

China Defends Xinjiang Program

OE Watch Commentary: On 24 December the Chinese language publication *huanqiu.com* published the accompanying excerpted article, which presented a Chinese perspective on its increasingly controversial political reeducation program targeting Uighurs in its Xinjiang region. The article refers to statements by the Foreign Ministry spokesperson about the issue. She first blamed Western media for sensationalizing the news and not using credible sources to discuss the situation in Xinjiang. She also suggested that the program is not targeted only at Uighurs or Muslims, despite the fact that they seem to only “train” people from that demographic group.

Responding to allegations that China was using an inflated threat of terrorism to justify the camps, the spokesperson asserted that China does not link terrorism to any particular religion. She also further justified the program by noting that in the last 24 months there were no instances of terrorism in Xinjiang. In addition, she mentioned measures that Western countries had taken in response to the threat of terrorism, such as the millions of cameras in London and vast array of surveillance equipment used by the police in New York, to demonstrate that China’s measures were comparable.

It is also notable that China deems the camp program to be successful enough that the spokesperson indicated the possibility for China to engage in exchanges about the program with other countries that are also dealing with terrorism. Her statement concluded by emphasizing the overarching prioritization of Xinjiang strategically, namely that China will continue to ensure the region is secure and stable so economic development can continue. Evidently, that will come at a cost for Xinjiang’s inhabitants who will be entered into the camps as part of the government fulfilling that apparent objective. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

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Minaret close to Id Kah mosque, Kashgar (Kashi), Xinjiang.
Source: CC BY-SA 2.5 es, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=431868>.

Source: “外媒称中国新疆加大对穆斯林的监视、拘留和同化行动 外交部回应 (Foreign media claimed that China’s Xinjiang has increased its surveillance, detention and assimilation of Muslims, with Foreign Ministry Responding),” *huanqiu.com*, 24 December 2018. <http://world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2018-12/13888814.html>

On December 24, 2018, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying hosted a regular press conference, some of which was recorded. I want to point out that on the issue of Xinjiang, some Western media have played a disgraceful role in sensationalizing the news recently. They are often based on hearsay. Considering the recent exaggeration of some Western media, I think it is necessary to emphasize a few more points/ First, the Chinese government’s consistent position is to oppose linking terrorism to any particular nation or religion. Second, the Uighurs are one of China’s 56 ethnic groups. The vast majority of Uighurs live in harmony with the other 55 ethnic groups in China. Third, for some people influenced by terrorism and extreme thoughts the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region government is helping them to learn language, law, and skills to eliminate terrorism and religious extremism.

Results have proved that the impact of anti-terrorism measures taken by Xinjiang in the past two years have been outstanding and positive. In the past few years, various types of terrorism incidents occurred frequently in Xinjiang, but now there have been no cases of terrorism for 24 consecutive months, and the sense of security of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang has been greatly improved. The placement of monitoring facilities is a common practice adopted by countries to maintain safety and stability.

Finally, I would also like to point out that the counter-terrorism stabilization and de-radicalization measures adopted by the Xinjiang Autonomous Region government to maintain security and stability are a useful, effective and positive method of preventative counter-terrorism. We are willing to strengthen exchanges of experience in this area with other countries that are also facing terrorism and extreme ideological threats to constantly improve.