

# Pan-Turks target China's Xinjiang

by Joseph Brewda

In April 1992, the town of Baren, in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, went into revolt, resulting in at least 22 deaths. The uprising was led by the Free East Turkestan Movement, a Pan-Turkic organization run out of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. According to Chinese authorities, the movement's members are Uighurs and Kyrgyz, who had acquired arms and training from the Afghan mujahideen.

Xinjiang has long been a target of British intelligence—with London hoping to manipulate the Uighur refugees from Xinjiang and Uighurs still there, into cannon fodder for London's plans to break up China, as per the maps published by Gerald Segal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1994, for the division of China into three countries.

Xinjiang's vulnerability lies in the fact that in 1949, when the Maoist revolution took power in Beijing, Xinjiang's population was 95% Uighur (Turkic) and 5% Han. Today, nearly 50% of the 16 million population is Han. Xinjiang was first the repository for some 2 million Kuomintang troops who could not make it to Taiwan, and then for a second wave of Han migration, after the 1957 Great Leap Forward. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, unemployed city youth were banished to Xinjiang, as well as millions of political undesirables. At that point, a half-million Uighurs from Xinjiang simply packed up and moved to adjacent Soviet republics.

Xinjiang has China's largest deposits of oil, uranium, gold, jade, and other raw materials.

Since the Uighur population is Turkic, the Pan-Turkic movement is to serve as midwife for a secessionist Xinjiang, with assistance from Islamic organizations headquartered in Pakistan and Turkey.

In December 1992, the National Congress of Turks of East Turkestan held its first conference in Istanbul. Isa Yusef Alptekin, conference chairman, had led a bloody Uighur revolt against the Chinese in 1945. He had been a Gray Wolves official since World War II, and was given the honor of being the president of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization of Lord Ennals et al.

Alptekin told the audience that the recent collapse of the Soviet Union meant "the time for collapse and dissolution has arrived for the Chinese empire. We expect help from our beloved Turkey, our new republics [in former Soviet Central Asia], co-religionists, and mankind in general, to put a check on China."

Namik Kemal Zeybek, Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel's adviser on Central Asian affairs, addressed the conference. "We must be prepared for these developments," he said, referring to Alptekin's forecast, "Let no one doubt that fortune will smile on East Turkestan." Gray Wolves leader Gen. Alparslan Turkes was also present, telling the audience that "Chinese imperialism's repression of East Turkestan must not be tolerated."

Beijing is acutely aware of the problem. In April 1994, Prime Minister Li Peng toured the Central Asian republics, to discuss trade and cooperation, and, reported one British outlet, "to silence groups campaigning for the independence of Xinjiang." But the Pan-Turkic movement has set up shop. Yusupbek Muglisi, head of the United National Revolutionary Front for Eastern Turkestan, based in Kazakhstan, told the press during Li Peng's tour, "We have decided to use all possible means, including terrorism, to bring out revolution in Xinjiang." As one Gray Wolves journalist, who frequently traveled to Central Asia, told *EIR*, "We are now using Kyrgyzstan as a base for operations in Xinjiang, just as we used Turkey as a base for operations in the Caucasus."

The "East Turkestan" movement is also finding help among Saudi-funded organizations in Pakistan connected to the Afghan mujahideen, a connection signaled when several hundred Uighur militants attended a conference of the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan last fall. Uighurs were among the recruits to the Afghan mujahideen in the fight against Soviet-run Kabul during the 1980s.

The British case officer for Xinjiang appears to be William Peters, a former British deputy high commissioner in Bombay, former ambassador to Malawi and Uruguay, and chairman of the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting in Singapore in 1971. Today, in his retirement, he amuses himself as chairman of the Leprosy and Tibet Society. In 1991, after a tour of Xinjiang, he wrote his optimistic forecast of rebellion in *Asian Affairs*:

"To the south and east [of Xinjiang] lies Tibet. Stories of the Tibetan resistance filter through to Kashgar and its neighbors. . . . To the northeast, Uighurs see the moves toward multipolarity in Outer Mongolia and hear about unrest among Mongols in Inner Mongolia. On the western side . . . there is no telling what direction semi-independent republics in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzia, and Uzbekistan might move vis-à-vis China. If there is any truth in the story of military help from Kyrgyz across the border for their fellow tribesmen in Xinjiang, this thought will be all the stronger. . . . A few Uighurs have heard of the Joint Committee for the Manchu, Mongol, East Turkmen and Tibetan Peoples and are particularly anxious to obtain by whatever means possible the Committee's publication *One Voice*. They have some links with Isa Alptekin, leader of the Turkestan Liberation Movement. . . . It is noteworthy that Alptekin's son Erkin Alptekin took an active part in the International Convention on Tibet in London from 6 to 8 July (1990).

"The conjunction of revived minority discontent on both national and religious grounds, of improved access across the frontier to fellow tribesmen, of major political change in neighboring countries, and of the sustained world reaction against genocide, colonialism, and apartheid, creates a situation in Central Asia in which radical change is just possible. . . . The present campaign to arouse world opinion on the subject of genocide, colonialism, and apartheid in China could be the lever which pries out from a Politburo due for change radical concessions in areas such as Xinjiang and Tibet."

Another person concerned to "rouse world opinion" on Xinjiang is Elsie Walker, a first cousin of George Bush and head of Asians for Democracy. In October 1994, Alptekin attended a conference in New York City of the Allied Committee of the Peoples of Eastern Turkestan, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, organized by Walker's outfit.

In its official announcement of the conference, the Tibetan government-in-exile declared: "This conference is being organized to let the international public know that in the uncertainty, instability, and even turmoil in China, that may result from the death of strongman Deng Xiaoping, the struggle to regain the freedom of these three peoples [Tibetans, Turkistanis, and Mongols] from communist China domination will be pursued relentlessly."



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