

# PAN-TURKISM AND GEOPOLITICS OF CHINA

*David Babayan\**

## *Introduction*

People's Republic of China (PRC) is currently one of the most powerful and dynamically developing countries of the world. The economic development of the country is particularly impressive, as explicitly reflected in key economic indices, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For instance, China's GDP in 2007 was \$3.43 trillion<sup>1</sup>, and in 2010 it already amounted to \$6 trillion<sup>2</sup>. The foreign trade volume of the country also grows at astronomical rates. In 1982 it was \$38.6 billion<sup>3</sup>, in 2002 – \$620.8 billion, and in 2010 totaled to almost \$3 trillion<sup>4</sup>. According to Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, China's economic development is a sustained fast growth rare in modern world history<sup>5</sup>.

Some experts even believe that while the first thirty years of China's economic reforms program was about joining the world, the story of the next thirty years will be about how China reaches out and shapes the world<sup>6</sup>. Chinese analysts calculate the standing of nations by measuring "comprehensive national strength" of these nations<sup>7</sup>. This method relies on measuring four subsystems of a country's national power: (1) material or hard power (natural resources, economy, science

---

\*Ph.D., History.

<sup>1</sup> "China's GDP grows 11.4 percent in 2007," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-01/24/content\\_7485388.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-01/24/content_7485388.htm), January 24, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Yongrong, "China's economy expands faster in 2010, tightening fears grow", *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/20/c\\_13699250.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/20/c_13699250.htm), January 20, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *Ежегодник Большой Советской Энциклопедии 1983 год*, Москва, Советская Энциклопедия, 1983, с.284.

<sup>4</sup> "China reports robust trade growth with emerging markets in 2010", *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-02/02/c\\_13717168.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-02/02/c_13717168.htm), February 2, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> "Deputy UN chief: China becoming engine for world economy," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/06/content\\_10154226.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/06/content_10154226.htm), October 5, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?*, New York, Public Affairs, 2008, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> See: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2000, Annual Report to Congress, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, 2000.

and technology, and national defense); (2) spirit or soft power (politics, foreign affairs, culture, and education); (3) coordinated power structure (leadership organization, command, management, and coordination of national development); and, (4) environmental power (international, natural, and domestic).

Naturally, the Chinese state strengthens all subsystems of its power base. At the same time Beijing faces a number of challenges in this context. Pan-Turkism represents one of these challenges. This ideology directly impacts spirit strength and coordinated power structure and is a serious threat to those. Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) with its significant percentage of Turkic speaking population is especially vulnerable from this perspective. This very area has been one of the global targets for Pan-Turkism since mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *China's Encounter with Pan-Turkism Ideology through the Prism of History*

Conceivably, China was the first state to encounter Pan-Turkism in the wake of this ideology's emergence. Let us examine the most significant events from this viewpoint. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a series of sizeable uprisings swept through Xinjiang, which culminated in establishment and existence in 1865-1878 of a theocratic Islamic state of Yettishar ("country of seven cities") with capital in Kashgar city. The emissaries of Ottoman Empire were the first ones to visit Kashgar. In 1869 Said Yakupkhan, the special envoy of Yaqub Beg, the ruler of Yettishar was personally received in audience by the Ottoman sultan Abdülaziz, who formally recognized Yettishar and its ruler. Abdülaziz gave the envoy a gift for Yaqub Beg as a sign of Yettishar recognition and sent high-ranking officers to Kashgar to assist in establishing the armed forces of the new state. The symbols of the state were similar to the Ottoman ones, with its flag being just a copy of the Ottoman Empire flag, which later became that of Turkey. In 1874 Yaqub Beg officially declared about a new political status: Turkish protectorate over Yettishar. Coins depicting Abdülaziz were minted in his honor in Kashgar<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, China managed to eliminate this state in 1878. The Heavenly Empire always attributed much importance to maintaining control over Xinjiang, assuming that its loss may threaten other regions of the country as well. It was in 19<sup>th</sup> century when Chinese strategists first pointed out that if Xinjiang is detached from China, then Mongolia may follow suit and the security of Gansu and Zhili (pre-1928 name of Hebei province – D.B.) provinces would become uncertain<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See: Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, Алматы, 2010, с.189.

<sup>2</sup> Ходжаев А., *Цинская империя, Джунгария и Восточный Туркестан*, Москва, 1979, с.70.

However, elimination of Yettishar did not stop penetration of Pan-Turkism ideas into China. The World War I was an especially active period for that. Ahmed Kemal, a prominent representative of the Committee of Union and Progress party, was sent to Artux city of Kashgaria to organize studies of pan-Turkic legacy in secular schools. Together with the local clergy and intelligentsia he opened a school and taught Pan-Turkism concepts there. Soon after, hundreds of volunteers arrived in Xinjiang to spread the ideas of pan-Turkic unity, and by the 1920s the extensive activities of the emissaries led to creation of a network of schools, training courses and groups<sup>1</sup>. These institutions studied the common history of Turkic peoples, preached ideas of their cultural, linguistic and religious unity, and advocated the need for a common struggle for liberation and establishment of a federal Turkic state which would also include the territories and population of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the whole Xinjiang and Western Mongolia.

The promotion of Pan-Turkism idea gained momentum in the 1920s. Its main proponent was Japan. Tokyo actively developed plans of establishing a Turan Empire under auspices of Japan, which would incorporate Xinjiang, Mongolia, Central Asia and Kazakhstan. In addition to the Turan Society founded by the Japanese in 1918, a school was opened to prepare Uyghur national personnel, a special magazine was issued about Xinjiang, and an Ottoman Dynasty offspring Abdul Kerim then residing in Tokyo was groomed for the throne<sup>2</sup>. It was not for nothing that after the end of the World War I the Chinese authorities imposed a strict ban on import of religious literature to Xinjiang from abroad, which had been brought before from Tashkent, Kazan and Turkey<sup>3</sup>.

A new phase for materializing Pan-Turkism ideas arrived with first half of the 1930s. On November 12, 1933 the Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET) was proclaimed, also known as East Turkestan Islamic Republic. Kashgar became the capital of this formation. Turkey played an instrumental role in creation of the state. Leaders of this republic Sabit Damulla and Muhammad Bughra have covertly sent their representatives to Turkey in early 1933, whereas a group of political, military and other experts traveled from Ankara to Kashgar. There were renowned politicians among them, such as Mustafa Kentli, Ali Bey and Harbiyaddin Mahmud. Some Uyghur scientists and researchers contend that the Turkish representatives wielded serious influence on organization and naming of this state<sup>4</sup>. Leaders of Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan believed that the Kemalist govern-

<sup>1</sup> Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, указ. соч., с.340.

<sup>2</sup> Петров В., *Мятежное сердце Азии. Синьцзян: краткая история народных движений и воспоминания*, Москва, Крафт+, 2003, с. 345.

<sup>3</sup> See: Жизнь национальностей, N14, 1922, с. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, указ. соч., с.342.

ment of Turkey will take steps in the international arena to protect the fledgling state from external aggression and at the same time anticipated substantial military and economic assistance from it. However, emergence of an independent state with Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism as underlying ideologies was obviously perceived in a negative light not only by China, but also the USSR. TIRET was eventually abolished owing mainly to the intervention of the USSR.

The last successful attempt to create an independent nation in Xinjiang was made at the end of the World War II. In 1944-1949 a Soviet-dependent state called East Turkestan Republic existed in the province. However, after the civil war in China ended and the communists overtook the power, Moscow supported the communist government and made sure that this republic was absorbed into People's Republic of China. Yet after China's jurisdiction was established over Xinjiang, many independence movement leaders relocated to Turkey and continued active propagandistic actions advocating separatism. They arranged for publishing a number of magazines and papers, including the *Turkestan* magazine that was renamed *Turkestan Avazi* in 1956. In 1986 an Istanbul based NGO Sharki Turkestan Vakfi was founded, which continues to function to date. In 1992, a World National East Turkestan Kurultay (Congress) was established yet again in Istanbul. This first ever Kurultay was remarkable not only for the fact that a body was created to coordinate activities of various Uyghur organizations in their efforts to separate from China, but also for the decision it made on choosing armed struggle for Xinjiang independence<sup>1</sup>.

After adopting this resolution, the Uyghur separatists started to escalate their activities, which took increasingly radical forms. According to Uyghur organizations, between 1992 and 1997 there have been 700 armed encounters, explosions and sabotage actions against Chinese presence in XUAR. Since April 1996 the number of people who participated in anti-Chinese manifestations reached 65,000, and there were 17 armed clashes. About 6,000 people were arrested in April-December, 1996, of which 600 were classified as "extremely dangerous"<sup>2</sup>.

Abdul'ahat Abdulrixit, Chairman of XUAR, stated in March 1999 that thousands of explosions, murders and other terrorist acts occurred in the region in 1990s, and according to the party sources, 380 people fell victim to terrorism in Xinjiang in 1998 alone, whereas 27 similar events took place in the first months of 1999, causing 100 deaths<sup>3</sup>. Between 1999 and 2008, separatist groups were blamed for more than 200 terrorist attacks that resulted in 162 deaths and more than 440 injuries<sup>4</sup>. Besides

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Сыроежкин Константин, «Вопрос об «уйгурском вопросе»», Континент, №6(68), 20 марта - 2 апреля 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Becquelin Nicolas, *Xinjiang in the Nineties*, China Journal, N44, 2000, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Magnier Mark, "China strives to rein in a separatist threat / Party fears Uighurs will unite to form independent state", *The Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 2006, p. A-11.

the terrorist attacks there have also been mass riots in XUAR. Among those one of the most massive was the 1997 Yining riot, in which more than 150 reportedly died<sup>1</sup>. The most recent incidents widely covered in media were the terrorist attack attempts by Uyghur radical organizations during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. 1300 terrorist suspect Uyghurs were arrested<sup>2</sup>.

However, the July 2009 events in Urumqi deserve a special attention. In the evening of July 5 mass riots erupted in the capital city of XUAR. The local Uyghurs attacked the ethnic Chinese, robbed and burnt their houses and other property. This was reportedly sparked by Uyghurs' anger over an ethnic clash previous month in the city of Shaoguan in southern Guangdong province, where two Uyghurs were killed and 118 people were injured in a brawl between Han and Uyghur groups at a factory<sup>3</sup>. By July 7 the death toll rose to 156, and the number of injured reached 1080<sup>4</sup>. Overall the riots left 197 people dead and more than 1,680 injured<sup>5</sup>. Among those killed in the riots 137 were Han Chinese<sup>6</sup>. The next day over 20,000 police were sent to quell unrest in Urumqi<sup>7</sup>. Beijing blamed the World Uyghur Congress<sup>8</sup>, headquartered in Munich, in masterminding and organizing the riots. The Chinese official sources claimed these were deadliest riots since 1949<sup>9</sup>. Chinese President Hu Jintao had to even cut short his visit to Italy for participating in the G8 summit and return home<sup>10</sup>. Afterwards, in early September 2009 the so-called "syringe attacks" took place in Urumqi and other Xinjiang cities. Uyghur youngsters attacked and stabbed the Han Chinese with syringes telling that they contain AIDS infected blood. By mid September 75 suspects were arrested in relation to this case<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance: Wayne Martin I, "Al-Qaeda's China problem", *Asia Times*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IB27Ad01.html>, February 27, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: "The Status of Human Rights in China: The U.N. Universal Periodic Review," *Monitor China*, [http://www.monitorchina.org/document\\_details.php?id=6583](http://www.monitorchina.org/document_details.php?id=6583), January 31, 2009; "China Said 1300 Uyghurs were arrested," *East Turkestan Information Center*, [http://www.uygur.org/wunn09/01\\_05.htm](http://www.uygur.org/wunn09/01_05.htm), January 5, 2009; Fong Tak-ho, "Terror' attack a warning shot for Beijing", *Asia Times*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/JC14Ad01.html>, March 14, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> "Scores killed in China protests," *BBC*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8135203.stm>, July 6, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> "Death toll in Xinjiang riot rises to 156," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content\\_11663866.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11663866.htm), July 7, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> "Many countries say Xinjiang riot China's internal affair," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/17/content\\_11726662.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/17/content_11726662.htm), July 17, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> "Turkish PM twisting facts of Urumqi riots: newspaper," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/14/content\\_11706029.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/14/content_11706029.htm), July 14, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> "Over 20,000 police sent to quell Xinjiang unrest," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content\\_11663816.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11663816.htm), July 6, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> "Police have evidence of World Uyghur Congress masterminding Xinjiang riot," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content\\_11663784.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11663784.htm), July 6, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> "Mobs in deadly Xinjiang violence subject to severe punishment: official," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content\\_11666945.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/07/content_11666945.htm), July 7, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> "Chinese president leaves for home ahead of schedule due to situation in Xinjiang," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/08/content\\_11670124.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/08/content_11670124.htm), July 8, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> "Police capture 75 suspects of Xinjiang syringe attacks," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/15/content\\_12057712.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/15/content_12057712.htm), September 15, 2009.

The problem is aggravated by that fact that terrorist and extremist organizations in Xinjiang are connected with a number of other terrorist organizations around the world, including Al Qaida. Some data suggest that before 9/11 over one thousand Uyghur combatants were trained in Al Qaida camps<sup>1</sup>. During one of the raids in January 2007, Chinese special forces seized video materials containing calls for a jihad against China<sup>2</sup>. Uyghur extremist organizations also attack citizens of China abroad. For instance, in one of such attacks three Chinese nationals were shot to death in Peshawar, Pakistan<sup>3</sup>. Pakistani officials suggest that in early 2008 nearly a thousand Uyghur militants from Xinjiang region have made their way to Waziristan<sup>4</sup> – an area almost wholly controlled by Taliban and local tribal chieftains, who have declared creation of the Islamic Emirate of Waziristan.

Chinese nationals were also attacked in post-Soviet Central Asian countries. These attacks started in 1998 and the most notorious ones took place in Kyrgyzstan. In 2000 a Chinese businessman was kidnapped and an assault was organized on an official Chinese delegation. In 2002 Uyghur bands killed a senior Chinese diplomat, and in the same year an explosion went off in a Bishkek bazaar. In March 2003, near Kyrgyz city Naryn, Uyghur combatants attacked a highway bus en route to China. The assailants killed 22 people, including 19 PRC citizens<sup>5</sup>.

Regarded as terrorist and extremist by the Chinese, but national and liberation-oriented by some especially foreign-based Uyghur circles, the most renowned and well-organized Uyghur groups are the following: East Turkestan Islamic Movement, East Turkestan Liberation Organization, United Revolutionary Front of East Turkistan (URFET), and Uyghur Liberation Organization (ULO). In 2001, ULO merged with URFET to form the Uyghuristan People's Party<sup>6</sup>.

It is remarkable that the above mentioned 2009 mass riots in Urumqi took place just a few days after Turkish president Abdullah Gül's official visit to China. Interestingly, Xinjiang was his last stop in China. During his two-day stay in Xinjiang, Gül visited Xinjiang University which granted him an honorary professor title<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> McGregor Andrew, "Chinese counter-terrorist strike in Xinjiang", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, [http://www.cacianalyst.org/view\\_article.php?articleid=4735](http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=4735), March 7, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Kenneth George Pereire, *The East Turkestan Islamic movement in China: Uighur discontent must be addressed to stem the tide of the jihadi movement in China*, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, June 23, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Van Wie, Davis Elizabeth, "China confronts its Uyghur threat", *Asia Times*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/JD18Ad01.html>, April 18, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Fong Tak-ho, "'Terror' attack a warning shot for Beijing", *Asia Times*, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/JC14Ad01.html>, March 14, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: "Murderers of 19 Chinese Citizens Identified—Kyrgyz Interior Ministry," *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, July 3, 2003; "Kyrgyzstan Police Identify Suspects in Robbery, Murder of 20," *AFP*, July 10, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> More information on Uyghur parties and organizations can be found, particularly, in Millward James, *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*, East-West Center, Washington, 2004, pp. 23-26.

<sup>7</sup> "Turkish president concludes China visit," *Xinhua*,

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/29/content\\_11622804.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/29/content_11622804.htm), June 29, 2009.

Gül became the first Turkish president to visit Xinjiang<sup>1</sup>. The Turkish response to the events in Urumqi was quite peculiar. Ali Bardakoğlu, President of Religious Affairs of Turkey made a statement that the world should not remain indifferent to the events in China<sup>2</sup>. And the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that he follows the developments with concern: “We see that Uyghurs living in Turkey along with our people who have felt this bitterness themselves express their righteous protest against these events. We have always seen our Uighur brothers, with whom we have historical and cultural ties, as a cooperation bridge between us and China, with which we have good relations. Our expectation is that these incidents which have reached the level of brutality are stopped immediately and the necessary measures are taken in accordance with universal human rights concerns. Turkey, a member of the UN Security Council for 2009 and 2010, will raise the issue in the UN”<sup>3</sup>. A little later Erdoğan called the XUAR events genocide<sup>4</sup>.

Ankara’s position was hailed by Uyghur emigrant organizations. For instance, Rebiya Kadeer, President of the World Uyghur Congress, stated that Uyghur people are happy with the support of Turkish government and people, as they were the first to voice concerns over the clashes between local authorities and Uyghur populace. Kadeer said: “We [Uyghurs] believe that Turkey will continue to provide us full support, and we do not consider it insignificant. Turkey is our great friend and brother.”<sup>5</sup>

Naturally, this triggered a rather negative reaction in PRC. An influential Chinese newspaper Renmin Ribao openly stated in one of its articles that Pan-Turkism will fail<sup>6</sup>. The tensions between the two countries increased to an extent that the PRC Foreign Ministry warned its citizens in Turkey to be vigilant and avoid populous areas<sup>7</sup>.

Examining the Turkish reaction to the Xinjiang events, it has to be taken into account that Pan-Turkism ideology and Turkey’s involvement in Turkic world geo-

<sup>1</sup> “Turkish president says ties with China to enter new page,” *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/30/content\\_11623246.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/30/content_11623246.htm), June 29, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> «Исламский мир не должен оставаться равнодушным к событиям в Китае – министр по делам религии Турции», *Trend*, <http://news-ru.trend.az/important/exclusive/1502527.html>, 9 июля, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Раджаб Тайиб Эрдоган: “Зверствам в отношении уйгуров должен быть положен конец”, *АПА*, [http://ru.apa.az/news\\_Раджаб\\_Тайиб\\_Эрдоган:\\_«Зверствам\\_138743.html](http://ru.apa.az/news_Раджаб_Тайиб_Эрдоган:_«Зверствам_138743.html), 8 июля 2009.

<sup>4</sup> «Турецкий премьер сравнил беспорядки в Синьцзяне с геноцидом», *РИА Новости*, <http://www.rian.ru/world/20090710/176941567.html>, 10 июля 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See: Богданова Н., «Уйгурский народ доволен поддержкой Турции - президент Всемирного Уйгурского Конгресса Рабия Кадыр», *Trend*, <http://ru.trend.az/news/important/exclusive/1504519.html>, 14 июля 2009.

<sup>6</sup> “Turkish prime minister's "genocide" remarks anger China,” *People’s Daily*, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6703527.html>, July 17, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Hu Yinan, “Be vigilant in Turkey, foreign ministry says,” *China Daily*, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-08/03/content\\_8507181.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-08/03/content_8507181.htm), August 3, 2009.

politics entered a new phase after the collapse of the USSR. This is attested by numerous statements of Turkish leaders and actions of Ankara, some which have already been discussed in this study. For instance, in 1992 Suleyman Demirel, then Prime Minister of Turkey, stated that “Ankara sees itself as the rightful inheritor of Russian influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>1</sup>. At the time of being the President of Turkey, commenting his visit to Georgia and Tajikistan, Ahmet Necdet Sezer said: “We always strived for a strategic alliance with the countries of the Central Asia and South Caucasus, and I suppose, we will attain this goal”<sup>2</sup>. Also, the speaker of Turkish parliament Izgi stated that it is absolutely necessary to open a corridor between Turkey and Turkmenistan and no other states should interfere with such corridor, also adding that Turkic nations should establish close and friendly relations to eventually become a single people and single state<sup>3</sup>.

It is natural that China views with alarm the strengthening Turkish influence in Central Asia, above all for the reason that it might additionally spur separatist sentiments in XUAR, especially given that a large Uyghur Diaspora lives in Central Asian countries, whereas Xinjiang is home to over a million Kazakhs, as well as Kyrgyz and other minorities. There are some unresolved problems in relations with these minorities, too. In this context it is worth mentioning about the open letter to the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev that was sent in late June 2009 by 362 Kazakh students studying in Urumqi<sup>4</sup>. In this letter Kazakh students blame China for discrimination and oppression of Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities. For example, they claimed that the Chinese Kazakhs encounter problems common in China and called upon Nazarbayev to focus not only on the problems of Kazakhstan society, but also the ethnic matters of Kazakh people abroad. They opined that the future for Kazakhs in China is uneasy and vague, and even it is overall under a question. The petitioners also pointed out that Kazakhs globally use three alphabets, which causes divide and alienation between them. They urged to use the Latin alphabet as the only possible compromise. The Chinese Kazakhs invited the attention of Kazakhstan’s president to the policies of Young Turks headed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had reformed the Turkish language for the sake of its future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ehteshami Anoushiravan and Murphy Emma C., “The Non-Arab Middle East States and the Caucasian/Central Asian Republics: Turkey”, *International Relations*, Vol. XI, N6, December 1993, p. 513.

<sup>2</sup> Рашидоглу А., «Запад прибирает к рукам Южный Кавказ и Среднюю Азию», *Зеркало*, www.zerkalo.az, 8 ноября 2001.

<sup>3</sup> News coverage of the Turkish TV channel *TRT-1*, March 27, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> For more details on the letter see: «Казахи из Китая написали письмо Назарбаеву: Политика КНР делает будущее казахов здесь смутным и неясным», *И.А. Регнум*, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/world/analytics/1180344.html>, 29 июня 2009.

Nevertheless, the main threat for China is certainly posed by Uyghur separatism, especially given the existence of Uyghur Diaspora in Central Asian countries. However, the PRC is anxious not about the presence of Uyghur Diaspora in Central Asia per se, but because many of the Central Asian Uyghurs have moved to the region from Xinjiang. According to some sources, about 600,000 Uyghurs have settled in Central Asia, having moved to escape what they said is repression by Chinese authorities<sup>1</sup>. Many of those who took part in creation of East Turkestan Republic in the 1940s had moved to Central Asia after Chinese jurisdiction over Xinjiang was reestablished, as well as during the Cultural Revolution of the 1950-60s. Uyghur political emigrant circles intensified their activities once Central Asian countries gained independence, even though some of the Uyghur organizations, such as Free Uyghuristan, were banned in all states of the region.

Uyghurs were especially active in Kyrgyzstan. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century around 200 veterans of the 1940s East Turkestan independence struggle lived in the country, and a former member of Kyrgyzstan parliament Nurmammed Kenjiev used to be Vice Chairman of the Allied Committee for the Peoples of Tibet, Eastern Turkestan and Inner Mongolia<sup>2</sup>. Separatist literature was imported to Kyrgyzstan illegally from Turkey, Syria, Jordan and even Australia, and in 1994 an event dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of East Turkestan Republic was organized in Bishkek<sup>3</sup>. Obviously, such action caused a strident response from the Chinese embassy, as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Attorney General of Kyrgyzstan. Fears of PRC are not limited to such things, given the above mentioned terrorist acts carried out by Uyghur organizations in this country against Chinese officials.

The situation in Xinjiang has not been stabilized yet. This is confirmed, for example, by the fact that Xinjiang authorities have adopted a resolution according to which all schools and kindergartens of the region should have at least four guards by autumn 2011, to ensure campus safety<sup>4</sup>.

### ***Confronting Pan-Turkism: Some Forms and Directions***

Needless to say, People's Republic of China has developed a policy to confront Pan-Turkism ideology. This policy has many levels and vectors. We shall examine just some of its forms and directions. Provided that Pan-Turkism threat arises both domestically and internationally, the policies of China to face it can be conditionally divided in two general groups; internal and external. Beijing takes appropriate steps

<sup>1</sup> "Kazakh Police Kill Suspected Uighur Separatists," *Reuters*, September 28, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> See: Manayev Kanai, "Ethnic Bomb at Kyrgyzstan's Border", *The Times of Central Asia*, June 29, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Guards required at schools, kindergartens in Xinjiang," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-12/07/c\\_13638684.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-12/07/c_13638684.htm), December 7, 2010.

in both dimensions to counter Pan-Turkism. These dimensions are in no way separate, rather being kind of communicating geopolitical vessels.

### ***External Environment***

As already mentioned, one of the sources for development and penetration of Pan-Turkism ideology in China is the external environment presented by potential adversaries of PRC, where both domestic and international Pan-Turkist elements find safe haven and support. To confront all of these, China has to build up a complex program of relationship with these countries and forces, especially that facing Pan-Turkism is just one of the components of the policy. It has to be noted that in China there have been different approaches to opposing this ideology. The period of USSR collapse is particularly interesting in this context. After the Central Asian countries gained independence, the Chinese leadership elite, especially in the bordering Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, had serious fears regarding possible upsurge of separatist sentiments, as well as Pan-Turkist and Pan-Islamist tendencies in Xinjiang. Wang Enmao, the former governor of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, in 1992 urged to build a “great iron wall” along the whole border between China and Central Asia, so as to defend against the foreign elements hostile to China<sup>1</sup>. Wang’s words reflected the mindset of the most of Chinese leadership at the moment, aimed at forestalling any potential unrest in Xinjiang caused by a combination of Pan-Turkism and radical Islam<sup>2</sup>.

This was in a way, an isolationist approach. It never became dominant, perhaps because it was impossible to conduct isolationist policies, especially in the light of PRC’s rapid economic growth and globalization of its trade and foreign relations. Consequently, Beijing now uses major diplomatic and economic mechanisms to conduct rather active policies, including those to deal with Pan-Turkism ideology.

### ***Diplomacy***

As far as diplomacy is concerned, there are both tactical and strategic components to it. The tactical ones include various demarches and other diplomatic pressure elements time to time utilized by China, particularly against Turkey. Since early 1990s Beijing stepped up diplomatic pressure on Ankara, which resulted in Turkish government’s official statement on recognizing XUAR as an integral part of PRC and prohibiting controversial actions of Uyghur Diaspora in Turkey, as well as a decision

---

<sup>1</sup>Lillian Craig Harris, “Xinjiang, Central Asia and the Implications for China’s Policy in the Islamic World,” *China’s Quarterly*, N133, March 1993, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Keith Martin, “China and Central Asia: Between Seduction and Suspicion”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, Volume 3, N 25, June 24, 1994, p. 27.

to no longer grant citizenship to Uyghur refugees<sup>1</sup>. Uyghur organizations established and functioning in Turkey to struggle for East Turkestan independence, had to relocate elsewhere. Among the new locations were the USA and Germany. For instance, the newly reformed East Turkestan National Center was hastily relocated in 1998 to Munich, where it was in further transformed into East Turkestan National Congress in 1999. In April 2004 the East Turkestan National Congress merged with World Uyghur Youth Congress (both were based in Munich) to form the World Uyghur Congress<sup>2</sup>. Among the US-based Uyghur organizations it is worth mentioning the Uyghur American Association, which is headquartered in Washington, DC<sup>3</sup>. This organization is headed by already mentioned Rebiya Kadeer, the president of World Uyghur Congress.

However, relocation of a number of leading Uyghur organizations from Turkey to Europe and USA hardly qualifies for a Chinese victory. It turns out that now not only Turkey, but also the USA and Europe are sources of Pan-Turkism ideology propagation. The fact that the Third Uyghur World Kurultay was held in the US Capitol speaks for itself, and it is no coincidence that at this very time president Obama raised the issue of 17 Uyghur prisoners in Guantanamo, which was portrayed as a gift to the Kurultay<sup>4</sup>. Understandably, the mentioned aspects already represent elements of a qualitatively new situation.

One of the diplomatic pressure directions, especially in relation to the Central Asia, is the water politics<sup>5</sup>. People's Republic of China possesses rather effective leverage of political pressure through water, especially with respect to Kazakhstan. About one-third of Kazakhstan's water resources come from China and Beijing intends to use the hydro-resources of more than 30 rivers flowing from China to Kazakhstan<sup>6</sup>. However the key elements in China's hydro-politics with regard to Kazakhstan are Irtysh and Ili rivers. An annual water abstraction of just 485 million m<sup>3</sup> from Irtysh River, i.e. about 5% of average annual flow, would bring dire consequences to Kazakhstan. If China increases annual water abstraction from Irtysh and Ili rivers to 1 billion m<sup>3</sup>, and maybe potentially to 6 billion m<sup>3</sup> (there is some information on such plans), then it might result in catastrophic effects for the whole region<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, Irtysh is the largest tributary of the Ob River, one of the main

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Островская Елена, «Уйгурский проект», *Новое восточное обозрение*, <http://www.journal-neo.com/?q=ru/node/1712>, 28 сентября 2010.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on these transformations see: «Всемирный Уйгурский Конгресс», *Uighur.narod.ru*, [http://uighur.narod.ru/articles/Uigur\\_Congress.html](http://uighur.narod.ru/articles/Uigur_Congress.html).

<sup>3</sup> See: "About UAA", *Uyghur American Association*, <http://www.uyghuramerican.org/categories/About-UAA/>.

<sup>4</sup> Мияржап Нурбанум, «Третий всемирный уйгурский Курултай», *Уйгурский культурный центр "УМУТ-ОЕМОЕТ"*, [http://umut.com/ru/2/382\\_1.shtml](http://umut.com/ru/2/382_1.shtml), 6 июня 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Подробнее о политике Китая в Центральной Азии в целом и гидрополитике, в частности, см. Бабаян Д., *Геополитика Китая на современном этапе: некоторые направления и формы*, Ереван, 2010; Babayan David, "Some of China's Geopolitical Vectors in Central Asia", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, N4, December, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> See: Bakhytzhан Temirbolat, "Water May Cause Conflict Between Kazakhstan and China," *The Times of Central Asia*, Vol.2, Issue N 22(65) June 3, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Туров Владимир, «Как Россию оставляют за "водозабором"», *Независимая Газета*, 12 мая 1999, с. 4.

rivers of Russia. It also feeds Lake Zaysan in Kazakhstan. Cities of Ust-Kamenogorsk, Semipalatinsk, Pavlodar, and the Irtysh-Karaganda channel may come under a threat of water starvation<sup>1</sup>. Use of Ili River waters by PRC also may lead to serious ramifications for Kazakhstan and the region as a whole. Eighty percent of water sources in the Ili River valley originate in territory of China<sup>2</sup>. Apparently, if the countries of the region conduct hostile policy toward China, including with respect to spreading Pan-Turkism ideology, then Beijing may utilize hydro-politics as one of the most effective mechanisms to counter such threats.

Nevertheless, it is evident that diplomatic pressure alone is not sufficient in foreign policy. People's Republic of China has developed a peculiar geopolitical strategy. It is based on the cluster approach, which is widely used by Beijing in relations with Turkey and Central Asian countries. The essence of this approach is that while developing cooperation with Ankara, Beijing makes sure to build relations with the neighboring countries as well, which are often adversaries and competitors to Turkey. This approach is expressly manifested in actual situations; in particular, in autumn 2010 when high-ranking PRC delegations extensively toured the countries of Middle East and Balkans. Let us examine this in more detail.

In October 2010, China's prime-minister Wen Jiabao visited Turkey. A wide range of bilateral relations were discussed within the framework of this visit. The Turkish party was so much inspired by economic cooperation prospects with China that Vice Chairman of the Turkish Exporters Assembly Mustafa Çıkrıkçıoğlu said that the near future is going to be "the era of China and Turkey"<sup>3</sup>. However, in parallel to expanding relations with Turkey, China also develops interaction with other countries of the region that have serious problems and controversies in their relations with Turkey.

For example, China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi had an official visit to Cyprus almost simultaneously to the Premier's visit to Turkey. During the talks with his Cypriot counterpart, the Foreign Minister stated that China attaches great importance to relations with Cyprus and hopes to make joint efforts with Cyprus to put forward the comprehensive and strategic partnership in line with the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit<sup>4</sup>. A few days before the visit to Turkey, China's premier Wen Jiabao paid a visit to Greece, where he pledged to deepen bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership with Greece<sup>5</sup>. In particular, China will help

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Pannier B. and Magauin E., "Kazakhstan: China Discusses Future of Irtysh River," RFE/RL Weekly Magazine, May 28, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> "China, Turkey hold forum to boost economic ties," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/20/c\\_13565503.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/20/c_13565503.htm), October 19, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> "China, Cyprus vow to enhance bilateral ties," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/19/c\\_13565290.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/19/c_13565290.htm), October 19, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> "China, Greece pledge to deepen strategic partnership in joint statement," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/04/c\\_13541501.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/04/c_13541501.htm), October 3, 2010.

with the upgrading and reconstructing the container terminal of the port of Piraeus<sup>1</sup>, which is the largest passenger port in Europe and one of the major ports in the world<sup>2</sup>. It was also announced that it is realizable for the trade volume between the two countries to double and reach the goal of \$8 billion<sup>3</sup>. Other than economy, China and Greece also touched upon cultural and historical matters. For instance, Premier Wen Jiabao said that the Chinese and Greek civilizations had made major contributions to the development of world civilization<sup>4</sup>.

China-Bulgaria relations also progressed virtually at the same time. Again in October 2010, PRC's Vice Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng made an official visit to Bulgaria. Simeon Djankov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Bulgaria said during the meeting with the Chinese delegation that his country aims for China to become the largest foreign investor in this Balkan country by 2013<sup>5</sup>. Bulgaria invites Chinese investment as the country offers the lowest taxes within the European Union, and in words of Wan Jifei, Chairman of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Bulgaria is a gateway for China to enter Europe<sup>6</sup>.

The relations between China and Syria develop dynamically as well. Syria is indeed an important player in the Middle Eastern geopolitics. The country represents a special interest for Beijing in the context of China's New Silk Road Strategy<sup>7</sup>. China is also interested in establishing closer cooperation with Syria in energy industry<sup>8</sup>.

China-Iran relations are also at a rather high level of development. For the PRC the Islamic Republic is a strategic partner. Currently Iran is China's third-largest oil supplier behind only Angola and Saudi Arabia, exporting about 300,000 barrels of oil per day<sup>9</sup>. More than 100 Chinese state companies are working in Iran to help build infrastructure projects—highways, ports, shipyards, airports, dams, etc. China is Iran's second-largest trading partner<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Chinese premier says China firmly supports Greece, ready to expand cooperation," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c\\_13541111.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c_13541111.htm), October 3, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: "Container Terminal", *Piraeus Port Authority S.A.*, [http://www.olp.gr/EN\\_PDF/Statistics/Pinakas\\_Istoselidas\\_OLP2007\\_%20final\\_en.pdf](http://www.olp.gr/EN_PDF/Statistics/Pinakas_Istoselidas_OLP2007_%20final_en.pdf), accessed December 28, 2010; "Piraeus port", *Greek Islands*, <http://www.greek-islands.us/athens/piraeus-port/>, accessed December 28, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> "Premier Wen makes five-point proposal on China-Greece ties," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c\\_13540459.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c_13540459.htm), October 3, 2010; "Chinese premier says China firmly supports Greece, ready to expand cooperation," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c\\_13541111.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c_13541111.htm), October 3, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> "Chinese premier says China firmly supports Greece, ready to expand cooperation," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c\\_13541111.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/03/c_13541111.htm), October 3, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> "Bulgaria aims for China to be largest investor by 2013: minister," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/16/c\\_13560151.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/16/c_13560151.htm), October 15, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> "Bulgaria welcomes Chinese investment: official," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/12/c\\_13552187.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/12/c_13552187.htm), October 11, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> См, к примеру, Lin Christina, "Syria in China's New Silk Road Strategy", *The Jamestown Foundation, China Brief*, Volume N10, Issue 8, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=36264&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=25&cHash=2539572719](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36264&tx_ttnews[backPid]=25&cHash=2539572719), April 16, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> "Bulgaria welcomes Chinese investment: official," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/12/c\\_13552187.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/12/c_13552187.htm), October 11, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Chang Parris, "China's Policy Toward Iran: Arms for Oil?," *China Brief, The Jamestown Foundation*, Volume N8, issue N21, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34141&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34141&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no_cache=1), November 18, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

In its cluster geopolitics, China forges relationships with some unrecognized states as well. In Turkey's case a special significance is attached to Iraqi Kurdistan. Apparently, by developing relations with Kurdistan Beijing resolves a number of strategic issues. Incidentally, some Chinese analysts view the Kurdish vector of the Chinese geopolitics precisely in this light<sup>1</sup>. One of the most economically beneficial areas of cooperation between China and Kurdistan is the energy industry. In 2008 Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Sulaymaniyah, one of the largest cities in Kurdistan, called on the Chinese government to encourage its companies to invest in Kurdistan, noting that there are four companies from PRC already working in the region<sup>2</sup>. In 2009 the Chinese Sinopec company acquired the Swiss firm Addax Petroleum, which among other things is involved in oil exploration and export from Iraqi Kurdistan<sup>3</sup>.

### *Economy*

Evidently, one of the key components of China's cluster geopolitics is development of economic relations. It is the deepening of mutually beneficial economic cooperation that makes the diplomatic pressure largely effective.

In this background a particular importance is attached to expanding economic ties with Turkey. The trade between them develops quite dynamically, which is reflected in trade volume figures. The two countries saw their trade surge from more than \$1 billion in 2000 to \$10.08 billion in 2009<sup>4</sup>. Yet the partners do not plan to stop on what has already been achieved. Specifically, Beijing and Ankara set a goal to increase bilateral trade to \$50 billion in five years, i.e. quintuple it compared to the 2009 volume<sup>5</sup>. And by 2020 it is planned to increase the volume of bilateral trade to \$100 billion<sup>6</sup>.

The relations between People's Republic of China and Central Asian countries also develop intensively, which can be told from the bilateral trade dynamics. For instance, the trade volume between PRC and Turkmenistan in 1992 totaled to \$4.5 million<sup>7</sup>, whereas in 2009 it surpassed \$1 billion<sup>8</sup>. In 1992 trade vol-

<sup>1</sup> См., например, Kuang Shengyan and Chen Zhihong, "Kuerde gongrendang wenti ji qi dui Tuerqi neiwai zhengce de yingxiang" (The Question of the Kurdish Workers Party and Its Impact on Turkey's Domestic and Foreign Policy) *Xiya Feizhou (West Asia and Africa)*, No 4, 1995, pp. 19-24.

<sup>2</sup> "Kurds urge China to invest in Kurdistan," *The Free Library*, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Kurds+urge+China+to+invest+in+Kurdistan.-a0189234926>, November 18, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> "Kurdistan Region of Iraq Licence Areas, Overview - all onshore exploration licences," *Addax Petroleum website*, [http://www.addaxpetroleum.com/operations/middle\\_east/license\\_area\\_overview](http://www.addaxpetroleum.com/operations/middle_east/license_area_overview).

<sup>4</sup> "Education best venue for fostering Turkey-China ties, says university president", *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/04/c\\_13542239.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/04/c_13542239.htm), October 4, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> "Chinese premier assures Turkish businessmen of growing trade," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/09/c\\_13549276.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/09/c_13549276.htm), October 9, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> "China, Turkey hold forum to boost economic ties," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/20/c\\_13565503.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/20/c_13565503.htm), October 19, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> For more details, see: China and Turkmenistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4458.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Парамонов В., Строков А., Столповский О., «Экономическое присутствие Китая в Туркменистане. Часть 1», *Центральная Евразия*, <http://ceasia.ru/ekonomika/ekonomicheskoe-prisutstvie-kitaya-v-turkmenistane.-chast-1.html>, 9 августа 2010.

ume between China and Kazakhstan comprised \$369.1 million<sup>1</sup>, and in 2009 it reached \$14 billion<sup>2</sup>. The bilateral trade between China and Uzbekistan evolves dynamically, too. Its 1992 volume amounted to \$47.5 million<sup>3</sup>, while by 2009 it was over \$1.9 billion<sup>4</sup>. According to the data of the PRC General Administration of Customs, the total trade volume between China and Tajikistan in 1992 constituted \$35.48 million<sup>5</sup> and in 2009 it amounted to \$266.6 million<sup>6</sup>. The 1992 trade volume between China and Kyrgyzstan was \$35.48million<sup>7</sup>, whereas in 2009 it surpassed \$643 million<sup>8</sup>.

China actively develops economic relations with the Muslim world in general. Trade between China and Arab states surged to \$107.4 billion in 2009 from \$36.4 billion in 2004<sup>9</sup>. The same type of dynamic development exists in its bilateral relations with the most populous Muslim country, Indonesia. Due to these close economic ties with the Islamic world, during the events in XUAR virtually all large Muslim countries, with the exception of Turkey, as mentioned above, stated that Xinjiang situation is the internal matter of China. Iran even blamed the Western countries for provoking the unrest through interference in China's internal affairs<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, everyone remembers well the Muslim reaction to the 2005 publication of prophet Mohammed caricatures in a number of European countries. Position of the Muslim world is nothing but a reflection of China's increased importance for the Muslim countries.

<sup>1</sup> Более подробно см. China and Kazakhstan, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China*, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4372.html>.

<sup>2</sup> «Основные показатели внешней торговли Республики Казахстан по странам за 2010 год», *Агентство Республики Казахстан по статистике*, [http://www.stat.kz/digital/vnesh\\_torg/DocLib/%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BD\\_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8.xls](http://www.stat.kz/digital/vnesh_torg/DocLib/%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BD_%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8.xls), accessed February 15, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> For more detailed information see: "China and Uzbekistan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4467.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Парамонов В., Строков А., Столповский О., «Экономическое присутствие Китая в Узбекистане. Часть 1», *Центральная Евразия*, <http://ceasia.ru/ekonomika/ekonomicheskoe-prisutstvie-kitaya-v-uzbekistane.-chast-1.html>, 13 августа 2010.

<sup>5</sup> For more detailed information see: "China and Kirgizstan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4374.html>.

<sup>6</sup> *Таджикистан в цифрах, 2010*, Агентство по статистике при Президенте Республики Таджикистан, Душанбе, 2010, с.157

<sup>7</sup> For more details, see: "China and Kirgizstan," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4374.html>.

<sup>8</sup> «Внешняя торговля Кыргызской Республики по странам», *Национальный Статистический Комитет Кыргызской Республики*, [http://212.42.101.124:1041/stat1.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=61](http://212.42.101.124:1041/stat1.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=61), Бишкек, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> "Chinese Premier urges upgrading China-Arab cooperation," *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/14/c\\_13293384.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-05/14/c_13293384.htm), May 13, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> "Mottaki: Western meddling led to China unrest," Press TV, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=100509&sectionid=351020101>, July 12, 2009.

### ***Internal Environment***

Beijing actively counters Pan-Turkism internally. This policy is rather multifaceted and includes, inter alia, mechanisms of forceful counteraction, conducting appropriate ethnic and administrative-territorial policies, as well as economic development of China.

#### ***Forceful Counteraction***

Forceful counteraction is one of the ways to deal with an ideology, especially if extremists resort to violence. When China restored jurisdiction over Xinjiang, it had to forcefully counter Pan-Turkism. Very often the arrested and convicted had wooden plaques on their chests that read “counterrevolutionary” and “Pan-Turkist”<sup>1</sup>. The 1980-90s surge of religious activity in Xinjiang triggered response actions of Chinese and XUAR authorities. In 1988 a decree was adopted to regulate the places of religious activities in Xinjiang. Two more decrees were issued in 1990s that regulated religious and clergy activities. With these documents Beijing created grounds for an immediate control over the religious sphere in the region. In exercising such control Beijing sometimes takes radical measures. For instance, according to Uyghur emigrant agencies, in particular the Eastern Turkistan Information Center, in 2000 the education authorities of the prefectures of Uyghur compact settlement, Kashgar, Aksu and Hotan, prohibited fasting for teachers and students during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. It was agreed beforehand that school principals were responsible for the control over the implementation<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, state employees, businesspeople and individuals both in urban and rural areas are banned from participating in any religious events. The Chinese authorities exert strict control over the Uyghur school curricula, and Uyghur teachers have to periodically take political trainings<sup>3</sup>. These are not Beijing’s only methods for rigorous thwarting of any separatism manifestations. According to the Amnesty International, in the period between January 1997 and April 1999 there have been 210 death sentences and 190 executions in Xinjiang<sup>4</sup>. According to Uyghur emigrant circles in 2001-2002 the Chinese authorities conducted a campaign in Xinjiang code-

---

<sup>1</sup> Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, указ. соч., с.537.

<sup>2</sup> “New Tricks of the Chinese Authorities During Holy Ramadan,” *The World Uighur Network News*, Electronic Newsletter Produced by the Eastern Turkistan Information Center, December 31, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> “Chinese Authorities Have Withdrawn the Works of the Uighur Authors From School Textbooks,” *The World Uighur Network News*, Electronic Newsletter Produced by the Eastern Turkistan Information Center, December 31, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Bakshi Jyotsna, “Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership in Central Asia: Implication for India”, *Strategic Analysis*, Monthly Journal of the IDSA, Vol. XXV, N2, May 2001, p. 172.

named Strike Hard that was aimed at uprooting separatism and illegal religious activities. In this period police arrested over 13,000 lawbreakers, confiscated 6,573 firearm pieces, 70,000 rounds of ammunition, 80 tons of explosives, etc.<sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, PRC has to keep a rather large military force in the region. Before the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had 500,000 troops stationed in Xinjiang, but in addition to those there are militia units with 2.6 million members who belong to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps<sup>2</sup>. This organization has played a key role in quelling unrest among Uyghurs.

### *Ethnic Policy*

It is absolutely clear that forceful methods alone are not sufficient to fight Pan-Turkism. Moreover, using too much force may consolidate the population and increase the number of separatist and Pan-Turkist sympathizers. Hence, Beijing has developed other mechanisms to counter this ideology. Among these the ethnic policy deserves special attention. Beijing has achieved significant success in this field.

The most important achievement is the fractioning of pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic national self-consciousness and successful inuring of separate national identities for each of the Xinjiang peoples. As a matter of fact, till 1930s the national identities of Xinjiang Muslims were manifested in quite a peculiar manner. Academician Aziz Narynbekov, a renowned Central Asian philosopher, wrote about Xinjiang of that period: "The locals had a vague idea about belonging to a single nation. When asked about their ethnicity many of them would answer: Kashgarian, Hotani, Yarkandi, Kuqarian, etc., i.e. they would name the place they were from"<sup>3</sup>. Pan-Turkists were very active to avail themselves of such opportunity and turn the location-based system of identities into a supranational system of Pan-Turkism. One of the already mentioned Pan-Turkist leaders, Muhammad Bughra used to say: "Our motherland is Turkestan, our ethnicity is Turkic, and our religion is Islam."<sup>4</sup>

Apparently, in such situation supranational ideologies like Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism could become dominant in national self-consciousness of Muslim and especially Turkic-speaking peoples. With this in mind, the Chinese authorities began instilling distinct ethnic self-consciousness on concrete peoples of Xinjiang. It has to be noted that China received much help in this process from the USSR, as the latter was also interested in shattering the supranational Pan-Turkism ideology, and especially in implanting Uyghur self-identity. In 1921 a conference of united Uyghur intelligentsia

<sup>1</sup> Сыроежкин Константин, «Вопрос об «уйгурском вопросе», *Континент*, №6(68), 20 марта - 2 апреля 2002 г.

<sup>2</sup> "120,000 Chinese Soldiers Entered "Xinjiang" by Plane," *Uighur Information Agency*, Washington, December 19, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> See: Нарынбаев Азиз, *Избранные произведения*, Бишкек, 2004, с.513.

<sup>4</sup> Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, указ. соч., с.343.

of Turkestan ASSR and Xinjiang was organized in Tashkent at the initiative of Abdulla Rozybakiyev, a statesman, public figure, educator and publicist, as well as with active participation of Sergey Malov, a Turkic studies expert. In this conference a decision was made on officially restoring the “Uyghur” self-designation as an ethnic-wide naming<sup>1</sup>. In 1923 an extraordinary session of the RCP(b) Central Committee bureau for Central Asia adopted a special resolution on “Uyghur” ethnonym.

It should be mentioned that this process progressed differently in the USSR and China, conceivably related to the fact that prior to 1949 there was an iron curtain between the two countries and Uyghurs living in these countries did not have adequate contacts with each other. Perhaps this was the reason why Uyghurs of PRC were not perceived as such by the peoples of Soviet Central Asia till mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. After elimination of East Turkestan Republic and notably in 1950s, tens of thousands of Uyghurs moved from Xinjiang to the Central Asian republics of the USSR, and the locals called them “Jihua” (Chinamen)<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, ethnic self-identity was successfully inured among Uyghurs, becoming a very important geopolitical milestone, considering that Uyghurs are the largest Turkic-speaking people of Xinjiang. Once emerged, the separate peoples wanted to maintain their national identity and did not want to assimilate with another, even closely related people. This was a serious blow to the supranational ideology.

### ***Administrative and territorial policies***

Promoting national identities among different peoples of Xinjiang would have not been effective as expected without appropriate administrative and territorial policies. Therefore, Beijing conducts ethnic and administrative-territorial policies in a close tandem. Here again, the Soviet Union’s assistance was invaluable, especially as far as the basics of national policy are concerned. It has to be noted that in 1920s, to follow the Leninism principles of national policy the Chinese communists took on board the thesis of peoples’ self-determination. The Chinese Communist Party program clauses of the time stated the following: “Peripheries like Tibet, Mongolia, Xinjiang, etc. shall be given the right for self-determination. These peoples may join China only if they wish so”<sup>3</sup>. The non-Han peoples’ right to self-determination had been also acknowledged in 1930s, particularly by the resolutions adopted in the 1<sup>st</sup> (1931) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (1934) All-China Congresses of Soviets<sup>4</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> congress resolution on the national issues stated: “The Chinese Soviet Republic categorically and uncondi-

<sup>1</sup> Хожамберди Кахарман, *Уйгуры. Этнополитическая история с древнейших времен до наших дней*, указ. соч., с.354.

<sup>2</sup> Гребенщиков Игорь, «Уйгуры в Кыргызстане», *Zona.kz*, <http://www.zonakz.net/articles/13629>, accessed February 10, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See: Рахимов Т., *Судьбы неханьских народов КНР*, Москва, 1981, с.46.

<sup>4</sup> For details see: Москалев А., *Гуанси-Чжуанский и Нинся-Хуэйский автономные районы КНР*, Москва, 1979, с.4.

tionally accepts the right of all nations for self-determination. This means in regions like Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Hunan, Guizhou and others with non-Han ethnic majority, working masses have the right to decide whether they would like secede from the Chinese Soviet Republic and establish their own independent state, or form an autonomous region within the Chinese Soviet Republic.” The Provisional Constitution adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Soviets stipulated that “The Soviet authorities in China declare national freedom for all small peoples and ethnic minorities in China and acknowledge their right to self-determination, including secession from China and creation of own states.”

However, by the time of the PRC establishment, the USSR advised the Chinese communists to change their approach to the national problem in order to prevent adverse effects. In late January, 1949 Stalin secretly sent A. Mikoyan to Mao Zedong to reach an agreement on bilateral relations of the two countries after Communist Party of China seizes power. Mikoyan and Mao also discussed the issue of Xinjiang. Mikoyan stated that USSR did not support independence movements of the Xinjiang ethnic groups and had no claims to this territory, deeming it an integral part of China<sup>1</sup>. Mikoyan also told Mao Zedong that Moscow recommends the Chinese Communists to exercise restraint in the national issues with regards to granting independence to ethnic minorities, because it would make the territory of the future Chinese communist state smaller. It was pointed out that ethnic minorities should be given autonomy instead of independence<sup>2</sup>.

The Chinese communists took the advice of the USSR and based the future structure of PRC on the Soviet administrative and territorial model, although they significantly augmented it. As in case with the USSR, China has union republics, which are called autonomous regions. On the other hand, Chinese constitution prohibits the administrative units seceding from China. Moreover, national autonomies in China have more layers. For example there are five Autonomous Prefectures in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: Bayingolin Mongol, Börtala Mongol, Ili Kazakh, Kizilsu Kirghiz and Changji Hui. These five Autonomous Prefectures cover an area of 918,500 sq.km and constitute over 50.5% of the XUAR territory. The Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture with its area of 470,900 sq.km is the largest autonomous prefecture of not only Xinjiang, but entire China<sup>3</sup>.

The ethnic composition of these prefectures is quite interesting. In both Bayingolin Mongol and Börtala Mongol<sup>4</sup> Autonomous Prefectures the titular nation, Mon-

<sup>1</sup> Обухов В., *Схватка шести империй. Битва за Синцзянь*, Москва, 2007, с.411.

<sup>2</sup> Бармин В., *Синцзянь в советско-китайских отношениях 1941-1949 гг.*, Барнаул, 1999, с.178.

<sup>3</sup> See: «Баянгол-Монгольский автономный округ», *Wikipedia*, [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Баянгол-Монгольский\\_автономный\\_округ](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Баянгол-Монгольский_автономный_округ).

<sup>4</sup> «Боро-Тала-Монгольский автономный округ», *Wikipedia*, [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Боро-Тала-Монгольский\\_автономный\\_округ](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Боро-Тала-Монгольский_автономный_округ).

gols, are a minority – 4.12% и 5.64%, respectively. In the former, Han Chinese make up 57.5% of the population, with Uyghurs comprising 32.7%, and in the latter – 67.19% and 12.53%, correspondingly. In the ethnic composition of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture Han Chinese are the largest group with 45.2%, followed by Kazakhs, 25.4%, and Uyghurs with almost 16%<sup>1</sup>. Tutular nation of Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture, the Kyrgyz, comprise less than the third of population, whereas Uyghurs are a majority with 64%<sup>2</sup>. Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture is dominated by Han Chinese with 75% of population, while the Hui comprise 11.5%<sup>3</sup>.

The next level of national administrative and territorial division is the Autonomous County. Apart from the five autonomous prefectures there are six Autonomous Counties in XUAR: Barkol Kazakh, Mori Kazakh, Taxkorgan Tajik, Hoboksar Mongol, Qapqal Xibe and Yanqi Hui. Barkol Kazakh Autonomous County is part of the Hami Prefecture. Its ethnic composition is dominated by Han Chinese (over 64% of population), whereas Kazakhs make up about 34%<sup>4</sup>. The other Kazakh entity is Mori Kazakh Autonomous County located in Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang. This county has a mixed ethnic composition with the Han, Kazakhs, Uyghurs, Uzbeks and Hui living together. The Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County of Xinjiang is part of the Kashgar Prefecture. The area of this autonomous entity is 52.4 sq. km, and Tajiks comprise a majority here with 84% of population<sup>5</sup>. Among other Autonomous Counties are Hoboksar Mongol, Qapqal Xibe and Yanqi Hui.

The fourth, lowest level of administrative division in PRC is Ethnic Township. There are plenty of Ethnic Townships on the territory of Xinjiang<sup>6</sup>. Among the Turkic Ethnic Townships the 13 Kazakh entities are the most numerous. These are Dewaili Douruke Kazakh, Wulatai Kazakh, Qianshan Kazakh Ethnic Townships in Hami Prefecture; Shanghugou Kazakh, Sangonghe Kazakh, Ashili Kazakh, Taxihe Kazakh, Hankazitan Kazakh, Qingshuihe Kazakh, Dangtizi Kazakh, Dushanzi Kazakh, Qiaoren Kazakh and Wumachang Kazakh Ethnic Townships in Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture. There are also six Kyrgyz Ethnic Townships in XUAR: Baozidun Kyrgyz and Yamansu Kyrgyz Ethnic Townships in Aksu Autonomous Prefecture, Kekeyaer Kyrgyz Ethnic Township in Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County,

<sup>1</sup> «Или-Казахский автономный округ», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Или-Казахский\\_автономный\\_округ](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Или-Казахский_автономный_округ).

<sup>2</sup> «Кызылсу-Киргизский автономный округ», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Кызылсу-Киргизский\\_автономный\\_округ](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Кызылсу-Киргизский_автономный_округ).

<sup>3</sup> «Чанцзи-Хуэйский автономный округ», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чанцзи-Хуэйский\\_автономный\\_округ](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чанцзи-Хуэйский_автономный_округ).

<sup>4</sup> «Баркол-Казахский автономный уезд», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Баркол-Казахский\\_автономный\\_уезд](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Баркол-Казахский_автономный_уезд).

<sup>5</sup> «Ташкуртан-Таджикский автономный уезд», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ташкуртан-Таджикский\\_автономный\\_уезд](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ташкуртан-Таджикский_автономный_уезд).

<sup>6</sup> См. «Национальная волость (КНР)», *Wikipedia*,

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Национальная\\_волость\\_\(КНР\)](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Национальная_волость_(КНР)).

Kengkeer Kyrgyz Ethnic Township in Hotan County, Xiata and Kuoketerieke Kyrgyz Ethnic Townships in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture. There are also one Uzbek (Danangou Uzbek Ethnic Township in Mori Kazakh Autonomous County) and one Tatar (Daquan Tatar Ethnic Township in Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture) Ethnic Townships.

Besides the Turkic Ethnic Townships XUAR contains others, too, including ten Mongol and four Tajik entities. Mongol Ethnic Townships are within prefectures of Altay (Handegate Mongol and Hemukanasi Mongol Ethnic Townships), Tacheng (Huojierte Mongol, Emaleguolen Mongol, Jiergeleteguole Mongol and Tabulehete Mongol Ethnic Townships) and in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture (Husongtuhaerxun Mongol, Chahanwusu Mongol, Kekehaotehaoer Mongol and Hujierte Mongol Ethnic Townships). Tajik Ethnic Townships are located in prefectures of Kashgar (Buyiluke Tajik and Zarexiat Tajik Ethnic Townships) and Hotan (Nawabat Tajik Ethnic Township), as well as in Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture (Taer Tajik Ethnic Township).

The multi-level system of national territorial division functioning in PRC has helped to achieve a number of geopolitical objectives. First, ethnic minorities received their administrative and territorial entities, which became one of the solutions for the national problem in PRC. Second, administrative and territorial division of Xinjiang corresponds to the ethnic mosaic of the region and in such situation these various ethnicities have different visions for their future. In these circumstances, for example, the aspirations of some Uyghur circles to secede from China and create an independent Uyghur state cannot be unequivocally accepted by representatives of other peoples, for whom the future of Xinjiang, or at least of their ethno-territorial entities could be envisioned differently. Third, some ethnicities that have administrative and territorial entities with Xinjiang, such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Uzbek, Mongol peoples, also have their independent states elsewhere. Therefore, these countries are not likely to do the bidding of independent Uyghur state advocates and worsen relations with PRC. Even if one would hypothetically suppose that China's positions in Xinjiang weaken, then different ethnicities and peoples, including the Turkic ones might find themselves in a struggle with each other for the region, which in turn would offset the likelihood of a consolidated, say, Pan-Turkist approach. All of the above mentioned aspects create for China some effective mechanisms of holding the political initiative.

### *Economic Development of Xinjiang*

Economic development of Xinjiang is one of the important directions in struggle with Pan-Turkism, as it allows easing the social tensions and prevents speculating with and using economic problems in Pan-Turkist propaganda.

Economic development of XUAR is impressive indeed. For instance, in the period between 2006 and 2011 foreign trade of the region reached \$76 billion, in-

creasing by a factor of 2.3 from 2001-2005<sup>1</sup>. The Chinese authorities provide favorable taxing framework for the region to develop its economy. The 2010 reform of the resource tax law in Xinjiang resulted in over 1 billion Yuan of extra revenue for the local government<sup>2</sup>. Special attention is paid to the social issues. In 2010 the social expenditures in XUAR have increased by 27%, reaching \$18 billion<sup>3</sup>. Ninety-seven thousand new homes have been built in the region for nomads, with 191,000 more to be constructed soon.

### *Conclusion*

As it can be told from all of the above, People's Republic of China takes very seriously the Pan-Turkism threats and undertakes effective steps to face them. The ideology of Pan-Turkism is indeed one of the most serious challenges to China's security, and in this respect China is kind of a natural ally for the both Armenian states, for which this ideology also poses a severe peril. From this perspective deepening and expanding Armenian-Chinese relations is important both for China and the Armenian states.

*March, 2011*

---

<sup>1</sup>“Foreign trade more than triples in China's Xinjiang,” *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-02/12/c\\_13729155.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-02/12/c_13729155.htm), February 12, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>See: “Xinjiang's tax reform leads to improving living standards,” *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/18/c\\_13696371.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/18/c_13696371.htm), January 18, 2011.

<sup>3</sup>For more details concerning social expenditures see, for example: “Gov't social spending in Xinjiang up by 26.8% in 2010,” *Xinhua*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/14/c\\_13691340.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/14/c_13691340.htm), January 14, 2011.