

## TRI ZLA IN KITAJSKA POLITIKA BOJA PROTI TERORIZMU

### THREE EVILS AND CHINA'S COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICY

Professional article

**Povzetek** Terorizem je postal ena od največjih groženj mednarodni skupnosti in človeštvu. Protiterorizem je postal pomemben del kitajskih domačih in diplomatskih dejavnosti. Pravzaprav se je kitajska protiteroristična kampanja začele še pred 11. septembrom, vendar je Kitajska šele po napadih začela sodelovati in postala pomemben člen v mednarodni protiteroristični koaliciji. Sile »Zahodnega Turkistana« pomenijo tri zla, ki vključujejo terorizem, ekstremizem in separatizem, kar je imelo v zadnjih letih za posledico kar nekaj krvavih incidentov s terorjem in nasiljem. To je bila resna kršitev temeljev človekovih pravic glede življenja in razvoja vseh ljudi v Xinjiangu. Kitajska je aktivno udeležena v mednarodnem sodelovanju v boju proti terorizmu. Prav tako podpira Združene narode in njihov Varnostni svet pri prizadevanjih za prevzemanje vodilne vloge v boju proti terorizmu. Kitajska prevzema aktivno vlogo v regionalnem ali subregionalnem sodelovanju proti terorizmu in je tudi poglobila dvostransko sodelovanje v boju proti terorizmu z ustreznimi državami.

**Ključne besede** *Mednarodni terorizem, Xinjiang, kitajska politika boja proti terorizmu.*

**Abstract** Terrorism has become one of the major threats to international community and human beings. Anti-terrorism has become an important part of China's domestic and diplomatic agenda. China's anti-terrorism campaign started even before 9/11, but it was only after the attacks that China participated fully and became a significant player in the international anti-terror coalition. The three evils of 'East Turkistan' forces – terrorism, extremism and separatism – caused a number of bloody incidents of terror and violence in recent years, and have seriously violated the basic human rights to life and development of all the peoples of Xinjiang. China has been actively participating in international cooperation against terrorism. It has supported the United Nations and its Security Council to play the leading role in counter-terrorism and has

taken an active part in regional or sub-regional cooperation against terrorism. China has also deepened bilateral cooperation against terrorism with the relevant countries.

**Key words** *International terrorism, Xinjiang, China's Counter-Terrorism Policy.*

**Introduction** Terrorism has become one of the major threats to international community and human beings. Since 9/11, China has actively participated in international campaign against terrorism. Three-evils, in the forms of terrorism, extremism and separatism are China's major security concern. China has a strong will to promote international cooperation against terrorism in future.

## 1 TERRORISM AS ONE MAJOR THREAT TO THE WORLD

Since the end of the Cold War, especially the September 11 incident, the system of international relations has been transforming from the one balance of power in international anarchy to a new one, mainly characterized by mutual interdependence between countries. The transformation will experience a long-term transition period, during which there will be full of complicated struggles; the road will be even tortuous. During the transformation of the system of international relations, terrorism has become one of the major threats to international community and human beings.

Terrorism, as one of non-traditional security threats, has great impacts on international relations. Non-traditional security threats are also regarded as global problems, transnational problems or low politics problems, including terrorism, environmental pollution, global warming, population explosion, drug trafficking, international crimes, and so on. Non-traditional security threats have two major characteristics. One is that they exist in the whole world and concern all human beings. Another one is that they threaten the existence and development of human beings. With growing impacts of non-traditional security threats on international relations and rising common interests between countries, countries, especially major powers, have to resolve disputes between them through consultation and coordination, and to cooperate to deal with non-traditional security threats.

Terrorism as one of non-state actors has been putting more implication on international relations. Non-state actors include terrorist organizations, transnational companies and non-governmental organizations, multilateral organizations, and so on. In recent years, non-state actors have become important actors in international relations. Now some non-state actors even have as much capital and means as those owned by states. Some big transnational companies have more capital than some middle or small states. In international society, there are many kinds of non-governmental organizations, the roles of which are spectacular in international relations and international politics. Since the end of the Cold War, terrorist organizations and their actions have developed and become new threats to human society. Although

terrorism has existed for ages, global terrorism is a relatively new phenomenon. Transnational and multiethnic, it is international in scope, with terrorists representing all walks of life, from poor to rich, third world to first world, illiterate to educated. Ironically, the same mechanisms that have fueled economic globalization have also enabled terrorism on a global scale. Those non-state actors have very important impacts on international relations.

The world has become more aware of the threat of terrorism, and has increasingly stressed the importance of international cooperation and the role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. Regional and bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism has been enhanced, while many countries have come up with new anti-terrorism strategies. More funds and human resources have been devoted to developing new means of preventing and combating terrorism. A number of countries have incorporated anti-terrorism into their national security strategy, a move rarely taken before the September 11 attacks. In order to strike the international terrorist force, with al Qaeda as its core, the United Nations Security Council has established a special counter-terrorism committee, drawing up 12 related resolutions, agreements and conventions; multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation has been expanding and deepening unceasingly. Many countries have brought counter-terrorism into their national security strategy, established or revised relevant laws, increased the input of manpower, material resources, and funds, actively researched and developed new technology, and strengthened all kinds of counter-terrorist measures. Theoretically, international society has created an "inescapable net" for terrorism.

But, the effect of comprehensive counter-terrorist measures in international society was not effective and has even developed into the embarrassing situation that "the more you strike, the more fierce the terrorism is".

First, the international terrorist influence is evidently characterized by miniaturization, decentralization and global networks. "Al Qaeda" colluded with other terrorist organizations in Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, forming a high-risk region from Central Asia to the Middle East where terrorist events happened frequently. Second, the international terrorist's capacities of mobilization, organization, planning, coordination and action are improving steadily; the conspiracy of destruction is becoming more covert and comprehensive; and the scope of attacks is gradually expanding from the U.S. to America's counter-terrorism allies and pro-America countries. In recent years, Spanish, Britain and Germany have successively experienced terrorist explosions and terrorists infiltrations. Al Qaeda is still posing great threats to global security. Third, the conflicts between the western and the Islamic world have been further deepened by the military counter-terrorist activities of the U.S. and other western countries. Apart from these, more and more young people born in the 1970s and 1980s are joining the ranks of terrorists. Homegrown terrorists have become a major force in terrorist attacks in various countries.

## 2 CHINA'S POLICY TOWARDS TERRORISM

Shortly after 9/11, China established its National Anti-Terrorism Coordination Group (NATCG) and Secretariat led by Hu Jintao. The National Ministry of Public Security also simultaneously launched an anti-terrorism bureau, responsible for the research, planning, guidance, co-ordination and undertaking of the national anti-terror agenda. The NATCG's office was subordinated under the anti-terror bureau of the National Ministry of Public Security. In addition, all the provinces followed suit by organizing their own anti-terrorist co-ordination groups and offices, with Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Xinjiang and Tibet at the forefront. In view of these expanded efforts, China has also made remarkable achievements in strengthening its anti-terror mechanism since 9/11. The capabilities of the "East Turkestan" group were severely weakened following the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and the subsequent strikes on terrorist bases. However, following the U.S.-led war in Iraq, the group has somehow revived, coinciding with the resurrection of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and the security situation in Central Asia has deteriorated again. To counter the emerging threats in the post-9/11 environment, the following measures have been taken by the NATCG and the National Ministry of Public Security.

Firstly, an early warning and prevention system has been set up. The objective of this system is to monitor the activities of terrorist groups, forestall terrorist attacks, and cut terrorist financing.

Secondly, a quick response mechanism is now in place. The purpose of this is for relevant authorities to take speedy and determined measures to neutralize perpetrators, restrict their fallout, and work for a quick resolution in the event of a terrorist strike. China has greatly enhanced the capabilities of its quick-response anti-terror troops over the past years both in personnel and equipment. They are now deployed not only in Xinjiang, but also in almost every provincial capital city.

Thirdly, a crisis control and management system is now being established. This system focuses on damage-control of human losses and infrastructural damages in the wake of terrorist attacks or during their initiation. China, drawing especially upon the experience of authorities in New York City handling the 9/11 disaster, seeks here to improve the co-ordination of policemen, fire-fighters, armed troops, civilian rescuers and medical personnel in the event of a terrorist attack. Training and exercises at various levels have already been conducted for this purpose.

Fourthly, a mass education and mobilization system has been initiated. Various authorities in China have carried out a series of education and training programs among civilians to raise awareness of counter-terrorism efforts. A number of schools have added anti-terrorism to their curriculum, while some research institutes and universities have set up anti-terror research centers. Besides, the Chinese legislature – the People's Congress – is also currently drafting an anti-terrorism

law. Promoting counter-terrorism capability is especially important as China experienced terrorism threats in the 2008 Olympic Games and is hosting the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.

### 3 THREE EVILS: EAST TURKESTAN SEPARATISM, EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

Over a long period of time, the 'East Turkistan' forces have unremittingly instigated separatist activities. The term 'East Turkistan' first appeared in the late 19th century. In the early 20th century, a tiny number of separatists and religious extremists in Xinjiang further politicized the term 'East Turkistan', and fabricated an 'ideological and theoretical system' about the 'independence of East Turkistan'. Separatists of different shades in Xinjiang raised the banner of 'East Turkistan' and formed 'East Turkistan' forces, trying to establish a so-called 'East Turkistan' separatist regime. From the early 1930s to the mid-1940s, with the instigation and support of hostile foreign forces, the 'East Turkistan' forces shouted slogans like "killing the Han and annihilating the Hui" and "opposing and expelling the Han", creating many disturbances and even wantonly slaughtering innocent people in their attempt to split the motherland and set up an illegal regime. What they did meet was strong opposition from people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

Since the founding of the PRC, Xinjiang has entered a new stage, enjoying ethnic unity and social stability. However, the 'East Turkistan' forces have persisted, carrying out clandestine actions. Supported by hostile foreign forces, the 'East Turkistan' forces both inside and outside China created many riots and launched armed insurrection in their attempt to split the country. In the 1990s, influenced by terrorism, separatism and extremism, the 'East Turkistan' forces both inside and outside China turned to terrorist violence as the chief means of their separatist activities. In the four decades from the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, 'East Turkistan' separatists rarely undertook armed activities within Chinese borders. However, the end of the 'jihad' against Soviet troops in Afghanistan combined with the chaotic situation unfolding there in the early 1990s somewhat spilled over, providing separatists with an opportunity of waging a 'jihad' in Xinjiang. In April 1990, separatists launched an attack in Baren in Akto county of Xinjiang, killing nearly 60 civilians and policemen. This turmoil represented the beginning of terrorist violence committed by the 'East Turkistan' group. After 1996, with the support from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, religious extremists and terrorist organizations in Central Asia built up their cross-border networks. Certain organizations of the 'East Turkistan' campaign like the 'East Turkistan Islamic Movement' became very active among these cliques, and Osama bin Laden has reportedly been quoted as saying: "I support your jihad in Xinjiang [referring to ETIM]".

The terrorist nature of the 'East Turkistan' forces was eventually recognized by the whole world. In 2002, the United Nations Security Council added the 'East

Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)' to its sanction list of terrorist groups. In recent years, the 'East Turkistan' forces have continued separatist activities under the banners of "democracy", "human rights" and "freedom", trying to escape strikes against them or to clear themselves of the name of terrorism. In 2004, the 'East Turkistan' forces patched together the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) outside China. Since then, they have plotted and organized a number of separatist and sabotage actions. On the one hand, they have stepped up infiltration to the ideological field by preaching separatism and 'holy war'; on the other, they have intensified their efforts in the acts of terror and violence, organizing and instigating some individuals within China to go abroad to receive training in religious extremism, separatism and terrorist skills, and openly calling on extremists inside China to create terrorist incidents, including bombings and poisonings aiming at kindergartens, schools and the government institutions, or attacking China's military forces and government departments.

Since 2008, the 'East Turkistan' forces have started a new round of sabotage activities, and created a number of bloody incidents of terror and violence aimed at the Beijing Olympics. In particular, the seriously violent incident of July 5, 2009, which erupted in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, was masterminded by terrorist, separatist and extremist forces both inside and outside China. The violence caused great damage to the lives and property of people of all ethnic groups, seriously jeopardizing the normal order and social stability of the region. After the eruption of the riots, the central government and the government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, relevant departments of the central and state organs, the military and armed police relied firmly on the cadres and masses of all ethnic groups to safeguard social stability, the socialist legal system and fundamental interests of the people, and took decisive and powerful measures to stop the violence in accordance with the law, to quickly bring the incident to an end and restore social stability in Urumqi.

The 'East Turkistan' forces have seriously violated the basic human rights to life and development of all the peoples of Xinjiang. Since the 1990s, the 'East Turkistan' forces have organized large numbers of acts of terror and violence, seriously jeopardizing the security of lives and property of people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. According to incomplete statistics, from 1990 to 2001, the 'East Turkistan' forces both inside and outside China created more than 200 bloody incidents of terror and violence in Xinjiang by means of explosions, assassinations, poisoning, arson, attacking, riots and assaults. As a result, 162 citizens, including people of various ethnicities, cadres at the grass-roots level and religious personnel, lost their lives, and over 440 were wounded. In 2002 they again organized several bloody incidents of terror and violence in Xinjiang. The most recent 'July 5' riot in Urumqi caused huge losses in lives and property of the people of various ethnic groups. By July 17, 2009, 197 people died (most being innocent victims) and over 1,700 were injured, with 331 shops and 1,325 motor vehicles destroyed or burned, and many public facilities were damaged.

The 'East Turkistan' forces have seriously interrupted the economic development of Xinjiang. Firstly, they have seriously undermined the environment for investment, as evidenced by the drastic reduction in investment from other parts of the country. From 1997 to 1998, when crimes of terror and violence were frequent, the economic development of Xinjiang witnessed a remarkable slowdown. Primarily, outside investment declined as foreign investors withdrew their funding one after another, thus depriving Xinjiang of many development opportunities. Secondly, tourism suffered as a result. Tourism is an important industry in Xinjiang. The 'July 5' riot in Urumqi in 2009 produced a serious adverse impact on Xinjiang's tourism, causing a sudden drop in both the number of tourists and revenue of tourism. Thirdly, precious resources have been dispersed. Plenty of human, material and financial resources have had to be put to guard against and combat crimes of terror and violence in order to safeguard the security of the country and social stability. Fourthly, exchanges between Xinjiang and foreign countries have been interrupted. The development of international thoroughfares and foreign trade in Xinjiang has been seriously affected.

The 'East Turkistan' forces pose a threat to regional security and stability. The 'East Turkistan' terrorist organizations, with ETIM as representative, have carried out actions in Central and South Asia over a long period of time, creating many bloody incidents of terror and violence, including assassinations, arson and attacks on police. They also secretly participated in terrorist activities plotted by international terrorist organizations, posing a threat to the peace and stability of all countries concerned.

In order to cope with these terrorist challenges that threatened China's security and unity, the Chinese authorities began to formulate an anti-terrorism strategy seriously, focusing mainly on combating 'East Turkestan' terrorist forces to ensure the security and stability of Xinjiang. Anti-terror corps were organized in Xinjiang, the first among China's provinces and autonomous regions, under the fiscal support of the central government. Meanwhile, as the 'East Turkestan' movement had international connections and was transnational in nature, this inadvertently implied that any Chinese anti-terrorist strategy was forced to rely on international cooperation. Indeed, this became one of the driving forces behind the institutionalization of the 'Shanghai Five' and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) mechanisms. From the Chinese perspective, it was of particular importance that China could now, within the framework of the organization, count upon the support of the other five member states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia) in its campaign against the 'East Turkestan' movement.

#### **4 CHINA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM**

China has been actively participating in International Cooperation against Terrorism. On January 20, 2003, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan put forward four-point proposition for deepened war on terror at the Anti-Terrorism Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the UN Security Council. First, with peace and security for all mankind

as the central theme of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to cultivate a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, and to resolve or mitigate such regional hotspots as the Middle East and Iraq. Second, with universal development and common prosperity as the foundation of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to promote the economic development of all countries, narrow the wealth gap and attain the development goals laid down by the UN Millennium Summit. Third, with closer communication among and integration of different civilization as the safeguard of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to promote understanding and tolerance among diverse civilizations and cultures. Fourth, with stronger exchange and cooperation as the key to counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to give scope to the leading role of the UN and help developing countries build up their capacity in compliance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China has supported the United Nations and its Security Council to play the leading role in counter-terrorism and opposite terrorism in all forms and manifestation. It has actively taken part in counter-terrorism discussions at the UN and its Security Council. It voted in favor of Security Council Resolutions 1456, 1465 and 1561 on counter-terrorism, and worked earnestly with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Council.

China opposes terrorism of all forms. Its position also includes: a comprehensive approach to address both the symptom and root causes of terrorism, enhanced capacity building of developing countries against terrorism, and rejection of double standards, and simple practice of linking terrorism with specific countries, ethnicities and religions. China also holds that the fight against the East Turkistan terrorist forces was part and parcel of the worldwide campaign against terror, and China stood ready to step up its cooperation with the relevant countries on this front in the interest of regional peace and stability.

China has taken an active part in regional or sub-regional cooperation against terrorism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has developed into an important mechanism of promoting regional security, stability and development. In 2003, China participated in joint military exercises under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a move that significantly deterred the terrorist forces operating at home and broad. In September 2003, the Foreign Ministers of six member countries of the SCO signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and the Agreement between the SCO Member Countries Concerning the Regional Counter-Terrorism Agency. In 2003, the Chinese side also participated in the meeting of the attorney-general and the first meeting of the Council of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Agency of the SCO, playing an important role in guiding and strengthening the cooperation of the organization. In January 2004, the SCO Secretariat and the SCO Regional Counter-Terrorism Agency were formally inaugurated in Beijing and Tashkent respectively. In June 2004, during the Summit Meeting of the SCO in Tashkent, leaders of member countries of the

SCO signed the Agreement on cooperation of anti-illegal transportation of narcotic drugs, mental drugs and their materials. The SCO also established the mechanism of regular meetings of Secretaries of National Security Councils of member countries, so they can strengthen their security cooperation. At the same time, China has facilitated the adoption of counter-terrorism initiatives by Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and other organizations.

China has deepened bilateral cooperation against terrorism with the relevant countries. In 2004, it held the fourth counter-terrorism consultation with the U.S. and the third consultation of China–U.S. working group on financial anti-terrorism. In July 2003, the customs authorities of China and the U.S. signed the bilateral declaration on the principles of Container Security Initiatives (CSI) cooperation and the annexes in Beijing, which opened a new area of China–US cooperation against terrorism. In addition, China held the frequent counter-terrorism dialogues with Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, EU and other countries.

China has also participated in various bilateral and multilateral anti-terror exercises. For example, it conducted a joint bilateral anti-terror military exercise with Kyrgyzstan in October 2002. In August 2003, it took part in the multilateral anti-terror military exercise dubbed “United-2003” with other fellow SCO members. Some of the more recent exercises include “Great Wall-2003”, held on September 26, 2003, attended by President Hu Jintao, as well as “Peace Mission 2005” under SCO auspices. Since 2006, China has held anti-terror military exercise with Pakistan, India and Russia.

**Conclusion** China is a country with an ancient civilization and likewise a history of more than 5000 years. Sages and men of virtue in ancient China had successfully solved a great many vital issues in the long process of history and come up with a good deal of valuable strategic thinking shining with Oriental wisdom, which still merit our attention. For instance, a Chinese ancient masterpiece named “Discourse on Warring States”, written more than 2000 years ago, stated: “It is better to win the heart of the people than to capture the city”. In other words, psychological victory is better than military success. To examine the present situation of counter-terrorism with this thinking will enable us to see that mere military means is not the answer to a thorough and final solution to the issue of terrorism. Counter-terrorism is a systematic project which should be tackled with integrated measures such as political, economic, diplomatic, cultural and military means.

Counter-terrorism needs to be tackled in a comprehensive way. There has to be a synergy on all fronts – political, economic, diplomatic, cultural and military – to achieve success. Confucius, the great ancient Chinese thinker, had once said: “A gentlemen gets along with others, but does not necessarily agree with them.” The ancient saying still holds good while waging a protracted war against terror. The international community should look in the face of the various differences existing in the current anti-terror cooperation and follow the principle of “seeking common

ground on major issues while leaving aside the minor difference”. Only by doing things this way can the international community reach more common ground and push the struggle against terrorism forward.

## Bibliography

1. 国务院新闻办公室：《新疆的发展与进步》白皮书，2009年10月。
2. ZHENG, Y., LIM T., W., 2009. *China's New Battle With Terrorism in Xinjiang*, *EAI Background Brief No. 446*.
3. 中国现代国际关系研究院：《国际恐怖与反恐怖斗争年鉴》，时事出版社，2009年。
4. Pang, G., 2006. *East Turkestan Terrorism and the Terrorist Arc: China's Post-9/11 Anti-Terror Strategy*. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 4, No. 2, p. 19-24.
5. Jagannath, P., 2006. *China's Position on International Terrorism. A Survey of Government Releases and Papers*, *China Report*, Vol. 42, No. 2., Pg. 199-207.
6. *Department of Policy Planning of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic China, China's Foreign Affairs, 2004. Edition, World Affairs Press, Beijing, May 2004. Pp. 340-341.*
7. Peng, Y., 2004. *U.S.-China Relations: Two Possibilities, One Option*. *CNAPS Working Paper*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute.
8. *U.S. Department of State, 2002c. UN Asked to Designate ETIM as Financier of Terrorism,* September 11. <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/etim1.htm>. Accessed on May 5, 2004.
9. *PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002b. China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept.* <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2612/2614/t15319.htm>.
10. Pang, Z., 2002. *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Should be Built on the Basis of New Regionalism*. *Beijing Renmin Wang WWW-Text in Chinese*, June 24 2002, FBIS, CPP20020625000045.