

The Risks of the Penetration of Religion Extremism in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative

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The “Belt and Road” initiative or strategy is intended not only to break through the Western containment and blaze the economic trail to Europe. It also aims to promote the economic development of border areas and quickly integrate them into the modern civilization system, so as to achieve long-term security and stability in Xinjiang. Without the stability and harmony in Xinjiang, the “One Belt One Road” strategy of development will always be poorly based. So all the economic development and cultural as well as religious exchanges should revolve around this core objective. Therefore, when developing the economy, we must consider the penetration of religious extremism to the Muslims in China by taking advantage of “One Belt One Road”. Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism and Wahhabism were originally established against the Western colonialism and for national independence and, but they are also extremely xenophobic and intolerant at the same time. ISIS and other Islamic extremist religious organizations that derived from the sects are increasingly rampant in Central Asia, causing no small impact in our country. Therefore, the most important issues in the field of ideology is how to join the similarly third-world Islamic countries to develop economy and eliminate the real path of religious extremism while preventing against the erosion of religious extremism in its numerous names on the Chinese Muslims .

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I. We must stay vigilant on the religious infiltration of Saudi Wahhabism and Pan Turkism.

Islamic religious extremism originated from several ideological sources in the Sunni and Shia. As a large number of Sunni Muslims are distributed in a vast area, there are more extremist organizations in this sect. And 90% of Muslims in China are Sunni, China suffers more seriously from it. The Saudi Arabian King Abdullah once announced a law condemning any form of atheism and any challenges to doubt Islam as “terrorism”. Although this bigoted rule is only a domestic law of Saudi Arabia, it has essentially reflected the Saudi Wahhabi’s strong exclusion of and discrimination against other religions, especially the atheists. This nature of intolerance, in its dissemination, inevitably produces of extreme hostility against other nations, especially nations that are not religious. Wahhabism exerts a quite serious impact on China, because its spread and

penetration to the Chinese Muslims can be dated back to history and it is expanding rapidly by the promotion of the Muslims in China.

Meanwhile, Turkey continues to provoke China on the ethnic problems and interfere with China's internal affairs, posing a more imminent threat than the US in undermining our border stability and ethnic harmony. Recently, Turkey has tied itself in the Middle East political turmoil. If China is not able to force Turkey to abandon its whim of Turkic empire in its perilous time, when it recovers, it will inevitably aggravate its contest against China. The "One Belt One Road" is not only an economic project; more importantly, it is a political campaign to boost the economic growth in the frontier and ethnic areas and to build a fortress guarding against the frenzy religious extremism. The omission of Turkey in its diplomacy and publicizing is only a disguised encouragement for the stowaway and the three kinds of forces, posing cultural threat to the "Belt and Road" initiative.

II. The mosques have no authentic doctrine in the religious boom in Xinjiang.

Islamic religious extremism is the root of violence and terrorism facing the world, and the repeated violence in Xinjiang were conducted in the name religion. So most people have a misunderstanding of the religious atmosphere in Xinjiang, believing that it is a very religious province. In fact, while Xinjiang has the world's highest density of mosques, most imams only receive primary or junior high school education. As many of them can only recite Koran in Arabic, they know little about the religious text, let alone the doctrine. So it is difficult for them to distinguish the orthodox doctrine from religious extremism. The reason is that people in south Xinjiang receive generally a low level of education and are far away from modern civilization, so there is no way to broaden their own vision for the religion, resulting in a confused religious belief. Therefore, it is very easy for religious extremism and ethnic separatism to find their market and living space, carrying out religious brainwashing with their simple and rude pyramid-selling.

Historically, the central government has been wavering on the religious problem in Xinjiang, it takes strict and laissez-faire policies alternately. The dealing of the core issue – training the imams, is in lack of systematic planning and respect, so the grass-root imams harbor psychological resistance against religious management and are unable to guard the doctrine against the intrusion of religious extremism. For instance, there are as many as 1,700 mosques in Shache County, but only two imams can receive training in Urumqi Islamic Institute each year. And a large number of imams and religious students are struggling with political study and

have no opportunity to learn religious knowledge. It results in a situation where the imams preach politics in mosques, which the secret preaching classes take possession of the right to interpret the doctrines, spreading falsehoods and inciting violence.

III. The benefits brought by the “Belt and Road” initiative should be enjoyed by all ethnic groups.

Only when the interests of the people are guaranteed can the people be united for common development and long-term stability in the frontier region. The number of ethnic Muslims in Xinjiang ranks the highest in the nation, but the northern Muslims, such as the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks, are hardly involved in terrorist violence, a prove that Islam is not the source of violence and terrorism. The particularity of Uighur has its historical origins and real living pressure. The Uygur population is over 9 million, according to statistics, and in fact, is certainly more than 10 million. But Gobi and deserts cover most of the lands in Southern Xinjiang, with only a few oases suitable for habitation. If the government does nothing in population control and per capita income, the chaos in southern Xinjiang will persist.

The issue of foreign exchange for the frontier ethnic minorities has always been a dilemma for the government, a dilemma between violence control and cultural communication, a dilemma that causes continuous smuggling from Xinjiang to Yunnan provinces. While the control is a correct way to maintain social stability and thinking, from the macro perspective of “One Belt One Road”, the economic and cultural exchanges between China and Central Asia, West Asia as well as the Middle East is the trend and the hope of the people. And the various Muslim ethnicities in Xinjiang have natural advantages in religion, ethnicity and language. They also aspire to improve their living situation in this wave of economic growth. Meanwhile, the construction of the Silk Road is also in urgent need of these people and channels. The major questions that we encounter currently are how to organize the minority people and train the young Muslims towards modern civilization. In maintaining stability and lasting peace, we need more innovative thinking.

In view of the above problems, this article proposes the following suggestions.

1. In developing the economy, we must consider preventing the religious extremism from staging a large-scale invasion into China in the disguise of “One Belt One Road”.

As the rise of China as a superpower is an internationally recognized fact, the extreme right Christian constitutionalism and extreme left Islamic

religious extremism are to both strengthen their missionary efforts in China, in a bid to influence our domestic and foreign affairs. There are more than 20 million Muslims in China, and the invasion of ISIS and other Islamic extremist religious organizations have caused no small impact. A major ideological issue during the implementation of “One Belt One Road” is to join hands with the Third-World Islamic countries to build common economic development and eliminate the real path of religious extremism, while preventing the erosion of various kinds of religious extremism to the Chinese Muslims.

2. The training of imams and talibs (religious students) must be considered from a political perspective. The Islamic Institute should expand the scope of enrollment and training. In addition to politics, the systematic training of religion should be a priority. At the same time, we should enhance the religious exchanges with more moderate Islamic countries in Southeast Asia and West Asia, jointly discussing how to restore the "Mean" and "green" Islam, which are the essence of the doctrine. The campaign against religious extremism in Xinjiang can only rely on grassroots imams and the succeeding talibs as they can affect the majority of the Muslims, so their support is the core issue.

3. In the background of the “Belt and Road” initiative, we can introduce a large number of secularized audio and video products from Central Asia, West Asia and the Middle East, translate and promote them. We should strongly support television and film production that is close to Xinjiang life, with particular attention to cultivate producers and directors proficient in both Uighur and Chinese languages. With regard to the various Uighur channels in Xinjiang, there are only a few in-depth programs about the life of ordinary people and even fewer good movies and TV series. Without high-quality and large quantities of promotion, it is useless to discuss getting rid of the religious extremism and accepting the modern civilization.

4. The bilingual education in the frontier area should be mutual rather than one-way. For the long-term development of the frontier, the bilingual students from all ethnic groups are not only fundamental for the construction of the border regions, but also an urgent need for the building of the “One Belt One Road”. If ethnic language courses are offered in all frontier schools, it will not only take care of the national feelings of the ethnic minorities, but will also cultivate a large number of bilingual talents of all ethnic groups and solve the employment problem of a large number of college students who speak minority languages. The bilingual education in Xinjiang is poorly received by the Uygur not only because of the extremist propaganda but also the uselessness of the learning.

Taking into account the actual situation in the Xinjiang, we can include the Uighur, Kazakh and other minority languages in the National College Entrance Examination, languages to supplement or replace the foreign language subject, increasing the motivation for all nationalities to learn each other's language.

5. The cooperation between Chinese and Arabic universities should not be confined to colleges in Muslim regions, Shanghai and other areas with abundant university resources should also be involved. We need to take Xinjiang Muslim students into our consideration instead of giving them up for possible risk. On September 12th, 2015, the Third China-Arab University Presidents Forum was held in Yinchuan. In the China-Arab Universities Strategic Cooperation Action Plan, which was jointly issued by many Chinese and Arabic universities, it was proposed to expand the scale of joint training of college students in the coming four years. From the macro perspective, the economic and cultural exchanges between China and Central Asia, West Asia as well as the Middle East is the trend and the hope of the people. Meanwhile, the construction of the Silk Road is also in urgent need of Xinjiang minority people and channels. The Xinjiang Muslim university students are very good students. But if they are not provided more living space and political growth space, after going back to work in Xinjiang, they will have strong religious rebellion. And this is a fact-proven point.

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