Chinese Strategy for De-radicalization

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ABSTRACT

China is fighting a tough battle against separatist terrorism perpetrated by militant Muslim Uyghurs in the far-western region of Xinjiang. De-radicalization is one of the policies the authorities in Xinjiang have recently taken to address the upsurge in terrorist violence. This paper consists of five parts. The first part deals with the background against which the de-radicalization strategy was conceived and developed. The second part discusses several major approaches to the strategy such as “five keys,” “four prongs,” “three contingents,” “two hands,” and “one rule.” The third part presents custodial, post-imprisonment, and social programs for targeting three groups of people: imprisoned radicals, released radicals, as well as those who are radicalized but not prosecuted. The fourth part describes programs for engaging communities in order to win over politically reliable people from civil society for support in de-radicalization. The last part draws a conclusion regarding the characteristics of, effectiveness of, controversies over, and future of the Chinese de-radicalization campaign.

China is facing a serious terrorism problem in connection with Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic group in the country’s far-western region of Xinjiang.¹ The frequency and escalation of domestic terrorism has prompted the Chinese government to adopt drastic policies to combat terrorism. De-radicalization is one of them. This warrants a special look, primarily because there have been many reports on the strategy, almost always positive, in China’s state-run media, whereas independent reports in Chinese or foreign academic publications have been rare, if not absent.

Chinese authorities claim that “religious extremism” is the ideological basis for terrorist attacks in China.² The realization that military, law enforcement, and intelligence measures alone are not sufficient to combat it prompted the authorities to come up with the idea of de-radicalization. The purpose of de-radicalization is not to punish radicalized people but to change their mindset to prevent them from carrying out acts of terrorism. Also, experiences abroad show that de-radicalization is possible through carefully planned and adequately funded programs.³ Among Chinese officials and academics there has been a consensus that, if rigorous de-radicalization measures are brought into practice, the risk of violent extremism can be significantly reduced.

The term “de-radicalization,” as used in this paper, refers not only to a break with extremist behavior but also to a shift in belief from extremist ideas to mainstream values.⁴ As it is extremely difficult to achieve the objective of de-radicalization, some scholars prefer...
to use the term “disengagement,” which entails the abandonment of extremist behavior either with or without a change in the radical worldview. China does not seem to care much about such a distinction: while the Chinese official term corresponding to “de-radicalization” is “qu jiduanhua” (in Chinese: 去极端化), there is no equivalent to “disengagement.”

This paper aims to describe and analyze Chinese de-radicalization efforts. The analysis is structured in five parts. The first part is an introduction to the birth of the de-radicalization strategy. The second part describes some major approaches to the strategy. The third and fourth parts present programs for de-radicalizing terrorists as well as programs for engaging communities in the de-radicalization campaign. The analysis will facilitate a better understanding of the Chinese de-radicalization efforts and allow drawing a conclusion in the fifth part with the characteristics of, effectiveness of, controversies over, and future of the Chinese de-radicalization campaign.

**Birth of de-radicalization strategy**

Before we examine the approaches and programs Chinese authorities use to de-radicalize people, we first need to take a look at the background against which the strategy of de-radicalization was created and developed.

**Separatism, extremism, and terrorism**

When it comes to terrorism in China, there is usually talk of the so-called “three forces”—namely separatism, extremism, and terrorism—which are blamed on militant Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang has officially been called “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” (XUAR) since 1955. For centuries, the place known today as Xinjiang was known to Chinese ancestors as “Xiyu” (“Western Region”). In the 1750s, this huge territory was conquered by the imperial dynasty of Qing (1644–1911) that had been established by Manchu ethnicity rather than by Han Chinese. Despite the territorial annexation, Qing rule in the region saw both internal rebellions and external interventions, which resulted in the establishment of an independent Islamic kingdom (1867–1877) under Yaqub Beg, a military official from the neighboring khanate Khoqand (located in present-day Uzbekistan). Following Qing’s re-conquest in 1877, the region was renamed “Xinjiang” (“New Dominion”) and made a province of the Qing empire. Xinjiang was taken over by the Republic of China (ROC) government led by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT) after Qing rule had collapsed in 1911 and became a part of the People’s Republic of China (PRC or China) after the KMT had lost a civil war with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949.

Xinjiang is a sparsely populated region on the far northwestern frontier, which takes up roughly one sixth of China’s landmass and shares borders with eight countries (Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India). Strategically, Xinjiang is extremely important for the maintenance of China’s border security and transnational trade. Xinjiang is especially important for its rich reserves of oil, gas, and other natural resources.

While 92% of the Chinese population belong to the dominant ethnicity called “Han,” the Uyghurs are only one of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities that make up the remaining 8%. Besides the Uyghurs, Xinjiang is also home to a number of other Muslim ethnic groups such as Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, and Tatars. According to a population
sample of 2009, the Uyghurs, numbering over 10 million, account for 46.4% of the total population in Xinjiang, whereas Han people account for 39%. \(^9\) The language spoken by the Uyghurs is similar to today’s Turkish. In terms of religion, most Uyghurs are Muslims. Therefore, Uyghurs are culturally closer to peoples in Turkey and the Central Asian republics such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan than to the ethnic Han Chinese. \(^10\)

The problem of ethnic separatism in Xinjiang may be traced back to the above-noted Islamic kingdom in southern Xinjiang, ruled by Yaqub Beg in the 19th century. This experience set a precedent for Uyghur independence based on religion and ethnicity. In the 20th century, owing to the influence of pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic sentiments, Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples (e.g., Kazakh and Kyrgyz) rose up against Chinese rule to proclaim the birth of two short-lived “East Turkestan Republics” (ETRs). In the four decades from the founding of the PRC in 1949 to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, the Chinese rule in Xinjiang encountered sporadic resistance from Uyghur people, especially from those living in southern Xinjiang. Since the 1990s, the rise of political violence in the region has been largely inspired by the independence of neighboring Central Asian countries and the religious extremism of the Middle East. Uyghur separatists have been advocating their own independent Islamic country, called “East Turkestan.” \(^11\)

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., China openly acknowledged the existence of domestic terrorism in its attempt to cooperate with the U.S. and other countries in the global war on terrorism. In 2002, the Chinese government stated in an official release that the “East Turkestan” terrorist forces inside and outside Chinese territory, between 1990 and 2001, were responsible for over 200 terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, resulting in 162 deaths and more than 440 injuries. \(^12\) In the years that followed, China designated several groups as terrorist organizations, including the notorious “East Turkestan Islamic Movement” (ETIM), a group recognized as terrorist by the US, the UN, and the UK. The ETIM, later also known as “Turkestan Islamic Party” (TIP), has been involved in the ongoing Syrian conflict in alliance with al Nusra (until very recently al Qaeda’s affiliate in Syria). \(^13\) However, foreign experts greeted the veracity of the Chinese release and the terrorism list with considerable skepticism. \(^14\)

Prior to the opening of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, an aircraft attack in March, and multiple killings in August had put the Chinese authorities on high alert. On July 5, 2009, mass violence in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, killed 197 people and injured more than 1,700 others. In the following years and particularly in 2013 and 2014, Xinjiang experienced an escalation of terrorist violence with heavy casualties and devastating consequences. Since 2015, owing to strengthened measures, terrorist violence in China has dropped sharply both in terms of frequency and intensity, except for very few high-profile attacks.

**Change of policies**

In response to the riots, assassinations, and bombings that started in the late 1980s, the Chinese government deployed various strategies to stabilize Xinjiang, including “soft” measures such as economic development and “hard” measures such as “strike hard” (in Chinese: 刑治) anti-crime campaigns. \(^15\) China began to identify Muslim institutions and practices as sources of instability. Thus, the repressive “strike hard” policy was partly focused on the observance of Islamic customs
the authorities considered illegal.\textsuperscript{16} These stabilizing efforts, however, were unable to prevent the deadly riot in 2009. In its wake, the then CCP chief of Xinjiang, Wang Lequan, was widely criticized for failing to govern the region properly. In April 2010, he was replaced by the reform-minded politician Zhang Chunxian.\textsuperscript{17} This change of guard was followed by the so-called “Xinjiang Work Forum,” chaired by the then Chinese president, Hu Jintao, in May 2010. The forum made a broad policy adjustment, giving priority to economic and social improvements in the region.\textsuperscript{18}

Given the surge in terrorist attacks since Zhang Chunxian had taken the helm, the authorities realized that the adjusted—largely soft—policies had not worked well enough. They were forced to couple the soft policies with hard measures to address the scourge of “religious extremism,” widely viewed as the driving force behind terrorist attacks. Manifestations of religious extremism were described by Nur Bekri, the then governor of Xinjiang, in his article in April 2014. He stated that the extremists prohibited other people from watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, singing and dancing; they did not allow laughter at weddings or crying at funerals; they forced women to wear burqas and men to grow beards; they advocated a pan-Islam society, demanding not only food, but also medicine, clothing, and even government-subsidized housing to be halal; they misled people, especially young people, into acts of terrorism; they distorted religious teachings; they made up heresies such as “jihadi martyrs go to heaven,” “killing a pagan is worth over 10 years of piety,” and “one gets whatever one wants in heaven”; they pitted believers against “pagans” and condemned those who do not follow their distorted beliefs as “traitors” and “scum.”\textsuperscript{19}

Since taking office as China’s top leader in November 2012, Xi Jinping has attached great importance to Xinjiang. To combat religious extremism, the CCP under his leadership held a high-profile “Second Xinjiang Work Forum” in May 2014, with the participation of all Politburo members and many other high-ranking officials. The meeting clarified China’s guiding principles, basic requirements, and major tasks in its efforts to achieve the overall objective of “social stability and long-term security” in Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{20} At the forum, Xi called on Xinjiang residents to identify themselves, regardless of their ethnicity, with China, the Chinese nation, its culture, and the socialism with Chinese characteristics. He also stressed the need to “strengthen inter-ethnic contact, exchange and mingling” and urged all ethnic groups to “show mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and appreciation,” to “learn and help each other,” and to “be tightly bound together like the seeds of a pomegranate.” Further, he proposed five basic principles for governing Xinjiang: protecting legal religious activities; stopping illegal ones; deterring religious extremism; guarding against its infiltration; and cracking down on crimes related to extremism.\textsuperscript{21} The fifth principle involves the clear authorization to conduct harsh crackdowns on religious extremism.

\textit{Strategy of de-radicalization}

A news website run by the Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television reported that Zhang Chunxian, then top leader of Xinjiang, used the term “de-radicalization” for the first time in January 2012. Although the authorities in Xinjiang noticed the harmfulness of religious extremism, they had to combat it in vain by means of education and persuasion owing to a lack of necessary counter-extremism laws.\textsuperscript{22}
In May 2013, the strategy of de-radicalization materialized in a policy document entitled “Several Guiding Opinions on Further Suppressing Illegal Religious Activities and Combating the Infiltration of Religious Extremism in Accordance with Law,” issued by Xinjiang’s CCP Committee. The policy document, often referred to as “No. 11 Document,” defines the borders between ethnic customs, normal religious practices, and extremist manifestations. In 2014, the No. 11 Document was supplemented by a “No. 28 Document” that refers to another policy guideline entitled “Several Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Work with regard to Islam.” Although the government of Xinjiang often emphasizes the importance of both documents for its de-radicalization efforts, these documents are internal party regulations by nature and unavailable to the general public. Based on these “confidential” documents, the legislature of Xinjiang revised an outdated regional law called “XUAR’s Regulations on Religious Affairs” (hereinafter abbreviated to “Xinjiang RRA”) in November 2014 and adopted a new regional law called “XUAR’s Implementing Rules on the Counter-Terrorism Law of the PRC” (Xinjiang IRCTL) in July 2017.

Since the Second Xinjiang Work Forum in May 2014, Xinjiang has placed the de-radicalization strategy high on its agenda. The strategy is implemented through a multitude of approaches and programs, in different forms, and by multiple CCP and governmental organs and civil society groups.

**Approaches to de-radicalization**

To implement the strategy, the authorities in Xinjiang have proposed various significant approaches such as “five keys,” “four prongs,” “three contingents,” “two hands,” and “one rule.”

**“Five keys”**

The “five keys” approach refers to five methods respectively for solving five different categories of problems. In official documents, the five methods are defined as follows:

- Ideological problems should be solved by means of ideology;
- Cultural problems should be solved by means of culture;
- Folk customs should be treated with an attitude of respect;
- Religious problems should be solved in accordance with religious rules;
- Violent terrorism should be combated in line with the rule of law and by means of iron-fisted actions.

The “five keys” are identified individually in this paper as the ideological, cultural, customary, religious, and legal keys. In the eyes of Xinjiang authorities, the “five keys” approach provides a fundamental, permanent solution to terrorism.

**“Four prongs”**

The approach of “four prongs” refers to a combination of the following four methods: “squeezing by correct faith”; “counteracting by culture”; “controlling by law”; and “popularizing science.” While the authorities initially spoke of “three prongs,” the list was later expanded to include the
fourth. An authoritative interpretation of this approach was articulated by Zhang Chunxian at the Xinjiang Stability Work Conference on January 8, 2016:

- “Squeezing by correct faith” means using correct faith to clarify the people’s understanding of Islam, awaken their minds, and squeeze out extremism;
- “Counteracting by culture” means seeking effective and practical solutions to countering extremism and guiding people to secularization and modernization;
- “Controlling by law” means making the best of the role of law not only in regulating social behavior and countering religious extremism but also in guiding social expectations and building social consensus;
- “Popularizing science” means spreading the knowledge about and promoting the use of science and technology in order to guide the people to uphold science, remove ignorance, and deny extremism.

“Three contingents”

The approach of “three contingents” refers to the policy of reinforcing three main groups of people the government can count on to maintain stability and security: 1.28 million cadres, 0.4 million teachers, and 28,000 religious figures. In 2015, Xinjiang held three meetings specifically to mobilize these people to play a central role in its de-radicalization efforts.

According to an anonymous professor in Xinjiang quoted by the Phoenix report, this policy is held in high regard. The cadres are important, because they are tasked with implementing policies. The teachers are important, because they have influence on 4.7 million students who account for 25% of the entire population and are in touch with almost all the families in Xinjiang. The religious figures are important, because the religion of Islam has a profound impact on the daily life of religious Uyghurs.

Let’s take the contingent of religious figures as an example. In order to boost the role of the religious leaders, the authorities held a special meeting on June 14, 2015, calling on them to be qualified, patriotic, religious figures. As always, they were asked to love their country, support the CCP leadership, and resist the “three forces.” In particular, they were urged to voice their strong condemnation of acts of violence in the name of Islam, expose the false beliefs of extremists and terrorists, and guide religious people in the war against extremist ideas and forces.

After the meeting, the authorities released a long list of measures that includes:

- Establishing CCP units within Islamic Associations at the county and prefectural levels, with the objective to guide religious people and bring their religion in line with socialism;
- Contacting religious figures and venues through government and party leaders on a regular, one-to-one basis in order to inform these leaders and solve problems in a timely manner;
- Improving the evaluation of religious figures so that those who work hard to promote ethnic unity can be rewarded and those who are unqualified can be removed from their posts.
“Two hands”

The “two hands” refer to the one “firm hand,” which cracks down on terrorists, and the other “firm hand,” which educates and guides Uyghur people.29 This approach is also a response to President Xi’s call for both harsh and soft measures against terrorism as pronounced at the Second Xinjiang Work Forum. For the soft measures to be effective, the hard measures are absolutely necessary. Xiong Xuanguo, a former top security official of Xinjiang, was quoted by the Phoenix report as saying that, if it were not for the crackdown, local officials would not have had the guts to enforce the law, local people would not have been ready to assist the government in arresting terrorists, and extremist manifestations such as the wearing of burqas would not have been curbed. On the whole, the crackdown could drain the environment of extremism and hence push forward the de-radicalization efforts.30

“One rule”

The “one rule” refers to the policy of “ruling Xinjiang according to law,” a regional response to the 18th CCP Central Committee’s Fourth Plenum resolution in October 2014 on “ruling the country according to law” (the Chinese interpretation of “the rule of law”). The emphasis on the law suggests the determination of Xinjiang authorities to change their previous de-radicalization practices, which were not firmly based on the law.31 This approach is well elucidated by Zhang Chunxian: “Regardless of ethnicity or religion, everybody must strictly follow the law; any appeal or aspiration must be expressed and satisfied in a lawful manner.”32 Recent national and local laws related to de-radicalization are as follows:

**XUAR’s Regulation on Religious Affairs.** On November 28, 2014, Xinjiang’s legislature amended a two-decades-old local law, “XUAR’s Regulation on Religious Affairs” (Xinjiang RRA). The newly amended law, consisting of 66 articles in eight chapters, legalizes a number of government directives previously implemented by local authorities, thereby granting the authorities more power to restrict religious practices, censor online speeches, and ban attire or beards perceived to be extremist.33

**Urumqi City’s Regulation on Burqa Ban.** On January 10, 2015, the legislature of Urumqi, capital city of Xinjiang, passed “Urumqi City’s Regulation on Banning the Wearing of Burqas in Public Places.” Besides burqas, the regulation also bans other symbols that the lawmakers perceive as extremist.34

**PRC’s Counter-Terrorism Law.** On December 27, 2015, China’s national legislature passed the much-anticipated Counter-Terrorism Law (CTL). A highlight of the newly enacted law is that it introduces, for the first time, China’s specific provisions on terrorist de-radicalization. These provisions are included in Articles 29–30. While Article 29 is a general stipulation on social and custodial de-radicalization, Article 30 addresses post-imprisonment de-radicalization.35
XUAR’s Implementing Rules on the Counter-Terrorism Law. On August 5, 2016, Xinjiang’s legislature passed “XUAR’s Implementing Rules on the ‘Counter-Terrorism Law of the PRC’” (Xinjiang IRCTL). The regional law, comprised of 61 articles in 10 chapters, features important provisions to supplement the national CTL.  

Programs for de-radicalizing terrorists

In Xinjiang, the de-radicalization strategy targets three main groups of people: imprisoned radicals; released radicals; and radicals who have not been in prison. Accordingly, there are three categories of programs to deal with these people: custodial programs; post-imprisonment programs; and social programs.

Custodial Programs

Legal basis

Prisons are often described as hotbeds of radicalization, but they have also served as incubators for de-radicalization. Custodial de-radicalization is a crucial part of Xinjiang’s efforts for countering violent extremism in all of its shapes and forms.

The CTL provides a legal basis for the use of custodial de-radicalization (Article 29 paragraph 2). Under this law, prisons, detention centers, and community correctional facilities are required to supervise, educate, and correct criminals imprisoned on terrorism or extremism charges. Moreover, prisons and detention centers may incarcerate such inmates either together with other, regular inmates or confine them separately, depending on the needs for rehabilitation and maintaining prison order.

The Xinjiang IRCTL contains two interpretations (Articles 39 and 40) on custodial de-radicalization as provided in the CTL. Under Article 39, the phrase “terrorist or extremist criminals” refers not only to those who have been imprisoned but also to those who are outside owing to probation or parole. Pursuant to Article 40, the “separate confinement” rule applies to the following criminals:

- Ringleaders of terrorist or extremist groups as well as major offenders in joint crimes;
- Those who, while serving their sentences, commit another offense, or incite or instigate other criminals to break the law;
- Those who resist de-radicalization programs and display violent tendencies.

“Xinjiang experiences”

Even before the de-radicalization strategy was proposed, Xinjiang prisons had taken innovative steps to de-radicalize people. This was made possible with the coordination and supervision of the Prison Administration, a governmental agency administered by the Department of Justice in Xinjiang. Over time, these prisons have reportedly gained hands-on experiences that are shared as “Xinjiang experiences” by some other prisons throughout the country. Still, the Prison Administration acknowledges that there is a need to find more individualized solutions and bolster actual effectiveness.
To sum up, the “Xinjiang experiences” include:

- Boosting the capabilities of prison officials for de-radicalization;
- Providing religious counseling to dispel extremist ideology;
- Garnering external support from other governmental agencies and civil society organizations;
- Utilizing de-radicalized prisoners to speak out against extremism.

1. *Boosting de-radicalization capabilities.* As of 2016, the Prison Administration had planned to select and train 100 police officers for de-radicalization efforts within three years. According to the Administration, the officers to be chosen for training should be politically reliable, speak both Chinese and Uyghur languages, be professionally skilled, and have related experience. They would be trained in colleges, by experts, through social investigations, or by taking on temporary positions. They would be required to familiarize themselves with ethnic theories, religious policies, Islamic doctrines, legal regulations, and Chinese history. Courses aimed at providing pedagogical and psychological knowledge and improving skills in modern science and human communication were also required. The training program would be incorporated into the region-wide “Fang Hui Ju” program. Apart from attending training courses, these officers would also receive training by living and working together with working groups of the “Fang Hui Ju” program who were stationed in the village. They were required to learn from local officials and residents, particularly about Uyghur customs and their agricultural life.

2. *Providing religious counseling.* The Prison Administration established a “De-radicalization Experts Group” (DEG) made up of politically reliable Islamic scholars and appointed Abuduwayiti Saidiwakasi, vice chairman of the Islamic Association of Xinjiang, as head of the DEG. Xinjiang prisons invited religious leaders to give religious counseling to radicalized detainees. In the First Prison of Xinjiang alone, the audience of such counseling sessions included 17 inmates imprisoned for terrorism-related crimes. The Phoenix report’s interview with Abuduwayiti gives a rare glimpse into how the First Prison has used religious counseling to dispel extremist ideology. According to the DEG chief as quoted by the report, most of these inmates did not plead guilty nor show remorse, nor did they recognize the legitimacy of Chinese laws. They identified themselves only with Islam as they understood it. Thus, to talk with the inmates about law or state recognition was useless. Instead, he chose to talk only about the Islamic religion and to debate with them. In the beginning, they saw in him primarily a representative of the CCP; still, after a long period of religious counseling, most of them were de-radicalized. One year later, the rate of success had reached 63%. Among those who had been rehabilitated were even leaders of notorious terrorist groups like the ETIM and Hizb ut-Tahrir. During counseling, Abuduwayiti usually used proper religious teachings in place of the extremist ones that had been implanted in their brains and then showed them how to be law-abiding citizens and good Muslims at the same time. He also instructed them how to work, respect their parents, and contribute to society in their worldly life so that they can go to paradise in the afterlife.

3. *Garnering external support.* In their de-radicalization work, Xinjiang prisons rely on a systematic and comprehensive “joint mechanism” that combines the strengths of prisons...
and their external partners. The mechanism is thought to be the correct channel for winning the cooperation of officials in other governmental agencies and external experts, scholars, professionals, and clerics from civil society organizations. In a journal article published in 2014, Yuan Bing, warden of the Third Prison of Xinjiang, said that the mechanism had involved 19 partner institutions. His prison could rely on these (mechanism) institutions to help prisoners’ families obtain relief funds. Further, civil society groups provided assistance in terms of policy interpretation, legal aid, occupational help, and psychological counseling. In spite of this, Yuan had to admit that much work still remained to be done before the “joint mechanism” would be in a position to play a greater role.43

4. Utilizing de-radicalized prisoners. Xinjiang prison authorities stress the value of well-behaved inmates who demonstrate obvious signs of being de-radicalized after undergoing custodial programs. In August 2014, two such inmates, Maimaituofuti Maimaitirouzi and Gul’aman Abudula, were sent to their home prefecture Hetian with the assignment to use their own experiences to expose the harm caused by extremism and demonstrate the benefits of change. Their testimonials were later released to the public. The first inmate described how he was radicalized abroad, became a co-founder of the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP), and had been deported from Pakistan to China; he asked young people to stay away from religious extremism. The latter reported how she had recruited other women to an extremist organization; she expressed her deep regret for having hurt their families and, especially, harmed their children.44 On February 1, 2016, Xinjiang prison authorities held a promotional meeting in the First Prison, at which Xinjiang High Court announced its decision to reduce the prison terms for Maimaituofuti Maimaitirouzi and ten other prisoners.45

Claim of success

Xinjiang claims a success in de-radicalizing prisoners. At a counter-terrorism conference in December 2015, Meng Jianzhu, chief of the CCP Political and Legal Commission and overseer of China’s counter-terrorism efforts, called on officials to learn from Xinjiang’s de-radicalization experiences and improve the effectiveness of their de-radicalization work.46 In February 2016, Xinjiang’s High Court reduced the sentences of 11 offenders convicted of terrorism-related crimes. Seven of these offenders had their sentences reduced from life terms to between 19.5 and 20 years. The other four prisoners, serving sentences of eight, 13, and 15 years, had their sentences reduced by six months.47 In a New Year’s address delivered on December 31, 2015, Zhang Chunxian declared that the de-radicalization campaign had “remarkably weakened the atmosphere of religious extremism.”48 At a press conference on March 8, 2016, Zhang, after elaborating on the positive security situation in Xinjiang, warned that, due to multiple factors, the situation for countering terrorism in Xinjiang remained serious and the struggle for stability long-term, complicated, and intense.49

Post-imprisonment programs

After the inmates are released from prison, they are very likely to encounter difficulties in finding a job and reintegrating into society. There may come a time when they may be tempted to return to an environment of violent extremism. This is why the reinteg
of released persons into society urgently requires post-imprisonment programs, run in close partnerships with civil society organizations.

“Placement and education”
The CTL dedicates the four paragraphs of Article 30 to a new administrative measure called “placement and education” (in Chinese: 安置教育). The measure is regulated as follows:

— **Risk Assessment.** Before any inmate is released, prisons and detention centers are required to assess the inmate’s dangerousness. To this end, the assessors consult with grassroots organizations as well as with anyone involved in investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating the case. If the inmate is deemed to be dangerous, correctional facilities should submit, to the intermediate court with jurisdiction over the location where the sentence was served, a recommendation for a “placement and education” program (paragraph 1).

— **Court Decision.** It is up to the court to decide whether such a program is necessary. The decision should be made prior to the prisoner’s release. A copy of the written decision must be sent to the prosecution office at the same level. If those subject to the program object to the decision, they may apply for re-consideration to the court at the next higher level (paragraph 2).

— **Facilities.** Such programs are administered by the provincial government and implemented by facilities under its jurisdiction. Persons attending the program should be assessed annually by the relevant facility. If they are found to be genuinely repentant and do not pose any threat to society, the facility is obliged to promptly issue a recommendation to the court that made the original decision to release these persons from the duty to attend the program. Meanwhile, persons subject to the program have the right to apply for release from this duty (paragraph 3).

— **Supervision.** The prosecution office supervises the decision-making by the court and the implementation of the program (paragraph 4).

Besides the CTL, the Xinjiang IPCTL includes several supplementary provisions (Articles 41–43) regarding the measure:

— **Time Periods.** Prisons and detention centers must submit the risk assessment report and the recommendation for such a program to the competent court six months prior to the prisoner’s release. The court should make a decision within one month, with a possible extension of another month under special circumstances (Article 41).

— **Responsible Agencies.** Governmental organs for judicial administration are responsible for running the “placement and education” programs, as well as for the planning, construction, and daily management of corresponding facilities (Article 42).

— **Program Activities.** “Placement and education” programs are designed to organize educational activities in law, ethics, mental health, modern culture, scientific knowledge, religious faith, as well as occupational skills (Article 43).

Apart from the above-mentioned provisions, there are no further rules on the implementation of “placement and education.” This measure almost certainly involves deprivation of freedom. Although the court makes the final decision on the measure, this happens
without sufficient judicial safeguards. This is especially alarming given that there is no time limit on the duration of the measure.

Although the above provisions have taken effect, at the time of this writing there is no information publicly available on how the measure is and will be implemented. Instead, there is a need to look at how released prisoners are generally de-radicalized in legal practice.

“Placement, help, and education”
At first glance, the “placement and education” program appears similar to “placement, help, and education” (in Chinese: 安置帮教) as regulated in a series of administrative regulations in China. Yet, these two measures are very different in nature. According to a 1994 regulation jointly adopted by several ministries of the central government, “placement, help, and education” refers to a non-coercive program targeting recently released prisoners, particularly those released less than three years prior, who lack the means to lead a normal life and exhibit signs of recidivism.\(^{50}\)

Social programs
Aside from custodial and post-imprisonment programs, the CTL also provides, in Article 29 paragraph 1, a legal basis for social programs targeting those who have engaged in terrorism or extremism but do not deserve criminal punishment. In such cases, police authorities are required to help and educate them, in cooperation with relevant authorities, villagers’ or citizens’ committees to which these persons belong, their places of work, the schools where they study, their family members, and legal guardians.

Pursuant to Article 38 of the Xinjiang IRCTL, the “relevant authorities” referenced in the social program are governmental departments including those for judicial administration, civil affairs, education, religious affairs, culture, human resources and social security, as well as government-controlled social organizations such as labor unions, Communist Youth Leagues, Women’s Federations, and Science & Technology Associations.

Yining County of Yili Prefecture is known for its successful de-radicalization programs and especially for its “Social Rehabilitation Center” established for this purpose. In late 2014, the county divided radicalized people into four categories depending on their extremist threat and opened four categories of training classes targeting these respective groups.\(^{51}\) According to the Phoenix report, the government dispatched several dozen experienced officials of Muslim ethnicities to take turns in living and working together with the targeted persons. At one time, the Center organized a meeting attended by more than 10 officials and more than 20 radicals. Both sides discussed and debated face to face, without the presence of police officers nor the use of coercive measures.\(^{52}\)

Programs for engaging communities
“Terrorists are not born, but are products of circumstances.” For any de-radicalization program to be successful, governments must engage communities to “build societal resilience to prevent individuals from joining or supporting terrorist groups.”\(^{53}\) In Xinjiang, the government initiates various programs to engage communities with two major purposes: first, winning politically reliable people from civil society for support; second, preventing vulnerable members of civil society from becoming
radicalized. These programs are implemented either through civil society groups in Xinjiang or through “Fang Hui Ju” working groups dispatched by the regional government. The civil society groups include Islamic Associations, Communist Youth Leagues, and Women’s Federations. They are nominally non-governmental, but in fact government-controlled organizations.

**Open letter**

Among all these civil society groups, Islamic Associations take a pivotal position for de-radicalization efforts in Xinjiang. On July 30, 2014, Jume Tahir, chief imam of the Id Kah Mosque in the city of Kashgar, was stabbed to death in broad daylight by Uyghur extremists for allegedly being a government stooge. After the assassination, the Islamic Association of Xinjiang (IAX) released an open letter to both imams and ordinary Muslims, condemning the killing of the imam and calling on them to oppose any form of terrorism and resist extremist ideology. The IAX specifically urged the clergy to be unafraid in defending the correct faith, resolutely dispute religious extremism, and declare war on terrorist activities.

**“Modern culture and young people”**

The Communist Youth League of Xinjiang (CYL Xinjiang), a subsidiary of the Communist Youth League of China (CYL China), is also involved in regional de-radicalization efforts. Since 2013, it has engaged in an educational program for “modern culture and young people” in the hope of using modern culture to help young people gain legal awareness and be more scientifically minded in its attempt to lighten religious atmosphere and counteract extremist ideology. The program is run in the form of promotional meetings, recreational and sports events, and knowledge contests, at five levels, namely the XUAR, prefecture, county, township, and village. As part of the program, the CYL Xinjiang organized a theatrical performance tour to ten townships within ten days in November 2014. The first performance in Ya’er Township in Tulufan Prefecture alone attracted an audience of around 3,000.

**“Beauty project”**

Owing to Zhang Chunxian’s proposal, Xinjiang launched in 2011 a five-year special program known as “Beauty Project” with a budget of 80 million Chinese yuan. The project, spearheaded by the government-controlled Women’s Association of Xinjiang, was concluded on June 25, 2016 with the opening of a special exhibition showcasing its achievements.

The project claimed to develop industries for women’s fashion, cosmetics, and accessories and promote the employment rate for Uyghur women as one component in Xinjiang’s de-radicalization work. Officially, the project was designed to provide educational and promotional activities to “spread modern culture” and “advocate healthy and civilized life styles.” In fact, it was intended to discourage Uyghur women from wearing veils (including face, head, and body coverings) associated with conservative Islam. To this end, the project financed a broad range of activities such as fashion shows, beauty contests, and lectures on dress code under the initiative “Let Your Beautiful Hair Float and Let Your Pretty Face Appear.”
“Fang Hui Ju”

“Fang Hui Ju” is a special project started by the government of Xinjiang under the leadership of Zhang Chunxian in March 2014, aimed at ‘investigating the conditions of the people, serving the interests of the people, and winning the hearts of the people’, officially abbreviated as ‘Fang, Hui, and Ju’ (in Chinese: 访惠聚), namely ‘Investigating, Serving, and Winning’. The original plan for this programme was to send 200,000 cadres to all villages and communities throughout Xinjiang, within three years and in three phases.

In announcing the start of this project, Zhang Chunxian said that the project is an innovative measure by Xinjiang to win the people’s support under a new situation. It is also part of the larger, nationwide, “mass line” campaign begun in June 2013. He stated that the dispatched officials should rely on the people, trust in the people, and mobilize the people. The project should leave no blanks in covering all 100,000 villages and communities. According to Zhang, the project is expected to make breakthroughs in the following six objectives:

— Changing Working Styles. By implementing the mass line campaign, the project aims to change working styles of local cadres and provide opportunities for training dispatched officials. The dispatched officials should make friends with the local cadres and residents, and try hard to help them solve problems.

— Enhancing Ethnic Solidarity. The dispatched officials are required to serve and help the local people wholeheartedly, organize activities to promote interethnic mutual trust, understanding, tolerance, and appreciation, and get fully integrated into local society.

— Promoting Religious Harmony. The officials should provide, on the one hand, information on science and modern culture and organize arts and sports activities. On the other hand, they should also crack down on illegal religious activities and religious extremism, refute the fallacy that “jihadist martyrs will go to paradise,” and do their utmost in de-radicalization efforts.

— Improving People’s Livelihood. These officials need to help local people solve problems with regard to education, employment, housing, social insurance, roads, drinking water and electricity supply, and increase their income.

— Maintaining Social Stability. The dispatched officials should help local authorities implement measures for maintaining stability and preventing violence or turbulence from spreading out of the village or township.

— Strengthening Local Authorities. Priority should be given to improving the capabilities of local authorities (mainly CCP village groups). This involves, for example, training local cadres, boosting their authority, and increasing their role.

On February 24, 2016, Xinjiang held a large conference to summarize its work on the project, award well-performing groups and individuals, announce work plans for 2016, and see off the third-phase working groups. Zhang Chunxian positively commented on the project by stating that two years of experience show that this is not only a strategic plan for stabilizing and safeguarding Xinjiang but also a successful practice for improving governance systems in villages and communities.
The conference was also attended by several group leaders in the second phase of the “Fang Hui Ju” project who shared their successful experiences. Among them, Wu Xian, party chief of Xinjiang government’s Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), was the first to speak. He had headed the working group in a village with over 600 households, called Bashikudukela in Puqiageqi Township of Moyu County in Hetian Prefecture. According to Wu, he and 45 other officials from the FAO had been dispatched to seven villages in the same township. They had lived and worked together with village officials and their fellow villagers, and had integrated themselves into the local people. Wu also used personal stories to prove the effectiveness of their work. In one story, his working group helped install drinking water pipes. The villagers were so grateful that they said emotionally: “The water is so clean; when it comes to the mouth, it also makes the heart sweet!” Another story happened on the day of the working group’s departure. The village’s party chief kindly accompanied them to the airport, before choking with sobs and saying: “I really cannot bear the thought of you leaving.”

Those unfamiliar with the nature of propaganda work in China, upon hearing these moving testimonies, may jump to the conclusion that the “Fang Hui Ju” project will eventually solve the problem of “three forces,” once and for all. However, these stories should not be taken very seriously, because they are, in all likelihood, exaggerated or fabricated. The dispatched officials would not openly acknowledge that they were equipped with riot shields, helmets, spears, and closed-circuit television cameras at their working stations or how fearful they had been of attacks by local Uyghurs. Nor would the authorities allow such stories to be published in government-controlled media.

**Conclusion**

**Characteristics**

Based on the foregoing examination, this paper identifies some key characteristics of China’s de-radicalization campaign.

First, the de-radicalization campaign implements a holistic strategy. While the central government sets out the general principles and policies on de-radicalization, the XUAR government develops specific approaches and programs to implement these principles and policies. All governmental agencies, public institutions, and NGOs in the region are involved in the grand project through multifold approaches and multifaceted programs. All of these programs are carefully planned and coordinated in order to convey constant and coherent messages against extremist ideology.

Second, the de-radicalization strategy adopts different approaches. As various factors can drive religious extremism, the approaches to countering them must be diverse as well. The approaches advocated and deployed by the XUAR include “five keys,” “four prongs,” “three contingents,” “two hands,” and “one rule.” Viewed together, these approaches point to legal, religious, cultural, ideological, and scientific aspects of the de-radicalization efforts. Among these aspects, the importance of the rule of law is increasing.

Third, the de-radicalization strategy deploys multifaceted programs. Xinjiang has taken soft counter-terrorism measures in the shape of religious, cultural, educational, occupational, and social programs. These programs target different groups of people, including those who are radicalized as well as those who are not radicalized but
considered vulnerable to recruitment. None of these programs is sufficient on its own as de-radicalization is more likely to succeed only when integrated to produce a synergy effect.

Fourth, the de-radicalization strategy underscores community engagement. In addition to programs implemented by governmental organs, the strategy also relies on NGOs to initiate programs to engage the communities. Although the “Fang Hui Ju” project is run by the XUAR, its aim is to engage the communities. NGO programs include the “Open Letter” by the Islamic Association of Xinjiang, the “Modern Culture and Young People” program by the CYL Xinjiang, and the “Beauty Project” by the Women’s Federation of Xinjiang. Since these NGOs are not really independent, it is highly questionable whether they can win the trust, let alone the minds and hearts, of the people they address.

Fifth, the de-radicalization strategy is an experimental undertaking. Despite being a long-term and systematic project, the de-radicalization campaign is also experimental in nature. There is ample evidence proving that most of the de-radicalization practices in Xinjiang have their precedents in other countries. Obviously, the global practices have been adapted to suit the realities and conditions in Xinjiang. Moreover, the regional government continues to encourage local authorities to seek innovative solutions through pilot projects.

**Effectiveness**

For China, de-radicalization is an imported concept. After the adoption of various national and local laws, de-radicalization has become an integral part of China’s counter-terrorism efforts. On many occasions, Xinjiang authorities have claimed success in de-radicalizing terrorists in prison and in reducing the extremist “atmosphere” among the general Uyghur population. Yet, there are good reasons to doubt this claim.

To begin with, it is very hard to assess the effectiveness of de-radicalization programs. There is consensus that such programs are conducive to securing behavioral change so as to lower the risk of terrorist re-engagement. However, as research findings suggest, it is difficult to establish reliable criteria and standards for ascertaining whether a terrorist has been truly reformed in terms of ideology.

In regards to the custodial programs in Xinjiang, it is definitely too early to declare success. Those who have allegedly been de-radicalized remain in prison. Nobody can be sure that they will never re-engage in terrorism after their release. Even if they desist terrorist activity within a few post-release years, nobody can reliably predict that they have truly given up on the idea of terrorism. Admittedly, research findings have shown that many of those who disengage from terrorist activity are not necessarily de-radicalized.

As for the programs that target other people so as to address the extremist “atmosphere,” it is also too premature to call it a success. The judgment of a less intense “atmosphere” is probably based on signs such as a decline in violent attacks and the rare sightings of face coverings. It is very likely, however, that such an atmosphere is merely the result of security measures rather than de-radicalization efforts. Also, it remains doubtful whether such an atmosphere is an indicator of obedience and peace, or rather a façade for hiding resentment and hostility.

Another challenge related to the issue of effectiveness is the difficulty in replicating best practices elsewhere, mainly because they are extremely expensive. In Saudi Arabia, for
example, the de-radicalization project includes a prison-based program that entails enormous input in various respects, as well as a comprehensive post-release program associated with extensive monitoring.\textsuperscript{67} The same also holds true for Singapore, which is globally known for its comprehensive de-radicalization programs.\textsuperscript{68} In a nutshell, de-radicalization efforts have to be proportionate. It is neither affordable nor worthwhile to spend disproportionately large resources on de-radicalization measures at the expense of other equally, or even more, important issues.

\textbf{Controversies}

One has to concede that many of the de-radicalization practices in Xinjiang are controversial. As the primary task of this paper is to describe the policies, approaches, and measures used in China for de-radicalization purposes, this author is not in the position to analyze all of these controversies in an in-depth manner. A few examples shall suffice to demonstrate the weak points of the Chinese de-radicalization efforts.

The first concern is with regard to Muslim leaders. Xinjiang authorities are tightening their control over these leaders using measures that include establishing CCP units within Islamic Associations at the county and prefectural levels to guarantee their political loyalty. Such control may prevent government-appointed imams from doing something unfavorable to the government, but it will also further undermine their legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of radicalized Muslims. This is especially worrying, because influential and credible Muslim leaders serve as a bridge between Uyghur Muslims and the government.

Second, civil society organizations are an important source for de-radicalization, because they can “reach the most recalcitrant members of society in ways that the state and its institutions cannot.”\textsuperscript{69} Xinjiang authorities also stress the role of civil society groups and rely on Islamic Associations, CYLs, and Women’s Federations for engaging communities, but their influence is bound to be limited, because they are in name non-governmental, but in fact government-controlled.

Third, the CCP gives high priority to the rule of law, a principle that has been explicitly recognized by Chinese law but not well implemented in legal practice. It is a positive development that China has introduced various laws in the past years and pledged to advance de-radicalization on the basis of the law. However, it is necessary to note that most of these laws involve granting even more powers to governmental agencies that already have broad, intrusive competences. These additional powers may constitute infringements on fundamental rights as guaranteed by Chinese laws and international human rights treaties.\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{Looking ahead}

On August 29, 2016, Zhang Chunxian was replaced by Chen Quanguo, formerly Tibet’s CCP boss, for unclear reasons.\textsuperscript{71} The parachuting of Zhang Chunxian into Xinjiang after the 2009 rioting suggested the CCP’s expectation to bring stability and security to Xinjiang. Yet, his term was accompanied by a rise in terrorist violence, albeit with a sharp drop since 2015.

Since coming to Xinjiang, Chen Quanguo has introduced new security restrictions\textsuperscript{72} and staged a series of mass rallies by the paramilitary police to show force and resolve.\textsuperscript{73} Also, there
appears to be no loosening of the de-radicalization efforts as a result of the change in power, at least in the short term. This conclusion is based on a Xinjiang CCP meeting convened by Chen Quanguo on August 30, 2016. At this meeting, Chen Quanguo affirmed that the policies and measures adopted under his predecessor Zhang for implementing the CCP Central’s principles and plans on Xinjiang had been “effective and practicable,” with a pledge to stick to the established plans and measures, and to work hard to implement and advance them.\footnote{Z. ZHOU}

**Notes**

1. For general information about Xinjiang and Uyghurs, see Dru C. Gladney, “China’s Minorities: The Case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur People,” a paper prepared for the former UN Working Group on Minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/WP.16), May 5, 2003, http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/SUBCOM/other/E-CN_4-SUB_2-AC_5-2003-WG_16.pdf (accessed March 26, 2017), 3–7; as well as Zunyou Zhou, *Balancing Security and Liberty: Counter-Terrorism Legislation in Germany and China* (Berlin, Germany: Duncker & Humblot, 2014), 93–97.

2. Xu Wei and Wang Qian, “Terror Fight Must Be Intensified in China,” *China Daily*, May 23, 2014, http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/23/content_17535095.htm (accessed March 26, 2017). In the Chinese context, “religious extremism” is a euphemistic term for “radical Islam,” “Islamic radicalism,” “Islamism,” “jihadism,” or “Salafism.” It is necessary to note that “religious extremism” is not a local product of Xinjiang but an import from beyond the borders.

3. Rohan Gunaratna and Lawrence Rubin, “Introduction,” in *Terrorist Rehabilitation and Counter-Radicalisation: New Approaches to Counter-terrorism*, edited by Rohan Gunaratna, Jolene Jerard, and Lawrence Rubin (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.

4. See Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists” (RAND Corporation monograph, 2010), xiii, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf (accessed March 26, 2017).

5. See, for example, John Horgan, “Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, no. 4 (February 2008), pp. 3–8; and John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 152–3. According to Horgan, there is a need to distinguish between “disengagement” and “de-radicalization.” The former involves a behavioral change, the latter a cognitive change.

6. See Michael Clarke, “The Problematic Progress of ‘Integration’ in the Chinese State’s Approach to Xinjiang, 1759–2005,” *Asian Ethnicity* 8, no. 3 (October 2007): 263–9; Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Far Northwest* (New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 17–19; James Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 116–33.

7. Dillon (see note 6 above), 19–22; 32–36.

8. Dillon (see note 6 above), 3–7.

9. For Xinjiang population statistics, see Australian Centre on China in the World, The China Story Lexicon “Xinjiang,” https://www.thechinastory.org/lexicon/xinjiang (accessed March 26, 2017).

10. For cultural similarities between Uyghurs and other peoples in Central Asia, see Arienne M. Dwyer, “The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse” (East-West Center Washington, 2005; http://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/PS015.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=32051, accessed March 26, 2017), 30.

11. For a historical background of ethnic separatism in Xinjiang, see James Millward, “Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment” (East-West Center Washington, 2004; http://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/PS006.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=32006, accessed March 26, 2017), 2–9; also Colin Mackerras, “Xinjiang at the Turn of the Century: The Causes of Separatism,” *Central Asian Survey* 20, no. 3 (2001): 294–302.
12. See Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, “East Turkistan’ Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity,” January 21, 2002, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

13. My thanks go to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

14. See, for instance, Nicolas Becquelin, “Criminalizing Ethnicity: Political Repression in Xinjiang,” China Rights Forum no. 1 (2004): 39; James Millward, Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment (Washington: East-West Center, 2004), 12–13; Yitzhak Shichor, “Fact and Fiction: A Chinese Documentary on Eastern Turkestian Terrorism,” China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly 4, no. 2 (2006): 102–103.

15. My thanks go to an anonymous reviewer for emphasizing this.

16. Brent Hierman, “The Pacificification of Xinjiang: Uighur Protest and the Chinese State, 1988–2002,” Problems of Post-Communism 54, no. 3 (2007): 51–56. The author wishes to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this publication.

17. Kathrin Hille, “China Replaces Party Chief of Xinjiang,” Financial Times, April 25, 2010 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3bde1886-5043-11df-bc86-00144feab49a.html (accessed March 26, 2017).

18. See Zou Shengwen and Gu Ruizhen, “Xinjiang Gongzuo Zuotanhui Zhaokai, Hu Jintao Wen Jiabao Fabiao Zhongyao Jianghua [Xinjiang Work Forum Opens; Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao Deliver Important Talks],” Xinhua, May 20, 2010 http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-05/20/c_12125041.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

19. See Nur Bekri, “Ningxin Juli, Tuanjie Fenjin, Gongchuang Xinjiang Gezu Renmin Meihao Weilai [Uniting Hearts and Strengths in the Joint Undertaking to Create a Beautiful Future for All of Xinjiang’s Ethnic Groups],” Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], April 7, 2014 http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2014/04-07/6035071.shtml (accessed March 26, 2017). See also Ben Blanchard, “China Official Says Islamists Seek to Ban Laughter and Crying,” Reuters, April 7, 2014 http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-xinjiang-idUSBREA360HX20140407 (accessed March 26, 2017).

20. See “Xi Jinping Zai Di’erci Zhongyang Xinjiang Zuotanhui Shang Fabiao Zhongyao Jianghua [Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the CPC Central Committee’s Second Xinjiang Work Forum],” Xinhua, May 29, 2014 http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-05/29/c_126564529.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

21. See “Central Govt Pledges Better Governance in Xinjiang,” China Daily, May 30, 2014 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/30/content_17552753.htm (accessed March 26, 2017); also James Leibold, “Xinjiang Work Forum Marks New Policy of ‘Ethnic Mingling,’” China Brief 14, no. 12, https://jamestown.org/program/xinjiang-work-forum-marks-new-policy-of-ethnic-mingling (accessed March 26, 2017).

22. See the exclusive report of Chen Fang, “Xinjiang Qu Jiduanhua Diaocha [An Investigation of De-Radicalization Efforts in Xinjiang],” Fenghuang Wang [Phoenix Television Online], 2015 http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/xjqjdh (accessed March 26, 2017). In April 2015, Chen Fang, a female writer with the Hong Kong-based Phoenix Television, toured to study several of Xinjiang’s terrorism-stricken counties or county-level cities and recorded her interviews with local officials, providing valuable insight into the security situation in Xinjiang. Given the sensitivity of the topic of terrorism, such a report would not have been possible without the permission and support of top leaders in Xinjiang.

23. For details on both laws, see below.

24. Wen Lina, “‘Wu Ba Yaoshi’ Kai ‘Xinsuo’ Ju Minxin [“Five Keys” Open the Lock of the Heart and Win the Heart of the People],” Tianshan Wang [Tianshan Net], October 2, 2015 http://news.ts.cn/content/2015-10/02/content_11815549_all.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

25. Yao Tong and Sui Yunyan, “Ganyu Dandang, Zonghe Fali, Quebao ‘Sange Jianjue’ [Guarantee ‘Three Promises’ Through Accountable and Comprehensive Efforts],” Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], January 9, 2016 http://news.ts.cn/content/2016-01/09/content_11951821.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

26. Chen Fang (see note 22 above).

27. Yao Tong and Miriguli Wutuoya, “Zizhiqu Zhaokai Aiguo Zongjiao Renshi Zuotanhui [The XUAR Holds a Forum on Patriotic Religious Figures],” Tianshan Wang [Tianshan Net], June
14, 2015 http://news.ts.cn/content/2015-06/14/content_11368337.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

28. See “Zizhiqu Dangwei ZuZhibu Jiu Jiaqiang ‘San Zhi Duiwu’ Jianshe Da Jizhe Wen [Organizational Department of the CCP Xinjiang Committee Responds to Questions Raised by Journalists on the Initiative of ‘Three Contingents’],” Tianshan Wang [Tianshan Net], August 6, 2015 http://news.ts.cn/content/2015-08/06/content_11720232_all.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

29. See Li Min, “Zizhiqu Zhaokai Ganbu Dahui Chuanda Guanche Quanguo Lianghui Jingshen [The XUAR Holds a Meeting for Cadres to Convey the Ideas of the National Two Sessions],” Tianshan Wang [Tianshan Net], August 6, 2015 http://news.ts.cn/content/2015-08/06/content_11720232_all.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

30. Chen Fang (see note 22 above).

31. See Zunyou Zhou, “Rehabilitating Terrorists: The Chinese Approach,” Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis 8, no. 4 (April 2016): 13.

32. Zhang Chunxian, “Quanmian Tuijin Yifa Zhi Jiang [Fully Promote the Efforts of Ruling Xinjiang According to Law],” Renmin Ribao [People’s Daily], January 7, 2015 http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2015/0107/c1001-26357939.html (accessed March 26, 2017).

33. See Li Jianxin, “‘Xinjiang Weiwu’er Zizhiqu Zongjiao Shiwu Tiaoli Xiuding Dansheng Ji [The Birth of the Revised XUAR’s Regulation on Religious Affairs],” Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], December 30, 2014 http://news.ts.cn/content/2014-12/30/content_10868075_all.htm#content_1 (accessed March 26, 2017); also Cui Jia, “Curbs on Religious Extremism Beefed Up in Xinjiang,” China Daily, November 29, 2014 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/29/content_18996900.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

34. See Li Yanan, “Wulumuqi Shi Gonggong Changsuo Jiang Jinzhi Chuandai Mengmian [Urumqi City Will Ban the Wearing of Burqas],” Renmin Wang [People Online], January 17, 2015; http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2015/0117/c1001-26403482.html (accessed March 26, 2017).

35. Tom Mitchell, “China Approves Controversial Antiterrorism Law,” Financial Times, December 27, 2015 http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/078a8b42-ac7b-11e5-b955-1a1d298b6250.html (accessed March 26, 2017); also Zunyou Zhou, “China’s Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism Law,” The Diplomat, January 23, 2016 http://thediplomat.com/2016/01/chinas-comprehensive-counter-terrorism-law (accessed March 26, 2017).

36. See “Xinjiang Issues China’s First Local Counterterrorism Law,” China Daily, August 5, 2016 http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-08/05/content_26364290.htm (accessed March 26, 2017); also Chong Koh Ping, “Xinjiang Gets Tough on Terrorism,” The Straits Times, August 5, 2016 http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/xinjiang-gets-tough-on-terrorism (accessed March 26, 2017).

37. Peter R. Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries” (a policy report of the ICSR), 2010, 1–3, http://icsr.info/2010/08/prisons-and-terrorism-radicalisation-and-de-radicalisation-in-15-countries (accessed March 26, 2017).

38. Sui Yunyan, “Xinjiang Jianyu Xitong Shenru Tuijin ‘Qu Jiduanhua’ Gongzuo [Xinjiang’s Prison Authorities Further Advance ‘De-radicalization’ Efforts],” Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], February 24, 2016 http://jmse.xjbs.com.cn/news/2016-02/24/cms1847593article.shtml (accessed March 26, 2017).

39. See Han Ting, “Xinjiang Jianyu Peiyang Bai Ming Minjing, Naru ‘Qu Jiduanhua’ Jiaoyu Gaizao Rencai Ku [Xinjiang Prisons Train 100 Police Officers and Put them into the Expert Database for De-radicalization Efforts],” Renmin Wang [People Online], February 26, 2016 http://sj.people.com.cn/n2/2016/0226/c188514-27819203.html (accessed March 26, 2017). Details about the “Fang Hui Ju” project will be described below.

40. Chen Fang (see note 22 above).
41. See also Jiang Wen, “Qianxi Shengzhan’ Fali Burong [‘Higra’ is Intolerable by Law or by Reason],” Tianshan Wang [Tianshan Net], June 9, 2015 http://news.ts.cn/content/2015-06/09/content_11356069.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

42. Chen Fang (see note 22 above).

43. Yuan Bing, “Weianfan Qu Jiduahua Jiaoyu Gaizao Shijian Yanjiu [A Study of De-radicalization Practices for Educating and Rehabilitating State Security Convicts],” Xinjiang Faxue [Xinjiang Law Journal], no. 2 of 2014, 65–66.

44. See “Weianfan Fu Xinjiang Hetian Shouci Xianshen Shuofa Yanjing Shougao [The Authorities Sends State Security Prisoners to Hetian Prefecture of Xinjiang for Confession Talks and Publicizes the Manuscripts of These Talks],” Zhongguo Ribao Zhongwen Wang [China Daily Chinese Edition], August 28, 2014 http://cnews.chinadaily.com.cn/2014-08/28/content_18504455.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

45. Cao Zhiheng and Yu Tao, “Xinjiang Dui 11 Ming Weihai Guojian Anquan Zuifan Yifa Jianxing [Xinjiang Reduces the Prison Terms of 11 State Security Prisoners According to Law],” Xinhua, February 2, 2016 http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2016-02/02/c_128696149.htm (accessed March 26, 2017).

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