muslim Minority* (Roberts, 2022) from the Princeton University library; in addition to the in-depth analysis from human rights groups spanning from Amnesty International to the Stanford Human Rights & Conflict Resolution Clinic's *Break Their Roots, Break Their Lineage* (Kaplan & Van Schaak, 2021). Considering that Xi Jinping's actions against the Uyghurs are rather complex and multifaceted, a plethora of other resources will be cited to provide a thorough analysis of how the president of China has proliferated ethnic cleansing in Xinjiang. Throughout the contents of this research paper, it will begin with examining the sociological aspects of Uyghur language, culture, and religion, then by analyzing how each facet of their life is perturbed by the Chinese government. Examination of how internment and re-education camps operate to ethnically cleanse the Uyghurs will be a primary component of the research.

Analysis

First and foremost, the Uyghurs are a unique group of individuals with social, cultural, and religious values that vastly differentiate from the majority of China. Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim congregation of ethnic Turks, whose language derives from the Turkic language family, and is written in a form of Arabic. Islam is a significant portion of their social structure, as the majority follow the Hanafi school of thought. However, the CCP does not favor neither their language nor their following of Islam. According to research by the *Human Rights Watch*, “The Chinese government’s apparent goal... is the erasure of Turkic Muslim culture and religion. Multiple government platforms [are designed to] ‘wash brains’ and ‘cleanse hearts’” (Van Schaak, 2021). Further reports state that those who are detained are indoctrinated to learn Chinese, praise the CCP, and to denounce their religion. Due to extremism and attacks within the province, Beijing has exploited and over-emphasized the amount of attacks, which was their basis for the precedent of labeling Uyghur Muslims as extremists. Uyghur society is rather conservative in terms of Islam, and Xi Jinping wishes to divert their attention away from Islam, and back to the CCP. Thus, reports from the *Human Rights Watch* have discovered that, “Since 2017... Chinese authority have damage[d] or destroy[ed] nearly two-thirds of Xinjiang’s mosques.” Further research has discovered that, “Important Islamic sites have been destroyed throughout the region” (Kaplan, 2021).

Clearly, the Chinese government under Jinping is deliberately attempting to completely erase the religion of the Uyghurs, in addition to their language that makes them unique in comparison to the Chinese population of 1.3 billion which is considered ethnic cleansing. Language is a major portion of how any society communicates with another; thus, the CCP’s attempt to mitigate their expression of speech is a direct attack on Uyghur society and culture. They simply cannot communicate to the capacity that they were once able to considering this prevention by the Chinese government. Furthermore, Uyghurs cannot continue these cultural practices with their children and youth due to Beijing’s preventions. Continuing to religion, Islam is an integral portion of Uyghur society, for it is an ancestral practice that has been followed for centuries. Praying five times a day is a portion of the five pillars of Islam, and mosques are the primary place of religious congregation for the Uyghur Muslims. However, the Chinese government is demolishing these structures at the masses, and the few that they allow to remain intact are plagued by Chinese flags and propaganda. Removing these three primary facets of

Uyghur society clearly conform to the definition of ethnic cleansing, as the CCP under Xi Jinping wishes for a China in which the Uyghurs worship their government instead of Islam, and speak Mandarin as opposed to Uyghur. This unscrupulous government wishes for all traditions whether they be correlated to Islam [such as Eid], performing their dance called the “Charigah,” or wearing their unique Suzani patterned clothing with a Tyubeteika (cultural hat), to be replaced by devotion to the CCP and Xi Jinping. Xi wishes for a China in which the Hans hold the majority, and prioritize the CCP over any form of religion, hence his staunch repulsion of Uyghur society, culture, and their religion of Islam (Amnesty International, 2022).

The most noticeable form of ethnic cleansing are the internment and re-education camps established under Jinping’s rule, in which these camps are filled by those who allegedly committed crimes. When the leader assumed power in 2014, a major initiative launched under his command was the “Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism.” Verbiage under this precedent is incredibly ambiguous and loose, which allows government officials to even, “...prevent the practice of Islam in itself” (Amnesty International, 2022). This has led to thousands of arrests for the following alleged offenses: “terrorism, extremism, separatism, supporting terrorism, inciting ethnic hatred, might think of terrorist actions,” in addition to numerous other claims that are almost always baseless or ambiguous. Beijing is incredibly tactical with the information that is projected in their country. Their surveillance over the populace challenges communication to the outside world, therefore, it is difficult to obtain the accuracy of the metrics. However, thousands of Uyghurs who have attested to Amnesty International have verified the “disappearances,” and many of the whistleblowers have disappeared themselves. Although the CCP has not reported the actual count of Uyghurs detained, satellite images and numerous sources have come to a consensus that, “More than one million Uyghurs [are detained]” (Gunter, 2022). With the numerous Uyghurs imprisoned, the CCP can now unethically obtain their housing and land, which would allow them to simplify trade routes between bordering nations without encountering any Uyghur protestation. This allows Jinping to proliferate his ambitious Belt and Road Initiative that enhances trade between foreign actors while Uyghurs suffer at the masses in internment camps and under mass surveillance throughout the region.

Within these camps, survivors and even former guards have reported the absolute horrors and human rights violations that the Uyghurs encountered. The predominant facets of these camps

include: indoctrination of Chinese culture and the CCP, torture, sterilization, denouncement of Islam, in addition to the denouncement of their culture. According to the reports received by Amnesty International, an average day for a Uyghur in an internment camp consists of, “Watching ‘educational videos’ that consist of Chinese... the ‘evils’ of Islam... how prosperous, powerful, and benevolent China, the CCP, and Xi Jinping are” (Amnesty International, 2022). Abuses were constant, and under some instances, detainees were brutally executed and sexually assaulted. Continuing with sexual assault, mass sterilization occurred throughout the camps in order to ensure that Uyghurs could not reproduce. Gulzir Mogdyn and Zurmat Dawut both proclaimed that they were forced to have an abortion, and displayed that their reproductive organs were permanently damaged. Since Islam is the core of Uyghur society and culture, Xi Jinping ensured that, “...it was not Allah who gave you all, it was Xi Jinping” (N. Aiman; Amnesty International, 2022). Under Xi Jinping’s rule of Xinjiang, ethnic Uyghurs are not allowed to practice their religion, celebrate their culture, continue teaching their language, and are constantly prevented from producing children, which are the structural foundations of ethnic cleansing.

Conclusion

This research paper has analyzed how the Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping discriminates and proselytizes ethnic minority Uyghurs, and confirmed that these practices conform to the definition of ethnic cleansing. From eliminating their original form of communication, to indoctrinating them to abstain from their cultural and religious practices, to imprisoning the innocent on baseless verdicts, to preventing women from bearing children, Xi Jinping is in the process of erasing Uyghur society. Due to China’s economic prowess, the backlash he has received from the west is still insufficient due to the lucrative profits from general trade, in addition to the Belt and Road Initiative that crosses over Xinjiang province that was unethically taken from the Uyghurs. With Xi Jinping pursuing a Han ethnic hegemony and economic benefits for the CCP, ethnic cleansing will continue against the Uyghur minorities, in which Jinping is erasing their culture, religion, and society as a whole.

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