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THE UYGHUR TURKS AND THE EASTERN TURKISTAN (XINJIANG CONFLICT): WHICH CHINA? CHINA'S GROWTH OR RED CRUELTY

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Abstract

Uyghur Turks are one of the most important Turkic Tribes of archaic Turkish history. The first groups whom adopted a settled life, urbanism, architecture, religion and etc... those who implement the development of the culture and civilization were also Uyghur Turks. They invented the 18 letter Uyghur Turkic Alphabet, and they have accomplished great works in the field of art and literature. The reason of the very high level of the literacy rate correspondingly that. In religion, they relinquished "Gök-Tengri" belief and embraced extrinsic religion called Manichaeism during the "Bögü Kaan" period. Then they united with Karluk Turks and founded Karahanli State, and by choosing Islam, they brought one of the most powerful and magnificent periods of Turkish history into Turkish history. The natural geographical neighborhood with the Chinese pushed the Uyghur Turks and the Chinese into a struggle from history.

The Chinese Manchu dynasty occupied the North of East Turkistan in 1757-1759 and the South in 1760. re-named "Xin Jian" means "The New Land" and became the 19th state of the China Empire. During the Mao Zedong period, the Communist regime continued to oppress.

Keywords: Uyghur Turks, Eastern Turkestan, China.

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UYGUR TÜRKLERİ VE DOĞU TÜRKİSTAN (SİNCAN SORUNU): HANGİ ÇİN? BÜYÜYEN YA DA KIZIL ZULÜM

Öz

Uygur Türkleri kadim Türk tarihinin en önemli boylarından birisidir. Türk tarihinde modern anlamda ilk yerleşik hayata geçen, şehircilik, mimarlık, din vb. kültür-medeniyet gelişimini hayata geçirenler yine Uygur Türkleridir. 18 harfli Uygur Türk alfabesini de icat ederek sanat ve edebiyat alanında büyük işlere imza atmışlardır. Okuryazar oranının çok yüksek olması da yine bunlara bağlıdır. Dinde ise Gök Tanrı inancını terk edip Böğü Kaan zamanında yabancı Mani dinini kabul ettiler. Daha sonra Karluk Türkleri ile de birleşerek Karahanlı Devletini kurdular ve İslamiyet'i de seçerek Türk tarihinin en güçlü ve muhteşem dönemlerinden birini Türk tarihine yaşattılar.

Çinliler ile olan tabii coğrafi komşuluk Uygur Türkleri ile Çinlileri tarihten gelen bir mücadelenin de içine itti. 1757-1759 tarihlerinde Doğu Türkistan'da çıkan iç karışıklıklardan faydalanan Çinli Mançu hanedanı Doğu Türkistan'ın kuzeyini, 1760'da da güneyini işgal etti. 18 Mayıs 1878'de ise Doğu Türkistan'ın tamamı Çin işgaline uğradı. 18 Kasım 1884'de Xin Jian yani "Yeni Toprak" adını alarak Çin İmparatorluğu'nun 19. Eyaleti oldu. Mao Zedong döneminde de Komünist rejim ile baskılar devam etti.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uygur Türkleri, Doğu Türkistan, Çin.

1. Origins Of The Uyghur Turks

Since the late 19th Century a number of archeological, cultural and political studies have been carried out by western scholars. When the area became interesting in geopolitical terms to the British, Russian, and Chinese imperial governments.¹ The middle age periods of the Uygur Turks describes by James Millward, a professor of History at Georgetown University (USA) who is specialised in history of China and Central Eurasia, writes in his book "Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang" that the Uyghurs originated in the Turks and the Mongolian core lands of the Orkhon River valley. He also notes the tribes known by the name "Uyghur" were former components of the another Turk khaghanate Gokturks.²

¹ Dilber, Thwaites, *Zunun Kadir's Ambiguity The dilemma of a Uyghur writer under Chinese Rule*. A thesis of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, 2001.

² Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation, *China: Situations of Uyghurs*, COI Complication, 2016, p.4.

In Chinese history mentioned the Uyghurs as a distinct tribal groups located in Northern and Eastern Wei Shu (Wei State) first time in 6th century. We just also mentioned that the medieval Uyghur Turks became a political entity in the mid-8th century when they established their steppe empire as the inheritors of the ancient Turk steppe tribal confederation. They ruled their empire for a century from their capital city in the heart of the Mongol steppe. Their empire ended when rival another Turkic Kirgiz tribes attacked it, and the Uyghur aristocracy fled south into the borderland areas between China and the steppe. Two groups of diaspora Uyghurs built new states in Gansu and the Tarim Basin. The Gansu Uyghurs stayed in that region but never exerted any real power as a state.

The Uyghurs who migrated to the Tarim Basin were more successful, building an independent kingdom that maintained a stable rule over the mixed population of city dwellers and nomads who lived in the far-flung oases of the area. The Tarim Basin Uyghurs readily adapted to the sedentary lifestyle and built one of the most highly diverse societies of the age, where Buddhists, Nestorian Christians, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians, and nomads all lived side by side. Even after they became subjects of the Qarakhitai and then the Mongols, the Uyghurs retained some autonomy as political rulers in the Tarim Basin. That ended when Khubilai lost control of the Tarim Basin and most of the Uyghur aristocracy moved to China. The Uyghur diaspora refashioned their identity a third time in China as members of the conquest government and the cultural literati. Their existence as a distinct political entity ended with the eviction from China of the Mongols.³ Consequently Uyghurs have existed since before the eighth century. Some Western scholars declared that Uyghurs identity was lost from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.⁴

Most of the Turkish historians do not agree that absence of the Uyghurs and they are right. They didn't just get lost but they lost their state and fell under the hegemony of Doglats in 1514 till 1759 Manchu (China) invasion. These period of the Uyghurs' administration also called "Hocalar". States can be lost by wars but nations can not be abolished so easily.

³ Micheal C. Broseose, *"The Medieval Uyghurs of the 8th through 14th Centuries"*, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History, Central Asia Online Publication Date: June 2017, pp.1-20, p.1-2, DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.232.

⁴ Dru C. Gladney, *China's Minorities: The Case Of Xinjiang And The Uyghur People*, Commission On Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Working Group on Minorities, Ninth Session 12-16 May 2003, p.5.

On the other hand Uyghur Turks choosed some religions like Buddhism, Manichaesim, etc... but the most efficent and still permanent one is Islam. the Uyghurs are Sunni Muslims, practising Islamic traditions similar to their co-religionists in the region. In addition, many of them are Sufi, adhering to branches of Central Asian Sufism. However, it is also important to note that Islam was only one of several unifying markers for Uyghur identity, depending on those with whom they were in co-operation at the time. ⁵

No doubt after all of these past centuries that the worst ones are 20th and 21th centuries for sure.

2. Colonialism In China And Chinese Colonization

When the British Navy occupied the China colonialism first stepped into China in the first Opium War (1839-42). This war is marked in history as the first in which steam-driven ships were used as the main force. By the end of the Second Opium War (1856-60), British colonialism further strengthened its foothold within Chinese territories. The Qing dynasty had to accept a series of humiliating treaties in 1842, 1844, 1854, 1858, and 1860 committing to pay an unusually high amount of compensation over the years, and grant sovereign control over the major ports of China in the coastal region. In 1854, the sovereign control of the treaty ports included rights for the victorious imperialists to trade freely and even to fix tariffs on their own. The treaties of 1858 and 1860 opened doors for the western powers to trade, and extend their influence into the interior regions of China. Falloowing century, in 1937, Japanese forces took control of the entire country. Colonialism in China, which initially started in only a few treaty port areas during the 1840s, gradually expanded over time and continued for more than a century, finally to end in 1945 after Japan was defeated in World War II.⁶

As a result of the colonializm of the China for many years, there has been an ongoing debate on whether the impact of colonialism on China was negative or positive. There has not been much of an agreement between the competing sides of the debate and scholars could not so far reach any consensus on this issue like always.⁷ China suffered under the British and Japan Powers for many

⁵ Ibid, p.5.

⁶ Mohammad, Shakil Wahed, *The Impact Of Colonialism On 19th And Early 20th Century China*, Cambridge Journal of China Studies, Volume 11, No. 2, 2016, pp. 24-33, p.25.

⁷ Ibid, p.26.

years for sure, but after the Second World War the nationalist and the communist groups concord demolished in China, and fought against each other. Mao Zedong confiscated the governments control and brought communism at the end of the 1940's. American supported nationalist had to escape and established the Taiwan.

An opportunity was emerged for Stalin. Nevertheless, when the communists did take power in China, both Mao and Stalin had to make the best of the situation. In December 1949 Mao, now chairman of the People's Republic of China which he had proclaimed and the first of October traveled to Moscow, where, after two months of arduous negotiations, he succeeded in persuading Stalin to sign a treaty of mutual assistance accompanied by limited economic aid. Before the Chinese had time to profit from the resources made available for economic development, however, they found themselves dragged into the Korean War in support of the Moscow-oriented regime in North Korea. Only after that baptism of fire did Stalin, according to Mao, begin to have confidence in him and believe he was not first and foremost a Chinese nationalist.

Despite those tensions with Moscow, the policies of the People's Republic of China in its early years were in very many respects based, as Mao later said, on "copying from the Soviets." While Mao and his comrades had experience in guerrilla warfare, in mobilization of the peasants in the countryside, and in political administration at the grass roots, they had no firsthand knowledge of running a state or of large-scale economic development. In such circumstances the Soviet Union provided the only available model. A five year plan was therefore drawn up under Soviet guidance; it was put into effect in 1953 and included Soviet technical assistance and a number of complete industrial plants. Yet, within two years, Mao had taken steps that were to lead to the breakdown of the political and ideological alliance with Moscow.⁸

Following years brought more problems and China turned the past colonial powers which colonized them. Mao or China Communist Party occupied Tibet, Inner Mongolia and East Turkistan. Under the "Cultural Revolution" political oppression and mandate increasingly have been felt. Thus China have described these regions that minorities of the China.

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mao-Zedong>

3. Nationalist Movements In Eastern Turkistan Against The China And Some Statistics

At that time the Uyghur Turks were included under the general rubric of Hui Muslims 'which was confined to mainly Chinese speaking Muslims' which included all Muslim groups in China. The policy have been countinued under the communist, eventually recognizing fifty six nationalities, the Uyghur Turks and eight othe Muslim groups split out from the general category.

Regional leaders of the Uyghur Turks actually invited the People's Liberation Army (PLA) after the defeat of the nationalists in 1949. In October 1949 Chinese Communists occuppied Easten Turkistan and their subsequent establishment of the region name became Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on 1 October 1955, perpetuated the Nationalist policy of recognizing the Uyghur as a minority nationality under Chinese rule. The on-going political uncertainties and social unrest led to large migrations of Uyghur and Kazak Turks from Xinjiang to Central Asia between 1953 and 1963, culminating in a Central Asian Uyghur population of approximately 300,000. This migration stopped with the Sino-Soviet split in 1962 and the border was closed in 1963, reopening 25 years later in the late 1980s.

The separate nationality designation awarded the Uyghur Turks in China continued to mask very considerable regional and linguistic diversity, with the designation also applied to many non-Uyghur Turks group such as the Loplyk and Dolans, that had very little to do with the oasis based Turkic Muslims that became known as the Uyghur Turks. In the same breath contemporary Uyghur separatists look back to the brief periods of independent self-rule under Yakub Beg and the Eastern Turkistan Republics. More over to the earlier glories of the Uyghur Kingdoms in Karabalghasan and Turpan, as evidence of their rightful claims to the region. Contemporary Uyghur Turks separatist organizations based in Ankara, Istanbul, Almaty, Amsterdam, Munich, Melbourne, and Washington may differ in their political goals and strategies for the region, but they all share a common vision of a continuous Uyghur claim on the region, disrupted by Chinese and Soviet intervention.

The independence of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics in 1991 has done much to encourage these Uyghur organizations in their hopes for an independent. Uyghuristan despite the fact that the new, mainly Muslim, Central

Asian governments all signed protocols with China in Shanghai in the Spring of 1996 that they would not harbour or support separatists groups.⁹

Another issue for the Asian and Caucasian Turks in the Soviet/Communist regimes that they re-named by the Soviet/Communist political Office. As we see below table China continued this traditions.

The Uyghur Turks are today an officialy second largest minority in China.¹⁰

As we see The Uyghur Turks are about average in terms of university graduates 0.5 per cent and illiterac 26.6 per cent as compared with all other ethnic groups in China.¹¹

The Islamic identity is also the biggest factor of the Uyghur Turks within Turkic identity. The religious traits of the movement were often placed on par with its national character. The constitution of the Eastern Turkistan declared that the state was synonymous with both a 'religious and national Islamic government' and a 'religious and national rule', formed as the result of a 'religious and national revolution' to administer the 'nation's religious, national, social, and economic affairs. Islamic Turks', while the establishment of an Islamic government was hailed as much as the national awakening was.

By today, China is applying a systematic assimilation programe on Uyghur Turks. International Observers have declared that more than a million of Uyghur Turks are prisoners in China's concentrations camps. Kindergarden age children have been taken away from their families, young Uyghur Turks girls forced to married a Chinese men, thousands of men, women, boy, girl, older, etc... were death under the torture. Well then why China do and hide that?

4. World's Factory: China's Economic Growth

China surpassed the United States in the mid-1970s to become the nation with the largest number of urban dwellers in the world. Although still a predominantly rural country, with an urbanisation rate just under 20%, in absolute numbers China had become over 30 years ago the world's largest urban

⁹ Gladney, *ibid*, p.5-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.7.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.8-10.

nation in human history. Anomalously, this ascendance occurred at the end of a period in which China's public policy was profoundly anti-urban. Much has changed since then. China's "opening up", and the introduction of market oriented reforms in the early 1980s, accelerated urbanisation across China such that, today, 600 million urban Chinese constitute 44% of the country's population. Indications are that urbanisation will continue, at even more rapid rates in parts of the country, well into this century.

Aside from the national socio-economic changes fuelled by urbanisation over the last 30 years, the growth of China's cities is starting to have major global impacts. The most obvious are environmental pollution of coastal waters by industries and untreated urban wastewater, crossborder and intercontinental air pollution from power plants, industries, and motor vehicles, and emissions that have made the country the second largest contributor to global warming. But less obvious global linkages are equally important.

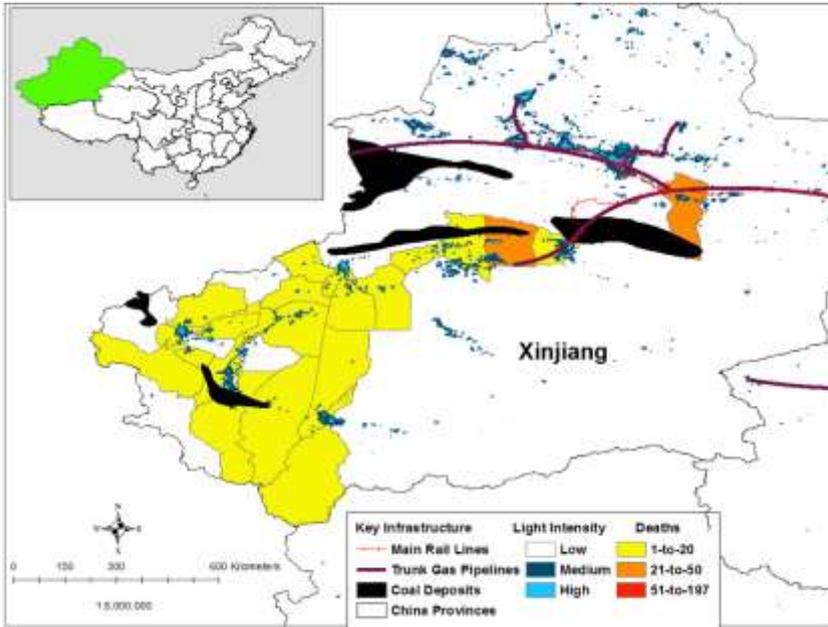
China's transformation into the world's biggest consumer of steel, cement and a wide range of resource commodities, including carbon-based energy sources, that is beginning to affect availability and supply prices in other countries, the transformation of China's cities into the world's factory, and the rapid evolution of the urban populace into a consumer base that is changing what global firms produce, and how they market them. Economic changes in China's cities are fundamentally changing the global structure of flows of natural resources, products, capital, technology, information, and people.¹²

Besides that a fundamental, gradually intensifying, and historical shift in China over the last two decades has been in relative terms a momentous increase in factor mobility fuelled by market oriented industrialisation, market driven trade, the introduction of new and more accessible transport technologies along roads, rail, inland waterways, and, more recently, policy loosening under China's market and *hukou* reforms. Eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang) region is one of the most important place for its natural resources.¹³

¹² Lamia Kamal Chaoui, Erward Leman, Zhang Rufeï, "Urban Trends and Policy in China", OECD Regional Development Working Paper, 2009, pp.1-70, p.5-6, doi:10.1787/225205036417.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.24.

Eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Natural Resources Map)



14

The purpose of the assimilation and the concentration camps is much economical than historical and political. Demographic strength and labour resources have been changing in countenance of the China for many years despite the largest metropolitan regions in East China. The OECD reports shows that new natural resources discovered in West China now, and historical silk road destination has been there for thousands of years. As we know United States of America is in East of China, and little bit North East Japan is there. For reaching the Europe' market and other nearest natural resources is only the East. Under these circumstances, the Uyghur Turks undermine the China.

CONCLUSION

The Turks and the Chinese have been rivals for thousands of years, but at the end of the migration of tribes many Turkic groups moved to West and

¹⁴ <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/beijings-xinjiang-policy-striking-too-hard/>

spreaded far and wide. The rest of them whom stayed in the Middle Asia that they formed a medieval state or established a state which lived a certain period. The Uyghur State was one of them which still is neighbor of the China.

Great leaders and politicians will pass from the earth, and the strongest imperial states will collapse and disappear from a new generation's memory, but civilization, wisdom, and cultural heritage will continue to play a significant role among human beings as long as there is human history.

The land of the Uyghur Turks today consists of the Junghar, Tarim, and Turpan basins, situated in the center of Asia. This region has had great importance since early times because of its favored geographic location on the ancient trade routes between the East and the West, connecting the Greco-Roman civilization with Indian Buddhist culture and Central and East Asian traditions. Burgeoning trade, commerce, and cultural exchange gave the Uyghurs' land a cosmopolitan character, marked by linguistic, racial, and religious tolerance. The Uyghurs' culture and art developed not only on the basis of the inheritance and preservation of their traditional culture, but also through cultural exchanges with others in the East and the West.

In Chinese sources, at various periods, this land has been called the "Western Region" or the "Western Countries." In non-Chinese sources, it was known as "Uyghuristan," "East Turkistan," "Chinese Turkistan," or "Chinese Central Asia." The term "Uyghur Äli," found in a medieval Uyghur manuscript, means "The Country of the Uyghurs." In 1884, the Qing Dynasty of China began to call the region "Xinjiang," which means "new territory." After 1955, the name "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" was given to it by the government of the Peoples' Republic of China.

According to the July 1, 1990, official Chinese census, the Uyghur (Turkic) speaking population was at that time 7.2495 million and comprised more than 60% of the region's population. The Han Chinese population was 5.7466 million, comprising about 30% of the 15 million total population of the Uyghur homeland. A decade later, the Chinese official census of 2000 indicated that the population of Uyghur-speakers was near 9 million, but independent sources claim that the Uyghur population is currently about 16 million. In the past ten years, the Han Chinese population in the region increased almost 32 percent. By contrast, in 1949, Uyghurs accounted for more than 90 percent of the region's population, while the Han Chinese accounted for only 5 percent of the roughly

5 million people in the Uyghur homeland at that time. Thus the Chinese population had increased 500 percent in the last half of the twentieth century.¹⁵

Another issue that needs to be emphasized that in the first half of the 20th century, as a result of the Uyghur education movement that spread across Eastern Turkistan, a new understanding and national consciousness started to develop among Uyghurs. Uyghur intellectuals trained abroad, along with the intellectuals from different countries, played a prominent role in the development of nationalism in this period. These Uyghur intellectuals included both those in Eastern Turkistan and Uyghur intellectuals in diaspora. The emergence and development of the Uyghur intellectual class in this period took place in accordance with the dispersion of Uyghurs across three different geographical regions: Eastern Turkistan; Central Asia and Russia; and Turkey and the Middle East. The rise of the Uyghur education movement played a significant role in the emergence of the Uyghur intellectual class. The Uyghur education movement, which started in the 1920s and 1930s, was shaped and mobilized by three groups within Uyghur society.¹⁶

All these factors were enough to disquieted China. When Communist Mao seized power the darkest period of the Uyghur Turks has begun. China seems to forget what happened to them by British and Japan Empires during the 19th and 20th centuries. Unfortunately China governments act like they vengeance. These political attitudes do not suit the great states like China. Regular member of the United Nations should stop this events urgently.

¹⁵ Dolkun Kamberi, *Uyghurs And Uyghur Identity*, Radio Free Asia, Washington D.C., 2015, p.1-2.

¹⁶ Nabijan Tursun, *The Influence of Intellectuals of The First Half of The 20th Century on Uyghur Politics*, Central Asia Programe, No 11, 2014, p.1.

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