

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Barbarians from without:
the role of external forces in Xinjiang Uyghur separatism

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Hull

by

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To Aurora Isabella and Edoardo

*When there is turmoil within,
barbarians from without inflict disasters*
Chinese old saying

Table of contents

Acknowledgments	5
Maps	6
Introduction	12
Chapter 1 Literature Review	29
Chapter 2 An outline and justification of the methodology	54
Chapter 3 External forces in ethnic conflicts: theories	75
Chapter 4 Uyghur diaspora and the Xinjiang issue	104
- <i>The Slovenian conflict: the role of the diaspora</i>	134
Chapter 5 Central Asian role in the Uyghur conflict	145
- <i>The Slovenian case: the opposition of the neighboring Italian government</i>	175
Chapter 6 Pakistan's role in the Uyghur conflict	181
- <i>The Slovenian case and non-state agents in Italy</i>	204
Chapter 7 The United States' role in the Uyghur conflict	214
- <i>The Slovenian conflict and US unsupportive stance</i>	252
Conclusion	263
Annex	273
Bibliography	283

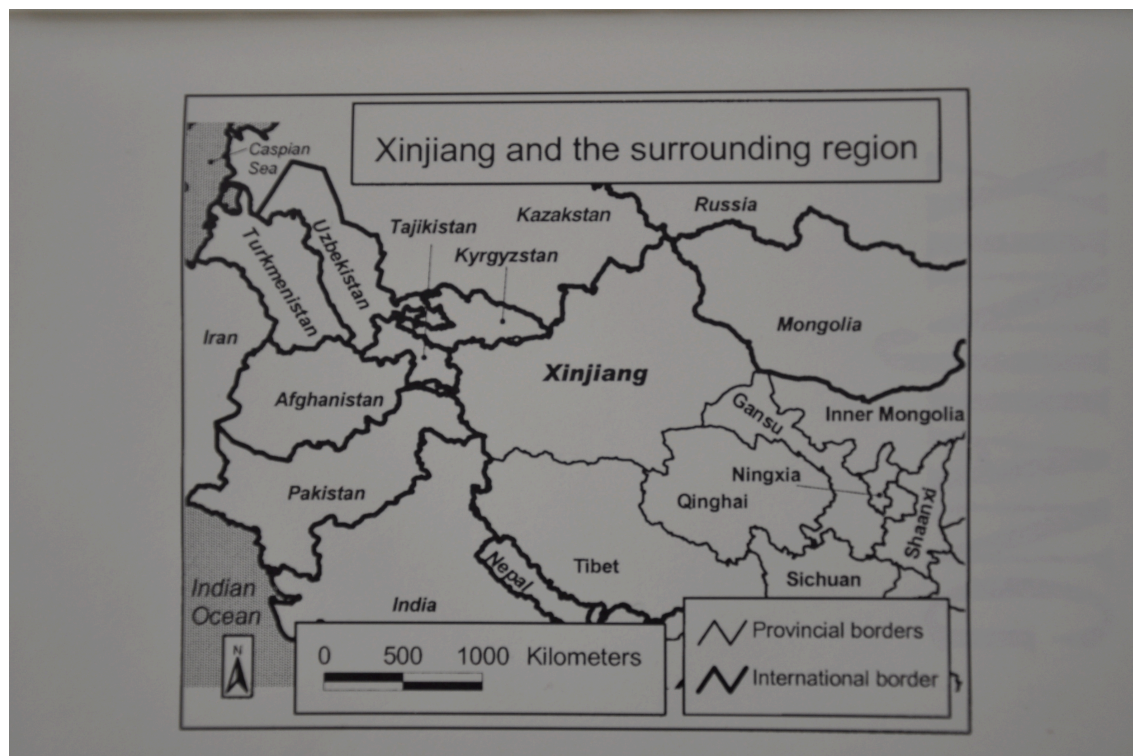
Acknowledgments

This book is the result of many years of study and research and observation of the Uyghur conflict and of the external forces that could affect that conflict. I began researching the Xinjiang issue in 2000. During this time I was based in Pakistan whilst writing an article for *Heartland*, an Italian journal on Geopolitics, regarding the Uyghur mobilization. Since then I have researched multiple facets of the Uyghur conflict.

Many people have helped me throughout this journey and I am sincerely indebted to them. Among these people there are a few who deserve special mention for their continuing support and assistance over the years. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas M. Kane who supervised this thesis with extraordinary competence, attentiveness, and patience. I would also like to thank all the people I interviewed who devoted much of their time to long and fruitful discussions on the Uyghur issue and the Slovenian conflict. In particular, I am deeply grateful to Andrea Trifunovits and Nicholas Bequelin for having spent so much time assisting me. I am also obliged to Ilaria Maria Sala and Ilaria Bottigliero for their many useful suggestions. Many thanks to Mizuho Kubo, Tomomi Ujino, Fabiana Cotič, the staff of the *Narodna In Studijska Knjiznica* (Slovenian Library of Gorizia) and the staff of the *Goriška knjižnica Franceta Bevka Nova Gorica* (Public Library of Nova Gorica) for their generous assistance. A huge thank you also goes to Teresa Ghini, Giulia Martini and Maria Bacchini for their unfailing care and encouragement. I am sincerely grateful to Sue Jane Walsh for her careful, meticulous and professional proofreading. Last but certainly not least, I am deeply indebted to Davide, Edoardo and Aurora Isabella for their tremendous support, patience and love.



Map of China
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Map of Xinjiang and the surrounding region

Starr Frederick S. ed. *Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) XIV

THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA



Map of Central Asia

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Map of Pakistan

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Map of Slovenia
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Map of Italian administrative regions
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Introduction

The overall picture of Xinjiang is one of a troubled area in which various endogenous forces and internal unrests have created long term instability. This research seeks to investigate what a number of selected external players are actually doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict. I do not aim at assessing in what measure these players are influencing the Uyghur conflict. More modestly, I am interested in assessing what selected external agents are actually doing, for their own motives and capacities, in this conflict, regardless of their impact on the conflict.

Such assessment is much needed in current academic geopolitical studies on the Uyghur conflict as it is crucial to identify the players who are involved in this conflict and to gain an understanding of what is motivating them and what tools are available to them. External assistance to a mobilizing group in an ethnic conflict (such as the Uyghur one) can take various forms. The form taken will depend on whether the support is psychological (such as encouragement and incitation), or whether the support is material (such as funding and logistical support). This research assesses the roles played by various state and non-state external agents in giving material assistance to Uyghur mobilizing groups and whether they may induce mobilization. The agents under scrutiny here are the Uyghur diaspora, Central Asian, Pakistani and US agents. The Uyghur diaspora and the Central Asian players have been the subject of frequent assessments in the academic literature. However, these analyses appear fragmented and outdated. Surprisingly academic research has marginally assessed or even neglected to assess the role of agents located elsewhere, for example in other neighboring countries such as Pakistan, or in a distant competing power, such as the United States. This research, on the contrary, carries out a needed systematic analysis of the reality of external material assistance to mobilizing Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

In this introductory chapter I present the background to the present research on external forces and the Uyghur conflict. This chapter also includes the presentation of the research problem and the associated research questions that the thesis seeks to address. Then it outlines the justification for the research by providing a statement of the contribution that the thesis makes to studies on Geopolitics. Lastly I will sum up the structure of the thesis and the content of each chapter. A specific chapter is devoted to the outline of the principal theories, the overview of the research methodology and the literature review.

Background

The region of Xinjiang has provided great interest to researchers. Academics have explored the various issues involved in the conflict in Xinjiang beginning with the grievances of the mobilizing ethnic group. Amongst these grievances, the main issue to emerge is the sense of deprivation. This is experienced by those who sense exclusion from the economic benefits that come from the exploitation of energy resources and investments in the region. It is also linked to the perception of lack of real political representation. Then there are the perception of colonization caused by the massive migration of Hans in Xinjiang and the perception of cultural assimilation in schools and in religious matters. Some of these works were devoted to identity issues amongst the Uyghurs alone or in relation to the Han Chinese. Rudelson¹ lamented that fragmented visions caused by the geographical distance among the main social groups (intellectuals, peasants and merchants) were marring the creation of pan Uyghur nationalism. Lipman² examined how language, religion and geography influenced the identity of all Muslims, including the Uyghurs living in China. Bequelin³ studied how Beijing's policies (including economic development and Han migration) influenced Uyghur-Han relations and favored the strengthening of Uyghur nationalism and, in the end, worsened the conflict. Research carried out by Kaltman⁴ into Uyghur-Han relations in China included an assessment of mutual perceptions: for example, the perception of prejudice and the resulting sense of oppression and marginalization in education and in job opportunities.

At times the debate on Xinjiang centered on historical and anthropological assessments of which group (the Hans or the Uyghurs) was the more autochthonous in

¹ Rudelson Justin Jon *Oasis identities. Uyghur nationalism along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

² Lipman Jonathan N. *Familiar strangers. A history of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997)

³ Bequelin Nicholas *Staged development in Xinjiang in China's campaign to 'open up the West': national, provincial and local perspectives* ed. Goodman David D. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

⁴ Kaltman Blaine *Under the heel of the dragon. Islam, racism, crime and the Uighur in China* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2007)

the region and therefore entitled to claim sovereignty in Xinjiang (Bovingdon⁵): a theme that is dear to mobilizing Uyghurs. Researchers were also busy trying to categorize the type of conflict: nationalist (Kostrzewa⁶), autonomist (Bovingdon⁷), violent separatist (Millward⁸) or Islamist (Shichor⁹). The issues at stake in this conflict were also scrutinized, especially those concerning energy that are relevant to China's economic development (Ghini¹⁰) and to the stability of the entire country (Fuller and Starr¹¹; Starr¹²).

Of course, the study of the response by the internal actors to this conflict gained some attention. Gladney¹³ explored the pattern of Uyghur opposition to Chinese rule by focusing on voice and exit strategies. Bequelin¹⁴, Fuller and Starr¹⁵ and Starr¹⁶ examined the response offered by Chinese state actors including massive investments on the one hand and militarization of the region on the other.

Therefore most of the literature on Xinjiang focused on the conflict *per se* and only marginally considered the involvement of external actors. Those researchers who did venture into this area identified players from outside: the Uyghur diaspora

⁵ Bovingdon Gardner *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han nationalist imperatives and Uyghur discontent* (Washington DC: East West Center, 2004)

⁶ Kostrzewa Thomas K. *Separatist nationalism in Xinjiang* [unpublished doctoral dissertation] (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1996)

⁷ Bovingdon Gardner *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han nationalist imperatives and Uyghur discontent* (Washington DC: East West Center, 2004)

⁸ Millward James *Violent separatism in Xinjiang: A critical assessment* (Washington DC: East Western Center 2004)

⁹ Shichor Yitzhak *Virtual Transnationalism: Uyghur communities in Europe and the quest for Eastern Turkestan independence in Muslim networks and transnational communities in and across Europe* eds Jørgen S. Nielsen and Stefano Allievi (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 281-311

¹⁰ Ghini Anna Lisa *The Chinese quest for energy Heartland*, Eurasian review of Geopolitics, 4, 2001, 75-85

¹¹ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S. *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003.

¹² Starr Frederick ed. *Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004)

¹³ Gladney Dru C. *Responses to Chinese rule. Patterns of cooperation and opposition in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004)

¹⁴ Bequelin Nicholas *Staged development in Xinjiang in China's campaign to 'open up the West': national, provincial and local perspectives* ed. Goodman David D. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

¹⁵ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S. *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003.

¹⁶ Starr Frederick ed. *Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004)

(Gladney¹⁷) and their transnational movements (Shichor¹⁸), the Central Asian Republics (Swanström¹⁹; Ong²⁰; McMillan²¹) and, very marginally, the radical groups in Pakistan (Shichor²²; Haider²³). Apparently no other external player was significantly considered. However brilliant these analyses may be, they have failed to assess other external players involved in this conflict. Therefore they offer a limited perspective.

Theorists have made some predictions regarding the motivation and pattern followed by external forces in ethnic/separatist conflicts similar to the one taking place in Xinjiang. These theories tell us that an ample spectrum of factors acts as a catalyst for external agents. Indeed external players may be interested in assisting Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang for various theoretical reasons. These might include opportunistic motives, ethnic affinity either alone or together with political competition, balancing strategies, affective motives, instrumental aims and trans-nationalism. I have devoted a chapter to these theories; however it is relevant to introduce the hypotheses briefly here.

I shall start with Horowitz²⁴ who explains that opportunism and ethnic affinities could lead external agents to intrude into a separatist conflict. In these cases the Uyghurs benefit from the presence of other players (besides the diaspora and Central Asian agents) with opportunistic behavior and/or ethnic affinities. Another theorist, Saideman²⁵, links political competition to ethnic ties: politicians care about the interests

¹⁷ Gladney Dru C. *Cyber Separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

¹⁸ Shichor Yitzhak *Virtual Transnationalism: Uyghur communities in Europe and the quest for Eastern Turkestan independence in Muslim networks and transnational communities in and across Europe* eds Jørgen S. Nielsen and Stefano Allievi (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 281-311

¹⁹ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45 (November 2005)

²⁰ Ong Russell *China's security interests in Central Asia* *Central Asian Survey*, 24(4) (December 2005)

²¹ McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

²² Shichor Yitzhak *Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang* *Asian Affairs* (2005)

²³ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs*, *Asian Survey* Vol XLV No. 4 (July August 2005)

²⁴ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

²⁵ Saideman Stephen M. *The ties that divide. Ethnic politics, foreign politics and international conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001) 8

of their supporters and will mingle in a separatist conflict in another state if this is what their constituents want. Carment and James²⁶ further elaborate this hypothesis by linking it with the ethnic composition of the external state agent. When a single ethnic group is the dominant group in a country, its *elites* can improve their control without the support of other ethnic groups. They can use foreign policy oriented towards co-ethnics abroad as a tool to reinforce ties with the dominant ethnic group in the state. By way of contrast, in a state that is composed of ethnically diverse groups, its leaders have to seek support through ethnic and crosscutting policies. In this instance, ethnic intervention in a foreign state may take place, but only in special cases, regardless of regime type. Also these theories elaborated by Saideman and Carment and James expand the range of external players in the Uyghur conflict to include other agents with competitive constituencies and/or ethnic ties.

Also realist scholars may be interested in ethnic conflicts since in the realist's view a state is more likely to support secessionist movements in a state it perceives as threatening. The stronger a state is, the more likely others will support secessionist movements in it²⁷. Therefore Uyghur separatists may find support among those external players who perceive China as a threatening power and they may be more numerous than its mere neighbors in the Central Asian Republics.

A group of scholars, called the affective school, elaborates the group affinity theory. Group affinity theory enquires into the capacity of the diaspora abroad to mobilize forces in the host country²⁸. It also enquires other groups abroad that could support ethnic mobilization: for these theorists groups that are defined by religion or race are more likely to get broader support, while groups defined by language are less likely to receive support²⁹. Another school, the instrumental school, supports the case of the independent state interests: a situation in which leaders intervene in a conflict

²⁶ Carment David and James Patrick (2000) *Explaining third-party intervention in ethnic conflict: theory and evidence* Nation and nationalism, 6 (2) (2000), 173-202 and Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16-24 and Carment David and James Patrick *Wars in the midst of peace: the international politics of ethnic conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 202 and 220-221

²⁷ Lake David A. and Rothchild Donald S. *The International spread of ethnic conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) 101

²⁸ Tellis Ashley J., Szayna Thomas S., Winnefeld James A *Anticipating ethnic conflict* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 1997) 38

²⁹ Gurr Ted R. *Peoples versus states: Minorities at risk in the new century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000) 90

abroad in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose their grip on power at home³⁰. Both theories may be applied to numerous external players in the Uyghur conflict besides the usual ones.

Only recently a wave of studies has emerged that are focused on the role of transnational entities in the context of international order³¹. For these studies individuals and groups from various different states develop more or less institutionalized linkages across the borders in what has been called *social trans-nationalism*. Therefore, in the case of the Uyghur issue, transnational agents located not only in Central Asia may be interested in intruding the conflict.

To sum up, several theories are available to explain the patterns and motives behind a third agent involvement in a separatist conflict. Despite the fact that these theories could help to design a wider spectrum of external forces in the Uyghur conflict, prominent studies of contemporary Xinjiang have failed to address this issue because they have focused only on the role of the Uyghur diaspora or on Central Asian state and non-state agents or, very marginally, on Pakistani non-state players.

The research problem

Therefore the existing research does not extensively explore the external agents of this conflict and thus it provides only a limited perspective. Firstly, the range of external agents normally analyzed is quite limited: only Central Asian players and the Uyghur diaspora are normally scrutinized as external agents of this conflict. Little effort is devoted to expanding this perspective by including other players such as other neighboring countries, i.e. Pakistan, and a distant power, i.e. the United States. Secondly, despite the recent changes the Central Asian states and Uyghur diaspora have undergone (changes that interfere massively with their influence in the conflict in

³⁰ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13

³¹ See Scartezzini Riccardo and Rosa Paolo *Le relazioni internazionali. Lineamenti di indagine sociologica (International Relations. Outlines of sociological study)* (Milan: Carocci, 1994) 37, 53 and 128-130
and also Keck Margaret E. and Sikkink Kathryn *Activists beyond borders* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998)
and also Tarrow Sidney *The new transnational activism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Xinjiang) there are limited works devoted to updating the academic literature by introducing this new perspective.

This research seeks to expand the range of external players under scrutiny and to provide an updated assessment of the external forces that are usually addressed. Therefore the focus of this thesis is on state and non-state players among those close to the region geographically (such as players in Central Asia and Pakistan), players who are close ethnically (in the Uyghur diaspora), or players with some interest in the issue (as in the United States).

This work does not cover the extent and depth of the many potential external supporting forces of the Xinjiang Uyghurs. It has a more modest aim: to analyze a selection of them to discover their rationale and the feasibility of their involvement in the Xinjiang conflict.

The selection comprises the pillar of external agents in the ethnic conflict: the diaspora, both in neighboring countries and further away. The Uyghur diaspora is especially important to the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movement not only in terms of advocacy and mobilization of the Uyghur cause but also in relation to other relevant external agents. As mentioned before, previous research studies devoted to this relevant player were performed a few years ago (Gladney³²; Shichor³³). So it is critical to assess whether *currently* this diaspora may exercise any external influence on the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movements.

This research will then address the issue of neighboring countries: the Central Asian Republics and Pakistan. Neighboring countries are considered, at least theoretically, to be interested players in an internal conflict. Moreover the Central Asian region and Pakistan share with Xinjiang so-called fuzzy border areas. This is a situation in which the political frontier does not correspond to the ethnic demarcation of the people living there, in contrast to the rigid divisions between mono-ethnic nation states, where the frontier sharply demarcates the territory of each ethnic group³⁴. Here players

³² Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

³³ Shichor Yitzhak *Virtual Transnationalism: Uyghur communities in Europe and the quest for Eastern Turkestan independence in Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and Across Europe* eds Jørgen S. Nielsen and Stefano Allievi (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 281-311

³⁴ See also Zago Moreno *Gli spazi contesi delle città' frontiera europee (The contended spaces of the European frontier cities)* in *Nazione, etnia, minoranza e confine. Contributi a una sociologia internazionale (Nation, ethnic group, minority and border. Contribution to an International Sociology)* ed. Gasparini Alberto (Gorizia: ISIG, 1998) 227-234

share ethnic proximity with the Uyghurs (Turkic for the Central Asians and Islamic for the Pakistanis) that generate a direct interest in the conflict. As previously stated, works on Central Asian involvement in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang were retrieved, however they are quite outdated (Swanström³⁵; Ong³⁶) or they focus on Central Asian state actors as the only external players thus neglecting an assessment of the role of non-state actors in the Central Asian region. On the other hand, the role of Pakistan, in terms of state and non-state actors, has been marginally considered in researches about the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang (Shichor³⁷; Haider³⁸). Therefore, it is highly necessary to perform an assessment of the influence these players exert over the Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang.

Lastly, this research also confronts the role of the largest current geopolitical competitor of the People's Republic of China: the United States. Surprisingly, the most authoritative authors on Xinjiang have neglected this possibility: most of them do not even consider the United States as an external agent in the conflict in Xinjiang. However, as the current hegemonic power, the United States might have a few motives for spurring ethnic conflict in its main challenger: China. Therefore it is critical to assess whether there are any internal actors in the United States, either state or non-state, who may intrude in the Uyghur conflict.

My research does not comprise analyses of other external agents such as Turkey, the kin state of the Uyghurs, or others because I had to restrict the selection to a few players in order to carry out a reasonable research study. In doing so, I have operated a selection in line with the usual framework for a conflict examination that includes, besides internal players, external agents at both state and non-state level³⁹.

³⁵ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005)

³⁶ Ong Russell *China's security interests in Central Asia* Central Asian Survey, 24(4) (December 2005)

³⁷ Shichor Yitzhak *Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang* Asian Affairs (2005)

³⁸ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs*, Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 (July August 2005)

³⁹ *Framework for conflict analysis* available from <http://www.unssc.org/web1/programmes/rcs/cca_undaf_training_material/tot06/January24/Integrating%20Conflict%20Prevention%20in%20Programming/Common%20Inter-Agency%20Framework%20for%20Conflict%20Analysis%20in%20Trans.doc> accessed January 10, 2009

The research questions and my findings

First research question and my findings

Of these potential spoilers I examine firstly their *interests* and *motivations* or *rationale* and secondly the *feasibility*⁴⁰ of their involvement in the conflict. The first research question is what are the motives of these agents? What is their rationale for spurring this conflict?

I shall argue that theoretically all these agents, at state and non-state levels, have various reasons to intrude into this conflict. Prominent scholars have proposed theories describing the conditions under which external actors become involved in spurring an ethnic conflict. I have used these theories to identify issues which will be important in assessing the role external actors are likely to play in the Uyghur conflict. Therefore, these theories provide a framework for my research. Firstly, they have helped me to select and evaluate the data in a systematic way. Secondly, my thesis offers a case study of how successfully these theories account for the Uyghur conflict. This work helps to test the predictions of these theories and helps us to understand the theories more completely. However, my primary objective is to learn more about the role of external actors in Xinjiang. Any contributions I might make to the theoretical literature are a secondary – although welcome – outcome of my research.

As I have mentioned before and I explain later, these players may be interested in assisting Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang for various theoretical reasons. These might include opportunistic motives, ethnic affinities either alone or together with political competition, balancing strategies, affective motives, instrumental aims and trans-nationalism. On the one hand all of these reasons provide the basis for an involvement of external forces (in some cases as state or as non-state actors) in an ethnic conflict. On the other hand, vulnerability, and/or the fear of a boomerang effect may, in theory, discourage state actors from intruding in ethnic conflicts abroad and vice versa: non-vulnerable states may feel secure enough to spur conflicts abroad⁴¹.

I will argue that, at least in theory, all the players under scrutiny here do not lack theoretical reasons to spur the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Hence, for each and every

⁴⁰ For *feasibility* I assume the the definition by the *Oxford Dictionary of English*: ‘the state or degree of being easily or conveniently done’ *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 2011)

⁴¹ I will explain in detail all these theories in the chapter devoted to the Theories and also throughout the thesis

one of the foregoing reasons I shall argue the geopolitical framework in which to collate this interest. In so doing, I expand the range of external players in this conflict: a consideration that has been widely neglected in the works of scholars until now. Also, this thesis performs a systematic research of the theoretical motives of these external players within a geopolitical context: an analysis that has gained little attention in academic literature on this conflict.

Second research question and my findings

And this leads to the second research question. Having seen that all these external agents have an interest in this conflict, what is their real capacity to intrude in it? Are they willing to do so? Is it feasible for them to spur this conflict? When confronted with the feasibility of this involvement, only some of these external forces have proved interested: the Uyghur diaspora, Pakistani non-state agents and US state and non-state actors. This is particularly interesting because previous works on external agents in Xinjiang have assessed their role as insignificant (in the case of the Uyghur diaspora) or assessed marginally (in the case of Pakistani non-state agents) or neglected completely (US state and non-state actors).

On the other hand, in this research Pakistani state actors and Central Asian state and non-state players have proved to be uninterested or only marginally interested in acting to spur Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang. However, as I explain later in this thesis, a study of non-events such as irrelevant players still matters. Jones Luong neatly summarizes this view by asserting that studies on mobilization should include accounts of where it occurs and accounts of where it does not⁴². Or, in Gellner's terms 'the non barking dogs'⁴³.

All in all, I shall argue that whilst theoretically, all of these players have the motives to intrude in the Uyghur conflict, in reality only some of them are doing so (the Uyghur diaspora, Pakistani non-state agents and US state and non-state actors). A number of others are marginally involved or totally uninvolved (Pakistani state agents and Central Asian state and non-state players). Interestingly, the players that were neglected or underestimated by previous research on the Uyghur conflict are proving to

⁴² Jones Luong Pauline *Institutional change and political continuity in post-Soviet Central Asia*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) quoted in Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia's ethnic minorities: why studying 'non-events' matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Volume 11/2006, 77

⁴³ Gellner Ernest *Nations and nationalism* (Malden MS and Oxford: Blackwell, 1983 and 2006) 42

be embroiled in this conflict.

Third research question and my findings

A third goal of this research is to put the Uyghur ethnic conflict in a broader comparative context. Surprisingly, academics have paid little attention to comparing the conflict in Xinjiang to previous ethnic conflicts in similar settings. Pei⁴⁴ is the only scholar retrieved in the West who has compared regime collapse in the Soviet Union with regime collapse in China. However considerable, his research focuses on socio-economic reforms as the key to change and it does not include ethnic mobilization. On the contrary, Chinese leaders and academics have studied carefully the causes of all Central Eastern European regime collapses in order to avoid succumbing to the same destiny⁴⁵. This was a thorough post-mortem analysis lasting ten years and taking into account every single aspect of the former Central Eastern European communist regimes and their demise, including as a result, those ignited by ethnic conflicts in order to take effective countermeasures⁴⁶.

Whatever countermeasures this regime may take, there are always lessons for us to learn from any past ethnic conflicts in order to understand certain patterns and dynamics in ethnic mobilization. Surprisingly the Western academy has not included this perspective. To acquire this perspective, I have performed a comparative examination with the Slovenian case, specifically focusing on the external forces that were involved. This was a situation in which another separatist movement acquired independence in 1991 through a wide wave of civil society activism and external support. Here the US administration acted against Slovenian separatist forces. However, other external players, Germany and Austria state and non-state actors and Italian non-state players, offered strong, decisive, support. Therefore the Slovenian separatist

⁴⁴ Pei Minxin *From reform to revolution. The demise of communism in China and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998)

⁴⁵ Shambaugh David *China's changing political landscape. Prospects for democracy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008) 284 and Shambaugh David *China's Communist Party. Atrophy and adaptation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) 50

⁴⁶ One of the relevant lessons learned by Chinese authorities is that in the Soviet and Yugoslav regimes the local Communist Party leaders (the real holders of the local power) were of the same ethnic group of the population in that region (i.e. in Slovenia the Party leader was a Slovenian, in Estonia the Party leader was an Estonian) and therefore when the separatist movement in those regions gained momentum, the local Communist Party leaders switched side and favored secession. In order to avoid this decisive passage, Chinese regime imposes Han (the Chinese ethnicity) local Party leaders from other provinces in regions where there are large groups of non-Han, as in Tibet and in Xinjiang.

movement is another case that could offer interesting analogies with the Uyghur conflict.

In a similar situation to the Uyghurs in Central Asia, communities of Slovenians were spread across the Iron Curtain in Italy and in Austria. Moreover, Slovenian discontent and separatist pressures were not recent phenomena, as in the Uyghur case. They made further large increases when similar, neighboring communist party regimes collapsed in 1989. This reflects the situation that faced the Uyghurs after the break-up of the Soviet Union in neighboring Central Asia. As regards my research, it is interesting to assess whether this case, with a relevant hostile external player and many other outside forces involved, could provide the template for ascertaining the possible involvement of external agents in the Xinjiang conflict.

Why Slovenia and not others? There are various reasons for this. Firstly, this conflict is a clear-cut case of separatism with the involvement of external agents: patron states, the diaspora and other state and non-state actors in neighboring countries. Secondly, similar to the Uyghur diaspora, the Slovenian diaspora was small. Thirdly, similar to the Uyghur case, some neighboring countries hosted players who were interested in supporting Slovenian separatists. Fourthly, the Slovenian separatist conflict happened in a country where the regime, a Leninist style authoritarian regime, was similar to the regime in China today. Lastly, the ethnic kin state is similarly non-existent (for Slovenia) or very distant (for the Uyghurs).

This research focuses on a comparative analysis between the Uyghur and the Slovenian diaspora, between the Central Asian (for the Uyghur case) and Italian (for the Slovenian case) state actors, between the Pakistani (for the Uyghur case) and Italian (for the Slovenian case) non-state actors and lastly between the US state and non-state actors in both cases. Here I have made a selection from amongst the various external agents. I have concentrated on Italy and Italian external agents, rather than others, because Italy was a neighboring country, with the presence of a fuzzy border area and communities of the Slovenian diaspora spread across the border. In Italy state actors were unwilling to support Slovenian independence while various non-state actors operated contrarily. All these features are consistent with the Central Asian Republics and Pakistan in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

I shall argue that there are salient similarities in the patterns and dynamics followed by external agents in both of the cases here. Notably the Italian state actors were similarly as unsupportive as the Central Asian and Pakistani state players. Moreover Italian non-state actors were assisting Slovenian separatists as non-state

agents. Pakistani non-state players are doing something similar with the Uyghurs. Lastly, the Slovenian diaspora in neighboring Italy was un-supportive to Slovenian mobilization. The Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia is currently similarly unsupportive towards Uyghur mobilizers in Xinjiang. A relevant difference between these two cases is the support given by the United States: remarkable in the case of Uyghurs, and contrary to the Slovenian case. Indeed the United States maintained a hostile attitude towards Slovenian separatism during the conflict. Similarly Uyghurs in the past faced unsupportive attitude when trying to attract wide US support for their cause. However, over the last few years they seem to have collected more support, especially by US backed pro-democracy organizations, notably the same organizations that during the Cold War, and therefore before the actual explosion of the Slovenian conflict, had offered some support to Slovenian mobilizers. In the end, external support to ethnic conflicts tends to ebb and flow as illustrated by both the Uyghur case and the Slovenian case.

In a few words in both these cases assistance comes from the same range of players. And this shows how critical it is to examine the role of external forces in past, concluded cases of ethnic conflicts in order to understand current, open conflicts such as the Uyghur one and to design a possible scenario. Hence, this research further expands the perspective of the Uyghur conflict by including a comparative study, a work previously neglected.

To sum up, this research is focused on assessing what a selected number of agents is doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang: are these players spurring it? What is their rationale? What is their feasibility? In other words, what are the reasons behind a possible involvement in the Uyghur conflict? Do they have the capacity to spur this conflict? On a secondary level this research will establish a parallel with a similar separatist conflict in a similar setting and, for this, it will include a comparative examination with the Slovenian conflict.

Justification for the research and statement of the contribution

Having said that, this section now outlines the justification for the research and provides a statement of the contribution that this thesis makes to studies on Geopolitics. Does this research extend our understanding of the phenomena, namely the Uyghur

conflict in Xinjiang? Does it elaborate, extend, or fill in gaps in our present knowledge on this matter?

The answer is yes, on both counts. As mentioned earlier, this study contributes to knowledge regarding the range of external players involved in this conflict. This issue has been widely neglected in the work of scholars to date. Also the study presents systematic research into the theoretical motives of these external players in a geopolitical context: an analysis that has gained little attention in academic literature on this conflict. This research also contributes a much-needed updated assessment of the real involvement of the players in the conflict. Moreover, it further expands the perspective on the Uyghur conflict by including a comparative study, a work hitherto neglected.

As such, this thesis responds to three needs in geopolitical studies. Firstly, there is the need for a broader perspective on the players in an ethnic conflict. Secondly, in order to understand their real involvement in the mobilization, there is the need for a systematic assessment of the range of players that usually come under scrutiny. Thirdly, the conflict needs a comparative perspective.

All in all, this investigation addresses a number of issues in geopolitical studies. In terms of perspective it broadens the range of actors examined. In terms of continuity, it provides an updated assessment of those who usually come under scrutiny. Finally, it gives a comparative perspective.

To summarize this chapter, this research seeks to address the issue of external players in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Therefore the aim of this research is to assess what selected external agents are actually doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict, whatever their impact over the conflict. For purposes of this research I have selected Central Asia and the Uyghur diaspora because they were already the subject of a few outdated research studies. Researches carried on in the past included the Central Asian Republics amongst the relevant players and excluded a possible role for the Uyghur diaspora in the Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang. Therefore I wanted to assess the reality of their potential to intrude in the Uyghur conflict. I have also selected Pakistan and the United States: these other players are surprisingly marginally considered (Pakistan) or widely neglected (the United States) in current literature on the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Indeed Pakistan and the United States are two agents whose state and non-state actors may spur the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang for several different reasons: the geographic and ethnic proximity for Pakistan; hegemonic aims and domestic pressures for the United States.

Moreover, throughout this work I compare the role of the external agents in the conflict in Xinjiang with the role of similar external forces that either supported or did not support Slovenian independence, as in the case of the Slovenian diaspora and the state and non-state actors in neighboring Italy, and the largest power of that time, the United States.

Outline of the chapters

This chapter has provided the background to this research and its objectives. Each of the following chapters will consist of narrative and analysis in order to develop an effective examination of the case under study.

Chapter One examines the recent literature on the issue of external players in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. It reviews the current literature on the Uyghur conflict to show that this literature suffers from a lack of research into the role of external actors. The aim of my research is to help to correct this deficiency.

Chapter Two describes the methodology I have used to conduct this research. In this chapter I explain what information I needed to obtain in order to write this thesis and the steps I took in order to obtain that information. This chapter also includes an explanation of terminology.

Chapter Three assesses the theoretical frameworks that are used to examine the role of external agents in ethnic conflict. Prominent scholars have proposed various theories to describe the conditions under which external actors become involved in spurring ethnic conflicts. This chapter sums up these theories; it also confronts each theory in the following chapters with the external players under study.

Chapter Four examines the Uyghur diaspora and its potential to fan Uyghur dissent in its homeland and to expand support for this conflict among other actors. Interestingly my research reveals two findings: first, in recent years the leadership of the Uyghur diaspora has undergone some relevant changes that have brought new strength to the advocacy movement. Second, the Uyghur groups based in the West may be more effective in mobilizing the support than the Uyghur diaspora which is settled in neighboring countries, such as the Central Asian Republics.

Chapter Five addresses the issue of the Central Asian Republics where state and non-state agents are usually deemed with a high potential of intruding in the Uyghur conflict. Here, also, my research will show two findings. First the Central Asian state

actors have favored relations with China at the expense of the Uyghur separatist movements dispersed across their territory. Secondly no non-state actors in the Central Asian region appear to be willing to support the Uyghur issue because most ethnic political activists, including the Uyghurs, have undergone a process of de-mobilization. In addition, political violence in the form of radical terrorism is in steady decline all over the Central Asian region, therefore lowering the risk of terrorist infiltration in Xinjiang from this area.

Chapter Six assesses the presence of state and non-state actors in Pakistan who are interested in assisting Uyghur mobilizing groups in Xinjiang: a consideration mostly shunned in academic studies on the Uyghur issue. Here my findings show that, despite Pakistani state players having several reasons to act as external agents of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position from being an ally of China towards more dangerous waters. However non-state agents in Pakistan, mainly radical groups, could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict there and some are actually engaged in this activity. This phenomenon is acknowledged by both states, Pakistan and China. However, the size of the phenomenon has yet to be assessed by academic research. Nevertheless, it constitutes a relevant finding that shifts the focus of external agents in the Uyghur conflict from the usual suspects onto a new set of players that were previously neglected.

Chapter Seven provides an examination of US involvement in this conflict at state and non-state level. The United States is another player that is generally disregarded by the academic literature on this conflict. My research demonstrates that a non-state agent very close to the US leadership is progressively supporting Uyghur groups, especially within the Uyghur diaspora. It has been steadily expanding the funds it devotes to Uyghur groups. These funds have now reached a sizeable figure, especially when compared to the support offered to other non-Uyghur agents in China. This is another salient finding of this work as it retrieves the main source of the newly found strength of the Uyghur diaspora in the West and it connects the United States (China's main competitor) to pro-democracy mobilization in favor of the Uyghurs.

The last chapter presents the conclusions of this research.

In this work the Uyghur case and the Slovenian one, are presented in separate sections in the appropriate chapters in order to provide readers with the best clarity.

The only other comparative work on China retrieved, the one by Pei⁴⁷, also separately elaborates on the case studies on China and the Soviet Union. In this thesis I illustrate the convergences between the two cases in this introduction and in each of the conclusive sections on the Slovenian case. In the conclusion I will also include a summary of my findings for the two conflicts.

⁴⁷ Pei Minxin *From reform to revolution. The demise of communism in China and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998)

Chapter 1

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of the literature on the Uyghur conflict. It focuses specifically on literature that addresses the issue of the external players that could spur that conflict. The debate regarding possible external players in the Uyghur conflict is somewhat lacking in perspective. The research typically identifies the Uyghur diaspora and the other Central Asian countries acting as leading characters in the unfolding conflict scenario. In other words, the range of external players usually comprises only the Central Asian Republics and the Uyghur diaspora. Recent literature on the geopolitical issue in Xinjiang has failed to fully assess or even consider other regional elements such as Pakistan and other world powers such as the United States as possible external players in the conflict. Therefore there is a need for a wider perspective, one that includes an assessment of the other potential key players. In order to create this perspective, this research challenges current limited vision of external players in the Uyghur conflict and expands the existing perspective. Hence it includes other players such as Pakistan, which is another neighboring country, and the United States, which is a distant power.

Moreover, despite the recent changes undergone by the Central Asian Republics and the Uyghur diaspora (changes that interfere massively with their influence in the conflict in Xinjiang) there are limited works devoted to updating the academic literature. This thesis provides a much needed update of the existing academic literature by delivering updated and systematic investigations into the Uyghur diaspora and the Central Asian Republics and their roles as external players in the Xinjiang conflict.

In other words my research contributes to the debate on the role of the external players in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang by assessing this issue more systematically. It includes a group of four external agents all of whom could be interested in spurring the conflict in Xinjiang. This assessment involves previously scantily considered or fully unconsidered agents such as Pakistan and the United States. And it includes an updated assessment of those agents that are already known yet not recently discussed, such as the Uyghur diaspora and the Central Asian Republics. Ultimately, this research provides a very much-needed contribution: both in terms of expanding the range of actors under study and in providing an assessment of their real role in this conflict.

Thus, this thesis finally contributes to the current debate regarding the conflict in Xinjiang and assesses what these selected external players are doing in respect to this conflict.

This chapter first provides an outline of related research in the field. I aim to show how my work extends or challenges existing works by addressing the voids that I have identified. For this purpose, this chapter is divided into several sections: these sections include topics such as the Uyghur diaspora, Central Asia, Pakistan and the United States. This format will create a clearer and more suitable structure for the writer and the reader. Secondly I examine the practical problems addressed by my research. Finally, I present my conclusions. This chapter does not examine the theories regarding the involvement of third parties in spurring ethnic conflicts as I have devoted a specific chapter to this subject.

This section addresses the first point by examining related research in the field in order to show how my work extends or challenges other works. For this thesis I have consulted all literature available regarding the Uyghur conflict and the Xinjiang's issue at large. These works provide the background and context for my research and they give the review a range of useful perspectives that can be applied over the long-term, medium-term and short-term. This literature proved to be a valuable resource. I also surveyed the current literature on the Geopolitics of China and the current literature on each of the players featured in this study. However, I only directly cite those works that are particularly relevant to the present study. I do not review the entire collection of research information from the professional literature in this chapter, but it is dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

I have selected specific authors because their works represent state of the art research or they are the leading papers in recent and semi recent academic literature on this subject. To clarify their backgrounds I have included a short biography of each author cited in this research in the Bibliographical section at the end of this thesis.

As an organizational pattern, I have chosen to constantly relate my own work to the existing literature in order to find connections or better intersections between this literature and my own research. Why? Because this allows me to clarify how my research relates to works by others and how it relates to the current debate on the Uyghur conflict issue. I compare and contrast different approaches or particular features or characteristics of the research that is pertinent to this thesis in order to show how they impact on this research and in order to evaluate them critically. This particular approach is the one most suited to this review as it allows me to put together an

argument and to draw on my source texts to support my assertions. In sum, it enables me to demonstrate that I am using the literature for my own purposes.

Having defined the architecture of this literature review, this section will examine the current or most recent debates regarding the role of the Uyghur diaspora in the Xinjiang conflict and relate these debates to my own research in order to explain my own contribution.

My research question regarding the Uyghur diaspora is what is it doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang: is it exerting any role? The Uyghur diaspora is especially important to the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movement. It advocates the Uyghur cause and it is useful in terms of the mobilizing purposes of other relevant external agents. But is it capable and willing to exert this role effectively?

In recent years, an increasing amount of research has been published concerning the inter-ethnic tensions in the Xinjiang area and the Uyghur political stance. The debate has also occasionally included the role of the Uyghur diaspora. In a seminal work on the Uyghur issue Gladney⁴⁸ described the Uyghur resistance organizations and showed how the Uyghur minority *elites* living abroad have been pursuing the cause of separatism online via a network of websites: Gladney has referred to such activities as a form of ‘cyber-separatism’. The author further described how the Uyghur separatists, who appear to be a united front, are in reality, driven by divided loyalties. Indeed, this was the case, until at least 2005, before Kadeer was exiled and joined the guide of the Uyghur diaspora advocacy movement in the West.

However, my research shows that more recently the new leadership has given new momentum to the Uyghur movement abroad by attracting much larger interest around the world. My research shows that today, in Western countries, the presence of the Uyghur diaspora represents the most active and effective strategic channel of communication for the Uyghurs’ cause.

For Gladney, the Uyghur diaspora web sites are mainly focused on the plight and history of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. However, my recent personal observations of the sites, especially the one run by the Uyghur American Association, revealed that they are mainly promoting Uyghur diaspora activities, especially those carried out by its president Kadeer. These activities include her statements, her calls for mobilization,

⁴⁸ Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

her meetings, her frequent tours and so on. It is no longer the case as it was when previously described by Gladney ‘While there are a plethora of internet sites and web-links to Xinjiang and Uyghur human rights issues, there is as yet no central site that is regularly updated.’⁴⁹. Nowadays, the sites that are directly involved with the new leadership, mainly in the person of Rabiya Kadeer, are regularly updated with the latest news, especially regarding her activities⁵⁰.

My research shows that Uyghur diaspora’s advocacy groups in the West, especially in the United States, have also raised their profile. This is thanks to their relevant presence on the internet which allows them to promote their activities among interested parties and ensures that they are not only confined to the sphere of so called ‘cyber-separatism’. More recently, as Gladney correctly stated on a mass circulation media outlet:

Increasingly, the Uyghur community in Washington, led by Ms Kadeer, is speaking with a more unified voice. Following the example of the Tibetan government in exile, it has disavowed independence, supported greater autonomy and peaceful resolution of conflicts, and rejected violence and radical Islam.⁵¹

Gladney⁵² has devoted a substantial part of his research to the Uyghur diaspora living in Western countries (mostly in Europe and the United States). His seminal work analyzes its potential to trigger a conflict within Xinjiang. Gladney denied that the Western diaspora, and the Uyghur cause at large, enjoy significant support by the US state agents, with the exception of funding for the Radio Free Asia Uyghur service. According to Gladney

[...] there is no evidence that the organizations and the sites they sponsor have ever received official government sponsorship. Other than the Radio Free Asia Uyghur service, which is supported by the U.S. government, there is no other government that officially supports dissemination of information related to Uyghur human rights issues. However, many Uyghur organizations in the past have claimed sympathy and tacit support from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Australia, Germany, France, Holland, and Canada.⁵³

⁴⁹ Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003) 9

⁵⁰ Informal observation

⁵¹ Gladney Dru C. *Ethnic pandemic Hong Kong*, The South China Morning Post, July 13, 2009

⁵² Gladney Dru C. *China’s minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

⁵³ Gladney Dru C. *China’s minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

However, on the contrary, my recent research shows that these activities can be carried out also thanks to the support of a relevant US INGO and the US Congress. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has been actually supporting Uyghur organizations settled in the United States at least since 2004. Also the examination of the NED budget shows that the NED has been progressively increasing the amount of funds allocated to Uyghur organizations since its first grant in 2004.

It must be said that Gladney's research was a fair reflection of the reality of the situation in early 2000. During this time, the Uyghur diaspora was deeply affected by factionalism, lack of strategy and lack of funding. For a long time these factors compromised the strength of the Uyghur diaspora and its capacity to catalyze international attention towards its issue. Although Gladney's investigation of Uyghur diaspora advocacy groups is dated, it remains one of the rare attempts to analyze these voices for advocacy. There is still a void in academic literature regarding the recent evolution of the Uyghur diaspora. My research provides significant findings to fill this void by showing the deep transformation undergone by the Uyghur diaspora in Western countries. Today this particular group represents the most active and effective strategic channel of communication for the Uyghurs' cause. Uyghur diaspora groups, especially in the West, have recently been displaying more effective leadership skills in order to mobilize and support separatist forces in their homeland. In contrast, the diaspora disseminated across most of neighboring Central Asia appears unable to perform political activities with any degree of freedom because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes there. Moreover across the whole of Central Asia, the Uyghurs are facing other kinds of problems alongside those caused by non-liberal political regimes that endanger their advocacy activities.

Gladney's analysis continues to be both relevant and important; however, there is still work to be done. As a matter of fact, research devoted exclusively to the Uyghur diaspora is still sparse and most studies on the Xinjiang issue do not include detailed analyses of the diaspora phenomenon. It is notable that I could not retrieve any other recent academic work regarding Xinjiang that included an extended examination of the Uyghur diaspora. In the last decade a research edited by Starr⁵⁴ offers the most comprehensive work on the Uyghur issue as it includes essays ranging from history to politics to economy. However, in this book, the repeat analyses by Gladney concerning

⁵⁴ Starr Frederick ed. *Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004)

the role of the Uyghur diaspora continue to reflect the considerations he developed in the first part of the 2000; this view holds that the Uyghur activism abroad was concentrated on internet websites, though with more positive tones. For this analysis Gladney begins with Hirschmann's assumption that a constituency in decline has three options: loyalty, voice or exit. For Gladney the Uyghurs are at exit strategy level: 'Interestingly, only by exercising Hirschman's 'exit' alternative can Uyghur oppositional voices continue to be heard.'⁵⁵

In the opinion of Gladney this advocacy movement was confined to cyberspace. My research reveals that a year later the Uyghur diaspora started to develop an effective leadership who subsequently started a media offensive in addition to the usual internet promotional activities. This offensive also includes a bestselling biography of Kadeer, originally written in German, *Die Himmelsstürmerin*⁵⁶, and translated into English, Italian, French and Japanese⁵⁷ and a documentary entitled *Ten conditions of love*⁵⁸. The documentary features the story of her second marriage to longtime Uyghur dissident Sidik Haji Rouzi who is also exiled in the United States. This offensive enabled the Uyghur issue to reach out to a larger public. The outcome of such efforts is indeed impressive: the Uyghur issue has been brought an unprecedented level of visibility that allowed Kadeer to meet President George W. Bush twice⁵⁹. Kadeer was also a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 and in 2009⁶⁰. My research also shows that the strategy of the present Uyghur leadership includes, besides gaining visibility, mobilizing relevant sub-state agents as the political parties in Europe and Asia.

So my research demonstrates definitively that the Uyghur diaspora advocacy is not merely relegated to website activism. This issue has not been given decent coverage in recent academic analyses devoted to analyzing the role of the Uyghur

⁵⁵ Gladney Dru C. *Responses to Chinese rule. Patterns of co-operation and opposition in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) p. 383

⁵⁶ Kadeer Rabiya with Cavelius Alexandra *Die Himmelsstürmerin (The skystriker)* (Munich: Heyne Verlag, 2007)

⁵⁷ Informal observation

⁵⁸ Daniels Jeff *Ten conditions of love* [Documentary] (Fitzroy Victoria: Arcimedia and Common Room Production, 2009)

⁵⁹ Once in Prague in June 2007 and once in July 2008 at the White House, Uyghur Human Rights Project *Rabiya Kadeer meets with President Bush at the White House* [Press release] (July 30, 2009) available from <www.uhrp.org/articles/1239/1/Rabiya-kadeer-meets-with-president-bush-at-the-white-house/index.html> accessed November 15, 2009

⁶⁰ Informal observation

diaspora in the Xinjiang conflict. These researches have failed to examine the more recent evolution of the Uyghur diaspora, especially the group which is scattered throughout the West.

A systemic study of Uyghur groups in other parts of the world is still lacking and academic literature on the current state of affairs remains sparse. Kostrzewa⁶¹ discusses the activities carried out by the Uyghur groups living in Central Asia, but his analysis is limited and appears outdated. Millward provides an 'overview of anti-state organizations and violent resistance among Uyghurs and other peoples in Xinjiang considering both domestic and international groups and activities'⁶². However his work is limited to violent advocacy groups and does not expand to include the activities of the Uyghur diaspora at large. Bovingdon does highlight the activism of Uyghur transnational groups in Central Asia and in the West and also in Saudi Arabia. He admits that

[...] while these organizations have given Uyghurs greater international visibility, there is scanty evidence that they have influenced politics in Xinjiang, despite some leaders' boasts and Beijing's accusations.⁶³

However his work focuses mainly on the internal factors and dynamics of the conflict, rather than on external agents such as the Uyghur diaspora. He devotes only a few paragraphs to the latter issue in which he briefly sums up the state of Uyghur organizations abroad. For further investigations he refers to Gladney, Millward and Shichor. I have already examined the works of Gladney and Millward. Concerning Shichor⁶⁴, his paper focuses on the Uyghur organizations in Europe in the early 2000s; therefore it is quite an outdated investigation that was carried out well before the rise of an effective leadership. More useful for this research is a recent work by Shichor in which he assesses the state of the Uyghur diaspora after the establishment of the World Uyghur Congress in 2004. For him the World Uyghur Congress is an umbrella

⁶¹ Kostrzewa Thomas K. *Separatist nationalism in Xinjiang* [unpublished doctoral dissertation] (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1996)

⁶² Millward James *Violent separatism in Xinjiang: A critical assessment* (Washington DC: East Western Center 2004) IX

⁶³ Bovingdon Gardner *Autonomy in Xinjiang* (Washington DC: East Western Center, 2004) 11

⁶⁴ Shichor Yitzhak *Virtual Transnationalism: Uyghur communities in Europe and the quest for Eastern Turkestan independence in Muslim networks and transnational communities in and across Europe* eds Jørgen S. Nielsen and Stefano Allievi (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 281-311

organization that is contributing to better co-ordination of the various fragmented organizations:

Until very recently, when the WUC was established, Uyghur diaspora organizations had been small, weak, and hardly coordinated. Previous attempts to create an umbrella organization that would unite all these groups and to agree on a common agenda and executive program had failed. Unlike the Dalai Lama, whose unchallenged leadership has managed to unite all Tibetans both in and outside China, the Uyghur transnational movement has been not only fragmented but also leaderless, especially after the death of Isa Yusuf Alptekin in 1995⁶⁵.

However Shichor's work crystallizes the state of Uyghur diaspora in 2005 and, as previously stated, my research shows that soon after, the Uyghur diaspora rallied around a new leadership and found a new means of visibility for their advocacy. Literature on the Uyghur diaspora suggests that towards the mid 2000s it was addressing the issue of leadership and co-ordination and how it could become more skilled and effective. However, somehow the academic debate did not follow events post 2005 when the Uyghur diaspora underwent a further and more dramatic evolution. A focus on this particular aspect will ensure that my research has critical importance in the field. My contribution will provide an updated assessment of the effectiveness of the role of Uyghur diaspora: my analyses takes into account its strength, its tools, and its rationale in order to understand whether it can be an effective external player in the conflict in Xinjiang. I will analyze the recent evolution of the Uyghur leadership in exile and show two results. Firstly, the leadership of the Uyghur diaspora in recent years has undergone changes that have brought new strength to its advocacy: it has acquired new and vibrant forms of activism, and it has acquired fresh thinking on the desired outcomes (separatism or autonomy) of the Uyghur struggle. This is new when compared with the strategic thinking of the older generation of the Uyghur leadership which had crystallized into the pursuit of a dogmatic separatism. Thus it had cornered itself into a 'wait-and-see' tactic away from the international spotlight. Secondly, it has recently become clear that political effectiveness is an inverse function of the distance from Xinjiang. Those Uyghur groups residing in the West are more effective in mobilizing support for Uyghur separatism than the Uyghur diaspora settled in the countries that neighbor Xinjiang, such as the Central Asian Republics. From this perspective, my research aims to contribute to the debate in recent studies on the Uyghur diaspora, by investigating its recent evolution and its internal differences and by

⁶⁵ Shichor Yitzhak *Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang* Asian Affairs (2005) 125

revising the assumption commonly found in the academic debate regarding its adequacy as external player of the Xinjiang's conflict.

This section will examine the current debate regarding the role of Central Asian forces in the Xinjiang conflict and then I will explain my own contribution. One of the hypotheses of this research is that Central Asian Republics state and non-state actors are not exerting significant influence on the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Concerning state actors, the Central Asian governments benefit immensely from political alliance and economic cooperation with China. Supporting conflict in Xinjiang offers no useful advantage to these Republics indeed it would compromise the delicate balance of their relationship with China. While there is no strategic incentive for the Central Asian leaderships to fan the flames of conflict in Xinjiang, they do have ethnic affinity with the Uyghurs and host Uyghur groups within their borders. Therefore, the challenge for the Central Asian governments is to walk a fine line between opportunism and ethnic kinship. How realistic is the choice to favor the latter while sacrificing the former and thereby play an active role in fanning the flames of ethnic conflict in Xinjiang? A quite extensive body of literature exists on this subject. For Starr, two forces exert great influence over Xinjiang's Uyghurs and they are Turkey and Central Asian Republics:

[Besides Turkey] the establishment of sovereign states in the formerly Soviet-ruled sector of Central Asia also creates a seductive and subversive Turkic model of future development for people in Xinjiang, and especially for those alienated from Chinese policies.⁶⁶

Also for Kostrzewa, Xinjiang's bordering states, especially Turkic ones, have so far played the greatest role in stimulating and reinvigorating Uyghur nationalism in Xinjiang. However his study is obviously outdated and reflects the wave of enthusiasm among the Uyghurs following the break up of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent states for Central Asians.

Ong more recently noted that 'Since late 2002, China has enlisted the help of its neighboring Central Asian states to marginalize the Uyghurs' few remaining supporters'⁶⁷ His considerations echo those of Brill Olcott especially where she asserts

⁶⁶ Starr Frederick *Introduction in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 11

⁶⁷ Ong Russell *China's security interests in Central Asia* Central Asian Survey, 24(4) (December 2005) 430

that Chinese engagement in the Central Asian region is rewarded with a consistent repression of ethnic support for the Uyghur separatist movement.

After a burst of initial [pro Uyghur] activism in the early 1990s, authorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan sharply curtailed their activities after being pressured strongly by China to do so.⁶⁸

My research also supports these conclusions and shows that the era when Central Asian *apparatchik* once supported Uyghur separatism as a tool against China seems passed. Nowadays Central Asian authoritarian regimes and the many problems attached to Uyghur ethnicity do not allow Uyghur advocacy groups to carry out effective activities and they do not seem to be a relevant external tool for Uyghur separatism within the Uyghur diaspora. Within their territory - only few Central Asian leaderships have allowed the Uyghur, pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic NGOs a little latitude to advocate the cause of the Xinjiang's Uyghurs. And, when Central Asian leaderships tolerate such advocacy groups, they do it with the goal of maintaining some leverage with the Chinese government⁶⁹.

Crucially, my research⁷⁰ identifies that the Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments have been especially diligent in their efforts to restrict even the slightest political activities of the Uyghur diaspora within their borders⁷¹ while some others tolerate a minimal set of Uyghur activist organizations⁷². In the end, more than a decade after the proclamation of the Central Asian Republics, Uyghur diaspora leaders and researchers feel that the Central Asian Republics have largely fallen short of ethnic kinship expectations. Such failure has been one outcome of the enormous geopolitical shift of influence in Central Asia produced by Chinese policies during the past decade.

These geopolitical shifts have been recorded and debated by various analysts. Indeed an extensive body of literature exists on Central Asia-China geopolitics, however the role played by the Xinjiang issue is not fully considered. All in all the

⁶⁸ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press 2005), 62

⁶⁹ Colin Mackerras, interview by author, June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes
Niklas Swanström, interview by author by phone, October 25 2009, notes
Wang Shang Wang, interview by author, May 5, 2005, Hong Kong, notes

⁷⁰ Rabeya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009 Kyoto, notes and tape recording
Ahmet Igamberdi interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.
Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, October 2008, Almaty, notes and tape recording

⁷¹ Rabeya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009 Kyoto, tape recording and notes

⁷² Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author, October 2008, Almaty, notes and tape recording

debate on Central Asia-China relations with respect to the Xinjiang issue is somewhat lacking. Crucially, Suisheng Zhao⁷³ notes that for a long time the PRC lacked a regional policy in its own periphery. However the break-up of the former Soviet Union has induced Beijing to adopt a periphery policy in Central Asia whilst keeping in mind its main goal: the stability of Xinjiang. Similarly Legvold emphasizes how the Chinese authorities understood immediately that a Central Asia formed by independent states was - and still is - a crucial strategic hinterland for its Northwestern regions:

If unstable, Central Asia becomes a threat to a large and crucial part of China. On the other hand, if reliable strategic ballast [balance][...] for north west China, then, given Central Asia's natural wealth, it becomes a potential stimulus to the economic 'development and prosperity' of a vital but vulnerable part of China.⁷⁴

Fuller⁷⁵ points out how China reinvigorated its commitment to develop Xinjiang right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Fuller and Walsh⁷⁶ Xinjiang's stability is reliant on good relations between China and the Central Asian Republics: ethnic radicalism in the latter could dangerously reinvigorate separatists in Xinjiang.

Swanström⁷⁷ points out that China – Central Asia relation is 'not a question of the classical problem of *Lebensraum* for China'. On the contrary, China wants to exploit its good relations with the Central Asian regimes in order to manage the conflict in Xinjiang.

China has used both direct bilateral relations and a larger framework as the Shanghai Co-operation Organization in order to engage the Central Asian cooperation in maintaining stability in Xinjiang. This approach has resulted in the effective alignment of the Central Asian states on the Chinese side at the expense of a common ethnic heritage across international and regional borders. The Central Asian governments have done so mainly because, as elaborated by McMillan 'the

⁷³ Zhao Suisheng *China's periphery policy and its Asian neighbors* Security dialogue vol.30 no.3 (London: September 1999)

⁷⁴ Legvold Robert *Great power stakes in Central Asia* in ed. Legvold Robert, *Thinking strategically. The major powers, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian nexus* (Cambridge MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2003) 17

⁷⁵ Fuller Graham *Central Asia: the new Geopolitics* (Santa Monica CA: Rand 1992)

⁷⁶ Walsh Richard *China and the new Geopolitics of Central Asia* Asian Survey, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 (March 1993)

⁷⁷ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005) 584

relationships in the Xinjiang-Central Asian region are not equal: China does dominate, economically, politically and militarily⁷⁸.

Brill Olcott⁷⁹ argues that from a Central Asian perspective Chinese engagement in the area, even through regional organizations, is imperative in order to gain area influence. For their part, Central Asian authoritarian regimes enjoy the Chinese acquiescence towards their illiberal policies. Ghini⁸⁰ describes how European and American attitudes are intrusive by contrast *vis-a-vis* the Central Asian regimes.

All in all, whilst the few works that focus on Central Asia-China relations with respect to the Xinjiang's issue are admittedly considerable, they fail to sufficiently elaborate certain relevant questions. For example, one might ask how great is China's commitment in Central Asia due to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? What are the geostrategic motives and implications behind the acceptance of Beijing's pressure on the Central Asian leaders to suppress Uyghur advocacy in Central Asia? From this perspective my research aims to answer these questions by expanding the parameters of the study concerning the role of Xinjiang in the Central Asia-China relations. My aim is to evaluate Central Asian adequacy as an external force in the Uyghur conflict.

Concerning non-state actors in Central Asia, there is a solid base of literature on these forces that takes into consideration most types of non-state actors. Previous debates suggested that the Central Asian region was prone to become a hotbed of instability because of the rampant growth and diffusion of violent mobilization. This view assumed that non-state actors were strongly influenced by radicalism. In other words, the non-state actors were mainly identified as non-state elements performing political violence of the Islamist kind. However, a few authors have recently recorded a change in mobilization strategies, one that affects both violent and non-violent strategies in the region. While violent radical groups seem to be on the decline in Central Asia, non-violent mobilization is replacing political violence. Brill Olcott⁸¹

⁷⁸ McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

⁷⁹ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press 2005) 197-200

⁸⁰ Ghini Anna Lisa *European Union – Central Asia relations in European Union – Asia relations in the 21st Century: problems, prospects and strategies* (Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe of the University of Karachi, 2002)

⁸¹ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005)

concludes that indeed radicalism is not widespread all over the region, while Cornell⁸² assesses how radical groups in Central Asia are more interested in controlling drug trafficking than in spreading instability. Vielmini⁸³ underlines how the development of opposition groups within civil society is facilitated by many non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NGOs manage the aid provided by the international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). The opposition groups that subsequently develop are providing civil society with a powerful tool with which to oppose the regimes without recourse to violence. As a result, the role of radical groups as the only form of government opposition is gradually eroded.

The data examined in this thesis supports these findings. For example, the available figures regarding the use of political violence by radical groups in Central Asia demonstrate that this phenomenon is declining. The figures that I have examined in this thesis show a consistent drop in the number of terrorist groups and the volume of their activities. Ultimately my research concludes that radicalism is not widespread across the Central Asian region and that Islamism does not pose a real danger to the Central Asian regimes and ultimately to stability in Xinjiang. Crucially, terrorism in Central Asia is in decline as it is no longer the only tool of opposition against authoritarian regimes, as indicated by Vielmini. Assumptions that I made a few years previously, such as the following, are now proving to be outdated and unfounded:

The destabilization of the Central Asian regimes is to a great extent owing to the political vacuum created by authoritarian policies. The repression of legitimate opposition (especially in Uzbekistan which appears somewhat reluctant to accept Western aid because of the West's pressure for democratization) crowds out moderate forces, benefiting the extremist forces that are left with the monopoly of opposition.⁸⁴

In summary, the recent literature and my research both reveal the following findings. Firstly, China has demonstrated a specific approach towards security in the

⁸² Cornell Svante *Narcotics, radicalism and security in central Asia: The islamic movement of Uzbekistan* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2007) available from <<http://publications.uu.se/abstract.xsql?dbid=7385>> accessed May 28 2007

⁸³ Vielmini Fabrizio *Continuità post-sovietica, autoritarismo politico e diritti umani in Asia centrale (Post soviet continuity, political authoritarianism and human rights in Central Asia)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI, September 2007)

⁸⁴ Ghini Anna Lisa *European Union – Central Asia relations in European Union – Asia relations in the 21st Century: problems, prospects and strategies* (Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi, 2002)

region by directly engaging the Central Asian governments in its fight against Uyghur separatists. Secondly, it has established a dominant role in the three main sectors: political, economic and military. Also it has been using this master/vassal relation in order to induce the Central Asian governments to restrict any support to Uyghur political activism in the region. In the end the governments of the Central Asian leaderships have distanced themselves from the Uyghur separatist cause. They have chosen to accommodate the demands of the Chinese leadership at the expense of pursuing the ethnic nationalism cause and, more critically, at the expense of a kinship-based separatist cause. Therefore the Central Asian governments have restricted any support to Uyghur political activism in the region. Moreover, radicalism and radical led political violence in the Central Asian region is in decline; consequently, there seems to be minimal risk of radical infiltration from this region.

My research agrees with the recent relevant findings of the literature on Central Asia. However most literature fails to relate these findings to the conflict of the Xinjiang and when it does, it does not sufficiently elaborate its extent. More pertinently, these works either do not identify or they only vaguely identify the geostrategic motives and implications behind China-Central Asian interrelations with respect to the Uyghur conflict. It is critical to identify these geostrategic motivations and implications in order to establish the real position of Central Asian state and non-state agents in the Xinjiang conflict. Therefore my thesis aims to conduct further and more comprehensive investigations into the question of whether Central Asian agents are adequate external forces in the Uyghur conflict.

This section will examine the current debate regarding the role of Pakistan's state and non-state forces in the Uyghur conflict. Later I will explain my contribution to this debate.

One of the hypotheses of this study is that research should also evaluate whether state and non-state organizations from Pakistan play a supportive role in relation to the Uyghur separatists. Despite the lack of common Turkic ethnic roots, terrorist groups might promote insurgency in southern Xinjiang in the name of a pan-Islamic ideology. What if this support from Pakistan, starts to be more intrusive? Could Pakistan-based agents have an interest in destabilization? What if fighters from Pakistan infiltrated from Xinjiang's southern border? Is it reasonable to expect that any terrorist spill-over effect from Pakistan, already affecting the area, would also extend to Xinjiang?

Existing literature on this issue is not abundant. At first glance, the academic literature focuses on examining China-Pakistan relations only at a state level. Weber⁸⁵ and Landi⁸⁶ provide analyses on the strategic alliances in the region and their impact on the Pakistani leadership.

Only very few researchers have examined the issue of radicalism being infiltrated in Xinjiang from Pakistan and elsewhere at a non-state level. Bodansky⁸⁷, for example, does so and outlines the strategic implications behind the decision by Pakistan to pursue radical infiltration in Xinjiang. Also Haider⁸⁸, more recently, investigates Sino-Pakistani relations and highlights the capacity of the Chinese authorities to control the influence of Pakistani generated radicalism in Xinjiang.

Others have recorded the existence of this phenomenon, albeit marginally. Starr has already explained the issue of connection among Uyghur radical groups in Xinjiang and abroad:

The reality is that Uyghurs are indeed in touch with Muslim groups outside Xinjiang, some of them have been radicalized into broader jihadist politics in the process, a handful were earlier involved in guerilla or terrorist training in Afghanistan, and some are in touch with international Muslim mujahidin struggling for Muslim causes of independence worldwide⁸⁹

Shichor confirms the spread of radicalism from Pakistan. However he records a decline in this phenomenon:

External support for Islamic radicalism in Xinjiang is limited. Most of it used to come from Pakistan and Afghanistan where Uyghurs, either sent or escaped from Xinjiang, have attended local madrassahs and become exposed to religious teachings. Yet, the American intervention in Afghanistan and Beijing's increased pressure on Islamabad drastically reduced the flow of fundamentalist Islamic ideas, and their upholders, into Xinjiang.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Weber Maria *Il dragone e l'aquila. Cina e USA. La vera sfida (The dragon and the eagle. China and the United States. The real challenge)* (Milan: Universita' Bocconi Editore, 2005)

⁸⁶ Landi Claudio *Buongiorno Asia. I nuovi giganti e la crisi dell'unilateralismo Americano. (Good morning Asia. The new giants and the crisis of the American unilateralism)* (Florence: Vallecchi, 2004)

⁸⁷ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* available from www.subcontinent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html accessed November 2 2005

⁸⁸ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 (July August 2005)

⁸⁹ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S. *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 36

⁹⁰ Shichor Yitzhak *Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang* Asian Affairs (2005) 129

On the contrary and more recently, Rashid, who has addressed the issue of Pakistani intrusion in his non-academic researches on radicalism in Central Asia and in Pakistan⁹¹ in 2008⁹² confirms that Uyghur extremists were still hiding in the Pakistani tribal areas. However he does not provide evidence or data to support these claims.

Pakistani involvement in spreading radical terrorism in Xinjiang is also the object of study for some Indian analysts. Raman⁹³ traces the path of the training centres where Uyghurs have been hosted in Pakistan, while Gangadharan provides useful information as he details the main Pakistani group involved in radical infiltration in Xinjiang:

China has blamed the Lahore based Tabligh-e-Jamaat, headed by Pakistan's former ISI chief, for fomenting unrest in Xinjiang. Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami has become one of the several fundamentalist groups that have been giving regular arms training to militants from Xinjiang, creating strong embarrassment for Islamabad. Since 1992, China has been asking Pakistani authorities to prevent such activities.⁹⁴

However, both investigations are quite outdated. Amnesty International (2004),⁹⁵ provides interesting information on this particular subject while also providing support to Uyghurs arrested in Pakistan for their involvement with terrorist groups. Roberts analyzes the impact of the Pakistani border opening on Xinjiang. However, his examination into current infiltration is outdated:

[...] scores of Uyghurs and other Muslims from Xinjiang continue to study in the madrassahs of Pakistan using private means. On returning to Xinjiang, many of these students have been instrumental in promoting a stricter understanding of Islam, but since 1997 the Chinese government has clamped down on this

⁹¹ Rashid Ahmed *The resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or nationalism? Taliban: militant Islam, oil and fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Heaven and Londo: Yale University, 2000) and *Jihad : the rise of militant Islam in Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003)

⁹² Rashid Ahmed *Descent into chaos The United states and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking Adult, 2008)

⁹³ Raman B. *Explosive situation in Xinjiang* Asia Times, January 28 2004, available from <www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GA28Ad04.html> accessed November 10 2005

⁹⁴ Gangadharan Surya *The China-Taliban Equation* Aakrosh: Asian Journal On Terrorism and Internal Conflicts, January 2000, Volume 3, Number 6, 55-77

⁹⁵ Amnesty International *People's Republic of China: Uighurs fleeing persecution as China wages its "war on terror"* (July 7 2004), available from <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa170212004>> accessed July 12, 2007

activity⁹⁶

Therefore he fails to provide a more recent assessment on this phenomenon.

Additionally, the issue of Kashmir and Afghanistan plays a relevant role in the problem of radical infiltration in Xinjiang. Giunchi⁹⁷, Trippodo⁹⁸ and Bennett Jones⁹⁹ have all provided interesting profiles of the radical groups that are involved there. In an unpublished paper,¹⁰⁰ I have described the infiltration of radical terrorism into Pakistan's bordering countries, as in the case of Afghanistan. Although they are set in different regions that neighbor Pakistan, these works do provide useful materials with which to explore the patterns of behavior underlying this infiltration.

However, all in all, the recent literature concerning Xinjiang and the geopolitical issue is somehow contracted when it comes to considering Pakistan's role as a possible external player in the Uyghur conflict. My research shows that there is a problem with radicalism and the infiltration of radicals from Pakistan to Xinjiang. However, it is unfortunate that there is not enough data to assess the extent of infiltration into Xinjiang from Pakistani non-state forces. Here the problem lies in how to record these activities. This type of survey often has been conducted by non-academic literature with disputable data whilst the academic research still remains focused on other external players and fails to consider Pakistani actors in the Uyghur conflict. On this matter much work is yet to be done. Nevertheless, this study attempts to expand the scope of plausible external players in the Xinjiang conflict. All in all my contribution will be to extend the range of external agents by including a neighboring country such as Pakistan which is usually overlooked in studies regarding this conflict.

This section will examine the debate regarding the role of US forces in the Xinjiang conflict and then I will show my research's contribution.

One of the hypotheses of this research concerns state and non-state players wading into the Xinjiang conflict as external agents, as they did with other non-violent or so-called 'color revolutions'. Is the Uyghurs' conflict in Xinjiang a case in point?

⁹⁶ Roberts Sean R. *A land of borderlands. Implications of Xinjiang's trans border interactions in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 227

⁹⁷ Giunchi Elisa *Il Pakistan tra ulama e generali* (Milano: Franco Angeli Editore, 2002).

⁹⁸ Trippodo Sergio *Kashmir* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2004)

⁹⁹ Bennett Jones Owen *Pakistan. Eye of the storm.* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2002)

¹⁰⁰ Ghini Anna Lisa *Pakistan and the Afghan crisis: European perspectives* [unpublished paper] (Hong Kong: Open University, November 1, 2001)

In this study I have chosen to analyze the US intervention only as a form of soft power and therefore I will exclude hard power understood as triggering conflict by violent means. Indeed Brzezinski¹⁰¹ calls for an American intervention combining soft power and military force in the vast area he calls the *Eurasian Balkans* that stretches from Suez to Xinjiang, and is of immense geo-strategic importance. However, whilst the likelihood of military intervention is remote, the use of soft power, especially in the form of supporting political opposition including Uyghur advocacy groups, is nonetheless real, as my research shows. Therefore this study only focuses on this kind of intervention.

In this case I have to relate the issue of such intervention in the Xinjiang conflict to previous similar experiences in similar authoritarian Leninist regimes, such as China today. My aim is to assess whether external agents, i.e. US INGOs have been involved in a pattern of ethnic conflict support that could be repeated with the Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang. Academic literature on this subject could not be retrieved. Therefore in order to design a framework for these INGOs' template I first analyze the theoretical literature that is the basis for their model of non-violent revolutions. Secondly I outline the literature regarding the first group of non-violent revolutions that occurred in Central Eastern Europe in the late Eighties. Thirdly I sum up the literature regarding the recent non-violent or colored revolutions. All of these analyses will be related to the involvement of US INGOs in order to identify whether a similar pattern is followed in the Xinjiang conflict.

Firstly, the theoretical literature that was utilized by the US INGOs in order to provoke instability through non-violent revolutionary means, is consistent with the theory espoused by Sharp¹⁰². Sharp insists that opposition to an authoritarian regime through violent means is counterproductive because the regime could always 'out-violence' the opposition in this field. Authoritarian regimes usually enjoy a monopoly of violent instruments (they control army, police, and security agencies); so they can always use more violent means than their opponents. Starting from this assumption, Sharp elaborates several non-violent models of opposition. His theoretical framework does not exclude the use of these models in ethnic conflict therefore these patterns of opposition could be applied in Xinjiang too.

¹⁰¹ Brzezinski Zbigniew *The grand chessboard: American primacy and its Geostrategic imperatives* (Jakson TN: Basic Books, 1998)

¹⁰² Sharp Gene *Power and struggle (Politics of nonviolent action, Part 1)* (Boston: The Albert Einstein Institution, 1973)

Secondly, there are several studies examining the first group of ‘colour’ or ‘velvet revolutions’ that helped to end the Cold War and affirmed the supremacy of US power in the world. McDermott and Stibbe¹⁰³ investigate Eastern European dissent during the 1980s and during the revolutions in order to provide a comparative approach to the different movements. Roberts¹⁰⁴ discusses the events that followed a non-violent pattern of resistance in individual countries at the end of the 1980s. However, both these works undermine the extent of external support given by American and Western European organizations. On this matter, Ghini¹⁰⁵ provides an extensive account of the policies of European organizations. The aim of these policies was to undermine alliances in the Eastern European Soviet bloc and to increase dissent. Whilst Grilli di Cortona¹⁰⁶ discusses the opposition forces in Eastern Europe in the light of the support they received from the West. These two works identify instances of external assistance to opposition movements that could be replicated by some external players in other geopolitical contexts such as Xinjiang and the Uyghur conflict there.

Thirdly, the studies regarding recent non-violent revolutions (2000-2006) are very interesting, although they are limited in term of quantity. Beissinger¹⁰⁷ examines the colored revolutions by applying the theory of the ‘modular political phenomena’ that is the emulation of a previous success. Interestingly Nissen¹⁰⁸ compares the ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine and the ‘Rose Revolution’ in Georgia to similar hypothetical situations, producing similar outcomes in Azerbaijan and Russia. These studies show the spread of colored revolutions in countries that were previously within

¹⁰³ Mc Dermott Kevin and Stibbe Matthew eds. *Revolution and resistance in Eastern Europe: challenges to Communist rule* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007)

¹⁰⁴ Roberts Adam *Civil resistance in the East European and Soviet revolutions* (Boston MA: The Albert Einstein Institution, 1999)

¹⁰⁵ Ghini Anna Lisa *Gli accordi tra le Comunita` Europee e i Paesi dell'Europa Centrale ed Orientale con particolare attenzione alla collaborazione sorta in ambito P.H.A.R.E. (The agreements between the European Communities and the Central Eastern European Countries, with a particular attention to the collaboration sprang up through the P.H.A.R.E. program)* [unpublished B.A. thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1994)

¹⁰⁶ Grilli da Cortona Pietro *Da uno a molti. Democratizzazione e rinascita dei partiti in Europa orientale (From one to many: democratisation and parties' re-birth in Eastern Europe)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1997)

¹⁰⁷ Beissinger Mark R. *Structure and example in modular political phenomena: the diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip revolutions* Perspectives on Politics 5/2007

¹⁰⁸ Nissen Scott T. *Examining the colored revolutions: successes and failures in popular revolt* [Paper] (Chicago IL: The Midwest Political Science Association, April 20, 2006) available from <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p140118_index.html> accessed June 20, 2009

the sphere of influence of either the Soviet Union or Russia. These studies concentrate on the internal opposition factors and lack in-depth analyses of the external forces (especially American organizations) that triggered these revolutions. Nevertheless, Nissen's work is, at least, original in that it offers a model that could be transposed and applied to other countries, including China and therefore Xinjiang.

All of this literature is concerned with past revolutions in other contexts that are similar to China. What about China and therefore Xinjiang? Academic attention has rarely been focused on the role of the United States and the possible involvement of the United States and US related forces in Xinjiang. Shichor anticipates Chinese concerns 'that the United States would engage, incite, and urge separatist movements in Xinjiang to act against China'¹⁰⁹ And Gladney¹¹⁰ outlines the attempts made by the Uyghur diaspora to solicit interest from recent US administrations and the role of some US backed organizations such as Radio Free Asia. However, no works could be retrieved that are specifically devoted to the analysis of US influence in the Xinjiang conflict.

There is still work to be done. Most literature regarding China and the US deals with the implications of Chinese growth, both economic and political, on the United States. Questions abound regarding whether China will leave the world order untouched or whether it will attempt to change the world order to fit with its own agenda. However, few studies examine how the United States is working to contain the rise of Chinese power especially through the 'color revolutions' and/or support for opposition groups that could serve this purpose. Little existing literature could be found that addresses whether similar color revolutions or such attempts could take place in China, especially in those regions where pockets of opposition are found, such as Tibet and Xinjiang. Shirk¹¹¹ provides an excellent synthesis of the latest trends in social unrest and the siege mentality that grips the Chinese Communist Party leadership. However, she fails to identify any external forces supporting this social unrest rather her work concentrates on what she called 'domestic threats'. Even though Shirk does mention that in 2005 Hu Jintao ordered the establishment of a think-tank to study the color revolutions in order to prepare China to stop this kind of uprising, she does not elaborate further on the study of potential 'color revolutions' in China.

¹⁰⁹ Shichor Yitzhak *The great wall of steel in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 160

¹¹⁰ Gladney Dru C. *Responses to Chinese rule. Patterns of cooperation and opposition in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 382

¹¹¹ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

In the first instance my contribution to this branch of study will be to include the United States as an external agent in the Xinjiang Uyghur conflict. Secondly, I intend to investigate the soft power tools currently used by the United States in China. I make a comparison between those tools that appear to best suit the purpose of encouraging ethnic opposition (as is the case in Xinjiang) and the ones aimed at fostering general political opposition in China. I also highlight the various degrees of support offered to Uyghur advocacy groups and other ethnic mobilizing groups in China such as the Tibetans. My evidence suggests that different US administrations may vary their degree of interest in the Uyghur issue. Information about activities carried out by US soft power organizations such as the INGOs, specifically in Xinjiang, as in China at large, is currently very sparse¹¹². Only certain data is published regarding funding from a leading institution, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), to the main Uyghur diaspora groups. This data shows that the NED is expanding support for the Uyghur discontent. This has been the case especially in the last few years, particularly when compared with the funding available to other similar organizations: organizations that represent grievances with the potential to mobilize larger masses in China.

In summary this thesis makes a number of contributions to the field. My research represents the first attempt to extend the range of external agents that could spur the conflict in Xinjiang. It does so by including such problematic regional players as the Pakistani ones and also the United States: a distant but relevant power that is normally neglected in studies regarding this ethnic conflict. Secondly, it crucially assesses that exactly these two players may possess far greater potential for spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang than those who are traditionally considered for this role, such as the Central Asian Republics. Thirdly, for the Central Asian Republics and the Uyghur diaspora this research provides a much-needed systematic and updated evaluation of their adequacy as external players in the Uyghur conflict. It demonstrates that, surprisingly, the Uyghur diaspora is greatly effective while the Central Asian states are no longer a pivotal player. Therefore my contribution is to expand the usual academic perspective on these studies, identify the new key players in this conflict and re-evaluate the old ones.

¹¹² See the Research Methodology Chapter on this issue.

Practical problems

Now I discuss two practical problems that my research has addressed. The main problem encountered by this research is the fact that some of the agents examined here are, in the end, irrelevant to the Uyghur conflict. In other words, this research found these players lack influence in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang: especially as the Central Asian agents have proven to be uninterested or only marginally interested in spurring Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang. Should these players still be considered as suitable research subjects? I believe it is still important to evaluate their relevance or irrelevance. As Jones Luong states, ‘a study of mobilization should account for cases where it occurs and for those where it does not’¹¹³ including, I add, the involvement of potential external forces whether they are already assessed to be relevant or not. Or, in Gellnerian’s terms ‘the silent dogs’ and their external trainers.

The other minor problem I encountered is the same for every researcher, especially on a contemporary subject: the quality assessment of information retrieved in various publications, whether academic or non academic. In an era where technology allows anybody to write about anything, it was necessary to operate a strict selection of the research literature based on a few criteria. The following criterias were used to select the research material: first, academic literature from established publications; second, non academic literature from authors with a solid and certified expertise on the issue; third, publication from a reputable news outlet; fourth mixed media from a distinguished professional; fifth, wherever certain authors were involved with the parties in conflict, i.e. Chinese nationals or Uyghurs, they were also required to have a background or current employment in third party countries. This requirement was intended to avoid the usual propaganda of both sides. In order to make transparent this selection I have included in the Bibliography a short biography of all the authors I have considered.

To sum up, the main practical problem faced by this research is the fact that some of the players examined have been assessed as irrelevant to the Uyghur conflict. However, it is still important to research them in order to assess their relevance or irrelevance. Also in order to select only credible publications I operated strict selection

¹¹³ Jones Luong Pauline *Institutional change and political continuity in post-Soviet Central Asia*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) quoted in Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Volume 11/2006, 77

criteria for the authors and the different kinds of publication. The reader may find proof of the solidity of the authors and the kind of the publications in the Bibliography of this thesis.

Terminology

I hereby wish to clarify some ethno-geographical and political terms that I used during this research.

Concerning the ethno-geographical terms, Chinese words in the text are Romanized according to the Pinyin system. Uyghur, a Turkic language written in Arabic, does not have a standard Romanization system. Therefore there are various Romanized words for the same term. I use the spelling Uyghur because it is widely accepted as an alternative of Uygur, Uighur or Uigur. For the names of persons I have interviewed I use the spelling suggested by those same interviewees. For other names mentioned here I use the spellings widely used in academic literature.

Xinjiang is the territory of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region while Tibet is for Tibet Autonomous Region both established by the People's Republic of China. Uyghurs interviewed generally preferred to use and hear from me the term Eastern Turkestan in alternative to Xinjiang. For the names of the cities in Xinjiang I use the conventional names best known in English as Kashgar (Qashqar in Uyghur and Kashi in Chinese Pinyin) and Urumchi (Urumqi in Uyghur and Wulumuqi in Chinese Pinyin).

Central Asian Republics include Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

As for the political terms, the term conflict is taken to mean 'a state of disagreement or argument between people, groups, countries etc'¹¹⁴ therefore including both violent and non violent clashes.

Although the word diaspora has been used to define a very broad range of concepts, as Saffran correctly stated

[...] the label [diaspora] has been stretched to cover almost any ethnic or religious minority that is dispersed physically from its original homeland, regardless of the conditions leading to the dispersion, and regardless of whether,

¹¹⁴ Longman *Dictionary of contemporary English* (London: Pearson Longman, 2009)

and to what extent, physical, cultural, or emotional links exist between the community and the home country.¹¹⁵

In this work I adopted the broad definition elaborated by Connor of diaspora as 'that segment of a people living outside the homeland'¹¹⁶.

Throughout this work I research not only state actors but also non-state players. For state actors I assume Mansbach's definition of nation-state actor, personnel from the agencies of a single central government including ministries and legislature, while non-state actor refers to the rest, including societal groups, non-governmental organizations, interest groups and even governmental non-central actors such as local authorities or

[...] parochial bureaucracies and officials generally [...] only peripherally concerned with world politics [...] [who] have a direct impact when they serve as the core of secessionist movements or when they establish and maintain direct contact with other actors¹¹⁷

In fact they are semi autonomous and, as stated by Josselin and Wallace 'public actors but not strictly defined – state actors'¹¹⁸.

I have included any other definition that needed clarification in the relevant footnotes.

Conclusion

In essence, the debate regarding possible external players in the Uyghur conflict is somewhat lacking in perspective. Typically, only Central Asian players and the

¹¹⁵ Safran William *Deconstructing and comparing diasporas in diaspora, identity and religion. New directions in theory and research* Eds Kokot Waltraud, Tololyan Khacig and Alfonso Carolin (London: Routledge, 2004) 9

¹¹⁶ A very broad definition by Connor reported in Connor Walker *The impact of homelands upon diasporas in Modern diasporas in international politics* ed. Sheffer Gabriel (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986) 16

¹¹⁷ Ferguson Yale H. and Mansbach Richard W. *A world of politics: essays on global politics* (London: Routledge, 2008) 99 see also Mansbach Richard *The web of world politics: nonstate actors in the global system* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1976) 41

¹¹⁸ Josselin Daphne and Wallace William *Non state actors in world politics: a framework in Non state actors in world politics* eds Josselin Daphne and Wallace William (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002) 2

Uyghur diaspora are scrutinized as external agents of this conflict. This research aims at expanding this perspective by including other players such as another neighboring country and a distant power: I have chosen Pakistan and the United States respectively.

As a result, this research contributes to knowledge in the field of literature concerning the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. It assesses the issue more systematically by including a group of four external agents that could well be interested in spurring the conflict in Xinjiang. This study presents some of these issues, especially those related to the involvement of Pakistan in the Uyghur conflict and those related to the use of soft power by the United States in Xinjiang. In the end, it will make a very much needed contribution both in terms of expanding the range of actors under study and in terms of providing an assessment of their real potential in this conflict.

Having said this, the coming chapter will explain the methodology that was used for this research.

Chapter 2

An outline and justification of the methodology

This chapter examines the methodology I used for this research. First, I explain what information I needed to obtain in order to write this thesis. Second, I explain the steps I took in order to obtain that information. Third, I examine the list of persons interviewed and the specific issues that came up in each interview. I also explain how I integrated the collection of evidence with the data analyses. Fourthly, I describe how informal observation helped me to understand some issues that were peculiar in this research. Finally, I present my conclusion.

Concerning the first point, the focus of my research during these years has been to assess a selection of external forces that could potentially intervene and spur the Uyghur separatist conflict. Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang could avail themselves of many external forces and it would be impossible to examine every single external force that might possibly be involved. Therefore this study concentrates on specific players identified using specific criteria commonly applied to conflict analysis in geopolitical studies. A recent wave of geopolitical studies has utilized the Analytic Hierarchy Process. This process comprises a system of analyses that combine geographic factors with three other criteria: economic, socio-cultural and political-military¹¹⁹. I have used this particular system to select my subjects for scrutiny. For example, I have included external agents considered to be relevant on the basis of their geographic proximity, such as Central Asia and Pakistan; those that are relevant on the basis of economic opportunity, again Central Asia and Pakistan. The Uyghur diaspora, Central Asia and Pakistan are relevant on the basis of their ethnic ties including religious and cultural ties. The United States is considered relevant to this study on the basis of political opportunism¹²⁰. Of course there are other systems for elaborating criteria. However a choice had to be made and this particular system is very inclusive and allowed me to choose not only those external agents with the most stringent interests in the Uyghur conflict but also those who were, at the same time, neglected or not fully assessed by recent academic literature.

So this research is focused on assessing what these agents are doing in respect to the

¹¹⁹ Bozzo Luciano, Simon-Belli Carlo and Batacchi Pietro *Metodologia per la definizione degli interessi nazionali: le matrici (Methodology to define national interests: the matrixes)* in *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005) 53-89

¹²⁰ See Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005)

Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang: are they spurring it? What is their rationale? What is their feasibility? In other words, what are the reasons behind a possible involvement in the Uyghur conflict? Do they have the capacity to spur this conflict? In order to answer these questions I needed to collect information regarding their motives, their strategies and what tools are available to facilitate that conflict.

On a secondary level my research had to establish a parallel with a similar separatist conflict in a similar setting. As explained in the introduction, there are always lessons that can be learned from any past ethnic conflicts in order to understand certain patterns and dynamics that occur in ethnic mobilizations. Surprisingly, the Western academy has not included this perspective when examining the Uyghur conflict. For this, I have performed a comparative examination with the Slovenian case. I have specifically examined some external forces that were involved there when Slovenia acquired independence in 1991 supported by widespread activism within internal civil society and external support. In this case the external players under investigation in this research were the Slovenian diaspora and Italian state and non-state agents and the United States. In order to examine this case I had to collect information to assess the motives, strategies and tools of the external forces mentioned above. There may be innumerable case studies to compare with the Uyghur conflict and its external forces. Hence, for this study, I had to pursue a selection of examples of external agents in similar contexts. I decided on Slovenia because, in addition to its similarities with the Uyghur case, in this specific conflict, I could gather interesting original information¹²¹ in order to assess the role of its own external agents. In essence, I made a comparative study with the Slovenian conflict and some external players in that conflict.

Having said that, I now outline the questions I addressed in each chapter of this research. First: is this an external force with motives to spur the conflict in Xinjiang? By answering this question, this study will assess the real interests of these forces in the Uyghur conflict and their strategic opportunities. This assessment will be made in the section that is devoted to studying the rationale for the potential involvement of each of the external forces under study. Second: is this an external force able to spur the conflict in Xinjiang? By answering this question, this study assesses the forces existing outside of Xinjiang that are in possession of the capability to produce conflict in Xinjiang. This analysis will be carried out in the section devoted to studying whether the potential involvement of each external player is feasible. The third question concerns the behavior of similar forces in past conflicts elsewhere,

¹²¹ I will explain later what kind of original research I could pursue.

i.e. in Slovenia. By answering this question this study assesses the similarities and differences of past cases involving external forces in similar conditions.

The bulk of each chapter consists of narrative and analysis in order to develop an effective examination of the case under study. Each chapter ends with a concluding section in which I list the routine questions and review the answers. In essence this research aims to assess the external agents that have been selected (including those either recognized or not recognized by existing academic literature) as potential players in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang and to establish a parallel with similar agents in a similar separatist conflict in Slovenia.

Concerning the steps I took in order to obtain this information, I selected qualitative methodology because it was the best means to collect the detailed, nuanced information I required in order to meet my research objectives. I needed to know which factors might motivate selected external actors to become involved with the Uyghurs. I also wanted to know what forms their involvement might take and by using this method in I was able to assess their chances for success. In other words, I am interested in group perceptions, choices and strategies and this is exactly the sort of qualitative data that interviews can provide. Therefore, interviews are the ideal method to learn what I wanted to know. For this reason, I have been analyzing most of the literature available and I have consolidated my research through conducting interviews, carrying out data analyses and engaging in some periods of informal observation. I interviewed several of the players under study and others who are experts on the issues. I interviewed Uyghurs living in Xinjiang and abroad as well as other non-Uyghurs who are specialists in the issue. These people contributed to my work with their knowledge and their views as did certain players involved in the conflict. I applied the same approach to the Slovenian conflict. I conducted numerous interviews with both resident Slovenians and Slovenians abroad and I interviewed various experts and also agents involved in the conflict.

I first composed a list of questions to ask all interviewees, whether it was an investigation into the Uyghur conflict or the Slovenian conflict. Plus, for every interviewee I added more questions depending on the kind of interviewee. The additional questions concerned its role in the issue (expert, agent, or other) and eventually they included other information acquired through previous interviews with other informants. Most of the questions focused on assessing aspects of the external agents that had not been covered by the existing literature on these conflicts. In other words, with each interviewee, the main discussion was about real and potential external agents in the Uyghur conflict. First I discussed issues such as the relevance of the Uyghur diaspora, its strategies, its effectiveness, and its leadership. Then I asked about the other players under study here: the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the

United States. Are these potential players in the Uyghur conflict? What is their rationale and their feasibility? Is there evidence to support this? The remaining questions were focused on assessing the reliability of the existing literature. Can we agree to this or that statement made by this or that author? Do you think this position is reliable? What is your opinion of this literature? In this way, I could lay down a questionnaire whose answers would guarantee a vast spectrum of information on the Uyghur and the Slovenian conflicts.

In summary, a qualitative method was essential for this research. I relied mainly on interviews with various agents, observers and those who were experts. The questionnaires included a set of identical questions and a set of different questions depending on the circumstance. In some cases I also benefitted from data analyses and informal observations of the events.

Having said that, I will now expand on the third point which concerns the persons I interviewed and the specific issues that came up in each interview. I will first sum up the list of the persons I interviewed regarding the Uyghur conflict, followed by the persons I interviewed regarding the Slovenian conflict. A list of those who were interviewed regarding other conflicts involving ethnic mobilization will follow.

The list follows the order of their appearance in the main part of the thesis.

The Uyghur conflict

For this conflict I have interviewed members of the Uyghur diaspora, Uyghurs living in Xinjiang and experts on the issue. I hereby include the three lists. I also indicate the language used for the interview and whether the interview was mediated by a translator.

Members of the Uyghur diaspora

Ahmet Igamberdi was interviewed by the author (in English), May 23, 2005 Sydney notes. An Uyghur born in 1937 in Xinjiang, Igamberdi was condemned to 6 years of labor camp and later spent 10 years in jail. He then fled to Australia where he leads the 1,200 strong members of the Uyghur community there. At the time of the interview he claimed to be chairman of the Eastern Turkestan government in exile. He is a voice from the Uyghur middle class intellectuals who are so frustrated not only with the Chinese authorities but also with the Central Asian governments accused of using and then abandoning the Uyghur cause. Igamberdi might be more emotionally involved because he belonged to a group of Uyghur

intellectuals who had been brought up to believe in Soviet support for the Uyghur cause. Indeed, between 1957 and 1961 he studied at the Central Asian Institute in Tashkent where he joined a Uyghur underground party. He subsequently tried to take advantage of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign and his friction with Maoist China. The Chinese authorities arrested him in 1963 for activities against the Chinese Communist Party, and condemned him to six years of forced labor. This sentence was followed by another term in a secret prison for political offenders in Urumqi, then a term of forced labor in a coalmine until 1979. Therefore his disappointment at the neglect of Russia and of the Central Asian Republics runs deep and does not allow him to make a rational analysis. This might be due to the long periods he spent in jail and the suffering he endured in labor camps which has led to the development of a deep hatred against the Chinese leadership. These events have left him too bitter to negotiate. When I asked for his opinion on an eventual agreement with China that would grant real autonomy to Eastern Turkestan his reaction was quite strongly evident: it was a loud 'No' emphasized with a violent fist on the table. During the interview his own personal history marred his capacity to lucidly assess the reality. He is clearly part of an older leadership that remains attached to an idealistic and uncompromising perception of irredentism. This leaves no other tool except a 'wait-and-see' posture oriented towards the time when China should implode as did the Soviet Union. He seems definitively out of touch with the reality of the situation.

Rabiya Kadeer was interviewed by the author (in Uyghur with English translation provided by a member of her staff) October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes. Kadeer, a former businesswoman and member of the National People's Congress of the PRC, was arrested in 1999. After six years in jail she was allowed to expatriate to the United States where she immediately took the position of President of the Uyghur American Association¹²². A year later, in 2006, she was elected President of the World Uyghur Congress and carried on with this newly strengthened advocacy strategy. This strategy included mass visibility and mobilization, therefore a fresh approach to the different strategic options and a substantial departure from the 'wait-and-see' posture. Kadeer has engaged in massive activism towards external forces: these include sub-state agents such as political parties and other mass entities such as universities and media outlets. She is expressing the same grievances as the older leadership, but with a more effective and greater visibility than in the past. She seems to have embraced the dogma of non violent advocacy: Kadeer declares that Uyghurs want to reach

¹²² See Kadeer Rabiya with Cavelius Alexandra *Dragon fighter. One woman's epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009)

‘self-determination peacefully through activism, advocacy, exposing to the world the plague suffered by Uyghur.’ She reflects the recent change of the Uyghur diaspora leadership with a softer stance by supporting the possibility for a negotiated agreement with China: one that could also include autonomy. In other words, her leadership goals have been softened by introducing a set of more realistic options whilst furthering their scenario plans. Her relations with the Chinese government and with other external players dominated the interview in a realistic way. Her own and her family’s history of jail did not overshadow her realistic views. In a conference I attended the previous day she had asked the audience not to pose question about her past in jail but about the future for her people. Also throughout the interview she did not prioritize her personal history rather she gave precedence to the grievances of the Uyghurs. She gave a frank analysis of the possible external players in the Uyghur issue, especially in the United States and Central Asia. However when asked about possible radical infiltration from Pakistan or about Uyghurs trained in Pakistan-Afghanistan Kadeer denied that there was any such involvement. Instead she explained the presence of the Uyghurs in Afghanistan and Pakistan as simply illegal migrants trying to escape to the West. A far too naïve vision for a person in her position, one who certainly knows more, but prefers to avoid admitting it for fear of damaging the newly found perception of Uyghurs as non violent advocates. Kadeer appears a skillful and lucid iron-lady.

Dolkun Isa, was interviewed by email (in English) February 8, 2006. At the time of the interview Isa was the Secretary General of the Uyghur Congress, a position he has retained. He was expelled from the Xinjiang University for leading a Student Union demanding an end to discrimination between the Uyghurs and the Han (Chinese main ethnic group). He is also on a most wanted list issued by the Chinese authorities as a suspect of terrorism in China in December 2003¹²³. He now lives in Germany where he was granted political asylum by the German authorities. One of the most active leaders of the Uyghur diaspora in Europe (currently he is the chairman of the Eastern Turkestan Union in Europe, with the main office again in Munich), he is a member of the younger generation of the Uyghurs abroad. This generation is rapidly replacing the older generation, whose feuds marred the previous management. He follows carefully any activity that could stimulate mobilization for Uyghurs including the plight of Uyghur exiles. His activities are not confined to Europe: he also frequently travels to Japan where he has contacts with some local political parties. In addition to our email exchange

¹²³ the first time I contacted him he was investigating the death of an Uyghur who I later discovered was Burhan Zunun, a Uyghur who had died after committing suicide in a Danish prison where he was detained for violation of immigration law there.

I also chatted with him a few times over the phone. During all these discussions his answers were not affected by his own background, rather they were focused on his own path within the Organization he leads as second in command. He seemed to know more than what he actually said: he denied that there was any role for Pakistani players. In the end he was tempted to use a bit too much of advocacy with a wining style characterized by isolation and abandonment of the Uyghur cause with no external supporter at all.

Khahriman Gojamberdi was interviewed by phone (in Russian with a translator in Italian provided by me) by the author, November 6, 2008 notes. Gojamberdi is chairman of the Kazakhstan Regional Uyghur (Ittipak) Organization in Almaty where he lives. He is an active Uyghur advocacy worker with years and years of experience. He told me he also travels to Xinjiang to make investigations into social and human rights issues and that he stays in contact with Uyghurs living there. He leads Uyghur advocacy groups in Kazakhstan, thus continuously promoting the cause of the Uyghurs there and in neighboring Xinjiang. Although he answered diplomatically to questions about external forces, he seemed lucid and reliable: a strenuous soldier of the cause.

Interviews in Xinjiang

I also pursued field research in Xinjiang, including interviews with resident Uyghurs. Alas, in an authoritarian regime is not always easy to carry on field research. Fumagalli has already noted the difficulties in performing research in Central Asia¹²⁴, but these same difficulties may be transposed to Xinjiang as well. Especially after the riots in 2008 and the expansion of security measures by the Chinese government in the area¹²⁵, field research has been quite difficult to accomplish. Even before these events, tolerance by the regime tended to

¹²⁴ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia's ethnic minorities: why studying 'non-events' matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006

¹²⁵ Wong Edward *China nearly doubles Security budget for Xinjiang* New York, The New York Times, January 13, 2010 and

Wines Michael *In restive Chinese area, cameras keep watch* New York, The New York Times, August 3, 2010
Even interviewing Uyghurs outside China involves undergoing scrutiny by Chinese security agents. When I interviewed Kadeer in Kyoto (Japan) the interview was interrupted by the arrival of some persons who Kadeer's staff recognized as Chinese agents. This encounter forced us to look for privacy. From the lobby of the hotel we went to a private hotel room. A few minutes later Kadeer's staff found these same persons stationed in front of the door and nosing around just outside the room. Then Kadeer's staff engaged in a brief chase in the corridor to persuade these agents to leave. Kadeer was totally emotionally untouched by this 'incident' and simply paused during the breaks and re-started immediately after as if she was used to this kind of situation.

ebb and flow¹²⁶. In 2005 I went to Urumchi to perform field research, however the sensitive political subjects of my research alarmed both officials and prospective Uyghur interviewees. When I tried to obtain official permission to interview academic staff at the University of Urumchi, the capital city of Xinjiang, I was rebuked and some of the interview candidates turned me down. However I did manage to pursue interviews with Uyghurs outside the official mainstream. I interviewed three Uyghurs in Urumchi (in Uyghur with English translation provided by another Uyghur) in May 2005. They preferred to decline their names. They all were high school teachers and they were very bitter about what they termed ‘Chinese domination or colonization’ in Xinjiang. In the end, their personal histories of discrimination marred their capacity to give lucid analyses and their capacity to see the Uyghur conflict in perspective with both its potential and its real external players. However, these difficulties in obtaining meaningful and unbiased information from Uyghurs in Xinjiang drove me to contact experts residing inside and outside of China, not necessarily Uyghurs, who could give me lucid and informative analyses of the issue under research. I wanted data, details, elements and facts from people whose perspective was unbiased and informative. I found these experts in China, in the rest of Asia and in Europe. The list of these experts is given below.

Experts

Nicholas Bequelin was interviewed by the author (in English) various times between 2001 and 2005, Hong Kong, notes. In early 2000s Dr. Bequelin was the director of the Hong Kong branch of *Human Rights in China*, an NGO devoted Human Rights advocacy. He is currently senior researcher in Chinese issues at *Human Rights Watch* in Hong Kong. With a strong academic background, he has been pursuing extensive research on the Uyghur issue in the last several years and is able to deliver a true and clear assessment of the conflict in Xinjiang without the sentimentalism typical of some advocacy workers. In 2005, at a time when the Uyghur leadership denied any contact at all with external players, he was able to assess that this was not true, especially regarding contact with the US administration and he gave me some remarkable hints.

Colin Mackerras was interviewed in person by the author (in English), June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes. Professor Mackerras is professor at the Griffith Business School, Australia. An ironic, realistic, longtime *cognizant* of the Uyghur issue, Professor Mackerras was especially

¹²⁶ Also Kadeer confirmed to me this swinging tolerance by the Chinese authorities. Kadeer Rabiya, interview by author, October 26, 2009 Kyoto, notes and tape recording

resourceful assessing the contribution of the Central Asian Republics to the Uyghur conflict: the reality and the potential for them to become players in the destabilization of Xinjiang.

Eva Pföstl, interviewed by phone (in Italian), by the author, December 3, 2009, notes. Professor Pföstl teaches Minority Rights at the IUSPIO University, Rome. She is also director of the Law and Economic studies Area at the Institute of Political Studies San Pio V. Herself a member of the Alto Adige/South Tirol minority living in Northern Italy, she has extensive experience in researching minority legal and socio-political issues in China, especially concerning Tibet. During our interview she could deliver a lucid assessment of the differences and similarities between the Tibetan and Uyghur diaspora: their roles within their conflict, their leaderships, their relations with various actors (the United States in particular) and their capacity to attract mass visibility on their issues.

Fabrizio Vielmini was interviewed by email (in Italian) by the author, September 17, 2009. Vielmini is a political analyst focusing on Central Asia and the Caucasus and he writes for Italian Geopolitics journals such as *Limes*. With a solid experience of in site research in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Vielmini specializes in radicalism and terrorism in these places. In our email exchange he gave an assessment of both the myth and the reality of radicalism and terrorist infiltration in Central Asia and the progressive stabilization of the area. This is an important issue as some literature has been considering Central Asia as a potential hotbed of Islamist conflicts with evident repercussions also in Xiinjiang. And the truth is quite different.

Francesco Sisci was interviewed by phone (in Italian), by the author, October 7, 2009, notes. Sisci holds a specialization in Chinese Studies from SOAS, London and is the Italian correspondent in Beijing for the Italian daily *La Stampa*. He also contributes to *Asia Times*. A journalist by profession with a taste for geopolitical investigation, he is always a resource for strong information on strategic and defense matters as he has a close familiarity with the People's Liberation Army. The interesting issues that came up during the interview concerned the relevance or irrelevance of Central Asia and Pakistan in the Uyghur conflict, especially the real size of the radical infiltration from Pakistan and Central Asia. In particular he explained me that Uyghur led bomb explosions in China in 2008 were artisanal made, therefore even the Chinese leadership (always ready to blame external agents) was convinced that there was no foreign assistance in those plots.

Niklas Swanström was interviewed by phone (in English), by the author, October 25, 2009. Dr. Swanström is director of the *Institute for Security and Development Policy* (Stockholm) and one of its cofounders. He is also research fellow at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He specializes in Northeast Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. He confirmed to me the relevance of Pakistan for the Uyghur conflict: the presence of Uyghurs in the training camp for terrorists in Waziristan and the possibility that radicalism may infiltrate Xinjiang from Pakistan. However he admitted the difficulties in collecting evidence to measure the real size of the problem.

Wang Shaoguang was interviewed in person by the author (in English), May 5, 2005, Hong Kong, notes. Professor Wang teaches at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and specializes in Xinjiang political issues. A fervid pro Chinese government fan, during our very brief encounter he could only express his biased opinions by denying any ethnic conflict in Xinjiang and even comparing the Uyghur tensions there to the separatist pressures in Corsica or federalist ones in Northern Italy today. Therefore he was unable to perform any real analysis of external agents who might be involved in a conflict he denied with provocative and mystifying propaganda.

Beniamino Natale was interviewed by email (in Italian) by the author, October 6, 2009. Natale has been *ANSA* (Italy's main news agency) correspondent in China since 2003. Until 2003 he was *ANSA* correspondent for Southern Asia, therefore he has extensive experience in the Pakistani arena. A particular issue that came up in his email was the strong commitment of the Pakistani government to maintaining good relations with China, whose assistance helped the Pakistanis to develop the atomic bomb.

Kathy Gannon was interviewed by email (in English) by the author, February 9, 2009. Between 1986 and 2005 Gannon was a correspondent for the *Associated Press* in Pakistan and Afghanistan. She is currently the Iran Bureau Chief-designate. In 2004, she was the Edward R. Murrow fellow at the *Council on Foreign Relations*. A doyenne of the journalists living in Islamabad, Gannon knows everybody and everything about the Pakistani – Afghani radical groups. Indeed in her communication she gave a detailed and valuable narration on Pakistani infiltration of radicals, especially from the Jamaat-e-Islami party, during the Nineties and the presence of Uyghurs in Pakistani training camps for terrorists.

Thomas Carothers was interviewed by email (in English) by the author, October 6, 2009. Carothers is the vice president of studies at the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* and ‘a leading authority on democracy promotion and democratization worldwide’¹²⁷. He claimed in an email not to have any information about European and/or American organizations active in any field (including mass mobilization) in Xinjiang.

Other agents

Jamila Raqib, interviewed by email (in English) by the author, January 29 2009. Raqib is Executive Director at the *Albert Einstein Institution*. She claimed not to have projects specifically designed for Uyghurs or to know anything about US organizations operating in Xinjiang. This is quite peculiar as the *Albert Einstein Institution* provides material and training for NED assisted mobilization (included the one in Tibet in 2008) and the NED funds Uyghur organizations¹²⁸.

The *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED), the *International Republic Institute* (IRI), the *National Democratic Institute* (NDI), the *Center for International Private Enterprise* (CIPE) and the *Solidarity Centre*, the *Freedom House* and the Information Resource Center of the US Embassy in Beijing were contacted, but replied elusively or did not reply at all. Anyway most data about their activities in China were available through the publishing of the NED’s budget and its various allocations with the exception of *Freedom House* and the Information Resource Center of the US Embassy in Beijing. Therefore the chapter regarding US involvement in Xinjiang examines the issue through these data analyses with the additional information received during some of the interviews mentioned above. This data analysis allows me to assess conclusively (with supporting evidence) whether some US non-state actors are intruding in the Uyghur ethnic conflict and also to establish the size of this assistance during the last few years. I also performed data analyses on other aspects for which I needed evidence and details. For example, I analyzed the number of terrorist attacks in Central Asia, in order to understand whether that phenomenon, which could have implications for stability in Xinjiang, is in decline or not.

¹²⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *Thomas Carothers* available from <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=9&prog=zgp&proj=zdrzlzme> accessed July 1, 2010

¹²⁸ See the chapter devoted to the United States as an external force

All in all, to gather information on the Uyghur conflict I have interviewed members of the Uyghur diaspora, Uyghurs living in Xinjiang and experts on the issue. Interviewees were for most part reliable and honest and delivered lucid analyses or at least provided important data for the outcome of this research. In some cases, especially when dealing with players, they gave a somewhat biased story. This might be understandable as the conflict is still open and some info and attitudes are still sensitive. However, experts on this issue were very helpful and resourceful. Additionally I have used data analyses, especially when I could not conduct any interviews or when I needed some peculiar evidence and in this way I could establish clearly, without doubt, some facts relevant to this thesis.

The Slovenian case

For this conflict I have conducted interviews with players, at various levels, and with experts.

Members of the Slovenian diaspora

Milan Bufon was interviewed by email (in Italian) by the author, March 18, 2009. Bufon is president of the *Slovenski Raziskovalni Inštitut* (SLORI), Slovenian Institute of Research, in Trieste (Italy). As a sociologist, he gave the academic perspective on the distribution and characteristics of the Slovenian diaspora.

Boris Peric was interviewed in person (in Italian) by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia notes. Peric is president of the *Kulturni dom Gorica* (Cultural House of Gorizia) and of *KB 1909 (Finančna delniška družba 1909-Financial Society 1909)* respectively. These are the main cultural and economic Slovenian institutions in Gorizia (Italy). A member of the Slovenian community living in Italy, he gave me a full assessment of the events and the players in the Slovenian conflict. Among the considerable amount of information that came up during the interview, an interesting issue was the strong linkages between the Slovenian diaspora organizations in Italy and the Yugoslav government: a sense of dependency that also marred the support of this diaspora for the Slovenian separatists. All in all, Peric provided an informative and honest account.

Aldo Rupel was interviewed in person (in Italian) by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes. Between 1989 and 2006 Rupel was Director of the *SLORI (Slovenian Research*

Institute), Gorizia Branch. A member of the Slovenian community living in Italy and a long time supporter of Tito and Yugoslavia, Rupel was and still is opposed to Slovenian independence. His bitterness over the events that ignited the Yugoslavian collapse transpired in the interview. However cross checking of the data he had given me confirmed they were reliable. He was especially useful when he recounted (with various details) the various political nuances among the separatist factions in Slovenia. These details included who had various supporters among the corresponding politicians abroad and also the supportive or non-supportive attitude of some Italian politicians.

Igor Princic was interviewed in person (in Italian) by the author, August 2009, Gorizia, notes. Princic is a sociologist. At the time of the Slovenian conflict he was researcher at the SLORI in Gorizia (Italy). He witnessed the Slovenian conflict as an active member of the Slovenian diaspora in Italy and could give me an interesting sociological and personal perspective at a time.

Marina Ussai was interviewed in person (in Italian) by the author, August 8, 2009, Gorizia, notes. Between 1997 and 2007 Ussai was researcher at the SLORI, Gorizia Branch. A member of the Slovenian community living in Italy, at the time of the Slovenian separatist conflict, she was a university student and witnessed the events as a member of the diaspora. She was very interesting when she narrated how these events were perceived among Slovenians living in Italy. Her data were crosschecked and the results proved to be reliable.

Bonnie Prokup was interviewed by email (in English), by the author, October 6, 2009. Prokup is the National Secretary of the *Slovenian Women's Union of America*. She was probably not involved in the organization during that period and she could not provide any info. Still she was the only member of the various Slovenian organizations in the United States to answer my interview request.

Agents

Gianni De Michelis was interviewed by phone (in Italian) by the author, October 14, 2009, notes. De Michelis was the Italian minister of Foreign Affairs between 1989 and 1992; thus the period included the Slovenian independence conflict. A relevant state actor of the Slovenian conflict, he strongly opposed Slovenian independence. His perspective as an insider was really important and full of details on how different groups supported or opposed his

stance in Italy and elsewhere. His information was reliable when duly crosschecked, as he did not try to manipulate the data: in fact he gave a lucid analysis of the different players in that conflict.

Adriano Biasutti was interviewed by phone (in Italian) by the author, October 8, 2009, notes. From 1984 to 1991 Biasutti was President of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region (in Italy). Therefore his time included the period of the Slovenian independence conflict. Another relevant player of the Slovenian conflict, this time as a non-state actor, he strongly supported Slovenian independence. Also his perspective as an insider was really important and full of details about the different opinions among state and non-state actors in Italy.

Experts

Rudolf Rizman, interviewed by email (in English) by the author, November 2, 2009. Professor Rizman is professor of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts - Department of Sociology, and president of the Research Institute of the Faculty of Arts. He is author of the book entitled *Uncertain Path – Transition and Consolidation of Democracy in Slovenia*¹²⁹. He has done academic research on Slovenian independence. His information was reliable and was particularly interesting when he described the strong pressure that was exercised by the Vatican and the Catholics in order to mobilize Catholic politicians abroad, especially in Italy.

Stefano Lusa was interviewed by phone (in Italian) by the author, October 23, 2009, notes. Lusa is an Italian journalist and a member of the Italian community living in Slovenia. He specializes in the contemporary history and politics of Slovenia and as such he published a book entitled *La dissoluzione del potere – Il Partito Comunista sloveno ed il processo di democratizzazione della Repubblica (The power dissolution – The Slovenian Communist party and the process towards democracy of the Republic)* (Udine: Edizioni Kappa Vu, 2007). He could give a broad perspective on the Slovenian conflict as one of the few ethnically non-Slovenians who has investigated the matter.

¹²⁹ Rizman Rudolf *Dall'autoritarismo alla democrazia attraverso l'indipendenza: Il caso sloveno (Uncertain path – transition and consolidation of democracy in Slovenia)* (Ravenna: Università di Bologna – Longo Editore, 2006)

Renato Podbersic was interviewed by phone (in Italian) by the author, October 12, 2009, notes. Podbersic is senior researcher at the *SCNR – Study Center for National Reconciliation* (Ljubljana). He gave me a frank assessment of the various players in the conflict especially those in Western Europe and the United States.

Others

Mihajlo Mihajlov was interviewed by email (in English) by the author, October 6, 2009. Mihajlov was a Yugoslav dissident of Russian lineage, residing first in Croatia then exiled in the United States and the UK. During the period 1985 to 1994, he also worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich and Washington D.C. I asked him about contacts with the Slovenian diaspora during his exile and he replied negatively. He was definitively uninterested in the issue.

In the end these players and experts delivered honest accounts and commentaries on the Slovenian conflict. It may be because this conflict has already erupted and resolved and is nearly twenty years old, and therefore even those with a strong background of involvement provided an unbiased assessment.

Other pro democracy revolutions with ethnic mobilization

In the chapter devoted to the US role in the Uyghur conflict I have also examined the role played by US INGOs in supporting the Uyghur groups, a pattern similar to the pro democracy assistance given to dissident groups in Communist Europe. To this end, I have analyzed the literature on that assistance and I have also conducted some interviews with people who witnessed the years leading up to the demise of the Communist regimes in 1989 and the early Nineties. I have focused my research on the question of whether the United States gave assistance to separatist forces and/or minority groups in order to spur their mobilization. I have discussed this issue with a number of people who were older high school or university students at that time. Consequently, they had a close perception of and/or witnessed the oppositional forces that led to the demise of the Ceausescu regime in Romania in 1989 (in which the Hungarian minority in Transylvania played an incendiary role) and the 1991 Baltic revolutions that began the implosion of the Soviet Union. I interviewed the following people:

Signe Kärgets was interviewed in person (in English) by the author, March 10, 2009, Osaka, notes. Kärgets is an Estonian national who witnessed the independence process in Estonia. She gave me an un-biased and informative testimony. She helped me to design a complete comparative analysis between the Estonian/Baltic separatist forces and the Uyghur ones including grievances, strategies and tools. She described how the neighboring Finland was relevant for developing dissent and how strong the US support for Estonia was perceived to be among the masses. She gave me hints on how the Estonian diaspora and its exiled dissidents maintained contacts and diffused oppositional material in its motherland.

Andrea Trifunovits was interviewed by phone (in Italian and in English) by the author, December 22, 2008. Trifunovits is an Hungarian citizen who witnessed the 1989 revolution. She holds a BA in Politics and Economics from the Karl Marx University in Budapest (now Corvinus University) and she specializes in minority studies. Through a reliable Hungarian perspective, she described to me how the Hungarian minority in Transylvania (Romania) mobilized against the Romanian central government. Moreover she gave me particular information on the uses and perceptions of clandestine foreign assisted media, especially radio, and other oppositional tools among the masses under the Communist regimes in Central Eastern Europe.

Mihaela Croitoru was interviewed by email (in Italian) by the author, March 9, 2009. Croitoru is a Romanian citizen and a witness to the 1989 revolution. In her communication she discussed how a vacuum still exists concerning what forces, external or internal, really spurred the mobilization in Transylvania and elsewhere in Romania in 1989, despite the fact that twenty years have passed since the demise of Ceaucescu. She underlined that in 2009 the Romanian government nominated a special commission to investigate and finally clarify this void in its national history.

In essence these three witnesses provided useful hints on the conflict they experienced. They were not actors in these events and also for them the conflicts were over a longtime ago. Therefore their accounts were unbiased and aimed at understanding the genuine reality of the facts.

All in all, the interviews that I conducted regarding the various conflicts, Uyghur, Slovenian or other, were aimed at understanding (from the different viewpoints of players, experts and witnesses) whether the external agents I identified in these conflicts were actual or

only potential spurs in ethnic mobilization or not. For the most part interviewees were reliable and honest and delivered lucid analyses or at least provided important data for the outcome of this research. Those interviewed for conflicts that had already erupted and concluded (Slovenia and elsewhere) were more unbiased than those involved in the Uyghur conflict. This might be understandable as the Uyghur conflict is still ongoing and some information and attitudes are still sensitive. However, experts on this issue were very helpful and resourceful. As mentioned before, I also carried out informal observations that helped me to assess some peculiar issues. The next section will explain in detail these observation periods.

Observation

This thesis also is indebted to the participant observations that I performed both before and during my years of research. Participant observation, defined as 'the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the research setting'¹³⁰ is already an established method for collecting information while performing qualitative research on various subjects. Participant observation is particularly important because it 'permits the researcher to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do'¹³¹. And certainly, in my case, it was a very valuable method for selecting key informants, clarifying my findings, carrying out informative formal interviews and informal conversations, among other things. I have performed this kind of observation in Xinjiang, in Pakistan and in Gorizia, on the border with Slovenia in the years leading up to and during the separatist conflict. The coming section will explain these observation periods and their relevance for this work.

Xinjiang

While researching for this thesis I made two trips to Xinjiang. One in November 2003 and the other in May 2005. During the first one I visited Urumqi, Turpan and Kashgar. During the second one I stayed in Urumqi where I conducted the interviews previously described. While the interviews were not very relevant to this research, the observations are relevant.

¹³⁰ Schensul, Stephen L.; Schensul, Jean J. & LeCompte, Margaret D. *Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires (Book 2 in Ethnographer's Toolkit)* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999) 91

¹³¹ Marshall Catherine and Rossman Gretchen B. *Designing qualitative research*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1995) 100

During those two trips I could understand why the Southern part of Xinjiang that borders Pakistan, with its poor and under-developed socio-economic situation, may be a fertile target for radical influence from Pakistan. I also visited a market in Kashgar which is said to be one of the largest in Central Asia: every weekend it attracts thousands of visitors across the borders of Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics. Therefore it encourages flows of people, possibly including the infiltration of destabilizing agents, a phenomenon described in the chapter on Central Asia.

Pakistan

Between 1999 and 2001 I lived in Pakistan and worked at the University of Karachi. My research on the Uyghur conflict began in 2000 during the time I was working on an article about energy in China and the issue of stability in Xinjiang for *Heartland*, an Italian journal on Geopolitics. Indeed my personal experience in Pakistan helped me to interpret my data on the Uyghur conflict because in those years I could work on the issue of the Uyghur conflict from a Pakistani perspective. During those years I made two trips to the border with Xinjiang. From there I could observe how the heavy Pakistani police and army controls in that region were only directed against eventual Indian infiltration and not against other Pakistani led activities, such as infiltrations of destabilizing agents in Xinjiang. Elsewhere in Pakistan I could also observe the spread of radicalism, especially among university students, including the open recruitment of volunteers for *Jihad* and *Madrassas* (Koranic schools) in Pakistani large cities. Thanks to the dozens of discussions I had with academics, researchers, IOs and NGOs staff, diplomats, journalists and the like I was able to understand several players in the state and non-state arena in Pakistan and their activities in the neighboring regions.

Slovenia

I also benefitted from direct informal observation of this conflict. This observation was carried out during the year leading to the eruption of the actual conflict and during the actual war in June 1991 and years that followed. From January 1990 to September 1999 I lived, studied and worked in Gorizia, an Italian city right on the border with Slovenia hosting a sizeable community of Slovenians. During those years, first as a Political Science student and later as an International Politics researcher, I had the opportunity to witness at first-hand the Slovenian independence process, to study the interactions between Slovenians in their homeland and in Italy and to analyze the evolution of the Slovenian independence movement.

In other words, throughout those years I was personally able to witness most events and to encounter some of the persons involved in the conflict as external agents. This peculiar observation will add original research to this thesis.

Conclusion

The first aim of this research is to identify whether selected external forces are intervening and spurring the Uyghur separatist conflict. In order to address this issue this study concentrates on identifying specific forces: I have selected external agents using specific criteria commonly applied to conflict analysis by the Analytic Hierarchy Process. This process comprises a system of analyses that combine geographic factors with three other criteria: economic, socio-cultural and political-military¹³². The selected external agents resulted simultaneously neglected or not recently assessed by academic literature.

On a secondary level, my research must establish a parallel with a similar separatist conflict in a similar setting. As explained in the introduction, there are always lessons to be learned from any past ethnic conflict in order to understand certain patterns and dynamics in ethnic mobilization. Surprisingly, the Western academy has not included this perspective when examining the Uyghur conflict. To establish this parallel I have performed a comparative examination with the Slovenian case, specifically with similar external forces involved there when another separatist movement acquired independence in 1991.

This research must answer three main questions. First, is this an external force that is willing to spur the conflict in Xinjiang? Second, is this an external force that is able to spur the conflict in Xinjiang? Third, how have similar forces acted in past conflicts elsewhere, i.e. in Slovenia?

To carry out my research and to answer these questions I selected qualitative methodology. I considered this to be the best method for collecting the detailed, nuanced information necessary to fulfilling my research objectives. I needed to know which factors motivate selected external actors to become involved with the Uyghurs. I also wanted to know what forms their involvement might take. This way I could assess their chances for success. In other words, in this research I am interested in group perceptions, choices and strategies. This is exactly the sort of data that interviews provide. Therefore, interviews are an ideal way to find

¹³² Bozzo Luciano, Simon-Belli Carlo and Batacchi Pietro *Metodologia per la definizione degli interessi nazionali: le matrici (Methodology to define national interests: the matrixes)* in *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005) 53-89

out what I wanted to know. For this reason, I have been analyzing most of the literature available and have consolidated my research through conducting interviews, data analyses and some periods of informal observation of events.

All in all, the interviews I conducted with regard to the various conflicts (Uyghur, Slovenian or elsewhere) were aimed at understanding from the viewpoint of players, experts and witnesses, whether the external agents I have identified in these two conflicts were actual or only potential spurs to ethnic mobilization or not. Most of the questions were focused on assessing those aspects of the external agents that had not been covered by the existing literature. In other words, with each interviewee I discussed mainly the question of real and potential external agents in the Uyghur conflict. The remaining questions were focused on assessing the reliability of the existing literature. I interviewed several players in each case under study or I consulted experts on the issues. I interviewed Uyghurs living in Xinjiang and abroad as well as other non-Uyghurs who specialize in the issue and as a result, could contribute their knowledge and their views to my work and possibly even name some players in the conflict. I did the same for the Slovenian conflict: I carried out numerous interviews with Slovenian residents and Slovenians abroad and with various experts and also with agents in the conflict.

For the Uyghur conflict the interviewees were for the most part, reliable and honest. They delivered lucid analyses or at least provided important data for the outcome of this research. In some cases, the players especially were apt to give a biased side of the story. This might be understandable as the conflict is still ongoing and certain information and attitudes are still sensitive. However, experts on this issue were very helpful and resourceful. For the Slovenian conflict both the players and the experts interviewed delivered honest accounts and commentaries on that conflict. It may be because this conflict has already erupted and is nearly twenty years old and therefore the conflict is over so there is nothing to hide. Even those with a strong background of involvement provided an unbiased assessment. Additionally for both conflicts I have used data analyses especially when I could not carry out any interviews or I needed some peculiar evidence; this way I could establish clearly, without doubt, some facts that are relevant to this thesis.

This thesis also is indebted to the participant observations I performed during my years of research and before. I have performed this kind of observation in Xinjiang, in Pakistan and in Gorizia, on the border with Slovenia in the years leading up to and during the separatist conflict. These experiences greatly enhanced my understanding of some peculiar issues in this research.

In the end my research developed using these methods and it successfully addresses the

issue of external players in the Uyghur conflict in a complete, updated, and structured manner. As previously stated, the agents under scrutiny in this thesis are the Uyghur diaspora, Central Asian, Pakistani and US agents. The Uyghur diaspora and Central Asian players have been subject to frequent assessments in academic literature. However, as I have explained in the Literature Review Chapter, these analyses appear fragmented and outdated. Surprisingly academic research has neglected to assess the role of agents located elsewhere, in neighboring countries such as Pakistan, or in a distant competing power such as the United States. Therefore thanks to the methods illustrated above my research contributes by carrying out a systematic analysis of the reality of external material assistance to mobilizing Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

Now, having explained my choice of methodology for this research, the coming chapter will assess the theories regarding external players acting to spur ethnic conflicts.

Chapter 3

External forces in ethnic conflicts: theories

External forces have their own agenda, hidden or disclosed, [...] an external force in a conflict is a part of the conflict
Emanuele Arielli and Giovanni Scotto¹³³

Virtually all of the strong post war secessionist movements have been supported by powerful international connections
Donald L. Horowitz¹³⁴

The aim of my thesis is to assess whether the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang may be spurred by one or more external forces and what these forces may be. Whilst researching the ethnic conflict in Xinjiang I needed to understand which issues to investigate in order to fully comprehend the Uyghur situation. Therefore I have relied on a number of theories that primarily guided me to identify which issues were most likely crucial. After investigating these issues, I am in a position to express my remarks on these theories themselves and perhaps suggest some outcomes on their accuracy. However this remains a secondary employ of the theoretical works and a secondary goal of my thesis.

A number of theorists have made predictions regarding the motivation and pattern followed by external forces in ethnic/separatist conflicts that are similar to the one taking place in Xinjiang. In the present chapter I summarize these theories and I analyze them in the context of Xinjiang and its possible external forces. These potential forces, at a state and non-state level, include the diaspora, the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States. By applying these theories to the current Uyghur conflict I will be able to identify which theories explain the rationale behind a possible involvement of each external player in the Uyghur conflict. Or, in other words, which theory best illustrates what is motivating each of the players. In the remainder of the thesis I further analyze on a case by case basis the theories I have identified for each agent under study.

In this research I do not focus on the literature regarding conflicts that are

¹³³ Arielli Emanuele and Scotto Giovanni *Conflitti e mediazione (Conflicts and mediation)* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2003), 169

¹³⁴ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 272-277

primarily internally generated and then externalized (or internationalized) by drawing in external players. In this case regional instability or the fear of spillover of the conflict or humanitarian intervention may generate a third-party intervention. Instead, this study concentrates on external forces as a catalyst for separatist conflict, not on external forces as a support for resolving ongoing conflict.

The question here is why do foreign players take sides in separatist conflicts? To answer this question I have selected theorists who have studied the role of external agents such as the diaspora, the neighboring countries and the more distant powers. Their theories help me to develop a research design that enables me to understand the role of a number of external forces. These forces include the Uyghur diaspora, neighboring countries as the Central Asian Republics and Pakistan and a relevant distant power such as the United States. In particular, I have focused my studies on the theories elaborated to analyze players driven by the following motives:

- Opportunism (desire to harm an enemy or gain leverage)
- Ethnic affinity
- Political competition and ethnic affinities
- Vulnerability
- Balancing strategy
- Affective motives
- Instrumental aims
- Trans-nationalism

Theoretical literature on ethnic conflicts is quite extensive. However theories exclusively devoted on third parties' interventions tend to be in most cases briefly elaborated. However, despite this limitation, they all proved essential for my research. In this chapter and in the remaining of the thesis I have included all the theoretical discussions about external forces as a catalyst for separatist conflict, not as a support for resolving ongoing conflict. The next section will examine these theories and match them with the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, and also with the Slovenian conflict. In this chapter I relate these theories to selected external players in the Uyghur conflict: the Uyghur diaspora, the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States. I also relate them with the external players under study in the Slovenian conflict: the Slovenian diaspora in Italy, the Italian and US state and non-state agents. The aim is to identify which theories best explain the motivations or the rationales for each of these players at a state and non-state level.

The Uyghur conflict

Opportunism

I shall start to examine these theories with the one pointing to opportunism as the cause of intervention: an external player may support a conflicting party for internal reasons, as part of its own strategy. External forces might be driven by the desire to harm an enemy. In this case the decision to favor a secessionist movement is based on an opportunistic rationale and the intention is to strike at the state that is hosting the separatist conflict. External forces might be involved in a separatist conflict because of strategic motives, for example, the desire to expand their influence. The main theorist here, Horowitz, suggests that

Diffuse strategic objectives, having little to do with relations between the states that happen to be involved, account for some such decisions [of intervention]. The clearest case of this is Libya's support for separatists in Corsica, Sicily, and the Southern Philippines. These are efforts that do not originate in interstate quarrels but in the desire to expand Libyan influence and ideology.¹³⁵

Who, among the selected external players in the Uyghur conflict, could be moved by a strategic aim? Well, as a competing power, this could apply to US support for the Uyghur cause through its National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as I will discuss later in its own chapter. In this case the United States may be interested in expanding its influence in China, or in a relevant part of it. This is a strategy already carried out by US agents, specifically CIA agents, in Tibet at least until the early Seventies when these operations ceased as part of the Open Door Policy between the United States and China¹³⁶.

However, influence might not be the only motivation. Another motivation could be leverage. Sometimes external players support separatist groups in order to gain leverage, with a view to bargaining with the host state and extracting concessions. For Horowitz 'Specific interstate disputes also provide occasion for support, because the

¹³⁵ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 273

Horowitz is not the only theorist in this debate. Another theorist, Brown, cites as an example of opportunistic intervention Pakistan's assistance to insurgents in India's Punjab. Brown Michael E. *The international dimensions of internal conflict* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) 598-599

¹³⁶ Conboy Kenneth and Morrison James *The CIA's secret war in Tibet* (Lawrence Kansas: the University Press of Kansas, 2002)

support becomes leverage for bargaining and concessions [from the host state]¹³⁷. This explains the relaxed attitude of Pakistan towards radicals' infiltration from its own territory to Xinjiang and towards Uyghurs' schooling in Pakistani *Madrassas*. In this case Pakistan may tolerate such phenomena in order to maintain some leverage with China and extract concessions from the Chinese government. To a lesser extent it also explains the attitude of the Central Asian governments towards some Uyghur-related non-governmental organizations operating on their territory, whose suppression the Chinese government has been requesting for years. In both cases support towards the mobilizing Uyghurs is based on an opportunistic calculation and used as a tool to bargain concessions from China.

Bargaining may occur also between the external supporter and the separatist group: if a separatist group offers too little or nothing, no external force will provide support. Indeed for Horowitz '[...] the *emergence* of separatism is not generally a function of international relations.'¹³⁸

In the end, whether supporting or not mobilizing Uyghurs might be an opportunistic calculation made by all external forces (with the exception of the diaspora) in the Xinjiang issue and it explains swinging levels in their support.

Ethnic affinities

Ethnic affinity is another possible factor behind external support. Ethnic affinities exert powerful pressure to generate support for ethnic conflicts abroad. State and non-state actors may intrude in an external conflict because they are motivated by ethnic affinities. The relevance of this theory for my investigation is that it focuses on the ethnic composition of external supporters including state and non-state agents. Therefore this research assesses whether the ethnic composition of the external supporters (state and non-state agents) under scrutiny here (such as the Uyghur diaspora and in the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States) reflects their stance in respect to the Uyghur conflict.

¹³⁷ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 274

¹³⁸ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272

For some theorists (Horowitz 2000; Roy 1997)¹³⁹ the non-state actors seem more likely to intervene in an external conflict rather than state agents. According to Horowitz, the strongest external aid seems to come ‘not from strong, established states with clear-cut interests, but from irregular forces across porous, remote borders’¹⁴⁰. To further prove this point, Horowitz researched the Burmese separatist insurrection. The author concluded that this insurrection was supported by weapons’ smuggling across the Thai-Burmese border in order to extract revenues. It also benefitted from military assistance provided by units of the Kuomintang army that had been escaping from China into Burma since 1952. Another example cited by Horowitz is Northeastern India: in this situation Thai smugglers transported US weapons, left in Vietnam during the war, across Burma into the hands of the Mizo separatists in Northeast India¹⁴¹. This evidence suggests that the involvement of the Uyghur diaspora and radical Pakistanis and Central Asian groups who support the Uyghur separatists might prove to be the most durable and strongest of all possible supports.

On the other hand, non-state actors motivated by ethnic affinities will not automatically become involved in an external conflict. External movements could be afraid of the failure of one group (Horowitz: 2000). Such a failure could hurt other similar movements and for this reason they may altogether avoid offering support or they may withdraw existing support. This also explains the fading support for Uyghur separatists from some of the radical movements based in Central Asia.

Concerning state actors sharing ethnic affinities with the separatists, they may be induced not to offer support for fear of contagion and the domino effect¹⁴². This is clearly one of the reasons behind the hostility towards Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang that has been shown by Central Asian and Pakistani governments in spite of their ethnic affinities.

¹³⁹ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

Roy A. Bikash (1997) *Intervention across bisecting borders* Journal of Peace Research 34 (3) 303-314

¹⁴⁰ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

¹⁴¹ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

¹⁴² Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

In summary, it seems that ethnic affinities may induce non-state actors to intrude in an external conflict while support from state actors may vary due to concerns about a possible domino effect and the fear of contagion of the conflict.

Political competition and ethnic affinities

Whilst Horowitz is the author behind the seminal and classic works on ethnic conflicts, he is not the only one to consider the rationales for third party interventions. Recent literature on external forces contains more extensively elaborated theories about other factors such as political competition. In other words, it links the external support in favor of a mobilizing group to the internal characteristics of the external supporter. Liberal theories in particular, presuppose that decision-making in international politics is ‘deeply affected by the domestic character of states, their political systems and their societies’¹⁴³. In this case the ethnic composition and the political constraints of the external supporters under scrutiny here (the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States) are relevant in order to assess their stance in respect to the Uyghur conflict.

One theory in particular links political competition to ethnic ties: politicians care about the interests of their supporters and will mingle in a separatist conflict in another state if this is what their constituents want. As Saideman says

When the constituents in one state have ties to a state from which a group is trying to secede (a host state), then the first state will assist the second state. Leaders who face little competition may not be as attentive to their followers' desires, but leaders who face strong competition may not be as attentive to their followers' desires, but leaders who face strong competition will certainly give assistance to those with whom their supporters share ethnic ties.¹⁴⁴

Also Carment and James point out how politicians in highly- institutionalized political contexts must act in accordance with the preferences of their constituents¹⁴⁵. Institutional constraints limit the actions of elites, in accordance with the preferences of

¹⁴³ Collins Alan *Contemporary security studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 27

¹⁴⁴ Saideman Stephen M. *The ties that divide. Ethnic politics, foreign politics and international conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001) 8

¹⁴⁵ Carment David and James Patrick (2000) *Explaining third-party intervention in ethnic conflict: theory and evidence* *Nation and nationalism*, 6 (2) (2000), 173-202

citizens¹⁴⁶, while leaders who have low institutional constraints enjoy unconstrained decision-making. As Carment and James point out

The leaders of such states [with institutional constraints] therefore are less likely to pursue unnecessarily reckless policies – either foreign or domestic – that put the interests of the state and its citizens as a whole at risk. The same cannot be said of leaders of low – constraint states, where the interests of the masses are far less influential in elite policy-making.¹⁴⁷

Carment and James further elaborated this hypothesis by linking it with the ethnic composition of the external state agent. They begin with the following assumption:

[...] when ethnic ties exist, the institutional constraints and ethnic composition of a state play the primary roles in determining whether that state will attempt to intervene on behalf of its co-ethnics abroad.¹⁴⁸

When a single ethnic group is the dominant group in a country, its *elites* can improve their control without the support of other ethnic groups. In this case, foreign policy oriented towards co-ethnics abroad may become a tool to reinforce ties with the dominant ethnic group in the state.

By contrast, in a state composed of ethnically diverse groups, leaders have to seek support through ethnic and crosscutting policies. Competing for the favor of one ethnic group may alienate the other groups. As a matter of fact, ethnic intervention in a foreign state may take place, but only in special cases, regardless of regime type. To make it clear, the theory has been elaborated by Carment and James in the following table:

¹⁴⁶ Institutional constraints may be outlined as regular, free and fair elections, universal vote election, referenda on constitutional matters, constitutionally guaranteed and enforced civil liberties, independent judiciary and checks and balances on decision making. See Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 18

¹⁴⁷ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 19

¹⁴⁸ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16 – 24

		Ethnic composition	
		Dominant (a)	Diverse (b)
Institutional constraints	Low (I)	Dominant-low (Ia): Belligerence	Diverse-low (Ib): Passive lobbying
	High (II)	Dominant-high (IIa): Sporadic interventionism	Diverse-high (IIb): Real-Politik policies

As for the definitions given by Carment and James of these different degrees of ethnic intervention, belligerence is carried out through '[...] ethnically oriented foreign policy as elites attempt to protect themselves from charges that they have "sold out" their ethnic constituents. Intervention and even invasion may take place as a means toward undermining efforts by rivals to seize power [...].'¹⁴⁹ Instead, passive lobbying, for Carment and James, occurs when

Leaders are likely to forego risky foreign policies in favor of nationalist rhetoric or token gestures aimed at placing the ethnically dominant group without doing damage to the state's [sic] international reputation or its broader economic and security-related interests. For example, elites may be rewarded for strong public statements that affirm the precedence of the dominant ethnic group in the state, while acting in a way that seeks to maximize overall wealth and security for the state. In such states, the leadership's [sic] "bark" is generally worse than its "bite."¹⁵⁰

Concerning sporadic intervention, for Carment and James typically electorate dislikes expensive foreign intervention therefore any 'Ethnic intervention [...] will be subordinate to the need for good politico-economic management. When specific circumstances combine to make other options unattractive, however, intervention comes into play.'¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 21

¹⁵⁰ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 22

While Real-politik implies that 'Ethnic interventions are likely to occur only when there are no strong preferences among any of the state's [sic] ethnic groups or where there is a general consensus that the state has strong real-politik-related reasons for involvement abroad.'¹⁵²

If we relate the above table to our case study, we should first discuss the ethnic composition of the players under study: the United States, Central Asian states and Pakistan. How do these countries fit this categorization? For this categorization we need a couple of assessments. First we need to assess the ethnic composition of these countries in order to understand whether they are ethnically dominant or diverse. Second we need to assess the levels of institutional constraint in order to understand whether they are high or low.

Concerning the issue of ethnic composition, is the term 'dominant' here taken to mean that one ethnic group comprises the majority of the population? Or does it mean that one ethnic group of the population is 'dominant' in the political and socio economic sectors? Carment and James offer the following definitions of dominant. Dominant indicates 'a homogeneous state characterized by the dominance of a single ethnic group (e.g. Japan, Iceland, Sweden, Poland, or Kuwait)¹⁵³; moderate dominant indicates 'a relatively homogeneous state characterized by the dominance of one ethnic group along with one or more small minorities with less than 10 percent of the total population (Libya)' ¹⁵⁴; moderate indicates 'a state characterized by the balancing of a large group against slightly smaller groups totaling less than 20 percent of the population (Sri Lanka)' ¹⁵⁵; moderate diverse indicates 'a state characterized by the balancing of one or more large groups against slightly smaller groups that together

¹⁵¹ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 22

¹⁵² Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 23

¹⁵³ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16 – 24

¹⁵⁴ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16 – 24

¹⁵⁵ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16 – 24

exceed 20 percent of the population (Zaire)' ¹⁵⁶ and finally diverse indicates 'a heterogeneous, ethnically mixed state in which there are multiple linguistic and religious divisions'¹⁵⁷.

Carment and James define dominant and diverse solely on the basis of the ethnic composition of the population and not on the weight of one or more groups in the socio-economic-political arena¹⁵⁸. My own assessment is based on the definition given by Carment and James. Hence I proceed by assessing the ethnic composition of the states under study based on the percentage of the ethnic groups among the population.

For this assessment I have relied on data offered by the CIA Factbook. Briefly, it states that in the United States the largest group is white (79, 96 percent)¹⁵⁹. Therefore the United States walks a fine line between moderate and moderate diverse. In Pakistan, Punjabis (44.68 percent) are the largest group with other relevant ethnic groups that together exceed 20 percent¹⁶⁰. Therefore Pakistan is moderate diverse. In Central Asia, in Uzbekistan, Uzbeks are the majority (80 percent)¹⁶¹ in Kazakhstan,

¹⁵⁶ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 16 – 24

¹⁵⁷ Carment David and James Patrick *Wars in the midst of peace: the international politics of ethnic conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 220-221

¹⁵⁸ Carment and James do say that 'measuring diversity by simply counting the number of ethnic groups entails one deficiency: it does not reveal the relative size of each group.' This is especially true for states where four groups have the same size that could wrongly be defined with the same degree of diversity of states with one dominant ethnic group and three smaller ones. Carment David and James Patrick *Wars in the midst of peace: the international politics of ethnic conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 221. However in the states under study here none falls into this case and neither in this research I want to assess the different degree of diversity. So I will maintain the assessment on the sole base of the size of the ethnic groups in respect to the overall population in order to have crosscut categorization.

¹⁵⁹ In the United States the 2010 census is undergoing while this investigation is carried out. The most recent data is an estimation made in July 2007 published by the CIA stating that the population there is composed by: 'white 79.96%, black 12.85%, Asian 4.43%, Amerindian and Alaska native 0.97%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.18%, two or more races 1.61% a separate listing for Hispanic is not included because the US Census Bureau considers Hispanic to mean persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin including those of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican Republic, Spanish, and Central or South American origin living in the United States who may be of any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.)' *CIA World Fact-book* available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶⁰ In Pakistan the same CIA World Factbook assessed that the population is composed by: 'Punjabi 44.68%, Pashtun (Pathan) 15.42%, Sindhi 14.1%, Sariaki 8.38%, Muhajirs 7.57%, Balochi 3.57%, other 6.28%' *CIA World Fact-book* available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶¹ In Uzbekistan there are 'Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, other 2.5% (1996 est.)' *CIA World Fact-book* available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

Kazakhs (Qazaq) are the largest group (53.4 percent)¹⁶², in Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz are the largest group (64.9 percent),¹⁶³ in Tajikistan, Tajiks are the largest one with (79.9 percent)¹⁶⁴, in Turkmenistan, Turkmen are the vast majority (85 percent)¹⁶⁵. Except for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and also Tajikistan (with slightly less percent) there are ethnic groups as large as or larger than 80 percent of the population that can be defined as moderate ethnic composition. The other countries have a moderate diverse ethnic composition. In essence they can be defined as follows

United States: moderate/moderate diverse

Pakistan: moderate diverse

Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan: moderate

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: moderate diverse

I will now address the issue of institutional constraints. Carment and Jones underline that constraints are not synonymous with democracy¹⁶⁶. In fact, institutional constraints refer to the following: ‘first, executive constraints (ranging from seizure of power to competitive elections); second, executive regulation (from unlimited authority to legislative parity); and third, regulation of participation (from no formal arrangements to formal institutionalization)’¹⁶⁷. Elsewhere, they simply denote that domestic constraints include regular free and fair elections, universal voting franchise, referenda on matters of high constitutional importance, constitutionally guaranteed and enforced civil liberties, an independent judiciary and various checks and balances on

¹⁶² In Kazakhstan the population is: ‘Kazakh (Qazaq) 53.4%, Russian 30%, Ukrainian 3.7%, Uzbek 2.5%, German 2.4%, Tatar 1.7%, Uyghur 1.4%, other 4.9% (1999 census)’ CIA World Fact-book available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶³ In Kyrgyzstan the ethnic composition is: ‘Kyrgyz 64.9%, Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uyghur 1%, other 5.7% (1999 census)’ CIA World Fact-book available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶⁴ In Tajikistan: ‘Tajik 79.9%, Uzbek 15.3%, Russian 1.1%, Kyrgyz 1.1%, other 2.6% (2000 census)’ CIA World Fact-book available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶⁵ In Turkmenistan: ‘Turkmen 85%, Uzbek 5%, Russian 4%, other 6% (2003)’ CIA World Fact-book available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html>> accessed July 1, 2010

¹⁶⁶ Carment David and James Patrick *Wars in the midst of peace: the international politics of ethnic conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 202

¹⁶⁷ Carment David and James Patrick *Wars in the midst of peace: the international politics of ethnic conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 202

executive decision making¹⁶⁸. Freedom House records political and civil liberties every year. It evaluates the following issues

Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3) The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4).¹⁶⁹

Therefore it covers almost all the above definition of domestic constraints except for the referenda. It may not be a complete system of evaluation; it is, however, the most complete system that could be retrieved. In essence, its overall results could be used for our research, that is, to help us understand whether the United States, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics have domestic constraints or not.

In 2010 Freedom House¹⁷⁰ reports that the United States is a free country and that Pakistan is partly free whereas the Central Asian Republics are not free. So the United States has high institutional constraints while all the others have low institutional constraints.

United States: free = high institutional constraints

Pakistan: partly free = between high and low institutional constraints

Central Asian Republics: not free = low institutional constraints

Therefore we could fit these countries into the Carment and James ethnic categorizations table as follows

United States: moderate diverse/moderate ethnic composition + high institutional constraints = diverse/high Iib cell

Pakistan: moderate diverse ethnic composition + low/high institutional constraints = moderate diverse/high and low = Ib and Iib cells

Central Asian Republics:

¹⁶⁸ Carment Davide and James Patrick *Institutional constraints: high versus low in International politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* eds Lobell Steven E. and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 18

¹⁶⁹ Freedom House *Rating process* available from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=351&ana_page=363&year=2010> accessed July 10, 2010

¹⁷⁰ Freedom House *2010 Reports* available from <www.freedomhouse.org> accessed July 10, 2010

Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan: moderate ethnic composition + low institutional constraints = moderate/low = Ib cell

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: moderate diverse ethnic composition + low institutional constraints = moderate diverse/low = Ib cell

So the above table becomes the following:

		Ethnic composition	
		Dominant (a)	Diverse (b)
Institutional constraints	Low (I)	Belligerence: none	Passive lobbying: Central Asia Pakistan
	High (II)	Sporadic interventionism: none	Real Politik policies: Pakistan United States

Pakistan and the Central Asian states will fit into the diverse – low (Ib) cell. As a matter of fact, these states enjoy low institutional constraints (Central Asian Republics) or between low and high constraints (Pakistan) and they oscillate between moderate and moderate diverse ethnic composition.

On the other hand the United States could fit into the diverse-low (Ib) cell as it is constrained by institutions and it is a country with a moderate diverse/moderate ethnic composition together with Pakistan which oscillates between low and high domestic constraints with the same ethnic categorization.

In sum, according to this theory which links ethnic composition to domestic constraints, the Central Asian and the Pakistani governments could be pushed to exercise passive lobbying in favor of the Uyghurs, while the United States and again Pakistan would follow Real-politik policies with respect to that conflict. Therefore they might well be less involved in that conflict.

Vulnerability

Saideman (Saideman 2001)¹⁷¹ proposed another theory, the so-called vulnerability theory. According to this theory, states which are vulnerable to ethnic divisions are inhibited from supporting separatist movements in other states for a number of reasons. These include fear of encouraging either the breakdown of their territorial integrity (contagion effect), or the spillover of the conflict, or, the fear of provoking revenge from the host state.

Though only briefly elaborated, this theory may prove relevant for my research as it highlights how some of the agents under study here (such as the neighboring Central Asia and Pakistan) fear the danger of contagion or spillover and/or the revenge of their powerful Chinese neighbor.

Balancing

On the contrary, the realist school has been enjoying wider debate: including discussions on secessionist conflict and third party intervention. For those adherents of the realist school, balancing is the fundamental art in international relations¹⁷². Therefore, in weak states, they support central government and in strong countries they support separatist movements. This might be caused by the search for security, as in the view of the so-called defensive realists¹⁷³, or the pursuit of power, as in the view of so-called offensive realists¹⁷⁴. The relevance of this theory for my investigation lies in the strategic position the external supporter assumes towards the state undergoing ethnic separatism. In other words, it links external support to a mobilizing group with relations between the external supporter and the state hosting the mobilizing group. In this case my investigation will include in the various chapters an assessment of the relations

¹⁷¹ Saideman Stephen M. *The ties that divide: Ethnic politics, foreign politics and international conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001) 17

¹⁷² Morgenthau, Bull and Waltz are among the realists who use the balance of power to promote a theoretical understanding of international relations
Morgenthau Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1948, reprint 1978)
Bull Hedley *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977)
Waltz Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979)

¹⁷³ See Van Evera Stephen W. *Causes of war: power and the roots of conflict* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999)

¹⁷⁴ See Mearsheimer John *The tragedy of great power politics* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2001)

between the external supporters under scrutiny here (the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States) and China in order to assess the stance the supporters take towards the Uyghur conflict.

In the realist view, a state is generally more likely to support secessionist movements in a state perceived as threatening. The stronger a state is, the more likely others will support secessionist movements in it. As Lake and Rothchild explain:

Although realist scholars are generally silent on the issue of ethnicity, the following linkage between ethnicity and international conflict patterns is implied by the realist perspective: since one tool for improving a state's security situation is to increase its relative capabilities, ethnic divisions within other states could provide states with opportunities to weaken potential rivals by exploiting their ethnic vulnerabilities. Naturally, efforts to "destabilize" a rival state could take the form of covert or overt support of the ethnic minority.¹⁷⁵

In this case, the United States, whose global leadership is being challenged by China, could be more interested in supporting the Uyghur separatists than neighboring countries such as Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics, which are less interested because they have fewer interests at stake.

Affective motives and instrumental aims

Two other prominent schools in ethno-politics have debated the subject: the affective school and the instrumental school. These two schools arrive at different conclusions as to why a foreign entity might give its support. Group affinity is the reason given by the affective school, whilst independent-state interests are the reason given by the instrumental school. Also these theories are of considerable use to my research as they concentrate on the role of diaspora in ethnic mobilizations. Therefore they will help me to assess the stance of the Uyghur diaspora with respect to Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang.

Group affinity is best defined in the following quotation from Tellis, Szayna and Winnefeld: 'Group affinity relates to the possibility that the members of the given group inhabit areas of neighboring countries and form distinct diasporas as a result of immigration.'¹⁷⁶ In this case, the analyst should enquire upon a number of points.

¹⁷⁵ Lake David A. and Rothchild Donald S. *The international spread of ethnic conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) 101

¹⁷⁶ Tellis Ashley J., Szayna Thomas S., Winnefeld James A *Anticipating ethnic conflict* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 1997) 38

Firstly, whether there are state boundaries that cut across a group's homeland, as in the case of the Central Asian Republics; secondly, whether there are irredentist organizations in the neighboring countries, again, as in Central Asia and also, on a smaller scale, in Pakistan; thirdly, what kind of resources can the co-ethnic group contribute to the mobilizing group, again, as in Central Asia, in Pakistan and in the Uyghur diaspora in the West; finally, are there channels available to convey these resources and skills from the co-ethnic group to the mobilizing group, again, in this conflict this would apply to players in Central Asia, in Pakistan and in the Uyghur Diaspora in the West.

Also in these theorists' view, groups defined by religion or race are more likely to get broader support, while groups defined by language are less likely to receive support¹⁷⁷. Therefore this theory provides a theoretical explanation that might possibly apply to the Uyghur diaspora, especially the one in Central Asia and the United States. And it might apply to Central Asian and Pakistani non-state agents.

The instrumental school has elaborated the independent state interest theory, a debate very close to the diversionary theory of war¹⁷⁸. It supports the case of the independent state interest, a situation in which leaders intervene in a conflict abroad in order to gain resources, create diversion or create the 'rally around the flag' effect when they lose grip on their power at home¹⁷⁹. As a matter of fact, if their leadership is challenged they may engage in adventurous foreign involvement to create diversions. This is one way that the external player maximizes security, wealth and power. This could be the case for the United States, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics.

In both cases (group affinity and independent state interests) foreign assistance can be provided (even when not requested) to the mobilizing group. Support can range from sanctuary for ethnic elites to financial assistance, from diplomatic support to organizational expertise, from arms supply to military training. All in all, foreign support may be critical to accomplishing ethnic mobilization.

¹⁷⁷ As a matter of fact for one leading theorist, Gurr, Islamic minorities are part of a very dense and organized network where they can acquire better techniques for effective mobilization, plausible appeals, good leadership and organizational skills. Moreover '*equally or more important, they benefit from the inspiration of successful movements elsewhere, successes that provide the images and more incentives that motivate activists.*' Gurr Ted R. *Peoples versus states: minorities at risk in the new century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000) 90

¹⁷⁸ Saideman Stephen M. *The ties that divide. Ethnic politics, foreign politics and international conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001) 6

¹⁷⁹ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13

Trans-nationalism

In addition to the affective school theory, there is another theory that focuses on the interference of non-state entities as external forces. These non-state entities play a relevant role in separatist conflicts. Among the non-state forces there are supranational organizations and human rights bodies which provide a forum for sub-national ethnic claims. Trans-national actors, including media networks and the arms trade, and of course, the diaspora provide both material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups. All of these links are crucial if an ethnic separatist movement is to prosper and grow. Only recently, an emerging wave of studies is focusing on the role of the transnational society in the context of international order¹⁸⁰. Individuals and groups from various different states develop more or less institutionalized linkages across the borders in what has been called *social trans-nationalism*. For most scholars dealing with this issue, the trans-national civil society is an expression of soft power that (in contrast to hard power that is military or economic influence) operates with leverage and persuasion. Trans-national society does not operate on behalf of a national government or intergovernmental organizations, as the following quotation makes clear.

[...] its field of action is fluid meaning its geographical boundaries follow changing circumstances and ‘represents [...] values and objectives shared by numerous people, including national liberation (for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization).¹⁸¹

Also, this theory is crucial to my investigation as it focuses on non-state agents; therefore it will help me to assess whether non-state agents in the states under scrutiny and the Uyghur diaspora may be supporting Uyghur mobilization. The Uyghur diaspora might be included in this group, along with those Islamist radical groups in Pakistan and Central Asia. The latter groups, Islamist radical groups in Pakistan and in Central Asia, may be encouraged to spur the conflict in Xinjiang because of their strong ideology, as Stepanova has theorized. Stepanova has examined how the characteristics of a terrorist group may reflect the degree of its internationalization:

¹⁸⁰ See Scartezzini Riccardo and Rosa Paolo *Le relazioni internazionali. Lineamenti di indagine sociologica (International Relations. Outlines of sociological study)* (Milan: Carocci, 1994) 37, 53 and 128-130

and also Keck Margaret E. and Sikkink Kathryn *Activists beyond borders* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998)

And also Tarrow Sidney *The new transnational activism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

¹⁸¹ Haynes Jeffrey (2007) *An introduction to International Relations and religion* (London: Pearson, 2007) 128

[...] movements that are guided by truly internationalist, even universalist, ideologies (whether purely ideological or quasi-religious) appear to be most susceptible to the spread of networks. [...] [also] separate consolidated localized groups based in different countries or region may be tied by ideological proximity, such as the solidarity among left-wing nationalist groups or among Islamicized separatist challenging central authorities in their respective countries¹⁸²

In sum, for Stepanova, and not only for her¹⁸³, the internationalization of a terrorist group depends more on its goals and its agenda (which are shaped by its ideology) rather than its organizational patterns. In other words, ideology is more relevant for the international activities of a terrorist group than its own structural shape, such as a strictly structured and heavily centralized group or an organization with consistent networks¹⁸⁴.

The table below relates all these theories to the external players under study. This table shows that the United States, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics have an equal number of reasons to support the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, regardless of whether they come from state and/or non-state agents, while the diaspora is somehow penalized, at least theoretically, because it is impossible to adapt all these theories to this entity.

¹⁸² Stepanova Ekaterina (2008) *Terrorism in asymmetrical conflict. Ideological and structural aspects* Sipri Research Report no. 23 Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 108-110

¹⁸³ the issue of ideology as a relevant factor to internationalize terrorist groups had been examined by other authors especially in respect to some terrorist groups in Europe as the Red Brigade in Italy and the Rote Arme in Western Germany Catanzaro Raimondo *Ideologie, movimenti, terrorismi (Ideologies, movements, terrorisms)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1990) and also Sommier Isabelle *La violenza rivoluzionaria. Le esperienze di lotta armata in Francia, Germania, Giappone, Italia e Stati Uniti (Revolutionary violence. Political violence in France, Germany, Japan, Italy and the United States)* (Rome: Derive Approdi, 2009) in the Chapter on Pakistan I will also discuss about terrorism on religious grounds defined by Del Re Emanuela C. *Terrorismo e religioni (Terrorism and religions)* Gnosis, Rivista di Intelligence italiana (Gnosis, Italian intelligence journal) 2, 2006, 34-48

¹⁸⁴ Stepanova Ekaterina *Terrorism in asymmetrical conflict. Ideological and structural aspects* Sipri Research Report no. 23 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 109-111

Theory	Diaspora	Central Asia	Pakistan	The United States
Opportunist		Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)
Ethnic affinity	Yes	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)
Political Competition/ Ethnic affinities		Passive lobbying (state agents)	Passive lobbying (state agents)	Real-politik (state agents)
Vulnerability		Cause of refrain = unprobable intervention	Cause of refrain = unprobable intervention	Yes No refrain = probable intervention
Balancing				Yes (non-state agents)
Affective	Yes	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)
Instrumental		Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)
Transnational	Yes	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)

In sum, every player under study has, in theory, a set of motives to intrude in the Uyghur conflict:

Uyghur diaspora: affective motives and trans-nationalism

Central Asian state and non-state actors: opportunism, ethnic affinities, political competition and ethnic affinities (Real-politik policies/passive lobbying), affective motives, instrumental motives and trans-nationalism

Pakistani state and non-state actors: opportunism, ethnic affinities, political competition and ethnic affinities (Real-politik policies/passive lobbying), affective motives, instrumental motives and trans-nationalism

United States' state and non-state actors: opportunism, ethnic affinities/political competition, affective motives, and instrumental motives

I will now relate these same theories to the external players in the Slovenian conflict under scrutiny here.

The Slovenian conflict

In this research I have specifically included a comparison between the Uyghur and the Slovenian diaspora, between the Central Asian (for the Uyghur case) and Italian (for the Slovenian case) state actors, between the Pakistani (for the Uyghur case) and Italian (for the Slovenian case) non-state actors and lastly between state and non-state actors based in the United States in the Uyghur and in the Slovenian conflicts. This section will relate the theories explained above to the external players in the Slovenian conflict under study in this reaserch in order to understand their motivations behind their possible embroilment.

Opportunism

According to this theory an external player may support a conflicting party for internal reasons, as part of its own strategy. As regards the Slovenian case, Italian state agents may have had, at least in theory, reasons to support Slovenian separatists in order to gain leverage in order to bargain with an independent Slovenia and extract concessions. Indeed, at that time, there were sensitive issues pending with Italy. First, the issue of the linguistic and cultural *tutelage* of the Italian minority living in Slovenia and secondly, the critical quest, by the Italian electorate, for the return or at least the compensation of estates that had once belonged to Italians and that had been confiscated under Tito's regime. Also Italy might have been interested in expanding its influence in Slovenia, an area right across its Eastern borders where other competitors, as Germany and Austria, already exerted strong influence. Did Italy pursue this strategy? The

section on Italian state agents in the chapter on Central Asia will assess whether this was the case.

Concerning the United States, US interests might have induced US state agents to expand their influence in Central Eastern Europe, especially under pressure from the US Congress, as I will explain in the section on the US role in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on the United States.

Ethnic affinities

Ethnic affinity is another possible factor behind external support and it concerns state agents as well as non-state players as the diaspora. Concerning the Slovenian conflict, the relevant agents could have been the Slovenian diaspora spread across the border in Italy as well as in the United States. These two diasporas could have supported co-ethnics separatists in neighboring Slovenia on the grounds of their ethnic affinities. The section on the study of the Slovenian diaspora in the chapter on the Uyghur diaspora and the one on the role of the United States in its own chapter will show the extent of such involvement.

Political competition and ethnic affinities

According to this theory, politicians care about the interests of their supporters and will mingle in a separatist conflict in another state if this is what their constituents want. If we relate this theory to the Slovenian case, we need first to assess Italy's and the United States' categorization: whether they were countries with a dominant or a diverse ethnic composition and whether they had high or low political constraints at the time of the Slovenian conflict, in 1991.

As far as Italy is concerned, in 1991 linguistic minorities amounted to the 5 percent of the population while foreigners were 356,159 units, or less than 1 percent, out of an overall population of 57,003,000 persons¹⁸⁵. Therefore Italian ethnic composition at that time was dominant.

¹⁸⁵ Bregantini Luca *I numeri e I luoghi delle minoranze etniche dall'Atlantico al Pacifico (Numbers and places of ethnic minorities from the Atlantic to the Pacific)* (Gorizia: Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale Gorizia, 1997) 116; and Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Conoscere l'Italia. Geografia, storia e popolazione (Knowing Italy. Geography, history and population)* available from: <http://www.esteri.it/MAE/IT/Ministero/Servizi/Benvenuti_in_Italia/Conoscere_Italia/Geograf_Storia_Popolaz.htm> accessed September 20, 2011

Regarding the political constraints, Freedom House states that in 2010 Italy was a free country¹⁸⁶. Since Italian constitutional system has not changed since its implementation in 1948, we may assume that in 1991, the year of the Slovenian secession, Italy was already a free country¹⁸⁷. Therefore it had high political constraints.

As a country with high political constraints and a dominant ethnic composition. Italy, in Carment's and James's elaboration, might have engaged in sporadic interventionism in the Slovenian conflict.

Concerning the United States, US categorization in this model points out that in the United States in 1990, the year of the census, the largest group was composed by whites (80.3 percent)¹⁸⁸. Therefore the United States already in 1990 walked a fine line between moderate and moderate diverse.

Regarding the political competition, Freedom House states that in 2010 the United States were a free country and, since US constitutional system has not changed since its implementation in 1789, we may assume that in 1991, the year of the Slovenian secession, the United States were already a free country

Therefore they at that time they were a free country with high institutional constraints¹⁸⁹ and therefore might have carried out Real-Politik policies.

The table below shows Italy's and the United States' positions in Carment's and James's debate:

¹⁸⁶ Freedom House *2010 Reports* available from <www.freedomhouse.org> accessed September 21, 2011

¹⁸⁷ See also Morlino Leonardo *Democrazie e democratizzazioni (Democracies and democratizations)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003) where the author illustrates the democratization process in Italy and elsewhere

¹⁸⁸ For the 1990 Census the US population was composed by: whites 80.3%, blacks 12.1%, Asians and Pacific Islanders 2.9%, Amerindians, Eskimos and Aleuts 0.8%, Other races 3.9
US Census *United States – Race and Hispanic origin: 1790 to 1990* available from <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/tab01.pdf>> accessed September 20, 2011

¹⁸⁹ Freedom House *2010 Reports* available from <www.freedomhouse.org> accessed September 21, 2011

		Ethnic composition	
		Dominant (a)	Diverse (b)
Institutional constraints			
	Low (I)	Dominant-low (Ia): Belligerence	Diverse-low (Ib): Passive lobbying
	High (II)	Dominant-high (IIa): Sporadic interventionism = Italy	Diverse-high (IIb): Real-Politik policies = The United States

This table clearly shows that Italian state players might have engaged in sporadic interventions supporting Slovenian mobilization while the United States might have carried out Real-Politik policies. I will carry out the assessment of the possible Italian sporadic interventions in the section on the role of the Italian state agents in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on Central Asia. The one on the possible US Real-Politik policies will be explained in the section on the US stance in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on the United States.

Vulnerability

According to this theory, states, which are vulnerable to ethnic divisions, are inhibited from supporting separatist movements in other states. In the case of Slovenia, Italian state agents may have feared the *revanchisme* of an independent Slovenia over Italian territories across the border inhabited by Slovenian diaspora. Moreover, Italy could have perceived the fear of an eventual spill over of the conflict, embroiling Slovenians living in Italy. As they could have felt vulnerable they refrained from supporting Slovenian separatism: was this the case? I will assess the reality of its involvement in the section on Italian state agents and the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on Central Asia. On the other hand, the United States might not have suffered the same kind of vulnerability as they did not fear possible spill over of the conflict and neither any other negative reflection from this separatist conflict. The section on the US role in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on the United States will examine the extent of their actual embroilment.

Balancing

In short, according to the realist school leaders support central government in weak states and separatist movements in strong countries. At the time of the conflict Yugoslavia was undergoing a critical economic and financial crisis¹⁹⁰. Ethnic tensions also within other groups, as the Croatians, the Bosnians and the Kosovo people, had already erupted in the previous decade, soon after the death of Tito in 1980. They were also a reflection of the severe splits inside the Yugoslav *nomenklatura*. Therefore Yugoslavia in 1991 was certainly in a position of considerable internal weakness and, at least in theory, Italy should not have supported secessionist movement in Yugoslavia, a country it did not perceive threatening at that time¹⁹¹. The same argument is valid for the United States which, at that time, were in a stronger position than Yugoslavia. Was this the case? A section on the role of Italian state agents in this conflict, in the chapter on Central Asia, will demonstrate whether this was the reality. This kind of assessment on the role of US state agents will be carried out in the section on the US position in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on the United States.

Affective motives and instrumental aims

As regards the affective motives, for Tellis, Szayna and Winnefeld: ‘Group affinity relates to the possibility that the members of the given group inhabit areas of neighboring countries and form distinct diaspora as a result of immigration.’¹⁹² This is exactly the case of the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which is inhabited by Slovenians. Therefore they might have supported separatists in Slovenia for affective motives: this aspect will be examined in the section on Italian non-state agents and the Slovenian conflict. Also the United States hosted groups of the Slovenian diaspora, albeit very small in size. Their involvement will be examined in the section on the US role in this conflict in the chapter on the United States.

¹⁹⁰ See the section on the Slovenian diaspora in the relevant chapter.

¹⁹¹ During the Cold War, the Yugoslav Army had initially concentrated its forces on the borders facing Italy, especially between Gorizia and Nova Gorica because it was the *Soglia di Gorizia* or Gorizia’s Threshold where, since the end of the World War II, Warsaw Pact and NATO forces had planned that an eventual ground attack in Italy could happen. So in that bordering zone large part of the Yugoslav and Italian armies had been settled since many decades. However after the end of the Cold War, despite the presence of forces on both sides of the border, this sense of threat was considerably lower.

¹⁹² Tellis Ashley J., Szayna Thomas S., Winnefeld James A *Anticipating ethnic conflict* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 1997) 38

For the instrumental school, leaders intervene in a conflict abroad in order to gain resources, create diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose grip on their power at home¹⁹³. Could this have been the case of Italian and US leaders? Was the Slovenian conflict an occasion to divert Italian and/or US public opinion attention? In theory yes and I will explain in the section on the role of Italian state agents in the chapter on Central Asia and in the section on the role of the United States in its own chapter whether this was the case.

Trans-nationalism

Also this theory focuses on the interference of non-state entities as external forces. Trans-national actors, including media networks and the arms trade, and of course, the diaspora may provide both material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups. My research shows that in Italy there were non-state forces, besides the diaspora, that theoretically could have provided this kind of support. My research also shows that this was not the case in the United States, with the exception of the Slovenian diaspora, for a series of reasons. In the section of the non-state agents involved in the Slovenian conflict in the chapter on Pakistan and in the section on the role of US players in the chapter on the United States, I will assess their relevance to this issue respectively.

In the end most of these theories could explain the reasons of the possible involvement in the Slovenian conflict of external players based in Italy and in the United States. In every relevant section on the Slovenian conflict I will assess if their embroilments were real.

The table below sums up these theories and their relations with the external players in the Slovenian conflict under study in this research.

¹⁹³ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13

Theory	Diaspora	Italy	The United States
Opportunism		Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)
Ethnic affinities	Yes		
Political competition and ethnic affinities		Yes (sporadic interventions)	Yes (Real-politik policies)
Vulnerability		Cause of refrain = un-probable intervention	No refrain = probable intervention
Balancing			
Affective motives	Yes		
Instrumental motives		Yes (state agents)	Yes (state agents)
Transnationalism		Yes (non-state agents)	Yes (non-state agents)

Therefore most of these theories could explain the reasons of the possible involvement of external players based in Italy and in the United States in the Slovenian conflict. In every relevant section on the Slovenian conflict I will assess if their embroilments were real.

Conclusion

To sum up, there are various theories dealing with the causes that might lead an external agent to support a separatist conflict abroad. Theorists have made some predictions regarding the motivation and pattern followed by external forces in ethnic/separatist conflicts similar to the one taking place in Xinjiang and the one occurred in Slovenia. Throughout this work I have gathered certain data to find out whether, in the case of Xinjiang, they are right and whether there are similar pattern followed by external players in the Slovenian conflict. I have used the present chapter to summarize these theories and to analyze them in the context of Xinjiang and its possible external forces, i.e. the diaspora, the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States, and also external forces at various levels in the Slovenian conflict. According to these theories, there are different rationales behind the support given to separatist groups by external agents: these include opportunism, ethnic affinities, political

competition and ethnic affinities, vulnerabilities (in this case it would lead to un-support), balancing desire, affective motives, instrumental motives and transnational movements.

Opportunism could lead external agents to support separatist conflict abroad. The rationale for this support would be the desire to expand influence and/or gain leverage for bargaining and extract concessions from the host state in conflict. This explains the relaxed attitude of Pakistan especially and, to a lesser extent, the attitudes of the Central Asian governments towards some Uyghur-related non-governmental organizations operating on their territory. This could also be the case with respect to US support for the Uyghur cause via its National Endowment for Democracy. And also might have been the case for Italian and US state agents' involvement in the Slovenian conflict.

Ethnic affinities are a powerful pressure to support ethnic conflicts abroad. However, the external state may avoid offering support because it fears both contagion and the domino effect. This is one of the reasons for the hostility shown by the Central Asian Republics towards the Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang, despite their ethnic affinities. Horowitz explains that it is movements abroad with shared ethnic affinities rather than states that could ultimately provide external support. This shows that it is interference from Pakistani and Central Asian radical groups and their support to the Uyghur separatists that could prove to be the most durable and the strongest of all the possible supports. It explains also the possible support given by the Slovenian diaspora residing in Italy and in the United States towards co-ethnics mobilizing in Slovenia.

According to the theory that links political competition to ethnic ties, politicians care about the interests of their supporters; hence they will mingle in a separatist conflict in another state if this is what their constituents want them to do. Whilst institutional constraints can limit the actions of elites, in accordance with the preferences of citizens, leaders who are subject to low institutional constraints are free to enjoy unconstrained decision-making. Within the context of this theory the Central Asian and the Pakistani governments could be pushed to exercise passive lobbying in favor of the Uyghur, while the United States and again, Pakistan, would follow Real-politik policies in respect of that conflict. On the other hand, in the case of the Slovenian conflict Italy, at least theoretically, might have carried out sporadic interventionism while the United States might have pursued Real-politik policies.

States that are vulnerable to ethnic divisions are inhibited from supporting separatist movements in other states for two main reasons. They fear that this will

either encourage the breakdown of their own territorial integrity or that it will provoke revenge from the state that is hosting the assisted separatists. For these reasons, the Central Asian Republics and Pakistan may be discouraged from inciting the Uyghur conflict. And also Italy might have feared Slovenian conflict's spillover onto its territory inhabited by Slovenian diaspora. On the contrary, the United States might not have sensed to be vulnerable and therefore might have engaged in this conflict.

A need to find balance could be the motive behind certain state support for both central government in weak states and separatist movements in strong countries. This might be caused by the search for security or by the pursuit of power. The main player in the case of the conflict in Xinjiang would be the United States. In the case of the Slovenian secession, Italy and the United States were in a stronger position than Yugoslavia, therefore might not have pursued this strategy.

The affective school focuses on the presence of a diaspora that could stimulate and channel support to the separatist movement in its own homeland. Also groups that share language or religion may offer support as in the case of the Uyghur diaspora and in the case of some non-state agents in Pakistan and Central Asia. Also the Slovenian diaspora dispersed in Italy and in the United States might have supported separatists in Slovenia for affective motives.

The instrumental school supports the case of the independent state interests. This applies in a situation in which leaders intervene in a conflict abroad in order to gain resources, or to divert public attention or to strengthen their power by promoting a show of support for some operations abroad. For these reasons, the United States, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics could all have an interest in using the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. In theory the Slovenian conflict might have provided an occasion to divert Italian and/or US public opinion attention as well.

Alongside the affective school, trans-nationalism also focuses on the interference of non-state entities as external forces. A number of non-state forces could provide material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups. These non-state forces include supranational organizations, and human rights bodies, plus trans-national actors including media networks and the arms trade, and of course the diaspora. This trans-national civil society is an expression of soft power that, in contrast to hard power (that is military or economic influence) operates with leverage and persuasion. The diaspora might be included in this group, as well as pro democracy organizations and it might also include those radical Islamist groups in Pakistan and Central Asia with a strong ideological pressure. Also in the Slovenian case several

Italian and US non-state forces, besides the diaspora, theoretically could have provided this kind of support.

In essence, the theories that are explained above may provide sufficient theoretical support to explain the rationale for Pakistani, Central Asian and US agents' involvement in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang and the motivations for state and non-state agents in Italy with respect to the Slovenian conflict. As regards the role of the diaspora, there are scant theories available to analyze its case. In the end, the degree of intervention from an external force will depend on many different variables: namely the level of security, wealth and power maximization sought by each and every one of them. Supporting a secessionist movement abroad may alienate allies, damage trade relations, and even cause a backlash in the stability of the same supporting country. Fear of these effects may inhibit supporters. On the other hand, there are countries where trans-national groups pursue their own agenda.

In the end, at least in theory, the Uyghurs do not lack foreign support as the Slovenians, as well at least in theory, did not. The next chapters will assess the rationale and feasibility of external support from selected players such as the diaspora, state and sub state agents in the Central Asian Republics, Pakistan and the United States and the similarities and unsimilarities with the external players in the Slovenian conflict. The rationale of these agents will be examined through the framework of these theories.

Chapter 4

The Uyghur diaspora and the Xinjiang issue

As explained in the Methodology Chapter in order to select the subjects under scrutiny I referred to a particular system: the Analytic Hierarchy Process. The Analytic Hierarchy System elaborates a system of analyses using geographic factors and three other criteria: economic, socio-cultural and political-military¹⁹⁴. Therefore I have included the external agents that are relevant in terms of geographic proximity, such as the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Pakistan, those relevant in terms of economic opportunity, again the CARs and Pakistan, and those relevant on ethnic grounds, including religion and culture, such as the Uyghur diaspora, the Central Asian Republics and Pakistan, and finally those relevant in terms of political opportunism such as the United States¹⁹⁵. In particular, the literature on Geopolitics recognizes the diaspora as an external actor in ethnic conflicts¹⁹⁶. Diasporas may oppose the policies and power of the authority in their homeland. Their activities may range from support to mobilization of homeland-based groups, from peaceful persuasion to violent confrontations. Members of the diaspora may succeed in influencing the policies of the host country towards their homeland. Their capacity to exert influence is not related to the size of the diaspora but rather to its unity and financial resources. This way it may exercise influence not only over the host state but also internationally, over other states and agencies. Usually the aim is to mobilize activists and even to provoke a possible crackdown in order to precipitate the involvement of foreign states on its side¹⁹⁷. The

¹⁹⁴ Bozzo Luciano, Simon-Belli Carlo and Batacchi Pietro *Metodologia per la definizione degli interessi nazionali: le matrici (Methodology to define national interests: the matrixes)* in *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005) 53-89

¹⁹⁵ See Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005)

¹⁹⁶ See the chapter on the Methodology, especially the part where I explain the criteria followed to choose the external players to be examined in this thesis.
See also See Jean Carlo and Napolitano Fernando eds *Interessi Nazionali: metodologie di valutazione (National Interests: evaluation methodologies)* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005)

¹⁹⁷ See Williams Robin M. Jr. *The wars within. Peoples and states in conflict* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 115 and Duffy Toft Monica *The geography of ethnic violence. Identity, interests, and the indivisibility of territory* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003) 31

diaspora might even provide tangible support even though that support was not demanded by the mobilizing group¹⁹⁸. As Byman explained:

The existence of ethnic group members living outside the group's homeland makes the security dilemma even more intense. [...] Furthermore, concern about the well - being of ethnic compatriots in distant areas often is a major cause of aggression. Thus, there is an incentive both for offensive operations to liberate besieged compatriots and for ethnic cleansing to wipe out potentially hostile pockets before they have the chance to arm and strike.¹⁹⁹

This chapter analyzes the influence of the Uyghur diaspora²⁰⁰ in the Xinjiang conflict. The Uyghur diaspora is especially important to the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movement not only in terms of advocating and mobilizing the Uyghur cause but also in relation to other relevant external players. So it is critical to assess whether this diaspora may exercise any external influence on the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movements.

This analysis is carried out in relation to the general research question posed in this thesis: what are the selected external forces under investigation doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? As explained in the Literature Review, in recent years, an increasing amount of research has been published on the inter-ethnic tensions in the Xinjiang area and on the Uyghur political stance; the debate has also occasionally included the role of the Uyghur diaspora. However research devoted exclusively to Uyghur diaspora is still sparse and most studies on the Xinjiang issue do not include a systemic study of the Uyghur diaspora phenomenon. The sparse studies that do confront this issue are outdated and fail to record the recent evolution of the Uyghur diaspora. Therefore, my research aims to contribute to recent studies on the Uyghur diaspora, especially regarding its recent evolution, its internal differences and its role as an external force in the Uyghur conflict.

For a long time, factionalism and a lack of strategy and funding have compromised the strength of the Uyghur diaspora and this has affected its capacity to catalyze international attention towards its issue. Could the Uyghur diaspora reverse this attitude and become a relevant external force for the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? My research shows critical findings that help to answer this question. First of all, in recent years the leadership of the Uyghur diaspora has undergone some relevant

¹⁹⁸ Tellis Ashley J., Szayna Thomas S., Winnefeld James A. *Anticipating ethnic conflict* (Santa Monica CA: Rand Arroyo Center, 1997) 28

¹⁹⁹ Byman Daniel L. *Keeping the peace. Lasting solutions to ethnic conflict* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002) 21

²⁰⁰ For the definition of diaspora used in this study, please see the Literature Review Chapter

changes that have brought new strength to the advocacy movement. These changes include a newly found vibrant activism, openness to the different options (separatism or autonomy) and planning for the future. Such developments appear to be at odds with the attitude of the older generation whose leadership was stagnating. Firstly, this previous leadership was crystallized into the pursuit of a dogmatic separatism, stymied by lack of visibility and cornered by a 'wait-and-see' tactic. Secondly, the Uyghur groups based in the West may be more effective in mobilizing support for Uyghur separatism than the Uyghur diaspora that has settled in neighboring countries such as the Central Asian ones. In fact in recent years the Uyghur diaspora in the West has been pursuing a more effective mobilization strategy than the one carried out by the Uyghur advocacy groups that are disseminated throughout Central Asia. The latter appear unable to freely perform political activities because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes and because of the social stigma attached to the Uyghurs in Central Asia.

I have come to such findings through investigation and interviews. My questions addressed the issues concerning the rationale and feasibility of intervention by the Uyghur diaspora. What are their strategies and tools? What is their aim? Who, among other external agents, are they targeting in order to gain assistance? In essence, among the various groups of the Uyghur diaspora who is the most effective in pursuing a role as an external force in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? As explained in the Methodology Chapter, this research has been carried out since 2000 and this circumstance has allowed me to assess various changes in the Uyghur diaspora leadership, their targets, strategies, and tools. Therefore, while the questions remained basically the same, the answers changed over time and this shows that, in recent years the Uyghur diaspora, especially the one residing in the West, has undergone changes involving its leadership, targets, strategy and tools.

In the first section of this chapter I analyze the rationale behind their activities: what are their motives? What is their rationale? Then, in the second part I assess their feasibility: are they willing to support the Uyghur mobilizing in Xinjiang? What tools do they have to spur this mobilization? Finally in the fourth section of this chapter I analyze the Slovenian case taking into account the role of the Slovenian diaspora.

My aim is to draw a useful comparison with the Uyghur case and to demonstrate that the Slovenian diaspora living in neighboring Italy was less involved in the Slovenian independence movement than Slovenian groups that were living elsewhere. This situation is similar to the Uyghurs who are dispersed throughout Central Asia and in distant countries. Then I will then present my conclusions.

Rationale

The following section analyzes the rationale behind the activities of the Uyghur diaspora: what are their motives? As seen in the Theory Chapter, two theories in particular involve diaspora in the mobilization of its kinship group in the homeland: affective theories and trans-national theories. The affective school focuses on the presence of a diaspora that could stimulate and channel support to the separatist movement in its own homeland. Concerning trans-nationalism, non-state forces such as supranational organizations, human rights bodies, transnational actors including media networks and the arms trade, and of course the diaspora, all of these are potential sources of material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups. These theories converge regarding the role of the diaspora therefore I examine both together in respect to the Uyghur diaspora: do these theories correspond to the rationale of the exiled Uyghurs?

As mentioned above and in the Theory Chapter, for both theories, the first condition is the presence of a diaspora. The second condition is the possibility that these communities might be able to stimulate and channel support to mobilize the Uyghur in Xinjiang. Later, this research will show that, although small in size, the Uyghurs abroad benefit from the aid of extensive organizations and that their most assertive advocacy groups are located in Western Europe and the United States. What is their rationale to mobilize the Uyghurs in Xinjiang? What are their motives? It is not a useless question as diaspora are not always deemed to be supporting their mobilizing kinship in the homeland, as shown by the part devoted to the Slovenian case in this chapter.

The coming section analyzes their rationale and then, the feasibility section assesses the strategies and tools that are available to achieve these targets.

This research shows that the Uyghur diaspora has the motives to mobilize their kinships in Xinjiang and in order to pursue this mobilization at home and abroad it has turned to realistic goals. In other words, its goals have been softened by introducing a more realistic set of options while furthering their planning scenarios. By contrast, the older leadership seems instead to remain attached to an idealistic perception of irredentism.

There has been a substantial change in the leadership of the Uyghur diaspora: a leadership that has introduced a new rationale. In mid 2000s Rabyia Kadeer swept away

the older leadership, a leadership marred by factionalism and excessive dogmatism in favor of irredentism. In this section I examine the differences between the rationales (independence, autonomy and the aftermath) pursued by the old and the new leaderships of the Uyghur diaspora.

Until mid 2000s, the main goal for the Uyghur diaspora leadership was to gain outright independence for Xinjiang without any compromise with the Chinese government. However, nowadays, the new leadership that has emerged since mid 2000s has softened the dogmatic rhetoric on independence and is prepared to open a dialogue with China regarding other options such as real autonomy.

Indeed some leaders of the Uyghur diaspora²⁰¹ abroad who belong to the older generation, such as Ahmet Igamberdi²⁰² vehemently supported the idea of independence as the only solution:

Autonomy is an impossible option: even if it were implemented, it would be un-effective. The Chinese government would interfere anyway. Autonomy of any kind is un-acceptable.²⁰³

It might have been because of long periods in jail and his suffering in the labor camps and the development of a deep hatred against the Chinese leadership²⁰⁴. It might also have been because of an entire life spent fighting against Chinese rule and without the reward of a genuinely autonomous Xinjiang. Whatever the reasons, the idea of a higher degree of autonomy was simply unacceptable.

More recently, the Uyghur diaspora leadership change has softened the diaspora's stance regarding the possibility of a negotiated agreement with China that could also include autonomy. As a matter of fact, Kadeer still supports the idea of independence while she is also open to other solutions, such as an effective degree of autonomy. She told me

We do not have self-determination but our aim is rightly this. If not we want real autonomy. We want to control natural resources. We want to move Chinese army out of Xinjiang. We are ready to make an agreement with China, but if this is not done we cannot stop.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Various discussions with Uyghur and non Uyghur activists living abroad between 2003 and 2009

²⁰² Please refer to the Methodology Chapter for a profile of Igamberdi

²⁰³ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes. When I posed the question on his opinion about an eventual agreement with China that would grant real autonomy to Eastern Turkestan his reaction was quite evidently strong: a loud 'No' with a violent fist on the table

²⁰⁴ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁰⁵ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes

Kadeer admits that conditions for the Uyghurs in Xinjiang have impressively deteriorated in the last decade as repression and assimilation policies have been massively implemented:

The situation in the last ten years has become worse. Before at least we could save our identity but now we cannot any more. Develop the West policy has been implemented to destroy our identity, settle Han people in Eastern Turkestan. Develop the West means change Uyghur: they become poorer, uneducated, without religion, nor culture or morality.²⁰⁶

According to Kadeer, in the previous fifty years assimilation was implemented more slowly than in the latest decade during which Chinese policies have affected the Uyghur economically, culturally, through birth control, through resettlement of Uyghur families, farmland occupation, religious repression, language assimilation, and so on. As Bequelin confirmed

After the independence of the Central Asian Republics in 1991 China tried to assimilate Xinjiang very quickly. Until 2001 it has worked very well with migration of Hans, oil industry thriving, cotton exploitation and so on. Now it is at a consolidation stage.²⁰⁷

These policies directly affect the Uyghurs who are driven towards mobilization, but instead they either run afoul of the authorities' writ, or are forced to consider migrating although they may be denied a passport. Therefore, the Uyghur diaspora leadership senses it must act quickly: 'The faster the Chinese assimilation goes, the less patience we have'.²⁰⁸

As for a possible post-independence scenario, some of the new Uyghur leaders envisage a democratic, secular and multi-party state with rule of law²⁰⁹ or simply a parliamentary democracy²¹⁰ while some of the older leadership simply did not plan an aftermath at all as Igamberdi candidly pointed out: 'First we will become independent then we decide'²¹¹. Indeed, as Mackerras stated to me in 2005, the Uyghur separatists at that time 'did not think of a post independence scenario'.²¹²

²⁰⁶ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Bequelin, interview by author, June, 2005, Hong Kong, notes.

²⁰⁸ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁰⁹ Isa Dolkun, personal communication, February 8, 2006.

²¹⁰ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²¹¹ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes

In the end, thanks to the new leadership, goals have been softened by introducing a set of more realistic options while furthering their planning scenarios. By contrast, the older leadership seems instead to remain attached to an idealistic perception of irredentism. Is this new rationale going to mobilize the Uyghur in Xinjiang? The following section assesses the strategies and tools available to implement this rationale.

Feasibility

Is the Uyghur diaspora able to play a key role as an external force able to spur the conflict in Xinjiang? Does it have these capacities? First, I show that in recent years the Uyghur diaspora in the West has been undergoing effective changes and pursuing a more effective mobilization strategy than the one carried out by the Uyghur advocacy groups that are disseminated throughout Central Asia. Then I demonstrate how the Uyghur diaspora that is present in Western countries today represents the most active and effective channel of communication strategy for the Uyghur cause. Uyghur diaspora groups, especially in the West, have recently been displaying more effective leadership and skills than in the past, in order to mobilize and support separatist forces in their homeland. On the contrary, the diaspora that is disseminated across most of neighboring Central Asia appears unable to freely perform any political activities because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes. Moreover, in the whole of Central Asia Uyghurs face other kinds of problems besides non-liberal political regimes that endanger their advocacy activities. In the end it has been gaining the necessary tools to impose significant mobilization.

The coming section illustrates how, in recent years, the Uyghur diaspora in the West has been undergoing effective changes and pursuing a more effective mobilization strategy than the one carried out by the Uyghur advocacy groups that are disseminated throughout Central Asia. I first describe their size and distribution and then, secondly, I describe the tools that are empowering them: especially their organizations, their coordination and cohesion, their leadership and the range of their activities. Concerning

²¹² Colin Mackerras, interview by author, June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes

the size and distribution of this diaspora, the Uyghur living outside of Xinjiang are estimated in about 500,000 units of which

Shichor [...] based on information from Enver Can in Munich, estimates there are about 500 Uyghurs in Germany (mostly in Munich), 500 in Belgium (mostly from Central Asia), 200 in Sweden (mostly from Kazakhstan), 40 in England, 35 in Switzerland, 30 in Holland and 10 in Norway. In addition, there are an estimated 10,000 Uyghurs in Turkey, 1,000 in the United States, 500 in Canada, and 200 in Australia (mostly in Melbourne).²¹³

And the remaining, about 487,000 persons, in Central Asia where the largest flux of migration occurred soon after the independence of the CARs. Migration abroad in the last few years has become very difficult, if not impossible, which directly affects the size of the Uyghur diaspora, as stated to me by Kadeer:

Chinese authorities do not issue passport to us. So in order to buy passports from Chinese officials Uyghurs sell their properties. Those who can't, run away through Pakistan but there they arrested and sent back to China.²¹⁴

Previously migration, at least towards Soviet Central Asia, was easier as witnessed also by Igamberdi, who studied in Tashkent between 1957 and 1961²¹⁵ as I will explain later in the part devoted to Central Asia. On the contrary, according to Kadeer, now, because of these difficulties with migration, the Uyghur diaspora is not growing in size.

Whatever the size, the Uyghur diaspora tends to establish its own organizations wherever it settles and it engages in activities ranging from mere cultural activities to political advocacy²¹⁶. In 2004 the World Uyghur Congress was founded as the umbrella organization for most of the Uyghur advocacy groups abroad. It was founded as part of the new drive to coordinate Uyghur advocacy around the world and to overcome the 'splits and internal rivalries'²¹⁷ that had previously marred the Uyghur diaspora. A year later, a new leader, Kadeer, emerged bringing a cohesive drive among the various organizations. In her own words:

²¹³ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²¹⁴ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²¹⁵ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes. Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²¹⁶ Informal observation

²¹⁷ Shichor Yitzhak *Limping on two legs: Uyghur diaspora organizations and the prospects for eastern Turkestan independence* (2007) available from CA&CC Press <http://www.ca-cac.org/online/2007/journal_eng/cac-06/12.shtml> accessed on December 20, 2009

I am the recognized leader. My orders are carried out. When we have our Congress we discuss issues that have emerged in local organizations. Policies [of the various groups] may be different but we all have the same aim.²¹⁸

Kadeer, a former businesswoman and member of the National People's Congress of the PRC, was arrested in 1999 and after six years of jail she was allowed to expatriate to the United States where she immediately took the position of President of the Uyghur American Association²¹⁹. A year later, in 2006, she was elected President of the World Uyghur Congress and carried on with this new strong advocacy strategy including mass visibility and mobilization, a fresh approach to the different strategic options and a substantial departure from the 'wait-and-see' posture.

At the end of this chapter this research will conclude that this new course of the Uyghur diaspora, especially the one based in the West, has proved to be more effective. The majority of the Uyghur advocacy groups joined and embraced Kadeer's new drive to gain more visibility and mobilization. They were also not adverse to the idea of adopting a fresh approach towards China i.e. not ruling out the achievement of genuine autonomy as an alternative to the option of independence. However, a minority group composed mainly by older leaders of the Uyghur diaspora refused this attitude of compromise and founded their own group. The group was named the Government of Eastern Turkestan in exile and led by Ahmet Igamberdi, an older dissident living in Sydney²²⁰.

This section assesses which organizations are the most relevant on a geographical basis starting with those settled in Central Asia and ending with those settled in the West. My aim is to show that Uyghur diaspora groups, especially in the West, have recently been displaying more effective leadership skills than in the past in order to mobilize and support separatist forces in their homeland. By contrast, the diaspora disseminated across most of neighboring Central Asia appears unable to freely perform any political activities mainly because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes.

²¹⁸ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²¹⁹ See Rabiya Kadeer with Cavelius Alexandra *Dragon fighter. One woman's epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009)

²²⁰ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes. As explained in the Methodology chapter Igamberdi is a Uyghur born in 1937 in Xinjiang who was condemned to 6 years of labor camp and later spent 10 years in jail. He then fled to Australia where he leads the 1,200 strong Uyghur community. At the time of the interview he was chairman of the Eastern Turkestan government in exile.

As this research is focused on the political conflict of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, I concentrate on those organizations involved in political advocacy and not on those focused on mere cultural activities.

Central Asia

Central Asia hosts about 487,000 Uyghurs from Xinjiang, with 200,000 of them in Kazakhstan alone²²¹. Two waves of migration to Central Asia, especially to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, took place in two different periods. The first wave was between 1950 and 1962, when the Sino - Russian tensions closed the border²²². Older intellectuals belonging to this group of migrants were associated with the Eastern Turkestan Republic, which controlled Northern Xinjiang from 1944 to 1949, and fled Xinjiang for Central Asia in 1962 thanks to the support of the Soviet Union²²³. The Soviet leadership encouraged the Uyghur migration towards Central Asia with the aim of demonstrating ‘the failure of the Chinese national minorities policy and cause internal problems for Chinese rule in Xinjiang’²²⁴. This was a policy which also included favoring the setting up of Uyghur advocacy organizations whose aim was to spur Uyghur separatism in China. An example of this policy is The United National Revolutionary Front of East Turkestan, the first Uyghur organization in Soviet Kazakhstan set up in 1984 with the tacit support of Soviet authorities²²⁵.

The second flux of massive migration occurred right after the collapse of the Soviet Union and gave life to a series of organizations also engaged in advocacy. However, my research shows that all these advocacy groups are nowadays less effective

²²¹ Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 121

²²² Between 1950 and 1962 35,000 to 40,000 Uyghurs migrated to Central Asia with the majority in May 1962 alone. See Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 117

²²³ Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 124

²²⁴ Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 117

²²⁵ Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 125

than the ones disseminated across the West. The main reason as Vielmini told me, is that ‘These Uyghur organizations are controlled by Central Asian governments’²²⁶. Also Sisci noticed that most Uyghur activists were expelled from Central Asia in the late Nineties²²⁷. Kadeer confirmed these assumptions and elaborated her assessment of the various degrees of political openness and freedom in Central Asia which allowed Uyghur advocacy groups there to perform better in certain countries and worse in others:

Kazakhstan is the best place [in Central Asia] for our Human Rights activists while Uzbekistan is the worst country where to promote Uyghur advocacy: it is simply impossible there. In Kyrgyzstan it is also very difficult.²²⁸

In fact Khahriman Gojamberdi, an Uyghur activist living and operating in Almaty (Kazakhstan) and chairman of the Kazakhstan Regional Uyghur Organization, told me that he and his group can perform various advocacy activities there such as ‘propaganda and agitation including distribution of brochures, delivering lectures, researches and investigations’²²⁹. He and his group also ‘maintain contacts with the World Uyghur Congress in Washington and Munich and with Rabiya Kadeer’²³⁰. They also ‘perform various visits in Xinjiang where we maintain contacts with Uyghur there despite resistance by the government there’²³¹. Therefore Uyghur advocacy groups in Kazakhstan seem free and able to carry out a limited series of activities including propaganda and contacts with Uyghur diaspora leaders such as Kadeer and Isa Dolkun²³², both of whom are considered as enemies of the state in China. These activities are highly discouraged elsewhere in Central Asia as previously mentioned. Indeed the other countries in the region still impose an illiberal environment where Uyghur political activities (as mentioned by Kadeer) are very difficult even for Uyghurs who hold a Western passport and therefore have a broader diplomatic protection, at

²²⁶ Fabrizio Vielmini, personal communication, September 17, 2009

²²⁷ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes.

²²⁸ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²²⁹ Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, November 6, 2008, notes

²³⁰ Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, November 6, 2008, notes

²³¹ Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, November 6, 2008, notes

²³² Please see the Methodology chapter for a profile of Isa Dolkun

least in theory. An example is the 2006 arrest in Uzbekistan and deportation to China of a Uyghur naturalized Canadian, Huseyincan Celil, despite strong Canadian criticism²³³.

In the whole region Uyghurs face other kinds of problems, besides political constrictions, that also endanger their advocacy activities. As explained to me by Swanström 'Uyghurs in Central Asia suffer from a negative image spread among the population and the governments, similar to the racial stigma attached to Gypsies in Europe.'²³⁴ Also Kadeer confirmed to me the stigma attached to the Uyghurs in Central Asia, where they are perceived by local population as dirty and devoted to petty crimes²³⁵. Another problem is financing as 'In Central Asia there are not so many funds available for Uyghur activists'²³⁶.

In the end, as Bequelin explained me the 'Uyghur diaspora faces so many problems in hosting countries there that they can do very little to promote the diffusion of news on the Uyghur cause'²³⁷. Also the fact that Uyghurs are Islamic can be used by Central Asian governments as a pretext to suppress their activities as 'Islamism is used as a pretext by the Central Asian governments to crush opposition there'²³⁸ Bequelin told me.

In essence, it seems that the era when Central Asian *apparatchik* used to support Uyghur separatism as a tool against China is over. Nowadays, Central Asian authoritarian regimes and the many problems attached to Uyghur ethnicity do not allow Uyghur advocacy groups to carry on effective activities and do not seem to be a relevant external tool for Uyghur separatism within Uyghur diaspora.

²³³ *Canada angry at Uighur sentence* [online article] April 20, 2007 available from < <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6574517.stm> > accessed December 15, 2009

²³⁴ Niklas Swanström, interview by author by phone, October 25, 2009.

²³⁵ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²³⁶ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes

²³⁷ Nicholas Bequelin, interview by author, June, 2005, Hong Kong, notes.

²³⁸ Nicholas Bequelin, interview by author, June, 2005, Hong Kong, notes.

Pakistan

Pakistan has been reported as a training ground for Uyghur militants seeking *Jihad* against the Chinese authorities. For an in-depth analysis on this country, please see the relevant chapter on Pakistan and Xinjiang.

Saudi Arabia

Migration of Uyghurs in Saudi Arabia was very strong during the 1930s and 1940s. Most migrants built up successful businesses in the construction and restaurant fields. So they were capable of financially supporting Uyghur advocacy groups, but the increase of organizations in terms of numbers and a general fading of interest in the Uyghur cause have, more recently, caused lowering levels of support. As Dru Gladney witnessed

In a personal interview, Anwar Yusuf, President of the D.C.-based Eastern Turkestan National Freedom Center, once claimed that he had received substantial support from patrons in Saudi Arabia, but by the late 1990s funding had begun to dry up due to too many organizations and waning interest in the Uyghur cause.²³⁹

No reports could be found about advocacy groups based in Saudi Arabia.

The rest of the world

Sizable groups of Uyghurs can be found in Europe, the United States and Australia. Their presence there is above all due to past policies on asylum. Uyghur dissidents have been benefitting from these policies. Recently these policies have been tightened and the influx of Uyghurs has decreased²⁴⁰. The numbers available about their size are as follows: about 500 Uyghurs in Germany (mostly in Munich), 500 in Belgium, 200 in Sweden, 40 in the UK, 35 in Switzerland, 30 in the Netherlands, 10 in

²³⁹ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁴⁰ For some reports Uyghur migration follows a regular path. Normally migrants first migrate to Central Asia, but fearing deportation back to China, they flight to Europe, the United States and Australia where they apply for asylum. Once their request is rejected they keep changing country where to apply or return back to Central Asia. See *Suicide underlines plight of Uyghur refugees* [Online article] available from <<http://uhrp.org/articles/89/1/Suicide-underlines-plight-of-Uyghur-refugees/Suicide-underlines-plight-of-Uyghur-refugees.html>> accessed October 26, 2006

Norway²⁴¹. Another 1,000 are in the United States, 500 in Canada and 10,000 live in Turkey²⁴². In Australia there are 1,200 located mostly in the Adelaide area²⁴³.

In the West many Uyghur advocacy groups are based in Turkey, the United States and Germany²⁴⁴. Their basic activity is to elaborate Uyghur propaganda and, since there is strong censorship in the Chinese media on what is happening in Xinjiang, these advocacy groups are a relevant source of information for Western media and human rights organizations. Contrary to what is stated by Gladney

[...] there is no evidence that the organizations and the sites they sponsor have ever received official government sponsorship. Other than the Radio Free Asia Uyghur service, which is supported by the U.S. government, there is no other government that officially supports dissemination of information related to Uyghur human rights issues. However, many Uyghur organizations in the past have claimed sympathy and tacit support from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Australia, Germany, France, Holland, and Canada.²⁴⁵

Quite the contrary, my research shows that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the US Congress and the previous US administration have actually been supporting Uyghur diaspora organizations settled in the United States. As Kadeer confirmed to me ‘We have very good relations with the NED since longtime: they support us with financing, materials, publicity, and promotion of our issues.’²⁴⁶. Also, as I explain in the chapter devoted to the United States, an examination of the NED budget shows that the NED is actually funding Uyghur diaspora organizations on an equal par with the Tibetan diaspora ones. I explain in the chapter devoted to the United States, how these US entities sponsor the Uyghur American Association. Here, I concentrate on their beneficiaries, the Uyghur organizations in the United States.

²⁴¹ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁴² Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁴³ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁴⁴ Informal observation

²⁴⁵ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁴⁶ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

Since the 1990s these advocacy groups have been using the Internet in order to seek support for their cause. Chinese censorship makes it impossible for these websites to reach any audience in Xinjiang to the point that, as Dru Gladney stated:

[...] they are all blocked in China, and mostly inaccessible in Central Asia due to either inadequate internet access or the high costs of getting on the net. Many Uyghurs I have talked with in China and in Central Asia have never heard of most of these sites. Interestingly, government officials in Xinjiang interested in the information provided on these sites also have said they do not have access.
247

However, abroad these sites provide essential visibility and attract support to the Uyghur cause among interested parties such as journalists and political activists in the West. As Kilic Kanat pointed out

Many of these sites are devoted to recent developments on the Uyghur question and press releases related to Uyghurs. [...] The users of these sites are mainly Uyghur nationalists and political activists. Virtual Uyghur world is mostly male-dominated and administered. [...] These Web users may not represent an accurate sample of the Uyghur community or Uyghur migrants at large, but they constitute a very representative sample of the Uyghur political activists and nationalists all around the world.²⁴⁸

Based on Gladney's research and survey²⁴⁹ monitoring of these sites indicates that there is little trace of radical or militant Islam and 'almost no call for Islamic *Jihad* against Chinese state'²⁵⁰. For Gladney they mainly focus on the plight and history of Uyghur in Xinjiang. However, based on my personal observations and according to my assessment, these sites (especially the one run by the Uyghur American Association) mainly promote Uyghur diaspora activities, in particular, those carried out by its president Rabiya Kadeer: her statements, her calls for mobilization, her meetings and her frequent tours. It is not any more the case as described by Gladney when he stated

²⁴⁷ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁴⁸ Kilic Kanat *Ethnic media and politics: The case of the use of the Internet by Uyghur diaspora* [Online article] <http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_7/kanat/index.html> accessed October 26 2006

²⁴⁹ Gladney seems to have performed an attentive survey of the content of most Uyghur diaspora run websites. See Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003) and

Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

²⁵⁰ Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/.../huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

While there are a plethora of internet sites and web-links to Xinjiang and Uyghur human rights issues, there is as yet no central site that is regularly updated²⁵¹. Nowadays, the sites directly involving the new leadership, and mainly Kadeer, are regularly updated with the latest news, especially on her activities²⁵².

In the end Uyghur advocacy groups in the West, especially in the United States, have raised their profile. This is also thanks to a relevant presence on the internet which allows them to promote their activities among interested parties and not be confined to only so-called 'cyber-separatism'. And these activities can be carried out also thanks to the support of a relevant US INGO, the NED, and the US Congress.

I will now analyze the most representative Uyghur diaspora groups in the West.

The East Turkestan Union in Europe

Funded by the Uyghur leader Isa Yusuf Alptekin²⁵³ and based in Munich, although most of its support, at least in the Nineties, came from Turkey²⁵⁴, the East Turkestan Union in Europe formed alliances with Tibetan, Mongol and Manchu activist groups. It publishes a bulletin stating that its mission is to 'disseminate objective current information on the people, culture and civilization of Eastern Turkestan and to provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of topics and complex issues.'²⁵⁵ Among its past leaders was Enver Can, who is now vice president of the World Uyghur Congress. Can is a very vocal Uyghur activist who, on behalf of the Transnational Radical Party²⁵⁶, took the floor at the 59th Commission on Human Rights of the United Nation in April 2003 and spoke about the Uyghur cause.

²⁵¹ Gladney Dru C Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

²⁵² Personal observation

²⁵³ He was East Turkestan representative to the Chinese parliament from 1932 to 1947. Later became the leader of the Uyghur dissidents in exile. He died in 1995 and has been substituted by his son Erkin Alptekin.

²⁵⁴ Kostrzewa Thomas K. *Separatist nationalism in Xinjiang unpublished doctoral dissertation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1996)

²⁵⁵ McNeal Dewardric L. and Dumbaugh Kerry *China's relations with Central Asian states and problems with terrorism* Congressional Research Service The Library of Congress (December 17 2001) available from <<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/7945.pdf>> accessed October 28 2006

²⁵⁶ A European Party led by Emma Bonino, former member of the European Commission, and Olivier Dupuis, a well known human rights activist and member of the European Parliament, with General consultative status with the ECOSOC of the United Nation. *Ecosoc* (July 26, 1995) available from

The East Turkestan Information Center

The East Turkestan Information Center had a prominent Germany-based English-language news website on Uyghur affairs. Chinese authorities accused the East Turkestan Information Center of secretly masterminding terrorist attacks on oil and natural gas pipelines, railways and other large-scale civilian infrastructure facilities in China²⁵⁷. The East Turkestan Information Center denied such accusations²⁵⁸, however it has ceased operations.

The World Uyghur Congress

This organization was established in April 2004 with the merger of the East Turkestan National Congress and the World Uyghur Youth Congress. This was the first attempt at merging the older generation of Uyghur with the younger one in the diaspora. It has also served as a tool to mitigate factionalism among Uyghur advocacy groups.

As a matter of fact, the World Uyghur Youth Congress comprised young people of Uyghur origin from different countries of the world. They organized a World Uyghur Youth Congress in the Estonian capital of Tallinn in November 2000 as part of the conflict prevention conference organized by the Unrepresented Peoples and Nations Organization (UNPO). Erkin Alptekin is a former general secretary (and later president of the World Uyghur Congress). They were very active with the media and advocated the attention of international organizations, particularly UNESCO, in the prevention of the destruction of Uyghur historic sites and cultural heritage.

The East Turkestan National Congress was more politically oriented and consistently advocated peaceful means to achieve autonomy or independence for Xinjiang. It was a federation of most of the Turkish and European Uyghur associations. A General Assembly, or National Congress, of the East Turkestan National Congress was held in 1992 in Istanbul. At the second General Assembly, held in Munich in 1999,

< <http://www.radicalparty.org/it/content/ecosoc> > accessed December 20, 2009

²⁵⁷ As declared by Zhao Yongchen, deputy director of the Chinese Ministry of Public Security in *China seeks int'l support in counter-terrorism* [online article] (December 16 2003) available from: <http://english.people.com.cn/200312/16/eng20031216_130505.shtml> accessed October 24, 2006

²⁵⁸ *China releases 'terror' blacklist of Uyghurs* [Online article] (December 19 2003) <<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/politics/2003/12/19/123681/>> accessed October 24, 2006

the East Turkestan National Congress was founded as the international democratically elected representative body of the Uyghur people.

The outcome of the merging of these two organizations, the World Uyghur Congress, claims to be the only legitimate umbrella body of the Uyghur people abroad and the representative organ of the Uyghur people: to speak and act on behalf of that people in the free world²⁵⁹. It now groups 21 organizations, all legally operating in several countries around the world. It states that it exists ‘to abhor the violence of terrorism and to declare its unconditional adherence to the internationally accepted human rights standards’²⁶⁰. The president of the World Uyghur Congress until 2006 was Erkin Alptekin, son of Isa Yusuf Alptekin, and a former general secretary of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) based in The Hague. In the 1970s and the 1980s, he worked for Radio Liberty in Munich, a radio funded by the government of the United States. He has remarkable skills in working with international organizations and governments in lobbying for the Uyghur peoples, especially with the European Parliament and the Transnational Radical Party mentioned above.

As previously stated, since 2006 the World Uyghur Congress has been presided over by Rabiya Kadeer (who is also president of the American Uyghur Association) in an attempt to congregate the two most important Western Uyghur advocacy groups under one leadership. This appears as a further attempt to change the past pattern of divisions and fights between several Uyghur leaders and advocacy groups, in order to follow the more prestigious and successful example set by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan diaspora. As Gladney more recently correctly stated in a non academic article:

Increasingly, the Uyghur community in Washington, led by Ms Kadeer, is speaking with a more unified voice. Following the example of the Tibetan government in exile, it has disavowed independence, supported greater autonomy and peaceful resolution of conflicts, and rejected violence and radical Islam.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ *Mission statement of the World Uyghur Congress*

<www.uyghurcongress.org/En/AboutWUC.asp?mid=1095738888&mid2=-223458291 accessed October 22, 2006>

²⁶⁰ ‘as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adherence to the principles of democratic pluralism and rejection of totalitarianism and any form of religious intolerance.’ *Mission statement of the World Uyghur Congress* available from <www.uyghurcongress.org/En/AboutWUC.asp?mid=1095738888&mid2=-223458291> accessed October 22, 2006

²⁶¹ Gladney Dru C. *Ethnic pandemic* Hong Kong, The South China Morning Post, July 13, 2009

The Uyghur American Association

Based in Washington, the Uyghur American Association ‘works to promote the preservation and flourishing of a rich, humanistic and diverse Uyghur culture, and to support the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, democratic means to determine their own political future.’²⁶² Presided over by Rabiya Kadeer since 2006, this organization has received substantial US funding. I analyze this situation in the chapter devoted to the United States as an external force. It is worth noting here, that Rabiya Kadeer told me personally that she succeeded in gaining the decisive attention of George W. Bush’s administration and that this allowed her to access the US Congress, several US politicians²⁶³ and the Western media to promote the Uyghur cause²⁶⁴. As previously stated, the release of her own biography in 2009, with a foreword by the Dalai Lama, and the tour to promote the book and the Uyghur cause appear as attempts to mimic the Dalai Lama’s limelight and to attract similar attention to the Uyghur cause.

East Turkestan Foundation

Founded in 1986, it promotes the Eastern Turkestan cause within the Turkish establishment, especially from the right wing. Its president Mehmet Riza Bekin, a former Brigadier General with the Turkish Army, tries to stop the alignment of Turkey with Chinese policies in Xinjiang. Nevertheless the results are minimal. Turkey, considered as a natural second homeland by the Uyghur, is rather more concerned with its good relationship with China than with its ethnic cousins. As Rabiya Kadeer admits:

[...] there was an unwritten diplomatic understanding in place [between Turkey and China]. China promised not to get involved in Turkey’s Kurdish problems, and in return, Turkey promised not to get involved in China’s Uyghur problems.
265

²⁶² *About UAA* available from

<<http://www.uyghuramerican.org/categories/About-UAA/>> accessed July 20, 2009

²⁶³ When the son of Rabiya Kadeer was arrested in June 14, 2006 in China ‘seventy-two United States Congressmen wrote a letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao calling for Ablikim’s release.’ Rabiya Kadeer with Cavellius Alexandra *Dragon fighter One woman’s epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009) 389

²⁶⁴ Rabiya Kadeer with Cavellius Alexandra *Dragon fighter One woman’s epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009) 384-385

²⁶⁵ Rabiya Kadeer with Cavellius Alexandra *Dragon fighter One woman’s epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009) 273

As a matter of fact, the East Turkistan Foundation only succeeds in bringing twenty Uyghur students from Xinjiang to Turkey to study every year. It also publishes a four-monthly paper *Voice of Oriental Turkestan* in Uyghur, Turkish, English and Arabic.

Australian Turkestan Association

This advocacy group is led by Ahmet Igamberdi, an older intellectual who suffered several years of prison and forced labor in China. He is also chairman of the Eastern Turkestan Government in exile. His organization lobbies the Australian government in order to put pressure on the Chinese authorities. Sometimes it organizes stages in front of the Chinese embassy. He does not run any websites and appears to live with very limited funding²⁶⁶. Nevertheless his commitment remains very strong as it is his uncompromising vision for an independent Eastern Turkestan²⁶⁷.

Among the other minor groups are:

- *Sherqi Turkistan Vakfi* (Eastern Turkistan Foundation) Istanbul, Turkey
- *Sherqi Turkistan Mediniyet-Hemkarliq Jemiyiti* (Eastern Turkistan Culture and Solidarity Association) Kocasinan/Kayseri, Turkey
- *Sherqi Turkistan Mediniyet-Hemkarliq Jemiyiti* (Eastern Turkistan Culture and Solidarity Association) Ankara, Turkey
- *Isa Yusup Alptekin Vakfi* (Isa Yusup Alptekin Foundation) Istanbul, Turkey
- *Yavrupa Sherqi Turkistanliqlar Birligi* (Eastern Turkistan Europe Union) München, Germany
- *Uyghur Kanada Jemiyiti* (Uyghur Canadian Association) Mississauga Ontario, Canada
- *Swetsiye Uyghur Komititi* (Swedish Uyghur Committee) Eskilstuna, Sweden
- *Swetsiye Uyghur Mediniyet Merkizi* (Swedish Uyghur Cultural Center) Stockholm, Sweden
- *Engilye Uyghur Jemiyiti* (Uyghur United Kingdom Association) London, United Kingdom
- *Gollandiye Sherqi Turkistan Vakfi* (Netherlands Eastern Turkistan Foundation) Tilburg, Netherlands

²⁶⁶ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁶⁷ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

- *Norwigiye Uyghur Komititi* (Norway Uyghur Committee) Oslo, Norway
- *Awustiraliye Uyghur Jemiyiti* (Australian Uyghur Association) Canberra, Australia

In essence, the Uyghur diaspora is not large in size, but has the benefit of extensive organizations. These organizations, especially in the West, have recently gained more effective leadership skills than in the past, in order to mobilize and support separatist forces in their homeland. Uyghur diaspora groups, especially in the West, have recently displayed more effective leadership skills than in the past, in order to mobilize and support separatist forces in their homeland. In contrast, the diaspora disseminated across most of neighboring Central Asia appears unable to freely perform political activities because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes. Moreover in the whole of Central Asia Uyghurs face other kinds of problems besides non liberal political regimes that endanger their advocacy activities.

In other words, my research shows that Uyghur diaspora groups, especially those in the West, have been undergoing a recent reorganization in order to achieve realistic targets and common, effective strategies that I assess below.

And now to the second part of this feasibility section. As previously noted, in the Literature Review most academic debates have missed a substantial change in the Uyghur diaspora. In order to achieve their goals, whether they are the goals of real autonomy or of independence, the Uyghur diaspora leadership in the West seems to have abandoned the ‘wait-and-see’ posture that was typical of the older leadership, in order to embrace a much more pro-active strategy. This section first assesses how this strategy includes the exposure of grievances. In doing this, there is not much difference with the past. However, a more effective strategy is now in place, in order to attract the attention of many non-state agents. I will then assess how these same grievances have gained greater exposure and visibility thanks to the new leadership. My hypothesis is that the new leadership is exposing them more effectively thanks to Rabiya Kadeer: a high-profile leader. Kadeer has indeed gained the Uyghur advocacy movement much greater visibility and mobilization among non-state agents.

I will start by examining the grievances of both the older and newer leaderships. As previously mentioned, the new leadership, as well as the older one, has been trying to expose Uyghur grievances to the media in order to attract visibility and thereby to

attract support and mobilization. My interviews²⁶⁸ indicate that both older and newer leaders of the Uyghur advocacy groups believe that China acquires major economic advantages by controlling Xinjiang and its resources. This is a recurring issue that affects the entire Uyghur diaspora that is united in feeling rejection towards Chinese economic depredation:

Chinese government maintains its control over Xinjiang because it is rich in natural resources. [...] Uyghurs do not receive either one percent of the benefits derived from the extraction of Eastern Turkestan's resources.²⁶⁹

Not only are natural resources such as energy concerned, but also farmland, jobs and eradication as stated by Kadeer:

The land is given to Han, but Uyghurs who are mainly farmers cannot have farmland. They are not educated and therefore cannot find other jobs in factories. So they migrate in Eastern China and are treated like slaves. Chinese government tells us 'you go to prison or you go to Eastern China.' We are against this re-settlement policy.²⁷⁰

Economic issues, such as the poverty and unemployment of the Uyghurs are indeed among the most important issues. This is where both older and more recent leaders, anywhere in the West, share a common grievance. As Igamberdi told me 'Unemployment among Uyghurs is high even among those who graduated from Chinese universities'²⁷¹. And, as Kadeer reflected

The Chinese government states that it has developed our region but on the contrary it is taking our resources. Why Uyghur people cannot find jobs? Why Uyghur families have to be moved elsewhere? [...] We should have the control over the natural resources of our country.²⁷²

Also 'cultural assimilation and genocide'²⁷³ remain high on the list of complaints of both leaders. As Igamberdi told me 'The Chinese destroy culture and

²⁶⁸ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes. Isa Dolkun, personal communication, February 8, 2006. Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁶⁹ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁷⁰ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁷¹ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁷² Rabiya Kadeer *The mother of 10,000 children Lecture*, Kyoto Jiyu Daiwaku, Campus Plaza in Kyoto, October 25, 2009, notes by the author.

²⁷³ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

religion in Eastern Turkestan. Their only aim is to assimilate Uyghurs.²⁷⁴ And as Kadeer stated

Develop the West has been introduced with the aim to destroy our identity [...] The Chinese do not change all our identity: Uyghur songs must be sung in Mandarin Chinese. Uyghur dances must be changed in order to suit modern dances. Traditional Uyghur dresses must be adapted to Chinese taste.²⁷⁵

While the content of the Uyghur grievances has remained the same, what about the exposure of these grievances? Are these issues achieving greater visibility thanks to the new leadership? My hypothesis is that with the leadership of Rabeya Kadeer these same grievances have a greater degree of articulation and exposure than with other leaders. Here is how.

In a seminal work on the Uyghur issue in 2003, Gladney defined Uyghur advocacy abroad as 'cyber-separatism'²⁷⁶, meaning that it was propaganda restricted to web sites managed by the Uyghur diaspora. Indeed this was the case, at least until 2005, before Kadeer was exiled and joined the guide of the Uyghur diaspora advocacy movement in the West. The activities of the older leaders had indeed thinned out and were restricted to demonstrations in front of the Chinese embassies and the few articles that were published in the Western media²⁷⁷. Igamberdi even denied to me of having contact with the state Department or with other US institutions and yet he went on attacking the US administration for abandoning the Uyghur issue²⁷⁸.

However, analysts told me that the Uyghur diaspora has, more recently, been undergoing a wave of dynamic changes. As Mackerras informed me the 'Uyghur diaspora is learning its lessons from the past. They coordinate their activities much more and are more effective'²⁷⁹. A specific momentum was given to these changes, especially by the Uyghur diaspora settled in the United States and organized by the American Uyghur Association. 'American Uyghurs are getting more organized'²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁷⁵ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁷⁶ Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

²⁷⁷ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁷⁸ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁷⁹ Colin Mackerras, interview by author, June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes

²⁸⁰ Nicholas Bequelin, interview by author, June, 2005, Hong Kong, notes.

Bequelin told me in 2005, the year before Kadeer's rise to presidency. As Kadeer explained to me

When I was member of the CNCP I promoted the Uyghur issue. I spoke many times to the Chinese government of the Uyghur problems and how to solve them peacefully, but nothing happened. Therefore I started to promote my opposition in the United States²⁸¹

As mentioned above, in 2006 Kadeer soon became the leader of most Uyghur diaspora advocacy groups around the world under the World Uyghur Congress: an umbrella organization where she feels her leadership is not challenged and, on the contrary, much respected. 'Each of us has different responsibilities in this structure. We help each other'²⁸² while her coordination appears to run smoothly:

There are no coordination problems among the various Uyghur diaspora groups around the world. Political activities might vary, but the aim is always the same for anybody. Normally the various groups discuss the issues with their local base and then refer to the Congress. However everything is dealt with, with much respect for each other.²⁸³

Besides her role as coordinator, she has engaged in massive activism towards external forces such as sub-state agents, political parties and other mass entities such as universities and media outlets. As for the strategy to mobilize both sub-state agents and other mass entities such as universities and media outlets, during many of her frequent trips to Asia and Europe Kadeer tries to engage the support of political parties and the public through whirlwind meetings²⁸⁴.

²⁸¹ Rabiya Kadeer *The mother of 10,000 children* Lecture, Kyoto Jiyu Daiwaku, Campus Plaza in Kyoto, October 25, 2009

²⁸² Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁸³ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁸⁴ When I met Kadeer in October 2009 in Kyoto, she was on her third visit to Japan in that same year. On this particular occasion she was on a lecture tour taking in several universities. On October 30, 2009, she had staged a news conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club Japan in Tokyo. This was the day before a similar event was due to be staged by the Dalai Lama. During the same period she met members of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (at this point an opposition party). On a previous visit in July 2009, she had met with members of the same party that was also the governing party, thus driving the Chinese government to summon the Japanese ambassador. When Kadeer left Japan she returned to Washington where she has an office with assistants. From here, she again departed for a series of lectures and meetings in Italy. The Radical Party had invited her for lectures and a press conference with members of both the main Italian coalition parties, including a former undersecretary of state for Foreign Affairs in Asia, Margherita Boniver. This was her second time in Italy in 2009 alone. The previous time in May 2009 she was invited to an audition at the Committee for Human Rights of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes; BBC World *China protests over Uighur tour* (July 29, 2009) available from <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8173730.stm>> accessed December 20, 2009;

Kadeer's media offensive also included a bestselling biography, originally written in German, *Die Himmelsstürmerin*²⁸⁵, and translated into English, Italian, French and Japanese²⁸⁶ and a documentary on the story of her second marriage to longtime Uyghur dissident Sidik Haji Rouzi who is also exiled in the United States. The documentary, *Ten conditions of love*²⁸⁷ and the foregoing offensive have enabled the Uyghur issue to reach a larger public audience. The outcome of such efforts is indeed impressive as the Uyghur issue has been brought to an unprecedented level of visibility that has allowed Kadeer to twice meet President George W. Bush²⁸⁸. Kadeer was also a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 and in 2009²⁸⁹. As Bequelin had already anticipated in 2005 'Rabiya Kadeer can be a symbol with charisma that can help push the issue internationally'²⁹⁰.

. As a comparison, when I met Igamberdi in Australia, my personal impression of him was that, on the contrary, he appeared to be settled in a quiet routine at his home in suburban Sydney, without an office or an assistant or relevant media exposure. He handed me some photocopies of statements on Uyghur grievances and articles printed in the Australian media about his own group's demonstrations that were held in Adelaide sometime before. The material included only one article from a foreign media source containing an interview released by him.

Conferenza stampa con Rebya Kadeer, leader mondiale degli Uiguri, detta "madre del popolo uiguro" (Press conference with Rebya Kadeer, world leader of Uyghurs, also called "mother of the Uyghur people") (November 25, 2009) video available from

<www.radioradicale.it/scheda/291769> accessed December 3, 2009;

Committee for Human Rights of the Italian Parliament - Deputies Chamber *Audizione di Rabiya Kadeer, presidente del World Uyghur Congress (Audition of Rabiya Kadeer, president of the World Uyghur Congress)* (May 5, 2009) notes of the audition available from

<www.camera.it/_dati/leg16/lavori/stencomm/03/indag/violazioni/2009/0505/s010.htm> accessed November 15, 2009

²⁸⁵ Kadeer Rabiya with Cavelius Alexandra *Die Himmelsstürmerin (The skystriker)* (Munich: Heyne Verlag, 2007)

²⁸⁶ Informal observation

²⁸⁷ Daniels Jeff *Ten conditions of love* [Documentary] (Fitzory Victoria: Arcimedia and Common Room Production, 2009)

²⁸⁸ Once in Prague in June 2007 and once in July 2008 at the White House Uyghur Human Rights Project *Rabiya Kadeer meets with President Bush at the White House* Press release (July 30, 2009) available from <www.uhrp.org/articles/1239/1/Rabiya-kadeer-meets-with-president-bush-at-the-white-house/index.html> accessed November 15, 2009

²⁸⁹ Informal observation

²⁹⁰ Nicholas Bequelin, interview by author, June, 2005, Hong Kong, notes.

As my research shows the grievances of the new leadership remain the same as the ones expressed by the older leadership, but with a more effective and greater visibility than in the past. However, there are also some links between the strategies carried out by the old and the new leaderships. One of these links is the strategy that is used to expose Uyghur grievances and to compare the Uyghur issue with the Tibetan one on the grounds that the conditions in the Uyghur nation are much the same as those in Tibet²⁹¹.

Similar to Tibetan lobbies abroad, the Uyghur diaspora seems to have embraced, at least externally, the dogma of non-violent advocacy. Kadeer declares that they want to reach ‘self-determination peacefully through activism, advocacy, and by exposing to the world the plague suffered by the Uyghurs’²⁹². She asserts that the Uyghur diaspora leadership has no involvement with violent conflict in Xinjiang:

Outside Eastern Turkestan we are peaceful, but inside we are not responsible for what happens during demonstrations. We have no relations with these demonstrations. [...] For years we fought using also violence, but really we are not violent people. We used violence as a response to the oppression carried out by the Chinese government.[...] as in Tibet we have to fight but peacefully using international tools as the international conferences.²⁹³

Collaboration with the Tibetan diaspora is high on the new agenda in order to assert a common right to self-determination and to multiply the effects of their joint mobilization abroad. As Igamberdi told me ‘With Tibet there is sharing of a common problem. We certainly cannot fight Chinese power alone!’²⁹⁴. However, Mackerras confirmed to me back in 2005, that ‘Compared to Tibetan opposition, the Uyghurs do not enjoy the same visibility’²⁹⁵. Also Pföstl confirmed that the Uyghur issue has a raised profile abroad especially

With the demonstration attached to the Olympic Games in 2008 it has increased its visibility making it clear that in China there is not only the Tibetan issue, but also the Uyghur one. However, it has not reached the same popularity as the Tibetan one.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ See Rabiya Kadeer with Cavelius Alexandra *Dragon fighter. One woman's epic struggle for peace with China* (Carlsbad CA: Kales Press, 2009) 266

²⁹² Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

²⁹³ Rabiya Kadeer *The mother of 10,000 children* Lecture, Kyoto Jiyu Daiwaku, Campus Plaza in Kyoto, October 25, 2009

²⁹⁴ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

²⁹⁵ Colin Mackerras, interview by author, June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes.

²⁹⁶ Eva Pföstl, interview by author by phone, December 3, 2009, notes.

Why are they unable to reach the same popularity as the Tibetan one? It might be because Westerners mentally associate Uyghurs with radical Islam and this limits their capacity to achieve broader popularity that is comparable to that enjoyed by the Tibetan movement. As Sisci put it

Kadeer has no possibility to achieve the popularity of the Dalai Lama because Xinjiang is a lost cause: Muslim advocacy cannot attract so much support in the West and even less now that China has been requested to co-operate with troops to stabilize Afghanistan. Probably Xinjiang is used now as a tool by Western states to push China to take part in the stability efforts in Afghanistan.²⁹⁷

In the end, the grievances of the new leadership remain the same as those expressed by the older leadership, but with a more effective and greater visibility than in the past. So media exposure is greater and this drives greater mass mobilization than before, at least at a non-state level. However, what about the support of state agents? Which states do these Uyghur advocacy groups target? Now I am going to assess which states are deemed to be strategically relevant as external agents supporting the Uyghur issue by the Uyghur diaspora leadership. My aim is to understand whether the Uyghur diaspora is trying to mobilize state actors in order to gain their support for the Uyghur conflict.

Mobilization abroad is aimed not only at attracting popular support but also at attracting the attention of other relevant external agents. The leadership of the Uyghur diaspora has been searching for the support of other external agents, particularly other states, for a considerable length of time. However, until a few years ago morale was low in the Uyghur diaspora and accompanied by a strong sense of neglect from the international community. The Secretary General of the World Uyghur Congress Dolkun Isa admitted in 2006:

Since 1949, [the] only force keeping the East Turkistan dream alive is the hard work and dedication of exiled Uyghurs. So far they did not get any attention in their fight with one of the most evil empires and its communist regime. [The] world seems to [be] determined not to help in the legitimate fight of the Uyghurs.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes.

²⁹⁸ Isa Dolkun, personal communication, February 8, 2006.

More recently the newer leadership has been re-injected with new energy, even though it senses the difficulty of its mission because ‘The Chinese government is pressing other countries in order to make them cease their support to Uyghurs’²⁹⁹.

Kadeer is pressing for other countries to become involved in the Uyghur issue: first the United States, then the UK and then Japan, Russia and Turkey³⁰⁰. The United States, the UK and Russia were involved in the Yalta agreements and thus they bear this responsibility.

Russia, the UK and the United States must help us as they carry the responsibility for the Yalta secret agreements where Russia sold us to China. Even President Bush in 2005 said that there must be clarification on these agreements. Indeed some of the issues dealt in those agreements are now solved. Some of the countries sold out [sacrificed] are now independent. Now we have to open that history page³⁰¹.

The idea of being treated as the proverbial sacrificial lamb is echoed by Igamberdi: ‘Stalin betrayed the Uyghur cause: when we had brief independent experiences he dumped us. In 1949 he allowed Mao to invade Eastern Turkestan.’³⁰²

As for the other countries targeted by Kadeer, Turkey has a direct interest as the kin state of Uyghur people. Japan is interested because of the regional implications of the issue³⁰³. Japan is especially important for the new leadership: Kadeer is a frequent visitor³⁰⁴ who receives considerable attention when she visits there³⁰⁵. The Uyghur leader has direct contacts with the Liberal Democratic Party now in opposition. Her leverage with the ruling Democratic Party may decrease, as it widely known that this party wants to improve relations with China. Nevertheless, Kadeer demands a direct intervention from the Japanese government.

The Japanese government should bring the Uyghur issue to the world’s attention. Japan should build up a regional integration in Asia and as such it should step into the Uyghur cause. I am here in Japan also to ask assistance for this issue. Japan should collaborate also with the UN in order to find a solution.

²⁹⁹ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

³⁰⁰ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

³⁰¹ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

³⁰² Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

³⁰³ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

³⁰⁴ Three times in 2009 alone Informal observation in Japan 2007-2010

³⁰⁵ Japanese interest in the Uyghur issue also derives from the fact that in Xinjiang there are important Buddhist historical sites to which the Japanese attach religious affection, as with Tibet. Support to the Uyghur and to the Tibetan oppositions is also carried out by nationalist fringes in an anti-Chinese and anti-Communist drive. Informal observation in Japan 2007-2010

We continuously hear about killings and tortures in Xinjiang. The Japanese government should demand investigations and explanations. I hope it will do this.³⁰⁶

As for the older leadership, it has maintained a deeper sense of disillusionment especially with Turkey, Russia and the United States. As Igamberdi told me

So far Turkey has been very friendly to China and in near future this trend will continue. The United States is hypocritical. After September 11, 2001 they labeled Uyghur separatism as Islamist and terrorist and since then China can repress the Uyghurs even more strongly. Russia today, as in the past with the Soviet Union, has only been exploiting the Xinjiang cause whenever this has been convenient for her.³⁰⁷

On the contrary, the new leadership maintains a more balanced approach by analyzing the agendas of the different administrations.

Uyghur advocacy groups and the United States have normal relations. However after the genocide in July [2009 in Xinjiang] they did nothing. If the United States had condemned Beijing a lot of Uyghurs would now be alive. The US government depends on the Chinese economy and therefore closes its eyes in front of the Uyghur issue. President Obama cannot talk. The US Congress gives a better response with open condemnations, and collections of materials and statements. The Bush administration was more reactive towards Uyghur, Tibetan and Burmese issues. Probably Human Rights had a larger priority. I do not know what will happen. May be they have secret plans for us. I cannot believe that developed countries can do nothing for us.³⁰⁸

As for Central Asia, the neighboring area with strong ethnic affinities, the older leadership maintains an emotional sense of disillusionment as Igamberdi showed me:

Independence of Western Turkestan [i.e. Central Asian Republics] had produced a lot of enthusiasm among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. However Central Asian states were deluded: they preferred to found the Shanghai Five Organization and collaborate with China. Uyghur dissidents who had sheltered there were sent back to China and then killed.³⁰⁹

Igamberdi might be more emotionally involved because he belonged to a group of Uyghur intellectuals who had been brought up to believe in Soviet support for the Uyghur cause. Indeed between 1957 and 1961 he studied at the Central Asian Institute

³⁰⁶ Rabiya Kadeer *The mother of 10,000 children Lecture*, Kyoto Jiyu Daiwaku, Campus Plaza in Kyoto, October 25, 2009

³⁰⁷ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

³⁰⁸ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

³⁰⁹ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

in Tashkent where he joined a Uyghur underground party and tried to take advantage of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign and of his friction with Maoist China. The Chinese authorities arrested him in 1963 for these activities against the Chinese Communist Party and condemned him to six years of forced labor. He was then sentenced to another term in a secret prison for political offenders in Urumqi, followed by forced labor in a coal mine until 1979³¹⁰. Therefore his disappointment at the neglect of Russia and the neglect of the Central Asian Republics runs deep and does not allow him to make a rational analysis.

On the contrary the new leadership seems to face the situation in Central Asia in a more realistic way:

Central Asian governments are in a difficult position as they have several internal problems therefore they are more focused on internal issues rather than ethnic affinities. They cannot discuss our issues with Beijing because they do not have enough power and leverage.³¹¹

All in all, the new leadership of the Uyghur diaspora is primarily targeting the United States, then the UK and then Japan, Russia and Turkey in order to acquire their support. However US support to Uyghur diaspora seems to ebb and flow depending on the different administrations and the different state agents within the country. In Central Asia there are also problems with support due to internal problems and the heavy presence of neighboring China. Therefore the Uyghur diaspora leaders elsewhere no longer rely on their support.

In essence, my research reveals some critical findings regarding the Uyghur diaspora. First, the new leadership has been conducting a more effective strategy to mobilize other external forces and to gain support for the Uyghur cause than the one carried out by the older leadership. Even though the grievances of the new leadership remain the same as those expressed by the older leadership, they are expressed with a more effective and greater visibility than in the past. In fact, media exposure is greater and drives greater levels of mass mobilization than before, at least at a non-state level, including parties. Secondly, at a state level the new leadership appears to be more realistic and strategically minded than the older leadership while the latter does not seem able to adopt an active strategy and prefers instead to adopt a 'wait-and-see'

³¹⁰ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

³¹¹ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

approach. As Igamberdi told me ‘If the Soviet Union collapsed, China also one day may implode and [if this does not happen] one day the world will understand that China is evil and has a dominating mind’³¹². On the contrary, the United States, then the UK and then Japan, Russia and Turkey are among the state agents this new leadership is trying to drive.

Therefore, as my research shows, the new leadership seems to be on a more rewarding path in terms of the co-ordination and visibility that are necessary to advocate and mobilize the Uyghur cause and to drive other relevant external agents. This thesis also shows that, contrary to past assumptions, Uyghurs in neighboring Central Asia can offer only limited mobilization when compared with Uyghur advocacy groups in countries that are far away. This appears to be similar to the situation that faces other separatist movements. For example, situations in which a diaspora that was disseminated across neighboring countries was less effectively engaged in the separatist conflict than one settled in distant regions. For different reasons, the case of Slovenia resembles this one: here the majority of the diaspora was settled in neighboring Italy and was unsupportive of the independence struggle in their homeland. The next section, details what happened in this case and describes how there are similarities between that situation and the Uyghur one. As explained in the Introduction, investigating comparisons between the Uyghur case and the Slovenian one is relevant to this study. Hereby I start by comparing the Uyghur diaspora with the role offered by the Slovenians abroad in the Slovenian independence conflict.

The Slovenian conflict: the role of the diaspora

The Slovenian conflict is another separatist case where a sizeable diaspora in a neighboring country did not play a meaningful role in the independence process of the kin state: Slovenia. Why Slovenia? Firstly, before Slovenia became independent in 1991 the country had a diaspora that was similar to the Uyghur one. Slovenians were distributed in neighboring countries (Italy and Austria) and in important, albeit distant players (Germany and the United States). Secondly, as with the Uyghur diaspora, the Slovenian diaspora was also highly organized in groups and associations. Thirdly, as mentioned before, the Slovenian independence process happened in a country,

³¹² Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes.

Yugoslavia, where the regime, a Leninist style authoritarian regime, was similar to the one in China today.

As explained in the Theories Chapter, in theory ethnic affinities and affective motives and also transnationalism are possible factors behind external support given by the Slovenian diaspora, especially the one dispersed across the border in Italy and the one in the United States.

However, I will argue that, despite the presence of a sizeable diaspora in neighboring Italy, this group played a marginal role in the Slovenian independence process. This appears to be the case with the Uyghur diaspora residing in Central Asia. It does not have the capabilities to incite significant disturbances or to produce significant political change in Xinjiang. My research shows that, for different reasons, the majority of the Slovenian diaspora in Italy was uninvolved in the Slovenian separatism.

This section first analyzes the Slovenian diaspora in general terms. Then it specifically examines the role of the Slovenians settled in neighboring Italy and in the United States. Lastly it presents my conclusions.

Slovenians abroad may account³¹³ for up to 500,000 of whom 150,000/180,000 are living in Austria, Italy and Hungary while the others are spread between Germany (80,000/100,000), the former Yugoslavia (less than 40,000), the United States and Canada (160,000 mainly in Ontario and Ohio³¹⁴), South America (more than 30,000 mainly in Buenos Aires and Caracas) and Australia (less than 30,000 especially in New South Wales).³¹⁵ As Bufon told me

Slovenian diaspora abroad is spread in neighboring countries, including the nowadays former Yugoslavian republics, and migrant communities in the rest of Europe and Americas (plus Australia). The relations of these groups with their motherland are different and very various.³¹⁶

³¹³ These are recently acquired figures: detailed numbers of the Slovenian diaspora around the world in late 1980s and early 1990s could not be retrieved, except for the United States. See the next footnote

³¹⁴ there were 120,000 Slovenians in the United States in 1990. *1990 Census of population detailed ancestry groups for states 1990CP-S-1-2* U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, available from <www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cp-s/cp-s-1-2.pdf> 2001-01-22 accessed March 15, 2009

³¹⁵ Joachim Höslner *Slovenia Storia di una giovane identità europea (Slovenia. History of a young European identity)* (Trieste: Beit, 2008) 244

³¹⁶ Milan Bufon, personal communication, March 18, 2009.

Slovenian diaspora all over the world has been highly organized through various cultural, economic and political societies and associations of different political mainstreams with a relevant percentage of anti-communists, especially among extra-European organizations³¹⁷. The communities settled mainly in the United States, in Ohio, and in Southern America were the product of two different emigration waves: one came after the 1929 economic crisis and the escape from Italian fascist oppression; the other came after the establishment of Tito's communist regime in 1945. The latter wave especially had a specifically strong anti-communist and pro-Slovenian independence commitment³¹⁸.

In 1990 the Slovenian population in Italy was estimated by the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs to be between 70-76,000 out of an overall population of 57,003,000: 25,000 were living in the Trieste province, 10-11,000 were in Gorizia Province and 35-40,000 were in Udine Province: all provinces running along the border with Slovenia³¹⁹. Historically, for a period of several centuries, they had settled in the nowadays fuzzy bordering region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, especially in the towns of Trieste and Gorizia. Until the break-up of Yugoslavia they were ideologically deeply divided between the communists, who offered lukewarm support to a pro-independence movement, and the anti-communists who were much more in favor of independence. Both groups were well organized³²⁰ with associations, NGOs, schools, financial institutions, unions, media, religious groups, and political parties³²¹ all with solid networks in Slovenia. Under the regime of Tito and post Tito the Slovenian authorities maintained close contacts with the more leftist groups³²², while proximity to the others was dependent on the evolving Yugoslav internal political conditions. For example, whenever the liberals gained ground in Belgrade, networking in the *Common Cultural*

³¹⁷ Various interviews with members of the Slovenian diaspora

³¹⁸ Boris Peric, interview by author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia notes.

³¹⁹ Bregantini Luca *I numeri e I luoghi delle minoranze etniche dall'Atlantico al Pacifico (Numbers and places of ethnic minorities from the Atlantic to the Pacific)* (Gorizia: Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale Gorizia, 1997) 116

³²⁰ In Italy alone there were 200 groups. Kacin Wohinz Milica and Pirjevec Joze *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866-1998 (History of Slovenians in Italy 1866-1998)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998) 132

³²¹ The Democratic Union, later Slovenian Union (or *Slovenska skupnost*) was a moderate party in North Eastern Italy. The Slovenian Popular Movement was also founded in Italy in 1968 and was Catholic and anti Communist. Kacin Wohinz Milica and Pirjevec Joze *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866-1998 (History of Slovenians in Italy in Italy 1866-1998)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998) 118

³²² Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes.

*Area*³²³ was easier, but if leadership in Belgrade tended towards radical orthodoxy, then relations suffered.

My research shows that the majority of Slovenians settled in Italy were against the Slovenian independence for various reasons:

Two thirds of the Slovenians living here [in Italy] were against. They were supporters of the Yugoslav model as a symbol of Balkan unity, self-management, and leadership in the non-aligned states' movement.³²⁴

Indeed Yugoslavia's autonomy from Soviet control and the self-management system imposed in Yugoslavia had gained the interest of many abroad who were fascinated by the situation, especially in Italy. The older generation of Slovenians that were disseminated in Italy had also taken part in the liberation struggles against German occupation between 1943 and 1945 along with pro-Tito forces and felt that their experiences and the myth of resistance were compromised: 'The building of the Yugoslav Federation was the realization of an ideal strongly felt here'³²⁵. Also, the above-mentioned connection between the Slovenian diaspora and Belgrade played a relevant role because 'Belgrade protected Slovenian communities abroad'³²⁶. Indeed Yugoslavia was committed to protecting Slovenians living in Italy not only through international agreements³²⁷ but also through its economic support. Belgrade financially supported most of the Slovenian organizations in Italy at least until 1990/1991 when, because of the Yugoslav financial crisis, this economic support ceased and onus fell on the Italian government to provide the necessary financial support³²⁸. The Slovenian diaspora in Italy did not host Slovenian political dissidents. Political dissidents like Jože

³²³ This was the denomination given by Ljubljana authorities to the intellectual dialogue among the Slovenians living in Slovenija and across the border. Kacin Wohinz Milica and Pirjevec Joze *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866-1998 (History of Slovenians in Italy 1866-1998)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998) 128

³²⁴ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes. Also Peric and Ussai confirmed this data

³²⁵ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³²⁶ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³²⁷ After the signature in 1954 of the London Memorandum where rights of the Slovenian communities in Italy are carefully listed and the border between Italy and Yugoslavia is revised in favor of the latter, a few more agreements followed, in order to ameliorate economic and political conditions of Slovenians in Italy. See also Kacin Wohinz Milica and Pirjevec Joze *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866-1998 (History of Slovenians in Italy 1866-1998)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998)

³²⁸ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

Pučnik remained in Slovenia for as long as they could and then later migrated to Germany, eventually paying only a short visit to the Slovenian community in Italy³²⁹.

The Slovenian diaspora in Italy knew very well the separatist pressures that had been developing in their homeland for a longtime as Rizman told me

More influence and information about what was going on with Milosevic's and Great-Serbian autocratic nationalism as a threat to Slovenia was disseminated by Slovene minorities living in Austria and Italy who were very well informed about the situation in the then break-away Yugoslavia³³⁰.

The emergence of Slovenian separatism was not recent:

It had already reached a climax in early Seventies when the Federal government led by the Slovenian liberal Kancic, after a dispute with the conservatives in Belgrade, succeeded in modifying the Federal Constitution in 1974.³³¹

However, the separatist drive gained new strength in the late Eighties. Word of mouth, personal contacts and even the circulation of the magazine *Mladina*, one of the leading Ljubljana-based media that were pushing for Slovenian independence, stirred discussions among the Slovenian diaspora in Italy regarding the separatist issue. 'We could buy *Mladina* in Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and then we discussed a lot about its articles here in Gorizia (Italy)' told me Ussai³³².

Slovenian communities in Italy knew about these separatist movements, but could not foresee the outcome. They could not understand where Slovenian separatists lead up to. It looked like Ljubljana separatists were taking some risks, like a gamble with their future.³³³

Discussions culminated with a visit to Gorizia by the leader of the Communist Party in Slovenia, Milan Kucan, himself a strong-willed separatist, in January 1991³³⁴ just a few months before independence was declared. The Slovenian elites in Ljubljana knew that the border communities were opposed to the separatist project³³⁵. However Kucan held a public meeting, in the main cultural center linked to the Slovenian left in Gorizia, the Kulturni Dom Gorica, to present the separatist issue¹.

³²⁹ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³⁰ Rudolf Rizman, personal communication, November 2, 2009.

³³¹ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³² Marina Ussai, interview by author, August 8, 2009, Gorizia, notes.

³³³ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³⁴ Igor Princic, interview by author, August 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³⁵ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

The supporters of independence, or the so called ‘whites’ as opposed to the ‘reds’, were mainly non-communist Slovenians who had always opposed socialist rule in Yugoslavia. They shared the same political orientation as part of the separatist *elite* in Slovenia that was led by the Catholics such as Peterle and Janza. These whites were mainly disseminated in South America and the United States. In Italy they represented a fraction of the Slovenian diaspora, about one third³³⁶ and ‘They were euphoric to get rid of communism and alimented Slovenian nationalism.’³³⁷.

However, their role was marginal mainly because of their limited size and tools³³⁸. As for the logistical help eventually offered by these communities, opinions vary regarding their role in facilitating the acquisition of weapons by the separatist factions in Slovenia through the port of Koper before the breakout of the conflict. Some deem it possible and point to the various import - export companies managed by Italian Slovenians whilst others categorically exclude it by pointing out that this traffic eventually involved other European countries, including maybe Austria³³⁹. As Lusa told me

Janza [one of the separatist leaders in Ljubljana in charge of the Defense Forces against the Belgrade Army] wrote a book about this weapons’ traffic, but he did not specifically say from where these weapons came from.³⁴⁰

As Peric stated simply, ‘There is no evidence’³⁴¹.

In the end, the role of Slovenians living in Italy appears to be more that of a witness rather than a participant in the Slovenian conflict both before and during the outbreak. Indeed during the outbreak of the ten days war of independence some members of the Slovenian diaspora crossed the border to observe the situation directly, as witnessed by Rupel ‘We went to visit Yugoslav soldiers imprisoned in a school by Slovenian forces in Saint Peter [a small town across the border]’³⁴². And Rizman confirmed me this marginal role played by the Slovenia diaspora in Italy

³³⁶ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes. Marina Ussai, interview by author, August 8, 2009, Gorizia, notes. Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³⁷ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³³⁸ Various interviews with Slovenians living in the region and informal observation

³³⁹ interviews with various members of the Slovenian community in Italy

³⁴⁰ Stefano Lusa, interview by author by phone, October 23, 2009, notes.

³⁴¹ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia notes

³⁴² Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

[Assistance from the Slovenians abroad was] Not that great as was the case in the Baltic states. It had more a symbolic weight. More influence and information about what was going on with Milosevic and Great-Serbian autocratic nationalism as a threat to Slovenia was disseminated by Slovene minorities living in Austria and Italy who were very well informed about the situation in the then break-away Yugoslavia. However, most of the "battle" for Slovenian independence and statehood was won by Slovenian politics and civil society in Slovenia itself. Support could be termed as a "soft" one, which means not arms or material assistance (money, as was the case in both regards for Croatia and the three Baltic states).³⁴³

In essence, the Slovenian diaspora in a neighboring country such as Italy appeared to have a very marginal if not irrelevant role in supporting and spurring separatism in Slovenia. My research shows that Italy as a liberal model linked to European integration played a far greater role in building up the separatist movement in Slovenia than did the Slovenian diaspora in Italy:

Proximity with Italy had an influence over separatism mainly due to attraction towards the standards that Italy had benefited from, such as European integration and trade and economic development. As a matter of fact, all Slovenian parties after independence had EU integration as a target to achieve.³⁴⁴

It has to be said that trans-border contacts between Italy and Slovenia, under the regime of Tito and post Tito, were totally different from those in other regions bordering the Iron Curtain. The mobility of Slovenians and Italians living near the border was easy as they could cross the frontier thanks to a specially arranged *laissez-passer*³⁴⁵. This *laissez passer* allowed many trans-border workers from the Slovenian side to commute every day to Trieste and Gorizia without the need of a passport or a visa. Also, Slovenian students living near the border could attend schools in Italy (especially ones with the Slovenian language curricula) and the University of Trieste and Gorizia by commuting freely every day. Also, Italian media were available along the border with a preference for TV and radio broadcasting over printed media 'as people found it more difficult to read in the Italian language'³⁴⁶. Even a daily printed in

³⁴³ Rudolf Rizman, personal communication, November 2, 2009.

³⁴⁴ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³⁴⁵ This document was issued to all residents in 15-km-radius on the Italian-Slovenian border and allowed the holders to cross dozens of vehicles or pedestrians only passages. Informal observation

³⁴⁶ Marina Ussai, interview by author, August 8, 2009, Gorizia, notes

Italy in Slovenian language, the *Primorski Dnevnik*, was available. And the result was that 'along the border on the Slovenian side people were mostly pro-West.'³⁴⁷

These exchanges increased the attraction of more liberal models and the knowledge of European integration without the filter of the regime's propaganda³⁴⁸. The effect of these exchanges led some Slovenian sociologists to state that the conflict between Slovenia and Belgrade was not a conflict between two nationalisms but rather a conflict between two models: the authoritarian Great Serbian system which opposed Western 'slavery' and the Slovenian project which was to achieve 'a modern, open and pluralistic society, ready and willing to adhere to the European integration process'³⁴⁹.

As Rizman told me

Slovenian politics did not (like to) use the concept of "separatism", but rather "disassociation" in order to avoid the bad, pejorative meaning of this word and assuming that the real "separatism" started, in fact, with Milosevic's politics - Memorandum of Serbian Academy, Serbian acquisition of Federal Bank, "Serbization" of the federal army, etc.³⁵⁰

In essence, it was Italy, as a liberal model, which became an attractive role model for Slovenian separatists who focused more on Western Europe than on Belgrade's model. On the other hand, the majority of the Slovenian diaspora settled in Italy was uninvolved in this process as it felt a closer political allegiance to Belgrade's leadership. All in all, most of the Slovenians living in neighboring Italy appeared to be against this independence process and therefore did not incite separatism in Slovenia. A situation consistent with the one faced by the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia, though for different reasons.

But what about the other diaspora groups that settled abroad, especially in the United States? Did they share, with the majority of Slovenians living in Italy, an ideological attachment to the Yugoslavian ideal or were they more prone to Slovenian nationalism? In the end, what was their role in spurring the separatist conflict in Slovenia? Could their role be more similar to the one played by the Uyghur diaspora in

³⁴⁷ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³⁴⁸ In 1994 I conducted a series of interviews between Gorizia and Nova Gorica for a video documentary whose aim was to assess the rate of knowledge and support of the European Integration. These interviews showed how strong and deep the support was held by Slovenians of different ages and professions. Ghini Anna Lisa, Grilli Tullio and Moratti Massimo *Europe across the border* [documentary] (Gorizia: Accademia Europeista di Gorizia - European Academy of Gorizia, 1994)

³⁴⁹ Rizman Rudolf *Dall'autoritarismo alla democrazia attraverso l'indipendenza: Il caso sloveno (Uncertain path – transition and consolidation of democracy in Slovenia)* (Ravenna: Università di Bologna – Longo Editore, 2006) 54

³⁵⁰ Rudolf Rizman, personal communication, November 2, 2009

the United States? The following section analyzes the Slovenian diaspora living in the United States in order to assess their role in the Slovenian independence. My question is whether their involvement was more active and effective than the involvement of the Slovenians living in bordering Italy and therefore whether this is similar to the case of the Uyghurs settled in Central Asia and in the United States.

In 1990 the Slovenian diaspora in the United States was composed of about 120,000 Slovenians mostly concentrated in Ohio (about 40 percent) and Pennsylvania (12 percent)³⁵¹. As mentioned above, these communities had a specifically strong anti-communist and pro-Slovenian independence commitment:

Slovenians living in the United States had a love hate relationship with their homeland and therefore a very troubled one. They contributed to Slovenian separatism through active lobbies in the United States.³⁵²

Therefore they supported Slovenian separatism and tried to promote this cause among US institutions in order to acquire their support ‘even though they were not very successful with the George Bush administration’³⁵³.

They did not have permanent lobbying agencies in Washington D.C., but preferred to use other existing organizations to advocate support for their home country. They especially promoted the 1990 elections in Slovenia through the existing Slovenian American Council. A while later, they established an *ad hoc* organization, Americans for Free Slovenia, that together with existing institutions³⁵⁴ pressed the US government to recognize Slovenia’s independence in 1992. As Rupel stated to me ‘Especially Slovenian professors working in large US universities were carefully listened to by the US administration’³⁵⁵.

Contrary to today’s Uyghur advocacy groups in the United States the Slovenian dissidents exiled abroad did not connect with other Yugoslav dissidents, at least this is what the famous Serbian exile Mihailo Mihajlov told me ‘Frankly speaking I really [sic]

³⁵¹ *1990 Census of population detailed ancestry groups for states 1990CP-S-1-2* U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, available from <www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cp-s/cp-s-1-2.pdf> 2001-01-22 accessed March 15, 2009

³⁵² Stefano Lusa, interview by author by phone. October 23, 2009, notes.

³⁵³ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³⁵⁴ i.e. the American Home newspaper and the Slovenian Research Center of America. Informal observation

³⁵⁵ Aldo Rupel, interview by the author, August 20, 2009, Gorizia, notes

did not closely [sic] follow Slovenian case, and was not close to Slovenian exile [sic] community.³⁵⁶

Also the Slovenian Congress, an institution that groups together some organizations of the Slovenian diaspora (and thus is similar to the Uyghur World Congress) was founded only after independence. Between 1991 and 1995 it was mainly a showcase for Slovenian politicians and since then its influence has declined considerably because of its strong links with Slovenian right parties³⁵⁷.

In essence they supported Slovenian separatism and tried to promote this cause among US institutions in order to acquire their support. A situation similar to the one currently facing the Uyghurs settled in the United States.

All in all, the role of the Slovenian Diaspora in the United States is deemed to have been more supportive to the cause of Slovenian separatism, albeit with different degrees of effectiveness, than that of the Slovenian diaspora settled in neighboring Italy. This stance is similar to the one adopted by the Central Asian governments *vis-a-vis* the Uyghur separatist conflict in Xinjiang.

Conclusion

For a long time, factionalism, and a lack of strategy and funding have all compromised the strength of the Uyghur diaspora and affected its capacity to act as a catalyst to direct international attention towards its issue. For some, such as Gladney, separatism among diaspora groups, especially those in the West, was confined to cyber separatism³⁵⁸: propaganda restricted to web sites that are mostly managed by organizations located in Europe. The ‘wait and see’ tactic that was pursued by the majority of diaspora groups, was mostly due to their awareness that they did not have any resources and could not find any other supporters or key players among the international community - not even their host states. However, a newly emerged leadership centered in the person of Rabiya Kadeer has injected new force into the advocacy movement.

³⁵⁶ Mihajlo Mihajlov, personal communication, October 6, 2009.

³⁵⁷ Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes

³⁵⁸ Gladney Dru C. *Cyber separatism and Uyghur ethnic nationalism in China* [paper] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies, June 5, 2003)

My research shows various findings. Firstly, a new Uyghur leadership has been conducting a more effective strategy to mobilize support for the Uyghur cause from external forces. Their efforts have been more successful than those of the older leadership. In the end, the basic grievances expressed by the new leadership remain the same as the ones of the older leadership, but they are expressed with far more effectiveness and given greater visibility than in the past.

Secondly, in recent years the Uyghur diaspora in the West has been pursuing a more effective mobilization strategy than the one carried out by Uyghur advocacy groups disseminated in Central Asia. The latter appear unable to freely perform political activities because of the control imposed by authoritarian regimes and because of the social stigma attached to the Uyghur in Central Asia.

Thirdly, other separatist movements appear to be faced with a similar situation: a situation in which a diaspora that is scattered across neighboring countries has been less effectively engaged in the separatist conflict than one that is settled in distant regions. The case of Slovenia bears some resemblance to this, though for different reasons. Here, the majority of the diaspora settled in neighboring Italy was unsupportive of the independence struggle in their homeland. Similarly, the Uyghur diaspora in the United States appears to be leading a greater role in stirring Uyghur separatism than the one played by the Uyghur diaspora in neighboring Central Asia.

All in all a distant, an effective and well-coordinated diaspora such as the Uyghur one in the United States may play a far more relevant role in spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang than the one that is settled in neighboring Central Asia.

Chapter 5

Central Asian role in the Uyghur conflict

Having good neighbors is like having a bigger house
Chinese old saying

This chapter analyzes the influence of Central Asia: one potential strategic regional player in the Uyghur separatist movement. Central Asia is especially important to the Uyghur separatist movement in Xinjiang as it shares not only borders but also cultural roots with the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. So it is crucial to assess whether the Central Asian Republics (CARs) are indeed exercising any external influence on the Uyghur separatist movements in Xinjiang. This analysis is carried out in relation to the general research question posed in this thesis: what are the selected and external forces under investigation here doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? My research shows two findings. First, the Central Asian state actors have tended towards favorable relations with China at the expense of the Uyghur advocacy groups that are dispersed in their territory. Secondly, no non-state actors in the Central Asian region appear to be going to support the Uyghur issue. In fact most ethnic political activists, including the Uyghurs, have undergone a process of de-mobilization in the rigidly controlled Central Asian societies. Even non-state actors as the radical groups do not seem going to support Uyghur separatists since these radical groups are suffering a steady decline in the Central Asian region. I have come to these conclusions through documentary research and interviews, as explained in the Methodology Chapter. My questions addressed issues concerning the rationale and the feasibility of intervention by Central Asian state and non-state actors. What would be the rationale for intervention and how feasible would such an intervention be? Is there any interest for this type of involvement in the Central Asian region? If yes, what interest could it be? Who might be its agents among the government agencies and the various radical groups and the Uyghur diaspora? In essence, are Central Asian state and non-state agents effectively pursuing a role as an external force in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

The first section of this chapter analyzes the rationale behind the possible support of Central Asian state and non-state actors in favour of the Uyghur mobilization groups in Xinjiang. Then I approach the feasibility side. Is there a will to pursue such involvement? The third section examines the Slovenian case taking into account the

role of a relevant neighboring country such as Italy to demonstrate that bordering countries do not always follow the path of supporting the separatist efforts of their neighbors. Then I will present my conclusions.

Rationale

This section analyzes whether such a rationale exists and whether such a rationale could precipitate an intervention in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang by Central Asian state and non-state agents who are based in these countries. First I examine the reasoning that might push the Central Asian state actors towards favoring Uyghur led destabilization in Xinjiang. Then I assess what rationale could lead other non-state agents in Central Asia to be involved in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. My aim is to understand the theoretical framework for a possible intervention in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang and how it could apply in this region.

Concerning state actors, as seen in the chapter on the Theories, several reasons could be found that might drive Central Asian state players to intervene. The first reason is opportunism: Central Asian state players might support separatist groups in Xinjiang in order to gain leverage with a view to bargaining with the host state, China, and extracting concessions. The second reason includes ethnic affinities and ethnic affinities linked to political competition: the Central Asian establishment could exercise passive lobbying in favor of Uyghur separatists. The third reason concerns instrumental motives: Central Asian leaders intervene in a conflict abroad, for example, Xinjiang, in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose their grip on power at home.

Concerning opportunism, the rationale for this support would be the desire to expand influence and/or gain leverage for bargaining and concessions from the host state in conflict. Therefore the main reason would be for Central Asian state actors to bargain with China in order to extract concessions. What concessions? Hypothetically the main concessions would be political and economic: Central Asian leaders might be willing to blackmail China by linking the stability and prosperity of Xinjiang to stability and prosperity in Central Asia because an unstable and un-prosperous Central Asia may reflect massively on Xinjiang. As Blank points out

[...] Chinese scholars explicitly articulate the connection between Xinjiang and Central Asia, arguing that China's policy to expand economic cooperation with Central Asia is undertaken, among other reasons, because to a large extent the stability and prosperity of northwest China is closely tied to Central Asia's stability and prosperity.³⁵⁹

There is firm consensus among all the region States that stability is an imperative. Therefore the main goal of Chinese leaders is to preserve stability in an area at its immediate borders. This pushes Chinese leaders to accept economic and security demands by the Central Asian leaders. Also Swanström confirmed to me

For any government, being Sweden, Italy or any Central Asia Republic, it is always important to have a certain amount of leverage. The leverage granted by controlling Uyghur communities in Central Asia could be used by those governments in exchange for Chinese offer to promote regional stability. It is a mechanism similar to the current Afghanistan-US relation. In this sense Uyghur in Central Asia could be used as a political tool by the hosting governments.³⁶⁰

During the 1990s there were significant improvements in the relations between China and the newly independent Central Asian Republics. Chinese authorities understood immediately that a Central Asia formed by independent states was - and still is - a crucial strategic hinterland for its Northwestern regions. An unstable Central Asia could be a threat to a crucial part of China, i.e. Xinjiang. As Legvold pointed out

[...] a Central Asia comprised of independent states forms a crucial strategic hinterland for the 'northwest provinces' of China. If unstable, Central Asia becomes a threat to a large and crucial part of China. On the other hand, if reliable strategic ballast [balance] for north west China, then, given Central Asia's natural wealth, it becomes a potential stimulus to the economic 'development and prosperity' of a vital but vulnerable part of China.³⁶¹

In the same line of thought Suisheng Zhao, professor and executive director of the Center for China-US Cooperation at Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, pointed out:

For a long time in the history of the People's Republic of China, Beijing was seen as 'a regional power without a regional policy' due to the lack of an integrated policy toward the countries on its periphery. Among the factors

³⁵⁹ Blank Stephen *Xinjiang and China's strategy in Central Asia*, Asia Times, April 3, 2004, available from <<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FD03Ad06.html>> accessed July 15, 2009

³⁶⁰ Swanström Niklas, interview by author by phone on October 26, 2009, notes

³⁶¹ Legvold Robert *Great power stakes in Central Asia* ed. Legvold Robert, *Thinking strategically. The major powers, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian nexus* (Cambridge MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2003) 17

responsible for this lack were the frequent domestic turmoil and policy changes, which limited China's ability to make any coherent foreign policy. A second factor was China's traditional cultural complacency and the legacy of sino-centrism, which saw China as the center of Asia. The third was what Steven Levine called China's ambiguous position in the region: 'more than merely a regional actor, but still less than a global power', which left China in an uncertain relationship with its Asian neighbors. The fourth was China's unique position in the bipolar Cold War setting which forced Beijing to see its security in global and not regional terms.³⁶²

Chinese leaders understood that 'both the security on China's Western border and her internal security in Xinjiang depend upon peaceful development in her Central Asian neighboring states and China's relations with them'³⁶³ reported Swanström. And therefore are accepting to lavishly support Central Asian stability.

Regarding economic concessions, for China, security in Xinjiang is not only valuable *per se* but also because a stable Xinjiang guarantees safe access to oil and gas resources in Central Asia. Chinese leadership is aware that good relations within Central Asia has been and still is critical for the exploitation of the natural resources existing not only in Xinjiang but in the entire region³⁶⁴. Central Asian leaders have been urging Chinese investment in the energy sector. China does not want to become energy-dependent on areas that are under the influence of the United States (such as the Middle East) and is considered as strategically closer to the ex-Central Asia Soviet republics. As put by Swanström 'Oil and gas have emerged as the most important *financial* reasons for China to engage with the Central Asian states to the degree that it has done.'³⁶⁵. This is extremely important for the economic development of China, Beijing feels very pressed to avoid any security threat in the region. In essence Central Asian state actors may be pressed to intrude in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang in order to acquire leverage, in the security field and in the economic sector. They may do so by threatening China with their intention to support Uyghur separatists. The feasibility section will assess if this is the reality.

³⁶² Zhao Suisheng *China's periphery policy and its Asian neighbors* Security dialogue vol.30 no.3 (London: September 1999)

³⁶³ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005) 570

³⁶⁴ Kellner Thierry *La Chine et la grande Asie Centrale (China and the great Central Asia)* Politique Etrangere, 3/2008 (Paris) 575-587

³⁶⁵ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005) 577

Concerning the second theoretical reason, ethnic affinities *per se* and linked to political competition, as noted in the Theories Chapter, leaders who have low institutional constraints enjoy unconstrained decision-making and may favor ethnic kinship. After assessing that the Central Asian Republics have low domestic constraints and moderate to moderate diverse ethnic composition³⁶⁶, the theoretical conclusion reached is that the Central Asian establishment could exercise passive lobbying with respect to the Uyghur conflict. This is a minor kind of support that Central Asian political *elites* may be willing to give in order to appease domestic requests by Uyghurs dispersed in the region. However, it has to be said that Uyghurs dispersed in Central Asia are not very large in number. As noted above they are currently about half a million. Under Soviet rule in 1989, before reaching independence in Central Asia, Uyghur presence in the region was even more marginal, as shown in the table below:

Central Asian Republic	No. of Uyghurs	Total population of the country	Percentage of Uyghurs	Source
Kazakhstan	176,157	16,464,000	1,1 %	Cens'89
Kyrgyzstan	26,186	4,258,000	0,6	Cens'89
Tajikistan	Not available	5,093,000		Cens'89
Turkmenistan	Not available	3,523,000		Cens'89
Uzbekistan	21,986	19,810,000	0,1	Cens'89

As reported by Bregantini Luca (1997) *I numeri e I luoghi delle minoranze etniche dall'Atlantico al Pacifico (Numbers and places of ethnic minorities from the Atlantic to the Pacific)* Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale Gorizia, Gorizia

Nevertheless, during the Cold War this Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia was suspected of being a fifth column by China. Indeed, Uyghur migrations from Xinjiang to Soviet Central Asia since the Fifties were often exploited by Soviet leaders as a channel of interference against the People's Republic of China:

The anti-Chinese feelings of the Uyghur migrants were used by the Soviets when Sino-Soviet relations cooled. [...] The breakup of the Soviet Union and independence of Central Asian nations inspired Central Asian Uyghurs, especially the immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s, to undertake political activities aiming at independence for their homeland – East Turkestan (Xinjiang). The Uyghur separatist movement in the Central Asian Republics, mainly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, reached its peak in the mid-1990s, but with the establishment of the Shanghai Five organization in 1996 [...] under strong Chinese pressure Central Asian governments had to suppress all local

³⁶⁶ see the chapter on Theories for this examination of moderate and moderate diverse ethnic composition in the Central Asian Republics

Uyghur political organizations. Today Uyghur public organizations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are exclusively confined to the spheres of culture, education and the socioeconomic development of Uyghur communities³⁶⁷

In essence, Uyghur groups in Central Asia, though small in size, benefitted, at least during the Cold War, from being instrumental to Soviet strategy during those years. Could these Uyghur groups still benefit from a form of passive lobbying by the Central Asian leaderships? The feasibility section will assess whether this is still the case.

The third theory concerns instrumental motives: Central Asian leaders intervene in a conflict abroad, in this case Xinjiang, in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose their grip on power at home.

Conventional wisdom has it that Central Asia is a tinderbox of potential conflicts, Fuller and Starr pointed out that ‘Central Asia as a whole – including Xinjiang - faces the constant and growing specter of instability’³⁶⁸. They further elaborated:

In Central Asia, new and often maladroit governmental institutions, fragile public support, and in nearby Afghanistan a state of civil war lasting nearly two decades created vacuums of power and opened the way to illegal cross-border movements of drugs, weapons, and fervent ideologies.³⁶⁹

The implosion of the Soviet Union has left a multitude of states, borders and players with a high rate of volatility. In a previous research in 2001 I assessed how authoritarian Central Asian regimes paved the ground for serious destabilization:

³⁶⁷ Kamalov Ablet *Uyghurs in the Central Asian Republics in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* eds. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London: Routledge, 2009) 124 and 130

³⁶⁸ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 37

Many authors and rapporteurs in the relevant Western government offices seem to trust this wisdom at least regarding Central Asia. Among the many:

-Hill Fiona *Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability* Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia July 23, 2003.

- Omelicheva Mariya Y. *Ethnic Dimension of Religious Extremism and Terrorism in Central Asia* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Chicago, 2007.

- Peimani Hooman *Failed Transition: war and instability in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2002)

- Weisbrode Kenneth *Central Eurasia: prize or quicksand? Contending views of instability in Karabakh, Fergana and Afghanistan* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)

- Ebel Robert and Menon Rajan eds *Energy and conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000)

³⁶⁹ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 39

The destabilization of the Central Asian regimes is to a great extent owing to the political vacuum created by authoritarian policies. The repression of legitimate opposition (especially in Uzbekistan which appears somewhat reluctant to accept Western aid because of the West's pressure for democratization) crowds out moderate forces, benefiting the extremist forces that are left with the monopoly of opposition³⁷⁰.

In the case of a serious challenge by opposition and radical forces in any of the Republics in Central Asia, spurring the conflict in Xinjiang could provide an exit strategy for the Central Asian rulers. The ruling *elites* in Central Asia could incite the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. It would create that diversion or the `rally around the flag` effect to distract domestic attention. Nationalistic tensions in the area have already erupted about borders and water and it is convenient to blame external agents in lieu of poor domestic policies. As far as water management is concerned, the system of infrastructure built during the Soviet era does not anymore serve an area that is divided into many states that are unwilling to co-operate and share this important resource:

On the contrary, it appears that policy-makers are increasingly viewing water as a resource to be used for extracting material benefits for themselves and their political clientele, and that they are disguising their parochial agendas in nationalistic, belligerent rhetoric³⁷¹.

As far as border demarcation

In many areas of Central Asia, effective demarcation was not initiated mainly because demarcation during Soviet times filled little purpose. This led to increased tensions along the borders areas in the late 1990s, as the IMU incursions led Uzbekistan to mine its borders with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Since no clear border existed, numerous deaths and injuries were the result³⁷².

Similarly to these events, the ruling *elites* in Central Asia could incite the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang for similar instrumental motives: ethnic kinship assistance to the Uyghurs could, at that point, be instrumental in order to create the diversion or the `rally around the flag` effect needed to move the domestic attention elsewhere.

³⁷⁰ Ghini Anna Lisa *European Union – Central Asia relations in European Union – Asia relations in the 21st Century: problems, prospects and strategies* (Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi, 2002)

³⁷¹ Tobias Siegfried (CWC), Thomas Bernauer (ETH Zurich), Renaud Guiennet (Danish Technical University), Scott Sellars (CWC), Andrew W. Robertson (IRI), Justin Mankin (Stanford University), Peter Bauer-Gottwein (Danish Technical University) *Coping with international water conflict in Central Asia: implications of climate change and new dams in the Syr Darya Catchment* paper presented at the Climate, Change and Security Conference, The Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters (Trondheim, June 16, 2010) 7

³⁷² Swanström Niklas L.P., Cornell Svante E., Anara Tabyshalieva *A Conflict and Security Analysis of Central Asia with a Focus on Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan* (Washington DC: Central Asia – Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University, 2005) 8

To sum up, Central Asia is deemed by several analysts, to be a tinderbox of possible conflicts. The main one may be regarding the challenge against ruling governments by opposition and radical groups. At that point, in order not to lose their grip on power at home, the authoritarian leaderships could decide to spur the ethnic conflict in Xinjiang by assisting the separatist Uyghurs: a strategy already used in order to divert domestic attention and to create the rally around the flag. Is this a feasible strategy? The Feasibility section will assess the potential of this agenda.

As previously mentioned, Central Asian non-state actors may also be interested in spurring the conflict in Xinjiang. Another set of theories frames the possible involvement of Central Asian non-state actors in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. These theories deal with ethnic affinities, affective motives and trans-nationalism: in these cases, non-state actors, such as radical groups in Central Asia, could support Uyghur separatists and spur the conflict there.

Ethnic affinities are a powerful pressure to support ethnic conflicts abroad. According to this theory, Central Asian radical groups could prove the most durable and the strongest of all the possible supports to Uyghur separatists.

For the affective theory, the presence of a diaspora could stimulate and channel support to the separatist movement in its own homeland. Also groups that share language or religion, (motives that are similar to trans-nationalism and ethnic affinities) may offer support.

For the trans-nationalist theory, non-state actors such as supranational organizations, human rights bodies, transnational actors including media networks, the arms trade and, of course, the diaspora could provide material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups. The diaspora might be included in this group, but it might also include radical Islamist groups in Central Asia with a strong ideological pressure. All in all, these are converging motives; therefore here, I examine them together in respect to the Central Asian-Uyghur issue.

Concerning the Uyghur diaspora, I have already noted before in this chapter and in the chapter devoted specifically to the Uyghur diaspora, that small groups of the Uyghur diaspora are dispersed in Central Asia. I have already explained how, during the Cold War, they benefited from strong state support in Central Asia and were instrumental in creating tension between the Soviet Union and China during those years. For the trans-nationalist theory they may be able to mobilize, acquire resources and channel them in Xinjiang as they already did during the Cold War.

Concerning radical groups, Central Asia is also home to a number of terrorist groups, unofficial militias and other paramilitary bands. Therefore Uyghurs are thought to be capable of managing easy access to the weapons and military training that are provided by radical groups in Central Asia and have an agenda to destabilize Xinjiang. Indeed, as Mackerras recounts:

the borders between Xinjiang and Central Asia began to be opened in the late 1980s, leading to an expansion of trade and cultural dealings, but also in the interchange of criminal activities like the smuggling of narcotics and arms and the spread of Islamist terrorism.³⁷³

As explained by Swanström ‘there has traditionally not been a clear border between the people in Central Asia and Xinjiang.’³⁷⁴ And, on account of this, large numbers of traders and visitors flock to Xinjiang and vice versa. However ‘the real number of visitors is probably much higher, since there are large black markets, both in China and Central Asia.’³⁷⁵

This flux of people has facilitated the shipment of weapons to Uyghur separatists, a phenomenon that has not gone unnoticed by the Chinese government:

Beijing is aware that the Uyghurs can receive ideological support and military hardware from neighboring Central Asian states today; a small number of arms have also flowed from Iran, Afghanistan and sympathetic brethren in Russia to insurgents in Xinjiang.³⁷⁶

And the result has been a strong ultimatum against any kind of support towards Uyghur insurgents being issued to Central Asian governments by Beijing. As noted by Swanström.

Long before September 11, 2001, China had warned the Central Asian states against supporting, protecting or training rebels from Xinjiang. The warnings had a significant effect as investments and trade in Central Asia would be in jeopardy if the Central Asian states had refused to comply with Chinese demands.³⁷⁷

³⁷³ Mackerras Colin *Xinjiang and Central Asia since 1990*, eds Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction into the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2009) 134

³⁷⁴ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45 (November 2005) 571

³⁷⁵ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45 (November 2005) 580

³⁷⁶ Ong Russell (December 2005) *China's security interests* *Central Asia Central Asian Survey*, 24(4), 429

In essence, radical groups in Central Asia and the Uyghur Diaspora may be potential supporters of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, in line with the theories on ethnic affinities, affective motives and trans-nationalism that foresee a potential external support offered by ethnic kinships, especially the diaspora and terrorist groups. The feasibility section will examine whether data and evidence on these two groups in Central Asia can support this theory.

To conclude, in theory, various possibilities exist regarding whether state and non-state players in the region may feel compelled to engage in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. For example, on the one hand opportunism could pressure Central Asian state players to support separatist groups in Xinjiang in order to gain leverage with a view to bargaining with China, and extracting concessions; ethnic affinities linked to political competition could persuade the Central Asian establishment to exercise passive lobbying in favor of Uyghur separatists; instrumental motives may push Central Asian leaders to intervene in the conflict in Xinjiang in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose their grip on power at home. On the other hand, the Uyghur diaspora, although small, along with radical groups in Central Asia may extend external support to Uyghur mobilizing groups in Xinjiang: in line with the theories on Ethnic Affinities, Affective Motives and Trans-nationalism. However, it has to be assessed whether this probability translates to reality. And this is exactly what I am going to assess in the coming section.

Feasibility

As previously explained, some theories could foresee an engagement of the Central Asian state and non-state actors in favor of the Uyghurs. This section examines the issue of feasibility regarding the Central Asian state and non-state players and their actual involvement in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. My research shows that Central Asian state actors have been subjected to China’s massive involvement in the economic, political and security sectors. This approach has resulted in the effective alignment of the Central Asian governments on the Chinese side at the expense of a common ethnic heritage across international regional borders. Moreover no non-state actors in the

³⁷⁷ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005) 572

Central Asian region appear to be going to support the Uyghur issue. Most ethnic political activists, including the Uyghurs, have undergone a process of de-mobilization in the rigidly controlled Central Asian societies. Even Central Asian radical groups are proving unsupportive of the Uyghur cause, for a few reasons. Firstly, despite some alarming forecasts in the past with regard to the incumbent radical destabilization of the Central Asian region, terrorism³⁷⁸ is in decline in the CARs. Indeed history of the past decade shows that the international networks of terror have limited levels of engagement with the Uyghur cause. Actual penetration of radicalism in Central Asian societies is also declining, as new tools to oppose Central Asian regimes are emerging. And in the end, on their part there is little interest in inciting ethnic conflict in Xinjiang.

I now analyze the Central Asian state actors response to the Xinjiang issue and I especially assess their responses to different Chinese strategies for persuading the Central Asian leaderships to repress Uyghur political activism. Later I will examine non-state actors in Central Asia in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

Concerning state actors, as previously noted, the Central Asian state players have responded favorably to the massive involvement of China at the expense of support for the Uyghur. Why? Firstly, China has included a specific approach towards the security of the region by directly engaging the Central Asian governments in its fight against Uyghur separatists; secondly, it has established a dominating role in the main sectors, the political, economic and military ones; and thirdly, it has been using this master-vassal relationship in order to induce Central Asian leaderships to restrict any support to Uyghur political activism in Central Asia. And, ultimately, the Central Asian governments have distanced themselves from the Uyghur separatist cause as they have deemed it more convenient to accommodate the Chinese leadership at the expense of nationalism and ethnic kinship.

In essence, first I delineate Chinese policies in Central Asia since the end of the Cold War in the security field, including direct policies and those including the framework of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) that are aimed at stabilizing Xinjiang. Secondly, I examine the Chinese comprehensive approach, including economic, political and military sectors. These sectors are aimed at building

³⁷⁸ For a definition of terrorism please see Del Re when she profiles terrorism as characterized by 'the voluntary use of violence against civilians to intimidate, frighten, often to kill for political or religious or other reasons'.

Del Re Emanuela C. *Terrorismo e religioni (Terrorism and religion)* Gnosis, Rivista di Intelligence italiana (Gnosis, Italian intelligence journal) 2, 2006, 34-48

up a dominating role for China in Central Asia and at securing the Central Asian governments' consent in suppressing Uyghur political activism there. Thirdly, I examine the response of the Central Asian governments and the rationale behind this response.

This section analyzes Chinese policies in the Central Asian region since the end of the Cold War in the security field. I first elaborate on the immediate periphery policies and later on those involving a larger regional framework such as the SCO. My aim here is to show that Central Asian state actors have been subjected to the massive involvement of China in the security sector, and others besides. This approach, together with the other kinds of involvement that I will examine later, has resulted in the Central Asian governments being effectively aligned with the Chinese side at the expense of a common ethnic heritage across international regional borders.

Concerning the periphery policies adopted by Beijing, at the end of the Cold War the Chinese authorities had to face fresh new political challenges at the periphery of their vast State. They had to elaborate a new policy for their periphery in order to increase national security and economic modernization. Economic motivation has been particularly strong in the formulation of a periphery policy³⁷⁹. As reported by Liu Tsai-ming, diplomacy was put in place to 'serve domestic economic construction'³⁸⁰. As concerns security issues, the Chinese government has been trying to prevent any neighbor from becoming a threat. As a consequence, border disputes have been settled and alliances between bordering countries and outside hostile powers have been encouraged, as stated by Fumagalli:

³⁷⁹ In China the leaders of the party and of the government make choices about foreign policy. During the first fifty years of the PRC Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and later Jiang Zemin influenced the most important decisions (i.e. making the atomic bomb, breaking up with the Soviet Union, establishing relations with the United States, etc). Now the structure is lead by Hu Jintao who is President of the Republic, Secretary of the Party and Head of the Central Military Committee. Relations between the party and the government are similar to relations between a principal and an agent: the first detains the real power while the latter manages the society. This means that in the end the party political leadership dictates foreign policy. Under Mao's rule relations with foreign countries had to follow security and military objectives even when they were economically inefficient. With Deng Xiaoping foreign policy served as a tool to the economic development of the country. This may explain the rationale of relations between China and Central Asian Republics.

³⁸⁰ Liu Tsai-ming *Zhuanfang xing wajaobuzhang (special interview with new Foreign Minister)* (Wenhui Bao, 27 June 1998) quoted in Zhao Suisheng *China's periphery policy and its Asian neighbors* Security dialogue, vol. 30 no.3 (London: September 1999)

Towards the end of the Nineties it was clear that the threat posed by Islamic radicalism would have had a central role in the relations between post soviet republics and any other actors who wanted to interact with them.³⁸¹

This periphery policy has been implemented not only for the sake of good relations with neighboring countries, but above all in order to provide China with more leverage *vis-a-vis* them. As pointed out by You Ji and Jia Qingguo, this kind of periphery policy

[...] is not just about putting the backyard in order. PRC's diplomatic history has clearly showed that troubled relations with the surrounding nations in the past had seriously narrowed China's foreign policy options, especially toward major powers. [...] Closer integration with Asia has become a must in China's regional foreign policy initiatives.³⁸²

China – Central Asian relations are ‘not a question of the classical problem of *Lebensraum* for China’³⁸³ quite the contrary, China wants to exploit its good relations with the Central Asian regimes in order to manage the conflict in Xinjiang. Over and over, the Chinese authorities made clear to the Central Asian governments that they would not hesitate to use negative and positive incentives with them if they did not suppress any Uyghur destabilizing action. Central Asian governments paid heed. As confirmed to me by Kadeer, the Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments have been diligent in restricting even the slightest political activities made by the Uyghur diaspora within their borders³⁸⁴. The range of activities carried out by the Chinese leadership ranged from pressures on Central Asian governments to prevent or cancel political events organized by the Uyghur diaspora to discussions in the SCO about Uyghur separatist groups. Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan ‘secured their full support’³⁸⁵ and

³⁸¹ Fumagalli Matteo *La dimensione strategica dell'Asia centrale tra Russia, Cina e USA (The strategic dimension of Central Asia among Russia, China and the United States)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI Institute for International Politics Studies, September 2007), 2

³⁸² You Ji and Jia Qingguo *China's Re-emergence and its foreign policy strategy* in *China Review* ed. Joseph Y.S. Cheng (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998) quoted in Zhao Suisheng *China's periphery policy and its Asian neighbors* Security dialogue, vol. 30 no.3 (London: September, 1999)

³⁸³ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45 (November 2005) 584

³⁸⁴ Rabeya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009 Kyoto, notes and tape recording

³⁸⁵ Ong Russell *China's security interests in Central Asia* *Central Asian Survey*, 24(4), (December 2005) 430

promised to ‘adopt resolute measures to oppose the separatists so that they would not gain a foothold in their countries’³⁸⁶. As Swanström told me³⁸⁷

I would say that no government is interested in destabilizing Xinjiang because this could produce greater destabilization across the region. Moreover every government would fear Beijing’s reaction.

A few Central Asian governments do tolerate a minimal set of Uyghur activist organizations, as confirmed to me by Khahriman Gojamberdi³⁸⁸, a Uyghur resident in Almaty (Kazakhstan). Gojamberdi told me that they carry on activities such as propaganda and mobilization (*Agitatsiya*) concerning the Uyghur issue, such as organizing conferences, issuing brochures and carrying out research. They are even allowed to maintain ‘contacts with leaders of the World Uyghur Congress such as Rabeya Kadeer and with the organization’s office in Munich and with Uyghurs in Xinjiang despite the Chinese government’s opposition’³⁸⁹.

The reason behind the tolerance shown by the Central Asian governments is, as previously explained, the desire to maintain some leverage. However, as explained to me by Wang Shaogang, ‘every country tries to maintain some leverage, but the balance is on the Chinese side’³⁹⁰. On the other hand no neighboring Central Asian governments have nurtured expansion dreams in Xinjiang because, as Mackerras told me, ‘The Uyghurs of Xinjiang certainly would not become part of some other Central Asian state’³⁹¹

In essence, since the end of the Cold War, Beijing has adopted a periphery policy in Central Asia with the stability of Xinjiang in mind as the main goal. For this, it has implemented a strong strategy made up of positive and negative incentives towards Central Asia in order to deter any state there from supporting Uyghur insurgents in Xinjiang and Uyghur advocacy groups in their own territory. This strategy has paid

³⁸⁶ Ong Russell *China’s security interests in Central Asia* Central Asian Survey, 24 (4), (December 2005) 430

³⁸⁷ Swanström Niklas, interview by author, October 25 2009, by phone, notes

³⁸⁸ Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, October 2008, Almaty, notes and tape recording

³⁸⁹ Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, October 2008, Almaty, notes and tape recording

³⁹⁰ Wang Shang Wang, interview by author, May 5, 2005, Hong Kong, notes

³⁹¹ Colin Mackerras interview by author, June 19, 2005, Beijing, notes

dividends as the Central Asian leaders have accepted the Chinese ultimatum and have sided with Beijing in its fight against Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang.

As mentioned above, the Central Asian leaderships' siding with Beijing at the expense of Uyghur discontent has been achieved not only through direct relations, but also through the involvement of a specific larger framework: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This section describes Chinese policies in Central Asia, including the implementation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's framework, which is aimed at stabilizing Xinjiang through international co-operation. My research shows that China has used both direct bilateral relations and a larger framework such as the SCO, including a relevant power such as Russia, in order to successfully engage the Central Asian governments in maintaining stability in Xinjiang.

The SCO was formed in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as an informal group of countries that were aiming at co-operating in the military sector. In 2001 it was transformed into a fully-fledged international organization with the inclusion of Uzbekistan and the establishment of a secretariat. The secretariat is based in Beijing (which testifies to the importance of the Chinese membership) while a permanent office for counterterrorism is hosted in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). Observer status has been given to Mongolia, Pakistan, India and Iran, but has been denied to the United States³⁹². The organization basically has three goals: co-operation to fight terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, trade exchange promotion and energy co-operation, and containment of the United States and European influence. The first goal, cooperation to fight terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, is absolutely critical for the Chinese leaders. At a 2005 summit of the SCO President Hu Jintao read a speech, *Strengthening Solidarity and Cooperation, and Promoting Stability and Development*, pointing out that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization should focus on security and economic development. As concerns the security issue, Hu declared that SCO's members should

First, make the best efforts to strengthen the security cooperation. Without stability, there is no development to speak of. The "three forces" (extremism, separatism and terrorism) have constituted severe threats to all member states and the whole region. We must unremittingly promote the implementation of documents and agreements on fighting against the three forces, conduct

³⁹² Casarini Nicola *La politica cinese nel mondo e in Asia centrale. Implicazioni per l'Occidente (Chinese politics around the world and in Central Asia, Feedbacks for the West)* (Rome: Institute for International Affairs, January 2008)

effective exchanges of intelligence, and speed up the research on the establishment of emergency mechanisms.³⁹³

On August 2007, the Chinese President Hu Jintao made a state visit to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan that 'helped to improve China's relations with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia, to safeguard security and stability of the region, and to stimulate the long-term, healthy and stable development of the SCO',³⁹⁴ and attended a summit of this organization in Bishkek. As commented on by the Chinese Foreign Minister Jiechi Yang and reported by Xinhua:

Heads of state from the member countries of the SCO observed the first ever joint anti-terrorism drill, which not only bolstered the troop's morale but also enhanced the member states' coordinating capability in jointly cracking down on the three evil forces and showed their determination and willpower to safeguard regional security and stability.³⁹⁵

Other reports from the Chinese official press added that, at a press briefing, Assistant Foreign Minister Li Hui said

China and Kazakhstan have made impressive achievements in identifying and cracking down on the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism, and cooperated well within the framework of the United Nations, SCO and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.³⁹⁶

The stability of Xinjiang is such a priority for the Chinese leadership that it has also encouraged the engagement of another relevant regional power and a member of this organization, that is, Russia. As Brill Olcott³⁹⁷ underlined

[...] both Russia and China are pursuing an aggressive regional strategy to complement the strong bilateral relationships their leaders are working hard to cultivate. Both countries believe geopolitical influence is accrued through

³⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China *Hu Jintao Attends the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit and Delivers an Important Speech* Beijing, The People's Daily, July 5, 2005 available from <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/hzxcfelseng/t202787.htm>> accessed April 20, 2009

³⁹⁴ *Hu's tour to Central Asia, Russia fruitful: FM*, Beijing, The People's Daily, August 19, 2007 available from <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/6242977.html>> accessed April 20, 2009

³⁹⁵ *Hu's tour to Central Asia, Russia fruitful: FM*, Beijing, The People's Daily, August 19, 2007 available from <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/6242977.html>> accessed April 20, 2009

³⁹⁶ *Chinese President's central Asia tour conducive to regional peace and stability: FM* The People's Daily, August 10, 2007, available from <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/6236118.html>> accessed April 20, 2009

³⁹⁷ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press 2005) 210

regional organizations which unite the Central Asian states and which they dominate.

Russia and China both have a direct interest in preventing Islamist movements in Central Asia. Its own experience in the Northern Caucasus shows that, despite the limited size of Islamic population in Russia, wherever Muslims are radicalized (as in the Caucasus) the effects can be very destabilizing³⁹⁸. Therefore, Russia and China are deeply committed to maintaining stability in Central Asia as demonstrated by several declarations issued by their leaders in recent years. In 2005 Russia and China issued a common declaration stating that

It is necessary to favor the peaceful co-existence and the common development of different peoples and also make efforts to defend state unity. All actions to divide states and spur divisions among the nationalities are inadmissible.³⁹⁹

The SCO is not only a security organization. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is also a tool for China's penetration in Central Asia. Its activity concurs with the parallel development of bilateral relationships. China and the Central Asian countries have established an entirely new relationship in recent years. As Britt Olcott reports 'China's posture toward [sic] the Central Asian states seems quite predictable and generally supportive'⁴⁰⁰ and the Central Asian authorities seem very happy and grateful for this. In the end, the SCO is an organization that is aimed at maintaining the regional status quo i.e. the predominance of Chinese and Russian interests and the survival of the Central Asian regimes. As stated by Britt Olcott

Russia and China are, to some degree, competitors for Central Asian oil and gas reserves. But to some degree, both recognize the partial pooling of efforts to be to their individual advantage.⁴⁰¹

In essence, China has used both direct bilateral relations and a larger framework such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, including a relevant power such as

³⁹⁸ Legvold Robert *Great power stakes in Central Asia* in *Thinking strategically. The major powers, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian nexus* ed. Legvold Robert (Cambridge MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2003) 4-5

³⁹⁹ *Declaration of Russia and China on International Order in the XXI century* Signed in Moscow on July 1, 2005 by Russian President Vladimir Putin and the PRC President Hu Jintao available from <<http://pensatoio.ilcannocchiale.it/print/623544.html>> accessed April 20, 2009

⁴⁰⁰ Britt Olcott Martha *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Changing the "Playing Field" in Central Asia* Testimony before the Helsinki Commission (September 26, 2006) 13

⁴⁰¹ Britt Olcott Martha *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Changing the "Playing Field" in Central Asia* Testimony before the Helsinki Commission (September 26, 2006) 11

Russia, in order to engage the Central Asian governments in maintaining stability in Xinjiang. This approach has resulted in the effective alignment of the Central Asian leaderships with the Chinese side at the expense of a common ethnic heritage across international regional borders. The Central Asians have done so mainly because, as elaborated by McMillan ‘the relationships in the Xinjiang-Central Asian region are not equal: China does dominate, economically, politically and militarily’⁴⁰².

The following section examines the Chinese comprehensive approach, including the economic, political and military sectors: an approach aimed at building up a dominating role in Central Asia and aimed at securing consent from the Central Asian governments to suppress Uyghur political activism there. My aim is to demonstrate how China has built master-vassal relationships with the Central Asia that have dutifully accepted restricting the Uyghur advocacy groups that are disseminated in the Central Asian region.

As mentioned above, to achieve this dominating role, the Chinese leadership has adopted a comprehensive strategy (*quan mian hua*) in Central Asia. This strategy is aimed at building up a dominating role in Central Asia and aimed at securing consent from Central Asian governments to suppress Uyghur political activism. This approach articulates itself in a series of dimensions comprising military, political and economic sectors, all deemed equally strategically vital in the long term⁴⁰³. This comprehensive approach began at the very birth of the independent Central Asian Republics when China immediately moved to solve old disputes about the land borders as a means to establish confidence building with the political and military leadership of their new neighbors. The comprehensive approach adopted by the Chinese leadership also includes economic aid. Trade has become a particularly relevant tool to exercise leverage over the Central Asian governments: Beijing has linked substantial aid to trade by granting loans to buy Chinese goods⁴⁰⁴. This is similar to Japan’s policy as it was promoted in most of Asia. As underlined by Swanström ‘It is China, not the USA or Russia, that has begun to meet the dearth of consumer goods and provisions in Central

⁴⁰² McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

⁴⁰³ Ong Russell *China’s security interests in Central Asia* Central Asian Survey 24(4), (December 2005) 425

⁴⁰⁴ 5.7 million USD to Kyrgyzstan and 5 million USD to Tajikistan. Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45 (November 2005) 579

Asia.’⁴⁰⁵ The economic strategy carried out by Beijing has also included massive investment in the energy sector in Central Asia. As Bequelin told me

China is trying to use economic agreements in order to gain political influence. In China decisions are made because of economical interest. They would like to have mere political influence but in the end it is oil and gas resources that matter at least for security reasons⁴⁰⁶

Central Asian leaders have been urging Chinese investment in the energy sector. China has gladly complied because it prefers the option of importing from this area rather than from others. China nowadays ships half of its oil import from the Middle East through the Malacca Strait, a choke-point that could be easily blocked by a hostile party (state or non-state). Therefore the alternative to import energy sources from Central Asia is largely pursued by China.

In the end:

The Chinese attempts to dominate the region look like a new version of classical vassal relations and China has worked hard to bring Central Asia once more under its economic and political influence⁴⁰⁷

Leniency, especially that offered by Central Asian Soviet leadership⁴⁰⁸, towards the Uyghurs living in Central Asia has ‘evaporated as economic interdependency in the Xinjiang – Central Asian region expands’⁴⁰⁹ stated McMillan. And the results of these dominating relations, whether they are bilateral or multilateral, security concerned or comprehensive, have proved to be very productive as, in the words of Swanström,

there are today no governments in the region that would dare to support any organization that could be classified as terrorists [...] Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have agreed to assist China in her struggle against separatists from Xinjiang in any way, and have on several occasions struck against Chinese rebels in direct military operations.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁵ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45 (November 2005) 579

⁴⁰⁶ Bequelin Nicholas, interview by author, June 2005, Hong Kong, notes

⁴⁰⁷ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45, (November 2005) 581

⁴⁰⁸ Ahmet Igamberdi, interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes

⁴⁰⁹ McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia Interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction into the 21st Century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

⁴¹⁰ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* Journal of Contemporary China, 14:45, (November 2005) 573

All in all China has established a dominant role in the main sectors, the political, economic and military ones, and it has been using this master-vassal relation in order to induce the Central Asians to restrict any support to Uyghur political activism there.

This section examines the geopolitical and internal reasons behind why the Central Asia aligned with Chinese strategy at the expense of the Uyghur issue. I first assess how Central Asian states, like any new states, have set their geopolitical interests according to the interests that are advanced by the neighboring great power, i.e. China, and so far they support China's position in Xinjiang, even though this compromises their ethnic links with the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Secondly, I study how authoritarian regimes in China and Central Asia can feel comfortable as they all experience illiberal political systems and they resent any foreign interference in internal affairs, again at the expense of Uyghur advocacy. My research shows that, firstly, the Central Asian governments are favoring a geopolitical alliance with China rather than ethnic kin support to the Uyghur because the former is domestically sustainable; secondly the Central Asian leaders feel comfortable when allied with China because the latter does not interfere with their authoritarian leaderships.

Concerning the first point, there is firm consensus among all the regional states that stability is an imperative, as suggested by China, the main geopolitical partner of the Central Asian Republics. The main goal of the Chinese leaders is to preserve stability in an area at its immediate borders, thus preserving the present political situation in which 'China does dominate, economically, politically and militarily'⁴¹¹ in relationships in the Xinjiang-Central Asian region. So, as Swanström told me

China has offered the Central Asian governments its support for regional stability in exchange for the Central Asian control over Uyghur advocacy groups disseminated in Central Asia.⁴¹²

The politics of favoring geopolitical interest (with China) at the expense of nationalism and shared ethnicity has also been shown to be sustainable in the past as the

⁴¹¹ McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia Interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, Transition and Crossborder Interaction into the 21st Century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

⁴¹² Swanström Niklas, interview by author by phone, October 25 2009, notes

Chechen case suggests⁴¹³ where, despite the similarities and ethnic proximity, the Central Asian leaderships did not offer any political support to Chechnya's separatist movement and, instead, backed Moscow's stern response against the attempted secession. As the Central Asian governments did not offer any substantial support to the Chechen separatist movement, similarly, they are not going to offer any assistance to the Uyghur separatists.

In a few words, the Central Asian leaderships have already experienced domestic sustainability as the result of favoring a geopolitical agenda in lieu of ethnic kinship: in our case the Central Asian regimes prefer to have a geopolitical alliance with China rather than choosing to support the Uyghurs.

Concerning the second point on shared illiberal political systems, China's regime and the authoritarian regimes in Central Asia find common ground in resenting any foreign intrusion into their internal affairs. Ong remarked that 'the Chinese have become the most ardent defendants of the Westphalian principle of sovereignty'⁴¹⁴. Brill Olcott noticed that

The Chinese have little interest in the domestic policies of the Central Asian regimes. Beijing is not encouraging them to be autocrat [sic] and they aren't disturbed if they become democratic. But, like the rest of the SCO member states, the leadership in Beijing believe [sic] that security threats come from groups with alien (read extremist) ideologies, and are not produced as a result of

⁴¹³ With Chechnya Central Asia shared ethnic and religious kinship, as Chechens were mostly Muslim. As the peoples of the Central Asia, the Chechens were struggling to achieve independence from Moscow. Chechnya had been colonized by Russian forces in the Nineteenth century just as Central Asia. Chechen separatists claimed they met all conditions set by Stalin, on the basis of which the right of secession had been granted to the 15 former Union Republics (that they had a population of a million and more; that the titular nation comprised the majority; that they shared a border with a foreign state (in Chechnya's case, Georgia). The secessionist *elite* in Chechnya grouped under the name Chechen National Congress (CNC), in November 1990 declared independence. However, neither Moscow nor Grozny's Soviet leadership accepted its legitimacy. The Chechen secessionist groups under the new leadership of Johar Dudaev transformed the CNC into the National Congress of the Chechen People (NCCP) and proclaimed the establishment of the independent 'Chechen Republic of Ichkeria'. Interestingly Dudaev until 1990 had been a general of the Soviet Air Force posted in Estonia where he had the opportunity to observe and admire growing Estonian secessionist movements. Moscow reacted in November 1994 by attacking Grozny with ground and air forces: it was the start of the first campaign in Chechnya that lasted until 1996 with the defeat of Russian leadership, itself deeply split over the issue. In September 1999 the bombings of apartment buildings in Moscow, Volgograd and Buinaksk provided the *casus belli* for Russian intervention and the start of the second Chechen military campaign that ended with a new invasion of Chechnya. See Hughes James *Chechnya. From nationalism to jihad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2007) and Russell John *Chechnya – Russia's 'War on terror'* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) 42

⁴¹⁴ Ong Russell *China's security interests Central Asia Central Asian Survey*, 24(4), (December 2005) 428

the domestic policies (and in particular the human rights abuses) of the governments themselves.⁴¹⁵

Economic development and political stability are the main goals of Central Asian leaders. Political pluralism is not. Clearly the model is China and therefore it does not come as a surprise that the successful and pragmatic Chinese leaders are very much admired by the Central Asian governments. In the end, China shares with them an interest in fighting against secessionist movements as these are identified as being among the main threats to the political status quo and the stability of the present political order. Therefore the Central Asian illiberal regimes have agreed to assist China in its fight against the Uyghur separatists.

To sum up, my research shows firstly, that China has included a specific approach towards the security of the region by directly engaging the Central Asian Republics in its fight against Uyghur separatists and secondly it has established a dominant role in the main sectors, the political, economic and military ones. In addition, it has been using this master-vassal relation in order to induce the Central Asian leaders to restrict any support to Uyghur political activism there. In the end, the Central Asian governments have distanced themselves from the Uyghur separatist cause as they have deemed it more relevant to accommodate the demands of the Chinese leadership at the expense of pursuing ethnic nationalism and a kinship-based separatist cause.

However, despite the lack of governmental support from Central Asia, there may be non-state actors that could incite the conflict there, agents such as radical groups and the Uyghur Diaspora which are scattered across the Central Asian region. Indeed the Central Asian leaders have restricted any government support to Uyghur political activism in the region. However, that region hosts many different non-state agents, including several ethnic groups and radical groups. Therefore the question is: are they assisting the Uyghurs' mobilization in Xinjiang? Are they offering any support to the Uyghur political mobilization? In this section I show that, first, despite previous predictions of incumbent ethnic political mobilization in the Central Asian region, most ethnic political activists, including the Uyghurs, have undergone a process of demobilization in the rigidly-controlled Central Asian societies. Secondly, I demonstrate that political violence in the form of radical terrorism is in steady decline in the Central

⁴¹⁵ Britt Olcott Martha *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Changing the "Playing Field" in Central Asia* Testimony before the Helsinki Commission, September 26 2006, 6

Asian region as the result of governmental repression on one hand and the expansion of non-violent channels to vent frustration on the other hand.

Concerning the first point, I argue that Central Asian governments have controlled and restricted Uyghur political mobilization in their region as they have also done with many other ethnic groups disseminated there. Central Asian governments have enhanced their policies in order to repress Uyghur political activism in the region, but with a very subtle strategy. On the one hand, they have left the Uyghur, pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic NGOs within their territory with only minimal latitude to advocate the Xinjiang Uyghur cause⁴¹⁶. This has been done in order to appease pan-Turkic nationalism and to create a modicum of leverage towards China. However, at the same time, the Central Asian governments have maintained steady control over the operations that are carried out by those same NGOs. Thus they have been very careful to ensure that even this limited activity does not disturb their relations with China⁴¹⁷.

More recently, even the little leniency offered by the Central Asian leadership⁴¹⁸, towards the Uyghurs living in Central Asia has ‘evaporated as the economic interdependency in the Xinjiang – Central Asian region expands’⁴¹⁹. Therefore, in Central Asia the Uyghur separatist groups are cracked down on and the non-violent Uyghur advocacy groups are ‘controlled by the regimes’⁴²⁰ and their range of activities is very limited. As explained in the Diaspora Chapter, the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia has different degrees of freedom to advocate Uyghur Human Rights in Xinjiang depending on the diversity of the environment. In the words of Kadeer

⁴¹⁶ The activities of these organizations are focused on propaganda (leaflets, lectures and demonstrations) about the plight of Uyghurs.
Khahriman Gojamberdi, interview by author by phone, October 2008, Almaty, notes and tape recording

⁴¹⁷ There are several Uyghur organizations based in Almaty (Kazakhstan) and in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), but they are difficult to contact, as I personally experienced. In Kazakhstan the main organizations are: Nozugum Foundation, the Kazakhstan Regional Uyghur (*Ittipak*) Organization, the Uyghuristan Freedom association, the Kazakhstan Uyghur Unity (*Ittipak*) Association and the Uyghur Youth Union in Kazakhstan. While in Kyrgyzstan they are: the Kyrgyzstan Uyghur Unity (*Ittipak*) Association and the Bishkek Human Rights Committee.

⁴¹⁸ Ahmet Igamberdi interview by author, May 23, 2005, Sydney, notes

⁴¹⁹ McMillan Ann *Xinjiang and Central Asia interdependency – not integration in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: history, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st Century* ed. Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 95

⁴²⁰ Vielmini Fabrizio, personal communication, September 17 2009

Kazakhstan is the best place [in Central Asia] for our Human Rights activists while Uzbekistan is the worst country where to promote Uyghur advocacy: it is simply impossible there. In Kyrgyzstan it is also very difficult.⁴²¹

However, in general, since independence the Central Asian minority groups have undergone de-mobilization or ‘the process through which subordinate groups lose their capacity to pursue collective goals’⁴²² as in Central Asia the state operates social control ‘to cage channels of political participation’⁴²³.

Indeed, Sisci told me that ‘since the end of the Nineties Uyghur activists have been expelled from Central Asia and gone to Germany, the United States and Turkey’⁴²⁴. As previously explained in this chapter, even before independence, the Uyghur presence in Central Asia was marginal.

I mentioned before that, since independence, Central Asian minority groups have undergone de-mobilization. In fact, many analysts predicted that in the Central Asian region soon after independence, a large mobilization of the several minority groups dispersed there would happen⁴²⁵. Fumagalli commented that ‘A season of ethnic conflict was expected to break out in the region. Remarkably, instead, very little mobilization has taken place’⁴²⁶. Many have therefore come to regard the case of Central Asia’s minorities as an instance of the archetypal Gellnerian ‘dogs [of nationalism] that did not bark’⁴²⁷ and in fact as Mark Beissinger’s research shows, ‘Central Asia remained by and large quiet on the eve of the Soviet collapse and in the early post-independence phase.’⁴²⁸ And still is. However, in Fumagalli’s words, this

⁴²¹ Rabeya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009 Kyoto, notes and tape recording

⁴²² Remmer K. L. *Political Demobilization in Chile, 1973-1978*. *Comparative Politics*, 12(3), 1980, 276 quoted by Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006, 79

⁴²³ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006,, 80

⁴²⁴ Francesco Sisci interview by author by phone, October 7 2009, notes

⁴²⁵ Just to quote one, ‘Central Asia as a whole – including Xinjiang - faces the constant and growing specter of instability’ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 37

⁴²⁶ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006, 72

⁴²⁷ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006, 73

⁴²⁸ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia’s ethnic minorities: why studying ‘non-events’ matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006, 77

'lack of 'noise' (Gellner's 'barking') does not imply total inertia. Other activities are performed far from the centre of the political stage and in a low tone/volume.'⁴²⁹ However, the problem is how to record these activities and, mainly, the fact that these activities have very little effect on the political centre, or at least there are no remaining visible effects on the latter. One has to assume that Uyghur mobilization in Central Asia remains low and does not 'bark' effectively at the Central Asian political elites or at the Xinjiang ones. In the end, the CARs' governments have steadily enhanced their control over the Uyghur activists and the activities that are disseminated in the region in order to minimize their capacity to mobilize, or 'bark' for the Xinjiang - Uyghur cause.

However, other groups, such as the radical groups dispersed in Central Asia, could be interested in hijacking the Uyghur cause and inciting conflict in Xinjiang. Could they really be an important external force in the Uyghur conflict?

The coming section demonstrates that, despite some alarming forecasts in the past with regard to the incumbent radical destabilization of the Central Asian region, terrorism is in decline there. It is also declining in terms of its actual penetration of radical groups in Central Asian societies. And in the end, on their part there is little interest in inciting ethnic conflict in Xinjiang.

In Central Asia, political elitism is concentrated in small circles; the strengthening of authoritarian rule and the lack of any political and economic reforms have increased popular frustration and pushed some to join radical Islamic groups. These groups have become more and more popular because of the lack of alternatives 'rather than the real desire to replace the regimes with a caliphate'⁴³⁰. As reported by the Country Reports on Terrorism 2007:

[...] popular grievances over governance and poor economic growth enhanced the conditions that terrorists and other extremists could exploit to recruit and operate in some parts of the region, such as the Ferghana valley.⁴³¹

However, after a stage of resurgence in the late 1990s, since September 11, 2001 and the fall of the Taliban's regime in Afghanistan, terrorism has been steadily declining in Central Asia. Leaders of the regions have exaggerated the risk posed by

⁴²⁹ Fumagalli Matteo *A methodological note on researching Central Asia's ethnic minorities: why studying 'non-events' matters* International Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 11/2006, 72

⁴³⁰ Fumagalli Matteo *La dimensione strategica dell'Asia centrale tra Russia, Cina e USA (The strategic dimension of Central Asia among Russia, China and the United States)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI Institute for International Politics Studies, September 2007) 35

⁴³¹ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism of the United States Department of State *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Washington DC: US State Department, April 2008)

radical groups in order to maintain a status quo in their favor⁴³². Contrary to common assumptions, radicalism is not widespread all over the region. In the words of Fumagalli

Political Islam in post-Soviet area has taken various appearances and display. Of scarce relevance in Turkmenistan and substantially marginal also in Kazakhstan, the so called Islamic threat in the region is concentrated in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, especially in the Ferghana valley transborder region.⁴³³

As Britt Olcott underlined

The risk posed by Islamic extremist groups has varied dramatically from state to state, in large part because the Islamic revival has followed quite a different course for the region's long-urbanized Uzbeks and Tajiks than it has for the formerly nomadic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen. Since the decline of communism, the practice of Islam has been revived everywhere, but radical Islam has made the greatest inroads where traditions of Islamic learning were strongest—that is, such as the old oasis cities.⁴³⁴

I am going to examine the recurrence to violence by radical groups in Central Asia in order to understand whether this political violence may spread in Xinjiang too and/or be carried out in Central Asia to support the Uyghur cause. Figures show that the number of terrorist groups and the volume of their activities have been consistently dropping. Analysis of data about terrorist attacks perpetrated in the whole region of Central Asia from 2004 to 2006 shows a steady decline⁴³⁵. In 2004 there were eleven attacks (mostly in Uzbekistan); in 2005 only one was registered in Uzbekistan and three in other countries of the region. In 2006, five attacks were carried out, mostly in Tajikistan and none in Uzbekistan. Of all these incidents, only a fraction of them were carried out by radical Islamists and these took place mostly in 2004. Before that year attacks were a minimal phenomena especially if compared to the size of the countries where they are perpetrated as shown by the table below on terrorist attacks carried out between 1997 and 2003 in Central Asia:

⁴³² See also Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005) 229

⁴³³ Fumagalli Matteo *La dimensione strategica dell'Asia centrale tra Russia, Cina e USA (The strategic dimension of Central Asia among Russia, China and the United States)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI Institute for International Politics Studies, September 2007) 12

⁴³⁴ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia's second chance* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005) 28

⁴³⁵ The Lawson Terrorism Information Center, Oklahoma City [website] available from <<http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/incidentcalendar.asp>> accessed August 28, 2008

Country	Terrorist attacks	Attacks for million of inhabitants
Uzbekistan	2	0.08
Tajikistan	11	1.80
Other Central Asian Republics	0	0

Source *US Department of State* as reported in Krueger Alan B. *What makes a terrorist Economics and the roots of terrorism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007) 66-67

No recent terrorist attacks have been carried out in Central Asia in support of the Uyghur cause. The last incident of this kind was reported in 2003 in Kyrgyzstan when, on March 16, a group of Uyghur militants hijacked a bus with twenty Chinese businessmen and later killed all of them. The *Eastern Turkestan Liberation Organization* was suspected as the force behind it. Between the years 2004 and 2006, shootouts between Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik army forces and radical groups occurred, but they did not seriously threaten the stability of the regimes⁴³⁶. However, as recorded by Fumagalli ‘local elites (but also China and Russia) exploited these as an excuse to repress even strongly religious and secular, violent and non violent oppositions.’⁴³⁷.

Or, as Brill Olcott mentioned, ‘Central Asia’s leaders have both exaggerated the risk of extremist groups and overestimated popular patience.’⁴³⁸ The steady decline of terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan alone may be caused by the ‘government's repressive security policies and [...] tightening of border controls, especially in the Ferghana

⁴³⁶ Fumagalli Matteo *La dimensione strategica dell’Asia centrale tra Russia, Cina e USA (The strategic dimension of Central Asia among Russia, China and the United States)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI Institute for International Politics Studies, September 2007) 12

⁴³⁷ Fumagalli Matteo *La dimensione strategica dell’Asia centrale tra Russia, Cina e USA (The strategic dimension of Central Asia among Russia, China and the United States)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI Institute for International Politics Studies, September 2007) 12

⁴³⁸ Brill Olcott Martha *Central Asia’s second chance* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005) 227

Valley and increased its cooperation with Kyrgyzstan'.⁴³⁹ This border control is effective and as Sisci told me

the terrorist weapons used to carry out the attacks in Xinjiang in the summer 2008 were artisanal made and this proves that regular trafficking of weapons does not reach radicals in Xinjiang.^{440 441}

All in all, as indicated in the Country Reports on Terrorism 2007:

A sustained commitment to counterterrorism by Central Asian states resulted in relatively few terrorist attacks. With U.S. support, Central Asian states have undertaken to improve the capabilities of their border forces and build new border posts to impede terrorist movements and interdict drug smuggling, some of which financed terrorism in the region. The sheer length of the border and local corruption remained obstacles in Central Asia's efforts to control its borders, however.⁴⁴²

And it is precisely the control of borders that could facilitate the transportation of Uyghur radicals trained elsewhere:

the Chinese concern for the Central Asian support to the separatists in Xinjiang accelerated when it became clear that some 50 Uighurs had been trained in Afghanistan and then transported to China through several Central Asian states. This incident created tension with all states that could have functioned as transport route for the separatists, including Pakistan.⁴⁴³

However, this fact indicates that Central Asia could be a passageway for Uyghur radicals, not a hotbed for their training and growth. Moreover, even though, as

⁴³⁹ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism of the United States Department of State *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Washington DC: US State Department, April 2008)

⁴⁴⁰ On July 26, 2008 a Uyghur radical group, the Turkestan Islamic Party, claimed to have carried out a series of attacks in Xinjiang and in other Chinese regions starting from May 5, 2008 with a bomb on a Shanghai bus, then with a bomb assault on a police station in Wenzhou on July 17, then with three bus bombed in Yunnan Province on July 21. Later on another string of terrorist incidents occurred: on August 3 2008 a police station assault in Kashgar provoked 16 deaths. The Chinese police blamed the ETIM or 'Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement' as responsible for the attack. A few days later, on August 8 2008, another bomb killed eight persons⁴⁴⁰ in Kuqa, Southern Xinjiang and on August 11 three policemen were stabbed to death at a check-point in Xinjiang

Esplosioni nello Xinjiang, otto morti (Explosions in Xinjiang, eight deaths) Milan, Corriere della Sera, August 9, 2008

Cina: uccisi tre poliziotti nello Xinjiang (China: three policemen killed in Xinjiang) Milan, Corriere della Sera, August 12, 2008

⁴⁴¹ Francesco Sisci interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes

⁴⁴² Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism of the United States Department of State *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Washington DC: US State Department, April 2008)

⁴⁴³ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45, November 2005, 575

Swanström told me, ‘people in Central Asia are quite unhappy, especially in Kyrgyzstan, with the pro China policies of their governments’⁴⁴⁴ this unhappiness is not turned into a reason to support Uyghur separatists. This is due to the fact that

Uyghurs in Central Asia suffer from a negative image spread among the population and the governments, similarly to the racial stigma attached to Gypsy in Europe.⁴⁴⁵

In the end, radicalism is not widespread over the Central Asian region and Islamism does not pose a real danger for the life of Central Asian regimes. Terrorism in Central Asia is also in decline because it is no longer the only tool that is available to oppose authoritarian regimes. The demise of the regime of Askar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 shows a recent trend in Central Asia where dictatorial regimes might be overthrown by peaceful means and thanks to the help of external forces (i.e. the US government)⁴⁴⁶. The American Human Rights Department and organizations such as Freedom House and the Senator McCain Foundation trained, funded and helped Akayev’s opposition in order to organize and to kick start a peaceful revolution⁴⁴⁷. The development of opposition groups among civil society is also helped by the many non-governmental organizations that manage the aid that is provided by international organizations⁴⁴⁸. This new group of workers, with the help of foreign funding, is indeed providing civil society with a powerful tool to oppose the regimes without resorting to violence, thus eroding the role of radical groups as the only opposition to governments. There is the establishment of an opposition press, organization of peaceful demonstrations, the distribution of a clear symbol of opposition that can be identified and marketed by supporters (such as the color orange in Ukraine and pink in Georgia or Serbia). Past assumptions I made a few years ago, such as the following, are now proving to be unfounded and outdated:

⁴⁴⁴ Swanström Niklas, Interview released by phone on October 26, 2009, notes

⁴⁴⁵ Swanström Niklas, Interview released by phone on October 26, 2009, notes

⁴⁴⁶ A similar process took place in Ukraine, Georgia and Serbia using tools and methods detailed in the book *From dictatorship to democracy* by Gene Sharp. I analyze the contents and activities of these pro - democracy organizations in the chapter devoted to the United States as an external force.

⁴⁴⁷ Loizeau Manon *Revolution.com* [documentary] (Paris: CAPA, 2005)

⁴⁴⁸ Vielmini Fabrizio *Continuità post-sovietica, autoritarismo politico e diritti umani in Asia centrale (Post soviet continuity, political authoritarianism and human rights in Central Asia)* (Milan: ISPI Working Paper, ISPI, September 2007)

The destabilization of the Central Asian regimes is to a great extent owing to the political vacuum created by authoritarian policies. The repression of legitimate opposition (especially in Uzbekistan which appears somewhat reluctant to accept Western aid because of the West's pressure for democratization) crowds out moderate forces, benefiting the extremist forces that are left with the monopoly of opposition.⁴⁴⁹

Nowadays dissatisfaction with a regime is also increasingly channeled through peaceful actions and terrorist forces might find new competitors for their leadership as opposition forces. If this is indeed the case, the Xinjiang Uyghur cause is, as far as Central Asian terrorist groups are concerned, clearly becoming sidelined. The focus for change is more likely to be internal.

In the end, the Central Asian governments have steadily enhanced their control over Uyghur activists and the activities that are disseminated in the region in order to minimize their capacity to mobilize, or 'bark', for the Xinjiang - Uyghur cause. This is due to the fact that the Central Asian governments have accepted the Chinese diktats to repress Uyghur political activism or face the consequences of negative incentives. Other agents, such as radicals disseminated in Central Asia, are not proving to be effective for the Uyghur cause for various reasons. Firstly, figures show that recourse to forms of political opposition such as terrorism is in decline in the Central Asian region. Terrorism in Central Asia is also in decline because it is no longer the only way to oppose authoritarian regimes: new non-violent tools are expanding as is shown by the case of Kyrgyzstan. In the end, radicalism is not widespread all over the Central Asian region and Islamism does not pose a real danger of destabilization. Secondly, the history of the past decade shows that the international networks of terror have limited levels of engagement with the Uyghur cause. The focus of non-Uyghur radical groups in Central Asia is more and more on internal affairs rather than on Xinjiang.

In essence, Central Asian agents have a low potential to incite conflict in Xinjiang. Indeed, bordering countries do not always follow the path of supporting the separatist efforts of their neighbors. In the similar case of Slovenia, Italy, a neighboring country who hosted a sizable community of Slovenians, did not support the independence process of Slovenia. The coming section examines this case to show how, as in the case of Central Asia and the Xinjiang issue, neighboring countries may oppose

⁴⁴⁹ Ghini Anna Lisa *European Union – Central Asia relations in European Union – Asia relations in the 21st Century: problems, prospects and strategies* (Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi, 2002)

separatism, despite the interests of co-ethnic communities and of strong internal pressure.

The Slovenian case: the opposition of the neighboring Italian government

In the Introduction I have already explained my reasons for performing a comparative study. In this particular case, Central Asia and Italy share some common factors with the Uyghur-Xinjiang and Slovenian separatist conflicts respectively. What are these factors? First of all, as explained in the Diaspora Chapter, before independence in 1991 Slovenia had a diaspora distributed in neighboring countries including Italy. This diaspora is similar to the Uyghur one disseminated in neighboring Central Asia. Secondly, as in the Central Asia-China case, Yugoslav-Italy bilateral relations were consistent and prevailed over other interests. For this analysis I mainly focus on the role of the Italian government and assess its involvement in the Slovenian separatist process.

As explained in the chapter on the Theories, the Italian state agents might have had a few motives to embroil in this conflict by supporting Slovenian separatists. One of the reasons is opportunism: supporting Slovenian separatists in order to gain leverage and bargain with an independent Slovenia and extract concessions. These concessions might have included better linguistic and cultural tutelage of the Italian minority living in Slovenia and also the critical quest, by Italian electorate, for the return or the compensation of confiscated estates under Tito's regime, estates once belonged to Italians. Also Italy might have been interested in expanding its influence in Slovenia under the pressure exerted by its main two competitors: Germany and Austria. Did Italy pursue this strategy?

Another theory tells us that Italy might have engaged in sporadic interventions in support of Slovenian mobilization. For Carment and James electorates typically dislike expensive foreign intervention therefore any 'Ethnic intervention [...] will be subordinate to the need for good politico-economic management. When specific circumstances combine to make other options unattractive, however, intervention comes into play.⁴⁵⁰ Were these circumstances in place at the time of the Slovenian conflict?

⁴⁵⁰ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention in Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 22

The last theory involving a possible role of Italian state agents is the one linked to the diversionary theory of war. For this debate state agents intervene in a conflict abroad in order to gain resources, create diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose grip on their power at home⁴⁵¹. Could this have been the case of Italian leaders?

My conclusion is that, despite the presence of other relevant interests and significant internal pressure by non-Slovenian non-state agents⁴⁵², the Italian government decided in favor of bilateral relations with Yugoslavia. Therefore, the Italian government did not support Slovenian independence. This attitude is similar to the attitude of the Central Asian governments with regard to the Uyghur separatist conflict in Xinjiang. In the end, as in the case of Central Asia and the Xinjiang issue, neighboring countries may oppose separatism despite the interests of co-ethnic communities and strong internal pressure.

As mentioned above, Italy was initially reluctant, and only later recognized the futility of resisting the course of history and the powerful drive of pro-democracy and pro-independence forces inside Slovenia. As the chapter devoted to Pakistan shows, there were contacts with Italian political forces and, there was the role of non-state agents, some of them strongly in favor of Slovenian independence. However, the Italian government was not supporting this separatist process and, as a matter of fact, strongly opposed it. Historically, Italy had indeed maintained such a stance because of Serbia’s role in the ‘Southern Slavs’ reunification process. This role is strikingly similar to the one played by Piedmont in the Italian *Risorgimento* which culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Moreover, the Serbs were a counterweight to the often virulent anti-Italian sentiment of the other parts of the complex Yugoslav ethnic puzzles such the Croats and the Slovenians. Finally, Rome feared the possible *revanchisme* of Slovenians living in Italy once an independent State had been established. This concern was dominant, even though the Italian local authorities and the population of the Slovenian bordering region of Friuli Venezia Giulia pledged the central government to support Slovenian Independence. Also, the

⁴⁵¹ Carment David and James Patrick *Third party states in ethnic conflict: identifying the domestic determinants of intervention* in *Ethnic conflict and international politics: explaining diffusion and escalation* ed. Lobell E. Steven and Mauceri Philip (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 13

⁴⁵² Please refer to the definition of local bureaucracies as non-state agents explained in the Literature Review Chapter

Yugoslav Army had initially concentrated its forces on the borders facing Italy, especially between Gorizia and Nova Gorica⁴⁵³, after Belgrade had falsely warned its soldiers that Italy was using its own army to support Slovenians⁴⁵⁴.

Whatever motives the Italians may have had, when the Slovenians had made clear their drive to pursue independence, Italy initially tried to talk them out of it. In the spring of 1991, the Italian minister of Foreign Affairs, Gianni De Michelis had warned the Slovenian leadership that ‘in Europe there is no space left for new states and you certainly do not want to move to another continent’⁴⁵⁵.

The attacks by the Yugoslav Army in Slovenia lasted a few weeks, during this period the troika of the European Union tried to persuade the Slovenians to suspend the independence declaration for two weeks. While the momentum gradually moved in favor of Slovenian independence, when the European *troika* again attempted mediation in Zagreb on July 1, 1991, De Michelis suggested that their Slovenian counterpart should accept a three-month-moratorium. At the end of this period, the Slovenians could do whatever they liked because ‘Nobody doubts Slovenia will be independent. The issue is Croatia’⁴⁵⁶.

But the Slovenian leadership did not trust the Italian-led *troika* as Italy was deemed pro-Serbia⁴⁵⁷. The Slovenians initially refused the proposal only to comply with it one week later in Brioni after a German-led attempt to push for a European recognition of Slovenian independence failed.

⁴⁵³ They concentrated in that specific area because it was the *Soglia di Gorizia* or Gorizia’s Threshold where, since the end of the World War II, Warsaw Pact and NATO forces had planned that an eventual ground attack in Italy could happen. So in that bordering zone large part of the Yugoslav and Italian armies had been settled since many decades. During the ten days Slovenian independence war, several ground battles between the Yugoslav army and the Slovenian territorial police occurred right on the border between Gorizia and Nova Gorica while the Italian army displayed some monitoring forces on its side of the border and the Italian Red Cross and hospital units offered emergency assistance to wounded Yugoslav and Slovenian soldiers and civilians.

⁴⁵⁴ Coen Leonardo *Battaglia ai confini. Gorizia ha paura (Battle on the borders. Gorizia is frightened)* Rome, La Repubblica, June 29, 1991

⁴⁵⁵ Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell’indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) 58

⁴⁵⁶ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 51

⁴⁵⁷ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 35

The governments in other countries had agreed sometime earlier to support Slovenian separatism, but, as De Michelis told me, they only did so in deference to the internal forces supporting Slovenian separatism:

Initially the Austrian government was not in favor, but a part of the Austrian political system was, especially the Popular Party and one of its leaders, was Ehrard Busek, at that time Ministry of Science, who later became involved with the Balkan stability pact, and who led a group close to the Bavarian CSU which was in favor of Yugoslav split-up. Both Busek and the Bavarian CSU were supporters of the Yugoslav dissolution as a natural stage of the Central Eastern European post communist transition. They both were Catholic and therefore allied to Peterle and the Slovenian Catholic party.⁴⁵⁸

In general, as De Michelis wrote later, internal pressure in these countries was very strong:

There was manipulation by academic and political groups, not economic sectors, in Germany, in Austria and in Italy as well, in order to push public opinion to think that the conflict in Slovenia was very violent and their governments had to do something in favor of Slovenian people.⁴⁵⁹

In Italy internal pressure was strong too and, as explained to me by De Michelis:

The main daily, the Corriere della Sera, titled a seven-column article ‘Ljubljana bombed’ and published other un-realistic articles about supposed cruelties carried out by Yugoslav forces in order to gain popular support for the Slovenian case.⁴⁶⁰

In fact Slovenian separatists preferred to lobby non-state agents rather than the Italian central government as Lusa told me:

Slovenian separatists preferred to seek support from the regional leaders instead of the central governments. In Slovenia they understand how the Italian political system works and have a great capacity to exploit regional collaboration tools such as Alpe Adria and friendship networking built inside Alpe Adria.⁴⁶¹

However, the Italian central government agreed to support Slovenian independence only when it was clear that it was fast becoming a *fait accompli*. As a

⁴⁵⁸ De Michelis Gianni, interview by author by phone, October 14 2009, notes

⁴⁵⁹ Bavarian CSU strongly supported Yugoslav dissolution mainly because Munich was, together with Toronto, the stronghold of the Croatian diaspora. See De Michelis Gianni *Così cercammo di impedire la Guerra (How we tried to avoid the war)*, in *La Guerra Yugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes, Italian Journal on Geopolitics 1/1994

⁴⁶⁰ De Michelis Gianni, interview by author by phone, October 14 2009, notes

⁴⁶¹ Lusa Stefano, interview by author by phone, October 23 2009, notes

matter of fact, direct Italian support to Slovenia started only after the declaration of independence.

In the end, my conclusion is that the Slovenian case shows that, despite the presence of relevant interests, Italy is a neighboring country that was opposed to separatism, despite the hosting of co-ethnic communities and strong internal pressure. In this case, the Italian government decided in favor of bilateral relations with Yugoslavia, and despite significant internal pressure by non-Slovenian non-state agents. In this case, the hosting of co-ethnic communities and strong internal pressure did not prove instrumental in pushing a government towards supporting a separatist movement in a neighboring country. This stance is similar to the one adopted by the Central Asian governments *vis-a-vis* the Uyghur separatist conflict in Xinjiang.

Conclusion

All in all, Central Asia is not playing any role in the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist cause. Since their independence, China and the CARs have all had a mutual interest in a number of issues. These include the fight against terrorism, border security, regional stability, economic development, and good relations.

China understands the strategic importance of Central Asia and the role that energy supplies originating from the region can play over Chinese economic development⁴⁶². Therefore, China has been exercising enormous influence over the area in order to avoid the settlement of any destabilizing force in the region. Moreover, China has been offering its Central Asian neighbors not only convenient trade exchanges but also major investments in infrastructures. And lastly China is more tolerant *vis-a-vis* the poor human rights records of the Central Asian regimes⁴⁶³. For their part, the Central Asian leaderships do not want to lose such an important ally, one that has promoted engagement instead of hostility. And indeed, for China, one reward

⁴⁶² In 1997 China imported 35.47 million tons of oil from Central Asia while in 2004 it imported more than 100 million tons. Di Placido Lorena *Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Un modello di cooperazione regionale in Asia Centrale (Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A model of regional cooperation in Central Asia)*, CeMiSS Osservatorio Strategico: supplemento Vol. 6 (Rome: June 2006)

⁴⁶³ on May 27, 2005 Uzbek president Karimov went to an official visit to Beijing which was cordial despite the International Community criticism over Karimov's brutal repression of the Andijian riots. For Chinese leaders Uzbek government did not make any mistake. Di Placido Lorena *Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Un modello di cooperazione regionale in Asia Centrale (Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A model of regional cooperation in Central Asia)*, CeMiSS Osservatorio Strategico: supplemento Vol. 6 (Rome: June 2006)

among others is the Central Asian abandonment of any support to or involvement in the Uyghur separatist cause in Xinjiang.

Terrorism in the Central Asian region is on the wane as political violence in the form of radical terrorism steadily declines. On the other hand, most ethnic political activists, including the Uyghurs, have undergone a process of de-mobilization in the rigidly controlled Central Asian societies.

The Italian government's behavior over the Slovenian case shows that factors such as hosting co-ethnic communities plus strong internal pressure did not prove to be instrumental in pushing a government to support a separatist movement in a neighboring country.

In the end, the possibility that the Central Asian state and/or non-state actors are in possession of the capacity or the will to trigger instability in Xinjiang is very remote. If there are external forces working to destabilize Xinjiang, most probably they are not to be sought or found in Central Asia.

Chapter 6

Pakistan's role in the Uyghur conflict

If you don't visit a bad neighborhood, the bad neighborhood will visit you
Thomas Friedman⁴⁶⁴

This chapter analyzes the influence of Pakistan. Pakistan is especially important to the Uyghur separatists as it shares not just borders with Xinjiang, but also religious roots with the Uyghurs. Pakistan is considered to be a good ally of the Chinese government so its involvement in the Xinjiang Uyghur conflict is often perceived as unbelievable. However, Pakistan is also hosting a series of non-state agents who are not deemed to be following Pakistani government strategies preferring, instead, to carry out their own agenda. So it is crucial to assess whether Pakistan and Pakistani based forces, or more appropriately non-state agents, are indeed exerting any external influence on the Uyghur separatist groups in Xinjiang.

This analysis is carried out in relation to the general research question posed in this thesis: what are the selected external forces under investigation doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? Therefore, in this chapter the relevant question is: what are Pakistan and/or Pakistani non-state players doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

As explained in the Literature Review Chapter, in political and public discourse, despite frequent references to the influence of Pakistani originated radicalism in the area, there is surprisingly little academic research on the phenomenon. The possibility that instability might be spurred from Pakistan is undervalued. Is the latter scenario, on the contrary, a likely possibility?

My research showed two findings: firstly, Pakistan could have several reasons to act as an external agent of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. However, there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position away from being an ally of China towards more dangerous waters. Secondly, non-state agents in Pakistan, mainly radical groups, could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict there. Their rationale, unrelated to *les raisons d'état* of the Pakistani government, may induce destabilization in Xinjiang. My research shows that there exists a problem of radicalism and infiltration of radicals from Pakistan to

⁴⁶⁴ Friedman Thomas *Il mondo è piatto: breve storia del ventesimo secolo (The world is flat: a brief history of the twenty-first century)* (Milano: Mondadori, 2006) 52

Xinjiang. However, there is not enough evidence to assess the size of non-state forces infiltration from Pakistan in Xinjiang. This assessment is difficult to carry out due to the understandable sensibility of the information involved. As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, here, the problem is how to record these activities. Often this has been limited to non-academic literature with disputable data while academic research still remains focused on other external players and fails to consider the Pakistani actors in the Uyghur conflict. On this matter much work is yet to be done. Nevertheless, this study attempts to expand the scope of plausible external players in the Xinjiang conflict: however this study at last confronts an existing phenomenon that has not been appropriately scrutinized by the academic literature on the issue. This work, at least, fully considers Pakistani players in the Uyghur conflict. Therefore it expands the usual range of external agents that are examined by the academic literature because it includes a neighboring country that is usually overlooked in studies on this conflict.

Why is this confrontation useful? As illustrated in the Introduction Chapter, neighboring countries, as in the case of Pakistan, are considered, at least theoretically, interested players in an internal conflict. Moreover, together with the Central Asian region, Pakistan shares with Xinjiang the so-called fuzzy border areas, where the political frontier does not correspond to the ethnic demarcation of the people living there. This is in contrast to there being rigid division between mono-ethnic nation states, where the frontier sharply demarcates the territory of each ethnic group⁴⁶⁵. Therefore these players, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics, share with the Uyghur ethnic kinships (Turkic for the Central Asians and Islamic for the Pakistanis) that generate a direct interest in the conflict. As previously stated, the role of Pakistan, in terms of state and non-state actors, has been widely ignored in research on the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Therefore, for this player also, it is highly needful to perform an assessment of its influence on the Uyghur mobilization in Xinjiang.

Interviews and informal observation were utilized to investigate this issue⁴⁶⁶. My research was aimed at answering the question: are Pakistani state and/or non-state actors a relevant external force for the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? What would be the

⁴⁶⁵ See also Zago Moreno *Gli spazi contesi delle città' frontiera europee (The contended spaces of the European frontier cities)* in *Nazione, etnia, minoranza e confine. Contributi a una sociologia internazionale (Nation, ethnic group, minority and border. Contribution to an International Sociology)* ed. Gasparini Alberto (Gorizia: ISIG, 1998) 227-234

⁴⁶⁶ Between 1999 and 2001 I lived in Pakistan and worked at Karachi University. See the chapter on Methodology Research on the observation I carried out in those years

rationale and feasibility of such intervention by Pakistani agents? Is there any interest in such involvement in the Pakistani region? If yes, what interest could there be? Would it be from state or non-state actors?

The first section of this chapter examines the rationale behind the eventual involvement of the Pakistani government and other non-state agents based in the country in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Then I will approach the feasibility of this involvement: has it happened already? Is there evidence of any current activities of Pakistani agents involved in the Uyghur conflict? The third section analyzes the similar Slovenian case, for reasons already explained in the introduction. This analysis takes into account the role of non-state agents in a neighboring country such as Italy, which hosted numerous groups of non-state forces who acted against the government strategy. This situation demonstrates that bordering countries sometimes host non-state agents who work against their own government's policy in order to support separatist groups in neighboring countries: a scenario similar to the Xinjiang-Pakistan case. Then I will present my conclusions.

Rationale

This section analyzes the rationale behind an intervention by the Pakistani government and the other agents that are based in the country in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. First, I examine what reasons could push the Pakistani government towards favoring Uyghur led destabilization in Xinjiang. Then I assess what rationale could lead other non-state agents to be involved in the Uyghur conflict. This examination will show that both state and non-state agents in Pakistan have various motives to intrude in the Uyghur conflict.

Concerning the first point, general wisdom considers the alliance between Pakistan and China as deeply strategic and therefore excludes the idea that the Pakistani government could harm this relation. However, these relations are not static and could change as the geostrategic setting of the region has been shifting towards new patterns in the last decade: I explain these patterns later in this chapter. In essence, in this evolving scenario China no longer perceives Pakistan as a fundamental ally. Is this new geostrategic pattern pushing Pakistan to react by spurring the conflict in Xinjiang?

In theoretical terms, as seen in the Theories Chapter, several reasons could drive Pakistani state players to do so. The first one is opportunism: Pakistani state players

support separatist groups in Xinjiang in order to gain leverage with a view to bargaining with the host state, China, and extracting concessions. The second one links ethnic affinities to political competition: the Pakistani establishment could oscillate from passive lobbying to Real-politik policies with respect to the Uyghur conflict. The third one concerns instrumental motives: Pakistani leaders intervene in a conflict abroad, in Xinjiang, in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose their grip on power at home. The last three reasons are concerned with ethnic affinities, affective motives and trans-nationalism: in all these cases Pakistani radical groups could support the Uyghur separatists.

The first hypothesis is related to opportunism: using the destabilization of Xinjiang in order to gain some leverage. Pakistan could be pursuing a strategy to try and deter the looming marginalization from the regional geopolitical scenario that the country has undergone. Xinjiang could be instrumental in ensuring that Pakistan is central to an evolving regional scenario where it could be otherwise marginalized if not ignored outright. The implosion of the Soviet Union in the early Nineties provoked dramatic changes in Central and South Asia. First of all, international attention shifted towards the new Central Asian Republics which were, and still are, very attractive for their gas and oil basins. Even the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, born in 1996 and comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, was founded in order to link these young Central Asian Republics to the two Asian giants. But the Shanghai Cooperation Organization does not include Pakistan⁴⁶⁷ despite its vehement efforts: evidently the focus is elsewhere, mainly in Central Asia, and there is also a problem of mistrust. China mistrusts the capacity of the Pakistani authorities to control the many radical groups dispersed in their territory, as explained by Haider:

[...] China’s counterterrorism concerns are linked to the broader militancy infrastructure in Pakistan that has partly flowed from its policy of using militant proxies against India in Kashmir⁴⁶⁸.

Moreover the India factor is marring the Pakistani position in China-Pakistani relations. India, Pakistan’s main regional competitor, has been developing a strategic partnership with China, Pakistan’s old time ally: since 2002 India and China have been developing an approach strategy that includes several agreements and even joint

⁴⁶⁷ Pakistan has been accepted only as an observer in 2005 at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

⁴⁶⁸ Haider Zaid *The China facto in Pakistan* Harvard Kennedy School Center for Public Leadership available from < <http://64.151.79.128/?p=131> > accessed October 15, 2010

military exercises⁴⁶⁹ and economic partnership: ‘With the Sino-Indian trade volume seven times that between China and Pakistan, China has clear economic interests in a Sino-Indian rapprochement.’⁴⁷⁰ Both India and China share the same mistrust of Western powers, particularly the United States, as they feel the West is maintaining control over them through military, economic and technological predominance⁴⁷¹. In the end, these two former competitors are giving in to political proximity more and more: India does not want to be encircled by China and China knows that it can not rise as a world power with the Indian spine in the flank. This new re-alignment has come as a shock for Pakistan, China’s historical ally. This change of geopolitical scenario and the fear of marginalization have made Pakistan edgy and nervous. Pakistan has finally understood that China does not need its alliance in order to deter or defeat India. For this reason Pakistan could have felt the urge to gain some other leverage over China and the infiltration of destabilizing proxy groups across the Xinjiang border would have been aimed at gaining this leverage. In the end, a country is geopolitically relevant if it is an asset or if it poses a problem: Pakistan is no longer an asset for China now that China’s anti India strategy has ceased. Therefore Pakistan may look to avoid marginalization by becoming problematic for China. The tactic here would be to support Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang in order to acquire Chinese attention and to avoid being left out in the new regional geopolitical order.

In essence, in this hypothesis Pakistan wants to deter its looming marginalization from the regional geopolitical scenario and, in order to acquire some leverage over China and to extract some concessions, Pakistan could become problematic by infiltrating destabilizing forces in Xinjiang.

The second hypothesis links ethnic affinities to political competition. As seen in the Theory Chapter Pakistani establishment could oscillate between passive lobbying

⁴⁶⁹ In 2005 China and India signed an agreement on the parameters to settle their boundary disagreement. They also started a strategic and co-operative partnership for peace. In 2006 a memorandum on defense exchange and co-operation is signed. And in 2007 they held their first joint military exercise on counter terrorism in Yunnan Province (PRC). *Milestones in India-China relations* Beijing, China Daily, April 1, 2010 available from <www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2010-04/01/content_9672201.htm> accessed June 1, 2010

⁴⁷⁰ Haider Zaid *The China factor in Pakistan* Harvard Kennedy School Center for Public Leadership available from <<http://64.151.79.128/?p=131>> accessed October 15, 2010

⁴⁷¹ See Bracken Paul *Fuochi ad Oriente (Fire in the East)* (Milan: Corbaccio, 2001) And also Landi Claudio *Buongiorno Asia. I nuovi giganti e la crisi dell'unilateralismo Americano. (Goodmorning Asia. The new giants and the crisis of the American unilateralism)* (Florence: Vallecchi, 2004)

and Real-politik policies with respect to the Uyghur conflict. Realpolitik policies are a substantial detachment from the Uyghur stance in favor of the Chinese stance. I concentrate on the passive lobbying because it involves pro-active behavior with respect to the conflict under study (i.e. assistance towards mobilizing Uyghurs). Therefore, for my research, passive lobbying is the relevant motive to assess⁴⁷². Pakistan could opt for this light support of the Uyghurs, mainly in order to appease some of its vocal Islamic groups or non-state actors. Here, the reason has less to do with strategic motives and more to do with ethnic domestic instances. Pakistan, despite hosting several minority groups, is a homogenous Islamic country⁴⁷³. A significant part of the population may challenge the Pakistani policy of alliance with China at the expense of the Uyghur ethnic kin. This is similar to the scenario in the chapter devoted to Central Asia. For this reason, Pakistani government may be pushed by internal players to support the Uyghur cause at least by performing some passive lobbying.

In essence, the theory that links ethnic affinities to political competition indicates that Pakistan may oscillate between passive lobbying and Real-politik policies with respect to the Uyghur conflict. For my research, passive lobbying is the relevant motive to assess. In this case, as in the similar case of Central Asia, a significant part of the population may challenge Pakistan's policy of alliance with China at the expense of the Uyghur ethnic kin and persuade it to enforce some kind of passive lobby in favor of the Uyghurs.

The third hypothesis concerns instrumental motives. For this hypothesis, Pakistani leaders intervene in a conflict abroad, i.e. Xinjiang, in order to gain resources, create a diversion or create the 'rally around the flag' effect when they lose their grip on power at home. This is a strategy already used in order to divert domestic attention and to create the rally around the flag effect by using the notorious Kashmir conflict and the anti-West campaigns⁴⁷⁴. It is interesting notice here, since my research is in Geopolitics, the first of the above-mentioned instrumental motives: Pakistan could spur the conflict in Xinjiang in order to gain resources. This is compatible with a hypothesis that was

⁴⁷² I explain in the Theories Chapter the definition of passive lobbying elaborated by Carment and James

⁴⁷³ See the Theory Chapter.

⁴⁷⁴ Ghini Anna Lisa *Pakistan and the Afghan crisis: European perspectives* [unpublished paper] (Hong Kong: Open University, November 1, 2001)

developed by Yossef Bodansky⁴⁷⁵ in which Pakistan wants to become the dominant power over the Western gateways to China in order to be in a position to exert influence over the entire so called Trans-Asian Axis⁴⁷⁶. What is this Trans Asian Axis? It is a land based transportation system stretching along the traditional Silk Route and its primary choke point is the Taklamakan Desert and Xinjiang's strategic cities of Yarkand and Kashi (traditionally Kashgar)⁴⁷⁷. In the end, controlling the Southern part of Xinjiang, which borders Pakistan, means controlling all the access routes towards Western China. As Yosif Bodansky noted in 1995:

Therefore, in pursuit of these objectives, Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency, the ISI, has recently launched a relentless drive to ensure that local Islamist irregular forces (most of whom are already Pakistan's proteges sponsored by the ISI) ultimately control all key roads and axes in recognition of Islamabad's hegemony over the western gateways of China.⁴⁷⁸

The Pakistani strategy to control this area is not recent. By the early Nineties Pakistan already had a grand design that went much beyond Kashmir and tried to establish a position of influence in the Trans-Asian region, including Afghanistan. In 1993, (under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto) the Pakistani interior minister Naserullah Babar⁴⁷⁹ led a government that had backed the Taliban financially, logistically and strategically since their first appearance in the Afghan civil war⁴⁸⁰, a country Pakistani leaders consider their 'strategic depth'⁴⁸¹. The ISI devoted much of its time and budget to backing the Taliban. It played a key role in the Taliban's rise to

⁴⁷⁵ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* [online article] (October 1995) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html>accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁷⁶ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* [online article] (October 1995) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html>accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁷⁷ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* [online article] (October 1995) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html>accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁷⁸ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* [online article] (October 1995) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html>accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁷⁹ Babar was at the beginning looking for a Pashtun group who could give access to Pakistani trade with Central Asia through southern Afghanistan and found it in the Taliban. So it started to back the Taliban even though this support generated apprehensions among Chinese leaders as they did not favor the establishment of such a radical regime in Afghanistan. Rashid Ahmed *China forced to expand role in Central Asia* The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst (July 19 2000) available from <www.iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_26_7_00_1.htm> accessed November 5, 2005

⁴⁸⁰ The Taleban movement first appeared in 1994, then it won the other groups and conquered nearly all Afghan territory and its capital Kabul (October 1996)

⁴⁸¹ Ghini Anna Lisa *Pakistan and the Afghan crisis: European perspectives* [unpublished paper] (Hong Kong: Open University, November 1, 2001)

power, culminating in its capture of Kabul in 1996 and since then the ISI has supported the Taliban's war against the Northern Alliance. According to a July 2001 report from Human Rights Watch, the ISI has

[...] been bankrolling Taliban military operations, arranging training for its fighters, planning and directing offensives, providing and facilitating shipments of ammunition and fuel, and on several occasions, apparently directly providing combat support.⁴⁸²

Since 2001 most of Afghanistan has been under the control of Western forces, therefore Pakistani leaders could be searching for new getaways. As a consequence, Xinjiang could become the northern strategic depth for Pakistan. As Pakistan lacks the fundamental weight to compete over the control of the Trans Asian Axis, it tries to obtain it by other means: sponsorship of terrorist groups in this area is functional for its control. In the end as Bodansky explained

Pakistan is determined to become a power to be reckoned with by its mere control over choke-points, not achievements or economic capabilities. The sponsoring of terrorism and non-version by the ISI is presently Islamabad's primary and proven instrument in the great endeavor.⁴⁸³

Bodansky is not the only author to notice Pakistan's attitude towards controlling external territories for its own security: a mantra Pakistan has been pursuing also on its eastern border, in Kashmir and Punjab. Botiveau and Cesari regarded it as an 'obsession'⁴⁸⁴ alimeted by Pakistani leaders towards all their neighbors.

In essence, on this hypothesis Pakistan could spur the conflict in Xinjiang in order to gain resources, in this case new gateways such as the so-called Trans-Asian Axis' or, in other words, control over the Western gateways to China.

To sum up, the Pakistani state could have three main reasons to destabilize Xinjiang by fomenting ethnic unrest there. First, it could be a strategy to avoid looming marginalization by gaining some kind of leverage towards China. Secondly, a significant part of the population may challenge the Pakistani policy of alliance with China at the expense of ethnic kinship and persuade it to enforce some kind of passive

⁴⁸² Human Rights Watch *Afghanistan crisis of impunity. The role of Pakistan, Russia and Iran in fueling the civil war* [report] (2001) available from <www.hrw.org/reports/2001/afghan2/index.htm#TopOfPage> accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁸³ Bodansky Yossef *Pakistan's trans Asian designs* [online article] (October 1995) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/bulletin/95oct/si951001.html> accessed November 2, 2005

⁴⁸⁴ Botiveau Bernard and Cesari Jocelyne *Geopolitique des Islams (Geopolitics of Islamic tendencies)* (Paris: Economica, 1997)

lobby in favor of the Uyghur. Third, there could be a strategy to exert influence over the Western gateways of China and therefore a relevant part of the Trans Asian axis.

Having examined the reasons behind the eventual Pakistani state intervention in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, I now examine the rationale behind the eventual interests of Pakistani non-state agents in spurring the conflict in Xinjiang. My aim is to demonstrate that non-state agents in Pakistan, mainly radical groups, could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict there. What non-state actors? As I will examine later in the Feasibility section, there is a phenomenon of radicals from Pakistan infiltrating Xinjiang. Autonomous radical groups also pursue their own agendas. This consideration is agreed also by those who are wary of the idea that the Pakistani government is involved in Xinjiang. As Natale told me

I'd exclude the idea that somebody in the Pakistani establishment supports Uyghur secessionism. For the Pakistani establishment the alliance with China is extremely important. However another issue regards the galaxy of Al Qaeda – Taliban and other pro Jihad groups fighting for the world Islamic Caliphate, as they are out of any strategic consideration.⁴⁸⁵

For these non-state actors there are three theoretical reasons to intrude in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, which are explained in the Theories Chapter. The first reason could be ethnic affinities. The second reason for these non-state agents to give their support to the Uyghur in Xinjiang could be group affinity. The third reason is linked to trans-nationalism, and deals with the interference that non-state entities produce as external forces.

Concerning the first reason, ethnic affinities are a powerful pressure to support ethnic conflicts abroad. However, trans-border ethnic affinities are very often a limit to external support by state agents since the external state may fear the contagion and domino effects. On the contrary, movements abroad such as non-state agents that share ethnic affinities could provide the ultimate external support, rather than states. In line with research by Horowitz, ethnic affinities are usually the motive that pushes '[...] not strong, established states with clear-cut interests, but [...] irregular forces across porous, remote borders'⁴⁸⁶. In the case under study here non-state agents such as radical groups

⁴⁸⁵ Beniamino Natale, personal communication, October 6, 2009

⁴⁸⁶ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

based in Pakistan may be identified as the ‘irregular forces’ mentioned by Horowitz. This suggests that the involvement of Pakistani radical groups and their support to the Uyghur separatists might prove the most durable and the strongest of all the possible supports.

Group affinity could be the second reason for these non-state agents to give their support to Uyghurs in Xinjiang. As explained by Gurr, one of the main affinity school’s scholar, groups defined by religion or race are more likely to get broader support, while groups defined by language are less likely to receive support⁴⁸⁷. Therefore, Islamist groups could find a strong motive to support the Uyghurs. Together with tribal groups settled there they have already established their own control over a significant part of the Pakistan North Western region, especially in Waziristan, and are known for their strong commitment to spreading their influence in other parts of Pakistan. These other parts include Afghanistan, Indian Kashmir and, at least since the Nineties, there have been attempts to do so in Xinjiang too (see the Feasibility section for a comprehensive analysis).

The third reason is linked to trans-nationalism, and deals with the interference that non-state entities produce as external forces. This latter group, non-state entities, plays a relevant role in separatist conflicts, and the Uyghur one could be their target. In this case, Islamist radical groups in Pakistan may be encouraged to spur the conflict in Xinjiang because of their strong ideology. As Stepanova theorized, ideology is more relevant to the international activities of a terrorist group rather than to its own structural shape: such as a strictly structured and heavily centralized group or an organization with consistent networks⁴⁸⁸. Also Del Re described that terrorism based on religious motives is ‘[...] today characterized by global activities on a larger scale that may be supported by networks-structured organizations: inter/intra connected, not necessarily with a hierarchical structure or anyway with a stronger structure, but with a

⁴⁸⁷ As a matter of fact for Gurr Islamic minorities are part of a very dense and organized network where they can acquire better techniques for effective mobilization, plausible appeals, good leadership and organizational skills. Moreover ‘*equally or more important, they benefit from the inspiration of successful movements elsewhere, successes that provide the images and more incentives that motivate activists.*’ Gurr Ted R. *Peoples versus states: minorities at risk in the new century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000) 90

⁴⁸⁸ Stepanova Ekaterina (2008) *Terrorism in asymmetrical conflict Ideological and structural aspects* Sipri Research Report no. 23 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press) 109-111
In the Theories Chapter I already mentioned some works linking ideology to the internationalization of terrorist groups. There are also works connecting ethnic conflict to terrorism: see Soeters Joseph L. *Ethnic conflict and terrorism. The origins and dynamics of civil wars* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005)

better capacity to communicate and disseminate their messages⁴⁸⁹. And this could be the case of religious terrorism spread in neighboring countries (including Xinjiang) by Pakistan-based organizations.

Sources I will later analyze state that since the Nineties Uyghur separatists have found significant ideological and material support in Pakistan. In the past decade there have been reports that radicals have infiltrated Xinjiang from Pakistan in order to encourage trans-border terrorism. They also have offered training of Uyghur militants and supply of weapons. Indeed, as mentioned before, Pakistan suffers from a high degree of internal instability that is led by the presence of innumerable groups with their own agendas. These groups may challenge the Pakistani policy of alliance with China by infiltrating Xinjiang with Islamists and/or training Uyghurs in order to destabilize the bordering region of Xinjiang: as they are already doing in other parts of the region. These reasons could lead to extremely destabilizing developments in Xinjiang.

To sum up, there are three reasons to account for why non-state agents in Pakistan, mainly radical groups, could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict. The first is trans-border ethnic affinities where movements abroad that share ethnic affinities rather than states could provide the ultimate external support. The second is group affinity, especially groups defined by religion or those who, as a race, are more likely to get broader support. The third reason is linked to trans-nationalism and deals with the interference that non-state entities produce as external forces. This latter group, non-state entities as radical groups, plays a relevant role in separatist conflicts, especially for ideological reasons, and the Uyghur one could be their target.

In this section I have examined the rationale behind the eventual involvement in the Uyghur conflict of the Pakistani state and non-state agents. First, I have assessed the reasons that could push the Pakistani government to favor Uyghur led destabilization in Xinjiang. In this case, three main reasons could drive Pakistani state players to do so. The first reason is opportunism: on this hypothesis, Pakistani state players support separatist groups in Xinjiang in order to gain leverage in view of bargaining with the host state, China, and extracting concessions. The second reason links domestic constraints to ethnic composition. On this hypothesis, Pakistani state actors may

⁴⁸⁹ Del Re Emanuela C. *Terrorismo e religioni (Terrorism and religion)* Gnosis, Rivista di Intelligence italiana (Gnosis, Italian intelligence journal) 2, 2006, 34-48

oscillate between Real-politik policies and passive lobbying. For my research, passive lobbying is the relevant motive to assess, as it corresponds to an actual involvement in this conflict. In this case, which is similar to the case of Central Asia, a significant part of the population may challenge the Pakistani policy of an alliance with China at the expense of the Uyghur ethnic kin and thus persuade it to enforce some kind of passive lobby in favor of the Uyghur. The third reason concerns instrumental motives. On this hypothesis, in essence, Pakistan could spur the conflict in Xinjiang in order to gain resources. In this case, the resources could be the so-called Trans-Asian Axis' or, in other words, control over the vital Western gateways to China.

On the other hand, the Pakistani government has proved to be unable to control its own non-state agents, such as the many radical groups, which follow their own agendas. These groups might contribute to the destabilization of Xinjiang despite the Pakistani government's unwillingness. These agents could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict there. For these non-state actors there are three theoretical reasons to intrude in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, and these are explained in the Theories Chapter. The first reason could be ethnic affinities. The second reason for these non-state agents to give their support to Uyghurs in Xinjiang could be group affinity. The third reason is linked to trans-nationalism, and deals with the interference that non-state entities produce as external forces. Their rationale, unrelated to *les raisons d'état* of the Pakistani state-players, may induce destabilization in Xinjiang. In the end, Trans-border ethnic affinities, group affinity, and trans-national ideology could be the main reasons to push these groups to spur the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. However, it remains to be assessed whether they are feasible as external key players in that conflict. In the next section I will investigate that assessment.

Feasibility

In the previous section I assessed that Pakistani state and non-state actors have many reasons to intrude in this conflict: are they willing to do it? I will first examine the feasibility of the state actors and then, secondly, the feasibility of non-state players. My conclusion is that there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistani state players are shifting their position from being allies of China towards more dangerous waters. As for non-state agents, my research shows that there is a history of radical infiltration

from Pakistan to Xinjiang, and it seems that both governments, Chinese and Pakistani, are aware of this situation. Although radicalism in Xinjiang was not generated in Pakistan, Pakistan, especially in the tribal areas, seems to be the ideal place to train would-be militants as it would provide a safe heaven for this practice. How large this phenomenon is, in term of size and threat, remains to be assessed and this assessment is difficult to carry out, due to the understandable sensitivity of the information involved. However, my research at least attempted to expand this perspective and it has finally placed Pakistan on the geopolitical map of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

With reference to the state actors, in the previous section I assessed the existence of strategic motives behind a possible involvement by Pakistani state actors. However, during my research, observers and analysts appeared to vary greatly concerning the hypothesis that Pakistani state players could be involved in destabilizing Xinjiang. As Natale clearly summed up to me:

China will always be a guarantee for Pakistan against India, as witnessed by the very tight relations between the armies of the two countries, which co-operate in every aspect including their nuclear programs: without China's assistance Pakistan would never have been able to develop the atomic bomb.⁴⁹⁰

The role exerted by China in supporting the Pakistani atomic weapons program has been recalled by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In the aftermath of the Pakistani nuclear tests in a broadcast speech he stated that:

Especially the manner in which China has supported us on this occasion is praiseworthy. Pakistan – China friendship has proved stronger and more meaningful after every test and tribulation.⁴⁹¹

I also had occasion to observe the closeness between the Chinese scientists and the Pakistani atomic bomb team⁴⁹² and other programs of economic assistance⁴⁹³ aimed

⁴⁹⁰ Beniamino Natale, personal communication, October 6, 2009

⁴⁹¹ *Nawaz Sharif's speech* BBC, May 28, 1998 available from <www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/102445.stm> accessed May 5, 2010

⁴⁹² Pakistan held its first atomic test in May 1998. When I arrived in Pakistan the year after, it was a common assumption among Pakistanis and the international community there that this test had been carried out thanks to Chinese assistance. Also, when Dr Kahn, the father of the atomic bomb in Pakistan, was still in charge of the nuclear research laboratories he hosted Chinese scientists in one of his estates in Islamabad. I happened to live in the house next door. Personal observation between 1999 and 2001 in Islamabad

at building strong ties between China and Pakistan. Also, fear of the reaction from Chinese authorities and the issues regarding the stability of the entire region would deter Pakistan, as it would deter any other country, from taking such dangerous steps. As Swanström summed up the situation to me

I would say there is no government interested in destabilizing Xinjiang for two reasons: first because it would destabilize the entire region and second because that government would have to face the Chinese government's reaction.⁴⁹⁴

Therefore, to conclude, Pakistan could have reasons to act as an external agent of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. However there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position as an ally of China towards more dangerous waters.

Now, I will examine the Islamists infiltration in Xinjiang since the Nineties, in order to assess the feasibility of non-state Pakistani external agents in the Xinjiang conflict. Assessing who, among the galaxy of radical groups in Pakistan, could be the external agent for the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang is an impossible task. Therefore, I have limited my research to examining previous accounts of radical infiltrations in Xinjiang that were carried out in the recent past and I assess the potential threats of this infiltration in the present. A comprehensive work like this has not been retrieved. Therefore, I believe this is an important analysis that could help assess the real weight of the role of Pakistani non-state agents in spurring the conflict in Xinjiang. My research shows that despite the presence of such infiltration in Xinjiang and the connections between some radical groups in Pakistan and in Xinjiang, there is no evidence that could give a real estimation of the size of the problem.

Starr has already explained the issue of connection among Uyghur radical groups in Xinjiang and abroad:

The reality is that Uyghurs are indeed in touch with Muslim groups outside Xinjiang, some of them have been radicalized into broader jihadist politics in the process, a handful were earlier involved in guerilla or terrorist training in Afghanistan, and some are in touch with international Muslim mujahidin struggling for Muslim causes of independence worldwide⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ such as the building site of the water energy plant in Gazibarota, near Islamabad, and the development of the port of Gwadar in the Beluchistani region near Karachi. I visited the first project's site together with a EU delegation.

⁴⁹⁴ Swanström Niklas, interview by author by phone, October 26, 2009, notes

⁴⁹⁵ Fuller Graham E. and Starr Frederick S *The Xinjiang problem* Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 36

However radicalism in Xinjiang was not originally generated in Pakistan, but in Saudi Arabia and in Iran as Sisci told me:

Islamism started to spread in Xinjiang in the late 80s early 90s when Iran and Saudi Arabia offered, welcomed by Chinese authorities, religious training to Chinese Muslims including Uyghurs. When these clerics returned to China they spread Islamism, especially the Wahabi doctrine. They were much appreciated as they were better educated than the local mullahs and they still set a high standard for educated clerics. This was the way the radical impulse in Xinjiang was born.⁴⁹⁶

This kind of infiltration, particularly from Pakistan, is a phenomenon that has existed since the 1990s. As Gannon confirmed to me:

The Uyghurs' history with Afghanistan and Pakistan dates back to the early 1990s. There were Uyghur in Afghanistan during the mujahedeen government that is back in power today in Afghanistan and again during the Taliban period. [...] During the 1990s Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami party sent its people to Xinjiang, according to Javed Nasir, who was ISI chief in Pakistan. The Jamaat activists went there to stir things up for sure but had contacts with the local activists. [...] Jamaat-e-Islami has sent its people into many countries, including to Bosnia and to Chechnya.⁴⁹⁷

Some radical groups in Pakistan have links with the ISI or with ISI officials and already some analysts have reported the activities of these groups, as well as the activities of other groups in Xinjiang. As Surya Gangadharan noted

China has blamed the Lahore based Tabligh-e-Jamaat, headed by Pakistan's former ISI chief, for fomenting unrest in Xinjiang. Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami has become one of the several fundamentalist groups that have been giving regular arms training to militants from Xinjiang, creating strong embarrassment for Islamabad. Since 1992, China has been asking Pakistani authorities to prevent such activities.⁴⁹⁸

In 1990, after the Baren uprising, during which 22 persons were killed⁴⁹⁹, China closed its road links with Pakistan for several months in order to block fundamentalist infiltration from there. An agreement between China and Pakistan in 1995 to upgrade

⁴⁹⁶ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes.

⁴⁹⁷ Kathy Gannon, personal communication, February 9, 2009.

⁴⁹⁸ Gangadharan Surya *The China-Taliban equation* Aakrosh: Asian Journal On Terrorism and Internal Conflicts, January 2000 Volume 3, Number 6, 55-77

⁴⁹⁹ Xinjiang mosques were banned causing a massive riot in Baren on 5 April 1990 causing between 22 (officially) and 50 (unofficially) deaths and collective arrests. After this episode, ethnic unrest in the region exploded. Raman B. *Continuing unrest in Xinjiang* [Online article] (March 14, 1999) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/world/w_1999-03-14.html>accessed November 2, 2005

the Karakoram highway linking Pakistan's Northern areas and Xinjiang has not been implemented yet, because, as Ahmed Rashid wrote

Beijing's reluctance stems from the fact that the road would run across Xinjiang and the Chinese fear that the route would increase the traffic in fundamentalism.
500

Despite this, the border between the two countries remains very porous and Pakistanis are being arrested every year in Xinjiang for illegally entering the country in order to hunt eagles or smuggle drugs, but these are not the only reasons. On 4 June 1996, the Urdu language Pakistani daily *Nawai Waqt* quoted a Chinese diplomat saying⁵⁰¹

[...] following the arrest of about 40 Pakistanis in October 1995 in Xinjiang for illegal activities Beijing has decided not to issue visas to any individual tourist. [...] Asked whether the arrested Pakistanis were indulging in unhealthy political activities in Xinjiang, he declined to comment.

In August 1997, the Xinjiang authorities announced the plan to lay a security fence to avoid the infiltration of drug smugglers and terrorists⁵⁰². During his visit to China in February 1998 the former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif gave firm assurances that he would take measures to stop fundamentalist infiltration into China⁵⁰³. In October 1998, a Chinese delegation from the Xinjiang provincial administration visited Gilgit (Pakistan) to talk with the chief secretary of the Northern Areas, Abdul Latif Khan, about measures to stop the penetration of terrorists and drug smugglers across the border.

Abdul Rasul, a supporter of the Uyghur cause who had fled Xinjiang in 1967 to live in Pakistan, claimed in an interview with the Pakistani daily *Nation* on 7 November 1998⁵⁰⁴ that Uyghurs from Xinjiang were studying in the *madrassas* (Koranic schools) in Pakistan and in Egypt and many Uyghurs were taking part in the Kashmiri *jihād* with

⁵⁰⁰ Rashid Ahmed as quoted by Gangadharan Surya *The China-Taleban equation* Aakrish: Asian Journal on Terrorism and Internal Conflicts 2000 Volume 3 Number 6 pp.55-77

⁵⁰¹ Raman B. *Continuing unrest in Xinjiang* [Online article] (March 14, 1999) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/world/w_1999-03-14.html> accessed November 7, 2005

⁵⁰² Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey July-August 2005 Vol XLV No. 4

⁵⁰³ Gangadharan Surya *The China-Taleban equation in Aakrosh: Asian Journal On Terrorism and Internal Conflicts* January 2000 Volume 3, Number 6, 55-77

⁵⁰⁴ Raman B. *Continuing unrest in Xinjiang* [Online article] (March 14 1999) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/world/w_1999-03-14.html>

the *Hizbul Mujahideen* and with the Taliban in Afghanistan⁵⁰⁵. The Chinese authorities accused a Pakistani Islamic missionary organization, *Tableeghi Jamaat*, of supplying Uyghurs with arms and of recruiting Uyghurs to train and fight in Afghanistan. In February 1997, the Chinese government openly accused this group of distributing religious materials in Xinjiang and with being 'actively involved' in violence and unrest in Xinjiang through its Kyrgyz branch led by a Chinese-Uyghur named Kasarly⁵⁰⁶.

In Xinjiang, the arrest of 16 Uyghurs who had trained in Pakistan led to an official protest on 6 January 1999 by the Chinese authorities. Those arrested had admitted to having undergone warfare training in Jalalabad (Afghanistan) and in Landi Kotal (Khyber Agency of Pakistan), but Pakistani officials denied the existence of any such training camp for Uyghurs⁵⁰⁷. In fact, one fundamentalist Pakistani group, one of the biggest, named *Harkat-al-Jihad-al-Islami* (whose leader was the Pakistani advisor of the Taliban head Mullah Omar) is reported to be recruiting fighters in Xinjiang⁵⁰⁸. It has trained them in camps that are located in the Pakistani tribal areas near the Afghan border and its fighters are active in Kashmir under the name *Harkat-al-Jihad* Brigade 111⁵⁰⁹. Still, in 2002, Wang Lequan, the secretary of the Xinjiang Communist Party announced that, of the more than 1,000 Uyghurs trained by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, about 600 were thought to have escaped to Northern Pakistan⁵¹⁰. As a matter of fact, until the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2002, the whole terrorist training system was fully integrated with the system of *madrassas* in Pakistan: many of which follow the conservative Deobandi teachings and advocate *Jihad*⁵¹¹. The graduates were

accessed on November 7, 2005

⁵⁰⁵ In 2004 the US government confirmed 22 Uyghurs were held at Guantanamo Bay after being arrested in Afghanistan. Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey July August 2005 Vol XLV No. 4

⁵⁰⁶ McNeal Dewardric L. *China's relations with Central Asian states and Problems with terrorism* CRS Report for Congress, December 17, 2001

⁵⁰⁷ Raman B. *Continuing unrest in Xinjiang* [Online article] (March 14 1999) <www.non-continent.com/sapra/world/w_1999-03-14.html> accessed November 7, 2005

⁵⁰⁸ and in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Britain. Trippodo Sergio *Kashmir* Editori Riuniti, Rome 2004 and Bennett Jones Owen *Pakistan eye of the storm* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2002)

⁵⁰⁹ It covers other banned (in Pakistan) terrorist organizations such as *Jaish-I-Mohammed* and *Lashkar-I-Toiba*

⁵¹⁰ Raman B. *Explosive situation in Xinjiang* [Online article] 28 January 2004 <www.Atimes.com/atimes/China/GA28Ad04html> accessed November 10, 2005

trained and dispatched not just to Kashmir, at that time declared a high priority of the Taliban, but also to the rest of Central Asia⁵¹² and Xinjiang. As stated by Swanström

When Pakistan admitted that several militants had trained in Pakistan and then transported to Xinjiang, their position as a close ally was promptly re-evaluated. As a result, China moved closer to India on several issues, without destroying relations with Pakistan which still remains one of China's most important allies.⁵¹³

Indeed the Pakistani government, concerned about the deterioration of relations with China, has carried out some operations against Uyghur separatists.

There have, however, been several measures to minimize the usage of Pakistan as a way into China for Muslim militants. Karakorum, the road between China and Pakistan, has for example been closed on several occasions since unwanted goods and individuals tend to take that route to Xinjiang.⁵¹⁴

Shichor confirmed the spread of radicalism from Pakistan. However he recorded a decline of this phenomenon.

External support for Islamic radicalism in Xinjiang is limited. Most of it used to come from Pakistan and Afghanistan where Uyghurs, either sent or escaped from Xinjiang, have attended local madrassahs and become exposed to religious teachings. Yet, the American intervention in Afghanistan and Beijing's increased pressure on Islamabad drastically reduced the flow of fundamentalist Islamic ideas, and their upholders, into Xinjiang.⁵¹⁵

However, despite Pakistani effort to reassure the Chinese government⁵¹⁶, the infiltration of Islamists has placed a strain on Chinese-Pakistani relations that has provoked the non-renewal of the Sino Pakistani land based trade agreement: an

⁵¹¹ Rashid Ahmed *Jihad The rise of militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2002)

⁵¹² China put a lot of pressure over Pakistan in order to force the Taleban to stop training Uyghurs especially in the Rishkor camp near Kabul. At a certain point the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan held a meeting in Kandahar with Taleban's leader Mullah Omar, but the latter denied Uyghurs were part of his forces. Instead he had sent them to join the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Rashid Ahmed (2002) *Jihad The rise of militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2002) 173-174

⁵¹³ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45, November 2005, p.573

⁵¹⁴ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45, November 2005, p.570

⁵¹⁵ Shichor Yitzhak *Blow up: internal and external challenges of Uyghur separatism and Islamic radicalism to Chinese rule in Xinjiang* *Asian Affairs* (2005) 129

⁵¹⁶ In November 2003 China and Pakistan also signed a joint declaration calling for bilateral cooperation also in combating separatism, extremism and terrorism. Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* *Asian Survey* Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

agreement that was signed in 1963 and expired in 2000. The Pakistani establishment is well aware that the Chinese lack of interest over this issue is due to the training of Uyghur militants in Pakistan and the supply of weapons to Uyghurs⁵¹⁷. For the same reasons, China has even chosen Iran as regional partner in the drive for security, rather than Pakistan, because the Iran-Central Asia-China axis is more geo strategically important⁵¹⁸. In 2000, Iranian President Mohammed Khatami was even permitted to visit to Xinjiang⁵¹⁹ and ‘despite [...] Iran's previous foreign policy of supporting oppressed Muslims everywhere, Khatami chose to praise Chinese policies in Xinjiang’⁵²⁰.

On 5 May 1997 Pakistan handed 14 Uyghurs over to China where they were wanted for bomb attacks in Xinjiang⁵²¹. Under Chinese pressure, in December 2000 Pakistan closed two camps for Uyghur immigrants (Kashgarabad and Hotanabad). And, during a visit to China in 2001 Pakistani President Gen. Musharraf urged all Chinese Muslims to be patriotic and avoid violence. To show Chinese authorities their commitment against the Uyghur separatists, Pakistan accepted the Chinese request to expel Uyghurs from religious schools, but refused to hand over them to the Chinese authorities. Hundreds of them went to Southern Afghanistan⁵²² to join the Taliban and Al Qaeda’s fight against NATO troops. It is not clear whether the rest returned back secretly into Xinjiang or remained in Pakistan to take part in other Islamist activities.

Also in May 2002, Pakistani police arrested Ismail Kader, a major Uyghur separatist leader, while he was attending a secret meeting in Kashmir⁵²³ thus proving

⁵¹⁷ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

⁵¹⁸ Vielmini Fabrizio *La Cina in Asia Centrale: un'opportunità' anche per Teheran (China in Central Asia: an opportunity also for Teheran)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics 5/2005.

⁵¹⁹ “the first foreign Muslim leader privileged to visit volatile Xinjiang” Rashid Ahmed *China forced to expand role in Central Asia* Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst July 19, 2000 available from <www.iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_26_7_00_1.htm> accessed November 10, 2005

⁵²⁰ Rashid Ahmed *China forced to expand role in Central Asia* Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst July 19, 2000 available from <www.iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_26_7_00_1.htm> accessed November 10, 2005

⁵²¹ Amnesty International reported that they were executed without a trial as soon as they had crossed the Chinese border. Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

⁵²² Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

⁵²³ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

that the connections between Uyghur and Kashmiri militants have been tight. Reports in December 2003 state that Pakistani troops had killed Hasan Mahsum, the leader of the *East Turkestan Islamic Movement* (ETIM) in the South Waziristan region of Pakistan on October 2, 2003⁵²⁴. In the same year, Pakistan and China signed an extradition treaty to facilitate the exchange of prisoners. The signature occurred during a visit to Beijing by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in November 2003. The Chinese media wrote that President Musharraf stated during the visit that ‘his country will never allow anybody, including the terrorist force of ‘East Turkestan’, to use the territory of Pakistan to carry out any form of anti-China activities’⁵²⁵.

In January 2004 it was further reported that China had forwarded a list of Chinese "terrorists and outfits linked to al-Qaeda" to Pakistan, asking the authorities to initiate action against these groups. In May 2004, a XUAR public security official, Ma Mingyue, was quoted in the Pakistani press as saying that some terrorists and ETIM members from Xinjiang were hiding in the Pakistani cities of Lahore and Rawalpindi.⁵²⁶

In fact, as Gannon told me, ‘Uyghurs have been found in Karachi, and most certainly have spent time in some Pakistani tribal regions [training for terrorist activities], mostly Bajur and South Waziristan.’⁵²⁷ More recently, Saudi Arabian media reports claimed that a group led by Qari Muhammad Tahir in the bordering region between Afghanistan and Pakistan had trained and supported Uyghur radical separatists from Xinjiang⁵²⁸. At the same time, the Chinese authorities claimed to have averted a terrorist attack with combustible liquid at a commercial airplane. The intended attacker was a Uyghur woman who had been trained in Pakistan⁵²⁹.

⁵²⁴ Haider Zaid *Sino Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs* Asian Survey Vol XLV No. 4 July-August 2005

⁵²⁵ Amnesty International *People's Republic of China: Uighurs fleeing persecution as China wages its "war on terror"* July 7, 2004 available from <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa170212004>> accessed August 28, 2008

⁵²⁶ Amnesty International *People's Republic of China: Uighurs fleeing persecution as China wages its "war on terror"* July 7, 2004 available from <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa170212004>> accessed August 28, 2008

⁵²⁷ Kathy Gannon, personal communication, February 9, 2009

⁵²⁸ Olimpo Guido *Cina, allerta per gli islamici uiguri (China, alarm for Islamic Uyghurs)* Milan, Corriere della Sera, March 9, 2008

⁵²⁹ French Howard W. *China confirms protests by Uighur Muslims* New York, The New York Times April 3, 2008

Also Rashid confirms that Uyghur extremists are actually still hiding in Pakistani tribal areas⁵³⁰. And a video recently released by the Turkestan Islamic Party and retrieved by the NEFA Foundation⁵³¹, shows very young boys with Central Asian features receiving military training and indoctrination. An excerpt shows these young boys shooting at a picture of Chinese president Hu Jintao. The NEFA claims that the Turkestan Islamic Party is 'allied to the Taliban and based along the Afghan-Pakistan border'⁵³² and this video was taken at a *Madrasa* run by the Turkestan Islamic Party. Swanström also told me later that 'the Chinese government claims that Uyghurs are receiving training by Islamic militants in the region, but this is a minor phenomenon'⁵³³. As observed by the same Swanström in one of his studies:

Ironically most of the weapons the Chinese confiscated at the border were Chinese weapons that China sold to Pakistan at an earlier stage. Pakistan in turn gave the weapons to the Taliban movement, which supported their religious brothers in Xinjiang.⁵³⁴

More recently, three members of the Turkestan Islamic Party (one of whom is a Chinese Uyghur national) were arrested in Norway and in Germany for orchestrating a terrorist bomb plot. All had been trained in the tribal areas of Pakistan⁵³⁵. Pakistan, especially the tribal areas, is the ideal place to train these would-be militants as it would provide a safe haven for this practice while 'in Afghanistan the Western military presence does not allow these kinds of operations'⁵³⁶. These tribal areas, especially in the area of Waziristan, are indeed under the control of Taliban forces⁵³⁷. The phenomenon is quite

⁵³⁰ Rashid Ahmed *Descent into chaos* (New York: Viking, 2009)

⁵³¹ *Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP): Training camp for child soldiers* available from <<http://www.nefafoundation.org/documents-area-pakistan.html#TIP0810>> accessed August 13, 2010

The NEFA Foundation, a research center based in New York and founded in the aftermath of September 11 World Trade Center attacks, is devoted to studies on terrorism

⁵³² *Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP): Training camp for child soldiers* available from <<http://www.nefafoundation.org/documents-area-pakistan.html#TIP0810>> accessed August 13, 2010

⁵³³ Swanström Niklas, interview by author by phone, October 26, 2009, notes

⁵³⁴ Swanström Niklas *China and Central Asia: a new Great Game or traditional vassal relations?* *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14:45, November 2005, 573

⁵³⁵ Wong Edward *China group tied to plot in Europe* New York, *The International Herald Tribune*, July 12, 2010, 3

⁵³⁶ Swanström Niklas, Interview by author by phone, October 26, 2009, notes.

⁵³⁷ When I lived in Pakistan I observed how some areas of that country, and even the city of Karachi where I stayed, were called the No Go Areas, meaning that other forces, none official ones, had the

worrying for Chinese authorities and it has induced them to negotiate directly with some radical groups in Pakistan like the Afghan Taliban and the Hezb-i-Islami-Gulbuddin in order to secure its interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In fact as Small says

[...] since the Pakistani military's relations with certain groups have fractured, [...] there has been a perception on China's part that it needs to reach out to some of these groups through additional channels--political parties such as the Jamaat-e-Islami--as the traditional ones are no longer sufficient. [...] [China] also aims to starve Uighur militants of any support. Beijing's expectation has been that Pakistan's military and intelligence services can lean on some of these militant groups to ensure that they steer clear of Chinese interests⁵³⁸.

All the above reports claim the existence of radical infiltration from Pakistan into Xinjiang. Is it really a relevant phenomenon in term of size and threat? As Sisci told me

There is a problem of radicals spreading to Xinjiang from Afghanistan and Waziristan, the uncontrolled areas of Pakistan. From Afghanistan in particular religious radicalism has been spreading since 2001, when Uyghurs were enrolled as Taliban troops in Afghanistan.⁵³⁹

Also Swanström confirmed to me that

There are reports on infiltrations of radicals from Pakistan to Xinjiang, but not much evidence is offered at least to demonstrate it is a large scale phenomenon. Also, the tribal areas in Pakistan have many things in common with some parts of Xinjiang. And indeed there are contacts, especially at the religious level, but not exchanges.⁵⁴⁰

Some point out that Afghanistan potentially poses a greater threat to stability in Xinjiang than Pakistan. As Sisci told me

Heroin, not in big quantities, and money from the Afghan warlords, in considerable quantities, crosses Xinjiang. Week-end direct flights bring many persons from Kabul to Urumqi and among them also radicals.⁵⁴¹

control of those places. The Northern West region was one of those areas, even though at that time they were not under such strong Taliban control. Informal observation 1999-2001

⁵³⁸ Andrew Small, interview with Jayshree Bajoria July 7, 2010 in *Intensifying China-Pakistan ties* the Council of Foreign Relations available from <http://www.cfr.org/publication/22603/intensifying_chinapakistan_ties.html> Accessed July 20, 2010

⁵³⁹ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes.

⁵⁴⁰ Swanström Niklas, Interview by author by phone, October 26, 2009, notes

⁵⁴¹ Francesco Sisci, interview by author by phone, October 7, 2009, notes.

The leader of the Uyghur diaspora, Kadeer, dismisses these concerns and rejects the hypothesis of radical infiltrations from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Kadeer explained that

Usually peaceful demonstrations in Eastern Turkestan turn violent because the Chinese government infiltrates them with spies in order to spoil the occasion and turn them into riots. Also the Chinese police attack peaceful demonstrations indiscriminately causing riots. Before their arrival, there are no riots but peaceful protests.⁵⁴²

For Kadeer, the Uyghurs found in Afghanistan and later jailed in Guantanamo by US forces were not fighters for the Taliban but instead were fugitives from arrest warrants issued against them by Chinese police after demonstrations in the Ili district in 1997: ‘They escaped to Afghanistan because if they had gone to Pakistan the authorities there would have arrested them and handed over to Chinese police. Even though the Chinese government talked about a connection between Uyghurs and terrorists, it was not true’.⁵⁴³

To sum up, during my research, observers and analysts have appeared to vary on the hypothesis that Pakistani state actors could be involved in destabilizing Xinjiang. In the end, there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position as an ally of China towards more dangerous waters.

On the other hand, concerning non-state actors, there is a history of radical infiltration from Pakistan to Xinjiang and both the Chinese and the Pakistani governments seem to be aware of this situation. Although radicalism in Xinjiang was not generated in Pakistan, Pakistan, especially the tribal areas, seems to be the ideal place to train would be militants as it would provide a safe haven for this practice. How large this phenomenon is, in term of size and threat, remains to be assessed. This assessment is difficult to carry out, due to the understandable sensitivity of the information involved. However, this study at last confronts an existing phenomenon that has not been appropriately scrutinized by the academic literature on the issue. This work, at least, fully considers the Pakistani players in the Uyghur conflict.

The coming section examines the similar Slovenian case. This analysis will take into account the role of non-state agents in a neighboring country such as Italy. Italy hosted numerous groups of non-state forces who acted against the strategy of the

⁵⁴² Rebya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, notes and tape recording

⁵⁴³ Rebya Kadeer interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, notes and tape recording

government to demonstrate that bordering countries sometimes host non-state actors who work against the policy of their own government in order to support separatist groups in neighboring countries, a scenario similar to the Xinjiang-Pakistan case, though with different means.

The Slovenian case and non- state agents in Italy

In this particular case, Pakistan and Italy share some common factors in the Uyghur-Xinjiang and Slovenian separatist conflicts respectively. What factors? First of all, there is the presence of non-state agents in a neighboring country, in the case of Italian non-state agents supporting Slovenian independence. This is similar to the Pakistani non-state agents with respect to Uyghur separatism in Xinjiang. Secondly, the presence of these forces, mainly politicians belonging to the political coalition of the Italian government, proved stingy and worked against the government's own strategy, this is similar to Pakistani non state agents and the Uyghur conflict.

Especially the transnational theory explains the involvement of non-state agents. Trans-national actors, including media networks and the arms trade, and of course, the diaspora may provide both material and symbolic support for politically mobilized ethnic groups.

My conclusion is that, some Italian non-state forces were actively involved in supporting the Slovenian independence process, though with different means (namely non violent), despite the strong negative stance of the Italian government. As such, this case is similar to the one under study here: the Pakistani government seems unsupportive of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, while its own non-state forces appear actively involved. And certainly, this case might be useful in order to understand certain dynamics regarding the involvement of non-state players in separatist conflicts abroad, despite state level disengagement.

First, I examine the different kinds of Italian non-state agents involved in the Slovenian separatist conflict and assess the level of their involvement. I start with the regions⁵⁴⁴ supporting Slovenian independence, then I examine the political parties and

⁵⁴⁴ See the Literature Review Chapter for a definition of non-state actors

Anyway, here I examine the Italian regions as non-state actors using the definition of Mansbach who defines local authorities as non-central actors.

Mansbach Richard *The web of world politics: Nonstate actors in the global system* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1976) 41

lastly a few of the relevant politicians involved. Later I will present my conclusion. Before starting this examination, I am going to briefly introduce some framing details in order to better understand the scenario. As already explained in the chapter devoted to Central Asia, the Italian government was against the secession of Slovenia. It was composed by a coalition of Demo Christian, Socialist and Liberal parties. Even though, at a local level and, for some, also at a leadership level these parties supported the Slovenian separatists, the government, especially the prime minister, Giulio Andreotti (a Demo Christian) and the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gianni De Michelis (a Socialist) maintained a steady position against Slovenian separatism until it was a *fait accompli*. Some Italian regions, especially those geographically and historically closer (they had been part of the Austro Hungarian Empire together with Slovenia), supported Slovenian independence even though they were led by exponents of these same parties in the coalition government thus contributing to a political clash.

And now to the first point: the regions. I argue that the regions involved in supporting Slovenian independence were those that had built up a close collaboration with Slovenian leaders within Alpe Adria⁵⁴⁵. One of the most active among them was Friuli Venezia Giulia, a region with a special autonomous status. The region's president, Adriano Biasutti (a Demo Christian), was supportive, despite the fact that the Italian government was strongly opposing this separation. The reason for this strong support was personal friendship that developed within Alpe Adria and also the reflection of his own constituency's preference. In other words, since this issue was strongly favored by the region's constituency, local political leaders had to act in accordance with the preferences of their constituency.

As mentioned before, Alpe Adria played a relevant role in building up a strong closeness among the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige and Lombardia (in Italy) and Slovenia and Croatia (in Yugoslavia). This organization was particularly relevant as 'Slovenia together with Croatia took part in the Alpe Adria organization as an independent member and therefore without the presence of federal

They are semi autonomous and, as stated by Josselin Daphne and Wallace William 'public actors but not strictly defined – state actors'

Josselin Daphne and Wallace William *Non state actors in world politics: a framework in Non state actors in world politics* eds Josselin Daphne and Wallace William (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 2

⁵⁴⁵ Alpe Adria is a 'Community of work' or rather a loose organization of political and economic co-operation founded by Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), Carinthia (Austria) and Slovenia in late 1960s and later expanded to other regions.

Yugoslav organs'⁵⁴⁶. This was not the only organization in which they collaborated as 'the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto and Slovenia were part of mixed committees and participated in other forms of bilateral collaboration.'⁵⁴⁷ Inside these forums there were also talks about the Slovenian independence plan, however, consistently:

The fear to be always controlled by Belgrade pushed to avoid taking the minutes about many contacts with foreign forces or, when taking notes, to exclude any mention of the independence process of Slovenia⁵⁴⁸

As soon as the Slovenian separatists openly claimed independence and opened the conflict, the Italian non-state forces close to the separatist faction declared their support. Among them the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, as the then president of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Biasutti told me 'The Council of the region voted unanimously for a document supporting Alpe Adria's position in favor of Slovenian independence.'⁵⁴⁹ The then president of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, Adriano Biasutti, told me the reason for this open support

was that Slovenia was part of Alpe Adria with us and when they pursued their independence goal we, together with all other Alpe Adria members, sided with them. At that time Carinthia held the presidency of Alpe Adria and led the coalition to support the Slovenian stance.⁵⁵⁰

In other words for Biasutti

We supported Slovenian independence because we were all part of Alpe Adria and when the war started we took sides with Slovenia while De Michelis [foreign affairs Minister] and Andreotti [President of the government] did not agree with us while the President of the Italian Republic, Cossiga shared our views. When he came for an official visit in the region, after the conflict when Slovenia was not yet recognized, we brought him to Gorizia and he walked on the border catching the attention of the Italian public opinion towards the issue of Slovenian recognition. That helped in gaining momentum and public support

⁵⁴⁶Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell'indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) 124

⁵⁴⁷ Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell'indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) 125-126

⁵⁴⁸ Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell'indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) IV

⁵⁴⁹ Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵⁰ Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

for that issue.⁵⁵¹

In fact, thanks to this activism:

Biasutti became one of the main channels of information of the Farnesina [the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs], of Ljubljana and of Giulio Andreotti [the Italian Prime Minister]. Thanks to him news from the Slovenian leadership was conveyed directly to the Italian government⁵⁵²

Biasutti also confirmed to me that he went to Ljubljana during the conflict ‘during the open conflict I headed an Alpe Adria delegation to Ljubljana to bring our solidarity to [the separatists’ leader] Peterle’⁵⁵³. And the Slovenians were skillful in exploiting the relationships developed within the Alpe Adria as Lusa told me ‘Slovenians had this capacity to understand and exploit the friendship network built within the Alpe Adria’⁵⁵⁴.

However, the main reason for this strong support offered by the leaders of the regions under study had less to do with the personal friendship build up in the Alpe Adria and more to do with constituency attitudes as the then Italian Foreign Affairs ministry De Michelis told me consistently

In Friuli Venezia Giulia and in Veneto the leading political groups were supporting Slovenian independence because it was a popular issue in those regions.⁵⁵⁵

This reflects theories about third parties intervention and political competition already explained in the Theories’ Chapter: politicians in highly institutionalized political contexts must act in accordance with the preferences of their constituency⁵⁵⁶. And in these regions, as mentioned by De Michelis, constituencies favored Slovenian separatism. Indeed, it was not only the leader of the region, at least in Friuli Venezia Giulia, who felt the pressure of his constituency, but all the regional leadership. Biasutti

⁵⁵¹ Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵² Sema Antonio *Estate 1991: gli amici italiani di Lubiana (Summer 1991: the Italian friends of Ljubljana)* in *La Guerra Jugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics Rome, 1/1994, 220

⁵⁵³ Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵⁴ Stefano Lusa, interview by author by phone. October 23, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵⁵ Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵⁶ see also Carment David and James Patrick *Explaining third-party intervention in ethnic conflict: theory and evidence* Nation and nationalism, 6 (2) (2000), 173-202

confirmed this to me, ‘All the regional council (including oppositional parties) supported Slovenian independence’⁵⁵⁷.

To sum up, the regions involved in supporting Slovenian independence were those that had built up a close collaboration with Slovenian leaders within Alpe Adria. Among them, one of the most active was Friuli Venezia Giulia where its president, Biasutti, became the main channel of information between Slovenian separatist leaders and the Italian government. However, the reason for this strong support was not only personal friendships that developed within Alpe Adria, but also the large support from the regions’ constituency members. However, despite this support in favor of Slovenian independence, they did not succeed in gaining the support of the Italian government towards Slovenian independence. So, in the end, there were regions in Italy that strongly supported the independence conflict in Slovenia. And despite being in the same political parties as the Italian central government, they worked against its own strategy.

And now the second point: the role of the Italian political parties that supported Slovenian independence. My research shows that there were contacts among the Slovenian political parties, especially the Slovenian Demo Christian Party and among the other foreign parties. This was also thanks to members of international movements. In Italy mainly the Demo Christian Party members were taking the Slovenian side and they were also under pressure from the Vatican. Other Italian parties, especially at a local level, such as the Socialist Party and also at a national level, such as the Liberal Party, were strongly supportive of the Slovenian separatists. I now examine the involvement of these three parties.

The Slovenian political parties supporting independence had contacts with foreign parties. The Christian Social movement founded in March 1989 and later renamed Slovenian Demo Christian Party (SKD) especially:

[...] was the only Slovenian Party with membership in two international movements: the EUCD [European Christian Democratic Union] and the EDU [European Democratic Union]. These political organizations favored contacts with European leaders.⁵⁵⁸

In Italy, this party had contacts with its counterpart, the Italian Demo Christian Party. As stated by Fajt

⁵⁵⁷ Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

⁵⁵⁸ Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell'indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) 126-127

The meetings with members of this party were frequent also because the presidents of the regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, Biasutti e Bernini. Respectively [both members of the Italian Demo Christian Party], were particularly active inside the Alpe Adria Community. Both knew very well the economic and the political situation in Slovenia and acted as bridge between Ljubljana and Rome.⁵⁵⁹

It appears that it was mainly Demo Christian Party members who were taking the Slovenian side. As Lusa told me 'the Vatican played a substantial role in gaining the support of the Christian Democratic Party'⁵⁶⁰. Also Rizman confirmed to me that there was strong pressure exercised by the Vatican and the Catholics:

Vatican was of course able and interested to recognize among the first independent Slovenia, [...] Catholic politicians in the neighboring countries were involved in mobilizing the support in their countries, in particular in Italy and Austria.⁵⁶¹

In the end, it was when the Demo Christian Francesco Cossiga, at that time president of the Italian Republic, visited Gorizia on an official visit and 'walked across the border, capturing the support of public opinion in favor of the recognition of Slovenian independence'⁵⁶². However it was not only the Italian Demo Christian Party that was involved in supporting Slovenian independence. Also 'the local leadership of the Partito Socialista [Socialist Party] requested the region to offer logistical assistance to local Slovenian institutions'⁵⁶³. The local parties' leaderships were the most involved and the Demo Christian and Socialist regional leaders as 'Biasutti, the president of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Umberto Carraro, vice president of Veneto, rushed to Ljubljana.'⁵⁶⁴

The pressure of the regional leaders towards the national parties was so strong, that even the national leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi, after a meeting with Renzulli, an MP from Friuli Venezia Giulia, stated that in case of open war the

⁵⁵⁹ Fajt Michela *I primi segnali dell'indipendenza dalla Jugoslavia nei rapporti internazionali della Slovenia (1985-1991) (First signs of independence from Yugoslavia in Slovenian foreign relations (1985-1991))* [unpublished BA thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1996-1997) 128

⁵⁶⁰ Stefano Lusa, interview by author by phone. October 23, 2009, notes.

⁵⁶¹ Rudolf Rizman, personal communication, November 2, 2009.

⁵⁶² Adriano Biasutti, interview by author by phone, October 8, 2009, notes.

⁵⁶³ Sema Antonio *Estate 1991: gli amici italiani di Lubiana (Summer 1991: the Italian friends of Ljubljana)* in *La Guerra Jugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics, Rome, 1/1994, 220

⁵⁶⁴ Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes.

Party would support the Slovenian separatists. Thereby clashing with the strategy of his party's partner, De Michelis. Another national leader within the government coalition, Renato Altissimo of the Italian Liberal Party, went on a mission to Ljubljana and accused the minister of foreign affairs of maintaining a 'dangerous and unjust position'⁵⁶⁵. De Michelis explained to me⁵⁶⁶, that the other politicians who were supportive of Slovenian independence,

were Flaminio Piccoli, also one of the leaders of the Demo Christian Party, and Piero Fassino, from the Left Democratic Party [party originating from the Italian Communist Party]'.

Elsewhere very similar political players succeeded in changing the strategy of their governments towards favoring Slovenian separatism. As De Michelis told me

In Austria a faction of the political system and in Germany one part of the Bavarian CSU [*Christlich-Soziale Union*, Christian Social Union] was supporting Peterle and the Slovenian Catholic party. Both Busek and the Bavarian CSU were supporters of the Yugoslav dissolution as a natural stage of the Central Eastern European post communist transition. They both were Catholic and therefore allied to Peterle and the Slovenian Catholic party.⁵⁶⁷

In those countries, these similar forces succeeded in persuading the central governments to support Slovenian independence. However, in Italy, similar non- state forces did not succeed in changing the Italian government's strategy

To sum up, my research shows that there were contacts among Slovenian political parties, especially the Slovenian Demo Christian Party and among the other foreign parties. This was also thanks to members of international movements. In Italy, it was mainly the Demo Christian Party members who were taking the Slovenian side: they were also under pressure from the Vatican. However, especially at a local level, other Italian parties, such as the Socialist Party and at a national level, the Liberal Party were strongly supportive of the Slovenian separatists. These three parties were members of the Italian coalition government. However, they did not succeed in gaining the Italian government's support for Slovenian independence.

⁵⁶⁵ Sema Antonio *Estate 1991: gli amici italiani di Lubiana (Summer 1991: the Italian friends of Ljubljana)* in *La Guerra Yugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics Rome, 1/1994, 220

⁵⁶⁶ Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes

⁵⁶⁷ Political party originating from the Italian Communist Party

So, in the end, there were political forces in Italy that strongly supported the independence conflict in Slovenia. And, despite being in the same parties as the Italian central government, these forces worked against its own strategy.

Concerning the third point, role of other non-state forces, my research shows that there were other non-state forces, especially in the academic and media sectors in Italy that were strongly supportive of the Slovenian separatists.

The media involved were mainly the local ones with a readership in the Friuli Venezia Giulia. As recounted by Sema, a politician:

Media from the Friuli region, especially those owned by the businessman Melzi, also promoted Slovenian independence among the audiences and even accused the Italian government of wasting the important economic chances that an independent Slovenia could offer⁵⁶⁸. And behind the political parties also local NGOs, linked to political parties, voiced their strong support in favor of Slovenia⁵⁶⁹.

For De Michelis, this public opinion support was the result of a manipulation by academic and political circles, not economic ones. The University of Trieste in Gorizia, my Alma Mater, was especially involved. As De Michelis recounted, and later confirmed to me:

It appears there was even a brains trust of experts, some Austrian, some Italian from Gorizia University, who had prepared a draft on how to mount a conflict to spur world public opinion in favor of Slovenia⁵⁷⁰

As De Michelis illustrated to me:

There was manipulation by academic and political groups, not economic sectors, in Germany, in Austria and in Italy as well, in order to push public opinion towards thinking that the conflict in Slovenia was very violent and their governments had to do something in favor of Slovenian people. In Italy the main daily, the *Corriere della Sera*, titled a seven-column article ‘Ljubljana bombed’ and published other un-realistic articles about supposed cruelty carried out by Yugoslav forces in order to gain popular support for the Slovenian cause.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁸ He refers to the article written by Quai *Occasione perduta (Lost occasion)* il Piccolo, July 4 1991

⁵⁶⁹ Sema Antonio *Estate 1991: gli amici italiani di Lubiana (Summer 1991: the Italian friends of Ljubljana)* in *La Guerra Jugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics, Rome, 1/1994, 225

⁵⁷⁰ De Michelis Gianni *Così cercammo di impedire la guerra (How we tried to avoid the war)* in *La Guerra Jugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics Rome, 1/1994, 234 and also Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes

⁵⁷¹ Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes

For him, the leading daily *Corriere della Sera* was actively promoting the Slovenian cause by 'publishing unreliable articles about violent fighting and bombings, untrue or exaggerated articles, signed by Eros Bicic, a name never heard after that period'⁵⁷². Also for Sema

These sub state agents met and kept in touch with Slovenian separatists and, at Peterle's request, engaged in media battles in order to maintain the public opinion's attention focused on the Slovenian affair⁵⁷³

To sum up, some media and academic sectors in Italy were strongly in favor of the Slovenian independence and *manoeuvred* in order to drive public opinion towards supporting the Slovenian separatists.

All in all, in the similar Slovenian case, Italy hosted numerous groups of non-state forces that acted against the government strategy. Italian non-state agents were actively involved in supporting the Slovenian independence process, though with different means (namely non-violent), despite the strong negative stance of the Italian government. Similarly, the Pakistani government seems unsupportive of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang while its own non-state agents appear to be actively involved. And certainly this case might be useful in order to understand certain dynamics regarding the involvement of non-state players in separatist conflicts abroad despite state level disengagement.

Conclusion

As previously explained, because of its ethnic proximity with the Uyghurs and because of its geographical bordering location, Pakistan theoretically has a direct interest in the conflict. Indeed, Pakistani state and non-state agents have many reasons to intrude in this conflict. Pakistani state players may be pushed by strategic motives: first by opportunism, second by a link between domestic constraints and ethnic affinities that could induce the adoption of passive lobby and third by instrumental motives. However, during my research observers and analysts have appeared to vary

⁵⁷² Gianni De Michelis, interview by author by phone, October 14, 2009, notes

⁵⁷³ Sema Antonio *Estate 1991: gli amici italiani di Lubiana (Summer 1991: the Italian friends of Ljubljana)* in *La Guerra Jugoslava (The Yugoslav war)* Limes Italian Journal of Geopolitics, Rome, 1/1994, 222

considerably in their views on the hypothesis that Pakistani state actors could be involved in destabilizing Xinjiang. In the end, there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position as an ally of China towards more dangerous waters.

On the other hand, Pakistani non-state agents could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict there for another set of theoretical reasons: ethnic affinities, group affinity and finally trans-nationalism. And indeed, there is a history of radical infiltration from Pakistan to Xinjiang and both the Chinese and Pakistani governments seem to be aware of this situation. My research shows that despite the presence of such infiltration in Xinjiang and the connections between some radical groups in Pakistan and in Xinjiang, there is no data that could give a real estimation of the size of the problem and this assessment is difficult to carry out due to the understandable sensitivity of the information involved.

In the similar Slovenian case, Italy also hosted numerous groups of non-state agents who acted against government strategy. My research shows that Italian non-state players were actively involved in supporting the Slovenian independence process, though with different means (namely non-violent), despite the strong negative stance of the Italian government. As such, this case is similar to the one under study here in which the Pakistani government seems unsupportive of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, while its own non-state forces appear actively involved

In the end, this study at last wholly confronts an existing phenomenon. Pakistani state and non-state agents considered as external forces in the Uyghur conflict is an issue that has not been appropriately scrutinized by the current academic literature on the subject. This work, at least, considers Pakistani players in the Uyghur conflict and therefore expands the usual range of external agents that are included by the academic literature. As previously explained, despite frequent references to Pakistani originated radical influence in the area in political and public discourse, there is surprisingly little research on the phenomenon. Certainly, an assessment of the real involvement of Pakistani state and non-state agents is difficult to carry out. However, my research has at least attempted to expand this perspective and has finally placed Pakistan on the geopolitical map of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

Chapter 7

The United States' role in the Uyghur conflict

For a long time there had been rumors – circulated, he had reason to think, by some malignant enemy – that there was something subversive and even revolutionary in the outlook of himself and his colleagues. They had been credited with attempting to stir up rebellion among the animals on neighboring farms. Nothing could be further from the truth! Their sole wish, now and in the past, was to live in peace and in normal business relations with their neighbors.

George Orwell - Animal Farm

Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of the United States in the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movement. The aim is to assess any US related influences that may be involved in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. This analysis is being carried out in relation to the general research question posed by this thesis: what are the selected and external forces under investigation doing in respect to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, only rarely has academic attention concentrated on the role of the United States and the possible involvement of the United States and of US related forces in Xinjiang. For example, Shichor anticipates the concerns expressed by the Chinese ‘that the United States would engage, incite, and urge separatist movements in Xinjiang to act against China’⁵⁷⁴. Meanwhile Gladney⁵⁷⁵ delineates the attempts made by the Uyghur diaspora to solicit interest from recent US administrations and the role of some US backed organizations such as Radio Free Asia. Mackerras is correct when he states that ‘Both China and the United States consider Xinjiang to be part of China, though China with far more passion than the United States’⁵⁷⁶. However, in the Theory Chapter I noted that from a purely theoretical perspective the United States might be said to have a few motives to spur the conflict in Xinjiang: opportunism, Real-politik, balancing and instrumental motives. At least in

⁵⁷⁴ Shichor Yitzhak *The great wall of steel in Xinjiang. China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 160

⁵⁷⁵ Gladney Dru C. *Responses to Chinese rule. Patterns of cooperation and opposition in Xinjiang: China's Muslim borderland* ed. Starr Frederick (Armony NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004) 382

⁵⁷⁶ Mackerras Colin *Xinjiang and Central Asia since 1990 Views from Beijing and Washington and Sino-American relations in China, Xinjiang and Central Asia. History, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21st century* eds Mackerras Colin and Clarke Michael (Abigdon and London: Routledge, 2009) 133

principle, the United States appears to have motives to intervene in Xinjiang. However, as described in the Literature Review, surprisingly, the most authoritative authors on Xinjiang have neglected this possibility: most of them do not even consider the United States as an external agent in relation to the Xinjiang conflict. With this work I aim to extend the range of external players who might eventually become involved in the Uyghur conflict by including the United States.

The core question for this chapter is whether the United States or any US related organizations are posing as a relevant external force for the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? My conclusion is that a non-state agent very close to the US leadership is progressively lending support to Uyghur groups, especially within the Uyghur diaspora. It has been steadily expanding the funds it devotes to Uyghur groups and these have reached a sizeable figure especially when compared to the support offered to other non-Uyghur agents in China. As in other cases explained before, this study at last confronts a phenomenon that has not been appropriately scrutinized by the academic literature on the issue. This work, at least, considers the United States as a player in the Uyghur conflict with the result that it expands the usual range of external agents included by the academic literature. Moreover, in this case, the data shows that a certain degree of US interest and involvement in the Uyghur conflict does exist. Until more evidence and documents become available we may only surmise that the US leadership is expanding its influence in Xinjiang. However with the data in our hands, this is highly probable. Even though my research may assess only in terms of probability whether US players are interested in the Uyghur conflict, an assessment is still relevant, as explained in the previous chapters.

For this assessment I have used interviews and data analyses. Interviews were utilized to investigate these questions. As the central question is qualitative, the interviews and data analysis were aimed at addressing two issues: what might be the rationale and feasibility for such an intervention by US agents? Is there any interest in such involvement in the United States? If the answer is yes, then what could that interest be? Who are the agents among the various state and non-state actors based there?

The first section of this chapter analyzes the rationale behind the eventual involvement of the US state and non-state agents in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Then I address the feasibility question in relation to this involvement: I assess to what degree the most relevant US organization is involved in the Uyghur case. I focus on a

tool of US administration and Congress: the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). This is an organization that has previously been involved in destabilizing regimes similar to the one governing China and Xinjiang⁵⁷⁷. The third section examines the Slovenian case in order to assess the role of the United States in this separatist conflict, and to show that this kind of support by US agents tends to ebb and flow. Then I will present my conclusions.

Rationale

This section analyzes the rationale behind US state and US non-state agents in order to understand if there are reasons here that could lead to an involvement in Xinjiang. My aim is to assess the rationale of an American involvement in the Uyghur conflict through the theoretical framework elaborated in the Theories Chapter. As mentioned in the Theories Chapter and in the introduction to this chapter, there are several reasons that could push the United States to try to spur mobilization in Xinjiang.

First, opportunism could be one rationale for an American policy to encourage Uyghur separatist movements. For opportunistic reasons the United States may have a strategic desire to expand its influence and/or gain leverage⁵⁷⁸. They might be also driven by the desire to harm an enemy. In this case, the decision to favor a secessionist movement might be based on an opportunistic rationale with the aim of striking against the state that is hosting the separatists. So opportunism could be one rationale of American policy: encouraging the Uyghur separatist movements in order to destabilize China. In this case I assess in particular, the desire to expand US influence and/or gain leverage in China with the desire to harm its enemy.

Second the desire to find a balance could be also provide a motive for the United States to intrude in the Uyghur conflict. For example, the United States might be supporting separatist movements such as the Uyghur one in strong countries like China. Whether they are in search of security as predicted by the defensive realists, or whether

⁵⁷⁷ Prof. Sautman, in a general press statement, recalls wider literature that links this organization with the CIA. ` Anyone familiar with the literature on NED knows that its leaders have themselves seen it as carrying out functions once within the purview of the CIA. ` Sautman Barry *Barry Sautman's response to Jamyang Norbu's opinion piece "Running-Dog Propagandists"* August 4, 2008 available from < <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=22228&t=1> > accessed December 10, 2009

⁵⁷⁸ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 272-277

they are aiming at the pursuit of power, as offensive realists assert, the US leadership might well be interested in using the Uyghur separatist cause in order to harm China. This target is not very dissimilar to the opportunistic rationale behind the decision to strike against the host state of the separatists as explained above⁵⁷⁹.

Third, the independent state interest theory as elaborated by the instrumental school is another theory that could explain the reasons why the United States might eventually intervene in the Uyghur conflict. This theory supports the case of independent state interests: a situation in which leaders intervene in a conflict abroad in order to gain resources, to create a diversion or to create the ‘rally around the flag’ effect when they lose grip on their power at home. In this way the external player (the United States) maximizes security, wealth and power by supporting a mobilizing group abroad: the Uyghur one.

There is one more theory that links the issue of external support to separatist conflict with constituency pressure in highly institutionalized political contexts. This is a situation in which politicians must act in accordance with the preferences of their constituencies⁵⁸⁰ and, if it is what their constituents want, they will mingle in a separatist conflict in another state: such as the Uyghur one in China.

The first reason, expanding influence and/or gaining leverage (opportunism), is indeed a very relevant and general interest of the United States. The internal destabilization of China, including Xinjiang, is one of the possible tools that the United States might be using to gain influence in China. Indeed, American administrations have a relevant motive to be engaged in Xinjiang and that motive is to develop leverage and/or gain influence *vis a vis* China. There is extensive literature that already assesses how mismatched interests, values and capabilities still constrain the extent of the political cooperation between the two powers: the United States and China⁵⁸¹. Therefore I concentrate on the other three reasons: the desire to find a balance (realist school), the need to maximize security, wealth and power (instrumental school), and lastly the pressure to act in accordance with the preferences of the constituency.

⁵⁷⁹ For a discussion on the coincidence between Realist views and opportunistic rationale see Saideman Stephen M. *The ties that divide. Ethnic politics, foreign politics and international conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press 2001) 21

⁵⁸⁰ Carment David and James Patrick (2000) *Explaining third-party intervention in ethnic conflict: theory and evidence* *Nation and nationalism*, 6 (2) (2000), 173-202

⁵⁸¹ One of the many academic researches: Economy Elizabeth C. and Segal Adam *The G-2 mirage. Why the United States and China are not ready to upgrade ties* *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2009

According to theoretical Realism, the desire to find a balance coincides with the need to maximize security, wealth and power. In view of the fact that maximizing security is a priority for defensive realists, whilst wealth and power is a priority for offensive realists and balancing is the aim for classical realists, I group them together. Therefore I first examine the reasons why the United States may desire to find balance and maximize security, wealth and power by spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Secondly I examine the rationale for US involvement in a separatist conflict in another state, such as the Uyghur one in China, if this fulfills the wishes of their constituents.

Concerning the first point, the US strategy to find balance and to maximize security, wealth and power by spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang; Ong contends that ‘China has often highlighted the role of foreign powers in fomenting internal dissent aimed at modifying the Chinese political system’⁵⁸². In fact the United States has a history of political intervention around the world, both in terms of supporting or clashing with authoritarian regimes. And indeed Ong reports on Beijing’s fear of being targeted by the latter kind of political intervention that is directed against its own authoritarian regime:

One Chinese assessment argues that the West in general and the USA in particular are supporting separatist forces in Xinjiang and other border areas with the aim of destabilizing China⁵⁸³.

My aim is to understand whether the desire to find a balance and maximize power, security and wealth could provide the rationale for the United States to utilize liberal pro democracy programs to intrude in the Uyghur conflict. This was an instrument that was massively used by American administrations during the last two decades as a part and parcel of a policy to overturn authoritarian regimes. An intrusion into the Chinese internal political arena with the aim of spurring its weaknesses (such as the Uyghur separatist conflict) would appear similar to the strategy that has already been used by the United States in the Soviet bloc. During the Cold War, the United States and its allies used an array of different instruments in order to destabilize and bring down Communist regimes similar to the Chinese one. For some secessionist

⁵⁸² Ong Russell *China’s security interests in Central Asia Central Asian Survey*, 24(4), December 2005, 428

⁵⁸³ Ong Russell *China’s security interests in Central Asia Central Asian Survey*, 24(4), December 2005, 428

movements, as in the Baltic States in 1989, the US government clearly offered ‘*patron tutelage*’ and promised a safety net⁵⁸⁴. In other cases, minority groups were very effective in destabilizing the incumbent authoritarian regime (for example, the Hungarian minority in Romania) and in 1989 this led to the demise of Ceausescu’s rule. Here, the United States appeared to play a bystander role, at least during the initial phase⁵⁸⁵. In this instance, the United States did not specifically target the Hungarian group. In other cases, it even steadily opposed any tentative move towards separatism, as in the case of Slovenian secession in Yugoslavia in 1991: a situation in which the United States showed hostility towards Slovenian independence till the very end.

⁵⁸⁴ In the Baltic States, especially in Estonia, the civil society triggered, through nonviolence, the first secession process in the Soviet Union in 1991 creating momentum for further separatist movements and in the end the collapse of the Soviet Union. Here US political support was open, but the role of these INGOs is not known. However the US political support appeared to have been sufficient to drive the Soviet Union to a passive and un-obstructive stance *vis a vis* Baltic separatism. The Estonian case is exemplary because all the external players played a part: the United States as the patron state, Finland as a supporting bordering liberal country, an active Baltic diaspora, vocal exiled dissidents. All worked timely and effectively with internal forces to reach the independence aspired to by Estonia. Grievances in the Baltic area were similar to the ones carried out nowadays by Uyghurs: the effective control over the region’s economy. Baltic States, such as Xinjiang, shared a border with other states and maintained a large unwelcome Russian migrant community similar to the Han presence in Xinjiang. Abroad, the Baltic diaspora, similar to the Uyghur diaspora, promoted their cause in the hosting cultural and political environments and advocacy groups.

Signe Kärgets, interview by author, March 10, 2009, Osaka, notes

Also Volcic Demetrio *History of Eastern Europe: The breakup of the Soviet Union* [series of lectures] (Gorizia: University of Trieste, Diplomatic and International Sciences, April 1994), notes

⁵⁸⁵ The initial destabilization of the Romanian regime was spurred by the Hungarian minority living in the region of Transylvania. This Hungarian group was strongly autonomist, since the end of XVIII century, and through its Protestant Church organization succeeded in spurring the demise of Ceausescu’s leadership. Here the support of US INGOs during the very first phase of the collapse of the regime is not known. However, data regarding the involvement of these organizations during the second phase of the demise of the communist regime are available and show they were consistent. Interestingly Transylvania, the region where initial regime destabilization was spurred, configures a setting with some similarities to the one actually existing in Xinjiang: a region with a dissenting ethnic group mounted in a larger state with a strong Leninist power structure, with variegated ethnic fabric over the territory and different external supporters. The outcome in Romania was not the independence of the Hungarians living in Transylvania, nevertheless it resulted in an improved minority right *tutelage* both legally and *de facto*.

Andrea Trifunovits, interview by author by phone, December 22, 2008

Mihaela Croitoru, personal communication, March 9, 2009

See also Poggeschi Giovanni (2003) *Le minoranze nazionali nei paesi dell’Europa Centrale ed Orientale (National minorities in Central Eastern European Countries)* in *Valorizzare le diversità: tutela delle minoranze ed Europa multiculturale (Improving diversities: minorities protection and multicultural Europe)* ed. Pfössl Eva (Rome: Istituto di Studi Politici S. Pio V, 2003) 209-286

also Argentieri Federigo *Ungheria 1956. La rivoluzione calunniata (Hungary 1956. The slandered revolution)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2006)

and also Pommier Vincelli Daniel *La Romania dal comunismo alla democrazia (Romania from communism to democracy)* (Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2008)

Also Puscas Vasile *Il trattato romeno-ungherese (1996) e la questione delle minoranze nazionali (The Romanian-Hungarian treaty (1996) and the issue of national minorities)* in *Come la diplomazia elabora e realizza la tutela delle minoranze centro-europee (How diplomacy conceives and achieves Central European minorities’ protection)* ed. Alberto Gasparini (Gorizia: ISIG Institute of International Sociology Gorizia, 2000)

and also Ghini Anna Lisa and Zago Moreno Eds. *The status of minorities in CEI member states* (Working documents – Voll 1 and 2) (Gorizia: ISIG (Institute of International Sociology Gorizia, 1998)

However, all over the Soviet Bloc, ideological propaganda played a decisive role with its rhetorical emphasis on human rights and democracy. American rhetoric pressed authoritarian countries into regime change. Action matched words with a flow of material and logistical support as well as assistance and funding from International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs)⁵⁸⁶.

Engagement aimed at regime change through these organizations did not stop after the collapse of the Soviet bloc regimes in the late Eighties and early Nineties. Even during the last two decades American administrations have resorted consistently and massively to the promotion of so-called democracy as part and parcel of a policy to overturn authoritarian regimes in the same area and elsewhere⁵⁸⁷. As Carothers says

Democracy assistance mushroomed in the early 1990s with the end of the cold war, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the heady acceleration of what enthusiasts were calling the ‘worldwide democratic revolution’, aiding democracy abroad was suddenly of intense interest to the U.S. policy makers.⁵⁸⁸

During the 1990s programs of democracy assistance were expanded beyond Central Eastern Europe in order to reach the former Soviet Union and Latin America, and also Asia and the Middle East. ‘By the mid-1990s, U.S. democracy aid was all over both the developing world and the former communist world and was an accepted part of U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy’⁵⁸⁹. Sorensen explains that more recently, September 11, 2001 has added urgency: rewarding those who struggle non-violently for freedom and, in the long term, to establish and consolidate political systems unfettered by terrorism and extremism. As this is what normally happens with democratic regimes⁵⁹⁰, it is a positive result for the United States⁵⁹¹.

⁵⁸⁶ I will explain later the contiguity between these INGOs and the US leadership

⁵⁸⁷ The demise of an authoritarian regime does not necessarily provoke the birth of democratic rule: the regime might be replaced by another un-democratic government. It is however important to notice that regime demises occurred during the last three decades have mostly led to the installation of democracies. See also Gill Graeme *The dynamics of democratization. Elites, civil society and the transition process* (London: Macmillian Press London, 2000) 43.

⁵⁸⁸ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 40

⁵⁸⁹ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 40

⁵⁹⁰ Sorensen Georg *Democracy and democratization Processes and prospects in a changing world* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 2008) 83-84

⁵⁹¹ I will later explain how the US administration has been and might still be involved in activities producing un-stability in China.

Because of the liberalist approach of the current ‘practice of international politics’⁵⁹² the United States is strongly engaged in expanding democracy abroad. Democracy promotion is indeed an important tool for expanding US influence through non-military options, a strategy that is consistent with President Obama’s new emphasis on soft power⁵⁹³. As pointed out by Diamond:

In many cases, assistance, often through small grants to grassroots organizations, has helped to till the soil of authoritarian stagnation and inspired democratic hopes and capacities, allowing democrats to prepare and mobilize for change when dictatorships fell into crisis.⁵⁹⁴

Could this scenario be replayed in Xinjiang as well? The section on Feasibility assesses the real engagement of these pro democracy programs in Xinjiang. However, to sum up, the United States has a history of using an array of different instruments in order to destabilize and bring down Communist regimes similar to the one in China. Among these tools there is democracy promotion, an instrument also used extensively during the last two decades by American administrations as a part and parcel of a policy to overturn authoritarian regimes. Even though it cannot be stated *a priori* whether the United States prefers to support separatist movements in order to destabilize China, the history of US external involvement in other countries has shown that sometimes it has supported separatism, and at other times it has not supported separatism.

This rationale reflects a top down perspective on the eventual involvement of the United States in the Uyghur conflict. However, US foreign policy decision-making is not centralized as different agencies of the State compete to define foreign affairs policies. These agencies often clash with legislative organs such as Congress which has important powers in foreign and security policies. And as members of Congress are sensitive to the moods of their constituencies, they often channel bottom-up strategies for foreign affairs. As Rosa remarked

For Risse the capacity of American social actors to organize and mobilize to influence security related choices are higher than in other countries with a strong State. This is visible in the economic actors’ capacity to influence and in the civil society mobilization on issues regarding peace or the weapons’ control.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹² Collins Alan *Contemporary security studies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 29

⁵⁹³ For the linkages between soft power and democratic peace theory see Collins Alan Collins *Contemporary security studies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 28

⁵⁹⁴ Diamond Larry *The spirit of democracy* (New York: Times Books, 2008) 314

⁵⁹⁵ Rosa Paolo *Sociologia politica delle scelte internazionali (Political sociology of international choices)* (Bari and Rome: Laterza, 2006) 117

What about US bottom-up approaches in the Uyghur conflict? Are there constituencies that could reclaim a US intervention in favor of the Uyghurs? The coming section deals with the rationale of the bottom-up approaches for supporting the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. In other words, I am going to assess the rationale for the United States to mingle in a separatist conflict in another state, such as the Uyghur one in China, if this is what their constituents want. My aim is to see if domestic issues could push constituencies in the United States to demand a larger involvement in favor of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Are there constituencies in the United States that may be interested in spurring China's weaknesses? Yes there are. Domestically, there is popular mistrust and fear of China among the US electorate and this situation pushes US politicians towards supporting Chinese discontent with the Chinese Communist Party rule. The American public remains unconvinced by the rhetoric of 'the peaceful rise of China' and 'the Chinese responsible power'. In 2006 a survey stated that 'three-quarters of the [American] public is concerned about China becoming a military power'⁵⁹⁶. Despite attempts by the Chinese leadership to reassure the United States that 'China will not challenge the United States globally, China will not seek to exclude the United States from Asia, and China will not confront the United States on bilateral issues like trade'⁵⁹⁷ the American public still mistrusts the future intentions of the Chinese. As Shirk points out:

[...] if China's leaders are not accountable to ordinary citizens or to economic interests with a stake in good relations, what is to prevent them from changing their tune as soon as they are strong enough to challenge the United States?⁵⁹⁸

This attitude is especially reflected in Congress, where members lend a careful ear to the moods of their constituencies. In 1987 the House of Representatives amended 'the Foreign Relations Authorization Act denouncing "human rights violations" in Tibet [...] asserting that Tibet is forcibly occupied by China'⁵⁹⁹. The success of the Tibetan

⁵⁹⁶ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 252

⁵⁹⁷ As stated by Hu Jintao during his travel to the United States in September 2005.

⁵⁹⁸ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 243-245

⁵⁹⁹ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 252

⁵⁹⁹ Grunfeld A. Tom *Tibet and the United States in Contemporary Tibet politics, development, and society in a disputed region* eds. Sautman Barry and Dryer June Teufel (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) 334

lobbies reached a climax in Congress especially after the events in Tiananmen Square in 1989. During this time

Both houses of the Congress kept on the White House to do something on Tibet while passing bills with with such provisions as a \$500,000 grant to Tibetan refugees, thirty U.S. college scholarships (for \$1,000,000) for exiled Tibetans, a prohibition on the export of defense goods to China, a bill urging the United States to impose trade sanctions against China, and Tibetan language radio broadcasts on the Voice of America (which began in Spring 1991)⁶⁰⁰.

Every year between 1990 and 2001 the US Congress discussed China's concession as a trading partner with Most Favored Nation (MFN) status. The United States linked this status to China's human rights record. The tool of the MFN was a typical Cold War instrument intended to destabilize the Communist bloc. For many years the United States had used the concession of MFN as a destabilizing tool in the Soviet bloc. In the Seventies it had rewarded Romania, Hungary and Poland with this privileged trade status for their efforts at pursuing an autonomous (separate from the Soviet Union) foreign politics. This generated deep irritation in a Soviet leadership that correctly saw these rewards as an attempt to break cohesion in the Soviet bloc. The European Communities also used the attribution of MFN with the same purpose⁶⁰¹. In the end MFN and other economic policies were instrumental in expanding Western political influence in Eastern Europe. This was summed up by Cox and Kennedy Pipe when they stated that 'The United States and its Western allies were determined to undermine Soviet influence in Eastern Europe by exploiting the USSR's weak economic control over the region and "luring" the East Europeans back into the Western camp'⁶⁰².

In the case of China, the US Congress has also been pushing the various administrations to negotiate the release of China's dissidents in order to please influential human rights activist groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty

⁶⁰⁰ Grunfeld A. *Tibet and the United States in Contemporary Tibet politics, development, and society in a disputed region* eds. Sautman Barry and Dryer June Teufel (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) 337

⁶⁰¹ Service Robert *Compagni. Storia globale del comunismo nel XX secolo (Comrades. Global history of communism in the XX century)* (Rome and Bari: Laterza Editori, 2008) 414
Also Ghini Anna Lisa *Gli accordi tra la Comunita' Europea ed i Paesi dell'Europa Centrale ed Orientale con particolare riferimento alla collaborazione sorta in ambito P.H.A.R.E. (The agreements between the European Community and the Central Eastern European Countries, with a particular attention to the collaboration sprang up through the P.H.A.R.E. program)* [unpublished B.A. thesis], (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1994)

⁶⁰² Cox Michael and Kennedy Pipe Caroline *The tragedy of American diplomacy? Rethinking the Marshall Plan* *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 7 No1 (Winter 2005) 105

International and the media. Thanks to the powerful pro-Tibet lobby⁶⁰³, Tibet has been a frequently discussed issue in Congress such that Congress has even pressed for the appointment of special US representatives for Tibet:

Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms – the powerful Senator who controlled the confirmation of all diplomatic appointments – ordered the State Department to create a post of American Ambassador to Tibet even though the U.S. government has long recognized Tibet as a part of China. Helms finally agreed to a compromise that would create a “special coordinator” for Tibet, but his staff insisted that the State Department appoint the Tibet coordinator at the very moment when Jiang Zemin was paying his first state visit to the United States in October 1997.⁶⁰⁴

Also in 2008 the Congress introduced the Department of State, Foreign relations, and related Programs Appropriations Act:

The final public law (P.L. 110-161) included provisions requiring U.S. representatives at international financial institutions to support projects in Tibet if they do not provide incentives for non-Tibetan immigration into Tibet; and provided \$5 million in ESF funds to NGOs supporting cultural traditions, sustainable development, and environmental protection in Tibet. [...] The final bill [...] provided \$15 million in democracy assistance funds for China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, providing that monies for Taiwan be matched by non-U.S. government sources; and \$150,000 for the U.S. Senate-China Inter-parliamentary Group, to remain available until September 2009. The final bill also prohibited funds for a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) program in China (Section 660(c)). After a complex series of procedural floor motions in December 2007, the bill was sent to the President, who signed it on December 26, 2007.⁶⁰⁵

In Washington recently, the most notable evidence of the rising profile of the Tibetan issue was the American Congressional Golden Medal award given to the Dalai Lama in October 2007. On the same occasion he also met the US president George W. Bush despite strong criticism by Chinese Foreign Ministry:

We have made solemn representations to the United States over this issue. [...] We hope relevant country could stick to the correct position on Tibet issue and do not use this issue to interfere with China’s internal affairs.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³ American interest in the Tibetan cause has risen in parallel with the efforts of an influential pro-Tibet lobby that has in the past decade successfully and vocally argued the case for a renewed US support of the grievances of the Tibetan people inside the PRC. See Grunfeld A. Tom *Tibet and the United States* in *Contemporary Tibet Politics, Development, and society in a disputed region* eds. Sautman Barry and Dryer June Teufel (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) 319-349

⁶⁰⁴ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 225

⁶⁰⁵ Dumbaugh Kerry *China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: Issues and implications for U.S. policy* Congressional Research Service, February 10, 2009, 33
Kerry Dumbaugh is specialist in Asian Affairs at the Congressional Research Service

⁶⁰⁶ *China opposes U.S. gold medal award to Dalai Lama* Beijing, Xinhua Agency, October 11, 2007

However, Washington's support for the Tibetan cause does not mean that the United States is actually supporting Tibetan independence. It is merely easing the pressure from the Congress and the public and it is pleasing the Tibetan lobby with activities that, in the words of Grunfeld

[...] have enough symbolic value to appease those applying the pressure while not actually altering official foreign policy. [...] These actions please the Tibet Lobby, ease pressure from Congress and the public, don't change U.S. policy that Tibet is part of China, and anger the Chinese.⁶⁰⁷

Also the pro-Taiwan lobby in the US Congress is still very active in trying to ease the isolation of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Recently the House of Representatives has adopted some House Concurrent Resolutions towards this end, as illustrated by the H. Con. Res. 73 proposed by Rep. Tom Tancredo:

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should resume diplomatic relations with Taiwan Introduced on February 16, 2007 Referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.⁶⁰⁸

And as the H. Con. Res.136 proposed by Rep. Steven Chabot states

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States lift restrictions on high-level visits by officials from Taiwan and allow direct high-level dialogue between officials from both governments Introduced on May 1, 2007 Referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which held mark-up on June 26, 2007 The House passed the measure by voice vote on July 30, 2007, and the measure was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on August 3, 2007.⁶⁰⁹

And as the H. Con. Res. 73 proposed by Rep. Shelley Berkley states

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should initiate immediate negotiations to enter into a free trade agreement with Taiwan Introduced on May 1, 2007 Referred to the House Ways and Means Committee's Trade Subcommittee on May 15, 2007.⁶¹⁰

It also shows that US politicians are reflecting the mood of the domestic electorate especially when relating to human rights issues in China. Shirk witnessed this behavior:

⁶⁰⁷ Grunfeld A. Tom *Tibet and the United States in Contemporary Tibet politics, development, and society in a disputed region* eds. Sautman Barry and Dryer June Teufel (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) 338

⁶⁰⁸ Dumbaugh Kerry *China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: issues and implications for U.S. Policy* Congressional Research Service, February 10, 2009, 34

⁶⁰⁹ Dumbaugh Kerry *China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: issues and implications for U.S. Policy* Congressional Research Service, February 10, 2009, 34

⁶¹⁰ Dumbaugh Kerry *China-U.S. Relations in the 110th Congress: issues and implications for U.S. Policy* Congressional Research Service, February 10, 2009, 34

My own experience in government taught me that Washington's typical approach to human rights in China – which involves public shaming and threats of sanctions – wins points with American domestic audiences.⁶¹¹

So there are reasons to believe that the US Congress and government might feel the urge to support anti-regime organizations in China. And indeed, US organizations involved in spurring mass mobilizations (eventually leading to regime collapses abroad) also called for nonviolent revolutions to receive funding, mainly from the Congress, and sometimes with additions from the State Department⁶¹² and from USAID⁶¹³.

To sum up, domestic issues such as the mistrust of China could push US constituencies to demand a larger involvement in favor of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, especially through the US Congress.

All in all, top down and bottom up approaches in US politics could lead the United States to spur the conflict in Xinjiang. Among the top down policies, the will to destabilize the Chinese regime could be a critical factor in driving the US government towards an engagement in the conflict in Xinjiang. This engagement could be used to destabilize and even bring down the Chinese regime. Among the bottom up approaches, a diffuse sense of mistrust towards China could push larger groups of US constituencies towards demanding a US intervention in favor of the Uyghurs. Both approaches share in common a main tool with which to destabilize or disturb a regime. This tool is the support of anti regime groups mainly through the pro-democracy organizations, or INGOs.

Are there pro democracy programs supporting Uyghur separatism? The following section examines whether programs of pro democracy assistance by US agents are spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Past cases of separatism in other

⁶¹¹ Shirk Susan L. *China fragile superpower* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 262

⁶¹² The State Department, on the other hand, concentrates 'on the policy side rather than the aid side – deciding when to apply economic and diplomatic carrots and sticks to discourage democratic backsliding or to reward democratic progress.' Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 52

I was in Pakistan in October 1999 when a military coup replaced the democratically elected Nawaz Sharif's government and installed a military junta controlled by General Pervez Musharraf. At that time I was working in a European Commission sponsored aid program so I witnessed firsthand the diplomatic frenzy this democratic backsliding generated and how much concern and pressure foreign representatives, especially from the United States, generated.

⁶¹³ USAID, especially, embraced democracy promotion policies already in the Eighties and, though in the beginning 'democracy assistance still aroused considerable skepticism among career aid officers, many of whom thought that the agency should steer clear of politics' Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 39

Leninist structured communist regimes show that these pro democracy organizations have not specifically targeted autonomist or separatist movements. So it cannot be said that US INGOs specifically target separatist and autonomist groups. On the other hand, pro-democracy organizations increasingly prefer to avoid ethnically related groups⁶¹⁴ and to focus on ordinary civil society in order to destabilize the core of the authoritarian regimes. So what is the case regarding the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

Feasibility

This section examines the feasibility of this involvement: I assess what degree of involvement the relevant US organizations (i.e., those already involved in past destabilization of similar regimes as the one governing China and Xinjiang) have in the Uyghur case. In particular, I examine the involvement of the most relevant US INGO, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). I also examine the role of its affiliated organizations and the China-related organizations it funds and to what extent Uyghur organizations are among the recipients of this pro-democracy assistance.

First I explain why I have chosen to study the involvement of the NED specifically as a tool of US influence in China. Second, I examine whether the NED is targeting Uyghur groups. I firstly examine NED funding to Uyghur organizations from 2004 (the year of the first direct grant to the Uyghur) and 2009 (latest data available) to show that funds have been steadily increasing and have reached a sizeable amount. Third I comparatively assess how much groups that represent non-ethnic grievances (with far larger potential for mass mobilization than the Uyghur) received from the NED in 2009 to demonstrate that NED assistance to the Uyghur is considerably larger. Fourth, I examine the Tibet uprising in 2008 in Tibet which was led by NED funded groups. My aim is to demonstrate how, in this case, NED support was used to organize a series of protests that destabilized a part of China in 2008. Therefore I contend that the NED is soundly interested in ethnic conflicts in China. Then I will present my conclusions. My overall aim is to understand whether in addition to the motives described above, the United States also has the will and the tools to spur the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

⁶¹⁴ I elaborate later on Carothers' studies about pro-democracy programs and ethnic groups.

Concerning the first point, an assessment of the NED activities in China is critical as it is a tool of US leadership involvement there because its leadership reflects its closeness to the American political center. I hereby demonstrate how this organization is close to the political center of America and how its main activity is to use grassroots programs to encourage political mobilization in countries where authoritarian regimes block political liberalization.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was founded in 1983 in the wake of the announcement by US President Ronald Reagan at the British Parliament on June 8, 1982. President Reagan declared the need for an initiative:

[...] to foster the infrastructure of democracy - the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities - which allows a people to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.⁶¹⁵

It is lead by chairmen who often are current or former Congressmen⁶¹⁶. Moreover, two of the affiliated NED organizations, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), are led by persons who are closely linked to the core of the US administration. Indeed the IRI current chairman, since 1993, is Senator John McCain. Since 2004 IRI's president is Lorne Craner who served as assistant secretary of state for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor between 2001 and 2004 and had already served as IRI's president between 1995 and 2001⁶¹⁷. Although it claims to have no affiliation to the Republican Party⁶¹⁸ and to be a non-partisan organization, it has a history of focusing on the strengthening of 'like-minded conservative parties'⁶¹⁹ in Latin America and non-communist parties in

⁶¹⁵ Johnston Whittle *Reagan and America's democratic mission in President Reagan and the world* Greenwood eds. Shmertz Eric J., Datlof Natalie, Ugrinsky Alexej (Westport Conn.: Publishing Westport Conn., 1997) 19.

⁶¹⁶ Richard A. Gephardt, former House of Representatives member, is the current chairman since January 2009 while Vin Weber, also a former House of Representatives member, was in charge from 2001 to 2009

⁶¹⁷ Some other members of the IRI board are former Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger, former Presidential Envoy to Iraq L. Paul Bremer, III, former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Constance Berry Newman, Presidential Envoy to Sudan Richard S. Williamson, former Chairman of the Republican Party Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. *IRI History* available from <www.iri.org> accessed April 15, 2009

⁶¹⁸ *Is IRI affiliated with the Republican Party?* Available from <http://www.iri.org/faq.asp> accessed April 15, 2009

⁶¹⁹ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 144

the former Soviet bloc. On the other hand, the NDI, chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, declares that it maintains a loose affiliation with the Democratic Party⁶²⁰. In some countries, such as Russia and Croatia, it has worked only with reform-oriented parties⁶²¹. Also its funding comes from the political core of America, that is, mainly from the Congress, sometimes with an addition from the State Department and from USAID. And it is said that their activities are accepted as 'part of U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy'⁶²². Is the NED such a relevant organization? As explained by Diamond:

Although it began with very small annual budgets (under 20\$ million – a fraction of the German foundations collectively), the NED gave critical aid to democratic movements in Poland, Nicaragua, and Chile. Probably its greatest success story was in Poland, where the Free Trade Union Institute transferred substantial assistance to the Solidarity trade union to support its education, publishing, and human right projects. Throughout Eastern Europe, NED helped to build the civic infrastructure that undermined communism in the late 1980s.⁶²³

In essence, the NED and its affiliated organizations use grassroots programs to encourage political mobilization in countries where authoritarian regimes block political liberalization. Indeed spontaneous mass mobilization is often unable to bring down an authoritarian regime and these INGOs can help set up or reorganize incisive opposition organizations. As underlined by Gill:

Some form of organization must be developed to carry the process forward and to give a sense of direction and defined purpose to mass discontent. The two most common types of such organization are political parties and trade unions, and it is often the emergence of these from out of the shadows of the authoritarian state which marks a crucial turning point in the process of regime breakdown.⁶²⁴

US INGOs were originally devised in order to provide an alternative to Soviet

⁶²⁰ *Is IRI affiliated with the Republican Party?* Available from <<http://www.iri.org/faq.asp>> accessed April 15, 2009

⁶²¹ Besides these cases of open partisanship, there are countries where both organizations support some parties for purely situational reasons: 'Aid from both NDI and IRI sometimes ends up favoring one party over others, not because of a specific political agenda but because of the particularities of personal contacts and relationships.' Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 146

⁶²² Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 40

⁶²³ Diamond Larry *The spirit of democracy* (New York: Times Books, 2008) 121

⁶²⁴ Gill Graeme *The dynamics of democratization Elites, civil society and the transition process* (London: Macmillian Press 2000) 17.

influence in Central Eastern Europe; they have since broadened their spectrum to include other geographical areas. In China some of them operate through a series of programs that I later specifically analyze. These INGOs, including the NED, tend to use a template for their democratization model that is a mix of bottom-up and top-down strategies: they target political groups, labor dissent, business sectors, and independent media and so on. They follow a model for spurring weaknesses in an authoritarian regime. When the legitimacy of the ruling *elites* in an authoritarian regime starts to fade away, this is the moment for popular discontent to break out and demand political liberalization. The ruling leadership responds with an opening that produces a multiplication of civic actors that mobilize and request general multiparty election. At this point the regime is compelled to concede political liberalization: elections are held ‘and an elected government takes power’⁶²⁵. The democratization process needs consolidation that ‘involves top-down change – the rationalization and the democratization of the main state institutions. It also includes bottom-up change – the strengthening and diversification of civil society’⁶²⁶.

This model implies an opening up of the regime. However according to Carothers

If a country has not yet even begun a political opening and is run by an authoritarian or a dictatorial regime, democracy providers concentrate on activities to foster independent groups and to disseminate the idea of democracy.⁶²⁷

The vacuum of political opening is exactly the phase currently existing in China at large and in Xinjiang in particular. Therefore the strategy applied there should enhance the independent groups able to coagulate citizens’ discontent. And indeed, the NED pays considerable attention to China. The US Congress has been progressively increasing the funding of the NED for its activities related to China. In 2009, according to the latest available data, it granted more than seven million USD for China-related activities including activities in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong⁶²⁸.

China’s relevance for NED funded democracy is proven in the speech delivered

⁶²⁵ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 87

⁶²⁶ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 87

⁶²⁷ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 89

⁶²⁸ NED *2009 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china> accessed June 15, 2010

by US President George W. Bush in 2003, at the 20th anniversary of the NED's founding, where he specifically mentioned China's democratic future:

Our commitment to democracy is tested in China. That nation now has a sliver, a fragment of liberty. Yet, China's people will eventually want their liberty pure and whole. China has discovered that economic freedom leads to national wealth. China's leaders will also discover that freedom is indivisible -- that social and religious freedom is also essential to national greatness and national dignity. Eventually, men and women who are allowed to control their own wealth will insist on controlling their own lives and their own country.⁶²⁹

Moreover, to highlight its focus on the political evolution of China, on June 17, 2008 the NED presented its annual Democracy Award to human rights activists all of whom came from China⁶³⁰.

All in all an assessment of NED activities in China is critical. The NED is a tool of US leadership involvement in China because NED leadership reflects its closeness to the political center of America. Its main activity is to use grassroots programs to encourage political mobilization in countries where authoritarian regimes block political liberalization. Is this the case in Xinjiang? Are Uyghur groups a target for this support? The coming section evaluates the NED's relevance in relation to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang: whether the NED is targeting Uyghur groups directly and/or indirectly. Firstly I examine NED funding to Uyghur organizations from 2004 (the year of the first direct grant to the Uyghur) to 2009 (latest data available). Then I investigate whether the NED is indirectly targeting Uyghur groups by funding China proper related organizations that support the Uyghur issue and other American organizations involved with dissent in China⁶³¹.

⁶²⁹ Bush George W. *President Bush discusses freedom in Iraq and Middle East* in *Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy* Office of the Press Secretary, November 6, 2003 available from <<http://www.ned.org/events/anniversary/20thAniv-Bush.html>> accessed January 28, 2009

⁶³⁰ 2008 recipients were lawyers Li Baiguang and Li Heping, who attended the Capitol Hill ceremony to receive their awards. Four other awardees were serving prison sentences in China and were honored in absentia: Chen Guangcheng, a lawyer arrested in 2005; Zhang Jianhong, a cyber-dissident arrested in 2006; Yao Fuxin, a labor organizer arrested in 2002; and Hu Shigen, a labor activist and cofounder of the China Liberal Democratic Party, arrested in 1992.

⁶³¹ Literature about dissent and mobilization in China is vast and indeed very interesting. Just to name a few relevant works:

- Ding Yijiang *Chinese democracy after Tiananmen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- O'Brien Kevin J. ed *Popular protest in China* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008)
- Perry Elizabeth J. and Selden Mark eds *Chinese society. Change, conflict and resistance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005)
- Cavalieri Renzo and Franceschini Ivan eds *Germogli di societa` civile in Cina (Civil society sprouting in China)* (Milano: Brioschi, 2010)

Information about the activities of US INGOs in Xinjiang, as in China at large, is currently very sparse⁶³². The data that is available regarding the funding of these organizations is very limited, as is any other source of information. However, details are available regarding the NED, the main INGO that is involved in pro democracy support. This data shows that assistance to Uyghur advocates does exist and is quite substantial, especially when compared to the funding available to other China related organizations.

My conclusion is that the NED, a pillar of US soft power targeted at authoritarian regimes, is progressively increasing its level of interest in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. In fact the NED devotes a good share of its resources (10 percent in 2009 of the total funding for China's activities) to Uyghur groups. A figure that has been progressively increasing since 2004, the first year that the NED allocated funds to Uyghur groups. Therefore assistance to Uyghur groups seems to be augmenting. Until more evidence and documents become available we may only surmise that the NED, and therefore the US leadership, is expanding its influence in Xinjiang. However the data that is currently available allows us to think that this is a realistic hypothesis.

Concerning NED funding to Uyghur organizations from 2004 (the year of the first grant to the Uyghur) and 2009 (latest data available), data shows that the Uyghur groups have been steadily increasing their grants and in 2009 they were beneficiaries of 10 percent of all NED grants devoted to China. My research shows that Uyghur discontent plays a substantial role in the NED spectrum of activities in China. Therefore my conclusion is that the NED does seem to be directly involved with Uyghur advocacy groups.

And now we come to the data concerning NED funding to Uyghur groups. First, I introduce the general allocation of NED funds to China in 2009. Then, I analyze the Uyghur beneficiaries of the NED funding in 2009 and how this compares with

- Goldman Merle *Sowing the seeds of democracy in China. Political reform in the Deng Xiaoping era* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994)

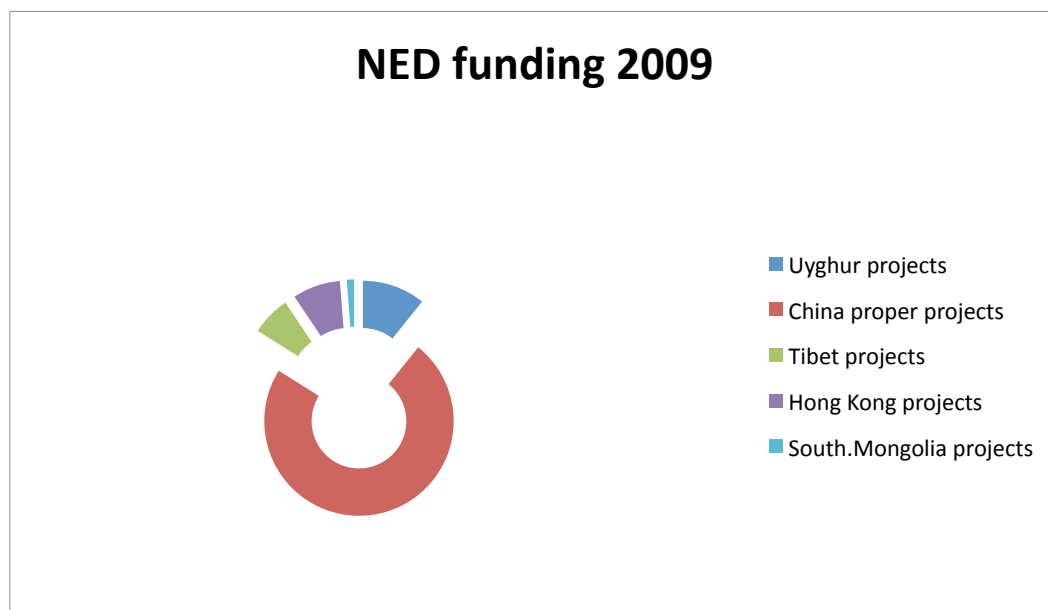
- Li Cheng ed. *China's changing political landscape. Prospects for democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2008)

- Goldman Merle *From Comrade to citizen. The struggle for political rights in China* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005)

⁶³² See the Research Methodology Chapter on this issue.

figures since 2004. My aim is to show that the NED has been developing a major interest in supporting the Uyghur issue.

Concerning the general allocation of NED funding to China's activities, in 2009 the total amount of funding was 7,030,797 USD⁶³³. Of this amount about 5,143,710 USD was granted for projects to be developed in China proper, and another 1,887,087 to those directly engaged with Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Southern Mongolian issues. Or better, as showed in the graphic below.



The graphic above shows the size of the NED funding given in 2009 to the various ethnic and non ethnic related projects in China. The funding for the Uyghurs (in dark blue) was the largest among the territorial related projects.

Source: Data *NED* available from <www.ned.org>

Graphic elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

	NED Funding 2009 for China's projects
Uyghurs'	756,306
China proper.	5,143,710
Tibet's	469,781
Hong Kong's	573,000
Southern Mongolia's *	88,000
Total	7,030,797

The table above shows the allocation figures for NED funding in China in 2009 divided among the various ethnic and non-ethnic groups

*The Southern Mongolia Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC) is the only recipient openly devoted to Southern Mongolian projects

Source: Data *NED* available from <www.ned.org>

Graphic elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

⁶³³ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china> accessed June 15, 2010

As shown in the table above, advocacy groups related to ethnic issues such as the Uyghur one in 2009 received 756,306 USD⁶³⁴. In particular the Uyghur advocacy groups funded by the NED in 2009 were

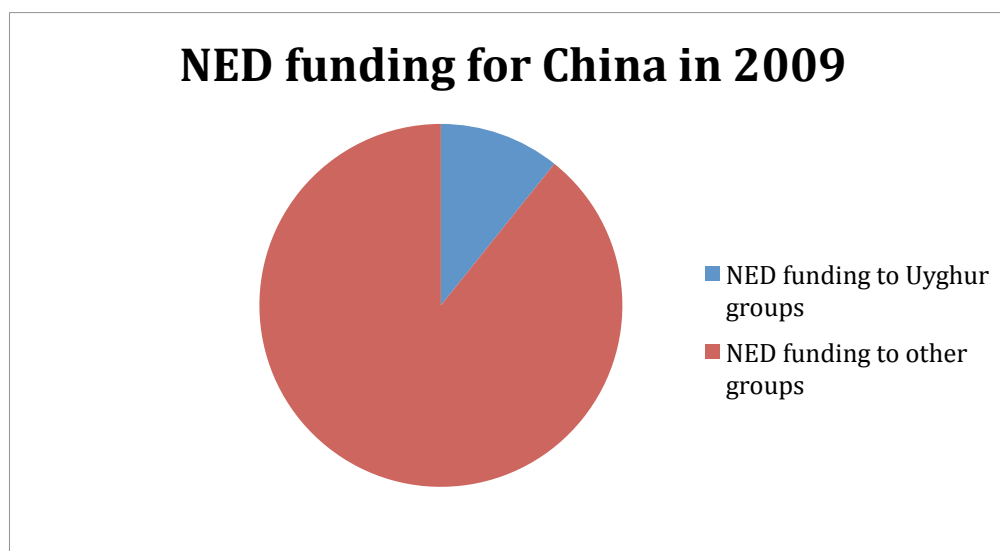
- Uyghur American Association (249,000 USD)
- World Uyghur Congress (186,000 USD)
- International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation (251,804 USD)
- International Uyghur PEN Club (69,502 USD)⁶³⁵

These are large sums for groups that represent a relatively small part of the overall population in China. In 2009 Uyghur programs received about 10 percent of the total NED funding for China: a large portion for groups that represent only 0.7 percent of the total Chinese population⁶³⁶. In the charts below I show how large the NED funding for Uyghur organizations is when compared with the small size of the Uyghur population in relation to China's entire population.

⁶³⁴ I will assess later how these figures have been increasing in the last two years for the Uyghur projects

⁶³⁵ This figure is the total amount granted by the NED and the State Department to the PEN Club

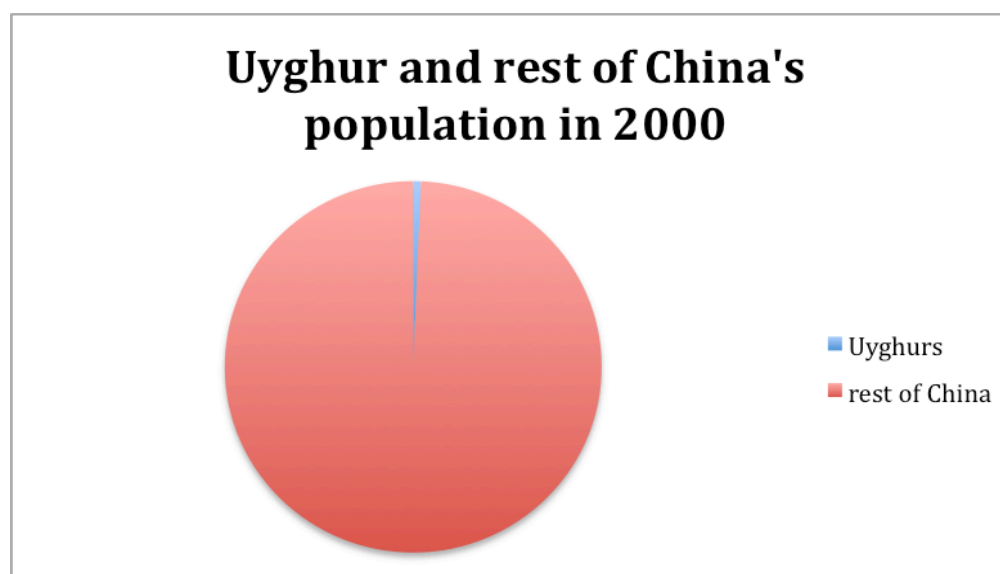
⁶³⁶ Uyghur population in Xinjiang was composed by 8,346,000 in 2000. This figure does not include Uyghurs living in other parts of the PRC where their distribution ranged from 310 to 8,000 persons for each province. The overall population of China reached 1.265 billion persons in November 1, 2000. Lavelly William *First impressions of the 2000 census of China paper* (Washington DC: Sociology Department and Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology University of Washington, November 4, 2001) 5 and China data Center *Total Uyghur population 2000 provincial statistics* University of Michigan available from <<http://chinadatacenter.org/chinageography/MapDisplay.asp?FigureNumber=c.336>> accessed July 15, 2010



This chart compares the NED funding to Uyghur (756,306 USD) and to other groups related to China (including Tibetan, Hong Kong and Southern Mongolian) (6,274,491 USD) in 2009.

Source: NED available from <www.ned.org>

Data and graphic elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

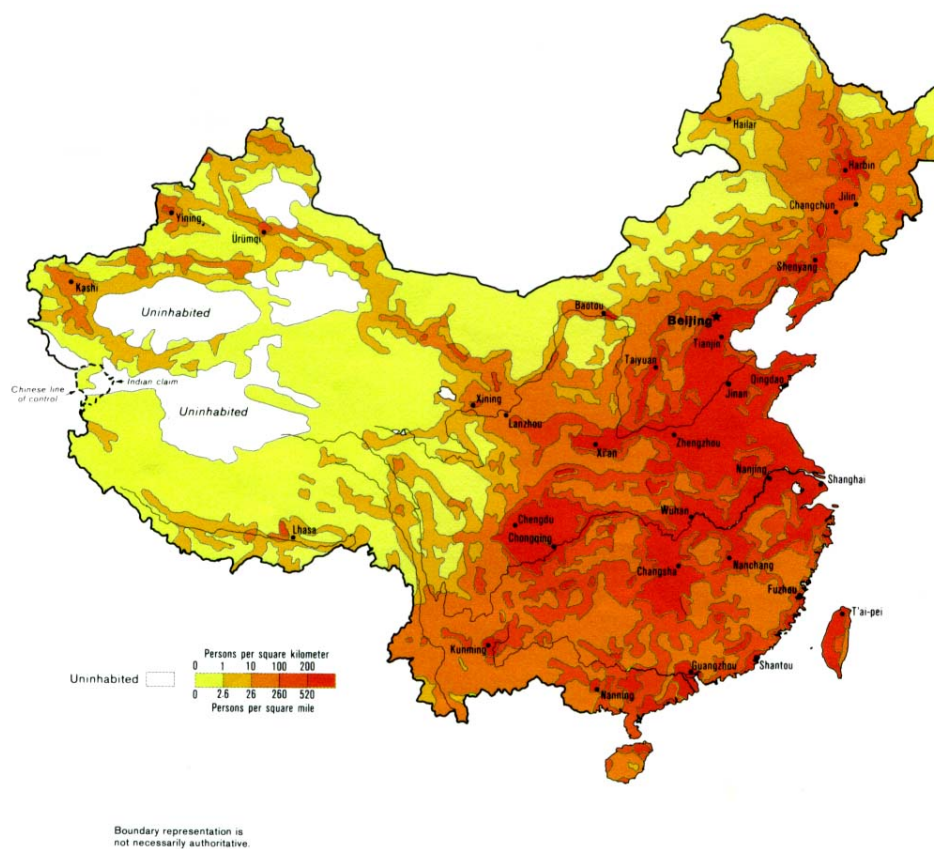


This chart compares the Uyghur population (8,346,000 persons) to the population of the rest of China (excluding the Uyghur) (1,256,654,000 persons) in year 2000

Source: Lavelly William *First impressions of the 2000 census of China paper* (Washington DC: Sociology Department and Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology University of Washington, November 4, 2001) 5 and

China Data Center *Total Uyghur population 2000 provincial statistics* (Detroit: University of Michigan, date unavailable) Elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

China: Population Density



Population density in China (1983)

The Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection - The University of Texas

In essence, in 2009 the NED funding devoted to China amounted to 7,030,797 USD. The Uyghur NGOs received 10 per cent, a sizeable fraction of this large sum, especially when compared with the size of Uyghur population and when compared with the NED funding allocated for proper activities in China.

Having said that I now address the next point and I investigate which specific Uyghur organizations were funded by the NED in 2009. I examine what activities were funded and I compare this data with data on funding received since 2004. My research shows that the amount allocated by the NED to Uyghur organizations is not dispersed across several organizations. On the contrary, most of the funding is granted to organizations connected to Rabiya Kadeer: the diaspora leader. As explained in the chapter on the diaspora, the NED, the US Congress and the past US administration have been actually supporting Uyghur diaspora organizations settled in the United States. As Kadeer confirmed to me:

We have very good relations with the NED since longtime: they support us with financing, materials, publicity, and promotion of our issues.⁶³⁷

Also, as this examination of the NED budget shows, the NED is actually funding Uyghur diaspora organizations⁶³⁸. These organizations include in particular, the Uyghur American Association (249,000 USD), the World Uyghur Congress (186,000 USD), the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Forum (251,804 USD) and the International Uyghur Pen Club (69,502 USD)⁶³⁹.

The Uyghur American Association mainly promotes Uyghur diaspora activities, especially those carried out by its president Rabiya Kadeer: it supports her statements, her calls for mobilization, her meetings, her frequent tours and so on. The Uyghur American Association received 249,000 USD in order to document and circulate information about human rights violations against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang⁶⁴⁰. The first NED grant to this organization was given in 2004⁶⁴¹ and amounted to 75,000 USD⁶⁴².

The World Uyghur Congress is the umbrella body of Uyghur organizations abroad⁶⁴³. It comprises 21 organizations that are legally operating in several countries around the world. It is also chaired by Kadeer. The World Uyghur Congress received financing from the NED which amounted to a total of 186,000 USD. This funding was used 'To enhance the ability of Uyghur pro democracy groups and leaders to implement effective human rights and democracy campaigns'⁶⁴⁴. The NED started to fund this

⁶³⁷ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

⁶³⁸ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶³⁹ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁴⁰ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁴¹ NED NED support for Uyghur Human Rights and prodemocracy groups in exile October 21, 2009 available from <<http://www.ned.org/for-reporters/ned-support-for-uyghur-human-rights-and-prodemocracy-groups-in-exile>> accessed July 17, 2010

⁶⁴² NED 2004 Grants Asia Programs Available from the publication section of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁴³ Mission statement of the World Uyghur Congress <www.uyghurcongress.org/En/AboutWUC.asp?mid=1095738888&mid2=-223458291> accessed October 22, 2006

⁶⁴⁴ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

organization in 2006⁶⁴⁵ with an initial 90,000 USD soon after its establishment⁶⁴⁶.

So, while one organization is devoted to acquiring international support through its exposure of the plight of Uyghurs, a strategy not unlike the one used by Tibetan diaspora, the other organization is dedicated to building itself as the relevant political force to drive Uyghur opposition.

Additional funding from NED was granted to the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation (IUHRDF) and to the International Uyghur PEN Club. The IUHRDF was founded as an offspring of the Uyghur American Association in 2005 and it is directed by Kadeer⁶⁴⁷. The purpose of this Uyghur-run human rights organization is to deliver information and give visibility to human rights abuses in Xinjiang⁶⁴⁸. In 2009 this organization received 251,804 USD from the NED in order to highlight the abuses on Uyghur women and children whose plight is relatively less well documented by the information that is provided by the Uyghur diaspora⁶⁴⁹. The first NED grant for this organization was approved in 2006⁶⁵⁰ and amounted to 90,000 USD⁶⁵¹.

A comparatively minor contribution of 69,502 USD from the NED and the State Department was given to the International Uyghur PEN Club to conduct advocacy campaigns and to publish work by some Uyghur intellectuals⁶⁵². The first funding,

⁶⁴⁵ NED *NED support for Uyghur Human Rights and prodemocracy groups in exile* October 21, 2009 available from <<http://www.ned.org/for-reporters/ned-support-for-uyghur-human-rights-and-prodemocracy-groups-in-exile>> accessed July 17, 2010

⁶⁴⁶ NED *2004 Grants Asia Programs* Available from the publication section of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁴⁷ R.Kadeer's Uyghur Human Rights Foundation Launches Website [Press Release] (November 30, 2006) available from <<http://www.uyghurnews.com/american/Read.asp?UighurNews=rkadeers-uyghur-human-rights-foundation-launches-website&ItemID=UA-2172008752811541129372>> accessed July 10, 2010

⁶⁴⁸ R. Kadeer's Uyghur Human Rights Foundation launches website [Press Release] (November 30, 2006) available from <<http://www.uyghurnews.com/american/Read.asp?UighurNews=rkadeers-uyghur-human-rights-foundation-launches-website&ItemID=UA-2172008752811541129372>> accessed July 10, 2010

⁶⁴⁹ NED *2009 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁵⁰ NED *NED support for Uyghur Human Rights and prodemocracy groups in exile* October 21, 2009 available from <<http://www.ned.org/for-reporters/ned-support-for-uyghur-human-rights-and-prodemocracy-groups-in-exile>> accessed July 17, 2010

⁶⁵¹ NED *2004 Grants Asia Programs* Available from the publication section of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁵² NED *2009 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

which amounted to 20,300 USD⁶⁵³, was given in 2007⁶⁵⁴.

As mentioned above, this funding to Uyghur groups has been steadily increasing since 2004. At that time the only direct funding of 75,000 USD was given to the Uyghur American Association. In that same year another group that was not managed by the Uyghur, the Beijing Spring Magazine, received 129,000 USD to publish a monthly magazine about democratization in China and ‘to work together with Uyghur democracy activists to increase awareness among Chinese communities, in China and abroad, of the dire restrictions on freedoms in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region’⁶⁵⁵. Therefore funding was indirectly given to advocate the Uyghur issue. An examination of NED funding between 2000 and 2003⁶⁵⁶ showed that Uyghur groups did not benefit from any direct NED grant. Similarly, no funding was given to other groups operating in China in order to indirectly promote the Uyghur cause.

In essence, most of the NED funding in 2009 was allocated to Uyghur organizations chaired by Kadeer. The purpose was to enhance their political strength and give the Uyghur issue a higher visibility. The quota of funding to Uyghur organizations in 2009 is particularly important as it amounts to 10 percent of the overall funding for China’s activities, this is a large portion for groups representing 0,7 of the Chinese population. Moreover funding for the Uyghurs has been progressively augmenting since 2004, the year the first grant was given by the NED: a sign of an increasing interest in the Uyghur issue.

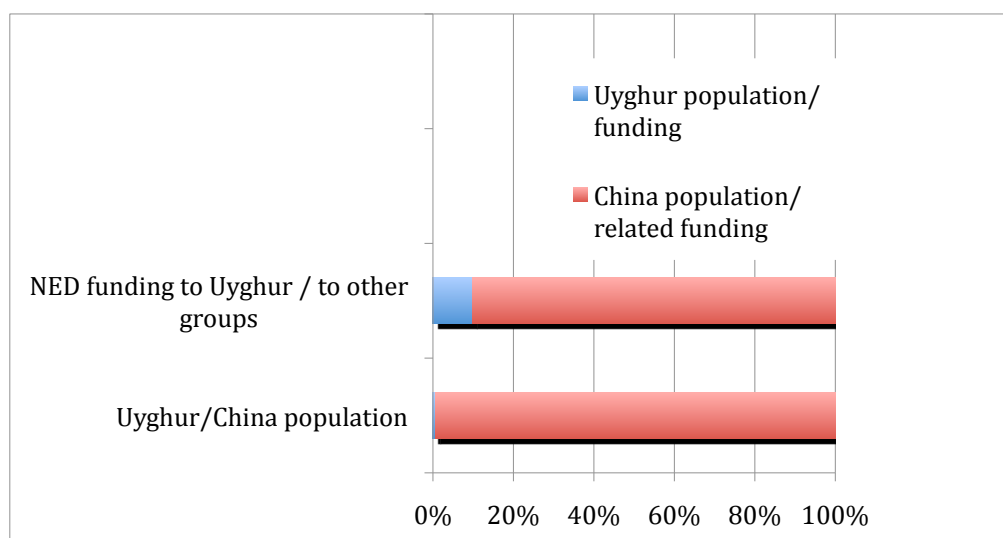
The charts below resume these trends: they reveal a disproportionate amount of NED funding to Uyghur groups when compared with the Uyghur population in China (chart 1) and steadily rising levels of NED funding to Uyghur organizations since 2004 (chart 2).

⁶⁵³ NED *2004 Grants Asia Programs* Available from the publication section of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁵⁴ NED *NED support for Uyghur Human Rights and prodemocracy groups in exile* October 21, 2009 available from <<http://www.ned.org/for-reporters/ned-support-for-uyghur-human-rights-and-prodemocracy-groups-in-exile>> accessed July 17, 2010

⁶⁵⁵ NED *2004 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from the publication sections of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁵⁶ NED *2000 Grants Asia Programs; 2001 Grants Asia Programs; 2002 Grants Asia Programs; 2003 Grants Asia Programs* Available from the publication sections of <www.ned.org> accessed June 15, 2010



This chart (no.1) directly confronts NED funding to the Uyghurs and to other groups in 2009 with the Uyghur population, 0.7 percent (nearly invisible on the chart), and the total population of China in 2000 (latest census available).

Source: NED available from <www.ned.org> and Lavelly William *First impressions of the 2000 census of China paper* (Washington DC: Sociology Department and Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology University of Washington, November 4, 2001) and China data Center *Total Uyghur population 2000 provincial statistics* (Detroit: University of Michigan, date unavailable))

Data and graphic elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

Concerning the third point, how the NED's funding allocation was distributed amongst the various recipients for activities in China during 2009, I examine which recipients received funding for activities in China, in addition to those recipients associated with ethnic issues, in order to assess what kind of grievances they represent and to understand whether their activities also reach out to Uyghur ethnic grievances thereby expanding the amount of support given by the NED to the Uyghur. My aim is also to assess the percentage of funding received by groups that deal with labor issues or human rights and to compare them with the amount received by organizations involved with ethnic issues: the Uyghurs in particular.

In the end my research will show that ethnic grievances, such as the ones pursued by the Uyghurs, receive a large portion of the overall funding despite the fact that they represent only a tiny portion of the Chinese population. Whilst other grievances, such as grievances over labor or human rights with a far larger potential for mass mobilizations are in receipt of comparatively minor support.

I will start with organizations related to China proper and later I will assess other non-China related organizations. Among the first group of organizations, the most

relevant recipients with funding above 100,000 USD⁶⁵⁷ in 2009 were

- Human Rights in China (250,000 USD)
- China Information Center (292,000 USD)
- Princeton China Initiative (647,287 USD)
- Democratic China (213,000 USD)
- Independent Chinese PEN Center (152,950 USD)
- Beijing Spring Inc. (145,000 USD)
- Beijing *Zhixing* Information and Counseling Company Ltd (255,000 USD)
- Center for Modern China (231,000 USD)
- China Free Press (155,000 USD)
- Beijing Yirenping Information & Counselling Center LLC (100,000 USD)

Also organizations with broader focus that devote part of their activities to China were included. They are:

- American Center for International Labor Solidarity (563,899 USD)
- Center for International Private Enterprise (235,835 USD)
- International Republican Institute (1,245,000 USD)
- National Democratic Institute (141,830 USD)
- Rule of Law and Public Participation (468,660 USD)
- Asia Catalyst Inc. (177,587 USD)

The following part examines the activities of these recipients and assesses what discontent they are addressing. Again, my aim here is to understand whether their activities also reach out to Uyghur ethnic grievances thereby expanding the amount of support given by the NED to the Uyghurs. As explained before in 2004 a NED funded organization related to China, Beijing Spring, received funding to promote the Uyghur cause. Is this still the case? Are non-Uyghur organizations receiving funding from the NED to advocate the Uyghur issue?

As previously mentioned, in 2009 Human Rights in China (HRIC) received 250,000 USD from the NED. This is an advocacy organization that was founded in March 1989 by Chinese dissidents living abroad. It is based in New York and Hong Kong and is completely devoted to voicing human rights violations and political

⁶⁵⁷ For space and summing reasons I have hereby illustrate only those with funding over 100,000 USD. However at the end of this thesis I have included an annex listing all recipients of the NED funding in 2009 for China with the description of the activities to be carried out with that funding.

discontent in China. It counts on a network of activists in China and on connections with local NGOs. It sends magazines and newsletters in the Chinese language to 350,000 Internet users in China and regularly features in Radio Free Asia programs⁶⁵⁸. HRIC's media work includes giving regular interviews on Radio Free Asia. This NED longtime grantee, as the NED defines it, receives also funding from private US foundations and the US State Department. The NED gave 250,000 USD in 2009 for programs intended

[...] to advance internationally recognized human rights in China. HRIC facilitates the work of domestic groups in building an effective agenda for social, legal, and political development through collaborative research and education, print and electronic publications, and advocacy.⁶⁵⁹

In Xinjiang, this organization focuses mainly on the defense of religious rights and against the repression and persecution of Uyghur dissidents. In 2005 it published a joint report together with Human Rights Watch on the repression of the Uyghurs⁶⁶⁰. In 2007 it issued the report *China: Minority Exclusion Marginalization and Rising Tensions* commissioned by the Minority Rights Group International. Moreover 'HRIC has profiled the cases of individuals from the XUAR [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Reion] whose rights have been affected'⁶⁶¹. Its website claims that it is staffed with 'Chinese, North American, and European individuals devoted to fostering greater space for democratic reforms and social justice'⁶⁶². Upon my explicit and direct questioning they have indicated that no Uyghur is working for them⁶⁶³.

On the other hand, as HRIC admitted 'there is little information available on the number of social organizations [in China] dedicated to advocating ethnic minority

⁶⁵⁸ *International spotlight lends hope to Human Rights in China NED Grantee Spotlight* available from <<http://www.ned.org/publications/articles/jun04Spotlight.html>> accessed June 1, 2010

⁶⁵⁹ *NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁶⁰ Human Rights in China and Human Rights Watch *Devastating blows: religious repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang* (New York: 2005)

⁶⁶¹ Human Rights in China, Hong Kong branch, personal communication, March 27, 2009

⁶⁶² Human Rights in China *Our mission and approach* (August 31, 2005) available from <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision_id=33597&item_id=10298> accessed March 20, 2009

⁶⁶³ Human Rights in China, Hong Kong branch, personal communication, March 27, 2009

interests⁶⁶⁴. For HRIC and other similar organizations this lack of information limits their capacity for affiliation with similar entities in China. In particular, minority-related NGOs are very limited and focus mostly on folk culture and language⁶⁶⁵. Even the collection of information regarding human rights violations is problematic because of tight censorship and the control of the authorities. Therefore, HRIC relies heavily on the Uyghur diaspora⁶⁶⁶ and its organizations such as the NED-funded *Uyghurs Human Rights Project*. This determines that ultimately, any HRIC activity related to Uyghur discontent is screened through the prism of the Uyghur diaspora abroad.

The China Information Center provides an extended source of information about news, human and civil rights violations, dissent, and any other political issue in China. It was funded by the Chinese dissident Harry Wu and is based in Washington. Funding from the NED (a total of 292,000 USD in 2009) is intended ‘To provide an alternative source of news and opinion [...] through two Chinese-language websites and an email list.’⁶⁶⁷ It also offers a comprehensive coverage including Tibet and Xinjiang.

An investigation on the other China related organizations funded by the NED I carried out between 2009 and 2010 revealed that none of these organizations has apparently carried out pro-Uyghur activities, not even Beijing Spring, that before 2004 had received funding to support the Uyghur mobilization⁶⁶⁸. Therefore the only NED funded non-Uyghur organizations supporting the Uyghur mobilizations are Human Rights in China and the China Information Center.

⁶⁶⁴ Human Rights in China and Minority Rights Group International *China: Minority exclusion marginalization and rising tensions* (New York, 2007) 15

⁶⁶⁵ Human Rights in China and Minority Rights Group International *China: Minority exclusion marginalization and rising tensions* (New York, 2007) 15

⁶⁶⁶ Human Rights in China and Minority Rights Group International *China: Minority exclusion marginalization and rising tensions* (New York, 2007) 9

⁶⁶⁷ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁶⁸ Beijing Spring (145,000 USD granted in 2009 by the NED) is a magazine promoting democracy in the PRC. The NED included it among its grantees in order ‘To support this magazine including analysis and commentary by authors inside and outside China regarding political developments, social issues, and the prospects for democratization in China’. Its website has links to the International Campaign for Tibet and other pro democracy and advocacy groups related to China, but no links to any Uyghur issue. Beijing Spring is particularly interesting because in 2004 it received funding to support the Uyghur cause, therefore NED funds were indirectly given to advocate the Uyghur issue as explained before. This does not seem the case in more recent years.

This is the information regarding NED funding to China related organizations. However, as mentioned before, the NED works as a consortium with other organizations not specifically related to China but nevertheless in receipt of NED funding for their activities in China. These organizations are as follows: the American Center for International Labor Solidarity or ACILS (563,899 USD from the NED in 2009⁶⁶⁹), the Center for International Private Enterprise or CIPE (235,835 USD) and the International Republican Institute or IRI (1,245,000 USD). These are the organizations that, together with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs or NDI (141,830 USD), are affiliated with the NED in a consortium.

The ACILS, now called the Solidarity Center, is aimed at developing trade unions. It is based in Washington with offices in Europe and Central Asia, namely Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Interestingly, these countries are the theater of the recent color revolutions. Under the name of the Free Trade Union Institute, the ACILS produced the most successful result in its first decade of operations by assisting the *Solidarnosc* struggle in Poland. The American Center for International Labor Solidarity received a total 563,899 USD in 2009⁶⁷⁰ for promoting programs of labor rights awareness, education and networking for low-wage migrants. It also supported a bilingual website on labor issues in China, and provided an online center for information on workers' rights and an email newsletter. In addition it offered legal-aid and enhanced accession to judicial recourse for Chinese workers and carried out education programs on workers' rights along 'with Chinese partners' and it supported 'the work of Chinese partner organizations to develop effective channels for worker representation and sustainable strategies for the protection of core labor rights and standards.'⁶⁷¹ No mention of the Xinjinag or the Uyghur issue was retrieved from its website⁶⁷².

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) is based in Washington. It devotes many of its Asian activities to China, such as developing non-governmental think tanks and promoting economic reform and understanding of market systems. The organization is developing institutional reforms against corruption and it promotes

⁶⁶⁹ NED 2009 *Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁷⁰ NED 2009 *Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁷¹ NED 2009 *Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁷² Solidarity Center available from <<http://www.solidaritycenter.org/>> accessed July 15, 2010

corporate governance reform by developing networks of private, voluntary business associations based on the American model. The Center for International Private Enterprise was granted 235,835 USD in 2009 in order to

[...] to encourage better local public governance in China, to advance discussion of democratic governance, and to enhance private-sector participation in policy debates.[...] To encourage opportunities for free and public debate about current events, political issues and reform agendas in China.⁶⁷³

The CIPE also conducts assessments of political stability in China. Recent research published by the CIPE states that democracy movements in China are going to succumb because, in addition to other problems, there is weak rule of law, disunity between various causes, and, in the words of the author Zhou a ‘hyper-nationalism that threatens prospects for peace and stability in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang province, and Tibet.’⁶⁷⁴ The blog attached to the CIPE’s own website has only once discussed the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang⁶⁷⁵. No other mention was found on its own website⁶⁷⁶.

The IRI, chaired by Senator John McCain, is focused on pro-democracy activities: above all, it concentrates on building parties and civic institutions and electoral monitoring. Its activities have also spread across Central Asia, i.e. to Kyrgyzstan. Before the democratic revolution in 2005, it funded a printing plant in Kyrgyzstan in which six opposition papers and also a book, *From dictatorship to democracy: a conceptual framework for liberation*, by Gene Sharp⁶⁷⁷ were printed⁶⁷⁸.

The NDI, chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is also devoted to democracy promotion. It manages programs on citizen participation, election monitoring and party development. It works actively in Central Asia where, amongst its

⁶⁷³ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁷⁴ Zhou Kate *China’s grassroots movement toward greater freedom* Economic Reform, Center for International Private Enterprise, August 28, 2008

⁶⁷⁵ *Violence in China offers a lesson on governance* [online post] (July 8. 2010) available from <<http://www.cipe.org/blog/?p=2714>> accessed July 15 2010

⁶⁷⁶ CIPE available from <<http://www.cipe.org/>> accessed July 15, 2010

⁶⁷⁷ I will analyze later this book

⁶⁷⁸ This printing house was managed by Freedom House representative in Bishkek, but funded by the IRI. In a documentary shot in Kyrgyzstan the director of the Bishkek office of Freedom House, Mike Stone appeared showing off this printing house he managed despite close scrutiny by the secret police. Later Sen. Mac Cain appeared while defending the printing house’s operations while on a phone call with Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Loizeau Manon *Etats Unis a` la conquete d l’Est (United States conquering the East)* [documentary] (Paris: Capa, 2005)

other activities, it also offers scholarships to dissenters to study in the United States⁶⁷⁹. In China, it has opened an office in Hong Kong from where it manages its activities all over China.

Both the IRI and the NDI have chosen to follow the same operational pattern in China: that pattern is to cooperate with governmental institutions in order to build up good connections (or *guanxi*, a fundamental tool to operate in China) probably in order to enhance and protect their non-governmental activities. The NDI has been collaborating with organizations affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the All-China Women's Federation⁶⁸⁰. Both the IRI and the NDI have contacts with the China Foundation for Human Rights Development: an organization chaired by Huang Mengfu who is vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress⁶⁸¹. The IRI in particular received 1,245,000 USD in 2009 from the NED:

To strengthen independent grassroots institutions, open dialogue on public policy questions [...]
 To increase transparency and accountability in local government [...]
 To strengthen rural women's land rights in China⁶⁸²

This organization states that it does not support 'ethnic-based parties, religion-based parties, and nationalist parties'⁶⁸³ and if these criteria are applied to China too, it means it does not support Uyghur political organizations as they are openly ethnic-based.

In 2009 the NDI received 141,830 USD 'to strengthen citizen participation in environmental decision making'⁶⁸⁴. Here it is worth remembering that environmental groups were among the few opposition groups that were tolerated by the regime in the Soviet Union, especially in the Baltic area, that led to the independence conflict in the

⁶⁷⁹ Loizeau Manon *Etats Unis a` la conquete d l'Est (United States conquering the East)* [documentary] (Paris: Capa, 2005)

⁶⁸⁰ A mass organization established in 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party.

⁶⁸¹ *IRI and NDI Meet with Chinese Human Rights Delegation* [Press release] (December 16, 2008) available from <<http://www.iri.org/newsreleases/2008-12-16-China.asp>> accessed March 2, 2009

⁶⁸² *NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs*. available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

⁶⁸³ Carothers Thomas *Aiding democracy abroad* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) 147

⁶⁸⁴ *NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs*. Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang> accessed June 15, 2010

Baltic States⁶⁸⁵.

To sum up the NED is funding several NGOs involved in political opposition, human rights protection and labor dissent in China. These are issues that could potentially mobilize larger masses than the Uyghur group. Strikingly, ethnic grievances, such as the ones pursued by the Uyghurs and the Tibetans, amount to 17 percent of the overall funding. This is a large portion of the overall funding despite the fact that they represent only a tiny portion of the Chinese population. Notably, other grievances, such as the labor or the human rights one, each receive comparatively modest sums despite the fact that they have a far greater potential for mass mobilizations.

As previously mentioned, direct support to Uyghur groups offered by the NED was 10 percent of the overall budget of the NED in 2009 while the Tibetan groups received 7 percent. Therefore my research shows that in China, the NED is putting emphasis on ethnic grievances. Uyghur discontent is present in the spectrum of NED assistance programs with a relevant role.

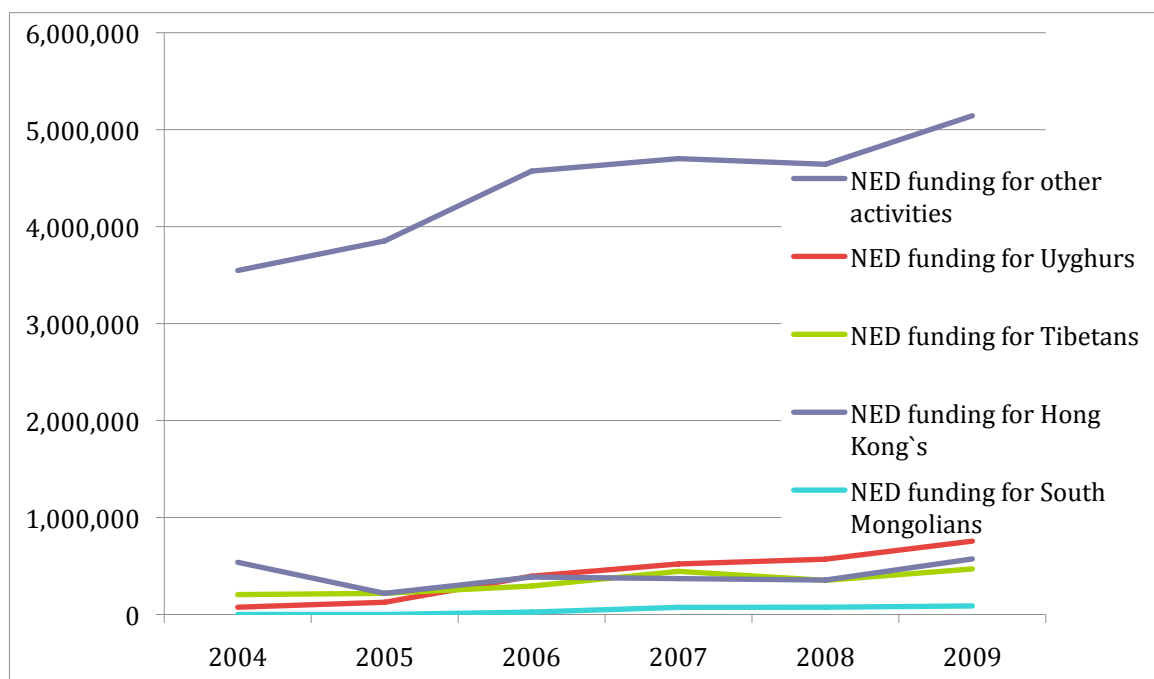
The table and chart below show how NED funding to Uyghur groups has been constantly augmenting since 2004, the year of the first grant to the Uyghurs and this funding has surpassed the provisions made for Tibetan organizations.

Year	Total NED funding for China related activities ⁶⁸⁶	NED funding for Uyghur activities	NED funding for Tibetan activities	NED funding for Hong Kong's activities	NED funding for Inner Mongolian activities	NED funding for other activities ⁶⁸⁷
2004	4,365,922	75,000	205,000	538,280	-	3,547,642
2005	4,447,583	126,000	251,225	218,000	-	3,852,358
2006	5,671,565	395,000	293,000	386,000	25,000	4,572,565
2007	6,110,471	521,105	444,650	369,983	73,435	4,701,298
2008	5,995,249	570,105	351,930	355,423	75,000	4,642,791
2009	7,030,797	756,306	469,781	573,000	88,000	5,143,710

⁶⁸⁵ Demetrio Volcic *History of Eastern Europe: The breakup of the Soviet Union* [series of lectures] (Gorizia: University of Trieste, Diplomatic and International Sciences, April 1994), notes. And Signe Kärgets, interview by author, March 10, 2009, Osaka, notes

⁶⁸⁶ Including the activities for the Uyghurs, Tibetans, Southern Mongolians and Hong Kong people

⁶⁸⁷ Excluding the activities for the Uyghurs, Tibetans, Southern Mongolians and Hong Kong people



This chart shows the constant rise of Uyghur allocations since 2004 compared to those for Tibetan, Hong Kong's and Southern Mongolian activities and other China related organizations. Funding for the Uyghurs has surpassed the grant for the other ethnic groups and groups in Hong Kong.

Source: NED available from <www.ned.org>

Data and graphic elaboration: Anna Lisa Ghini

To conclude this section, the data shows that the NED is giving priority to assisting a series of groups who are involved in ethnic dissent, mainly the Tibetans and the Uyghurs. Groups mobilizing around political opposition, human rights protection and labor discontent also receive grants. However, despite the fact that they have the potential to mobilize larger masses than the ethnic groups that are in conflict in China, the NED is giving a sizeable support to these latter groups and in particular to the Uyghurs.

Today Chinese Communist Party's rule in China is undermined by certain vulnerabilities that are similar to those in the Soviet bloc communist regimes. Is the United States interested in exploiting these vulnerabilities, as it did in similar regimes in Central Eastern Europe? If the answer is yes, then could the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang (overall an ethnic conflict within China) be targeted by US agents? In this chapter I have assessed whether the NED and its affiliated organizations are assisting the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, in a way that is similar to what has already happened in the Soviet bloc.

The uprisings in Tibet in March 2008 could prove that this approach is feasible. Therefore, I am going to examine the 2008 Tibetan uprising in order to demonstrate how NED sponsored groups used this conflict to organize a series of protests that destabilized part of China in 2008. This will illustrate that the NED is soundly interested in ethnic conflicts in China. In that situation, a number of US pro-democracy organizations supported the Tibetan mobilization and the result was a ten day destabilization of the greater Tibetan region⁶⁸⁸. Five organizations linked to the Tibetan diaspora were involved: the Gu Chu Sum Movement of Tibet (association of former political prisoners), the International Campaign for Tibet, the Tibetan Women's Association, the Longhso Youth Movement of Tibet, and the Voice of Tibet. All of these organizations, except the Longhso Youth Movement of Tibet, had received funding from the NED in 2007⁶⁸⁹. Other funding was given to the Tibetan diaspora by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, by the United States Agency for International Development and by the Tibet Fund of New York⁶⁹⁰. Between February 15 and 17, 2008, these five organizations trained forty activists who represented twenty-five Tibetan communities resident in India. The courses were aimed at preparing them on how to carry out non-violent opposition and books offered by the Albert Einstein Institution were translated into Tibetan with a preface written by the

⁶⁸⁸ On March 10 2008 monks attended to a vigil to commemorate 1959's demonstrations during which some of them, six or seven, were arrested. On the same day three hundred monks marched from Drepung Monastery to the Potala Palace to claim the liberation of those arrested in October. Fifteen monks waved the forbidden Tibetan flag in downtown Lhasa, shouting pro-independence slogans, and were immediately arrested. However the police reacted by arresting another fifty monks. The following day some hundred persons gathered on the road to the Drepung Monastery, but faced heavy clashes with the police. On March 14 violence erupted as civil Tibetans attacked 'the next available symbol of Chinese governance' Barnett Robert *Thunder from Tibet* The New York Review of Books Volume 55, Number 9, May 29, 2008, 4

⁶⁸⁹ See annex list of the organizations funded by the NED. It is worthwhile to consider here that the quota of the overall budget for China remained the same before and after the 2008 uprisings. In 2007 Tibetans received 7 percent of NED funding. In 2009 Tibetan activities received the same percentage, 7 percent. NED 2009 *Grants Asia Programs*.

Available from <www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-tibet> accessed June 15, 2010

NED 2007 *Grants Asia Programs*. Available from

<<http://www.ned.org/grants/07programs/grants-asia07.html#chinaTibet>> accessed April 15, 2009

⁶⁹⁰ The United States is not the only country to spur the Tibetan cause. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation, a think tank linked to the Free Democratic Party, was actively involved in the disruptive demonstrations during the European relay of the Olympic torch in March 2008. As a matter of fact, in May 2007, it co-organized the Fifth International Conference for Tibet in Brussels where a road map for the pro Tibet activities was designed. Right during that conference it was decided to focus protests in the West right during the 2008, year of the Olympic Games, in order to maximize international media attention and embarrass the Chinese government. See Cheong Ching *Fanning flames* Hong Kong, The South China Morning Post, April 24, 2008

Dalai Lama, and then distributed⁶⁹¹. In fact, the demonstrations in Tibet followed a theoretical pattern elaborated by Gene Sharp, the director of the Albert Einstein Institution, in one of his books: *From dictatorship to democracy: a conceptual framework for liberation*.

They started with a protest to test the tolerance of the regime and its level of support from the wider population: in the Tibetan case it was a vigil to commemorate the demonstrations in 1959. For Sharp, the more support and force the opposition may gain, the braver the actions that could be carried out. In the Tibetan case, soon after the vigil was ended, three hundred monks marched from Drepung Monastery to the Potala Palace to claim the liberation of those arrested during the previous October. Fifteen monks waved the forbidden Tibetan flag in downtown Lhasa, shouting pro-independence slogans, these were braver actions as in line with Sharp's theory. As explained before, for Sharp, the target is to affect the regime's resources, paralyze its core and in the end, bring about its disintegration. Ultimately, the Tibetan unrest in March 2008 achieved the aim of destabilizing the Tibetan region for an entire week. That is probably what the US agents were aiming at: appeasing the domestically powerful pro-Tibet lobbies and weakening China for a limited period.

Could this be the case for the Uyghurs in Xinjiang too? In Xinjiang also there were riots in 2008 and 2009. On March 23 2008, while unrest was suppressed in Tibet, riots erupted in Xinjiang, in the city of Hotan where about 500 Uyghur protested and many were arrested. Some claimed that they were requesting a lifting of restrictions on the wearing of Islamic scarves and head coverings, while others say that they were seeking independence⁶⁹².

In 2008 there were not only riots but also terrorist attacks in China, outside Xinjiang, allegedly made by some Uyghur groups. On July 26, 2008 an Uyghur radical group, the *Turkestan Islamic Party*, claimed to have carried out a series of attacks in Xinjiang and in other Chinese regions. These attacks were started on May 5, 2008 with a bomb on a Shanghai bus, followed by a bomb assault on a police station in Wenzhou on July 17, followed by three bus bombs in Yunnan Province on July 21. Another string of terrorist incidents occurred later in Xinjiang: on August 3, 2008, a police station assault in Kashgar resulted in 16 deaths. The Chinese police named the Eastern

⁶⁹¹ Cheong Ching *Fanning flames* Hong Kong, The South China Morning Post, April 24, 2008

⁶⁹² French Howard W. *China confirms protests by Uighur Muslims* New York, The New York Times April 3, 2008

Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as responsible for the attack. A few days later, on August 8 2008, another bomb killed eight persons¹ in Kuqa, Southern Xinjiang, and on August 11 three policemen were stabbed to death at a check-point in Xinjiang⁶⁹³. On July 5, 2009 violence exploded after a protest in Urumqi by 300 young Uyghurs protesting against the killings of two Uyghur migrants by Han co-workers in a factory in Guangdong province. The protest expanded and violence erupted against the Hans and this resulted in several days of clashes, of the 197 who were killed, most were Hans⁶⁹⁴.

We do not know for sure whether the NED was behind the demonstrations that erupted in Xinjiang in 2008 and 2009. Kadeer refuses to link these events to any external influence and the NED does not answer to this, or to other questions. The absence of documentation and evidence prevents these events from being satisfactorily explained. However there is literature linking the 2008 demonstrations in Tibet and the NED and it shows how NED support was used to organize a series of protest that destabilized part of China in 2008⁶⁹⁵. Therefore, this demonstrates that the NED is soundly interested in ethnic conflicts in China.

To sum up in this section, I have assessed whether US agents, specifically the NED, are assisting the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, in a way that is similar to what has already happened in the Soviet bloc. The NED, this leading US organization involved in pro-democracy programs, is focusing on both ethnic and non-ethnic oppositional groups and it works towards enhancing the ability of independent groups to coalesce the discontent of citizens. Considerable assistance is devoted to the Uyghur and Tibetan organizations. This is especially the case when compared to the assistance given to groups advocating issues that are far more popular in China such as labor and human rights and political opposition grievances. The Uyghur groups in particular have been expanding their NED funding in the last few years. The Tibetan uprising in 2008 led by NED sponsored groups helps us to understand how this support really works and it demonstrates that, in the end, the NED is soundly interested in ethnic conflicts in China.

⁶⁹³ *Esplosioni nello Xinjiang, otto morti (Explosions in Xinjiang, eight deaths)* Milan, Corriere della Sera, August 9, 2008

Cina: uccisi tre poliziotti nello Xinjiang (China: three policemen killed in Xinjiang) Milan, Corriere della Sera, August 12, 2008

⁶⁹⁴ *200 uiguri a processo per le violenze etniche (Trial for 200 Uyghurs for ethnic violence)* Milan, Corriere della Sera, August 29, 2009

⁶⁹⁵ Interestingly in 2007, the year before of Uyghur and Tibetan mobilizations, their groups received overall the same amount of funding.

However no evidence could be retrieved to link NED funded Uyghur organizations with the mobilizing groups in Xinjiang in 2008. Until more evidence and documents become available we may only surmise that the NED, and therefore the US leadership, is expanding its influence in Xinjiang.

The Slovenian separatist movement is another case that could offer interesting analogies to the Xinjiang Uyghur conflict. And the next section investigates the role of the United States in the Slovenian conflict in order to see whether it favored this separatist faction or not.

The Slovenian conflict and US unsupportive stance

For my research, it is interesting to assess whether this case could provide a model for the possible involvement of US influence in Xinjiang. However, in Slovenia the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism. Therefore why should we make a comparison? The answer is because US support and its pro democracy programs do tend to ebb and flow⁶⁹⁶. As discussed in the diaspora Chapter, the Uyghur diaspora leaders told me how in the last decade they sensed different attitudes by different administrations. Everything seems to change depending on the agenda of the moment. The Slovenian case is a formidable case study of how US support ebbed and flowed depending on the different American leaderships and contingencies. Could this be also the case for the Uyghurs?

In theory state and non-state agents based in the United States might have had a few motives to intervene in this conflict. First, US state agents might have intruded in this conflict for opportunism, with the aim to gain influence, for instrumental aims, in order to divert US public opinion or because they sensed the United States invulnerable with respect to their involvement in this separatist conflict. In reality they did not spur this conflict. Second, affective motives, ethnic affinities and transnationalism might have induced non-state agents based in the United States to support Slovenian mobilizers. In reality the Slovenian diaspora only supported Slovenian separatists, but with limited outcomes, as seen in the chapter on the diaspora.

⁶⁹⁶ See also Grunfeld when he states that also support to the Tibetan issue has been ebbing and flowing during different phases. Grunfeld A. Tom *Tibet and the United States in Contemporary Tibet Politics, Development, and society in a disputed region* eds. Sautman Barry and Dryer June Teufel (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) 319-349

In this section I explain the reality of these agents' involvements. I first explain how and why the US administration, Congress and the Slovenian diaspora acted with respect to Slovenian separatism. Secondly I assess whether there is a parallel with the Uyghur issue. Then I present my conclusion.

Concerning the first point, at the outset there were a number of reasons for US opposition to Slovenian independence: geo-strategic irrelevance during the time period of the Slovenian case, a lack of direct representation and lobby agency in the US Congress, minimal visibility of the Slovenian issue in the United States and fading interests by the usual US pro democracy programs.

As for the geo-strategic irrelevance during the period of the Slovenian case, after 1989 the Bush administration had begun a process of disengagement from an area where no immediate and relevant US interests were perceived. The United States preferred to focus on the Middle East, particularly Iraq, while Reagan's ideology of liberating Central Eastern Europe from Communism quickly faded away. In Washington, Yugoslavia was deemed as a European crisis that had to be treated within the continent⁶⁹⁷. As Pirjevec states

At that time, - as [Secretary of State Baker] wrote in his memoirs - none thought [in Washington] to deploy ground troops in Yugoslavia since American people would not have backed such decision. In the end, the United States had fought three wars during this century in Europe – two hot and one cold. Therefore this was sufficient also because the United States had just fought another important war – the Gulf war⁶⁹⁸

In fact, in 1990, when separatist forces were on the verge of exploding, the United States had already opted for the threat of economic sanctions instead of military ones. In November 1990 Congress approved the Nickles-Bentley Amendment that prohibited US economic assistance if certain human rights conditions were not met in Yugoslavia. However this amendment involved only 5 million USD and its taking effect was subject to the discretionary authority of Secretary of State Baker⁶⁹⁹. In

⁶⁹⁷ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 47

⁶⁹⁸ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 48

⁶⁹⁹ Warren Zimmermann *Origins of a catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers—America's last Ambassador tells what happened and why* (New York: Times Books, 1996) available from

Washington there was little will to mingle in the Yugoslav crisis and instead, US officials tried to persuade Slovenian and Croatian separatists to recede. The US Ambassador in Belgrade Warren Zimmermann labeled Slovenian longing for independence as ‘nationalism Greta Garbo style’⁷⁰⁰ while Secretary of State Baker fought against the Slovenian project till the very end:

On June 21 he made a flying visit in Belgrade, where, in harmony with the US press, that had compared Croatia and Slovenia to two “teenagers whose hormones made them crazy” he delivered a series of patronizing lectures to main Yugoslav political leaders⁷⁰¹.

He also clearly stated to Kucan (from Slovenia) and Tudjman (from Croatia) that the United States ‘did not encourage or award secession’⁷⁰².

Moreover, the United States opposed Slovenian independence even after it became a *fait accompli* accepted by most European countries. Despite recognition by the EU members that had already been offered between December 1991 and January 1992, the United States still refused to concede and gave up only in April 1992 after considerable lobbying by the Slovenian diaspora and the Catholic Church. As Kaldor asserts, in the Balkans, including Slovenia, two different security strategies were involved by Western forces. On the one hand was the traditional geopolitical approach, an approach that traditionally uses diplomatic, economic and military pressures, and on the other hand was what Kaldor calls the cosmopolitan approach, thus a bottom up approach in which

[...] the emphasis is on respect for human rights, support for civil society, economic assistance and regional cooperation. [...] By and large, the United States has tended to pursue geopolitical forms of intervention, while the EU has tended to apply both geopolitical and cosmopolitan approaches⁷⁰³

Concerning the lack of direct representation and lobby agency in the US Congress, certainly the Slovenian separatists were not helped by the fact that in 1990

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF129/CF-129.chapter11.html> accessed September 10, 2009

⁷⁰⁰ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 36

⁷⁰¹ Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 39

⁷⁰² Pirjevec Joze *Le guerre jugoslave 1991-1999 (The Yugoslav wars 1991-1999)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001) 39

⁷⁰³ Kaldor Mary *Human security* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) 122

the Slovenian diaspora in the United States was composed of only about 120,000 Slovenians, who were mostly concentrated in Ohio (about 40 percent) and Pennsylvania (12 percent)⁷⁰⁴. These small groups were not large enough to build up a constituency and thereby gain a representative in the US Congress⁷⁰⁵.

Even among these small groups support for Slovenian separatism was controversial because among the Slovenian diaspora in the United States, interest in the issue was variable as ‘they had a love and hate relationship with their motherland’⁷⁰⁶. And definitively

They did not mobilize as other groups did such as the Croatian diaspora in the United States that contributed even as soldiers in the conflict⁷⁰⁷.

Moreover the Slovenian communities in the United States that supported independence did not have permanent lobbying agencies in Washington, D.C., but preferred to use other existing organizations to advocate support for their home country. They especially promoted the 1990 elections in Slovenia through the existing Slovenian American Council. Only later they established an *ad hoc* organization, Americans for Free Slovenia, which together with existing institutions⁷⁰⁸ pressed the US government to recognize independent Slovenia in 1992. Before that, they resorted to more ordinary ways of pressuring political circles in the United States to favor the Slovenian cause: ‘They sent letters to Congress and the president in order to draw their attention to the Slovenian issue’ Podbersic told me⁷⁰⁹. However, in Congress there was a strong pro Serbia representation lead by Rep. Bentley⁷¹⁰ and therefore Slovenian campaigns in Congress seemed largely ineffective.

⁷⁰⁴ *1990 Census of population detailed ancestry groups for states 1990CP-S-1-2* U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, available from <www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cp-s/cp-s-1-2.pdf> - 2001-01-22> accessed March 15, 2009

⁷⁰⁵ As other Central Eastern European migrant communities had, Polish and Hungarian, for example.

⁷⁰⁶ Stefano Lusa, interview by author by phone, October 23, 2009, notes.

⁷⁰⁷ Renato Podbersic, interview by author by phone, October 12, 2009, notes.

⁷⁰⁸ i.e. the American Home newspaper and the Slovenian Research Center of America. Informal observation

⁷⁰⁹ Renato Podbersic, interview by author by phone, October 12, 2009, notes.

⁷¹⁰ Warren Zimmermann *Origins of a catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers—America’s last Ambassador tells what happened and why* (New York: Times Books, 1996) available from <http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF129/CF-129.chapter11.html> accessed September 10, 2009

Regarding the minimal visibility of the Slovenian issue in the United States, the visibility of the Slovenian cause was greater in Western Europe than in the United States, and this was also thanks to the presence of Slovenian political dissidents. Generally, Slovenian political dissidents did not migrate to the United States, but stayed in Slovenia or moved to Western Europe⁷¹¹. Political dissidents like Pucnik remained in Slovenia as long as they could and then later migrated to Germany⁷¹². Nor did other Slovenian dissidents exiled abroad seem connected with other Yugoslav dissidents, at least this seems to be the case with the most relevant ones, such as Mihajlov the famous Serbian exile who told me ‘Frankly speaking I really [sic] did not closely [sic] follow Slovenian case, and was not close to Slovenian exil community [sic].’⁷¹³. This indicates that they did not converge in larger groups of dissidents that could have granted greater visibility to their cause.

On the other hand Slovenian politicians had strong ties with politicians in Western Europe, as explained in the chapter devoted to Pakistan (and the role of sub state forces in the Slovenian case). In Western Europe Peterle, a leading separatist ‘had contacts with friends, mainly Catholic politicians, in Austria and Germany’⁷¹⁴.

Lastly, concerning the fading interests of the usual US pro democracy programs for the Slovenian issue, unfortunately, data are not available regarding any assistance to Slovenian players that was provided by US INGOs. However, I could collect interesting information on the role of radios that were used as tools by US pro democracy strategists during the Cold War. This information shows that during the Cold War Slovenians had been targeted by some of the usual tools of US pro democracy strategies. The Slovenian Language section of Voice of America (VOA)⁷¹⁵ had been a persistent instrument of US influence in Slovenia since 1945. During the Cold War Voice of America was a tool for promoting US politics and culture in Communist countries; it still carries on with this activity nowadays, especially in those authoritarian regimes where the leadership advances anti-American politics. VOA reached mostly to Slovenians who were living in the Central-Eastern part of the province. In Trieste, since

⁷¹¹ Boris Peric, interview by author, August 21, 2009, notes.

⁷¹² Boris Peric, interview by the author, August 21, 2009, notes.

⁷¹³ Mihajlo Mihajlov personal communication, October 6, 2009.

⁷¹⁴ Renato Podbersic, interview by author by phone, October 12, 2009, notes

⁷¹⁵ It is based in Washington DC and has an office also in Hong Kong. Informal observation

1945, two US subsidized radio stations, a section of Radio Liberty of Munich and Radio Trieste A, were active. Programs devoted to pro democracy propaganda were broadcast in Slovenian⁷¹⁶. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were conceived by the US State Department and the CIA to voice the views of dissidents, especially those exiled, in order to promote destabilization in the Soviet bloc. They started to broadcast from Munich in 1950. Later, in 1971 they became independent from the CIA and in 1976 they were merged into one radio station⁷¹⁷. Now, this station is owned by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the US Senate supported agency, together with Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. Therefore during the Cold War the United States had targeted Yugoslavia with its pro democracy programs at least via radio broadcasts.

On the other hand Congress, the main source of funding for these organizations, had shown a benevolent attitude towards the Yugoslavian regime since the time of the Cold War. In a previous research study⁷¹⁸, I revealed how the West had granted MFN status and other economic tools as prizes to Yugoslavia (and also Romania) to reward them for their rebellious attitude within the Soviet bloc. As Cox and Kennedy Pipe⁷¹⁹ stated, it was a way to lure other Central Eastern Europeans into dissenting behavior against their controller: the Soviet Union. In the United States, it was Congress that granted MFN status and other economic benefits to Yugoslavia and continued to do so until 1992 (when it was suspended because of the warlike activities)⁷²⁰. Therefore the Congress had a benevolent attitude towards the Yugoslav regime and not towards the Slovenian separatists.

In essence, the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism. Slovenia's geo-strategic irrelevance during that period is among the various

⁷¹⁶ Boris Peric, interview by author, August 21, 2009, Gorizia, notes.

⁷¹⁷ A. Ross Johnson *Then and now: free media in unfree societies* Radio Free Europe, December 2008 available from <<http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>> accessed March 15, 2009

⁷¹⁸ Ghini Anna Lisa *Gli accordi tra la Comunita' Europea ed i Paesi dell'Europa Centrale ed Orientale con particolare riferimento alla collaborazione sorta in ambito P.H.A.R.E. (The agreements between the European Community and the Central Eastern European Countries, with a particular attention to the collaboration sprang up through the P.H.A.R.E. program)*, [unpublished B.A. thesis] (Trieste: University of Trieste, 1994)

⁷¹⁹ Cox Michael and Kennedy Pipe Caroline *The tragedy of American diplomacy? Rethinking the Marshall Plan* Journal of Cold War Studies Vol. 7 No1 (Winter 2005): 105

⁷²⁰ Pregelj Vladimir *Normal-Trade-Relations (Most-Favored-Nation) Policy of the United States* (Washington DC: CRS Report for Congress, December 15, 2005)

reasons for this posture as, post 1989, the Bush administration had begun a process of disengagement from an area where it perceived no immediate and relevant US interests. Certainly it did not help the Slovenian separatists when in 1990 the Slovenian diaspora in the United States was composed of a group not large enough to build up a constituency: therefore it did not have a representative in the US Congress. The supporters of Slovenian separatism did not even have permanent lobbying agencies in Washington. Moreover, the visibility of the Slovenian cause was greater in Western Europe than in the United States, also thanks to the presence of Slovenian political dissidents. Lastly Slovenians had been targeted by some of the usual tools of US pro democracy strategies, during the Cold War. However the US Congress, the main source of funding for pro-democracy organizations, had shown a benevolent attitude towards the Yugoslavian regime, and therefore not towards the Slovenian separatists, since the time of the Cold War.

And now to the second part of this section: the similarities with the Uyghur case. The first point is that in the Uyghur case the US administration seems to similarly ebb and flow by following its own geo-strategic agenda. The second point of similarity is that the Uyghurs also lack direct representation in the US Congress. The third point of similarity is that the Uyghur cause suffers from minimal visibility in the United States.

Firstly, in both cases, the support of the US administration seems to ebb and flow by following a larger geo-strategic agenda. As previously mentioned, the Bush Administration was engaged elsewhere and did not focus on Slovenian grievances. Similarly, the Obama administration seems uninterested in the Uyghur case, as Kadeer told me

The US government depends on the Chinese economy therefore closes its eyes in front of the Uyghur issue. President Obama cannot talk. [...] Bush administration was more reactive towards Uyghur, Tibetan and Burmese issues. Probably Human Rights had a larger priority.⁷²¹

Second, the Slovenian diaspora in the United States was numerically small and thus comparable to the Uyghur one also existing there, who number even less, about 1,000⁷²². Therefore Slovenians in the United States did not form a large constituency and did not benefit of any direct representation in the Congress and this is similar to the

⁷²¹ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

⁷²² Gladney Dru C. *China's minorities: the case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur people* (2003) available from <[www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/\\$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/AllSymbols/79E5FCFFB0A0E39CC1256D26004661FC/$File/G0314169.pdf?OpenElement)> accessed October 26, 2006

Uyghurs. On the other hand the Congress offers support to Uyghur dissidents as Kadeer told me ‘with open condemnns, collections of materials and statements.’⁷²³

Third, similar to the Slovenians, the Uyghur are also targeted by US pro democracy assistance as explained before in this chapter. They also had access to US backed special radios. As in the case of Slovenia, where Congress funded Radio Liberty and VOA was broadcast in Slovenian, Congress has previously funded Radio Free Europe and has more recently funded Radio Free Asia which has been voicing dissent and grievances in the language of the Uyghurs.

Radio Free Asia⁷²⁴ broadcasts (via short waves, satellite and internet) news regarding politics and human rights in several Asian languages, including Mandarin, Uyghur and three Tibetan dialects. As mentioned before, it is funded by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the US Senate supported agency behind other radios such as the VOA and Radio Free Europe. Radio Free Asia was founded in 1950 and was a tool for spreading anti-Communist propaganda. Its operations ceased in 1961 and resumed in 1996. The agenda of Radio Free Asia is the same as its sister company Radio Free Europe (and Radio Liberty, since they merged in 1976): it is to voice political dissent in those countries where regimes carry out anti-American policies. In other words, it is instrumental in the expansion of US soft power in China. As stated by the Congressional findings and declaration of purposes on US International Broadcasting, sec. 6201:

The continuation of existing United States international broadcasting, and the creation of a new broadcasting service to the people of the People's Republic of China and other countries of Asia which lack adequate sources of free information, would enhance the promotion of information and ideas, while advancing the goals of United States foreign policy.⁷²⁵

Interestingly, during the 1960s, Radio Free Europe aired Uyghur language programs hosted by pro-independence activist Erkin Alptekin. In the 1970s, after a rapprochement between the United States and the Chinese Government, these programs ceased, but resumed in 1998, soon after the re-establishment of Radio Free Asia in 1996. Programs include a call-in line that the Uyghur can use to channel their

⁷²³ Rabiya Kadeer, interview by author, October 26, 2009, Kyoto, tape recording and notes.

⁷²⁴ I visited the office of China Labor Bulletin and Radio Free Asia in Hong Kong in 2003

⁷²⁵ Congressional findings and declaration of purposes on US International Broadcasting, sec. 6201 available from <<http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/22C71.txt>> accessed March 15, 2009

complaints and frustrations⁷²⁶. Bovingdon offers the following assessment of the situation: ‘Though Beijing routinely blocks RFA, many Uyghurs are reported to listen to and have taken inspiration from the station.’⁷²⁷ VOA, the other radio station that operated to spur Slovenian dissent, is not available to air Uyghur opposition as it broadcasts in 45 languages including Mandarin and Tibetan, but not in Uyghur.

All in all, there are similarities between the Uyghur and Slovenian cases in respect of US support. Also in the Uyghur case the US administration seems to ebb and flow by following its own geo-strategic agenda, as explained in the Diaspora Chapter.

To conclude, the Slovenian separatist movement is another case that could offer interesting analogies to the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. In Slovenia, the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism. Among the reasons for this non-supportive attitude are the geo-strategic irrelevance of Slovenia during that period, the lack of direct representation and lobby agency in the US Congress, the minimal visibility of the Slovenian issue in the United States and the fading interest of the usual US pro democracy programs. These are partly the problems that the Uyghurs are faced with when trying to attract US support for their cause. However over the last few years they seem to have collected more support, especially from US backed pro democracy organizations and this is partly similar to Slovenia in the Cold War era. In the end, the Slovenian case somehow provides a model for US engagement in Xinjiang, at least in times of geo-political tension.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have assessed whether the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang is benefiting from external support from the United States. The top down and bottom up approaches in US politics could lead the United States to spur the conflict in Xinjiang. Concerning the top down approach, the US leadership has, at least theoretically, two main reasons to spur the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. First the desire to acquire leverage by controlling some problematic internal forces, such as the Uyghur

⁷²⁶ Bovingdon Gardner *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han nationalist imperatives and Uyghur discontent* (Washington DC: East West Center, 2004) 10

⁷²⁷ Bovingdon Gardner *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han nationalist imperatives and Uyghur discontent* (Washington DC: East West Center, 2004) 10

separatists, which may subsequently force the Chinese leadership to focus on internal stability matters. Second, spurring ethnic conflict in order to destabilize and overturn the Communist Party regime in China and install a friendly leadership, as it has already done elsewhere. Concerning the bottom up approach, American constituencies could push for a US intervention in favor of the Uyghur: domestic issues such as a mistrust of China could push US constituencies (especially through the US Congress) to demand a larger involvement in favor of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang,

Is the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang part of this picture? Could it be used as a tool to gain leverage by US agents? Is the United States interested in exploiting the Uyghur conflict as an internal vulnerability to spur regime change? Democracy promotion is one of the tools used to spur regime change or at least to develop destabilization, and gain leverage. Are there US pro democracy programs supporting Uyghur separatism? Data regarding the NED, the largest of these INGOs, shows that this assistance does exist: the NED is supporting the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, and this is similar to what has already happened in the Soviet bloc. It is focusing on both ethnic and non-ethnic oppositional groups and it works towards enhancing the ability of independent groups to coalesce the discontent of citizens. Considerable assistance is devoted to the Uyghur and Tibetan organizations, especially when compared to groups advocating issues that are far more popular in China such as labor and human rights and political opposition grievances. The Uyghur groups especially, have expanded their NED funding in the last few years. On the other hand, the Tibetan uprising in 2008, which was led by NED sponsored groups, helps us to understand firstly, how this support really works and secondly, that the NED is interested in ethnic conflicts in China. Therefore my research shows that in China the United States is putting emphasis on promoting ethnic conflicts and the Uyghur discontent in particular, plays a notable role.

The history of the Uyghur case with respect to the United States seems similar to the Slovenian case. In that situation, the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism during the conflict. This non-supportive attitude and its causes are reflected, in part, in the situation that faces the Uyghurs when they try to attract US wide support. However during the last few years they seem to have attracted more support, especially from US backed pro democracy organizations and this is similar to the Slovenian experience in the Cold War era. In the end, external support to ethnic conflicts tends to ebb and flow as illustrated by both the Uyghur case and the Slovenian case.

My conclusion is that through the NED, the United States is actively supporting Uyghur groups (who could spur the conflict in Xinjiang) to a greater extent than any other ethnic groups in China. It remains to be seen how far US support for the Uyghur mobilization will go. However, the current available data show that since 2004 this support has been rising and it is now a consistent part of the overall funding of the main US INGO for China

Conclusion

This research has addressed the issue of external players in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang with the aim of understanding whether selected external agents are involved in spurring the conflict. The existing research does not explore extensively the potential external agents of this conflict; therefore it only provides an outdated and limited perspective. For this reason my thesis sought not only to expand the range of external players under scrutiny but also to provide an updated assessment of the external forces that are the usual subjects under scrutiny.

This chapter will conclude the thesis. In the following sections I will first sum up the aims of this work and the research questions for each of the external agents under study. Then I will describe my findings. Next I will present a synthesis of the comparison between the Uyghur and the Slovenian case studies. Lastly I will conclude by illustrating the issues in geopolitical studies raised by this work.

The Uyghur diaspora

I will start with the first external agent under scrutiny: the Uyghur diaspora. The Uyghur diaspora is especially important to the Uyghur separatist movement, not only in terms of advocating the Uyghur cause but also in relation to other relevant external players. Therefore it was critical for this study to assess whether this diaspora is exerting any external influence on the Xinjiang Uyghur separatist movements.

For a long time the strength of the Uyghur diaspora has been compromised by factionalism, lack of strategy and funding. These factors have also affected its capacity to catalyze international attention towards its issue. Has the Uyghur diaspora reversed this attitude and become a relevant external force for the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? What would their strategies and tools be? What is their aim? Who, among other external agents, are they targeting in order to gain assistance? In essence, among the various groups of the Uyghur diaspora, who is the be most effective in pursuing a role as an external force in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

Findings

My study produced relevant findings. Firstly, in recent years the leadership of the Uyghur diaspora has undergone a number of changes. These changes have brought new strength to its advocacy and created a newly found and vibrant activism. They have also encouraged fresh thinking on the desired outcomes (separatism or autonomy) of the Uyghur struggle. These can be seen as new developments when compared with the strategic thinking of the older generation of the Uyghur leadership. The previous leadership had crystallized in the pursuit of a dogmatic separatism and had cornered itself with a “wait-and-see” tactic away from the international spotlight. Secondly, it has recently become clear that political effectiveness is an inverse function of the distance from Xinjiang. Those Uyghur groups residing in the West are more effective in mobilizing support for Uyghur separatism than the Uyghur diaspora that is settled in the countries neighboring Xinjiang, such as the Central Asian Republics. From this perspective, my research aimed to contribute to recent studies on the Uyghur diaspora by revising the common assumption in the academic debate regarding its inadequacy as an external player in the Xinjiang conflict.

All in all, my findings show that a distant, effective and well-coordinated diaspora, such as the Uyghur one in the United States, may play a far more relevant role in spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang than the diaspora that is settled in neighboring Central Asia.

Central Asia

Concerning the second external agent under study, I have investigated the influence of one strategic regional player over the Uyghur separatist movement in Xinjiang: Central Asia. Central Asia is especially important to the Uyghur separatist movement as it shares both its borders and its cultural roots with the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. So it is crucial to assess whether the Central Asian Republics are indeed exercising any external influence on the mobilizing Uyghurs.

My questions addressed such issues as the rationale and feasibility of intervention by the Central Asian state and non-state actors. What is the rationale and feasibility of such an intervention? Is there any interest in such involvement in the Central Asian region? If the answer is yes, then what could constitute such interest? Who could be its agents among the government agencies and the various radical

groups? In essence, are Central Asian players effectively pursuing a role as an external force in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang?

Findings

In the recent literature and in my research findings there is evidence to demonstrate firstly that China has included a specific approach towards security in the region by directly engaging the Central Asian Republics in its fight against the Uyghur separatists. Secondly, that China has established a dominating role in all of the main sectors: political, economic and military. Thirdly that China has been using this master vassal relation in order to induce the Central Asian Republics to restrict any support to Uyghur political activism in the region. In the end, the Central Asian governments have distanced themselves from the Uyghur separatist cause. They have deemed it more critical to accommodate to Chinese leadership albeit at the expense of pursuing ethnic nationalism and a kinship-based separatist cause. Therefore the Central Asian governments have restricted any support to Uyghur political activism in the region. Moreover, radicalism and radically led political violence in the region is in decline and as a result, the risk of radical infiltration from the Central Asian region seems minimal.

My research also supports the conclusions reached by other researchers in that it shows that the era of Central Asian *apparatchik* support for Uyghur separatism to be used as a tool against China seems passed. Nowadays, the Central Asian authoritarian regimes and the many problems attached to Uyghur ethnicity do not allow Uyghur advocacy groups to carry on effective activities and they do not seem to be a relevant external tool for Uyghur separatism within the Uyghur diaspora. Within their territories - only a few Central Asian leaderships have continued to allow a little latitude to the Uyghur, pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic NGOs to advocate the cause of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. And when Central Asian leaderships do tolerate such advocacy groups, their goal is to maintain some leverage with the Chinese government.

Crucially my research identifies that the Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments have been especially diligent in restricting even the slightest political activities of the Uyghur diaspora within their borders, while certain others will tolerate a minimal set of Uyghur activist organizations. In the end, more than a decade after the proclamation of the Central Asian Republics, Uyghur diaspora leaders and researchers on the subject feel that the Central Asian Republics have, to a large extent, fallen short of ethnic kinship expectations. Such failure has been a product of the enormous geopolitical shift of influence in Central Asia that Chinese policies have produced over the past decade.

Pakistan

Pakistan was another agent under study. Pakistan is especially important to the Uyghur separatists as it shares not just borders with Xinjiang, but also religious roots with the Uyghurs. Pakistan is considered to be a good ally of the Chinese government so its involvement in the Xinjiang Uyghur conflict is often perceived as unbelievable. However, Pakistan is also hosting a series of non-state agents who are not deemed to follow Pakistani government strategies and instead prefer to carry out their own agenda. So it is crucial to assess whether Pakistan and Pakistani based forces, or, more appropriately, non-state agents, are indeed exerting any external influence on the Uyghur separatist groups in Xinjiang.

My research was aimed at answering the question of whether Pakistan and/or Pakistani non-state actors were intruding the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. What would be the rationale and feasibility of such intervention by Pakistani agents? Would it be from state or non-state actors?

Findings

The findings here are crucial because Pakistan could have several reasons to act as an external agent of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. However, firstly, there is still not enough evidence to prove that Pakistan is shifting its position away from being an ally of China towards more dangerous waters. Secondly, non-state agents in Pakistan, mainly radical groups, could be interested in spreading destabilization in Xinjiang by spurring the Uyghur conflict. Their rationale, unrelated to *les raisons d'état* of the Pakistani government, may be to induce destabilization in Xinjiang. My research showed that although there is an existing problem of radicalism and the infiltration of radicals from Pakistan to Xinjiang, there is simply not enough evidence to assess the size of the non-state forces infiltration from Pakistan in Xinjiang. Also this assessment is difficult to carry out due to the understandable sensitivity of the information involved. The problem here is how to record these activities. Often these records have been limited to non-academic literature with disputable data whilst the academic research remains focused on other external players and fails to consider Pakistani actors in the Uyghur conflict. On this matter there is much work yet to be done. Nevertheless, this study attempts to expand the scope of plausible external players in the Xinjiang conflict. In attempting to realize this aim it should be noted that this study finally confronts an existing phenomenon that has hitherto not been appropriately scrutinized

by the academic literature on the issue. Despite frequent references to Pakistani originated radical influence in the area in political and public discourse, there is surprisingly little research on the phenomenon. My research has, at least, attempted to expand this perspective and has finally placed Pakistan on the geopolitical map of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang.

The United States

The United States was the last external agent to be investigated. The aim here was to assess the existence of US related influence in the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. Are US agents spurring the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang? In theoretical terms, the United States might have a few motives to spur the conflict in Xinjiang, at least in principle. The question is whether, in the real world, there is interest in such US involvement? If the answer is yes, then what interest could that be? Who could be the agents among the various state and non-state actors who are based there?

Findings

My conclusion is that a non-state agent very close to the US leadership is progressively supporting Uyghur groups, especially within the Uyghur diaspora. It has been steadily expanding the funds it devotes to Uyghur groups and these have reached a sizeable figure, especially when compared to the support offered to other non-Uyghur agents in China.

I have assessed that the most relevant US organization for promoting democracy abroad, one of the tools used to spur regime change or at least to develop destabilization, and gain leverage, is involved in the Uyghur case. This organization, the NED, an organization which is funded by the US administration and Congress, has indeed previously been involved in destabilizing regimes that are similar to the one governing China and Xinjiang⁷²⁸. Data regarding the NED shows a record of their assistance to the Uyghurs. The NED is supporting the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, and this is similar to what has already happened in the Soviet bloc. The organization is focusing on both ethnic and non-ethnic oppositional groups and it works towards

⁷²⁸ Prof. Sautman, in a general press statement, recalls wider literature that links this organization with the CIA. 'Anyone familiar with the literature on NED knows that its leaders have themselves seen it as carrying out functions once within the purview of the CIA.' Sautman Barry *Barry Sautman's response to Jamyang Norbu's opinion piece "Running-Dog Propagandists"* August 4, 2008 available from < <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=22228&t=1> > accessed December 10, 2009

enhancing the ability of independent groups to coalesce the discontent of citizens.

A considerable level of assistance is devoted to the Uyghur mobilization, especially when compared with groups advocating other ethnic grievances or issues that are far more popular in China, such as labor and human rights and political opposition grievances. It is specifically the Uyghur groups who have expanded their NED funding in the last few years. Therefore my research shows that the United States is putting emphasis on promoting ethnic conflicts in China and that the Uyghur discontent plays a notable role here.

My conclusion is that through the NED, the United States is actively supporting Uyghur groups to a greater extent than any other group in China. It remains to be seen how far US support for the Uyghur mobilization will go. However, the currently available data shows that since 2004 this support has been rising and it is now a consistent part of the overall funding of the main US INGO for China

Ultimately, whilst it can be claimed that in theory all of these players have motives for intruding the Uyghur conflict, in reality only some of them are doing so. When confronted with the feasibility of this involvement, only some of these external forces have proven to be interested. The interested players include the Uyghur diaspora, Pakistani non-state agents and US state and non-state actors while certain others are marginally involved or totally uninvolved (Pakistani state actors and Central Asian state and non-state players). This is particularly interesting because previous works on external agents in Xinjiang have assessed their role as insignificant (in the case of the Uyghur diaspora) or marginally or completely neglected to assess them (in the case of Pakistani non-state agents and US state and non-state actors).

Therefore, the fact that the Uyghurs are attracting less support than theories would predict, is a significant research finding of this thesis. Interestingly, the players that were neglected or underestimated by previous researches on the Uyghur conflict are proving to be embroiled in this conflict. This research also contributed a much-needed updated assessment of the real involvement of the players usually under study in this conflict.

The Uyghur and the Slovenian cases

Concerning the comparative perspective that is introduced in this thesis, there are intriguing lessons to be learned from the comparison between the Uyghur case and the Slovenian conflict.

In Slovenia the majority of the diaspora that had settled in neighboring Italy was unsupportive of the independence struggle of their homeland. Similarly, the Uyghur diaspora in the United States appears to be playing a greater role in stirring Uyghur separatism than the role played by the Uyghur diaspora in neighboring Central Asia. In both cases there appears to be a situation similar to that faced by other separatist movements in which a diaspora that is scattered in neighboring countries has been less effectively engaged in the separatist conflict than the one settled in distant regions.

Moreover this research revealed that a neighboring country such as Italy was opposed to separatism. Italy's stance was negative despite the presence of relevant interests, considerable internal pressure and the hosting of Slovenian communities. In this case, the Italian government decided in favor of bilateral relations with Yugoslavia, despite significant internal opposition especially by non-Slovenian non-state agents. In this situation, the hosting of co-ethnic communities and strong internal pressure did not prove to be instrumental in pushing a government to support a separatist movement in a neighboring country. A similar situation exists *vis-à-vis* Central Asian states in relation to the Uyghur separatist conflict in Xinjiang.

My research shows that Italian non-state actors were actively involved in supporting the Slovenian independence process albeit through different (non-violent) means, despite the strong negative stance of the Italian government. As such, this case is similar to the one under study here, in which the Pakistani government seems unsupportive of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang while its own non-state forces seem to be actively involved. And certainly, this case might prove useful in furthering our understanding of certain dynamics regarding the involvement of non-state players in separatist conflicts abroad, despite disengagement at state level.

During this conflict, the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism. The reasons behind this un-backing attitude are numerous. They include geo-strategic irrelevance during the period of the Slovenian case, the lack of direct representation and lobby agency in the US Congress, the minimal visibility of the Slovenian issue in the United States and the fading interest of the usual US pro democracy programs. In part, the Uyghurs face similar problems when they try to

attract US support for their cause. However, over the last few years they seem to have gained more support especially from US backed pro-democracy organizations: this situation is similar to Cold War era Slovenia. In the end, the Slovenian case somehow provides a model for US engagement in Xinjiang, at least in a time of tension.

All in all, I have argued that there are salient similarities in the patterns and dynamics followed by external agents in both of the cases cited. The case of Slovenia bears some resemblance to the Uyghur one, though for different reasons.

All in all, the role of the Slovenian Diaspora in the United States is deemed to have been more supportive to the cause of Slovenian separatism, albeit with different degrees of effectiveness, than that of the Slovenian diaspora settled in neighboring Italy. Similarly, the Uyghur diaspora in Central Asia is currently unsupportive towards Uyghurs mobilizing in Xinjiang while the diaspora settled in the West is more engaged.

The Italian government's behavior over the Slovenian case shows that factors such as hosting co-ethnic communities plus strong internal pressure did not prove to be instrumental in pushing a government to support a separatist movement in a neighboring country. This stance is similar to the one adopted by the Central Asian governments *vis-a-vis* the Uyghur separatist conflict in Xinjiang.

However, despite the strong negative stance of the Italian government, Italian non-state agents were actively involved in supporting the Slovenian independence process, though with different means (namely non-violent). This case might be useful in order to understand certain dynamics regarding the involvement of non-state players in separatist conflicts abroad despite state level disengagement, a situation similar to the one occurring in Pakistan where the government seems unsupportive of the Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang, while its own non-state forces appear actively involved.

In Slovenia, the United States maintained a hostile posture towards Slovenian separatism. In the past the Uyghurs faced a similarly unsupportive attitude when trying to attract wide US support for their cause. However over the last few years they seem to have gained more support, especially from US backed pro-democracy organizations. Therefore the Slovenian case somehow provides a model for US engagement in Xinjiang, at least in times of geo-political tension.

In the end, external support to ethnic conflicts tends to ebb and flow as illustrated by both the Uyghur case and the Slovenian case.

The table below sums up the similar findings in these two case studies. It clearly shows how the identity of most external players is similar.

<i>Players</i>	<i>Uyghur case</i>	<i>Slovenian case</i>
Diaspora in neighboring area	NO	NO
Diaspora in distant area	YES	YES
State players in neighboring area	NO (CARs and Pakistan)	NO (Italy)
Non-state players in neighboring area	YES (Pakistan) NO (CARs)	YES (Italy)
US state and non-state players	NO (before 2004) YES (since 2004)	YES (during the Cold War) NO (during the separatist conflict)

In both cases the diaspora in a distant area is more effective in spurring the conflict than the one dispersed in a neighboring area. Also state players in some neighboring areas seem uninvolved while non-state players in the same zones are engaged in supporting activities. Additionally, in both cases the US stance towards these ethnic conflicts ebbs and flows. This illustrates the truth of the prediction made by Horowitz 'Foreign support tends to come and go, and, in the life of any secessionist movement, there may be periods of no support, multiple sources of support, or dramatically shifting sources of support.'⁷²⁹

In the end the lessons to be learned from these two cases regard the role of the diaspora in distant areas, the role of the non-state actors in neighboring countries and the role of the main distant power. In both these cases assistance comes from the same range of players. And this shows how crucial it is to examine the role of external forces in past, concluded cases of ethnic conflicts in order to understand current, open conflicts such as the Uyghur one and to design a possible scenario.

Of course, this work does not claim to have obtained absolute and permanent results regarding the reality of the external players in the Uyghur conflict. It suffers the usual problems faced by researches on contemporaneous issues. Indeed these players may change their geopolitical choices regarding the Uyghur conflict. In fact,

⁷²⁹ Horowitz Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 273

geopolitical choices are made on the basis of national interests and national interests are selected by the state. Hence national interests form a basket of preferences with a limited budget mainly in terms of resources and power. Beyer's assumption that 'actors can change in their foreign policy behaviour within the course of history and following changes in power'⁷³⁰ is also valid here. Therefore, the players under scrutiny here may change their geopolitical choices in respect of the Uyghur conflict and the reality pictured in this research may change. However, this thesis has attempted to perform an investigation on the current scenario, as mutable as this scenario can be and this is entirely consistent with the usual geopolitical studies.

Although the reality of these players in the Uyghur conflict may be subject to change, nevertheless this thesis has raised important issues in geopolitical studies and it has made positive contributions to the existing research in these areas. The issues raised include the scope of current perspectives: this research has expanded the range of actors under scrutiny. Another issue is the need for continuous assessments: this research has provided an updated assessment of the usual players under scrutiny. Finally this research has provided a comparative perspective which may well prove useful in future studies on ethnic conflicts both past and present.

All in all, when addressing geopolitical analyses of ethnic conflicts, one should never fail to assess who the possible *barbarians from without*, old or new ones, could be.

⁷³⁰ Beyer Cornelia *The European Union as a Security Policy Actor - The Case of Counterterrorism* European Foreign Affairs Review, 2008, 3

ANNEX

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

GRANTS FOR CHINA'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2009⁷³¹**China (excluding Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong)****Rule of Law and Public Participation***\$458,660*

To strengthen the rule of law, enhance citizens' awareness of their legal rights, enhance norms of access to information and the free flow of information, and broaden participation in public policy debates. Projects will support a variety of educational, research, policy analysis, and legal aid activities.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity*\$271,863*

To promote workers' rights by building the research and advocacy capacity of emerging grassroots industrial accident victims' NGOs in China. The Solidarity Center will work with local partners to support initiatives that foster Chinese NGOs' participation in domestic networks seeking to open space for civil society involvement in implementing industrial occupational safety and health (OSH), and to strengthen links between Chinese and international OSH advocates.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity*\$133,958*

To strengthen rule of law and labor rights enforcement, and to promote the peaceful resolution of labor disputes. The Solidarity Center and its long-time partner will work together to enhance the advocacy skills and online networking ability of labor lawyers and workers rights groups, as well as to foster international solidarity with grassroots labor-rights protection initiatives.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity*\$127,806*

The Solidarity Center will support worker rights advocates to educate and empower workers to protect their rights. The Solidarity Center will provide training in practical skills and knowledge for selected advocates; promote and sustain networks of worker rights NGOs, labor law reformers and practitioners; provide technical models for integrating occupational safety and health principles and improvements into a nascent collective bargaining processes; and promote plant-level occupational safety and health worker committees.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity*\$30,272**

Through its website, continued distribution of its worker rights information CDs inside China, and frequent interviews with the international and Chinese press, the Wei

⁷³¹ NED 2009 Grants Asia Programs. Available from www.ned.org/where-we-work/asia/china-xinjiang accessed June 15, 2010

Jingsheng Foundation aims to promote awareness among Chinese workers of their rights and, by speaking on behalf of Chinese workers, inform the international community on the labor rights situation in China.

Asia Catalyst, Inc.

*\$145,000**

To improve Chinese NGOs' operational capacity, and facilitate cooperation between Chinese NGOs and counterparts in the region. Asia Catalyst will develop a Chinese-language web-based forum featuring a variety of resources for NGOs, including information about human rights, social justice, and environmental protection efforts across the region. Asia Catalyst will also organize training programs for NGO staff and volunteers, including workshops on decision-making and other internal governance processes.

Asia Catalyst, Inc.

*\$32,587**

To function as a regional forum and facilitate cross-border linkages among NGOs. Asia Catalyst will maintain a Chinese-language informational website that will include resources for NGOs and post information about human rights, social justice, and environmental protection initiatives.

Beijing Dongzhen-Nalan Cultural Communication Co., Ltd. (BDNCCC)

\$45,000

To strengthen civil society and advance respect for human rights. BDNCCC will facilitate several trainings for civic groups to introduce to participants basic concepts of human rights and organizational development skills, such as management systems, leadership, and team building.

Beijing Spring, Inc.

\$145,000

To publish the monthly Chinese-language magazine Beijing Spring, which carries analysis and commentary by authors inside and outside China regarding political developments, social issues, and the prospects for democratization in China.

Beijing Yirenping Information & Counseling Center, LLC

\$100,000

To promote the rule of law and the development of public interest law in China. The Center will maintain a telephone hotline to provide citizens with legal aid, conduct research regarding legal reforms and produce related public reports, make policy recommendations to relevant authorities, and hold a discussion series for lawyers and concerned citizens.

Beijing Zhiaixing Information and Counseling Company Limited

\$255,000

To operate a diverse program promoting accountability and human rights. The work of the organization will include legal aid, investigative reporting, activist training, and human rights documentation related to HIV/AIDS and other public health threats.

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)

\$120,188

To encourage better local public governance in China, to advance discussion of democratic governance, and to enhance private-sector participation in policy debates.

CIPE will support its local partner to develop and produce the first edition of a planned annual empirical analysis of local government performance as reported in the domestic media, which will complement the partner's established annual index rating provincial governments on public governance best practices and actual outcomes. The partner will also continue its highly successful bi-weekly policy symposia.

Center for International Private Enterprise

\$115,647

To encourage opportunities for free and open public debate about current events, political issues and reform agendas in China. CIPE will support a local partner's weekly discussion forums at which key policy issues and current events can be freely debated. The forums are open to the public and aim to attract participants from diverse backgrounds. The forum organizer will create a summary of the discussion after each forum, and distribute it online and in print format.

Center for Modern China

\$231,000

To maintain a forum for informed and responsible debate of public policy questions. The Center will publish *Modern China Studies*, a quarterly Chinese-language scholarly journal that features economic and social science research concerning liberal, democratic solutions to contemporary policy questions in China.

China Aid Association, Inc.

\$75,000

To promote religious freedom in China. China Aid will provide legal aid in select cases, and publish the *Chinese Law & Religion Monitor*, a semi-annual journal containing analysis and documentation of religious issues and human rights abuses, particularly concerning religion.

China Free Press

\$155,000

To expand the space for free expression. China Free Press will host banned and censored Chinese prodemocracy websites that provide a platform for discussion and debate on current events and important social, political and economic questions facing China. China Free Press will also maintain a dedicated civil rights column as a forum for reports, commentary, and appeals by citizens.

China Information Center

\$292,000

To provide an alternative source of news and opinion for audiences in China. The Center will disseminate news, commentary, and independent analysis of developments in China and important international events through two Chinese-language websites and an email list.

China Labor Watch

\$34,070

To promote labor rights and government accountability. The Solidarity Center's partner organization conducts in-depth research on labor issues, disseminates a variety of research and educational publications, and engages in related legal aid and advocacy activities.

Democratic China, Inc.*\$195,000**\$18,000 (Supplement)*

To promote well-informed and uncensored dialogue on issues relevant to China's political development. The grantee will publish the online Chinese-language magazine *Minzhu Zhongguo* (Democratic China), which carries news and analysis by authors inside and outside of China regarding current affairs, culture, history, and international relations.

Friends of China Labour Bulletin, Inc.*\$40,000*

To promote labor rights and government accountability. The organization conducts in-depth research on labor issues, disseminates a variety of research and educational publications, and engages in related legal aid and advocacy activities.

Human Rights in China, Inc.*\$250,000*

To advance internationally recognized human rights in China. HRIC facilitates the work of domestic groups in building an effective agenda for social, legal, and political development through collaborative research and education, print and electronic publications, and advocacy.

Independent Chinese PEN Centre, Inc.*\$152,950*

To promote freedom of expression in China. Activities will include translation of materials on freedom of expression into Chinese, publishing banned materials to enable Chinese readers to have access to diverse views and literary works despite official censorship, and organizing domestic and international advocacy campaigns on behalf of imprisoned writers and journalists.

Initiatives for China*\$85,000*

To promote inter-ethnic understanding, mutual trust, and cooperation among pro-democracy activists from different ethnic groups in China. Initiatives for China will organize an inter-ethnic conference with conflict resolution workshops and panel discussions on democracy, human rights, and religious freedom.

International Federation of Journalists*\$32,000*

To strengthen the capacity of local journalists to advance press freedom in China. The program will provide training in international standards and practices, facilitate regional engagement in monitoring press freedom in China, and distribute print and electronic reports and newsletters.

International Republican Institute (IRI)*\$880,000*

To strengthen independent grassroots institutions, open dialogue on public policy questions, and more widespread rights awareness. IRI will support the healthy development of civil society organizations and coalitions via both subgrant support and technical assistance, including exchanges enabling Chinese civil society actors and government officials to observe and discuss relevant social and regulatory frameworks as implemented by their Central European counterparts.

International Republican Institute (IRI)*\$320,000*

To increase transparency and accountability in local government, and to advance dialogue between grassroots civil society and local and national government on public policy development and implementation. IRI will support an integrated, multifaceted program designed to open the budgeting process to greater oversight and input by local legislators. IRI will also undertake cooperative activities with a local think tank to promote the development of responsive social policy and to implement experimental reforms as an advocacy tool for wider reform.

International Republican Institute (IRI)**\$45,000*

To strengthen rural women's land rights in China. IRI will partner with a grassroots non-governmental organization to conduct multiple stakeholder workshops and outreach in a selected province. The project will research, document, and publicize, realistic, replicable best practices in protecting rural women's equal access to land-use rights, as is required under the law.

International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation*\$226,804*

To advance the human rights of ethnic Uyghur women and children. The Foundation will maintain an English- and Uyghur-language website on the human rights situation of Uyghur women and children; conduct a civic-education seminar for Uyghur women; and conduct advocacy on behalf of the human rights of Uyghurs in China.

Laogai Research Foundation*\$53,000*

To campaign for the abolition of the Laogai labor camps. The Foundation will carry out investigation and documentation of the Laogai system and other human rights concerns in China, and will publish additional books in its Chinese-language series featuring the memoirs of Laogai survivors.

Morning Bell Press*\$25,191**

To stimulate public debate regarding reforms in China. Morning Bell Press will publish and distribute original works by Chinese authors regarding key events in recent Chinese history.

National Democratic Institute (NDI)*\$141,830*

To deepen the understanding and practice of democratic principles. NDI will work to strengthen citizen participation in environmental decision making. NDI will conduct workshops on practical participatory methods; develop an informal network with environmental NGO leaders and officials; and compile best practices and models of public participation in environmental decision making.

Princeton China Initiative*\$320,000*

To promote human rights in China. The Princeton China Initiative will carry out a broad program of support for human rights projects to enhance transparency, accountability, legal knowledge, and access to justice.

Princeton China Initiative*\$187,087*

To promote media freedoms and civic engagement via the internet in China. The Princeton China Initiative's China Digital Network program will bring together specialists in internet technology to exchange information and create online tools that can be used by ordinary Chinese citizens, journalists and social activists for "citizen journalism" and civic-oriented, open communication.

Princeton China Initiative*\$125,000*

To provide an effective forum for free expression and to stimulate liberal debate on China's international role. Princeton China Initiative will publish China in Perspective Magazine, which will provide a pluralistic platform for Chinese writers to discuss issues related to comparative democratization, Chinese foreign policy making, responsible international behavior, and nationalism.

Princeton China Initiative*\$15,200*

To promote human rights in China. The Princeton China Initiative will carry out a broad program of support for human rights projects to enhance transparency, accountability, legal knowledge, and access to justice.

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center*\$88,000*

To advance the human rights of ethnic Mongols living in the Southern Mongolia region of China. SMHRIC will report on the human rights conditions in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, also known as Southern Mongolia, through its website and its English and Mongolian language electronic publication, Southern Mongolian Watch.

Wei Jingsheng Foundation, Inc.*\$54,300*

To promote awareness among Chinese workers of their rights and to inform the international community on the labor rights situation in China. The Foundation will continue its outreach through its website, continued distribution of information to China, and frequent interviews with the international and Chinese press.

* Indicates Department of State funding beyond NED's annual appropriation

China (Xinjiang)**International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation***\$25,000 (Supplement)*

To advance the human rights of ethnic Uyghur women and children. The supplement will enable the organization to hire a full-time interpreter/translator to work with Foundation director Rebiya [sic] Kadeer. Such language assistance is necessary for her to be effective in international advocacy work.

International Uyghur PEN Club (IUPC)*\$69,502**

To increase awareness of the situation for Uyghur writers and artists in China, and to build a broad coalition in defense of freedom of expression. IUPC will organize a conference bringing members from eight Turkic-speaking PEN Centers, as well as other concerned activists, and will compile a publication titled "A Voice for Freedom in Central Asia." IUPC will maintain a website publishing banned writings and the works of persecuted poets, historians, journalists, and others, and will conduct international advocacy campaigns on behalf of imprisoned writers.

Uyghur American Association

\$249,000

To raise awareness of Uyghur human rights issues and advance Uyghurs' religious freedom and human rights. The UAA's Uyghur Human Rights Project will research, document and bring to international attention, independent and accurate information about human rights violations affecting the Turkic populations of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

World Uyghur Congress

\$186,000

To enhance the ability of Uyghur prodemocracy groups and leaders to implement effective human rights and democracy campaigns. The World Uyghur Congress will organize an annual conference bringing together prodemocracy Uyghur leaders and active volunteers for strategy and training sessions focusing on coalition-building and creating comprehensive action plans.

* Indicates Department of State funding beyond NED's annual appropriation

China (Tibet)

Bodkyi Translation and Research House

*\$15,000**

To increase the knowledge of the Tibetan monastic community in exile about Chinese minority laws and the theory and practice of nonviolent action. The Bodkyi Translation and Research House will conduct a series of workshops and produce a variety of resource material for distribution to monks in exile on Chinese minority laws and the theory and practice of nonviolent action.

ConsultationsSamdup

*\$50,000**

To share information, facilitate dialogue, and improve understanding between Tibetans in exile and Tibetans and Chinese inside China. Consultations Samdup will carry out an on-line communication project directed primarily at outreach to Chinese citizens inside China to engage them on issues of freedom of information, democracy, and human rights, especially with respect to Tibet.

Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet

*\$43,675**

To provide support to Tibetan political prisoners and to educate Tibetans in exile about human rights conditions in Tibet. Gu-Chu-Sum will support serving and former political prisoners in Tibet, sponsor a lecture tour and human rights workshops, maintain a human rights desk, and publish a bi-monthly human rights newsletter.

International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)*\$50,000*

To improve understanding of human rights and democracy-related concerns in Tibet among Chinese, both in China and abroad, and to increase communication between Tibetans and Chinese. ICT will facilitate interaction between Tibetan and Chinese officials, academics, and others through meetings, conferences, and the publication of a Chinese-language newsletter and website.

International Tibet Support Network*\$45,000*

To improve strategic planning and coordination of worldwide campaigns for human rights and democracy in Tibet. ITSN will facilitate an international campaign for greater freedom in Tibet based on a comprehensive three-year strategic plan, produce advocacy materials for use by members, and organize international meetings of Tibet support groups.

Khawa Karpo Tibet Culture Centre*\$25,000*

To provide news and analysis to the Tibetan public and to promote greater discussion and debate on current issues related to Tibet and Tibetans. Khawa Karpo will publish the weekly Tibetan-language newspaper, Bo-Kyi-Bang-Chen (Tibet Express), and maintain a trilingual website.

Students for a Free Tibet*\$22,506**

To strengthen Tibetan activists' skill in information gathering, media advocacy, information communication technology, grassroots organizing, and leadership. Students for a Free Tibet will conduct a two-week leadership training program for Tibetan youth, focusing on democracy, media strategy, nonviolent tactics, and the use of technology in campaigning and organizing

Tibet Museum*\$15,000*

To preserve material related to modern Tibetan history and to educate visitors about the Tibetan culture and people. The Tibet Museum will maintain and operate its Dharamsala-based museum, "Demton Khang," display a touring exhibition, organize seminars and lectures, publish a newsletter and brochures, and maintain a website.

Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD)*\$50,000*

To raise awareness about and to deepen understanding of democracy in Tibet. TCHRD will produce and disseminate reports and newsletters highlighting the situation in Tibet and conduct workshops and speaking tours on democracy and human rights for Tibetans in exile.

Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts (TIPA)*\$15,000**

To promote democratic ideas and values through music and the performing arts. TIPA will produce audio and visual material related to democracy and sponsor performances of traditional Tibetan theater, opera, and music throughout Tibetan communities in India to reinforce concepts of nonviolence and democracy.

Tibetan Literacy Society*\$35,000*

To provide the Tibetan public with independent and accurate information on developments in Tibet and in the exile community, and to promote open discussion among intellectuals and a general readership on civic issues, including human rights and democracy. The Tibetan Literacy Society will publish and distribute throughout the Tibetan community in exile Tibet Bod-Kyi-Dus-Bab (Tibet Times), a Tibetan-language newspaper published three times a month.

Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC)*\$15,000**

To enhance the capacity of the legislative branch of the Tibetan government-in-exile by strengthening the skills of Tibetan parliamentarians-in-exile in strategic planning, outreach, and communications. The Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre will organize an eight-day workshop on strategic planning skills and ways to promote dialogue and outreach with the Chinese and international community.

Tibetan Review Trust Society*\$25,000*

To promote freedom of press and to improve understanding of democratic concepts in the Tibetan exile community. Tibetan Review will publish a monthly English-language news magazine that provides Tibetans in exile and the international community with Tibet-related news, insightful editorials and opinion pieces, including articles written by prominent journalists, academics, and others interested in Tibetan issues.

Tibetan Women's Association (Central)*\$15,000*

To promote the social, political, and economic empowerment of Tibetan refugee women and to raise awareness of human rights violations against women in Tibet. The Tibetan Women's Association will publish a bi-monthly newsletter and a bilingual magazine and advocate for the rights of Tibetan women.

Voice of Tibet*\$33,600**

To encourage and to sustain independent public opinion inside Tibet and to familiarize Tibetans with the ideals of democracy and human rights. The "Voice of Tibet," an independent, Tibetan-language shortwave radio station, will broadcast regular news about Tibet, the Tibetan exile community, and the Tibetan government-in-exile to listeners in Tibet and in neighboring countries.

Welfare Society Tibetan Chamber of Commerce*\$15,000*

To empower and build the capacity of the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC) to support the development of a sustainable Tibetan business community and to encourage entrepreneurship among Tibetans. The TCC will organize a series of workshops for the Tibetan business community on entrepreneurship and to help develop the capacity of the TCC in business association operations and management.

- Indicates Department of State funding beyond NED's annual appropriation

China (Hong Kong)**American Center for International Labor Solidarity***\$130,860*

To promote freedom of association by building the capacity of democratic trade unions in Hong Kong. The Solidarity Center will work with its local partner to support initiatives for collective bargaining, member organizing and civic empowerment.

Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor*\$170,000*

To raise the standards of human rights protection and democratic representation in Hong Kong. The Monitor will carry out human rights reporting, casework, campaigning, and public education drawing local and international attention to civil rights and human rights developments in Hong Kong.

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)*\$272,140*

To advance the dialogue between citizens and political actors on constitutional reforms. Through sponsoring public forums and a political participation website, NDI will support local civil society organizations to analyze and provide recommendations on the government's proposal for constitutional reform.

Bibliography

As I have explained in the Literature Review, in an era where technology allows anybody to write about anything, it was necessary to operate a strict selection of the research literature based on a few criteria. The following criteria were used to select the research material: first, academic literature from established publications; second, non academic literature from authors with a solid and certified expertise on the issue; third, publication from a reputable news outlet; fourth, mixed media from a distinguished professional and/or extremely relevant to this study; fifth, wherever certain authors were involved with the parties in conflict, i.e. Chinese nationals or Uyghurs, they were also required to have a background or current employment in third party countries. This requirement was intended to avoid the usual propaganda of both sides.

In order to make transparent this selection, I have included in the Bibliography a short biography of all the authors I have considered.

About UAA available from <<http://www.uyghuramerican.org/categories/About-UAA/>> accessed July 20, 2009

Ackerman Peter and Duvall Jack *A force more powerful. A century of non violent conflict* (New York: Palgrave, 2000)

Ackerman is editor of the documentary *A force more powerful* (PBS) and holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Duvall is executive producer of the tv series at PBS

Agnew John *Fare geografia politica (Doing political geography)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2002)

Agnew is chair at UCLA, Los Angeles

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Alunni is a researcher on Geopolitics. He contributes to *il manifesto* and *Guerra & Pace*

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