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## Uyghurs Under the Chinese State: Religious Policy and Practice in China

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## Uyghurs Under the Chinese State: Religious Policy and Practice in China

### Abstract

The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is notorious for committing human rights violations. These violations include infanticide, human trafficking, violent enforcement of the one-child policy, and religious persecution. The international community commonly overlooks religious persecution of the Uyghurs, who are targeted and often oppressed by the Chinese government. China is arguably the center of the political and economic international system but, as the Uyghur diaspora expands to developed countries, including the United States, the rest of the world must understand the issues at the forefront of the conflict.

### Keywords

Human rights, China, Uyghurs, Religious persecution

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## **Uyghurs under the Chinese State: Religious Policy and Practice in China**

By Katie Corradini

### **Introduction**

The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is notorious for committing human rights violations. These violations include infanticide, human trafficking, violent enforcement of the one-child policy, and religious persecution. The international community commonly overlooks religious persecution of the Uyghurs, who are targeted and often oppressed by the Chinese government. China is arguably the center of the political and economic international system but, as the Uyghur diaspora expands to developed countries, including the United States, the rest of the world must understand the issues at the forefront of the conflict.

### **Who are the Uyghurs?**

The Uyghurs are the Turkic Muslim minority who live primarily in the Xinjiang region of Western China and constitute approximately forty-five percent of Xinjiang. Religious freedom is perhaps the most prevalent mode of repression endured by the Uyghurs. The Chinese government, while officially declaring all religions equal and free, continues to put harsh restrictions on Uyghurs. Muslims in China must endure terrorist labels, public harassment, and stringent religious regulations. Much of the world, especially the United States, is turning a blind eye to the human rights abuses that the Uyghurs face. While the Uyghurs have at times resorted to violence, their goal is to practice religion freely in China without fear of persecution or death.

A major obstacle facing Uyghurs today is the lack of support from the international community. Many Uyghurs who lived in the Middle East after the September 11 attacks were suspected of being al Qaeda operatives. The United States military arrested Uyghurs after China declared the East Turkestan Islamic Movement a terrorist organization. Because of Sino-American foreign policy, the United States was obligated to capture the Turkic Muslims. Approximately twenty-two Uyghurs were detained in Guantanamo Bay and, of those, many were not released until this year. To date, seventeen countries have agreed to give asylum to the prisoners after their release, since they cannot return to China.

Today, Uyghurs are in two groups: those who want an independent Uyghur state and those who realize that it is easier to conform to traditional Chinese culture. It seems that the Uyghur youth want to be able to practice their religion without worrying about persecution, but they also believe that going to Chinese schools, wearing traditional Chinese clothing, and living comfortably with Han Chinese in Xinjiang are more acceptable than constantly being targeted by the Chinese government. This trend has undoubtedly reinforced the Chinese government's efforts to continue its political and cultural pressure on the Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. As more Uyghurs conform to the traditional Chinese way of life, the government believes that its restrictions are working and the Uyghur independence movement is getting smaller.

### **Uyghur Culture Versus Traditional Chinese Culture**

Traditional Chinese culture relies heavily on a rigid set of social and political values, which include, but are not limited to, a strict education system, the one-child policy, and adherence to

religious practices as outlined in the Chinese Constitution. Article 36 of the Constitution states, “[c]itizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion....” (Constitution of the People’s Republic of China). Although Islam is one of the five official religions in China, the Chinese government reserves the right to refuse equal protection to any religious group. The Uyghurs are treated more unfairly than other Islamic groups in China.

China’s goal is to reinforce traditional Chinese culture for all those living in the PRC. The government has made it close to impossible for Uyghurs to practice their religion by closing Islamic schools and mosques and forbidding traditional Muslim clothing. Although Uyghurs are officially exempt from abiding by China’s one-child policy, pregnant Uyghur women are forced into late-term abortions at a rate much higher than Han Chinese women. Being forced to go against their religious beliefs is yet another catalyst for Uyghur unrest in Xinjiang. In response to this situation, China has enforced its policies even more harshly. For example, parents are not permitted to allow their children to participate in religious activities, and imams must pledge allegiance to the Communist party.

### **Response from the Chinese Government**

On July 5, 2009, riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang province. According to official reports, 192 people were killed and 1,721 were injured. The Chinese government blamed the Uyghurs for instigating the riots and called the event a terrorist attack. The riots, though tragic, were another attempt by the Uyghurs to seek the religious freedom forbidden in China. Chinese law officially prohibits discrimination against any ethnic or minority group and allows Muslims to practice Islam freely throughout the country. Unofficially, however, the Chinese government is notorious for persecuting those who practice any religion not condoned by the state. As of November 9, 2009, nine rioters—eight Uyghurs and one Han—had been executed, and many more sentences are expected to be handed down in the coming months. Under international law, the Chinese government must allow those arrested the rights to obtain their own defense counsel and to see all evidence against them, as well as the chance to appeal when necessary. Based on the government’s decisions thus far, it is difficult to believe that China will allow the defendants all their rights.

Like many minority groups throughout world, the Uyghurs feel that resorting to violence is one of the only ways to reach their goals and defend their rights. Because China controls the media, the outside world only hears China’s side of the story and, because some Uyghur organizations are labeled as terrorist groups, the international community often sides with China without taking the time to understand the other side of the conflict.

### **Conclusion**

If China continues to violate its citizen’s human rights, it will be increasingly difficult for this Asian country to continue its policy of engagement with the international human rights system. Furthermore, China, now a member of the Human Rights Council, clearly lags behind in actual implementation of human rights standards. As this paper illustrates, religious persecution and discrimination against the Uyghur minority is a clear example of the precarious human rights situation within Chinese territory.

Implementing the specific recommendations made to China by various UN bodies represents a crucial step in advancing individual and systemic protections and respect for human rights in this country. China must stop its egregious human rights violations, not only against the Uyghurs, but against all its citizens. China's position as a political economic powerhouse does not excuse it from committing these violations, nor does it excuse it from being held accountable by the international community.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

Anonymous. 2009. "Urumqi Riot: Backstory." *China Today* (July). Available online: [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-07/30/content\\_209831.htm?intx=july+2009](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-07/30/content_209831.htm?intx=july+2009).

Annotation: This article is a brief synopsis of the Urumqi riots that erupted in July, 2009. The author of this article explains the role of the Chinese government and what steps it took to stop the violence. According to the article, the World Uyghur Congress instigated the riot and the Chinese government simply defended itself. The article does not fault China for the riots; rather, they place sole blame on the Uyghurs. Regardless of whose side the reader takes, the article is very informative.

———. 2009. "Is China Fraying?" *The Economist* (July 9).

Annotation: On July 5, 2009, a riot broke out between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government in the capital of Xinjiang Province, Urumqi. By the time the violence ended, more than 150 people had been killed. Although the article is very critical toward the Chinese government, it also comments that China's quick action following the riot was responsible. The article thoroughly explains the events leading up to the violence. It also compares China's policies in Xinjiang and Tibet. This article is relevant for a person who does not know much about the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region or the history of Islam in China.

———. 2009. "Troubles across Turkestan." *The Economist* (July 14).

Annotation: Riots in the Xinjiang region of China left roughly fifty Turkic-speaking Uyghurs dead. The author claims that the attacks were instigated by the Uyghurs but believes the response by the Chinese government was not proportional. Turkey must support the Uyghur movement because many Chinese Uyghurs live in Turkey to escape the repression of the Chinese government. Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are pressured by China to remain silent about Uyghur unrest, and some Uyghurs have even been sent back to Xinjiang. Anyone who is interested in current Chinese foreign policy will find this article beneficial.

Balci, Bayram. 2007. "Central Asian Refugees in Saudi Arabia: Religious Evolution and Contributing to the Reislamization of Their Motherland." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26 (2): 12-21.

Annotation: Balci's article is about Islamic refugees, including Uyghurs, who have left their home country for Saudi Arabia. Balci claims that, once living in Saudi Arabia, the refugees tend to convert to Saudi religions like wahhabism and salafism. He chronicles the migration of Central Asian and Western Chinese Muslims to Saudi Arabia during the twentieth century. Balci also argues that refugee Muslims who practice religion in Saudi Arabia take a very different form of Islam home to their families in Central Asia and Western China. The reader who is very knowledgeable about Central Asian and Islamic history will find this article interesting.

Baranovitch, N. 2007. "From Resistance to Adaptation: Uyghur Popular Music and Changing Attitudes Among Uyghur Youth." *China Journal* (58): 59-82.

Annotation: Baranovitch's article is unique, in that it explores Uyghur culture through the music that the Uyghur youth listen to. He argues that music is a great portal into the lives of those who are oppressed. He writes about a Uyghur musician named Askar who sings about his Uyghur heritage and, as a result, strengthens Uyghur culture, especially in Xinjiang. The other aspect of Baranovitch's article is the current attitude of Uyghur youth. Many believe that fighting for independence is pointless, and perhaps life will be better (and free from persecution) if they integrate into Chinese culture.

Bhattacharji, P. 2008. "Religion in China." *Council on Foreign Relations*, (May 16). Available online: [http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/religion\\_in\\_china.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/religion_in_china.html).

Annotation: Bhattacharji provides a thorough and extensive background on religion in China. The author details Christianity, Islam through the Uyghurs, Buddhism through Tibetans, and Falun Gong and Falun Dafa. Bhattacharji briefly explains the groups' ongoing struggles against the Chinese Communist Party. The website has several links to other helpful organizations and documents concerning religious policy in China.

Becquelin, N. 2000. "Xinjiang in the Nineties." *The China Journal* (44): 65-90.

Annotation: With the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Chinese government recognized the volatility of the region and tried to reign in Uyghur culture in the Xinjiang province to align it more with ethnic Chinese culture and politics. Additionally, China aligned itself by forming an alliance called the "group of five" with other Central Asian states to control the sociopolitical atmosphere in the region. Becquelin writes a very informative historical sketch of Xinjiang during the 1990s, specifically after the fall of the Soviet Union. The article would be very useful for someone who wants to learn how the political, economic, and social aspects of Xinjiang society evolved over the last two decades.

Buszynski, L. 2005. "Russia's New Role in Central Asia." *Asian Survey* 45 (4): 546-565.

Annotation: Buszynski explores the economic, political, and militaristic relationship between Russia and Central Asia. He notes how the relationship has changed after the fall of the Soviet Union. He argues that, post-9/11, the American military presence in the Middle East and Central Asia emasculated Russia and weakened its authority over Central Asia.

Buszynski references Central Asian and Middle Eastern experts like Ahmed Rashid, so a reader who is familiar with Rashid's work should find this article equally valuable. Though the article does not focus on the Xinjiang province, it provides a thorough background of how the conflict between Uyghurs and the Chinese government could easily expand into neighboring nations.

Chien-Peng, C. 2004. "The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia." *China Quarterly* (180): 989-1009.

Annotation: In 2001, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan formed the Shanghai Co-operation for the purpose of resisting American influence in the Central Asian States and ensuring China's control remained strong. Chien-Peng's paper is an in-depth look at Chinese foreign policy and how it has been shaped by the September 11 attacks. The author also notes the importance of a strong relationship between China and Russia in light of the war on terror and Islamic extremism, as well as the region's natural resources, especially oil.

Clarke, M. 2003. "Xinjiang and China's Relations with Central Asia, 1991-2001: Across the 'Domestic-Foreign Frontier?'" *Asian Ethnicity* 4 (2): 207.

Annotation: Clarke argues that there is a direct relationship between China's foreign policies with Central Asia and its domestic policies regarding ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region. Clarke assumes that the reader of this article already has some knowledge of Chinese foreign policy in Central Asia and the Uyghurs' plight in Western China. He also questions the current relationship between economic development and ethnic stability in the Xinjiang region. The overload of information in the article can be a bit overwhelming, but Clarke includes good specifics necessary for understanding China's relations with Central Asia.

———. 2008. "China's 'War on Terror' in Xinjiang: Human Security and the Causes of Violent Uighur Separatism." *Terrorism & Political Violence* (20): 271-301.

Annotation: Clarke's article is about the consequences of the "terrorist" label placed on the Uyghurs in Xinjiang by the Chinese government. Clarke shows that, throughout history, the primary violent uprisings in Xinjiang have been in response to changing policies regarding

the Uyghurs, whether during Maoist China or today's current administration. The violence has not been acts of terrorism, contrary to what China and other nations claim. Additionally, the "terrorist" label has done little to increase awareness of their struggles within the international community. If anything, that label has hindered any developments they have achieved during the past two decades. This article makes it clear that Chinese political and economic policies make it very difficult, if not impossible, for Uyghurs to maintain their own culture and identity within China.

Davis, E. V. W. 2008. "Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China." *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 35 (1): 15-30.

Annotation: Davis's article is a brief history of China's policies toward Muslim groups in Western China, and an analysis of how that history has contributed to present day politics. This article is helpful for someone who is interested specifically in the relationship between Western China and Central Asia. Additionally, this article explains the changing relationship between China and its Muslim population post-9/11. While this article mainly focuses on China and the Middle East, the author also discusses US foreign policy.

Dittmer, L. 2005. "Power Politics in the Himalaya and Beyond: Introduction." *Asian Survey* 45 (4): 497-502.

Annotation: Dittmer's article refers to many minority groups within China, not just the Uyghurs. One of his arguments is that, if the minority groups are able to modernize, then they stand a chance at improving their status within China. Dittmer also refers to Haider's article about the Sino-Pakistan relations on the Karakoram highway. His main point is that we live in a globalized world that has many socioeconomic benefits. However, at the same time, the globalization has caused much more political discontent, militant sectarianism, and trafficking, all of which especially affect minority groups living in the center of our global economy.

Finley, J. S. 2007. "Chinese Oppression in Xinjiang, Middle Eastern Conflicts and Global Islamic Solidarities among the Uyghurs." *Journal of Contemporary China* 16 (53): 627-654.

Annotation: Joanne Smith Finley, lecturer in Chinese at Newcastle University, writes about the sense of solidarity among Muslim Uyghurs and how outside influences have formed that solidarity. Finley acknowledges that bonds were forged through violence and riots, and she does not deny that some Uyghurs used militant Islamic ideologies to gain independence. However, she says that the violence is only one ideology behind Uyghur resistance movements. She also writes about modern-day technology, such as CDs, DVDs, and the internet, and what role they play in strengthening the Uyghur independence movement. This article would be useful for someone who wants to learn more about Islamic renewal in the Far East and its impact on Chinese policies.



Goldman, M. 1986. "Religion in Post-Mao China." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 483: 146-156.

Annotation: In Maoist China, religious practice was all but forbidden in the country. During the Xiaoping era, religion was slowly allowed back into society, although it was still controlled by the state. After the Soviet Union fell, the Chinese government was more focused on the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in Western China, so Muslims were allowed to practice as long as they abided by the guidelines set out by the government. Goldman argues that, as China's control on religion got tighter, those who practiced the targeted religions went underground even further. This was the exact opposite response the Chinese government wanted after making religion a faction of the government.

Goldstein, R. 2009. "Is China Spying on Uyghurs Abroad?" *Christian Science Monitor* (July 14). Available online: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2009/0714/p06s12-woap.html>.

Annotation: The author of this article claims that China has an international espionage system in place to keep track of Uyghurs across the world. This accusation comes after a Uyghur was arrested in Sweden for "unlawful acquisition and distribution of information relating to individuals for the benefit of a foreign power," i.e. China. The brief article shows a different perspective on China's foreign policy and its desire to maintain control of Uyghurs regardless of where they live. It also shows the extent to which the government will go for that control. This article is informative and broadens the scope of Uyghur nationalism and Chinese repression, proving that oppression is not limited to Chinese soil.

Goossaert, V. 2005. "The Concept of religion in China and the West." *Diogenes* 52 (1): 13-20.

Annotation: The author wrote this article for someone who wants to learn about the modern history of religion in China, and how that history led to current policies and practices. Goossaert explains the five religions in China—Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism—and the policies China used to control these religions during the last century. He argues that China's stance on religion is heavily based on superstition, making it nearly impossible to practice religions in China. This article was not written in an attempt to explain the role of religion in Chinese culture; rather, Goossaert seeks to explain how religion has shaped political, social, and humanitarian crises in China.

Haider, Z. 2005. "Sino-Pakistan Relations and Xinjiang's Uyghurs: Politics, Trade, and Islam along the Karakoram Highway." *Asian Survey* 45 (4): 522-545.

Annotation: In 1982, a 500-mile highway opened between the Xinjiang province in China and Islamabad in Pakistan. Haider claims that increased trade between China and Pakistan drove a wedge in the Uyghur community, straining Muslim relations between Pakistan and

the Uyghurs in Western China. This article is very useful for someone who is researching Chinese and Middle Eastern policies. Haider does not show bias towards either group. He acknowledges that the Chinese government and Uyghurs alike are responsible for unrest and violence in Xinjiang.

Hastings, J. V. 2005. "Perceiving a Single Chinese State." *Problems of Post-Communism* 52 (1): 28-38.

Annotation: Hastings breaks the Uyghur violence up into two categories: episode unrest and insurgent activity. He looks into why some episodes of unrest have escalated into violent riots. Hastings does not believe that calls for Uyghur independence were the primary reason violence broke out. Rather, he indicates that demands that have gone unanswered by the Chinese government have led to independence movements. One demand includes halting the Chinese government's exploitation of natural resources, specifically oil, located in the Xinjiang region, which causes relocation and economic disruption among the Uyghurs. Another demand made by the Uyghurs is to stop the Chinese government from sending Han Chinese into Xinjiang for the sole purpose of spreading traditional Chinese culture. Hastings's article is very useful for someone who wants to research specific reasons for periods of unrest in Xinjiang.

Hierman, B. 2007. "The Pacification of Xinjiang: Uyghur Protest and the Chinese State, 1988-2002." *Problems of Post-Communism* 54 (3): 48-62.

Annotation: Hierman writes an in-depth, historical piece on Chinese-Uyghur relations from 1988-2002. His focus is China's ability (or inability) to effectively rule the Xinjiang region in Western China. The article is broken down into time periods and is relatively easy to follow, even for a reader who has little knowledge of the issue. He also includes detailed charts and graphs to show levels of contentious events by year in each region. Hierman believes that, if enough Uyghurs work together to overcome Chinese oppression, then they have great potential to "resist repressive measures taken by coercive states."

Hilton, I. 2004. "God in China." *Index on Censorship* 33 (4): 200-204.

Annotation: Isabel Hilton says that China opened itself up to religious groups after the death of Mao in order to bring peace and stability, as long as the religious beliefs were kept under "Party control." She claims that the Uyghurs and Tibetans practice religions that are "indistinguishable from national movements that challenge the legitimacy of Chinese rule." She also believes that Chinese people are turning to religion to find a moral compass that the Chinese government cannot provide. A reader who wants to learn more about the history of religion in China and its potential to be transformed into a political movement will find this article very informative.

Huang, M. 2001. "U.S. Human Rights Policy Towards China." *Foreign Policy in Focus* 6 (8): 8.

Annotation: Huang writes about the current human rights situation (as of 2001) in China and the hypocrisy of US policies towards China. She notes that the United States has not ratified the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), both of which have been ratified by China. Yet, for political reasons, the United States continues to pressure the Chinese government to improve its human rights records. Huang also refers to egregious human rights violations committed against the Uyghurs and other minority groups within China. She argues that the United States can pressure China to improve its human rights record through trade and security policies.

Human Rights Watch. 2005. "China: Religious Repression of Uighur Muslims." Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/04/10/china-religious-repression-uyghur-muslims>

Annotation: This article details a Human Rights Watch report called "Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang." The Chinese government is using the war on terror as an excuse to violate the human rights of more than eight million Uyghurs in Xinjiang. The government not only bans all Uyghurs from practicing their religion, but is also ensuring the migration of millions of ethnic Chinese into Xinjiang in order to have a stronger traditional Chinese culture. Though the plight of the Uyghurs dates back to pre-9/11, the Chinese government is using the attacks to label Uyghurs as terrorists and arrest them under the guise of legality.

———. 2009. "China: Security Build-Up Foreshadows Large-Scale Crackdown." Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/07/10/china-security-build-foreshadows-large-scale-crackdown>.

Annotation: The authors of this report predict the widespread crackdown on Uyghur nationalists by the Chinese government in the days following the 2009 riots. The media accounts of the violence are in support of the Han Chinese and the Chinese government singles out Uyghurs who they believe instigated the attacks. The report also refers to the whereabouts of Uyghur detainees the government has taken into custody. Sophie Richardson, the director of Asia advocacy at Human Rights Watch, states that the only reliable investigation is an international one.

———. 2009. "China: President Should Ease Tension by Acknowledging Grievances." Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/07/08/china-president-should-ease-tension-acknowledging-grievances>

Annotation: Human Rights Watch, which has documented hundreds of human rights violations in Xinjiang, argues that the Chinese government should be more transparent in

cases like the Urumqi riots, as well as episodes of violence involving Tibetans and other minorities in China. Although China vowed to follow the rule of law after the riots in Urumqi, Human Rights Watch has witnessed arbitrary arrests and the denial of basic rights such as right to counsel. It is the position of Human Rights Watch that, if China does not fulfill its obligation to provide basic legal rights to those arrested, then the United Nations and other international organizations must take over the investigations and arrests of those involved in the riots.

Hyer, E. 2006. "China's policy towards Uyghur nationalism." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 26 (1): 75-86.

Annotation: Hyer discusses how Chinese policy against the Uyghurs after WWII has led to the current state of affairs between the government and this minority group. He details specific uprisings in each decade to document Chinese foreign policy regarding the Middle East and Central Asia. The argument is that several countries, like Pakistan, Turkey, and Kazakhstan, have solid economic relations with China; therefore, the countries do not want to disrupt anything by supporting the Muslim Uyghurs. This article would be useful for a reader who wants a comprehensive look at twentieth century Chinese policies.

Kung, L. Y. 2006. "National Identity and Ethno-Religious Identity: A Critical Inquiry into Chinese Religious Policy, with Reference to the Uyghurs in Xinjiang." *Religion, State & Society* 34 (4): 375-391.

Annotation: Kung begins with a brief history of religion in China and an analysis of how it has progressed to what it is today. He calls Chinese religious policy a "policy of control." While noting that China's religious policy is regulated by law, he is quick to point out that the government understands religious policy is entwined with political issues, such as China using religion to increase social morality. This article would be beneficial to anyone who wants to learn more about religious rights in China. The author assumes the reader does not have a large background in Chinese policies.

Lillis, J. 2009. "Kazakhstan: Solidarity and Rage." *Transitions Online*: 3-3.

Annotation: Lillis writes about the support of Kazakh Uyghurs for Uyghurs living in the Xinjiang region. After the protests in July 2009, Kazakhs have shown strong support for Uyghurs fighting Chinese oppression. They argue that China is encouraging Han migration into Xinjiang to instigate violence and unrest. Lillis takes the side of the Uyghurs, claiming that the Chinese government used unnecessary force against unarmed Uyghurs during the riots in July 2009.

Mackerras, C. 2005. "Some Issues of Ethnic and Religious Identity among China's Islamic Peoples." *Asian Ethnicity* 6 (1): 3-18.

Annotation: Mackerras's article discusses the changes of ethnic and religious debates after major world events. He gives a history of Islam in China, but spends much time on Muslim rights after the fall of the Soviet Union and after the September 11 attacks. He notes that China claims to have found Uyghurs fighting with al Qaeda in Afghanistan, thus posing the question of China's right to target specific Muslim groups due to their link with terrorists.

Paperny, A. M. 2008. "China's Wild West." *Maclean's* 121 (49): 24-26.

Annotation: Paperny discusses the possibility of economic development and investment to appease the dissenters in the Xinjiang region. China has invested a lot of time and money in oil exploration in Xinjiang and, as a result, new factions have broken off within the Uyghurs between the poor and middle-income families. She also talks about the paranoia surrounding Uyghurs, many of whom think that the Chinese government has spies all over Xinjiang and that one wrong move could land them in jail. This article is brief but informative if someone wants to learn more about the consequences of economic development in the northwestern regions of China, specifically Xinjiang.

Petersen, K. 2006. "Usurping the Nation: Cyber-Leadership in the Uyghur Nationalist Movement." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 26 (1): 63-73.

Annotation: Peterson writes the article assuming the reader already knows about the Uyghur nationalist movement. She explores how the internet has helped the movement, specifically discussing how it has increased the call for the creation of "East Turkistan," the Uyghur's independent nation. Peterson argues that, through the internet, Uyghurs are separating themselves from China and growing closer to creating their own independent nation. Websites give Uyghurs from around the world the chance to unite and fight for a common goal. Peterson definitely favors the Uyghur movement and sometimes harshly criticizes the Chinese government for its oppression of Muslims in China.

Potter, P. B. 2005. "Governance of China's Periphery: Balancing Local Autonomy and National Unity." *Columbia Journal of Asian Law* 19 (1): 293-322.

Annotation: Potter, an attorney and Director of the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia, writes about the challenges of local development when the centralized government keeps getting involved. He also writes about China's changing relationship with its inner periphery areas of Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. He compares the inner periphery to the outer periphery areas of Macao, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Although parts of the article are written in a legal jargon, it provides plenty of information about China's policies toward ethnic minorities and repressed groups. The average reader may find the article tedious but useful.

———. 2003. “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China.” *The China Quarterly* (174): 317-337.

Annotation: Potter’s article deals with how China controls religion while maintaining a positive international reputation. He argues that China will lose its legitimacy as it continues to suppress religious freedom. Throughout China’s modern history, especially post-Mao, religious freedom or control were always the responsibility of the Chinese government, though some regimes were more rigid than others. Potter refers to documents released by the Chinese government that explicitly say religion must be accommodating to a socialist society. Potter’s article serves as a good resource for someone who would like a basic history of religious oppression in twentieth century China.

Thrall, N. 2009. “Eastern Promises.” *New Republic* 240 (16): 15-17.

Annotation: This article brings to light the plight of Uyghurs who were wrongfully detained and put in Guantanamo Bay. Abubakkar Qassim, a Uyghur, was arrested in China and, after his release seven months later, was sold to Pakistani authorities while on a trip to Afghanistan to visit a Uyghur village. He was suspected of being an al Qaeda operative and was taken to Guantanamo Bay. Thrall interviewed Qassim, who now lives in Albania, about his experiences in Guantanamo.

Zhao, Y. 2001. “Pivot or Periphery? Xinjiang’s Regional Development.” *Asian Ethnicity* 2 (2): 197-224.

Annotation: This article was written just before 9/11. The author writes about Chinese-Islamic policy from an objective point of view. The beginning of the article focuses on the history of China and Central Asia, specifically the former Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. The second half of the article focuses on Chinese foreign policy and development. Zhao also details the economic plans implemented by China during the 1990s. This article would be useful for someone who already has a solid background in Chinese/Middle Eastern policy.

Zhou, J. 2009. “Doomed to Failure.” *Beijing Review* 52 (28): 2-2.

Annotation: This article is very brief, but it is also interesting, in that it takes the side of the Chinese government and defends their actions during the Urumqi riots. Zhou condemns the anti-China acts of violence that happened in July, 2009 and cites evidence that the World Uyghur Congress is responsible for instigating the riots. Zhou says that any Xinjiang independence sought will never be received if anti-Chinese tactics show a complete disregard for human rights. Zhou wrote the article for someone who wants a dissenting view of the conflict between China and the Uyghurs.