STUDIES IN POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GLOBAL LABOR AND WORK | 8

TELLING TALL TALES

"Uyghur Genocide" as a Political Stratagem

Barry Sautman



BRILL

Telling Tall Tales

Studies in Political Economy of Global Labor and Work

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Cover illustration: A public building in a village of Kashgar Prefecture, southern Xinjiang, China. Photo by Professor Yan Hairong, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: "Genocide" through the Looking Glass

> [Genocide] is a very charged word. It's a very abused word. Some people claim it where it doesn't exist, for political gain, and they deny it where it does exist, for political reasons as well.
>
> CRAIG MOKHIBER, director, New York office of the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights and lawyer for the OHCHR in Geneva and New York (1992–2023)[1]

1 Crying "Genocide!" as the "Abuse of Abuses"

The abuse of terms for political ends is a constant in certain circles. A Trump-appointed US Federal Judge in Texas issued a 2025 ruling against a Trump policy, by barring use of the late 18th Century's Alien Enemies Act (AEA)[2] to deport members of Venezuela's Tren de Arena (TdA) criminal gang. Trump designated TdA a "Foreign Terrorist Organization" and proclaimed its members "'liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as Alien Enemies.'" The AEA, used only in three US wars, is invocable "Whenever there is a declared war between the United States and any foreign nation or government, or any invasion or predatory incursion is perpetrated, attempted, or threatened against the territory of the United States by any foreign nation or government." The court found AEA enactment era records that show "use of 'invasion" and "predatory incursion" refers to an attack by military forces. It noted Trump did not even suggest Venezuela had directed TdA to conquer the US or assume control over part of it. TdA's conduct was thus not an invasion or predatory incursion for purposes of the AEA, whose invocation, the court said, was "contrary to the plain, ordinary meaning of the statute's terms."[3]

1 "Human Rights Lawyer PROVES Israel Is Committing GENOCIDE," Katie Halper podcast, Nov. 13, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aL3-Z-IYTMU.

2 50 U.S.C. § 21, www.govregs.com/uscode/expand/title50_chapter3_section21.

3 *J.A.V. v. Donald J. Trump*, Southern District of Texas, CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:25-CV-072, May 1, 2025.

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Trump abused the AEA's terms to implement mass deportation of a disfavored nationality. Other federal judges soon ruled that "invasion" did not apply to mass migrations.[4] Intelligence agencies had determined that "The gang is not controlled by the administration of Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, nor committing crimes in the United States at its direction." The FBI reported that some gang members imprisoned in the US claimed that Venezuela's government promotes gang migration to the US, but "'most' of the intelligence community 'judges that intelligence … is not credible'" because there was no corroborating evidence. A Deputy Director of National Intelligence then unsuccessfully pressured the agencies to reverse their finding.[5] The Supreme Court, however. directed a lower court to examine claims by the migrants that they could not be legally deported under the AEA.[6]

Trump officials nevertheless tried again to abusively apply the term "invasion." They announced that the right of habeas corpus could be suspended in immigration cases, citing the Constitution Article I, which says it is a privilege that can be suspended "in cases of rebellion or invasion [where] the public safety may require it." Habeas had been suspended four times before, including by Abraham Lincoln in Maryland during the Civil War and by Franklin Roosevelt in Hawaii after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. It had never been used to remove the rights of immigrants, as migration is not an invasion.[7]

At the same time as legal terms were distorted to further state policy as to deportations, the Trump administration abused another term for political ends. When several Tesla facilities were hit by Molotov cocktail-wielding critics of Trump's then-ally Elon Musk, US Attorney General Pam Bondi called the actions "domestic terrorism" and threatened punishment with up to 20-year imprisonment under 18 U.S.C Ch. 113B: Terrorism.[8] Its section 2331 says "domestic terrorism" is "activities that (B) appear to be intended – (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by

4 Ryan Goodman and Dani Schulkin, "A Pyrrhic Victory: Initial Supreme Court Gain for Trump on Alien Enemies Act May End in Administration's Loss," Just Security, May 9, 2025, www.justsecurity.org/113195/alien-enemies-act-cases/.

5 Charlie Savage and Julian Barnes, "Spy Agencies Do Not Think Venezuela Directs Gang, Declassified Memo Shows," *New York Times* (NYT), May 5, 2025; Charlie Savage, et al, "Official Pushed to Rewrite Intelligence So It Could Not Be 'Used Against' Trump," NYT, May 20, 2025.

6 "Supreme Court Extends Freeze on Use of Alien Enemies Act for Deportations," NYT, May 17, 2025.

7 Karoun Demirijian, "Trump Officials Consider Suspending Habeas Corpus for Detained Migrants," NYT, May 10, 2025.

8 "Attorney General Pamela Bondi Announces Severe Charges Against Violent Tesla Arsonists," Department of Justice, Mar. 20, 2025, www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-pamela-bondi-announces-severe-charges-against-violent-tesla-arsonists.

intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping." Musk is not a "civilian population" and the attacks did not kill, injure or even intimidate. An anti-Tesla protestor described by the US Attorney for Washington, DC as a "domestic terrorist" was prosecuted only for low-level misdemeanors.[9] Anti-Tesla attacks on property are likely not what most people have in mind when they think of terrorism. Bondi's abuse of the term did however lead to other, non-violent protestors against Musk being threatened and harassed as "domestic terrorists."[10]

Another example of potential abuse of a term involves "armed conflict," in the context of the Haitian government's fight against gangs that control of 80% of the capital, Port-au-Prince. Haiti hired private contractors to carry out armed drone strikes, which by mid-2025 had killed several hundred gang members. An armed conflict exists only if armed groups are organized, have a clear chain of command, and a commander who issues and enforces orders. If there is an armed conflict, a party to it can carry out offensive operations, such as drone strikes, as long as it seeks to minimize collateral damage. If there is no armed conflict, then lethal force can only be used if there is an imminent threat to a person's life. A security firm owned by Erik Prince, a prominent US Trump donor, operates many drones used by the Haitian government. The strikes have not broken the gangs by killing leaders or led to criminal convictions of members or taking territory from them. The leader of the main gang coalition threatened to also acquire drones.[11]

Terms like "invasion" or "terrorism" and "armed conflict" are abused, but even "abuse" is abused. For example, the first Trump administration's State Department released a collection of documents entitled "The Chinese Communist Party's Human Rights Abuses in Xinjiang" – China's large, predominantly ethnic minority, northwestern region. It deals with actions and practices in 2017–2021, mostly undocumented, that the US government declares objectionable – if done by China, but not if done by the US in the many countries where it has used force.[12] The State Department catalog of "abuses" fails to acknowledge that a complex mobilization was needed in those years to deal with terrorism and other, often violent, illegalities in Xinjiang.

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9 Glenn Thrush, et al, "Trump Withdraws U.S. Attorney Nominee, Whose Extremism Tested Limits for G.O.P. Senators," NYT, May 8, 2025.

10 "FBI Launches Task Force Targeting Anti-Tesla 'Domestic Terrorism,'" CNN, Mar. 25, 20225, https://edition.cnn.com/2025/03/25/us/fbi-task-force-tesla-attacks-hnk/index.html.

11 Frances Robles, "Haiti Is Using Drones to Fight Gangs. Here's Why That's Likely to Be Illegal," NYT, June 17, 2025.

12 https://2017–2021.state.gov/ccpabuses/.

After Britain invaded the US in 1812, a Constitutional power granted the President to call up state militias during an invasion or insurrection was challenged as potentially leading to abuses. The Supreme Court upheld the president's power to determine whether an invasion or insurrection has occurred. Justice Joseph Story remarked that "It is no answer that such a power may be abused, for there is no power which is not susceptible of abuse."[13] To not distinguish widespread, systematic and intentionally directed abuses from individualized instances of state lawlessness, as likely occurred in Xinjiang, is itself a propagandistic abuse of the term "abuses."

The term "pogrom" has also been misused. "Pogrom" was historically used for murderous mob attacks against Jews in Europe; it is now employed even where non-Jews are set upon and murdered. Elissa Bemporad, a Queens College, New York professor who specializes in East European Jewish history, say it "involves several perpetrators assaulting victims chosen because they belong to a subordinate group, often ethnic." In recent years, officials and rights activists have described attacks against Serbs in Kosovo, Rohingya in Myanmar, Muslim immigrants in Germany and Roma in Ukraine as pogroms.[14] A particularly prominent pogrom occurred in Gujarat, India in 2002 when current Indian PM Narenda Modi was that state's Chief Minister:

> Hindu mobs took murderous revenge on Muslims for a train fire that killed Hindu pilgrims. Over the course of nearly 3 months, more than 1,000 people were killed, most of them Muslims. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were accused of negligence and even complicity. One horrified federal official called it a 'state-sponsored massacre.'[15]

Several US Zionist leaders deployed the term pogrom after fights in 2024 between protestors and counter-protestors at a demonstration in front of a Los Angeles synagogue where a sale of land in Palestine's West Bank, to Jews only, was held. The sale violated international law because it involved an occupied territory and was racially discriminatory, but US President Joe Biden, Governor Gavin Newsome, and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass denounced the protest. Bass has been Vice Chair of the Board of the US government's National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a regime change agency that finances Uyghur

13 *Martin v. Mott*, 25 US 19 (1827) at 32.

14 Marc Tracy, "The Amsterdam Attacks and the Long Shadow of 'Pogroms'" NYT, Nov. 24, 2024.

15 Jennifer Szalai, "How the World's Largest Democracy Slid Toward Authoritarianism," NYT, Nov. 27, 2024.

émigré groups, a post she held even when she served on the US Congressional committee that oversees NED.[16]

The term "pogrom" was also misused to describe 2024 attacks in Amsterdam on supporters of Israel's Maccabi football team visiting Netherlands. Clashes occurred after Maccabi supporters chanted anti-Arab racist and pro-genocide slogans, assaulted people of Arab appearance and, burned Palestinians flags. Pro-Palestinian North African Dutch youths inflicted minor injuries on several dozen Maccabi supporters, but no one was killed. Far-right anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders nevertheless termed this a pogrom. Other Dutch, as well as rightist Israeli politicians did the same, despite the bloodless nature of the altercations.[17] Those who assaulted the Maccabi supporters were prosecuted and received prison sentences; all charges against Maccabi supporters who assaulted "Arabs" were dismissed.[18]

An incipient pogrom had occurred in the occupied West Bank in 2023. After Palestinian gunmen killed two Israelis, a mob of hundreds of Israeli settlers burned homes and cars in the town of Huwara and killed a Palestinian. Israel's West Bank Commander, Major General Yehuda Fuchs called the action "A pogrom done by outlaws." Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who oversees Jewish settlement in the West Bank, said however, "I think the village of Huwara needs to be wiped out. I think the State of Israel should do it," meaning that the authorities, rather than a mob, should demolish the town.[19] A Canadian journalist has pointed out however that the US would say to critics of Israel that "you cannot use words and phrases like genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing. That's racist, that's anti-Semitic," but that the US employs such terms about Xinjiang with much less reason.[20]

Predictably, the term "pogrom" is abused as part of a political stratagem. A mob made up of several hundred Muslim ethnic minority people in Dagestan, Russia's southern-most republic, stormed the region's main airport, looking to vent their anger over the bombing of Gaza by seeking out Israeli passengers

16 Glenn Sacks, "No, the L.A. Synagogue Protest Wasn't a "Pogrom" – That's a Gross Misuse of History," Salon, June 28, 2024, www.salon.com/2024/06/29/no-the-la-synagogue-wasnt-a-pogrom--thats-a-gross-misuse-of-history/; Nuri Vittachi, "L.A. UNREST: Funder of HK Protest Gets Taste of Own Medicine," June 9, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnX8Wol2nrc.

17 Mira Oklobdzija "Debunking the Amsterdam 'Pogrom,'" Foreign Policy in Focus, Nov. 12, 2024.

18 "Netherlands Football Hooliganism: Prosecutors Drop 'Maccabi Tel Aviv' Assault Cases," Al-Jazeera, July 3, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9D1jUPQKns.

19 "Israeli Army Kills Palestinian in West Bank; 3 Arrested," AP, Mar. 2, 2023.

20 Alex Lo, "The Moral Collapse of Western Leaders Over Palestine," SCMP, Nov. 2, 2023.

to attack. Airport personnel attempted to block the rioters and no one was injured, although the rioters did overturn a police car. Police identified about 150 participants and, within a day, 60 were arrested. A US National Security Council spokesperson nevertheless stated that "Some people have compared it to the pogroms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and I think that's probably an apt description."[21]

The archetypal pogrom had been carried out, mostly by ethnic Moldovans, in the Russian Empire city of Kishinev (Chisinau), Bessarabia in 1903. It occurred after a local newspaper promoted a "blood libel," a false claim that Jews had murdered a Christian boy to use his blood in a ritual. Of the city's 55,000 Jews, 49 were cruelly murdered. Some 500 Jews were wounded, 600 women were raped, and 1,500 homes were destroyed. The local authorities supported the pogromists and the Czar excused their murders. Two years later, much worse pogroms happened throughout the Russian Empire's Pale of Settlement for Jews: as many as 200,000 Jews were murdered in 600 massacres.[22] If what happened in Dagestan in 2023 were a pogrom – it may not have been even an attempted one, as it is unclear that murder was intended – it would have been the world's first bloodless pogrom. Calling it such however served to reinforce the ongoing US campaign against Russia's government.

Genocide has been called an "often abused term,"[23] a "much-abused term"[24] a "widely-abused term"[25] or even "the most abused term."[26] Its abuse is part of politically-motivated promotions of ignorance about atrocities. Attention is diverted to lesser order or unintended instances of mass deaths, while occluding or marginalizing discussions of higher order and intended catastrophes. The stratagem has been employed as to the catastrophes that liberal Western regimes have deliberately induced, such as the millions who died in exterminations and mitigatable famines in India, Ireland, and elsewhere in the British

21 Max Seddon and Polina Ivanova, "Dagestan Riot Reminiscent of Tsarist-Era Persecution," FT, Nov. 1, 2023; Canaan Lidor, "Rioters Storm Airport in Russia's Dagestan in Hunt for Jews Aboard Flight from Israel," *Times of Israel*, Oct. 29, 2023.

22 Stephen Zipperstein, *Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History* (New York: Liveright/WW Norton, 2018); Matt Lebovic, "How A Small Pogrom in Russia Changed the Course of History," *Times of Israel*, Apr. 9, 2018.

23 "A Suggestion for Jury Selection," *Daily News* (Sri Lanka), Jan. 14, 2017.

24 Alex de Waal, "Conquerors of the Land of the Fur," *Times Higher Education Supplement*, Jan. 4, 2008.

25 Adrian Guelke, Benyamin Neuberger, *Rwanda 1994: Genocide in the "Land of the Thousand Hills" Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24:2 (2018): 246–247.

26 Tristin Hopper, "Genocide: A Guide to the Most Abused Term: Word has Been Misused for Decades," *National Post*, Dec. 9, 2023.

Empire,[27] US wars of aggression,[28] and poverty-induced mortalities in the Global South through unequal exchange.[29]

Many countries have also been subjected to inaccurate, politically-designed atrocity claims. The most calumnious of these is that a genocide has been committed.[30] The US military, for example, has carried out many real atrocities in unjust wars,[31] but misleading charges have also been levelled in relation to two just wars that US forces fought. One claim concerns the Union army's Devil's Punchbowl camp for freed slaves in Natchez, Mississippi during the Civil War; the other is about the Rhine Meadows camps for German prisoners of war at World War II's end.

Defenders of the Confederacy have called the Devil's Punchbowl camp a Union "genocide against blacks," alleging that 20,000 African Americans were killed there or allowed to die through starvation and disease.[32] No basis for the figure is provided. African American historian Clifford Boxley has noted that camp deaths were not intentional, as "Natchez had a huge influx of refugee ex-slaves that the Union was not equipped to handle," with deaths inevitable.

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27 Jag Balla, "Free Market Genocides: The Real History of Trade," Evonomics, Sept. 11, 2022, https://evonomics.com/free-market-genocide-the-real-history-of-trade/.

28 Imogen Piper and Joe Dyke, "Tens of Thousands of Civilians Likely Killed by US in 'Forever Wars,'" Airwars, Sept. 6, 2021, https://airwars.org/investigations/tens-of-thousands-of-civilians-likely-killed-by-us-in-forever-wars/.

29 Jason Hickel, et al, "Imperialist Appropriation in the World Economy: Drain from the Global South Through Unequal Exchange, 1990–2015," *Global Environmental Change* 73 (2022): 1–13; Michael Roberts, "Further Thoughts on the Economics of Imperialism," Brave New Europe, Apr. 24, 2024, https://braveneweurope.com/michael-roberts-further-thoughts-on-the-economics-of-imperialism.

30 Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

31 Kim Wagner, *Massacre in the Clouds: An American Atrocity and the Erasure of History* (New York: Public Affairs, 2024); Nick Turse, *Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Macmillan, 2013); Jeremy Brecher, et al, *In the Name of Democracy: American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005); Stephanie Savell, "The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force: A Comprehensive Look at Where and How it Has Been Used," Watson Institute, Costs of War, December 14, 2021, https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2021/Costs%20of%20War_2001%20AUMF.pdf. "Costs of War: Afghan Civilians." The Costs of War, 2021, https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians/afghan.

32 Patrick Young, "When Lost Causers Drink from the Devil's Punchbowl They are All Wet," The Reconstruction Era, Mar. 10, 2020, https://thereconstructionera.com/when-lost-causers-drink-from-the-devils-punchbowl-they-are-all-wet/; Karl Burkhalter, comment, Leon Anijar, "This Woman Helped Inspire the South to Put Up All Those Monuments to the Confederacy," History News Network, Oct. 28, 2017, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/167281.

Moreover, most Union troops in Natchez were Black and many had relatives in the camp.[33]

An elaborate analysis argues that the Devil's Punchbowl was "completely a manufactured crisis by the defeated Confederacy loyalists, which was designed to maximize suffering of emancipated slaves." As the Union army advanced, slaveholders retained able-bodied slaves and cast off the old, very young, and decrepit, who then fled to an army unable to even provision itself. Slaveholders thus created the plight of the Devil's Punchbowl refugees and many died despite their liberators' efforts. The ratio of Black refugees in Natchez was six women and children to one man and many men became soldiers. Those who remained were paid to work for the military, but their mobilization led to inaccurate claims that they were "forced laborers." Half the 4,000 freed slaves in Natchez died, mostly from smallpox. The army quarantined the infected, giving rise to an inapt terming of the Devil's Punchbowl as a "concentration camp."[34]

The Devil's Punchbowl tale was part of a larger narrative of the "horrors of Reconstruction." From 1865 to 1877, the US government took hesitant steps to dismantle white domination in the defeated South. From the 1890s to the 1940s, a wholly negative narrative of Reconstruction was propagated by Prof. William Dunning and the many academics he trained, plus by popularizers, such as Clyde Bowers and Margaret Mitchell, authors of racist best-sellers, *The Tragic Era* (1929) and *Gone with the Wind* (1936). The Dunning School attacked Reconstruction as "a conspiracy by vindictive radical Republicans to subjugate southern whites at bayonet point."[35]

After almost four decades of anti-Reconstructionism, a counter-narrative emerged with WEB DuBois' book *Black Reconstruction* (1935), although it took the later Civil Rights Movement to fully negate the negative narrative. The view of leading historian of Reconstruction Eric Foner is now a consensus: that the "horrors of Reconstruction" discourse "helped freeze the mind of the white South in bitter opposition to any change in the region's racial system … the fundamental flaw in the Dunning School was the authors' deep racism," and "racism shaped not only their interpretations of history but their research methods and use of historical evidence."[36]

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33 Jan Griffey, "Devils Punchbowl Concocted Confederate Propaganda Boxley Says," *Natchez Democrat*, June 17, 2022; Young, When Lost Causers.

34 Davi Ottenheimer, "Devil's Punchbowl in Natchez: Confederate Disaster and Propaganda Campaign," Flyingpenguin, June 2, 2021, www.flyingpenguisn.com/?p=33699.

35 Mark L. Bradley, *Bluecoats and Tar Heels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2009): 268.

36 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

The 19 Rhine Meadows camps (*Rheinwisenlager*) housed two million POWs in spring-summer 1945, when a destroyed Germany had great food and shelter deficits. A 1989 book by Canadian fiction writer James Bacque alleged that a million POWs died there, a claim he repeated in many publications.[37] Internet postings repeat the assertion.[38] Investigations by historians found a much lower number of deaths, from 3000–22,000, with an official West German committee, headed by former Nazi ideologue Erich Mashke, concluding an eight-year study in 1972 that found that 4,537 died. All but one camp had a mortality rate between 0.6–0.8%. That was because there was significant "ameliorative work carried out to reduce the overcrowding at the earliest opportunity and to provide whatever food could be available."[39]

Deaths were not part of a plan of "annihilation," as Bacque and his supporters argued. Indeed, the camps were mainly controlled by German military police, some of them corrupt. Harvard historian Niall Ferguson also concluded in 2004 that the death rate for American-held German POWs was among the lowest experienced by surrendered combatants during and after the war.[40] A 2004 study showed German POWs in the US were better treated than African American soldiers.[41] By then, Bacque had doubled down on his claims; in a 1997 book he asserted the Allies brought about 5.7 million premature German deaths in 1946–1950.[42] Historians refuted that claim as well. They also pointed out that Bacque's work represented an effort by the extreme right to gain mainstream acceptance.[43]

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37 James Bacque *Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners at the Hands of the French and Americans After World War II* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1989): 2; James Bacque, "The Last Dirty Secret of World War Two," *Saturday Night* 204:9 (September 1989): 31–38.

38 Taha Alward, "Eisenhower's Rhine Meadow Death Camps: A Deliberate Policy of Extermination,' 2013, www.imdb.com/title/tt5001046/ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbp61fOVFaE].

39 Bob Moore, *Prisoners of War: Europe, 1939–1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022) 4423: Mark Felton, "The Rhine Meadow Camps: What Really Happened," 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=icFKdMw7nT8.

40 Niall Ferguson, "Prisoner Taking and Prisoner Killing in the Age of Total War: Towards a Political Economy of Military Defeat," *War in History*, 11:2 (2004): 148–192.

41 Matthias Reiss, "Icons of Insult: German and Italian Prisoners of War in African American Letters During World War II," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 49:4 (2004): 539–562.

42 James Bacque, *Crimes and Mercies; the Fate of German Civilians Under Allied Occupation, 1944–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997).

43 Bernd Greiner, "Verschwiegene Schuld? (Secretive debt)" Zeit Online, Jan. 26, 1996, www.zeit.de/1996/05/Verschwiegene_Schuld_?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2F.

2 Xinjiang: the Uyghur Region in Brief

Hegemonic false assertions made since the Civil War about forced labor and concentration camps in the Devil's Punchbowl and since the 1940s about atrocities in the Rhine Meadow POW camps have their counterpart in current Western claims of genocide and other international crimes against Uyghurs, China's largest ethnic minority group. China is a US-sized territory, but has 1.4 billion people, 4.2 times the US population. In 2020, 8.9% of Chinese were ethnic minorities, up from 6.7% in 1982. The minority population has increased much faster than the national population, which is now decreasing. That is indicated by 11% of Chinese children being ethnic minorities in 2020, up from 7.6% in 1982.[44]

Uyghurs are the major Turkic minority in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang. It is an area that is one-fourth desert, but is also one-sixth of China's territory, the same size as the US's Alaska and three times the size of France. Xinjiang, however, only has about 5.5% of China's arable land (7.1 million hectares), as one-third of China's salt deserts are in the region.[45] That would be problematic were it not for Xinjiang's low population – less than 2% of China's.

The region had almost 26 million people at the 2020 census, 14.9 million (58%) of whom were ethnic minorities. Uyghurs were the largest group at 11.6 m. People of China's majority ethnic group, Han, were 10.9 million or 42% of Xinjiang 2020 census population. In terms of total population, the Han proportion has been fairly steady for the last half-century: it was, in 1964 33%; in 1978, 41.6%; in 1982, 40.5%; in 1990, 37.6%; in 2000, 40.6%; in 2006, 42.6%; in 2010, 40.5%; and in 2020, 42.24%.[46]

The census counts of the Han proportion of Xinjiang's population have thus all been in the 38–42% range since 1978. The census, however, counts all those present in Xinjiang for the past six months, including temporary residents. Han, however, were only 31.6% of all people with their household registration (*hukou* 户口) in Xinjiang in 2018, indicating that many Han in Xinjiang are

44 Lyu Lidan, et al, "Parental Ethnicity and Adolescent Development: Evidence from a Nationally Representative Dataset," *Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20:5 (2023): 3799.

45 Jane Xia, "China's Xinjiang Turns Salt Desert into Fertile Farmland in Food Security Push," *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), June 16, 2025.

46 Colin Mackerras, "Religion and the Uyghurs: a Contemporary Overview," in Guljanat K. Ercilasun, et al (eds.), *The Uyghur Community: Diaspora, Identity and Geopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 59–84; Linda Lew, "China Census: Migration Drives Han Population Growth in Xinjiang," SCMP, June 15, 2021.

non-permanent.[47] Indeed, there has been great turnover of Han, but almost none of Uyghurs.

Xinjiang's economy was traditionally centered on agriculture, but no longer. In 2020, the industrial sector had a 26.3% share of the economy, while farming, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery had 15.3%. Other sectors were construction, 8.7%; wholesale and retail, 4.9%; finance, 7.9%; hotel and catering, 1.0%; transport, storage and post, 4.4%; real estate 3.9% and other services, 27.6%.[48] Xinjiang has seven major industries: "green chemical production, cotton and textile apparel, new materials, new energy, equipment manufacturing, distinctive services, agricultural products, and deep processing."[49]

Southern Xinjiang, the place of Uyghur concentration, is 65% of the region's territory. Northern Xinjiang's better climate results in much less drought and salinity however, making it more suitable for agricultural production. The region's main prefecture level cities are northern, as are the main traffic arteries, highways and railroad stations. Counties in the south are small, with long distances between them and the more developed north. The only southern city with a high GDP is Korla, the capital of Bayingoleng Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, which has rich petroleum resources and significant tourism.[50] Southern Xinjiang's population density is low by regional and national standards. It was only 8.08 per km in 1998–2006, but that already exceeded the density threshold of seven people per sq km in an arid area.[51]

A study found that in Xinjiang's 99 counties and districts, from 2001 to 2020, urban/rural industrial convergence was greater in the north. In the south, it

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47 "Xinjiang Population Dynamics and Data," State Council Information Office, (SCIO), Sept. 26, 2021, www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1713594/1713594.htm; Adrian Zenz, "Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP's Campaign to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang," Jamestown Foundation, 2021: 10, https://jamestown.org/product/sterilizations-iuds-and-mandatory-birth-control-the-ccps-campaign-to-suppress-uyghur-birthrates-in-xinjiang/; "Graphics: Facts About Xinjiang's Population and Ethnic Groups," CGTN, Sept. 2, 2022.

48 "Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Credit Report," Pengyuan, Sept. 5, 2022, www.cspi-ratings.com/pengyuancms/rating-actions/rating/Pengyuan-International-Assigns-A-Rating-to-the-Government-of-Xinjiang-Uygur-Autonomous-Region-Outlook-Stable/IssuerCreditReport_XinjiangGovernment_PengyuanInternational.pdf.

49 Mao Weihua, "Desert Corps Lays Foundation for Progress in Xinjiang," *China* Daily (CD), Oct. 29, 2024.

50 Maliyamuguli Abulimiti, et al, "Study of Coordinated Development of County Urbanization in Arid Areas of China: The Case of Xinjiang," *PLOS One* 17:10 (2022): 1–18.

51 "Forget the Speculation: Here's the Truth About Xinjiang Population," CGTN, Sept. 26, 2021.

was still weak, although coupling coordination was spreading from northern high-value points to the periphery. Development in the south was still dominated by primary industry, whose output value was above 40% of the total, much more than the Xinjiang average. That was partly because the south is more remote, with a lower population density and more unbalanced investment-to-output ratio in infrastructure construction. Recently however, the latecomer advantage of industry convergence in southern Xinjiang is apparent. Urban-rural industrial convergence increasingly stimulates growth in farmers' incomes and convergence's positive effect on farmers' income growth is now long-term. Moreover, the positive effect of convergence on income is most pronounced among low-income farmers, while the effect is negative on the income of high-income farmers.[52]

Xinjiang ranks 19th among China's 31 provincial-level jurisdictions in per capita disposable income. It increased some 75% in 2013–2020.[53] In 2013 it was Y13,700, but grew at an average of 7% annually, to reach Y30,899 in 2024 or 75% of China's national figure.[54] Per capita income in largely Uyghur-populated rural southern Xinjiang grew in purchasing power terms by 529% between 2000 and 2020. Southern average income was 52% of China's average in 2000, but 67% of in 2020.[55] Uyghurs outside southern Xinjiang, about one-fourth of the total, likely have a smaller ethnic income gap. In 1993, "the income of Uighur peasants was just over Y700, while that of Han living in Xinjiang was over Y2,600"[56] because most Han were urban. A US scholar noted in a 2013 however that "economically, Xinjiang has dramatically improved relative to

52 Su Keqiao, et al, "Examining the Path of Urban–Rural Industry Convergence and Its Impacts on Farmers' Income Growth: Evidence from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China," *Annals of Operations Research* (2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-023-05762-z.

53 "Per Capita Disposable Income of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China From 2013 to 2020," Statista, Jan. 5, 2022, www.statista.com/statistics/804759/china-per-capita-disposable-income-of-xinjiang.

54 Zhang Yuanshi and Wang Yan, "West's Political Maneuvering Over Xinjiang Issue Will Face More Contempt," *Global Times* (GT), Mar. 11, 2024; "Disposable Income per Capita: Year to Date: Xinjiang," CEIC, 2025. www.ceicdata.com/en/china/income-per-capita/disposable-income-per-capita-ytd-xinjiang; "Xinjiang's Efforts to Advance Opening-up Bear Fruit," CD, Mar. 7, 2025.

55 Kyle Ferrana, *Why the World Needs China: Development, Environmentalism, Conflict Resolution and Common Prosperity* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2024).

56 Elzbieta Szyszlak, "Cultural Security of Minorities under Threat: The Situation of the Uyghurs in the People' Republic of China," *Scientific Journal of the University of the Land Forces* 53:4 (2023): 719–733.

its economy of a decade ago, although it still lags behind the industrialized coastal areas."[57]

By 2011, average monthly income of Uyghurs in the region's capital, Urumqi, was Y892, while those of Han was Y1,141.[58] That Uyghur incomes were 78% of Han incomes in the regional capital disconfirms unsupported assertions that Uyghurs have been "locked out of jobs and enterprises in [Xinjiang] created by industrialization since the economic liberalization of [China] began in the late 1970s"[59] or that in Xinjiang "the beneficiaries from the economic development are mostly Han Chinese, whereas the Uyghurs face economic discrimination and barely participate from (*sic*) economic growth."[60]

The Uyghur/national income gap is thus substantial, but diminishing. African American median household income in the US is two-thirds of median white household income. Uyghurs, however, are much more rural than the national population – about 70% compared to 36%. African Americans however are more urban than US whites. Black Americans, who are about 12.5% of the US population also held only 3.4% of the US's total wealth, while whites, who are about 62% of the population had 84.2% of the wealth.[61]

3 Genocide by Thee, but Not by Me

The claim of Uyghur genocide is a political stratagem, generally defined as a careful plan to gain political support for a cause's actions and ideas by outwitting potential opponents, often by devious means. A stratagem may be carried

57 Elizabeth van Wie Davis, *Ruling, Resources and Religion in China Managing the Multiethnic State in the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 31.

58 Zang Xiaowei, "Uyghur–Han Earnings Differentials in Ürümchi," *China Journal* 65 (2011): 141–155.

59 Hannah Theaker, "The 'People's War on Terror' in Xinjiang: A Model for China?" Council on Geostrategy, 2023, www.geostrategy.org.uk/research/the-peoples-war-on-terror-in-xinjiang-a-model-for-china/.

60 Florian Frenzel, *The Belt and Road Initiative: A Driver for Securitization in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region?* Martin Luther University, Human Geography Working Paper Series 5 (2021): 11, https://public.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/mluhumangeowps/issue/view/351.

61 Stacy M. Brown, "Black-White Economic Disparities Continue to Widen," Washington Informer, Feb. 4, 2025, https://wordinblack.com/2025/02/black-white-economic-disparities-continue-to-widen/; Dang Yuanyue, "China's Urban-Rural Gap is a Threat to Growth. Is the Divide Too Wide to Fix?" SCMP, Aug. 27, 2024; "Racial and Ethnic Minorities Made Up About 22 Percent of the Rural Population in 2018, Compared to 43 Percent in Urban Areas," USDA Economic Research Service, 2020, www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=99538.

out without regard to whether claims have an empirical basis or hoped-for actions have a malign impact. German historian Ernst Nolte argued in the 1980s that the Holocaust was Hitler's response to a real "Bolshevik threat" to destroy Germany and to the effects of rapid industrialization, at least as much as it was due to of his anti-Jewish ideology. Nolte's writings were a "stratagem for minimizing Nazi genocide by attempting to rationalize and justify it,"[62] as seen, for example, in Nolte's argument that because Zionist leader Chaim Weizman said at World War II's outset that Jews would fight with Britain against Germany, the Nazi "internment of Jews" was justified.[63] Nolte's reasoning, which included equating Soviet prison camps and Nazi extermination centers and referring to the "so-called" annihilation of Jews, "was embraced by Holocaust deniers and neo-Nazis."[64]

Not every erroneous claim of mass murder is created for a malign purpose as a political stratagem, but even those created for a benign purpose are to the discredit of their inventors and should be repudiated. For example,

> Five million is frequently cited as the number of non-Jews killed by the Nazis. The figure is inaccurate and was apparently an invention of famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal. According to historian Deborah Lipstadt, he began to refer to 'eleven million victims' of the Holocaust, six million Jews and five million non-Jews in the 1970s. Wiesenthal later admitted making up the figure to promote interest in the Holocaust among non-Jews. Lipstadt says 'he chose five million because it was almost, but not quite, as large as six million.' The number of non-Jewish civilians murdered for racial or ideological reasons in concentration camps, historian Yehuda Bauer estimates, was no more than half a million.[65]

Prof. Lipstadt concluded that "Any falsification with respect to the Holocaust, whatever its purpose may be, gives comfort and solace, not to speak

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62 Alan Rosenbaum, "Philosophical Reflections on Genocide and the Claim About the Uniqueness of the Holocaust," *Paidea Human Rights*, 1998, www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Huma/HumaRose.htm; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* 2d ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1989).

63 Jurgen Habermas, "A Kind of Settlement of Damages: the Apologetic Tendencies in German History Writing," in James Knowlton (ed), *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?: Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993): 33–44.

64 Sam Roberts, "Ernst Nolte, Historian Whose Views on Hitler Caused an Uproar, Dies at 93," NYT, Aug. 19, 2016.

65 Terese Penchak Schwartz, "The Holocaust: Non-Jewish Victims," Jewish Virtual Library, 2023, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/non-jewish-victims-of-the-holocaust.

of ammunition, to Holocaust deniers. It enables them to turn the tables and claim that 'defenders of the Holohoax' are the ones guilty of fabricating history."[66] Similarly, Eric Pickles, a former Conservative government minister and member of the House of Lords who heads the UK's Delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, has said that "Exaggerating the numbers of the dead, or even minimizing them, is in itself a form of Holocaust distortion and a critical threat to Holocaust memory and to fostering a world without genocide."[67]

Mislabeling acts as genocide is akin to mislabeling medical conditions as "cancer." Gleason 6, affecting the prostrate, and ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), affecting the breast, make up 20–25% of US prostrate and breast cancer diagnoses, involving about 100,000 people. These conditions however "are more accurately explained as risk factors for prostrate and breast cancers with malignant potential," as they generally do not spread to other parts of the body:

> [They are] early-stage 'cancers' that meet the microscopic definition of the disease (what a pathologist sees through the microscope) but not the clinical definition (a condition that is highly likely to grow and cause symptoms and has the potential to kill a person) … anything but the dreaded "C" word.

Mislabeling less threatening medical conditions as cancer is consequential; it "often leads to unnecessary treatment, disfigurement, side effects and a constellation of other psychological, relationship and financial issues," while "changing the label would make matters considerably less stressful for patients and their families. It would greatly reduce unnecessary treatments."[68]

Mislabeling actions or processes as genocide often leads to harming the people of the accused state through negative racialization, sanctions, or even armed attack. It may lead to political and financial support for undeserving or even malign groups, as with "Uyghur genocide" claims. Western states, especially the US, have demeaned Chinese, imposed damaging sanctions against China, and backed émigré groups who make wholly unsupported assertions about Xinjiang.

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66 Deborah Lipstadt, "Simon Wiesenthal and the Ethics of History," *Jewish Review of Books*, Winter 2011, https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/217/simon-wiesenthal-and-the-ethics-of-history/#.

67 Robert Philpot, "UK Launches Inquiry into Deaths at Sole Nazi Concentration Camps on British Soil," *Times of Israel*, Aug. 7, 2023.

68 Laura Esserman and Scott Eggener, "Not Everything We Call Cancer Should be Called That," NYT, Sept. 2, 2023.

Within the group of countries that are "rich liberal democracies with strong security ties to the US,"[69] there is what Karl Popper called "uncritical common sense."[70] It is that Western states are the world's prime defenders of human rights and developing countries are the main sites of their violation. What people in developing countries think about particular accusations of genocide is generally disregarded, as it is assumed that, in contrast to Westerners, people in the Global South make evaluations influenced by ethnocentricity, corruption, and instrumentalism. No regard is paid to whether non-Westerners may conceive of "genocide" 'differently from the expansive way it is commonly conceived in the West or whether it should be claimed only where evidence shows beyond a reasonable doubt that the elements of genocide's legal definition are fulfilled.

The idea that elites in the West do not take genocide as seriously as it is taken elsewhere is regarded as wholly implausible, as their politicians, media and NGOs do label some actions as genocidal, at least where the accused are non-Western.[71] Yet, as a Hong Kong Canadian columnist has put it, "America is obsessed with other people's genocides, even some that might not qualify as such. It seems to think that such public discourse among its citizens is salutary. Perhaps that would be more so if they had paid more attention to the genocides committed in their own national history."[72]

Many assertions of genocide disregard the legal definition of genocide and fail to meet the standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt that applies even to the lowest-level crimes. They often use accusations of genocide as a political stratagem to mobilize resources and sentiment against a political adversary. Scholars at universities in Europe and Taiwan have put it that

> Today's agitation over the "Uyghur genocide" motif sheds light on the way in which, since its production at the end of the Second World War, the word genocide has appeared from the outset as a political issue, an issue of discourse warfare and great ideological maneuvers rather than of law and justice.[73]

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69 Gideon Rachman, "Xi's China and the Rise of the 'Global West,'" *Financial Times* (FT), Oct. 25, 2022.

70 Karl Popper, "How I See Philosophy," in Charles Bontempo and S. Jack Odell (eds.), *The Owl of Minerva* (New York: McGrawHill, 1975): 41–55.

71 Alexander L. Hinton, "Critical Genocide Studies," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* (GSP) 7:1 (2012): 4–15.

72 Alex Lo, "Why the US Should Recognize Pakistan's Bangladesh Genocide – For Its Own Complicity," SCMP, Nov. 3, 2022.

73 Alain Brossat and Juan Alberto Ruiz Casado, *Culture of Enmity: The Discursive Struggle for Taiwan in the Making of the New Cold War* (Berlin: Springer, 2023): 91.

Political stratagems are often deployed but rarely acknowledged. Janan Ganesh, a leading *Financial Times* columnist, proposed however in a 2023 essay a stratagem to knowingly use an inapt trope to deprecate a political opponent. He argued that US politicians may be chauvinists, but are not supporters of isolationism, because that "movement [has] little purchase on public life since Pearl Harbor." Yet, saying there is a threat of isolationism and using "jingoism," is politically useful in getting other countries to align with the US, one of Ganesh's goals. It also pushes the US's "left" to support a militarized state and the US to militarily support allies and check "rough nationalists" abroad, other Ganesh goals. He thus advises: "Keep the trope going, then. Just don't believe it"; that is, use an inapt claim to accomplish political ends.[74]

Another political stratagem is US elites' assertion that China subsidizes "excess capacity" in green technology. That claim ignores substantial US government subsidies of electric vehicle producers and consumers, as well as the need to make low-carbon alternative energy products affordable to combat climate change. As China-specialized US economist Stephen Roach has put it, "Politicians who want to restrict a nation like China, which provides green technology at low cost and high quality in areas like electric vehicles (EVs) and solar batteries, that is purely a political agenda that makes no sense from an economic comparative advantage point of view."[75] The same is true of the "inflationary use of the term" genocide. A Rice University historian of human rights has said of that: "Charges of genocide generally do have political effects … The choice of the term [is] therefore itself eminently political."[76]

Misrepresentations of genocide call to mind Lewis Caroll's 1871 tale of Alice going "through the looking class" and meeting anthropomorphized egg Humpty Dumpty. She disputed his odd definition of the word "glory" as "a nice knock-down argument." A famous exchange ensued:

> When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.' 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all.[77]

74 Janan Ganesh, "A Republican-Led America Would Not Shrink from the World," FT, February 8, 2023.

75 Lo Kinling, "Stephen Roach on How Beijing Can Right Its Economic Course and the US' Big China 'Blunder,'" SCMP, July 15, 2024.

76 Lora Wildenthal, "Imagining Threatened Peoples: The Society for Threatened Peoples (Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker) in 1970s West Germany," in Susanne Kaul and David Kim (eds.), *Imagining Human Rights* (DeGruyter, 2015): 101–117.

77 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022 [1871]): 71.

Humpty Dumpty had raised the philosophy of language question "Are we to master language or is language to master us?"[78] Politicians protect their own mastership by owning words. Like Humpty Dumpty, they do so without regard to how their interpretation diverges from a term's common or technical/legal understanding. That is consequential with "genocide." States and ethnic organizations now often willfully misinterpret the term. They do so to make it a rhetorical weapon in a conflict and perhaps to get third parties to intervene on their behalf to sanction or to use force against the state that they claim is committing genocide.[79]

Valerie Gabard, a Hague-based French lawyer who worked on international criminal tribunals for Cambodia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, has remarked that

> Very often the term genocide is used loosely in common language by people to refer to the biggest, gravest crime because somehow it sounds far worse than war crimes or crimes against humanity. But, legally speaking, the definition of genocide is very narrow … The intention to physically exterminate a group is the main criterion for this crime.[80]

Leading genocide scholar Dirk Moses has explained that there is a deliberate misuse of the term "genocide" for political purposes:

> In the public consciousness of international law, you have a hierarchy with genocide at the top, so obviously victim groups want to go for the gold standard. This is appalling because crimes against humanity are themselves extremely serious. That's why they were a major indictment in the Nuremberg trials – they covered what is now called the Holocaust. Genocide wasn't one of the indictments at Nuremberg, it was crimes against peace, aggressive warfare, crimes against humanity and war crimes.[81]

78 Emrys Westacott, "Humpty Dumpty Philosopher of Language," ThoughtCo., Jan. 5, 2020, www.thoughtco.com/humpty-dumpty-philosopher-of-language-2670315.

79 Alexander Laban Hinton, "Both Israel and Palestinian Supporters Accuse the Other Side of Genocide – Here's What the Term Actually Means," The Conversation, Nov. 7, 2023, https://theconversation.com/both-israel-and-palestinian-supporters-accuse-the-other-side-of-genocide-heres-what-the-term-actually-means-217150.

80 Sonia Phalnikar, "What Exactly is Genocide?" Deutsche Welle (DW), Apr. 14, 2022.

81 Avi Ackermann, "Israel and the 'Crime of Crimes,'" Coda Story, Jan. 30, 2024, www.codastory.com/rewriting-history/dirk-moses-israel-genocide-icj/.

The United Nations is said to define a crime against humanity as a "deliberate act, typically as part of a systematic campaign, that causes human suffering or death on a large scale."[82] Crimes against humanity are with piracy, slavery, aggression, war crimes, genocide and torture, crimes under customary international law. They thus give rise to universal jurisdiction and, essentially, are prosecutable everywhere, by everyone.[83] Genocide is distinguished from crimes against humanity by being governed by a treaty, the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.[84] In 2024, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolved to create a convention on crimes against humanity, initiating a process of negotiations in 2026–2029. The treaty will hold states responsible for committing or not preventing such crimes.[85]

The Genocide Convention was the product of negotiation among diverse states who found common ground by defining genocide narrowly.[86] The treaty's

> reference to 'intent' sets it apart from other crimes under international law. The ICTR [International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda] and ICTY [International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia] Statutes define crimes against humanity, for instance, by referring to acts "committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack" against certain civilian populations. Although it is understood that the actor must engage purposively in the prohibited conduct (such as killing or causing serious harm), there is no explicit reference to the actor's intent with respect to the widespread, systematic character of the attacks. Genocide, by contrast, requires, at the very least, an awareness on the part of the actor of the discriminatory nature of his actions.[87]

Some Western scholars propose to redefine genocide by eliding it with crimes against humanity, through eliminating genocide's required proof of a special

82 Nadia Rubalii and Max Pensky, "Preventing Crimes Against Humanity in the US," The Conversation, June 22, 2018, https://theconversation.com/preventing-crimes-against-humanity-in-the-us-98679.

83 Antonio Cassese, *International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 246.

84 "International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide," 78 UNTS: 277, 102 Stats. 3045, Dec. 1, 1948.

85 "Crimes Against Humanity and an Obtuse Indian Stance," *The Hindu*, Dec. 20, 2024.

86 Linda Kinstler, "The Bitter Fight Over the Meaning of 'Genocide,'" NYT, Aug. 20, 2024.

87 International Center for Transitional Justice, "The Applicability of the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide to Events Which Occurred in the Early Twentieth Century," 2002: 11, https://www.groong.com/ICTJ-analysis.html.

intent to destroy a group. They may realize, however, that states and peoples will not likely accept their view.[88] These scholars do however at least try to relate their proposals to the essential method of the crime of genocide, which has been mass killings, as part of a coordinated plan to annihilate a protected national, ethnic, racial or religious group.[89] The "Uyghur genocide" claim is quite different however: it proceeds in the absence of an assertion of mass killings. Indeed, in 2017–2019, the key years for the genocide claim, the Xinjiang death rate fell from 4.48 per 1,000 to 4.45.[90] In contrast, in Gaza, the crude death rate in 2024 was 39·3 per 1000 people, 14 times the all-cause mortality in 2022, even when ignoring non-injury excess mortality, e.g. disease, starvation, etc.[91]

Assertions of a Xinjiang genocide scarcely mention deaths. When, in early 2021, the US first made the accusation, an official "said the best rationale for the genocide label was the use of forced sterilizations, birth control and family separations to destroy Uighur identity."[92] A 2022 European Parliament resolution on Xinjiang said nothing about killings, but asserted that "credible evidence about birth prevention measures and the separation of Uyghur children from their families amount to crimes against humanity and represent a serious risk of genocide."[93] These statements indicate that Western politicians did not believe the unevidenced claims made by Uyghur émigré groups that many Uyghurs had died through repression. They sought to bolster the politically-useful charge of genocide by providing unevidenced substitute genocidal acts for the mass killings that have always characterized recognized genocides.

Besides being banned by treaty, genocide and its advocacy are the subject of some countries' domestic laws. Canada, for example, has Criminal Code Section 318 (1), making any advocate or promoter of genocide liable to imprisonment for up to five years imprisonment. US Code 18 US Code § 1091, the Genocide Convention Implementation Act of 1987 (Proxmire Act), adopts

88 See, e.g. Steven R. Ratner, "Labeling Mass Atrocity: Does and Should International Criminal Law Rank Evil?" *Wayne Law Review* 54:2 (2008): 569–575.

89 Ben Kiernan, et al, *Cambridge World History of Genocide: Genocide in the Contemporary Era, 1914–2020* v. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

90 "Population: Death Rate: Xinjiang," CEIC, 2022, www.ceicdagta.com/en/china/population-death-by-region/cn-population-deathj-rate-xinjiang.

91 Zeina Jamaluddine, et al, "Traumatic Injury Mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a Capture–Recapture Analysis," *Lancet* 405:10477 (Feb. 8, 2025): 469–477.

92 Edward Wong and Chris Buckley, "U.S. Says China's Repression of Uighurs Is 'Genocide'," NYT, Jan. 19, 2021.

93 "European Parliament Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang, Including the Xinjiang Police Files," European Parliament, June 8, 2022, www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2022-0310_EN.html.

the Convention's definition and criminalizes committing genocide against US-connected people.[94] For there to be a Proxmire Act genocide, "a substantial part" of a "protected group," such as an ethnic or religious minority, must be destroyed. "Substantial" is defined as "a part of a group of such numerical significance that the destruction or loss of that part would cause the destruction of the group as a viable entity within the nation of which such group is a part." That definition indicates that there must be massive killing for a genocide to be found. The law also penalizes directly and publicly inciting genocide, but only where a genocide has already taken place.[95]

The threat of genocidal actions in the US is not insubstantial.[96] No one has been indicted under the Proxmire Act however and the US is one of the few countries where incitement to genocide is "protected free speech." Supposedly, it could become criminal if the advocacy is "so pervasive that it becomes harassment" or "is expressed in such a way that it is a true threat";[97] yet, even then advocacy of genocide is not punished. Israel's Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who has been convicted in Israel of racist incitement and support for a terrorist group, was to deliver a speech in Brooklyn, New York in 2025. A woman walking near the venue was mistaken for a pro-Palestinian protestor and set upon by a pro-Israel mob of hundreds of men and boys who chased her, threatened to rape her, and bashed her head, all the while chanting "death to Arabs." Police did not intervene. Ironically, the woman turned out to be a Jewish Israeli citizen. Despite the threats, harassment and actual violence of the chanters of a genocidal slogan, none were charged with incitement to genocide; instead, five pro-Palestinian protestors were arrested.[98]

There has been a "decades-long pattern of the US government denying, minimizing, downplaying and rationalizing genocide and related crimes against humanity by American allies." That includes Israel's actions in Gaza, where genocide is not yet proven, but has been declared "plausible" by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the institution that can adjudicate a charge of genocide laid against a state. The US State Department calls the ICJ view

94 "18 US Code 1091: Genocide," Cornell Legal Information Institute, 2024, www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/1091.

95 Charles Johnson, "Ten Years on, Yezidi Cases Expose a Lack of Corporate Accountability in US Genocide Law," Atlantic Council, July 24, 2024.

96 Alexander Laban Hinton, *It Can Happen Here: White Power and the Rising Threat of Genocide in the US* (New York: New York University Press, 2021).

97 Edward Chermerinsky, "When Should University Administrators Speak?: Personal Reflections," *Baylor Law Review* 76:1 (2024): 49–62.

98 "Mob Chased Brooklyn Woman After Mistaking Her for Protestor at Speech by Israeli Security Minister," AP, Apr. 29, 2025.

"unfounded"[99] although the massive killing in Gaza are circumstances that at least gives rise to inference that genocide is being committed. The US rejects even the plausibility of genocide in Gaza though in the past decade it declared that genocides were ongoing in Iraq, Syria, Myanmar, Xinjiang, and Sudan, all places where the US opposed the national government.[100]

That selective approach is in line with the perspective evinced by prominent Trump ally Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR). He stated in 2025 that "we have to take our friends where we find them … what matters, in the end, is less whether a country is democratic or non-democratic, and more whether the country is pro-American or anti-American."[101] Trump's Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth at a 2025 security conference that included "authoritarian" states proclaimed that "We are not here to pressure other countries to embrace or adopt our politics or ideology. We respect you, your traditions and your militaries. And we want to work with you where our shared interests align."[102] That view allows the US to accept as legitimate rule by the Communist Party of Vietnam, but not by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), because Vietnam cultivates friendly relation with the US,[103] while US elites regard China as a counter to their global hegemony or even as an enemy. Hegseth, at the security conference, labelled China a "threat."

4 Re-inventing "Genocide" in Xinjiang

While they have denied a plausible genocide in Gaza, the Biden and Trump Administrations, along with a half dozen Western parliaments, have said genocide in Xinjiang is a certainty. Western analysts have even claimed, contrary to the Genocide Convention, that "Uyghur genocide" can be based not on

99 Stephen Zunes, "By Rejecting Evidence of Genocide in Gaza, the US Is Following a Familiar Pattern," New Lines Magazine, Feb. 14, 2025, https://newlinesmag.com/essays/by-rejecting-evidence-of-genocide-in-gaza-the-us-is-following-a-familiar-pattern/.

100 "The Guardian View on Israel and Gaza: Trump Can Stop this Horror," *Guardian*, May 13, 2025.

101 "Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Cotton's Opening Remarks at the Confirmation Hearing Tulsi Gabbard for ODNI," Tom Cotton Senator, Jan. 30, 2025, www.cotton.senate.gov/news/speeches/senate-intelligence-committee-chairman-cottons-opening-remarks-at-the-confirmation-hearing-tulsi-gabbard-for-odni.

102 Quoted in Benjamin Ho, "America Takes a Leaf Out of China's International Relations Playbook," RSIS, June 5, 2025, https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/america-takes-a-leaf-out-of-chinas-international-relations-playbook/.

103 Hai Hong Ngyuen, "Will Vietnam's Diplomacy Influence Political Reforms at Home," Foreign Policy in Focus, May 30, 2025.

physical destruction of an ethnic groups, but on "social death by attrition" or a "program of assimilation."[104]

Such inventions are necessary because Uyghur émigrés and the Western politicians and NGOs that have taken up their cause make unevidenced assertions about Xinjiang events that have little or no relation to the strictures of the Genocide Convention. Their divorce from reality has not been because they are unable to recognize it; rather, it represents a stratagem that intersects with a larger program to isolate and contain China as a potential challenger to US hegemony.

The present work looks at key aspects of claims of intended destruction of Xinjiang ethnic groups, using concepts and empirical studies that frame legal and common understandings of genocide. It engages the origin of relevant Convention provisions and judicial and scholarly interpretations of those provisions, both in the Xinjiang case and with respect to the surfeit of asserted genocides globally. Particularly considered is whether a decline in Xinjiang birthrates and placement of children outside their families are related to the concepts of genocide.

Besides genocide, alternative claims about Xinjiang are engaged that require understanding additional relevant concepts and the actual experiences of the region. These assertions include that it is a settler colony and/or site of crimes against humanity, and "cultural genocide." The claims are, in effect, fallbacks for those who know that asserting a "physical genocide" in Xinjiang is unsustainable. For example, an Irish legal scholar stated in 2020, based on pronouncements by US government-affiliated scholars and Western media, that the US should take the lead in penalizing China for a cultural genocide, because the Uyghur population "nears its extinction at the hands of State-orchestrated practices" including already closed "detention centers," "indoctrination of children" and "restrictions on Uyghur education."[105] A 2022 Harvard University thesis on the prevention of genocide also averred that

> An attempted cultural genocide may more accurately describe what is going on in Xinjiang. There is no attempt to rid China of the Uyghurs, no ethnic cleansing is contemplated, any more than was intended for

104 David Tobin, "Genocidal Processes: Social Death in Xinjiang," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 45: 16 (2022): 93–121; Bonnie Girard, "Assimilation: China's Failed Strategy in Xinjiang," The Diplomat, June 30, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/assimilation-chinas-failed-strategy-in-xinjiang/.

105 Ciara Finnegan, "The Uyghur Minority in China: A Case Study of Cultural Genocide, Minority Rights and the Insufficiency of the International Legal Framework in Preventing State-Imposed Extinction," *Laws* 9:1 (2021): 1–20, https://www.mdpi.com/2075-471X/9/1/1.

> Tibet. It seems to be the Chinese strategy [is] to counter protesting ethnic groups as political problems that must be resolved through brutal forced re-education (assimilation). One might predict that a more docile Uyghur population will eventually be tolerated and accepted as a separate ethnic group as, for example, the Tibetans were.[106]

University of London Tibet specialist Robert Barnett, speaking of both Tibet and Xinjiang has said of government efforts in the two regions that "They are not trying to eradicate these cultures. They are surgically removing and they're surgically grafting."[107]

These claims fail to recognize, that cultural genocide was not included in the Convention. Courts have rejected it as a genocidal act, despite some Western scholars insisting that genocide should not be restricted to biological/physical destruction, so that a state or group they favor can sue a state or group they disfavor.[108] The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which adjudicated claims arising from international crimes of the 1990s, has stated however that

> customary international law limits the definition of genocide to those acts seeking the physical or biological destruction of all or part of the group. Hence, an enterprise attacking only the cultural or sociological characteristics of a human group in order to annihilate these elements which give to that group its own identity distinct from the rest of the community would not fall under the definition of genocide.[109]

Claims of forced assimilation also fail to recognize that for Raphael Lemkin, the refugee Polish Jewish lawyer who created the genocide concept, assimilation was a commonplace distinct from cultural genocide. Lemkin prepared "Draft Article II" during the process of negotiating the Genocide Convention. It initially had a definition that included "forcible transfer of children … forced

106 Michael Gaubeca, "Can Genocides Be Prevented in This [sic] 21st Century": 72–73, master's thesis, Harvard University, 2022, https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37371426.

107 Josh Chin and Niharika Mandhana, "China Steals Language and Home Life from Tibetan Kids as Young as 4," *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), June 29, 2025.

108 Corman Kenny and Travis Farr, "The International Criminal Court's Opportunity to Correct the Erroneous Interpretation of the Mens Rea for Genocide," *Human Rights Quarterly* 46 (2024): 25–66.

109 *Prosecutor v. Krstic*, Case No. IT-98-33-T, Judgment 2 August 2001, para. 580.

and systematic exile of individuals … prohibition of the use of the national language … systematic destruction of books printed in the national language or of religious works or prohibition of new publications; or … systematic destruction of historical or religious monuments." Lemkin, however, came to *not* regard as genocidal

> forced assimilation by moderate coercion – involving for example, prohibition of the opening of schools for teaching the language of the group concerned, of the publication of newspapers printed in that language, of the use of that language in official documents and in court, and so on. [In contrast, cultural genocide] was a policy which by drastic methods, aimed at the rapid and complete disappearance of the cultural, moral and religious life of a group of [humans].[110]

The UN Draft Declaration of the Ad Hoc Committee on Genocide in 1948 thus "left the protection of minorities from forced assimilation to the system of protection of minorities (whose focus is on human rights and not genocide) 'against a policy of forced assimilation employing relatively moderate methods.'"[111] The contrast between genocidal mass murder and cultural dismantlement led to rejection of including cultural genocide in the Convention.[112]

Cultural genocide is thus not a genocidal act under the Genocide Convention and remains a non-legal concept. It is not *lex lata*, the law as it exists, and is not even *lex ferrenda*, the law as it should be,[113] as international courts do not recognize it and most criminal law specialists concur in that non-recognition. Some Western academics note that "cultural genocide is typically considered outside the scope of the Convention," but argue that it should not be or argue

110 Kurt Mundorff, "Other People's Children: a Textual and Contextual Interpretation of the Genocide Convention, Article 2(e)," *Harvard International Law Journal* 50:1 (2009): 61–127 (122).

111 Hilly Moodrick-Even Khen, "The Uyghurs: the Case for Making the Prohibition on Cultural Genocide a Soft Law Norm in International Law," *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights* 30 (2023): 76–109.

112 Elisa Novic, *The Concept of Cultural Genocide: an International Law Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 25.

113 See Hojjat Salimi Turkaman, "The Legal Nature of the Climate Change Regime: Fluctuation between Lex Lata and Lex Ferenda," *Utrecht Journal of International and European Law* 38:1 (2023): 1–13.

that the "Uyghur case" may pave the way for making cultural genocide an international crime.[114]

If a case against a state were brought to the ICJ or to the institution that deals with charges of genocide against individuals, the International Criminal Court (ICC), claiming cultural, not physical, genocide, it would likely not be heard. If it involved Xinjiang and were heard, it could easily be shown that Uyghur cultural practices remain intact and disprove assertions like one a US scholar made that "The policy in Xinjiang has been one of total homogenization and assimilation," intended "to essentially erase all vestiges of Uyghur culture."[115]

First to be examined here is how genocide is interpreted in the international law in which the concept is embedded and how the concept is misused for political ends. We then focus on misappropriation of the concept in Uyghur émigré and Western narratives about claimed genocidal preventions of births and transfer of children of detained parents. Many assertions of Xinjiang genocide are made by those who Britons refer to as "barracks room lawyers" – persons who give authoritative-sounding opinions on subjects in which they are not qualified, especially legal matters. Some are self-promoting politicians or propagandizing journalists, but there are also academics like those US economist Paul Krugman describes: "people who are genuinely brilliant in some areas but utter fools in other domains."[116]

As will be shown, several Anglosphere Xinjiang specialists take up almost every claim of the Uyghur émigrés and their US government sponsors, no matter how fantastic. They do so without interrogating and verifying the assertions and without having a grounding in legal and social science concepts relevant to the claims, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, settler colonialism, and forced labor. They do what some academics have done in other fields: defend those with whom they have an affinity through their studies, even in the face of evidence that Uyghur émigré groups promote only speculations and flawed perspectives.

An example of how that works concerns UK poet Craig Raine's 2006 book exonerating poet and playwright TS Eliot of charges that he was anti-Jewish and a misogynist,[117] traits most Eliot biographers have discerned. The leading

114 Bonnie St. Charles, "You're on Native Land: The Genocide Convention, Cultural Genocide and the Prevention of Indigenous Land Takings," *Chicago Journal of International Law* 21:1 (2020): 227–262; Finnegan, The Uyghur Minority; Khen, The Uyghurs.

115 Kenton Thibaut, "Repressive Technologies and Ethnic Policy in China: The Case of Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia," *Sinosphere* 1 (2021): 33–47.

116 Paul Krugman, "Did the Story of Tesla Ever Make Sense?" NYT, Dec. 30, 2022.

117 Craig Raine, *T. S. Eliot* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

UK literary theorist and critic Terry Eagleton rejected Raine's defense and argued that Raine knew little about concepts needed to analyze the interface of Eliot's worldview and literary production. Eagleton underscored that Eliot is regarded as having been a "sourly elitist reactionary who fellow-travelled with some unsavory political types in the 1930s." He rhetorically queried "Why do critics feel a need to defend the authors they write on, like doting parents deaf to all criticism of their obnoxious children?"[118] Raine is not the only literati to "defend the authors they write on." Nobel Prize-winning US playwright Eugene O'Neill's biographer Louis Schaefer discussed a letter that O'Neill wrote about his landlord, but omitted part of the letter. It said the landlord – a prominent and philanthropic lawyer – was untrustworthy because he was a Jew.[119]

Another example is Eugene Genovese, a leading US historian of slavery. In his first book, in 1974, he applied Marxian theorist Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to argue that it was slaveowner paternalism that enabled slavery to persist.[120] By the late 1980s, Genovese was a rightwing defender of the slaveholders. In his last book, in 2017, he confirmed that he liked the slaveowners, who he saw as champions of pre-modern ideals. Genovese admired slaveholder ideologists as "thoughtful, educated critics of the 19th C. society and moral order" who had a "principled stance" against industrial capitalism. He did so despite historians situating US slavery within the global industrial capitalist economy –[121] slave labor fueled Manchester's 108 cotton mills by 1853 – even while recognizing that slavery and capitalism were "connected but different systems of exploiting labor and generating profit."[122]

Western politicians, media, NGOs and Xinjiang specialists attach themselves to Uyghur émigré groups and buy into what they offer, while ignoring that the émigrés' unverified assertions indicate a political stratagem to cry genocide and mobilize support for separatism. In accepting émigré claims, their supporters commit logical fallacies, such as the fallacy of composition,

118 Terry Eagleton, "Raine's Sterile Thunder," *Prospect*, March 2007, www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/culture/57706/raines-sterile-thunder.

119 Saul Singer, "Was Eugene O'Neill An Anti-Semite?" Jewish Press, Jan. 22, 2020, www.jewishpress.com/sections/features/features-on-jewish-world/was-eugene-oneill-an-anti-semite/2020/01/22/.

120 Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974).

121 Eugene Genovese, *The Sweetness of Life: Southern Planters at Home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Amy Murrell Taylor, "In Praise of Slavers: Swansong of a Historian who Admired the Paternalism of the Antebellum South," *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) 5998, Mar. 16, 2018.

122 Stephanie McCurry, "The Plunder of Black Life," TLS, May 19, 2017; Matthew Stallard, et al, "How Slavery Made Manchester the World's First Industrial City," *Guardian*, Apr. 3, 2023.

which elides a part with the whole. An example is the unreflective acceptance of the Uyghur émigré claim to represent the views and interests of Uyghurs, even though, as a US scholar of ethnic politics in China has observed, "there is no single Uyghur agenda."[123]

The part that their supporters confuse with the whole is the Uyghur émigrés themselves. Many Western Xinjiang specialists wrongly assume that émigrés represent their ethnic group. Uyghurs, however, are politically-diverse. Western state-backed rightwing émigré groups mainly represent separatist Uyghurs. A survey has indicated that it is unlikely that most Uyghurs are separatists.[124] Around 2019, it was said there were some 500,000 Uyghurs among the 622,500 minorities and 1.6m total CCP membership in Xinjiang,[125] numbers likely to have risen in recent years.

Like the Uyghur émigrés, many political leaders and forces have no basis for asserting that most people agree with them. Thus, Trump said in 2024 that "Many Canadians want Canada to become the 51st state," but a survey showed that 82% of Canadians would not like to become the 51st state and 13% said they would.[126] In Canada, the pro-secession Parti Quebecois asserts most Quebecois support independence, but in mid-2025, an Ekos poll found that only 26% did, down from 37% only a few months earlier, in part because US threats to Canada united Quebecois with other Canadians. The poll also found that 86% of Quebecois were proud to be Canadian. The pollsters stated that "Quebecers have largely abandoned their aspirations to leave Canada."[127]

Rather than Canadians wanting to join the US or most Quebecois wanting to leave Canada, about an equal proportion of Americans want secession. A 2024 poll showed that 23% of Americans support the state they live in seceding from the US. In the largest states, New York, California and Texas, the proportions were 28, 29, and 31%.[128] Within some states, such as Illinois, many Republican-supporting counties have movements to secede from the Chicago

123 Davis, Ruling, Resources: 29.

124 Tang Wenfang and He Gaochao, "Separate but Loyal: Ethnicity and Nationalism in China" (Washington: East-West Center, 2010), www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/separate-loyal-ethnicity-and-nationalism-china.

125 Wu Huijian, "Are Uyghurs Active in China's CCP?" Quora, July 16, 2021, www.quora.com/Does-China-force-Uyghur-Han-intermarriage; Liu Xin, "1.6m Party Members of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang Jointly Promote Local Development," GT July 2, 2019.

126 Joe Edwards, "How Canadians Feel About Becoming '51st US State,'" *Newsweek*, Dec. 18, 2024.

127 Matthew Renfrew, "Quebecers have Largely Abandoned their Aspirations to Leave Canada." Cultmtl, June 2025, https://cultmtl.com/2025/06/support-for-quebec-sovereignt-independance/.

128 "US 'Breaking Apart' with 25 States Ready to Leave," *Newsweek*, Apr. 8, 2024.

Democrat-dominated state, even though that would immiserate these largely rural areas.[129]

Even if some Uyghurs were shown to favor separatism, it would likely reflect what Nathaniel Hawthorne observed, that "You can get assent to almost any proposition so long as you are not going to do anything about it."[130] As with Americans who favor secession, most Uyghurs who back separation would likely back away from it were it to become a real prospect, because Xinjiang, like the downstate Illinois counties, would lose vital financial support, in the Xinjiang case from a large and rising China. The region might well suffer the same decline that some of Xinjiang's Central Asian neighbors did after their reluctant exit from the former Soviet Union.

Another logical lapse is the "Texas sharpshooter fallacy," a confirmation bias that selectively chooses and interprets information to fit pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses. The fallacy, also known as the multiple comparisons fallacy, seeks to account for the likelihood of finding some subset in large data that has some common property, caused by a factor other than its actual cause. It is an epidemiological metaphor about a Texan who shoots at the side of an old barn, then draws a shooting target centered on the tightest cluster of shots. He thereby "proves" that he has hit the bullseye many times and is a sharpshooter.

The fallacy often occurs when there is a large amount of data, but a focus on only a small subset of it. A Swedish study of people living near high-voltage power lines sought to determine whether the lines impaired their health. It looked for increases in rates of over 800 ailments and found that one of those 800 risk ratios, childhood leukemia, was four times higher among those who lived closest to the power lines. The study's publication discussed only that one positive link. Testing for over 800 ailments, however, created a high probability, by chance alone, that at least one ailment would statistically correlate with living distance from power lines. Such "random noise" is expected in any sizeable set: statisticians expect 5% of a sample to be statistically elevated and 5% to be statistically decreased. An epidemiologist noted, "By statistics alone, it's very possible that there will be a number of cancers in one block and none in the next 10 blocks. And if one wants to try to identify sources of cancer, what one must do is study many, many children." Later studies found no power lines/childhood leukemia link.[131]

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129 Patti Waldmeir, "The Red Counties that Want to Split from Blue Illinois", FT, Mar. 11, 2025.

130 Quote Fancy, 2024, www.whatshouldireadnext.com/quotes/nathaniel-hawthorne-you-can-get-assent-to#google_vignette.

131 M. Feychting and A. Ahlbom, "Magnetic Fields and Cancer in Children Residing Near Swedish High-Voltage Power Lines". *American Journal of Epidemiology* 138:7

Claims that crimes against humanity, arbitrary detention or forced labor are occurring in Xinjiang exemplify the Texas sharpshooter fallacy. The assertion that one million Uyghurs were sent to "deradicalization centers" was based on guesses that a US-based Chinese dissident group elicited from émigrés about eight Kashgar Prefecture villages. They opined that the proportion of fellow villagers sent to the centers averaged 9–10% of village populations. That proportion was then extrapolated to the Xinjiang Uyghur population of 11–12 million, for a figure of more than one million.[132] If the claim of 9–10% of the Uyghur population being in detention were accurate, it would mean a rate of incarceration far exceeding that of the *Yezhovshchina*, the Soviet Union' Great Purge of 1936–1938. Archival K.G.B. sources have shown that there were then 2.5 million arrests, involving 1.5% of the Soviet population.[133]

A 2023 field report on a village in Yecheng County, Kashgar prefecture, found that it had 1,089 people in 252 households. Yecheng County was first among Xinjiang's 99 counties in the number of terrorist incidents before 2017,[134] so it could be expected to have had a particularly high number of people "detained;" yet only 22 or 8.7% of the households had someone who had gone to one of the "vocational education and training centers" (职业技能教育培训中心; VETCs; sometimes referred to as 教育转化培训中心).[135] In Xinjiang, the average household size in 2015 was 3.4 for Han and 4.8 for Turkic minorities.[136] That means that it was likely that no more than 3% of the Yecheng County village's total population was "detained."

The unconfirmed guesses about the eight Xinjiang villages are an analog of the cluster of bullet holes made by the imagined Texas sharpshooter. Also, in the huge set of data about "places of detention" and workplaces in Xinjiang, there would be, by chance alone, some instances where there was the appearance – but not necessarily the reality – of arbitrariness or illegality. The most

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(1993): 467–481; John Palfreman, "Currents of Fear," Frontline, June 13, 1995, https://web.archive.org/web/20160203040412/http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/programs/transcripts/1319.html.

132 Steve Hsu, "Carl Zha: Xinjiang, Ukraine, and U.S.-China Relations," Manifold, Apr. 21, 2022, www.manifold1.com/episodes/carl-zha-xinjiang-ukraine-and-u-s-china-relations-10/transcript.

133 J. Arch Getty, et al, "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: a First Approach Based on Archival Evidence," *American Historical Review* 98 (1993): 1017–1049.

134 Liu Chuyu, "Local Public Goods Expenditure and Ethnic Conflict: Evidence from China," *Securities Studies* 28:4 (2019): 739–772.

135 Interview, Yecheng County officials, July 12, 2023.

136 Xiaozhao Yousef Yang and Scott Schieman, "Racial Disparities in Death Rates and Death Incidences in Xinjiang: A Study of Multilevel Ecological Mechanisms," *Science and Medicine* 340 (2024), www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953623007621.

that can be said for these instances is that they are "hypothesis-generating," not that they are "hypothesis testing": evidence of widespread, systematic and intentionally-directed oppression would have to be shown to move the claim from speculation to proof.

Western sources also maintain "genocide" as a non-falsifiable proposition, no matter how fanciful émigré assertions about it. Anyone who challenges the Western mainstream discourse is labelled a "pro-China" "tankie," "campist," or "genocide denier."[137] In 2021, Bill Yee (余宏荣), a retired British Columbia provincial judge, former Vancouver city councilor, ex-Chinese Benevolent Association head, and member of the provincial Chinese-Canadian Community Advisory Committee, challenged Canada's mainstream discourse of Xinjiang. He was attacked as a "genocide denier," mainly by Hong Kong émigrés, including for "'parroting lines that echo those of Beijing authorities,' such as the Uyghur population increasing by millions." They demanded Yee's expulsion from the Board of the Chinese Canadian Museum, even though no Xinjiang demographer denies that Uyghurs have increased by millions in recent decades.[138]

The claim that Yee is a "genocide denier" is analogous to the charge that Jewish critics of Israel's policies are "self-hating Jews." That rhetorical trick has been characterized by British scholar of anti-Semitism Antony Lerman as "an entirely bogus concept." It is used to stifle legitimate discussion and results in the replacement of serious study of anti-Semitism by "people lacking any serious expertise in the subject, whose principal aim is to excoriate Jewish critics of Israel and to promote the 'anti-Zionism = anti-Semitism' equation."[139]

University of Birmingham doctoral candidate Rong Wei sought, in 2021, to study the UK's "anti-China lobby." Rong had worked with international relations scholar Peter Burnham and emphasized the primacy of domestic politics in her research on the UK's China policy. The anti-China lobby's leaders, mainly grouped in the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) and the China Research Group of Tory MPs, sought to block her funding. One of its leaders is writer and China regime-change advocate Benedict Rogers. Another is former Conservative Party Chairman Sir Iain Duncan Smith who, in 2025,

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137 See, e.g., Matthew Roberts, "The War on the Uyghurs: A Conversation with Sean R. Roberts," Made in China, Oct. 4, 2021. Dan La Botz and Stephen Shalom, "We Oppose McCarthyism and Apologizing for China," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Aug. 15, 2023.

138 Graeme Wood, "Horgan Faces Backlash for Genocide-Denying Adviser," BIV, Apr. 8, 2021, www.biv.com/news/economy-law-politics/horgan-faces-backlash-genocide-denying-adviser-8263881.

139 Antony Lerman "Jews Attacking Jews," Haaretz, Sept. 12, 2008, www.haaretz.com/2008-09-12/ty-article/jews-attacking-jews/0000017f-e1ae-d75c-a7ff-fdaff4a90000.

denounced the head of the UK military for visiting Beijing because "China is a brutal state, guilty of genocide in Xinjiang." He has also stated that China has "a regime that is an ideological enemy of the West and a clear security threat to Western countries" and implied that that British national strength cannot be restored without confronting China. Members of these groups "include Lord David Alton and MP Tom Tugendhat [who] are known for their extreme positions, such as pushing a widely debunked story that Hong Kong police secretly murdered protesters at an underground train station."[140]

Such ideas are the stuff of the émigré myths that pervade the discourse of "Uyghur genocide." The discourse is highly consequential in the Anglosphere and Western Europe by reinforcing anti-China sentiment and anti-Chinese racism. The result has been Western policies that include sanctions that have harmed Xinjiang's development, but especially the welfare of the very Uyghurs that Western politicians and other supporters of the émigrés claim to be saving.

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140 Rong Wei and Peter Burnham, "Time for a UK Rethink on China Relations?" UK in a Changing Europe, Jan. 21, 2021, https://ukandeu.ac.uk/time-for-a-uk-re-think-on-china-relations/; "UK's Anti-China Lobby is Facing 'Nightmare'" Fridayeveryday, Nov. 30, 2021, https://fridayeveryday.com/uks-anti-china-lobby-is-facing-nightmare/; "IDS Rocket for Military Chief Over Beijing Trip," *Daily Telegraph* (DT), Apr. 11, 2025; Iain Duncan Smith, "We Can't Restore our Nation to Strength Without Confronting China," Telegraph Online, Apr. 13, 2025.

CHAPTER 2

"Uyghur Genocide" and Population: Myths and Realities

> "Qui veut noyer son chien l'accuse de la rage" (If you want to drown your dog, accuse it of having rabies; French proverb indicating that those who want to harm someone will often resort to calumnies).[1]

1 Stricter Birth Limitations for the Majority than for Minorities and "Genocide"

The main basis cited as evidence of a Uyghur genocide concerns population. Xinjiang ethnic minorities have increased by 235% from 4.451 million at China's 1st census, in 1953 to 14.932 million at the 7th census in 2020.[2] Meanwhile, China's whole population grew 142%, from 582.6 million in 1953 to 1.411 billion in 2020. The Han majority ethnic group were 91% of Chinese in 2020; minorities were 8.89% and numbered 125.3 million, equal to Japan's total population. Uyghurs were 45% of Xinjiang's population in 2020 and 78% of its minorities. They are Xinjiang's and China's largest minority populations, while Xinjiang minorities are 9.6% of China's minorities and 1% of all Chinese.[3]

The prevention of births basis for the claim of "Uyghur genocide" is unlike that asserted for any other genocide. Even US supporters of the genocide claim, such as Fordham University legal scholar Martin Flaherty, note that "No credible person or organization alleges killing, still less of the sort that conjures up Nazi extermination of Jews."[4] Instead, the claim is said to be based on Genocide

1 "Proverbes," linternaute, 2024, www.linternaute.fr/proverbe/449/qui-veut-noyer-son-chien-l-accuse-de-la-rage/.

2 Xinjiang Population Dynamics.

3 "China's Xinjiang Population Growth Report Raises Eyebrows," Radio Free Asia (RFA), Sept. 30, 2021.

4 Martin Flaherty, "Repression by Any Other Name: Xinjiang and the Genocide Debate," The Diplomat, Aug. 3, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/repression-by-any-other-name-xinjiang-and-the-genocide-debate/.

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Convention Art. II (d), which bars "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group," and Art. II (e), which bans "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." As to genocidal prevention of births,

> seventy-five years after the Genocide Convention was adopted, this particular act of genocide has never been prosecuted in any international court. Nor has it been closely scrutinized by the ICJ, which can adjudicate disputes under the Genocide Convention where a State Party is accused of violating its obligations to prevent and punish the crime.[5]

Western supporters of the "Uyghur genocide" claim nonetheless focus on Art. II (d). In 2024, two scholars at Washington DC's Georgetown University, one of them historian of Xinjiang James Millward, wrote that Article II "specifically recognizes 'imposing measures intended to prevent birth with the group,"[6] thereby implying that the Genocide Convention bans national or regional birth limitation programs that encompass a protected group, even if the programs also take in the territory's whole population. Where an Article II(d) prevention of births has been plausible however, the measures taken were always applied to a minority ethnic or religious group and not also to the country's national majority. For example, it has been said that

> Myanmar has imposed coercive birth prevention measures on the Rohingya since at least the 1990s. Rules introduced in 2005 specified that Rohingya couples seeking to marry must promise to limit the number they will have (initially to three children, later reduced to two) with the threat of criminal punishment, and even involuntary birth control, for exceeding this limit. In 2013, the Rakhine state authorities announced the 'reinforcement' of this policy in Maungdaw and Buthidaung, with the government spokesman suggesting that this policy applied only to the Rohingya.[7]

Contrary to the argument of US-based German anthropologist Adrian Zenz, the chief proponent of "Uyghur genocide" claims, the "prevention of births"

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5 Rosemary Grey, "A Legal Analysis of Genocide by "Imposing Measures Intended to Prevent Births": Myanmar and Beyond," *Journal of Genocide Research* (JGR) 26:4 (2024): 441–462.

6 Nader Hashemi and James Millward, "Lessons on Genocide from Xinjiang and Gaza," DAWN [Democracy for the Arab World Now], Feb. 23, 2024, https://dawnmena.org/lessons-on-genocide-from-xinjiang-and-gaza/.

7 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 456–457.

and "transfer of children" claims made about Xinjiang in no way resemble the Third Reich's mass murdering sterilization and child transfer practices. Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention was not violated in Xinjiang because birth limits applied there were not intended to destroy an ethnic group, but were an all-China practice that affected Han more than minorities, who had preferential policies until 2017. As one international law scholar has put it, "The fact that the Chinese government has previously applied the same family planning policies to the majority Han population while simultaneously exempting the Uyghurs cuts against the argument that such policies as applied to the Uyghurs demonstrates an intent to genocide them."[8]

Coerced abortions and sterilization among Han were widely reported before the "two-child policy" was enacted in 2015, though China's government, in the 21st Century, pushed to reduce such practices. Thus, in 2014, the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) "expressed concern that 'the illegal practices of forced abortions and sterilizations persisted in China,' despite 'remarkable efforts by the State Party [China] to curb' such practice." Coercions also occurred on a much smaller scale even during the two-child policy period, 2016–2021,[9] in part because "While the state has considerable power in formulating rules, it is less effective at enforcement, at least partly because the rules have been contested and manipulated by state agencies at various administrative levels."[10]

The actions that affected Xinjiang minorities for four years (2017–2021) thus impacted Han throughout China for four to five decades, from 1980 to 2021 or even from 1971 to 2021. No genocide involving "prevention of births" has however been or could be based on applying to a country's majority population stricter birth limits than those experienced by a targeted minority. In a plausible genocide, birth limits are applied more strictly to minority populations or are applied only to a minority population and not at all to the majority. That was the case, for example, with the two-child birth limit the Myanmar government announced would apply for Muslim Rohingya minority, but not for the country's Buddhist majority.[11]

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8 Joel Slawotsky, "Is China Guilty of Committing Genocide in Xinjiang?" *Chinese Journal of International Law* (CJIL) 20:3 (2021): 625–635 (631).

9 Chelsea Follett, "Neo-Malthusianism and Coercive Population Control in China and India," Cato Institute, July 21, 2020: (16–19), www.cato.org/policy-analysis/neo-malthusianism-coercive-population-control-china-india-overpopulation-concerns.

10 Rao Fangping, et al, "Perceived Land Tenure Security in Rural Xinjiang, China: The Role of Official Land Documents and Trust," *China Economic Review* 60 (2020): 1–21.

11 "Suu Kyi Denounces Two-Child Limit on Myanmar Rohingya Families," Reuters, May 27, 2013.

The opposite situation from the one in Myanmar obtained in Xinjiang from the early 1980s to 2016. Birth limits were much more strictly applied to China's majority Han than to ethnic minorities in the region. Xinjiang Han were limited to one child in the cities and two in the countryside; ethnic minorities could have two children in the cities and three in the countryside. Until 2017 moreover, Uyghurs exceeded even these limits, mainly in the countryside, by about 20%. In south Xinjiang's 92% Uyghur Kashgar Prefecture in 2014, there were 68 births per 1,000 people, while the all-Xinjiang rate was 16.5, a 4.1:1 ratio. The ratio for Uyghur to Han births may have been higher still, perhaps exceeding 5:1. In 2017–2021, all Xinjiang residents could have two children in cities and three in rural areas.[12] Since 2021, Chinese can have as many children as they want and there are again indications of a Uyghur birth rate exceeding the all-China and Xinjiang rates.

The Georgetown scholars also omitted to disclose that a genocide must be proved by showing, *beyond a reasonable doubt*, that the prevention of births is intended to destroy a protected group, as such. "Beyond a reasonable doubt" is the common law standard for proving even the pettiest of crimes. Those who charge others with any crime have the entire burden to prove it. The accused party does not have to prove a negative – an absence of criminal acts and intent; rather, the accuser must show, almost to a certainty, that such acts occurred with that intent. That is because, as a *New York Times* columnist observed in 2025, "It's hard to keep defending yourself against a false accusation. It's logically impossible to prove an absence."[13]

The Georgetown scholars alluded to the work of "researchers," but did not show any examples of convincing evidence of either genocidal acts or intent, let alone evidence that would meet the necessary level of proof. US Supreme Court cases have characterized "beyond a reasonable doubt" as "'a subjective state of certitude" and "utmost certainty"[14] or "subjective state of near certitude"[15] – and that is for even ordinary crimes. To prove genocide, the "crime of crimes," may require an even higher-level certainty, but at least "proof at a high

12 "The Information Office of the People's Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Holds a Special Press Conference on Population and Family Planning in Xinjiang," Sept. 5, 2020, http://gb.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/PressandMedia/202009/t20200905_3278223.htm; "The 13th Press Conference on Xinjiang-Related Issues," Tianshannet, Aug. 30, 2020, www.huyangnet.cn/content/2020-08/30/content_744471.html; Helen Davidson, "Xinjiang Births Plummeted After Crackdown on Uyghur, Says Report," *Guardian*, May 12, 2021.

13 M. Gessen, "The Attacks on Zohran Mamdani Show That We Need a New Understanding of Antisemitism," NYT, June 24, 2025.

14 *In Re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358, 364 (1970).

15 *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 315 (1979).

level of certainty appropriate to the seriousness of the allegation," as stated by the ICJ.[16]

The Georgetown scholars went on to assert that

> In addition to mass internment, the key distinguishing feature of Uyghur persecution is birth suppression. Through forced sterilization and implanting of IUDs, China could reduce the Uyghur population by up to 4.5 million people within 20 years, according to researchers, in the name of what Chinese authorities call 'population optimization' – a clearly colonial ambition to make the region ethnically like the rest of China.[17]

That statement neglects key features of Uyghur demographics. First, voluntary sterilization and implantation of IUDs have existed in Xinjiang for decades – as they have in all of China, the US, and elsewhere. A study by Uyghur women physicians showed that 60.6% of southern Xinjiang Uyghur women in 2013–2014 *preferred* IUDs for contraception, compared to sterilization (9%) condoms (7.9%), oral contraceptives (6.8%) and other (15.7%).[18] Nationally in China in 2010, contraception by women aged 20–49 included sterilization, 31.7%; IUDs, 48.15%; condoms, 9.32; and oral contraceptives 0.98%. UN all-China figures for 2017 for women aged 15–49 were 18.3% permanent sterilization and 34.1% IUDs.[19] Only in recent years have oral contraceptives become more popular. In the US in 2018, 27.7% of women using contraception chose sterilization; 12.9% used IUDs.[20]

An increase in use of contraceptive methods of several kinds increased in Xinjiang in the four years before the abolition of birth limitations in 2021. A German researcher has written that it

> can partly be explained by the fact that until a few years ago, contraception was limited or not available at all in many parts of Xinjiang, and the

16 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Yugoslavia*), Preliminary Objections (*Yugoslavia v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*), Judgment, 26 February 2007, para. 210.

17 Hashemi and Millward, Lessons on Genocide.

18 Guzhalinuer Abulizi, et al, "At What Age Should the Uyghur Minority Initiate Cervical Cancer Screening if Screened Using CareHPV," *Cancer Medicine* 10: 24 (2021): 9022–9029.

19 Wang Cutong, "Trends in Contraceptive Use and Determinants of Choice in China: 1980–2010," *Contraception* 85:6 (2012): 570–579; "World Contraceptive Use 2019," UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2019, www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/world-contraceptive-use.

20 "Contraceptive Use in the United States by Method," Guttmacher Institute, May 2021, www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-method-use-united-states.

> Chinese government has invested billions in expanding the health system in Xinjiang since 2017. This expansion resulted, among other things, in over 9,000 dispensing points where common contraceptives were made available to the population free of charge across the province. An increase in the use of contraceptives was a foreseeable consequence.[21]

If there have been forced sterilizations or coerced IUD implantations among Xinjiang minorities, they have yet to be convincingly documented. Even if some individual cases were documented, there must be evidence of widespread, systematic and intentionally-directed forced abortion or forced sterilization to make out a case of a crime against humanity.[22] For a genocide to be shown, proof of a program intended to destroy the Uyghurs as such would have to be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt. The Uyghur population has not however been reduced and, in contrast to China's declining Han population, it continues to grow, a fact that also tends to contradict émigré claims of massive state criminality.[23]

Second, birth limitations in China were abolished in 2021. A "three child policy" said to be announced at the time is only a suggestion, not a limitation. Families in China can now choose to have as many or as few children as they want.[24] By 2023 H1, the change to a pro-natalist policy in China, including Xinjiang, produced a 50% jump in the birthrate, compared to 2022, in 92% Uyghur Kashgar Prefecture. Its birthrate thus rose to about 11.76 or nearly twice the national birthrate.[25] The émigré World Uyghur Congress (WUC) ignores these changes in Uyghur birthing. In 2025, it was still claiming that "China's birth control policies aimed at Uyghur women have sparked serious concerns

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21 Walther Bucklers, "China, Xinjiang and Genocide," Nachdenkseiten, Dec. 15, 2021, https://eastandwest.me/2021/12/15/china-xinjiang-and-genocide-nachdenkseiten/.

22 "Belarus Report Finds Systematic, Widespread and Gross Human rights Violations," OHCHR, Mar. 23, 2023, www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/03/belarus-report-finds-systematic-widespread-and-gross-human-rights; "U.S. Declares Russia Committed 'Crimes Against Humanity' in Ukraine," Reuters, Feb. 18, 2023.

23 John Burger, "China Continues its Genocide of Uyghurs, Says Defector from Xinjiang" [Interview Mamtimin Ala], *Aleteia,* Mar. 5, 2022, https://aleteia.org/2022/03/05/china-continues-its-genocide-of-uyghurs-says-defector-from-xinjiang.

24 Isabel Hilton, "China's Age-Old Problem," *The New European*, Jan. 2023, www.thenew european.co.uk/chinas-age-old-problem/; Evelyn Cheng, "China Scraps Fines, Lets Families Have as Many Children as They'd Like," CNBC, July 21, 2021.

25 Interview with a demographer of Xinjiang, Academy of Social Sciences in Urumqi, July 29, 2023; interview with a prefectural Health Commission official, Kashgar, August 5, 2023.

regarding demographic suppression,"[26] just as in 2024 the Georgetown scholars had pretended there is a program to reduce the Uyghur birthrate.

A Xinjiang rural society specialist who regularly gathers data from a set of 15–20 villages in southern Xinjiang has also noted that by 2023 village populations were again growing fast due to a much-increased birth rate. His colleague, who is also in Xinjiang, averred that the region's Uyghur population can be expected to eventually rise to 15m.[27] Zenz, had noted in 2021 that researchers projected that southern Xinjiang's minority population could grow by 30% by 2040, "broadly based on existing family-planning, especially now with three children."[28]

Rapid population growth would not be surprising, as many Uyghurs traditionally wanted four children.[29] A survey in 97% Uyghur Hotan prefecture, southern Xinjiang, in 2017 found 51% of respondents wanted more than three children and of these, 66.9% wanted four children.[30] Zenz has put it that "The Uyghur population has sought and wanted to have certain numbers of births of children that are significantly higher than Han population."[31] US-based Uyghur separatists have acknowledged that in Xinjiang prior to 2016, "Turkic families ha[d] an average of four or more children per family."[32]

In the 1990s, the formal limit in rural Xinjiang was three or four children and that was said to still be the case in 2015.[33] Moreover, many families who exceeded

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26 "WUC Marks Uyghur Language Day, Commemorates 1988 Student Protests Amid Ongoing Rights Abuses in Xinjiang," Asian News International (ANI), June 17, 2025.

27 Interview with Prof. Yan Xueqin and Prof Wang Ping, Xinjiang Normal University, Urumqi, June 17, 2024.

28 Adrian Zenz, "End the Dominance of the Uyghur Ethnic Group: An Analysis of Beijing's Optimization Strategy in Southern Xinjiang," *Central Asian Studies* (CAS) 40:3 (2021): 291–312.

29 Wang Xiaorang, "Cry Me a River: The Environmental Transformation of the Tarim River Basin and the Impact on Chinese-Uighur Relations," MA thesis, Colorado State University, 2011: 100, https://mountainscholar.org/bitstream/handle/10217/70368/WANG_colostate_0053N_10745.pdf.

30 Huo Jinwei, et al, "Research on Population Development in Ethnic Minority Areas in the Context of China's Population Strategy Adjustment," *Sustainability* 12:19 (2020): 1–13.

31 Adrian Zenz, Testimony to the Uyghur Tribunal, June 7, 2021: 275, https://uyghurtribunal.com › uploads › 2022/01.

32 "East Turkistan Was Never a Part of China," East Turkistan Government in Exile, Jan. 19, 2023: 4–5, https://east-turkistan.net/east-turkistan-was-never-a-part-of-china/.

33 Isabel Attane and Youssef Courbage, "Transitional Stages and Identity Boundaries: The Case of Ethnic Minorities in China," *Population and Environment* 21:3 (2000): 257–280: Zhou Mei and Li Xiaoxiao, "Uyghur Women in Xinjiang: Political Participation, Employment and Birth Control," in Li Xiaobing and Patrick Fuliang Shan (eds.), *Ethnic China: Identity, Assimilation and Resistance* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015): 85–99.

birth limits did not register their children; before 2017, some did not even register their marriages,[34] so that even the number of families with "out-of-quota" children was underestimated. Scholars who studied the birth registration system in 2009 noted that "some minorities and populations with special customs communicate little with the majority of Chinese society and do not register any of their children."[35] Even in 2019 however, some local government agencies charged with investigating illegal births still "only look[ed] at families with more than four children" and "prescribe[d] lighter penalties for poorer families."[36]

The possibility of an "elimination of the Uyghur population" through birth limitations that was advanced as "proof" of a genocide[37] has never happened. It could not have happened even had birth limitations continued beyond 2021. From the early 1980s to 2021, all Xinjiang people had the right to birth two children if they were urban and three if they were rural. In practice however, the three child-limit was scarcely enforced, except in 2017–2021.[38] As a Canadian religious studies scholar observed with some understatement, "In recent decades, Uyghurs have commonly had more children than are permitted under China's policies."[39]

Third, "population optimization" has long been an official goal not only in Xinjiang, but throughout China. For four decades, the quantity of births was limited. The focus now is on increasing the birthrate and elevating the quality of births, by further reducing maternal and infant mortality and providing increased access to medical and educational facilities. Birth suppression is not a "key distinguishing feature of Uyghur persecution," as it does not exist. The final four years of China's birth limits were the only years in which birth limits were applied as strictly to Uyghurs as to Han. These limits did not cause the Uyghur population to shrink, even as the natural population growth rate (NPGR; births – deaths) of Han moved toward zero. That means that assertions by Western NGOs, including the Minority Rights Group International – an

34 "China Official calls for Reduced Birth Rates in Xinjiang," Reuters, Jan. 23, 2015.

35 Li Shuzhuo, et al, "Birth Registration in China: Practices, Problems and Policies," *Population Research Policy Review* 29:3 (2010): 297–317.

36 Keith Lamb, "Academic Bias, Migration, Family Planning Not Equivalent to Genocide," CGTN, June 10, 2021.

37 Mackenzie Austin, et al., "Memorandum" [to Professor Van Schaak], Stanford Law School Human Rights and International Justice Policy Lab, Jan. 23, 2021: 25, www.justsecurity.org.

38 Li Xiaoxia, "An Analysis Report on Population Change in Xinjiang," GT, Jan. 7, 2021; Andrea C. Wilson, *Minorities and National Integration in China: The Case of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region*, University of Regina, MA thesis, 2007: 88.

39 Marie-Eve Melanson, "Pathways to Statelessness and Parent-Child Separation among Uyghurs in Turkey," *Journal of the Council for Research on Religion* 3:2 (2022): 1–23.

entity 96% financed by UK statutory and government donors – that there has been "a significant shrinking of the Uyghur population," is inaccurate.[40]

The Georgetown scholars' 2024 essay exemplifies the misstatements and omissions common among promoters of "Uyghur persecution" claims.[41] Western NGOs are non-factual about Xinjiang, but most also draw arguments exclusively from Western sources. Some Western scholars do so as well,[42] including some Xinjiang specialists.[43] They ignore the large body of Chinese and other non-Western scholarship that rejects their contentions and fail to acknowledge the increase in almost every socio-economic indicator for Xinjiang minorities, including those that relate to providing support for birthing.[44]

Some Western scholars also advance unevidenced assertions that scholars and analysts outside the West and particularly in China, provide only "academic justifications" for state policies or are manipulated by the state to "create the impression of diverse voices supporting China's policies" or "have a permanent position on these matters and reject any alternatives."[45] These analysts pretend that objective assessment of events in Xinjiang is their exclusive province, despite the vast majority of the world's Xinjiang specialists working in China, especially Xinjiang itself. The much smaller number of Western, especially Anglosphere, Xinjiang specialists – many with government connections – have been generally hostile to the counter-narrative of Xinjing[46] among Western and Chinese scholars that has recently emerged.[47]

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40 "Uyghurs in China," Minority Rights Group, https://minorityrights.org/communities/uyghurs/.

41 "France's Uyghurs Say Xi Visit a 'Slap' From Macron," AFP, May 4, 2024.

42 Gabriella Cipolla, et al, "Intent to Destroy: Reproductive Violence Against Uyghurs as a Weapon of Genocide in China," *Gender Policy Journal* 15 (2021–2022): 53–60.

43 See e.g., Madlen Kobi, "Building Shanghai in the Borderlands: a Visual Approach to the Restructuring of the Uyghur City in Xinjiang," *Visual Studies* 39: 1–2 (2024): 100–111.

44 See, e.g. Hilly Moodrick-Even Khen, "The Uyghurs: A Case for Making the Prohibition on Cultural Genocide a Soft Law Norm in International Law," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 30 (2023): 76–109; "China Xinjiang Risk: Very High/Ongoing, August 2023," Asia Pacific Regional Outlook (Asia Pacific Centre for Responsibility to Protect), https://r2pasiapacific.org/files/10238/APRO_aug2023_china.pdf.

45 "Chinese Sources," Xinjiang Documentation Project, 2025, https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/chinese-sources/; Marie Brockling, et al, "The Role of 'State Endorsers' in Extending Chinese Propaganda: Evaluating the Reach of Pro-Regime YouTubers," *International Journal of Communication* 17 (2023): 5622–5644; Vita Golod, "The 'Uyghur Issue' From the Kazakhstan Perspective," *Cultural and Religious Studies* 11:9 (2023): 429–443.

46 Yojana Sharma, "Row Erupts Over State-Approved Research Trips in China," *University World News,* Sept. 27, 2023, www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20230927113629296.

47 Slawotsky, Is China Guilty; Sienho Yee, "Grouphood Promotion v. Grouphood Destruction: China's Regional Ethnic Autonomy as Antithesis to Genocidal Intent," CJIL 22: 4

2 "Uyghur Genocide" Inquisitors

The "Uyghur Tribunal," (UT) exemplifies the conclusory nature of the negative narrative of Xinjiang. It was an unofficial body, consisting solely of Britons, and convened by the WUC in London in 2021, with the evident purpose of "convicting" China of genocide in Xinjiang. It considered the claim of genocide under all five Convention-listed genocidal acts. The evidence for four of the five claims of commission of genocidal acts was so weak however that, after the UT pronounced its "verdict," UK barrister and UT head Sir Geoffrey Nice stated that

> The Genocide Convention speaks of five distinct acts, ranging from mass killing to the forcible transfer of children. The People's Tribunal found no evidence of genocide in four of the five areas. 'In the case of the Uyghur Tribunal there was no evidence of mass killing,' Sir Geoffrey said. 'The only one upon which we found sufficient evidence is imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.[48]

Nice is a patron of the fiercely China-critical Hong Kong Watch, headed by the UK's most obsessed anti-China public figure Benedict Rogers. Rogers had previously initiated a "China Tribunal" that Nice chaired. He then advanced the idea of a UT, to also be chaired by Nice.[49] The China Tribunal had been set up by the Anglosphere-based "International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China," to declare that China does forced organ harvesting from "prisoners of conscience." The International Coalition is in part a creation of Ethan Guttmann of the Washington DC-based, US Congress-sponsored, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC) that also employs Adrian Zenz. Guttman said in 2020 that at least 25,000 detained Uyghurs were murdered and their

(2023): 823–849; Barry Sautman "Xinjiang: Bloodless Genocide or Blood Libel?" in Georg Gesk, et al (eds.), *Xinjiang – eine Regionim Spannungsfeld von Geschichte und Moderne Beiträge zu einer Debatte* (Xinjiang: a region in the field of contestation in history and modernity), (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2024): 247–302; 2025 Barry Sautman, "Securitizing the Uyghurs? Comparative Socio-Economic Indicators and China's Approach in Xinjiang," in *Politics and Security Governance* 1:1 (2025): 10–30; Barry Sautman, "Creating Something from Nothing: 'Xinjiang Genocide' as a Political Stratagem," *Science & Society* 89:1 (2025).

48 "Winter Olympics 2022: From COVID-19 to Politics, Beijing is Set to be a Games to Remember," ABC News, Jan. 30, 2022, www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-30/beijing-winter-olympics-games-preview/100788638.

49 Benedict Rogers, *China Nexus: Thirty Years in and Around the Chinese Communist Party's Tyranny* (London: Optimum Publishing International, 2022).

organs harvested each year, that crematoria throughout Xinjiang dispose of the victims' bodies, and that China has "fast lanes" for moving human organs in local airports.[50] In 2022, Guttman estimated that 2.5–5% of Uyghur detainees had been organ-harvested.[51] In 2024, he told US officials that "Uyghurs aged in their mid-20s to early 30s are being taken from mass internment camps and killed for their organs." Victims are supposedly incapacitated and sent to east China hospitals to have as many as four organs harvested and sold to Gulf state recipients, who prefer organs from Muslims who do not consume pork or alcohol. Guttmann provided no cases of actual organ-harvested Uyghurs.[52]

A 2024 VOC report's "evidence" of extra-judicial organ harvesting was only that Chinese hospitals' capacity to do organ transplants had increased, hardly a surprise given the large legitimate need for organ transplants in a country of 1.4 billion.[53] The rightwing US newspaper *Wall Street Journal* observed in 2025 that

> Allegations that Beijing is engaged in institutionalized theft from prisoners and others of body parts for organ transplants have recently gained traction among Republican China critics. While few human-rights groups make that claim today, the anti-Beijing spiritual group Falun Gong has forcefully promoted the issue.[54]

US historian of genocide Waitman Wade Beorn has put it that all genocides have "contained systematic killing measures against individual members of specific groups based solely on their membership in that group." While the definition of genocide "includes the words 'serious bodily or mental harm,' this and other elements are not prosecuted in the absence of mass killing."[55] Beorn and other scholars have thus noted that no genocide is prosecuted absent mass killing. That is so, with regard to claims of genocide through prevention of

50 David Stavrou, "China's 'XXX Files': '25 Thousand People Disappear Each Year, Their Organs Are Harvested'" *Haaretz*, Dec. 4, 2020.

51 "Forced Organ Harvesting in China: Examining the Evidence," Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, May 12, 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XtlCLFKzlo.

52 Alex Willemyns, "Experts: China is Sequencing Uyghur DNA for Organ Harvesting," RFA, Mar. 20, 2024.

53 "Uyghur, Falun Gong Detainees Likely Source for China's Organ Market: Report," RFA, Mar. 12, 2024.

54 James Arredy, "Harvard's China Ties Become New Front in Battle with Trump," WSJ, June 8, 2025.

55 Waitman Wade Beorn, "No, Russia Isn't Committing 'Genocide' in Ukraine," WP, Mar. 15, 2022.

births, because even where a perpetrator possesses genocidal intent, "not every crime committed by him or her that may affect the birth rate within the protected group would qualify as imposing measures intended to prevent births if such offender does not commit it with the intent to affect that birth rate."[56]

For a genocide to be established based on prevention of births, both the *actus reus* – measures intended to prevent births by women of a protected group and not among women of the whole people – and the *dolus specialis*, the intent to destroy the protected group as such, must be proved. The leading treatise on elements of crimes under international law has considered genocidal preventions of birth, in relation to the work of the ICTR and ICTY, the two main tribunals that have prosecuted genocide cases. It observed that no judgment of the ICTR

> has ever convicted an accused on the basis of this underlying offence or otherwise found that it was established by the evidence. None of the ICTY chambers has ever had reason to discuss this underlying offence, as the allegation has never appeared in any indictment before the tribunal.[57]

The likely reason for these results is that there has not been a genocide in which prevention of births – or transfer of children – has been the exclusive genocidal act. Moreover, if there were an action to prevent the birth or transfer the children of a protected group, but no mass killings, it would be exceedingly difficult to show the necessary mental elements (*mens rea*) relevant to intent, unless the action was so massive that very many births were prevented over an extended period or a great many children were permanently transferred. The inability to show *mens rea* absent a widespread, systematic and intentionally-directed state project was indicated by Justice Mekel in *Nulyarimma v. Thompson*, where an Australian Aborigine raised her separation from her mother and upbringing outside her culture as the sole basis for an alleged genocide.[58]

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56 Monika Zakrzewska, "A Different Approach Towards Srebrenica Genocide – Can Killings of Bosnian Muslim Men Amount to Imposing Measures Intended to Prevent Births within the Protected Group?" LLM thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2020: 7, 11 (quoting *Prosecutor v Popović et al.* (Case No. IT-05-88-T), Judgment, 10 June 2010, para. 818).

57 Gideon Boas, et al, *Elements of Crimes under International Law* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 187–188.

58 *Nuyarimma v. Thompson*, (Austl. F.C.A. 1999) (Merkel, J. dissenting); Austin, et al, Memorandum: 22; Kristen Daglish, "The Crime of Genocide: Nulyarimma v. Thompson," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 50 (2001): 404–411.

The negotiators who created the Rome Statute of the ICC inserted a requirement about claims of imposing measures to prevent births and forcible transfer of children. It states that for these acts to amount to a genocide, it must be shown that "the conduct took place as part of a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against that group or was conduct that could itself effect that destruction."[59] Australian genocide law specialist Rosemary Grey has concluded that "To satisfy this requirement, when genocide by 'imposing measures intended to prevent births' is charged, the ICC Prosecutor must show either that the measures were part of a broader suite of genocidal acts (e.g. mass killings) or were themselves capable of destroying the group in whole or in part."[60] Even if prevention of births in China in 2017–2021 affected only Xinjiang minorities and not the whole of the Chinese nation, it was not part of "a broader suite of genocidal acts" and was incapable of destroying the group, due to continuing natural population growth.

The Rome Statute requirement thus likely also means that absent mass killings, birth prevention measures must at least meet the criteria for crimes against humanity – acts that were systematic, widespread and intended deliberately, as a matter of policy. That is implied by the ICJ accepting, in its *Croatia v. Serbia* case, that while sexual violence can amount to genocide under Art. II(d), the rapes alleged must be on such a scale as to be "measures intended to prevent births"; that is, widespread, systematic and intentionally-directed.[61] Prof. Grey also notes that

> strong evidence must be led to demonstrate that the perpetrator committed the sexual violence with the intent of making the victim socially, physically, and/or psychologically unable to reproduce. A prosecutor that alleges that intent without evidence is on shaky ground.[62]

It has been further opined, about the intent to destroy a protected group as such, that

> not every act committed with the intention to impose measures to prevent births will amount to the crime of genocide if the perpetrator

59 ICC, "Final Draft Text of the Elements of Crimes, Agreed Upon by the ICC Preparatory Commission at Its Fifth Session in New York, 12–30 June 2000," Art. 6(a)-4, 6(b)-4; 6(d)-4 and 6(e)-4, www.un.org/law/icc/statute/elements/elemfra.htm.

60 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 444–445.

61 ICJ, Judgment, (*Croatia v. Serbia*), Feb. 3, 2015 [166].

62 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 454.

> does not do so in order to destroy the protected group. Therefore, social birth control programs, such as the so-called one-child policy in China, even though its purpose is to impose measures to prevent births within the group, do not amount to the acts of genocide due to the lack of the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, one of the protected groups.[63]

Two renowned US international law scholars have also averred that "The clear purpose of the Chinese measures is not and never was to 'destroy in whole or in part' the Uygur group by suppression of births, but reflects a general population-control strategy in a country that already has 1.4 billion human beings, and has long experimented with various kinds of population control and sterilization policies and practices."[64]

Efforts to reduce an ethnic group's birthrate that is much higher than the rate among other ethnic groups, by applying to the faster-growing group the same birth limitations already applied to other ethnic groups, do not show an intent to destroy the faster-growing group. That effort may be for benign, non-genocidal reasons, such as increasing the prosperity of members of the faster growing group by lowering its child dependency ratio (ratio of persons 0–14 years old per 100 adults aged 15–64). That ratio was 37.36% in 97% Uyghur Hotan prefecture in 2010, but only 29.46% in Xinjiang in 2022.[65] A lowered birthrate also creates opportunities for minority women. Chinese scholars, writing about Xinjiang family planning in 2015, stated that

> [T]he traditional perspective of childbearing significantly limits those who continuously give birth during their 20s and early 30s, and they cannot step outside the family circle into the outside world. A large number of children makes housework much harder and traps the young mother

63 Zakrzewska, A Different Approach: 12 [citing Schabas, Genocide in International Law: 294 and Florian Jessberger, "The Definition and the Elements of the Crime of Genocide," in Paola Gaeta (ed.), *The UN Genocide Convention: A Commentary* (Oxford University Press 2009): 102].

64 Alfred de Zayas and Richard Falk, "The Unjustified Criticism of High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet's Visit to Xinjiang," Pearls & Irritations, June 18, 2022, https://johnmenadue.com/alfred-de-zayas-and-richard-falk-the-unjustified-criticism-of-high-commissioner-michelle-bachelets-visit-to-xinjiang-in-china/.

65 Huo Jinwei, et al, "Research on Population Development in Ethnic Minority Areas in the Context of China's Population Strategy Adjustment," *Sustainability* 12:19 (2020): 1–13; "Children and Old-Age Dependency Ratio in China in 2022, by Province or Region", Statista, 2024, www.statista.com/statistics/1088540/china-children-and-old-age-dependency-ratio-by-region-province/.

in such a situation for too long a time, so they have too little chance of success and collectivism, making them feel inferior, and even worse, to be at a disadvantage.[66]

3 The (Temporary) Sharp Fall in Uyghur Births

The question of intent is central to discussions of genocide. Birthrates for all Chinese ethnic groups have greatly diminished over the past five decades, due to socio-economic factors and birth limit policies. The proportion of coercive action is unknown,[67] but it was more used against Han than minorities. Han had an expectation of strict birth limits right up to 2021.[68]

Coerced prevention of births is the main basis of the Xinjiang genocide assertion,[69] based on a precipitous fall in the Uyghur birthrate, mainly from 2016 to 2018. Regulations limiting births are only genocidal, however, if they are adopted to fulfill an intent to destroy an ethnic group. The sharp drop in the Uyghur birthrate in 2016–2018 does not show that. Instead, it resulted from a first-time systematic implementation of birth limits for Uyghurs, especially in Uyghur-concentrated rural southern Xinjiang. Other likely factors affecting the sharp drop in Uyghur birthrates in that period were separation of couples in VETCs for a period averaging somewhere between nine and 15 months, and the decline in the Islamic extremist hyper-natalism that had affected areas of Uyghur concentration.

A 2023 US government publication misleadingly stated that "Since 2017, the Xinjiang government has carried out a campaign to forcefully reduce birth rates or 'illegal births' among Uyghurs and other minority groups." It failed to inform readers that in 2021 China ended all efforts to reduce birthrates. In fact, China's government has adopted a pro-natalist policy in which "Chinese women of childbearing age … are being pursued through a vigorous campaign organized

66 Zhou and Li, Uyghur Women.

67 Follett, Neo-Malthusianism: 10.

68 Michelle Wong, "China's Two-Child Policy Under Fire as Parents' Bank Account Frozen for Having Third Child," SCMP, Feb. 13, 2019; "Newborn Third Child Triggers Online Debate," CD, Nov. 4, 2019; "Chinese Citizens Upset with Couple Forced to Pay 320,000 Yuan for Violating the Two-child Policy," GT, June 11, 2020; "Couple Required to Pay Over $100,000 Penalty for Violating Two-Child Policy," GT, Dec. 24, 2020.

69 Scott Simon, "China Suppression of Uighur Minorities Meets U.N. Definition Of Genocide, Report Says," NPR, July 4, 2020 (interview with Adrian Zenz), www.npr.org/2020/07/04/887239225/china-suppression-of-uighurminorities-meets-u-n-definition-of-genocide-report-s.

by vast district administrative networks. Grass-roots government workers have been mobilized to contact women in their neighborhoods to urge them to get pregnant."[70]

Socio-economic factors also likely played a role in the falling Uyghur birthrate, through acceptance of fewer children as a choice norm adopted by a more educated and mobile population. Lowered fertility is a concomitant of increased income levels, especially where "transformation from a society that is less well-connected, more tradition-bound, relatively isolated and rural, and communal rather than individualistic into a nation that is generally the opposite, with more developed markets, thicker communication networks, and denser settlements." When this change is sudden and rapid, as in Xinjiang, women enter the workforce faster than men change their traditional attitudes about helping at home; fertility then declines.[71] As parents get richer, they also invest more in their children through education. Because that is costly, parents have fewer children as incomes rise. Because raising children is also time-consuming, as wages increase, childcare becomes time that could otherwise be spent working and thus more costly for parents, especially mothers, resulting in falling fertility and greater female labor force participation.[72]

A leading scholar of Xinjiang society observed in 2025 that the incomes of Uyghurs roughly doubled over the past decade, which significantly affects fertility, so that by now most Uyghur families want two or three children.[73] Xinjiang minorities, like Chinese generally, may also find the cost of raising additional children unsustainable. Around 2019, the average cost in China for raising a child was the equivalent of US$66,000, 6.9 times China's GDP per capita and a much higher ratio than in developed countries. The cost is about a third lower than average in rural areas, but in major cities the price tag was twice the average.[74]

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70 "China Primer: the Uyghurs," Congressional Research Service, Jan. 6, 2023, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10281; William Zheng, "Chinese Government Workers Call Up Women to Urge Them to Have Babies," SCMP, Oct. 28, 2024.

71 Claudia Goldin, "Babies and the Macroeconomy," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 33, 311, Dec. 2024, www.nber.org/papers/w33311.

72 Matthias Doepke, et al, "The New Economics of Fertility," International Monetary Fund, F&D Magazine, Sept. 2022, www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Analytical-Series/new-economics-of-fertility-doepke-hannusch-kindermann-tertilt.

73 Interview, Prof. Yang Shengmin, Minzu University, June 5, 2025.

74 Liu Qian, "For More Babies, China Must Ensure Its Population Policy is Fit for the Modern Woman," SCMP, Oct. 24, 2023.

The 2023 female labor participation rate in China was 63.73% (male = 78.6%),[75] while the global female rate is about 50%.[76] Chinese women now may be less willing than before to forego other life experiences by focusing on childrearing. One analyst put it that

> in recent years, with the gradual acceleration of the pace of economic construction in towns and cities, people's attitudes towards childbirth have changed greatly in pursuit of a higher level of material and spiritual quality of life, and more and more couples of childbearing age are postponing childbirth.[77]

Coerced birth control is criminalized in China, but is also unnecessary, given the change in birth norms. China's governments at all levels now encourage births, though not by banning abortions. Coerced birth control has happened in many countries and continues in parts of the other China-sized country, India.[78] The US prevents births in prisons and immigration detention centers.[79] Since 2022, it also coerces births through its partial ban on abortion, despite the previous year having seen the first international court conviction for the crime against humanity of forced pregnancy.[80] Japan also has policies designed to obstruct avoidance of pregnancy.[81]

ln China, during a half century of state limits on population growth (1971–2021), localized coercion occurred. A Peking University demographer put it

75 World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report," 2023: 143, www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/.

76 Gao Fang and Li Xia, "From One to Three: China's Motherhood Dilemma and Obstacle to Gender Equality," *Women* 1:4 (2021): 252–266.

77 孙萍 "新疆的人口生育水平的变化与发展——基于人口普查数据" (Changes and Development of Population Fertility Levels in Xinjiang – Based on Census Data), Mar. 4, 2020, https://www.touqikan.com/cjxy/448011.h.

78 Nanditha Krishna, "India's Population Conundrum," *New Indian Express*, July 23, 2021.

79 Lisa Reinsberg and Sarah Paoletti, "The US Bears International Responsibility for Forced Sterilization of Women in ICE Detention," Justsecurity.org, Sept. 29, 2020; Emily Medosch, "Not Just ICE: Forced Sterilization in the United States," *Immigration and Human Rights Law Review*, May 2021, https://lawblogs.uc.edu/ihrlr/2021/05/28/not-just-ice-forced-sterilization-in-the-united-states/; Gregory N. Price, et al, "Did North Carolina Economically Breed Out Blacks During Its Historical Eugenics Sterilization Campaign?" *American Review of Political Economy* 15:1 (2020): 1–21.

80 *Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen*, International Criminal Court, No. ICC-02/04-01/15 (February 4, 2021).

81 Motoko Rich and Kyoko Matoya, "Japan Makes It Very Hard to Be Sterilized. These Women Demand Change," NYT, June 21, 2024.

that "forced abortions were not rare as a means of compulsory birth control."[82] That coercion was sometimes used is not surprising given the overall number of sterilizations and abortions: from 1971 to around 2012, there were 336 million abortions and 222 million sterilizations,[83] the vast majority of which would have been among China's Han majority. Western scholars generally do not even advance guesses about the proportion of abortions and sterilizations that were coerced when China had birth limitations however,[84] so it is gratuitous to assume the practice was widespread, systematic and intentionally directed, the defining criteria for crimes against humanity.

From the mid-1990s and through the early 21st Century however, birth limit enforcement was relaxed and abortions fell sharply. By 2005, provincial regulations forbade directly forcing women to undergo abortions.[85] Fines displaced mandated abortions, although in 2014, some still occurred in remote regions. A study found however that

> The greater the percentage of ethnic minorities in a sub-region, the lower the incidence of induced abortion. This association is due in part to the fact that induced abortion is mainly promoted to prevent second and third births in the Han sub-region, and the number of allowable births in the Han sub-region is more strictly limited than in ethnic minority areas.[86]

China remained a country with a higher-than-average rate of induced abortion, with 78% of unintended pregnancies in China ending in abortion in 2015–2019, while the global average of unintended pregnancies that end in abortion was 61%. The US's Guttmacher Institute has said that China had 17.7 million abortions in that period, but according to a China National Health Commission (NHC) report at the end of 2021, there were 9.5 million abortions, for an average of 1.9 million annually. Using that figure and Guttmacher's number of 930,000 US abortions in 2020, while adjusting for population size, the US abortion rate

82 "China has a Long Way to Go to Raise its Fertility Rate," China.org.cn, Oct. 6, 2018, https://global.factiva.com/hp/printsavews.aspx?pp=pp+Print&hc=Publication.

83 Ma Jian, "China's Brutal One-Child Policy," NYT, May 22, 2013.

84 See, e.g. Philip R. Reilly, "Eugenics and Involuntary Sterilization: 1907 to 2015," in *Annual Review of Genomics and Human Genetics 2015* 16: 351–368.

85 Fu Danni, "All Planned Out: The Changing Role of Population Control," Sixth Tone, Nov. 20, 2018, www.sixthtone.com/news/1003227/all-planned-out-the-changing-role-of-population-control.

86 Wang Cutong, "Induced Abortion Patterns and Determinants Among Married Women in China: 1979 to 2010," *Reproductive Health Matters* 22:43 (2014): 159–168.

exceeds China's. If the US had a China-sized population, it would have had, in 2015–2019, about two million more abortions than China.[87] The proportion of "forced" abortions in China was indeterminate and what is "forced" needs interpretation, as single Chinese women are "coerced" by social norms to have abortions, women may be coerced by husbands to do so, etc.

Forced birth control is illegal in Xinjiang[88] and the genocide claim is necessarily limited to 2017–2021, as before 2018 minorities had a much higher birthrate than Han and from 2021 China has had no mandatory birth limits.[89] In 2013, a scholar wrote that "More than 90% of the Han Chinese in Xinjiang live in urban areas in Northern Xinjiang."[90] From 1992–2017, Xinjiang's urban Han were limited to one child and rural Han to two, except that after 2002, a second child was allowed to couples where both spouses had been from a one child family.[91] Minorities such as Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Hui ("Muslim Chinese") were allowed two in urban areas and three in rural areas.[92] Smaller minorities were not subject to any birth limits.[93]

The Western stereotype, derived from Uyghur émigré leaders, is that Xinjiang repressively enforces family planning laws among minorities. In 2010, WUC head Rebiya Kadeer said, without providing evidence, that China "strictly limits the birth of Uyghur children. As a result, China conducts a lot of abortions every year against the wish of Uyghur families."[94] The Xinjiang minority population's 14.27% growth in 2010–2020 however contradicted Kadeer's 2009 claim

87 Karina Tsui, "China Set to Discourage Abortion Amid Concern over Birthrates," WP, Aug. 18, 2022; Jeff Diamant and Besheer Mohammed, "What the Data Says About Abortion in the US," Pew Research Center, June 24, 2022, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/06/24/what-the-data-says-about-abortion-in-the-u-s-2/; "China to Discourage Abortions to Boost Low Birth Rate," Reuters, Aug. 16, 2022.

88 "Population and Family Planning in Xinjiang," Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Sept. 4, 2020; www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cgjed/eng/zt/xjfk/t1812096.htm.

89 中共中央　国务院关于优化生育政策促进人口长期均衡发展的决定　(Chinese Communist Party and State Council Decision on Optimizing the Family Planning Policy to Promote the Long-Term and Balanced Development of the Population), July 20, 2021, www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-07/20/content_5626190.htm.

90 Han Enze, *Contestation and Adaption: The Politics of National Identity in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

91 Nie Wanli, *The Interrelationship Between Migration and Family Behaviors*, Universitet Pompeu Fabra, PhD diss. 2019: 137, www.tdx.cat/bitstream/handle/10803/667882/twn.pdf?locale-attribute=es.

92 Li Xiaoxia, "An Analysis Report on Population Change in Xinjiang," GT, Jan. 7, 2021.

93 "Respecting and Protecting the Rights of All Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang," SCIO, July 2021, www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-07/14/c_1310059892.htm.

94 Ida Karlsson, "China: On the Thousand Mothers March," Inter Press Service, Oct. 20, 2010.

that "most Uyghur women of childbearing were no longer able to give birth, due to prevalent sterilizations and use, voluntary or otherwise, of IUDs."[95]

Even "Uyghur genocide" claim promoters recognize however that birth limitations for Xinjiang minorities went largely unenforced before 2017.[96] An aspect of that laxity was reported to a Western researcher by her closest informant, a woman with rural ties in Kashgar, in the Uyghur heartland. She stated that

> By law women must be eighteen and men twenty before they can get married. However, in the countryside girls can be married when they are only fourteen or fifteen, sometimes even thirteen. Often the groom is forty or older, usually he is someone who has money and is willing to help a poor family if they let him marry their young daughter. Girls don't agree, but they have no choice because their parents force them.[97]

As of 2021, three births became China's *recommended* maximum, with all sanctions for exceeding three births (social fees, firings, etc.) banned.[98] Couples who have a fourth child may even be eligible for the preferential policies (优惠政策) specified in the 2021 version of the Population and Family Planning Law, which created the (suggested) "three-child policy"; for example preferential access to retirement homes for parents of such couples.[99]

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95 "Prepared Statement of Rebiya Kadeer" in US House of Representatives, "An Evaluation of 30 Years of the One-Child Policy in China," Nov. 10, 2009, https://chrissmith.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2009.11.10_an_evaluation_of_30_years_of_the_one_child_policy_in_china.pdf.

96 Danielle F.S. Cohen, "Minority Births Under China's One-Child Policy," paper International Studies Association conference, Toronto, 2014, cited in Jorg Friedrichs, "Sino-Muslim Relations: the Han, the Hui and the Uyghurs," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* [JMMA] (2017): 1–60; Ivan Watson, et al, "Xinjiang Government Confirms Huge Birthrate Drop but Denies Forced Sterilization of Women," CNN, Sept 21, 2020; Sansar Tsakhirmaa "Comparative Ethnic Territorially-Based Autonomy in Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia of China: An Analytical Framework," *Journal of Contemporary China* (JCC) 31:138 (2022): 1–28.

97 Maria Christina Cesaro, *Consuming Identities: the Culture and Politics of Food Among the Uyghur in Contemporary Xinjiang*, PhD diss., University of Kent, 2002: 125, https://kar.kent.ac.uk/86046/1/DX231701.pdf.

98 Zoey Zhang, "China Releases Supporting Measures for Three-Child Policy," China Briefing, July 2021, www.china-briefing.com/news/china-releases-supporting-measures-for-three-child-policy; "China: Three-Child Policy Becomes Law, Social Maintenance Fee Abolished," Global Legal Monitor, Sept. 23, 2022, www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2021-09-23/china-three-child-policy-becomes-law-social-maintenance-fee-abolished/.

99 中共中央 国务院关于优化生育政策促进人口长期均衡发展的决定 (Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and State Council), Xinhua, July 20, 2021, www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-07/20/content_5626190.htm.

Sichuan province, with a population almost the size of Germany's, had by early 2023 "made a bold pitch to try to get its citizens to procreate: Have as many babies as you want, even if you are unmarried." Married parents or a single mother who has a fourth or higher number child can "register with the local government, a process that qualifies parents for paid parental leave and reimbursed hospital bills."[100] Shanghai, the world's most populous city, along with Shaanxi and Guangdong provinces also allow unmarried women to register children.[101]

4 Genocide without Mass Killing?

As a US Xinjiang genocide claimant notes, "Genocide has not yet occurred in history without some form of killing" and

> Since all previous genocides rely on subparagraph (a) to exterminate the targeted protected group, the jurisprudence and academic discussions have not focused on other genocidal means, including reproductive measures. Instead, the possibility of a group disappearing through birth prevention measures is labeled as "exaggerated", "unrealistic", and "absurd."[102]

Those labels, however, are largely appropriate. Non-killing acts intended to destroy a group have occurred, but they have always been part of a genocide in which significant killing has occurred; other "genocides" solely involving prevention of birth or forcible transfer of children have only been proposed or imagined.[103] Wherever coerced birth control of minorities is subsumed in an actual genocide, it is part of a coordinated plan centered on direct mass killing. Genocide by preventing births only occurs as part of a massive shedding of blood; genocide by preventing births, without extermination, has only been *imagined*, mainly by Nazi officials and science fiction writers, just

100 Nichole Hong and Zixu Wang, "In Pursuit of a Baby Boom," NYT, Feb. 25, 2023.

101 "Motions, Proposals for China's 2023 Two Sessions Focus on Boosting Birth Rate," GT, Mar. 1, 2023. "Some of China's Biggest Provinces are Letting Everyone – Including Unmarried Couples – Have as Many Kids as They Want, and It Shows the Depths of China's Birth Rate Concerns" Insider, Feb. 14, 2023, www.insider.com/china-birth-rate-unmarried-people-unlimited-children-2023-2.

102 Brianna Dyer, "A Slow Death: Long-Term Genocide," *Opinio Juris*, Mar. 3, 2022, http://opiniojuris.org/2022/03/29/a-slow-death-long-term-genocide/.

103 Sautman, Bloodless Genocide.

as Hollywood films, such as *Independence Day* and *12 Monkeys,* have imagined that alien invaders or a "mad scientist" would wipe out humanity.

Mass murder with genocidal intent can effectuate a prevention of births. The Turkic Muslim conquest of the Uyghur Buddhist kingdom in Hotan (Khotan) in 1006 is said to have resulted in the killing of all Buddhist adult males. That, in effect, extinguished Buddhism there because Buddhist women were forced to marry Muslim men and raise their children as Muslims.[104] Actual genocidal birth prevention programs have also been lethal in themselves. Most victims of Nazi ethnically-selective sterilizations were murdered.[105] SS doctor Horst Schuman killed 30,000 Jews in Auschwitz in carrying out horrific sterilizing experiments. He served only six years in prison in post-war West Germany,[106] becoming one of the thousands of examples of Germany – the self-proclaimed *vergangenheitsbewaltigungsweltmeister* (world champion of the struggle to overcome the past) – failing to prosecute most of history's greatest mass murderers.

Of 10.6m Jews of Europe, the Nazi murdered roughly 3m in concentration camps – extermination camps (Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidanek, etc.) and annihilating "labor" camps. Two million were killed in mass shootings by Einsatzgruppen and Wehrmacht formations, and one million were murdered through starvation, disease, suicides, etc. in ghettos.[107] Forced sterilization accounted for very few or even none of these losses, given that the vast majority of the 30,000 Jews sterilized and then murdered in Auschwitz would have been killed whether or not they had been sterilized.

The subsumption of genocidal birth prevention in massive ethnic mass murder programs is likely one reason why the post-war Nuremburg war crimes tribunal did not make forced sterilization a separate prosecutable crime, placing it instead within the Nazis' extermination program.[108] Moreover, many

104 Interview, Prof. Wang Hui, historian, Tsinghua University, Aug. 10, 2023; 殷 晴, "关于大宝于阗国若干的问题," 新疆历史论文许继 (乌鲁木齐: 新疆人民出版社, 1982): 241–258.

105 Andrew Wisely, "War against 'Internal Enemies': Dr. Franz Lucas's Sterilization of Sinti and Roma in Ravensbrück Men's Camp in January 1945," *Central European History* 52:4 (2019): 650–671.

106 "Nazi Doctor in Ghana Admits Sterilizing 30,000 Jews; Killed 80,000," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1966, www.jta.org/archive/nazi-doctor-in-ghana-admits-sterilizing-30000-jews-killed-80000.

107 Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

108 Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial: War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 107.

Western countries then had forced sterilization programs, some of which were to last for decades after World War II. The Council of Europe stated in 2013 that "In the first half of the 20th century, a considerable number of European States – not just Nazi Germany – engaged in often massive forced or coerced eugenic sterilization and castration programs, some of whose victims are still alive."[109] For example, "Eugenic sterilization reached its climax in Sweden during the period 1943–1949,"[110] just as the Genocide Convention was being framed. Sweden had a State Institute for Racial Biology from 1922 onwards, with its funding backed by all Swedish parties, except the Communists. Its directors feared "racial suicide" was proceeding as poor people had more children than wealthier people. A decade further on, "Germany embraced the concept and followed the Swedish example by establishing the Berlin Institute for Racial Hygiene, an organization which would eventually contribute to the Nazi race ideology." During Sweden's program of coerced sterilization 1934 to 1976, Swedes were forcibly sterilized because they were deemed poor or ignorant; some committed suicide.[111] Unsurprisingly, "there have not yet been any successful international prosecutions [of acts of reproductive violence] as genocide. This may in part stem from the lack of a clear recognition of this type of violence as separate and distinct category."[112]

Systematic coerced birth control among Xinjiang minorities would have created resistance in an area where external geopolitical scrutiny is great. It would have required cooperative medical personnel and police. In Xinjiang in recent years however, these jobs often draw minority people from communities with high degrees of ethnic identity, especially Uyghurs. Contrary to common conception, there is no necessary contradiction between ethnic and national identity. Indeed, a study has shown that Sichuan's Yi minority youths who have a stronger sense of ethnic identity also have a stronger sense of national identity

109 "Putting an End to Coerced Sterilizations and Castrations," Parliamentary Assembly doc. 13215, May 28, 2013, https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=19755&lang=en.

110 Michael McEchrane, "Universal Human Rights and the Coloniality of Race in Sweden," *Human Rights Review* 19 (2018): 471–493.

111 Stephanie Hyatt, "A Shared History of Shame: Sweden's Four-Decade Policy of Forced Sterilization and the Eugenics Movement in the United States," *Indiana International and Comparative Law Review* 8:2 (1998); 475–503; Laura Llach, et al, "Why Did Sweden Sterilise Up to 30,000 People Against Their Will in the Cause of Eugenics?" Euronews, Aug. 6, 2023, www.euronews.com/2023/06/08/how-did-sweden-sterilise-up-to-30000-people-against-their-will-in-the-cause-of-eugenics.

112 Aldo Zammit Borda, "Putting Reproductive Violence on the Agenda: A Case Study of the Yazidis," JGR 26: 1 (2022): 94–21.

and that stronger ethnic identity led to a more positive intergroup orientation, which in turn predicted a stronger national identity.[113] Even if ethnic minority people are generally willing to uphold national policies, it is unlikely that they would, without visible complaint, enforce malign policies against people of their own ethnicities.

There is no evidence Xinjiang minorities' taking up birth control in 2017–2021 was coerced and it is unlikely that it was more coerced than Han women's taking up birth control in the half-century up to 2021. During that time, according to University of California, Irvine sociologist and China population specialist Wang Feng, "hundreds of millions of Chinese women underwent sterilization procedures or had intrauterine devices inserted."[114] Contraceptive use moreover was already widespread among Xinjiang minorities before birth limitations were equalized, although the provision of free contraceptives for the first time in 2016 significantly expanded access.[115]

The increase in Xinjiang's minority population has occurred despite a sharp fall in the total fertility rate (tfr) – the expected number of births per woman over a lifetime – for both China's Han and minorities over the past four decades. In 1982, Han and minority tfrs were 2.5 and 4.2 respectively; by 2020, they were 1.31 and 1.5. The tfr for all China's ethnic groups was below replacement level (2.1) by 2000, but populations did not shrink, because death rates declined and life expectancy increased. In 2020, great variation among minorities' tfr's still existed, ranging from 0.92 for China's highly-educated ethnic Koreans, through 1.51 for Hui ("Muslim Chinese"), and up to 1.95 for Tibetans. Meanwhile, Uyghurs "maintained comparatively high fertility rates." Inter-group variation in tfr relates to urbanization and education levels, but both social and ethnic factors affect fertility levels. There are intra-group differences as well; Uyghur women with primary school educations had a tfr in 2015 of 2.20 children, while those with a bachelor's degree or above had 1.52. Traditions are still influential, such as the esteem for large families among the Zhuang, China large southwestern minority, but a "second demographic transition," based on new family norms among minorities, has also emerged, featuring "cohabitation, delayed marriage, choosing not to have children, and pursuing individualism within marriage." Moreover, "intense economic pressure, limited childcare resources

113 Luo Ning, et al, "Ethnic and National Identification of Minority Youth in China: The Mediating Role of Intergroup Orientation," *PLoS One* 19:6 (2024).

114 Wang Feng, "Population Decline Isn't a Problem (and 'More Babies' Isn't a Solution)," NYT, Jan. 31, 2023.

115 Bucklers, China, Xinjiang and Genocide.

and the pursuit of individual achievement" is making Han and minority fertility rates converge.[116]

Uyghurs are the one Chinese minority for whom Western entities claim a "demographic genocide."[117] Their population has not decreased, however. Uyghurs have a positive NPGR, while the NPGR for Xinjiang's Han may be negative, as it is for Han nationally. A sharp Xinjiang birthrate drop did occur in 2018–2019 however, and an argument was then made that it indicated a genocide. That was the allegation, for example, of Pierre-Marie Meunier, a former French intelligence officer with a Paris-based strategic risk consultancy.[118] Omer Kanat, a US government Radio Free Asia (RFA) employee and WUC co-founder, claimed Xinjiang's birthrate dropped by 50% from 2017 to 2019. He attributed the drop entirely to forced sterilization and coerced abortion, but presented no evidence.[119] Kanat de-contextualized the Uyghur birth rate drop, misrepresenting the reasons for it, and its relation to China's falling birthrate.

Xinjiang's natural population growth continued, but at a sharply reduced rate, as in China as a whole. The Xinjiang NPGR was 11.1 in 2017, when the all-China NPGR was 5.58. Xinjiang's NPGR was only 6.13 in 2018, but the national rate was 3.81. The Xinjiang NPGR fell further to 3.69 in 2019, when the all-China rate was 3.32.[120] Xinjiang's 2017–2019 NPGR decline was thus 66.7%, but the all-China NPGR decline was still a hefty 40.5%. The difference between the two declines was because birth limitations were applied to rural Uyghurs for the first time in 2017–2021. Even in 2019, Xinjiang's NPGR exceeded the national rate, however. Moreover, the national NPGR continued to decline precipitously; it dropped by 109.2% from 2016 to 2022.[121]

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116 Jin Yongai, et al, "Fertility Transition of Han and Ethnic Minorities in China: A Tale of Convergence and Variation," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 9:4 (2023): 522–552; William Huang, "Will the Dungan Muslims be the Only East Asian Ethnic Group with Above-Replacement Fertility," Gript, May 7, 2023, https://gript.ie/will-the-dungan-muslims-be-the-only-east-asian-ethnic-group-with-above-replacement-fertility/.

117 Davidson, Xinjiang Births Plummeted.

118 Pierre-Marie Meunier, "The Truth About Uighurs: Has China Really Committed Genocide?" Fair Observer, Apr. 21, 2024, www.fairobserver.com/world-news/china-news/the-truth-about-uighurs-has-china-really-committed-genocide/#.

119 "China: Omer Kanat, Co-Founder of the World Uyghur Congress: 'No One is Safe Within Our Region and Everyone is Being Followed,'" CE Noticias Financieras, June 2, 2023.

120 Lew, China Census.

121 "China's Population Natural Growth Rate, 1949–2022," CEIC, 2025, www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-natural-growth-rate-by-region/population-natural-growth-rate.

Notably also, China's tfr dropped from 1.81 in 2017 to 1.5 in 2019,[122] without any tightening of birth limitations for the whole country. That makes it likely that much of the fall in Xinjiang's birthrate was for the same reasons as in the rest of China. The national tfr fell from 1.5 in 2019 to as low as 1.0 in 2023, a 50% drop in four years.[123] That precipitous drop was likely caused by both changes in birthing norms and the pandemic, although there is little indication of a post-pandemic birthrate recovery in China.

The Uyghur population likely also continued to grow in 2017–2021, the years of the claimed "demographic genocide." Demographers of Xinjiang have stated that in 2019, the birthrate among Uyghurs was the same as that in Xinjiang as a whole, 8.14.[124] A demographer has also noted that "The death level of the Uyghur population is similar to that of the Han Chinese and was already at a very low level very early on, possessing the prerequisites for fertility decline." The fall in the death rate allowed Uyghurs and other minorities to elect to have fewer children because more were now surviving infancy.[125] The low death rate for Xinjiang also meant that the NPGRs for the region and for Uyghurs living there were positive, at about 3.69.

Xinjiang's NPGR was in fact positive each year from 2021 to 2024,[126] while the all-China birthrate fell sharply from 2017 onwards, with a negative NPGR (NNPGR) by 2022. The Han NPGR was lower than most minorities' NPGR. In Xinjiang's mainly Han areas, the NPGR was 2.44 in 2018; in Xinjiang's mainly minority areas it was 4.06.[127] In southern Xinjiang, where about 88% of the population is Uyghur, natural growth continued: in 2018, in Kizilsu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture it was 11.45, in Aksu Prefecture 5.67, in Kashgar

122 "Fertility Rate in China from 2002 to 2022," Statista, 2024, www.statista.com/statistics/270164/fertility-rate-in-china/.

123 Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, "China's Population Decline is Getting Close to Irreversible," Peterson Institute of International Economics, Jan. 18, 2024, www.piie.com/research/piie-charts/2024/chinas-population-decline-getting-close-irreversible.

124 李建新, 秋丽雅, "我国少数民族"人口生育及其影响因素分析——以壮族、回族、满族、维吾尔族、藏族、蒙古族 (Analysis of the fertility of ethnic minorities in my country and its influencing factors: Taking the Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, Uyghur, Tibetan and Mongolian as examples), 西北民族研究. 2022(01), 10.16486/j.cnki.62-1035/d.20220124.003.

125 "Li Jianxin: I Investigated the Population Problem in Southern Xinjiang and Found a Phenomenon," Observer Network, July 12, 2021, https://readchina.info/en-US/artricls/548985680932372480; Morris Rossabi, *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005): 157–158.

126 "Guangdong, Henan, Shandong Rank Top Three in 2024 Newborns," GT, Apr. 7, 2025.

127 Li Jianxin and Qiu Liya, "Demographic Transition and Population Dynamics in Xinjiang China," *China Population and Development Studies* 8 (2024): 78–95 (88).

Prefecture 6.93, and in Hotan Prefecture 2.96.[128] Notably, in 2018 in Gulbagh sub-district of Hotan City, where the city's Han population concentrates, the NPGR was only 1.2, but in 99% Uyghur Hotan County, the figure was 5.29.[129]

Xinjiang's positive NPGR rate likely owes to a higher NPGR among Uyghurs than among Han. As in all but one of China's 19 western and central provinces, the region had negative population growth in 2022 and 2023, even as its NPGR was positive.[130] A positive NPGR can coexist with a negative population growth when outmigration significantly exceeds in-migration. Out-migration from Xinjiang is overwhelmingly Han. The region's fall in population is likely attributable to both a negative NPGR and negative net migration of Han.

Han outmigration was formerly spurred by perceptions of insecurity and ethnic conflict. Xinjiang had 8.83m Han in 2010, but 8.6m in 2015. In 2015–2018, the number of Han fell by 868,000. By 2018, their share of the household-registered population was 31.6%. Adrian Zenz, a German anthropologist at the US government-supported Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, has said that in 2018–2019 "many Han Chinese had left Xinjiang and business had suffered."[131] He and Australian Xinjiang specialist James Leibold stated in 2019, when Leibold was employed by the Australian/US/UK governments-sponsored Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), that "Anecdotal reports from local informants suggest many Han have left Xinjiang or are actively preparing to do so should an opportunity arise."[132]

Zenz has also put it that after 2017, "Han population decreases took place in several Uyghur majority regions, and in fact all across Xinjiang."[133] Before 2018, the Uyghur population was increasing at a much higher rate than the Xinjiang Han population, both because of a higher birth rate and Han outmigration. Further Han outmigration in 2018–2019, together with a continuously falling birthrate, likely meant that the proportion of Han in Xinjiang declined in the same period for which a Uyghur "demographic genocide" is claimed.

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128 China Statistical Yearbook, 2019.

129 "Slanderer Adrian Zenz's Xinjiang-Related Fallacies Versus the Truth," Xinhua, Apr. 30, 2021.

130 Jiang Yangge, "A Glimpse into Population Growth and Migration Across China," *Beijing Review*, May 6, 2024.

131 Linda Lew, "Xinjiang: China's White Paper May Point to Forced Labor Claims, Experts Say," SCMP, Sept. 18, 2020.

132 Adrian Zenz and James Leibold, "Securitizing Xinjiang: Police Recruitment, Informal Policing and Ethnic Minority Co-optation," *China Quarterly* (CQ) 242 (July 2020): 324–348.

133 Adrian Zenz, "A Response to the Report Compiled by Lin Fangfei, Associate Professor at Xinjiang University," Medium, Oct. 8, 2020, https://adrianzenz.medium.com/a-response-to-the-report-compiled-by-lin-fangfei-associate-professor-at-xinjiang-university-bdad4bbb97f9.

Xinjiang's fertility drop after 2017, when the genocide supposedly began, was sharp for both minorities and Han and post-2017, Xinjiang Han may even have had a negative NPGR.[134] The decline was sharper for minorities because the Han birthrate was already lower than the minority birthrate in 2017, when birth limits were equalized. An analogy is China and India's average annual carbon emission intensity decline rate. India's decline rate in 1990–2017 (1.2%) was lower than China's (4.1%) because much less-industrialized India's carbon emission intensity in 1990 was already much lower than China's. In fact, India's 2017 CO_2 emissions per capita was still 21.4% lower than China's had been in 1990.[135]

Diminishing effects of further inputs to a program after a major effort had already been made occur with birthrates just as with economies. Thus, the slowing of China's economy by 2023 was partly because it had already hugely invested in building infrastructure, constructing industry, and reducing extreme poverty,[136] although on the latter score, reform-era China was less successful than socialist-era China had been.[137] Han birthrates had already fallen sharply before 2017, so that there was less room for them to fall sharply after that date.

As early as 2000, Xinjiang's policy fertility – the fertility level implied by implemented fertility policies – was a tfr of 2.37 children. The observed tfr was only 1.7, however. The Xinjiang gap between the two kinds of tfr is the highest in China, which indicates that Xinjiang's minority birthrate was much higher than among Han, as it was only the very low Han birthrate that could lower the observed tfr so far below the rate that policies implied.[138]

Whether the withdrawing of Xinjiang's minority birth preferences in 2017, by enforcing birth limitations for the first time in rural areas, was wise is debatable, given that the preference was assumed to be culturally- and politically-valued among minorities. It has been observed, however, that rural families

134 Adrian Zenz, testimony, Uyghur Tribunal, June 7, 2021: 276, https://uyghurtribunal.com › uploads › 2022/01.

135 Jiao Ziheng, "Comparing Decoupling and Driving Forces of CO_2 Emissions in China and India," *Frontiers of Environmental Science* 10 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3389/fenvs.2022.847062.

136 James Galbraith, "China in Decline? New US Narrative is Geared Towards 2024 Election," SCMP Aug. 18, 2023.

137 Dylan Sullivan, et al, "Capitalist Reforms and Extreme Poverty in China: Unprecedented Progress or Income Deflation?" *New Political Economy* 29: 1–2 (2024).

138 Peter McDonald, "The Emergence of Low Fertility as a Policy Issue," *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 22:2 (2007): 1–9.

having many children and upward social mobility are negatively correlated. China-specialized sociologists in the UK have stated that

> [S]ome of the [preferential] policies, well-intended as they were in respecting and preserving minority cultures such as the exemption from the family-planning policies, might have had the unintended consequences of perpetuating their poverty. For rural ethnic families already struggling in poverty and with rather limited upward mobility chances available in the local economy, having three, four or more children would only reduce their chances for improvement as compared with urban families with smaller family sizes or even with the majority peers in the rural, more developed, area where the family-planning policies were generally reinforced.[139]

Withdrawing minority preferences did not, however, evidence genocidal intent. Equalized birth limits in Xinjiang in 2017–2021 allowed rural Han for the first time to have same three children as Uyghurs, though very few Han did so and many rural Uyghurs had already exceeded that number without being significantly penalized. Urban Han and minorities were both limited to two children. Equalization was not intended, as a UK scholar has claimed, "to compel Uyghur women to maintain their family at the new maximum of two children;"[140] they continued from 2017–2021 to be entitled by law to have three children in the countryside.

Enforced birth limits during the equalization period were not even "discriminatory" merely because they disparately impacted minority birthrates over a four-year period,[141] any more than preferential policies for China's minorities have been "reverse discrimination" because they ostensibly disadvantage Han. Most Chinese do not see most preferences for minorities as reverse discrimination; such policies "have been largely uncontroversial in China and widely accepted if not whole-heartedly welcomed by the Han majority."[142] That con-

139 Li Yaojun and Zhao Yizhang, "Double Disadvantages: A Study of Ethnic and Hukou Effects on Class Mobility in China (1996–2014)," *Social Inclusion* 5:1 (2017): 5–19.

140 Joanne Smith Finley, "Why Scholars and Activists Increasingly Fear a Uyghur Genocide in Xinjiang," JGR 23:3 (2021): 348–370.

141 Nathan Ruser and James Leibold, "Family De-Planning: the Coercive Campaign to Drive Down Indigenous Birth Rates in Xinjiang," Uyghur Tribunal, June 6, 2021:8, https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211214-Nathan-Ruser.pdf.

142 Hanna Wei, *Sociocultural Otherness and Minority Justice: a Study on China* (Berlin: Springer, 2022): 152.

trasts with the US, where because most whites and many Asian-Americans are convinced that the few remaining preferential policies for Black and Latino minorities involve a zero-sum scenario, they oppose even policies framed to increase opportunities for people regardless of ethnicity.[143]

Though "Uyghur genocide" proponents claim prevention of births among Uyghurs arose from a malign intent, they in effect acknowledge that a benign intent was expressed. Zenz has stated that Chinese policymakers and academics hold that population policy in Xinjiang is based on the idea that "'excessive population growth' impacts the per capita availability of resources and sources of income, with unmet material desires in turn giving rise to 'religious extremism and splittism.'"[144] Given their associations with Western governments and Uyghur émigrés however, Zenz, et al ignore that Xinjiang's development has benefitted Uyghurs and cannot acknowledge that anything they have said recognizes benign intent in policies toward Xinjiang minorities. That is so even though that failure to acknowledge development contravene logic and the intellectual honesty expected of scholars and other analysts.

Many Xinjiang genocide claimants misleadingly discuss the recent reduction in Xinjiang minority birthrates without noting that for decades minorities had more lenient birth limits than Han, with limits in rural Xinjiang in practice scarcely applied to minorities before 2017. Agents of a CIA-connected geopolitical analysis firm stated however, in 2014, that "In practice, with a few exceptions, Uighurs, like Tibetans and other ethnic minorities, have seldom been subject to population controls like their ethnic Han counterparts."[145] Even where birth limits preferences that Xinjiang minorities received from the early 1980s to 2017 are noted in mainstream discourses of Xinjiang, the significant fall in Han birthrates in 2017–2021 goes unacknowledged. The national birthrate was 12.64 per 1,000 population in 2017; 10.86 in 2018; 10.41 in 2019; 8.52 in 2020, 7.52 in 2021. There was thus a 40.5% national birthrate fall in 2017–2021 and further drops to 6.77 in 2022 and 6.39 in 2023.[146]

Xinjiang's overall birthrate dropped 61% in those same four years: from 15.88 births per 1,000 in 2017 to 10.69 in 2018; 8.14 in 2019; 6.94 in 2020; to 6.16 in 2021. The main Xinjiang decline was in 2017–2019, when the birthrate fell 48.7%, while the national drop then was 17.6%. In 2017, Xinjiang's 15.88 birthrate

143 John Bateson, "Discrimination is Afflicted by Zero-Sum Thinking Too," FT, Oct. 11, 2023.

144 Zenz, Sterilization, IUDs.

145 "Stratfor: China Gets Tough on Minorities in Xinjiang," Aug. 7, 2014, www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/china-gets-tough-minorities-xinjiang.

146 CEIC, "China Population: Birthrate: By Region," 2022, 2023, www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-birth-rate-by-region.

was higher than the 12.64 national rate, but by 2021 Xinjiang's birthrate was 6.16, while the national birthrate was 7.52. The national rate fell to 6.77 in 2022, below the crude death rate of 7.37. Xinjiang's birthrate at 6.53 was still a bit under the national birthrate in 2022, but above the region's death rate of 5.76.[147] In 2023, the Xinjiang birthrate, at 7.10, was again significantly above the national rate of 6.39.[148]

Xinjiang's pandemic-influenced death rate reached 6.17 in 2023, but the national death rate was 7.87. Thus, Xinjiang's NPGR was positive, while China had a negative NPGR. Statistics by ethnicity have not been made available for 2023 and 2024, but it is likely the Uyghur birthrate significantly exceeded the national rate and that China's Han birthrate remains lower than the minority rate. The drop in the Han rate casts minority birthrate reductions in a wholly different light than "genocide." Short-term enforcement of family planning for Xinjiang minorities cannot be evidence of genocidal intent, given that birthrates among them were very much higher before 2017 and are likely higher since the end of birth limitations in 2021.

Besides Xinjiang in 2017–2021, other equalizations of birth limitations have occurred. In the mid-1980s, the one-child policy in cities was extended to the Man and Zhuang, two large, previously-exempted ethnic minorities.[149] Guangdong Province enacted new regulations in 1998 specifying that minorities, who had been allowed three children, were now restricted to two.[150] Later, because Guangzhou, Guangdong's 98.5% Han-populated capital, has an aging population, from 2009 it urged couples who had been limited to one child to have two, as some minorities still could do.[151] That set a precedent for what was to

147 CEIC, China Population; Adrian Zenz, "A Summary of Beijing's Policies in Xinjiang," joint US Senate hearing on "Atrocities in Xinjiang: Where Do We Go From Here?" June 9, 2021, www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/061021_Zenz_Testimony.pdf; "Birthrate in China from 2000 to 2021," Statista, 2022, www.statista.com/statistics/251045/birth-rate-in-china/; Nik Martin, "How China Can Solve Its People Problem," DW, Jan. 23, 2023; "Population: Birth Rate Xinjiang," CEIC, 2023, 2024 www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-birth-rate-by-region; "Population: Death Rate: Xinjiang," CEIC, 2023, www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-death-by-region/cn-population-death-rate-xinjiang.

148 "Birth Rate in China by Province or Region," Statista, 2025, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1179703/china-birth-rate-by-region-province/.

149 Xian Huiping, et al, "How Work–Life Conflict Affects Employee Outcomes of Chinese Only-Children Academics: The Moderating Roles of Gender and Family Structure," *Personnel Review* 51: 2 (2022): 731–749.

150 "Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in the People's Republic of China," Human Rights in China, 1998: 76, www.hrichina.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Submissions/HRIC_CEDAW-1998.pdf.

151 Daniel Shearf, Chinese Province Encouraging Couples to Have 2 Children, VOA, Nov. 1, 2009, www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2007-07-11-voa21/401067.html.

occur in Xinjiang. Of course, no one claimed the change in Guangdong was anti-minority discrimination, let alone genocide.

Other factors, besides existing regulations finally being applied to rural minorities, account for Xinjiang's falling birthrate – social development, especially urbanization, whose rate increased from 43% in 2010 to over 50% in 2019,[152] higher educational levels, and, in 2020–2023, the pandemic – have served to also decrease birthrates over a short period all over China. Chinese workers had an average of 6.1 years of schooling in 1985, but 10.8 years in 2021, up from 8.2 to 11.7 years in the cities and from 5.5 years to 9.2 years in the countryside.[153] Simultaneously, China's tfr dropped 2.63 to 1.16. Thus, a 77% increase in average years of schooling was associated with a 55% fall in fertility.

Genocide claimants have mainly focused on the fall in the Uyghur birthrate by state-sponsored contraceptive measures, but "Much of the reduction in birthrate appears to be a result of family separation";[154] that is, Uyghurs being at VETCs in 2017–2019 or being incarcerated or going out to work. These separations, being quite temporary, could only have a short-term birthrate effect, which counters an intent to destroy an ethnic group as such by prevention of births.

Policy equalization, plus these factors, wholly explains the sharp birthrate decline. Tursunay Abudureyim, inspector of the Xinjiang Bureau of Statistics, put it in 2020 that "The decline of Xinjiang's population growth in 2018 is the result of full implementation of Family Planning Policy, which also reflects Xinjiang's economic and social development and the changing patterns of people's reproduction attitude among all ethnic groups." He also noted that

> Before 2017, family planning policy was not implemented adequately in southern prefectures of Xinjiang, like Kashgar and Hotan, which resulted in having more children than the policy allowed. In recent years, during Xinjiang's poverty alleviation campaign, home visits and information soliciting from household to household have identified a large number of children born out of the policy and had them registered. Such population accounted for 20% of the population, including newborns, registered in

152 Szyszlak, Cultural Security.

153 "China's Labor Force Nears Average Age of 40 as Population Grows Old," Yi Cai Global, Dec. 15, 2023.

154 Ashley Smith, "US Corporations Are Complicit in the Repression of Uyghurs," Truthout, Jan. 17, 2023, https://truthout.org/articles/us-corporations-are-complicit-in-the-repression-of-uyghurs/.

> that year, which is in line with the estimations of health and statistics authorities.[155]

Xinjiang demographer Li Xiaoxia made a similar assessment in 2021: "In 2018, both fertility rate and natural growth rate of ethnic minority population (the [Uighur] population in particular) in Xinjiang decreased significantly. All of these can be attributed to the strict implementation of the family planning policy."[156]

That explanation negates speculation of an intent to destroy minorities. It indicates that "full implementation" of birth limits lowered the birthrate to deal with the exceeding of the then-existing preferential policy of "two in the cities, three in the countryside" for Xinjiang ethnic minority births. The problem was significant because the high number of births particularly inhibited sustainable development and reinforced poverty in southern Xinjiang's countryside.

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155 "The 13th Press Conference on Xinjiang-Related Issues," Tianshannet, Aug. 30, 2020, www.huyangnet.cn/content/2020-08/30/content_744471.html.

156 Li Xiaoxia, "An Analysis Report on Population Change in Xinjiang," GT, Jan. 7, 2021.

CHAPTER 3

Forcible Transfer of Children: No Force, No Transfer

> But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better … [The] invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases … can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain.
>
> GEORGE ORWELL, 1946, of politicians' language[1]

1 No Evidence, No Case

An "international community of scholars of Xinjiang and the Uyghurs" – some 40 people, almost all white and all in the West – said in 2020 that there is a "genocidal program" in Xinjiang. None charged that mass killings were involved.[2] They assert genocide based on preventing births among minorities, despite the fall in Xinjiang minority births in 2018–2021 being wholly explicable by factors that negate genocidal intent. They also claim that transfers of children are genocidal, mainly based on half of Xinjiang middle school students attending boarding schools (内初班).[3]

The absence of judicial proceedings as to Genocide Convention Art. II(d), "prevention of births," also applies to Art. II(e) claims of genocide through the forcible transfer of children. An Israeli international law specialist has noted

1 George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," Horizon, 1946, www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/.

2 Ondrej Klimes and Joanne Smith Finley, "China's Neo-Totalitarian Turn and Genocide in Xinjiang," *Society and Space*, Dec. 7, 2020, www.societyandspace.org/articles/chinas-neo-totalitarian-turn-and-genocide-in-xinjiang.

3 James Millward, "International Academic Signatories of the Open Letter Regarding UH High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's Statement and Visit to the Xinjiang Uyghur Region," May 7, 2022, https://jimmillward.medium.com/international-academic-signatories-of-the-open-letter-regarding-uh-high-commissioner-for-human-4c05a2cb309e.

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that "the provision has been dormant and considered anachronistic and was rarely applied by an international or a local court."[4]

A claim of genocide based on forcible transfer of children has not been adjudicated in any international court.

> Genocide by killing was charged in 17 ICTY cases and 11 ICTR [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda] cases; genocide by causing serious bodily or mental harm was charged in 16 ICTY [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia] cases and nine ICTR cases; and genocide by inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction was charged in 10 ICTY cases and no ICTR cases. There were no formal charges of genocide by "imposing measures intended to prevent births," nor genocide by transferring children for that matter.[5]

Rulings by international courts that a genocidal forcible transfer of children has taken place are non-existent. A legal scholar in the UK has stated that in the *Croatia v. Serbia* case,[6] the ICJ "interpreted Article II(e) of the Genocide Convention restrictively, limiting it to forcible transfers of children that leads to biological destruction of the group, which 'can have consequences for the group's capacity to renew itself, and hence to ensure its long-term survival.'"[7] That ruling implies that transfer of children must be large-scale and permanent. The transfer alleged for Xinjiang is on the smallest of scales: only a low-single digit number of cases of temporary transfers from a Uyghur family to an orphanage or other state facility has been alluded to by émigré groups. No instance has involved a permanent transfer, let alone a permanent transfer to a Han family. Most of the very few transfers were where at least one parent was active in émigré "East Turkistan" separatism. The allegation charged against China in Xinjiang contrast to what happened to indigenous North American[8]

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4 Hilly Moodrick-Even Khen, "The Forcible Transfer of Children from Ukraine as Genocide: Awakening the Dormant Prohibition of the Genocide Convention," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 32 (2024): 78–118.

5 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 444.

6 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (*Croatia v. Serbia*), Judgment, ICJ Reports (2015), para 136.

7 Iulia Joffe, "Forcibly Transferring Ukrainian Children to the Russian Federation: A Genocide?" JGR 25:3–4 (2023): 315–351.

8 Bryan Newland, "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report," Bureau of Indian Affairs; May 2022, www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf; Eesha Pendharkar, "Native American Children Endured Brutal

and Australian children,[9] as Xinjiang has not had long-term removals or transfers of minority children to majority population families or to murderous residential schools.

Only a few Xinjiang transfers outside families – perhaps a half-dozen from 2017–2019 – are reported by émigré groups and repeated by Western media. The cases are mostly of one or both Uyghur parents deciding to become émigrés, generally in Europe, and not knowing whether their children were then with relatives or at an orphanage or boarding school.[10] Émigré groups often cite the same two cases that now appear in a 2025 Center for Uyghur Studies (CUS) report. It circularly references the first case by citing only the CUS head's statement. The parents of the Kuchar brothers were émigrés in Turkey. The brothers were in a state-run Xinjiang boarding school for 18 months in 2018–2019, but émigré reports do not say why the brothers were not sent to Turkey immediately or placed with relatives in Xinjiang. They did however later join their parents in Istanbul. Mihriban Kader and Abilkim Memtinin emigrated to Italy in 2016 after Kader became pregnant with her sixth child. They left four children with grandparents, one of whom ended up in a VETC and the other in police custody. Three children were sent to an orphanage and one to a boarding school. No information was provided about whether the children are now in Italy with their parents.[11]

These Xinjiang transfers were short term and were to state institutions, not Han families. Yet, even long-term transfers of children to families of another ethnicity are only genocidal if the intent to destroy a protected group, as such, has been proved. Ukraine has claimed genocide against Russia but would have difficulty sustaining it based on civilian deaths. In 27 months of war from February 2022 to May 2025 Ukraine sustained about 13,000 civilians deaths or an

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Treatment in U.S. Boarding Schools, Federal Report Shows," *Education Week*, May 11, 2022, www.edweek.org/leadership/native-american-children-endured-brutal-treatment-in-u-s-boarding-schools-federal-report-shows/2022/05; Mundorff, Other People's Children: 120–121.

9 Robert van Krieken, "Rethinking Cultural Genocide: Indigenous Child Removal and Settler-Colonial State-Formation," *Oceania*, 75 (2004), 125–51; Richard J. Reynolds, "'Clean, Clad and Courteous': a Review History of 200 Years of Aboriginal Education in New South Wales," *Journal of Negro Education* 78:1 (2009): 83–94.

10 See Durrie Boscaren, "How China's Detention Camps for Uighurs are Separating Families," The World, Feb. 11, 2019, https://theworld.org/stories/2019-02-11/how-china-s-detention-camps-uighurs-are-separating-families; Maura E. Cunningham, "'Let Only Red Flowers Bloom' Review: The Narrowing of China," WSJ, Mar. 21, 2025.

11 "Breaking the Roots: China's Use of Boarding Schoos as a Tool of Genocide Against Uyghur Muslims," Center for Uyghur Studies, May 13, 2025: 20–23, https://uyghurstudy.org/new-report-chinas-use-of-boarding-schools-as-a-tool-of-genocide-against-uyghur-muslims/.

average of 11 civilian deaths per day.[12] Ukraine's military deaths were estimated at 60,000–100,000 in that period.[13] The 1:6 ratio of civilian-to-military deaths in Ukraine is thus the opposite of what one would expect if a widespread, systematic and intentionally directed crime against humanity was ongoing, let alone a genocide. In contrast, in Gaza, the civilian-to-military deaths ratio after a year of war was said to be as much as 4:1.[14]

As no "physical genocide" can be shown for Ukraine, it asserts a Russian genocide by sending up to 6,000 children from the Donbas region to Russia, with some adopted or fostered by Russian families. The children were orphans evacuated from a combat zone and many may be ethnic Russians or have dual identity. A researcher for a 2023 US State Department-sponsored Yale University study of the transfers said such actions, if "for purposes of changing, altering or eliminating national identity can constitute a component act of the crime of genocide."[15]

In 2023, the ICC indicted Vladimir Putin for the war crime – not genocide – of "forcible deportations" by permanently transferring children. It alleged "at least hundreds of children [were] taken from orphanages and children's care homes." Russia said 2,000 children without guardians were transferred. Ukraine said it confirmed 16,000 cases, although some may be with a relative. The UN estimated in 2023 that 2.9m Ukrainians had moved to Russia since the 2022 invasion began, including about 700,000 children, according to both Russians and Ukrainians. In 2024, Russia said 4.8m Ukrainian citizens, 770,000 of them children, had been taken in by Russia. Most children are believed to be with their families.[16] Many have been moved from a war zone by one authority or another. Children transferred to schools or summer camps could call home

12 "Cumulative Number of Civilian Casualties in Ukraine During Russia's Invasion Verified by OHCHR from February 26, 2022 as of April 30, 2025, By Date of Report," Statista, 2025, www.statista.com/statistics/1296924/ukraine-war-casualties-daily/.

13 Helene Cooper, "Troop Casualties in Ukraine War Near 1.4 Million, Study Finds," NYT, June 3, 2025.

14 Matthew G. Cockrill, "Civilian Casualties in Gaza: Israel's Claims Don't Add Up," Action on Armed Violence, Oct. 28, 2024, https://aoav.org.uk/2024/casualties-in-gaza-israels-claims-of-50-combatant-.deaths-dont-add-up-at-least-74-of-the-dead-are-civilians/.

15 Timofei Rozhansky, "Russia Accused of 'Genocide' After Fast-Tracking Adoption of Ukrainian Children," Radio Free Europe, June 30, 2022, www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-russia-adoption-war-children/31922974.html; "Russia has Held at Least 6,000 Ukrainian Children for 'Re-education', US-Backed Report Says," Reuters, Feb. 15, 2023.

16 Marc Santora and Emma Bubola, "Russia Signals Intention to Deport More Children," NYT, Mar. 16, 2023; "UN Committee Urges Russia to End 'Forcible Transfer' of Ukrainian Children," Al-Jazeera, Feb. 8, 2024.

and could be reclaimed if parents came for them, a difficult but not impossible task.[17]

Law professors in Denmark have advised Ukraine to sue Russia in the ICJ for an alleged genocidal large-scale, permanent forcible transferring of children.[18] It has not done so, likely because it is not confident it can show the thousands of transfers were carried out with the intent to destroy Ukrainians as such. In the Xinjiang case, there is no showing of an *actus reus*, let alone *mens reus*: the number of transferees is infinitesimal compared to the population of several million Uyghur children, transfers were temporary, and there is no hint of genocidal intent.

Such scenarios cannot be compared with the forcible transfers of the Armenian genocide, the model for the Genocide Convention provision banning forcible transfer with an intent to destroy a group.[19] Many Armenian children died during death marches into the north Syrian desert; Turkish, Kurdish and Arab forces drowned, burned to death or killed through sexual violence many other Armenian children.[20] Almost three-fourths of all Armenian children aged 13 years or younger were lost through death or captivity.[21] If children were one-quarter of the Ottoman Armenian population of around 2 million, then almost 375,000 children either died or were forcibly transferred and lost to the Armenian people.

Whether a war crime can be made out under the circumstances in Ukraine will be debated. The claim of genocide is assuredly inaccurate however, as for transfer to be a genocidal act it must proved that it was intended to destroy an ethnic group.[22] That may be one reason Ukraine did not bring a case in

17 Carlotta Gall and Oleksandr Chubko, "The Russians Took Their Children; These Mothers Got Him Back," NYT, Apr. 8, 2023.

18 Iryna Marchuk and Aloka Wanigasuriya, "The Curious Fate of the False Claim of Genocide On the ICJ's Preliminary Objections Judgment in Ukraine v. Russia and Beyond," Vervassungs Blog, Feb. 24, 2024, https://verfassungsblog.de/the-curious-fate-of-the-false-claim-of-genocide/.

19 Ruth Amir, "*Killing Them Softly: Forcible Transfers of Indigenous Children,*" *GSP* 9:2 (2015): 41–60.

20 Nazan Maksudyan, *Ottoman Children & Youth During World War I* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2019): 110; Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide. The Armenian Case," JGR 5:3 (2003): 421–437; Schneider, Forcible: 124.

21 Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, "The Armenian Genocide and the Survival of Children," in Alexandre Kimenyi and Otis L. Scott (eds.), *Anatomy of Genocide. State-Sponsored Mass Killing int the Twentieth Century*, ed. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001): 250–251.

22 *Bosnia v. Serbia*, para. 186.

the ICJ accusing Russia of genocidal transfer of children.[23] As William Schabas, a leading scholar of genocide, has explained, transfer of children "is only genocide if it can be established beyond a reasonable doubt that a transfer was conducted with the intent to destroy a group physically *and to the exclusion of any other reasonable explanation*."[24]

Changing national identity is not itself genocidal, absent the special intent to destroy a group as such, something not evidenced merely by showing that a group, mainly of orphans, were taken out of a war zone and subjected to indoctrination, as the Yale study's authors assert. In actual genocides, transfers of children are mopping-up operations to finish off an ethnic or religious group that has experienced massive killing. The transfers themselves often are lethal. Xinjiang's situation is different: the very few transfers of children were temporary and not carried out in a manner barred by international law. Asserting that Genocide Convention Art. II(e) was violated in Xinjiang is also illogical because transfers of children of parents imprisoned or at VETCs in 2017–2019 were impermanent and because no obvious intent to erase ties with the child's ethnic community has been shown. Transfers of children in genocides however have always involved permanent displacement with that intent.

There is only one way in which Chinese children have been permanently transferred from their cultural community: international adoption. It involved 120,000 Chinese children during the One Child Policy-era, peaking at 14,000 children in 2005. International adoptions from China totaled 150,000 by the time they were ended in 2020. Americans had adopted 80,000 of these Chinese children.[25] Specialists told the US Congress in 2002 that minority children in China were *not* put up for international adoption. They were not classed as abandoned children, but instead orphans, to be placed with relatives and retain their culture. Most Han international adoptees, however, effectively lost most or all their culture and adopted a Western culture.[26]

Thus, even as to China's one permanent child transfer program, ethnic minorities enjoyed a preference. Minority children in a Western context, however, have not been so sheltered from transfer away from their birth cultures. Non-Native families' adoption and de-culturalization of North American and Australian indigenous children is well-known. Europe's Romani ("Gypsy")

23 Vladyslav Kudrik, "Experts Warn UN Court's Approach in Ukraine Versus Russia Genocide Cases 'May Lead to More Instability,'" *Kiev Independent*, Apr. 1, 2024.

24 "What Constitutes Genocide," DW, Mar. 1, 2023.

25 Follett, Neo-Malthusianism: 11; "China Ends Foreign Adoptions," BBC, Sept. 6, 2024.

26 "China's Children: Adoption, Orphanages and Children with Disabilities," Roundtable Before the Congressional Executive Committee on China, Oct. 21, 2002, www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-107hhrg83513/html/CHRG-107hhrg83513.htm.

children have also been disproportionately transferred to non-Romani families over the last few centuries, a process begun under Empress Maria Theresa of Austria in the late 18th Century, but that grew markedly after the late 20th Century end of socialism in Eastern Europe.[27]

2 Family Separations, Boarding Schools and Genocides

US anthropologist Darren Byler has said that "hundreds of thousands of [Uyghur] children have been separated from one or more of their parents. Many children throughout the region are now held in boarding schools or orphanages which are run by non-Muslim state workers."[28] Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, a China Strategic Risks Institute director, University of Ottawa senior fellow and Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project advisory board member, wrote in 2025 of "hundreds of thousands [of children] unable to reunite with their parents."[29]

Such statements are at odds even with reporting by China-hostile US journalists. For example, at the end of 2019, *New York Times* journalists noted that "A directive from the Qapqal [Xibo Autonomous County, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture] government ordered children of working couples to be in care – home villages for the young, boarding schools for older ones – so their parents could move for work."[30] The directive hardly indicates that any children are being "held" by the state or that they are any more "separated" than the hundreds of millions of children elsewhere in China whose parents work outside their villages.

Byler apparently had no idea how many Uyghur children were in orphanages. It may have been few, as Xinjiang orphanages overwhelmingly have had Han children. He also used the terms "separated" and "held" propagandistically, as the "hundreds of thousands of children" he mentions were in boarding schools from which they could return home on weekends and holidays; they were not separated or held like prisoners. Many Xinjiang orphanages and

27 Jolie Chai, "Forced Removal of Romani Children from the Care of their Families," European Roma Rights Centre, 2005, www.errc.org/roma-rights-journal/forced-removal-of-romani-children-from-the-care-of-their-families.

28 Darren Byler, "For China's Muslim Minority, the Internet was a Safe Haven – Until it Wasn't," Fast Company, Sept. 23, 2019, www.fastcompany.com/90405715/for-chinas-muslim-minority-the-internet-was-a-safe-haven-until-it-wasnt.

29 Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, "Being Sanctioned by China Just proves that our Advocacy for Human Rights is Having an Impact," *Globe and Mail*, Jan. 28, 2025.

30 Chris Buckley and Austin Ramzy, "Inside China's Push to Turn Muslim Minorities into an Army of Workers," NYT, Dec. 30, 2019.

boarding schools are moreover run by Uyghurs and where Han are administrators, they cannot be gratuitously assumed to ignore minority childrens' cultural backgrounds.

Byler's 2019 claim about transfer of children was likely derived from a publication by Zenz a couple months earlier. True to form, Zenz, writing just before the wind-up of the VETCs, provided no confirmable evidence of forced transfer. Rather, he argued that four measures had recently occurred in Xinjiang that imply forced transfer of children: 1) the construction of pre-schools and boarding schools had accelerated; 2) the facilities have security measures in place and teach about Chinese language and culture; 3) state organs had said facilities such as boarding schools have benefits; and 4) these organs had prepared for any negative consequences of children being temporarily separated from their parents.[31] None of these measures betokens forced transfer however. All four measures are ordinarily found in many parts of the world. Zenz cites no evidence of widespread, systematic and intentionally-directed transfers and temporary separations cannot show an intent to destroy an ethnic group.

Years after the wind-up of the VETCs that Xinjiang had from April 2017 to October 2019, Uyghur émigrés and their Western supporters were still telling a tale of a million or more children spirited away from families, to be "brainwashed." In 2024, the pro-independence East Turkistan Svenska Uyghur Kommitten (SUK), an émigré group in Sweden, wrote that

> Over one million Uyghur children have been forcibly abducted by the CCP from their families, who are detained in concentration camps or prisons. Stripped of their familial support, these defenseless children endure severe human rights abuses. They are subjected to physical and psychological torture, forced labor, organ harvesting, sexual violence, and systematic indoctrination designed to erase their cultural and religious identities and brainwash them into loyal Chinese citizens.[32]

In 2024, a CUS article on "China's brutal separation of Uyghur children and their families" asserted that the VETC's still existed, with

> reports indicating that a million or more Uyghurs have been arbitrarily detained in 'transformation-through-education' centers, subjected to

31 Adrian Zenz, "Break Their Roots: Evidence for China's Parent-Child Separation Campaign in Xinjiang," *Journal of Political Risk* 7:7 (2019), www.jpolrisk.com/break-their-roots-evidence-for-chinas-parent-child-separation-campaign-in-xinjiang/.

32 "Uyghur Rights Organization Bashes China for Atrocities in Xinjiang," ANI, July 23, 2024.

> torture, political indoctrination, and a systematic campaign of forced assimilation.' In this landscape of terror, Uyghur children are wrenched from their parents' arms and placed in state-run institutions, where their language, beliefs, and cultural heritage are systematically obliterated.

The article also asserted that "Uyghur children are forcibly enrolled [in boarding schools' whether or not their parents have been taken away. Here they undergo a relentless process of Sinicization. Instruction is almost exclusively in Mandarin, with the Uyghur language and cultural practices being aggressively and outright banned." The article was by a Center "researcher," but had no research or evidence. Indeed, neither that article nor the longer 2025 CUS "study" mentioned any particular "victims" or any study of a Xinjiang boarding school.[33] No evidence is provided that children have been forcibly abducted, that concentration camps exist, or that children are being "brainwashed" to abandon their cultural and religious identities. Mainstream Anglosphere media and NGOs contain no analysis questioning these assertions.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) Associate Director Maya Wang has said that "In some parts of Xinjiang … children [have been] held in state-run 'orphanages' that aim to stamp out their culture and identity."[34] No source for this assertion was specified. Wang asserted, in 2024, that "Hundreds of thousands of Uygurs remain in long-term arbitrary imprisonment." She cites no evidence that shows that this large number of Uyghurs are imprisoned, nor to conclude that their imprisonment is "arbitrary."[35] Wang likely knows that unlike the whites who ran the Native American residential schools and orphanages, no Chinese leader has ever said that they intended to "stamp out [the] culture and identity" of Xinjiang minorities. China has no leader like Trump, who has often and recently endorsed racist ideas of "good genes" and "poisoning the blood."[36]

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33 Dareen Khaled, "The Unspoken Tragedy: China's Brutal Separation of Uyghur Children and their Families," Center for Uyghur Studies, Mar. 6, 2024, https://uyghurstudy.org/the-unspoken-tragedy-chinas-brutal-separation-of-uyghur-children-and-families/.

34 Maya Wang, "China's 'Beautiful Xinjiang' Continues to Oppress Uighurs," Al Jazeera, Sept. 13, 2023.

35 Han Bochen, "3 Uygurs Freed as Part of US-China Prisoner Exchange: Report," SCMP, Dec. 4, 2024.

36 Robert Mackey, "Trump Hails Good Bloodlines of Henry Ford Whose Anti-Semitism Inspired Hitler," The Intercept, May 22, 2020, https://theintercept.com/2020/05/22/trump-hails-good-bloodlines-henry-ford-whose-anti-semitism-inspired-hitler/; Michael Gold, "Trump's Long Fascination With Genes and Bloodlines Gets New Scrutiny," NYT, Dec. 23, 2023.

Even an émigré-controlled US propaganda outlet alleged only dozens of Uyghur children had been sent to "orphanages."[37] No widespread or systematic effort to transfer children has been shown. The émigré assertion that there is "forced family separation of nearly one million Uyghur children,"[38] probably referring to Uyghurs at boarding schools, does not amount to a transfer of children, as boarding school children in Xinjiang frequently return home, most more often than do foreign students at elite British boarding schools.[39]

A University of Leiden international law specialist has recounted that in its 2005 judgment in *Prosecutor v. Vidoje Blogjevic and Dragan Jokic*, an ICTY Trial Chamber "came to the puzzling finding that 'physical or biological destruction of a group is not necessarily the death of group members." If a genocide could occur without fatalities, transfer of children might by itself amount to a genocide. That decision was soon overturned on appeal, however.[40] A study of forcible transfer of children and genocide has said genocidal forcible transfer is an act operating biologically, "by preventing children from reproducing within the group, and physically, by discouraging children from returning to their group … to destroy the group as a separate and distinct physio-biological entity."[41] Genocidal transfers, like the Native American residential schools, have however always operated during or soon after mass killings.

The US is an example. In 1492, there were an estimated 7–10m indigenous people in what is now US territory. Before 1900, 13 million native people in what is now US territory had died from disease and slaughter, while the "rough total estimate of Indigenous deaths attributable to the legacy of colonialism and institutionalized racism since 1900 exceeds 200,000."[42] The US's official heroes sought the forcible dispossession of Native Americans and generally their extinction. President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 wrote that indigenous people should be first indebted and then dispossessed of their land; 30 years later President Andrew Jackson said of Native Americans "They have neither

37 "Dozens of Uyghur Children of Xinjiang Village Camp Detainees Sent to Live in Orphanages," RFA, Feb. 2, 2018, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/orphanages-07022018143057.html.

38 "Interview: Salih Hudayar PM Of the East Turkestan Government-In-Exile," *Times of Israel*, June 8, 2023.

39 "What Is Life Like at Boarding Schools?" Stonar School, 2025, www.stonarschool.com/boarding/life.

40 Van den Herick, The Meaning of the Word.

41 Mundorff, Other People's Children: 117.

42 David M. Smith, "Counting the Dead: Estimating the Loss of Life in the Indigenous Holocaust, 1492–Present," 12th Native American Symposium 2017, www.se.edu/native-american/2017-native-american-symposium/.

the intelligence, the industry, the moral habits, nor the desire of improvement which are essential to any favorable change in their condition . . . they must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear."[43]

In 1884, mass killings of Native Americans were still ongoing. Attendees at an influential "Friends of the Indian" conferences resolved "that every effort should be made to secure the disintegration of all tribal organizations" and "take[e] Indian youth from the reservations to be trained in industrial schools placed among communities of white citizens."[44] For the US government, transfer was seen as cost-saving: "When the US created Indian boarding school, the goal was to save money. Then-Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller estimated that assimilating Indians would cost only a fraction of the ongoing military conflict with the tribes."[45]

The proposed transfer was already in motion when Richard H. Pratt founded Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Pratt had been a US Army "Indian fighter," who fought in the Red River War to remove indigenous people from the US's Southern Plains; he also ran the Ft. Marion, Florida prison for Native Americans. Pratt envisioned dispersing all Native American children among 70,000 white families. More than 10,000 children attended Carlisle, the largest of the US's 534 indigenous boarding schools. At least 408 of these schools received federal funding and at least 105 of were run by Christian denominations. The program reached a peak around the 1930s, but schools continued to open, nine of them after 1969. The schools were paid for with funds extracted from trust accounts for indigenous nations, set up as part of treaties ceding lands to the US, forcing indigenous people to pay for schools designed to sever their children's ties to their families and extinguish their culture. Native Americans paid again for the schools through labor at these institutions, where cooking, cleaning, laundry etc. was typically done, without compensation, by the children themselves.

Carlisle existed from 1879 to 1918 and Pratt headed it until 1904. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ezra Hayt explicitly instructed Pratt to take Lakota Sioux children in the first class, to serve as hostages for the good behavior of their fathers, who had destroyed General George Custer's cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. The children were put in uniforms of the same

43 Dana Hedgpeth and Sari Horwitz, "They Took the Children: U.S. Created Indian Boarding Schools to Destroy Cultures and Seize Land," *Washington Post* (WP), Dec. 22, 2024.

44 "Second Annual Address to the Public of the Lake Mohonk Conference (Indian Rights Association, 1884)," in Francis Paul Prucha (ed.), *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975): 161–164.

45 Rebecca Nagle, "The US has Spent More Money Erasing Native Languages than Saving Them," *High Country News*, Nov. 5, 2019.

US army that had killed their relatives and were drilled like soldiers. In its early years, more students died each year at Carlisle than graduated. About 100 Native children are buried at its former site, which is now Carlisle Barracks, a training center for US military officers to fight the "war on terror." Some 450 children may have died as a result of attending Carlisle, with most buried elsewhere. Native children there "were taught that their cultures were inferior. Some teachers ridiculed and made fun of the students' traditions. These lessons humiliated the students and taught them to be ashamed of being American Indian." Lakota and Dakota leaders finally agreed in 1889 to accept loss to white settlers of nine million acres of land in exchange for a promise their children would be returned from the schools, a promise not kept.[46]

Pratt was a "progressive" in his era. He advocated legal equality for Native Americans and opposed the common idea that race and intelligence are correlated. He nevertheless believed that white ways were better, stating that his institute's philosophy was that "all there is that is Indian in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, save the man."[47] "The man" was however often not saved and cultures were obliterated at the schools. Long-serving Superintendent of the Indian Schools Estelle Reed wrote that "The Indian child must be placed in school before the habits of barbarous life become fixed and there he must be kept until contact with our life has taught him to abandon his savage ways and walk the path of Christian civilization."[48] One study termed this pedagogical approach "Education for Extinction" and noted that there was considerable resistance to the schools among both children and parents.[49]

More than 300,000 Native American children – by the 1920s, 83% of all Native American children – were enrolled in the schools. Many children had been forcibly removed from their families. Parents who refused to give up their children were sometimes incarcerated, including in California's infamous Alcatraz prison. Moreover,

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46 Nick Estes, "The US Stole Generations of Indigenous Children to Open the West," *High Country News*, Oct. 14, 2019; DaNeen Brown, "'Barbaric': America's Cruel History of Separating Children from their Parents," WP, May 31, 2018.

47 R.H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Boston: Ellis, 1892): 46, https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/docs-resources/CIS-Resources_1892-PrattSpeech.pdf.

48 Superintendent of Indian Schools, "Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools," in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington: GPO, 1900).

49 David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

> Many children faced beatings, malnutrition, hard labor and other forms of neglect and abuse. Some never returned to their families. Hundreds are known to have died, a toll expected to grow as research continues … [T]he schools largely shared the mission of assimilating Indigenous students by erasing their culture. Children's hair was cut off; their clothes were burned; they were given new, English names and were required to attend Christian religious services; and they were forced to perform manual labor, both on school premises and on surrounding farms. Those who dared to keep speaking their ancestral languages or observing their religious practices were often beaten.

Forced child labor outside the schools made girls mainly into servants in white households and boys into laborers for white-owned factories or farms. Conditions included "paying the children unfair wages, making them cover their own room and board, removing them from their studies for months at a time, and placing them in lodgings that were substandard or segregated from white laborers." Boys working on farms might have to work six days a week, 10 hours a day.[50]

A 2022 United States Department of the Interior report stated that

> Tens of thousands of Native American children were removed from their communities and forced to attend boarding schools where they were compelled to change their names, they were starved and whipped, and made to do manual labor between 1819 and 1969.[51]

By 1900, one in five Native American children was in a boarding school. By the 1920s, most Native American students, some as young as four years old, were boarders, with 60,000 at the peak. A 1969 Senate report said the boarding school system was "grossly underfinanced, academically deficient and had a 'major emphasis' on discipline and punishment." US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, whose grandparents were Native American boarders, stated in 2024 that the system was "a concerted attempt to eradicate the quote, 'Indian problem' – to either assimilate or destroy Native peoples altogether." Despite the US's ostensible church/state separation, "while in

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50 Zach Levitt, et al, "'War Against the Children,'" NYT, Aug. 30, 2023.

51 Bryan Newland, "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report," Bureau of Indian Affairs; May 2022, www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/inline-files/bsi_investigative_report_may_2022_508.pdf.

boarding schools, children were rarely allowed contact with their family. Instead, Native children were subject to the demands of Christian missionaries who attempted to assimilate them into white culture, often using violence and manipulation."[52]

A 2024 *Washington Post* investigation found 3,100 children died at the schools, more than three times the number the 2022 US government report documented, while 1,000 Native American children were sexually abused by priests, nuns and brothers at dozens of Catholic Church-run boarding schools.[53] Besides children who died at the schools, "More children may have died away from the campuses, after they became sick at school and were sent home."[54] Forcible removal to an off-the-reservation school was practiced only early in the program. From 1893 onward, parents driven by extreme and increasing poverty formally consented to that kind of removal, the alternative being an equally oppressive on-reservation school.[55]

Sandra White Hawk, author of *A Child of the Indian Race: A Story of Return*, told a US Senate Committee that "Children frequently received corporal punishment for speaking their language. Methods of punishment included: solitary confinement, flogging, whipping, slapping, handcuffs, and devising methods to induce children to administer punishment to each other."[56] President Biden apologized for the schools in October 2024, days before the US presidential election, in the "battleground" state of Arizona, in Maricopa County, where there are many Native Americans and the vote was expected to be close and decisive.[57]

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52 Theresa Rocha Beardall and Frank Edwards, "Abolition, Settler Colonialism, and the Persistent Threat of Indian Child Welfare," *Columbia Journal of Race and Law* 11:3 (2021): 533–574 (541).

53 Dana Hedgpeth, "Tribes Sue US Over Deaths, Abuse at Boarding Schools," WP, May 27, 2025.

54 Matthew Brown, "Forced Assimilation and Abuse: How US Boarding Schools Devastated Native American Tribes," AP, Oct. 25, 2024.

55 Eesha Pendharkar, "Native American Children Endured Brutal Treatment in U.S. Boarding Schools, Federal Report Shows," *Education Week*, May 11, 2022, www.edweek.org/leadership/native-american-children-endured-brutal-treatment-in-u-s-boarding-schools-federal-report-shows/2022/05; Mundorff, Other People's Children: 120.

56 Patti Waldmeier, "A Dark Era in Treatment of Indigenous Children Comes to Light," FT, Aug. 23, 2022.

57 Gabriel Sanchez and Stephen Nunio-Perez, "Biden's Apology for Boarding Schools May Boost Native American Vote for Arizona Democrats," Brookings, Oct. 31, 2024, www.brookings.edu/articles/bidens-apology-for-boarding-schools-may-boost-native-american-vote-for-arizona-democrats/.

A 1969 study found 25–35% of all Native children had been removed from their families and communities.[58] In 1978, the same percentages represented the proportion of Native children removed from their homes. Some church-run indigenous-student schools lasted past the Federal system and, in the 1970s, an estimated 30% of Native American children were still being forcibly transferred from their families, with 85% transferred to non-Native homes. In 2018, 56% of Native children transferred from their families went to non-Native homes.[59] These figures however "may be a serious undercount of the widespread reality of child removal."[60] The Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Adoption Program from 1958 to 1968 and subsequent Adoption Resource Exchange of North America, allowed for gradual phasing out of boarding schools, which were costly to the US government, as children were transferred to white families who bore the cost of their forced assimilation.[61] The parents were willing to do so because

> the number of middle-class, mostly white parents who wished to adopt outstripped the number of infants surrendered for adoption by a wide margin. Some white couples, frustrated by yearslong waits to adopt children who looked like them, became interested in adopting nonwhite children, and Native children proved especially appealing.[62]

Child welfare agencies often suppose the economic benefit of placing a child with a non-Native family outweighs benefits from being raised in a Native culture and community. A 2021 report found Native children still disproportionately enter the child welfare system and are removed from their homes at a rate up to three times that of white children. Its authors found that the number of Native children in foster care grew by 203% from the 1970s to 2019, but the number of non-Native children grew 98%; the number of Native children adopted in that period was up 72%, but the number of non-Native children

58 Gabriele Glaser, "The Brutal Past and Uncertain Future of Native Adoptions," NYT, May 16, 2023.

59 Christie Renick, "The Nation's First Family Separation Policy," The Imprint, Oct. 9, 2018, https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/nations-first-family-separation-policy-indian-child-welfare-act/32431; "Setting the Record Straight: The Indian Child Welfare Act Fact Sheet," National Indian Child Welfare Association, 2018, https://www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Setting-the-Record-Straight-2018.pdf.

60 Beardall and Edwards, Abolition: 544.

61 Margaret Jacobs, *A Generation Removed: The Fostering and Adoption of Indigenous Children in the Postwar World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

62 Glaser, The Brutal Past.

adopted fell by 7%.[63] Similarly, in 2018, 3.8% of Australians and 5.9% of children were indigenous,[64] but no less than 35% of all children in out-of-home care were Aboriginal, up from 20% twenty years earlier.[65]

3 Xinjiang Boarding Schools and the Genocidal Imaginary

Expectedly, proponents of the Uyghur genocide claim compare boarding schools in the region to the US and other Anglosphere residential schools for indigenous children,[66] even though no intention to destroy Xinjiang minorities culturally or organizationally has been expressed by Chinese officials. For example, US scholar James Millward asserted in a 2023 article that

> [T]he Xinjiang boarding schools have re-created the brutal residential institutions designed to deracinate Indigenous children in Australia, Canada, and the United States. They also contribute to China's broader colonial policy to Sinicize the region by moving Han people into Xinjiang and suppressing Uyghur birth rates.[67]

Millward provides no way to verify his claim that boarders are punished for speaking Uyghur, even though his assertions are based on "escaped children," who presumably could be identified. Studies of Uyghurs at boarding schools show they can speak their language there.[68]

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63 Frank Edwards, et al, "American Indian and Alaska Native Overexposure to Foster Care and Family Surveillance in the US: a Quantitative Overview of Contemporary System Contact," 2022, file:///C:/Users/sobarrys/Downloads/ms_draft_ineq.docx%20(1).pdf.

64 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "Australia's Children," Feb. 25, 2022, www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/background/australian-children-and-their-families.

65 Chris Sarra, "Too Many Indigenous Children are Taken from Their Families – It Doesn't Have to Happen," *Guardian* (Australia), May 23, 2017.

66 "Government Boarding Schools as a Tool of Genocide in the 21st Century: Uyghur and Tibetan Family Separation," Uyghur Human Rights Project, July 26, 2022, https://uhrp.org/event/boarding-schools/.

67 James Millward, "China's New Anti-Uyghur Campaign: How the World Can Stop Beijing's Brutal Oppression," *Foreign Affairs,* Jan. 23, 2023, www.foreignaffairs.com/china/chinas-new-anti-uyghur-campaign.

68 Chen Yangbin, *Muslim Uyghur Students in a Chinese Boarding School: Social Recapitalization as a Response to Reintegration* (New York: Lexington Books, 2008); Chen Yangbin, "Boarding School for Uyghur Students: Speaking Uyghur as a Bonding Social Capital," *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education* 4:1 (2010): 4–16.

Boarding schools in Xinjiang are vastly different from the Native American residential schools. According to Uyghur teachers, children typically return home on weekends and holidays.[69] Children are not beaten or farmed out to labor. No evidence has been presented of deaths at boarding schools or that parents oppose sending their children to them. Many Native American residential school students lost their native language or became unable to comfortably speak either their mother tongue or English.[70] Fieldwork in Kashgar, Hotan and Ili in 2023 and 2024 found however that all ethnic minority children encountered were bilingual in China's national language (国语) and their ancestral language, with the latter always spoken among the children themselves and to their parents.

Byler has condemned the "widespread residential boarding school system, where Uyghur and Kazakh children are instructed in Chinese and not permitted to practice their faith traditions."[71] He does not explain how using the national language for instruction and absence of religious observation in Xinjiang schools differs from the rest of China. In Byler's US, English is the language of instruction and no religious practice occurs in public schools.

While no claim has been made that any Xinjiang "transferred" children died as a result, there have been many instances where massive deaths of children, accompanied by claims of genocide, occurred with transfers or without them. The lethality that was part of transfer of indigenous North American and Australian children exemplifies the first scenario. Significant excess mortality among Iraqi children due to US sanctions from 1990–2003 are an example of the second scenario. Estimates of studies range from 50,000 to 1 million, with 500,000 the most-cited figure.[72] Iraqi children's deaths were hugely greater than the 10,000-plus deaths estimated for transferred indigenous children in

69 "Boarding Education in Xinjiang, China's Efforts to Guarantee Right to Education for All: Chinese Scholar," GT, Aug. 25, 2023.

70 Jon Reyhner, "Promoting Human Rights Through Indigenous Language Revitalization," *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review* 3 (2008): 151–189; Dillon Platero, "Bilingual Education in the Navajo Nation," in Rudolph Troike and Nancy Modiano (eds.) *Proceedings of the First Inter-American Conference on Bilingual Education* (Arlington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975): 56–61.

71 Steven Chase, "SFU Academic Assails Canada's Criticism of China on Human Rights," *Globe and Mail*, July 30, 2021.

72 Joy Gordon, *Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010): 255–257; "Razing the Truth About Sanctions Against Iraq," Geneva International Center for Justice, Sept. 7, 2017, www.gicj.org/positions-opinons/gicj-positions-and-opinions/1188-razing-the-truth-about-sanctions-against-iraq; Talha Abdulrazaq, "How the West Whitewashes Killing in Iraq," Aug. 22, 2017, www.trtworld.com/opinion/how-western-nations-whitewash-the-killing-of-children-in-iraq-9845.

what Pope Francis described as genocide when visiting Canada in 2022[73] and infinitely higher than what has been claimed for Xinjiang.

The main transfer-related allegation about Xinjiang concerns children of "double-detained" minority parents in VETCSs, which Chinese officials deem "schools with the character of de-radicalization" that continued efforts in place before 2017. Children of the "double-detained" were said to have been sent to a government facility and not to available relatives[74] or to a boarding school against the wishes of parents.[75] Some claims imply, with no evidence at all, that such children were "transferred to adoption institutions outside" Xinjiang.[76] Other unevidenced assertions are that many children were involved. Thus, HRW has asserted that "Chinese authorities have housed *countless* children whose parents are detained or in exile in state-run child welfare institutions and boarding schools without parental consent or access."[77]

Some VETCs in fact had their own elementary schools. For example, Stephanie Kam and Michael Clarke mention Yutian County VETC's attached elementary school:

> [I]n 2018 the secretary of the Party Committee of the Education Bureau of Yutian County noted that because 'the parents of these children were poisoned by extreme ideologies' and were 'unwilling to send their children to school', the children 'could not speak Mandarin and failed to develop good life habits'. However, after being enrolled in the elementary school of Yutian County [VETC], the children have developed 'good daily habits' such as learning to wash their faces, brush their teeth and attend to 'personal hygiene.'[78]

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73 "Pope Francis: It was a Genocide Against Indigenous People," Vatican News, July 2022, www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-07/pope-francis-apostolic-journey-inflight-press-conference-canada.html.

74 Adrian Zenz, "Break Their Roots: Evidence for China's Parent-Child Separation Campaign in Xinjiang," *Journal of Political Risk* 7:7 (2019), www.jpolrisk.com/break-their-roots-evidence-for-chinas-parent-child-separation-campaign-in-xinjiang/; Zhou Zunyou, "Chinese Strategy for De-Radicalization," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31:6 (2017): 1187–1209.

75 Morris Rossabi, *China and the Uyghurs: a Concise Introduction* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022): 128.

76 Marco Respinti, "Desperate Divorces: Another CCP Crimes Against the Uyghurs," Bitter Winter, Aug. 22, 2023, https://bitterwinter.org/desperate-divorces-another-ccp-crimes-against-the-uyghurs/.

77 HRW, "China: Xinjiang Children Separated from Families," Sept. 15, 2019, www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/15/china-xinjiang-children-separated-families.

78 Stephanie Kam and Michael Clarke, "Securitization, Surveillance and 'De-Extremization' in Xinjiang," *International Affairs* 21:3 (2021): 625–642 (637).

Kam and Clarke try to link teaching primary school children the national language and personal hygiene to the securitization of Xinjiang and compare it to constructing an "exemplary population" as per the actions of Australian settler colonialist administrators. The logic of such connections is elusive, given that primary school pupils in China and the world are taught national languages and personal hygiene. Those at VETC-attached schools were not permanently removed from their families or cultures. Australian officials, such as Sir Paul Hasluck and Victoria's first Lieutenant Governor Charles La Trobe however, explicitly sought to destroy Aboriginal culture through permanent removal. Aboriginal education was also set in a context of dispossession of the land, social disintegration and, indeed, of indigenous people dying out. Education was often entirely neglected, because white parents could exclude Aboriginal children, a policy that continued until the 1970s. Aboriginal children were in segregated, hugely inferior schools that trained them for "the lowest order of society," as farm hands, servants, etc. Whites made all decisions about Aboriginal education and very few Aborigines attained a secondary education. By 1960, not a single Aborigine in Australia's most populous state had a university education; by the mid-1970s, only a miniscule number of Aborigines were degree holders. Even in 2009, Aboriginal attendance at government-run schools was "abysmal."[79]

Transfers of Armenian, Polish, and North American indigenous children that spurred creation of Article II were permanent, often lethal, and aimed at cultural erasure. Notably, "children detained in several of these programs suffered staggering mortality rates, reaching at least 50% in some facilities."[80] The Xinjiang VETC-related "transfers" had none of these features. In particular, boarding schools for Xinjiang students radically differ from 20th Century North American indigenous residential schools. Leibold recognized, as to those outside the region, that

> Unlike the forced removal of indigenous children in 20th-century America, Canada and Australia, these residential schools are completely voluntary and hugely popular … [It is a] transformative academic experience creating genuine opportunities for social advancement and cultural exchange. Most of its graduates go on to top Chinese universities while

79 Richard J. Reynolds, "'Clean, Clad and Courteous: a Review History of 200 Years of Aboriginal Education in New South Wales," *Journal of Negro Education* 78:1 (2009): 83–94.

80 Mundorff, Other People's Children: 66.

> others pursue study-abroad options before taking up a range of career opportunities.[81]

US politicians, however, continue to attack Xinjiang boarding schools, including those outside Xinjiang. In 2025, Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) said of the Chinese government that "in Tibet and Xinjiang … they've oppressed religious and ethnic minorities and ethnically cleanse them by removing their kids and sending them to other parts of the country."[82] Places at boarding schools outside Xinjiang however are avidly sought, in part because students who attend such schools will acquire quasi-native fluency in the world's second most-spoken language. That is the same reason that moves parents in the US, where anti-China discourse is all-pervasive, to compete to enroll their children in one of the country's 407 Chinese language immersion programs in 32 US states, one fourth of them in conservative Utah.[83]

In 2017, 43,000 Xinjiang students, most of them Uyghurs, applied for the 9,880 places at the *neidi* ("inland") schools.[84] Even during the pandemic, in 2020, 36,740 students applied for the same number of places. More than three-fourths of students pay no fees; room, board, medical care, transport, etc. are all free. At least 80% of the students must be minorities and up to 10% can be Han from farming or herding families. In most schools, students study together with local Han students but live in separate dorms. Within schools, there is a "multi-dimensional mingling system" (多为融合系统). A survey of Xinjiang class students in schools in two inland cities found

> about 70% of the Xinjiang students in the two schools showed positive feelings toward their local peers, while about 10% of the Xinjiang students showed negative feelings [and] the proportion of Xinjiang students who hold negative perceptions of their local peers was higher than their local peers' negative perceptions of them.

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81 James Leibold, "Interior Ethnic Minority Boarding Schools: China's Bold and Unpredictable Educational Experiment," *Asian Studies Review* [ASR] (2019): 3–15.

82 "Interview With Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR); Communist China Is the Greatest Threat That We Face," Fox News, Feb. 16, 2025.

83 Han Bochen, "Mandarin Immersion Programmes Persist in American Schools Despite High-Level US-China Tensions," SCMP, Dec. 27, 2023.

84 Timothy Grose, *Negotiating Inseparability in China: The Xinjiang Class and the Dynamics of Uyghur Identity* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2019): 20.

In the school where there were 6–9 Xinjiang students in every class of 60, making them quite visible, 86.59% of local students had a positive opinion of them. The concentration of Xinjiang students did not cause inter-group conflict or tension; instead, there was a "positive effect of visibility in granting more negotiating power for minority students in interethnic interactions and generating more positive perception among local Han students for their local peers."[85] A study found that most accepted students' parents took pride in their child's admission, as "the students are generally seen as the hope for many families to acquire higher social and economic status."[86]

Minority students in Xinjiang classes outside the region are not penalized for using minority languages outside class. They often do so.[87] They also acquire a stronger sense of identification with Xinjiang while in the schools.[88] University of Melbourne researchers further found that

> in the name of ethnic integration and security, the school required non-Uyghur and non-Muslim students to unconditionally adapt to Uyghur and Muslim living habits and customs, but not vice versa. For instance, Han students from Xinjiang were not allowed to eat non-halal food in the shared space with Muslim students. As a Han Xinjiangban [Xinjiang class] student argued, "Instead of Han-isation [汉化 *hanhua*] of them [ethnic minority students], I think I am now being ethnicised [民族化 *minzu hua*].[89]

In 2024, a Turkish news source even claimed a conspiracy in which "China is teaching ethnic Chinese people the Uyghur language and settling them in Xinjiang."[90] Of course, officials from elsewhere in China seconded to southern Xinjiang might need Uyghur language instruction.

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85 Yuan Zhenjie and Yang Miaoyan, "Student Ratio Matters: Policy Implementation, Ethnic Visibility and the Effect on Student Interaction in China's Relocated Boarding Schools," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 66:3 (2023): 326–353.

86 Yuan Zhenjie and Zhu Hong, "Uyghur Educational Elites in China: Mobility and Subjectivity Uncertainty on a Life-Transforming Journey," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47:3 (2021): 536–556.

87 Su Xin, "Becoming Familiar Strangers: An Exploration of Inland Boarding School Education on Cultural Wellbeing of Minority Students from Xinjiang Province," *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education* 28:2 (2018): 1–12.

88 Yuan Zhenjie, "The Daily Politics of Inter-Ethnic Mingling in the Xinjiangban," ASR 43:1 (2019): 36–55.

89 Yuan Zhenjie, "Is the Xinjiangban an Effective Antidote to Ethnic Conflict?" Centre for Contemporary Chinese Study, University of Melbourne, Research Brief No. 11 (2017).

90 "Report Says China Teaching Ethnic Chinese People Uyghur Language," BBC Monitoring, Feb. 1, 2024.

4 Boarding Schools: All-China and Xinjiang

By late 2016, the number of boarding students in China's rural towns and villages in China was 26.08 million or 27.5% of the total number of students in rural areas. There were 16.66 million rural junior middle school boarding students for a boarding rate of 58.6%.[91] Most students in rural boarding schools are Han.[92] As of 2017, half of China's secondary students and about 12% of the primary students in rural China boarded.[93] The proportion is bound to increase as China's birthrate falls, including in rural areas because many village schools will close and students will either commute long distances or board.[94]

Hundreds of thousands of Chinese rural schools have already closed. In 1987, there were 897,406 Chinese primary schools; by 2014, there were only 201,377. Rural primary schools dropped from 743,975 to 128,703. Chinese primary students decreased from 128.4 million to 94.5 million, with rural primary students diminishing from 104.6 million to 30.5 million.[95] In 2000–2016, 386,500 compulsory schools (primary and secondary) were closed; 92.36% of them were rural schools. School closures were due to falling birth rates and outmigration that depopulated the countryside. Since then, urban and rural school closure rates have intensified due to China's sharp birthrate drop. China's Law on Compulsory Education requires county governments to set up boarding schools to ensure all children have nine years of education.[96]

Scholars in Shanghai have put it that "To provide educational opportunities for rural children in recent decades, the Chinese government has aimed to establish at least one (sometimes several) boarding middle schools in each administrative township. In the case of remote farms or ranches, even boarding elementary schools were established."[97] The study argues that negative effects of school closures can largely be overcome by creating boarding schools. The only remaining

91 Yang Zekun, "Boarding Schools in Tibet 'Optimal Choice' for Students," CD, Aug. 16, 2023.

92 See, e.g., Mette Halskov Hansen, *Educating the Chinese Individual: Life in a Rural Boarding School* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

93 "China's Grim Rural Boarding Schools," *The Economist*, Apr. 12, 2017.

94 Dang Yuanyue, "China's Urban-Rural Gap is a Threat to Growth. Is the Divide Too Wide to Fix?" SCMP, Aug. 27, 2024.

95 Tobias Haepp and Lyu Lidan, "The Impact of Primary School Investment Reallocation on Educational Attainment in Rural Areas of the People's Republic of China," *Journal of Asia Pacific Economy* 23:4 (2018): 606–627.

96 Wu Zhihui, "Path and the Standards of Rural School Consolidation in China Since 2000," *Handbook of Educational Policy Studies* (Berlin: Springer, 2020): 3–33; Shen Yijing, "Birth Rate Woes Hit China Where Schools are Closing for Lack of Children," SCMP, Aug. 2, 2024.

97 Wang Zhen and Ye Feng, "Don't Tar China with West's School Abuses," China-US Focus, Aug. 26, 2022, www.chinausfocus.com/society-culture/dont-tar-china-with-wests-school-abuses.

negative effect associated with switching to a boarding school is on primary school completion. That can likely be overcome as well, because school closures are much less likely now than they were at the time of the survey, as many old schools have already closed and new schools have replaced them. Moreover, completion of both primary and middle school is now mandatory. That requirement is largely enforced in minority areas. In Xinjiang, the primary school enrolment rate was 99.85% and the "retention rate of nine-year compulsory education hit 95.69%; gross enrollment rate of high schools stood at 98.87%."[98]

For students who stay in a boarding school in primary school and through middle school then, the experience is a functional educational benefit equal to attending a non-boarding school close to home. A 2024 study also found that the effect of school consolidations in China was to reduce out-migration, as boarding schools create opportunities for parents to become entrepreneurs and employers because boarders' parents can devote more time to building businesses.[99] Attending a boarding school is advantageous for students from low socio-economic families or rural areas in terms of learning reading and mathematics. A 2020 study found that in China "Boarding school can substantially improve performance on math and verbal achievement tests" and that "Left-behind boy boarders do not suffer from the same negative effects on mental well-being as those with both parents at home," while "Boarding school can substantially improve performance on math and verbal achievement tests."[100] Another 2020 study found that

> students from low-SES families or rural areas tend to board at schools. Boarding students performed better than day students in 8th-grade mathematics tests. Among students with essential needs, those residing at school during the week significantly benefited in their school performance in both subjects. Overall, it appears that governmental investment in boarding programs can, to some extent, compensate for some family disadvantages.[101]

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98 Wang and Ye, Don't Tar; "Xinjiang Works Vigorously to Protect Right to Education for People of All Ethnic Groups," GT, Aug. 25, 2023; "Xizang Details Progress in Education," CD, Apr. 18, 2024.

99 Zhao Yu, et al, "The Long-Term Influence of Education Resources Allocation on the Migration: Evidence From China's Rural School Consolidation Policy," *Journal of Asian Economics* 91 (2024): 1–16, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1049007824000058.

100 Liu Mengqi and Kira M. Villa, "Solution or Isolation: Is Boarding School a Good Solution for Left-Behind Children in Rural China?" *China Economic Review* 61 (2020).

101 Tan Minda and Katarina Bodovski, "Compensating for Family Disadvantage: An Analysis of the Effects of Boarding School on Chinese Students' Academic Achievement," *Forum for International Research in Education* 6:3 (2020): 36–57.

Global media widely reported a 2023 report about education in Tibet by three UN-appointed special rapporteurs, from France, Greece, and Pakistan. All are unpaid volunteers, not UN employees. Many special rapporteurs are financed by governments, especially the US and European states. Asked about the influence such donations have

> Vernor Muñoz, for example, recognized that 'this is the most difficult implication of having resources from external sources – [the contributors may] require you to follow certain agendas or [pursue] certain interests.' Another expert, Gabor Rona, explained that individual States' financial contributions to individual mandates 'are valuable and necessary to the health of the Special Procedures system, but they [can] create the appearance, if not the fact, of undue influence.' Richard Falk went further, declaring that direct funding 'can have a corrupting effect.'[102]

The special rapporteurs did not indicate a visit to Tibet. It is unclear whether their report contains any original research or merely replicates the claims of Tibetan émigré groups, especially a 2021 report by the Canada-based émigré Tibet Action Institute that is mainly informed by testimonials of émigrés and ignores contradicting evidence about the nature of boarding schools.[103] Some months after elaborating a negative narrative about boarding schools in Tibet, the same special rapporteurs created the same narrative about boarding schools in Xinjiang. The announcement of their report on that topic strongly implied that they had been "informed" about the schools and had done no original research.[104]

The special rapporteurs did not reveal who their informants were. That makes it likely that the informants were Uyghur émigré "advocacy" organizations. That has been the pattern with UN-related bodies: in 2023, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that the "coerced boarding school system" was part of an "assimilation policy." That conclusion appears to be based on acceptance of a submission by the Tibet

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102 Gregor Puppnick, "Boosting the Financial Transparency of UN Special Procedures," Universal Human Rights Group, Sept. 10, 2021, www.universal-rights.org/boosting-the-financial-transparency-of-un-special-procedures/.

103 "Separated from Their Families, Hidden from the World: China's Vast System of Colonial Boarding Schools Inside Tibet," Tibet Action Institute, 2021, https://s7712.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2021_TAI_ColonialBoardingSchoolReport_Digital.pdf.

104 "China: Xinjiang's Forced Separations and Language Policies for Uyghur Children Carry Risk of Forced Assimilation, Say UN Experts," OHCHR, Sept. 26, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/china-xinjiangs-forced-separations-and-language-policies-uyghur-children.

Advocacy Coalition, "a project established in 2013 by International Tibet Network, Tibet Justice Center and Students for a Free Tibet that provides information to UN Missions in Geneva, encouraging strong monitoring of the human rights situation in Tibet via the UN mechanisms available e.g. Universal Periodic Review, Committee for Economic, Social, Culture and Economic Rights."[105] Groups in the Tibet Advocacy Coalition, such as Students for a Free Tibet, are connected to the US government, particularly through the NED.[106]

Xinjiang in 2019 had "12,757 schools for basic education, with 5.89 million students and 484,000 faculty members."[107]Apparently then, boarding schools are a minority of the region's educational institutions, as in Xinjiang's 800 townships, there are "nearly 400 boarding primary and secondary schools." All charge no tuition and provide free textbooks, clothes and psychological counseling. In 2017, Xinjiang boarding schools had an enrolment of 497,800.[108] While rural Tibet and Xinjiang boarding schools are free, that is not necessarily so in rural areas of China that are mainly Han. As a study of why students drop out of school in rural China has noted, "If there is not a local school, a student's only option may be to attend a boarding school in an area farther from home where boarding costs are too expensive for families to sustain."[109]

Xinjiang's minority population is five times that of the Tibet Autonomous Region, while the number of boarding students in Xinjiang is only marginally higher than those in the TAR. The rate of boarding in Xinjiang appears to be about 10%, half the national rate. Even if the rate of minority students boarding in Xinjiang is twice that for Han, Byler's claim that the Xinjiang boarding schools have a larger scale and are more systematic than those of Native residential schools in the US is wrong, as some 25–35% of Native children attended those schools.[110]

That there were many deaths in North American residential schools, but none reported for Xinjiang is likely because the US and Canadian governments promoted a racist ideology against Native peoples. In Canada, the government "portray[ed Native peoples] negatively. School textbooks, and mainstream

105 "Every Tibetan Has Equal Rights," 2023, https://tibetadvocacy.org/.

106 "Students for a Free Tibet," Devex, 2025, www.devex.com/organizations/students-for-a-free-tibet-212426.

107 "Officials Discuss State of Education in Xinjiang at Press Conference," CGTN, Jan. 21, 2020.

108 Boarding Education in Xinjiang; Amy Qin, "In China's Crackdown on Muslims, Children Have Not Been Spared," NYT, Dec. 28, 2019.

109 Mollie Brady, "Elevated Dropout Rate in Rural China," Ballard Brief, Summer 2020, https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/elevated-school-dropout-rates-in-rural-china.

110 Qin, In China's Crackdown; Glaser, The Brutal Past.

scholarship and political discourse, all spoke with one voice in supporting that invidious portrayal."[111] The Chinese government, in contrast, promotes the view that all ethnic groups in China are equal and together comprise the Chinese nation.[112]

Many Xinjiang boarding schools have substantial Uyghur staff,[113] while Native schools were staffed by whites. Byler's implication is that Xinjiang boarding schools are *worse* than were US Native residential schools. That in all respects conditions at North American residential schools for indigenous students were very significantly worse than those in Xinjiang boarding schools exemplifies the anti-Chinese racism of Western narratives of Xinjiang. So too does the unevidenced implication, presented in the *New York Times* article quoting Byler, that Uyghur boarding students are especially depressed about their lot.

By late 2018, boarders were 12.9% of Xinjiang primary school pupils and 44.7% percent of junior middle school students, "roughly the same as the national average." Nationally in 2020, 10.14% of primary school students and 46.83% of junior middle school students were boarders. As far back as 2011 however, a study by a Hong Kong Institute of Education researcher found that in such minority areas as Guangxi, Tibet and Yunnan over 20% primary school students and over 70% of secondary school students were boarders.[114]

Boarding schools in Xinjiang pre-date the push in 2017–2021 to enforce birth limitations and the existence of the VETCs. The upsurge in building them began at least as early as 2015, with several large new schools with mainly Uyghur students opening in Kashgar.[115] Far from involving forced enrollment, many Uyghurs parents want their children to attend schools in which Mandarin is the language of instruction. China-specialized US diplomat Chas Freeman has recounted discussions with Uyghur parents:

> 'Well, why are you sending your kid to a Chinese medium elementary school or nursery school?' And they'd say, 'Well, it's very simple. You

111 Eamonn Callan and Dylan Arena, "Indoctrination," *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 104–121 (112).

112 Giulia Cabras and Sam Tynen, "Visual Propaganda in Northwest China: Exploring Cultural Representations," *Central Asian Survey* (2025): 1–25.

113 Grose, Negotiating Inseparability.

114 Zhao Zhenzhuo, "A Matter of Money? Policy Analysis of Rural Boarding Schools in China," *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. 6:3 (2011): 237–249.

115 Adam Jones, "China's Approach to Countering Religious Extremism Among Uyghurs in Xinjiang," in Catherine Owen, et al., *Interrogating Illiberal Peace in Eurasia: Critical Perspectives on Peace and Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018): 55–72 (67).

> know, if my kid goes to the Chinese school, he or she will start English in the third grade. And now, he or she could be a petroleum engineer or some other member of the scientific elite in the country as a whole. But if I send my kid to a Xinjiang language medium school, they'll start Chinese in the third grade, starting English in the seventh grade, and they'll end up selling pots in the market'.[116]

Even journalists for a China-hostile US newspaper recognized, with respect to boarding schools in Tibet, where the schools are free for nomadic and farming families and are generally like those in Xinjiang, that

> The government schools appeal to many Tibetan parents. Their children can study math and science, subjects that open a path to jobs in civil service or other sectors that pay better than farming or herding. Many of the schools are newly built with desktop computers, digital blackboards and sports fields.[117]

Employment opportunities for monolingual Uyghurs who migrate outside Xinjiang are highly constricted. A study of Uyghurs outside the region, mainly based on interviews in Beijing from 2007–2009 noted that "Given the difficulties which many Floating Uyghurs have with speaking the Chinese language, it has become extremely hard for Uyghurs, especially those who have received limited education, to find employment in China Proper."[118]

US media claim that boarding schools inside Xinjiang separate ethnic minority children from their communities.[119] The schools are locally-embedded however. A decade ago, Xinjiang authorities embarked on reopening or building new schools in remote areas of Xinjiang. They did so to enable students to attend nearby schools, rather than go to boarding schools, as in the rest of the country, because they found that many rural minority students would otherwise drop out of school. At the same time more boarding schools were to be built where there were many left-behind children of migrant worker

116 Aaron Mate, "Veteran US Diplomat Chas Freeman on US vs. China," Greyzone, Dec. 25, 2020, https://thegrayzone.com/2020/12/25/veteran-diplomat-us-confronts-china-to-protect-supremacy-not-security/.

117 Chin and Madhana, China Steals.

118 M. Rayila, "The Pain of a Nation: The Invisibility of Uyghurs in China Proper," *Equal Rights Review* 6 (2011): 44–57.

119 Qin, In China's Crackdown.

parents, where bilingual education was weak, or where children of different ethnicities could study together as a result.[120] A 2023 study observed that

> In order to improve the utilization efficiency of education finance, a large number of small-scale schools and teaching points in rural areas have been removed and merged, which has led to adverse consequences such as the increase of distance between rural students and school. Therefore, the state has invested special funds to implement the construction project of boarding schools, which has promoted the rapid development of rural boarding schools.[121]

For example, students from nine villages in the Karakoram mountains' Xihexiu Township, Yecheng County, Kashgar, attend the county seat's boarding school. They are bussed to school in the fall by a winding 127 km road, returning home at New Years and for summer break.[122]

Middle schools under the Xinjiang Class program are the region's elite boarding schools. In place since 2004 and with 30 schools in 13 cities, they have highly competitive admission through exams and grades and enrolled 10,600 students in the 2016–2017 school year. The schools are required to have a 90% ethnic minority student body, most from remote and poor areas. All fees, accommodations, food and supplies are free. Some 98% of graduates are said to go on to senior high schools and universities in China's major cities. For example, no. 66 middle school in Urumqi, with 3,400 students in 2017, had students of 13 ethnicities, drawn from throughout the region. Instruction is in Putonghua, Uyghur and English. Parents are allowed to visit regularly and students can call home every night.[123] In Kashgar Prefecture in 2020, Education Bureau head Aniwar Abulimit stated that

> We provide subjects on ethnic languages in primary and middle schools, and teach Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongol, Xibe and so on, thus protecting the rights of students from ethnic groups to learn their own languages

120 "Xinjiang to Re-open Schools in Remote Countryside," Xinhua, Mar. 31, 2012.

121 Yang, Boarding Schools.

122 "A Lesson in Determination," CD, Mar. 9, 2024.

123 Han Jie, "The School Program Exposing Students in China's Remote Xinjiang to a Wider World," CGTN, May 12, 2017, https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d59444f7a677a4d/share_p.html; Li Xiaoyu, "Empowerment Through Education," *ChinAfrica* no. 9, July 9, 2017, www.chinafrica.cn/China/201707/t20170703_800099458.html.

> and effectively promoting the inheritance and development of ethnic minority languages and cultures.[124]

One reason the Xinjiang Schools program and other boarding schools are needed is because "although southern Xinjiang is catching up with northern Xinjiang in terms of hardware, such as school construction with state assistance, southern Xinjiang is always behind northern Xinjiang in terms of human resources." Putonghua mastery also varies greatly between some areas with a significant minority concentration, such as Ili and Turpan, and overwhelmingly minority areas, in southern Xinjiang. While the north-south gap in teacher quality is gradually narrowing, "the quality of talent is significantly better in Urumqi or Karamay than in Kashgar and Hotan," with teachers in northern Xinjiang often graduates of top universities and having advanced degrees, while this is much less the case in southern Xinjiang.[125] A 2023 study observed that

> The treatment and status of teachers in southern Xinjiang are generally lower than those in other areas of Xinjiang … and it is difficult for excellent teachers to persist for a long time. Xinjiang's long-term brain drain has seriously affected the development of education. According to incomplete statistics, Xinjiang has lost nearly 200,000 talents since 2000.[126]

In part, the higher-than average enrollment of boarders in minority areas is due to greater than average educational challenges; for example, 2016 data showed 7.33% of Chinese six years and above had not even attended primary school, but the figure for minorities was 11.23%. Moreover, while junior middle schools in China have the largest proportion of the country's students, for ethnic minorities it is primary schools. That indicates dropouts are more prevalent among minorities than among all of China's students. Inter-related socio-economic conditions and educational barriers create that outcome, for

124 Mao Weihua and Cui Jia, "Xinjiang Denies 'Forced Boarding' of Students," CD, Jan. 17, 2020.

125 Han Tao, et al, "Spatial Equity of Basic Education Resources and Coordinated Regional Development in Xinjiang, China," *Chinese Geographical Science* 33 (2023): 441–457.

126 Wu Fangyuan, et al, "The Practice of Educational Integration in Promoting Ethnic Integration in Southern Xinjiang," *Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences* 2:1 (2023): 44–49.

example, poverty, rurality, remoteness, an acute shortage of qualified teachers, underdeveloped transport, and a low-level of bilingualism.[127]

Chinese boarding schools are often related to left-behind children (LBC) whose parents have migrated for work. A 2023 study determined that low-income family students were among those more likely to benefit from boarding.[128] A 2024 study found "the participation rate for boarding schools is more than two times higher for LBC in comparison to non-LBC," as "Boarding schools offer a stable living environment with dedicated staff to care for and supervise students, providing an improved learning environment, especially for LBC."[129] A study by China Tibetology Center researcher Yang Tao "found that there is no direct correlation between the proportion of students' ethnic groups and the rate of boarding in primary and high schools. Nationwide, areas with higher urbanization rates and better economic performance have lower boarding rates."[130] That means boarding is not directly ethnicized and can be expected to decrease in Xinjiang and other minority areas as they become wealthier and more urban.

As of 2020, "up to 80% of rural children are still under the custody of other generations or temporary custody of relatives and friends." Boarding schools guarantee school attendance under such circumstances and allow rural communities to deal with the acute shortage of teachers and rural schools' low and diminishing financial viability compared to urban schools. Thus, in 2018, Xinjiang brought in 90,000 new teachers, equal to one-fourth of the existing corps of teachers. Chinese media insist however that boarding is voluntary and that boarders have telephone access to parents during the week and can go home on weekends, leaving on Friday afternoon and returning on Monday morning, as well as on holidays.[131] China's ambassador to the UK has also noted that "parents could see their children at any time" when they were at school.[132]

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127 Xue Eryong and Li Jian, *Childhood Education Policy in China: Problems and Strategies* (Berlin: Springer, 2022): 81; Xinjiang Population Dynamics.

128 Li Yunsen, et al, "School Boarding and Students' Prosocial Behaviors: Evidence from Rural China," *China and World Economy* 31:3 (2023): 115–139.

129 Yao Mengzhu, "Both Parents Migrating and Left-Behind Children's Cognitive Ability in Rural China: Does It Pay?" *Front Public Health* 12 (2024), www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11061458/.

130 Yang Boarding Schools.

131 Xue and Li, Childhood Education: 115–117, 127; "Local Ethnic Minorities Debunk Claims of Forced Boarding School Enrollment in Xinjiang," CGTN, July 12, 2021; Qin, In China's Crackdown; Officials Discuss.

132 新疆再教育营：中国驻英国大使刘晓明否认强　行拆散穆斯林家庭 (Xinjiang re-education camps: Chinese ambassador to Britain denies forcibly breaking up Muslim families), BBC, July 19, 2020, www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-48906806.

A Xinjiang official has pointed out that "In boarding schools, there are both boarding and day students, and the choice of whether or not to board is entirely voluntary on the part of the students and their parents, and there is no such thing as forced boarding."[133] Darren Byler has asserted however that "Nearly half a million Muslim children were sent to Chinese-medium non-Muslim residential boarding schools," implying that children from Muslim households must receive an ethnically-segregated religiously-based education[134] and that having Xinjiang minority children in boarding schools that have some Han teachers amounts to "enacting a forcible transfer of the children of one ethnicity to another," a clear exemplification of how much claims of Xinjiang genocide relies on racialized imaginings.[135]

Officials in Xinjiang have advanced elaborate explanations of how and why boarding schools function. They point out that Xinjiang's vast size means that distances between many settled areas are great, making commuting difficult, especially in rural areas, that those who live near a school can commute, but that if they need to be boarders they will be provided with free accommodation and, if they are rural, free meals. For example, at the Xuesong Middle School in Aketao County, Kezilesu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture, there are 1,800 boarders; all receive free accommodations. Even students from pasturing areas as far away as 400 km are brought home by government buses for the summer and winter holidays. The decision to live on or off campus is, however, made by parents and students who live not so far from the school can go home on weekends, holidays and school breaks. Schools provide mother tongue language courses for Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, Kirghiz and Xibe students.[136] The academic literature substantially accords with this description and promoters of the genocide claim present no counter-description, but merely imply that boarding is state-mandated, for the purpose of cultural extinction, by forbidding minority languages and religious practices.[137]

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133 "强制绝育" "代际隔离" ？新疆官员揭露抹黑谣言," ("Forced sterilization" and "intergenerational segregation?" Xinjiang officials expose smear rumors), 中国新闻网 Jan. 12, 2021, http://news.cnwest.com/szyw/a/2021/01/12/19429946.html.

134 Ashley Smith, "US Corporations Are Complicit in the Repression of Uyghurs," Truthout, Jan. 17, 2023, https://truthout.org/articles/us-corporations-are-complicit-in-the-repression-of-uyghurs/.

135 Darren Byler, "Eliminate All Illegal Births: Negative Eugenics and Uyghur Women as Objects of Contestation," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 12:3 (2022): 367–371 (370).

136 23rd Press Conference; Xinjiang Population Dynamics; Officials Discuss; "Xinjiang Gets Education Boost," CD, Feb. 17, 2024.

137 "Han Teachers in Xinjiang: Save Uyghur Children!," Bitter Winter, Sept. 10, 2019, https://bitterwinter.org/han-teachers-in-xinjiang-save-uyghur-children/.

No actual reports exist of Xinjiang boarding students being forbidden to converse in their mother tongues. Organized religious practices within state schools are not sanctioned. The same was true in the VETCs.[138] Whether private prayer in boarding schools is permitted is disputed. Xinjiang Muslims, whether devout or not, celebrate holidays that have an Islamic origin, so these may be marked in boarding schools. Indeed, CCP members throughout the region participated in the July 2022 celebration of Eid al-Adha (Qurban Eid or the "Feast of Sacrifice").[139] At the same time, the "East Turkestan Government in Exile" (ETGE) claimed that "no body was able to go" to Muslim religious activities in Xinjiang.[140] Urumqi's mosques were observed to be full at Qurban in 2023.

Secondary schools for Xinjiang students outside Xinjiang (内地民族班; 新疆班 *Xinjiangban*) have existed since 2000. Uyghurs are about 70%, Kazakhs 15%, Han 10%, and Hui, Kyrgyz and Tajiks the remainder. About 60% of students come from southern Xinjiang and almost 80% were from farming and nomad families in 2017.[141] A survey then of 320 recent secondary school graduates preparing for university at a boarding school for minorities included students who were disproportionately from Xinjiang. Some 79% thought the experience strengthened their ethnic identity.[142] Other studies have found the same strengthened identity among Xinjiang students boarding outside the region.[143]

A study has found that "Contrary to the intuitive view that minority students hold negative feelings towards state-led education in the *Xinjiangban*, we find that most ethnic minority students have open-minded attitude not only to the imparting of knowledge indifferent to ethnic differences but also to the rhetoric of patriotism and ethnic integration." Contrary also to another "intuitive" view, the researchers found that "the *Xinjiangban* students' ethnic

138 "Remarks on the Religion-Related Issues in Xinjiang," Xinjiang Government Information Office, Dec. 10, 2020, http://jeddah.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zt/xjfk/202012/t20201213_5538578.htm.

139 "Chinese Use Muslim Holiday for Propaganda Purposes, Celebrating with Uyghurs," Radio Free Asia (RFA), July 11, 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/muslim-holiday-07112022192541.html.

140 John Burger, "China Continues its Genocide of Uyghurs, Says Defector from Xinjiang" [Interview Mamtimin Ala], *Aleteia,* Mar. 5, 2022, https://aleteia.org/2022/03/05/china-continues-its-genocide-of-uyghurs-says-defector-from-xinjiang.

141 Leibold, Interior Ethnic Minority; Yuan Zhenjie, et al, "The Xinjiang Class: Multi-Ethnic Encounters in an Eastern Coastal City," CQ 232 (2017): 1094–1115.

142 Liu Xiaoxu, "Ethnic Minority Students' Access, Participation and Outcomes in Preparatory Classes in China: a Case Study of a School of Minzu Education," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* (2021).

143 Grose, Negotiating; Chen, Muslim Uyghur Students.

identities are very much alive and tangible in their everyday routines and practices." Moreover, minority students found that the level of indoctrination in patriotism in their inland boarding school is significantly less than what they had experienced in Xinjiang, while local Han students with whom minority students interact familiarized themselves with minority culture, causing minority students to have positive attitudes about inter-ethnic interactions. Religious practices must be carried out covertly, in contravention to regulations, but students have private telephonic access to religious texts.[144]

A 2016 survey of 570 Xinjiang students at a boarding secondary school in south China, more than 50% of them Uyghur and 20% Han, found that students' ethnic commitment negatively impacted their national commitment, but did make them want to know more about China.[145] Uyghur students were able to assert their Uyghurness and were dominant in the Student Union.[146] Although Uyghur students do absorb some elements of Han culture when outside Xinjiang, they re-activate their ethnic commitment when they return to the region.[147] Evidently, the boarding school experience of Xinjiang minorities outside the region does not detach them from their native cultures and communities. It cannot be construed as even "cultural genocide" and also contradicts the assumption that it is "de facto impossible to develop Uyghur culture and draw safely on the culture of the titular [*sic*] nation without harming Uyghur culture."[148]

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144 Yuan Zhenjie, et al, The Xinjiang Class: 1105–1107, 1115.

145 Yuan Zhenjie, et al, "Learning to Succeed? Interplay between Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Students' Perception on Social Mobility in a Xinjiang Class School of China," *Sustainability* 14 (2022): 1–14.

146 Yuan Zhenjie, The Daily Politics.

147 Chan Yangbin, "Uyghur Graduates' Ethnicity in their Dislocated Life Experience: Employment Expectations, Choices and Obstacles," ASR 43:1 (2019): 75–93.

148 Elzbieta Szyszlak, "Cultural Security of Minorities under Threat: The Situation of the Uyghurs in the People's Republic of China," *Scientific Journal of the University of the Land Forces* 53:4 (2023): 719–733.

CHAPTER 4

The Fallback: "May Constitute … Crimes against Humanity" in Xinjiang

> [Xinjiang] is the single most powerful issue that shows a profound fault line of world views, underpinned by different philosophies and values and the way they shape understanding that world.
>
> KERRY BROWN, China specialist, King's College, London[1]

1 Crimes against Humanity and the OHCHR Report of 2022

Recognized genocides have always had large-scale killings and those murders generally have been preceded or accompanied by explicit statements of intent. Even where there is no general consensus that a genocide was committed, but that huge crimes against humanity doubtless occurred, there is often an explicit call to mass murder. Albert Forster, Nazi Gauleiter in Pomerania, addressed a crowd of ethnic Germans in the Polish town of Wejherowo in 1939, soon after its capture. He stated "We have to eliminate the lice ridden Poles, starting with those in the cradle … in your hands I give the fate of the Poles, you can do with them what you want." The crowd responded by chanting "Kill the Polish dogs!" and "Death to the Poles."[2] Forster had another process to destroy the part of the Polish nation in his Gau. He ordered the mass reclassification of its Poles as Germans, which occurred alongside his organizing the murder of about 87,000 inhabitants. It is unlikely that anyone would conceive that the non-exterminatory act of ethnic reclassification could by itself amount to genocide, but taken

1 Kerry Brown, *China Incorporated: the Politics of a World Where China is Number One* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023): 137.

2 Elepha Elżbieta Grot, "Biblioteka Publiczna Gminy Wejherowo im. Aleksandra Labudy w Bolszewie" in "Ludobójstwo w Piaśnicy z uwzględnieniem losów mieszkańców powiatu wejherowskiego." (Genocide in Piaśnica with a discussion of the fate of the inhabitants of Wejherow county Public Library, of Wejherowo nt: 10), cited in "Albert Forster," Wikipedia, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Forster.

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together with the mass killings, the reclassification would likely be deemed a crime against humanity.[3]

A 2024 report from Israeli human rights group B'etselem presents evidence that crimes against humanity have been committed against Palestinians in Israel's custody.

> The testimonies [of Palestinian detainees] clearly indicate a systematic, institutional policy focused on the continual abuse and torture of all Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. [The policy] is applied across all prison facilities and to all Palestinian prisoners. Among its main tenets are unrelenting physical and psychological violence, denial of medical treatment, starvation, withholding of water, sleep deprivation and confiscation of all personal belongings. The overall picture indicates abuse and torture carried out under orders, in utter defiance of Israel's obligations both under domestic law and international law.[4]

B'tselem is not associated with any Palestinian resistance group, nor financed by a state. While perhaps non-Zionist, its stances on Israeli policy are akin to those of mainstream US-based groups, such as Human Rights Watch. It thus has a very different status from the Uyghur émigré groups who put forward a handful of diaspora-based testimonialists. B'tselem's report included testimony of many Palestinians who experienced a wide variety of tortures. A group of UN Special Rapporteurs also issued a statement indicating they received "substantiated reports of widespread abuse, torture, sexual assault and rape, amid atrocious inhumane conditions, with at least 53 Palestinians apparently dying as a result in 10 months."[5]

In 2024, a UN Commission of Inquiry issued a 59-page report on Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack inside Israel, which specified that mass killings and a pattern of sexual violence occurred that amounted to war crimes. It also issued a 126-page report on Israel's activities in Gaza during the first three months of war in Gaza. That report specified that Israeli forces' war crimes involved

3 Christopher Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004): 33.

4 "Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps," B'tSelem: the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Aug. 2024, www.btselem.org/publications/202408_welcome_to_hell.

5 "Israel's Escalating Use of Torture against Palestinians in Custody a Preventable Crime Against Humanity: UN experts," UN Office of the High Commission of Human Rights, Aug. 5, 2024, www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable.

systematic violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack. Appearing before the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and based on reports of the Commission of Inquiry and the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), South African judge, former UN human rights chief, and commission head Navi Pillay indicated Israel alone had also committed crimes against humanity, notably extermination, "due to the immense numbers of civilian casualties in Gaza and widespread destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure [that] were the inevitable result of an intentional strategy to cause maximum damage."[6]

Some Western entities do not endorse "Uyghur genocide" because there is no precedent for a bloodless genocide and no evidence of genocidal acts committed with the intent to destroy a protected group, as such. Those entities may also find it more politically advantageous to charge that crimes against humanity have been committed in Xinjiang, as many people see no acts in Xinjiang that resemble what happened in the Holocaust or Armenian and Rwandan genocides and may take offense at applying "genocide" to Xinjiang because it diminishes the horror of actual genocides. As a US historian of genocide has said, doing so "devalue[es] the crime as merely atrocity propaganda of the kind witnessed in World War I and as a rhetorical device rather than a legal instrument." He was referring to false British claims of German murders, rapes, and cannibalizations of Belgians at the war's outset. Moreover, "Expanding [genocide's] definition or allowing it to become a propaganda device would be detrimental in the future."[7]

Several Western entities suggest China is committing crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, including the US-based, Western-dominated NGO Human Rights Watch and the OHCHR. They do so largely based on Zenz's work at the ultra-right Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC). Thus, in 2024, Andrew Bremberg, VOC President Emeritus, ex-Director of Trump's Domestic Council and his Representative of the US to the European Office of the UN in Geneva, said that files the VOC published in 2022 "were repeatedly referenced and included by the [OHCHR] in its August 31, 2022 report."[8]

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6 "Israel May Have Violated Laws of War in Gaza, UN Rights Office Says," Reuters, June 20, 2024.

7 Beorn, No, Russia; HC Peterson, *Propaganda for War: The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914–1917* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1939).

8 "House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Hearing, "The Chinese Communist Party's Malign Influence at the United Nations – It's Getting Worse"; Testimony by Andrew Bremberg, president emeritus of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation," Congressional Documents and Publications, Apr. 10, 2024.

The 2022 OHCHR report was issued by a UN office "more than 80% of whose staff is made up of people from the United States and other Western countries."[9] Discussion of the report in Western media has almost been entirely about a single sentence: "The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups, pursuant to law and policy, in the context of restrictions and deprivation more generally of fundamental rights enjoyed individually and collectively, may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity."[10] Western NGOs however ignore the standard for determining a crime against humanity – that the criminality is widespread, systematic and intentionally directed.[11] Intentional direction of a crime against humanity means "pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack."[12] There are plenty historical and contemporary instances of actions that fulfill these three criteria; for example, Ku Klux Klan terror during the post-Civil War Reconstruction of the US South in the late 1860s and early 1870s was common, organized, and an intended policy of group leaders.[13]

Those who claim crimes against humanity in Xinjiang also base their allegations almost solely two categories of sources 1) testimonials of Uyghur émigrés who were likely mobilized by separatist groups outside China and who make highly implausible claims – for example of the universality of forced sterilization of Uyghur women; and 2) skewed collections of documents assembled by monomaniacal anti-China figures that exclude any analysis that counters the Uyghur émigré narrative. There is no hint that the testimonials were at all subjected to cross-examination or that the assembled documents were subjected to critical scrutiny. These sources would be disregarded as inadmissible in any case alleging serious human rights violations.

2 Not Arbitrary, Not Detention

The crimes against humanity that have been alleged for Xinjiang are first and foremost connected to arbitrary detention, plus acts alleged to have been

9 "OHCHR Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China," Office of the High Commissioner, Aug. 31, 2022: 34, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ohchr-assessment-human-rights-concerns-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region/.

10 OHCHR Assessment: 44.

11 Belarus Report.

12 Rome Statute Art. 7.

13 Fergus M. Bordewich, *Klan War: Ulysses S. Grant and the Battle to Save Reconstruction* (New York, Knopf, 2023).

committed in places of detention. There was a huge spike in initiated prosecutions – for all offenses – in Xinjiang in 2017, rising from around 45,000 in 2016 to over 215,823 in 2017. The extent to which prosecutions were arbitrary is unclear, however, as it should be assumed that most prosecutions were for plausible offenses, unless proof of the contrary is made, beyond a reasonable doubt. In 2018, there were 135,546 prosecutions; in 2019, 96,596; in 2020, 48,258; in 2021, 44,603 and in 2022, 37,819.[14] Many initiated prosecutions may have been initiated for terrorism, religious extremism, sedition, secessionism, etc., but in the whole of China in 2018–2022 there were only 1,400 completed prosecutions for "national security offenses."[15] Many prosecutions may have been initiated, but then terminated, with the accusation dismissed or the accused assigned to a VETC.

International law does not prohibit prosecutions for advocating secession or other offenses that endanger sovereignty. Many countries have relevant laws. Under Sec. 152 of the Indian Justice Code (*Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita*), effective from July 2024,

> Whoever, purposely or knowingly … excites or attempts to excite secession or armed rebellion or subversive activities, or encourages feelings of separatist activities or endangers the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India; or indulges in or commits any such act shall be punished with imprisonment for life or with imprisonment which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

The "example scenario" for Section 152 is: "If an individual uses electronic communication to incite separatist activities or rebellion against India, they could be charged under BNS Section 152 and face life imprisonment or imprisonment for up to seven years, as well as a fine."[16]

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14 "Xinjiang Official Figures Reveal Higher Prisoner Count," HRW, Sept. 14, 2022, www.hrw.org/node/382830; Beth Van Schaack, "Opening Remarks for Uyghur Side Event During UNGA High Level Week, Hosted by the Atlantic Council, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch," US State Dept., Sept. 19, 2023, www.state.gov/opening-remarks-for-uyghur-side-event/; Ben Cardus and Peter Irwin, "UHRP Analysis Finds One in 26 Uyghurs Imprisoned in Region with World's Highest Prison Rate," UHRP, Apr. 25, 2024, https://uhrp.org/insights/uhrp-analysis-finds-1-in-26-uyghurs-imprisoned-in-region-with-worlds-highest-prison-rate/.

15 Helen Davidson and Amy Hopkins, "Number of People Prosecuted in China's Courts Up 12% in Five Years, Report Shows," *Guardian*, May 29, 2023.

16 "What Is BNS Section 152?" Law4U, Sept. 16, 2024, https://law4u.in/top-answer/335/what-is-bns-section-152#:~:text=A1%3A%20BNS%20Section%20152%20criminalizes,unity%2C%20and%20integrity%20of%20India.

While 2017–2019 were years of intensified suppression of crimes in Xinjiang, there followed a return to an earlier level, in 2021–2022, indicating a new "normality." Indeed, in 2024, China's top security official Chen Wenqing underscored that China had no terrorist attacks in more than seven years and that there should be a "normalization of counter-terrorism."[17]

A May 2022 Western "community of scholars" missive sought to influence the OHCHR, which was then writing the non-binding report on Xinjiang that issued on the day High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet left office, August 31, 2022. The OHCHR report is alleged to be mainly based on a bibliography compiled for the US government-sponsored Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) by Magnus Fiskesjo, a former Swedish diplomat and obsessively anti-China anthropologist at the US's Cornell University.[18]

The OHCHR's one and only – but constantly referenced in Western media – allusion to possible crimes against humanity is about detention and not genocide, settler colonialism, forced labor, etc., none of which are mentioned in the report. The question that can be framed from this statement is whether there has been widespread and systematic arbitrary detention, raising issues of what constitutes arbitrariness and detention. The OHCHR report stated that "deprivations of liberty in residential facilities appear to have been without any apparent legal basis for a considerable period." The report assumes VETCS were places of detention, though they mainly involved vocational and political/legal educational and many attendees were allowed weekends at home,[19] hardly characteristics of places of detention. It also does not recognize the evident non-arbitrary basis of the many assignments to VETCS of persons found to have violated a law. Even vocal proponents of the "Uyghur genocide" trope, such as Zenz and the director of research at the US-based UHRP Henry Szadzieweki acknowledge that the VETCS's "mass re-education" was a strategy that the Chinese government chose as an alternative to the "West bombs

17 Dang Yuanyue, "Normalize Anti-terror Measures," SCMP, May 28, 2024.

18 William Ging Wee Dere, "Prominent Canadian YouTuber Slandered by Xinjiang Victims Database," Canada Files, Jan. 18, 2023, www.thecanadafiles.com/articles/prominent-canadian-youtuber-slandered-by-xinjiang-victims-database; "Bibliography," UHRP, 2023, https://uhrp.org/bibliography/; Magnus Fiskesjo, "How Beijing is Using the Nazi Propaganda Playbook to Justify its Concentration Camps to the World," HKFP, Oct. 27, 2018, https://hongkongfp.com/2018/10/27/beijing-using-nazi-propaganda-playbook-justify-concentration-camps-world/.

19 阿不都热克甫·吐木尼牙孜, "没有教培中心就没有新疆的安稳日子," (Without the Education and Training Centers, there would be no peaceful days in Xinjiang), 新疆日报, Dec. 5, 2019.

Muslims" approach to counter-terrorism.[20] The VETCs were thus not a crime against humanity, even if their main purpose was "political reeducation."

Actions in Xinjiang against advocacy of secession, religious extremism, etc. are decried in the West as resulting in arbitrary detention and that has played a role in the imposition of sanctions. Arbitrary restrictions on speech elsewhere are often ignored, however. No sanctions are applied against Thailand, for example, although insulting the Thai king (*lese-majeste*) is an offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Since 2020, more than 270 people have been punished under the law, "many of them handed long consecutive sentences by the courts." In 2024, a 50-year sentence was given for post on a personal Facebook account; a leading human rights campaigner was also given two-years.[21] The US however maintains strong relations with Thai governments, in large measure as a counter to China.[22]

Xinjiang is moreover not the only place where people who commit non-serious crimes may be penalized without trial. In other countries as well, a person may be charged with a crime and agree to incarceration to avoid a heavier sentence resulting from a loss at trial. Assignment to a VETC in Xinjiang generally was in place of filing a criminal charge or going forward with a prosecution. In China, as elsewhere, a criminal record may give rise to continued monitoring, post-incarceration employment discrimination, denial of access to social media and other disabilities.[23] Conviction for a political crime is especially consequent for Uyghurs, as such crimes may be assimilated to separatism.[24] In China,

> violations of law that might be minor crimes in other legal systems are often considered non-criminal, administrative violations. Penalties for such violations, including up to 15 days detention, can be given directly by the police without a court trial … The Counter-terrorism Law authorizes between 10–15 days detention, along with a Y10,000 fine, for minor illegal

20 James Griffiths, "Ten Years on From Kunming Attack, Terror Threat Has Receded but Crackdown on Muslims Continues Unabated," *Globe and Mail*, Feb. 29, 2024.

21 "UN Experts Urge Thailand to Ditch Royal Defamation Laws," AFP, Jan. 30, 2025.

22 P. Mike Rattanasengchanh "Security or Democracy?: U.S.-Thai Relations in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries," *Pacific Historical Review* 93:4 (2024): 601–625.

23 Bu Yiting, "Re-employment of Ex-offenders in China: Research on Employment Discrimination and the System of Elimination of Criminal Record," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 631 (2022), www.atlantis-press.com/article/125968491.pdf.

24 Christoph Valentin Steinert, "The Duration of Political Imprisonment: Evidence from China," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 40:4 (2023): 349–372.

> conduct that doesn't rise to the level of a 'crime.' This includes knowingly hiding terrorists, driving away people of other religions and ethnicities, inciting people to deface currency or identity documents, and so forth. The Xinjiang Implementation regulations expand this list to include possession of various 'extremist' material and even encouraging minors to participate in religious activities, and more.[25]

Article 33 of the Decision of 10 October 2018 to revise the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region regulation on de-radicalization made the VETCs a primary locus for de-radicalization. The 2019 White Paper on Vocational Education and Training indicated that placement in the VETCs would be the substitute for criminal conviction and imprisonment of

1. People who were incited, coerced or induced into participating in terrorist or extremist activities, or people who participated in terrorist or extremist activities in circumstances that were not serious enough to constitute a crime [and]
2. people who participated in terrorist or extremist activities that posed a real danger but did not cause actual harm, whose subjective culpability was not deep, who acknowledged their offences and were contrite about their past actions and thus do not need to be sentenced to or can be exempted from punishment, and who have demonstrated the willingness to receive training.[26]

In the US, 94% of state court convictions for misdemeanors result from a plea bargain and 97% of federal criminal trials are avoided through one. Some innocents are thereby convicted, due to the "trial penalty," where defendants receive much worse sentences if they choose to go to trial, a coercion the Supreme Court has endorsed. Those who plead guilty to misdemeanors still have heavy court costs and barriers to accessing work, housing, and custody of their children.[27]

In Switzerland, plea bargains are not permitted and 90% of criminal cases are settled by a "summary penalty order" (*strafbefel*; SPO), not a trial. Swiss prosecutors can sentence a defendant to a fine, or either imprisonment for

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25 Jeremy Daum, "XJ Education Centers Exist, but Does Their Legal Basis?" China Law Translate, Aug. 14, 2018, www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/xj-education-centers-exist-but-does-their-legal-basis/.

26 "Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang," SCIO, Aug. 17, 2019, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201908/17/content_WS5d57573cc6d0c6695ff7ed6c.html.

27 Clark Neily, "Prisons are Packed Because Prosecutors are Coercing Plea Deals. And, Yes, It's Totally Legal," Think, Aug.9, 2019, www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/prisons-are-packed-because-prosecutors-are-coercing-plea-deals-yes-ncna1034201.

six months or a monetary penalty equivalent to six months in prison if the accused admits to committing the offense or if his responsibility is satisfactorily proven. The six-month limit is on SPOs' actual sentences, with SPO usually used for minor crimes, like shoplifting or vandalism, but also for some serious crimes. Prosecutors can sentence the defendant without any judicial involvement and "This can sometimes be highly appealing to defendants who want to remain private about the offense they commit." Some 90% of the accused served with an SPO accept it, despite no "trial penalty" existing in Swiss courts. Only 7% of people in one studied canton used legal counsel during SPO proceedings. Moreover,

> there is no requirement for the prosecutor to meet with accused persons before issuing an [SPO], even if a prison sentence is given, unless the defendant objects to the order … Of the [SPOs] sent out in Switzerland, 67% are given after police interrogate the recipient of the order, 8% are given after a prosecutor has a chance to speak directly with the recipient, and 25% are given to recipients who do not have a chance to speak with anyone from the government before receiving the order [while] 70% of [SPOs] simply fail to state the reasons for the punishment.[28]

Whether a policy is socially desirable can often be distinguished from whether it is legal. In some countries, tax resisters regard as unjust or discriminatory certain taxes and the criminal laws that enforce their payment. Courts, however, will generally rule that these taxes are not unconstitutional and thus permissible. The question is not whether the Swiss SPO system is a desirable way to deal with non-serious crime, but whether international law disallows it. No one claims that or asserts that SPO is arbitrary detention, let alone a crime against humanity.

The OHCHR report and Western discourse about arbitrary detention in Xinjiang thus avoid discussing states' retained power to determine, in their own political and cultural contexts, what activities warrant detention and what facilities to characterize as places of detention. It is instead assumed that "Western standards" must govern these issues. That means, for example, presenting assignment of a long-bearded man to a VETC as "arbitrary" although the beard may be a visible sign of support for Salafism in a region where Salafis have engaged in terrorism. Indeed, ASPI recognized in a 2020 counter-terrorism

28 Kirk Earl "Switzerland's "Summary Penalty Order" System: Should A Similar System Be Used for America's Minor Crimes?," *Notre Dame Journal of International & Comparative Law*: Vol. 13: 2 (2023) https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndjicl/vol13/iss2/7.

report that "growing a beard" can reflect men "changing their physical appearance to conform or identify with an extremist or terrorist group."[29]

The claim of Uyghur Association of America (UAA) spokesman Ilshat Hesen that "Wearing a moustache or beard is not considered a crime anywhere else in the world," is disconfirmed by his own home region.[30] Central Asian states ban face-covering and long beards, indicating there is no customary international law that precludes states from instituting such bans, which are aimed at eliminating visible identifications with Islamism. It has been opined that in banning burqa/niqab and long beards in 2017, China mimicked Central Asian states.[31] Other culture-related actions the Xinjiang government promoted in 2017–2021 were also to counter religious extremist ideology; for example, public dancing was encouraged in southern Xinjiang because religious extremists prohibit people from singing and dancing.[32] While some assignments to Xinjiang's VETCs for minor crimes may not have been justified, making the practice over-inclusive, statements, by some Western media and scholars, that "the individuals targeted for internment and 're-education' have not committed any crimes" are however gratuitous.[33] Even less unevidenced are assertions that "Within the [VETCs] themselves, detainees are forced to assimilate by renouncing Islam, pledging allegiance to the CCP and speaking only in Mandarin."[34]

A US legal scholar critical of China's practices in Xinjiang noted the OHCHR "says only that there is sufficient evidence to *consider* that the Chinese government 'may' have committed crimes against humanity without specifying which of the possible acts it has in mind."[35] Yet, US entities continue to issue misleading statements about the report, such as that it found "significant evidence that Beijing is committing crimes against humanity."[36] OHCHR's report

29 Peta Lowe, "Youth and Violent Extremism." in Isaac Kfir and John Coyne (eds.), *Counter-terrorism Yearbook 2020* (Barton: ASPI, 2020): 29–32.

30 "Five Uyghurs with 'Crescent Moon-shaped' Beards on Trial in China," RFA, June 12, 2015.

31 Gary Sand, "China Mimics Central Asian States, Bans Long Beards in Restive Region," Eurasianet, Apr. 21, 2017, https://eurasianet.org/china-mimics-central-asian-states-bans-long-beards-in-restive-region.

32 Jones, China's Approach: 66.

33 Klimes and Finley, China's Neo-Totalitarian.

34 Radivah Chowdhury, "Canada Recognized China's Actions Against Uyghurs As Genocide. Here's What You Need To Know," Chatelaine, Mar. 15, 2021, https://chatelaine.com/news/canada-recognizes-uyghur-genocide-faq/.

35 Martin Fletcher, "Crimes Against Humanity: the UN (Finally) Weighs In," JustSecurity, Sept. 15, 2022, www.justsecurity.org/83071/crimes-against-humanity-in-xinjiang/.

36 Lauren Baillie and Matthew Parkes, "Don't Look Away from China's Atrocities Against the Uyghurs," United States Institute for Peace, Apr. 6, 2023, www.usip.org/publications/2023/04/dont-look-away-chinas-atrocities-against-uyghurs.

was a statement by that office only. It has not been approved by the HRC, which voted in October 2022 to not consider it. The UNGA, under whose authority the OHCHR operates, would do likewise.[37] OHCHR, like the HRC itself, is supposed to eliminate "double standards and politicization" of human rights issues.[38] It has not done so; for example, failing to investigate alleged US crimes in Afghanistan, with a June 2022 statement about the country not even mentioning that the US may have contributed to its sorry state.[39]

The accusation of genocide is the category that most blatantly displays double standards; that is, "genocide is only an 'odious scourge' when countries who are not your friends do it."[40] The US famously has had such a double standard, illustrated by the 2017 "Tillerson Memo" provided to the then-US Secretary of State and former Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson. It said that

> Allies should be treated differently – and better – than adversaries. '[W]e should consider human rights as an important issue in regard to U.S. relations with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. And this is not only because of moral concern for practices inside those countries. It is also because pressing those regimes on human rights is one way to impose costs, apply counter-pressure, and regain the initiative from them strategically … [I]n the case of US allies such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines, the Administration is fully justified in emphasizing good relations for a variety of important reasons, including counter-terrorism, and in honestly facing up to the difficult tradeoffs with regard to human rights.[41]

This approach is seen in US support for the Philippines' government. In the mid-20th Century it settled with Christians the mainly Muslim Mindanao region, which "led to a long-running insurgency by indigenous Moros. The conflict is estimated to have cost the Philippines $2–3 billion and killed approximately

37 "High Commissioner for the Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights," UN General Assembly Resolution 48/141, Dec. 20, 1993, www.un-documents.net/a48r141.htm.

38 "Human Rights Council," UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, Apr. 3, 2006, https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251_en.pdf.

39 "Oral Update on Afghanistan: Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights," OHCHR, June 15, 2022, www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/high-commissioner-updates-human-rights-council-afghanistan.

40 David Simon, "A Huge Amount is at Stake in the ICJ's Genocide Judgment," FT, Jan.16, 2024.

41 "Leaked Memo Schooled Tillerson on Human Rights," Politico, Dec. 19, 2017, www.politico.com/story/2017/12/19/tillerson-state-human-rights-304118.

120,000 people" [from 1969 to 2004].[42] The US called South Africa's 2024 ICJ filing, accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, "meritless, counterproductive and without any basis in fact whatsoever" even after more than 20,000 mostly civilian Gazans were killed.[43] At the same time it claimed "Uyghur genocide" in the absence of mass killings.

The OHCHR report is about a part of China and has more than 300 footnotes but includes no citations to works of Chinese academics, experts or NGOs. Ostensibly, the High Commissioner visited Xinjiang in May 2022 to learn from such sources and met with academics and the Chief Justice of China's Supreme Court.[44] There are no citations to any private citizen resident in Xinjiang. There are citations to private citizens in the West, but not to Western critical examinations of claims of state crimes in Xinjiang, only to those who promote such claims. The report also has no discussion of why Xinjiang detentions may or may not fall under international law barring crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Explanatory Memorandum is relevant; it defines crimes against humanity as

> particularly odious offenses in that they constitute a serious attack on human dignity or grave humiliation or a degradation of one or more human beings. They are not isolated or sporadic events, but are part either of a government policy .... or of a wide practice of atrocities tolerated or condoned by a government or a de facto authority. Murder; extermination; torture; rape; political, racial, or religious persecution and other inhumane acts reach the threshold of crimes against humanity only if they are part of a widespread or systematic practice.[45]

Rome Statute Art. 7 (1)(e) specifies that one category of crimes against humanity is "Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law." Notably, "The contextual element determines that crimes against humanity involve either large-scale violence in relation to the number of victims or its extension over a broad geographic area

42 Lachlan McNamee, *Settling for Less: Why States Colonize and Why They Stop* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023): 39.

43 Megan Stack, "Don't Turn Away from the Charges of Genocide Against Israel," NYT, Jan. 12, 2024.

44 "Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet After Official Visit to China," May 28, 2022, www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/05/statement-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-michelle-bachelet-after-official.

45 UN General Assembly, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, July 17, 1998, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3a84.html.

(widespread), or a methodical type of violence (systematic)." No showing has been made of large-scale or systematic violence in the VETCs, nor even that a large proportion of imprisonments were so arbitrary as to violate fundamental international law.[46]

Detaining many people is not in itself a crime against humanity. If that were so, US authorities, through their detentions, "may have committed crimes against humanity." In 2021, the US had more than two million prisoners, so that with 4.2% of global population it had about 20% of the world's prisoners. The US's 629 prisoners per 100,000 people was the world's highest rate, about 5.3 times China's and 4.5 times the world average.[47] The OHCHR has not implied that the US government may be guilty of imprisonment in violation of international law.

The OHCHR's "*may* constitute … crimes against humanity" phrasing may be a backhanded recognition of a verity pronounced by an ICTY Trial Chamber, that "[a]lthough the realm of human rights is dynamic and expansive, not every denial of a human right may constitute a crime against humanity."[48] There may have been unlawful confinements that denied the human rights of some of those sent to VETCs, without their detention amounting to a crime against humanity.

The VETCs did not necessarily involve "detention," as commonly understood. Many and perhaps most VETCs allowed home visits on weekends and holidays, leave at other times if needed, and visits by family members.[49] That is not a typical of detention in most parts of the world. Germany and Netherlands are among the very few countries that allow weekend home visits for some low-level offenders.[50] Weekend home visits for VETC "trainees" were however seen by an unsupervised group of reporters for the China-hostile BBC. In 2018, BBC journalists visited two Urumqi VETCs on a Friday afternoon and then left in a vehicle. They decided to make an unannounced observation by

46 "Crimes Against Humanity," UN Office of Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect 2022, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml.

47 "World Prison Population List," 13th ed., Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, 2022: 2, www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_prison_population_list_13th_edition.pdf.

48 *Prosecutor v. Krupreskic, et al*, ICTY, Jan. 14, 2000: para. 618, https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/icty-prosecutor-v-kupreskic-et-al.

49 "The 19th Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues," Nov. 18, 2020, http://munich.china-consulate.gov.cn/ger/zlgxw/202011/t20201130_3466999.htm.

50 "The Prison System: Does it Rehabilitate Offenders or Create Better Ones?" *Caribbean Barrister*, Mar. 2022, https://caribbeanbarrister.com/the-prison-system-does-it-rehabilitate-offenders-or-create-better-ones/.

returning to the front gate of one VETC late that afternoon and found "trainees" were in fact departing for home visits.[51]

Olsi Jazexhi is an Albanian/Canadian journalist who teaches at Malaysia's International Islamic University. He is known as hostile to both China and Albania's Catholic minority, while as a "popular historian," Jazexhi positively affirms the Ottoman Empire. He visited a VETC in Wensu County, Aksu in 2019 and released videos in which he is seen interrogating a teacher on whether "students" could leave the VETC on weekends. He was told they leave on Friday afternoons and return on Sunday evenings. He also asked "students" whether they had time away from the VETC. They answered that they return home each weekend and have time off for major festivals.[52] Jazexhi nevertheless testified at a meeting organized by the WUC and Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization at the European Parliament to denounce the "forceful de-Islamization and de-Turkification of Uyghurs by their Han Chinese masters."[53]

An Australian Broadcasting Corp. journalist visiting Xinjiang in 2023 did an interview, not arranged by his hosts, with a souvenir vendor who said he had been in a VETC for seven months. The interviewee "showed no outward sign of intimidation" and said he had been in the VETC because of his extreme religious views: "He denied any mistreatment at the facility, claiming he ate well, played chess and read books and was even allowed to go home on weekends."[54]

Conditions at the BBC-visited VETCS were much better than those reported for refugees in a much richer country, Germany;[55] yet, a Uyghur émigré in Canada made the unevidenced claim that VETCS were "Nazi style political education centers where conditions are extremely poor."[56] Even ASPI's study of VETCS distinguished 202 "Tier 1" and "Tier 2" "suspected low-security re-education

51 "Inside China's 'Thought Transformation' Camps," BBC, June 18, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmId2ZP3h0c (See 10:35–11:05).

52 "Dr. Olsi Jazexhi Interrogates Chinese 'Teachers' in Wensu County Detention Center in Aksu, Xinjiang," Aug. 23, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClKVs8qa2jw; "Mahmuti Dunias, Kurikumal Turdi, Tokniaz and Keisar Show their Crimes, Ending Up in Detention Camp," Aug. 24, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp5y9LCZqTA.

53 "Olsi Jazexhi Speaks at the European Parliament About the Uyghurs, Xinjiang Concentration Camps," YouTube, Dec. 17, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt1asbh4ECc.

54 David Lipson, "After Years of Brutal Repression, China's Communist Party Tries to Turn Xinjiang into a Tourism Hotspot," ABC News, Oct. 1, 2023.

55 Ali Breland, "Surviving Germany's Neo-Nazi Resurgence," *New Republic*, Apr. 26, 2023, https://newrepublic.com/article/171675/surviving-germanys-neo-nazi-resurgence.

56 Dilmurat Mahmut, "Controlling Religious Knowledge and Education for Countering Religious Extremism: Case Study of the Uyghur Muslims in China," *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education* 5:1 (2019): 22–43.

centers" and "suspected re-education facilities" from 72 "Tier 3" "suspected detention facilities,"[57] indicating that most VETCs were not detention centers.

3 Crimes against Humanity Unproven

Crimes against humanity are commissions of one or more of the ten acts specified in the ICC's Rome Statute Article 7 – murder; extermination; enslavement, deportation or forcible transfer of population; imprisonment; torture; sexual violence; persecution against an identifiable group; enforced disappearance of persons; apartheid; other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health. The acts constitute a crime against humanity only when "part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack"; that is, "a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts … against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack." For a crime against humanity to exist, the requisite *mens rea* (mental state) must be established; it is that

> the accused must first have had the requisite specific intent to commit the underlying act (such as murder, extermination, or torture). Then, if that act is to entail additional, criminal, liability as a crime against humanity, the accused must also have had the requisite *mens rea* for crimes against humanity, which has been defined as knowledge of the context of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population.[58]

A crime against humanity is not simply that many individuals commit many crimes. The criminals must be shown to have been aware that their crimes were part of a concerted state or group effort intended to attack a civilian population. That was case with the precedential Nuremburg Trial defendants convicted of crimes against humanity after World War II.

Crimes against humanity are usually part of a broad pattern of criminality that involves massive killings. It is a "cognate concept … developed to address much the same phenomenon that Lemkin was concerned with," but without

57 Nathan Ruser, "Exploring Xinjiang's Detention System," ASPI, 2020, https://xjdp.aspi.org.au/explainers/exploring-xinjiangs-detention-facilities/.

58 *Prosecutor v. Kordic and Cerkez*, ICTY, 2001: 60–61, www.icty.org/x/cases/kordic_cerkez/tjug/en/kor-Htj010226e.pdf.

the intent to physically destroy an ethnic, racial or religious group and without the "'unmatched rhetorical power of the 'G-word.'" Genocide and crimes against humanity should not be elided however because

> Criminal law insists upon rigorous definitions for a number of reasons, not the least of which is a requirement of precision that is deeply rooted in fair trial standards. Not every form of sexual harassment will qualify as rape; all homicide is not murder; not every fizzy drink should be described as champagne; and all meat is not filet mignon. Words matter.[59]

The OHCHR has stated that crimes against humanity must be "gross human rights violations" that are "intentionally directed, widespread and systematic."[60] Even acts that result in deaths are not crimes against humanity if they do not meet these criteria. For example, in 2022, 24 Aborigines died in custody in Australia. If there was no evidence of intentional direction and, as is likely, the deaths could not be deemed "widespread and systematic," they may create domestic criminal liability, even charges of murder, but they are not a crime against humanity.[61]

The same might be said about the 19 deaths in custody in 2022 at NYC's Rikers Island detention center, where the daily population averaged 6,000. Most deaths resulted from negligence by guards. Only one white detainee died. A federal monitor found the head of Rikers suppressed information about deaths. Black and Hispanic people were 52% of NYC's population in 2021 but were some 90% of jail admissions. Black people in NYC were jailed at a rate 11.6 times higher than whites, with a 29.5:1 ratio for Manhattan. Riker's Island is not, however, the worst in terms of deaths in custody in US detention facilities. The Southern Regional Jail in West Virginia, with a daily population of about 700, had 13 deaths in custody in 2022.[62] In about the first half of 2024, there were 22 deaths in custody at Ely State Prison, Nevada, which had around 1,183 inmates, indicating about a 4% annual death rate.[63]

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59 William Schabas, "'Definitional Traps' and Misleading Titles," GSP 4:2 (2009): 177–183.

60 Belarus Report.

61 "Keating Ignores Genocide to Defend His 'China fantasy'" *The Australian*, Mar. 17, 2023.

62 Hurubie Meko, "NYC Jails Chief is Hiding Dysfunction at Rikers, Federal Monitor Says," NYT, June 8, 2023; Jane Ransom and Jonah Bromwich, "Tracking the Deaths in NYC's Jail System," NYT, May 30, 2023, Reuven Blau, "Racial Gap in City Jails Only Gotten Worse, John Jay Study Finds," The City, Mar. 3, 2023, www.thecity.nyc/2023/3/2/23621862/racial-gap-nyc-jails-got-worse; Kris Maher, "West Virginia Jail Deaths Under Investigation," WSJ, June 13, 2023.

63 "Ely State Prison (ESP)" State of Nevada, Dept. of Corrections, 2024, https://doc.nv.gov/Facilities/ESP_Facility/; "Fatal Altercation in Nevada Prison: Three Inmates Die," *Eulerpool*,

US officials do not know how many detainees die in custody each year, but in 2019 some 1,200 died in local jails (average daily population 741,900), with 77% of them not having been convicted of a crime.[64] There were also some 30,800 deaths by US police violence in 1980–2018, an average of 810.5 deaths per year,[65] but in 2023, 1,232 persons were killed by police.[66] Black men have a 1 in 1,000 lifetime chance of being killed by police, 2.5 times the white rate.[67]

With all that, few claim that US deaths in custody or police killings are a crime against humanity. The deaths are widespread, but may not be systematic, and no solid evidence of intentional direction exists. The US, by the way, is not the only Western country where ethnic minority people receive the special attention of police. In France, black and Arab young men are subjected to police identity checks 20 times as often as the rest of the population.[68]

In at least one case, émigré groups and the US government have sought to keep Uyghurs imprisoned, despite a significant death rate. It was reported in 2023 that "At least 350 Uyghur men, women, and children fleeing China have been arrested upon entering Thailand since 2013. In 2015, 172 of the women and children were resettled in Turkey. But a few weeks later, Thai authorities deported 109 of the group back to China." In 2017, 20 Uyghurs escaped from a detention center in Thailand. There were 45 Uyghur asylum seekers in custody in Thailand in 2025 because five of the remaining 50, three adults and two children, had died in custody in 2015–2024, all from medical conditions.[69] No one claimed that the high rate of Uyghur deaths in detention in Thailand was a crime against humanity. In March 2025, Thailand deported to China 40 of the remaining Uyghurs. Uyghur émigré lawyer Rayan Asat of the US government-connected Atlantic Council, said those extradited would inevitably be imprisoned, but Thai officials visited five returnees at their homes in Xinjiang.[70]

Aug. 2, 2024, https://eulerpool.com/en/news/all/deadly-confrontation-in-nevada-prison-three-inmates-die.

64 "Deaths in Custody are a Crisis, and Data on Them is a Black Hole, a New Report Says," NPR, Feb. 28, 2023.

65 GBD 2019 Police Violence US Subnational Collaborators, "Fatal Police Violence by Race and State, 1980–2018: a Network Meta-Regression," *Lancet* 398: 10307, Oct.2, 2019: 1239–1255.

66 "Mapping Police Violence," 2024, https://mappingpoliceviolence.us/.

67 Frank Edwards, et al, "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race–Ethnicity, and Sex," PNAS, Aug. 5, 2019, www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1821204116.

68 "Enquete sur l'acces aux droits," Defenseurs des Droits, 2017, www.defenseurdesdroits.fr.

69 "Uyghur Asylum Seekers Keep Dying in Thailand's Detention Centres," ANI, Apr. 23, 2023; Sui-Lee Wee and Nyrola Elima, "Fearing Deportation, Uyghurs Helt in Thailand Go on Hunger Strike," NYT, Jan. 19, 2025.

70 "Rayhan Asat, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist: "Xi Jinping Seeks to Make the Uyghur Population," Disappear," CE NoticiasFinancieras, Mar. 22, 2025; "Thai Government Rejects Allegations of Staged Uyghur Visits," *Bangkok Post*, Mar. 20, 2025.

There have been few claims of deaths in detention of Xinjiang ethnic minorities. If there were any deaths, as Uyghur émigrés and their supporters claim, they cannot be assumed to be from unnatural causes, as among the asserted one to three million detainees, thousands would die from an assortment of natural causes. There is no indication of a significant level of deaths however. That may be because the number of "detainees" has been overestimated, based on the crudest extrapolation, and because conditions in Xinjiang detention facilities and the VETCs were better than in many countries not assailed for crimes against humanity.

In any large-scale "detention" some deaths occur. The US had about six million immigration detentions from 2004–2020 and 214 deaths in custody. The death rate however increased with the second Trump deportation campaign: in 2025 H1 there were 10 deaths. That was perhaps in part due to documented conditions of confinement that in every respect recall the (unconfirmed) claims made about Xinjiang's "detention centers."[71]

The average length of US immigration detention is 52 days; the duration of VETC "training" may have averaged about one year, seven times longer. Had the migrants to the US also averaged a one-year detention, there would have been about 1,500 deaths in custody or one out of every 4,000 detainees. If the same ratio had applied in the VETCs and the latter had one million "trainees" – the often claimed, but not substantiated, number – that would result in about 250 deaths in the VETCs each year. The VETC were open for 2.5 years, so total deaths would be about 625.[72] Many less than that number have been claimed, however. There is no evidence that deaths in the VETCs were widespread, systematic or intentionally-directed.

Places of detention with normal death rates should not be misrepresented as "concentration camps." For example, seven British internment camps in Cyprus from 1946–1949 housed 53,510 Jews, of whom about 400 died, a death rate of about 2.5 per 1,000 per annum. That death rate compares very favorably with the UK death rate of the time, 11.8. There were also 2,200 births in the Cyprus camps, a birthrate of some 13.7 per 1,000 per annum.[73]

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71 Miriam Jordan and Jazmine Ulloa, "Concerns Grow Over Dire Conditions in Immigrant Detention," NYT, June 28, 2025.

72 Alex Nowrasteh, "21 People Died in Immigration Detention in 2020," Cato Institute, Oct. 22, 2020, www.cato.org/blog/21-people-died-immigration-detention-2020; Altaf Saadi, et al, "Duration in Immigration Detention and Health Harms," *JAMA Network Open* 8:1 (2025); Hannah Ziegler, "Canadian Citizen Dies at ICE Detention Center in Florida," NYT, June 26, 2025; Miriam Jordan and Jasmine Ulloa, "Concerns Grow Over Dire Conditions in Immigrant Detention," NYT, June 28, 2025.

73 "The JUST Act Report: Cyprus," US State Department, s.d. (2020?), www.state.gov/reports/just-act-report-to-congress/cyprus/.

From 1942–1945 Japanese-Americans were interned based on racial discrimination. Almost all Japanese Americans in the continental US were "evacuated," a hugely over-inclusive event given that 70,000 of the 110,000–120,000 internees were US citizens. There were 1,862 deaths (a few killed by guards) or a yearly mortality rate of about 5.4.[74] That was lower than the 10.4 rate in the US in 1942.[75] It was far lower rate than is typical at actual concentration camps; thus, 90% of Jews and Roma/Sinti and 50% of non-Jewish Poles in Auschwitz died.[76]

4 Other Crimes against Humanity: Torture and Mass Imprisonment

Torture has also been alleged as a crime against humanity in Xinjiang. States only "engage in torture by adopting torture as a state policy or by systematically employing it as a means of governance."[77] The Constitution Project's Taskforce on Detainee Treatment was chaired by former Representative and Undersecretary for Border and Homeland Security Asa Hutchinson (a Republican) and former Representative and Ambassador to Mexico Jim Jones (a Democrat). Its 560-page report in 2013 had two main findings: "that it is indisputable that the United States engaged in the practice of torture" and that "the nation's highest officials bear some responsibility for allowing and contributing to the spread of torture," having authorized torture of "War on Terror" suspects detained in multiple open and secret prisons. No sanctions were imposed on any authorizing US officials, "even in cases of homicides."[78]

There is no evidence of a state policy or systematic employment of torture in Xinjiang, even if some state agents may have illegally engaged in torture. That contrasts with the presumption of a state policy of torture where torture is shown or admitted to be widespread and systematic: "For example, surveys

74 Buddy Blouin, "What Life Was Like in the Japanese-American Internment Camp," Veteran Life, 2023, https://veteranlife.com/military-history/what-life-was-like-inside-a-japanese-american-internment-camp/.

75 "Vital Statistics of the United States," Center for Disease Control, 1942: 24, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsus/VSUS_1942_1.pdf.

76 Aaron O'Neill, "Estimated Number of Deportees and Deaths at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp Complex During the Holocaust 1941–1945, by Background," Statista, June 21 2022, www.statista.com/statistics/1288821/auschwitz-deportees-deaths-by-background/.

77 Aditi Bagchi, "Intention, Torture, and the Concept of State Crime," *Penn State Law Review* 114:1 (2009): 1–48.

78 "The Report of the Constitution Project's Task Force on Detainee Treatment," 2013: 335, https://docs.pogo.org/report/2013/TCP-Detainee-Task-Force-Report.pdf?_ga=2.150161715.408917315. 1692251411-9939962.1692251411.

have found that more than 50 percent of police officers in India self-report using torture against suspects."[79]

Some allegations made about detention and torture in Xinjiang also do not amount to gross violations of human rights; for example, the existence of the VETCs or throwing water in the face of detainees. Torture cannot *a priori* be ruled out in places of confinement, almost anywhere in the world, however. For example, in New York State, where there are about one prison guard to every two prisoners, officials documented 290 cases of physical abuse, including brutal assaults, by prison guards since 2010, where guards had attempted to cover up the abuse. Only 10% of the guards responsible were fired and

> In dozens of documented cases involving severe injuries of prisoners, including three deaths, the agency [the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision] did not even try to discipline officers, state records show … The records probably reflect only a fraction of the violence guards have inflicted in New York's corrections system, experts said. Many prisoners do not file complaints because they fear retaliation or not being believed.

Lawsuits against brutal guards are seldom successful; when they are, the guards' damages are almost always paid by the state.[80]

In 2023, a UN special rapporteur found that prisoners at the US base in Guantanamo, Cuba were being held in cruel and inhuman conditions that may meet the legal threshold for torture.[81] In Japan, the 99.9% conviction rate of those prosecuted is largely based on confessions and coercion, and torture is far from unknown.[82] In the US, by the way, only 0.4% of Federal criminal defendants went to trial and were acquitted in 2022; not very different from the 99.9% conviction rate claimed for those in Xinjiang who experience a completed prosecution.[83]

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79 Christine Eck, "Institutional Variation in Police Misconduct Oversight Systems," *Comparative Politics Newsletter* 28:1 (2018), https://mattgolder.com/files/research/newsletter2018s.pdf.

80 Alysia Santo, et al, "Guards Brutally Beat Prisoners and Lied About It. They Weren't Fired," NYT, May 19, 2023.

81 Carol Rosenberg, "Conditions at Guantánamo Are Cruel and Inhuman, U.N. Investigation Finds," NYT, June 26, 2023.

82 Ryo Mac, "The Whole Story on Japan's 99% Conviction Rate, and the Corruption that Follows," Skeptikai, Sept. 28, 2013, https://medium.com/skeptikai/the-whole-story-on-japans-99-conviction-rate-and-the-corruption-that-follows-249455cfbf9.

83 John Gramlisch, "Fewer Than 1% of Federal Criminal Defendants were Acquitted in 2022," Pew Research Center, June 14, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/06/14

Even in countries with model prison systems, instances of what some call torture occur. In 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture defined solitary confinement as "any regime where an inmate is held in isolation from others (except guards) for at least twenty-two hours a day." He said it "can amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment when used as a punishment, during pretrial detention, indefinitely or for a prolonged period, for persons with mental disabilities or juveniles."[84] In 2019, the UN Committee on Torture criticized Norway's government for placing prisoners, including those with mental illnesses, in long-period solitary confinement.[85] In Switzerland, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) found in 2022 "deplorable conditions," due to overcrowding detention facilities in French-speaking cantons, plus police violence.[86] In New York state, a prisoner suing the government had been sentenced to two years in solitary confinement for throwing a foul liquid at guards.[87] Developed countries are much better positioned than China to avoid inhuman or degrading conditions of incarceration: Japan's nominal per capita income is 2.8 times China's, while Norway's is 7.4 times and Switzerland's is 7.2 times.

There is thus far no evidence, taken in Xinjiang itself, that affirms or disconfirms claims of torture. Allegations have been made in interviews abroad, which Western entities likely set up through Uyghur émigré groups and may have involved persons coached or with a need to allege torture to further asylum applications. Thus, in 2021 Amnesty International (AI) reported on 55 "camp survivors" interviewed outside China; each one claimed torture.[88] The

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/fewer-than-1-of-defendants-in-federal-criminal-cases-were-acquitted-in-2022/; "Report Highlights Systematic Repression, Human Rights Violations of Uyghurs in Xinjiang by China," ANI, Aug. 16, 2024.

84 "UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Calls for the Prohibition of Solitary Confinement," UNOHCHR, Oct. 18, 2011, www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2011/10/un-special-rapporteur-torture-calls-prohibition-solitary-confinement?LangID=E&NewsID=11506.

85 "The UN Committee Against Torture Critical of Norway's Use of Isolation," Sivilombudet, 2019, www.sivilombudet.no/en/news/prevention-torture/the-un-committee-against-torture-critical-of-norways-use-of-isolation/.

86 "Prison Overcrowding Remains a Problem in Prisons in French-Speaking Switzerland: Anti-torture Committee Report," Council of Europe, June 8, 2022, www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/prison-overcrowding-remains-a-problem-in-prisons-in-french-speaking-switzerland-anti-torture-committee-report.

87 Hurubie Meko, "N.Y. Prisons Have Ignored Limits on Solitary Confinement, Judge Finds," NYT, June 20, 2024.

88 "Like We Were Enemies in a War: China's Mass Internment, Torture and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang," Amnesty International, 2021, https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/.

WUC itself has said that "in detention facilities, equipment such as restraint chairs (tiger chairs), weighted restraints, and hoods/blindfolds" were used.[89]

Amnesty International also made the over-the-top claim that "Today Xinjiang has become an open-air prison."[90] The phrase is most often used about Gaza; for exadmple, in 2010 by UK PM David Cameron and in 2023 by UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Territories Francesca Albanese. In 2024, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken linked Xinjiang and Gaza, saying that the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan "comes at a time of conflict and pain for many Muslim communities, including Uygurs in Xinjiang [and] Palestinians in Gaza."[91] The US's seeming commiseration with Gazans came as they were being killed with US weapons provided to Israel. Xinjiang, however, in no way compares to Gaza, which had been blockaded since 2007 and bombed since October 7, 2023. Israel, Gaza's occupying power, made the blockade permanent. Egypt, which also has a border crossing with Gaza, has largely done the same. Effectively, most people cannot enter or leave Gaza and the movement of goods and aid is highly restricted. Israel literally walls off Gaza in the north and east prevents the transfer of goods or people by sea in the west, while a US-financed Egyptian structure walls it off from the south.[92]

Gaza in 2022 had a 44% unemployment rate and a per capita real (PPP) GDP of US$1,257.[93] Xinjiang had 2% unemployment in 2021 and a nominal per capita GDP of about US$9,520.[94] Since average PPP income per capita in China is about 55% higher than nominal per capita GDP, Xinjiang's real per capita income is about US $14,750, more than ten times that in Gaza. Xinjiang's GDP grew on average 8.3% per annuum from 1952 to 2018, but 12.7% per year from 2013 to 2023. It increased by 6.8% in 2023 and 6.1% in 2024.[95]

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89 "World Uyghur Congress Highlights Dire Situation of Uyghurs in Xinjiang on International Day Against Torture," ANI, June 26, 2024.

90 Stephanie Nebehay, "European and Muslim Countries Urged to Take Action Over China Persecution of Uighurs," *The Independent*, Feb. 5, 2019.

91 U.S. Department of State, "On the Occasion of Ramadan," Mar. 12, 2024, www.state.gov/on-the-occasion-of-ramadan/.

92 ER Kabir, "Why Gaza is Known as the World's Biggest 'Open Air Prison'" *Indian Express*, Oct. 11, 2023.

93 Andrew England "What Will Be Left of Gaza After the War?" FT, Jan. 3, 2024.

94 "Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China from 2012 to 2022," Statista, Feb. 28, 2023, www.statista.com/statistics/804209/china-per-capita-gdp-value-of-xinjiang/.

95 Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan "Xinjiang & Xizang and Human Rights Issue and Western Propaganda," Eurasia Diary, Mar. 11, 2024; "Xinjiang: Understanding Complexity, Building Peace," Eurispes, et al, 2021: 6, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://idi-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/New-Report.pdf; "Stay True

Xinjiang is open in all directions. The 2.3m Gazans, 81% of whom are refugees from other parts of Palestine, are confined to 365 sq. km. Gaza's population density is thus 6,300 per sq. km – the same as Hong Kong and much more than Greater London. The density is 788 times that of southern Xinjiang's eight people per sq. km. Gazans are at Israel's mercy for food, water, and electricity. Even before the 2023 war, some 95% of them could not access clean water, 80% were impoverished and needed international aid, 68% of households were severely or moderately food-insecure, the unemployment rate was 46%, 31% of households had difficulty in meeting essential education needs. Electricity availability averaged 11 hours a day.[96]

Gaza's living conditions are worse than many prisons; as are facilities in Myanmar and Bangladesh for Rohingya, which are also described as "open-air prisons"[97] That is not the case with Xinjiang. Of course, the thousands of Gazan civilians killed in war are also a sharp contrast with Xinjiang. That does not stop Westerners from invoking the "Muslim Uyghurs" when criticisms are made of Israel's assault on Gaza. For example, a US academic editor who excoriated protests against the Gaza war as "anti-Semitism," added that "Anyone who claims that it's about fighting oppression [of Palestinians] might ask themselves what they've done about the oppression of Muslim Uyghurs in western China."[98]

Torture may have occurred in Xinjiang, but has not been proven. More importantly, there is no evidence of *intentional direction* of torture, nor have violations been shown to be widespread or systematic. Conjecturing that Xinjiang detentions per se may be a crime against humanity is thus likely a political stratagem. "Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law" is an ICC-listed crime against humanity,[99] but the imprisonment must be severe, presumably quite long-term or accompanied by horrific conditions, and must violate a "fundamental

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to Principle all Enjoy Equal Rights, Participate in Global Rights Governance," Mehr News Agency, Sept. 21, 2024; Yan Wei, "Diverse Drivers of Growth," *Beijing Review* no. 2 (2025).

96 Nuri Razali, "Undernutrition, Stunting Rife: Dire State of Diets Among Palestinian Kids Underlined by New Study," Food Navigator Asia, May 31, 2022; "Gaza Strip in Maps: What it's Like for the People that Live There," BBC, Oct. 12, 2023; Raja Abdulrahim, "Gaza Has Suffered Under 16-Year Blockade," NYT, Oct. 7, 2023; Kabir, Why Gaza.

97 Sun Ngyuen, "Rohingya Risk Death at the Hands of Smugglers to Escape the 'Open-Air Prison in Myanmar, Bangladesh," SCMP, Feb. 28, 2023.

98 Karen Christiansen, "The Muzuzahs on My Doorposts," Oct. 26, 2023.

99 "Elements of Crimes," ICC, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20140923132736/http://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/336923d8-a6ad-40ec-ad7b-45bf9de73d56/0/elementsofcrimeseng.pdf.

rule of international law," that is a peremptory norm (*jus cogens*), such as the norm against arbitrary detention.[100] This definition fits refugees when they try to reach developed countries. Many are imprisoned or are in prison-like conditions in the "third countries" where they were intercepted, resulting in countries such as the US accepting very few refugees. The interception and detention of refugees is often not by the developed countries themselves but at their behest; for example, the EU has paid the Libyan coast guard to intercept migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean. The EU, by the way, rejects such migrants though its population is shrinking, as the tfr has fallen in 13 Western European countries from 2002 to 2022.[101] Even if undocumented migrants reach a developed country, it may send them to a developing third country, as the US now does.[102]

The UN defines a "detained person" as "any person deprived of personal liberty, except as a result of conviction for an offence."[103] Many persons are detained for years without having been tried and convicted. In India in 2020, more than 100,000 people had been in prison for more than a year without being tried.[104] In 2022, "those awaiting trial normally constituted the largest prison population in Botswana with the average time spent on remand being around 2.5 years. Some individuals spend an excess of six years on remand."[105] Average detention time for Australia asylum seekers in 2022 was over two years.[106] In Malaysia "Undocumented foreigners are typically detained for long periods while awaiting deportation, while refugees and asylum seekers who do not want to return home are held indefinitely." More than 150 foreigners died in detention there in 2022, including 25 women and seven children. Detainees

100 "Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention," A/HRC/22/44, OHCHR, 24 December 2012, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/CompilationWGADDeliberation.pdf.

101 Servet Yanatma, "Europe's Fertility Crisis: Which Countries are Having the Fewest Babies?" EuroNews, Aug. 17, 2024.

102 Eleanor Paynter, "Supreme Court Rules Trump Can Rapidly Deport Immigrants to Libya, South Sudan and Other Countries They Aren't From," *The Conversation*, June 24, 2025, https://theconversation.com/supreme-court-rules-trump-can-rapidly-deport-immigrants-to-libya-south-sudan-and-other-countries-they-arent-from-258155.

103 "Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment," General Assembly Resolution 43/173 A/RES/43/173 (Dec. 9, 1988), www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r173.htm.

104 "70% Prisoners in India are Undertrials," *The Hindu*, Sept. 11, 2020.

105 "Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Preliminary Findings from its visit to Botswana (4 to 15 July 2022)".

106 "Statistics on People in Detention in Australia," Refugee Council of Australia, Oct. 15, 2022, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/detention-australia-statistics/5/.

were Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, including trafficked children, and Indonesian and Chinese workers. Those released reported torture and gross deficiencies in food, space and medical care. In January 2021–June 2022, 6% of detainees in Malaysia died. The UN High Commission on Refugees is barred from entering detention centers.[107]

In Greece in 2020, maximum detention time for asylum seekers increased to 36 months.[108] The NGO Refugees International has said the refugee camps have "prison-like" conditions and, in internal documents, EU officials cited many deficiencies in the camps, particularly affecting children.[109] In the UK, there is no maximum "limit to detaining people under immigration powers and detention may continue lawfully indefinitely if there is a 'realistic prospect of removal within a reasonable timeframe.'" Thus, many asylum seekers "have been detained for months and sometimes years from countries such as Syria, Eritrea, Sudan and Afghanistan where there is absolutely no realistic prospect of removal."[110] Europe's detentions of asylum seekers, which had been lengthy until then, have not been applied to Ukrainians during the war with Russia, as some EU leaders have noted that the Ukrainians were fellow Europeans.[111] In 2024,

> Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, praised Italy's plan to send migrants to Albania as "out-of-the-box thinking." Under [Italian PM] Meloni's plan, migrants would be screened in Albania and stay in detention centers while they await decisions on their asylum applications. Ideas like Ms. Meloni's are gaining favor, with other

107 "Malaysia Pressed to Probe Deaths of 150 Foreigners in Detention Last Year," Reutters, Feb. 23, 2023; Hadi Azmi, "Malaysian Immigration Slammed Over Deaths of 149 Indonesians: 'No Clean Water, Atrocious Food'" Bloomberg, June 28, 2022.

108 "Recourse to Detention," European Agency for Asylum, 2021, https://euaa.europa.eu/easo-asylum-report-2021/481-recourse-detention#:~:text=In%20addition%2C%20the%20time%20limits,the%20total%20maximum%20detention%20period.

109 "One Year Since Greece Opened New 'Prison-like' Refugee Camps, NGOs Call for a More Humane Approach," Refugees International, Sept. 20, 2022, www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2022/9/20/one-year-since-greece-opened-new-prison-like-refugee-camps-ngos-call-for-a-more-humane-approach; "EU Details Violations at Greece's 'Model' Refugee Camps," Al-Jazeera, May 11, 2023.

110 Annie Campbell Viswanathan, "Some Facts on Immigration and Small Boat Crossings," FT, Feb. 23, 2023.

111 "The Ukraine Crisis Double Standards: Has Europe's Response to Refugees Changed?" ReliefWeb, Mar. 3, 2022, https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-crisis-double-standards-has-europe-s-response-refugees-changed.

> leaders also considering paying countries to process asylum applications and possibly deport those whose claims are denied.[112]

The US has a long history of putting foreign nationals behind bars; about 14 million have been detained/imprisoned from the 1940s to the 2020s. In February 2024, the US's Immigration and Customs Enforcement were holding 39,000 would-be immigrants and two-thirds had no criminal record. Contemporary US government practice includes extensively detaining asylum seekers. Most are from developing countries and are held in what are effectively prisons run by private, for-profit firms in remote "black sites." Detention of people who have not broken any law, but invoked their international legal right to apply for asylum, is expressly conceived as a deterrent to people exercising that right.[113] The US criminal legal and immigration systems converge in the detention and imprisonment of large numbers of immigrants.[114] The US system hardly impacts anti-terrorism and has none of the educational functions Xinjiang's VETCs had.

5 Arbitrary Detentions Compared

The intakes of the VETCs included both convicted and other persons; thus, Chinese officials rejected the sobriquet "detention camp."[115] While a person not convicted of an offense, but deprived of personal liberty, is a detained person, not all persons deprived of liberty absent a conviction are "*arbitrarily* detained," let alone arbitrarily detained as part of a crime against humanity. An argument that some VETC detentions were illegal or that the program was misguided is distinct from the regarding of most detentions as arbitrary: "The notion of 'arbitrary' includes that the deprivation of liberty is not taken in accordance with the applicable law and procedure and is not proportional to

112 Jenny Gross, et al, "On Migration, Europe Warms to Ideas Once Seen as Fringe," NYT, Nov. 18, 2024.

113 Ana Raquel Minian, *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Invisible History of Immigrant Detention in the United States* (New York: Viking Press, 2024); "Number of Detained Migrants Increases," Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Feb. 29, 2024, https://trac.syr.edu/whatsnew/email.240229.html.

114 César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, *Welcome the Wretched: In Defense of the "Criminal Alien"* (New York: New Press, 2024); César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, *Migrating to Prison America's Obsession with Locking Up Immigrants* (New York: New Press, 2023).

115 "SCIO Briefing on Xinjiang's Stability and Development," SCIO, Dec. 11, 2019, http://english.scio.gov.cn/pressroom/2019-12/11/content_75501330_8.htm.

the aim sought, reasonable and necessary. It 'include[s] elements of inappropriateness, injustice, lack of predictability and due process of law.'"[116]

An example of arbitrary detention might be the 2025 arrests and deportations to an El Salvador prison, using the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, of many Venezuelans who had been living in the US. Some were deported based on having tattoos that US immigration officers thought might be those of Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang.[117] These deportations may violate the Convention Against Torture (CAT), whose principle of non-refoulement bars removal or transfer to a country such as El Salvador that has prisons with documented torture. El Salvador President Bukele has also proclaimed that "the men would be subjected to forced labor and held at [maximum security prison] CECOT potentially indefinitely."[118]

The transfers to El Salvador violated CAT Art. 3 which says that "[n]o State Party shall expel, return ('refouler') or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture." The transfer also violated US law: the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (FARRA), 8 U.S.C. para. 1231, states that "It shall be the policy of the United States not to expel, extradite, or otherwise effect the involuntary return of any person to a country in which there are substantial grounds for believing the person would be in danger of being subjected to torture, regardless of whether the person is physically present in the United States." Yet, while transferring non-Salvadorans to El Salvador, the Trump administration sanctioned Thai officials for transferring to China forty Chinese citizen Uyghurs who had been held for a decade in Thai prisons, though China had pledged to not imprison, let alone torture them and to allow Thai officials to visit transferees at their homes in Xinjiang.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions (WGAD) has set out three categories of arbitrary detention. Category I is "When it is clearly impossible to invoke any legal basis justifying the deprivation of liberty (as when a person is kept in detention after the completion of his sentence or despite an amnesty law applicable to him)." Category II is "When the deprivation of liberty results

116 "About Arbitrary Detention: Working Group on Arbitrary Detention," OHCHR, 2022, www.ohchr.org/en/about-arbitrary-detention.

117 Sharon Zhang, "Trump Admin Deported Venezuelan Men Just Because They Had Tattoos, Report Finds," Mar. 27, 2025, https://truthout.org/articles/report-trump-admin-deported-venezuelan-men-just-because-they-had-tattoos/.

118 Rebecca Ingber and Scott Roehm, "The Trump Administration's Recent Removals to El Salvador Violate the Prohibition on Transfer to Torture," JustSecurity.org, Mar. 20, 2025; Alan Feuer, "Abrego Garcia Was Beaten and Tortured in El Salvador Prison, Lawyers Say," NYT, July 2, 2025.

from the exercise of the rights or freedoms guaranteed by articles 7, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] and, insofar as States parties are concerned, by articles 12, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR]." Category III is "When the total or partial non-observance of the international norms relating to the right to a fair trial, spelled out in the [UDHR] and in the relevant international instruments accepted by the States concerned, is of such gravity as to give the deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character."[119]

Claims about the VETCs have mainly related to potential Category II arbitrariness, even though the UDHR is not per se binding law and China – like US allies Saudi Arabia and UAE – has not ratified the ICCPR. Examples include detention based on exercising the right to practice one's religion under UDHR Art. 18 or the right to share one's opinion (Art. 19). These and other rights, however, are nowhere absolute. Restrictions on religion can be imposed to protect the health, safety and even morals of the population and the sharing of an opinion that incites people to racial discrimination is, in most countries, illegal. It is thus not obvious, as many Western analysts simplistically suppose, that "most of the Uyghur inmates were arrested arbitrarily."[120] Being detained in the absence of a conviction for a crime is not automatically equivalent to being arbitrarily detained, which typically has involved confinement based on categories that are not applicable to those were sent to the VETCs.

For example, "rehabilitation through labor" can be regarded as detention,[121] but it is not always arbitrary detention. There were instances, in the 1990s and 2000s, in which the WGAD found that Chinese or South Korean citizens were subjected to prolonged detention and "ideologically coercive forced labor" based solely on their political views. Persons detained in VETCs may be differently regarded, however. They may not have been under arbitrary "administrative detention." That practice is most often seen as arbitrary where claimants for asylum are subjected to "prolonged administrative custody without the possibility of administrative or judicial review or remedy" and as has been found as to asylum claimants in Australia. Those sent to VETCs also may not have been in "mass detention," defined as "the large-scale imprisonment of people for similar reasons or collective crimes, where each detention is typically

119 WGAD, "Revised Fact Sheet No. 26," Feb. 8, 2019, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/FactSheet26.pdf.

120 Anonymous, "While China's CT Policy in Xinjiang Lacks Humanity, It Also Lacks Long-term Effectiveness," Kennedy School Review, Feb. 3, 2021, https://ksr.hkspublications.org/2021/02/03/while-chinas-ct-policy-in-xinjiang-lacks-humanity-it-also-lacks-long-term-effectiveness/.

121 WGAD, Revised Fact Sheet No. 26.

not given individual consideration." Mass imprisonment of thousands of Iranian dissident asylum seekers in the US's Camp Liberty in Iraq after 2009 is an example. Turkey's mass arrests of family members of suspects after a coup attempt in 2016 is another.[122] There has been mass detention at the US prison in Guantanamo, Cuba ("Gitmo"). There, arbitrary detention is used to extract information. The ACLU stated in 2022 that since 2002, 779 Muslim men and boys had been detained in Gitmo, almost all without charge or trial.[123]

The Xinjiang "detentions" are *sui generis* however. They generally did not involve asylum seekers, relatives of suspects or even information extraction. In contrast to WGAD's cases involving administrative or mass detention, the announced purposes were deradicalization and learning vocational skills. The 2017 Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Regulation on Anti-Extremism[124] allows "Governments at the county level and above can set up education and transformation organizations and supervising departments such as vocational training centers, to educate and transform people who have been influenced by extremism." The regulation required centers to teach vocational skills, spoken and written Chinese, and aspects of the law itself, plus other regulations.[125] Western elites who are ill-disposed toward China's government ignore all it says about the "training centers" however. Thus, Oxford University international relations professor Rosemary Foot simply assumes the centers were not "part of benign retraining and anti-terrorist efforts," but must evidence racial discrimination.[126]

Some detentions in Xinjiang likely were arbitrary, as they are in many countries, including the US.[127] It is highly probable that some arbitrary actions will

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122 Jared Genser, *The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Commentary and Guide to Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 172–173, 384–386 (www.perseus-strategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Jared-Genser-The-UN-Working-Group-on-Arbitrary-Detention-Cambridge-University-Press-2019.pdf

123 "20 Years Later, Guantanamo Remains a Disgraceful Stain on Our Nation. It Need to End," ACLU Nevada, Jan. 11, 2022, www.aclunv.org/en/news/20-years-later-guantanamo-remains-disgraceful-stain-our-nation-it-needs-end.

124 "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-Extremification," China Law Translated, Mar. 2017, www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-regulation-on-de-extremification.

125 Mimi Lau and Nectar Gan, "China Changes Law to Recognize 'Re-Education Camps' in Xinjiang," SCMP, Oct. 10, 2018.

126 Mark Magnier, "As Trump Cuts US Profile at United Nations, China's Leadership Opportunity Grows," SCMP, Feb. 22, 2025.

127 "Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on its Visit to the United States of America," Human Rights Council, 2017, www.aclu.org/report-un-working-group-arbitrary-detention-its-visit-united-states-america.

occur whenever state efforts are made against "extremism," because the term is often loosely defined. For example, since 2007 the UK government has had a Prevent strategy that requires public bodies to monitor and report people they suspect are vulnerable to extremism, which it defines as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values." Some people have been reported for activity unrelated to terrorism or other illegal activity. Former Chancellor and later PM Rishi Sunak proposed in 2022 to broaden Prevent to include those engaged in "vilification of the UK."[128]

Religious practices of some persons in Xinjiang may have been misjudged as "extremist" indicators of support for terrorism and/or separatism. It is unlikely however that the Xinjiang detentions were widespread or systematically arbitrary. It is even less likely that, as a Uyghur poet who after emigrating became a Washington, DC Uber driver and self-appointed "spokesman for a cause" has written, that in Xinjiang in 2017, "the vast majority of the arrests were based on fabricated crimes."[129] To arrest people on any pretext, as the poet claims, would have been counter-productive to the state's "de-radicalization" aims. Deradicalization programs carried out among detainees, after all, have not yet been confirmed to be generally effective, although the two-year-long program in Sri Lanka, which involved vocational skill training and other educational measures, is seen as the most successful.[130] Arbitrarily detaining people, to make them into prisoners to be put into such programs, could thus only be an inept act by what is generally agreed to be a reasonably competent Chinese leadership.

For imprisonment to be a crime against humanity it must be widespread, systematic and committed "with knowledge of the attack" against a civilian population,[131] i.e. "intentionally directed."[132] "Widespread" refers to the scale of the acts or number of victims. A "systematic" attack indicates "a pattern or

128 "Prevent," Liberty, 2022, www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/fundamental/prevent/; "Former Counter-Terrorism Police Chief Attacks Rishi Sunak's Prevent Plans," *Guardian*, Aug. 2, 2022.

129 Tahir Hamut Izgil *Waiting to be Arrested at Night: a Uyghur Poet's Memoir of China's Genocide* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2023).

130 Brendan Koerner, "Can You Turn a Terrorist Back into a Citizen?," Wired, Jan. 24, 2017, www.wired.com/2017/01/can-you-turn-terrorist-back-into-citizen/; Rajan Basra, "Review of Evidence: Prison-based Interventions Targeting Violent Extremist Detainees," XCept, 2022, https://xcept-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-07-19_RoE-Prison-Interventions-V4-Jul19.pdf.

131 "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court" Article 7, Prevent Genocide International, 2022, www.preventgenocide.org/law/icc/statute/part-a.htm#2.

132 OHCHR, Belarus Report.

methodical plan."[133] The "widespread or systematic" clause implies that the crimes must be programmatic, while the "as part of" phrasing implies that a particular crime must be part of a larger plan that includes an array of crimes. Temporary detentions in Xinjiang can hardly be equated with classic crimes against humanity, such as 1919's Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, where British-led troops killed more than 1,000 and wounded over 2,000 unarmed Indians peacefully protesting Britain's refusal to grant India dominion status.[134] Still less can actions in Xinjiang be compared to what President Emmanuel Macron termed a crime against humanity, France's occupation of Algeria (1832–1962), where repression may have caused two million deaths, but for which France refuses an apology.[135] His stance recalled that of Australian PM John Howard, who "refused to apologize to Indigenous people for the abduction of the so-called 'stolen generation' of Aboriginal people, generally of mixed ancestry, who were taken away by the Australian state." Subsequent PM Kevin Rudd did apologize, but without asking Aboriginal people whether they accepted the apology and with a declaration that the matter was basically settled, meaning that there would be no compensation.[136]

6 Criminals against Humanity?

Among the greatest crimes against humanity since World War II and a peak event in the US's pattern of 91 coups over a century,[137] was the US co-organization of the mid-1960s massacre of leftists, ethnic Chinese, secularists, etc. by the Indonesian military, police and militias. It resulted in 500,000–1,000,000 deaths, mainly in a six-month period, followed by the implantation of an extensive system of murderous concentration camps. Those actions became a model for US-fostered mass exterminations of leftists and indigenous people

133 "Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots: China's Crimes Against Humanity Targeting Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims," HRW, Apr. 19, 2021, www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting.

134 Amin Jauhar, "Apology for Jallianwala Bagh Massacre Could Offer a Chance for Britain to Atone," *Indian Express*, Mar. 6, 2019.

135 James Ker-Lindsay, "Will France Ever Say Sorry?" www.youtube.com/watch?v=KU8qZ38W90k.

136 J. Kehaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism Then and Now: A Conversation Between J. Kehaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe," *Politica e Societa* 1:2 (2012): 235–258 (250).

137 Johnny Harris, "American-Backed Coups, Mapped," 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wIOqHSsV9c.

in South and Central America.[138] No act alleged in the OHCHR report on Xinjiang is comparable to the widespread and systematic criminality that occurred in Indonesia or other Western state-prompted exterminations.

OHCHR also cited instances of torture: beatings, prolonged solitary confinement, forced sitting still for long periods, and water thrown in prisoners' faces. These acts were reported by 17 former detainees, who said they were detained for between two and 18 months. They were likely self-selected or produced by émigré political groups and thus not a representative sample of the hundreds of thousands or millions of persons who these same groups claim were in VETCs, nor of the half-million people who HRW alleges have been held in Xinjiang prisons since 2017. The highly selective interviews, in which no cross-examination was carried out, made it impossible to gauge whether wrongful acts were widespread or even the proportion of those who went through VETCs who were either volunteers or detainees. The report contains no indication of whether any of those alleged to have committed crimes against detainees were prosecuted, despite at least one instance being publicly reported: a PRC court verdict dated 29 March 2019 (https://archive.is/6uwX6) found an ethnic Mongolian policeman guilty of attempted rape of a Uyghur woman while she was at a detention center awaiting transfer to a VETC.[139]

The report also stated that "There are credible indications of violations of reproductive rights through the coercive enforcement of family planning policies since 2017" and noted the "unusual and stark" fall in the minority birthrate in 2017–2019. It did not however call these violations crimes and added that "a lack of government data 'makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the full extent of current enforcement of these policies and associated violations of reproductive rights.'" Transfer of children was not mentioned at all. High Commissioner Bachelet herself did not sign the report or present it to a press conference, as is customary. That may be why her successor as High Commissioner,

138 Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Peter Dale Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965–1967," *Pacific Affairs* 58:2 (1985): 239–64; Kim, Jaechun. "U.S. Covert Action in Indonesia in the 1960s: Assessing the Motives and Consequences." *Journal of International and Area Studies* 9:2 (2002): 63–85; William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe: Common Courage Press: 2004); Lindsey O'Rourke, *Covert Regime Change: America's Secret Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); Vincent Bevins, *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World* (*New York: Public Affairs, 2020*).

139 "China: Unrelenting Crimes Against Humanity," HRW, Aug. 31, 2023, www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/31/china-unrelenting-crimes-against-humanity-targeting-uyghurs; Finley, Why Scholars: 357, fn. 66; Mundorff, Other People's Children: 122.

Volker Turk, said in 2024 of the OHCHR report on Xinjiang that "yes it was my predecessor who published it, but it was done by my office." An ex-President of Chile, Bachelet has said that Western states pressured her and China and she "spent the final days of her tenure defending herself from criticism that she was bending to the will of the Chinese government." After the report appeared, it was said that its release "may spare Ms. Bachelet from charges by activists [in the West] that she was derelict in her duty" and that "Previously, Bachelet had been accused by some rights activists of being too soft on China although the hard-hitting report helped redeem her credibility in the eyes of some." It was also claimed that there was a consensus that the report is "a strong, clear accounting of China's violence and oppression against Uyghurs" and a "game-changer for the international response to the Uyghur crisis," the confirmation of that "consensus" and the "game-changer" being proclamations by the *Washington Post* and the UHRP.[140]

In 2024–2025, Bachelet emerged as a possible candidate to become UN Secretary General (UNSG) in 2026, when the post will likely go to a Latin American woman. The winning candidate must win the votes of all UNSC permanent members. It is speculated that alleging potential crimes against humanity in the 2022 report may have been to please the US, while not endorsing the report may have been to avoid angering China.[141] WUC spokesperson Zumretay Arkin has stated that "leaving with this report helps her [Bachelet] office's credibility."[142]

Xinjiang genocide claim supporters initially condemned the report for not crying genocide. When their condemnation of the report gained no traction, they switched to saying "Although the UN report does not use the term 'genocide' outright, the explanation of the issue in the report leads the reader to the conclusion that it is indeed a genocide."[143] In other words, not mentioning genocide means indicating genocide anyway. HRW's 2025 report on China did

140 "The UN Report on China's Atrocities Against the Uyghurs is Damning," WP, Sept. 2, 2023; "Potential 'Crimes Against Humanity' in China's Xinjiang," UN Says, Al Jazeera, Sept. 1, 2022; "Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: 'At the Heart of Every Security Response Must Be Human Rights,'" CE Noticias Financieras English, May 4, 2024.

141 "Criticized by Lula for Lack of Women, UN May Choose 1st Head in 2026," Noticias Financieras, Sept. 24, 2024.

142 OHCHR Assessment: 13, 21–22, 34. 36; "China May Have Committed Crimes Against Humanity in Xinjiang, says U.N.," Reuters, Sept. 1, 2022; "China Ambassador: U.N. Report on Xinjiang Has 'Closed Door of Cooperation,'" Reuters, Sept. 9, 2022; Nick Cumming-Bruce and Austin Ramzy, "U.N. Says China May Have Committed 'Crimes Against Humanity' in Xinjiang," NYT, Sept. 1, 2022.

143 Kok Bayraq, "Xi's 'Hard-won' Stability in Xinjiang," *Taipei Times*, Sept. 4, 2023.

not mention genocide but stated that in Xinjiang there were "'crimes against humanity' against Uighurs and other Muslims" including "'arbitrary detention, torture, mass surveillance, forced labor, cultural and religious persecution, and family separation.'" No evidence was offered.[144]

Alfred de Zayas has observed that the OHCHR report contradicted statements about Xinjiang that Bachelet had made in Guangzhou in May 2022 and in her June 2022 HRC annual report.[145] De Zayas also noted that, in his own role as a OHCHR staffer and independent expert, he had also been subjected to political pressures. He stated that the August 2022 OHCHR report "was not written by Michelle Bachelet herself" and that "OHCHR reports are always written by the OHCHR staff and/or by consultants, who are not always impartial and free of *a prioris*, who do not always try to reflect all sides of the picture, who do have personal preferences and frequently violate the fundamental rule "audiatur et altera pars" – listen to all sides."[146] Before undertaking her visit to Xinjiang, Bachelet met with Uyghur émigré leaders, including Omer Kanat, co-founder of the WUC.[147] The Uyghurs abroad interviewed by the OHCHR were likely supplied to its investigators by the WUC and other émigré groups.

OHCHR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani has stated that "we are making no judgement ourselves on ["genocide"]. The available information assessed according to our own standards does not enable us to do so at this time."[148] That is likely a politically-determined statement. Western government-financed researchers had for four years asserted a Xinjiang genocide based only on a sharp fall in minority birthrates, occurring in the context of a severe fall in Chinese birthrates generally, and on a few stories by émigrés about children of double-detained parents being temporarily transferred to state facilities. That surely should allow the OHCHR to reach the conclusion that the genocide claim about Xinjiang has no relation to genocide – which Germany's

144 "China Events of 2024," Human Rights Watch, 2025, www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/china.

145 "Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet After Official Visit to China," OHCHR, May 28, 2022, www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/05/statement-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-michelle-bachelet-after-official; "Report on the 50th Session of the Human Rights Council," Universal Human Rights, July 11, 2022, www.universal-rights.org/blog/report-on-the-50th-session-of-the-human-rights-council/.

146 Alfred de Zayas, "The Flaws in the "Assessment" Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on China," Counter Punch, Sept. 6, 2022, www.counterpunch.org/2022/09/06/the-flaws-in-the-assessment-report-of-the-office-of-the-high-commissioner-for-human-rights-on-china/.

147 China: Omer Kanat.

148 "'Genocide' in Xinjiang? Why UN Report Steers Clear," AFP, Sept. 3, 2022.

Foreign Minister described, in 2019, as "the greatest crime against humanity in history."[149]

Supporters of the émigré claims initially criticized Bachelet's successor Volker Turk, who at first "avoided any direct criticisms of Beijing, opting for a quiet diplomatic approach, rather than public condemnations and accountability efforts."[150] Turk was again criticized in mid-2023 by Western-based human rights NGOs, such as HRW and AI, for failing to "clearly emphasize the urgent need for accountability for (China's) alarming violations." HRW indicated that its main concern was "forced assimilation," which even if present and politically and morally objectionable, is not a crime under international law, as Lemkin made clear decades ago.[151] An OHCHR team visited Beijing in May 2024 and the Office stated in August 2024 that "in Xinjiang, we understand that many problematic laws and policies remain in place." It did not say what those laws and policies are. Talks between the OHCHR and Chinese officials had focused on "counter-terrorism policies and the criminal justice system" and the OHCHR statement mentioned arbitrary detention and insufficient information about those detained.[152]

Notably, the OHCHR in 2024 did not repeat its 2022 phrase about Xinjiang crimes against humanity. The US State Department attacked China over Xinjiang when the 2024 OHCHR statement was made but spoke of "atrocities" and not genocide.[153] The Chinese government responded that "China is willing to engage in constructive exchanges and cooperation with the [OHCHR] on the basis of mutual respect." It asked OHCHR to be impartial and objective and avoid "politicization of human rights and divisive confrontational actions" that might be "exploited by political forces seeking to suppress or smear China."[154] In 2025, Volker Turk said that in Xinjiang there were "undue prison sentences, incommunicado detention, and restrictions on fundamental rights." He again did not speak of crimes against humanity.[155]

149 Heiko Maas, "Hey, Siri, What is Holocaust?" Federal Foreign Office, Jan. 27, 2019 https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-day-of-remembrance/2182468.

150 Baillie and Parkes, Don't Look Away.

151 "UN Says Its Still Pushing for Action on Abuses in China's Xinjiang, Following Criticism from Rights Groups," AFP, Sept. 1, 2023.

152 Finbarr Bermingham, "China's 'Problematic Laws' Remain in Xinjiang Two Years After Damning Report: UN," SCMP, Aug. 27, 2024.

153 "U.S. Department of State – Second Anniversary of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' Assessment on the Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang," Aug. 30, 2024.

154 "China Says 'Willing to Engage' with UN Rights Body on Xinjiang," *Hurriyet Daily News*, Aug. 28, 2024.

155 "OHCHR Flags China Over 'Infringement' of Tibetan Rights," IANS, June 18, 2025.

Even were the OHCHR to be impartial and objective, it is unlikely that Western politicians and media will be, as long as the Xinjiang issue serves as a useful political stratagem. US elites rarely if ever renounce any accusation against China, no matter whether it shown to be illogical or mendacious. In that respect, they resemble Ronald Reagan, who could not be corrected even by his closest advisers, "no matter how often his false assertions, statistics and quotations were rebutted." For example, as President in the early 1980s, Reagan took up the unevidenced claim that the Soviet Union was building an air base on the tiny Caribbean island state of Grenada and ordered an invasion that resulted in more than 100 deaths and that the UNSC, by an 11-1 vote, condemned as a "flagrant violation of international law," with the US vetoing the resolution.[156] Then-Senator Joe Biden, although a leader of the supposed opposition party, endorsed the invasion and helped the CIA win support for it among other senators.[157]

7 Substantiating Genocide and Crimes against Humanity

To establish a genocide requires proof of a proscribed act (*actus reus*), such as mass killings, and an intent (*mens reus*) to destroy a group, such as an ethnic minority.[158] The perpetrator must have the intent to commit the crime's *actus reus* and the special intent (*dolus specialis*) to destroy a protected group as such. The intent needed for a genocide thus extends beyond and is not dependent on the intent to do the *actus reus*.[159] As the ICTR has said, "Genocide is distinct from other crimes insomuch as it embodies a special intent or *dolus specialis*."[160] Their lack of a way to show special intent is why some genocide claimants will fallback on asserting that crimes against humanity are being committed, as only the intent to carry out intentionally-directed, widespread and systematic crimes against a civilian population need be shown.

Showing special intent is most often thorough statements of the "genocidaires," the organizers of genocidal acts. During the 20th Century's first genocide, the German military commander in Namibia, Lt. General Lothar von

156 Max Boot, *Reagan: His Life and Legend* (New York: Norton, 2024).

157 Jeremy Scahill, "1983: Invasion of Grenada," The Intercept, Apr. 27, 2021.

158 "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," United Nations General Assembly, 1948, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf.

159 Clark, Elucidating: 500.

160 *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, ICTR-96-4-T (Appeal Judgment), 2 September 1998, para. 498.

Trotha, wrote in 1904, "I believe that the [Herero] nation as such should be annihilated."[161] He stated an intention to wage a "racial struggle" to "wipe out the entire nation or to drive them out of the country," a view that Chief of the German General Staff Alfred von Schlieffen seconded.[162]

Ottoman Minister of the Interior and Turkey's de facto leader Talat Pasha, as well as another top Turkish leader, Dr. Bahaeddin Shakir, issued telegrams in 1915 ordering to officials "to annihilate all of Armenians living within Turkey, not to allow a single one to remain" and to carry out "the annihilation of Armenians to the greatest extent possible."[163] Hitler's January 1939 Reichstag speech predicted annihilation of Europe's Jews if war broke out and he publicly said six times in 1941–1943 that his prediction was being realized. On December 12, 1941, the day after declaring war on the US, Hitler told top officials that "the Jews having caused another world war, their extermination must follow."[164] On January 27 1942, he demanded that the Jews disappear from Europe and on Feb. 3 1942 predicted that would happen. His statements were widely-publicized and he made many more in private conversations. Propagandists were also tasked with spreading the idea, by word of mouth, of exterminating the whole world's Jews.[165]

Intent can conceivably be inferred from the nature of the violence, the victims, and the surrounding context of victimization, but direct evidence, such as statements by the perpetrators evincing their genocidal intent to destroy a group as such, is typically necessary.[166] The writings about a Uyghur genocide have failed to prove the existence of special intent; even analysts with US government links have indicated the opposite of the intent to destroy a group as such, by characterizing China's policy in Xinjiang as radically inclusionary. Thus, James Millward has said the Chinese government's discourse of Xinjiang

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161 Jan-Bart Gewald, "Colonization, Genocide and Resurgence: The Herero of Namibia 1890–1933," in Michael Bollig, and Jand-Bart Gewald (eds.), *People, Cattle and Land: Transformation of a Pastoral Society in Southwestern Africa*, (Koln: Koppe, 2000): 187–226.

162 Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 32.

163 Taner Akcam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Palgrave, 2018); Harry Kazelian, "Taner Akçam Shares Research Revealing When Decision Was Made to Commit Armenian Genocide," *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, Mar. 14, 2023, https://mirrorspectator.com/people/dr-taner-akcam/.

164 Matthew Ghobrial Cockerill, "Did the Nazis Plan to Extend the Final Solution Beyond Europe? Assessing the Evidence," *Holocaust Studies* 30:3 (2024): 534–557.

165 Randall Bytwerk "The Argument for Genocide in Nazi Propaganda," Quarterly Journal of Speech. 91: 1 (2005): 37–62; Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: the Years of Extermination, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007): Ch. 6.

166 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 458.

is "an aggressively inclusive narrative, one that minimizes non-Han ethnic identity not through exclusion, but by engulfing it within a larger invented category [the Zhonghua minzu 中华民族 or "Chinese nation"]."[167] He has also stated that the Chinese government is "not trying to drive [Uyghurs] out of the country; they're trying to hold them in."[168] An analysis, by Chinese scholars at two European universities, of a key official Chinese news source also found that inclusionary ideas pervade official discussions of Uyghurs.[169] Inclusion, rather than punishment, was the raison d'etre for the VETCs that the Xinjiang government tasked with "education and transformation" from 2017–2019.[170] A 2024 official statement said VETCs were

> adopted to address the challenges posed by terrorism and radicalization. These centers were never intended to coerce trainees into abandoning Islam or the Uygur language and culture. Instead, they were designed to help individuals influenced by terrorism and extremism return to a positive path and reintegrate into society by equipping them with basic vocational skills. By late 2019, all trainees had successfully completed their educational programs.[171]

A Singapore journalist observed of the VETCs that "their ultimate goal is to integrate training subjects back to society after undergoing 'education.'"[172]

China's ethnically inclusionary ideology is an aspect of a political system that in fact has many inclusionary aspects.[173] Ethnically inclusionary ideology differs sharply from exclusionary racial ideologies, which construct the racialized "other" as a threat or a burden, and whose presence supposedly makes

167 James Millward, "(Identity) Politics in Command: Xi Jinping's July Visit to Xinjiang," The China Story, Aug. 16, 2022, www.thechinastory.org/identity-politics-in-command-xi-jinpings-july-visit-to-xinjiang/.

168 Jen Kirby, "China's Brutal Crackdown on the Uighur Muslim Minority, Explained," Vox, Nov. 7, 2018, www.vox.com/2018/8/15/17684226/uighur-china-camps-united-nations.

169 Zhou Xue and Zheng Jiaru, "The Construction of Muslim Minorities Image and the Communication of National Image through Media Discourse a Case Study of China CGTNs Documentary on Xinjiang Uyghurs," SHS Web of Conferences 159, 02020 (2023), www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2023/08/shsconf_iclcc2023_02020.pdf.

170 SCIO, *Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2019); Mahmut, Controlling Religious Knowledge.

171 Li Fangfang, "Learning Links," *Beijing Review*, Mar. 21, 2024.

172 Han Yong Hong, "Is There a Genocide in Xinjiang?" Think China, Feb. 19, 2021, www.thinkchina.sg/politics/there-genocide-xinjiang.

173 Anna Ahlers, "Political Inclusion in Contemporary China," *Journal of Chinese Governance* 4:3 (2019): 201–206.

the situation worse for the racialized majority.[174] Exclusionary ideologies make genocides more likely,[175] but even as early as 2015, US analysts observed that

> Calculable living standards are rising for all ethnicities across the board in Xinjiang, and those who go through the Chinese educational system and embrace urbanism, globalism, and some would say "Han-ification" often have a world of opportunities that were not available even a generation before. 'To China's credit, they do try to co-opt Uyghurs in their development plans,' said Julia McClenon, an American researcher [now at the US government's Naval Postgraduate School] who has written about the ethnic situation in Xinjiang. 'It's one of the reasons why many of their policies have been effective in that regard.'[176]

Even Zenz has at times contradicted his own claim of a proven genocide by saying of Uyghurs, that "it's not about eliminating them. It's about bringing them under control."[177]

Genocide claimants have the entire burden of proof to show, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the "crime of crimes" has occurred. International law has thus adopted the common law view of the burden of persuasion in criminal law. Some non-common law states, for example, Vietnam, also have that approach in their domestic legal system,[178] while others, such as China, may have a more ambiguous perspective.[179] An Australian law of genocide scholar has noted that the UN Fact Finding Commission on Myanmar was

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174 Martin Wolgast and Sima Nurali Wolgast, "Exclusionary and Exploitative Racism: Empirical Analyses of Two Facets of Contemporary Racial Ideologies," *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 14:1 (2024).

175 Barbara Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955," *American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003): 57–73.

176 Wade Shepherd, "The Complex Impact of Urbanization in Xinjiang," The Diplomat, Dec. 16, 2015, https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/.

177 John Ibbitson, "China Has Lost All Moral Authority as Data Suggests Suppression of Uyghur Births," *Globe and Mail*, June 10, 2021.

178 Ngyuen Ngoc Kien, "Principles of Questioning and Argument at First-instance Criminal Hearings," Vietnam Law and Legal Forum, Aug. 20, 2015, https://vietnamlawmagazine.vn/principles-of-questioning-and-argument-at-first-instance-criminal-hearings-4949.html.

179 Li Jinke, "The Relationship Between Criminal Procedural Law of Evidence and the Constituent Elements of Criminal Law," in Y. Chen et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2023 3rd International Conference on Modern Educational Technology and Social Sciences* (ICMETSS 2023), Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 784, www.atlantis-press.com/article/125993009.pdf.

> applying a low standard of proof (reasonable grounds). Prosecutors seeking to charge sexual violence as genocide by 'imposing measures intended to prevent births' in a criminal trial would need to satisfy the more onerous standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt.' Accordingly, they would need strong evidence to show that the alleged perpetrators committed sexual violence with the *intent* of preventing births within the Rohingya group, as part of a broader effort to destroy that group.[180]

Proof involves facts that finally and conclusively demonstrate that something is real or true. It is not to be confused with evidence – information that *might*, tentatively, lead one to believe something to be real or true. Conjecture, opinion, and belief are not facts, let alone proof.[181]

8 The Role of Émigrés in the Discourse of "Crimes against Humanity" in Xinjiang

An Australian scholar of China's ethnic relations has noted that "The Uyghur diaspora organizations overwhelmingly favor independence and are bitterly hostile to China and its policy toward Xinjiang."[182] These groups advance their objective of secession despite no country holding that the region is not legitimately part of China. Their unevidenced contentions about genocide influence unknowledgeable politicians and journalists and even some Western Xinjiang specialists, to support separatism; for example, the late Pomona College scholar Dru Gladney sat on the board of the pro-independence Uyghur émigré East Turkistan National Movement.[183]

The WUC, nominally headquartered in Munich, Germany but effectively based in Washington DC,[184] officially advocates self-determination for "East Turkistan" – the right to choose independence. Its statements also indicate,

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180 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 458.

181 Haley Aprile, "Evidence is Not Proof – the Adversarial Approach to Establishing Truth," *Australian Risk Management Journal* 32: 8 (2024): 103.

182 Colin Mackerras, "Religion and the Uyghurs: a Contemporary Overview" in Guljanat K. Ercilasun, et al (eds.), *The Uyghur Community: Diaspora, Identity and Geopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 59–84.

183 Petula Dvorak, "'This Feels Good': Hope and Commerce Near the White House," WP, June 19, 2020; "Professor Dru Gladney Passed Away Suddenly and Unexpectedly," ETNM, Mar. 22, 2022, www.facebook.com/ETAwakening/photos/a.164554287573725/905143040181509/.

184 Christopher Cunningham, *Diasporas, Ethnic Conflicts and Traumatic Events*, PhD diss, Northeastern University, 2013: 229, https://repository.library.northeastern.edu.

however, that it does not accept that Xinjiang is legitimately part of China. It has said, for example, that China is a "neighbor" of "East Turkestan," meaning the WUC regards Xinjiang as a separate state.[185] The WUC works with groups that also regard Tibet and Inner Mongolia as occupied countries entitled to independence or self-determination, regions that together with Xinjiang comprise 55% of China's territory.[186]

The WUC ignores the law of self-determination. It is a right of colonized or indigenous non-self-governing peoples – and peoples under alien occupation, because they are "a people," defined as the entire population of the occupied territorial unit. Ethnic groups are not peoples separate from the state they are part of, so ethnic minorities are not entitled to self-determination, except where they are systematically denied rights accorded the majority group.[187] Uyghurs have the same rights as other Chinese, so are not entitled to external self-determination – to choose to separate from the country. The UNSG has specified the reason for this rule: "If every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve".[188]

Without presenting any evidence, the WUC has said it "estimates that one million Uyghurs have died over the last six decades – not from natural causes, it is understood"[189] and urges Trump to sanction China through the G7, NATO and the UN.[190] WUC has said, from 2018 onward, that China is committing genocide against Uyghurs, but by 2025 even it may have given up claiming mass deaths, as it stated that it works to raise global awareness of human rights violations, including: "mass detentions in re-education camps," "forced

185 Maria Soloshcheva, "The Uyghur Terrorism," *Iran & the Caucasus* 21:4 (2017): 415–430, www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26548912.pdf.

186 See, e.g., "Joint Statement: Over 230 Rights Groups Demand Resignation of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights," WUC, June 8, 2022, www.uyghurcongress.org/en/joint-statement-over-230-rights-groups-demand-resignation-of-un-high-commissioner-for-human-rights/.

187 Vita Gudeleviciute, "Does the Principle of Self-Determination Prevail Over the Principle of Territorial Integrity?" *International Journal of Baltic Law* 2:2 (2005): 48–74.

188 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping," Report of the UN Secretary General to the Summit Meeting of the UN Security Council, Jan. 31, 1992: 9, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749/files/%5EST_%5EDPI_1247-EN.pdf.

189 "World Uyghur Congress Again Demands Self-determination for East Turkestan," Nationalia, Feb. 10, 2015, www.nationalia.info/new/10610/world-uyghur-congress-again-demands-self-determination-for-east-turkestan.

190 "WUC Urges US President to Address Uyghur Genocide by China," ANI, Nov. 7, 2025.

labor and religious suppression," and "cultural erasure and surveillance," none of which implicate genocidal acts.[191]

The relationship that host country political, media, and academic sectors now have with Uyghur émigrés parallels past host country interaction with other rightwing émigré groups. Such groups detest the government of the country they left, in part due to ideological opposition to its "leftist" policies and in part due to their emigration often resulting in downward social mobility. For example, a 2023 study of Hong Kong émigrés in Britain found political reasons were "the most significant factor influencing their decision to leave the city." Only 30% of the 1,310 respondents – 58% of them aged 30–49 – found full-time jobs, despite 78.4% being university graduates and 30% holding master's degrees or above. The results showed that many migrants from Hong Kong "might have had to switch from professional or managerial roles to primary industry or elementary work."[192] The bitterness of recent émigrés about the Chinese government, makes them far from objective in appraising conditions in their native city.

In exchange for political, financial and sometimes military support, émigrés further the host state's aim of regime change in their own country, especially by helping to shape host country negative narratives about the land they left. In the process, host country forces uncritically absorb into their own discourse unevidenced émigré claims, often in disregard of their veracity. Émigrés in turn often portray themselves as useful agents to further host country efforts at regime change. For example, Penpa Tsering, head of the Tibet Government in Exile hosted by India, visited Paris in 2023 to tell Europeans that "If you want to bring about positive [read: regime] change in China, eventually you need both internal forces and external forces. And we are the internal forces, Tibetans. Uyghurs, Mongols, Hongkongers, Taiwanese, including the pro-democracy movement inside China. They all will have to come together."[193]

Several Uyghur émigrés have held influential official positions in the US. Elnigar Iltebir left Xinjiang for Turkey at age 10 in 1994 and moved to the US in 2000 at age 18. Her father, a former Urumqi middle school teacher, was a propagandist for RFA from 2000–2017. Her sister, Elfidar Iltebir, is president of the Washington-based, US government-funded UAA. Elnigar was also an

191 "World Uyghur Congress to Host Key Dialogue on Uyghur Repression and Digital Surveillance," Asianet News, Feb. 25, 2025.

192 Laura Westbrook, "Only a Third of Hongkongers Who Recently Moved to UK Found Full-Time Jobs, Despite Most Being Highly Educated, Survey Reveals," SCMP, Aug. 23, 2023.

193 Jan van der Made, "Leader of Tibetan Government in Exile Warns France Over China's Policies," RFI.fr, Dec.5, 2023.

émigré political activist. In 2019, Trump put her in charge of China issues at the National Security Council, the main White House foreign affairs advisory committee. Elnigar later became a professional staff advisor to Republican Senator Marcos Rubio in the Senate Intelligence Committee. Rubio is Secretary of State in the second Trump administration.[194] Nury Turkel, who left Xinjiang for the US in 1995 and has not returned, co-founded and headed the UAA. He has also led other US government-funded émigré groups, including the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), from which he resigned in 2024 due to sexual harassment charges. Turkel was also formerly chair of the official US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and is a fellow at the ultra-right Hudson Institute think tank.[195]

The symbiosis of émigrés and hosts has existed since the first group designated "émigrés" departed in the 1790s in response to the French Revolution. The 150,000 who left

> represented the first clearly political group of exiles both regarding their motives and their choice of destinations of exile … Émigrés who had previously been active in (pre-)revolutionary politics or the military were often involved in projects aiming at the downfall of the revolutionary regimes. They also cooperated with or tried to influence their host territories for achieving these aims, including military violence and scenarios of revenge.

Émigrés, especially ultra-royalists, were most influential in Britain. A decade earlier, the UK drew in 7,000 of the 80,000–100,000 "empire loyalists" who fled the new US.[196]

The Loyalists claimed shelter and sympathy as fellow subjects of the Crown and Britons' "kith and kin." French émigrés did not have those ties, but the

194 "China vs. the U.S.: Chile Seeks to be Neutral in Times of Trade War," CE Noticias Financieras, Apr. 27, 2025; Simone McCarthy, "White House Appoints Uygur-American Elnigar Iltebir to Top China Policy Advisory Job," SCMP, Aug. 15, 2019; "Testimony of Elfidar Iltebir, President, Uyghur-American Association," CECC Hearing, "Implementation of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and the Impact on Global Supply Chains," Apr. 18, 2023, https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/Elfidar%20Iltebir%27s%20statement-CECC%20Hearing%20on%20Forced%20labor.pdf.

195 "Nury Turkel," Hudson Institute, 2025, www.hudson.org/experts/1349-nury-turkel; "Woman Faced Backlash for Claiming Sexual Harassment by Uyghur Leader," RFA, July 15, 2024, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/sexual-harassment-allegations-backlash-07152024144734.html.

196 Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2011).

British state funded them through NGOs of the time, to contribute to Britain's effort to defeat revolutionary France. Émigrés framed much of the British negative narrative of France. Prominent Britons took up their cause, especially long-serving MP Edmund Burke, who pushed for Britain to aid émigrés seeking the French state's overthrow and is now seen as the founder of conservatism.[197]

The French émigrés used the ten-month "Reign of Terror" in France in 1793–1794, to exhort Europe against the revolution. They never balanced that brief and condemnable terror against the centuries of their feudal ancient regime, as Mark Twain was to do nearly a century later when he contrasted two "Reigns of Terror":

> one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions [yet] our shudders are all for the 'horrors' of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the axe, compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heart-break.[198]

A century and a quarter later, part of another host country's political forces absorbed the most extreme claims of rightwing émigrés. Leaving the fallen Russian Empire after the revolution, Baltic German, ethnic Russian, and Ukrainian émigrés flocked to Berlin and Munich in 1918–1923. The forces these émigrés had supported murdered about 100,000 Jews in pogroms during the Russian civil war (1917–1921). Many émigrés brought with them a violent racist ideology which they imparted, including to the new Nazi Party, through a Russo-German organization, Aufbau. They expanded Hitler's anti-Jewish worldview, helped finance his party, and joined its actions, including the Nazi's 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, an attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government. Émigré Aufbau leader Alfred Rosenberg went on to become a key ideological influencer of Hitler and perpetrator of the Holocaust. The émigrés introduced to

197 Friedemann Pestel, "Who Were the French Emigrés? On the Relationship Between and Emigré and Refugee Studies," Age of Revolutions, May 29, 2023, https://ageofrevolutions.com/2023/05/29/who-were-the-french-emigres-on-the-relation-between-emigre-and-refugee-studies/; Kirsty Carpenter, "British Government Aid to French Emigrés and Early Humanitarian Relief During the French Revolution," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 48:3 (2022): 51–68; Juliette Reboul, *French Emigration to Great Britain in Response to the French Revolution* (Berlin: Springer, 2017); Frederick Peter Lock, *Edmund Burke. Volume II: 1784–1797* (Clarendon Press, 2006): 453.

198 Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969 [1889]): 40.

Germany the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a concocted fantasy about a long-term Jewish plan to dominate the world, and the idea of a "Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy" that must be eradicated.[199]

Uyghur émigré groups fit into the pattern of rightwing émigré politics established by the French ultraroyalists in Britain and White Russians in Germany, which has included assertions of plots by the "impure" to dominate or even obliterate the "pure." Uyghur émigré leaders claim, for example, that there is forced intermarriage of Uyghurs to Han and Anglosphere media have produced many articles in which similar assertions are made and with the same lack of evidence. Media pronouncements are then repeated by influential people with no first-hand or researched knowledge of Xinjiang who nevertheless opine about forced marriage there.[200] For example, in 2019, Turkish/German Arsenal football star Mesut Ozil, tweeted that "in East Turkistan … the women are forced to marry Chinese men,"[201] so that forced intermarriage would lead to fewer children registered as Uyghurs and more registered as Han. The opposite is true however, because up to 90% of children of Uyghur/Han intermarriages are registered as Uyghurs, in part because of preferential policies for minorities, such as in university admissions.[202] Even if there was evidence of forced intermarriage – and there is none – to associate it with genocide requires a showing that Han spouses seek to contribute to a plan to destroy the Uyghurs, as such, through forced pregnancy. That would require "strong evidence of genocidal intent," through statements of governmental officials or the Han spouses, that they intend that destruction.[203]

Whether they are explicit about it or not, many Uyghur émigré groups are viewed as seeking an independent "East Turkistan."[204] Western media derive much of their information on Xinjiang from Uyghur separatist groups, many of them US government-financed and with substantial incentives to invent what they say. The US-based UHRP, for example, was founded by the UAA in 2004

199 Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917–1945*. (New York: Cambridge University Press. 2005). Richard Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin, 2004): 178–179.

200 Barry Sautman, "Xinjiang Forced Intermarriage as Genocide: A Problem from Nowhere," draft paper.

201 Nick Ames, "Arsenal Distance Themselves from Mesut Özil Comments on Uighurs' Plight." *The Guardian*, December 13, 2019.

202 Interview with Prof. Yang Shengmin, Xinjiang specialized anthropologist, Minzu University, May 7, 2024.

203 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 450–451.

204 Yitzhak Shichor, "Elephant in the China Shop: the Uyghur Pyrrhic Victory," *Sociology of Islam* (2023): 1–20; "Netherlands-Based Uyghur Activist Calls for China's Disintegration," ANI, May 13, 2025.

with an NED grant.[205] NED was founded by the US Congress in 1983 and has been wholly funded by it. Its mission is to "do today was done covertly twenty-five years ago by the CIA," in the words of founder Allen Weinstein.[206]

NED touts the groups it funds for ensuring that US laws supporting the émigré cause are enacted. An example is the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act (UHRPA) of 2020, which contains "visa and financial sanctions extended to Chinese companies, officials, government agencies and import, export and investment flows" and was extended in 2024 for five more years.[207] From 2004 to 2020, the NED provided Uyghur émigré groups with $8,758,300. In 2016–2020, NED provided UHRP alone with more than US$1.54m.[208] Since 2021, NED has been headed by Damon Wilson, an ex-State Department, National Security Council, and NATO official. A 2024 Chinese report indicated that "NED's average annual funding for the World Uygur Congress ranges from US$5 million to US$6 million."[209] In 2023, US Secretary of State Blinken said that "NGOs like Campaign for Uyghurs and [UHRP] are documenting the genocide and crimes against humanity against predominately Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China."[210]

The *Daily Telegraph* (DT) UK newspaper group reported the UHRP claim that "Chinese people are being paid to marry Muslims in order to wipe out the Uyghur population." It termed UHRP merely a "Washington-based NGO" [that] "draws from official policy documents, social media posts and interviews with Uyghurs abroad."[211] The DT failed to mention that UHRP, along with the WUC, the Campaign for Uyghurs, and other émigré groups, are NED clients. Government-funded-and-endorsed groups cannot credibly be described as NGOs.

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205 Zhang Chi, "Competing Narratives of the Xinjiang Question and China-West Geopolitical Rivalry," in Shixin Ivy Zhang and Altman Yuzhu Peng (eds), *China Media, and International Conflicts* (New York: Routledge, 2023): 58–73 (66).

206 David Ignatius, "Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyless Coups," WP, Sept. 23, 1991.

207 Mark Magnier, "Biden Signs Pentagon Budget Bill that Extends Sanctions on Hong Kong Officials," SCMP, Dec. 25, 2024.

208 "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act Builds on Work of NED Grantees," NED, May 29, 2020, www.ned.org/uyghur-human-rights-policy-act-builds-on-work-of-ned-grantees/; "Awarded Grants Search," NED, 2023, www.ned.org/wp-content/themes/ned/search/grant-search.php?organizationName=&region=Asia&projectCountry=China&amount=&fromDate=&toDate=&projectFocus%5B%5D=&search=&maxCount=25&orderBy=CountryR&start=1&sbmt=1.

209 Cyril Ip, "US Group Accused of 'Ideological Infiltration,'" SCMP, Aug. 11, 2024.

210 "Secretary Antony J. Blinken on the 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom," US Fed News, May 15, 2023.

211 Simina Mistreanu, "Chinese 'Paid to Marry' Uyghurs in Cleansing Plan," DT, Nov 17, 2022.

UHRP Director of Global Advocacy Louisa Greve was formerly NED Vice President for Programs and East Asia Director.[212] UHRP Associate Director for Research and Advocacy Peter Irwin was formerly WUC Program Manager and Spokesperson. He asserted, without providing evidence, that in Xinjiang "Having a Koran at home can get you 10 years [in prison]."[213] Zenz had opined in 2019 that "Anyone in Xinjiang who engages in any type of religious practice, anyone who even has a single Koran verse saved on their mobile phone, will be subjected to a brutal process of re-education without trial."[214] UHRP head Omer Kanat said after Ramadan, 2023, without showing evidence, that Muslims could not observe the month in any way. "They couldn't fast. They couldn't read the Quran. They couldn't attend Friday prayers. They couldn't even pray at home. If they tried, they would almost certainly be sent to a concentration camp."[215] Mosques, however, are observably full on Muslim holy days. In 2025, an émigré-linked news service said Xinjiang officials order Uyghurs to work during Ramadan, to stop their fasting.[216] Muslims however need not take the Ramadan month off work. They only fast from dawn to dusk and, the world-over, "Most Muslim employees continue to work during Ramadan."[217]

Such statements are not only unsubstantiated, but also uncontextualized; for example, they fail to note that for most Uyghurs, the Quran was inaccessible until a generation ago, as it was not translated into Uyghur until 1986. Even Omer Kanat has attested that the translation, done by Muhammad Salih Hajim, was carried out as part of a Chinese government-approved project.[218] It was thus, in part, the CCP that made the Quran accessible for Uyghurs. In a 2023 visit to the Islamic Institute in Urumqi, students were seen as having

212 "Staff," UHRP, 2023, https://uhrp.org/staff/.

213 David Lipson, "After Years of Brutal Repression, China's Communist Party Tries to Turn Xinjiang into a Tourism Hotspot," ABC News, Oct. 1, 2023.

214 "Chinese Oppression of the Uighurs Like 'Cultural Genocide,'" *Der Spiegel*, November 28, 2019, www.spiegel.de/international/world/chinese-oppression-of-the-uighurs-like-cultural-genocide-a-1298171.html.

215 Omer Kanat, "Where Is the Outrage, and Action, in the Arab World Over China's Uyghur Genocide?" DawnMena, May 10, 2023, https://dawnmena.org/where-is-the-outrage-and-action-in-the-arab-world-over-chinas-uyghur-genocide/.

216 "China Forces Uyghurs into Labour During Ramadan to Prevent Fasting, Restrict Religious Practices: Reports," Asian News International (ANI), Mar. 21, 2025.

217 "Can You Work During Ramadan?" Studio Aribya Institute, Mar. 4, 2025, https://studioarabiya.com/can-you-work-during-ramadan/.

218 Edmund Waite, "The Emergence of Muslim Reformism in Contemporary Xinjiang: Implications for the Uyghurs' Positioning Between a Central Asian and Chinese Context," in Ildiko Beller-Hann, et al (eds.), *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007): 165–184.

Korans. It has also been asserted that to combat religious extremism, Xinjiang government programs have taught the Koran, to show it is not in accord with religious extremist Wahabism.[219] Moreover, "The Chinese government has never prohibited Uyghur Muslims from learning and reciting the Quran at home. If requested, an Imam will visit homes to help Uyghur children recite and memorize the Quran with precision, free of charge. The government has even developed online apps to facilitate the correct pronunciation and recitation of the Quran."[220]

Religious extremism is defined in Xinjiang's Regulation on De-radicalization (新疆维吾尔自治区去极端化条例 2017) as "'propositions' and 'activities' that, 'by distorting religious teaching or with other means, incite hatred and discrimination, or advocate violence, etc.'"[221] It is seen as a threat not only in Xinjiang, but elsewhere.[222] The Chinese state condemns Salafist (塞莱非耶) religious extremism, but has yet to put out propaganda like the video about Islamic extremism that the state of Bavaria issued in 2024, which German politicians denounced because, as one put said, it "bears an alarming resemblance to the negative depictions of Jews in the Third Reich and one gets the impression that Islam in general is being stigmatized."[223]

Governments or separatist groups often cite the same media that elicited statements from them as confirming their own claims. For example, after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack from Gaza, the Israeli government supplied the *India Today* news channel with its account of a Hamas fighter calling his parents to brag he had killed Jews, which *India Today* published. When Israel responded in the ICJ to South Africa's charge of genocide in Gaza, it cited the *India Today* article as the source for its argument, – in effect citing itself.[224] A

219 Leo He Zhao, "Blowback Roundtable …" Chinarising.puntopress, Nov. 11, 2023, https://chinarising.puntopress.com/2023/11/11/blowback-roundtable-invites-jeff-j-brown-and-leo-he-zhao-with-hosts-billy-bob-and-ben-toth-for-an-around-the-world-discussion-china-rising-radio-sinoland-231111/.

220 "Xinjiang: Islam Blossoming," *The Nation*, Aug. 31, 2024.

221 "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-Extremification," China Law Translated, Mar. 2017, www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region-regulation-on-de-extremification.

222 Mohammed Nassir, "The Rising Threat of Far Right and Religious Extremism: Safeguarding Singapore's Social Harmony," RSIS Commentary, Feb. 19, 2025.

223 "Islamophobic State Government Video Causes Outrage in Germany," Al-Jazeera, Sept. 4, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-cZGsaCbIU; Selja Amatovic, "German Former MP Denounces State Agency's Video Clip as 'Racist Trash'," Politico, Sept. 2, 2024, www.politico.eu/article/former-german-mp-denounces-state-agencys-videoclip-as-racist-trash/.

224 Pamela Philipose, "Backstory: India Is on the Wrong Side of History on Gaza, and the Media Has Not Helped," The Wire, Feb. 3, 2024, https://thewire.in/media/backstory-india-is-on-the-wrong-side-of-history-on-gaza-and-the-media-has-not-helped.

Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC) report on Tibetan boarding schools cited a report by the Tibetan Action Institute (TAI) claiming the schools have a malign purpose. The TAI is one of 12 Tibetan émigré organizations funded by NED. TAI's website posted the same CBC report as authority for its own claims. Such circular referencing is common in negative narratives about China: an entity issues a report making claims, a media group reproduces the report's claims and cites the report; the claimant then presents the media article as news.[225]

Some US scholars unquestioningly accept unevidenced claims of media and advocacy groups, however. They adopt assertions such as "China's Goal Is the Extermination of the Uyghur People."[226] The US scholar who authored that quote has also said, "I completely trust what the Uyghurs in the diaspora are saying."[227] That trust abounds even though such academics likely know that media and advocacy groups have incentives to promote claims that draws public attention or advance their cause. So too with individual émigrés whose quest for political asylum may be furthered by atrocity tales or an asserted risk of persecution. Such claims are *de rigeur* among undocumented or overstaying migrants from China. For example, a British judge granted asylum to a Chinese overstayer who said his attendance at UK pro-Taiwan independence rallies would expose him to persecution if he were returned to China. His claim was believed even though there was evidence the applicant had not been seriously engaged in political activism.[228]

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225 "Without Corroboration or Balance, Western Media's Propaganda Targeting Xizang will Persuade Nobody," GT, Apr. 30, 2023; "How Washington's NED Propagandized Tibetan Education for Shock Value … and Used Canada to Do It," Jerry's Take on China, Apr. 18, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Mjc-YvLvu0.

226 Lina S. Lenberg, *Genocide in East Turkestan: Exploring the Perspectives of Uyghurs in the Diaspora and their Resistance to Chinese* State *Violence,* EdD diss., University of San Francisco, 2022, https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1608&context=diss.

227 Kurban Niyaz, Interview: 'There's a Clear Intentional Destruction of Uyghur Culture and Identity' RFA, Oct. 10, 2022, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/lina-lenberg-10102022174608.html.

228 Charles Hymas, "Chinese Asylum Seeker Avoids Deportation After Claiming Support for Taiwanese Independence," Telegraph Online, June 20, 2025.

CHAPTER 5

"Judging" Genocides Real and Imagined

1 A "Very British" Pseudo-Court

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC), acting through UK politicians, convened a non-judicial "Uyghur Tribunal" (UT) in 2021. Its $115,000 in funding came mainly from the WUC,[1] but not in reality "from Uyghurs" as Arslan Hidayat, head of the Washington-based Campaign for the Uyghurs put it,[2] as NED funds the WUC.[3] An Israeli Xinjiang specialist pointed out that the WUC's "main political gravity center is in Washington, gathering political momentum primarily because of the growing Sino-American rivalry, smartly exploited by the WUC." The "wholesale Western 'support'" for the émigré cause is "more as a part of the orchestrated 'China bashing' campaign" than a reflection of human rights concerns, as "none of the Western reactions improved the situation of China's Uyghurs one iota."[4]

Composed solely of UK residents, the UT heard only Western-based testimonialists. They were not cross-examined and, where torture, forced sterilization, forced abortion, etc. was alleged, no medical evidence was presented. The UT made no use of information derived from scholars in China, who are overwhelmingly predominant among the world's Xinjiang specialists.

The UT found "imposition of measures to prevent births intended to destroy a significant part of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang," but "no evidence of organized mass killings." It "acknowledged that its 'genocide' determination based on birth control was at odds with popular understandings of the word." Though it produced no evidence of an intent to destroy the Uyghurs, as such, UK politicians made use of the UT. Robert Jerick, a minister in Tory governments and contender in 2024 for the Tory leadership, endorsed its conclusion.[5]

The UT's finding of no evidence of mass killing however negated the claim of Nusrat Ghani, another minister in Tory governments. Before the US officially endorsed the genocide claim in January 2021, Ghani had only claimed

1 "WUC Abuses Women Rights," *The Nation*, Sept. 17, 2024.
2 "China Spreading Propaganda Videos of Uyghurs Living "Happily" on YouTube," *India Today*, Sept. 28, 2022.
3 "2021 Annual Report," NED, 2022, www.ned.org/annual-report/2021-annual-report-2/.
4 Shichor, Elephant.
5 "Holocaust Memorial Day: Debate between Shailesh Vara and Robert Jenrick," Hansard, Jan. 27, 2022, www.parallelparliament.co.uk/mp/shailesh-vara/vs/robert-jenrick.

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that "slave labor is alive and well in China."[6] In March 2021 however, she stated that "The US government has described the treatment of the Uyghurs as genocide. Think about what that means – it means the deliberate killing of humans en masse,"[7] exactly what the UT was soon to declare non-existent. Ghani nevertheless referenced only putative "slave labor," in the Xinjiang cotton industry, and did not explain how, if that is so, Xinjiang produced 92.2% of China's cotton, 5.69m tons, in 2024, through the efforts of 327,000 cotton producing households – 70% of them ethnic minorities – while planters in the US around 1860 produced only 1 million tons of cotton, using the labor of 1.8 million slaves. The answer is because Xinjiang cotton production no longer needs to rely much on labor, let alone slave labor. Cotton planting is 100% mechanized and harvesting is 90%.[8] With smart cotton farming that uses sensors to monitor field conditions, such as pest presence, groundwater levels, and weather data, in real time and create digital models, one worker can oversee 200–300 mu (13.34–20 ha) of cotton fields, compared with just 30 mu (2 ha) under traditional methods.[9] Thus,, despite US cotton-related sanctions, Xinjiang cotton production rose by 11% from 2020 to 2024.[10]

The UT found no mass killings but failed to note the non-existence of other phenomena typically associated with genocides, such as occupation. Even the US military has noted that "occupiers cannot overcome the host population except by annihilation." Occupation usually gives rise to large-scale resistance that can only be ended by massive killing.[11] The lack of such killing in Xinjiang effectively indicates not only no genocide, but no occupation.

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6 "Forced Labor in UK Value Chains – Nusrat Ghani Responds to BBC Report on Labor in China's Xinjiang Cotton Fields," UK Parliament, Dec, 15, 2020, https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/365/business-energy-and-industrial-strategy-committee/news/137922/forced-labour-in-uk-value-chains-nusrat-ghani-responds-to-bbc-report-on-labour-in-chinas-xinjiang-cotton-fields/.

7 Emily Sutherland, "Are You Selling China's Slave Cotton?" *Drapers*, Mar. 2, 2021, www.drapersonline.com/insight/analysis/are-you-selling-chinas-slave-cotton.

8 "Xinjiang's Cotton Output Grows in 2024," XH, Dec.27, 2024; "Xinjiang Kicks Off Cotton Planting Season with Undeterred Momentum," CD, Apr. 22, 2025; "The Cotton Economy," National Parks Service, 2025, www.nps.gov/blrv/learn/historyculture/cotton-economy.htm#:~:text=This%20happened%20along%20with%20a,pounds%20of%20cotton%20each%20year.

9 "Xinjiang Cotton Finds New Path in Global Markets: Advancing from Raw Material to High-tech Export," People's Daily Online, July 2, 2025.

10 National Bureau of Statistics, "Bulletin on the National Cotton Output in 2020," Dec. 21, 2020, www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202012/t20201221_1810253.html; "Xinjiang Sets Record for Grain Output in 2024," CD, Jan. 23, 2025.

11 Stephen Marche, "Why America Can't Conquer Canada," *Maclean's*, Jan. 9, 2025.

Every genocide has had not only mass killings and mass graves, but also mass flight. There has been no mass of refugees fleeing Xinjiang, despite the region having 5,700 km of borders with eight countries.[12] Kazakhstan has a long border with Xinjiang and has had Uyghurs since the late 19th Century. Its government figures show zero net migration of Uyghurs for 2018–2020 making it unlikely that many Uyghur refugees fled Xinjiang. Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, by the way, learn its national languages: three-fourths can speak Russian and four-fifths can speak Kazakh, but "Uyghurs that have lived in Kazakhstan for a generation or longer likely use Russian more often than their native language."[13] No one claims, however, that Uyghurs in Kazakhstan have thereby undergone a "cultural genocide."

Most upheavals generate waves of outmigrants. About 2.5 million left after the Russian revolution or 1.5% of the population; 4.5% fled the American Revolution.[14] One indication of no panicked out-migration from Xinjiang is statistics about the flow of Chinese citizens to Ecuador, a country that until 2024 allowed Chinese visa-free entry. It became a jumping-off point for the trek by undocumented Chinese seeking to enter the US. Shanghai and Xinjiang have same-sized populations and data on place of origin showed that more than ten times the number of Shanghai people than Xinjiang people came to Ecuador.[15]

If there were a Xinjiang genocide, one would expect photographic evidence of it, as there is even of the Holocaust, despite the pervasively repressive Nazi regime. Although China has about 1.6 billion cell phones, there is no such photographic evidence for Xinjiang. The photo most often displayed as evidence is of sitting rows of uniformed Uyghur men. They are typically shown from the front and described as "concentration camp" prisoners. An online video explains however that the men were at a drug rehabilitation center, where they listened to an imam's speech and watched an on-stage cultural performance, visible in photos shot from the rear.[16] Xinjiang then had what is, by China's standards, sig-

12 "Visiting the Training Base of Police Dogs in Xinjiang," CGTN, Dec. 2, 2021.

13 Dyugu Benici, *The Impact of Rising Kazakh Nationalism on Minorities in the Post-Soviet Nation-Building*, Middle East Technical University, MA thesis, 2022: 69, 76; Matthew Stein, "Uyghurs Without Borders? The Economic and Social Status of Uyghurs in Kazakhstan and Its Impact on Interethnic Conflict and Transnational Threats," US Defense Department Foreign Military Studies Office, 2012: 5.

14 Albert Szymanski, *Human Rights in the Soviet Union* (London: Zed, 1984): 155.

15 Matthew Loh, "The Thousands of Chinese Migrants Headed to the US-Mexico Border Just Lost Their Key Entry Point to America," Business Insider, June 20, 2024.

16 See "Reports on China," Youtube, June 23, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG6awogjkms.

nificant drug use that contributed to the spread of HIV.[17] Another explanation of the photo is that the men were in a prison, but listened, on April 17, 2017, to a religious leader and then a prisoner's repentant speech, an event not out of place at many prisons outside of China.[18] Importantly, those attending appear to be in robust health, which is hardly typical of "concentration camp" inmates.

The UT had requested evidence about "Uyghur genocide" from the US government, but "Requests for assistance by provision of useable evidence, including by Freedom of Information requests, have all been declined."[19] Its UK-citizen members were entitled by law to access UK government information – which is unlikely to have been classified – but UK officials also refused. Both governments likely did so because they had no evidence of genocide.

The UT had no testimony by anyone questioning the claim of genocide or crimes against humanity nor any cross-examination. As the ICJ observed in *Bosnia v. Serbia*, the reports by independent bodies that are "partisan" and are not the "product of a careful court or court-like process lack value."[20] The UT was nevertheless followed in 2024 by the "Court of the Citizens of the World" (CCW). It called itself "quasi-judicial" and held tendentious hearings in the Hague, Netherlands, implying an association with the Hague-headquartered ICJ. The CCW was convened to find China guilty of intending to "completely annihilate the Uyghur community" and issued an "arrest warrant" for Xi Jinping, charging him with 11 types of crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and aggression, covering Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and the US. Its supporters had to admit that it did "not have the enforcement power of a national court or an international judicial body," but failed to state that it was not a court at all, except of the "kangaroo" kind.[21]

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17 Allessandra Cappelletti, "'Developing the Land and the People': Social Development Issues in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (1999–2009)," *East Asia* 32 (2015): 137–171 (152); Justin Rudelson and William Jankowiak, "Acculturation and Resistance," in S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (New York: Routledge, 2004): 299–319.

18 Nuri Vittachi, "The Strange Truth Behind the World's Most Mis-used Photo," YouTube, Feb. 3, 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmmmOVz9vEo.

19 "Uygur Tribunal Judgment," Dec. 9, 2021: 7, 24, 30, 55–56, https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Uyghur-Tribunal-Judgment-9th-Dec-21.pdf; Owen Churchill, "China Committed Genocide in Xinjiang, Says UK Independent Body," SCMP, Dec. 10, 2021.

20 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*), [*Bosnia v. Serbia*] ICJ, Feb. 26, 2007, para. 227, www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/91/091-20070226-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf.

21 "International Pressure Builds on China for Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang, Tibet," ANI, July 21, 2024.

The UT and CCW resembled the International Tribunal for Natural Justice, "an independent, UK-based group that holds 'hearings' and 'trials' and whose members have promoted baseless conspiracy theories about 5G technology and the coronavirus." It claimed Bill Gates wants to use vaccines to kill billions of people, starting in Africa. A 2020 Gates statement was cited: "The world today has 6.8 billion people. That's headed up to about 9 billion. Now, if we do a really great job on new vaccines, health care, reproductive health services, we lower that by perhaps 10 or 15%." Gates' intent however was "to help reduce the rate of global population growth and, as a result, lower carbon emissions," not to kill. Improved health care lowers population growth in poor countries by lowering child mortality and, as more children make it to adulthood, parents choose to have smaller families.[22] Based on the 2020 statement however, an "anti-Vax activist" member of the Italian parliament said Gates seeks genocide and called on the ICC to try him for crimes against humanity. Videos of her speeches have millions of views globally, especially in Africa.[23] Ironically, genocide specialists note that in areas of high population density and scarce resources, population growth may contribute to civil wars or genocides, as in Rwanda, while reducing population growth may lessen the odds of genocides, as in Sudan's Darfur region.[24]

It is not only "popular understandings of the word" genocide that make mass killings its *sine qua non*. International law scholars also understand it as such; for example, one in Israel has put it that "The touchstone of genocide is committing acts of a large scale, demonstrable as aiming for the physical destruction of another group, as such."[25] Pervasive destruction of infrastructure, massive killings of civilians (mainly women and children), plus induced malnutrition and epidemics accelerated by territorial confinement – all in the context of statements that show disregard for Palestinians' survival and support ethnic cleansing – have thus led genocide scholars to conclude that Israel

22 Ali Swenson, "Bill Gates Never Said '3 Billion People Need to Die,'" AP, Jan. 27, 2021.

23 "Fact Check: Italian Government Has Not Called for Bill Gates Arrest," Reuters, May 26, 2020; "Italian Politician Spreads False Claims About Bill Gates in Parliament Speeches," AFP, May 28, 2020.

24 Kurt Johannson, "Precursors of Genocide: a Research Agenda," Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1998, https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/id/eprint/979955/1/A-MIGS__Occasional_Paper_Series__PRECURSORS_OF_GENOCIDE_-_A_RESEARCH_AGENDA.pdf; Wesley Hermann, "Anthropogenic Activities and Resource Shortages: The Case of Darfur," URJ 1:2 (2009): 1–32; Ole Magnus Theisen, "Blood and Soil? Resource Scarcity and Internal Armed Conflict Revisited," *Journal of Peace Research* 45:6 (2008): 801–818; Mahmud Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

25 Slawotsky, Is China Guilty.

is committing genocide in Gaza. These include some scholars who previously were reluctant to reach that conclusion.[26]

Apart from what genocide scholars had concluded about the intent of Israeli leaders, there was another, unique evidence of intent. For the first time during a plausible genocide, public opinion about potential genocidal acts was surveyed and much of the Israeli population was shown to have supported an ethnic cleansing, even if based on a genocide. Pennsylvania State University commissioned a 2025 poll conducted for Israeli firm Geocartography Knowledge Group, which surveyed a representative sample of 1,005 Jewish Israeli adults. It found that 82% supported forced expulsion of Gaza's residents, 56% favored doing the same to Israel's Arab citizens (up from 48% in 2013–2014), 53% agreed Israel should disallow humanitarian aid in Gaza. Some 47% supported the army killing all Gazans, to comply with a Biblical injunction in which God commanded ancient Israelites to annihilate every living thing in the "iniquitous" city of Jericho after it fell. Expulsion of Gazans was supported by 70% of secular respondents, 38% of whom also backed expulsion of Israeli Arabs, up from 33% in 2013–2014. Just 9% of Jewish men under age 40 – the demographic of soldiers – fully opposed expulsion and transfer.[27]

At the same time, even some Israeli mainstream politicians hinted that a genocide might be underway. Former Israeli PM Ehud Olmert stated in May 2025 that "What we are doing in Gaza now is a war of extermination: indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians … Yes, Israel is committing war crimes."[28] Significantly, the Nazis described their war in the East as a *vernichtungskrieg*, a war of extermination.

An Australian international law specialist has stated that the scale of destruction can indicate genocidal intent.

> In most cases, intent must be inferred from the circumstances. Because of this, the scale of destruction is a relevant factor in establishing intent. In some cases, such as in Rwanda, evidence of genocidal intent is manifest in the number of killings. Death on such a scale simply could not

26 Sondos Asem, "Top Genocide Scholars Unanimous that Israel is Committing Genocide in Gaza: Dutch Investigation," Middle East Eye, May 17, 2025, www.middleeasteye.net/news/top-genocide-scholars-unanimous-israel-committing-genocide-gaza-investigation-finds; Shmuel Lederman, "Gaza Laboratory 2.0," *Journal of Genocide Studies* (2024): 1–6.

27 "Yes to Transfer: 82% of Jewish Israelis Back Expelling Gazans," *Haaretz*, May 28, 2025; "Major Poll: About Half of Israeli Jews Want to Expel Arabs," Ynet.News.com, Mar. 9, 2016.

28 Quoted in Thomas Friedman, "The Flashing Signals That I Just Saw in Israel," NYT, May 27, 2025.

> occur unless it was done pursuant to an overarching plan aimed at ending the existence of the group.[29]

There are scholars, almost all in the West, who want genocide to be something other than what the Genocide Convention defines it to be. They may want it to not only be about the physical destruction of a protected group or may want the classes of protected groups to be expanded beyond the four prescribed in the Convention.[30] Whether such changes should be made can be debated, but most genocide scholars do recognize that genocides have been physical destructions of protected groups. American University genocide specialist Jeffrey Bachman did a textual analysis of 393 scholarly articles on incidences of genocide, finding that there is a "hegemonic understanding of genocide," as most analyses use an understanding of genocide that prioritizes physical destruction of a population.[31]

Another way of expressing that finding is that scholars have generally recognized "actually existing genocides" as centering on mass killing. Three genocides have been "officially recognized under the definition of the term in the 1948 Genocide Convention and led to trials in international criminal tribunals: one against the Cham Muslim and ethnic Vietnamese perpetrated by Khmer Rouge leaders in Cambodia in the 1970s, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and the 1995 Srebrenica Massacre in Bosnia." All three genocides involved massive killings. So too did "The mass killings of the Yazidis by ISIS in Iraq and of the Rohingya in Myanmar [that] have been recognized as genocide by the United Nations as a whole."[32] A UN Commission of Inquiry found ISIS violated Genocide Convention II(d), prevention of births. A UN Fact-Finding Mission found the same about the Rohingya, albeit by applying an improper standard of proof.[33]

Yet, James Leibold, who was then a Xinjiang specialist at the Western government/arms makers-financed Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI),

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29 Catherine Renshaw, "The Numbers Game: Substantiality and the Definition of Genocide," JGR 25:2 (2023): 195–215.

30 See, e.g., Benjamin Meiches, *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

31 Jeffrey Bachman, "Cases Studied in Genocide Studies and Prevention and Journal of Genocide Research and Implications for the Field of Genocide Studies," GSP 14:1 (2020): 2–20.

32 Nicole Narea and Sigal Samuel, "How to Think Through Allegations of Genocide in Gaza," Vox, Nov. 13, 2023, https://www.vox.com/world-politics/2023/11/13/23954731/genocide-israel-gaza-palestine.

33 Grey, A Legal Analysis: 447.

recognized that "direct killing remains, as far as we know, relatively rare in Xinjiang." He asserted that instead the Chinese state is engaging in indirect annihilation by "slowly and persistently scraping away elements of their identity, memory and self."[34] Such an amorphous process, even if real and open to criticism, is not genocide or any known crime however. Countries have been actively forging a sense of national identity in their populations from early on in the modern era; for example, in the late 18th Century document, Federalist No. 62, James Madison or Alexander Hamilton wrote of the goal of a US with a "people thoroughly incorporated into one nation."[35] Teaching national identity is what states do with students to forge a national identity, reshape inter-generationally transmitted memories, and create a new sense of self.[36] Hong Kong China specialist Kerry Kennedy has observed that

> Patriotic education is not a new idea in China or elsewhere. All nations seek to develop young people and citizens who love their country and will support it. It may be called civics in the United States, citizenship education in the United Kingdom, or civics and citizenship education in Australia, but the purpose is the same: to develop understanding, skills and national values.[37]

What the Uyghur émigrés' supporters object to is not state nationalism, but that Xinjiang minorities are part of the Chinese nation – even though these supporters may be unable to find Xinjiang on a map, frequently placing it in northeast, rather than northwest China.[38] A UK journalist even wrote in 2025 that "China claims people from the [Uyghur] ethnic minority group are sent to

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34 Gerald Roche and James Leibold, "State Racism and Surveillance in Xinjiang (People's Republic of China)," *Political Quarterly* 93:3 (2022): 442–450.

35 Publius, "Federalist Paper No. 62," s.d., https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed62.asp.

36 Helen Murray, "Curriculum Wars: National Identity in Education," *London Review of Education* 6:1 (2008): 39–45; Manisha Kanwar, "Role of Education in Shaping Youths' National Identity," Skoolz, 2023, www.skoolz.in/blog/role-of-education-youth-national-identity; Michael Barr, "National Identity and History Teaching in Singapore: Bringing the Malays Back," in Helen Mu Hung Ting and Luigi Cajani (eds), *Negotiating Ethnic Diversity and National Identity in History Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2023): 263–283; Basak Ince, "Citizenship Education in Turkey: Inclusive or Exclusive," *Oxford. Review of Education* 38:2 (2012): 115–131.

37 Kerry Kennedy, "Patriotic Education for Hong Kong Must be Curated with Care," SCMP, Nov. 12, 2023.

38 "No Asylum for Chinese Organ Whistleblower," SWI Swissinfo.ch, July 29, 2010, www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-politics/no-asylum-for-chinese-organ-whistleblower/18620140; Taylor Troeth, "Daughter's Crazy Lunar New Year Gift from Parents," DT, Jan. 29, 2025.

Xinjiang for 're-education' to combat terrorism," evidently conceiving Uyghurs as being from outside Xinjiang.[39] The prominent British/South African journalist RW Johnson wrote in 2025 that in Xinjiang "over a million Uighurs are in re-education camps essentially due to their Muslim faith. Torture, abuse and even death is common in these camps."[40] He was evidently unaware that what he called "re-education camps" had closed five years earlier and that there is no evidence of unnatural deaths having occurred in VETCs.

2 Propagandizing "Uyghur Genocide"

Adrian Zenz, a German researcher at the VOC who self-promotes as "an internationally-known and widely-cited expert on Beijing's policies and actions in Xinjiang,"[41] is the leading proponent of the genocide claim. He spent one week as a tourist in Xinjiang, in 2007 and has not returned since. The BBC commissioned him to produce a study of the "disappearance" of Uyghurs, but he "initially turned it down. He said it was 'too hard, too little evidence – although he did later step into the fray to produce that evidence'" – such as it is.[42]

Zenz and other genocide claim proponents formerly made scholarly contributions in the subfield of China ethnic studies, but have become part of US-led "industries" that often have ties to Western governments. Supporters of the Xinjiang émigrés are typically part of the "white savior industrial complex." The Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole, reacting to Western charity billboards urging Westerners to "Save Africa" coined that phrase in 2012. It describes white people of privilege seeking personal catharsis by attempting to liberate, rescue, or otherwise uplift underprivileged people of color. He said that the complex is not about justice, "It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege." He added that "A 'nobody' from America or Europe can go to

39 Dominic Penna, "Starmer Risks UK Security with Chinese Diplomat Visit," DT, Jan. 28, 2025.

40 "RW Johnson: Huawei, Beijing's Eyes and Ears – and Gullible African Leaders," BizNews, Feb. 2, 2025.

41 Adrian Zenz, "Letter to Canterbury University," Oct. 5, 2020, https://adrianzenz.medium.com/letter-to-canterbury-university-783fbfea13e6.

42 Phill Hynes, "Most Heinous of Crimes on Flimsiest of Evidence," Friday, Jan. 6, 2022, https://fridayeveryday.com/most-heinous-of-crimes-on-flimsiest-of-evidence/; "Adrian Zenz, the Academic Behind the 'Xinjiang Police Files', on China's Abuse of Uighurs," France24, May 25, 2022, www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220525-adrian-zenz-the-academic-behind-the-xinjiang-police-files-on-china-s-abuse-of-uighurs.

Africa and become a divine savior, or, at the very least, satisfy their emotional needs under the banner of 'making a difference.'"[43]

The same might be said about white saviorism as applied to China. The US has an elaborate history of "saving the Chinese" – from heathenism, communism, amorality, etc. White saviorism has been called, in a case study by director Jackie Jesko, "a pervasive thing in American culture that needs to be challenged."[44] In the West, white saviorism may also enhance career mobility. That some white saviors of the Uyghurs are specialists in their history or culture hardly gives them any great authority to speak about the intentions and outcomes of policies and practices in contemporary Xinjiang. As The UK's Astronomer Royal (1995–present) Martin Rees has observed about Nobel Prize winners,

> Even the best scientists have narrow expertise; their views on broader topics carry no special weight. Some of the greatest become an embarrassment if given a public platform. A laureate can be found who will support almost any cause, however eccentric, and some exploit their status.[45]

White saviors have made dubious genocide claims; for example, that Covid-19 restrictions were a genocide.[46] Crying Xinjiang genocide has been incorporated into notions of Western superiority, if not Western identity itself, in much the same way that "democracy" has become part of Western identity. According to Cambridge University politics specialist John Dunn:

> [T]he term democracy has become (as the Freudians put it) too highly cathected: saturated with emotion, irradiated by passion, tugged to and fro and ever more overwhelmed by accumulated confusion. To rescue it as an aid in understanding politics, we need to think our way past a mass of history and block our ears to many pressing importunities.[47]

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43 Teju Cole, "The White Savior Industrial Complex," *Atlantic*, Mar. 21, 2012.

44 Christopher Kuo, "The Director of 'Savior Complex' on the Perils of 'White Saviorism,'" NYT, Oct. 4, 2023.

45 Martin Rees, "Even Nobel Winners Sometimes Rely on Serendipitous Discovery," FT, Oct. 23, 2024.

46 Naomi Klein, *Doppelganger: A Trip into the Mirror World* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, 2023). https://naomiklein.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Israel-Palestine-and-the-Doppelganger-Effect.pdf.

47 John Dunn, *Setting the People Free: The Story of Democracy,* 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019): 17.

The "Xinjiang genocide" trope's absorption into Western identity also resembles how the "unbreakable bond" with "progressive" Israel became part of American identity.[48]

Many people in developed countries continue to exude a sense of superiority based in large part of their self-identification with democracy, despite their great disillusionment with the self-proclaimed "world's greatest democracy," the US. A Pew survey in 2024 showed that only 21% of people in a group of 34 countries thought the US a good example of democracy, 40% thought that the US *was* a good example of democracy but has not been in recent years, and 22% thought the US has never been a good example. The average view of US democracy in the 34 countries in 2024 was less favorable than even three years earlier.[49]

Favorability ratings for the US declined further in 2025 after Trump's return to power. A Morning Consult Pro poll showed, for the first time in years, that China was rated more favorably than the US in its 41-country survey. Countries where the US was favored over China dropped from 29 in January 2025 to 13 in April 2025. Countries where views of China were already favorable saw their favorability rating increase further.[50] The Alliance for Democracies Foundation's 2025 Democracy Perception Index, based on surveys in 100 countries accounting for 91% of world population, found that compared with 2024, the net perception of the US fell from +22% to –5% and countries with a favorable view of the US dropped from 76% to 45%. Just 38% of respondents world-wide trusted the US's democratic leadership, down from 66% in 2015; 29% trusted China in that regard. Some 52% identified America as a threat to global democracy, compared to 48% for China and 46% for Russia. Trump was viewed negatively in 82 countries and Xi Jinping in 44.[51] A 2025 IPSOS polled found that 46% of respondents thought the US would play a positive role in international affairs (down from 66% in 2015 and 59% in 2024), but

48 Amy Kaplan, *Our American Israel: The Story of an Entangled Alliance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

49 "Globally, Biden Receives Higher Ratings Than Trump," Pew Research Center, June 11, 2024: 33–34, www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/.

50 Jason McCann, "Make China Great Again? How US Retrenchment Benefits Beijing," Morning Consult Pro, May 13, 2025, https://pro.morningconsult.com/analysis/us-china-global-standing-competition.

51 "Democracy Perception Index – The New World Order in Numbers," Copenhagen Democracy Summit, May 13, 2025, https://copenhagendemocracysummit.com/2025/sessions/3678/democracy-perception-index-%E2%80%93-the-new-world-order-in-numbers.

49% (up from 47% in 2015) thought China would do so.[52] US white saviors of peoples in China disregard that their own country may now be seen as more problematic.

White saviors of the Uyghurs have partisan political and social identities and some are proponents of liberal or "progressive" anti-communism. US State Department Policy Planning head George Kennan proposed in 1948 that Western states assist left-wing parties and labor unions that were not pro-Soviet, to create a rift between the USSR and working-class movements.[53] From 1950 to the late 1970s, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was a major CIA effort to recruit "leftist" intellectuals and artists to wage the Cold War.[54] The CIA-influenced "non-communist left" (NCL) and the broader Western intelligentsia did just that.[55]

The Democratic Party has the allegiance of the very few "socialists" and "progressives" in the US Congress.[56] On Xinjiang, the two US parties are also supported by some progressive intellectuals, such as Noam Chomsky, who said in 2019 that "China's 're-education camps' for perhaps a million Uyghurs, which may well be the largest mass incarceration of a racial or religious group since the Holocaust, is surely a major crime, meriting harsh condemnation." In 2021, he said of Xinjiang that it is "Pretty hard to get good evidence, but there's enough evidence to show that there's very severe repression going on,"[57] though the media sources presenting that "evidence" are the same ones that despise Chomsky. The European Parliament's Left Group of parties sponsored a 2025 resolution echoing most rightwing claims about Xinjiang. It said Uyghurs were "subjected to intense surveillance, forced labor, involuntary sterilizations and birth prevention measures, among other rights abuses, which may amount to crimes against humanity" and called for tightening regulations against

52 Brian Iselin, "Update: How the US Lost 76 Countries," Medium, May 16, 2025, https://brianiselin67.medium.com/update-how-the-us-lost-76-countries-f6aa8209abbb.

53 John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1990): 199.

54 Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1989); Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper: the CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (1999).

55 Hugh Willford, *The CIA, the British Left and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2004).

56 Ben Burgis, "AOC Shouldn't Have Endorsed Joe Biden," Jacobin, July 12, 2024, https://jacobin.com/2023/07/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-joe-biden-endorsement-centrism-2024-election.

57 "Uyghur Genocide Proof," 2021, www.reddit.com/r/chomsky/comments/ro3hv0/uyghur_genocide_proof/.

products made with forced labor, seeking to sanction China for an unproven practice the way the US does.[58]

The movement to the right of "progressives" replicates how Mussolini, Oswald Mosely, Pierre Laval, and other European socialists became fascists in the 1930s. Alex Karp, the billionaire CEO of the data fusion firm Palantir, exemplifies 21st Century "progressive" supporters of US hegemony. In 2018, Karp described himself as a socialist and progressive, but he also said that Palantir has an obligation to support the US government and military.[59] In 2024, he said that he and his firm are "active in defending the values of the West" and "our belief that the West is a superior way to live."[60] By then, he and other tech moguls had been enlisted to aid the US anti-China mobilization and to support Israel's war in Gaza.[61]

Uyghur émigré groups and the US-based "Chinese overseas dissident community" have also backed Israel's plausibly genocidal war in Gaza.[62] The World Uyghur Congress – whose name echoes the World Jewish Congress – said it "strongly condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas against Israeli civilians." Omer Kanat, UHRP Executive Director has said "It's horrifying to see the deliberate, brutal attacks on civilians, including women, men, and children, by Hamas."[63] Kanat held several meetings with pro-Israel entities in the US after the Gaza war began.[64] Salih Hudayar, head of the separatist East Turkistan National Movement (ETNM), said "Palestine, along with many Muslim nations, shamelessly sided with our oppressors," so he stands "with Israel

58 "Motion for a Resolution on the Cases of Unjustly Imprisoned Uyghurs in China, Notably Ilham Tothi and Guishan Abbas – B10-0114/2024," ForeignAffairs.co.nz, Oct. 8, 2024.

59 Rob Brown and Eliot Copeland, "Palantir Has a $20 Billion Valuation and a Bigger Problem: It Keeps Losing Money," WSJ, Nov. 12, 2018; Andrew Sorkin, "Silicon Valley Doesn't Like Trump. It Can Still Work with the Government," NYT, Sept 10, 2018.

60 "Billionaire Tech CEO Calls Wokeness 'Central Threat' to America," Fox Business, May 9, 2024.

61 Jack Poulson, "US Tech Industry Gathers to Organize Against China, While Defending Its Obscured Role in Ongoing Slaughter in Gaza," May 10, 2024, https://jackpoulson.substack.com/p/scsp-ai-expo-2024; Caroline Haskins, "'I'm the New Oppenheimer!': My Soul-Destroying Day at Palantir's First-Ever AI Warfare Conference," *Guardian*, May 17, 2024.

62 "From Palestine to "Xinjiang": Settler Colonialism and Surveillance State with Darren Byler," Palestine Solidarity Action Network, Mar 21, 2024, https://palestinezh.substack.com/p/from-palestine-to-xinjiang-settler.

63 Ng Weng Hoong, "World Uyghur Congress in a Quandary Over Israel's War in Gaza," Wengcouver, Mar. 14, 2024, https://wengcouver.substack.com/p/world-uyghur-council-stands-with.

64 Selena Green and Mahesh Ranjan Debata, "Why Uyghur Groups have Contradictory Stances on Israel-Hamas War," First Post, Sept. 9, 2024.

against the aggression of Hamas, which is backed by China and Iran."[65] Uyghur émigré support for Israel has been condemned across the Islamic world, from Lebanon to Malaysia.[66] A vocal critic of China in Canada has said "The WUC is probably the only Muslim-dominated organization in the world to stand with Israel in the Gaza conflict." Western supporters of the Uyghur émigrés also recognize that "Israel has become a vocal supporter of the Uyghurs."[67]

The Uyghur émigré position on the Israel/Palestine war in 2023 reflects a common stance of rightwing political forces in the West who aspire to win or influence mainstream powerholders by being anti-China and pro-Israel.[68] Western-based Uyghur émigré groups are like UK loyalists in Northern Ireland who are pro-Israel in part because republicans are pro-Palestine.[69]

Israel's government first joined with Western states to condemn China about Xinjiang in 2021.[70] After China refused to support Israel in its war with Palestinians after October 7, 2023, Israel joined with other, mostly Western countries, to support a resolution condemning China on Xinjiang in the UN's Third Committee[71] and attacked it about Xinjiang during China's 2024 Universal Periodic

65 Interview: Salih Hudayar; "Uyghurs Condemn Palestinian 'Support for Genocide' Against Muslims In China," Breitbart, June 15, 2023, www.breitbart.com/asia/2023/06/15/uyghurs-condemn-palestinian-support-genocide-against-muslims-china/; "Uyghur Groups Condemn Hamas's Terror Attacks on Israeli Civilians," Uyghur Times, Oct. 10, 2023; https://uyghurtimes.com/uyghur-groups-condemn-hamass-terror-attacks-on-israeli-civilians/; "WUC Condemns Hamas Attacks on Civilians and Stands with All Those Suffering from Violence," WUC, Oct. 9, 2023, www.uyghurcongress.org/en/statement-wuc-condemns-hamas-attacks-on-civilians-and-stands-with-all-those-suffering-from-violence/.

66 Sultan Hali, "Israeli Apartheid Supported by International Double Standards," *Al-Mayadeen*, Oct. 19, 2023, https://english.almayadeen.net/articles/opinion/israeli-apartheid-supported-by-international-double-standard; "The Uyghur Issue: Is it Genuine or U.S-Israel Propaganda?" *Malaysia Post*, Oct. 22, 2023, https://malaysiapost.com.my/2023/10/22/the-uyghur-issue-is-it-genuine-or-u-s-israel-propaganda/.

67 Lachlan McNamee, "Settler Colonialism Is Not Distinctly Western or European," *Aeon*, Oct. 5, 2023, https://aeon.co/essays/settler-colonialism-is-not-distinctly-western-or-european.

68 "Europe's Far-right Joins Rallying Cry Against Antisemitism, Unsettling Some Jews," Reuters, Nov. 16, 2023.

69 Oliver Jeffers, "An Artist Rethinks Climate Change in Words and Pictures," NYT, Oct. 6, 2024.

70 "Israel Shifts China Policy, Condemns Its Treatment of Uyghurs at UNHRC," *Jerusalem Post*, June 23, 2021.

71 "Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang: Joint Statement at the UN Third Committee," UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Oct. 18, 2023, www.gov.uk/government/speeches/joint-statement-on-human-rights-violations-in-xinjiang-at-the-un-third-committee.

Review before the Human Right Council.[72] Israeli media have featured articles, including by Western politicians, condemning China for committing genocide in Xinjiang, but not criticizing Israel about the Gaza war.[73]

In contrast to Israel's attacks on China over Xinjiang, US-based Uyghur émigré leader Nury Turkel has admitted that "no Muslim country, no Muslim leader, has criticized the Chinese government in the slightest."[74] US-based UHRP head Omer Kanat has said "there has been no resolution of condemnation, and no official inquiry or hearing, in any Muslim-majority country" about the émigré claims.[75] That may be because émigré leaders are seen as the US's *askaris* – colonial native mercenaries – in a war against the Dar al-Islam, the Muslim world. Muslim country leaders may also regard the Uyghur émigré claims as inaccurate; for example, Turkel's assertion that "Uyghur men and women detained in the camps are imprisoned for praying, attending religious weddings or visiting mosques [and] that between 2 million and 3 million Uyghurs are being held in more than 300 camps," assertions that have no empirical basis.[76]

"Progressive" anti-communism underlaid first generation, anti-Soviet US neo-conservatism in 1960s and 1970s.[77] US neo-conservatism's Middle East-focused second generation came in the 1990s and 2000s. The white saviors of Xinjiang are part of a third generation of China-concentrated "neo-neo-conservatism" or "new neo-conservatism."[78] "China hawks" marshal national chauvinism and racism mainly to defeat a supposed "Chinese challenge" to a self-proclaimed US hegemony. Biden acknowledged US hegemony in 2024 in stating that "I am running the world … we are the essential nation of the

72 Finbarr Bermingham, "China's United Nations Human Rights Review Puts Global Divide On Display," SCMP, Jan. 24, 2024.

73 Sergio Restelli, "China's double standard for Xinjiang and Gaza," *Times of Israel,* Apr. 24, 2024, https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/chinas-double-standard-for-xinjiang-and-gaza/.

74 "Nuri Turkel and the Uyghur Plight," SupChina, Oct. 11, 2018, https://supchina.com/podcast/nury-turkel-and-the-uyghur-plight/.

75 Omer Kanat, "Where Is the Outrage, and Action, in the Arab World Over China's Uyghur Genocide?" DawnMena, May 10, 2023, https://dawnmena.org/where-is-the-outrage-and-action-in-the-arab-world-over-chinas-uyghur-genocide/.

76 "Uyghur Activists: 'We will Never Forget' Jewish Support in US, UK," Jewish News Syndicate, June 13, 2023, www.jns.org/world-news/china/23/6/13/294927/.

77 Ari Cushner, "Cold War Comrades: Left Liberal Anti-Communism and the American Empire, 1941–1968," PhD diss., UC Santa Cruz, 2017, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2z1041sr.

78 Bonnie Kristian, "Will 2024 Bring the Return of the Neocons?" Reason, June 2023, https://reason.com/2023/05/07/will-2024-bring-the-return-of-the-neocons/.

world."[79] The Chinese challenge to US hegemony may be only imagined and the assertion that the US is "a uniquely benign and generous hegemon"[80] may be an arrogant self-conceit, but US "liberal hegemony," qua world policeman, is real.[81] As the US ability to maintain hegemony declines, one component of its defense has been to proclaim the US – as a leading UK journalist has put it, "a strikingly benign and successful hegemon." That statement reflects a disregard for the large number of people, overwhelmingly non-white, killed in the US's armed actions.[82] Another key component is to contain and eventually destroy China, as the Soviet Union was destroyed. Harvard University law professor Noah Feldman observed as long ago as 2013 that

> Western leaders believe that China's present governing system is fundamentally illegitimate. Think of it from the Chinese leader's point of view: they must engage with opposite numbers who would like to see their whole governing structure crumble. Their Western negotiating partners think they hold their place at the table unjustly. Given this reality, they must accept that any deal made by their Western interlocutors is meant as a step, however small, towards their own destruction.[83]

Biden stated that the US must "shape the norms and institutions that govern relations among nations"[84] and that "American leadership is what holds the world together." His Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, averred that "When we're not engaged, when we don't lead, then one of two things happens: either some other country tries to take our place, but probably not in a way that advances our interests and values, or no one does, and then you get chaos."[85]

Most Americans believe their country's elites' denials about hegemony, but as 19th Century French poet Charles Beaudelaire remarked, "la plus belle des ruses du Diable est de vous persuader qu'il n'existe pas! [The Devil's most

79 "ABC's George Stephanopoulos' Exclusive Interview with President Biden: Full Transcript," ABC, July 6, 2024.

80 Thomas Friedman, "Trump Just Bet the Farm," NYT, Apr. 3, 2025.

81 John Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

82 Martin Wolf, "The Case for Persisting with Foreign Aid," FT, Feb. 12, 2025.

83 Noah Feldman, *Cool War: The Future of Global Competition* (New York: Random House, 2013).

84 Ryan Crocker, "The World Won't Organize Itself," *The Atlantic*, Nov. 1, 2020, www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/11/biden-knows-that-the-world-wont-organize-itself/616953/.

85 Adam Tooze, "Chartbook 248: 'American Leadership is What Holds the World Together.' Joe Biden October 2023," Oct. 23, 2023, https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-248-american-leadership.

beautiful ruse is to persuade you that he doesn't exist!]"[86] There are occasional admissions in key media that US hegemony does exist, however, and that the leaders of both major parties want to see it preserved. For example, in 2024, *New York Times* journalists observed that "A consensus has solidified among Democrats and Republicans in Washington that China must be constrained because it is the nation most capable of upending American global dominance."[87] A *Financial Times* journalist noted that in the US by 2024 there was a "deepening consensus that US-China antagonism was permanent."[88]

Mainstream prominent traditional news media play a major role in forging that consensus. A 2021 study used 247,000 *New York Times* articles from 1970 onwards and 101 surveys of US opinions to toward China to determine whether the former influenced the latter. It found that the nature of the *Times*' coverage of China in a given year accounted for 54% of variance in US public opinion on China in the subsequent year.[89] The consensus extends to the Xinjiang issue. Thus, "The Combating CCP Labor Abuses Act," which requires the Department of Commerce to teach US businesses how to avoid contact with Xinjiang, passed the US Senate unanimously.[90]

Veteran neocons – Robert Kagan, Max Boot, Eliot Cohen, John Negroponte– supported Biden's election in 2020, "showing, if nothing else, that the bipartisan commitment to the new cold war is alive and well."[91] Biden appointed Elliot Abrams to the board of the bipartisan US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. He is a Reagan-era neocon friend of El Salvadoran death squads, a Bush Jr.-era Deputy National Security Advisor who helped organize a coup attempt against the newly elected Hamas government of Gaza, and a Trump-era impresario of a failed coup in Venezuela.[92] Abrams was not appointed for his perspicacity: in 2023, the bipartisan-supported Abrams told the US

86 "Le Joueur Généreux (The Generous Gambler)" Petits Poemes en Prose (Paris: Michel Levy Freres, 1869): 87–91, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Joueur_g%C3%A9n%C3%A9reux.

87 Edward Wong and Anna Swanson, "Is Trump More Flexible on China Than His Hawkish Cabinet Picks Suggest?" NYT, Nov. 22, 2024.

88 Leo Lewis, "Why It's Hard to Be a Friend of America," FT, Jan. 2, 2025.

89 J. Huang, et al, "Large-scale Quantitative Evidence of Media Impact on Public Opinion Toward China," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8:1 (2021): 1–8.

90 "Gary C. Peters – Commerce Committee Passes Bipartisan Bill Led by Peters to Combat Human Rights Violations," PUBT, Apr. 30, 2025.

91 Marshall Auerback and James Carden, "The Rotten Alliance of Liberals and Neocons Will Likely Shape U.S. Foreign Policy for Years to Come," Public Seminar, Sept. 1, 2020, https://publicseminar.org/essays/the-rotten-alliance-of-liberals-and-neocons-will-likely-shape-u-s-foreign-policy-for-years-to-come-biden-kagan/.

92 Alex Lo, "The Horrors that Made the Career of Joe Biden's Latest Appointee," SCMP, July 11, 2023.

Congress that Hamas would not attack Israel from Gaza, as it was focusing on the West Bank.[93]

Ironically, the ideology of contemporary "progressive" anti-communism fits the bill of what the professorial gurus of first-generation US neo-conservatism, Irving Kristol (the ex-Trotskyist father of Bill Kristol) and Daniel Bell (a lifelong liberal), said at the movement's launch: "It is the nature of ideology to preconceive reality, and it is exactly such preconceptions that are the worst hindrances to knowing-what-one-is-talking-about."[94] Claimants of Xinjiang genocide do not know what they are talking about because their assertions are not evidence-based, but derive from Yellow Peril/Red Menace ideology.

3 Supporting Separatism, Denying Religious Extremism and Terrorism

The object of many propagators of the "Uyghur genocide" trope is to support separatisms that seek to splinter China[95] and to deny that religious extremism and terrorism impact Uyghurs. Thus, a Czech China specialist has called the idea that religious extremism was significant in Xinjiang "trumped up."[96] A Chinese "NGO" has argued otherwise, for example, about women:

> Religious extremists claim that Muslim women who do not obey their husbands will be expelled from their home, and women cannot go out alone, learn scientific knowledge, or work outside. We have observed that, in rural areas where religious extremism is prevalent, women's equal rights within the family are largely deprived. Women's personal freedom and reproductive choices are greatly restricted. Women's right to education is violated. Many Uyghur female students are not allowed to study even when admitted to university. A survey shows that 65% of women in

93 Elliott Abrams, "No Incentives for Terrorism: U.S. Implementation of the Taylor Force Act and Efforts to Stop 'Pay to Slay,'" testimony before House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, Sept. 27, 2023.

94 Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, "What is the Public Interest," *Public Interest* (Fall, 1965): 3–5, www.nationalaffairs.com/storage/app/uploads/public/58e/1a4/9ee/58e1a49eea60e937247032.pdf

95 "London: 'China's Dictators' Condemned by UK Parliamentarians, Human Rights Advocates," Asian News International (ANI), Oct. 2, 2023.

96 Ondrej Klimes, "How China is Trying to Decimate Uyghur Minds," Asia Research Institute, Mar. 31, 2020.

> southern Xinjiang surveyed have no personal income and 42.5% cannot spend money alone.[97]

The inherent tendency of religious extremist practice to infringe on the rights of women can be a legitimate reason for criminalizing it. International law allows states to enact laws punishing conspiracies against rights and some states do have such laws. Under 18 U.S.C. para. 241, for example, any two or more people who "conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person … in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution of the United States" can be fined or imprisoned for up to ten years.

Many scholars recognize that Salafist ideology, spread from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, made great inroads in southern Xinjiang and southern Asia even before the start of the 21st Century.[98] With the advent of China's reforms in the late 20th Century many Uyghurs travelled to Mecca and encountered Salafist ideology.[99] The spread of Salafism was part of what US Islamic minorities scholar Dru Gladney and others identified as a "fourth tide of Islam in China" that had affected Xinjiang.[100] That tide first came in at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Central Asian states and grew over a whole generation. Around 2010, after the widespread adoption of social media platforms,

> Previously inaccessible religious teachings and information from the global Islamic community proliferated, and younger generation of Uyghurs descended upon the cities, swelling ranks of attendees at daily prayers and Friday gatherings at mosques. They used a veiled language to

97 "Written Statement Submitted by China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS)," Human Rights Council 41st Session, June 27, 2019, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/192/69/pdf/g1919269.pdf.

98 Hacer Gonul and Julius Rogenhofer, "Wahabism with Chinese Characteristics," Institut de Relations Internationales et Strategiques, Asia Focus no. 51, 2017, www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Asia-focus-51.pdfCambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 61–63.

99 Graham Fuller and Jonathan Lipman, "Islam in Xinjiang," in S, Frederick Starr (ed.) *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2004): 320–352; Gardner Bovingdon, *The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010): 121.

100 Dru Gladney, "Islam in China: Accommodation or Separation," CQ 174 (2003): 451–467; Mackerras, Religion: 78.

> disseminate the more subversive stances they were adopting against the Communist Party.[101]

Liberal/progressive anti-communism now connects with conservative efforts to foster a Soviet-style breakup of China by "East Turkistan" separatists and kindred émigré forces. It is backed by rightwing Western figures who also favor independence for Tibet, Hong Kong, and Inner Mongolia, areas totaling 55% of China's territory. It has merged with Western racial and cultural identities that produce alliances with murderous rightwing regimes. Precedents exist for "progressives" supporting violent anti-communism, such as the German Social Democrat's use of the proto-Nazi Freikorps to suppress workers' uprisings after Germany's World War I defeat.[102] Today, the formerly left-leaning German Green Party supports the US's containment strategy. Its member, Foreign Minister (2021–2025) and now-president of the UNGA (2025–) Annalena Baerbock, echoed US pronouncements about China as a dictatorship that seeks to reshape the international order "to make the world safe for autocracy." Ironically, however, it is Trump who claims that under the US Constitution Art. II, "I have the right to do whatever I want as president."[103] The WUC has lauded Baerbock's attacks on China's Xinjiang policies.[104]

US ex-Trotskyist neo-conservative academics supported the Vietnam and Iraq wars.[105] Today, some US China scholars, such as Mel Gurtov – the Pentagon Papers author who became a Vietnam War opponent – reject China Threat ideology in general, but uncritically accept the Xinjiang genocide discourse propagated by ultra-rightists such as Zenz and by liberal scholars attached to US-funded institutions, such as James Leibold.[106] They likely know that the genocide claim is part of framing the China Threat, but nevertheless endorse it, perhaps to mitigate the marginalization of those who reject the US waging a "New Cold War" against China. In any case, social justice themes originating

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101 Nic Cavell, "The Literature of Uyghur Disappearance," *Dissent* 71:2 (2024): 109–113.

102 Nigel Jones, *A Brief History of the Birth of the Nazis* (London: Robinson, 2004): 270.

103 Kate Shaw, "Why Is This Supreme Court Handing Trump More and More Power?" NYT, May 25, 2025.

104 "China Summons German Envoy After Foreign Minister Calls Xi Jinping a Dictator," DPA, Sept. 19, 2023; "World Uyghur Congress Welcomes German Foreign Minister Stance on Uyghurs," European Interest, Apr. 14, 2023.

105 John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945–1994* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Usman Butt, "The Neo-Conservatives Who Paved the Road to Invading Iraq," MEMO, Mar. 19, 2023, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230319-the-neoconservatives-who-paved-the-road-to-invading-iraq/.

106 Mel Gurtov, *Engaging China: Rebuilding Sino-American Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022): 71–76.

with US progressives have been adapted to further US foreign policy objectives. Christopher Mott, of the US's Institute of Peace and Diplomacy (IPD), has written that US interventionist elites use

> prevailing moralist trends to serve as ideological justifications for expansionist and hawkish policies … Such use and weaponization of the language of justice to advance the foreign policy objectives of the liberal Atlanticist Blob is particularly evident against regions and countries the West believes actively challenge the Liberal International Order (LIO) status quo or where it seeks to justify military and economic interventions on normative grounds.[107]

Present-day Xinjiang-focused exponents of Yellow Peril and "China Threat" ideology deploy longstanding Cold War rhetoric. US anthropologist Darren Byler exemplifies the "progressive" wing of the "New Cold War" on Xinjiang issues. In white savior fashion, he casts himself as a heroic "accomplice in Uyghur struggles" who is "willing to utilize a bit of my own privilege as a white, male, US citizen and scholar to advocate for Uyghur rights, amplify Uyghur stories, and stand up to the Chinese regime." Attacking China in the US is by no means an act of defiance however and has its rewards. Byler was a fellow in 2020–2021 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a Washington-based, US Congress-chartered, government/big business-financed policy institute housed rent-free in a Federal building.[108] It received $14 million or 30% of its funding from the US government in 2025. A senior associate at the key US government-tied think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), has said the Wilson Center is a US government "soft power tool."[109]

Byler is the senior editor of the Xinjiang Documentation Project (XJDP) in British Columbia, operating since 2020 and maintained by the Luce/American Council of Learned Societies Project in China Studies.[110] The Luce Foundation

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107 Christopher Mott, Woke Imperium: The Coming Confluence Between Social Justice and Neoconservatism (Washington: IPD, 2022), https://peacediplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Woke-Imperium.pdf.

108 "Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars," Influence Watch, 2022, www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/woodrow-wilson-international-center-for-scholars/#:~:text=The%20Wilson%20Center%20receives%2030,from%20the%20U.S.%20federal%20government.

109 Andrew Rudman, "Trump Makes Us Less Safe, Less Engaged with Cuts to International Programs," *Bangor Daily News*, Apr. 23, 2025.

110 "American Council of Learned Societies Expands Access to China Studies Resources and Data through New Website," PR Newswire, Jan. 29, 2025.

was set up and financed by Henry Luce, the Time, Inc. media baron with close ties to the CIA.[111] The XJDP makes no pretense of scholarly objectivity, stating that it aims to provide "sources about the policies of the [Chinese] government, human rights violations, cultural erasures, labor abuses, and settler colonization in Northwest China."[112] Byler echoes the "captive nations" theme that Nazi-collaborator émigrés brought to the US after World War II in stating that "Uyghurs are a stateless people who have been colonized by an authoritarian state that is attempting to exert totalitarian control over their society."[113]

Byler nevertheless seeks to create an image as even-handed, criticizing both the US and China and "mass killing in Israel and mass internment in China."[114] The "even-handedness" is specious however, as the tens of thousands of dead Palestinians do not at all equate with any putative "internment" in China. Byler's equivalence is even more false than the contention that the right-wing Polish government's discriminatory policies against minorities and Nazi Germany's murderous racism were the same in 1939. Byler moreover must know that China retains significant preferential policies for Xinjiang minorities and that its policies have produced marked economic and social gains for Uyghurs in recent years.

Rhetoric by Western supporters of the Uyghur émigré ideology is based on a fundamental attribution error: the tendency to ascribe others' behavior to their essential nature and not the situations they face. For Xinjiang, that situation, from 1990 to 2016, was terrorism carried out by separatist, Islamist extremists who forged ties to Al-Qaeda and ISIS and received indirect support from US government-financed Uyghur émigré groups. There were no successful terrorist attacks in Xinjiang after 2016, but Uyghur separatists and religious extremists continued to be involved in terrorist groups outside China, most notably Al-Qaeda and ISIS-KP [Khorasan Province]. Terrorists attacked Chinese working in Pakistan.[115] It was reported in 2024 that

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111 Simon Willmetts, "The CIA and *Time Magazine*: Journalistic Ethics and Newsroom Dissent," *Diplomatic History* Volume 48:5 (2024): 719–743.

112 Xinjiang Documentation Project, University of British Columbia, 2025, https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/about-us/about-project.

113 "Xinjiang Specialist Darren Byler for Sinopsis: A Project Far More Extreme than the Stanford Prison Experiment," Sinopsis, Nov. 21, 2018, https://sinopsis.cz/en/xinjiang-specialist-darren-byler-for-sinopsis-a-project-far-more-extreme-than-the-stanford-prison-experiment/.

114 "From Palestine to "Xinjiang": Settler Colonialism and Surveillance State with Darren Byler," Palestine Solidarity Action Network, Mar 21, 2024, https://palestinezh.substack.com/p/from-palestine-to-xinjiang-settler.

115 Ayesha Sikander, "Ensuring Security for Progress: Pakistan's Commitment to Chinese Safety," *The Diplomat*, July 9, 2024, https://thediplomat.com/2024/07/ensuring-security-for-progress-pakistans-commitment-to-chinese-safety/.

> Investigations into lethal ISIS attacks over the past three months in Iran, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey revealed that they all involved ISIS militants from Central Asia, mostly notably Tajiks. Turkish prosecutors say Uygurs from Xinjiang were also involved in some of the recent attacks. ISIS-K has called for members of the Turkistan Islamic Party, an al-Qaeda affiliate whose stated goal is establishing a caliphate in Xinjiang, to defect.[116]

In announcing a putative campaign against China in 2024, ISIS-K restated many accusations Uyghur émigré groups and their Western supporters make, with the same lack of evidence.[117] A US academic who studies ISIS wrote that "ISIS has demonstrated remarkable adaptability. As an organization, it may yet grow stronger [in part because] after its territorial defeat in 2019, stated U.S. military strategy shifted its focus from counterterrorism in the Middle East toward nation-state adversaries, notably China and Russia."[118] Chinese government policies did however also play an inadvertent role in the 1980s and 1990s in creating religious extremism and terrorism. Xinjiang minorities were indiscriminately encouraged to develop ties with Central Asians, some of whom favored pan-Turkic separatism and religious extremism.[119] Xinjiang students were sent abroad to study Islam in schools dominated by Salafism, the Sunni doctrine of close and comprehensive emulation of the first three generations of Muslims (*al-salaf al-sālih*, "the pious predecessors," i.e. companions and successors of the Prophet Muhammed).

Until 2014, officials hardly intervened in Xinjiang inter-Muslim religious disputes, even though these had political implications. Disputes were mainly between practitioners of the Sufi-oriented Islam traditional in Xinjiang, which includes veneration at "tombs of saints" (拱北) and is generally quietist or non-resistant, and Wahabi Salafist influencers, who refuse any other source of Islam than the Qur'an and Sunna (逊奈; the words and acts of the Prophet). They tout an extreme, Saudi-derived social practice that flowed from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Xinjiang. Saudi groups facilitated Wahabi influence in China by funding imams and financing their religious training in the Kingdom. Salafism and Wahabism overlap, as "Both sects share considerable similarities

116 Thomas Hussain, "Trials and Terror," SCMP, Mar. 31, 2024. See also Philip BK Potter and Chen Wang, *Zero Tolerance: Repression and Political Violence on China's New Silk Road* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 66.

117 "Islamic State Threatens Chinese Regime over "Oppression" of Uyghurs," CE Noticias Financerias English, May 2, 2024.

118 Jessica Stern, "Don't Underestimate the Enduring Power of ISIS," NYT, Jan. 9, 2025.

119 Michael Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia: A History* (London: Routledge, 2011): 135–136.

in their scriptural ideas, historical ancestry and opposition to traditional Chinese Islams," but Wahabism "focuses specifically on those characteristics imported from Saudi Arabia."[120] Salafism and Sufism are not fully contradictory: some Salafists are quietist and Sufis are not always peaceful, but "Sufis and Salafis are never on good terms."[121] Many of those who wage jihad (杰哈德; literally, struggle) are Salafists and jihadi Salafism, including Wahabism, has been at odds with Sufism ever since Mohamed bin Abdul-Wahab founded his movement in the 18th Century. It was based on attacking Sufism, as Salafism sought to "abolish all beliefs that are likely to remember the polytheism and idolatry – the worship of saints, pilgrimages to their mausoleums, tobacco, alcohol, use of chapels, music, song, etc."[122]

In mid-2014 however, Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the 2d Xinjiang Work Forum that the CCP "must engage in meticulous religious work, actively guiding the adaption of religion to socialist society and ensuring that religious figures and believers play a positive role in promoting economic development."[123] Xinjiang's Religious Affairs Regulations, promulgated at the beginning of 2015, particularly aimed to prevent coercion of Muslims by religious extremists.[124] That coercion began with the assassinations of prominent imams (伊玛目), such as Aronhan Haji in Kashgar in 1996 and Yunus Stik Mawla in Aksu in 1997[125] and culminated with killings of Sbdurehim Daomalla Kazihan, imam at

120 Gonul and Rogenhofer, Wahabism.

121 Mark Sedgwick "Sufis as 'Good Muslims': Sufism in the Battle against Jihadi Salafism," in Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015): 105–117; Mark Sedgwick, "Is Sufism Always Peaceful?" Religion Oraklene, Jan. 21, 2020, https://religionsoraklene.no/is-sufism-always-peaceful/; Joas Wagemakers, "Why Salafis Have Anti-Sufi Attitudes," Fondazione Asis, Apr. 22, 2022, www.oasiscenter.eu/en/why-salafis-have-anti-sufi-attitudes; Sun Yan, "Islamization and Crackdown in Ningxia: Another Xinjiang?" JCC 32:144 (2023): 984–999.

122 Daniel Ungureanu, "Wahhabism, Salafism and the Expansion of Islamic Fundamentalist Ideology," *Journal of the Seminar of Discursive Logic, Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric* 9:2 (2011): 140–147.

123 "精心做好宗教工作 – 三论学习贯彻习近平总书记新疆工作座谈会重要讲话精神 (Do Religious Work Meticulously Well – Three Theories on the Study and Implementation of General Secretary Xi Jinping's Important Speech at the Xinjiang Work Forum)," 人民日报, June 4, 2014, paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2014-06/04/nw.D110000renmrb_20140604_3-01.htm.

124 Julia Famularo, "Chinese Religious Regulations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: A Veiled Threat to Turkic Muslims?" Project 2049 Institute, June, 2018, https://project2049.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Famularo_PRC_Religious_Regulations_Xinjiang.pdf.

125 Michael Martina, "Imam's Killing in China May be Aimed at Making Muslim Uighurs Choose Sides," Reuters, Aug. 1, 2014.

Turpan's most important mosque in 2013[126] and Juma Tahir, imam of China's largest mosque, Kashgar's Id Kah, in 2014.[127]

Not surprisingly, an effort to curb religious extremism impelled greater regulation of religion in China. In April, 2016, at the 2d National Work Conference on Religion (NWCR), "Xi Jinping called for 'separation of church and state,' 'adaption to socialist society,' 'resisting foreign infiltration and religious extremism' and'upholding *Zhongguo hua* [Sinicization]."[128] The 2017 national Religious Affairs Regulations Art. 63 bans "advocating, supporting, or funding religious extremism, or using religion to harm national security or public safety, undermine ethnic unity, divide the nation, or conduct terrorist activities and separatism."[129] At the 2021 3rd NWCR, Xi said "China must adhere to the direction of the opinion of religion, insist on uniting the masses of religious believers around the party and the government." He stressed supervision of religious leaders and management of online religious affairs.[130] The 2024 Xinjiang Religious Affairs Regulations Article 5 also specifies that religious institutions and adherents "practice core socialist values" and "adhere to the Sinicization of religion in China."[131]

Some rightwing forces claim that China, by not having separation of religion and the state (SRAS), negates religious freedom and violates international law. They decry state/religion imbrication in China because it is not promotive of religion, in contrast to many other countries that also have little or no SRAS. International law does not, however, forbid state/religion imbrication and many countries have that link. Studies by Israeli scholar Jonathan Fox show the degree to which states do not separate themselves from religion and violate religious freedom (RF). A 2005 study found that 84.2% of Middle Eastern states have official religions, and all others strongly support religion, while 34.6% of western democracies have one or more official religions, an additional 46.2% strongly support one or more religions. Just 19.2% of western democracies have

126 Colin Mackerras, "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Relations: Part of a New Silk Road or Central Asian Zone of Conflict?" *East Asia* 32:1 (2015): 25–42.

127 "Timeline: Terror in Xinjiang," China.org.cn, 2024, www.china.org.cn/china/xinjiang_unrest/2009-07/09/content_18104185_2.htm; Mackerras, Religion: 75.

128 Sun Yan, Islamization.

129 "Religious Affairs Regulations 2017" China Law Translates, Sept. 7, 2017, www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/religious-affairs-regulations-2017/#:~:text=Individuals%20and%20organizations%20must%20not,the%20nation%20or%20carry%20out.

130 Amber Wong, "China Tightens Control of Religion, with Focus on National Security," SCMP, Dec. 6, 2021.

131 Martin Lavicka, "A New Round of Restrictions Further Constrains Religious Practice in Xinjiang," China File, Apr. 19, 2024, www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/new-round-of-restrictions-further-constrains-religious-practice-xinjiang.

full SRAS. Even some countries that have full SRAS are not free of the possibility of state religious discrimination; for example, as of 2014, eight US states had laws barring atheists from holding political office.[132] Indeed, it is a political necessity for US Congress members to be religiously affiliated; a 2023 poll found only one member of 535 was "unaffiliated," despite surveys indicating that 30% of Americans are "unaffiliated."[133] Moreover,

> in the Middle East 36.1% of states ban at least one religion, and the remaining states place legal or practical limitations on minority religions. While no western democracies ban any religions, half do not give equal treatment to all religions … Of western democracies, 61.5% engage in at least some religious discrimination. The most common forms of discrimination are the requirement of minority religions (as opposed to all religions) to register in order to have official status and limits on proselyting.[134]

A 2007 study of 152 states with more than one million people found most democracies do not have SRAS, though democracies have lower average levels of state involvement in religion than non-democracies.[135] A 2021 study of 183 states found that "very few countries, including liberal democracies, meet any standard for RF [religious freedom], even when one allows for 'loose' standards where some violations of RF are allowed." Using a standard that allows states to restrict burial rituals, wearing of religious symbols, building or leasing a place of worship, denial of equal access by minority clergy to jails, the military, or hospitals, and surveillance of religious activities, "88.5% of countries are not truly religiously free."[136]

There are few indications of popular support in China for discrimination against Muslims. Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing, scholars based at Stanford

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132 Hunter Schwarz, "There are States Where You Technically Cannot Hold Public Office if You're an Atheist," WP, July 8, 2014.

133 "Faith on the Hill," Pew Research Center, Jan. 3, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/01/03/faith-on-the-hill-2023/; Cristopher Scheitele and Katie Corcoran, "The Number of Religious 'Nones' has Soared, but Not the Number of Atheists – and as Social Scientists, We Wanted to Know Why," The Conversation, May 6, 2024.

134 Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, "Separation of Religion and State in the Twenty-First Century: Comparing the Middle East and Western Democracies," *Comparative Politics* 37:3 (2005): 317–335.

135 Jonathan Fox, "Do Democracies Have Separation of Religion and State?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 40:1 (2007): 1–25.

136 Jonathan Fox, "What is Religious Freedom and Who Has It?" *Social Compass* 68:3 (2021): 321–341.

University and UC San Diego, surveyed a random sample of Chinese about their political views in 2018–2019. Most agreed that "In ethnic minority areas, the government should regularly appropriate funding to maintain religious sites, including mosques and Buddhist temples."[137] There is however much popular support in the West for excluding Muslims. In the US, there is significant support for restricting the civil liberties of Muslims,[138] with a 2009 report indicating that nearly half of poll respondents had agreed with that idea.[139] Asked in 2024 by the Royal Institute of International Affairs "Should all immigration from Muslim-majority countries be stopped?" 55% of 10,000 polled across Europe answered "yes," with a majority in all countries except Britain and Spain.[140]

Violent jihadi opposition to Sufism has continued into the present century; jihadi Salafists killed 305 people at the Sufi-oriented al-Rawdah mosque in Sinai, Egypt in 2017.[141] Many Xinjiang Salafists were jihadis, who opposed Xinjiang's long-practiced form of Islam. The Chinese government should have strongly favored Sufis over Salafis, but mainly failed to do so because it misunderstood Sufism, underestimated the gains made by Salafist extremism, and mainly adhered to a non-intervention policy before 2015. In that respect, it did not differ from the Harvard scholar who, in the first decade of the 21st Century, soon proved wrong after he wrote that jihadi Salafist movements "had little impact on Africa" and that "Jihadism and extremism have made very limited inroads in sub-Saharan African countries overall."[142]

Government reluctance to intervene against Salafism, with its significant jihadi variant, allowed it to thrive in China, even after it began to be curbed

137 Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing, "Gauging Preference Stability and Ideological Constraint under Authoritarian Rule," Aug. 24, 2020, https://kingcenter.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj16611/files/media/file/wp2003_0.pdf.

138 Darren Sherkat and Derek Lehman, "Bad Samaritans: Religion and Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the United States: Negative Sentiment Toward Immigrants," *Social Science Quarterly* 99:2 (2018): 1791–1804; Allyson Shortle and Ronald Gaddie, "Religious Nationalism and Perceptions of Muslims and Islam." *Politics and Religion* 8:3 (2015): 435–457.

139 Joshua Keating, "Would Americans Vote to Ban Minarets?" *Foreign Policy*, Nov. 30, 2009.

140 "Islamic Communities Victims of Political Islam and the Far-Right in Europe," MENA Research Center, Jan. 14, 2025, www.mena-researchcenter.org/islamic-communities-victims-of-political-islam-and-the-far-right-in-europe-2/.

141 HA Hellyer, "The Dangerous Myths About Sufi Muslims," *The Atlantic* Nov. 27, 2017, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/11/airbrushing-sufi-muslims-out-of-modern-islam/546794/.

142 Ousmane Kane, "Moderate Revivalists: Islamic Inroads in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Harvard International Review* 29: 2 (2007): 64–68.

in Xinjiang. In heavily Hui Lanzhou, Gansu, a Saudi-trained Arabic language teacher at the Salafist *madrasa* (religious school) stated the "The government does not interfere with us." Textbooks from Saudi Arabia, brought back by Chinese who studied at Medinah University, were widely used in Gansu. A journalist for US and UK media said in 2016 that "in many Muslim majority parts of China, ideologies commonly associated with extremism are flourishing," but authorities suppressed Salafism only in Xinjiang, as only there was Salafism tied to separatism.[143] Scholars said in 2017 that "Salafism is banned in Xinjiang and discouraged to various degrees elsewhere in China. However, it is not banned in the Hui community in general."[144]

Religious extremist forces are said to have "once heavily influenced" Xinjiang.[145] US anthropologist Dru Gladney observed in 2019 that "The Salafi and Wahhabi groups have been pouring money in China." Much of that money and Salafist influence came from Saudi Arabia.[146] The campaign to expel Saudi and Arabic influence (出沙化反阿化) in religious practice was a reaction to the spread of Salafist and especially Wahabist ideology.[147] Wahabism, as well as the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) religious ideology are not however banned in China, even in Xinjiang and continued to exist in the region as of 2024. The activities of these tendencies are likely to be closely scrutinized by government agencies, but they are tolerated as long as they obey the law and do not engage in polemics against other "sects."[148]

Most of the small number of Western academics who actively support the Uyghur émigré cause are aware of the implantation of religious extremism in Xinjiang, especially in its heavily Uyghur south. They also know of the tie between Salafism and terrorism, but they reflexively adopt émigré claims that terrorism has not been significant in Xinjiang and that there is a wholesale

143 Alice Su, "China Doesn't Mind Islamic Extremists: As Long as They're Not Uighur," Foreign Policy, Dec. 18, 2016, https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/china-doesnt-mind-islamic-extremists-long-theyre-not-uighur.

144 Gonul and Rogenhofer, Wahabism.

145 Bai Fan, "US's Push for Xinjiang-Related Bills a Classic Imperialist Maneuver," GT, Aug. 24, 2023.

146 Mohammed Turki A. Al-Sudairi, "Adhering to the Ways of our Western brothers: Tracing Saudi Influences on the Development of Hui Salafism in China." *Sociology of Islam* 4: 1–2 (2016): 27–58.

147 Emily Feng, "'Afraid We Will Become the Next Xinjiang': China's Hui Muslims Face Crackdown," NPR, Sept. 26, 2019, www.npr.org/2019/09/26/763356996/afraid-we-will-become-the-next-xinjiang-chinas-hui-muslims-face-crackdown; Sun Yan, Islamization.

148 Interview, head of the Religious Affairs Bureau, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, January 17, 2024; interview, Prof. Wang Ping, Xinjiang Normal University, Urumqi, June 17, 2024.

ban on Islamic practice in the region. They have been organized politically, notably by the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy (formerly the Center for Global Policy), "a nonpartisan [rightwing] think tank in Washington DC, working to enhance U.S. foreign policy," New Lines Institute has ten "Founding members of the Uyghur Scholar Working Group." All ten are white and from the Anglosphere, including five Americans, two Britons, two Australians, and one German (in the US). The Anglosphere has become the bedrock of US foreign policy coordination in the world and hence of the US's mobilization against China.[149]

New Lines Institute is said, by a conservative US think tank, to be associated with the Muslim Brotherhood (*Iqwan*), an ostensibly non-violent, but in practice jihadi organization found in many countries.[150] Since mid-2022, the Working Group has been coordinated by Elise Marie Anderson, a Xinjiang-specialized ethnomusicologist who is also a senior program officer at the Washington-based rightwing think tank Freedom House. She previously worked for the UHRP and the US government's Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC).[151] The two chairs of the CECC, Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Jeff Merkley (D-Or), incidentally, urged a Federal ban on Americans travelling to Xinjiang.[152] The proposed ban may be because visits would disconfirm Congress members' "Xinjiang genocide" negative narrative. A month later, Smith, together with Tom Suozzi (D-NY), reconstituted the Congressional Uyghur Caucus. Suozzi insisted "There's no question of the abuse. There's no question about how horrific it is. There's no question that it's being done." Smith averred that "there's a genocide going on this very minute" and criticized the Biden White House and State Department for supposedly "looking askance" at a genocide.[153]

That the "saviors" of Xinjiang are indeed largely white saviors is exemplified by the "Core Group on Xinjiang" formed by 11 countries in 2022 and consisting of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden,

149 Michael Klare, "Early Signs of the Failure of American Global Power," Foreign Policy in Focus, July 5, 2024.

150 Kyle Shideler, "New Muslim Brotherhood-linked Think Tank Tries to Launder Credentials, Fails," Center for Security Policy, Nov. 12, 2020, https://centerforsecuritypolicy.org/new-muslim-brotherhood-linked-think-tank-tries-to-launder-credentials-fails/.

151 "Uyghur Scholars Working Group," New Lines Institute, 2024, https://newlinesinstitute.org/initiative/uyghur-scholars-working-group/.

152 "US Lawmakers Urge Blinken to Ban Travel to China's Xinjiang," Radio Free Asia, Mar. 8, 2024.

153 Alex Willemyns, "US Lawmakers Relaunch Uyghur Caucus," RFA, Apr. 2024.

the UK and US.[154] In their virtual signaling, white saviors of "the Uyghurs" insist Westerners denigrate China and endorse their genocide claim on pain of being marginalized in the West. They may be accused of "genocide denial" and even "aiding imperialism,"[155] despite their having opposed racism and imperialism.

Those who dissent from Western positions on China or affirm positive developments in the country will be dismissed as a "CCP shill."[156] A common rhetorical device to shut down dissent on "Uyghur genocide" is the accusation of "echo[ing] some of the CCP's talking points on Xinjiang."[157] Australian National University China specialist Jane Golley was attacked after questioning whether the claim of one million Xinjiang "internees" was accurate. She ended up resigning as head of ANU's China in the World center. Some figures outside the West, such as Singaporean diplomat Kishore Mahbubani, do however "wave away the U.S. position that there has been a genocide in Xinjiang … as 'factually incorrect'."[158]

These rhetorical devices also serve to reinforce the racist notion that Chinese arguments at odds with common Western positions cannot be right. That notion may exist because some Western analysts apparently think Chinese leaders are slow-witted. A German geographer has said "It appears that Beijing is unable to comprehend the Uyghur's (sic) attachment to their identity."[159] Cultural attachment is thought too difficult a concept for China's leaders, even though these same leaders are attached to their own identity. Chinese leaders are also depicted as pursuing "indiscriminate violence," "collective repression," etc. even though "Visible, broad-scale repression is often thought to be more costly and less preferable, because it risks domestic and international

154 "Joint Statement on Xinjiang on the Second Anniversary of the OHCHR's Assessment," US Mission to International Organizations in Geneva, Sept. 24, 2024, https://geneva.usmission.gov/2024/09/24/joint-statement-on-xinjiang-on-the-second-anniversary-of-the-ohchrs-assessment-hrc57/.

155 Gerald Roche and Mychal Smith, "Xinjiang Denialists Are Only Aiding Imperialism," *The Nation*, July 6, 2021.

156 Nuance, "I Called SerpentZA to Say He Was Right About CHINA?!" Mar. 29, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-8P-4xvkRM.

157 Lin Li and James Leibold, "The Chinese Communist Party's Overseas Influence Operations Seek to Alter the Xinjiang Narrative," The Strategist, July 7, 2022, www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-chinese-communist-partys-overseas-influence-operations-seek-to-alter-the-xinjiang-narrative/.

158 Tunku Varadarajan, "'Living the Asian Century' Review: Kishore Mahbubani's World," WSJ, Aug. 16, 2024.

159 Frenzel The Belt and Road Initiative.

backlash."[160] The assumption behind that is that China's leaders are not as smart as Western analysts, even as to an obvious proposition.

As US Xinjiang specialist Patrik Meyer has remarked,

> Any western scholar, media outlet, or multinational company presenting a positive perspective on Xinjiang is swiftly dismissed as being the product of China's propagandistic machinery, if not accused of knowingly propagating Beijing's lies for self-serving interests. The fact, however, is that most researchers who disagree with the mainstream anti-China scholars and media are neither mouthpieces of the Chinese government nor stupid.[161]

The rhetorical trick of "Chinese shills" has been called out in a 2024 analysis of assertions, mainly by women, that some key members of the anti-China "human rights community" have engaged in sexual harassment. In a report by Allbritton Journalism Institute, a Washington-based trainer of political journalists noted that "People who allege misconduct can also face a very different kind of accusation from their colleagues: that they may be spies or influence agents for the Chinese government attempting to destroy a righteous cause."[162] That bait will doubtless continue to be the retort of last resort from the camp of "Uyghur genocide" proponents.

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160 Sheena Chestnut Greitens, et al. "Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression," *International Security* 44:3 (2019/2020): 9–47.

161 Patrik Meyer, "Western Scholars and Activists Must Refrain from Using Beijing's Playbook to Quell Dissenting Voices," TNL Mediagene, Jan. 11, 2024.

162 Haley Byrd Wilt, "The Human Rights World Has a Sexual Harassment Problem," Notus, May 10, 2024, www.notus.org/policy/human-rights-groups-sexual-harassment.

CHAPTER 6

Industrializing the "Uyghur Genocide"

1 The Xinjiang Negative Narrative and Its "Industries"

Mainstream media in Western and allied countries now have a strong anti-China animus, especially traditional media, whose US consumers are much more likely to be hostile to China than consumers of online and social media.[1] The US government is pushing this animus to even higher levels: in 2024, the US Congress created a "Countering the PRC Malign Influence Fund" with $1.6 billion for anti-China propaganda overseas.[2] Studies show that negative Western attitudes toward China owe largely to media-infused bias.[3] Especially in the Anglosphere,

> the genocide allegation has been made so indisputable by an overwhelming number of reports and the subsequent sanctions, that the slightest challenge to the 'genocide' accusation would be dismissed as poor scholarship and/or sympathy towards the Chinese state. The intolerance for nuanced research impairs the understanding of local complexities which require evidence-based and longterm research.[4]

In several cases globally, genocide denials are so ill-founded and blatantly political that they are obviously related to prejudice and might even be regarded as hate crimes. Other denials however involve claims of genocide that are very far from universally accepted.[5]

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1 Li Xiaojun and Ang Yuen Yuen, "Media Consumption Patterns and Public Hostility Toward China in the United States," *Communication and the Public*, 2025, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5263311.

2 Marcus Stanley, "House Passes $1.6 Billion to Deliver Anti-China Propaganda Overseas," Responsible Statecraft, Sept. 11, 2024, https://responsiblestatecraft.org/china-cold-war-2669160202/.

3 Tim Summers, "Shaping the Policy Debate: How Does the British Media Present China?" King's College London, Lau China Institute, Policy Series 2023:8, www.kcl.ac.uk/news/british-media-china; David McNeill and Nao Kato, "Fanning The Flames: China Vs. Japan In The Media," *Asia – Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 22:4 (May, 2024), https://apjjf.org/2024/5/mcneill.

4 Zhang Chi, Competing Narratives.

5 See Bedross Der Mattrosian (ed.), *Denial of Genocide in the 21st Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023).

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Zenz and other white saviors have also joined the US-centered "genocide industry." The late Herbert Hirsch, a pioneering US scholar of genocide studies, has observed that

> There is now a genocide industry in Washington, DC – a smallish offshoot of its foreign policy counterpart – where members are brought into the fold and recycled as they demonstrate their willingness to go along with the party line of whatever the ruling administration's genocide/human rights policy happens to be … A very common and apparently useful strategy is to invite vetted "experts" – hand-picked by the administration or by the leadership in Congress – to testify in front of various committees. Here, it is important to ask ourselves why some appear while others do not. Is it related to how much one knows about a particular topic or how well acquainted one is with a given situation, or is it that each side of any argument calls on those who will justify the policy they wish to pursue?[6]

US politicians selectively include "experts" in the Washington-based genocide industry by inviting them to testify to Congressional bodies. These entities endorse Uyghur émigré claims, issue calls for sanctions against China, and confirm positions of members of Congress who know little of the country and often act out of political opportunism or ideological animus.[7] A leading German genocide scholar, Dominik Schaller, has also spoken of the genocide industry:

> [T]he accusation of genocide became an efficient instrument of propaganda. The opponents of the Cold War regularly accused one another of committing acts of genocide … As a result of this political exploitation, the term "genocide" degenerated into a rhetorical weapon … genocide sells. Book manuscripts related to mass violence need to carry "genocide" in their titles in order to be published and sold … researchers [must] keep a critical distance from both activists and profit-oriented actors in the field. The most important task is to elude instrumentalization in any

6 Herbert Hirsch, "Preventing Genocide and Protecting Human Rights," *Genocide Studies International* 8:1 (2014): 1–22.

7 See, e.g., testimony of James Millward to Committee on Foreign Affairs, hearing on "Atrocities Against Uyghurs and Other Minorities in Xinjiang," May 6, 2021: 15–25, www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-117hhrg44450/html/CHRG-117hhrg44450.htm.

> form … [by] constantly scrutinize[ing] the terms, concepts, categories, and methods that are commonly used in genocide studies.[8]

The genocide industry is akin to the "anti-Semitism" industry that exists in the US and some other Western countries. A New York Times columnist has written that

> In this country and elsewhere – most notably in Germany – a vast network of anti-antisemitism activists, many of them self-appointed and many of them not Jewish, have leveled this accusation against hundreds of thinkers, writers and artists who have criticized Israeli policies. Many – probably most – of the accused are Jewish. I am one of them.[9]

There is a third industry that some Western supporters of the Uyghur émigré cause join, the "politico-entertainment sector." While the white savior and genocide industries are at least Anglosphere phenomena, the "politico-entertainment complex" or "political industry" is basically American and was essentially founded by conservative leader William F. Buckley in the 1960s.[10] This "lucrative and ego-feeding" industry is "a source of income and status, or even of belonging." It involves such entities as television "news" shows, think tanks, political action committees, but also speaking and (non-academic) publishing opportunities.[11]

The politico-entertainment sector is related to the "politico-media complex." Those in the industry can gain access to media to promote themselves and their ideas or causes, including in ways that subvert international law.[12] Within media, their sensationalist "politainment" might be, for example, hyping a "genocide" with no empirical basis.[13] There is, in the US at least, a

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8 Dominik Schaller, "From Lemkin to Clooney: The Development and State of Genocide," GSP 6:3 (2011): 245–256.

9 M. Gessen, "The Attacks on Zohran Mamdani Show That We Need a New Understanding of Antisemitism," NYT, June 24, 2025.

10 Sam Tananhaus, *Buckley: The Life and the Revolution that Changed America* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2025).

11 Janan Ganesh, "The Problem with America's Politico-Entertainment Complex," FT, Feb. 28, 2024.

12 "The Politico-Media Complex: The Alliances Forged Between Politics and Media," atarion.com, 2024, https://atarion.com/uploads/the_politico_media_complex.pdf; Monica Hakimi, "The Media as Participants in the International Legal Process," *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law* 16: 1 (2006): 1–34.

13 Jorg-Uwe Nieland, "Politainment," in Wolfgang Donsbach (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2008): 973.

"world of rightwing influence" in which a self-proclaimed former "nobody" can become a somebody by gaining a modicum of access to politico-media circles. That can be so for otherwise obscure academics and activists, if they promote a cause popular with such circles.[14]

The fourth industry some supporters of the Uyghur émigré cause may have joined is the "sanctions industry." In both 2022 and 2023, the US government imposed more than 3,000 sanctions, up from only a few hundred in the early 2000s. Not only has that generated a large bureaucracy, particularly in the Departments of Treasury, Commerce, and Homeland Security, but also a large contingent of lobbyists. Spending in the US for professional advice on compliance with sanctions now is at about $30 billion a year. As an ex-advisor to the US Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which oversees sanctions, has put it, it is "'the richest guys' who are 'best equipped to pay for the right services.'" That means that joining the sanctions industry can be very rewarding. That is especially so for the former politicians who firms pay to lobby government to keep competing Chinese firms out of the US market.[15]

Some US industries, such as textiles and solar panels, have vociferously supported sanctions against all Xinjiang-made products under the Uyghur Forced Labor Protection Act (UFLPA) of 2021. In 2024, the US's National Clothing and Textile Organization strongly supported UFLPA's ban on imports that use Xinjiang cotton.[16] In 2025, the National Council of Textile Organizations president, seeking to exclude more Chinese products, urged Trump to "take it even further to step up enforcement even more, because industries like ours matter and that this will help them achieve some of their key goals."[17] The US's Southern Shrimp Association in 2024–2025 persuaded the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ban several seafood processing companies from the US market, asserting, without evidence, that they use forced labor merely because they have some Uyghur employees.[18]

US NGOs and individuals who support the émigrés gain prominence by interacting with Western industries that compete with Chinese counterparts. China's solar panel production prominence attracts its European competitors

14 Stuart A. Thompson, "He's a Master of Outrage on X. The Pay Isn't Great," NYT, June 6, 2025.

15 Jeff Stein, et al, "As Sanctions Surge, an Influence Industry is Booming," WP, Oct. 25, 2024.

16 Shemona Shafaya, "US Textile Sector Welcomes Blacklisting of 26 Chinese Firms Under UFLPA," *Just Style*, May 17, 2024.

17 Richard Vanderford, "Trump Has a China Trade War Weapon He Hasn't Picked Up," WSJ, Mar. 21, 2025.

18 "US Shrimp Group Urges Ban on Chinese Seafood Processor Over Forced Labor Claims," ANI, Jan. 5, 2025.

to support Zenz's unevidenced claims of Uyghur forced labor. In 2024, he spoke at a meeting of the European Solar Manufacturing Council (ESMC), urging the EU to adopt the same burden shifting applied to Chinese solar firms doing business in the US, who are required to prove they do not use forced labor.[19] In 2025, the UK's "progressive" Energy Secretary David Miliband, speaking of the government's plan to extensively adopt solar panel, said that to "eradicate the abhorrent practice of modern slavery … Uyghur and other minorities in China's Xinjiang province would not be involved in the supply chain in Britain."[20]

Joining the white savior, genocide, politico-entertainment and sanctions industries spells career advancement for some, but also provides opportunities for virtue signaling, the "public expression of opinions or sentiments intended to demonstrate one's good character or social conscience or the moral correctness of one's position on a particular issue."[21] Virtue signaling flows naturally from the "moral crusading" that German China scholars have observed, not only with respect to the Xinjiang issue, but in 21st Century Western Sinology more generally.[22] Arguably, however, with Trump in power, "vice signaling" may also have a place.[23] In any case, the Uyghur émigré forces and many of their Western supporters cultivate "Trump's China hawks" and vice versa.[24]

The discourse of the white saviors of the Uyghurs and Western supporters overlaps. In 2023, Zenz spoke of a "slow genocide" in Xinjiang through reducing the population densities of Uyghurs.[25] UHRP head Omer Kanat affirmed in 2025 that there are "ongoing slow-genocide policies."[26] Émigré lawyer Rayhan Asat, of the US government-connected Atlantic Council, said there is a

19 Will Norman, "ESMC and Uyghur Groups Say 'Burden of Proof' Must Shift to Tackle Alleged Xinjiang Forced Labor in Europe's Solar Supply" PV Tech, Feb. 19, 2024, www.pv-tech.org/xinjiang-alleged-forced-labour-in-eu-solar-burden-of-proof-shift/.

20 Tony Diver, "Miliband to Cover Britain's Lakes in Floating Solar Panels," *Telegraph*, July 1, 2025.

21 "What is the Meaning of Virtue Signaling?" baba.la, 2024, https://en.bab.la/dictionary/english/virtue-signalling.

22 Bjorn Alpermann and Gunter Schubert, "Gegen das moralische Kreuzrittertum – Chinaforschung ist kein politischer Aktivismus" (Against moral crusading – China research is not political activism), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Mar. 9, 2022.

23 Jemima Kelly, "We Have Now Entered the 'Mask Off' Era," FT, Feb. 3, 2025.

24 Amy McKinnon and Lili Pike, "Trump's China Hawks Are Also Uyghur Advocates," *Foreign Policy*, Nov. 15, 2024, https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/11/15/rubio-waltz-china-xinjiang-uyghurs-human-rights/.

25 Jasmin Chua, "What Evidence Shows About China and Uyghur Forced Labor," *Sourcing Journal*, May 19, 2023.

26 "Peters Reintroduces Bipartisan Legislation to Help Combat Human Rights Violations," Congressional Documents and Publications, Feb. 14, 2025.

genocide and "It's like a deliberate attempt at ethnic cleansing. They want to bring about a slow disappearance of this population."[27]

The Uyghur population has not been reduced however, and Xinjiang has not been ethnically cleansed. Genocide tends to take place amidst clashing armies in existential conflicts, while ethnic cleansing is "the importation of a new population [into a territory] usually accompanied by the expulsion of indigenous persons."[28] No armies are clashing in Xinjiang and no expulsion of "indigenous persons" is occurring. Some 99.8% of Uyghurs live in Xinjiang[29] and Uyghurs are not an indigenous people under the ILO's definition,[30] which reflects the UN view that distinguishes indigenous people from ethnic minorities: indigenous people as those who identify themselves as indigenous groups, established cultures and social institutions before European colonialism, and continue to maintain those traditional ways.[31] Uyghur self-identity is only a century old, emerging at the 1921 Tashkent Conference of Soviet-influenced Turkic intellectuals, while Xinjiang's incorporation into China as a multi-ethnic region dates back many centuries.[32]

The notion that Xinjiang has had one of "the most violent instances of forced migration around the world in the late twentieth century" is also erroneous. The absence of displacement – the key feature of settler colonialist forced migration – in Xinjiang contrasts with the processes the Australian settler colonialism specialist Lachlan McNamee describes in Iraq and West Papua:

> [D]uring the 1970s, the Iraqi government sought to "Arabize" Kirkuk – the site of the largest oil deposits in northern Iraq. It did so in part by transferring Kurdish oil and industrial workers in the Northern Oil Company to southern Iraq and replacing them with Arabs. Industrial centers

27 "Rayhan Asat, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist: "Xi Jinping Seeks to Make the Uyghur Population," Disappear," CE NoticiasFinancieras, Mar. 22, 2025.

28 McNamee, Settling for Less: 42–43.

29 John Feng, "China's Uyghur Genocide Ongoing in Xinjiang: US Human Rights Report," *Newsweek*, Apr. 13, 2022.

30 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (ILO Convention No. 169), https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169; Douglas Sanders, "Indigenous Peoples: Issues of Definition". *International Journal of Cultural Property*. 8:1 (1999): 4–13.

31 William H. Meyers, "Indigenous Rights, Global Governance and State Sovereignty," *Human Rights Review* 13: 3 (2012): 327–347.

32 Adrienne Dwyer, *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy and Political Discourse* (Washington: East-West Center 2010): 75; Deng and Valle de Frutos, Historical-Sociological: 74; Sean Roberts, "Imagining Uyghurstan: Re-evaluating the Birth of the Modern Uyghur Nation" CAS 28:4 (2009): 361–381.

> of Kirkuk like Yaychi quickly became predominantly Arab. Similarly, when Indonesia took control over West Papua in the 1960s, it dismissed most of the indigenous Papuan workforce in the petroleum industry. As migrants were drawn in to replace Papuans, oil-rich areas of West Papua such as Sorong or the Cenderawasih Bay quickly became predominantly non-Papuan.[33]

The qualification of Xinjiang genocide as "slow" – as in "slow genocide,"[34] "slow motion genocide"[35] or genocide by "slow death"[36] – because there have not been any mass killings in the region – is familiar. Tibetan émigrés now copy these phrases in appeals for US government support,[37] but Western white racists also deploy the trope. Ultra-rightist Afrikaner groups do so in speaking about the (proportionately few) murders of whites in South Africa.[38] Former US Congress member Steve King (R-IA) and US neo-Nazi Richard Spencer speak of a conspiracy to carry out "slow motion genocide" of whites through immigration and abortion and advocate an ethno-state to reverse that putative process.[39] Spencer and like-minded "alt-right" leaders couple that with proclaimed hostility to capitalism, to give racism a progressive veneer.[40]

Just as there have been no "bloodless genocides" however, "slow genocide" is a rhetorical ploy. All genocides have been murderous and concerted. Even

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33 McNamee: Settling for Less: 45.

34 Adrian Zenz and Erin Rosenberg, "Beijing Plans a Slow Genocide in Xinjiang," Foreign Policy, June 8, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/08/genocide-population-xinjiang-uyghurs/.

35 Harry de Quetteville, "'China is Harvesting Hair and Organs from the Uyghurs – it's a Slow-Motion Genocide'" *Telegraph*, May 22, 2022 (Nury Turkel, Uyghur Human Rights Project head).

36 Beth van Schaak, "Genocide Against the Uyghurs: Legal Grounds for the United States' Bipartisan Genocide Determination," Just Security, Jan. 27, 2021, ustsecurity.org/74388/genocide-against-the-uyghurs-legal-grounds-for-the-united-states-bipartisan-genocide-determination/.

37 "Exiled Leader Tells US Congress Tibet Faces 'Slow Death' Under China," Reuters, Mar. 29, 2023.

38 Daniel Friedman, "Donald Trump Must Intervene in SA – Black Monday Protesters," *The Citizen*, Oct. 29, 2018.

39 "Rep. Steve King Goes Full White Nationalist in Interview with Austrian Site," Huffpost, Oct. 25, 2018, www.huffpost.com/entry/iowa-rep-steve-king-austria-whitenationalist_n_5bca4851e4b0a8f17eec6001; "Richard B. Spencer: The Founder of Alt-right Presents Racism in a Chic New Outfit," European Center for Populism Studies, June 28, 2021, www.populismstudies.org/richard-b-spencer-the-founder-of-alt-right-presents-racism-in-a-chic-new-outfit/.

40 Jason Wilson, "Socialism, Fascist-style: Hostility to Capitalism Plus Extreme Racism," *Guardian*, Aug. 20, 2017.

the head of the main Afrikaner advocacy organization, Afriforum, when asked about a supposed genocide of whites, denied it, stating that "genocide is what we saw in Rwanda." That country's killings in 1994 were massive and rapid; hundreds of thousands were slaughtered over a 100-day period.[41] The contrast is apt, as 800,000 Tutsi, about 80% of their Rwandan population were killed in 1994,[42] while the number of whites in South Africa grew from 4,434,697 in 1996 to 4,539,212 in 2024, despite a –645,098 net white migration from 1985 to 2014 and an additional –91,000 in 2016–2021.[43]

2 Xinjiang: No Settlers, No Colonialism

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (新疆生产建设兵团, XPCC or *bingtuan*) features in all claims of Xinjiang settler colonialism. Founded in 1954, mainly to develop agriculture in Xinjiang, it now focuses on manufacturing and commerce.[44] The XPCC is a mainly Han institution, 85.1% in 2019, down from 88% in 1993. It had 2.6 million members in 2020–2023, down from 2.8 million in 2000 and 2.7 million in 2013, disconfirming claims that it is flooding Xinjiang with Han. The *bingtuan*'s 700,000 productive workers were 5.3% of the region's 13.6m employed people in 2020, with 7.34 million or 55.2% of them urban. Assertions that "the *bingtuan* employs more than 12% of the region's workforce"[45] are thus in error. The XPCC has 14 divisions and 175 regiments, 70,000 sq. km under its administration, and generates 17% of Xinjiang's GDP (down from one-third in the 1960s). In the two main Uyghur-dominated prefectures in 2020 Han were the minority in the *bingtuan*: in Kashgar, the XPCC

41 Faizel Patel, "Gayton McKenzie Says He Loves Donald Trump During Discussion with AfriForum Leader," *The Citizen*, Feb. 18, 2025.

42 Marijke Verpoorten, "The Death Toll of the Rwandan Genocide: A Detailed Analysis for Gikongoro Province," *Population* 60:4 (2005): 331–367.

43 "The People of South Africa: Population Census, 1996," Statistics South Africa Report, No. 03-01-11; "South Africa's Population," South African Gateway, 2024, Southafrica-info.com/people/south-africa-population; "Mid-Year Population Estimates," Statistics South Africa, 2014; Khangelani Moyo "South Africa Reckons with Its Status as a Top Immigration Destination, Apartheid History, and Economic Challenges," MPI, Nov. 16, 2021, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-africa-immigration-destination-history.

44 Tom Cliff, "Neo-Oasis: The Xinjiang Bingtuan in the 21st Century," *Asian Studies Review* 33:1 (2009): 83–106.

45 "Employment and Labor Rights in Xinjiang," SCIO, Sept. 2020, www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-09/17/c139373591.htm; "US Punishes China State-Within-State in Xinjiang over Rights," AFP, July 31, 2020; James Seymour, "Xinjiang's Production and Construction Corp and the Sinification of East Turkestan," *Inner Asia* 2:2 (2000): 171–193.

3rd Division was 47.2% Han; in Hotan, the 14th Division was 39.6% Han.[46] For these very Uyghur areas of Xinjiang, talk of "ethnically homogenous bingtuan farms of Xinjiang"[47] is inapt.

Also in error is the notion that the *bingtuan* is mainly in areas of Uyghur concentration. Almost seven out of ten of its members are outside southern Xinjiang. With 810,000 members there in 2016, they were 6.97% of southern Xinjiang's total population, down from 7.88% in 2000. *Bingtuan* members were also much older than the general southern Xinjiang population.[48] The southern Xinjiang population grew from 8.756 million in 1998 to 11.593 million in 2018, but most growth was from natural population increase. There were only 412,000 migrants to the region during that 20-year period or 3.55% of the 2018 total population. In some years, areas like Bayingolin Prefecture recorded negative net migration.[49]

In 2023, the *bingtuan*'s GDP reached Y369b ($52.6 billion) an increase of 6.9% over the preceding year.[50] Some 48% came from agriculture and the rest from industry (mainly oil, coal, cement, chemicals and electricity), hi-tech and services. The ubiquitous Western depiction of its members as a militia of farmers is thus inaccurate. The XPCC controls 70,600 square km of land, with about one-quarter of the region's arable land. Its members have built farms in the desert, using underground water. A 2023 *bingtuan* report indicated that recruits will be sent to "land that is unoccupied. We should use water resources to improve economic development and the living standards of Uyghurs, to restrict the space for terrorism." In other words, it neither sets up farms on land taken from minorities nor deprives them of river water.[51]

In 2023, per capita disposable income of all XPCC residents was Y40,339, about Y1,100 above the national average. Xinjiang disposable incomes were about 70% of the *bingtuan* average. XPCC urban incomes were Y46,485 and rural incomes Y30,565.[52] The above average *bingtuan* incomes are likely because

46 Xinjiang Bingtuan Yearbook, 2020, http://tjj.xjbt.gov.cn/2020nj/mainindex.htm.

47 Tom Cliff, "Refugees, Conscripts, and Constructors: Developmental Narratives and Subaltern Han in Xinjiang, China," *Modern China* 47:5 (2021): 540–568.

48 王巧玲, "兵团优化南疆人口资源问题研究 (Study on the optimization of population resources in southern Xinjiang by the XPCC)," 劳动保障世界 33 (2018): 79–81.

49 欧阳金琼, et al., "新疆南疆地区城镇化、产业升级与人口集聚——基于 县域统计资料与 SDEM 模型" (Industrial upgrading, urbanization and population agglomeration in South Xinjiang: based on county statistics and SDEM models), 西北人口 42:3 (2021): 117–126.

50 Mao Huihua and Cui Jia, "Corps Urged to Support Xinjiang," CD, Oct. 8, 2024.

51 Mark O'Neill, "Militia Settlers in Xinjiang Become Economic Powerhouse," EJ Insights, Oct. 10, 2024.

52 Wang Jinhui, "Esprit de Corps Builds a Desert Economy," CD, Oct. 7, 2024.

members are more urban and older than average. Contrary to assertions that its members are all "military farmers,"[53] "the *bingtuan* today is almost entirely civilian."[54] Its workforce has roughly 400,000 farmers on 175 farms, 15% of its membership. In 2014, 37 of these farms were mainly inhabited by minorities.[55] XPCC has roughly 200,000 public employees (civil servants, teachers, doctors, etc.) and 100,000 secondary sector workers and managers. It also had, in 2010, 520,000 retirees, many of them outside Xinjiang.[56]

The *bingtuan* has extensive land holdings – some 20.2% of the region's arable land around 2010.[57] There is no basis however for the fantasy of the then-head of the émigré UAA that "[The XPCC] occupied all the fruitful land in East Turkestan, all the rivers, all the water sources."[58] Little *bingtuan* land was formerly farmed by others; rather, it is largely reclaimed "wasteland" (荒地). One out of every three mu (1/15th of a ha.) of arable land in Xinjiang was reclaimed by the XPCC.[59] The Chinese term for "wasteland" (荒地) does not imply, as the English term does, an empty, desolate space, but instead an area not formerly cultivated or used for grazing.[60] Wasteland development in southern Xinjiang has benefitted environmental sustainability; in a 2025 study, researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography found

> significant land-use changes between 1992 and 2020. Cropland expanded by approximately 18,851 square kilometers, while grassland and woodland

53 Sarah Tynen, "Dispossession and Displacement of Migrant Workers: The Impact of State Terror and Economic Development on Uyghurs in Urban Xinjiang," *Central Asian Survey* (CAS) 39:1 (2020): 1–21.

54 Tom Cliff, "Peripheral Urbanism," *China Perspectives* 2013, 3: 13–23.

55 "The History and Development of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps," SCIO, Oct. 5, 2014, http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/2014/10/05/content281474992384669.htm.

56 Bao Yajun, "The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps: An Insider's Perspective," *China: an International Journal* 18:2 (2020): 161–174; Tynen, Dispossession; Mark O'Neill, "Xinjiang Sanctions Threaten China-EU Investment Agreement," EJ Insight, Apr. 1, 2021.

57 黄登迎, 杨红 "农村土地'三权分置'政策面临的主要困境及解决路径———以新疆为例, (The main dilemmas and solution faced by the 'separation of three rights' policy in rural land: taking Xinjiang as an example)" 哈尔滨工业大学学报 (社会科学版) 19:6 (2017): 130–136.

58 Wade Shepherd, "The Complex Impact of Urbanization in Xinjiang," The Diplomat, Dec. 16, 2015, https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-xinjiang/.

59 "在军垦第一城，习近平再次强调这种精神" (In the first city of military reclamation, Xi Jinping again emphasizes that spirit), 央视网新闻报道, July 13, 2022, http://news.cyol.com/gb/articles/2022-07/18/content_XEjbQUp2z.html.

60 "Huang di," Han Book, 2025, www.hanbook.com/chinese-dictionary/words/huang1-di4-wasteland.

> increased by about 10,235 and 1,015 square kilometers, respectively. Conversely, barren land decreased by around 20,597 square kilometers. The ecological quality index improved from 0.1196 to 0.1248, particularly in the upper and middle reaches of the [Tarim] river basin … [T]he primary driver of ecological improvement is the conversion of barren land into grassland and woodland, which enhances ecosystem services such as water conservation, soil retention and biodiversity preservation.[61]

Contrary to what has been claimed by a Canadian researcher, the Chinese term 荒地 thus has no connection to the discourse of "wasteland" used to justify settler encroachments into indigenous territories. It is unrelated to the Western concept of *terra nullius* – the assertion that a territory is uninhabited and thus can be legally colonized. It has no relation to the concept of *vacuum domicilium* (empty of inhabitants), in which if land is not under an active use, does not have fixed habitation, structures, or fences, it was free for the taking – the excuse that the self-proclaimed "more advanced" white settlers employed to take Native American land that had been used mainly for seasonal hunting.[62] Needless to say, *bingtuan* leaders have never claimed Xinjiang is uninhabited or that its long-resident people have not owned the land.

3 Mortalities, Life Expectancies and Other Comparisons

Rapid population growth impacted the ability of Uyhgur farmers to make a living off the land. It owes to preferential policies that allowed for a much higher birthrate than among Han, while Uyghur death rates are relatively low and likely do not differ much from Xinjiang Han rates. In areas of Xinjiang with higher percentages of Han, their death rate is roughly like that of local Uyghurs. The 2021 all-China death rate was 7.18 per 1,000, but for Xinjiang it was 4.56 in 2018,[63] down from 20.82 in 1949. The low Xinjiang death rate is

61 "Study Reveals Land Use Changes, Ecological Trends in China's Tarim River Basin," Xinhua, May 24, 2025.

62 Qingchuan Gu, *Is China a Settler State? The Critique and Expansion of Settler Colonial Theory*, MA thesis, University of Alberta, 2021: 74, ra.library.ualberta.ca/items/0cef5a92-6229-41b9-a447-3a6ca1998335; Alfred A. Cave, "Canaanites in a Promised Land: The American Indian and the Providential Theory of Empire," *American Indian Quarterly* 12:4 (1988): 277–297.

63 National Bureau of Statistics, "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2021 National Economic and Social Development," Feb. 28, 2022, www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202202/t20220227;_1827963.html#:~:text=There%20were%2010.62%20million%20births,rate%20of%207.18%20per%20thousand; Zuliyati Simayi and

because the region's people, especially Uyghurs, are young: in China in 2020, 0–14 year olds were 17.9% of the population, in Xinjiang they were 22.46%, and among Uyghurs, 30.23%. Concomitantly, 13.5% of Chinese in 2020 were 65-plus, but they were 7.76% of Xinjiang people and 5.59% of Uyghurs.[64]

In 97% Uyghur Hotan prefecture, the minority death rate was 5.73 in 2015 and 4.79 in 2017. Han death rates in Hotan were super-low, only 1.83 in 2015 and 1.59 in 2017, because the "Uyghur heartland" has very few elderly Han. In 92.6% Uyghur Kashgar prefecture, the 2018 death rate was similar to rates in Hotan, 5.56.[65] Xinjiang's death rate during the pandemic – 5.46 in 2020, 5.60 in 2021, and 5.76 in 2022 – also remained well below those for China as a whole – 7.07 in 2020, 7.18 in 2021, 7.37 in 2022.[66] Wujiaqu, in northern Xinjiang, is the Xinjiang county-level jurisdiction with the highest proportion of Han, 96%. Its death rate was 6.9 in 2019,[67] while Zenz has put the 2018 death rate in southern Xinjiang, where the population was 92% Uyghurs, at 6.37.[68] A demographer of Xinjiang has said that, "The death level of the Uyghur population is similar to that of the Han Chinese and was already at a very low level very early on, possessing the prerequisites for fertility decline."[69]

The US death rate in 2022, incidentally, was 9.1, up from 8.2 a decade earlier, although part of the difference with Xinjiang may be because the US has

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Zhang Yaxi, "An Analysis of American Interference in Xinjiang Affairs Under the Context of Human Rights Protection – A Research Report from the Perspective of Xinjiang's Population," Xinjiang University, Jan. 4, 2021, http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/xinjiangfocus/2021-01/04/content_77239994.htm.

64 Li Jianxin and Qiu Liya, "Demographic Transition and Population Dynamics in Xinjiang China," *China Population and Development Studies* 8 (2024): 78–95.

65 Hotan, Kashgar Statistical Yearbooks, 2015–2018.

66 "Population: Death Rate: Xinjiang," CEIC, 2024, www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-death-by-region/cn-population-death-rate-xinjiang; China's Population Drops for Second Year, with Record Low Birth Rate," Reuters, Jan. 17, 2024; "China the World Fact Book," CIA, Sept. 3, 2024, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/; China Statistical Yearbook 2023, https://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/ndsj/2023/indexeh.htm.

67 Zhang Jianhua, et al, "Epidemiological Investigation of Sudden Cardiac Death in Multiethnic Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China," BMC Public Health 19: 116 (2019); Xinjiang Bingtuan Yearbook, 2019, http://tjj.xjbt.gov.cn/2020nj/mainindex.htm.

68 Zenz, End the Dominance; "China's Plans to Dilute Southern Xinjiang's Uyghur Population Could Constitute Genocide, Scholar Says," RFA, Aug. 30, 2021.

69 "Li Jianxin: I Investigated the Population Problem in Southern Xinjiang and Found a Phenomenon," Observer Network, July 12, 2021, https://readchina.info/en-US/artricls/548985680932372480; Morris Rossabi, *Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005): 157–158.

a higher proportion of elderly people.[70] In contrast to Xinjiang moreover, US death rates are sharply different by "race." For American Indians/Alaska Natives the rate in 2021 was about 14.78; for blacks 11.51; for whites 9.03.[71] US child mortality is also high and growing: 4% of US children do not survive to age 40, a rate four times that of other wealthy countries. The US youth death rate jumped by 10.7% from 2019 to 2020 and 8.3% from 2020 to 2021, not mainly due to the pandemic, but to drugs and murders. Black youths 10–19 are murdered at a rate six times as high as that of Hispanic children and teenagers and 20-plus times the rate for white children and teenagers.[72] Whether an ethnic gap in youth murder rates in Xinjiang is unclear, although there likely is some gap, as crime and inequality are correlated in China.[73] In any case, China's official murder rate in 2023 was one-eighth that of the US: 0.46 cases per 100,000 people versus 5.7. The odds are the youth murder rate among Uyghurs was lower than among any US population.[74]

The falling Xinjiang death rate contradicts claims of "diminished health outcomes and clear deprivations of health access perpetrated by Chinese officials against Uyghur Muslims."[75] The same is true for increased Uyghur life expectancy: it was 63 years in 1990, 67 in 2000, 72 in 2010, 74.7 in 2020,[76] and 75 years in 2024.[77]

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70 "U.S. Death Rate 1950–2022," Macrotrends, 2022, www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/death-rate.

71 "US Life Expectancy Drops to Lowest in a Generation," Voice of America (VOA), Dec. 23, 2022.

72 Stephen Woolf, et al, "The New Crisis of Increasing All-Cause Mortality in US Children and Adolescents," JAMA, Mar. 13, 2023, https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2802602; David Wallace-Wells, "It's Not Deaths of Despair, It's Deaths of Children," NYT, Apr. 7, 2023.

73 Song Zhe, et al, "Poverty Aversion or Inequality Aversion? The Influencing Factors of Crime in China," *Journal of Applied Economics* 23:1 (2020): 679–708.

74 "China Battles Rare Surge in Violent Crime Incidents Amid Economic Woes," AFP, Nov. 14, 2024.

75 Adhi Radhakrishnan, "An Inherent Right to Health: Reviving Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 52:1 (2020): 80–139 (132).

76 Brenda L. Schuster, "Gaps in the Silk Road: An Analysis of Population Health Disparities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China," CQ 198 (2009): 433–441; Rossabi, China and the Uyghurs: 100; Wang Wei, et al, "Spatial Variation and Social Determinants of Life Expectancy in China, 2005–2020: A Population-Based Spatial Panel Modelling Study," *Lancet* 23: 100451 (June 1, 2022), www.thelancet.com/journals/lanwpc/article/PIIS2666-6065(22)00066-9/fulltext.

77 Chen Yingchun, "Expats Need to Break Stereotypes and Ignore Misinformation," CD, Mar. 26, 2024.

Uyghur life expectancy increased by 12 years in one-third the time it took British life expectancy to grow by 3.5 years from 1770 to 1870.[78] Uyghur life expectancy is higher than the 2024 global average of 73.33 years. It is much above that of India in 2024 (70.62), the country best compared to China.[79] A China-critical Swedish analyst had already put Uyghur life expectancy in 2019 however at 74 for males and 79 for females.[80] Xinjiang life expectancy in 2021 was 75.2[81] and in 2023 was 76, up 8.65 years since the year 2000.[82] In 2024, the figure given was 77.94.[83] National life expectancy in China in 2024 was 77.64 years,[84] up from 55 years in 1970 and 35 years in 1949.[85] In the latter year, by the way, US life expectancy was 65 for men and 70 for women, but now Chinese life expectancy exceeds that of Americans.[86]

By 2035, China's average life expectancy is expected to reach 81.3 years. Gains in life expectancy in provinces with a high concentration of minorities, especially Xinjiang, are predicted to not come from seniors, as in provinces of high Han concentration, but from young people. That will partly result from lowering infant and maternal mortality and increasing the pace of urbanization, as China's healthcare coverage for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health is comparable to those in high-income countries. Xinjiang will also have a significantly higher proportion of young people than almost all other provinces.[87]

The increased life expectancy of Uyghurs disconfirms Roche and Leibold's strained assertion that in Xinjiang the state commits the equivalent of

78 David Brooks, "The Great Struggle for Liberalism," NYT, Mar. 30, 2024.

79 "World Life Expectancy 1950–2025," "India Life Expectancy 1950–2025f," Macrotrends, 2025.

80 Laerke Vinther Christiansen, "The Chinese Crackdown in Xinjiang," The Perspective, Feb. 4, 2019, www.theperspective.se/2019/02/04/article/the-chinese-crackdown-in-xinjiang/.

81 Global Data Lab, "Life Expectancy," 2023, https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/table/lifexp/CHN/?levels=1+4&years=2021+2020&interpolation=0&extrapolation=0.

82 "Graphics: Sustained Population Growth and Health Advancements in Xinjiang," CGTN, Mar. 18, 2024, https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-03-18/Sustained-population-growth-and-health-advancements-in-XNnjiang-1s3X8Rk4xeo/p.html.

83 "Numbers Show Xinjiang's Rapid Development," XH, Aug. 28, 2024.

84 "China Life Expectancy 1950–2025," Macrotrends, 2025.

85 "Life Expectancy by Country," Worldometer, 2024, www.worldometers.info/demographics/life-expectancy/, Brook Larmer and Jane Zhang, "China's Population is Shrinking. It Faces a Perilous Future," *National Geographic*, Mar. 22, 2023, www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2023/03/chinas-population-is-shrinking-it-faces-a-perilous-future.

86 "8 Numbers that Reveal Unusual Facets of Modern China," BBC, May 26, 2024.

87 Bai Ruhai, et al, "Projections of Future Life Expectancy in China Up to 2035: a Modelling Study," *Lancet Public Health* 8:12 (2023): 915–922; Winnie Yip, et al, "Universal Health Coverage in China Part 1: Progress and Gaps," *Lancet Public Health*, 8:12 (2023): 1025–1034.

genocide of minorities because it "distribute[s] premature death to 'abnormal' populations," through "the desire to 'optimize' the population structure of the region through the manipulation of birth rates and targeted resettlement of Han and Uyghur communities," etc.[88] In fact, even a former US government official has recognized that in recent years "China has expanded the network of elderly care facilities in Xinjiang."[89]

A useful comparison of state policies that have increased or decreased life expectancy can be seen if one sets alongside the trend in Xinjiang what happened in 1990s Russia. Under the US-supported President Boris Yeltsin, who demolished Soviet socialism, male life expectancy fell from 63.4 in 1991 to 57.4 years in 1994, producing four million "excess deaths."[90] The sharp life expectancy drop was related to GDP falling to half or less in Russia by 1996, compared to a decade earlier. The same was so in Ukraine. In ex-Soviet Georgia by then, the GDP level was only one-fifth the mid-1980s level.[91] Western elites admired Yeltsin despite the drastic fall in life expectancy and other economic and social disasters of early post-Communist Russia. The six year-drop in life expectancy in Russia was dramatic, but the 4.6 single-year pandemic-induced decrease of life expectancy in New York City (NYC) in 2020 was even more so. As with life expectancy more generally in the US, the drop was ethnically uneven: it was 3 years for whites, 5 years for blacks, and 6 years for Hispanics.[92]

A gap of about four years may still exist between Han and Uyghur life expectancies. It owes to differences in income and education levels, but also to regional distribution. Han are mainly in northern Xinjiang, an area with "high population density, a developed industrial economy and high land development intensity." Some 80% of Uyghurs live in southern Xinjiang, with lower population density and development intensity and mainly rural employment.[93] Notable gaps in life expectancy exist elsewhere in China, as well: there is a four-year gap between two neighboring and overwhelmingly Han eastern provinces, Anhui (77) and Jiangsu (81).[94]

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88 Roche and Leibold, State Racism.

89 Peter Matthis, "Yes the Atrocities in Xinjiang Constitute a Genocide," *Foreign Policy*, Apr. 17, 2021, https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/yes-atrocities-xinjiang-constitute-genocide-232783.

90 Elisabeth Brainerd, "Mortality in Russia Since the Fall of the Soviet Union," *Comparative Economic Studies* 63 (2021): 557–576.

91 Utsa Patnaik, "The Republic of Hunger," *Social Scientist* 32:9/10 (2004): 9–35.

92 Joseph Goldstein, "N.Y.C. Life Expectancy Dropped 4.6 Years in 2020, Officials Say," NYT, Apr. 7, 2023.

93 Han Chuqiao, et al, "Evaluating and Simulating Resource and Environmental Carrying Capacity in Arid and Semiarid Regions: A Case Study of Xinjiang, China," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 338:1 (2022).

94 Wang Wei, Spatial Variation.

Elsewhere, large life expectancy differences are found within the same country or sub-unit. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the majority Kyrgyz have a much lower mortality rate than the Russian minority.[95] Women in Orkney Islands, Scotland live on average almost 18 more healthy years than those in Blackpool, England.[96] In 2018–2020, there was a 16.8 year difference in healthy life expectancy between Orkney Islands and Inverclyde males and 23 years for Orkneys and North Ayrshire females.[97] Glasgow men live seven years less than men in East Dumbartonshire; Glasgow women live 5.6 years less than East Renfrewshire women.[98]

In the US, life expectancy in Hawaii in 2022 was 8.8 years longer than in Mississippi.[99] Life expectancy in the Deep South's "Black Belt" is as much as 20 years lower than in the US northeast and west,[100] due to the correlation between life expectancy and wealth. Inequality of wealth (net worth and financial assets), is measured by the Gini Coefficient, with 0 being complete equality of households and 1 being all wealth held by a single household. The US's coefficient in 2016 was.87, far higher than all other developed countries.[101]

The Xinjiang Han/Uyghur gap is also much lower than the one between all Australians (83.7) and Aboriginal people (73.6). There is a 7.4 year gap between all New Zealanders and Maoris and an almost 9 year gap between Israelis (83.5) and occupied Palestinians (74.6).[102] The gap between US whites (76.4) and

95 Michel Guillot, et al, "Understanding the "Russian Mortality Paradox" in Central Asia: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan," *Demography* 48 (2011): 1081–1104.

96 "Map of Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth," The Health Foundation, Jan. 6, 2022, www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/health-inequalities/map-of-healthy-life-expectancy-at-birth.

97 "Healthy Life Expectancy in Scotland, 2018–2020," National Records of Scotland, 2022, www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/life-expectancy/healthy-life-expectancy-in-scotland/2018-2020/.

98 Jamie McKenzie, "Scotland's Life Expectancy is the Lowest in Western Europe with Poorest Scots Men Expected to Die 13 years Before Those in 'Least Deprived' Areas," *The Scotsman*, Sept. 24, 2020.

99 Talal Ansari, "Where Are People Living the Longest? See Where Your State Ranks in Life Expectancy," WSJ, Aug. 23, 2022.

100 "Life Expectancy and Inequality," American Inequality, 2023, https://americaninequality.substack.com/p/life-expectancy-and-inequality.

101 Moritz Kuhn, et al, "Income and Wealth Inequality in America, 1949–2016," Universitet Bonn, 2019, www.wiwi.uni-bonn.de/kuhn/paper/Wealthinequality_final.pdf.

102 "Life Expectancy of the World Population," Worldometer, 2022, www.worldometers.info/demographics/life-expectancy/; "Life Expectancy," Australia Government, 2020, https://ctgreport.niaa.gov.au/life-expectancy; Birdie Witton, "Māori will Take a Century to Catch up with Pākehā for Life Expectancy, New Report Find," Stuff, Sept. 28, 2021, www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/126512059/mori-will-take-a-century-to-catch-up-with-pkeh-for-life-expectancy-new-report-finds.

Native Americans (65.2) in 2021 was 11.2 years,[103] but from 2018–2021 it was 14 years – and 22 years in Native American-concentrated South Dakota.[104]

The gaps between all Australians and indigenous Australians and between Israelis and occupied Palestinians have been said to each create "about 4,000 avoidable Indigenous deaths from deprivation each year."[105] The gap between US whites (77.6) and US blacks (71.8) in 2020[106] was also larger than the Han/Uyghur difference in Xinjiang. That was so despite US whites being much more likely than blacks to be rural,[107] while Han are much more urban than Uyghurs. Many urban US environments have large class-driven life expectancy gap by race:

> Black life expectancy in Washington, DC was the lowest among all races at an average of 72.7 years. This compared unfavorably with an average of 88 years for white people, 88.3 years for Latinos, and 88.9 years for Asians in Washington, DC Black people also had the lowest per capita annual median income and the greatest disparities in income at $29,927 when compared to that of white people at $92,758 and Latinos at $41,151.[108]

In 2020 incidentally, Washington, DC life expectancy was 75.3, but it was 82.43 in Beijing.[109]

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103 Roni Rabin, "Life Expectancy for Americans Sharply Drops," NYT, Sept. 1, 2022; German Lopez, "Covid's Toll on Native Americans," NYT, Sept 8, 2022.

104 "Native Americans have Shorter Life Spans, and It's Not Just Due to Lack of Health Care," CBS News, Apr. 15, 2024, www.cbsnews.com/news/native-americans-life-expectancy-health-care/.

105 Gideon Polya, "Excellent Xinjiang Health, Growth & Education Outcomes Contradict Sinophobic US Lies," *South Asia Journal*, Jan. 17, 2022, http://southasiajournal.net/excellent-xinjiang-health-growth-education-outcomes-contradict-sinophobic-us-lies/.

106 Elizabeth Arias, et al, "Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020," NVSS, July 2021, www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr015-508.pdf.

107 "Racial and Ethnic Minorities Made Up About 22 Percent of the Rural Population in 2018, Compared to 43 Percent in Urban Areas," USDA Economic Research Service, 2020, www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=99538.

108 Camille Busette and Samantha Elizondo, "Economic Disparities in the Washington DC Metro Region Provide Opportunities for Policy Action," Brookings Institution, Apr. 27, 2022, www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2022/04/27/economic-disparities-in-the-washington-d-c-metro-region-provide-opportunities-for-policy-action/.

109 "Beijing's Average Life Expectancy Rises to 82.43 years," China.org.cn, July 27, 2021, www.china.org.cn/china/2021-07/27/content_77655002.htm "District of Columbia," National Center for Health Statistics, 2023, www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/dc/DC1.htm.

US life expectancy is "not among its wealthy peers, but below Kosovo, Albania, Sri Lanka and Algeria (and just ahead of Panama, Turkey and Lebanon)."[110] At 57th highest among the world's countries,[111] it declined even after the pandemic receded and has substantial regional differences within the country, largely due to policy differences. European states less rich than the US, with lower economic growth rates, also have higher life expectancy, again due to policy differences.[112] For example, if US and UK life expectancies by net household incomes are compared, there is a five-year gap even among those with a comfortable income. The average US life expectancy is the same as life expectancy in Blackpool, the most economically-distressed English city, with the country's lowest life expectancy. The relatively poor US state of West Virginia has an average life expectancy four years less than even Blackpool.[113]

4 Poverty Alleviation versus "Genocide"

Poverty alleviation programs in Xinjiang also counter-indicate genocidal intent. Genocides typically result in catastrophic lowering of the affected group's living standards, but in 2022, the per capita net income of those lifted out of poverty in Xinjiang grew by 12.1% year-on-year. That increase was Y609 higher than the rise in per capita net income of people lifted out of poverty nationally, indicating a particularly concerted effort at poverty alleviation in Xinjiang.[114]

An ILO study concluded that anti-poverty programs can obviate forced labor: "if nobody is poor then nobody will have to accept awful working conditions, and no 'economic coercion' will be able to push people into forced labor."[115] A 2023 study compared industrial and educational anti-poverty efforts from 2013 to 2019 in heavily Uyghur southern Xinjiang and much less

110 David Wallace-Wells, "Why is the US Such a Deadly Place?" NYT, Aug. 9, 2023.

111 Alex Lo, "US and UK are Far More Dangerous to Themselves Than China," SCMP, Aug. 10, 2023.

112 Paul Krugman, "Understanding the Red State Death Trip," NYT, Apr. 3, 2023.

113 John Burn Murdoch, "Why are Americans Dying So Young?" FT, Mar. 31, 2023.

114 吐尔孙·艾拜, "新疆农村劳动力转移是实现现代化的必由之路: 兼驳郑国恩 '强迫劳动论'" (The transfer of rural labor in Xinjiang is a necessary way to achieve modernization: rebuttal to Adrian Zenz's 'forced labor' theory) 经济导刊, Apr. 2, 2024, www.jingjidaokan.com/icms/null/null/ns:LHQ6LGY6LGM6MmM5ZTgoNzU4Y2E.

115 Neil Howard, "Combatting Forced Labour and Trafficking in Africa: Current Responses and a Way Forward" (Geneva: ILO, 2014): 37, https://researchportal.bath.ac.uk/files/20396908/29.pdf.

Uyghur-concentrated northern Xinjiang. It found these programs were generally useful and that

> the policy implementation of poor counties in southern Xinjiang is better than that in northern Xinjiang. This shows that the poverty alleviation policies deployed by the state can take into account the characteristics and conditions of ethnic minority communities and provide them with more preferential policies. This is consistent with what the Chinese government has promised in its poverty alleviation plan.[116]

German China specialists who visited Xinjiang in 2023 found that branches of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in agriculture and industry there must employ almost exclusively Uyghurs at national minimum wage standards, with the intent of helping to solve the employment problem.[117] Regional government vice chair Chen Weijun has said central SOEs play a pivotal role in promoting employment, improving livelihoods, and fostering industrial development and economic growth in Xinjiang.[118] A leading Chinese academic noted in early 2025 that "Chinese [SOEs] and the [Xinjiang] regional government are set to invest approximately two trillion yuan ($274 billion) into around 130 projects in Xinjiang over the next one to two years."[119]

Western media and émigré-supporting scholars, however, ignore rapid economic and social development among Uyghurs. That rhetorical ploy is analogous to stating that Chinese imports caused tens of thousands of US jobs losses, but ignoring that jobs losses were largely offset by jobs created to export to China.[120] Instead, bizarre assertions are made, such as a rightwing Australian journalist saying in 2025 that China's government "considers the Uyghur

116 Huang Yujie, et al, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Targeted Poverty Alleviation Policies in Xinjiang, China," *Humanities and Social Science Communications* 10: 389 (2023), www.nature.com/articles/s41599-023-01858-w.

117 Thomas Heberer and Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, "Jenseits von Hass und Zorn – nach der erfolgreichen Kampagne gegen Terrorismus und Islamismus sollen sich nach dem Willen Pekings die Verhältnisse in Xinjiang wieder normalisieren" (Beyond hatred and anger – after the successful campaign against terrorism and Islamism, Beijing wants conditions in Xinjiang to return to normal), *Neues Zurcher Zeitung*, Sept. 11, 2023, www.nzz.ch/meinung/xinjiang-china-kampf-gegen-terrorismus-und-separatismus-ld.1753509.

118 "China's Central SOEs Invest Over 280 bln Yuan in Xinjiang in 2024," XH, Mar. 12, 2025.

119 "Evolving Insights," *Beijing Review*, Jan. 30, 2025 (interview with Zhang Weiwei).

120 Robert Feenstra, "US Exports and Employment," *Journal of International Economics* 120:C (2019): 46–58.

cultural identity a mental illness" and practices "enslavement of a race they barely regard as human."[121]

Poverty is being mitigated through industrialization, especially in relatively poor and heavily Uyghur southern Xinjiang. In 2018 alone, 1,218 "satellite factories" (卫星工厂) were set up in Kashgar Prefecture alone; 60% of its villages had one and employed a "large number of surplus laborers."[122] The "transfer" – in fact, migration – of rural labor is a long-established practice; it is voluntary and likely not mainly government-organized. It exists in many impoverished areas of China and has often been coupled with vocational training.[123] "Labor transfer of rural surplus laborers" (农村富余劳动力转移就业) through poverty alleviation programs has not been shown to involve coercion.[124] Poverty alleviation in rural areas is expected to lessen labor transfer, as it diminishes the necessity to take a job outside the village. Indeed, a study in villages around Wusu City, Tacheng Prefecture, Xinjiang has shown that rural economic development has a negative influence on rural labor transfer.[125]

Labor transfers in China's minority areas are often individual efforts and do not necessarily involve factory work. Thus, in 83.6% ethnic minority Hualong Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai province, 52% of the population is Hui (Muslim Chinese). Its labor transfers are mostly people going out to set up small businesses, mainly restaurants.[126]

Subsidies for Xinjiang also contradict assertions of genocidal intent. A 2024 report indicated that in the past two years, the central government provided Y1.05 trillion (US$148 billion) in transfer payments to Xinjiang or about US$28,000 per inhabitant annually. Nineteen pairing provinces provided an additional Y39 billion (US$5.5 billion) in 2022–2024, 70% of which went to southern Xinjiang. Much of that went for infrastructure projects, including "eleven Y10-billion level projects in southern Xinjiang." There was also funding

121 Vikki Campion, "Renewable Power has a Dirty Secret: Slavery," DT, Mar. 15, 2025.

122 吐尔孙·艾拜, "新疆农村劳动力".

123 Zhang Jun and An Dongping, "Transfer of Rural Surplus Labor and Vocational Education," *Asian Agricultural Research* 3:1 (2011): 72–76.

124 See Adrian Zenz, "The Conceptual Evolution of Poverty Alleviation through Labor Transfer in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," CAS, (2023): http://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2023.2227225.

125 高志刚, 李梦杰, "基于结构模型的农村富余劳动力转移影响因素分析," (An Analysis of Factors Affecting the Transfer of Rural Surplus Labor Based on Structural Equation Model – A Case Study of XihuTown, Wusu City, Xinjiang), 新疆财经 2017: 4: 39–46. https://bjb.xjufe.edu.cn/EN/abstract/abstract160.shtml.

126 Guo Yuanzhi and Wang Jieyong, "Poverty Alleviation Through Labor Transfer in Rural China: Evidence from Hualong County," *Habitat International* 116 (2021): 1–11.

for social development, which for example resulted by 2024 in one kindergarten for every 102 Xinjiang children and one primary school for every 783 students. High school gross enrollment ratio reached 98.25%.[127]

A 2018 study in villages in one of the 15 townships in 91% Uyghur Yecheng (Kargilik) County, Kashgar Prefecture that are 97% Uyghur and 2% Han found 85.2% of households had four or more people and 13.4% had more than eight people. Most village adults had a middle school education; 82.8% of households had an annual income of less than Y10,000.[128] County government revenue was about Y600 million per annum, but government expenditures were Y7 billion per year, almost US$1b. Shanghai aids Yecheng and provided annually Y600 million in transfers payments; the central government provided the remainder of the shortfall.[129] This largess goes to a county that was the epicenter of terrorism in Xinjiang before 2017 and where de-extremification work began as early as 2014.[130]

The 2012 China Labour-Force Dynamic Survey (CLDS) found 40% of Xinjiang Han, but 22% of Uyghurs, reported non-agricultural employment. Some 68% of Uyghur workers were farmers, while 30% of Han farmed. In largely Uyghur southern Xinjiang, 74% of the population engaged in agriculture, in part because few could speak *Guoyu* (国语) – as China's common language was termed before 1955 and is now called again in Xinjiang. Thus, only 8% of Uyghur farmers had ever worked outside their county, but 37% of Han farmers had. While 11% of Han said they were unemployed, just 3% of Uyghurs did so. Uyghurs' main obstacle to prosperity was their less remunerated agricultural

127 "SCIO Press Conference on Xinjiang's Practices in Advancing Chinese Modernization with Breakthroughs in High-Quality Development," China.org.cn, June 27, 2024.

128 祖力亞提·司馬義, 陳稔源 & 陳艷平, "新疆喀什地區農村少數民族富余勞動力就業調查研究——以葉城縣爲例" (Research on the Employment Survey of Rural Minority Ethnic Minority Surplus Labourers in Kashgar Region of Xinjiang – Taking Yecheng County as an Example), 西北民族研究 2018:3: 14–25. doi:10.16486/j.cnki.62-1035/d.2018.03.003.

129 Interview, Yecheng County officials, July 12, 2023.

130 Liu Chuyu, "Local Public Goods Expenditure and Ethnic Conflict: Evidence from China," *Securities Studies* 28:4 (2019): 739–772; "Three Han Chinese Officials Murdered in Xinjiang During President Xi's Trip," RFA, May 14, 2014, www.refworld.org/docid/5391ba0914.html; "Chinese Policy Toward Xinjiang Resembles Soviet Policies Toward Central Asia, Highlights Differences Between West and East 'Turkestan'," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 10: 165 (Sept. 18, 2013), https://jamestown.org/program/chinese-policy-toward-xinjiang-resembles-soviet-policies-toward-central-asia-highlights-differences-between-west-and-east-turkestan/; Lin Meilian, "Yecheng After the Attack," GT, Mar. 8, 2012; Adrian Zenz, "'Thoroughly Reforming Them Towards a Healthy Heart Attitude': China's Political Re-education Campaign in Xinjiang," CAS 38: 1 (2019): 102–128.

employment. The government was already partly addressing this problem before 2017 as it "pushed hard its 'one household one job' policy to guarantee that at least one person is employed in a Uyghur household" and provided Uyghurs with public service or SOE jobs. Xinjiang also continues the Mao-era substitution (頂替) policy that was abolished elsewhere in China in 1986, allowing adult children to inherit the jobs of retiring parents.[131]

Uyghurs were not far behind Han in educational or vocational training, but in 2012 still had low *Guoyu* levels: on average they "could neither understand nor speak Mandarin well" and

> This lack of linguistic skills in Mandarin put them at a disadvantage in their job search, especially when Mandarin is the working language of large-scale state enterprises, such as PetroChina and Sinopec. These enterprises prefer to hire Han Chinese for their language and technical skills even when they operate business in Xinjiang.[132]

US Xinjiang specialist Anthony Howell surveyed some 600 workers in Urumqi in 2008 and found that Uyghur and Han respondents had almost the same level of work experiences and same (low) level of education. While almost all Han were "conversationally fluent in Mandarin," only 73.8% of Uyghurs were fluent, although many of them may not have been literate in Chinese and the percentage of Uyghur fluent speakers of *Guoyu* would likely have been much lower in Xinjiang outside Urumqi. Howell concluded that

> preliminary evidence suggests that the Han-Uyghur income gap could not be explained by a variation in education levels. Rather the major variation in human capital attainment stemmed from one's mastery of the Mandarin language. This finding lent some support to the argument that ethnic-based income disparity may be the result of language barriers in the labor market.[133]

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131 Shan Wei, "Isolated but Happy: The Social Profile of Uighurs in China," in Zhao Litao and Qi Dongtao (eds.), *Chinese Society in the Xi Jinping Era* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2020): 95–114; 蔡果兰 and 杨圣敏, "环境容量视角下南疆人口的生育与增长j," 西北民族研究 (Fertility and population growth in southern Xinjiang from the perspective of environmental capacity) 2020:03: 21–33.

132 Shan Wei, "Explaining Unemployment Among Uighurs in China," *East Asian Policy* 9:3 (2017): 85–95.

133 Anthony J. Howell, "Chinese Minority Income Disparity in Urumqi: An Analysis of Han/Ugyhur Labor Market Outcomes in the Formal and Informal Economies," *China: An International Journal* 11:3 (2013): 1–23.

A 2014 article noted that language has a role in the Han/Uyghur income gap that was being addressed with bilingual schooling and affirmative action, because "a mastery of Mandarin is essential for employment within the government or an SOE, two of the best paying sectors in Xinjiang's extraction-heavy economy."[134] A 2017 study said of Xinjiang wage increases since 2000 that "While the Han migrants have profited immensely from the development program, it seems the Uyghurs have enjoyed the benefits as well."[135]

Interestingly, however, the CLDS found that Uyghurs tended to be more confident than other Xinjiang ethnic groups, including Han, of their social status' future improvement, more satisfied with what they had gained in their lives, more accepting that it is fair, least likely to have mental or self-perceived medical problems and to experience crime, and happier overall. Some of these positive conditions may have related to Uyghurs' religiosity and others to preferential policies that improved educational and health levels. Uyghurs also had higher in-group trust, but lower out-group trust than other ethnicities. That may partly explain then-prevailing ethnic tensions.[136]

5 Ethnic Population Balance and Benign/Malign Intent

Zenz has stated that China's policy is "intended to reduce the Uyghur population in Xinjiang relative to the numbers of ethnic Han Chinese" and that this meets the criteria for genocide specified in the Genocide Convention.[137] An intent to alter the proportions of two ethnic groups in an area does not however indicate genocide, as it may be for a benign purpose. About 89% of Singaporeans own their housing and under its Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP), Singapore has since 1989 sought to ensure that racial enclaves do not form in public housing estates. It did so after noting that some neighborhoods in the city-state overwhelmingly had populations of one ethnic group. Occupancy quotas exist for three ethnic groups – Chinese, Malays and Indians, whose proportions of the population in 2020 were 76%, 15% and 7.5% respectively. Under the EIP, once the quota for the majority "race" has been reached, a homeowner of a minority race can sell his or her flat only to another member of a minority

134 Brent Crane, "A Tale of Two Chinese Muslim Minorities," The Diplomat, Aug. 22, 2014, https://thediplomat.com/2014/08/a-tale-of-two-chinese-muslim-minorities/.

135 Amy H. Liu and Kevin Peters, "The Hanification of Xinjiang, China: The Economic Effects of the Great Leap West," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 17:2 (2017): 265–280.

136 Shan Wei, Isolated but Happy: 98, 103.

137 Zenz, Sterilizations, IUDs.

race. The government has stressed that the goal of this effort to alter ethnic proportions is a benign one, ethnic integration.[138]

There is no indication however that the Chinese government seeks to reduce the Uyghur proportion of the Xinjiang population, but only that scholars have at times proposed to increase the proportion of Han in heavily Uyghur southern Xinjiang to achieve greater ethnic integration. Uyghurs are already moving to predominantly Han northern Xinjiang, owing to its economic opportunities, so integration is less of a concern for that part of the region.

A policy of "three-inters," ethnic interaction, interchange, and intermingling (三交 -- 民族交往，民族交流 and 民族交融) has also been promoted for more than a decade in Xinjiang.[139] These have been described in English as "contact, exchange and blending among all ethnic groups." The concept is said to have "inspired a host of relatively anodyne cultural programs [including and] 'ethnic youth exchange project,' aimed at supporting interethnic professional, educational, and touristic activities, as well as the countrywide mobilization of scholars to compile materials on the 'history of contact, exchange, and blending of the Chinese nation.'"[140]

In 2024, Xinjiang's Ili Kazakh Prefecture implemented a regulation to foster "ethnic intermingling" that included "'embedded living models' where different ethnicities will live in the same area to avoid the clustering of any groups." The regulation, to be initially carried out in the prefectural capital of Ghulja (Yining), was denounced by Uyghur émigré leaders as "forcing assimilation."[141] They also said it is "a continuation of ethnic genocide, systematically dismantling Uyghur culture" by "submerging [Uyghurs] within the Chinese population and ultimately eradicating their existence." Zenz has it that "the regulation aims 'to formalize a policy of assimilation and population dilution' for national security reasons." A leading prefectural official, Niyaz Hashim, said however that "The regulation is primarily designed to create unity among the Han Chinese ethnicity and various ethnic groups." Indeed, WUC vice-chairman Ilshat Hasan Kokbore said of the regulation that "The ultimate goal of China is

138 Navene Elangovan, "Study Finds 'Clustering' of Races in Some Neighbourhoods Largely Due to Purchasing Power Disparity," MToday, July 25, 2021, www.todayonline.com/singapore/study-finds-clustering-races-some-neighbourhoods-largely-due-purchasing-power-disparity.

139 Mark Elliot, "The Case of the Missing Indigene: Debate Over a 'Second Generation Ethnic Policy," *China Journal* no. 73 (2015): 186–213.

140 Aaron Glasserman, "National Insecurity: Frontier Governance and Ethnic Policy in Contemporary China," National Bureau of Asian Research, Aug. 8, 2024, nbr@nbr.org.

141 "China Imposes First Rules Forcing Ethnic Mingling in Xinjiang," Bloomberg, Dec. 28, 2023.

uniting not only the Uyghurs, but all ethnic groups, into a single nation." Kobkbore has himself lived for the past two decades in the US, a country that also unites ethnic groups into a single nation. He also added, contrary to all available evidence, that "local government authorities in Xinjiang have doubled the Han Chinese population in Xinjiang."[142]

Other countries also have policies that seek to avoid ethnic residential concentrations. Sweden's refugee dispersal policy implants refugees, who are mainly from Muslim majority countries, in native Swedish areas, for the benign purpose of integration.[143] Integration with other ethnic groups may curb religious extremism and separatism. A scholar who studies Islamic practice in Shadian, a largely Hui ("Muslim Chinese") city in the southwest's Yunnan province, has noted that Uyghurs from southern Xinjiang who went to study at religious schools (madrasas) in Shadian were often antagonistic to the Chinese government before they arrived and "considered Mandarin an infidel language." In Shadian, they lived and prayed with Hui and "When exposed to a vibrant culture of different relationships between Islam and the government, they recognized that peaceful coexistence is possible."[144]

Integration may also lessen prejudices. A study of non-Arabs living in US neighborhoods with significant Arab Muslim populations found that long-term exposure to their Arab Muslim neighbors decreases explicit and implicit prejudice against Arab Muslims, reduces support for policies and political candidates hostile to Arab Muslims, increases charitable donations to Arab countries, leads to more personal contact with Arab Muslims, and increases knowledge of Muslims and Islam.[145]

Actions to create greater integration of ethnic groups often raise questions of benign versus malign intent. For example, until 2023, benign admission policies could prefer the US's underrepresented minorities. Fewer than 200, mainly highly selective, richly-endowed US universities, of a total of 4,000 institutions, practiced "affirmative action" however.[146] Most applicants, especially

142 Gulchehra Hoja, "China Tests New Ethnic Assimilation Policy on Uyghurs," RFA, Jan. 26, 2024, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/ethnic-integration-policy-01262024154850.html.

143 Matz Dahlberg and Mahinee Valeyatheypillay, "On the Anatomy of a Refugee Dispersal Policy: Neighborhood Integration and Dynamic Sorting," Ifo Institute Working Paper No. 25, 2018, www.ifo.de/en/publications/2019/working-paper/anatomy-refugee-dispersal-policy-neighborhood-integration-and.

144 Su, China Doesn't Mind.

145 Leonardo Bursztyn, et al, "The Immigrant Next Door," *American Economic Review* 114:2 (2024): 348–384.

146 Sarah Mervosh and Troy Closson, "The 'Unseen' Students in the Affirmative Action Debate," NYT, July 1, 2023.

Black and Latino students, were unaffected by it, because they did not apply to selective institutions.[147] Yet, a 2023 Pew poll showed 33% of Americans approved of preferences for minorities in admissions, but 50% disapproved; for whites it was 29% approve, 57% disapprove, but for African Americans, 47% approve, 29% disapprove.[148] In a 2023 Reuters/IPSOS poll, 46% of respondents said affirmative action discriminated unfairly against whites, including 49% of white respondents and 39% of minority respondents,[149] a misperception of the intent and effect of the preferences.

In his 2024 campaign, Trump asserted there was "a definite anti-white feeling in this country." In power in 2025, he "made a major push to root out programs that promote diversity, which he has suggested lead to the hiring of incompetent people," including by ordering Department of Justice investigations of institutions that aspire to workforce "demographic diversity." Maya Wiley, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, observed that

> The plain message that they are conveying is: If you even think about, talk about or claim to be in favor of diversity, of equity, of inclusion, of accessibility, you will be targeted. They're conveying that white men are the most discriminated against people in American society and therefore entitled to affirmative action.[150]

Rightwing forces challenging preferential admission policies, mainly for African American and Hispanic students, compared them to quotas on admitting Jews imposed by elite universities from the 1920s to 1960s that sharply reduced the proportion of Jews in student bodies. The limits in 2022 on the high level of Asian American admissions – 25% at Yale and Princeton, 28% at Harvard, drawn from a population that is 7.3% of the US total – were however for the benign purpose of creating a diverse student body, while exclusion of Jews was intended to preserve universities as white Gentile reserves. The difference between malign and benign intent explains why Jews almost unanimously opposed restrictive quotas, while many Asian Americans continue to support

147 Richard Arum and Mitchell L. Stevens, "For Most College Students, Affirmative Action Was Never Enough," NYT, July 3, 2023.

148 "More Americans Disapprove Than Approve of Colleges Considering Race, Ethnicity in Admissions Decisions," Pew, June 8, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/06/08/more-americans-disapprove-than-approve-of-colleges-considering-race-ethnicity-in-admissions-decisions/.

149 "Most Americans Think College Admissions Should Not Consider Race – Reuters/Ipsos Poll," Reuters, Feb. 16, 2023.

150 Erica L. Green, "For Trump, Civil Rights Protections Should Help White Men," NYT, May 25, 2025.

affirmative action for other minorities.[151] That is so despite Asian Americans excelling in entry to US schools that admit based only on "objective criteria," such as a single exam; for example, solely exam-based admission in 2023 to NYC's leading high school, Stuyvesant, was 64% Asian Americans, but only 3.5% Blacks and Latinos, despite the latter accounting for two-thirds of New York students.[152]

A 2023 Court of Appeals decision distinguishes malign and benign intent. At the elite Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ) in Fairfax County, Virginia, almost three-fourths of students admitted in 2020 were Asian Americans. The primary method of assessing was a difficult exam. It was dropped in 2021 in favor of a "problem-solving essay," plus "experience factors." TJ also set aside admission slots for the top 1.5% of students at every area public middle school and expanded class size. TJ admissions officers were not told applicants' race, but the change was intended to raise student body diversity. Black enrolment went from 1% in 2020 to 7% in 2021, Latinos from 3% to 11%, and whites from 18% to 22%. More low-income, female and underrepresented high schools' students were admitted. Asian American new enrolment fell from 73% to 54%, but other groups in 2021 remained underrepresented compared to their groups' proportions in Fairfax County's overall population and enrolments in its schools.[153]

A conservative legal foundation underwriting the lawsuit argued there was intentional, malign disparate treatment of Asian American applicants and that TJ's new criteria of residence and income levels are "proxies for race in order to get a racial result"; that is, even if the means were race neutral, the end sought was to change the school's racial composition. The court upheld the "race neutral" admissions policy, observing that TJ had a legitimate interest in expanded diversity.[154] The court reasoned that lowering the number of students of a particular "race" by adopting a new policy that sets out

151 Jerome Karabel, "Yes. Harvard Discriminated Against Jews. No, That's Not What It's Doing to Asian Americans," Slate, Nov. 1, 2022, https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2022/11/harvard-jewish-quotas-asian-americans-supreme-court.html.

152 Troy Clossen, "Stuyvesant High School Admitted 762 New Students. Only 7 Are Black," NYT, June 2, 2023.

153 Stephanie Saul, "Court Backs High School in Virginia on Admissions," NYT, May 24, 2023; Karina Elwood, "Appeals Court Upholds Thomas Jefferson High School's Admission Policy," WP, May 23, 2023; Grayson Quay, "Virginia School System 'Discriminated Against' Asian Americans, Federal Judge Says," *The Week,* Mar. 12, 2022; Adam Liptak, "Elite High School's Admissions Plan May Face Supreme Court Test," NYT, May 29, 2023.

154 Quoted in Ilya Somin, "Fourth Circuit Ruling in Anti-Asian Discrimination Case Sets a Dangerous Precedent" (reason.com), Volokh Conspiracy, May 23, 2023, https://reason.com/volokh/2023/05/23/fourth-circuit-ruling-in-anti-asian-discrimination-case-sets-a-dangerous-precedent/.

ethnically-equal criteria may not signal discriminatory intent, if the intent is avowedly to realize a legitimate interest.[155] The Supreme Court refused to review the TJ case,[156] despite its 2023 ban on affirmative action in cases involving Harvard and the University of North Carolina, after it was alleged they applied higher academic standards and gave lower ratings on personal characteristics to Asian American applicants.[157]

6 Terrorism or No Terrorism?

An India-based news service that serves Uyghur émigré groups has said that "In recent decades, the Chinese government has subjected the Uyghurs to a range of repressive measures, citing security concerns and the threat of extremism, despite no significant threat posed by the group."[158] The WUC holds that "The Uyghurs do not have a history of terrorism and extremism. Although a very small number of incidents have occurred, these have been massively exaggerated and overstated by the Chinese Government and used to repress the Uyghur people as a whole." It thus avers that "Millions of innocent people are currently detained in the camps," which "have nothing to do with fighting terrorism" and are "just yet another tool for the Chinese Government to persecute the Uyghurs … because the [CCP] sees the existence of the Uyghur people who have a unique language, history, ethnicity, culture and historically defined territory as a threat."[159] Such assessments are inapt because terrorists, religious extremists and separatists, not Uyghurs per se, have been repressed and because those forces were a real threat over the quarter century from 1990–2016.

The number of people who passed through the VETCS and how long they stayed on average is unknown. The numbers begin at the "hundreds of thousands" used by Australian-government connected scholar Michael Clarke.[160]

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155 Sonja B. Starr, "The Next Battle Over Color-Blindness Has Begun," NYT, July 10, 2023.

156 Adam Liptak, "Supreme Court Won't Hear New Case on Race and School Admissions," NYT, Feb. 20, 2024.

157 *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 US 181 (2023), www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199_hgdj.pdf.

158 "Uyghur Activist and Singer to Perform in London, Spotlighting Persecution of Her Community," ANI, Jan. 6, 2025.

159 Anirban Bhaumik, "Uyghurs Want India to Call Out 'Repressive' China," *Deccan Herald*, Mar. 15, 2019.

160 Michael Clarke, "Patriotic Songs and Self-criticism: Why China is 'Re-educating' Muslims in Mass Detention Camps," The Conversation, Mar. 31, 2020, https://hongkongfp

Zenz is however the originator of an outbidding that ranged from hundreds of thousands to six million. In a 2018 article, he included a table supposedly showing detainee numbers in Xinjiang localities. It was "reportedly leaked from a reliable source" to a "Uyghur exile media organization based in Istanbul." He does not specify the émigré media entity and cites only a second-hand report in *Newsweek Japan*. Zenz does say that "the accuracy of this estimate is of course predicated upon the supposed validity of the stated sources," but does not vouch for the sources, which he may not know. He admits to only guessing, stating "while there is no certainty, it is reasonable to *speculate* that the total number of detainees might range anywhere between several hundred thousand and just over one million."[161]

US-government connected Uyghur émigré leader Rushan Abbas, chair of the WUC Executive Committee, has however claimed three million imprisoned.[162] That figure was also used by Trump's Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia-Pacific Affairs Randall Shriver.[163] It was still cited by Uyghur émigré activists in the US in 2023.[164] Even in 2025, émigré lawyer in the US Rayhan Asat asserted that "there are millions of innocent people in the camps" and that "in reality there is not a single family in which at least one person has not been taken."[165]

The claim of 3 million in "the camps" is a remarkable speculation, given that Zenz has it that "over 85% of such detainees are typically male" and that Zenz only noted 15 minors among more than 5,000 arrested Uyghurs.[166] A list Zenz has touted of alleged detainees in one Xinjiang locale also showed that 91% were male.[167] According to the 2020 census, "in the 0–14, 15–59, and 60 and above age groups, the Uygur proportions were 30.51%, 60.95% and 8.54%."[168]

.com/2018/07/28/patriotic-songs-self-criticism-china-re-educating-muslims-mass-detention-camps/.

161 Adrian Zenz, "New Evidence for China's Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang," Jamestown Foundation, May 15, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/evidence-for-chinas-political-re-education-campaign-in-xinjiang/.

162 Tal Schneider, "She Exposed China's Crimes Against the Uighurs; Now She Needs the World to Save Them," *Times of Israel*, Jan. 15, 2023.

163 "China Putting Minority Muslims in 'Concentration Camps,' U.S. Says," Reuters, May 4, 2019.

164 Kok Bayraq, "Xi's 'Hard-won' Stability in Xinjiang," *Taipei Times*, Sept. 4, 2023.

165 Rayhan Asat, Lawyer.

166 Zenz, Testimony to the Uyghur Tribunal, June 7, 2021: 268, https://uyghurtribunal.com › uploads › 2022/01.

167 "'Ideological Transformation': Records of Mass Detention from Qaraqash, Hotan," Uyghur Human Rights Project, Feb. 18, 2020, https://uhrp.org/report/mass-dentention-hotan/.

168 Xinjiang Population Dynamics.

That configuration was, by the way, significantly younger than the one for Xinjiang as a whole, where the proportions were 22.4%, 66.46% and 11.28%.[169] It is much younger still than the one for China as a whole, where the proportions were 17.95%, 63.35% and 18.70%.[170] There were 11.62m Uyghurs in Xinjiang in 2020, and 7,717,361 Uyghur adults in China,[171] with a bit more than 7.6 million of them in Xinjiang. Some 4 million of the 11.62 million were thus Uyghur children aged 0–18 and 1 million were "seniors." Of the roughly 6.7 million non-senior Uyghur adults, about 3.4 million were women. That means that the maximum male, adult, non-retired Uyghur workforce members would be about 3.3 million, even disregarding that some young and middle-aged adult Uyghurs would have been unable or unwilling to work. Abbas has thus implied that roughly 90% of non-senior Uyghur adult males were detained, which likely would have collapsed Xinjiang's economy in short order.

The claim of 3 million in VETCs is at odds with the calculation of Israeli Xinjiang specialist Yitzhak Shichor. He averred that even if the claim is that 1 million Uyghurs were detained, that "implies that around one-third of all grown up male Uyghurs workforce were idle. This is implausible. If true, work in Xinjiang would have practically halted, but did not." Instead, in 2014–2019, the Xinjiang economy annually grew at a rate averaging 7.2%. In 2020, after the pandemic began, growth was still 3.4%, with both rates above the national rate.[172]

People from 22 households out of 252 in a Yecheng village with 1,089 inhabitants went to a VETC for one or more of three reasons: 1) they spoke Putonghua poorly and could benefit from intensive instruction; 2) they were unemployed and unskilled and could learn a skill, such as cultivation of walnut trees, the village's new industry, baking nan, or hairdressing; or 3) they had been involved in "black activity," i.e. small time criminality, including engaging in religious extremism.[173] The village is in the county that had the highest number of terrorist incidents in Xinjiang. One would then expect that the village had a proportion of assignees to the VETCs much higher than the Xinjiang average, indicating that estimates of the main Western proponents of Uyghur émigré claims are also implausible. An example is Byler's claim that 10–20% of the

169 "Why is the Population Demographics a Reflection of Xinjiang's Development," CD, July 1, 2022 (Interview with Liang Yuchun, Principal of the Higher Institute of Nationality and Society, Xinjiang Normal University.).

170 Graphics: Sustained Population Growth.

171 "Islam," Pew Research Center, Aug. 30, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/08/30/islam/.

172 Shichor, Elephant: 8.

173 Field notes, Yecheng, July 7, 2023.

11.5 million Xinjiang adult Muslim population, i.e. 1.15–2.3 million, have been detained.[174]

The discourse has included an assertion that the Chinese government denied the existence of Xinjiang "re-education centers" (再教育中心). That may be because it understands this phrase as referring to places of detention that exist only for purposes of ideological indoctrination. The VETCs, however, also had language and vocational goals. AI has indicated that language training was a primary objective of the VETCs and that language training took up many hours every day.[175] Vocational training was also significant. The World Bank had provided a $50 million loan to establish VETCs in Xinjiang in 2015. After it was accused of aiding in the creation of a detention camp, the World Bank stated in late 2019 that

> it conducted a review on this project in Xinjiang after having received a series of serious allegations as to what it really was. The statement provides the information that the Bank launched a fact-finding review, and World Bank senior managers travelled to Xinjiang to gather information directly. The team conducted a thorough review of project documents, engaged in discussions with project staff, and visited schools directly financed by the project, as well as their partner schools that were subjects of allegations. This World Bank investigation, the statement concludes, does *not* confirm any of the allegations.[176]

Hu Lianhe (胡联合) is a former Tsinghua University scholar who became Deputy Director of the United Front Work Department Ninth Office (中央统战部九局) dealing with Xinjiang, Deputy Head of the Central Politics and Law Commission's Secretariat for Coordinating Xinjiang Work (中央政法委新疆工作协调领导小组办公室) and Deputy Head of the Secretariat for the Central Party Leading Small Group on Xinjiang Work (中央新疆工作协调小组办公室). He was to become, in 2023, the first US-sanctioned Xinjiang-related Central Government official. Hu had replied, at a 2018 meeting of the UN Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), to US member of the CERD Gay McDougall, who said "there were many credible

174 Gemma Ware, "China's Plan for Xinjiang," The Conversation, Jan. 28, 2022.

175 Amnesty International, "'Like We Were Enemies in War: China's Mass Internment, Torture and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang," (2021): 80, 84.

176 Gerard Dumoulin, et al, "Behind the Smokescreen: West's China Cold War Agenda," Transcend Media Service, Aug. 16, 2021, www.transcend.org/tms/2021/08/behind-the-smoke screen-wests-china-cold-war-agenda/.

reports that one million ethnic Uighurs were held in what resembles a 'massive internment camp' that is shrouded in secrecy, a sort of no rights zone." She provided no source for the one million figure. McDougall's ready acceptance of that unevidenced claim may have been influenced by her own position on CERD: she served from 1997–2001 and was in the third year of another four-year term in 2018. Her re-appointment, when her term expired in late 2019, required support from the China-hostile Trump administration. Hu said the number McDougall cited was "completely untrue" and that China imprisoned people for grave crimes, while minor criminals were assigned to VETCS "to assist with their rehabilitation and reintegration" and "were not subject to arbitrary detention or ill-treatment."[177] In 2020, a Chinese official said "only a very small number of people who have been affected by religious extremism and committed minor crimes have received vocational training."[178] A German scholar has averred however that

> Though the regional government rejects claims that millions of people were 'put into camps,' it has not released any figures on how many people were in the deradicalisation centres. Its – not very convincing – justification for this lack of transparency is that 'the total numbers of vocational education and training centers and their trainees across Xinjiang were dynamic and constantly changing.'[179]

The Xinjiang Victims Database, operating since September 2018, reportedly had, as of November 2021, 16,000 entries.[180] It was said of it, in 2023, that "Some

177 "China Rejects Allegations of Detaining Million Uighurs in Camps in Xinjiang," Reuters, Aug. 14, 2018; Ben Norton and Ajit Singh, "No, The UN Did Not Report China Has 'Massive Internment Camps' For Uighur Muslims," Information Clearing House, Aug. 27, 2018, www.informationclearinghouse.info/50123.htm; James Leibold, "Hu the Uniter: Hu Lianhe and the Radical Turn in China's Xinjiang Policy," China Brief 18:16, Jamestown Foundation, Oct. 10, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/hu-the-uniter-hu-lianhe-and-the-radical-turn-in-chinas-xinjiang-policy/; "US Blocking of Gay McDougall for UN Anti-racism Committee is a Major Setback for the Fight Against Racism, says MRG," Minority Rights Group, Apr. 17, 2019; "US Sanctions Chinese Officials Over Uyghur Abuse," https://minorityrights.org/us-blocking-of-gay-mcdougall-for-un-anti-racism-committee-is-a-major-setback-for-the-fight-against-racism-says-mrg/; RFA, Dec. 8, 2023, www.rfa.org/english/news/china/uyghur-persecution-12082023154211.html; Hannan, China: Modernization: 1027.

178 "21st Press Conference by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-Related Issues in Beijing," *New Dawn*, Jan. 4, 2021.

179 Michael Brie, *Beyond Liberalism and Communism: Socialist Theory and the Chinese Case* (London: Routledge, 2024): 214.

180 Ashwini Vasanthakumar, *The Ethics of Exile: A Political Theory of Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021): 40.

of the names are convicted terrorists publicly available in Chinese criminal documents and others do not exist."[181] There are obstacles to accessing data on detentions, but the list is largely built through Uyghur émigrés reporting missing and presumably detained relatives and friends. The increase in entries to about 61,700 by September 2023[182] indicates this method produces very uncertain knowledge about detainees, but the number is likely much less than the million(s) claimed. In December 2023, a Chinese report said "the Xinjiang Data Project, the Xinjiang Victims Database and the Uyghur Transitional Justice Database … enlisted a total of 12,050 persons living in Xinjiang. Through comparison with the Chinese citizenship system, 1,342 of them – or more than 10 percent – were fabricated identities."[183] Also in 2023, a US State Department official spoke of "more than 15 thousand Xinjiang residents whose sentences are known."[184]

Fantasies and hyperbolic assertions are however what helped émigré leader Rushan Abbas get "Uyghur genocide" into mainstream US media in late 2019.[185] After she did so, several US and UK Xinjiang specialists followed suit. Media have also misleadingly implied that a Chinese government statement that an average of 1.3 million Xinjiang people received vocational training in 2014–2019 confirms that one million-plus people have been in VETCs.[186] The statement was

> Every year from 2014 to 2019 Xinjiang provided training sessions to an average of 1.29 million urban and rural workers, of which 451,400 were in southern Xinjiang. The trainees mastered at least one skill with employment potential, and the vast majority of them obtained vocational qualifications, skill level certificates, or specialized skill certificates, allowing them to go on to find stable employment.[187]

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181 William Ging Wee Dere, "Prominent Canadian YouTuber Slandered by Xinjiang Victims Database," Canada Files, Jan. 18, 2023, www.thecanadafiles.com/articles/prominent-canadian-youtuber-slandered-by-xinjiang-victims-database.

182 Xinjiang Victims Database, https://shahit.biz/eng/, accessed on Sept. 1, 2023.

183 Xin Ping, "The West's Xinjiang Narrative – A Shameless Lie," CD, Oct. 11, 2023.

184 Van Schaack, Opening Remarks.

185 Amie Ferris-Rotman, "Abortions, IUDs and Sexual Humiliation: Muslim Women Who Fled China for Kazakhstan Recount Ordeals," WP, Oct. 5, 2019.

186 Cirosantilli, "Chinese Authorities 'Indirectly' Confirm the Scale of the Camps: China Claims 1.3 Million Xinjiang Residents Given 'Vocational Training' Each Year," r/China, www.reddit.com/r/China/comments/iuqjzn/chinese_authorities_indirectly_confirm_the_scale/; Mimi Lau and Linda Lew, 'Training Given to 1.3m a Year' in Xinjiang, SCMP, Sept. 18, 2020.

187 SCIO, Employment and Labor.

China has long had vocational schools. As of 2021, it had 1,518 vocational colleges issuing graduation certificates equivalent to normal universities (大专), with 5.53 million students, roughly a twofold growth from 2011.[188] The government has in recent years pushed to expand vocational education, but there continues to be shortages of teachers and resistance from parents and students to learning to be a skilled worker, rather than a professional.[189]

In Xinjiang in 2020, 53.9% of students made the transition from middle school to an ordinary high school.[190] Presumably, almost all the rest entered vocational education. In "inner China" (内地 *neidi;* Uyghur *kouli*) 6 years of primary and 3 years of middle school are required. Some 94.6% of middle school students transition to some form of upper secondary education and about 5.4% drop out. About 50% go on to an ordinary high school and the rest get vocational training. In Xinjiang, 12 years of primary, middle, and secondary education are mandated, so that a bit more than half of students go on to ordinary high schools and the rest to vocational schools.[191]

Xinjiang had vocational education specifically directed to unemployed Uyghur youths well before the two-and-half year existence of the VETCs. A scholar of anti-terrorism policy in Xinjiang noted that vocational training was combined with "legal education":

> To encourage jobless young Uyghurs to improve their employability, the local government provides them with free vocational training. In some cases, the government even provides incentives to achieve this goal … All of the trainees are gathered in November for a month of military training, and then half a month is spent on public policies, for example, on the Marriage Law, birth control policy, and prevention and treatment of AIDS, before they are given training on specific skills.[192]

188 Cheng Si, "Setting Goals," CD, May 3, 2023.

189 Mandy Zuo and Nuli Maimaiti, "Despite China's Push, Vocational Education is Still Struggling with a Shortage of Staff and Lack of Respect," SCMP, Jan. 8, 2024; Wei Wei, "Don't Doubt China's Resolve to Tackle Youth Unemployment," SCMP, June 10, 2024.

190 Wu Fangyuan, et al, "The Practice of Educational Integration in Promoting Ethnic Integration in Southern Xinjiang," *Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences* 2:1 (2023): 44–49.

191 Li Xin, "Zhongkao, Not Gaokao, Now the Make-or-Break Exam, Parents Say," Sixth Tone, June 26, 2023, www.sixthtone.com/news/1013176.

192 Zhang Chi, *How Does the Chinese Communist Party Legitimize its Approach to Terrorism?* PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2018: 180.

Rushan Abbas' statement refers to Xinjiang vocational training in general, not VETCs, and the average also included three years before VETCs existed. Xinjiang official Elijan Anayat said in 2021 that the VETCs had deradicalization courses and training in law, language, and vocational skills, that they no longer existed after October 2019, that the number of people and their length of stay had varied, and that they could "go home regularly and ask for leave in case of need."[193]

US propaganda broadcaster RFA surveyed, in 2018, 300 Uyghurs who had left China, an unrepresentative sample of the Uyghur population more likely to include formerly "detained" people. It found that 30.7% had been detained for less than 12 months, 1.3% for 12 months or longer and 4% had been sent to "reeducation centers."[194] Thus, among these Uyghur émigrés, those "detained" for less than a year were 24 times more prevalent than those "detained" for more than a year. That makes it likely that the average "detention" time was less than a year – and perhaps much less. Being "detained" was distinguished in the survey from being in a "re-education center" and only a dozen of the 300 respondents had a "re-education" experience.

A journalist from Uzbekistan who visited VETCs and reported he could freely communicate with "officials and trainees," stated that it took nine months to one and one-half years for VETC participants to pass the exams and leave.[195] The many months, rather than many days, needed may have been because the official view was that "Many trainees were influenced by religious extremism and their conducts closely followed the 'religious law' and 'domestic discipline' concocted by terrorists and extremists. They defied the law of the state and even interfered with and sabotaged the implementation of state law."[196] Estimates have been made of the proportion of the Uyghur population that had been affected by religious extremism. Demographer of Xinjiang Li Xiaoxia put it at 20% of Uyghurs. The head of the regional Department of Justice said it

193 "The Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing," Jan. 13, 2021, http://jeddah.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zt/xjfk/202101/t20210117_5538592.htm.

194 "Trapped in the System: Experiences of Uyghur Detention in Post-2015 Xinjiang," RFA.

195 Lao Mu, "Vocational Education and Training Centers in Xinjiang Represents New Path to Address Terrorism," People's Daily Online, Sept. 10, 2019, http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0910/c90000-9613730.html.

196 "The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang," State Council Information Office, March 2019, http://ba.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zt_12/202001/t20200109_2318957.htm.

was 30%.[197] Officials in 98% Uyghur Hotan Prefecture stated that one-eighth of the prefecture's households had been influenced by religious extremism.[198]

Supporters of the Uyghur émigrés claimed in 2023 that "the camps were not closed; they were turned into prisons. More than three million Uyghurs who had been detained indefinitely were sentenced to various lengths of imprisonment without trial."[199] In the same year however, even Zenz recognized that "numerous [VETCs] were desecuritized and decommissioned between 2019 and 2020"[200] and a US Congress research organ noted that the VETCs only existed from 2017 to 2019. It added, without presenting evidence, that "Since 2019, the XUAR government appears to have released some detainees, sent others to factory labor, and prosecuted many as criminals."[201] Western media however continue to amplify the émigré pretention of numerous "re-education camps" in Xinjiang, firmly implanting a "fact" that some Western scholars rely on.

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197 Greitens, Counterterrorism: 42.

198 Iinterviews in Hotan, July, 2023.

199 "Xinjiang's Governor Tuniyaz Despised as a Traitor, Puppet of Beijing," ANI, Feb. 27, 2023.

200 Adrian Zenz, "Innovating Penal Labor: Reeducation, Forced Labor, and Coercive Social Integration in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," *China Journal* 90 (2023): 27–53.

201 "China Primer: the Uyghurs," Congressional Research Service, Jan. 6, 2023, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10281.

CHAPTER 7

"Genocidal" Impetuses and Intents: Xinjiang and Beyond

1 A Peculiar "Genocide" in Xinjiang

The misappropriation of the charge of genocide has resulted in a wide variety of claims that have no relation to legal or even common understandings of the term. These understandings are grounded in the actual experiences of the well-recognized genocides, especially those of the 20th and 21st Centuries. The leading law of genocide specialist William Schabas has remarked that

> We have the legal definition of genocide being used at cases at the International Court of Justice and in the convictions of the Rwanda tribunal. We have a very well-established law of what genocide is. But then you have this phenomenon of attempts to use the label genocide that does not correspond to the legal definition of genocide, whether it's with the Uyghurs in China or the war in Ukraine.[1]

From those well-recognized cases of genocide by states, it is apparent that genocide requires mobilization of many soldiers, police, and other state agents and that these cannot be drawn from the ethnic or religious groups experiencing the genocide. No one argues that China's army has played a role in the enforcement of the birth limitations and transfer of children alleged to be the genocidal mechanisms; rather, these actions would primarily involve police, as well as medical personnel and officials. Police in Xinjiang are heavily recruited from ethnic minorities; Xinjiang Medical University is the key source of doctors and nurses for the region and a 2012 report indicated that 58% of its students were ethnic minorities.[2] A 2014 study stated that 394,000 of Xinjiang's 768,800 cadres (51.24%) were minorities and 402,900 (52.4%) were women. The number of minority cadres was up from 339,000 in 2004 and 348,000 in 2011. Some 83% of county leaders were ethnic minorities.[3] If then a genocide has occurred in

1 Phalnikar, What Exactly.

2 Edwin Karmondy, "Minority Education in Remote Regions of China," *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences* 4:2 (2012): 109–120.

3 Zhou and Li, Uyghur Women.

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Xinjiang, it would have been a most peculiar one, carried out in a society where most police, medical personnel, and officials are ethnic minorities and where the most prominent instance of mass killing was carried out by members of a minority group, mainly against members of the majority group.

Adrian Zenz has stated measures adopted in 2017 included "recruitment of 100,000 new police officers."[4] By 2018, many Uyghurs had recently joined the police.[5] Two years later, it was said "the number of Uyghurs and other minorities recruited into the police force in Xinjiang far exceeds previous recruitment and forms a key part of the current regime's security strategy."[6] A US National Public Radio journalist who accepts the Xinjiang émigré narrative, has said "A lot of the low-level staff enforcing China's crackdown are ethnic Uyghurs."[7]

By 2017, there were already five times more police in Xinjiang than in 2007,[8] although it is unclear whether the increase is mainly in the regular police force (编制内警察), who are national civil servants, or in locally-recruited auxiliary police officers (辅警), police hands (协警) and voluntary police, categories numerous throughout China. There have been drives to increase the police presence in villages[9] where Uyghurs and other minorities disproportionately live, so naturally the rural police should be predominantly Uyghur.

Émigré leaders and their supporters portray Xinjiang as very heavily policed.[10] A 2023 UHRP report has said that as of 2017, there were 2.3 times more People's Armed Police and other "security-related positions" than elsewhere in China: 478 per 100,000 population, compared to 212 nationally.[11] The Xinjiang ratio however is not unusual. The US ratio in 2020 was 428 per 100,000 and the US has had a low rate of terrorism in the last couple decades.

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4 Adrian Zenz, "Problematic Privilege in Xinjiang," Diplomat, June 5, 2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/problematic-privilege-in-xinjiang/.

5 Darren Byler, "Xinjiang Specialist Darren Byler for Sinopsis: A Project Far More Extreme than the Stanford Prison Experiment," Sinopsis, Nov. 21, 2018, https://sinopsis.cz/en/xinjiang-specialist-darren-byler-for-sinopsis-a-project-far-more-extreme-than-the-stanford-prison-experiment/.

6 Adrian Zenz and James Leibold, "Securitizing Xinjiang: Police Recruitment, Informal Policing and Ethnic Minority Co-optation," CQ 242 (July 2020): 324–348.

7 Ayesha Rascoe, "The Sunday Story: Arresting Your Brothers and Sisters," NPR, Aug. 2024 (Emily Feng), www.npr.org/2024/08/25/1198913934/uyghur-complicity-china-state-oppression.

8 Rossabi, China and the Uyghurs: 123.

9 "China Says to Increase Police in Xinjiang for Stability," Antara, Jan. 31, 2012.

10 Eugene Whong and Nuriman Abdurashid "Xinjiang is 'One of the Most Heavily Policed Regions in the World': Study," RFA, Dec. 14, 2023, www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/police-12142023175225.html.

11 Ben Carrdus, "Policing East Turkistan: Mapping Pollice and Security Forces in the Uyghur Region," UHRP, Dec. 2023, https://uhrp.org/report/policing-east-turkistan-mapping-police-and-security-forces-in-the-uyghur-region/.

A higher-than-average police-to-population ratio is to be expected in a region where a campaign to mitigate political violence is carried out. When violence subsides the police presence should diminish. That is what happened in Xinjiang.[12] Fieldwork in 2024 in Bole, Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture and Yining, Ili Kazak Autonomous Prefecture revealed that many neighborhood police stations (派出所) had closed and sat empty over the past two years. A veteran policeman stated that the number of police had been sharply reduced as the threat receded and there was neither the staff nor the need for such stations.[13]

Xinjiang's situation is, in some respects, comparable to Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), a region disputed between India and Pakistan and experiencing significant political violence. There have been 163,000 police – 83,000 in Indian-controlled areas and 80,000 in Pakistani-controlled districts. All of J&K had a population of 19.6 million, so there were 840 police per 100,000 population, a much higher ratio than in Xinjiang, China, India or Pakistan.[14] China's had 142 police per 100,000 around 2023.[15] India had 145 police per 100,000 population in 2020. Pakistan, despite a major terrorist problem in some regions, had 185 per 100,000 in 2017.[16]

In Xinjiang however, the July 5, 2009 anti-Han pogrom that killed hundreds, and later terrorist incidents, involved mass killings that caused many Han to sense they faced discrimination.[17] It has been argued that Han in Urumqi resorted to violence after the police had delayed responding to the pogrom because it was being carried out by members of a minority group. The delay may have been related to the "two restraints and one leniency" (两少一宽)

12 Patrik Meyer, "Cultural Genocide? The Reality on the Ground in Xinjiang," Fair Observer, Jan. 23, 2024, www.fairobserver.com/world-news/china-news/cultural-genocide-the-reality-on-the-ground-in-xinjiang/.

13 Field visit to Bole and Ili, July 2024.

14 "History and Background of the J&K Police," Jammu and Kashmir Police, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20181018013156/hwww.jkpolice.gov.in/about-jammu-kashmir-police/history.htm; "2024 Azad Kashmir Protests," Wikipedia, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Azad_Kashmir_protests.

15 "China Says it Has Achieved a Miraculously Low-crime Society," *The Economist*, Nov. 23, 2023.

16 "Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D) Releases Data on Police Organizations as on 01.01.2020," Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Dec. 29, 2020, https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1684384; Aniesa Hussain, "Pakistan," Security Women, 2024, www.securitywomen.org/country-analysis/pakistan#:~:text=According%20to%20World%20Bank%20statistics,the%20total%20national%20police%20force.

17 Isabel Cote, "Political Mobilization of a Regional Minority: Han Chinese settlers in Xinjiang," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 34:11 (2011): 1855–1873.

policy in place since 1984, which "discouraged local police from taking immediate action when they encounter minority suspects."[18] The pogrom had a role in some Han adopting a racist view of Uyghurs, though others did not.[19] Further afield, in Guangzhou, with a significant Uyghur population, Han had, before the "7.5 Incident" a positive attitude toward Uyghurs, who were "associated with an ethnic image of vigor, humor and kindness." After July 5, this "changed toward a stereotype of fierceness, anger, and violence," with concomitant job and housing discrimination.[20]

The Urumqi pogrom occurred after a protest there against the deaths of two Uyghurs in a clash of Han and Uyghur workers in Shaoguan, Guangdong, caused by a false report that Uyghurs had raped Han women. Two Han were later convicted of the murders in Shaoguan, with one sentenced to death and the other to life imprisonment.[21] Many Uyghurs went from southern Xinjiang to Urumqi to attend the July 5 protest.[22] In Hotan in 2023, officials said that soon before July 5, 2009, some 300 local residents bought one-way bus tickets to Urumqi, which they said indicated an intention to die there.[23] From abroad, the WUC called on people to demonstrate. The Urumqi protest was forcibly dissolved, but according to mainstream Western journalists, the police did not apparently use lethal means.[24] The WUC however asserted that thousands of Uyghurs were killed by police. It presented no evidence

18 Yan Sun, review of David Tobin, *Securing China's Northwest Frontier: Identity and Insecurity in Xinjiang, Pacific Affairs* 95:1 (2022), https://pacificaffairs.ubc.ca/book-reviews/securing-chinas-northwest-frontier-identity-and-insecurity-in-xinjiang-by-david-tobin/; Shan Wei and Chen Gang, "The Urumqi Riots and China's Ethnic Policy in Xinjiang," *East Asian Policy* 1:3 (2009): 14–22.

19 Darren Byler, "'Uyghurs are so Bad': Chinese Dinner Table Politics in Xinjiang" The China Project, June 3, 2020, https://thechinaproject.com/2020/06/03/uyghurs-are-so-bad-chinese-dinner-table-politics-in-xinjiang/.

20 Li Xiyuan, "Ethnicity or Nationality?: Minority Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Contemporary China," in *Ethnicity as a Political Resource: Conceptualizations across Disciplines, Regions, and Periods* (Cologne: Transcript Verlag, 2015): 151–168.

21 Joanne Smith Finley, "'No Rights Without Duties: *Minzu Pingdeng* [Nationality Equality] in Xinjiang Since the 1997 Ghuljha Disturbances," *Inner Asia* 13: 1 (2011): 73–96.

22 James Millward, "Introduction: Does the 2009 Urumqi Violence Mark a Turning Point?" CAS 28:4 (2009): 347–360.

23 Interviews, Hotan, July 29, 2023.

24 Peter Foster, "Uighur Unrest Not Another Tiananmen," DT, July 7, 2009; Thomas PM Barnett, "The New Rules: Urumqi is not Tiananmen and Xinjiang is Not Tibet," *World Politics Review*, July 13, 2009, www.worldpoliticsreview.com/the-new-rules-urumqi-is-not-tiananmen-and-xinjiang-is-not-tibet/.

and Western journalists who did interviews in Urumqi immediately after July 5 did not accept the WUC claim.[25]

In the pogrom, "Young Uighur men rampaged through the streets on July 5, beating and stabbing Hans and attacking Han businesses." The "angry mob set upon Han passers-by. Many victims were slashed, stabbed, and beaten to death." Police suppression of rioters and retaliatory attacks ensued. Officially, 197 people were killed, 46 of them Uighurs; 1,700 were injured, "the vast majority of them Han."[26] Beijing University ethnicity specialist Ma Rong said however that the death toll "'was nearly one thousand,'" of whom "'95%'" were Han, mainly migrant workers … "Authorities … could not reveal the real figures for fear they would spark a new round of Han reprisals against Uighurs."[27] The number killed and wounded in Urumqi in 2009 was specified only a decade later as, at the time, "complete disclosure could create greater panic among the public, which could, in turn, translate into an internal exodus of the Han population."[28]

In other respects, the official version of July 5, 2009 in Urumqi may have been accurate, however. An Australian National University scholar has noted that "within two days [of July 5] China was hosting some 150 foreign reporters from more than 80 media organizations in Urumqi … Western print, television and internet media carried widely-read reports, pictures and video footage of the violence and, as far as the basic facts were concerned, generally confirmed the official Chinese account."[29] A *Daily Telegraph* (UK) journalist even stated that

> Now that the sequence of events is clearer, I have a lot of praise for the Chinese security operation in the city. According to Peter Foster, who is on the scene, they managed to prevent escalating situations getting

25 Feng Yuan Ji, "Talking Past Each Other: Chinese and Western Discourses on Ethnic Conflict," *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2014, www.sciencedirect.com.

26 Jonathan Watts, "Old Suspicions Magnified Mistrust into Ethnic Riots in Urumqi," *Guardian*, July 10, 2009; Aysha Khan, "Uighurs Reflect on Violence that Set Off Chinese Crackdown," WP, July 10, 2020.

27 "Xinjiang Party Chief Likely to Stay on Despite Public Discontent and Eroded Intra-Party Authority, Contacts Say," Public Library of US Diplomacy, Nov. 16, 2009, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BEIJING3127_a.html.

28 Cai Congyan and Wang Yifei, "China and International Terrorism Law," in Ignacio de la Rasilla and Cai Congyan (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of China and International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2024): 219–237.

29 Ji Fengyuan, "Talking Past Each Other: Chinese and Western Discourses on Ethnic Conflict," International Conference on Communications and Media, Oct. 18–20, 2014, Longkewi, Malaysia.

> out of hand several times yesterday with calm and judicious policing. In addition, allowing journalists to circulate and protecting them from the crowd has clearly paid dividends. [WUC head] Rebiya Kadeer's claims that 400 Uighurs were killed on Sunday were dismissed by my colleagues on the ground, who have neither seen nor heard any evidence to back up her accusation.[30]

The journalist on the scene also praised police for restraining Han counter-attacks.[31] Today however, WUC accounts of the July 5 pogrom omit any mention of the massacre of Han,[32] even though a scholar who supports their cause has written that on that day "marauding Uyghur youth hunted down and then butchered innocent Han civilians (or those perceived to be Han …) Hundreds of vehicles and shops were looted and then set ablaze."[33]

The Urumqi killings featured gruesome murders of Han after being dragged off buses or attacked at their businesses. That resembled classical Russian Empire pogroms against Jews, but also massacres of African Americans in early 20th Century US cities. During four days in 1906, thousands of white men invaded African American areas of Atlanta, Georgia, responding to exaggerated or contrived accounts of assaults on white women by Black men. The rioters were further inflamed by local stagings of Thomas Dixon's terroristic anti-Black play *The Clansman.* Pulling anyone with a dark skin off a streetcar or dragging them out of their businesses to beat, stab or shoot them, pogromists killed at least 25 African Americans; two whites also died.[34] The WUC portrays terrorist attacks by Uyghur separatists against civilians as justified resistance. The Chinese state, however, regarded the 2009 Urumqi killings as mass murder. By early 2010, 26 people received death sentences; eight Uyghurs and one Han were eventually executed.[35]

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30 Malcolm Moore, "Urumqi Riots Signal Dark Days Ahead," EastWestSouthNorth, July 8, 2009, www.zonaeuropa.com/20090708_1.htm.

31 Peter Foster, "Criticism and Credit for the Chinese Police," DT, July 9, 2009.

32 "The Urumqi Massacre," WUC, Dec. 8, 2009, www.uyghurcongress.org/en/the-urumqi-massacre/; "On 15th Anniversary of 2009 Urumchi Massacre, World Uyghur Congress Seeks Justice," ANI, July 4, 2024.

33 James Leibold, "Ethnic Policy in China: is Reform Inevitable?" East West Center Policy Studies 68, (2013): 10.

34 Clifford Kuhn and Gregory Mixon, "Atlanta Race Massacre of 1906," New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2005, www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/atlanta-race-massacre-of-1906/.

35 A.R.M. Imtiyaz, "Mapping Crisis and Solutions in the Uighur National Question," *Peace Review* 32:1 (2020): 51–62.

2 Preferential Policies and Ethnic Fusion

Stanford University scholars Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing did anonymous online surveys of political views in China in 2018–2019. They found a wide and consistent distribution of responses and the large proportion of responses not aligned with state policy indicated that generally respondents were forthright. Pan and Xu used seven statements to gauge the degree of "ethnic accommodation" among Chinese. Their findings show acceptance of state preferential policies, except as to university admissions. Respondents mainly agreed that "It is reasonable for family planning policies to be more relaxed toward ethnic minorities than toward ethnic Han," a significant change perhaps in the attitude of Han toward that preferential policy compared to the mid-1980s, when a US scholar said resentment was growing among Han over exemption of minorities from the then-stringent one-child policy. Chinese in 2018–2019 also largely agreed that "Ethnic minorities should be appointed to the top political positions of minority autonomous regions, including the position of regional party secretary." Respondents were thus not in accord with the Party's policy of appointing Han to be regional party secretaries. Because ethnic regions must be headed by a titular minority person, that is "done for political and ethnic balance," although scholars have noted that "Han officials often defer to ethnic interests so as to avoid perceived Han chauvinism"[36] and some minority officials, such as the then-mayor of Yining, Xinjiang have said they discuss policy and make decisions together with the Party secretary.[37]

The survey respondents mostly agreed however that "The policy of giving additional points to ethnic minority students in the college entrance examination should be stopped." The study further showed that wealthier and more educated people tend to diverge more from state policies. Those with higher levels of regime support were more likely to favor ethnic accommodation.[38]

Despite a common assumption then, a mainly positive view of preferential policies exists in China, as in the US, where a May 2023 Reuters poll showed

36 Yan Sun, "Debating Ethnic Governance in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 28: 115 (2019): 118–132.

37 Lin Meilian, "The Inclusion Challenge," GT, Jan. 5, 2012.

38 Jennifer Pan and Xu Yiqing, "Gauging Preference Stability and Ideological Constraint under Authoritarian Rule," 21st Century China Center Research Paper, 2020: 18–19, A5–A6, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3679076. See also Illaria Mazzocco and Scott Kennedy, "Public Opinion in China: a Liberal Silent Majority?" Center for Strategic and International Studies, Feb. 9, 2022, www.csis.org/analysis/public-opinion-china-liberal-silent-majority; Tom Grunfeld, "In Search of Equality: Relations Between China's Ethnic Minorities and the Majority Han," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 17:1 (1985): 54–67.

49% of respondents agreeing that "due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality," while 32% disagreed and 19% were unsure.[39] Most Americans did oppose ethnic preferences in university admissions before the 2023 Supreme Court ban however,[40] just as most Chinese do. The two countries' situations with preferences have differed however. Most US applicants were unaffected by affirmative action because they did not apply to the selective institutions that practiced it. Although the number of added points for minorities on the national entrance examination have been reduced in recent years and, in some places, points are now provided only to rural students,[41] many Chinese universities still provide preferences for minorities, either through adding points to their exam or by admitting minority students with fewer points than the institution's minimum. A 2024 study conclude that

> While bonus points for minority candidates have been or are being phased out in nine of China's central and east-coast provinces, preferential policies are here to stay in western China, particularly in the five autonomous regions and three ethnic provinces. Further, a combination of bonus points, quotas, cutoffs, and/or interior schools will be maintained for severely impoverished areas, where bonus points alone may be insufficient to compensate for disparities in educational opportunity. This more targeted approach considers geography and corollary socioeconomic realities as well as the ethnic status of candidates.[42]

Even critics of China's ethnic autonomy and preferential policies recognize the justice of the idea that a debt is owed to minorities through the history of imperial exploitation, as propounded by Premier Zhou Enlai when preferential policies were first announced in the late 1950s.[43] That stands in contrast to

39 "A 'Great Day for America': Trump, Republicans Hail Affirmative Action Ruling," Reuters, June 30, 2023.

40 Ruth Igienik, "A Majority of Americans Say Race Should Not Be a Factor in College Admissions," NYT, June 29, 2023.

41 Zhao Yimeng, "Additional Points Policy Gets Tougher," CD, May 21, 2024.

42 Zhang Yutian and D. Eric Archer, "Expanding Access to Undergraduate Higher Education for China's Ethnic Minority Populations," *Journal of Critical Global Issues* 1:1 (2024): 1–22, https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=jcgi.

43 Zhou Enlai, "民族区域自治有利于民族团结和共同进步 (Ethnic regional autonomy benefits ethnic unity and common progress)," in 周恩来统一战线文选 (Zhou Enlai: selected works on the united front) (北京: 档案出版社 1984 [1957]), 334–346; 周 平, "中国民族政策价值取向分析 (Analysis of the value orientation of China's ethnic policies)," 当代世界与社会主义 (双月刊) 2 (2010): 132–141.

the racially-disparate result of polls about a proposed preferential policy for African Americans now being discussed in the US, reparations for the descendants of slaves. A 2021 Pew survey of US adults found that less than one-third agreed with the idea of repayment with land or money. Some 77% of Black adults favored reparations, although about 60% said that reparations were not at all likely in their lifetime. Only 18% of white adults supported reparations, as did 39% of Hispanics and 33% of Asians. About half of Democrats were in favor, but only 8% of Republicans agreed.[44]

Preferential policies have largely been accepted in Xinjiang although they are "packages of economic incentives and social benefits specifically for the Uyghur population" and, as of 2017,

> [this] package of presents, known as the people's benefits (惠民), includes the following substantial perks: job opportunities for university graduates; a fourteen-year free education, which includes exemption from tuition and textbook fees; annual free health check-ups for urban and rural residents; a subsistence allowance for poor families; poverty alleviation in rural southern Xinjiang and a housing subsidy for people in rural Xinjiang.[45]

By the same token, there is no evidence that even those Xinjiang minority people who did not welcome the birth limitations requirements in 2017–2021 saw birth limits equalization as discriminatory. After all, despite the claim of a UK defense analyst that in 2017 "Beijing issued new laws limiting Uyghur births,"[46] equalization did not change birth limits regulations for minorities; it only enforced existing limits, in many areas, for the first time.

Claims of discrimination against an ethnic group are sometimes made without acknowledging that the group has received preferences that advantaged it as to the aspect of life about which discrimination is alleged. For example, a journalist for the rightwing German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, receiving an award for covering "cultural genocide" and "crimes against humanity" in Xinjiang, stated that "Uighurs are Chinese citizens, but they're treated like

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44 "Black and White Americans are Far Apart in Their Views of Reparations for Slavery," Pew Research Center, Nov. 28, 2022, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/11/28/black-and-white-americans-are-far-apart-in-their-views-of-reparations-for-slavery/.

45 Jones, China's Approach.

46 Joseph E. Fallon, "China's Crime Against Uyghurs is a Form of Genocide," *Fourth World Journal* 18:1 (2019): 76–88.

second-class citizens because they look different and have Uighur names."[47] Such claims by journalists are unsurprising, as even German China scholar Bjorn Alpermann has asserted that cultural genocide is ongoing in Xinjiang.[48] In a report to a government agency, he stated that China's "aim is still to assimilate the minoritized ethnic groups into the Han Chinese and to control them in all areas of life."[49] Another German scholar has commented about Alpermann's claim however that

> When mandatory preschools where Uyghur children are taught in both their native language and the state language are construed as 'cultural deformation' and as part of a 'cultural genocide,' the concept of genocide is stretched so wide that it loses all meaning. All processes of modernization and national integration could conceivably be stigmatized as genocide under this version of the concept.[50]

Alpermann quotes no Chinese official statements that might support a claim of cultural genocide, because none exists. Top officials, such as State Ethnic Affairs Commissioner Pan Yue, have repeatedly stated that there should be "unity in diversity" (多元一體). That pervasive accommodationist slogan[51] goes back several decades, to the writings of China's most renowned anthropologist, Fei Xiaotong.[52] In ethnic studies theory moreover, assimilation of ethnic groups is by

> educational, cultural, occupational, matrimonial, demographic, political, and other state policies aimed at the adoption of the core group culture and way of life by the targeted non-core group [while] 'Accommodation' refers to situations where the 'differences' of a non-core group are more or less respected and institutions that regulate and perpetuate these

47 "IJ4EU Impact Award Winner: the Xinjiang Police Files," ECPMF, Apr. 5, 2023, www.ecpmf.eu/2023-ij4eu-impact-award-winner-the-xinjiang-police-files/.

48 Bjorn Alpermann, *Xinjiang: China und die Uiguren* (Xinjiang: China and the Uyghurs) (Wurzburg: University of Wurzburg Press, 2021).

49 "Decoding China: How Beijing is Sinicizing Islam," DW, June 28, 2024 (Bjorn Alpermann).

50 Brie, Beyond Liberalism: 216.

51 Pan Yue, "Unity in Diversity," GT, June 12, 2024; Fang Wei, "Unity in Diversity," *China Today*, Apr. 8, 2024.

52 Wei Xiaoshi, "Pluralistic Unity: The Social Life of Duoyuan Yiti in China," *Inner Asia* 25:1 (2023): 23–38; 沈雪晨, "多元" 與 一體": 費孝通民族理論與中華民族觀之發展 ('Pluralism' and 'unity': Fei Xiaotong ethnic theory and the development of the Chinese national viewpoint), master's diss, 國立臺灣大學). 華藝線上圖書館, https://www.airitilibrary.com/Article/Detail/U0001-0608202020570700.

> differences are put in place. The host state grants the status of minority to that non-core group.[53]

The Chinese government idea of "ethnic fusion"[54] is accommodation that contradicts claims of "forced assimilation," which would involve compelling minorities to adopt Han culture, rather than multi-ethnic adoptions of elements of Han and minority cultures. Alpermann also erred in stating in February 2022, nine months after China fully abolished all birth limits, that "birth control in Xinjiang has been tightened (Geburtenkontrolle in Xinjiang verschärft wurde)."[55]

While some individual fellow-Chinese may discriminate against Uyghurs, as some majority people do against minorities everywhere, it is misleading to imply that the Chinese government discriminates even while Uyghurs have enjoyed decades of preferential policies. There has been discrimination against Xinjiang people more generally, however. In 2014, when terrorist attacks in Xinjiang were peaking, "Many Han people from Xinjiang said they have been treated like 'second class' citizens outside Xinjiang. Some of them have experienced rejection from hotels, others find they are discriminated against when applying for jobs."[56]

3 Speculative Sinophobia

Speculation is the modus operandi for Western, especially US, attribution of all bad things to China. Commenting on this speculative Sinophobia, Yale University China business specialist Stephen Roach provided several examples in 2024:

> US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, a leading Democrat, asks us to 'imagine' what could happen if Chinese EVs were weaponized on

53 Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 21.

54 习近平: 在全国民族团结进步表彰大会上的讲话 (Xi Jinping's speech at the all-China ethnic unity and progress commendation conference), Sept. 27, 2019, 习近平: 在全国民族团结进步表彰大会上的讲话重要语汇摘编 (Excerpt from Xi Jinping's speech at the all-China ethnic unity and progress commendation conference), Oct. 2024, www.en84.com/15769.html.

55 Felix Wemheuer, "Die Geburtenrate hat sich fast halbiert" (The birthrate has almost been halved)(interview with Alpermann), Jungle World, Feb. 3, 2022, https://jungle.world/artikel/2022/05/die-geburtenrate-hat-sich-fast-halbiert.

56 Lin Meilian, "As Violence Rises in Xinjiang, Han Residents No Longer Feel at Home," GT, Mar. 12, 2014.

> American highways. FBI director Christopher Wray and Donald Trump appointee and member of the conservative Federalist Society, warns that Chinese malware could disable critical US infrastructure 'if or when China decides the time has come to strike.' A former US counter-intelligence officer has compared sensors in Chinese-made cranes to a Trojan horse. There are many 'what ifs' and mythical parallels, but no hard evidence on intent or verifiable action[57]

Roach later added that

> Fears that mainland China will attack Taiwan in 2027 reflects a dated hunch by retired admiral Phil Davidson, former head of the US Indo-Pacific Command. The key words – imagine, if, and hunch – speak volumes to the dangers of acting on conjecture … Last year, FBI Director Wray … sounded a very public alarm that 'China already has a bigger hacking program than every other major nation combined.' Maybe not. According to the new World Cybercrime Index compiled by researchers at the University of Oxford, the world's top cybercrime threats originate from, in descending order, Russia, Ukraine, China, the US, Nigeria, Romania, North Korea and the UK. In fact, China only narrowly beat out the US for third place.[58]

An explanation for the lowering of Uyghur birth rates based on non-conspiratorial factors comports with Occam's Razor. 14th Century English philosopher William of Ockham proclaimed "*Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitate*" (entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity), so the search for explanations should be constructed with the smallest possible set of elements. With competing explanations, the simpler – and non-conspiratorial one – is preferred, based on the principle that any scientifically-based claim must be potentially falsifiable and simpler claims are more testable.[59] Western elites however have adopted not the simpler explanation, but the simplistic one for matters concerning China, in keeping with the now-standard procedure in the West of

57 Stephen Roach, "Sinophobia in the US is Off the Rails and Blocking Paths to Progress," SCMP, Mar. 28, 2024.

58 Stephen Roach, "How Election Lies and China Fears Lead to Bad Outcomes for the US," SCMP, Oct. 29, 2024.

59 Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Routledge, 1992 [1959]): 121–132.

> politicians offering 'simplism': the ideology of simple answers for complex problems. Simplism is old under euphemisms such as 'common sense,' 'moral clarity' and 'telling it straight' … Simplists use conspiracy theories to simplify unintelligible reality.[60]

Political, media and other elites who make unevidenced claims can rest assured that most people know little to nothing about the subject and cannot or will not detect the lack of an empirical basis for unsubstantiated assertions. Western media assert, for example, that "Evidence of forced labor comes from people who have left China and government documents."[61] Most people will not however have heard that works purporting to marshal such evidence do not provide actual cases of Uyghurs, inside or outside Xinjiang, presenting confirmable evidence of forced labor or official documents showing Uyghur workers are coerced, rather than mobilized.

Assertions of "Xinjiang genocide" will likely persist though they do not comport with the "coordinated plan of actions" centered on mass annihilation that Convention framers saw in the Jewish and Armenian genocides. They will remain though they are made by states whose own prevention of births and transfer of children of minority and indigenous people continued into the late 20th and even 21st centuries. They will continue even though Chinese may regard them as a vicious defamation that reinforces longstanding Western notions of "Chinese cruelty."[62]

A close, contextualized, and critical examination of strategic use of genocide claims, particularly the Xinjiang case, is thus needed and should not be distracted by red herrings, such as the supposition that China's former birth limits and related penalties were "illegal." Whether desirable or not, birth limits are not barred under international law, "although limitations should not impose sanctions that violate the integrity of the human body (e.g. forced sterilization and forced abortion)."[63] The UN's Second International Conference on Population in 1984 considered China's birth control policies, which were

60 Simon Kuper, "The End of Reading and the Rise of Simplism," FT, Oct. 21, 2023.

61 "Factory Boss Defiant as Sanction Bite in China's Xinjiang," AP, May 25, 2021.

62 Barry Sautman, "Big Thunder, Little Rain: The Yellow Peril Framing of the Pandemic Campaign Against China," CJIL 21 (2021): 395–424; Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong, "Bashing 'the Chinese' Contextualizing Zambia's Collum Coal Mine Shooting," JCC 23:90 (2014): 1073–1092.

63 Roman Maydanyk and Katerina Moshalenko, "Certain Limitations in Reproductive Rights' Exercising," *Wiadomosci Lekarskie* 74:11 (2021): 3016–3020, https://wiadlek.pl/wp-content/uploads/archive/2021/WLek2021112.pdf#page=16.

then fervently applied to Han Chinese, although not to Uyghurs. It refused to condemn these policies and

> This refusal indicated that the 'basic human right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children' accepted in Bucharest [at the 1st International Conference in 1974] was, therefore, circumscribed in its exercise in accordance with governmental demographic goals and in a manner that a given government considered 'responsible.'[64]

Later conferences did not forbid states regulating the number and spacing of children, but focused on whether abortion should be allowed. Proposals to reduce population, rather than the population growth rate, were not made in China. They are made however by Westerners; for example, 11,000 scientists concerned about the environment and population growth, stated in 2019 that "Still increasing by roughly 80 million people per year, or more than 200,000 per day … the world population must be stabilized – and, ideally, gradually reduced – within a framework that ensures social integrity."[65]

Developed countries already have low birth rates, so the scientists' proposal was aimed at developing states. US professor of energy engineering Arvind Ravikumar said of their statement that "A bunch of white people in the developed world saying population should be reduced is the definition of an imperialist framing."[66] Other scientists argued however that it is not credible that the tens of thousands who signed the scientists' "warnings to humanity" are racists or xenophobes; rather they are concerned about human population growth leading to the extinction of non-human life, overcrowding, depletion and degradation of natural resources, etc.[67] Some Western liberal philosophers concerned about environment and population endorse an enforced a one-child policy, using fines, an approach China has abandoned.[68] In any case, China's

64 Lucia Berro Pizzarossa, "Here to Stay: The Evolution of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in International Human Rights Law," *Laws* 7 (2018): 1–17.

65 William J. Ripple, et al, "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency," *BioScience* 70:1 (2020): 8–12.

66 "Critics Blast a Proposal to Curb Climate Change by Halting Population Growth," Bloomberg, Nov. 6, 2019.

67 Haydn Washington and Helen Kopnina, "Discussing the Silence and Denial Around Population Growth and Its Environmental Impact: How Do We Find Ways Forward," *World* 3 (2022): 1009–1027.

68 Sarah Conly, *One Child: Do We have a Right to More?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Greg Bognar, "Overpopulation and Procreative Liberty," *Ethics, Policy and Environment* 22:3 (2019): 319–330.

ethnically-equalized sanctions for violating Xinjiang birth limitations in 2017–2021 were not intended to destroy a group, nor were the few brief transfers of children to state institutions.

In examining the claim of Xinjiang genocide, a prime concern should be one that scholars of genocide advance – to avoid "conceptual slippage/elision [and] the potential for the term's misuse." They recognize that "the requirement of establishing genocidal intent necessarily creates a high threshold, which is important for preserving the specificity and integrity of the crime of genocide – and thus guarding against an overuse/misuse of the term."[69] Such misuse is now so common that unfounded claims far outnumber substantiated genocides. Alternatively, some scholars substitute idiosyncratic definitions of genocide for what treaties, tribunals, and treatises agree it is; for example, by arguing that cultural change in Xinjiang is genocide.[70]

Misuse of the term "genocide" is so common that even some journalists working for leading Western media have noted it – except where the misuse is directed against China. For example, after the 2024 overthrow of the Bangladeshi government of Sheik Hasina, there were many instances of violence. Indian sources claimed an ongoing genocide against Hindu Bangladeshis, who account for one-tenth of the population. A *New York Times* article stated that

> Right-wing social media accounts and news media loyal to the Indian government often use terms like genocide to describe the widespread violence that left hundreds of people dead following Ms. Hasina's ouster, though Hindu leaders in Bangladesh said that only a few were from their community.[71]

The misuse of "genocide" resembles misappropriation of the charge of treason, a term often deployed against political opponents as to acts not punishable under a national law of treason, including in countries where treason is punishable only as to a narrow range of specific acts. For example, in 1791, then-Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson said any Virginian who cooperated with the National Bank of the United States that Alexander Hamilton proposed was guilty of "treason" against Virginia and should be executed.[72] While President in 1807, Jefferson accused his former Vice President and then-political

69 Janine N. Clark, "Elucidating the *Dolus Specialis*: An Analysis of ICTY Jurisprudence on Genocidal Intent," *Criminal Law Forum* 26 (2015): 497–531.

70 David Tobin, "Genocidal Processes: Social Death in Xinjiang," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45:16 (2022): 93–121.

71 Saif Hasnat, et al, "Two South Asian Neighbors, Once Friendly, Are Now at Bitter Odds," NYT, Nov. 28, 2024.

72 Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin, 2004): 352.

opponent Aaron Burr of treason, for levying war by conspiring to separate the western states from the US. He had Burr arrested, without indictment by a grand jury and, during Burr's trial, sought to have the presiding judge, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Marshal, impeached. Burr was acquitted, in part because he had not actually levied war and thus did not commit treason.[73] Ironically, three decades earlier, Jefferson had violated the English Statute of Treason by levying war against King George III.

In 2023, Trump said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley committed treason, for which execution was the traditional punishment because Milley had spoken with his Chinese counterpart during the January 6, 2021 Capitol insurrection, to assure him that Trump did not intend launching a distracting military attack on China.[74] Under US law however, treason consists only of levying war against the United States or adhering to its enemies, giving them aid and comfort within the US or elsewhere.[75] Milley had not committed treason, yet Trump used the term as a political stratagem after Milley termed Trump "fascist to the core."[76] Milley himself noted an actual treason, stating that the Civil War Confederacy was an act of rebellion and "an act of treason, at the time, against the Union, against the Stars and Stripes, against the U.S. Constitution." Yet, even though Confederate civil and military leaders Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee levied war against the US, they were not tried for treason, in part because treason, like genocide, is hard to prove; indeed, less than 30 US charges of treason have been brought from 1789–2023.[77] In the US treason is punishable by death. In Israel, the penalty for assisting an enemy in wartime is life imprisonment or death; a US journalist was investigated for the crime in 2024, after reporting Hezbollah missile strikes in Israel.[78]

In Britain, there have also been few recent examples of treason. One occurred in 2021 when a Briton compassed the death of the monarch, an original basis for the common law of treason. He had reached the grounds of Windsor Castle

73 R. Kent Newmyer, *The Treason Trial of Aaron Burr: Law, Politics and the Character Wars of the New Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

74 Brian Klaas, "Trump Floats the Idea of Executing Joint Chiefs Chairman Milley," *The Atlantic*, Sept. 25, 2023.

75 18 U.S.C. para. 2381.

76 Edward Luce, "America's Dead Heat Trump-Harris Election," FT, Oct. 16, 2024.

77 Charles Dunlap, "Were Confederate Soldiers Tried for Treason?" Lawfire, July 11, 2020, https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2020/07/11/were-confederate-soldiers-tried-for-treason/; Scott Bomboy, "Aaron Burr's Trial and the Constitution's Treason Clause," National Constitutional Center, Sept. 1, 2023, https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-great-trial-that-tested-the-constitutions-treason-clause.

78 18 U.S.C Ch. 115; Jonah Valdez, "US Journalist Jeffrey Loffredo Releases After Being Detained by Israel for Four Days," Intercept, Oct. 11, 2024.

in an attempt to assassinate the Queen and in 2023 was given a nine-year sentence.[79] Accusations of treason without a basis in law have however been leveled in Taiwan. In 2023, its defense minister accused a professor at the territory's National Defense University of treason and called for his execution because he and other NDU academics owned a firm that engaged in scientific cooperation and business with a China mainland firm.[80]

Another much abused term is "slave." Lord Alton has called China's solar panel industry "the Chinese Communist Party's industry of slavery," without naming any "slave."[81] Mainstream UK media make similar, unevidenced, accusations, often in lurid terms:

> Chinese manufacturers account for 80 per cent of the global supply of solar panels – and 98 per cent of those already installed in Britain. This monopoly has been achieved – in part – through the exploitation of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang region of north-west China. Labor is allegedly rounded up from villages and herded into camps surrounded by barbed wire, where they toil for little or no pay. The US and EU have passed laws banning solar products made by slave labor.[82]

Former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith, who prominently denounces "slave labor" in Xinjiang, responded to calls by Caribbean states for reparations for actual slavery by stating "We have paid well over the asking price for anything to do with what happened because we were the ones who paid through the nose to stop it." Tory China-baiter and former MP Jacob Rees-Mogg, added that "They [the Caribbean] ought to pay us for ending slavery, it is not something any other country had done and we were motivated by Christian charity." Slavery was abolished in the British Empire however only after many armed revolts by slaves made its maintenance too costly and liberated slaves were then made into indentured laborers on Britain's Caribbean plantations.[83]

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79 "Jaswant Singh Chail: Man who Took Crossbow to 'Kill Queen' Jailed," BBC, Oct. 5, 2023.

80 Matthew Strong, "Taiwan Probes Defense University Professor over Cooperation with China," Taiwan News, Dec. 19, 2023.

81 Eleni Courea, "Labor Facing Defeat in Vote to Ban Green Energy Investments Tied to Uyghur Exploitation," *Guardian*, Feb. 5, 2025.

82 Miles Dilworth, "Revealed: How China has been Allowed to Takeover Britain's Energy Industry in the Name of Ed Miliband's Net Zero Dream," Mail Online, Feb. 13, 2025.

83 Eleanor Shearer, "Slavery Reparations: A Rose-tinted View of Empire Stops Us Seeing What We Really Owe the Caribbean," Oct. 25, 2024, John Anderson Media, www.bigissue.com/opinion/slavery-reparations-commonwealth-caribbean-starmer/; Jacob Rees-Mogg, "We Must Confront the CCP," www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYlTwKPZZJA.

Josh Hawley (R-MO), a member of the US Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations demanded in 2024 that Jeff Rittener, chief trade officer for US IT firm Intel, condemn Uyghur "forced labor." When Rittener said he would leave that matter to experts, Hawley accused Rittener of failing to condemn "slave labor" – which Rittener had done explicitly – and said that Intel was "groveling to China."[84]

Li Cheng, an analyst at the elite Brookings Institution in Washington DC for 17 years who is famed for studies of Chinese political elites is a self-described liberal and friend of the Dalai Lama. He has denounced "some of the crackdowns [in China as] really excessive, a mistake." On Xinjiang, however, Li "questions the US government's official descriptions of the events as genocide." He has said that in Washington he in now "branded as a spokesperson for China" and that he and other Chinese Americans are directly challenged because of their race and name. Now that Li is a Hong Kong academic, he finds he does not have to self-censor to the same extent as in Washington.[85]

The hypothesis that crimes are being committed against Uyghurs because they are Uyghurs cannot be falsified because evidence from non-affirming sources – Xinjiang people, Chinese scholars, researchers outside China, etc., is assumed to result from coercion, bribery, or duplicity, disallowing any showing that the hypothesis is false. That was the approach at the Cold War's height as well. The history faculty at liberal Columbia University told a promising student in the late 1950s that "they would not sign any Marxist dissertation." The student, Eugene Genovese, then purged his thesis of Marxist analysis.[86] Many non-mainstream views are still disallowed by mainstream US institutions. For example, renowned Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs, who has decades-long experience working in Russia and Ukraine, has recounted that he tried for three years to have appear in the *New York Times* a 700-word op-ed

84 "Sen. Hawley Grills Intel Exec. on Forced Labor in China," C-Span, Sept. 10, 2024, www.c-span.org/video/?c5131744/sen-hawley-grills-intel-exec-forced-labor-china; "Hawley Exposes Intel Corporation for Investing Billions in Chinese Tech While Cutting American Jobs & Failing to Condemn Slave Labor Wednesday, September 11, 2024," www.hawley.senate.gov/hawley-exposes-intel-corporation-for-investing-billions-in-chinese-tech-while-cutting-american-jobs-failing-to-condemn-slave-labor/.

85 Edward White, "'We Do Not Live in a Liberal Era [interview with Li Cheng],'" FT, Oct. 26, 2024.

86 J. William Harris, "Eugene Genovese's Old South: A Review Essay," *Journal of Southern History* 80:2 (2014): 327–372.

piece interrogating mainstream Western narratives of the Russia/Ukraine war, but was always refused.[87]

Studying Xinjiang genocide assertions in a global context is also fraught. Scholars generally agree that "genocide is a rare event," but most comparative studies have a "no variance" research design: the dependent variable is a recognized genocide.[88] Almost no authors treat "negative," "contrapositive" or "null" cases.[89] That is so even though many non-genocide cases exist, including the one that Western politicians and media have made most prominent, Xinjiang. There is however a need to contrast actual genocides and the many null, but politically-strategic, claims and to discuss the latter's implications for our understanding of both genocides and Xinjiang. Doing that requires an effort of "forensic scholarship" – analysis that aims at "demystifying pseudo-scholarly arguments."[90] That effort has now begun.

4 Xinjiang Sanctioned

Mass atrocities are often committed in and out of armed conflicts, but claims of genocide are often mere stratagems. The assertions may be inconsequential if made *en passant* by an obscure separatist group or if easily recognized as "atrocity propaganda" of warring powers. The Xinjiang genocide assertion is consequential however, because the force behind it is the US government, the world's primary sanctioning power and regime-change plotter.[91] Western narratives of Xinjiang also have had negative consequences for China/European relations, as in 2021 the European Parliament, citing Xinjiang, voted to freeze the China-EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment that had taken seven years to negotiate.

A 2023 study found US sanctions up by 933% in 20 years. In one way or another, they now cover a third of the global economy and a fourth of countries.

87 "Ukraine Has Turned the World Upside Down!" – Jeffrey Sachs, Jimmy Dore Show, Mar. 12, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SAKXzBPTws.

88 See David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49:1 (1996): 56–91.

89 Scott Straus, "Second Generation Comparative Research on Genocide," *World Politics* 59:3 (2007): 476–501.

90 Adam Schatz, "Goldhagen's Willing Executioners," *Slate*, Apr. 8, 1998, https://slate.com/news-and-politics/1998/04/goldhagen-s-willing-executioners.html/.

91 Agathe Demarais, *Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World Against US Interests* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022); Lindsey O'Rourke, *Covert Regime Change: America's Secret Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

The US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control's 2023 list of sanctioned individuals and entities had 2,206 pages[92] and

> the Treasury Department estimated in late 2021 that it had sanctions on 9,421 organizations and individuals … In 2022, the Treasury Department added 2,549 new designations while delisting only 225. That means nearly 12,000 entities were under U.S. sanctions as of the beginning of this year.[93]

In 2017–2024, 1,300 Chinese entities were put under US sanctions, with very few able to get delisted.[94] The US imposed 1,000 sanctions and trade restrictions on China in 2023 and 2024 H1.[95] Both major US parties uphold sanctions: in Obama's 2d term, 2,350 entities were sanctioned; the Trump administration imposed 3,800 in the next four years. Tufts University's Daniel Drezner has analyzed sanctions as a function of the decline of US power globally.[96]

The main Xinjiang-related US sanctioning law is the UFLPA, in effect since late 2021,[97] a law that an influential former Labour Minister has proposed the UK imitate.[98] Advanced by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio while a Senator, the UFLPA has "virtually banned imports from Xinjiang."[99] It has had a diminishing effect however, in that "The value of shipments US Customs and Border Protection detained under the UFLPA dropped from a monthly peak of $290.7 million in March 2024 to $9.2 million in February [2025]."[100]

UFLPA accepts the definition of forced labor elaborated in the US's 1930 Tariff Act, which involves the menace of a penalty for non-performance of labor. The need to show "menace of penalty" may derive from the forced Black labor

92 Francisco Rodriguez, "The Human Consequences of Economic Sanctions," Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2023, www.cepr.net/report/the-human-consequences-of-economic-sanctions/.

93 Max Boot, "Washington is Sanctioning 12,000 Entities. It's Backfiring," WP, June 8, 2023.

94 "World Needs to Stand Up Against Evil U.S. Law on 'Forced Labor,'" XH, June 1, 2024.

95 Sylvie Zhuang, "Could China's New Export Controls on Military-Related Tech and Materials Backfire?" SCMP, May 31, 2024.

96 Daniel Drezner, "The United States of Sanctions," FP, Aug. 24, 2021, https://diplomatizzando.blogspot.com/2021/09/the-united-states-of-sanctions-daniel-w.html.

97 Public Law No. 117–78, Dec. 23, 2021, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-117publ78.

98 "UK Should Outlaw Imports of Goods Made by Xinjiang Forced Labour, Says Senior Lawmaker," Reuters, Sept. 16, 2024.

99 Yoko Kuborta, "China Region is No-Go for Western Firms," WSJ, Mar. 17, 2025.

100 Richard Vanderford, "Trump Has a China Trade War Weapon He Hasn't Picked Up," WSJ, Mar. 22, 2025.

after slavery's formal end in 1865. Then, "African Americans without jobs often were assigned to white guardians for work without pay. The penalty for quitting often included imprisonment for breach of contract."[101] Moreover,

> freed men and women were routinely arrested under false charges and then leased out to plantation owners and industrialists to work off their sentence. Some historians have described this convict leasing system as 'worse than slavery,' because there was no incentive to avoid working those people to death. Over time, courts accepted that all people who are incarcerated lose the protection against slavery or involuntary servitude.[102]

UFLPA however does not require presentation of any evidence of the existence of a penalty for refusing a job. Instead, it automatically assumes that importation of any Xinjiang-related goods contravenes US law. The ILO, in its 2024 handbook, moreover now includes "labor transfers" as amounting to forced labor. A handbook provision, likely added due to Western pressure, mirrors Uyghur émigré and US claims about Xinjiang. It states that

> Other violations involve large-scale labor transfer schemes, where workers belonging to certain ethnic or religious minority groups must – under menace of penalty – relocate to another geographical area to work in a State or private enterprise, sometimes under guise of vocational training or regional economic development.[103]

The US government has not shown "menace of penalty," but only speculated that "It is estimated that 100,000 Uyghurs and other ethnic minority ex-detainees in China may be working in conditions of forced labor following detention in re-education camps."[104] By mid-2024, 65 Chinese firms had been listed for sanctions, including those in textiles, apparel, agriculture, polysilicon, plastics,

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101 "The 1890s: Black Codes," Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2024, https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/forever/endofanera/page2.html.

102 Andrew Ross, et al, "End Legal Slavery in the United States" NYT, June 20, 2024.

103 Adrian Zenz, "Updated ILO Forced Labor Guidelines Directly Target Uyghur Forced Labor," Jamestown Foundation, Apr. 14, 2024, https://jamestown.org/program/updated-ilo-forced-labor-guidelines-directly-target-uyghur-forced-labor/.

104 "Against Their Will: The Situation in Xinjiang," US Dept of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, s.d. (2021?), www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/against-their-will-the-situation-in-xinjiang.

chemicals, batteries, household appliances, electronics, etc.[105] By early 2025, there were 144 banned firms, with most in the mining, solar and textile sectors.[106]

UFLPA "assumes that all goods produced in China's Xinjiang region are made with forced labor and are therefore banned from entering the US … [A]nyone importing goods into the US must demonstrate … that their products were not made wholly or in part with forced labor, providing 'clear and convincing evidence,' in order to get an exception." Thus, goods made with a single fiber produced in Xinjiang are banned from the US. From June 2022 to March 2024, 3,096 shipments into the US were detained pursuant to UFLPA. Of $185 billion of apparel, textile and footwear products imported into the US in 2022, $35m worth were detained.[107] In 2024, 631 shipments worth $30–40 million were stopped and held offshore under UFLPA,[108] Yet, by mid-2024 it was said that "These measures have effectively blocked an estimated $700 million worth of goods."[109] That is because Xinjiang's exports to the US in 2023 were 92% lower than in 2020.[110] Many Xinjiang company simply no longer ship to the US because their goods are automatically blocked and that is highly consequential – for Uyghur workers.

As of early 2025, the Xinjiang cotton and textile industry provided jobs for over one million people,[111] but sanctions have cost many jobs. Shache [Yarkhand] County, Kashgar Prefecture, is more than 95% Uyghur and formerly had more than 100 textile factories. Only one-fifth were still operational after UFLPA went into effect.[112] Sanctioned firms that remain have greatly reduced their workforces and by the end of 2023, sanctions had disrupted operations at more than 100 local enterprises. Sanctioned textile and garment factories

105 "'Forced labor' or Veiled Protectionism?" People's Daily Online, May 31, 2024.

106 "US Bans Imports From 37 Chinese Firms Over Forced Labor Charge," Mining.com, Jan. 16, 2025.

107 Rachel Lawler, "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) and How it Impacts Apparel," JustStyle, Mar. 28, 2024.

108 Forrest Laws, "Technology Traces Sustainability and Country of Origin Root," *Delta Farm Press*, Mar. 29, 2024.

109 "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Marks Progress Amid Ongoing Challenges," ANI, June 29, 2024.

110 Lo Kinling, "China has Turned Inward to Sell Xinjiang Cotton After a Trade Ban. Will it be Enough?" SCMP, Aug. 11, 2024.

111 "To Maintain Output, Growth Despite Sanctions," XH, Jan. 19, 2025.

112 "Commentary: 'Forced Labor' Smear Killing Jobs, Ruining Lives of Xinjiang Ethnic Minorities," XH, May 29, 2024.

were forced to cut production or shut down entirely, resulting in significant layoffs.[113]

A Nordic countries delegation visiting Kashgar in 2024 was told that a sanctioned cotton factory reduced its workforce from 20,000 to 5,000.[114] Tianshan Wool Textiles, near Urumqi said that due to sanctions, foreign trade was now less than 10%, compared to 80% before. Its workforce was reduced from 700 in 2021 to 500 in 2024.[115] Xinjiang firms that overwhelmingly employed Uyghurs have been damaged by UFLPA: a privately-owned clothing company's workforce of 2,200 in 2018 was reduced to 500 by 2024.[116] A Shache factory went from 1,000 to 100 employees; most laid-off workers were Uyghur women, who are most impacted by sanctions and not just in terms of income. Xinjiang University's Tuersun Aibai has noted that

> For a family, the complementarity of economic income between husband and wife is conducive to their enjoyment of equal family status. Meanwhile, working is beneficial for Uyghur women to understand modern production technology, lifestyle and concepts, and could promote their awareness of their right to make choice and enhance their ability to pursue a better life.

The Xinjiang regional government has also charged local governments with enhancing support for businesses subjected to US sanctions. They are to help these firms expand their domestic and international markets, including by improving brand recognition, promoting technological innovation and assisting in overcoming operational difficulties.[117]

Alena Dohan, the UN Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures, issued a report in May 2024, reflecting her visit to Xinjiang and stating

> I received information about enterprises employing thousands of people, which were forced to undergo in a short period of time significant cuts in

113 "Xinjiang Backs Its Firms, Counters US Sanctions," CD, Jan. 24. 2025.

114 Jan Oberg, et al., "Report from the Nordic Delegation to China's Xinjiang Province, Sept. 7–15, 2024," Transcend Media Service, Nov. 16, 2024, www.transcend.org/tms/2024/12/report-from-the-nordic-delegation-to-chinas-xinjiang-province-7-15-sep-2024/.

115 "China Pursues Diplomatic Offensive to Counter Accusations of Forced Labor in Uyghur Region," *Irish Times*, Dec. 21, 2024.

116 Cui Jia, "Xinjiang Cotton: Who the Real Victims Are," CD, Mar. 29, 2021. CD, "So-Called 'Forced Labor' in Xinjiang is One of the Most Notorious Laws of the 21st Century, Aiming to Destabilize Xinjiang: FM," GT, Mar. 16, 2024.

117 "Xinjiang Orders Local Govts to Support Sanctioned Businesses," CD, Sept. 3, 2024.

> their workforce, in some cases of more than 50%, or small and medium enterprises getting bankrupt. Those most likely to be affected are persons in vulnerable situations, including those in informal employment, older workers with less skills and productive capacity, as well as women employed in certain sectors of the economy … Unilateral targeted sanctions as a punitive action violate, at the very least, obligations arising from universal and regional human rights instruments … Any unilateral sanctions taken without or beyond authorization of the UN Security Council … in accordance with law of international responsibility, are illegal.[118]

Sanctions cause Uyghur workers to be laid-off, but also contribute to layoffs of workers outside China, such as in the Philippines, where textile and garment manufacturers have had their exports to the US stuck in ports due to UFLPA requirements that they prove no Xinjiang cotton is being used.[119] Unevidenced claims of forced labor cause job losses even in the US. In 2022, Chinese lithium-ion electric vehicle battery company Gotion said it would invest US$2.36 billion in building a plant in the small northern Michigan town of Big Rapids, creating some 2,000 jobs. John Moolenaar, a Republican who represents the Congressional district where Big Rapids is located and chairs the House Select Committee on China, launched a campaign against the firm, saying that it had ties with the XPCC, which he claims uses forced labor. In his 2024 campaign Trump condemned the investment and in 2025 the future of the plant remained uncertain.[120]

State-organized forced labor might be proved through interviewing those who assert they performed it. Such interviews are only of use, however, if there is cross-examination to determine truthfulness. There appear to have been no cross-examinations or even journalistic interrogations of any of the small number of Uyghur and Kazakh émigrés who have claimed coercive assignment to work, usually only for weeks. Instead of such interviews, the US government, in effect, precludes Chinese firms from proving non-coercion, unlike the EU, which requires "proof of malfeasance"[121] US officials proceed by assuming

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118 Alex Lo, "How Washington Makes Up a Fake Genocide but Enables a Real One," SCMP, June 15, 2024.

119 Khrischielle Yelao, "4,577 Garment Workers Retrenched Due to Soft Market, US Cotton Law," *Manila Bulletin*, May 6, 2024.

120 Breanna Noble, "U.S. States Divided Over Willingness to Welcome a Chinese Automaker," *Detroit News*, Mar. 14, 2025.

121 Jasmine Malik Chua, "EU Reaches Provisional Deal on Forced Labor Ban," *Sourcing Journal*, Mar. 5, 2024.

Uyghurs are "persecuted," finding that a firm recruited Uyghurs, and concluding that it is for forced labor. For example,

> Officials from Xinjiang-based Cofco Sugar visited several homes of persecuted minorities in a village to recruit Uyghurs to work at one of its plants, according to [DHS]. Jingweida Technology, in the manufacture of electrical converters, power supplies, capacitors and chargers for electric batteries, is alleged to have engaged in poverty alleviation programs believed to be part of an overall forced labor strategy. Anhui-based textile company Xinya New Materials is also said to be working with an established government-sponsored labor transfer program.[122]

In a case where a Chinese laser printer company challenged UFLPA sanctions,

> Court filings by the government highlight UFLPA's "rebuttable presumption" clause that requires enforcement authorities to presume that all goods "mined, produced, or manufactured" in whole or in part in Xinjiang are made with forced labor and prohibited from entering into the US unless proved otherwise. The law also provides no "specific procedural requirement" to add new entities on the list [and] the UFLPA does not mandate either the release of evidence or prior notification.[123]

Many firms operating outside Xinjiang are sanctioned because they use Xinjiang cotton or even trade or warehouse products that use it. The US also sanctions firms that work with entities that implement poverty-alleviation. Sanctions target "paired-assistance" programs that have linked China's richer areas with Tibet since 1994 and with Xinjiang since 1997. It was then that the East-West Cooperation program was set up, "through which Beijing paired [minority areas] across the country with Han coastal local jurisdictions such that these rich Han jurisdictions can provide financial support and transfer Han cadres to speed up economic development in non-Han areas." The programs saw Y170b invested in Xinjiang over the next quarter century, "with 80% of the funds spent on improving people's lives by providing them with access to safe housing, asphalt roads, tap water, and better education and medical

122 Igor Patrick, "3 More Chinese Companies Added to US Import Ban Over Uygur Forced Labor Concerns," SCMP, Dec. 9, 2023.

123 Khushboo Razdan, "'Guilty Until Proven Innocent': Chinese Firm Challenges US Law on Uygur Forced Labor," SCMP, Jan. 4, 2024.

services."[124] For example, from 2010 to 2024, well-off Suzhou, Jiangsu province, sent 111 officials and 840 skilled professionals to aid development in Xinjiang, where they reportedly established nearly 800 projects.[125]

Even apart from applied US sanctions against alleged Xinjiang "forced labor," accused firms are not allowed a defense. In 2023, Volkswagen, operator of a plant in Urumqi, commissioned an audit by a human rights and corporate responsibility consultancy headed by Markus Loning, Germany's former human rights commissioner. It carried out an inspection of contracts and pay records of all 197 employees and interviewed 40. Its findings were however dismissed, based on the assumption that an auditor would not be "able to carry out a politically sensitive job at a plant run by a Chinese state-owned company" and that the interviewed workers were placed in an intimidating situation because the interviews were livestreamed to the offices of a Shenzhen law firm.[126] HRW senior researcher Jim Worthington said that "the risk of reprisals against auditors and workers in Xinjiang means that no audit can credibly claim to have investigated labor conditions at factories" in Xinjiang.[127] Worthington however misconstrued the burden of proof where a crime is involved: VW did not have to prove there was no forced labor; its accusers had to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that forced labor existed, but proffered no such evidence.

The insinuation that an audit was impossible was not accompanied by any evidence of a reprisal against any auditor or interviewed worker. It is not the first time an audit in Xinjiang has found no forced labor and then been ignored. Western human rights NGOs demanded that the Swiss-based Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) suspend its Xinjiang certification program because of supposed forced labor. BCI is headed by a British business advisor and has been funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). At the time of a 90-day freeze on funding in early 2025, USAID was a 10,000 person-strong global entity that funded health, food and agriculture programs,

124 "Notice Regarding the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List," Federal Register 89:097, FREG 43417, May 17, 2024; "Wonderful Xinjiang: Names Extolling Rosy Life Bear Witness to Region's Remarkable Change," XH, July 22, 2024; Chao-yo Cheng, *Autonomy in Autocracy: Explaining Ethnic Policies in Post-1949 China*, PhD diss., UCLA, 2019: 58, https://escholarship.org/content/qt2q64z1mz/qt2q64z1mz_noSplash_9bdb3c5b7e9a2d4ad06cd4c3ab119c37.pdf.

125 "Support from Suzhou Benefits Xinjiang Students," CD, Sept. 3, 2024.

126 Patricia Nilson, "VW Audit Finds No Forced Labour at China Plant," FT, Dec. 7, 2023.

127 "Volkswagen-Commissioned Audit Finds No Signs of Forced Labor at Plant in China's Xinjiang Region," AP, Dec. 6, 2023; Patricia Nilsson and Edward White, "Xinjiang Factory Audit Touted by VW Fell Short of International Standards," FT, Sept. 20, 2024.

but also groups that support "US strategic interests" through regime change operations. The 2025 stop work order for USAID made by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), was said to have defunded Uyghur émigré groups.[128]

BCI suspended its Xinjiang certification in March 2020, disabling firms that use the region's cotton from entering the global supply chain. BCI had ten "executive partners" in such Xinjiang locales as Bole, Korla and Aksu. In mid-2020, BCI China personnel conducted research in Xinjiang and found no forced labor. Wu Han, head of BCI's Shanghai office, reported on two investigations and third-party reports, including by Swiss firm SGS, that concluded that no cases of forced labor were found in Xinjiang since 2012. BCI in Switzerland ignored the reports.[129]

Ignoring exculpatory audits effectively disbars anyone from effectively undertaking to prove the negative that forced labor is not present. Under such conditions then, sanctioned Chinese and foreign firms will be reluctant to employ Uyghurs, who are thus not protected, but rather harmed by sanctions.[130] The UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of the Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights Alena Douhan, visited Xinjiang in 2024 and

> found a 'decline in business activities,' 'significant loss of global markets either due to unilateral sanctions per se or due to overcompliance with such measures by foreign businesses and entities,' which in turn caused 'job losses,' 'disruptions in social protection schemes by disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, particularly in

128 "Better Cotton Initiative," USAID, s.d. (2016?), https://divportal.usaid.gov/s/project/a0gt0000000rW7IAAU/improving-livelihoods-and-economic-development-in-cotton-producing-areas; "Trump's Foreign Aid Freeze Could Prove to be a Boon for the World's Authoritarian Strongmen," AP, Feb. 8, 2025; "U.S Aid Freeze Risks Handing Influence to China in Beijing's Backyard," Reuters, Feb. 11, 2025; Alex Lo, "Hong Kong Should Cheer Elon Musk for Shutting Down 'Criminal' USAID," SCMP, Feb. 21, 2025; Cyrus Janssen, "The End of USAID: How Trump's Move Shifts Global Power to China," Feb. 23, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZWd9fKECkM.

129 Yuan Yuan, "Allegations of Forced Labor in Xinjiang's Cotton Production Encounter a Barrage of Backlash," *Beijing Review* No. 14, Apr. 8, 2021; 毛淑杰, "新疆棉花遭遇'明枪'与'暗战' (Xinjiang Cotton Encounters 'Open Guns' and 'Secret Wars')," 南方网, Nov. 8, 2022, https://news.southcn.com/node_8462087af1/ddbd18f8b9.shtml.

130 Phill Hynes, "Unbelievably, US Trade Act Targets China Poverty Rescue Program," Friday Every Day, June 14, 2022. https://fridayeveryday.com/unbelievably-us-trade-act-china-poverty-rescue-program/.

> labor-intensive sectors, including women, older persons, and all those in informal employment.[131]

The US has consistently voted, within the UN system, to abolish Douhan's position, because she has found that US sanctions against several countries amount to violations of human rights. In her 2024 visit to Xinjiang, she found neither genocide nor crimes against humanity.[132]

As US wire service analysis noted, "There is a presumption of guilty until proven innocent instead of vice versa"[133] and firms that seek to prove their Uyghur workers are not forced will have their proof to be judged by the China-hostile US Congress:

> The UFLPA allows firms to rebut the presumption that goods from [Xinjiang] are made with forced labor by documenting the conditions of workers and providing evidence that no forced labor was utilized in the production of the good or any of its components. Both the law and the DHS's enforcement strategy have made clear, however, that the bar for proof is high. Any exceptions granted by the DHS must be reported to a skeptical Congress and will be carefully scrutinized, providing an additional disincentive for the DHS to grant such exceptions.[134]

The high bar is almost insurmountable, as even Western auditors' evidence is essentially disallowed. A US Department of Labor official told Congress that "Conducting due diligence in Xinjiang supply chains over the use of forced Uygur labor is 'impossible' under the conditions set by the Chinese government, and the 'only responsible thing' to do is not to operate." The same official said Xinjiang workers were being sent to work elsewhere to "depopulate" the region,[135] an obvious inaccuracy: only a tiny proportion of Uyghurs work outside Xinjiang and very few do so permanently. From 2014 to 2020, 117,000

131 "Ingrained Bias Gives Life to Xinjiang 'Forced Labor' Lie," CD, May 23, 2024.

132 Jimmy Quinn, "U.N. Rapporteur, after Receiving Chinese Funding, Calls for End to All Sanctions on China." *National Review*, May 24, 2024, https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/u-n-rapporteur-after-receiving-chinese-funding-calls-for-end-to-all-sanctions-on-china/.

133 "Regulatory Crackdown on Slavery in Cotton Supply Chains a Wake-up Call for Fashion Brands," Reuters, Aug. 20, 2023.

134 Marti Flacks, "What's Next for the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act?" CSIS, June 21, 2023, www.csis.org/analysis/whats-next-uyghur-forced-labor-prevention-act.

135 Igor Patrick, "China Thwarts Accurate Audits of Xinjiang Supply Chains, US Lawmakers Hear," SCMP, May 1, 2024.

people of all ethnicities went from Xinjiang to work elsewhere in China or on average less than 17,000 a year.[136]

Most media accounts about UFLPA rely on Zenz's speculations that anti-poverty programs involve forced labor and fail to note that he has not shown any cases of forced labor.[137] The US DHS thus sanctions Chinese companies without direct proof of forced labor. One way to prove state-organized forced labor is through statements by officials during or after the period of forced labor. Fritz Sauckel, head of a 12 million-strong forced labor program, stated at a 1944 meeting of Nazi Germany's Central Planning Board that "Out of the five million foreign laborers who arrived in Germany, not even 200,000 came voluntarily." Sauckel also said of forced laborers that "All the men must be fed, sheltered and treated in such a way as to exploit them to the highest extent with the lowest possible degree of expenditure."[138] Former PM Hatoyama Yukio stated in 2019 that World War II-era Japan forcibly mobilized about 8 million Koreans of a Korean population of 25 million, and 3.5 million of those mobilized were forced laborers.[139]

Ironically, the same US government that sanctions Chinese for unproven Xinjiang forced labor those who profited from proven, murderous slave labor. Honorees most notably include Werhner von Braun and Karl Debus, scientists whose work relied on World War II concentration camp slave labor that killed at least 20,000 people in the Nazis' development of the V-1 and V-2 rockets, missiles that killed thousands of more civilians when used against Britain. The US has a plethora of memorials, many at government sites, to these war criminals, who together with many hundreds of recruited Nazis, worked for the US space program after the mid-1940s.[140]

5 Forced Labor Unevidenced

China's "labor transfer" is part of poverty alleviation programs that include both minorities and Han. In Xinjiang, most labor transfer is a transitioning

136 "China Signals Shift but No Letup in Xinjiang," AP, Dec. 22, 2020.

137 "US Bans 26 Textile Firms Over Alleged Links to Forced Labor in China," ANI, May 17, 2024.

138 "Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression Volume 1, Chapter X – The Slave Labor Program, The Illegal Use of Prisoners of War," https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/chap_10.asp.

139 "Former Japanese PM Pays Respects to Korean Victims of Forced Labor," Yonhap News, Oct. 12, 2019; "Around 2 mil. Koreans Conscripted to Labor From 1939 to 1945," *Hankyoreh*, Oct. 31, 2018, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/868192.html.

140 Mark Felton, "NASA's Nazi Memorials – Honoring War Criminals 2024," Apr. 20, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrKmDUNi6sY.

from full-time farming or herding to work in a village satellite factory, construction site, restaurant or other locale near where the former farmers or herders live.[141] Importantly, Zenz and others who fabulate forced labor present no evidence of "menace of penalty."[142] Instead, they make statements like "[A] large part of forced labor in Xinjiang may not involve obvious signs of compulsion. People are kept at work by an implicit message; leave a state-assigned job and you are in trouble." They present no *confirmed* cases of state-assigned jobs, let alone of menacing workers who quit.[143]

A 2025 *New York Times/Der Spiegel* investigation of Uyghur workers employed in factories outside Xinjiang stated that 3.2m Xinjiang workers did labor transfer in 2023, of whom "tens of thousands of Uyghurs" went outside Xinjiang. It asserted that "The workers are paid, but the conditions they face are unclear. And UN labor experts, scholars and activists say the programs fit well-documented patterns of forced labor" because "experts and activists say Uyghurs usually have no choice but to accept the job assignments." The only scholars or experts named and quoted were Adrian Zenz and Rayhan Asat; their employers' ties to the US government were not disclosed. The evidence was said to include "photos of workers in neat rows at train stations before departing Xinjiang," even though Chinese government sources readily state that workers travel in orderly groups from Xinjiang to their new jobs.

New York Times journalists interviewed more than three dozen Uyghur workers near the Hubei and Jiangsu province factories where they worked. They recounted that

> Several workers suggested, with some hesitation, that they labored under close supervision. They said their jobs had been arranged for them and that they sometimes needed permission to leave factory grounds, usually upon arrival. Security guards at some factories also confirmed they had been sent Uyghur workers by government agencies. Other workers said that they had taken the jobs willingly and were staying in them on their own accord … [A worker in Hubei] said they "were allowed to leave the factory premises and could return to Xinjiang if they gave a month's

141 祖力亞提·司馬義,陳稔源 & 陳艷平, "新疆喀什地區農村少數民族富余勞動力就業調查研究——以葉城縣爲例" (Research on the Employment Survey of Rural Minority Ethnic Minority Surplus Labourers in Kashgar Region of Xinjiang – Taking Yecheng County as an Example), 西北民族研究 2018:3: 14–25. doi:10.16486/j.cnki.62-1035/d.2018.03.003.

142 Fernando Munoz Bernal, "Xinjiang 'Forced Labor' Witch Trials See U.S. as Judge and Plaintiff," XH, June 5, 2024.

143 "The Evolution of Forced Labor in Xinjiang," *Economist*, May 31, 2024.

> notice." He said he worked up to 14 hours a day, and earned a monthly salary of up to 6,000 yuan, or $827, about the national average for a factory worker in China.[144]

Another article about the *New York Times/Der Spiegel* effort is by UK-based The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ), whose geolocation work enabled the investigation. The article quotes only Western sources, including Laura Murphy, an academic who became a US DHS official, Zenz, and Asat. Zenz avers that because Xinjiang has a "police-state environment," a threat of detention does not have to be shown to prove forced labor. He muses that because "The coercion is systemic, built into the system. The very notion of choice becomes highly questionable," meaning that the "menace of penalty" element of forced labor need not be adduced, because it is assumed, which is in fact what the UFLPA does. As to a "police-state environment," Western scholars who have visited Xinjiang found no great police presence.[145]

The TBIJ article noted that "A [Chinese] state media article tallied more than 100,000 labor transfers out of Xinjiang as far back as 2006, the year the program started," a tiny proportion of the 6.7 million non-senior Uyghur adults. The article also terms scenes in online videos showing Xinjiang minority workers in Hubei and Jiangsu playing sports, barbecuing, dancing, singing and pledging allegiance to a Chinese flag "examples of the sinister destruction of Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz identities." It implies that the pledge is especially sinister, yet, civil servants and firm employees in Japan pledge loyalty in a formal ceremony at their public offices or companies.[146]

While casting labor transfer as malign, the article nevertheless alludes to the benign purpose for mobilizing impoverished households to participate in anti-poverty programs. It states that "transfers are the government's first recourse to stop household incomes dropping." Improved incomes among poor minority and Han households was a goal of the 832 Targeted Poverty Alleviation programs in 22 of China's 31 provinces from 2013 to 2020.[147] The article also recounted two interviews

144 David Pierson, "Far from Home: Uyghur Workers in Factories Supplying Global Brands," NYT, May 28, 2025.

145 Patrik Meyer, Cultural Genocide?; Heberer and Schmidt-Glintzer, Jenseits von Hass und Zorn.

146 "New Recruits Mark 1st Day at Work Across Japan as Fiscal 2024 Begins," *Japan Today*, Apr. 1 2024.

147 Li Xunhuan and Zhou Yang, "Targeted Poverty Alleviation Promotes Sustainable Socioeconomic and Ecological Development in China's Poor Areas," *Geography and Sustainability* 6:1 (2025).

> Outside a chicken processing plant above a river in Hubei province, a young man smoking a cigarette said that he came to work at the factory because his mother and grandmother were ill and needed to go to hospital. Another man said that while he worked 12- to 14-hour days, in violation of Chinese law, the pay was decent. Originally from Kashgar in Xinjiang, he'd been at the factory for a little over a year. Initially, he would have to tell his group's minder every time he left the factory, but with time he had earned more trust.[148]

These articles implied that government agencies finding jobs for workers and assisting them in getting to jobsites indicated forced labor. They failed to acknowledge that the investigation had found no evidence of forced labor; rather it showed that workers said they had taken their jobs voluntarily, were receiving average salaries, and could quit their jobs. The interviewed workers cannot at all be classed as undergoing forced labor under the definition in ILO Convention No. 29 (1930), a treaty that China, but not the US, has ratified: forced labor is "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily."[149] The ILO has elaborated by stating

> First, some form of work or service must be provided by the individual concerned to a third party; second, the work is performed under the threat of a penalty, which can take various forms, whether physical, psychological, financial or other; and third, the work is undertaken involuntarily, meaning that the person either became engaged in the activity against their free will or, once engaged, finds that he or she cannot leave the job with a reasonable period of notice, and without forgoing payment or other entitlements.[150]

The ILO notes that "In addition to being a serious violation of fundamental human rights and labor rights, the exaction of forced labor is a criminal offence." As a criminal offence it must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt.

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148 Daniel Murphy, "China's Economy Runs on Uyghur Forced Labor," The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ), May 29, 2025, https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/chinas-economy-runs-uyghur-forced-labor.

149 "Rather Forced or Obligatory Labor," International Labor Organization Convention No. 29, June 28, 1930, https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=60653.

150 "ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labor, Results and Methodology," ILO, 2012: 19.

Despite its not having found any evidence of forced labor, US politicians seized on the *New York Times/Der Spiegel* investigation to demand more sanctions against China. Republican and Democratic Senators claimed that the two newspapers had "found that the Communist Chinese government is forcing thousands of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities to work in factories outside Xinjiang," even though no instance of "forcing" was adduced by the journalists.[151]

Palacky University Olomouc Xinjiang-specialist Rune Steenberg asserted in 2024 that Xinjiang labor transfers are coerced, based on information on "forced labor" he obtained from German journalists who "interviewed people who were in a 're-education' camp and forced to work there." The interviewees are likely to have been émigrés who had been "trainees" in VETCs or former prisoners. Work done by prisoners is exempted from the ILO Convention no. 29 definition of forced labor. People who have been *imprisoned* by a non-judicial decision cannot be forced to work.[152] That precludes requiring pre-trial detainees to work, although whether they still do so in China after it ratified Convention no. 29 is unclear.

In any case, the VETCs were not places of detention or at least not for many who were in them, but had not previously been slated for prosecution. "Trainees" were not detainees or prisoners. Those terms are commonly understood as individuals confined for punishment, not for mainly educational purposes. Detention moreover involves "severe restriction of motion,"[153] but "trainees" were allowed to return home on weekends and holidays.[154]

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151 "Ricketts, Colleagues Call for Plan to Address Communist China's Forced Labor Transfers of Uyghurs," Public, June 24, 2025.

152 "Combating Forced Labour A Handbook for Employers & Business," ILO, 2015: 14–15, www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@declaration/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_099624.pdf.

153 General Comment 35, Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/35, Dec. 16, 2014, para. 5–6.

154 "Inside China's 'Thought Transformation' Camps," BBC, June 18, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmId2ZP3h0c (See 10:35-11:05); 阿不都热克甫·吐木尼牙孜, "没有教培中心就没有新疆的安稳日子," (Without the Education and Training Centers, there would be no peaceful days in Xinjiang), 新疆日报, Dec. 5, 2019; "Dr. Olsi Jazexhi Interrogates Chinese 'Teachers' in Wensu County Detention Center in Aksu, Xinjiang," Aug. 23, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClKVs8qa2jw; "Mahmuti Dunias, Kurikumal Turdi, Tokniaz and Keisar Show their Crimes, Ending Up in Detention Camp," Aug. 24, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp5y9LCZqTA; "The 19th Press Conference on Xinjiang-related Issues," Nov. 18, 2020, http://munich.china-consulate.gov.cn/ger/zlgxw/202011/t20201130_3466999.htm; David Lipson, "After Years of Brutal Repression, China's Communist Party Tries to Turn Xinjiang into a Tourism Hotspot," ABC News, Oct. 1, 2023.

In *Terhes v. Romania*,[155] the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on whether a Romanian government pandemic lockdown reached the level of detention. The Court, nine years earlier, had described detention as the harshest restriction on the freedom of movement.[156] Terhes, a rightwing Romanian politician, challenged the lockdown and was allowed to apply for permission to leave his house and visit places necessary for everyday life, such as shops for essentials and medical treatment. The court thus concluded under European Convention on Human Rights Article 5, that the Romanian authorities' measure was not a detention, but an interference with the freedom of movement justified under Art. 2, para. 3 Prot. No. 4, as "in the interests of national security, for the maintenance of ordre public, for the prevention of crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others." The interference addressed a "pressing social need" and was "proportionate to the aim pursued."[157] The Court also opined that "it seems necessary to grant a wide margin of appreciation to states as they needed to act in a life-threatening situation with a lot of uncertainties."[158]

6 Work as a Normal Civic Obligation in China

Assigning work as part of vocational training in VETCS was lawful because, in China, "Work is an honorable duty for every citizen who is able to work"[159] and because international law does not disallow states from creating a duty to work. That duty does not arise in China because its leaders are "authoritarian slavedrivers," as Yellow Peril/Red Menace ideologists in the West would have it. Rather, it is because "some philosophical traditions (Hegelianism-Marxism) hold that work is essential to the realization of our natures, either qua individuals or as members of a species for whom productive, world-changing activity is essential."[160]

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155 EHCR 159 (May 20, 2021), www.scribd.com/document/508604272/Decision-Terhes-v-Romania-Lockdown-Ordered-by-the-Authorities-to-Tackle-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Could-Not-Be-Equated-With-House-Arrest.

156 *Austin v. the United Kingdom*, App. No. 39692 (Mar. 15, 2012), para. 57.

157 *Terhes v. Romania*, Para. 46.

158 Katharina Koch, "Lockdown Measures as Detention? – The Case Terhes & La Roumanie," Jean Monnet Saar, Europarecht Online, Sept. 24, 2021, https://jean-monnet-saar.eu/?page_id=101545.

159 "Constitution of the People's Republic of China" (2019), Art. 42, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/lawsregulations/201911/20/content_WS5ed8856ec6d0b3f0e9499913.html/.

160 Michael Cholbi, "The Duty to Work," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 21 (2018): 1119–1133.

The European Values Survey shows that a moral embeddedness of work – a moral duty to work – is supported by much of the continent's population. There is however variation across the 44 countries surveyed. The notion of a duty to work is weakest in the richest countries and strongest in ex-communist countries and those with a less generous welfare state.[161]

There are philosophers who oppose an obligation to work, but most recognize that in many countries, including the US, the expectation of work is firmly entrenched in contemporary culture.[162] These philosophers may not want anyone to be obliged to work, but as Brown University political philosopher David Estlund puts it, "'I don't want to do that'" does not justify thinking, "'I have no duty to do that.'"[163] Bluntly put, states, in or out of the West, are entitled to make work a duty, regardless of whether that policy comports with "Western values."

However much Western critics object to China making the duty to work a normal civic obligation, they must accept that it is – for them – "awful but lawful," to use a US policing term.[164] For Western critics of China – and of other places where work is a duty – it is something that infringes on *their* values and which they do not want the state to do, but that international law allows of states. An analogy may be the suspension of habeas corpus, an act many people regard as abhorrent, but which can be lawful under discrete circumstances. Abraham Lincoln, early in the Civil War, was called a "tyrant" for using suspension of habeas to imprison Confederate sympathizers in nearby Maryland suspected of sabotage while Washington DC was threatened with rebel attack. Lincoln cited the US Constitution Art. 1, Sec. 9, which states that "the Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it." It was unclear whether suspension was a power given only to Congress, but

> Lincoln suspended habeas corpus unilaterally, without Congress, arresting thousands of political opponents and suppressing the free press and free speech to a degree unmatched in U.S. history before or since. When

161 Kirsten Stam, *The Moral Duty to Work: A Cross-national and Longitudinal Study of the Causes and Consequences of Work* Ethic Values in Contemporary Society (Tilburg: Tilburg University, 2015).

162 Cholbi, The Duty to Work: 1120.

163 Quoted in Jason Brennan, "Get a Job and Pay Your Taxes! What Utopophiles Must Say to the Poor," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 39:1 (2023): 48–67.

164 Charles Blow, "Awful but Lawful," NYT, Apr. 7, 2021.

> Chief Justice Roger Taney of the Supreme Court held that the suspension was unconstitutional, Lincoln ignored him.[165]

Congress retroactively approved Lincoln's action and, at the height of the war, it affirmed a wider suspension of habeas corpus, which continued until the end of the conflict.

Chinese society has an embedded idea of an obligation to work: "Chinese morality includes the idea that citizens should work for both social development and to enhance the wealth of their nation. Chinese citizens understand the important correlation between the public interest of China and the personal interest of its citizens."[166] ILO Convention no. 29, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 8(3)(c), and the European Convention on Human Rights 4(3)(d) all exempt "normal civic obligations" from the definition of forced labor.

Normal civic obligations the ECHR has discussed include jury duty, fire brigade duty, the duty of doctors to provide free medical exams, etc.[167] International law does not restrict delineation of normal civic obligations to only those deemed acceptable in Western states however, and what is a normal civic obligation varies nationally even in the West. In Spain for example, there are electoral boards at national, provincial and local levels. Unlike in other Western states, "Serving on an electoral board is a civic obligation, with exemptions granted only for compelling reasons such as work commitments or health issues."[168] In 27 countries – including most Latin American and several European and African states, plus Australia, voting is a compulsory civic obligation; those who refuse it are menaced by penalty of a fine or jail.[169]

A civic obligation found in more than 70 countries – and thus as normal as jury duty – involves compulsory service programs for recruiting health workers in remote and rural areas. Programs require health professionals to work for the government, with a ministry assigning health workers to any part of the country for a specified number of years. In 16 Sub-Saharan African countries

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165 Noah Feldman, "This Is the Story of How Lincoln Broke the U.S. Constitution," NYT, Nov. 2, 2021.

166 Jiang Na and Wang Yue, "Transformation of Labor Rights: a Solution to Protecting Prisoners in China?" *Forensic Research & Criminology International Journal* 7:2 (2019): 106–107.

167 "Guide on Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights," Aug. 31, 2024: 14–15, https://ks.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr-ks/guide_art_4_eng.

168 Mario Kolling, et al, "Spain Report: Sustainable Global Indicators, 2024," Bertelsmann Stiftung, www.sgi-network.org/docs/2024/country/SGI2024_Spain.pdf.

169 "Compulsory Voting," Idea International, 2025, www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database/compulsory-voting.

medical education is conditioned on 2–3 years of mandatory service. Governments with compulsory service program are not only those that Western politicians injudiciously lump together as "authoritarian"; thus, Norway, Puerto Rico, and Quebec have such programs. In Australia, "all international medical graduates must spend ten years working in a 'district of workforce shortage' as assigned by the Rural Workforce Agencies."

In some countries, students must do a rural placement while training to complete their education, or their degree is withheld. In Australia and Japan, a graduate must serve in an underserved region to enter a postgraduate/specialization program. Rural placement may be required after graduation, often for one year for each year of educational financial support. There are also job-linked programs that require service to attain a license to practice or for career advancement. In developing countries such as Malaysia, Mexico and parts of India, medical graduates must work in an underserved setting, with no attached incentive. Penalties exist for refusing to serve in compulsory programs: 64% of governments withhold certification needed to practice; others force graduates to repay state money spent on education. There may also be a fine; in two Indian states, the fine in 2010 was one million rupees (US$21,000). Many compulsory service programs increase the quality of medical care; indeed, some are created to overcome the unequal distribution of health resources; for that purpose Thailand, for example, requires medical graduates to work in public healthcare for three years after graduation.[170]

The programs mainly benefit patients, not the compelled medical personnel. Yet, though "Many health professionals object to compulsory service programs," programs are *not* judicially-deemed forced labor.[171] In fact, a Swedish monograph that analyzed such programs as inhibitions on emigration does not even mention forced labor.[172] Mandatory public service by students as a condition of graduation is required at even some US public universities.[173]

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170 Shao Shen, et al, "Human Resource Allocation Status and Equity Research of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in China from 2016 to 2020," *Frontiers in Public Health* 12 (2024), https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11391484/.

171 Sebyl Frehywot, et al, "Compulsory Service Programmes for Recruiting Health Workers in Remote and Rural Areas: Do They Work?" *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 88:5 (2010): 364–370; Candace Chen, et al, "A Survey of Sub-Saharan Medical Schools," *Human Resources for Health* 10:4 (2012).

172 Yusuf Yuksekdag, *Doctors Behind Borders: The Ethics of Skilled Worker Emigration*, PhD diss., Linkoping University, 2019, https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1318267/FULLTEXT01.pdf.

173 See, e.g., "History," University of Washington School of Law, 2025, www.law.uw.edu/about/history.

States of all stripes have also had compulsory military service; the US Supreme Court ruled that the power to conscript manpower for military service was "beyond question" and thus did not infringe the 13th Amendment prohibition on involuntary servitude.[174] The eminent American pragmatist philosopher William James opposed compulsory military service, but proposed that young men be conscripted for civic, social and humanitarian purposes, mainly by working:

> To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.[175]

Some African countries have compulsory public service. Nigeria has a National Youth Service Corp[176] and Rwanda has a compulsory community cleanup event for those aged 18–65 and, as a result, is seen as one of Africa's cleanest countries.[177] The UK's Tories proposed, in the 2024 national election, mandatory public service for 18-year olds.[178] In 2024, Sweden activated mandatory civilian service duty. From January 19, 2024 to December 2028, this duty, for 16-to-70 year olds, "is to be performed only in the rescue service for which the municipalities are responsible and in operations and maintenance for electricity production and networking."[179]

The US Supreme Court in 1916 upheld a Florida law requiring citizens to perform forced labor on state roads, every year for six days, at 10 hours per day, or pay a tax. Against the argument that this was involuntary servitude banned

174 *United States v. O'Brien*, 391 U.S. 367, 377 (1968).

175 William James, "Proposing the Moral Equivalent of War," 1906, laphamsquarterly.org.

176 "National Youth Service Corps," 2025, www.nysc.gov.ng/.

177 Amy Yee, "How Rwanda Tidied up Its Streets (and the Rest of the Country, Too)," July 18, 2018, npr.org.

178 "Conservatives Want to Bring Back Compulsory National Service," BBC, May 26, 2024, www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpddxy9r4mdo.

179 Elin Hofverberg, "Sweden: Government Activates Civilian Service Duty," Library of Congress, Feb. 28, 2024.

by the 13th Amendment, the Court called upon the *trinoda necessitas* principle of Anglo-Saxon kings of a millennium earlier, under which all free men were required to perform *expeditio contra hostem, arcium constructio, et pontium reparatio* (going against the enemy, construction of towers, and repair of bridges). It stated that

> the term 'involuntary servitude' was intended to cover those forms of compulsory labor akin to African slavery which, in practical operation, would tend to produce like undesirable results. It introduced no novel doctrine with respect of services always treated as exceptional and certainly was not intended to interdict enforcement of those duties which individuals owe to the state … a state has inherent power to require every able-bodied man within its jurisdiction to labor for a reasonable period on public roads near his residence without direct compensation.[180]

That decision, *Butler v. Perry*, remains binding precedent today. A 1988 Supreme Court decision that discussed the case also noted that "[t]he guarantee of freedom from involuntary servitude has never been interpreted specifically to prohibit compulsion of labor by … psychological coercion."[181] That likely means that "being pressured" to take a job, for example, by the importunities of officials, does not create involuntary servitude.

Mandatory service is also no longer unpopular even in the US. A 2023 survey found that 75% of people aged 18–24 supported an 18-month mandatory national service program, if they were compensated, received free room and board during their service, and could choose civilian or military service.[182] Some US political, academic and media elites also propose mandatory public service,[183] which they would not do if such service was likely to be judicially constructed as forced labor. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has "proposed compulsory service for women and men in the Bundeswehr or in social institutions, such as nursing homes and homeless shelters." He has said "compulsory service can become especially valuable. People will step outside

180 *Butler v. Perry* 240 US 328 (2016).

181 *United States v. Kozminski*, 487 U.S. 931 (1988).

182 Steven Cohen, "Americans Support Mandatory National Service," *The Hill*, Oct. 15, 2023.

183 David Carden, "To Save Democracy, America Needs a Mandatory Public Service Program," *Foreign Policy*, Oct. 31, 2021; Johnathan Holloway, "To Unite a Divided America, Make People Work for It," NYT, July 2, 2021; Debra Satz, "In Defense of a Mandatory Public Service Requirement," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 91 (2022): 259–269; Rana Foroohar, "American Education Under Attack," FT, Apr. 7, 2025.

their comfort zone, meet other people, and help fellow citizens in difficult situations. It will break down prejudices and build a sense of solidarity."[184]

In avowedly socialist states, the duty to work has been a normal civic obligation.[185] A project of the Swedish think tank Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) has put it that "employment in command economies" forms "part of normal civic obligations."[186] There is no reason to suppose that states are barred from enforcing that duty by assigning a job to persons who are able to work, but lack employment, assuming that there is no unreasonable penalty for a worker who later wants to take up another job. A VETC trainee's work, while in the VETC or upon graduation, could thus be regarded as having fulfilled a "normal civic obligation."

The malign or benign purpose of compulsion must also be considered. If the population of Gaza experiences permanent forcible displacement, it will likely be because the Israeli and/or US governments want to be rid of Palestinians and re-populate the area with Jewish settlers or turn the enclave into Trump-rebuilt "Riviera of the Middle East." Consider, however, another, hypothetical forcible displacement. What if, in 1940, when Germany invaded Norway, the Norwegian government – which resisted the Germans for two months – had compelled all Jews to leave Norway for neighboring Sweden. It would have thereby saved the lives of hundreds of Norwegian Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

7 Forced Labor Unindicated

As to work outside VETCs and prisons, Xinjiang specialist Rune Steenberg offers that "If someone refuses, there are consequences" and that "if you didn't show up or didn't agree to participate, you could get in trouble." He provides no examples of "consequences" or "trouble." It is a common tactic in political discourse: claim a harmful phenomenon exists but provide no examples. Then-West Virginia Governor, now Senator Jim Justice signed a bill banning aid to transgender students participating in college athletics. Asked to provide examples of transgender students accruing an advantage through such

184 "Number of Germans Leaving the Armed Forces Doubles Since Ukraine Conflict," TRT World, s.d. 2023, www.trtworld.com/magazine/number-of-germans-leaving-the-armed-forces-doubles-since-ukraine-conflict-58449.

185 Lawrence C. Becker "The Obligation to Work" Hollins Digital Commons (Oct. 1980), https://digitalcommons.hollins.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=philfac/.

186 V-Dem "Codebook," Mar. 2021: 174, www.v-dem.net/static/website/img/refs/codebookv111.pdf.

participation, Justice was unable to name any, perhaps because the US has 510,000 college student athletes, but less than 10 are transgender.[187]

Prof. Steenberg acknowledges that those released from "camps" who transfer to inland (内地) factories "are given a contract, they sign an agreement, and they are paid some kind of money." He also notes that there are labor transfer programs involving people

> who have not been arrested or detained. They are directly 'recruited' to work in various factories, fields, etc. Some people are sort of forced into it because their village – or wherever they are – they are told that they need to bring so many people to a certain place, for example, to pick cotton.

Steenberg adds that "many also sign up for these labor transfer programs voluntarily, to receive a salary, although not very high, and with certain condition that they can also leave if they want." The four circumstances that Steenberg discusses – in prisons, in VETCs, after VETCs, and in labor transfer programs – thus involve either labor exempted from the binding ILO standard or are remunerated and voluntary, albeit sometimes deriving from government-sponsored mobilization and sometimes not. Steenberg however sweepingly claims that those who are offered contracts, sign up for work, and are paid salaries "are under political pressure to go and do the work, and they have no alternative."[188] Laura Murphy has also said

> When a government official knocks on the door of a Uyghur person and says they should take a job far from home, the person knows this is not merely a request. They know there are directives that say refusal is punishable by detention. And they know how horrible detention is. Every Uyghur in Xinjiang has either been in detention themselves or has someone close to them who has been. This is not a choice. This is not consent.[189]

No directives mandating punishment for refusal to transfer from Xinjiang to a factory outside the region have been presented. If there were "no alternative" to accepting offered work, officials would not have to try hard to persuade some

187 "Hayes: The Trans Population is Far Smaller Than the Right Would Have You Believe," MSNBC, Jan. 8, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBLBk-WEfPM.

188 Erkin Damolla, "Researcher Explains How Uighurs are Exploited in Xinjiang Forced Labor Regime," Eurasianet, July 16, 2024.

189 Murphy, China's Economy.

workers, as they often must. Videos depict this process, showing not political pressure, but rather selling the job's personal benefits, such as added income, skills training and an interesting life experience.[190] Mobilization to persuade are a common feature of Chinese campaigns. For example, in 2017, the government proclaimed a campaign to persuade students, especially ethnic minorities, to not drop out of school. Officials would bear "enormous responsibility and pressure" to get dropouts to return to school and

> For a student who dropped out of school, seven or eight people would work around him/her, including the headmaster, head teacher, subject teachers, township cadres, village cadres, and even the mayor's car is used, and the town leaders have to pay to "coax" them to go to school.[191]

In minority areas of Yunnan province, southwest China, where dropping out is related to difficulties in learning, not financial reasons, concessions had to be offered by officials to dropouts to persuade them to reverse their decision.[192]

A phrase a US political activist used might encapsulate a process analogous to the persuasive mobilization that occurs in China. Speaking of how supporters of her presidential candidacy were mobilizing delegates to the US Democratic Party's 2024 national convention to vote for Vice President Kamala Harris, the activist said of the Harris campaigners "And if it can be done through cajoling, they'll do that. And if they twist arms, they'll do that."[193]

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190 Adrian Zenz, "Coercion in Xinjiang's Cotton Fields," Victims of Communism, Dec. 16, 2020, https://victimsofcommunism.org/coercion-in-xinjiangs-cotton-fields/; Han Yong Hong, "BBC vs CCTV's Xinjiang: Which is the real Xinjiang?" Think China, Apr. 6, 2021, www.thinkchina.sg/bbc-vs-cctvs-xinjiang-which-real-xinjiang.

191 Mei Wu, "The Impact of Measures Aimed at Achieving Equity and Quality in Chinese Ethnic Minority Education," in Wing-on Lee, et al (eds.), *International Handbook on Education Development in the Asia-Pacific* Berlin: Springer, 2022): 1–14.

192 Mei Wu, "Strengthening Compulsory Education for Chinese Ethnic Minorities: the No one Less Policy," talk at Education University of Hong Kong, June 18, 2024, www.eduhk.hk/ie/files/file/department/iell/Seminar-ppt/Ethnic_Minority_Education_-_the_No_One_Less_Policy.pdf.

193 Adam Nagourney, et al, "Democratic Delegates See Harris as the Strongest Candidate Against Trump," NYT, July 23, 2024.

CHAPTER 8

Controlling the Discourse of Xinjiang

1 The US as "Savior of the Uyghurs"?

Since 2018, Western and Western-influenced media have been filled with claims of Xinjiang genocide.[1] Years later, Western-based entities continue to cry genocide in Xinjiang, based on undocumented assertions by other Western entities and without regard to data and arguments made by counter-analysts. The World Medical Association (WMA) is an example. Based in France and composed of 112 national medical associations, including China's, and representing 10 million medical professionals, it issued a 2023 resolution about Xinjiang. Citing only a single 2020 AP article, WMA accused China of "engaging in the most egregious violations of human rights, which bring the entire medical profession into disrepute."[2] It was the second WMA resolution on Xinjiang, a slightly less vituperative condemnation was made in 2020, entirely unaccompanied by evidence. That declaration was made at the behest of the British Medical Association (BMA), which also welcomed the 2023 resolution.[3]

Western politicians and NGOs misrepresent their promotion of such claims as a universal consensus. Then-Senator Marco Rubio said, after the OHCHR issued a 2022 report on Xinjiang that failed to affirm the genocide claim, that "Everyone in the world, except apparently people at the United Nations, knows

1 Magnus Fiskesjo, "China's 'Re-education' / Concentration Camps in Xinjiang / East Turkistan and the Campaign of Forced Assimilation and Genocide Targeting Uyghurs, Kazakhs, etc: Bibliography of Select News Reports & Academic Works," Apr. 2022, https://uhrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Chinas-genocide-in-Xinjiang-BIBLIOGRAPHY.pdf.

2 "WMA Resolution on Acknowledgement and Condemnation of the Human Rights Violations Against the Uyghurs and Other Minorities in China," 74th WMA General Assembly, Kigali, Rwanda Oct. 2023, www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-resolution-on-acknowledgement-and-condemnation-of-the-human-rights-violations-against-the-uyghurs-and-other-minorities-in-china/.

3 "WMA Resolution on Human Rights Violations Against Uighur People in China," 71st WMA General Assembly (online), Cordoba, Spain, October 2020. www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-resolution-on-human-rights-violations-against-uighur-people-in-china/; BMA Media Team, "BMA Welcomes WMA General Assembly's Acceptance of Its Resolution on Human Rights Violations Against Uyghur People in China," Oct. 11, 2023, www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-welcomes-wma-general-assembly-s-acceptance-of-its-resolution-on-human-rights-violations-against-uyghur-people-in-china.

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the [CCP] is committing genocide."[4] As Secretary of State in 2025, Rubio said that "China, under the direction and control of the [CCP], has committed genocide and crimes against humanity targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other members of ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang."[5] A Hong Kong journalist countered that

> The US is not the whole world, neither are its Western allies. In fact, on many pressing world issues, they are often in the minority of nations. But they monopolize the global narrative machinery by their sheer wealth, power and military muscles.[6]

Those who promote the "Uyghur genocide" trope as a universal consensus typically see the US government as protector of Xinjiang's 12 million Uyghur Muslims. The US however has not only waged war in many Muslim countries, it has also done nothing about mistreatment of 210m Indian Muslims, the world's largest Muslim minority.[7] A US columnist noted has noted that

> Under Modi's government, violence against Muslims in India has risen and is often unpunished. Modi's government has enacted laws and policies that target Muslims, including changes to citizenship rules that disadvantage Muslims and revocation of the special status of Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region contested by India and Pakistan.[8]

By 2016, there had been more than 70,000 deaths in seven decades of conflict in Kashmir.[9] While suppression there reduced conflict fatalities from 4,000 in 2001 to 253 in 2022, that was officially 253 more conflict deaths than in Xinjiang that year. Mass killings continue in Kashmir, along with thousands of conflict-related imprisonments. India's Public Security Act "grants authorities

4 "Rubio Slams UN Human Rights Office for Yielding to CCP Pressure on Uyghur Report," Sept. 1, 2022, www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=58BDA5BB-9510-4B5A-A4AF-840CC39BB8DA.

5 Marco Rubio, "On China's Forced Return of Uyghurs to China," US Fed News, Feb. 27, 2025.

6 Alex Lo, "US in No Position to Set Itself Up as Judge and Jury of Other Countries' Records," SCMP, Feb. 2, 2023.

7 Rahul Bhatia, *The New India: The Unmaking of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: Public Affairs, 2024).

8 Lydia Polgreen, "India, the World's Largest Democracy is Jettisoning Freedom and Tolerance," NYT, Feb. 9, 2023.

9 "Like Karadzic, Prosecute All Accused of HR Violations in Kashmir: JKCCS," *Kashmir Observers*, Mar. 26, 2016.

the power to detain any citizen for a period of up to two years with no trial or formal charges … enabl[ing] the arrest and detention of individuals without warrant or specific charges, often leading to extended periods of confinement without a clear timeframe."[10]

Kashmir has developmental problems that aggravate conflict. Prior to 2017, unemployment arguably also played a major role in conflict in Xinjiang.[11] In Kashmir, there was a 2023 unemployment rate of 23%.[12] Registered urban unemployment in Xinjiang was 2% in 2021. It was higher in rural areas, but the state planned to reduce the regional rate to 5.5% by 2025.[13]

Persecution of Muslims in India extends to academia as well. Muslim university professors, administrators, and student groups are attacked physically and verbally by the five million-member Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (AVBP or "All India Students' Council"). It is a wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS or "National Volunteer Organization"), the 5–6 millon strong paramilitary grouping that undergirds the BJP. With many top BJP politicians being AVBP veterans, most such attacks go unpunished.[14]

Anti-Muslim ideology is also promoted through popular culture in India, especially music. Some of it makes false claims of "love jihad," or intermarriage aiming to convert a Hindu spouse. "Love jihad" is supposed to be a conspiracy to have Muslims outnumber Hindus and take over the country, pithily put in a saying about how "Muslims will rule India in 20 years because their women give birth every year and their men are allowed four wives." A song that gathered four million hits on YouTube had the lyrics "Some people are conspiring /That we will produce many children /When their numbers go past ours /They will make us dance to their tune." Films also promote a negative view of India's Muslims, reversing the previous cinematic image of cross-religious unity.

10 "Geographical Displacement and Medical Negligence: the Plight of Kashmiris Detained Under the Public Safety Act," 2024, www.thepolisproject.com/read/geographical-displacement-and-medical-negligence-the-plight-of-kashmiris-detained-under-the-public-safety-act/.

11 Shan Wei, Explaining Unemployment.

12 John Reed and Chloe Cornish, "Call for Kashmir Investment Begins to Bear Fruit," FT, Oct. 5, 2023.

13 "Xinjiang: Registered Unemployment Rate in Urban Areas," Knoema, 2023, https://knoema.com/atlas/China/Xinjiang/Unemployment-Rate; "Beyond the Tianshan Mountains: Xinjiang is a Land of Wonders," CGTN, July 20, 2022.

14 Vasudevan Sridharan, "Indian Nationalist Student Organization AVBP: From University Campuses to BJP's Corridors of Power," SCMP, Dec. 26, 2023; "Muslim Students Called 'Terrorists,' Attacked by ABVP at Hyderabad University," Feb. 15, 2023, Maktoob Media, https://maktoobmedia.com/india/muslim-students-called-terrorists-attacked-by-abvp-hyderabad-university.

Poems and books do likewise. This hate speech produces hate crimes including murders and goes unpunished. It is not criticized by the US government.[15]

The US State Department response to evidence of Indian state anti-Muslim actions is to ignore it and proclaim "the shared values that connect the United States and India as two thriving, vibrant democracies."[16] The difference in the US government's attitude toward oppression of Muslims in India and its assertions of a "Xinjiang genocide" have not gone unnoticed. Harvard historian Maya Jasanoff has put it that "Despite evidence that India's atrocities against its Muslims are far more brutal than Chinese treatment of Uyghurs, Western leaders and organizations evade any criticism of India and Modi. Unlike his critical attitude toward China on its alleged Uyghur 'genocide,' US president Biden ignores Muslim persecution in India." Indeed, Modi was feted at the White House and at a 2023 joint session of Congress.[17] When he visited Trump in 2025, mistreatment of India's Muslim minority was ignored.[18]

Modi is expressly exclusionary about Muslims, referring to them as "infiltrators," who have more children than Hindus, who will get more wealth if Modi's political opponents win out.[19] No Chinese leader has characterized Uyghurs in that way. Muslims are 14% of Indians but hold only 5% of seats in the parliament. Indian journalist Mohammad Ali has noted that the BJP said during the 2024 elections that if Modi wins, the "infiltrators" will be expelled from the country. Ali concluded that "India is now a country where police have been accused of standing by as Hindus attack Muslims, where the killers of religious minorities go unpunished and where Hindu extremists openly call for the genocide of Muslims."[20] Moreover, "Every day, India's social media spaces, reaching hundreds of millions of people, are inundated with anti-Muslim

15 Kunal Purohit, *H-Pop: The Secretive World of Hindutva Pop Stars* (*New Delhi: Harper Collins/India, 2023*); Mujib Mashal and Hari Kumar, "Strangers in Their Own Land: Being Muslim in Modi's India," *NYT*, May 18, 2024; Bibek Bhandari, "In India, Chorus of Anti-Muslim Hatred Grows Louder With rise of 'Aggressive' Hindutva Pop," SCMP, Jan. 17, 2024.

16 Polgreen, India.

17 Shichor, Elephant: 15; Maya Jasanoff, "Narenda Modi is Not Who America Thinks He Is," NYT, June 22, 2023.

18 Chietigj Bajpaee, "Modi's Washington Visit Highlights India's Importance to the US, but will not Resolve Long-Term Challenges," Chatham House, Feb. 11, 2025, www.chathamhouse.org/2025/02/modis-washington-visit-highlights-indias-importance-us-will-not-resolve-long-term.

19 Mujib Mashal, "Why Did Modi Call India's Muslims 'Infiltrators'? Because He Could," NYT, Apr. 23, 2024.

20 Mohammad Ali, "I'm an Indian Muslim, and I'm Scared to Say So," NYT, May 26, 2024.

vitriol promoted by the BJP and its associated right-wing organizations."[21] Despite its boasting of being "the largest democracy in the world," repression in India today is directed against "Muslims, students, activists, opposition politicians, lower-caste Dalits, gay men and lesbians."[22] It was reported in 2024 that "More than three dozen human rights defenders, poets, journalists and opposition politicians face charges, including under antiterrorism laws, for criticizing Mr. Modi's divisive policies, according to rights groups."[23]

US officials praise India's political system despite a 2023 report of Sweden's V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute, which termed India "one of the worst autocratizers in the last 10 years." It is among the "closed and electoral autocracies" that "together contain almost 72% of the world's population, or 5.7 billion people," compared to the 13% of the world's population that lives in liberal democracies and 16% who live in electoral democracies. V-Dem rated India in the bottom 40–50% on its Liberal Democracy Index at rank 97; 108 on the Electoral Democracy Index and 123 on the Egalitarian Component Index out of 179 countries.[24]

The dichotomization of democracies and autocracies is itself problematic, as there are also "anocracies," i.e. countries with both liberal democratic and "autocratic" characteristics; the US has elections, but due process and freedom of the press may be compromised.[25] It accounts for some 40% of the world's arms exports and, according to V-Dem, "of the 84 countries codified as autocracies … in 2022, the US sold weapons to at least 48, or 57% of them."[26] By volume, 49% of US arms exported in 2018–2022 went to states the rightist US think tank Freedom House classes as "not free" (35%) or "partially free" (14%).[27] The US thus can hardly be the savior of any actually-oppressed people, let alone one that is not.

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21 Sameer Yasir, "Leaflet by Leaflet, a Few Aging Activists Fight India's Tide of Bigotry," NYT, May 28, 2024.

22 Vidya Krishnan, "India Is Devouring Its Best and Brightest," NYT, Oct. 26, 2023.

23 Yasir, Leaflet by Leaflet.

24 Felix Wiebrecht, et al, "State of the World 2022: Defiance in the Face of Autocratization," *Democratization* 30:5 (2023): 769–793.

25 Barbara F. Walter, "Why Should We Worry that the U.S. Could Become an 'Anocracy' Again? Because of the Threat of Civil War," WP, Jan. 26, 2022; Alex Lo, "US Faces Likely Trajectory from Anocracy to Civil War," SCMP, Jan. 6, 2022.

26 "Biden Is Selling Weapons to the Majority of the World's Autocracies," The Intercept, May 11, 2023, https://theintercept.com/2023/05/11/united-states-foreign-weapons-sales/?menu=1.

27 "Arming Autocracies: Arms Transfers and the Emerging Biden Doctrine," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, July 6, 2023, www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2023/arming-autocracies-arms-transfers-and-emerging-biden-doctrine.

Those who question unevidenced assertions about oppression in Xinjiang are abused as "genocide deniers" or, in the case of developing country leaders, as so beholden to China that they lack all agency.[28] It is demanded of others that they dissociate themselves from anyone who dissents from the Xinjiang genocide narratives.[29] A Muslim Chinese historian, Ma Haiyun at Frostburg State University in the US, who is critical of Chinese government policies toward his Hui ethnic group, has said that "In the current political climate, if you publicly state that there is no genocide in Xinjiang, it will affect your reputation to the point where if I said this, half of my friends would cut me off." Ma said Uyghur émigrés often use sensationalist language bordering on fabrication and "This labelling of the situation in Xinjiang as a genocide, it's all tied to geopolitics, it's all because of US-China tensions." Xinjiang Victims Database head Gene Bunin has averred that "Either you say that X is evil and then we like you, or you don't say that X is evil and you are thus our enemy. Critical thinking is somehow optional."[30]

Uyghur émigrés and their supporters self-present as truth-bearers and showcase their views exclusively, shunning those who dissent. In 2024, Syracuse University School of Education had as its annual "Atrocity Studies Lecture" a "panel of experts" on "Uyghur Genocide: The Ongoing Efforts for Accountability." The panelists were Babur Ilchi, UHRP Program Manager, Elfidar Iltebir, UAA President, and "concentration camp survivor" Tursunay Ziyawudun. The panel moderator was Julie Milsap, UHRP Government Relations Manager. The panel was advertised as "provid[ing] context for and lived experiences of this genocide and the efforts to hold the Chinese government, and the world, accountable for these crimes."[31]

The panelists were not "experts," but US government-connected atrocity propagandists. Babur Ilchi said the entire Uyghur ethnic group had been imprisoned,[32] which would have collapsed Xinjiang's economy and bolstered recruitment to Islamist groups. Elfidar Iltebir asserted that for almost

28 Marco Respinti, "Xinjiang Genocide Deniers: Hyper-Cautious Scholars or Useful Idiots?" Bitter Winter, May 3, 2022, https://bitterwinter.org/xinjiang-genocide-deniers-hyper-cautious-scholars-or-useful-idiots/.

29 Phillip Cunningham, "The Three Body Problem Has a Problem," China US Focus, Aug. 23, 2021, www.chinausfocus.com/society-culture/the-three-body-problem-has-a-problem-22372.

30 Baptista, Human Rights in China.

31 "School of Education Announces Annual Atrocity Studies Lecture on 'Uyghur Genocide: the Ongoing Efforts for Accountability,'" Feb. 21, 2024, https://soe.syr.edu/lecture-on-uyghur-genocide-the-ongoing-efforts-for-accountability/.

32 Elizabeth Palmer, "The Rebranding of Xinjiang," CBS News, Jan. 7, 2024, www.cbsnews.com/news/the-rebranding-of-xinjiang-china-crackdown-on-muslim-uyghur-population/.

two decades programs involving Uyghur women working in factories outside Xinjiang have had no relation to diminishing poverty, but exist only to stop them bearing children and separate them from existing children.[33] Tursuany Ziyawudun said, in Kazakhstan, that she had not been abused in detention in Xinjiang in 2018, but when she moved to the US she claimed to have been raped.[34] Julie Milsap compared the Uyghurs' situation to the Holocaust and said Uyghur children are barred from speaking Uyghur, a claim easily disconfirmed in Xinjiang.[35]

Those making the Xinjiang genocide claim thus resemble 16th Century Spanish Inquisitors or Ukrainian pogromists of a century ago, who demanded that those they forcibly converted kiss the crucifix to uphold their newfound Christianity – or suffer the consequences.[36] US Senator Tom Cotton famously demanded that the Shou Zi Chew, the Singaporean CEO of Tik Tok, affirm that China was committing genocide in Xinjiang.[37]

Western NGOs deny access to those who refute that genocide or crimes against humanity are being committed in Xinjiang. When Xinjiang deputy party secretary and regional chairman Erkin Tuniyaz was to visit Brussels for discussions with EU researchers, UK director of HRW Yasmine Ahmed, a former UK and Australian government lawyer, said "The UK and EU should not be drawn into meetings with senior Xinjiang officials so that China can whitewash its atrocities in the Uygur region."[38]

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33 "Rights Group Organizes Virtual Discussion to Highlight China's Atrocities on Uyghur Community," ANI, Mar. 8, 2024.

34 Phill Hynes, "Most Heinous of Crimes on Flimsiest of Evidence," Friday, Jan. 6, 2022, https://fridayeveryday.com/most-heinous-of-crimes-on-flimsiest-of-evidence/; Megha Rajagopolan, "She Escaped One of China's Brutal Internment Camps for Muslims: Now She Could Be Sent Back," BuzzFeed, Feb. 16, 2020, www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/china-uighur-xinjiang-kazakhstan.

35 Abdhullah Dowaihy, "Why We Must Stand Up for Uyghurs: An Interview with Activist Julie Millsap," The Baines Report, Oct. 3, 2022, https://sites.utexas.edu/bainesreport/2022/10/03/why-we-must-stand-up-for-uyghurs-an-interview-with-activist-julie-millsap/; Julie Millsap, "Educational Policies of the PRC and Uyghur Genocide," Campaign for Uyghurs, 2021: 33, https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Julie-Millsap.pdf.

36 "Spanish Inquisition: Torquemada and Torture," Prisoners of Eternity, Apr. 15, 2021, www.prisonersofeternity.com/blog/spanish-inquisition-torquemada-and-torture/; Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In the Midst of the Civilized World: the Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust* (New York: Pan Macmillan, 2021).

37 "This Tom Cotton Moment Will Make Your Jaw Drop," TYT, Feb. 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=k47DTB8XxiQ.

38 Finbar Bermingham, "EU and China to Resume Human Rights Dialogue Next Week, Days Before Xinjiang Chief Visits Brussels," SCMP, Feb. 11, 2023.

US media are particularly active in accusing China of genocide. A 2021 study found that of six prominent mainstream US media whose articles discussed "Xinjiang genocide," five were accusatory and one was neutral. Among eight prominent non-US media (none of them Chinese) one was accusatory (the BBC), four were neutral, and three denied the genocide claim.[39] Many Western politicians have taken up the claim, yet a 28-country IPSOS survey in mid-2022 found that among 17 professions, respondents rated politicians the least trustworthy, averaging just 12% (10% in the US), but journalists fared only slightly better at 25%.[40]

The US-led anti-China mobilization was cast by FBI Director Christopher Wray as an "all of society, all of government" US effort. It rests on embedded racist tropes, such as Chinese cruelty and dissembling, ideas that fostered prejudice resulting in the mid-1880s expulsion of Chinese from at least 168 US communities[41] and many later acts of discrimination. That enables the Xinjiang genocide claim to be accepted despite popular distrust of the US politicians and media who promote it. It reinforces racism because where "China" is accused of genocide, "the Chinese" are as well. US media elide "China" and "Chinese"; thus, a *New York Times* article about Chinese consumers increasing their purchases of gold speaks of "China" doing so.[42]

The CCP had 100 million members in 2025, 7.7% of them ethnic minorities.[43] Its Youth League had 75 million members[44] and its Young Pioneers had 113 million members.[45] With over 20% of the population members of a CCP organization, most Chinese are either members or related to members.[46] Thus, one cannot easily distinguish the CCP and "the Chinese." Indeed, US politicians elide the two: Gov. Ron DeSantis, signing a bill that would prohibit

39 Ma Feier, "A Comparative Study of Chinese and Non-Chinese Media Reporting on the term 'Xinjiang Genocide'." Foundation for Law and International Affairs, https://flia.org/a-comparative-study-of-chinese-and-non-chinese-media-reporting-on-the-term-xinjiang-genocide/.

40 "Global Trustworthiness Index 2022," IPSOS, July 29, 2022, www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2022-07/Global%20trustworthiness%202022%20Report.pdf.

41 Adam Goodman, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

42 Daisuke Wakabayashi and Claire Fu "China is Buying Gold Like There is No Tomorrow," NYT, May 5, 2024.

43 "CPC Grows Stronger as Membership Exceeds 100 Mln," XH, June 30, 2025.

44 "Communist Youth League of China has About 75.32 Mln Members, People's Daily Online," May 3, 2025.

45 "Chinese Young Pioneers Total 113 Million Members," People's Daily Online, May 31, 2025.

46 Bloomberg, June 30, 2025; SCMP, June 30, 2022; Mimi Lau, "Reshaping of China's Communist Youth League Gives Insight into Party Resilience," SCMP, May 20, 2022.

any Chinese citizen not a US permanent resident from buying real property in Florida, "said it was part of Florida standing up against the [CCP], which he called the US' 'greatest geopolitical threat.'"[47]

Claims of CCP oppression of minorities incorporate the idea that its supporters – who likely are most Chinese – are oppressors. Elites outside China typically distinguish "the Chinese" and the CCP only as a political ploy, to avoid being accused of anti-Chinese racism when they attack "China." The distinction they make is like what his defenders say about 16th Century German theologian Martin Luther, in response to his attacks against Jews; that the attacks were anti-Jewish, but not anti-Semitic; that is, that Luther's hatred was for the Jewish religion and not Jews per se. Luther however said that whether baptized as Christians or not, a Jew remained a Jew and Christians should burn Jewish, homes, schools and synagogues.[48] It was not the theology or religious affiliation of Jews that animated Luther's hatred, but their ethnicity, just as it is not the CCP's existence that animates "anti-China" (read: anti-Chinese) outlook of US politicians.

Many Westerners may not distinguish "China" and Chinese. In 2024, a Princeton China specialist, writing about the "China panic" created by US media, stated that he

> recently surveyed over 2,500 Americans on the question of whether Chinese Americans who were born in the United States should be allowed to serve in the U.S. intelligence community. Roughly 27% said Chinese Americans' access to classified information should be more limited than for other U.S. citizens, and 14% said they should be allowed no access at all. This is overt racism, and while not the majority opinion, it is concerning that so many Americans are blurring the line between the Chinese government and people of Chinese ethnicity, mirroring the language of our politicians.[49]

Elision of a state and people may not be viable but is not unprecedented. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism says anti-Jewish prejudice may inhere in "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." Criticizing Israel as racist is

47 Han Bochen, "US Judge Declines to Block Florida Law Restricting Chinese from Buying Property," SCMP, Aug. 18, 2023.

48 Carol Schaeffer, "Hatred in Plain Sight (Wittenberg, Germany; Judensau," *Smithsonian*, Oct. 1, 2020.

49 Rory Truex, "Let's All Take A Deep Breath," NYT, May 6, 2024.

thus equated with regarding Jews as racist.[50] In 2024, the US House of Representatives voted 320-91 to adopt the definition and Biden endorsed it, as have 31 US states. European countries, such as the UK, Germany and Austria have also adopted this elision of Israel and Jews.[51] After Trump returned in 2025, Harvard did the same.[52] US Zionists sometimes proclaim that Judaism cannot be separated from Israel[53] and US institutions often equate criticism of Israel as an ethnocracy and slurs against Jews.[54] Trump has attacked "liberal Jews" for ignorance and disloyalty, i.e. disloyalty to Israel – which Trump says is the "country" of US Jews – but also disloyalty to the US, which supports Israel. Since most US Jews are liberals, it is Trump's attack that could be seen as one on Jews generally.[55]

A German parliamentary resolution of 2019 characterized as anti-Semitic the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to decouple from Israel as an apartheid state. The advisory declaration asked all German states and municipalities to deny public funding to any institution that actively supports BDS or questions the right of the state of Israel to exist. Cultural leaders, including some from Jewish institutions, challenged the declaration, as stifling the free exchange of ideas. A group of Israeli students at a Berlin arts academy that discussed the theme of Israel as a settler colonial state had its website taken offline by the government-funded academy. The German government has stated that questioning Israel's existence as a state was a red line that could not be crossed because that is anti-Semitic. In short, Germany officially equate Israels and Jews.[56]

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50 Daniel Sugarman. "What is the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism?", *The Jewish Chronicle,* July 20, 2018.

51 Alice Speri, "Biden Embraces Anti-Semitism Definition that Has Upended Free Speech in Europe," The Intercept, June 6, 2023, https://theintercept.com/2023/06/06/antisemitism-definition-israel-palestine/; "Suppressing Palestinian Rights Advocacy Through the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism," European Legal Support Center, June 2023, https://elsc.support/news/breaking-new-report-reveals-human-rights-violations-resulting-from-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism; Peter Baker, "Biden to Address Holocaust Rembrance While Stayjng Quiet About Campus Unrest," NYT, May 1, 2024.

52 Michelle Goldberg. "Trump's Plan to Crush the Academic Left," NYT, Jan. 24, 2025.

53 Sarah Otterman, "In Letter, 540 Jewish Columbia Students Defend Zionism, Condemn Protests," NYT, May 10, 2024.

54 Natasha Lennard, "Columbia Task Force Finally Weights In: Yes, Anti-Zionism is Anti-Semitism," The Intercept, June 17, 2024.

55 Sara Dorn, "Jewish Groups Condemn Trump For Attacking 'Liberal Jews' On Rosh Hashanah," *Forbes*, Sept. 23, 2023; Jacob Magid, "Trump Berates Disloyal US 'Jewish Leaders,' Ignoring Calls to Condemn Kanye, Fuentes," *Times of Israel*, Dec. 9, 2022.

56 Melissa Eddy, "German Cultural Leaders Warn Against Ban on Israel Sanctions Movement," NYT, Dec. 11, 2020.

People still speak moreover of "the Germans" or "the Turks" as having committed genocide, not just the Nazis or the Sultan. It is unsurprising then that those who uphold the claim about Xinjiang speak of "the Chinese" as committing genocide. Tainting Chinese as *genocidaires* shores up the "cruel Chinese" racist trope embedded for more than a century and a half in the West and facilitates the US-led Yellow Peril/Red Menace campaign against China and Chinese.

2 Rhetorical Outbidding and "Uyghur Genocide"

Most Xinjiang genocide claims repeat assertions by VOC researcher Zenz. US billionaire Warren Buffet has quipped "never ask a barber whether you need a haircut."[57] Referring to US media use of retired general officers to opine on military and national security affairs, it was recalled that a media commentator has said "You wouldn't hire a made man, like a mobster, to work at the DA's [District Attorney's] office, right? You wouldn't hire a pickpocket to work as a TSA [Transportation Security Administration] screener."[58] Barbers have a self-interest in promoting haircuts. The Generals who typically sit on "defense contractor" boards have a self-interest and ideological propensity to uphold military action. "Uyghur genocide" proponents such as Zenz, in making unsupported claims, further career-based, status-based, and ideological self-interests. They ignore disconfirming evidence that counters those self-interests.

Famed US psychologist Abraham Maslow once observed, "I suppose that it is tempting if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."[59] This precept relates to genocide claimants' reliance on Zenz, a professional anti-communist who necessarily sees all communist party-ruled state actions as malign. Zenz rose from obscurity through unevidenced accusations, succeeding to the extent that CIA head/Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cited him in the run-up to the 2020 US presidential election. The precept also applies to government-linked scholars, such as Beth van Schaak and Laura Murphy, the former having served as State Department Ambassador for Global Criminal Justice and the other as a policy advisor to the Department

57 Janine Mancini, "Warren Buffett Says Seek Unbiased Advice: 'Don't Ask the Barber Whether You Need A Haircut,'" Yahoo Finance, Jan. 23, 2024, https://finance.yahoo.com/news/warren-buffett-says-seek-unbiased-200531986.html.

58 Ken Klippstein, "NBC Rejects Trump Voice But Embraces War Party," Intercept, Mar. 30, 2024.

59 Abraham Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: a Reconnaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966): 15.

of Homeland Security. They too engage in rhetorical outbidding to attract the attention and support of elites, whose political needs they fulfill.[60]

Rhetorical outbidding in the US around "oppression of the Uyghurs" is a kind of competition among leaders of political parties, NGOs, a small number of scholars turned propagandists, etc. The competition has become a Moloch or Multilateral Trap, which is when the pursuit of individual interests leads to detrimental outcomes for society.[61] An example is anglers competing in catching fish in a lake, resulting in the depletion of the lake's stock of fish.

China's cooperation with other countries, including Western states, is needed to achieve key global goals, such as combatting climate change, dealing with epidemics, facilitating trade, etc. The Moloch Trap that arises from the rhetorical outbidding about Xinjiang make this cooperation much more difficult. For example, in 2021, UK ambassador to China Caroline Wilson asked Liz Truss, then the UK's trade minister and later its (ultra-short term) PM, why the UK could not treat China like it did France. The China-hostile Truss "responded saying the French were not committing genocide, a reference to China's alleged treatment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang."[62]

Zenz as a rhetorical outbidder has made the "as bad as the Nazis" assertion that "what is happening in Xinjiang is one of the worst mass cases of human rights abuses in the world today … Even though there is no mass killing or death camps, there are sadly many similarities to the oppressions of the 1940s in Germany."[63] He cannot be ignorant about 1940s Germany – as surveys show that many Westerners are –[64] as education about Nazi crimes is compulsory in Zenz's native Germany. His inapt comparison reflects his role as a propagandist, in the mode of Goebbels, a Heidelberg University PhD who claimed authorship of 14 books. Zenz's approach also is consonant with that of Trump's former advisor Steve Bannon, who pithily advised in 2018 that "the way to deal

60 "Pompeo Calls China Muslim Sterilization Reports 'Shocking' and 'Disturbing,'" Reuters, June 30, 2020.

61 David Gurteen, *Conversational Leadership*, 2025, https://conversational-leadership.net/multipolar-trap/.

62 "UK Lines Up New Ambassador to Help Rebuild China Ties," Reuters, Feb. 21, 2025.

63 Nick Megoran, "Meet the Christian Investigator 'Equipped by God' to Expose China's Uyghur Genocide," Premier Christianity, Aug. 25, 2021, https://www.premierchristianity.com/interviews/meet-the-christian-investigator-equipped-by-god-to-expose-chinas-uyghur-genocide/5442.article.

64 Lindsay Johnstone, "Holocaust Remembrance Day: How are Europe's Children Taught about the Holocaust?," EuroNews, Jan. 27, 2020, www.euronews.com/2020/01/27/holocaust-remembrance-day-how-is-the-holocaust-taught-in-your-country.

with [the opposition] is to flood the zone with shit," that is, with misinformation and disinformation.[65]

Zenz also "floods the zone"; for example, in 2020 he ridiculed the idea that the more than doubling of the Uyghur population over a 40-year period before 2020 indicated the unlikelihood of a "Uyghur genocide," stating, "The Jewish population in Germany grew significantly between the 1800s and 1933. Therefore, there clearly was no Holocaust, or else how could such a substantial increase in population happen?"[66] He apparently was unaware that the Jewish German birth rate was significantly lower than the non-Jewish German birth rate and the Jewish population increased mainly through immigration to Germany of "Ost Juden," Jews from the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. In 1933, these immigrants accounted for about one-fifth the Jewish population in Germany.[67] Moreover, as a leading scholar of the Holocaust observed, Jews in Germany were subjected to a progression of maltreatments:

> The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had proclaimed: You have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: You have no right to live.[68]

Uyghurs have experienced none of those three phases of oppression; they continue to live as Uyghurs among other ethnic groups in Xinjiang. The Uyghur birth rate has been substantially higher than that of Han and only a small fraction of Uyghurs have left Xinjiang. While the Jewish population in Germany was reduced from over 500,000 in 1933 to a few thousands in 1945, the Uyghur population has continuously expanded. Genocides, however, typically result in a negative NPGR. For example, before October 2023, Gaza had an NPGR of 20 per 1,000, based on a high birthrate. It is estimated, however, that in 2024, Gaza's NPGR was a –7.6. That however was based on the pre-war 2023 base rate, while the 2024 birth rate must have hugely fallen, given the widespread killing and destruction in the latter year. Gaza also lost an estimated 250,000–300,000 people to emigration, out of a population of about 2.3 million. Emigration

65 Sean Illing, "'Flood the Zone with Shit': How Misinformation Overwhelmed Our Democracy," Vox, Feb. 6, 2020, www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/1/16/20991816/impeachment-trial-trump-bannon-misinformation.

66 Adrian Zenz, post, X, July 2, 2020, https://x.com/adrianzenz/status/1278510561106460673.

67 Steven Lowenstein, *The Population History of German Jewry 1815–1939* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2023).

68 Raul Hilberg in *The Destruction of the European Jews* 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press): 9.

from late 2023 to early 2025 equaled or exceeded total emigration from Gaza in 2007–2023.[69]

Zenz also claimed in 2023 that in Xinjiang there has been "an internment of an entire ethnic group."[70] The UHRP's Babur Ilchi said in 2024 the Chinese government had "round[d] up an entire ethnic group into mass concentration camps."[71] They outbid even the émigré leaders who put the number "imprisoned" at 3 million. A WUCS spokesperson in 2024 also referred to the Bosnian Muslim situation of the 1990s, which included Serbian forces' genocidal Srebrenica massacre. Despite no massacres of Uyghurs, she stated that "there are parallels in the history of atrocities, crimes, documentation efforts, transitional justice, international justice, and accountability measures. We can use this as a model for understanding the Uyghur genocide."[72]

Zenz's rhetoric is matched by that of the failed prognosticator of the *Coming Collapse of China* Gordon G. Chang. In a book with that title, he averred in 2001 that China would fall apart within a decade. Presenting no evidence, he said in 2019 that

> China has maintained what they call these re-education camps or 'vocational centers.' They are concentration camps, and they resemble what we saw in the Third Reich. People are dying in these camps. It's not like there are gas chambers, but they've got policies designed to force people into situations where many of them do die. We know that China is building crematoria to dispose of the corpses. These camps are now being seen by satellite images over Tibet. One can imagine that they could spread to the rest of China as well. This is a crime against humanity … China is not

69 Palestine Strategic Report, 2022–2023, 2024, https://eng.alzaytouna.net/palestine-strategic-rep/; r/IsraelPalestine, "Examining the Gaza Population Growth Rate During the War" Feb. 2024, www.reddit.com/r/IsraelPalestine/comments/1hs6zny/examining_the_gaza_population_growth_rate_during/#:~:text=If%20we%20use%20the%20Gaza,for%20the%20year%20of%202024; Michael Milshtein, "After the Cease-Fire Deal: The Palestinians Experienced a Nakba, But Feel Victorious," *Ynet*, February 2, 2025, www.ynetnews.com/article/hkmdxm301x; Ofer Guterman, "Strategic Alternatives for the Gaza Strip," INSS Policy Analysis, Apr. 10, 2025, www.inss.org.il/publication/gaza-strategic-alternatives/#_ftn5.

70 "VOC Testifies to US Congress on Beijing's Genocide in Xinjiang," VOC, Mar. 24, 2023, https://victimsofcommunism.org/voc-testifies-to-us-congress-on-beijings-genocide-in-xinjiang/.

71 Elizabeth Palmer, "The Rebranding of Xinjiang," CBS News, Jan. 7, 2024, www.cbsnews.com/news/the-rebranding-of-xinjiang-china-crackdown-on-muslim-uyghur-population/.

72 "World Uyghur Congress Grapples with Chinese Threats at Sarajevo Conference," RFE/RL, Oct. 24, 2024, www.rferl.org/a/wuc-uyghur-congress-harassment-sarajevo-xinjiang-china/33171721.html.

> a legitimate state. We can see this from what it's trying to do to liquidate the Uighur culture. If it's not genocide, not quite, it *is* the attempt to eliminate a minority group and to get rid of their culture. This is 'culturecide,' if you can call it that … We didn't deal with the Third Reich. We shouldn't be dealing with the People's Republic because they're starting to resemble each other.[73]

Major US firms did however extensively deal with Nazi Germany, even during the war and even in conjunction with the Holocaust.[74] Ironically, Chang, casting himself as a defender of Xinjiang Muslims, is a fellow at Gatestone Institute, an anti-Muslim US think tank.[75] He was also, in 2023, an advisor to Republican presidential contender Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis[76] and claimed then that China "is executing a plan to exterminate Americans," citing a "secret speech" two decades ago by the then-Chinese defense minister in which he supposedly "advocat[ed] the extermination, by disease, of Americans. His plan was to clear out the hills, plains, and valleys of North America so that the Chinese people could settle in the vast spaces left uninhabited."[77]

Chang is often cited as a leading practitioner of "Sinophrenia": the view that China both seeks to take over the world and is collapsing.[78] Such contradictory claims are not unusual in ultra-right circles; for example, Nazi sympathizers alternately deny the Holocaust and explain it away through "whataboutism."[79] In 2023, Chang also repeated his prediction of two years earlier that China will opt for "forced procreation." No Chinese leader had even hinted at that possibility, but prominent US news sources provided Chang with a forum for his

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73 "Gordon Chang: Muslim 'Concentration Camps' Prove China 'Not a Legitimate State,'" Breitbart, May 13, 2019, www.uyghurcongress.org/en/gordon-chang-muslim-concentration-camps-prove-china-not-a-legitimate-state/.

74 Bradley Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (New York: St. Martin's, 2018); Charles Higham, *Trading with the Enemy an Expose of the Nazi-American Money Plot 1933–1949.* (London: Hale, 1983).

75 "Gatestone Institute," 2023, https://powerbase.info/index.php/Gatestone_Institute#Promoting_anti-Muslim_writers.

76 Alexander Ward and Ari Hawkins, "The China Hawks Briefing DeSantis," Politico, May 31, 2023, www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2023/05/31/the-china-hawks-briefing-desantis-00099407.

77 Gordon G. Chang, "Fresno Lab: China's Operation to Exterminate Americans," Gatestone Institute, Aug. 3, 2023, www.gatestoneinstitute.org/19858/prestige-biotech-china.

78 Thomas Orlik, *China: The Bubble that Never Pops* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 187–188; Jane Hayward, "Belief China is BOTH Collapsing AND Taking Over the World," Jane Hayward China, Jan. 9, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9oyh9_iA0.

79 Alex Ross, "How American Racism Influenced Hitler," *New Yorker*, Apr. 23, 2018.

speculation.[80] Forced procreation was however a practice of salafi jihadists in Africa and the Middle East – formations with an ideology of the kind that the Chinese state has fought in Xinjiang.[81]

Even Zenz and Chang have been rhetorically outbid, however, by Georgetown University Xinjiang history specialist James Millward. He has said what is happening there is "not quite genocide," but is "reminiscent of the worst past colonialist depredations against indigenous peoples as well as ethnic pogroms, the Holocaust, and South African apartheid." Millward urges people to "voice concerns about PRC assimilationism and Han supremacy," as if these would be the equivalent of the Holocaust and other massive ethnic murder campaigns.[82] Loyola University of New Orleans historian of Xinjiang Rian Thum, speaking of Uyghurs in 2018 averred that "an entire culture is being criminalized" and that the region has "a formalized racism on the order of South African apartheid."[83] Such inaccurate statements show a lack of knowledge of both Uyghur cultural practices and South Africa's former system.

Statements by such "white saviors" of the Uyghurs recall an outlandish comparison drawn by Steve Schwarzman, the Trumpist Blackstone co-founder with assets of US$50 billion. He stated in 2010 that Barack Obama's plan to close the "carried interest loophole," which allows private equity owners to pay a low rate of taxes, was equivalent to the Nazi invasion of Poland.[84]

The conclusion about events in Xinjiang should not be "not quite genocide," but "not at all genocide." If intent to destroy an ethnic or religious group is not proved beyond a reasonable doubt, there is no genocide, just as the absence of proof of an existing or incipient fetus means no pregnancy – and no one speaks of being "not quite pregnant." Contrary to Millward's assertions as well,[85] there is also no colonialism, settler or otherwise.

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80 "China's Dystopian Population Goals: Forced Procreation and 'Industrialized Births'," The Hill, Nov. 9, 2023, https://thehill.com/opinion/international/4299666-chinas-dystopian-population-goals-forced-procreation-and-industrialized-births/; Gordon Chang, "Is Forced Procreation Coming to China?," *Newsweek*, June 8, 2021.

81 Valerie Oosterveld, "Forced Marriage: Terminological Coherence and Dissonance in International Criminal Law," *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 27 (2019): 1263–1282; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, "Statement by United Nations Special Representative on the first anniversary of the Sinjar tragedy," Aug. 3, 2015, www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/press-release/statement-by-un-special-representative-of-the-secretary-general-on-sexual-violence-in-conflict-zainab-hawa-bangura-on-first-anniversary-of-sinjar-tragedy/.

82 Millward, What Should Americans.

83 Rian Thum, "What Really Happens in China's 'Re-education' Camps," NYT, May 15, 2018.

84 Edward Luce, "What Croesus Wants from Trump," FT, Oct. 23, 2024.

85 Millward, (Identity).

UK Xinjiang specialist Joanne Smith Finley rhetorically outbids even Zenz and Millward. As far back as 2011, she ridiculed the idea that in China "individuals from all ethnic groups must promote nationality unity and protect national unification," implying that separatism must be tolerated.[86] She insists that "It's genocide, full stop"[87] elaborating that

> This is not a dramatic, sudden episode of mass killings; it is slow, progressive, creeping. But it is nonetheless a genocidal act and process, which, taken together with the other policies of cultural erasure, will ensure a *vastly depleted* Uyghur population in numerical terms, and that only a hollow shell or husk of the Uyghur identity will remain.[88]

Finley's predictions have not come to pass. They equate with one by US House Select Committee on China member Raja Krishnamoorthy (D-IL) that "The mass ending of Uyghur births clearly meets the definition of genocide."[89] There has been no mass ending of Uyghur births, which continue at a higher level than among Han. Even had there been a Uyghur birthrate lower than among Han, showing an intent to destroy is the sine qua non of genocide and is disconfirmed by the absence of mass killings, by birth limitations in 2017–2021 that still allowed minorities two or three children, and by an array of preferential policies for Uyghurs.

Finley claims, based on someone's tweet, that while Xinjiang Han demonstrators are treated leniently by local police, Uyghur protestors "face a shoot to kill policy."[90] Finley too equates actions in Xinjiang with the Holocaust. Discussing how the Nazis criminalized marriage between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans, she fails to note that what Uyghur émigrés decry is not a ban on ethnic intermarriage, but the government's supposed promotion of it. She also fails to recognize that claims of genocide in Xinjiang are almost exclusively made by Westerners and attributes Muslim countries' non-endorsement of the

86 Finley, No Rights Without Duties: 81.

87 "China Forces Birth Control on Uyghur Minority to Curb Muslim Population in Xinjiang," AP, July 2, 2020.

88 "Chinese Statistics Reveal Plummeting Births in Xinjiang During Crackdown on Uyghurs," VOA, Mar. 27, 2021, www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_voa-news-china_chinese-statistics-reveal-plummeting-births-xinjiang-during/6203821.html.

89 VOC Testifies.

90 Jo Smith Finley, "China Protests: Uyghur People Have Suffered Most from Draconian Zero Covid Policies, But are Two Terrorised to Join In," The Conversation, Dec. 1, 2022, https://theconversation.com/china-protests-uyghur-people-have-suffered-most-from-draconian-zero-covid-policies-but-are-too-terrorised-to-join-in-195740.

claim to economic ties to China – even though most Muslim countries have strong economic ties to the West as well. Finley even classes Pompeo's vitriol about Xinjiang as "relatively measured and constructive."[91]

The promotion of voluntary ethnic intermarriage is in fact the very opposite of genocidal. An international law scholar in Israel has noted:

> The intellectual motivation and the raison d'etre of genocide is uber-segregation, a drive to physically exterminate another group of humans from existence. Genocide's fundamental objective is to decisively prevent any interaction, let alone relations, between the minority and majority groups. The ultimate objective of genocide is complete and permanent physical separation from the targeted group. Accordingly, only the physical destruction of the targeted group can assure the perpetrators of genocide of this goal … Co-existence and integration with the majority group is incongruous with genocide.

He has added that "the Chinese government promotes Uyghur participation in Chinese society and Uyghurs are popular models and actors/actresses. As reported by VOA, integration and intermarriage between Han and Uyghurs is viewed positively."[92]

Zenz has also said "I believe that God equipped and used me to discover and expose these atrocities."[93] He is not the first to claim God chose him to combat an evil people. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, about his struggle against "Jewish Marxism": "I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."[94] Zenz's struggle, sponsored directly by the VOC and indirectly by the US government, is against "Chinese Marxism." A German analyst has also pointed out that Zenz "used to work at an evangelical educational institution near Stuttgart and published faith studies that describe the equality of men and women, homosexuality and the non-violent raising of children as religiously problematic."[95] Zenz upholds neither objectivity nor its possibility, stating "I feel very clearly led by God to do this. I can put it that way. I'm not afraid to say that. With Xinjiang, things really changed. It became like a

91 Finley, Why Scholars: 358–359, 367.

92 Slawotsky, Is China Guilty: 631.

93 Nick Megoran, "Meet the Christian Investigator 'Equipped by God' to Expose China's Uyghur Genocide," Premier Christianity, Aug. 25, 2021, www.premierchristianity.com/interviews/meet-the-christian-investigator-equipped-by-god-to-expose-chinas-uyghur-genocide/5442.article.

94 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1969): 65.

95 Bruckler, China, Xinjiang.

mission, or a ministry."[96] That background has not given pause to the Western politicians and writers who use Zenz's pronouncements to bolster their efforts to depict China as a nation of *genocidaires*.

Ironically, Zenz, while accusing China of a Hitlerian genocide, prescribes a fate "worse than genocide" for the bulk of humanity. He upholds the Christian fundamentalist idea, derived from the apostle Mark (16:16), who wrote that Jesus's last words were "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Zenz himself has written that "unbelieving Jews who do not come to Christ" are "'rebels' and transgressors" who God will "wipe out"; they will "have to go through the time of God's wrath," presumably meaning being killed and subjected to eternal torture.[97] Zenz's view is not rare in the US, where 82% of evangelical Christians believe Hell exists and only 31% believe non-Christians can attain Heaven.[98] Its proponents are not politically marginalized: Trump favored dispensationalist Texas pastor Robert Jeffress, who pronounced, in Israel in 2018, that Jews who do not convert will go to Hell. Fellow Texas preacher and televangelist John Hagee accompanied Trump to a ceremony establishing the US Embassy in Jerusalem, held on the same day Israeli forces killed 64 Palestinians protesting their confinement in Gaza. Hagee holds that Hitler and the Holocaust were part of God's plan to get the Jews to return to Zion, the predicate for Christ's return.[99] Zenz is a dispensationalist, "an anti-abortion, anti-feminist Christian fundamentalist captivated by End Times theology,"[100] and thus hardly a defender of "a woman's right to choose."

3 Ignoring Counter-Evidence

Xinjiang genocide claimants ignore all factors that show no relation to genocidal intent and that fully explain both the minority birthrate decrease of

96 Josh Chin, "The German Data Diver Who Exposed China's Muslim Crackdown," WSJ, May 21, 2019.

97 Marlon Sias and Adrian Zenz, *Worthy of Escape: Why Not All Believers Will Be Raptured Before the Tribulation* (Bloomington: Westbow Press, 2012): 290–291.

98 "US Public Becoming Less Religious," Pew Research Center, 2015, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/.

99 Kate Ng, "Trump Hosts Pastor Who Says 'Jews are Going to Hell' at White House Hanukah Party," *Independent*, Dec.12, 2019; Paul Pillar, "Religion Corrupting Policy – And Vice Versa," May 20, 2018, https://lobelog.com/religion-corrupting-policy-and-vice-versa/.

100 Gareth Porter and Max Blumenthal, "US Accusation of 'Genocide' by China Based on Claims by Far-Right Ideologue," Grey Zone, Feb. 23, 2021, www.informationclearinghouse.info/56350.htm.

2017–2021 and the minority boarding school experience. These include the Chinese government's 1) partial adoption of "second generation" minority policies, under which minority family planning preferences were scaled-back in practice;[101] 2) recognition that population densities were high in much of southern Xinjiang and that rapid population growth was unsustainable in relation to employment, land, water, etc.; 3) conviction that high birthrates inhibit economic and social development and that there were many out-of-plan and unrecorded minority births; 4) knowledge that out-migration of Xinjiang Han, partly linked to terrorist attacks before 2017, coupled with a falling Han birthrate, could lead to a more mono-ethnic living experience incompatible with construction a multi-ethnic Chinese nation (中华民族) and with abatement of religious extremism and terrorism; 5) temporary transfer, of a very small number, of minority children whose parents were both in a VETCs or prison, as well as transfer of some children of separatist émigré Uyghurs who were disassociated from their relatives, who would otherwise have taken in their left-behind children.

Xinjiang genocide claimants also ignore that some Uyghur émigrés expressly advocate Han "ethnic extinction" and that separatists engaged in mass killings in Xinjiang from 1990 to 2016. The July 5, 2009 pogrom by several thousand Uyghurs in Urumqi deteriorated into a violent riot in which Uyghurs attacked Han Chinese businesses and individual Han Chinese on the streets, chanting "Kill the Han, smash the Hui, drive the Mongols out!" and "Cut the Kazakhs." The rioters overwhelmingly killed Han and Hui civilians, male and female. Two days later Han rioters killed a much smaller number of Uyghurs. Reportedly, 197 people were killed over several days of rioting; 46 were Uyghurs, of whom 10 were among the 156 "civilian deaths."[102]

WUC statements on the July 5 pogrom ignore killings of Han and speak of a "massacre" of Uyghurs,[103] even though most of the 46 Uyghurs killed likely were pogromists who murdered or injured civilians. The WUC is not alone in

101 Gerald Roche and James Leibold, "China's Second Generation Policies are Already Here," Made in China 2020:2, https://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n7524/pdf/chinas_second_generation.pdf.

102 Michael Clarke, "Urumqi 2009 and the Road to Xinjiang Re-education Centers," The Diplomat, July 11, 2019, https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/urumqi-2009-and-the-road-to-xinjiang-re-education-centers/; "Innocent Civilians Make Up 156 in Urumqi Riot Death Toll". Xinhua, Aug. 5, 2009; Nick Holdstock, "A Perfect Bomb," N+1, Oct. 27, 2010, www.nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/a-perfect-bomb/; "Nine Executed Over Xinjiang Riots," BBC, Nov. 9, 2009.

103 "15 Years After Xinjiang Unrest, China Fends Off Criticism of Hardline Rule," Nikkei Asia, July 5, 2024.

ignoring the July 5 anti-Han pogrom. A writer for the US magazine *The New Yorker*, in an article about Xinjiang, said of that event "Hundreds of people were injured or killed, and hundreds were arrested. More than forty Uyghurs were presumed disappeared. Dozens were later sentenced to death."[104] The brutal mass killings of Han, overwhelmingly civilians, went unmentioned.

Despite the mass killings of Han and Hui in Urumqi however, a pogrom is not a genocide. Killings of civilians that accompany military actions against a state or insurgents do not necessarily amount to a pogrom either. For example, the European Jewish Association claimed that the murders of 695 Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023, simultaneous with military action in which 444 soldiers were killed, amounted to "the largest pogrom since the second world war, on a par with Babyn Yar ravine massacre."[105] That misconstrues what a pogrom is and neglects to mention that 33,000 Jews were massacred at Kyiv's Babi Yar, not in conjunction with Nazi military action in Ukraine, but as part of a genocide. Such "classic" pogroms as those at Kishinev in 1903 and Odessa in 1905 also were not murders of civilians taking place during a military action. Indeed, no one calls the US Army's My Lai massacre of 1968 in Vietnam a pogrom. That is so even though there were no military-age males among the as many as 504 civilians killed. It and other killings of civilians were major war crimes, but not pogroms.

4 The Uyghur Diaspora in the West and Ethnic Cleansing

The Urumqi pogrom was not incidental to military action; it likely was intended as an ethnic cleansing. Pogrom, genocide and ethnic cleansing are three distinct, but related concepts.[106] Separatist organizers have projected that their actions would cause non-Uyghurs to flee Xinjiang, which did happen, temporarily. The Urumqi pogromists thus resembled the US white racists in the late 19th Century, who killed hundreds of Chinese immigrants in pogroms in Los

104 Raffi Khatchadourian, "Ghost Walls," *New Yorker*, Apr. 12, 2021.

105 Alex Benjamin, "October 7 Showed Israelis Containment was a Sham," FT, Oct. 16, 2024.

106 Sascha Becker, et al, "Persecution, Pogroms and Genocide: A Conceptual Framework and New Evidence," *Explorations in Economic History* 86 (2022), www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0014498322000493: Pia Krishnankutty, "Pogrom, Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: What and How They Differ from Each Other," The Print, Feb. 28, 2020, https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/pogrom-genocide-ethnic-cleansing-what-these-mean-and-how-they-differ-from-each-other/372680/.

Angeles, San Francisco and elsewhere, causing many surviving Chinese to flee the country.[107]

While the 2009 Urumqi pogromists may not have been *genocidaires*, there are Uyghur separatists who have displayed genocidal intent or allied themselves with defenders of genocide. They are mainly in the diaspora, to which most of them have come since the "third wave" of outmigration from Xinjiang that began in the 1990s or they were born abroad. That third wave was mainly students or intellectuals, and among them "the most militant tend to choose new destinations such as the US, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Scandinavia."[108]

The US's Uyghur community was only 800–1,000 people in 2009[109] and "at least 9,000"[110] in 2015, has more recently been estimated to be 5,000–6,000, 10,000, or 15,000 strong.[111] It is centered in the Washington, DC area, with about 3,000 close-by, in Virginia.[112] There are 2,000 Uyghurs in Canada and 3,000 in Australia.[113] Most Uyghurs in Norway, Canada, and some other Western countries come from Central Asia, not China.[114] These Uyghur communities are a small part of a global diaspora spread over 38 countries. Some Uyghur separatists and rightwing Western organizations claim the diaspora numbers

107 Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007).

108 Valentin Guerif, *Making States, Displacing Peoples: A Comparative Perspective of Xinjiang and Tibet in the People's Republic of China*, MSc. Oxford University, 2010:10, www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/wp61-making-states-displacing-peoples-2010.pdf.

109 Saskia Witteborn, *Unruly Speech: Displacement and the Politics of Transgression* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023).

110 "What You Should Know About China's Minority Uighurs," Al Jazeera, July 8, 2021.

111 Mettersun Beydulla, "Experiences of Uyghur Migration to Turkey and the United States: Issues of Religion, Law, Society, Residence, and Citizenship," in Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hassan (eds.), *Migration and Islamic Ethics: Issues of Residence, Naturalization and Citizenship* (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 174–195; Damilola Banjo, "Uyghurs Outside China Are Passionately Preserving Their Culture, Despite the Dangers," Pass Blue, Nov. 8, 2023, www.passblue.com/2023/11/08/uyghurs-outside-china-are-passionately-preserving-their-culture-despite-the-dangers/; "The Support of Muslim States Still Weak for Uyghur Ethnic [sic[in China," Mi'raj News Agency, Nov. 2, 2022, https://en.minanews.net/the-support-of-muslim-states-still-weak-for-uyghur-ethnic-in-china/.

112 Learning a Language.

113 "Learning a Language for Loss: Uyghur School in US Offers Link to Homeland," AFP, Apr. 24, 2023.

114 Suchandanda Chaterjee, "Bordered Conscience: Uyghurs of Central Asia," in Güljanat Kurmangaliyeva and Ercilasun Konuralp Ercilasun (eds.), *The Uyghur Community Diaspora, Identity and Geopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 105–120.

as many as 500,000, but generally say 90% are in Central Asia and Turkey.[115] The ETGE hyperbolically asserts there are a million Uyghurs outside China with 75% in Central Asia.[116]

A 2010 report put the number of Uyghurs in Kazakhstan at 300,000, with 60,000 in Kyrgyzstan and 6,000 in Tajikistan, but the source of those figures is unclear.[117] A decade and a half later, the UHRP was still giving a figure of 297,000 for Kazakhstan and 60,000 for Kyrgyzstan, but 10,000 for Tajikistan.[118] That indicates that there was no large-scale flight by Uyghurs from Xinjiang even during a supposed "genocide." It contradicts a UK journalist's 2025 claim that "There has been exodus of Uyghurs from China's Xinjiang region over the past decade."[119] There has not, though all recognized genocides have large-scale refugee flows.

An estimated 50,000 Uyghurs resided in Turkey in 2024,[120] but in 2021 it was said that 30,000–50,000 live in Istanbul alone.[121] Despite Turkey's reputation as a base for anti-China activity, only 650–700 people demonstrated at China's Istanbul embassy in 2024 to protest the People's Republic's 75th anniversary, including Uyghur émigrés and their Turkish supporters, who include the fascistic Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*).[122] The protest bizarrely demanded "the closure of internment camps in Xinjiang" – the VETCs that closed five years earlier.[123] The small turnout at the protest is not unusual. China-hostile forces in the UK

115 "Mapping the Uyghur Diaspora," UHRP, Nov. 21, 2023, https://uhrp.org/report/diaspora/; "Looking for Home Around the World: The Uyghur Diaspora and Its Needs," Freedom House, Jan. 11, 2024, https://freedomhouse.org/article/looking-home-around-world-uyghur-diaspora-and-its-needs.

116 David Whitehouse, "Xi Jinping Visit Gives France's Macron Chance to Raise China's Uyghur 'Genocide,'" The Diplomat, May 6, 2024, https://thediplomat.com/2024/05/xi-jinping-visit-gives-frances-macron-chance-to-raise-chinas-uyghur-genocide/.

117 Chris Zambelis, "Uighur Dissent and Militancy in China's Xinjiang Province," Center on Terrorism at West Point 3:1 (2010), https://ctc.westpoint.edu/uighur-dissent-and-militancy-in-chinas-xinjiang-province/.

118 "Uyghurs: a Turkic Ethnic Group with Deep Roots in Xinjiang and Beyond," *The Nation*, Feb. 28, 2025.

119 Tom Levitt, "Thailand Condemned for 'Shameful' Mass Deportation of Uyghur Refugees to China," *Guardian*, Mar. 4, 2025.

120 Sophia Yan, "Long Arm of China Looms Over One of the World's Last Uyghur Bookshops," *Telegraph*, Sept. 1, 2024.

121 Vusal Guliyev, "The Place of Uyghur and Kurdish Issues in Sino-Turkish Relations," Baku Research Institute, Jan. 30, 2024, https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/en/the-place-of-uyghur-and-kurdish-issues-in-sino-turkish-relations/.

122 Jonathan Marshall, "Erdogan's Neo-Fascist Turkish Allies," Consortium News, Apr. 19, 2017, https://consortiumnews.com/2017/04/19/erdogans-neo-fascist-turkish-allies/.

123 "Uyghur Diaspora Protests Against China's National Day in Istanbul," ANI, Oct. 1, 2024.

– Uyghur, Tibetan, Hong Kong and other émigrés, plus Conservative Party politicians – have opposed construction of a new Chinese Embassy in London. Their protest at the site of new structure in February 2025 was attended by only 1,000 people.[124] Some Uyghurs in Turkey are also not hostile to the Chinese government and travel to Xinjiang to see family and do business. A Uyghur in Istanbul has said "Among us Uyghur businessmen, more than 99% of us still have links to China."[125]

Only the small Uyghur diaspora in the US has influence and is also the most openly racist. In March 2021, the UAA disrupted a Washington, DC "Stop Asian Hate" rally that was a response to pandemic-related physical attacks on Asian Americans. The drive-by hecklers called for a world war to "Wipe Out China!", which means killing a large part of China's population. UAA and other Uyghur émigré groups have also allied with ultra-right, anti-immigrant, Islamophobic groups in the US. It has attacked the Black Lives Matter movement and claimed China developed the pandemic virus as a bioweapon and spread it to the world.[126] Ultra-right Uyghur émigré groups have aligned themselves with racist forces despite even their sympathizers acknowledging that Uyghurs themselves face racial discrimination in the US.[127]

An alignment of Muslim Uyghur émigrés with Islamophobic US ultra-rightists is not inexplicable. Judeophobes – German and US ultra-rightists, Hungarian president Viktor Urban, etc. show support for Israel,[128] as do the WUC, UAA and other Uyghur émigré groups. Some individual elite Jews have worked with neo-Nazi forces in Ukraine (Oleg Kolomoiski) and in France (Eric Zemmour).[129] Stephen Miller, Trump's former director of the Immigration and Cus-

124 Mark Landler, "In Giant Chinese Embassy in London, Opponents See Long Arm of Beijing," NYT, Feb. 20, 2025.

125 Ayesha Rascoe, "The Sunday Story: Arresting Your Brothers and Sisters," NPR, Aug. 25, 2024, www.npr.org/transcripts/1198913934.

126 Ajit Singh, "'Wipe Out China!' U.S.-Funded Uyghur Activists Train as Gun-Toting Foot Soldiers for Empire," Greyzone, Apr. 5, 2021, https://mronline.org/2021/04/05/wipe-out-china-u-s-funded-uyghur-activists-train-as-gun-toting-foot-soldiers-for-empire/.

127 Mettersun Beydulla, "Experiences of Uyghur Migration to Turkey and the United States: Issues of Religion, Law, Society, Residence, and Citizenship," in Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hassan (eds.), *Migration and Islamic Ethics: Issues of Residence, Naturalization and Citizenship* (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 174–195 (188).

128 Emma Rosenberg, "Taking the "Race" Out of Master Race: The Evolving Role of the Jew in White Supremacist Discourse," *Nationalities Papers* (2023): 1–25, doi:10.1017/nps.2022.111.

129 Christian Esch, "'Banderites' vs. 'New Russia' The Battle Field of History in the Ukraine Conflict," Reuters Institute, Oxford University, 2015, https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/banderites-vs-new-russia; Sebastien Bourdon, "The Neo-Nazi 'Zouaves Paris' Group Behind the Violence at Zemmour Rally," Media Part, Dec. 9, 2021, www.mediapart.fr/en/journal/france/091221/neo-nazi-zouaves-paris-group-behind-violence-zemmour-rally.

toms Enforcement agency and Deputy Chief of Staff has overseen travel bans directed at Muslim countries and mass deportations. He is Jewish, but has had ties to "white nationalists" who "want America to be mostly, if not entirely, white" and may not view Jews as white.[130]

White racist ideology has also influenced thinking among a segment of Asian peoples. National University of Singapore scholar Kalicharan Veera Singam has noted that "Perhaps, [because of] a general ignorance about what the ideology in its entirety stands for, some non-Caucasians might latch on to certain strands of the ideology they find appealing such as xenophobia, racism and homophobia"[131] Because some Asians and Asian descendants adopt white racist ideology,[132] some white racists express admiration for at least northeast Asians.[133]

Uyghur émigrés are however not the only separatists who say "their" ethnic group is experiencing genocide, while advocating genocide against another, much larger group. Khalistani separatists, who want an independent country for India's Sikhs and had engaged in bombings and assassinations, held a rally in Brampton, Canada in 2023. Two prominent slogans were "Sikh genocide" and "Kill India."[134] The Uyghur and Sikh émigré examples illustrate that ethno-nationalists create their own identities and legitimacy by denying those of the Other.

WUC founder Erikin Alptekin was employed for 24 years by the US government's RFE/RL network, founded and staffed by former Nazi propagandists.[135]

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130 Jamelle Bouie, "Stephen Miller's Sinister Syllabus," NYT, Nov. 15, 2019; "Stephen Miller Can't Make America White. LA is Paying for His Impotent Rage," Salon, June 11, 2025; Andras Deszo, "The Roots of Orban's Strong Bond with Israel and its PM," Nov. 14, 2023, https://balkaninsight.com/2023/11/14/the-roots-of-orbans-strong-bond-with-israel-and-its-pm/.

131 Kimberly Lim, "Far-right Views in Southeast Asia? How 2 Singapore Cases May Reflect 'Anti-Woke' Movement's Slow Creep," SCMP, Feb. 17, 2024.

132 Ashley Yang, "Asians Might Vote Left, But the Model Minority Is Still Pretty Racist," Annenberg Media Center, July 11, 2015, www.neontommy.com/news/2015/07/asians-might-vote-left-model-minority-still-pretty-racist.html.

133 Tony Tulathimutte, "What Dylann Roof's Desire to Ally With 'Very Racist' Asians Actually Means," *Vice*, June 25, 2015, www.vice.com/en/article/gqmv5j/racist-like-us-what-dylann-roofs-desire-to-ally-with-the-asians-actually-means.

134 "Indira Gandhi's Assassination by Sikh Bodyguards Flaunted on a Tableau with Khalistan Flags at Sikh Parade in Canada's Brampton, Poster Says 'Revenge,'" OpIndia, June 7, 2023, www.opindia.com/2023/06/khalistanis-flaunt-indira-gandhis-assassination-on-a-tableau-in-canadas-brampton/.

135 Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: The First Full Account of America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Disastrous Effect on The Cold War, Our Domestic and Foreign Policy* (New York: Weidenfeld, 1988): 130–134; Chemical/Mind, "The Denazification That Never Happened," Dec. 15, 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRoFUSZApJo.

He succeeded his father Isa Yusuf Alptekin as the leader of global Uyghur separatism. The elder Alptekin had been aligned with Turkish fascist leader Alparsan Turkes. His National Action Party (MHP) and Grey Wolves paramilitary wing have denied the Armenian genocide, accused Armenians of wanting to destroy the Turks, and killed Kurdish activists.[136] In 2015, MHP members attacked South Korean tourists in Istanbul after they mistook them for Chinese. MHP youth groups hung banners on their headquarters buildings reading "We crave Chinese blood."[137]

Anti-Asian racism remains strong in the West, especially in the US: a 2022 poll found that 21% of Americans saw Asian-Americans as at least partially responsible for Covid-19 and only 29% of Asian Americans (vs. 61% of whites and 33% of Blacks) completely agree that they feel that they belong and are accepted in the U.S. A poll also showed that one in six Asian-Americans experienced a hate crime or incident in 2021.[138]A 2022 poll found that about one-third of Asian American had changed their daily routines to avoid being targeted by hate crimes.[139]

In Xinjiang "from 1990 to the end of 2016, there were several thousand cases of violent terrorism, and thousands of innocent people have been killed or injured."[140] Inside and outside Xinjiang and other parts of China, separatists incited and carried out mass killings, mainly of Han civilians, but also of non-separatist Uyghurs, and even of a few non-Chinese abroad.[141] According

136 Ajit Singh, "Inside the US-Backed World Uyghur Congress," Consortium News, Mar. 9, 2020, https://consortiumnews.com/2020/03/09/inside-the-us-backed-world-uyghur-congress/.

137 Ahmet Hakkan, "Koreans and Chinese 'Both Have Slanted Eyes,' Turkey's Nationalist Leader Says Over Attacks on Tourists," *Hurriyet Daily*, July 9, 2015, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/koreans-and-chinese-both-have-slanted-eyes-turkeys-nationalist-leader-says-over-attacks-on-tourists-85134.

138 "American Attitudes Towards Asian Americans in 2022," Staatus Index, 2022, https://www.staatus-index.org/; "New Survey from Momentive and AAPI Data Offers Important Correctives on Hate in America," AAPI, Mar. 16, 2022, https://aapidata.com/blog/discrimination-survey-2022/.

139 Luis Noe-Bustamante, "About a Third of Asian Americans Have Changed Their Daily Routines Out of Concer Over Threats, Attacks," Pew Research, May 9, 2022, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/05/09/about-a-third-of-asian-americans-say-they-have-changed-their-daily-routine-due-to-concerns-over-threats-attacks/.

140 "The Vocational Education and Training Centers in Xinjiang Are by No Means So-Called 'Concentration Camps,'" *International Focus Magazine*, Dec. 4, 2019, https://ifmagazine.net/the-vocational-education-and-training-centers-in-xinjiang-are-by-no-means-so-called-concentration-camps/.

141 Christian Shepherd, "China Intensifies Xinjiang Propaganda Push as Global Backlash Grows," FT, Apr. 2, 2021; "Bangkok Shrine Bombers Targeted Chinese Tourists," EJInsight, Feb. 26, 2016, www.ejinsight.com/eji/article/id/1247982/20160226-bangkok-shrine

to Zenz, the attacks outside Xinjiang "forced the government in Beijing to become more proactive or face the wrath of Chinese citizenry … The Han Chinese population would not have accepted any further attacks in mainland China. It put significant pressure on the government."[142] Zenz, who views the Chinese government as "totalitarian," unwittingly implies that it is responsive to popular demands. By claiming that the demands were only those of Han, however, he denies any agency to Uyghurs, who were also damaged by terrorism.

One objective of mass killings may have been to change the "demographic balance" in Xinjiang, by causing Han to leave Xinjiang. A separatist Uyghur writer stated, before the July 2009 Urumqi pogrom, that

> Once the civil war begins, 60% of the Han will leave Xinjiang within the first year … The Han have weapons and we will lose one to two million people. But we will have the support of the Islamic world and 150 million Turkish people.[143]

Nothing like that happened, but terrorists have repeatedly created temporary insecurity and out-migration among Han,[144] through direct action and by generating tightened security that made life more difficult for Han and minority residents.[145] After July 5, 2009, many Han fled Xinjiang and "the Han share of the permanent population in Xinjiang … began to precipitously fall."[146] Uyghurs also temporarily fled Urumqi,[147] which for a time reversed its residential desegregation. A panicked exit of Han from Xinjiang may have been the

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-bombers-targeted-chinese-tourists; Lucas Webber, "China, Xinjiang, and the Uyghurs in Global Jihadist Propaganda," *Small Wars Journal*, Jan. 17, 2021, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/china-xinjiang-and-uyghurs-global-jihadist-propaganda; Rossabi, China and the Uyghurs: 119–124.

142 James Griffiths, "Ten Years on From Kunming Attack, Terror Threat Has Receded but Crackdown on Muslims Continues Unabated," *Globe and Mail*, Feb. 29, 2024.

143 Mark O'Neill, "Uyghur Nightmare," SCMP, Sept. 10, 2009.

144 Katrin Hille, "Xinjiang Ethnic Groups United in Hostility Toward Leaders," FT, Sept. 4, 2009; "Xinjiang China Conundrum: Rise of Ethnic Tensions," *Strait Times*, July 5, 2014.

145 "As Violence Rises in Xinjiang, Han Residents No Longer Feel at Home," GT, Mar. 12, 2014; Tom Cliff, *Oil and Water: Being Han in Xinjiang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016): 197; "Xinjiang Security Crackdown Sparks Han Chinese Exodus," FT, Dec. 22, 2019; "Han Chinese Flee Xinjiang's 2d Largest City After 3 Years of Harsh Social Controls," *Taiwan News* Dec. 24, 2019.

146 McNamee, Settling for Less: 130–131.

147 "Uighurs Flee City of Strife and Opportunity," Reuters, July 11, 2009.

intent of a 2016 ISIS video in which extremist Uyghurs said they would "drown Han Chinese in a sea of blood."[148]

China's government has pursued "anti-terrorism" (反恐) and "de-extremism" (去极端化) measures. Its response to terrorism and "unrest" has not only been repression, however. That may be because the Chinese government knows, as scholars do, that "ethnic violence is positively associated with horizontal inequality, which is measured by education attainment difference between Han and the largest ethnic minority group in a prefecture" in Xinjiang.[149] There is thus also a "soft war," partly related to regional development and supported by many Uyghurs.[150] It includes a substantial expansion of employment opportunities. On average about 460,000 new jobs per year are created in Xinjiang, where the government has said it has "help[ed] over 30,000 people with employment challenges secure jobs every year."[151]

A 2022 study shows an unrest prevention motive has "increase[d] public sector employment of otherwise disenfranchised demographics." Unrest gives rise to state-subsidized expanded employment by SOEs outside Xinjiang of Uyghur men and to some extent of minorities generally, which represents an increase of such opportunities, particularly for male minorities. Increased state employment is accompanied by rising average earnings and ad hoc social relief transfers to male minorities. Private job opportunities for male Uyghurs outside Xinjiang shrink under such circumstances, however. The study shows these benefits are provided intentionally, which negates a state intent to destroy the benefitted ethnic group.[152] Providing targeted benefits to minorities differs from generally assisting economic development in a minority area which, because it attracts migrants, may not counter an attraction to terrorist groups.[153]

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148 Heberer and Schmidt-Glintzer, Jenseits von Hass und Zorn.

149 Cao Xun, et al, "Digging the 'Ethnic Violence in China' Database: The Effects of Inter-Ethic Inequality and Natural Resources Exploitation in Xinjiang," *China Review* 18:2 (2018): 121–154.

150 Liu Tianyang, *China's Soft War on Terror: Space-Making Processes of Securitization* (New York: Routledge, 2022): 90–92.

151 "Xinjiang Sees Remarkable Employment Figures," XH, Dec. 16, 20024.

152 Jaya Y. Wen, "State Employment as a Strategy of Autocratic Control in China," STEG Working Paper (2022), https://steg.cepr.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/WP020%20Wen%20StateEmploymentAsAStrategyOfAutocraticControlInChina.pdf.

153 Yin Weiwen, "Rooted in Poverty?: The Political Economy of Terrorism in Xinjiang," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 18:1 (2017): 41–66.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion: Genocide without a Doubt or Genocide as a Stratagem?

> Because genocide is the worst crime, then any atrocity that happens, anything that people think deserves some sort of extreme title, they call genocide … So, there are actually UN resolutions on war crimes and on genocide, and they define them clearly. Now, one can dispute those definitions, but those are the definitions under international law.
>
> OMER BARTOV, historian of the Holocaust, Brown University[1]

1 "The West versus the Rest" on "Uyghur Genocide"

In 2019, 21 Western states and Japan sent a letter to the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC) calling on China to end arbitrary detentions of Uyghurs. The US did not sign; it had withdrawn from the HRC in 2018, as it was to do again in 2025. Thirty-seven Global South countries, many of them mainly Muslim, responded by stating that "Faced with the grave challenge of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a series of counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers."[2]

In 2021, 43 countries, headed by France, issued a statement of concern about human rights in Xinjiang to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) 3rd Committee; 36 were Western, the others were Japan, Liberia, Eswatini, Marshall Islands,

1 "'Clear Intention of Ethnic Cleansing': Israeli Holocaust Scholar Omer Bartov Warns of Genocide in Gaza." Democracy Now, Nov. 10, 2023, https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/10/bartov_genocide_apartheid.

2 Catherine Putz, "Which Countries Are For or Against China's Xinjiang Policies?" The Diplomat, July 15, 2019, https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/which-countries-are-for-or-against-chinas-xinjiang-policies/.

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and Palau, all highly US-dependent states. Genocide was not mentioned and 54 states supported China's position on Xinjiang.[3]

In June 2022, 47, mainly Western, states condemned China over Xinjiang in the HRC. The four added countries were Andorra, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras; three were among the 13 small states worldwide that then recognized Taiwan's administration, rather than the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Western-sponsored statement again did not mention genocide.[4] At the October 2022 meeting of the UNGA's 3rd Committee, which deals with social, cultural, and humanitarian issues, there was the first Western effort in the UN after the release of the condemnatory OHCHR Xinjiang report. Three more countries joined the condemnation, but apart from Japan, the only countries outside Europe and North America were Guatemala, Belize, Palau, Nauru, Liberia, Somalia, and Eswatini, all but one of them then recognizing Taiwan.[5] A joint statement of 66 developing countries opposed the Western resolution.[6]

In October 2023, 51 countries, led by Britain, voted for the 3rd Committee to condemn China on Xinjiang. The US delegate stated that "China's Government continues to perpetrate genocide in Xinjiang." No predominantly Muslim country supported the resolution.[7] Almost all the 72 countries voting to support China were developing countries.[8]

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3 "Cross Regional Joint Statement on Xinjiang," Oct. 21, 2021, https://onu.delegfrance.org/we-call-on-china-to-allow-immediate-meaningful-and-unfettered-access-to; "Xinjiang Wins More Support," GT, Oct. 31 2019.

4 "Joint Statement on Behalf of 47 Countries in the UN Human Rights Council on the Human Rights Situation in China," Government of the Netherlands, June 14, 2022, www.government.nl/documents/diplomatic-statements/2022/06/14/joint-statement-47-countries-un-human-rights-council-situation-china.

5 US Mission to the UN, "Joint Statement on Behalf of 50 Countries in the UN General Assembly Third Committee on the Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang, China," Oct. 31, 2022, https://usun.usmission.gov/joint-statement-on-behalf-of-50-countries-in-the-un-general-assembly-third-committee-on-the-human-rights-situation-in-xinjiang-china/.

6 "The Overwhelming Majority of the United Nations Member States Oppose the Interference in China's Internal Affairs in the Name of Human Rights," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oct. 31, 2022.

7 James Kariuki, "Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang: Joint Statement at the UN Third Committee," UK Government, Oct. 18, 2023, www.gov.uk/government/speeches/joint-statement-on-human-rights-violations-in-xinjiang-at-the-un-third-committee; "Third Committee Spotlights Human Rights Abuses in Conflicts, Stressing Need to End Terrorist Attacks, Genocide, Illegal Hostage-Taking, Enforced Displacement," 3rd Committee, 78th Session, 24th and 25th Meeting, Oct. 17, 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/gashc4385.doc.htm.

8 "Developing Countries and Friendly Countries Voice Support for China's Just Position and Opposition to Interference in China's Internal Affairs Under the Pretext of Human Rights in the UN," Permanent Mission to the UN of the PRC, Oct. 17, 2023, http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/chinaandun/socialhr/3rdcommittee/202310/t20231018_11162597.htm.

In line with the racist implication that Global South leaders, in contrast to Western elites, are generally corrupt, Western commentators dismissed support for China. A prominent US writer said "Many world leaders' silence about Xinjiang has, in effect, been purchased." His evidence is that in 2021, former Pakistan PM Imran Khan stated that as to issues Pakistan has with China, it raises them behind closed doors, because China is one of Pakistan's greatest friends.[9] No mention was made of the US's ability to "purchase" support among many states.

All scholarship in China that accords with the official view on Xinjiang is also dismissed out of hand. University of Pennsylvania China specialist Neysun Mahboubi, who speaks of "China's persecution of the Uygur population in Xinjiang," has stated that "Any Chinese academic notions that are rooted in government ideology are intrinsically suspect, in my view, and one that true academics would not take seriously."[10] He does however take seriously Western "academic notions that are rooted in government ideology," as are the notions of academic or ex-academic proponents of "Uyghur genocide" such as Zenz, Roberts, van Schaak, Murphy, Leibold, etc.

In October 2024, Pakistan presented to the 3rd Committee a resolution on behalf of 80 developing countries affirming that issues affecting Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong were China's internal matters.[11] The resolution responded to 14 Western states, plus Japan that condemned China on human rights in Xinjiang and Tibet.[12] The US, UK, Australia, Germany, etc. were then arming Israel's war on Palestinians.[13] The 2024 vote was much more lopsidedly in favor of China than the vote a year earlier. As an idiom Mencius coined puts it, a just cause will enjoy more support than an unjust cause (dé dào duō zhù shī dào guǎ zhù 得道多助失道寡助).

The US government is the chief state promoter of the idea that China's government intends to destroy Xinjiang's minorities. Its highly racialized mobilization to persuade the world has had very limited success, however: UN member state votes to condemn China were 22 for, 50 against in 2019; 27–46 in

9 Michael Schuman, "The Global Outrage Machine Skips the Uyghurs," *The Atlantic*, Jan. 6, 2025.

10 Meredith Chen, "History Tells Us US-China Ties Will Survive Current Rupture: Neysun Mahboubi," SCMP, June 30, 2025.

11 "Pakistan, Speaking for 80 Countries, Says Issues like Xinjiang, Hongkong & Xizang are China's Internal Matters," *Balochistan Times*, Oct. 24, 2024.

12 "Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang and Tibet," Permanent Mission of Australia at the UN, Oct. 22, 2024, https://unny.mission.gov.au/unny/241022_UNGA79_Joint_statement_on_the_human_rights_situation_in_Xinjiang_and_Tibet.html.

13 Alex Lo, "Western Values, What Western Values?" SCMP, Nov. 11, 2024.

2020; 42–68 in 2021; 47–69 in 2022, 51–72 in 2023 and 15–80 in 2024. By region, it was the West v. the Rest; for example, in 2022, it was 2–33 in Africa, 5–9 in the Americas, 2–20 in Asia, and 4–4 in Oceania. Only in Europe did the vote go against China, 34–3. For Muslim countries, the vote was 1–37 in China's favor. Muslim countries supporting China included almost all those generally allied with the US internationally, some heavily dependent on the US economically and militarily.[14] Many such states had fought alongside the US in Iraq in 1990 and in Libya in 2011. Some later fought alongside the US in Syria and Yemen.[15] Turkey is a NATO member, but as a Turkish politics specialist noted in 2023, "we [do] not hear about the fate of the Uyghurs from the Turkish political leaders anymore."[16]

Countries representing almost half the world's population have supported China's position on Xinjiang, while countries attacking China on Xinjiang represent only a bit more than one-sixth:

> In total, 86 countries have at one point signed a joint statement supporting China's position in Xinjiang while 56 countries have at one point signed a joint statement criticizing China's position in Xinjiang. Using 2022 population estimates, the pro-China camp comprises 3.93 billion people or 49.3% of the world total (of whom 2.50 billion or 31.4% of the world total are outside China), while the anti-China camp comprises 1.26 billion people or 15.8% of the world total. In addition, some countries have separately supported or criticized China's position in Xinjiang. This raises the tally to at least 98 countries supportive of China and 57 countries criticizing China. Notably, of the 57 countries that condemned China the vast majority (44) voted *against* a resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia

14 Casey Ho-yuk Wan, "Bachelet's 'Assessment of Human Rights Concerns in Xinjiang' Risks Discrediting the OHCHR and Politicizing the Human Rights Regime," International Manifesto Group, Sept. 14, 2022, https://internationalmanifesto.org/bachelets-assessment-of-human-rights-concerns-in-xinjiang-risks-discrediting-the-ohchr-and-politicizing-the-human-rights-regime/; "In Rare Move, Apparently Under US Pressure, Israel Votes to Condemn China Abuses," *Times of Israel*, June 23, 2021.

15 Adrian Ariaratnam, "Who Knew the Seychelles Had a Navy," Dec. 22, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdUcl3Wm3Jk.

16 Nukhet Sandal, "Navigating the Uyghur Dilemma: Türkiye's Balancing Act with China," Australian Outlook, Aug. 31, 2023, www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/navigating-the-uyghur-dilemma-turkiyes-balancing-act-with-china/.

and related intolerance" at the 76th General Assembly on November 4, 2022.[17]

In the main, the states voting against China are the same "Collective West" countries that in late 2022 voted *against* the UN resolution favoring a more equitable New International Economic Order. The vote was 125 for and 50 against or states with 7 billion people for and states with 900 million against.[18] A 2023 vote in the 47-member HRC to take follow-up action on the OHCHR report had 11 countries abstain; among the 17 states in favor, all were Western or recognizing Taiwan, except Somalia. There were 19 votes against, 9 of them Muslim countries, including some US allies.[19] When, more than two years later, the US under Trump again left the HRC, ex-WUC head Dolkun Isa "condemned the declining credibility of the UNHRC."[20]

Notably, "the governments of most Muslim countries usually did not oppose or even publicly supported China's actions in Xinjiang, and many of these in fact are the USA's close allies rather than simply being 'bribed' by China's economic hegemony."[21] Indeed, Organization of the Islamic Conference representatives toured Xinjiang in 2024 and praised policies in the region.[22] Muslim support for China on Xinjiang issues has not gone unnoted even by China's separatist, US-supported, enemies. They are likely aware that this stance differs from the one taken after the Urumqi pogrom of 2009, when Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, and other Muslim states expressed sympathy for their Xinjiang co-religionists and accused China of genocide.[23]

US-based Uyghur émigré leader Nury Turkel admits that "no Muslim country, no Muslim leader, has criticized the Chinese government in the slightest."[24]

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17 "The Xinjiang Controversy at the United Nations," Qiao Collective, s.d. 2024 (?), www.qiaocollective.com/xinjiang-at-the-un.

18 Ben Norton, "West Opposes Rest of World in UN Votes for Fairer Economic System, Equality, Sustainable Development," Multipolarista, Dec. 22, 2022, https://multipolarista.com/2022/12/22/west-un-vote-economic-system-equality/.

19 UN Human Rights Council, Oct. 6, 2022, https://twitter.com/UN_HRC/status/1578003299827171330.

20 "Uyghur Activist Dolkun Isa Raises Alarm Over China's Influence on UNHRC," ANI, Feb. 26, 2025.

21 Zhang Bozhen, "An Analysis of China's Muslim-Related Policies from the Perspectives of Ethnic Heterogeneity, Sinicization and Anxiety Management," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 7:1 (2022): 45–55 (51).

22 "Delegates from Islamic Body Hail Xinjiang's Stability, Development," XH, Oct. 19, 2024.

23 Raphael Israeli, "China's Uyghur Problem," *Israel Journal of Foreign Policy* 4:1 (2010): 89–101.

24 "Nuri Turkel and the Uyghur Plight," SupChina, Oct. 11, 2018, https://supchina.com/podcast/nury-turkel-and-the-uyghur-plight/.

US-based UHRP head Omer Kanat has said "there has been no resolution of condemnation, and no official inquiry or hearing, in any Muslim-majority country" about the émigré claims.[25] That may be because émigré leaders are the US's *askaris* – native fighters in colonial armies – and because their claims are inaccurate; for example, Turkel's 2023 assertion that "Uyghur men and women detained in the camps are imprisoned for praying, attending religious weddings or visiting mosques [and] that between 2 million and 3 million Uyghurs are being held in more than 300 camps."[26]

Western critics of China have belittled Muslim countries' distrust of Western claims about Xinjiang and even asserted that whether the claims have an empirical basis is beside the point. Thus, Jonathan Eyal, International Director at the UK's corporate-sponsored defense thinktank, the Royal United Services Institute, has averred that "It does not matter whether allegations about the fate of China's Muslims are correct or false. What matters is the curious lack of interest throughout the Middle East in even examining this question." Eyal gratuitously assumes both that people in the Middle East are deliberately ignorant about Xinjiang and that the claims cannot have already been examined and found to be unproved by people in the Middle East.[27]

The lack of Muslim support for Uyghur émigré groups may also be because they seek to befriend Israel's government, while attacking the Palestinian leadership. Uyghur émigrés tout self-determination for "East Turkistan," but align themselves with the US, Israel, and five other states – Argentina, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Paraguay – that voted against a 2024 UN General Assembly resolution affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, while 172 countries voted for it.[28]

Another Muslim country that Hudayar attacks is Pakistan; his advocacy of cession of Pakistan-controlled Gilgit-Baltistan to India is likely to gain political support from the ruling rightwing BJP.[29] The BJP, in turn, is solidly pro-Is-

25 Omer Kanat, "Where Is the Outrage, and Action, in the Arab World Over China's Uyghur Genocide?" DawnMena, May 10, 2023, https://dawnmena.org/where-is-the-outrage-and-action-in-the-arab-world-over-chinas-uyghur-genocide/.

26 "Uyghur Activists: 'We will Never Forget' Jewish Support in US, UK," Jewish News Syndicate, June 13, 2023, www.jns.org/world-news/china/23/6/13/294927/.

27 "Appeal – and Realities – of China's Peace Initiatives," *Staits Times*, July 31, 2024.

28 "UN Adopts Resolution Affirming Palestinian Right to Self-determination by Overwhelming Majority," Middle East Monitor, Dec. 19, 2024, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241219-un-adopts-resolution-affirming-palestinian-right-to-self-determination-by-overwhelming-majority/.

29 "Uyghur-American Politician Calls for Enhanced Cooperation to Address Independence Struggles in China, PoGB," ANI, Aug. 10, 2024.

rael. Its members hope Israel will destroy the "Muslim terrorists," while India "continues to be an enthusiastic buyer of Israeli weapons and technology."[30] Meanwhile, in a 2024 survey, "about a third of Israeli Jews said their perception of China had turned negative from positive previously,"[31] a change likely connected to China's diplomatic opposition to the Gaza War.

Hudayar, who is also the ETGE "Foreign Minister," is an exceptional émigré rhetorical outbidder, stating in 2024 that

> At the very moment, millions of our people remain locked up in concentration camps, while millions more have been given official sentences for so-called crimes of separatism or for simply being in prisons, he said. At the same time, over 890,000 of our children are currently forcibly separated from their families and put into state-run institutions or internment camps aimed at erasing their identity and assimilating them into what is essentially so-called loyal Chinese citizens, as the Chinese government calls it … [P]racticing Islam or any other religion in the country is criminalized.[32]

A vocal critic of China in Canada has observed that "The WUC is probably the only Muslim-dominated organization in the world to stand with Israel in the Gaza conflict."[33] Western supporters of the Uyghur émigrés also recognize that "Israel has become a vocal supporter of the Uyghurs."[34] The WUC, UHRP and ETNM take pro-Israel positions while claiming to represent the whole of the Uyghur Muslim population globally. The ETGE has even bizarrely claimed that Islamists generally support China on Xinjiang issues.[35]

The émigrés are pro-Israel though the Muslims among whom 90% of diasporic Uyghurs live are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Western-based émigré groups support Israel even though Hamas, unlike the Palestine Liberation

30 Gideon Rachman, "While Europe Frets, India Expects," FT, Oct. 14, 2024.

31 Alex Lo, "Why Benjamin Netanyahu is Becoming Beijing's Best Frenemy," SCMP, Oct. 7, 2024.

32 "'The Situation in East Turkestan is a Global Concern': Foreign Minister of East Turkestan Government-in-Exile," Asian News International (ANI), Apr. 7, 2024.

33 Ng Weng Hoong, "World Uyghur Congress in a Quandary over Israel's War in Gaza," WengCouver, Mar. 14, 2024, https://wengcouver.substack.com/p/world-uyghur-council-stands-with.

34 Lachlan McNamee, "Settler Colonialism Is Not Distinctly Western or European," *Aeon*, Oct. 5, 2023, https://aeon.co/essays/settler-colonialism-is-not-distinctly-western-or-european.

35 "Uyghur-American Politician Accuses China of Exploiting Islamist Alliances to Hide Uyghur Oppression," Jagran, Sept. 3, 2024.

Organization, has reportedly supported Uyghur émigré claims against China.[36] Uyghur émigré groups are most concerned however to secure support from the US and Germany, two unconditional state supporters of Israel, and from other states that subordinate Muslims. In 2023, the Turkistan Islamic Party (*Turkistan Islam Partisi*; TIP) – "a fusion of ethno-nationalist ideology and Islamic theology,"[37] which in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria has aligned with al-Qaeda and the Taliban – said "both India and Uyghurs jointly should stop Chinese expansionism in the region."[38]

In Turkey, however, one Uyghur émigré group, the East Turkistan National Assembly, is pro-Palestine. It has been speculated that "Geopolitical considerations might be an element of their decisions; they have to keep pace with the Turkish government as refugees. However, not receiving donations from Western countries may be a more important reason for them having an independent stand towards Israel." In Malaysia, officials had accommodated Uyghur émigré groups and their local supporters. With the Gaza war however, "the Malaysian opposition [has] built up tremendous pressure on the Anwar Ibrahim government to stop patronizing the Uyghurs and even ban their activities on Malaysian soil."[39] They appear to have been successful to the extent that Anwar disputes the Uyghur genocide claim.[40]

The Uyghur émigré position on the Israel/Palestine war in 2023 reflects a common stance of ultra-right forces in the West who aspire to win or influence power by being anti-China and pro-Israel.[41] Uyghur émigré groups in the West are also like Northern Ireland Protestant loyalists, who are pro-Israel in part because Irish republicans in the north and the Republic are pro-Palestine.[42]

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36 "Palestinians May be More Accommodating Than Israelis," *The Arabian Post*, Mar. 22, 2024.

37 Andrew Mumford, "Theory-Testing Uyghur Terrorism in China," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12:5 (2018): 18–26.

38 "Al-Qaeda-Linked Uyghur Militant Group Seeks India's Help Against China Over Xinjiang: Report," *Hindustan Times*, Feb. 20, 2023.

39 Green and Debata, Why Uyghur Groups; Hew Wai Weng, "The Politics of Save Uyghur: China's 'Islamic Diplomacy' and Islamic Activism in Malayia," Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Nov. 2024, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/the-politics-of-save-uyghur-china-s-islamic-diplomacy-and-islamic-activism-in-malaysia.

40 "Pro-China Malaysian Prime Minister Denies Uyghur Genocide, Voices Support for Hamas," *Uyghur Times*, Oct. 5, 2024, https://uyghurtimes.com/pro-china-malaysian-prime-minister-denies-uyghur-genocide-voices-support-for-hamas/.

41 "Europe's Far-right Joins Rallying Cry Against Antisemitism, Unsettling Some Jews," Reuters, Nov. 16, 2023.

42 Oliver Jeffers, "An Artist Rethinks Climate Change in Words and Pictures," NYT, Oct. 6, 2024.

Uyghur émigré groups in the West consistently adopt pro-US positions and the WUC and other émigré groups also urge Germany to do for them what it has done for Ukraine in its war with Russia.[43] Because Muslims generally supports Palestinian rights while the US supports Israel, many Muslims are critical of the US. In four of the five countries that Arab Barometer surveyed from December 2023 to March 2024, fewer than one-third of respondents viewed the US favorably, while "Arab citizens' views of China have warmed in our recent surveys, reversing a half-decade trend of weakening support for China in the Arab world."[44]

An ultra-right Israeli government first joined with Western states to condemn China about Xinjiang in 2021.[45] After China refused to support Israel in its latest war with Palestinians, Israel joined with Western countries to support a resolution condemning China on Xinjiang in the 3rd Committee.[46] It also attacked China about Xinjiang during its 2024 HRC Universal Periodic Review.[47] Israeli media feature articles, including by Western politicians, that condemn China for both Xinjiang genocide and its criticism of Israel about its war in Gaza.[48]

2 The Rise and Fall of Uyghur Jihadi Salafists

UHRP head Nury Turkel's condemnation of Muslim countries resemble the laments of TIP leader and "longest-standing Uighur jihadist" "Emir Sheikh" Abdul Haq al-Turkistani. It was reported in 2024 that "The TIP has always

43 "Uyghur Congress Demands German Councilor to Raise Human Rights Issues During his Upcoming Visit to China," ANI, Apr. 10, 2024.

44 Michael Robbins, et al, "America is Losing the Arab World and China is Reaping the Benefits." *Foreign Affairs* (July/Aug. 2024); Jeremy Garlick and Anja Senz, "Choosing to Lose: How US and EU Policy Decisions Contribute to Greater Chinese Influence in the Global South," EuroHub4Sino, 2025, https://eh4sweb.blob.core.windows.net/vitrin/files%2Fchoosing-to-lose-how-us-and-eu-policy-decisions-contribute-to-greater-chinese-influence-in-the-global-south.pdf.

45 "Israel Shifts China Policy, Condemns Its Treatment of Uyghurs at UNHRC," *Jerusalem Post*, June 23, 2021.

46 "Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang: Joint Statement at the UN Third Committee," UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Oct. 18, 2023, www.gov.uk/government/speeches/joint-statement-on-human-rights-violations-in-xinjiang-at-the-un-third-committee.

47 Finbarr Bermingham, "China's United Nations Human Rights Review Puts Global Divide on Display," SCMP, Jan. 24, 2024.

48 Sergio Restelli, "China's Double Standard for Xinjiang and Gaza," *Times of Israel,* Apr. 24, 2024, https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/chinas-double-standard-for-xinjiang-and-gaza/.

been clear; the end goal independence."[49] Haq went to Afghanistan around 1997 to fight alongside the Taliban and later joined al-Qaeda in Syria. After 2001 "there is evidence that Uyghurs militants … took leadership roles in global jihadist organizations." Founded in 2006, TIP seeks to create a caliphate. It sent the Turkistan Brigade (*Katibat Turkistani*) to join with al-Qaeda in Syria. Several thousand al-Qaeda and ISIS-affiliated Uyghurs fought in Syria, with TIP the leading foreign al-Qaeda-embedded group. In Syria, TIP used child soldiers and executed Christians. It had aided the Taliban in overthrowing the US-backed Afghanistan government in 2021 and in 2024 al-Turkistani was in the Islamist stronghold in northwest Syria when the al-Assad regime fell. He stated that "the Chinese infidels will soon taste the same torment that the infidels in the Levant tasted." TIP was allied with and funded by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS; Organization for the Liberation of the Levant), the Islamist force that defeated al-Assad's regime. HTS in 2025 had hundreds of Uyghur fighters, while the Afghanistan-based ISIS-K group also recruits among Uyghurs.[50]

A late 2024 analysis noted HTS was supported by Ukraine's GUR intelligence agency, itself a "CIA project." It opined that "The possibility thus arises of the CIA using GUR as a plausibly deniable proxy for managing or at least encouraging [TIPS] expansion to the geostrategic Central Asian region between Russia and China," adding about TIP that

> The organization has a history of collaborating with terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in support of the quest to carve out a Uyghur state from China. That's why it was designated as a terrorist group by the UN Security Council. The United States removed its own such designation in late 2020 giving the reason that the group had become inactive, but now it's known that this wasn't true.[51]

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49 "Uyghur Fighters in Syria Vow to Come for China Next," *Telegraph*, Dec. 15, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DRzaZiI8_Q.

50 "Uyghur Militant Group in Syria Announces Senior Appointments, Urges Unity," BBC, Mar. 28, 2024; Tom O'Connor, "China Vows to 'Strike Down' Syria's Victorious Uyghur Rebels Threatening Xi," *Newsweek*, Dec. 13, 2024; Philip BK Potter and Chen Wang, *Zero Tolerance: Repression and Political Violence on China's New Silk Road* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 59; "New Jihadist Danger for Europe: HTS Returnees from Syria," CE Noticias Financieras, Feb. 1, 2025.

51 Andrew Korybko, "Uyghur Separatist Threat Could Reach Beyond China's Xinjiang," *Asia Times*, Dec. 17, 2024, https://asiatimes.com/2024/12/uyghur-separatist-threat-could-reach-beyond-chinas-xinjiang/.

After HTS triumphed in Syria, in line with its al-Qaeda origins, it abolished parliament and instituted many Islamist practices, including executing women for adultery, dismissing women judges, banning the theory of evolution, persecuting Christians, Alawites, and Shiites, carrying out hundreds of summary executions, etc.[52] In 2025, it was reported that TIP was "incorporated into the newly formed Ministry of Defense."[53] The new Syrian army appointed three Uyghurs as high-ranking officers. Commander of the TIP forces in Syria Abdulaziz Dawood Khudaberdi, a.k.a. Zahid, became a brigadier general; Mawlan Tarsoun Abdussamad and Abdulsalam Yasin Ahmad were made colonels. The three Uyghur Syrian army high-ranking officers were half of the foreign fighters among the 50 officers appointed.[54] Notably, "The TIP is thought to have hundreds of fighters in Syria and aims to establish an Islamic State in parts of China and central Asia."[55] Uyghur supporters of ISIS also remain in northeastern Syria.[56]

In fighting alongside al-Qaeda in Syria, TIP effectively aligned with Israel, which had aided the anti-Assad forces, including by paying the salaries of thousands of their fighters. In turn, several Syrian opposition leaders evinced support for Israel. The US had also backed Syrian rebels and, in 2021, TIP said it viewed the US as a potential ally in its battle against China.[57]

TIP has asserted that China's Muslims are sold "halal pork" and that Chinese slaughterhouses process Uyghur fetuses for consumption. A French source noted in 2017 that it

> has positioned itself at the head of the separatist cause. Dozens of attacks have been committed in its name, including the detonation of a car bomb

52 Susan Dirgham, "To the PM: the Costs of Our Gullibility and Ignorance re Syria," Pearls & Irritations, Jan. 31, 2025, https://johnmenadue.com/to-the-pm-the-costs-of-our-gullibility-and-ignorance-re-syria/.

53 Laura Zhou, "Ambassador Meets Syria's Interim President," SCMP, Feb. 23, 2025.

54 "China Concerned Over New Syrian Regime Appointing Xinjiang Uygur Militants to Top Military Posts," Press Trust of India, Jan. 9, 2025.

55 "Syria Appoints Foreign Islamist Fighters, Including Uygurs, to Military: Sources," Reuters, Dec. 31, 2024.

56 "Trump's Aid Freeze Shocks a Syria Camp Holding Families Linked to the Islamic State Group," AP, Feb. 4, 2025.

57 "Israel Giving Secret Aid to Syrian Rebels, Report Says," *Independent*, June 19, 2017; Ehud Yaari, "How Israel Lost the Syrian Civil War," Jerusalem Strategic Tribune, June, 2023, https://jstribune.com/yaari-how-israel-lost-the-syrian-civil-war/; Marissa Newman, "Syrian Opposition Activist Calls for Peace with Israel," *Times of Israel*, Apr. 19, 2014; Sheri Oz, "Fahad Almasri Offers Israel Real Peace And Middle East Stability … But…" Israel Diaries, Dec. 10, 2016, www.israeldiaries.com/fahed-al-masri-offers-israel-real-peace-middle-east-stability/; O'Connor, China Vows.

> in Tiananmen Square and a spate of stabbings in Kunming. TIP's activities have spread beyond China's borders, with the organization blamed for such attacks as a suicide bombing on the Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan, carried out on 30 August 2016.

The world was regularly informed by TIP about its intent to launch "jihad" in Xinjiang.[58] A US Defense Department Asia Center for Security Studies analyst wrote in 2020 that

> Uyghur militants have long-established, deep operational ties to al-Qaeda and the Taliban dating back to at least the early 2000's, and the groups have long expressed solidarity for the Uyghurs' cause. For example, in October 2009, following deadly riots in the Xinjiang regional capital of Urumqi, Abu Yahya al-Libi, then a prominent member of the al-Qaeda leadership, condemned China's "decades of oppression … organized cleansing and … systematic repression" of the Muslim population, and called on Uyghurs to prepare for Holy War. Similarly, in October 2016, al-Qaeda leader Aymen al-Zawahiri railed against China as an "atheist occupier" and in 2019, al-Qaeda's general command issued a statement in support of [TIP] – which is the primary Uyghur terrorist organization currently operating in Afghanistan and Syria – and called on Muslims to support their cause. ISIS has likewise urged "revenge" against China for its policies in Xinjiang, and in March 2017 released a video featuring Uyghur members of the group who vowed to return home and "shed blood like rivers" … Uyghur extremists enjoy the support of transnational jihadist groups, thanks largely to the fact that they continue to fight alongside al-Qaeda and ISIS on the battlefield.[59]

The demand of Uyghur émigrés and their Western supporters that Muslims attack China on Xinjiang issues is related to the place Xinjiang has in China's

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58 Jacob Zenn, "Nowhere to Run, Nowhere to Hide: Whither Jihadism in China?" China Brief 19:8 (2019), https://jamestown.org/program/nowhere-to-run-nowhere-to-hide-whither-jihadism-in-china/; Antoine Vaigneur-Jones, "War and Opportunity: the Turkistan Islamic Party and the Syrian Conflict," Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique, no. 7, 2017, www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/war-and-opportunity-turkistan-islamic-party-syrian-conflict-2017; Raffaelo Pantucci, "Uyghur Terrorism in a Fractured Middle East," in Michael Clarke (ed.), *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in China: Domestic and Foreign Policy Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

59 Sam Mullins, "Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific: The Year Gone by and the Road Ahead," *Security Nexus*, Jan. 24, 2020: 12–13, https://apcss.org.

Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI is China's major 21st Century global program aimed at global economic growth by increased financing and building infrastructure, creating investments, and fostering trade, mainly in and with developing countries. The Chinese government has averred that "We will work to develop Xinjiang as the core region for the Silk Road Economic Belt"[60] and much has been written about the BRI and Xinjiang,[61] in part because of Xinjiang's natural resources: it has 30%, 34%, and 40% of China's total oil, natural gas and coal,[62] although Xinjiang's power generation no long mainly relies on these fossil fuels; in 2025, renewables created 55.72% of it.[63] Xinjiang also borders Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Russia and Afghanistan, five of which have majority Muslim populations. The sanctions imposed on Xinjiang are thus imposed against a key BRI corridor.

3 Accepting or Rejecting the Uyghur Genocide Trope

Rejection by states and peoples in the Global South of the Xinjiang genocide trope does not mean it has no adherents in developing countries, but where an analysis is made, the émigré/US government position is almost always rejected. Individuals who have not carried out an analysis however will often, for political or religious reasons, merely repeat Western media; for example, Yahya Sserembaa, a research fellow at the progressive Makerere Institute of Social Research in Uganda is critical of US influence over Islamic thought in

60 "13th Five-Year Plan on National Economic and Social Development," National Development and Reform Commission, March 17, 2016, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201612/P020161207645765233498.pdf.

61 Wang Fei, et al, "Assessment of the Drivers and Effects of International Science and Technology Cooperation in Xinjiang in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative," *Sustainability* 15:2 (2023): 1497; Shafez Moli Hali, "Xinjiang and its Potential for the Belt and Road Initiative," paper, "Conference: Perspectives on Xinjiang and the Belt & Road Initiative," Islamabad, Oct. 2020, www.researchgate.net/publication/343976368; James Dorsey "A China Wins Twice Proposition: The Belt and Road Initiative," *The Paper*, February 26, 2019, www.indrastra.com/2019/02/PAPER-China-Wins-Twice-Proposition-BRI-005-02-2019-0062.html. www.researchgate.net/publication/343976368_Xinjiang_and_its_Potential_for_the_Belt_and_Road_Initiative.

62 "Investing in Xinjiang," Doing Business in China, 2024, https://www.china-briefing.com/doing-business-guide/china/where-to-invest/investing-in-xinjiang-economy-industry-trade-and-investment-profile.

63 "Mega Projects in Xinjiang Power China's Energy Transition," State Council News, May 21, 2025.

his country, but said of Xinjiang in 2023 – without providing evidence – that "China is applying genocidal policies that seek to reduce and weaken the populations of these societies and indoctrinate them with the dominant ideologies of the nation in order to dominate them without much resistance."[64]

"Global South" states have 88% of the world's people and produce 42% of global GDP.[65] Most support China's positions on international issues. A US Department of Defense-funded study of UNGA voting patterns in 1991–2020 found "Sino–Russian positions enjoy much broader global support than those of the US." States in the Group of 77 (G-77), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS are more likely to align with China and Russia than states outside these groups. NATO members are more likely to side with the US than non-NATO states.[66] An analysis for the US government-created and funded East/West Center found NATO membership correlated with voting for a HRC resolution criticizing China on Xinjiang, but participation in the China-led BRI did not correlate with voting against.[67]

In 2025, a UK journalist nevertheless proclaimed that "in 2022 most of the world was directly criticizing China for its widespread human rights abuses and forced labor camps in Xinjiang."[68] James Millward put it that there was "global outrage" about the VETCs after 2018 and "that the world would see these as concentration camps and the country's treatment of Uyghurs as crimes against humanity and genocide."[69] Asserting "Xinjiang genocide" appears then to have become so embedded in Western identity that the views of the rest of the world are of no account.

The West is also disproportionately influential in international institutions, such as the OHCHR. Craig Mokhiber, formerly OHCHR New York office director and OHCHR lawyer in Geneva and New York, has noted that the Western

64 "IUIU – Zionism, Nazism and The Intersection of The Two Genocidal Ideologies," *Public*, Nov. 30, 2023.

65 Kishore Mahbubani, "Measuring the Power of the Global South," Chatham House, Feb. 2, 2024, www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2024-02/measuring-power-global-south#:~:text=It%20is%20certainly%20true%20that,the%20West%20in%20many%20ways. Andrew Leung, "Gaza, Ukraine, TikTok: US Double Standards are Eroding its Global Power," SCMP, Feb. 22, 2024.

66 "Bloc Politics at the UN: How Other States Behave When the United States and China–Russia Disagree," *Global Studies Quarterly* 3:3 (2023): 1–11.

67 Cullen Hendrix and Marcus Nollen, "The West versus Beijing? Determinants of the UN Human Rights Council Vote (not) to Debate Human Rights in Xinjiang," East/West Center Occasional Paper, Sept. 2023, www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/west-versus-beijing.

68 Tom Jowitt, "Elon Musk Questions X's Ban In China, After TikTok Ban," Silicon.co.uk, Jan. 20, 2025.

69 James Millward, "China Revoked My Visa, and Came to Regret It," NYT, June 15, 2025.

European and Other Group (WEOG) within the UN represents states with 11% of global population, but that three of the five UN Security Council (UNSC) permanent members are in the WEOG and it has two additional elected seats on the UNSC, giving the WEOG five of the 15 UNSC seats. Moreover,

> Similar patterns of structural inequities privileging WEOG are reflected in the composition of other intergovernmental bodies as well. They are also grossly over-represented in the UN's senior management team. The post of head of political affairs is unofficially reserved for an American, as is the head of UNICEF and of the World Food Program. The head of peacekeeping is reserved for the French, and humanitarian affairs for the British. And of the 9 Secretaries-General in the organization's history, 4 have been from WEOG countries … Regardless of who occupies the rotating chair of the group, the dominant actor remains the US, the group's 'first among equals.' Even though it sometimes claims to be an "observer," the US conveniently accepts full membership when electoral slates for UN bodies are decided.[70]

To deflect charges that they are agents, dupes, or "genocide deniers," Westerners must now "renounce the Devil and all his works" on Xinjiang, as Christians committing to the church at baptism are required to do. Many Westerners do that even though they realize that an un-evidenced charge that a country and its people are committing genocide is a defamation bound to foster racism. At the same time, several European states force citizens to affirm that Communists perpetrated "genocides" against national populations: Hungary penalizes by three years in jail anyone refusing to affirm that. Lithuania's penalty is two years and Latvia's five.[71]

As of 2025, six parliaments (US, UK, France, Canada, Netherlands, and Lithuania) had made a Xinjiang genocide claim in non-binding resolutions,[72] mainly by unanimous or near-unanimous votes.[73] That likely indicates that many members who affirmed the resolutions knew little or nothing about Xinjiang and favored the measure because it was directed against China or to be

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70 Craig Mokhiber, "WEOG: The UN's Settler-Colonial Bloc," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Sept. 4, 2024.

71 Dougald Lamont, "The Problem with the Monument to Victims of Communism," CBC News, Apr. 25, 2015, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/the-problem-with-the-monument-to-victims-of-communism-1.3048558.

72 Finbarr Bermingham, "EU Lawmakers Push to Designate Human Rights Conditions in Xinjiang as 'Genocide'," SCMP, June 7, 2022.

73 Shichor, Elephant: 5.

seen as "human rights defenders." Because political and media elites generally have high opinions of their own knowledge and abilities, such votes may also reflect the Dunning-Kruger effect, a cognitive bias in which people with limited competence in a domain overestimate their abilities and "people who are overly confident or arrogant about particular topics often form opinions based on what they think they know [which] leads to the spread of false information or the rejection of rules or evidence-based policies."[74]

The "driving force behind the genocide resolutions in Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Lithuania" was IPAC, funded primarily by NED, but also by George Soros' Open Society Foundation and the pro-independence Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.[75] China has successfully opposed participation in IPAC by MPs from developing countries,[76] so that it is

> an association of politicians from 19 national parliaments (mainly the NATO countries) and the European Parliament, whose advisory team, including Mr. Zenz, has diverse connections to the CIA-related Jamestown Foundation and the CIA sister organization NED or [to the CIA] itself – [and are] like Robert Suettinger, long-time CIA employees. The organization was founded on the dubious assumption that Chinese violations of human rights deserve more attention than those of its own member states and NATO.[77]

By 2024, some 20% of the CIA's budget was devoted to China, a rise of over 200% in the past three years.[78] In 2025, new CIA director John Ratcliffe stated that China was a "once-in-a- generation challenge."[79] The CIA itself may continue to fund Uyghur émigré groups and their Western supporters if Trump's cutbacks of NED, USAID and other of the emigres' funders hold.

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74 "Unpacking the Dunning-Kruger Effect (With Examples)," Dovetail.com, Jan. 11, 2024, https://dovetail.com/research/dunning-kruger-effect-examples/.

75 Andrew Sharp, "Inside IPAC, The Global Legislatory Alliance Taking on China," Nikkei, Apr. 27, 2023; Alex Lo, "Denying Anti-China MP Entry May be Bad Press but Perfectly Justified," SCMP, Apr. 19, 2025.

76 Shewta Sharma, "China's 'Interference' Blamed on Resignation of Solomon Islands Minister from Group Critical of Beijing," *The Independent*, May 12, 2025.

77 Bucklers, China, Xinjiang.

78 "CIA Director Bill Burns and MI6 Chief Richard Moore Talk to FT Editor Roula Khalaf," FT, Sept. 5, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp5PeoAW6mI.

79 Liang Xinlu, "What Ideology Means to Trump and His Team in the US' Competition with China," SCMP, Jan. 24, 2025.

Canada's parliament shows how Western legislatures may reach their conclusions about Xinjiang. It held hearings addressed only by Uyghur émigré spokespeople, some of them NED-funded, and by politicians allied with such groups.[80] Canada's parliament is also distinct however, in having recently honored a Nazi. Ukrainian SS-man Yaroslav Hunka received two standing ovations in Canada's House of Commons in 2023, with PM Justin Trudeau and visiting Ukrainian PM Volodymyr Zelensky participating.[81] On the other hand, Canada's Conservative Party dismissed one of its own 2025 election candidates for saying about Xinjiang, in 2021, "So what the Chinese government is saying (is) they're trying to educate people not to have radical views and, because it's a core region, they're trying to give them skills to have jobs, to … not have radicalized thoughts or that kind of thing to prevent terrorists."[82] Even relaying China's view on Xinjiang is unacceptable to a major Canadian party.

As of 2025, the US government was still the only one that officially endorses the genocide claim. In 2024, the new UK government declined to do so, speaking only of "repression" against Uyghurs.[83] That "repression" was put as "China continues to persecute and arbitrarily detain the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities."[84] Both the "leftist" *Guardian* and rightist *Daily Mail* newspapers criticized the Labour Party government for failing to pronounce a Xinjiang genocide.[85] That stance evinces the media's reflexive belief in Western institutions, which had caused Malcolm X to comment that "If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."[86]

Even the US's close ally Japan does not endorse the genocide claim. It is one of 42 countries that have not ratified the Genocide Convention, all of them in

80 Aidan Jonah, "Meet the Canada-Based, NED-Funded Group Driving the Debunked Xinjiang Genocide Narrative in Canada," Canada Files, Jan. 26, 2022, www.thecanadafiles.com/articles/meet-the-canada-based-cia-front-funded-group-fiercely-driving-the-debunked-xinjiang-genocide-narrative-in-canada.

81 "Canadian Parliament Gives WWII Nazi Standing Ovation," Al-Jazeera, Sept. 22, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7sFxJbcYvg.

82 Raisa Patel, "Pierre Poilievre Says Willingness to Quickly Drop Problematic Candidates Sets Him Apart from Mark Carney," *Toronto Star*, Apr. 3, 2025.

83 Dominic Penna, "David Lammy 'Breaks Promise' by Failing to Accuse China of Genocide," *Telegraph*, Aug. 20, 2024.

84 "No 10 Declines to Say Whether China Committing Genocide," *Telegraph*, Oct. 18, 2024.

85 Kumail Jeffers, "Lammy 'Goes Soft' on China Genocide Before Beijing Visit," *Scottish Daily Mail*, Oct. 18, 2024; Eleni Courea, "Labour Backtracks on Push for genocide ruling on China's treatment of Uyghurs," *Guardian*, Oct. 18, 2024.

86 "Malcolm X on Racism, Capitalism and Islam," Al-Jazeera, Feb. 21, 2022.

Africa, Asia and the Americas.[87] A Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs official has also cited a lack of information to determine whether genocide has taken place.[88] Japan, moreover, "does not have a legal system that serves as a basis for imposing sanctions on the grounds of human rights violations."[89]

In Germany, another close US ally, the Bundestag [parliament] Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid's hearing on Xinjiang in May 2021 concluded that genocide could not be regarded as proven. A German China specialist noted that Zenz had said Xinjiang's minority population grew by almost 20% in 2010–2018, while Germany's population grew less than 2%. In 2019, Xinjiang's birthrate at 8.14 per 1,000 was somewhat below Germany's 9.4, but "the birth rate in Shanghai is even lower [7.2] and nobody there would accuse the Chinese government of planning a genocide."[90] By 2024, Germany's birth rate was 8.1, the same as Xinjiang's in 2019; the 2024 Shanghai birthrate was 4.75, a 34% drop in four years.[91]

As for the OHCHR's report alleging forced sterilizations and abortions, Renmin University professor Shi Yinhong has noted that "This report was not produced by the UN; rather, it was the human rights commissioner's own report."[92] In fact, it was the report of the OHCHR, where there may have been forces that preferred the "campaigning and condemning" approach of Bachelet's predecessor to Bachelet's "engagement and diplomacy."[93] China issued a lengthy countering report to OHCHR's assessment.[94] Mainstream Western media ignored that riposte.

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87 "The Genocide Convention," Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, 2022, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide-convention.shtml.

88 "Why is Japan Cautious About Taking Stance on Alleged Uyghur Human Rights Abuse by China?" *Mainichi*, Mar. 17, 2021, https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210316/p2a/00m/00p/019000c.

89 "Government's Crackdown on Uyghurs 'Not Recognized as Genocide,'" *Mainichi*, Jan. 26, 2021, https://mainichi.jp/articles/20210126/k00/00m/010/145000c; "Domestic Law Blocks Government on Genocide Pact," Japan News, May 11, 2021.

90 Bucklers, China Xinjiang.

91 "Birth Rate in Germany from 1990 to 2024," Statista, May 7, 2025, www.statista.com/statistics/1584343/birth-rate-per-thousand-inhabitants-germany/; "Usual Residence: Birth Rate Shanghai," CEIC, 2025, www.ceicdata.com/en/china/population-prefecture-level-city-usual-residence-natural-growth-rate/cn-population-usual-residence-birth-rate-shanghai.

92 Mimi Lau and Jane Cai, "UN's Xinjiang Human Rights Report Expected to Further Strain Relations Between China and West," SCMP, Sept. 1, 2022.

93 Yuan Yan and Henry Foy, "UN Human Rights Agency Wracked by Internal Conflict Over Uyghur Report," FT, Sept. 15. 2022.

94 Fight Against Terrorism.

4 Weasel Words about Xinjiang

Shi Yinhong has also noted the OHCHR report used words like "may have" and "potential" and "possibly," so that "These allegations remain just that, allegations."[95] That is what Western reports that make charges against China and Chinese typically do; for example a 2024 Canadian government report claimed interference by China in Canada's 2019 and 2021 elections. It phrased its assertions in terms of "may have," "potentially," "reasonable possibility" etc.[96]

Zenz also frames his assertions by using modal auxiliary verbs, such as "might," "could," "may" – words "used to show possibility, necessity, willingness, or capability."[97] This phrasing is indeterminate by design, to imply plausibility; for example, a UK conservative newspaper's journalist wrote of "goods possibly made by forced labour in Xinjiang,"[98] rather than "allegedly made." Such framing employs tergiversating "weasel words" that appear to make statements cautious or ambiguous even though modals should indicate uncertainty, often only possibility. Zenz's *conclusions*, however, are certainties that major crimes are being committed in Xinjiang; for example, in 2025, despite failing to show any actual cases of forced labor, Zenz said Xinjiang "currently operates the world's largest system of state-imposed forced labor."[99]

Zenz is not the only one employing this rhetorical stratagem. Amy Lehr, a human rights program director at the US government-related CSIS, has stated labor programs in Xinjiang are embedded in poverty alleviation, but that given tight control, "'we have to *assume* for the moment that there's a very significant *risk* of coercion'" and that forced labor could arise "even if the coercion is implicit or the programs offered workers a decent income." Darren Byler has said that "There is a great deal of pressure placed on individuals to sign work contracts" and "many [Xinjiang] residents *believed* that resisting work transfers could prompt detention. 'The threat of the camps hangs over everyone's heads, so there is really no resistance to assigned factory work.'" A *New York Times* article featured a Kazakhstan citizen who said his wife "spent a year in an indoctrination camp and in [2019] was sent to work at a clothing factory for

95 Dayle Edwards, "Italian Former Official: Xinjiang Genocide Allegations Unfounded," YouTube, Sept. 3, 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6BD4lWdUd4.

96 Marie Josee Hogue, "Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions," Foreign Interference Commission, May 3, 2024, https://foreigninterferencecommission.ca.

97 "Modal Auxiliary Verbs: Definition & Examples," Study.com, 2024.

98 Cindy Yu, "The UK's New China Policy is the Same Old Claptrap," *The Times*, June 29, 2025.

99 Jasmine Malik Chua, "How Will Chinese Tariffs Impact Forced Labor Enforcement?," *Sourcing Journal*, Feb. 7, 2025.

three months." He added that "his wife had no choice but take the job. 'After being released, you need to work according to their policies.'" No evidence of the veracity of this hearsay was adduced.[100]

Verbal sleights of hand like these allow Zenz, Lehr, Byler and the *New York Times* to speculate that there is forced labor without showing actual cases of coercion. Instead, they express certitude that forced labor exists in Xinjiang, thus exemplifying the Chinese idiom of "spouting roadside gossip" (dào tīng tú shuō 道听途说).

5 The VETC Strategy and Terrorism

China's main rebuttal about the VETCs has been that they were needed to combat terrorism and were effective. Several scholars at the US's University of Missouri argued in 2019 that China's internal security strategy in Xinjiang was premised on

> its desire to prevent terrorism from diffusing into China via radicalized transnational Uyghur networks, particularly those with links to terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, Syria, and the broader Middle East … [In] 2014–2016, the CCP appears to have concluded that China's Muslim population was broadly vulnerable to infiltration and 'infection' from transnational jihadist networks, and that the primary vector for potential infection was the Uyghur diaspora's increasing contact with militant groups in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The researchers, citing many sources, noted "The recent publication of leaked internal documents on CCP actions in Xinjiang appears to confirm the importance of terrorism in the minds of senior party leaders including Xi Jinping." They also observed that "Beijing's current policy would be a costly one to pursue without any genuine belief in the presence of a security threat."[101] The implication is that there was a legitimate reason for the VETCs that had nothing to do with the intention to commit "cultural genocide," force assimilation, etc.

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100 Chris Buckley and Austin Ramzy, "Inside China's Push to Turn Muslim Minorities into an Army of Workers," NYT, Dec. 30, 2019.

101 Sheena Chestnut Greitens, et al, "Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression," *International Security* 44:3 (2019/2020): 9–47.

In a 2018 study of China's ongoing anti-religious extremism campaign, a Western Xinjiang specialist averred that with the CCP's penetration into heavily-Uyghur southern areas, "Xinjiang is likely to see more violent disturbances, not fewer" because of resentment of the intrusiveness of the measures undertaken.[102] A 2019 study, by a senior analyst at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, stated that "By reportedly sending Xinjiang's Muslim population to 'vocational education centres,' China's attempts to 'prevent extremism' may lead to a resurgence of ethnic unrest in Xinjiang."[103] Since February 2017 and as of 2025, neither violent disturbances nor other signs of ethnic unrest have been apparent in Xinjiang.[104] Though intrusive, VETCs and other measures may have had their intended effect of significantly mitigating extremism and terrorism.

Anti-religious extremism efforts may also enable Xinjiang Muslims to reject some views commonly found in Muslim countries that are anti-science or anti-woman. Pakistani sociologist Riaz Hasan conducted a survey among a cross-section of Muslims in Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Egypt asking whether respondents agreed with several statements. One was whether they believed that Darwin's Theory of Evolution "could not possibly be true." In five of the countries, 52–61% agreed, while in Iran the question could not even be asked because it might offend religious sensibilities. In Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic, only 14% of Muslim respondents agreed, however. Another statement was "if men are not in charge of women, women will lose sight of all human values and the family will disintegrate." Proportions of respondents who agreed – including women – were Turkey 29%, Kazakhstan 36%, Iran 49%, Pakistan 65%, Indonesia 72%, Malaysia 75%, and Egypt 86%.[105]

A 2022 study at Indonesia's Universitas Muhammadiya stated, "Although Uyghur separatist groups and Islamic radicalism are more vocal and visible, they are becoming weaker, not stronger."[106] Yet, for a quarter-century before then, the University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database (GTD) lists 135

102 Jones, China's Approach: 69.

103 Nodirbek Soliev, "Uyghur Violence and Jihadism in China and Beyond," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 11:1 (2019): 71–85.

104 "Xinjiang Overcomes Terrorism, Prospers," CD, Aug. 19, 2022.

105 Riaz Hasan, *Inside Muslim Minds* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006).

106 Emil Hikmawan and Surwandono "Uyghur Separatism Based on Imam Al-Ghazali's As-Syaukah Perspective," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 9:11 (2022): 89–106.

attacks and 767 fatalities from Xinjiang terrorism, with most victims Uyghurs.[107] According to GTB data, from April 1996 to June 2001, when Jiang Zemin was President, there were 64 terrorist attacks involving Xinjiang; between July 2001 and October 2012, while Hu Jintao was President, there were 18 attacks; and from November 2012 to June 2017, during the presidency of Xi Jinping, there were 61 attacks.[108] Writing in 2014, a US government-connected security analyst stated that "ethno-nationalist Uyghur extremists have shifted their tactics to include more bombings and wider-scale, more-public attacks."[109]

The number of attacks and deaths from these attacks may be a large underestimate, however. The GTD figures derive from public sources, while the Chinese government claims "Incomplete statistics show … thousands of terrorist attacks from 1990 to 2016."[110] Indeed, two China specialists in the US, discussing terrorist violence in Xinjiang, have stated that in 2014 alone there were "240 fatal mass attacks."[111] Scholars interviewed in Xinjiang in 2023 averred that the number killed by terrorists was likely in the low thousands and even Western analysts sympathetic to the Uyghur émigrés speak of "serious transnational terrorism" in Xinjiang.[112]

Xinjiang terrorist attacks in Xinjiang were also part of a larger onslaught of jihadi Salafist killings. According to rightwing French think tank Fondation pour L'innovation Politique (Foundation for Political Innovation; Fondapol), there were 48,035 "Islamic terror attacks" between 1979 and 2021, inflicting 210,000 deaths. Islamism accounted for >60% of the terrorist attacks in the world. Almost 90% of attacks were in mainly Muslim countries, so most of the dead were Muslims. Europe, the Americas, and Oceania were sites for just 2.4%

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107 [Results for Xinjiang], Global Terrorism Database, 2022, www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&search=xinjiang&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=1&count=20#results-table; Michael Clarke, "Settler Colonialism and the Path Toward Cultural Genocide in Xinjiang," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 13:1 (2021): 9–19; Wan, Bachelet's.

108 See Giulia Sciorati *"Rooting Out Resistance in Uyghur Society": The Making of China's Counterterrorism Policy in Xinjiang (1996–2017)*, PhD diss. University of Trento, 2020: 93, 137, 187.

109 Julia McClenon, "Pounding on the Detonator: How China Is Radicalizing Its Own Uyghur Population," CTX 4:3 (2014): 34–50, https://globalecco.org/ctx-vol.-4-no.-3-august-2014.

110 "The 60th Press Conference of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Xinjiang-related Issues in Beijing," Nov. 17, 2021, http://be.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zt/xinjiangEN1/202112/t20211220_10471909.htm.

111 Li Xiaobing and Patrick Fuliang Shan, "Introduction: Beijing's Dream and Ethnic Reality," in Li and Shan, *Ethnic China: Identity Assimilation and Resistance* (Lanham: Lexington, 2015): XI–XXVII (XIV).

112 Matthew Wilson, "Chinese Uyghurs: International Terrorists or a Terrorized Minority," Australian Outlook, Apr. 23, 2019, www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/chinese-uyghurs-international-terrorists-or-terrorised-minority/.

of the deaths from Islamist terrorism. Of the total deaths, the Taliban killed in terrorist attacks 69,303 people, the Islamic State 58,632, Boko Haram 25,719, and Al-Qaeda 14,359. These four groups, three of which have had Uyghur jihadi participants, together accounted for 80% of the deaths caused by Islamist terrorism globally. The peak year for Islamist terrorist attacks in the world was 2014, with >28,000 deaths in that year alone. The Fondapol tally excluded "Islamist terrorist attacks perpetrated in countries with a non-Muslim majority where Muslim populations are concentrated in certain provinces"; for example, Kashmir. It thus excluded Xinjiang.[113]

The GTD coverage of China shows that "in recent decades, most terrorist attacks occurred in Xinjiang and those outside Xinjiang have linkages to alleged Uyghur separatists and terrorists, formerly called Eastern Turkistan Independent Movement, now called another name, Turkestan Islamic Party."[114] The greatest upsurge of terrorism was from 2010 to 2014 and resulted in 494 deaths, according to Germany's Mercator Institute for China Studies (Merics).[115] An AP journalist has said of terrorism in Xinjiang that "Hundreds of innocent civilians, both Han Chinese and Uyghur, perished in increasingly deadly attacks."[116]

China's government stated in 2019 that "Since 2014, Xinjiang has destroyed 1,588 terrorist groups, arrested 12,995 terrorists."[117] In comparison, in the 25-year period of domestic political terrorism in the US before 2022, right-wing extremists killed 320 people and anti-fascists killed one person. The US population is 13 times that of Xinjiang's, but a much lower level of killing in the US than in Xinjiang caused great concern about the rise of far-right terrorism in the US.[118]

Islamist forces affiliated with terrorist groups are implacably violent, as was shown by those in Libya who were released from prison by Qaddafi's regime

113 Dominique Reynie (ed.) "Islamist Terrorist Attacks in the World, 1979–2021," Fondapol, Sept. 2021: 6–7, 35, www.fondapol.org/app/uploads/2021/09/fondapol-study-islamist-terrorist-attacks-in-the-world-1979-2021-11-2021.pdf.

114 Yan Rui, "Have China's Anti-Terrorism Approaches been Successful in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR)?" MA thesis, Macquarie University, 2019: 23, https://scholar.archive.org.

115 Hynes, Most Heinous.

116 Dake Kang, "Terror and Tourism: Xinjiang Eases Its Grip, But Fear Remains," *Boston Globe*, Oct. 10, 2021.

117 Nectar Gan, "China Says it Has Arrested 13,000 'Terrorists' in Xinjiang as it Seeks to Justify Internment Camps for Muslims," SCMP, Mar. 18, 2019.

118 Luke Mogelson, *The Storm is Here: An American Crucible* (New York: Penguin, 2022); Rachel Kleinfeld, "The Rise of Political Violence in the United States," *Journal of Democracy* 32:4 (2021): 160–176; Arie Perliger, *American Zealots: Inside Right-wing Domestic Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

and initiated violence that led to tens of thousands of deaths and the shattering of Libya as a country.[119] An international law specialist has commented that "China might argue that the strict discipline in Xinjiang in fact saves lives as it is intended to root out extremism and deter future terrorism."[120] At any rate, many asserted genocides are related to suppression of terrorism and armed insurgency. Some have argued that most actual genocides have that origin and that huge slaughters of civilians always result from counter-insurgencies.[121] China did not take that route in fighting terrorism in Xinjiang: no large-scale massacres occurred, yet China's approach did end terrorist attacks.[122]

Xinjiang officials were concerned also that Islamist groups such as Hizb utl-Tahrir were engaged in widespread infiltration activities in the region.[123] As of 2023, the Uyghur-based, separatist ETIM, which has been in neighboring Afghanistan since the early 1990s, had "hundreds of members active in the provinces of Badakhshan, which partly borders Xinjiang. It is also present in Faryab and Nuristan provinces, as well as the capital Kabul."[124] Uyghur émigrés and their Western supporters however deny that mass murders of civilians in Xinjiang and other parts of China by armed separatists are even criminal acts, let alone terrorism. For example, Michael Clarke casts such acts as "terrorism" in quotation marks.[125]

China's leaders could regard the attacks as terrorism or an armed conflict where international law allows the "just use of force" (*jus ad vim*).[126] In any case, their response was not harsher than that of the US after Germany's defeat in World War II. From May 1945, the 5,000-strong Werewolf force of Hitler Youth and SS-men launched attacks that killed several dozen US troops and many more non-US Western soldiers. Allied reprisals killed 3,000–5,000

119 Alan Kupferman, "Did R2P Foster Violence in Libya?" GSAP 13:2 (2019): 38–57.

120 Slawotsky, Is China Guilty: 632.

121 Davis Larkin, "Slaughter Strategy: On Genocides' Calculated Origins," 2019, *Chicago Journal of Foreign Policy*, https://chicagoforeignpolicy.wordpress.com/2019/01/20/slaughter-strategy-on-genocides-calculated-origins/.

122 Vanessa Cai, "Deadly Moscow Shooting Leaves China's Internet Divided on Need for Tighter Security Measures as Country Seeks to Open Up," SCMP, Mar. 26, 2024.

123 Frederick DeJong, *Uyghur Texts in Context: Life in Shinjiang Documented from Public Spaces* (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 140–143.

124 Amy Chew, "Why ISIS Offshoot is Still a Threat for China's Businesspeople in Afghanistan," SCMP, Jan. 9, 2023.

125 Michael Clarke, "Dizzy with Success: Xi Consolidates Repression in Xinjiang," The Interpreter, July 26, 2022, www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/dizzy-success-xi-consolidates-repression-xinjiang.

126 Paolo Salomon, "Counterterrorism Uses of Force: the Laws of War and Jus Ad Vim," *Santa Clara Journal of International Law* 22:2 (2024): 118–163.

Germans and by late 1945, the US had also put more than 100,000 Germans into detention camps. Collective punishments, fines, and curfews continued in West Germany until 1948.[127]

The Human Rights Committee oversees the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It stated in 2018, when the VETCs were in full swing, that parties to the treaty must "take adequate preventive measures in order to protect individuals against reasonably foreseen threats of being murdered or killed by criminals and organized crime or militia groups, including armed or terrorist groups."[128] Measures implemented then and later and described by Xinjiang's government as "law-based deradicalization efforts and the fight against terrorism," were said by it in 2023 to have increased "the public's sense of security" to 99.1%, from 87.5% in 2012.[129]

The OHCHR report does not condemn the VETCs per se, as international law does not forbid non-discriminatory de-radicalization measures. Thus, alongside "hard" measures such as killings and imprisonments, there are "'soft' counterterrorism programs [that] seek to undo the radicalization process by engineering the individual's return to moderate society, usually by providing them with a stable support network, probing their original reasons for radicalizing, and divorcing them from their extreme beliefs and social contacts."[130] De-radicalization measures may even intrude on key rights; for example, some Western countries criminalize apologies for terrorism.[131] The OHCHR report however ignores Chinese government arguments that the VETCs played a role in vindicating the human right to be free of murderous terrorist attacks.

The OHCHR report also ignored the Chinese state's vindication of the right to development in Xinjiang, a right within the UN's purview.[132] Chinese inter-

127 Mark Felton, "SS Werewolf: The True Story," May 28, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBv1SHjqd1Q; Perry News Network, "Iraqi Insurgents, 'Werewolves' and the Uses of History," History News Network, 2007, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/41908.

128 "Human Rights Committee General Comment no. 36, 2018," in *Reporting Under the International Convention for the Protection of All from Enforced Disappearance: Training Guide* (New York, OHCHR, 2022): 23.

129 "Pursuing Advancement," *Beijing Review*, Mar. 21, 2024.

130 "A New Approach? De-Radicalization Programs and Counter-Terrorism," International Peace Institute, 2010, www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/a_new_approach_epub.pdf.

131 Stephen Sawyer and Roman Zinigrad. "De-Radicalization and Integration in France: Legal & Policy Framework," American University of Paris. 2021, https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04471780v1/document.

132 "Declaration on the Right to Development," UN General Assembly Resolution 41/128, Dec. 4, 1986, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/DeclarationRightDevelopment_en.pdf: Bayraq, Xi's 'Hard-won' Stability.

national law professors have argued that "Chinese counterterrorism criminal laws are not more repressive in nature than other countries laws" and that "In engaging with prevention, China has therefore aligned itself with the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy." Successful counterterrorism activities, on balance, can potentially have a positive effect on human rights, while "sweeping, preventive and repressive" measures are "a common 'counterterrorism' challenge in almost all countries."[133]

US media and official sources have noted that thousands of Uyghurs have fought with ISIS, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Southeast Asia.[134] A rightwing US think tank has said "Xinjiang has supplied the highest number of foreign ISIS fighters from any country of the world outside of Tunisia and Saudi Arabia."[135] A UK journalist has written that "There has indeed been a history of terrorism by Islamic and nationalist extremists among the Uyghurs. It is estimated as many as 5,000 went to join Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, making the Uyghurs one of the biggest contingents of foreign fighters in ISIS."[136]

The routes of Uyghur jihadis going to Syria through Southeast Asia are now well-known.[137] Essays, including an analysis in a Jamestown Foundation publication where several of Zenz's works have appeared, showed ISIS and al-Qaeda's interest in promoting Xinjiang terrorism.[138] The Jamestown Foundation, by the way, was set up with the help of CIA Director William Casey and has had as leaders ex-CIA Directors James Woolsey and Michael Hayden, CIA Special Activities Division member Michael Vickers, retired Air Force General Robert

133 Cai Congyan and Wang Yifei, "China and International Terrorism Law," in Ignacio de la Rasilla and Cai Congyan (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of China and International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2024): 219–237.

134 Colin Clarke and Paul Rexton Kan, "Uighur Foreign Fighters: An Unexamined Jihadist Challenge," *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies* 8:5 (2017); "Turkey Turns Down Citizenship for Some Uyghurs," VOA, Mar. 16, 2022, www.voanews.com/a/turkey-turns-down-citizenship-for-some-uyghurs/6488401.html; Jeremy Page, "Over 100 Chinese Fighters Have Joined Islamic State in Syria," WSJ, July 25, 2016; "Why China's Bet In Syria Has Failed, What Are Beijing's Main Concerns After Assad's Fall?" News18, Dec. 23, 2024.

135 Mahmut, Controlling Religious Knowledge.

136 John Simpson, "Behind Xi Jinping's Great Wall of Iron," *New Statesman*, Feb. 16, 2022.

137 Lu Xiaoyu, "How Jihadists Travel: The Clandestine Migration of Chinese Transnational Fighters to Syria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 48: 6 (2025): 654–673.

138 Animesh Roul, "Al-Qaeda and Islamic State Reinvigorating East Turkistan Jihad," *Terrorism Monitor* 17:10 (May 17, 2019), https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaeda-and-islamic-state-reinvigorating-east-turkistan-jihad/; see also Lucas Webber, "China, Xinjiang, and the Uyghurs in Global Jihadist Propaganda," *Small Wars Journal*, Jan. 17, 2021, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/china-xinjiang-and-uyghurs-global-jihadist-propaganda.

Spalding, and former Vice President Dick Cheney. It has been funded by several major neocon foundations.[139]

US Xinjiang specialist Sean Roberts has interviewed Uyghurs with combat experience in Syria. He has said that "that they are just waiting for somebody to organize a group with a viable plan to attack China."[140] Reportedly in 2016, there were 2,000–2,500 Uyghur ETIM-organized fighters allied with al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's Syrian branch and 500–1,000 serving with ISIS in northern Syria. That is a very disproportionate number of the ISIS's "foreign terrorist fighters" (FTF): from 2013–2019, 53,000 foreigners – men, women and children from 80 countries – went to Iraq and Syria to be with ISIS.[141] A 2016 study of 3,500 FTF from 60 countries in ISIS found that 114 (3.25%) came from Xinjiang, yet the Uyghur population is less than 1% of the world Muslim population.[142] In 2017, Israeli intelligence said 3,000 Uyghur fighters were in Syria and the latter's ambassador to China put the number at 5,000 fighters, but that with family members, there might be three to four times that.[143] A Uyghur émigré scholar in Canada has also noted the "reality that many Uyghurs have been attracted to some radical groups like ISIS."[144]

Reviewing Roberts' book, Columbia University China specialist Andrew Nathan stated that "tens of thousands [of Uyghurs] have join[ed] jihadis in Syria."[145] A UN Security Council report has said Uyghur émigré groups in Turkey, where about 60% of Uyghurs outside China live,[146] are the main recruitment source for jihadi organizations. The "Uyghur foreign fighters have been

139 Hunter Wiand, "An Old Enemy: The Regressive Tendencies of American Foreign Policy," Georgetown Environmental Law Review, Jan. 4, 2022, www.law.georgetown.edu/environmental-law-review/blog/an-old-enemy-the-regressive-tendencies-of-american-foreign-policy/.

140 Sean Roberts, *The War on the Uyghurs: China's Internal Campaign Against a Muslim Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020): 242.

141 Tanya Mehra, et al, "Trends in the Return and Prosecution of ISIS Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the United States," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Aug. 29, 2023. https://icct.nl/publication/trends-return-and-prosecution-isis-foreign-terrorist-fighters-united-states.

142 Nate Rosenblatt, "All Jihad is Local: What ISIS' Files Tell Us About Its Fighters," New America Foundation (July 2016), https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/ISIS-Files.pdf.

143 Greitens, Counterterrorism: 35.

144 Haytham Mouzahem, "Uighur 'Jihadis' Role in Syria War," News, *The Levant News*, (April 19, 2016), http://the-levant.com/chinese-uighur-jihadis-play-a-significant-role-insyria-war/; "Syria Says Up to 5,000 Chinese Uighurs Fighting in Militant Groups," Reuters, May 8, 2017.

145 Andrew Nathan, *Foreign Affairs*, Feb. 16, 2021, foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2021-02-16/war-uyghurs-chinas-internal-campaign-against-muslim-minority.

146 Schneider, She Exposed.

particularly praised by jihadi networks for their commitment to raising young fighters." Turkey's government allegedly recruited Uyghur jihadis to go with their families to Idlib, Syria, so that the Uyghur population there numbered about 20,000. The Uyghur jihadis forcibly displaced locals and persecuted Christians, aiming to establish a "Turcic colony" that Turkey would annex.[147] Since 2015, when HTS and its Uyghur émigré allies took over Idlib, women have had to cover their hair; many now wear fully veiling niqab.[148]

Ironically however, Turkey, like Kazakhstan, has endorsed China's stance on Xinjiang issues.[149] President Recep Tayyip Erdogan asserted after the July 5, 2009, Urumqi pogrom that there was a "genocide" against Uyghurs. At least since 2015, however, he has opposed Uyghur separatism, spoken of "Ankara's belief that Uyghurs have full rights in China" and noted Turkey's "respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity." At the same time, some prominent Erdogan supporters do endorse Uyghur separatism, but "the purpose of such activity is to achieve a certain effect in domestic politics."[150]

Many terrorists circulate between battlefields abroad and shelter in their home country, but since 2017 that has been less possible for Uyghur "foreign fighters."[151] Terrorism experts suggest that China's actions in Xinjiang "have made it too difficult for militants to recruit from China."[152] The diminished ability of terrorists to operate in Xinjiang may have also mitigated terrorism outside China. Thus,

147 Steven Sahiounie, "From Idlib to Xinjiang: Uyghur Fighters Trained for Terror," 21st Century Wire, Sept. 26, 2018, https://21stcenturywire.com/2018/09/26/from-idlib-to-xinjiang-uyghur-fighters-trained-for-terror/; Carl Zha, "Uyghur Fighters In Syria to Fight China," Silk and Steel, Dec. 22, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jOmHjVxq.

148 Damien Willey, "Bombshell: Shift in Syria Leaves US in a Panic," KernowDamo, Jan. 15, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfLMheBWnP4.

149 Dang Yuanyue, "China Finds Foreign Support for Xinjiang Policies as Region Seeks to Boost Economic Ties," SCMP, Apr. 11, 2024.

150 Zuzanna Kryzanowska, "On the Trail of the Grey Wolf: Pan-Turkism in Turkey's Foreign Policy," Center for Eastern Studies, May 17, 2024, www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2024-05-17/trail-grey-wolf-pan-turkism-turkeys-foreign-policy#_ftnref6.

151 Mehmet Soylemez, "Turkey-China Relations in the 21st Century: from Enhanced to Strategic Partnership," PhD diss. Hong Kong Baptist University, 2017: 342, https://scholars.hkbu.edu.hk/files/55026553/OA-0362.pdf; Pinar Temblay, "New UN Report on Islamic State Gives Ankara Another Headache," Al-Monitor, Aug. 12, 2021, www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/08/new-un-report-islamic-state-gives-ankara-another-headache.

152 Maria Siow, "Why is ISIS Silent on China's Uygur Muslims, When US Alleges Genocide?" SCMP, Jan. 27, 2021; "Turkish Pro-Government Pundit Accuses US of 'Exploiting' Uyghur Issue," BBC, June 12, 2024.

> From the perspective of the authorities, the political re-education camps, the mass monitoring of Uighurs, and other security measures have therefore been effective. This has made the TIP not only less relevant in its bases far away from China's borders in Syria, but also has left the group literally calling for help from the global jihadist community out of desperation for its circumstances.[153]

6 Use and Abuses of "Uyghur Genocide"

Although the OHCHR assessment did not even mention the term "genocide" it will likely be used in propaganda campaigns to support the claim, which are part of wider disinformation efforts. A week before the report was issued, Stanford University's Internet Observatory and Graphika, a New York-based network analytics firm, released a study of a pro-US/Western influence operation covering Central Asia and the Middle East, based on account data provided by Twitter and Meta. The report said that "[An] interconnected web of accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and five other social media platforms … used deceptive tactics to promote pro-Western narratives in the Middle East and Central Asia." Fake media personas were generated who posed as independent news media outlets, spreading memes, short-form videos, and hashtags to promote campaigns and online petitions. Over the past five years, the influence campaigns "consistently advanced narratives promoting the interests of the United States and its allies while opposing countries including Russia, China, and Iran." Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and US military websites were especially promoted and

> A small cluster of assets within the Central Asia group focused almost exclusively on China. These accounts – a fake persona and sham media outlet – mainly focused on the genocide of Uighurs and Muslim minorities in "re-education" camps in Xinjiang. Posts described alleged organ trafficking, forced labor, sexual crimes against Muslim women, and suspicious disappearances of ethnic Muslims in Xinjiang.[154]

153 Zenn, Nowhere to Run.

154 Stanford Internet Observatory and Graphika, "Unheard Voice: Evaluating Five Years of Pro-Western Covert Influence Operations" Aug. 24, 2022: 2–3, 25, https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:nj914nx9540/unheard-voice-tt.pdf.

The online influence operation indicates use of "Xinjiang genocide" in the overall political strategy of countering China as the US's government's self-proclaimed "most consequential geopolitical challenge."[155] Even after this operation was exposed however, many US officials and ex-officials have made the same unevidenced claims; for example that China's government has an "unapologetic embrace of slavery" as it "forces Uyghurs to work in commercial facilities in Xinjiang and compels laborers in its Belt and Road Initiative around the world."[156]

International crimes specialist and Judge of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers Guenael Mettraux has argued that the law of "genocide was adopted to sanction a very specific form of criminal action. It would be regrettable to denature genocide for the sake of encompassing within its terms as many categories and degrees of criminal involvement as possible."[157] Michael O'Hanlon, Director of Research at *Foreign Policy*, also finds the Xinjiang genocide claim to be inappropriate. He has said that the US government should stop using the term, which "has a clear and palpable historical and political meaning that conjures up gas chambers and mass butchery." He also averred in 2023 that he does "not know how seriously offended Chinese leaders find the use of that term, but it has provoked a significant row between China and Canada in recent months; it would appear that the term is indeed inflammatory as well as insulting to Beijing."[158] In 2025 Secretary of State Marco Rubio expelled South Africa's ambassador to the US because he had not shown respect by undiplomatically accusing the US of practicing white racism and because, inter alia, South Africa had accused Israel of genocide in Gaza.[159]

UC Berkeley comparative economist Gerard Roland has said genocide is a systematic effort to kill off members of a group through actual killing, as happened in the Holocaust and Rwanda and thus what is happening in Xinjiang is not genocide. He has added that the term should not be watered down from its

155 "US National Security Strategy Navigates Geopolitical, Transnational Challenges," VOA, Oct. 13, 2022.

156 John Cotton Richmond, "How to Stop Governments from Trafficking," Atlantic Council, June 26, 2024.

157 Guenael Mettraux, *International Crimes and the Ad Hoc Tribunals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 215.

158 Michael O'Hanlon, "Getting China Right: Resoluteness Without Overreaction," Brookings Institution, June 2023, www.brookings.edu/articles/getting-china-right-resoluteness-without-overreaction/.

159 "Angry US KICKS OUT 'Obscene' South African Envoy: 'Can't They Criticise Trump?' State Dept Asked," *Times of India*, Mar. 17, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiSkVDzPwL8.

more horrific meaning and should be saved for fully true cases.[160] Lyle Goldstein, then a US Naval War College China specialist and now Director of Asia Engagement at Defense Priorities, a Washington-based think tank, has said that labeling Chinese policy in Xinjiang as "demographic genocide" is "ridiculous to the point of being insulting to those who lost relatives in the Holocaust." He added that in China there "is a more repressive posture than we would like, but it sure isn't genocide" and that

> What basis is there for this claim that the re-education camps are like concentration camps? … Clearly there is a surveillance state in China. Clearly there is repression of separatist movements and some ethnic minorities, clearly the Chinese state is authoritarian, but that's not the same as some of the claims being made about genocide and millions in camps.[161]

An Israeli historian has similarly said that characterizing the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 as genocidal "insults the memory of the countless victims of antisemitism in the past."[162] International law professors Alfred de Zayas and Richard Falk have put it that

> The misuse of the word genocide is disdainful toward relatives of the victims of the Armenian massacres, the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide – and as well a disservice to both history, law, and the prudent conduct of international relations … Evidence-free allegations of "genocide" in Xinjiang, China, are unworthy of any country, and most of all, of the country that wants to act as the prime international champion of human rights. Raphael Lemkin would turn in his grave if he learned that the crime of "genocide" has been so crassly instrumentalized to beat the drums of Sinophobia.[163]

Former Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo has said that "the Chinese took very rough measures against extremist Muslims, as had the French," but

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160 Barkley Rosser, "Is China Committing Genocide In Xinjiang?" Econospeak, Feb. 16, 2021, http://econospeak.blogspot.com/2021/02/is-china-committing-genocide-in-xinjiang.html.

161 Ithamar Handelman-Smith, "Is Uyghur Genocide Denial Going Mainstream?" Fairplanet, Oct. 19, 2021, www.fairplanet.org/op-ed/is-uyghur-genocide-denial-going-mainstream/.

162 Jonathan Dekel-Chen, "An Israeli Hostage's Parent: This Is Not the Holocaust," NYT, June 18, 2024.

163 De Zayas and Falk, Reflections.

while the Armenian and Jewish genocides were quite real, the Xinjiang genocide claim is "an abuse and misuse of the term."[164] An Israeli international law scholar has written that

> [A]ccusations of genocide must be carefully evaluated since false accusations of genocide degrade the meaning of the term and create a slippery slope where defending against a real genocide becomes more difficult … By inappropriate accusations, genocide becomes a word bereft of meaning. Indeed, by falsely accusing China of engaging in the international crime of genocide, a grave injustice is committed against victims of real genocide; such false accusation constitutes a diminution of historical outrages, which further greatly weakens the cause of advancing human rights.[165]

Even the China-hostile UK business magazine *The Economist*, stated that the term genocide was an inappropriate "rhetorical escalation" because there is no slaughtering of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. It added that "by accusing [China] of genocide … in the absence of mass murder, America is diminishing the unique stigma of the term."[166] As Anatole France, the late 19th Century French writer who took up the cause of Armenians persecuted in the Ottoman Empire and defended Alfred Dreyfus from anti-Jewish defamation, said, "[W]ords are like coins. When freshly minted, the images and inscriptions on them are clear. But by dint of constant circulation they become effaced until the outlines are blurred and the words unintelligible."[167]

Because the Xinjiang genocide claim is one made both against the state and individuals it may be regarded as a malicious false accusation. In many countries, that is a crime; in Japan in 2020 for example, 33 people were arrested on that account.[168] That may scarcely matter to genocide claimants, however. They are mostly employed by Western governments or NGOs those governments fund, so whether Xinjiang genocide is an inappropriate conception, a

164 "George Yeo: What's Happening in China's Xinjiang is Not 'Genocide,'" Mothership, May 7, 2021, https://mothership.sg/2021/05/george-yeo-xinjiang-genocide/.

165 Slawotsky, Is China Guilty: 626, 633.

166 "'Genocide' is the Wrong Word for the Horrors of Xinjiang," *The Economist*, Feb. 13, 2021.

167 Quoted in Rick Rozoff, "The United States Defines Genocide in a Way that Suits Its Interests," in Margaret Haerens (ed.), *Genocide* (Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press, 2012): 28–40.

168 "警察庁， 犯罪統計書 令和2年の犯罪" (*Crime Statistics 2020*), www.npa.go.jp/toukei/soubunkan/R02/pdf/R02_ALL.pdf.

malicious accusation, or even a racism-promoting blood libel, its principal claimants enjoy impunity.

Many of those who make the accusation likely knew from the outset that the claim did not comport with common or legal understandings of genocide but see it as a useful political stratagem in the Western anti-China mobilization. For example, in 2024, a 2022 French documentary film was being recirculated asserting that in Xinjiang,

> more than a million people are being arbitrarily detained in camps where they undergo torture, re-education, forced labor and are banned from speaking their own language. Children are also being re-educated in so-called "orphanages" while women are subjected to forced sterilization. Uighur culture is being systematically destroyed. Under the pretext of fighting Islamic radicalism and poverty, the Chinese Communist Party secretly built 1,400 internment camps and set about eradicating Uighur culture and its entire intelligentsia.[169]

Many proponents of the genocide claim also deploy it because they are imbricated in electoral politics that feature intellectual dishonesty and inaction and penalize politically-risky positions. Thus, Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg for 18 years and then President of the European Commission, famously said in 2007 about European "structural reform" that "We all know what to do, but we don't know how to get re-elected once we have done it."[170]

Scholars have found the "Juncker curse" to be inaccurate, as European politicians have neo-liberalized economies and societies, even though European electorates disapprove, and yet have survived politically.[171] Politicians however are fearful of losing the next election if they leave themselves exposed to attack over a controversial issue. That would likely be the case with the moral panic over the "China Threat." A moral panic is a pervasive belief that a great evil threatens society and must be contained.[172] The "China Threat" recapitulates

169 "China: The Uighur Tragedy | Inside the Chinese Genocide," Yuzu Productions, Dec. 2, 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gdxce2LmjM.

170 "The Quest for Prosperity," *The Economist*, Mar. 17, 2007.

171 Marco Buti, et al, "Defying the 'Juncker Curse': Can Reformist Governments Be Re-elected?" *European Economy*, May, 2008, https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/pages/publication12586_en.pdf; Bjorn Bremer, et al, "Juncker's Curse? Identity, Interest, and Public Support for the Integration of Core State Powers," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58:1 (2020): 56–75.

172 Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 1972).

moral panics over other US government-designated perils.[173] It manifests how US politicians and media cast China as "the most formidable challenge or even an enemy" and "feel the need to out-hawk one another to protect themselves and advance professionally."[174]

A Princeton University China specialist has put it that "Nearly anything with the word "Chinese' in front of it now triggers a fear response in our political system."[175] US political elites feel that need to "out-hawk" even though China rejects defining China/US relations as a competition.[176] US anti-China propaganda affects the whole world, but most of all the West. Thus, the EU labelled China a "systemic rival" in 2019, even though Chinese leaders have made clear that they have no intention of spreading their "system" outside China and seek to have amicable relations with Europe.[177] Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney stated in 2025 that China is Canada's greatest security threat, even though he simultaneously recognized that Trump's repeated statements about extinguishing Canada as a state "are not idle threats."[178]

US propaganda and sanctions against China are a function of that perceived competition and, because they are supported by almost all US politicians, are now self-generating and operate irrespective of who leads the US political system. Thus, Willie Wo-Lap Lam, a Hong Kong journalist at the US's ultra-rightist Jamestown Foundation, observed in 2025 that "Trump himself doesn't have that much of an interest in what's happening in Tibet, in Xinjiang and in Hong Kong, But it's just another card to play in the longstanding systemic competition with China."[179]

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173 Scott Burchill, "Fueling the 'China Threat,'" *Arena Quarterly* No. 3, Sept. 2020, https://arena.org.au/fuelling-the-china-threat/; Steven Osuna, "Transnational Moral Panic: Neoliberalism and the Spectre of MS-13," *Race & Class* 61:4 (2020): 3–28; Greg Simons, "The Anatomy of a Moral Panic: Western Mainstream Media's Russia Scapegoat," *Changing Societies and Personalities* 3:3 (2019): 189–206; Haggai Ram, *Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

174 Dewey Sim, "'Structural' Problem: Top China Scholar Says US Tensions Will Be 'With Us for a Long Time,'" SCMP, Mar. 25, 2024; Jessica Chen Weiss, "The China Trap: US Foreign Policy and the Perilous Logic of Zero-Sum Competition," *Foreign Affairs* 101 (Sept/Oct 2022).

175 Truex, Let's All.

176 Zhao Ziwen, "China Hits Out at US Ambassador Nicholas Burns for Making Negative Comments 'on Multiple Occasions,'" SCMP, Mar. 19, 2024.

177 "Spain Calls for EU to Forge Own China Policy Without Trump," FT, Feb. 25, 2025.

178 Han Bochen, "Canada Now Likely has More Latitude to Work with China if US Tensions Persist: Analysts," SCMP, Apr. 30, 2025; Ilya Gridneff, "Carney Prepares to Pick Up West's Anti-Trump Mantle After Poll Wins," FT, Apr. 30, 2025.

179 Tiffany May, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions On Officials Over Abuses," NYT, Apr. 2, 2025.

Promoting a "China threat" narrative "attract[s] 'research' dollars, from the Australian government, US government and other foreign entities to drive this narrative."[180] ASPI, VOC, and other "think tanks" that advance the "Uyghur genocide" trope are financed by NED and other government entities. US government grants were 10%–12% of ASPI funding and "financed roughly 70% of its China research since 2019."[181] In 2020–2021, ASPI got 37.5% of its funds from the Australian Department of Defense, 24.5% from other Australia state agencies, and 18.3% from overseas governments, including from Japan, the US, and the UK.[182] Entities such as ASPI also receive bipartisan support from US politicians when they are criticized.[183] Such support is needed because ASPI reports on supposed forced labor in Xinjiang, along with similar reports by Amnesty International, the Uyghur Tribunal and the OHCHR have been thoroughly refuted by the Australian lawyer Jaq James.[184] A Hong Kong lawyer has also written that

> The Western narrative, which alleges widespread 'forced labor' in Xinjiang's cotton sector, finds its primary source in the reports published by [ASPI] have been paraded as 'authoritative' evidence despite their glaring methodological deficiencies and political entanglements. [ASPI] reports rely on ambiguous satellite imagery, anonymous sources, and speculative language peppered with phrases like 'believed to be' and 'possibly linked.' There is no fieldwork, no transparent methodology, and no engagement with the accused parties. To accept such reports as an evidentiary basis for sanctions is to abandon both academic integrity and international legal standard.[185]

180 Marcus Reubenstein, "Dungeons and Dragons: The China Threat Fiction," APAC News, Sept. 6, 2021, https://apac.news/dungeons-and-dragons-the-china-threat-fiction/.

181 Chun Han Wong, "U.S. Aid Halt Slows Haul of China Data – Funding Freeze Hits Nonprofit Groups Tracking Increasingly Scarce Information," WSJ, Feb. 27, 2025.

182 ASPI, "Annual Report, 2020–2021," www.aspi.org.au.

183 Matthew Knott, "China Hawk Think Tank Fears Cuts," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 11, 2024.

184 Jaq James, "ASPI's 'Uyghurs for Sale' Report: Scholarly Analysis or Strategic Disinformation?"; "Amnesty International & Human Rights Watch's Forced Xinjiang Labour Claims: Junk Research or Noble Cause Corruption?"; "The Uyghur Tribunal: People's Justice or Show Trial?"; The Assessment on Human Rights in Xinjiang by the UNOHCHR: A Critical Analysis; Co-West-Pro Consultancy, 2022–2023, www.cowestpro.co/papers.html.

185 Virginia Lee, "Western Media is Trapped in Self-reinforcing Loop of Disinformation About Xinjiang," CD, June 16, 2025.

Such acceptance of information without prior analysis, reflection, and understanding exemplifies the Chinese idiom "hú lún tūn zǎo" (囫囵吞枣, literally to swallow in one gulp). Noam Chomsky has also remarked on the "China threat" narrative that

> there's an interesting article about it by an Australian statesman, well-known international statesman, former prime minister, Paul Keating, who reviews the various elements of the China threat, and concludes, finally, that the China threat is that China exists. And he's correct. China exists and does not follow U.S. orders. That's no good. You have to follow U.S. orders. If you don't, you're in trouble.[186]

Many Western politicians will thus double down on "Uyghur genocide." Australia's rightwing former PM Tony Abbot did so in 2024 when he spoke of "the increasingly genocidal tendencies in Xinjiang province."[187] In 2025, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it "has grave concerns about human rights violations in Xinjiang, including the use of Uyghur forced labor;"[188] yet, around the same time, significant forced labor in Australia was being reported by both the US government and Australian Federal Police.[189] Former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, from the ruling ultra-right Fratelli d'Italia party, has made a similarly unevidenced assertion of growing forced labor in Xinjiang.[190]

In many moral panics, fact checking does not necessarily dislodge a narrative once it has taken hold. That may be especially true for discourses that invoke racist tropes; for example, the narrative in Germany in 2016 that Muslim immigrants are rapists.[191] Indeed, fact checking may backfire when done by a political out-group member, as it makes misinformation spreaders more

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186 "Noam Chomsky and Jeremy Scahill on the Russia-Ukraine War, the Media, Propaganda, and Accountability," The Intercept, Apr. 14, 2022.

187 "The Weekend Interview with Tony Abbott: A Fighter in the Cold War with China," WSJ, Apr. 13, 2024.

188 Blair Jackson, "'Grave Concerns': Australia's Hidden Shame," news.com.au, Jan. 20, 2025.

189 "2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Australia," US Department of State, 2025, www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/australia/; "AFP Alerts on Surge of Forced Labor in Australia," Mirage News, Dec. 2, 2024, www.miragenews.com/afp-alerts-on-surge-of-forced-labor-in-australia-1368512/.

190 "'Only Blind Eyes Could Ignore Genocidal Nature': Italian Senator Condemns China's Severe Human Rights Violation of Uyghurs," ANI, May 5, 2024.

191 Sabiha Allocher, et al, "The Politics of Moral Panics," The Century Foundation, May 9, 2022, https://tcf.org/content/report/the-politics-of-moral-panics/?agreed=1.

certain of their beliefs.[192] Johns Hopkins University political scientist Lilliana Murphy has found, concerning affective US politics, that "It is possible to correct misperceptions about politics by simply providing correct information. The problem is that this new correct information doesn't change people's feelings about political candidates or issues."[193]

The US novelist and social reformer Upton Sinclair once remarked that "it is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it."[194] UK economist John Maynard Keynes stated that "There is nothing a government hates more than to be well-informed; for it makes the process of arriving at a decision more complicated and difficult."[195] Many Anglosphere political and media elites have an "outright hostility to evidence-producing institutions." They also do not want to be informed by evidence about Xinjiang because it would negate a narrative that serves their political and career interests.[196]

A Chinese idiom also encapsulates the futility of trying to change incentivized or convinced misinformers. "Playing a lute to cows (对牛弹琴)" is about one who does not listen, understand or appreciate something you try to tell, teach or explain to them, despite all your efforts. The cows in regard to Xinjiang are Western, especially US, elites. They are unwilling to consider that they are misinformed and are misinforming about Xinjiang. They do realize however that outside the West, their position is not accepted and that China's view can receive a serious hearing. Thus, in 2023, Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), who specializes in foreign affairs said

> Now, China is trying to expand its relationship with the Islamic world … And yet, they have a million Uyghurs in prison, God knows how many killed. And they have told Burma/Myanmar, Kill as many Rohingya as you want. It won't affect us. As a matter of fact, we'll root for you. How effective have we been in letting the Muslim populations from Indonesia

192 Diego Reinero, et al, "Partisans are More Likely to Entrench Their Beliefs in Misinformation When Political Outgroup Members Fact Check Claims," Pyrexia, May 12, 2023, https://psyarxiv.com/z4df3.

193 Quoted in Thomas Edsall, "Why Losing Political Power Now Feels Like 'Losing Your Country,'" NYT, Apr. 24, 2024.

194 Susan Ratcliffe (ed.) "Upton Sinclair," Oxford 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

195 Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: a Biography. v. 2: The Economist as Savior, 1920–1937* (New York: Macmillan, 1992).

196 Diane Coyle, "How to Provide Evidence in Turbulent Times," FT, Feb. 11, 2025.

> to Egypt know what China is doing and making them pay a price? [T]he answer to the question … is that the US never makes China pay a price in terms of its popularity in the Islamic world and elsewhere. We are just too nice. We do not push. We do not degrade and denigrate. But China's behavior toward Muslims, Uyghur and Rohingya, in particular, deserves denigration. We are too nice to do that.[197]

The US government is however far from "nice" about Xinjiang: it is the only government to level the charge of genocide. Sherman, however, knows that China is now seen at least as favorably as the US in Muslim countries and wants the US government to be even more forceful in attacking it. His show of sympathy for Muslims in Xinjiang is, like his talk of saving the Muslim Rohingyas, a political stratagem. Sherman is not only co-chair of the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus, but is also "considered to be one of the best friends of India in the U.S. Congress."[198] A 2024 report by NGOs Refugees International and The Azadi Project has noted that more than 600 Rohingya were being held in "inhumane and dire" "jail-like facilities" in India. India has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and few detainees, who are mostly women and children, have courts cases. After serving two years in prison for illegal entry, those "released" are sent to a detention center. At least eight detainees have died in detention. The report concluded that the Modi government's Islamophobia was a factor in detentions.[199]

US liberal Democratic Party politicians are conservatives by international standards and thus vociferous supporters of the Uyghur émigré cause. For example, Member of Congress Ritchie Torres (D-NY) inserted in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024 a "Uyghur Genocide Intelligence Review Act." It "requires the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to submit to Congress an annual report related to the ongoing and brutal genocide of more than one million Uyghurs – a Muslim ethnic minority group in the People's Republic of China's Xinjiang region." The "one million Uyghurs" figure likely reflects the claims regarding VETCs. Torres ignored that the VETCs had already been

197 "Surrounding the Ocean: PRC Influence in the Indian Ocean," House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Indo-Pacific, Apr. 18, 2023, www.congress.gov/event/118th-congress/house-event/115667/text?s=1&r=33.

198 "PM Narendra Modi has Become Face of India; Development, Economy Improved: Congressman Brad Sherman," *The Hindu*, Apr. 10, 2024.

199 Daniel P. Sullivan, et al, "A Lifetime in Detention: Rohingya Refugees in India," Refugees International and Azadi Project, Dec. 16, 2024, https://reliefweb.int/report/india/lifetime-detention-rohingya-refugees-india.

closed for four years and that no one had experienced "genocide" in a VETC. He also said the legislation was about "sounding the alarm about the CCP's clear and convincing intent to destroy the culture, identity, history, and very existence of Uyghurs as a people, whose birthrates have already been cut in half by forced abortions and sterilizations."[200] Torres failed to distinguish a birthrate decline from a decline in a group's population size or proportion of the population. In Xinjiang, there was neither and certainly no decline intended to "destroy … the very existence" of a group. He ignored the all-China sharp birthrate decline, that birth limits in China were abolished, and that there is likely an ongoing increase in Uyghur birthrates.

The consistently negative coverage of China in prominent mainstream Western media has not gone unnoticed, especially among analysts outside the West. A UAE finance executive, for example, has pointed out that the *Financial Times* has reached a fever pitch of "anti-China rhetoric" in its unbalanced reporting about China.[201] Many Western intellectuals experience the Gell-Mann Amnesia Effect as to discourses of China. Named by US physician and science fiction writer Michael Critchton for his friend, US physicist Murray Gell-Mann, the Effect is that a person trusts newspapers for topics which that person *is not* knowledgeable about, despite recognizing the newspaper is inaccurate on topics which that person *is* knowledgeable about. Gell-Mann found that newspaper articles about physics were so inaccurate that they often confused cause and effect, but he still trusted those newspapers' writings about national and international politics.[202] Many years earlier, George Orwell noticed something similar in his analysis of anti-Semites in Britain and remarked that "The only useful approach is to discover why they can swallow absurdities on one particular subject while remaining sane on others."[203]

Even where the highly-educated doubt the accuracy of what a news medium says about areas they are knowledgeable about, they typically accept *New York Times*, *Guardian* or other "top" news media pronouncements about China,

200 "US Rep Ritchie Torres Bill on Investigating the Uyghur Genocide Going to President Biden's Desk," Dec. 14, 2023, https://ritchietorres.house.gov/posts/u-s-rep-ritchie-torress-bill-on-investigating-the-uyghur-genocide-going-to-president-bidens-desk.

201 Syed Aamir Zahidi, "What About More Balance in the FT's China Coverage," FT, Oct. 16, 2024.

202 "Gell-Mann Amnesia Effect," The Basics Guide, May 22, 2023, https://thebasics.guide/gell-mann-amnesia-effect/.

203 George Orwell, *Antisemitism in Britain* (London: Contemporary Jewish Record, 1945).

though their consistently negative reportage about a reasonably successful country implies political animus. Critchton pointed out that this Effect

> does not operate in other areas of life. In ordinary life, if somebody consistently exaggerates or lies to you, you soon discount everything they say. In court, there is the legal doctrine of *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, which means untruthful in one part, untruthful in all.[204]

Machiavelli affirmed that "The people, as Cicero says, may be ignorant, but they can recognize the truth and will readily yield when some trustworthy man explains it to them."[205] If a wide audience is exposed to data and arguments that interrogate it, global opinion may yet reject the calumny of "Xinjiang genocide" as a misuse of the concept for political ends. For that to happen however, global scholars need something that the Chinese state has yet to provide, access to all relevant data. China itself needs to eschew it "internalization of external messaging" (外宣内宣化), where arguments directed at an international audience end up being designed for domestic consumption and become an "internal revelry" (内部的狂欢).[206] Some Chinese media leaders recognize this problem in terms of the official discourse of Xinjiang.[207] China also needs to be forthright about and address real problems in Xinjiang, many of which are local versions of all-China problems, for example pervasive social inequality.

After several years of a tendentious Western discourse of Xinjiang genocide, an effective counter-narrative is beginning to emerge, despite restrictions on data and argumentative failings.[208] While strong incentives remain for Western elites to continue with the rhetoric of genocide, forced labor, arbitrary

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204 "Gell-Mann Amnesia Effect," 2024, https://theportal.wiki/wiki/The_Gell-Mann_Amnesia_Effect.

205 Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and Selected Discourses* (New York: Bantam, 1966 [1513]).

206 Cai Xuejiao, "Beijing's 'China Story' Strategy Could Miss Its Global Targets, Think Tank Says," Caixin Global, July 15, 2021, www.caixinlobal.com/2021-07-15/beijings-china-story-strategy-misses-its-global-targets-think-tank-says-101740918.html; Stella Chen, "Putting the Soft Back in Soft Power," China Media Project, Mar. 31, 2022, https://chinamediaproject.org/2022/03/31/putting-the-soft-back-in-soft-power/; Yuan Yang, "A Limitless Presidency Means Limited Diplomacy," FT, Oct. 25, 2022.

207 江和平, "深融合, 强发声, 创旗舰——CGTN 积极推进高质量发展升级改版工作" (Deep integration, strong vocalization, creating flagships: CGTN enthusiastically pushes forward its work of high-quality development, upgrading and revamping), 电视研究 10 (2019): 58–61.

208 Amber Wang, "China's Xinjiang Policies 'Poorly Explained and Ruthlessly Executed,'" SCMP, May 2, 2021.

detention etc. in Xinjiang, it should also be recalled that to mitigate the possibility of war, even Reagan and Thatcher eventually retreated from their characterizations of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire" – a term taken from an émigré, Alexander Solzhenitsyn.[209] Perhaps the same or other weighty considerations will lead to dismantling the Western narrative of Xinjiang.

209 Norman Dombey, "How NATO and the USSR Avoided 1980s Nuclear War," FT, Sept. 19, 2024.

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Many claims of genocide do not present a prima facie case of the intent to destroy a group, let alone show guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. They are a stratagem to enhance the claimant's position in an inter-state or intra-state conflict. Claims about China's Xinjiang are not based on the mass killings associated with genocide, but on birth limits for minorities in 2017–2021 that included practices previously applied to China's Han majority for decades, plus brief family separations of a few minority children. These assertions impel Western sanctions and incite anti-Chinese sentiment but are empirically unsupported and degrade the concept of genocide. Apart from the genocide claim, assertions of crimes against humanity and arbitrary detention in Xinjiang are also shown to be misinformed and the political context of these accusations is analyzed.

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