

**PRC Assimilationism and the Atrocities against non-Han peoples of the Uyghur Region**

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Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, thank you for inviting me to testify about this critical issue. I would like to mention at the outset that insofar as I have any expertise to offer, acquiring it has been generously supported by Title VI Foreign Language and Areas Studies grants and National Resource Centers, the Fulbright-Hays program, the Woodrow Wilson Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities and by the University of Arizona where I taught in the early 1990s. Federal and state public funding has been and remains critical to building and maintaining US knowledge about China. The recent decline in funding for China studies and all international and area studies is regrettable and problematic for national security.

**My remarks today fall into the following sections:**

**I. Summary of the situation and its background**

**A. Xinjiang and its indigenous peoples**

**B. PRC ethnicity policies from 1949 and the recent turn to assimilationism**

**C. Summary of the atrocities inflicted upon Xinjiang non-Han peoples**

**II. General Considerations and Specific Recommendations**

**A. Responding to Xinjiang atrocities in the context of the Sino-US relationship**

**B. Messaging human values-based concerns of US and allies**

**C. Recommendations for US and other concerned governments**

**III. Conclusion**

**I. A. Xinjiang and its indigenous people**

Xinjiang, or the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), or simply the Uyghur Region, is a so-called autonomous region well over twice the size of Texas, in the northwest of the People's Republic of China. Northern Xinjiang is mountainous; southern Xinjiang is mainly desert, with several oasis cities. Although the entire region is ethnically diverse, the southern part of the region is more densely populated by Uyghur people, while more Han and Kazakhs live in the north. The north, home of most of Xinjiang's petrochemical and mineral extraction, is more economically developed than the south, where agricultural development has not enjoyed the same market-based agricultural reforms that since the 1980s dramatically raised standards of living in rural parts of eastern China.

The population of the Uyghur Region is roughly 25 million, with Uyghur and Han each comprising 40-some percent, Kazakhs at 6-7%, Hui at around 4% and several other local ethnicities in small percentages. Besides the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Hui and members of other Chinese Central Asian groups have also been victims of current policies. These other groups include Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Mongols, Dongxiang and others. Although Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik groups are historically and culturally Muslim, not all individuals are practicing. The native languages of Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz are in the Turkic family, so they may be called Turkic; but Tajik is an Iranian language, so Tajiks are not Turkic; Hui are Muslims, but they speak Chinese, so likewise are not Turkic. I thus often call the victims of current policies "Uyghurs and other indigenous peoples," "non-Han," or "Chinese Central Asians," rather than "Turkic Muslims," to properly include all the afflicted people.

It is especially important to understand that although the PRC officially claims its policies are aimed at combatting Islamic "extremism," in fact, while the policies are certainly Islamophobic, the victims also include many secular individuals, and even some, such as Mongols, whose ethnic group is not Muslim at all. The most accurate and comprehensive descriptor for the targets of the Xinjiang policies is "Uyghurs and other non-Han peoples of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region."

### **I.B. PRC ethnicity policies from 1949, and the recent turn to assimilationism**

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took control of Xinjiang in 1949. The previous government of the region, in power since 1945, was an uneasy coalition of the Guomindang (KMT), or Nationalist Chinese, and the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR), which had formed with Soviet support to resist the imposition of Guomindang rule in 1944. The ETR had nearly defeated the GMD militarily, but in the final months of World War II the United States urged the Guomindang, and the Soviet Union urged the Eastern Turkestan leaders, to reach a ceasefire. Thus the GMD and the ETR formed a coalition government in Xinjiang.<sup>1</sup>

When the CCP took over Xinjiang, it replaced the former ETR leaders with its own hand-picked Uyghur, Kazakh and other native officials. It accepted the GMD surrender and settled 80,000 demobilized Guomindang troops in Xinjiang, where they formed the Xinjiang Production Construction Military Corps (XPCC), or Bingtuan. Thus began the modern colonial settlement of the region with Han Chinese. (The XPCC is now deeply involved in running Xinjiang prisons and camps and in the region's cotton industry.)

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<sup>1</sup> James Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Hurst, Co., 2021), chapter 5.

Like the Soviet Union after 1917, the PRC from 1949 was a socialist state ruling a former empire—the Qing empire. For a socialist regime, a dedicated opponent of imperialism, this legacy of imperial diversity posed both a practical and an image problem. The PRC thus implemented a modified version of the Soviet nationalities policies, and in China officially recognized 56 ethnic groups, including the Han. The designation of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, three other "Autonomous Regions," each nominally self-governed under a titular ethnic group, along with many so-called "autonomous" prefectures and counties, comprises the territorial element of that original PRC approach to ethnicity. We may call this PRC's diversity management system.

This original diversity management system made ethnic identity a building block of state administration. It supported language, education and cultural expression of each officially recognized group; in theory, and at times in practice, it protected non-Han groups from discrimination and cultural erasure by the Han majority, and assured that each official ethnic group was represented within the authoritarian government and party. While very different from the diversity management systems of liberal democracies, this first generation PRC diversity system, when honestly implemented, proved popular among non-Han people. One might even say that in the 1950s, non-Han people in China were, as regards racial discrimination and violence, better off than Blacks and other persons of color in Jim Crow America. The Cultural Revolution of the 1960s-1970s was a horrific exception, but non-Han groups in the PRC look back to the 1980s as a golden age of PRC diversity policies.

With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, PRC scholars and Party ideologues debated whether Soviet nationalities policies themselves had contributed to the disintegration of the USSR. Some called for a second generation Chinese ethnicity policy that would promote "melding" and "fusion" of ethnic groups, rather than continue state and party support for the 55 non-Han identities and their nominally autonomous territories.<sup>2</sup>

When Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, he embarked on a radical revision of the PRC diversity system. He transferred the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the State Administration for Religious Affairs, formerly under the State Council, to reside instead under the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party. In other words, he moved the bureaucracies dealing with ethnicity and religion out of the government, and under direct Party control.<sup>3</sup> He announced in 2014 that problems in Xinjiang would require attention not just to "material" measures (that is, economic development) but also to "psychological issues" (*jingshen wenti* 精神问题; "*jingshen*" is also translated as "spiritual").<sup>4</sup> He launched a campaign to "sinicize" (*Zhongguo hua* 中国化) religion in China by destroying domes and minarets and removing crosses, moons and stars from architecture; hanging the national flag and Party slogans in houses of worship; and erasing Arabic script and even the word "*halal*" from the windows of restaurants.

Moreover, General Secretary Xi has promoted the ideal of a unitary, homogeneous Chinese identity, labeled "*Zhonghua*," as an ideological centerpiece closely related to his "China Dream." As one current Chinese political catchphrase puts it, "Take firmly the forging of a *Zhonghua* collective consciousness, as

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Elliott, "The Case of the Missing Indigene: Debate Over a 'Second-Generation' Ethnic Policy," *The China Journal* 73 (January 2015): 186–213.

<sup>3</sup> <https://jamestown.org/program/hu-the-uniter-hu-lianhe-and-the-radical-turn-in-chinas-xinjiang-policy/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://jamestown.org/program/a-family-divided-the-ccps-central-ethnic-work-conference/>

the main [political] line" ( 铸牢中华民族共同体意识为主线).<sup>5</sup> The *Zhonghua* concept is meant as a super-ethnicity, above and encompassing all the others; but the word *Zhonghua* itself is composed of two Chinese characters that each individually mean "Chinese," and the officially promoted characteristics of *Zhonghua* identity are indistinguishable from Han characteristics and customs. The muscular state promotion of *Zhonghua* identity is in effect a top-down effort to Han-ize, or Sinicize, the non-Han ethnic groups in China.

Another prominent slogan, appearing at least since 2018, makes *Zhonghua* a racial concept, and even argues that Uyghur and other Xinjiang non-Han groups are, in fact, *racially* related to *Zhonghua*. The official press read-out of the Third Central Xinjiang Work Forum (Sept. 26-26, 2020) quotes Xi Jinping saying, "Every ethnic group [*minzu* 民族] of Xinjiang is a **family-member linked to *Zhonghua* bloodlines**" 新疆各民族是中华民族血脉相连的家庭成员 (emphasis added).<sup>6</sup> Such official rhetoric has been accompanied by official promulgations falsely claiming that the Uyghur language is Chinese, not Turkic; and that Uyghurs are not historically descended from Central Asian Turkic peoples, but rather from *Zhonghua* people.<sup>7</sup>

This is ethnocidal assimilationism. Because the *Zhonghua* category is practically indistinguishable from the Han category, it is also Han-supremacist. It is not the kind of chauvinism that *excludes* diverse ethnic groups from membership in a national community or expels them across national borders. Rather, the current PRC assimilationism seeks to forcibly submerge Xinjiang non-Han peoples into an invented identity, mandating that distinctive ethnic features be scrubbed away through false historical narratives, cultural and language erasure, rhetoric about shared bloodlines, and coerced re-education. The current PRC assimilationism is diametrically opposed to the diversity system espoused for the first six and a half decades of the PRC.

The phrase "forging collective *Zhonghua* consciousness" reminds us of a metaphor we now reject in the United States: the melting pot. The CCP, however, has substituted a blast furnace for the melting pot, and directed it at the indigenous peoples of Xinjiang and, increasingly, at other non-Han and at speakers of languages other than Mandarin as well. The industrial-strength metaphor of the blast furnace, chosen by the CCP itself, aptly sums up the physical coercion and cultural violence of the concrete policies inflicted upon Xinjiang indigenous peoples since 2017.

### I.C. Summary of the atrocities inflicted upon Xinjiang non-Han peoples

Since 2017, the policies implemented in Xinjiang include:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-09/26/c\\_1126544371.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-09/26/c_1126544371.htm). And see <https://jimmillward.medium.com/notes-on-xi-jinpings-speech-to-the-3rd-xinjiang-central-work-forum-25-26-september-2020-768b43242b8f>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-09/26/c\\_1126544371.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-09/26/c_1126544371.htm). And <https://jimmillward.medium.com/notes-on-xi-jinpings-speech-to-the-3rd-xinjiang-central-work-forum-25-26-september-2020-768b43242b8f>

<sup>7</sup> In 2018 the Mayor of Urumchi declared that "The Uyghur people are members of the Chinese family, not descendants of the Turks." <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1117158.shtml>

<sup>8</sup> An up-to-date summary of these policies, with full documentation of the evidence, may be found in Human Rights Watch and Stanford Law School Mills Legal Clinic, "'Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots': China's Crimes

- Intense physical and digital surveillance and data-gathering.
- The use of artificial intelligence algorithms to predict so-called "extremism" and subject over a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other non-Han peoples of Xinjiang to extra-legal detention in a network of prison-like "concentrated educational transformation centers" 集中教育转化中心 on the grounds that they might be infected by a "thought virus." Others tagged by the system have been confined to their homes, and / or required to attend indoctrination programs without being confined.
- Prosecution and imprisonment of an additional several hundred thousand people via the legal system. Xinjiang, with 1.5% of the national population, in 2017 saw 21% of all criminal prosecutions in the PRC.
- Normal aspects of religious and ethnic identity, as well as past foreign travel, having relatives residing abroad, and other normal behavior and characteristics, are defined as "extremist" and used to justify arbitrary detention, internment or imprisonment. Thus many highly educated, multi-lingual academics, writers, artists and entrepreneurs—the accomplished leaders of non-Han society, such as the economist Ilham Tohti, Xinjiang University President Tashpolat Tiyip, noted folklorist Rahile Dawut, and tech-entrepreneur Ekpar Asat—have been detained or imprisoned without cause.<sup>9</sup>
- Physical and psychological torture, rape and sexual abuse within "concentrated educational transformation centers," detention centers and prisons.
- Separation of families as a result of the mass internment and incarcerations; placing of young Uyghur children in Chinese-language boarding kindergartens and orphanages.
- Physical destruction of cultural patrimony, including ancient mosques, shrines, cemeteries and neighborhoods.
- Erasure of the Uyghur script and language from public spaces and illegalization of its use in schools and official settings.
- Transfer of Uyghurs from internment facilities or place of residence to factories, sometimes far from their homes, under coercive conditions that constitute forced labor. In some factories, Uyghur transfer workers are confined under "military style" supervision and denied free movement outside of factory grounds.
- The housing of CCP cadres in Uyghur homes for extended periods, sometimes in households where the husband has been detained, thus housing unrelated Han men alone with Uyghur women and children.
- State incentivization of marriages between Han and non-Han, especially between Uyghur women and Han men. A new regulation declares parental opposition to such marriages to be "extremist"; with the camps system punishing non-Hans for so-called extremism, this constitutes state coercion of non-Han to marry Han.<sup>10</sup>
- Zealous pursuit of birth limitation policies resulting in massive declines of birth and natural population growth rates in Xinjiang over the past few years: birth-rates in predominantly non-

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against Humanity Targeting Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims," 19 April 2021.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/09/us/politics/china-uyghurs-arrest.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://supchina.com/2019/08/07/uyghur-love-in-a-time-of-interethnic-marriage/>

Han areas of Xinjiang fell by between 30 and 56 per cent between 2018 and 2019, while birthrates across the PRC as a whole fell by only 4.2%. Birth rates in densely Uyghur areas of southern Xinjiang fell by even higher percentages.<sup>11</sup>

## **II. General Considerations and Specific Recommendations**

### **II.A. Crafting the US response to Xinjiang atrocities in the context of the Sino-US relationship**

Prior to the passage of the United States – China Relations Act of 2000, China's trade relations with the United States were linked to the PRC emigration and human rights record; the US president sometimes placed conditions on annual renewal of China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) status; some in Congress also attempted to block renewal. Ultimately, presidents of both parties wound up waiving China's annual MFN review every year from 1989-1999, despite China's bad human rights record, allowing imports from the PRC to enjoy the lowest tariffs and import quotas. The US-China Relations Act of 2000 and China's subsequent accession to the World Trade Association (2001) put an end to annual MFN review, and effectively de-linked PRC-US trade in general from human rights considerations.

We are now in the odd situation where the previous US administration unilaterally imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese imports, without reference to human rights; and then, through much of 2019, delayed taking action on the crisis in Xinjiang lest doing so hamper its efforts to achieve a trade deal to resolve the trade war that it itself had started.<sup>12</sup> Rather than tariffs being a tool, however clumsy, to press for human rights improvements, the Trump tariffs themselves became an obstacle hindering US action in the face of atrocities reminiscent of the worst ethnic abuses of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Fortunately, since 2020, the administration and Congress have taken a series of measures that symbolically and tangibly oppose China's atrocities in Xinjiang in a far more effective way than broad-brush tariffs can. These measures include sanctions of individuals and entities, including the XPCC, by the Treasury Department; the Customs and Border Patrol issuance of Xinjiang region-wide "withhold release orders" on cotton and tomato products; and US Congressional passage of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 (S. 3744) which became law in June 2020.<sup>13</sup> Given how complementary and deeply interwoven the US and Chinese economies are, such surgically targeted sanctions are superior to ultimately unworkable attempts to link human rights to Sino-US trade in general. Most recently, Canada, the UK and the EU joined the US in similar sanctions, thus demonstrating that horror at the Xinjiang policies is international and collective, and not part of some bilateral Sino-US spat. The US should help other countries add their voices to this chorus—especially countries other than traditional NATO allies.

Besides trade, the US and China are linked and complementary in knowledge production through our educational systems and other exchanges. This relationship will be essential to successful planetary

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<sup>11</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/01/china-documents-uyghur-genocidal-sterilization-xinjiang/> ; <https://jamestown.org/program/sterilizations-iuds-and-mandatory-birth-control-the-ccps-campaign-to-suppress-uyghur-birth-rates-in-xinjiang/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3015441/us-sanctions-over-xinjiang-internment-camps-are-ready-go>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3744>

responses to climate change, pandemics, the disruptions of industrial automation and other global issues. And, of course, our two countries share deep and broad person-to-person ties, through tourism, educational and cultural exchange, as well as large numbers of PRC citizens and peoples of Chinese origin who are US citizens and permanent residents. We share outrage and grief at the recent spate of anti-Chinese and anti-AAPI speech and violence in the United States.

The challenge then, is how to respond to the Xinjiang atrocities—or other issues troubling the Sino-US relationship—while navigating between the Scylla of downplaying atrocities, on the one hand, and the Charybdis of demonizing China, on the other, such that constructive collaboration becomes impossible and innocent people in the US and PRC suffer as a result.

## **II.B. Messaging human values-based concerns of US and allies**

I suggest bearing in mind three types of considerations when threading this needle.

1. The US should **avoid gratuitous provocations that serve no strategic purpose**, and reverse past such needlessly antagonistic decisions that cast the US, more than China, in a bad light. If possible, Peace Corps and Fulbright programs in China should be restored, and educational and cultural exchanges encouraged. The US should permit the reopening of the PRC consulate in Houston, Texas. (The American consulate in Chengdu, closed by the PRC in retaliation for US unilateral action, was the consulate closest to Tibet and Xinjiang. Millions of Han, Tibetans, Uyghurs and others in the entire western, inland part of China must now travel thousands of miles for visa interviews. We have made it much harder for the poor, the rural, and the non-Han to have access to US consular services—and potentially travel to the US—while privileging those in the richer, predominantly Han coastal areas and biggest cities of China.) In this regard, I welcome the recent announcement by the State Department that it is expanding national interest exemptions for Chinese students coming to the US, and that it is seeking ways to process more visa applications more quickly. This sends an important signal.

In addition, the US should reduce or eliminate the broad-spectrum Trump tariffs that have served no economic or diplomatic purpose, but which are costing American consumers, taxpayers and businesses billions of dollars.

2. **At the same time, human rights issues and related concerns must remain on the front burner.** In the past, as before the passage of the US-China Trade Relations Act in 2000, economic relations and human rights concerns were treated as an either-or proposition. After that bill's passage, however, with the elimination of annual human rights review as a condition for MFN renewal, the US government has sometimes downplayed or sidelined concerns about human rights or peoples pressured by CCP policies: as when President Bill Clinton relegated the Dalai Lama to side office visits, or when US official diplomatic treatment of Taiwan fails to reflect our respect for and friendship with that robust democracy. We must stand up for, and not be afraid to speak clearly about, what is right, when the time is right. And when the time is right to roll up our sleeves and hash out trade agreements, then that is okay, too.

Thus: **In dealing with the PRC, compartmentalize, when necessary, but neither marginalize nor minimize human rights and human values.** And whenever possible, if denouncing or pressuring the PRC regarding human rights issues, do so in concert with other nations.

**3. Engage Chinese interlocutors in as many conversations as possible. And given the United States' own imperfect history in regard to diversity, equity and inclusion, approach such conversations with a measure of humility.** This is not to admit, or deny, moral equivalency between the US past (or present) and what the PRC is doing to Xinjiang peoples. Rather, it is to highlight shared human values, because it is precisely our own concern about racial violence, colonialist abuses, and intolerance of diversity at home that explains why we are appalled at the policies the CCP is inflicting on Xinjiang indigenous peoples. Indeed, this is why we reject the PRC argument Xinjiang policies are "internal affairs of China" that the rest of humanity should ignore. Just as air pollution is bad wherever it occurs, and must be curtailed, ethnic intolerance and violence are evil wherever they occur. That is a human value as much as it is an American one.

**And from that standpoint, then, we should remind Chinese interlocutors that China is better than this**—that in diametrical contrast to post-2014 Chinese assimilationism, the PRC's past ethnicity management system, when properly implemented, was one that China could be proud of, in keeping with the global project of embracing our diversity for the common good of humanity.

## **II.C. Specific recommendations for the US and other governments**

Though I direct these recommendations to the United States Congress and Administration, I hope that other countries will take similar measures as appropriate to their own laws and regulatory structures.

- Continue precisely-targeted sanctions and shaming of Xinjiang entities and individuals through the Department of Commerce Entity List, the Global Magnitsky Act, and the Customs and Border Patrol Withhold Release Orders.
- Congress should pass the updated Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, recently reintroduced by Representative James P. McGovern of Massachusetts, which enjoys strong bipartisan support. In particular, I applaud this bill's call on U.S. publicly traded businesses to issue disclosures regarding their engagement with Chinese companies and other entities engaged in mass surveillance, mass interment, forced labor and other serious human rights abuses in the XUAR. Though some corporations have expressed concerns about this bill, the root problem lies in the policies in Xinjiang, not with the US Congress maintaining its traditional concern over forced labor, a tradition going back to Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. §1307). The concerns of multinational corporations about the viability of their business in China, as conveyed via their Chinese partners, delivers a strong message to the Chinese government. As we have seen from the uproar over Xinjiang cotton already in China, these measures are having an impact.
- Expand investigations and scrutiny of the Xinjiang policies beyond just what is happening in the XUAR. So far, the focus has fallen primarily on entities physically located and operating within Xinjiang itself, and a few factories in eastern China using Uyghur labor. But this misses a big part of the problem. Through the Counterpart Assistance or Pairing Assistance Program (*duikou yuanJiang* 对口援疆), nineteen rich provinces and municipalities of eastern China are mandated to finance, consult and broker corporate partnerships with sister-cities and counties and the XPCC in Xinjiang. These provinces and municipalities include Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin,

Guangdong, Shenzhen and others.<sup>14</sup> Uyghurs from internment camps have been channeled to work in factories built and run by these eastern Chinese cities, provinces and companies under the Pairing Assistance Program. Some participating provinces and cities are reportedly involved with training programs conducted in the internment camps. In all cases, Pairing Assistance sister-cities, sister-provinces and affiliated Chinese companies closely collaborate with the XPCC and the very same local administrations in Xinjiang that are engaged in mass surveillance, mass internment, forced labor and other serious human rights abuses in the Uyghur region.<sup>15</sup>

- Accept that the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics cannot proceed as usual, and use the opportunity to maximize pressure on CCP leaders to stop the abuses in the Uyghur Region. Rather than treat the Olympics simply as an up-or-down, executive-level decision to participate or boycott, all interested parties, including athletes, corporate sponsors, the US Congress, parliaments and executive branches of other countries, broadcast media, and individual spectators should consider how to deny the CCP a positive Olympic spectacle, and instead turn the moment into an opportunity to reveal and deplore the atrocities committed against Xinjiang peoples. Media, if blocked from free access to China, should not broadcast the splashy opening and closing ceremonies. If you can't cover the politics, don't cover the pandas. Athletes should consult their own consciences and air their deliberations on social media. Corporations should consider the reputation of their brands and the long-term rather than short-term interests of their shareholders. Politicians should avoid partisan attacks on their colleagues' Olympics-related decisions, and instead direct their criticism at the PRC policies that have ruined the upcoming Winter Olympics for everyone, most of all the indigenous peoples of Xinjiang.

### III. Conclusion

As members of this Committee well know, cotton has become a central issue in the abuses in Xinjiang, and in the reaction of the United States and the world community to those abuses. China produces 20% of the world's cotton. Xinjiang produces 80% China's cotton. Uyghur labor, mustered under various levels of coercion, participates at all stages of cotton and textile production, from fiber to fabric to fashion. The Xinjiang Production Construction Corps, which purchases and produces much of Xinjiang's cotton, fields Xinjiang's high-tech harvesters, and funds Xinjiang's high-tech prisons.

This thread of cotton connects the Uyghurs and other Xinjiang peoples to the businesses and people of the world, in what Dr. Martin Luther King called "an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny." It is one reason why we in the United States care for people native to distant Central Asia. Again, in the words of Dr. King, because "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. . . . Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

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<sup>14</sup> The full list is Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Henan, Hebei, Guangdong, Liaoning, Fujian, Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, Shanxi, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Shenzhen. Yuhui Li, *China's Assistance Program in Xinjiang: A Sociological Analysis* (New York: Lexington Books, 2018), 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> <http://xidrc.xinjiang.gov.cn/xidrc/yjji/dkyjyjis.shtml>.