

Mounting Efforts on Jihadi Forums to Target China for Terrorist Attacks

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Preface

Over the past year, a concentrated effort has been made by the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) – a militant Islamic Jihadi group, mostly active in the Waziristan area and the north-west border with Pakistan, which is endeavoring to establish an independent Islamic emirate in eastern Turkistan – to focus the attention of Global Jihad on the Chinese oppression, which according to contentions, is being waged against the Muslim population there. Seemingly, the aim of the campaign is to recruit Jihadi volunteers from all over the world, in order to expand the fighting framework against the Chinese regime.

Background

Eastern Turkistan, which is situated in western China, is at present an autonomy known as Xinjiang, in Chinese, or Uyghuristan in the Uyghur language. The region has over 7 million Uyghurs, who speak the Uyghur language and who comprise the region's majority, as well as other nationalities, such as the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Han Chinese and others.¹ Upon the occupation of the region by Communist China in 1949, the friction between the Chinese government and its Muslim population in east Turkistan constantly increased, manifesting itself in the establishment of the Turkistan Islamic Party.

¹ For more history on the Uygur and this region see:
http://www.uygur.org/enord/histdory/uyqurlar_kim.htm



The caption: "Map of China showing the region of occupied Eastern Turkistan"

The background to the establishment of the group, as related by its online publication "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", can be found in the endeavors of Dhiya Al-Din bin Yusuf (1965-1990), who was influenced in his youth by the Jihad ideal and who sought to advance the armed struggle against the Chinese regime, owing to the Chinese repression of the Muslim population. In 1985, Dhiya started to garner support for the Jihad against the Chinese government. This was done after obtaining the consent of the Sharia scholars. In 1989, he decided to name his group "The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement." On May 3rd 1990, 300 members of his movement attacked the government building in Baren and succeeded in occupying it. The Chinese response was not slow in coming and about 4,000 Chinese soldiers were sent to put down the revolt. They blockaded the building where the group was holed up. Dhiya and 32 of his men were killed during the fighting between the two forces and the remainder was captured.

Dhiya left behind "A clear path and true faith. As for the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement which Dhiya had founded under his leadership, it became a symbol in the eyes of the sons of Eastern Turkistan and a symbol of their path."²



Members of Dhiya's group arrested by the Chinese military forces in Baren

In 1997, the Movement was reorganized by Hassan Abu Muhammad Makhdum (1964-2003), who emigrated to Afghanistan in order to join the Taliban forces, together with other Uyghur Muslims. Within the framework of the reorganization, the group's Council members decided, in 2000, to change its name to the "Turkistan Islamic Party".³ In 2001, when the coalition forces attacked the Taliban in Afghanistan, many of the Movement's members were killed,⁴ including Makhdum himself. He was killed in November 2003, in an armed conflict with the

² "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, March 2009, pp. 33-34.

³ In accordance with the video which the Party published in January 2009 entitled "The firm stand and the preparations for the Jihad for Allah".

⁴ In one of the postings on the Jihadi Forum "Shabakat Al-Mujahideen Al-Electroniya" they wrote that China was concerned about the Taliban's influence trickling down into East Turkistan: <http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=18755>

Pakistani forces. His place was taken by Abd Al Haqq Al-Turkistani, born in 1971, who was appointed Emir of the movement. He still holds this position today.⁵



Emblem of the Turkistan Islamic Party

Hassan Abu Muhammad Makhdum (1964 – 2003)

Hassan Makhdum was one of the most prominent and central figures in the Islamic Party of Turkistan, and was one of the initial founders outside Turkistan, who left behind him a rich heritage of an obdurate armed struggle against the Chinese regime. He gained and still has such high standing amongst the members of the movement, that he is included in the fighters' pantheon and the roll of honored martyrs in Islamic history, alongside such figures as Salah Al-Din, Abd Allah Azzam and others.

Makhdum was born in the Kashgar region in Uyghuristan and had a religious education. In 1990-1991, he was incarcerated in a Chinese prison, having been charged of training a Jihadi cell and establishing the Turkistan Islamic Party in the village of Baren. He was imprisoned once again in 1993, for issuing a call to

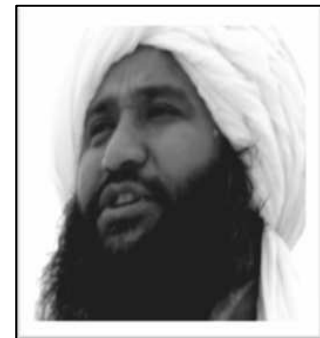
⁵ <http://www.archive.org/details/Jihad-in-Turkistan-Middle> according to the video released by the East Turkistan Party

hold a conference on "Reform for Religious Knowledge in Eastern Turkistan." He was released in July 1996 but was imprisoned once again in August 1996. He was released from prison in September 1996. In June 1997, he decided to emigrate from his home country to Afghanistan which at the time was under the control of the Taliban. He founded the "Turkistan Islamic Party" in Afghanistan, to aid Muslims in East Turkistan. For this purpose, he trained Muslim fighters who emigrated from Turkistan to Afghanistan, alongside teaching Sharia in preparation for a conflict with the Chinese forces. In September 2001, together with members of his group, he assisted the Taliban in their fight against the invasion of the Coalition Forces, headed by the United States. Upon the fall of the Taliban regime in December 2001, Makhdum moved, together with members of his group, to the Pakistan – Afghanistan border "to prepare themselves for the beginning of the Jihad against the Crusader campaign." On October 2nd 2003, Makhdum was killed during the fighting against the Pakistan army.

Members of the movement summarized his heritage and his contribution to the Muslims' problem in East Turkistan:

1. "Hassan Makhdum was the first to provide military training to the Mujahideen within an organized framework".
2. "He was the first to call upon the Turkistan Mujahideen to seal their fate by establishing the Islamic Caliphates and the Jihad for Allah in this era".
3. "He was the reason that the youth studied the correct faith free of fanaticism. He was the first to call for unity with the Mujahideen all over the world at this time.
4. "He was the first who instilled hope in the oppressed after they had despaired of ever achieving freedom".

5. "He was the first who played a part in distinguishing between the Turkistan groups, based on Islamic belief, and not on nationalism or democracy".
6. He was the first who discovered the belief in love and friendship in Islam between the Turkistan Mujahideen".⁶



Photographs of Hassan Makhdum

⁶ Abdullah Mansour – biography of Abu Mohammad, may Allah have mercy on him, Turkistan Al-Islamiyya, vol. 1, July 2008, p.28-30



**A video relating Makhdum's life story titled
"The Biography of Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Turkistani"**

Worthy of note is another figure esteemed by the movement named Sheikh Bilal (1968-2001), who accompanied Makhdum. Bilal was also imprisoned in a Chinese prison for a lengthy period from 1992 and was also extremely devoted to Da'awa. He was released from prison in 1995 and in 1997 he immigrated with Makhdum to Afghanistan. He was killed in November 2001 whilst fighting against the militias of Abd al-Rashid Dostum, who were fighting alongside the Coalition Forces. It would seem that the members of the movement are trying to attribute him a considerable contribution in forming the image of the "new" Turkistani, i.e. changing the simple man, who was submissive and passive, into an active warrior, who seeks to fight with all his might for the future and rights of the Turkistan Muslims.⁷

⁷ For a more detailed biography of Balal see: "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 4, July 2009, pp. 19-22



Sheikh Bilal

After Makhdum's death, Abd Al-Haqq Al-Turkostani was elected Emir of the movement. Biographical details can be found in the interview which he gave to the online publication of the group "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", which is spread over several sections. He states that he was imprisoned in a Chinese prison, but only for two months owing to an erroneous suspicion that he was involved in the beating of a Chinese laborer. At that time, Al-Haqq and his family were being harassed by the Chinese authorities which resulted in him emigrating to Pakistan and from there to Afghanistan.⁸



Amir Abd Al-Haqq

When he arrived in Afghanistan, he joined the Taliban, together with other Turkistan emigrants who were in touch with Makhdum. In October 2001, he took part in the Taliban efforts, which he claims included Afghans, Uzbeks, Arabs and to a lesser extent Turkistani and other nationalities, to foil the American invasion. However, these efforts did not succeed, of course, owing to the massive American attack against the Taliban fortifications and the fall of the main cities. Owing to this troubling development, Abd Al-Haqq expressed his concern to a number of Taliban leaders, that Hassan Makhdum's life was in danger. After receiving a Sharia permit to withdraw from Afghanistan to Pakistan, on condition

⁸ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya". Edition 1, July 2008 p.5-8 Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 3 ,March 2009, pp. 9-12

that the Mujahideen continue to operate and reorganize their ranks, Hassan Makhdum moved his operations to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Abd Al-Haqq remained in Afghanistan to help the Mujahideen.⁹

In the beginning of March 2010 the "Turkistan Islamic Party" lost its leader, Abd Al-Haqq Al-Turkistani, as he was killed by a missile launched from a CIA-operated unmanned aerial vehicle in the region of North Waziristan.¹⁰ It is still unclear who is going to replace his position as the leader of the Turkistan Islamic Party.

China and its Attitude towards Islam as Perceived by the Turkistan Islamic Party

On various occasional postings on Jihadi forums such as Al-Faloja, the Chinese government is described as an oppressive and autocratic regime, with a clear and systematic anti-Muslim agenda, which is determined to empty the Xinjiang region of its Muslim population. It is important to stress that these postings are tendentious and are intended to de-legitimize the Chinese government, especially as we did not find authentication from other sources. Overall, one can see a desire to tarnish China's image in order to create a more convenient base for enlisting support and activists from amongst various local and international target populations. For example, on one of the postings, it was claimed that in 2006, the Chinese government had started to put its policy to empty the Xinjiang region

⁹ A detailed description of Abd Al-Haqq's memoirs from the time his was in Afghanistan can be found in the 4th volume of the group's magazine: Abdullah Mansour, "a meeting with the Emir of the Turkistan Islamic Party", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, pp. 8-12

¹⁰ <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2010/03/2010328195748457.html>

of its Muslim population into practice.¹¹ Another posting states that China has succeeded in halving the number of Muslims in the region and changing the composition of its population, i.e. to change the Muslims in the region from a majority to a minority and also to change the region's name to a Chinese one - Xinjiang, which means "the new country".¹²

In another posting, they quote the call made by Rabia Kadir,¹³ an Uyghur minority human rights activist in the United States, to the American Congress to thwart the Chinese plan to reduce the Muslim population in the Xinjiang region. According to her, the plan is to tempt young Uyghur girls to leave Xinjiang, in order to work in industrial areas in eastern China, such as Peking. Upon moving to the industrial areas, the girls are treated harshly by the authorities and receive paltry salaries. Moreover, there is a trend to compel the Uyghur women to marry non-Muslims. This line of action, she states, has brought about the removal of 240,000 people from Xinjiang, mostly women.¹⁴ In another posting, an interview held with one of the Turkistan women was published, in which she states that they were supposedly coerced into leaving their birth place, in order to move to the center of China and serve as cheap labor. This same girl, who allegedly succeeded in escaping this fate and fleeing China, relates her traumatic experiences at great length, in the interview.¹⁵

¹¹ For example see: <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=39078&highlight=%C7%E1%D5%ED%E4>

¹² <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=39994&highlight=%C7%E1%D5%ED%E4>

¹³ <http://www.uyghuramerican.org/forum/showthread.php?p=52645#post52645>. Rabia Kadir was imprisoned in a Chinese prison for more than five years due to her activities for human rights and the Uyghur minority. In 2005 she was deported to the United States. Today she is a leading Uyghur activist and President of the World Uyghur Congress. See above for her full biography.

¹⁴ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=39078&highlight=%C7%E1%D5%ED%E4>

¹⁵ Abd Al-Hakim Aaraf, "the open secret", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, pp. 13-16



**Photo of Turkistan women at the train station
a minute before being sent as a labor force to China**



Photo of Turkistan women in Chinese factories

Another posting states that during the 1990s, China closed a large number of mosques (28,000) and madrasas (18,000) seized Muslim religious books (730,000), forced Muslim religious clerics to burn the books, forbade restoring Muslim religious institutions etc. China is also mentioned as having made it difficult for the minority educational institutions in China, to function effectively, in order to perpetuate their backwardness. For example, "The Chinese government prevents the Turkistan students from traveling abroad for study purposes" and "only permits teaching the history of China to the Turkistan students".¹⁶ All in all, China is accused of a deliberate policy of preventing Uyghur Muslims from leaving its territory, and therefore does not give them passports or visas.¹⁷ On one of the postings on the "Shumukh Al-Islam" forum, dated

¹⁶ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=39078&highlight=%C7%E1%D5%ED%E4>

¹⁷ Abd Al-Aziz Timor Turkistani, "Refusing passports to the Turkistan nation out of all the nations living in China", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, pp. 18-19

December 14th 2009, reported that the Chinese security forces had succeeded in catching dozens of Uyghur Muslims, who tried to escape from China to Cambodia in order to request political asylum there.¹⁸



An illustration of a banned passport of the Uyghur Muslims

These postings mainly quote from the online publication of the group known as "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", which was first published in July 2008. It discusses the Chinese oppression at length and its injustices against the Muslim minority in this region. For example, it states that during the rule of Mao Tse Tung, during the days of the Communist Revolution, more than 4.5 million Muslims were murdered. In addition, a letter on the policy of deliberate starving of the Muslim minority in the country, conducting nuclear experiments in east Turkistan, on declaring the Islamic religion to be outside the law,¹⁹ on the confiscation of the natural resources (oil, gold etc) in this region, etc.²⁰ In the third volume, it is even claimed, that in 1998, a Chinese medical team was sent to inoculate Muslim students in Gulag schools. It eventually transpired that these inoculations were lethal and killed many of the students. Initially, the students who became ill with

¹⁸ <http://shamikh.net/vb/showthread.php?t=53943>

¹⁹ See Abdullah Mansour, "The Crimes of the Chinese Communist Regime in Eastern Turkistan", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 1, July 2008, p. 12

²⁰ Abu Hadiga, "The Truth about the Chinese Atrocities towards the Muslims", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, pp. 63-64

a mysterious illness, after receiving the injections, were taken to hospital for medical treatment, but they were put in isolation and did not receive any treatment at all and they eventually died. When the medical delegation wanted to continue with the inoculations, the Muslim families refused to go along with it, the "students started to run away from school", and were thereby saved. "Later on, it became known that these inoculations had a virus which attacked the brain. The criminal Chinese doctors planted the virus in the inoculation, in order to slow down the development of the children's brains, but its effect was quickly discovered and the plot was exposed. The government did not take any steps against those involved in this crime.²¹ It is important to stress, that this claim was not verified by any other media reports and it would seem to be an additional component in the Turkistan Islamic Party's propaganda machine. In the fourth volume, the Chinese authorities are depicted as trying to corrupt the Turkistan students. It was contended, that at the 80th annual event celebrating the foundation of the Communist Party in China, the students of the capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi, were forced to raise their right hand before the statue of remembrance to mark the liberation of Xinjiang and to loudly declare their loyalty to the party. In the same volume it is claimed that this phenomenon of taking an oath of allegiance to the Communist Party is actually widespread in all the elementary schools in Turkistan. The students are required to assemble in the schoolyard, pay their respects to the Chinese flag and recite in a loud voice "we will defend the unity of the homeland and we will fight against the nationalists". In addition, stickers are placed on the schools' walls stating that Xinjiang is an inseparable part of China.²²

²¹ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, p.65.

²² "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 4, July 2009, p.63.

In addition to these stories of conspiracies, one can also find articles which relate personal stories written by Turkistan Muslims, on the persecutions, torture and oppression which they and their families suffered at the hands of the Chinese government.²³ For example, a Muslim Turkistan woman tells how she endured harsh torture, together with other Muslims, in a Chinese prison, forcing her to emigrate from her country.²⁴ Another story tells of how the feet of a Turkistan Muslim were nailed down as part of the torture which he endured.²⁵

It should be noted that a number of articles published in the online publication, were printed beforehand in the book "The Global Islamic Resistance Call" written by Abu Musab Al-Suri, born in 1958, who was one of Al-Qaeda's most prominent intellectuals.²⁶ In the book, there is a review of the Islamic history of eastern Turkistan and the Chinese oppression which took place there since the end of the 18th century, which increased since the rise of the Communist²⁷ rule in China.



**Photograph of Turkistan Muslim prisoners
taken by the Chinese army**

²³ See example: Abd Al-Hakim bin Natr Muhammad, "The Communist Chinese government's Atrocities", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol.3, pp. 54-56.

²⁴ Um Umran Al-Turkistaniyya: "The nation of emigration: A True Story of Emigration", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, pp. 57-59.

²⁵ As published in the forum Ansar al-Mujahadeen on 17 July 2009: <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=6603>

²⁶ For additional information see: Brynjar Lia's, "The Al-Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri: A Profile", Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 15 March 2006. <http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00076/ The Al-Qaeda strate 76568a.pdf>

²⁷ Abu Musab Al-Suri, "The Global Islamic Resistance Cal", pp. 499-501.



Photograph of torture endured by Muslims in eastern Turkistan

There is a trend to present China not only as the bitter enemy of the Eastern Turkistan Muslim minority, but of all Islam. For example, China is mentioned as having continuously smeared the Prophet Mohammad's honor, knowingly and deliberately. The Party claims that the CCTV Chinese television channel, broadcast an historical drama series entitled "the Tang Empire", in which they showed in one of the scenes in Chapter 15, an image of the Prophet Mohammad, which was presented as a gift to the Emperor of China by the Prophet's messengers, in a sarcastic and disrespectful manner.²⁸ The group stated: "The Sharia clerics agreed unanimously that anyone who curses or mocks Allah's messengers is a horrendous heretic and must be ostracized by the community and executed with no possibility of repenting. If this is the law with regard to Muslims who mock Allah's messengers, then what is the law with regard to the Chinese Communists who actually deny the existence of Allah himself. Therefore,

²⁸ The scene can be seen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dyUEZmVFQE>.

fighting against them is an obligation because of their heresy.²⁹ Alongside the denigration of the Prophet, there is also a description of the Chinese authorities' scornful attitude towards the Quran. According to the group, one of the Chinese newspapers reported that on 24 May 2009, the authorities burned 32,320 religious and historical books, including copies of the Quran. They claim that this step emanates from the decision of the Chinese Universities Council, which was taken on May 14th 2009, to cancel the studies at schools of the Uyghur language and to commence teaching Chinese. The group defines this policy in the following words: "This new campaign is part of China's fascist policies, in order to wipe out the Uyghur national religious culture, as the first stage of their final elimination".³⁰



**The scene in which the Prophet Muhammad's image is revealed
(In the heading "The Chinese government mocks the Prophet")**

It would seem that with this step, the group is trying to fan the flames amongst the Muslims and to demonstrate how hostile China is to the Islamic religion. The group stated that: "The roots of this hatred are first and foremost in religion and only then colonialism. In this way, the persecuting government is preventing our

²⁹ "The Chinese government mocks the Prophet, Allah's prayer and his blessing for peace", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, March 2009, p. 3. This article was also posted on one of the Jihadi forums: <http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=19555>.

³⁰ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 4, July 2009, p.63.

people from exposing the Islamic religious symbols and is fighting against those who belong to it, under cover of what they call terrorism and radicalism."³¹ One can also presume that by raising this issue, the group is trying to channel the Muslims' feelings of rage regarding the insult to the Prophet, to terror attacks against Chinese targets.

The group also believes that the United States should be considered the main enemy of Islam, following the military campaign which it is leading against Afghanistan and Iraq and in light of the collaboration with the Chinese authorities in its oppression.

On May 1st 2009, the group published an official announcement, in which it referred to the U.S. declaration of April 21st 2009,³² that the Turkistan Islamic Party is a terrorist group which supports the Al-Qaeda network and that it was decided to freeze its assets in the United States. According to the group, the declaration emanated from heavy Chinese pressure on the United States, which acceded to the Chinese request because of the sensitive geo-political situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In light of this declaration, the group notified all the Turkistan Muslims residing abroad, to be watch out for attempts to arrest them. The group also issued a threat that it is able to attack any country which attempts to arrest its members.³³ The party wishes to point to the close ties and the collaboration between the United States and China in their war against the Mujahideen and thereby tie them together as the enemies of Islam. For example, they stressed the meeting which took place in London on April 1st 2009, between Barak Obama and the Prime Minister of China, Hu Jintao, in which they agreed to

³¹ Abu Khidija, "The truth about the Chinese hatred towards the Muslims", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", vol. 3, March 2009, p.64.

³² The full declaration can be found at: <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/tg92.htm>.

³³ <http://www.shmo5alislam.net/vb/showthread.php?t=36529>. In the same breath, in the Pakistani media, the group denied that 9 of its members had been arrested by Pakistani security forces and handed over to the Chinese authorities.

aid each other in the war effort against the Taliban, particularly in light of the concern that Pakistani nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of the Mujahideen. The group therefore claims that it is possible that following China's obligation to the United States to fight against terrorism "China is strengthening its war against all the Mujahideen because of its inability to differentiate between the Turkistani and the others".³⁴ Reference to the United States is basically negative and it is accused, in the publication,³⁵ of also of being responsible for leading the "capitalistic world to stagnation and bankruptcy. The democracy which the United States and the West are trying to spread amongst the Islamic nations is only a treacherous and unreliable ideal."



**Photograph of Obama, Clinton and the Chinese prime minister.
Clinton's face has been covered for religious reasons
(Turkistan Al-Islamiyya, Vol. 4, p. 4)**

The July 2009 Riots

The violent riots which broke out on July 5th 2009, between the Chinese Hahn and the Uyghur in Urimqi, the capital of the Xinjiang province, once again brought the problem of the Muslim Uyghur minority in China to the forefront of the world's awareness, due to the widespread media exposure. The conflicts took

³⁴ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, p. 4.

³⁵ Abu Sayaf Allah, "The U.S. is leading the capitalistic world to stagnation and bankruptcy", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 2, 2 October 2008, pp. 31-32.

place against the backdrop of previous bloody conflicts, which erupted on 25 June 2009, between Chinese workers and Uyghur workers at a plant manufacturing electronic games in the Shui Guan Guang Dong province, following a rumor, which was later found to be untrue, that six Uyghur men had raped two Chinese girls. Two Uyghur men were killed in these conflicts. The Chinese government's disregard of the Muslims' demand to open an enquiry into the murder of two of their colleagues at the plant, instigated their demonstrations which rapidly became bloody riots, which as mentioned above, broke out in July 2009. Almost 200 people were killed during these riots, approximately 1,700 people were injured and more than 1,400 were arrested by the Chinese police.³⁶ These riots served, and in actual fact still serve incendiary material for the party's propaganda, which endeavors to blacken China's image and prove that they are not peace loving toward the Muslims in the country and the entire Islam religion, but are full of hatred. For example, the Jihadi forum in Turkish, Takva, reported on July 9th 2009, that during the riots, the Chinese authorities closed the mosques in the city of Urumchi.³⁷

On 8 July, Sayf Alah, one of the Party's senior officials, published a manifesto on "The Communist Slaughtering of our Muslim Nation in Chinese Urumki (Eastern Turkistan). According to him, China is continuing to perpetrate crimes against the Muslim population in the country in various ways, such as transporting Muslim boys from their place of birth in Turkistan to the interior of China, under the pretext of showing goodwill by locating jobs for them. Upon their transfer, they are put to hard labor. In order to substantiate his contention, he points to the authorities' silence surrounding the "last slaughter perpetrated by the Chinese against the Turkistan workers" and the fact that no punitive measures were taken

³⁶ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/952/710.html>,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8135203.stm>

³⁷ <http://forum.tak-va.com/showthread.php?t=1253>.

against those responsible. He claims that the Chinese authorities continued to violate the law when they sent in the security forces: "The Chinese police's role was expressed by supporting the abusers and slaughtering the abused". In response to these events, Sayf Allah sent a strong message to the Chinese government, that they should not think that they would not be obliged to pay for their deeds, and that the last "slaughtering" would not go away quietly and would be revenged. In addition, he called upon those Turkistan citizens who were not members of the Party, "to return to their religion and to adhere to the Quran and the Prophet's Sunna" and go out and defend the Islamic religion against the Chinese government. In actual fact, the Party wants to take advantage of the feelings of revenge and the trauma of these bloody events, in order to expand its ranks and resistance to the Chinese government by the Muslim Turkistan citizens".³⁸



The video film with Sayf Allah's manifesto on the "Slaughter" of the Muslims in Eastern Turkistan

³⁸ The manifesto was published on Jihadi forums in Arabic correspondence and in a video film in Uyghar together with Arabic text, for example:

<http://shamikh.net/vb/showthread.php?p=240867>

The text of the Arabic announcement was also published in the Party's publication "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, pp. 6-7. for an English translation see:

<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefatip0709.pdf>,
<http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefatip0709.pdf>

On August 1st 2009, another manifesto was published on the issue, this time by the Party's Emir, Abd Al-Haqq, under the heading "China's Massacre and Barbarism will not go Unanswered". At the beginning of his paper, Abd Al-Haqq states that Eastern Turkistan has an Islamic past and heritage, which were cut off due to the conquest of the Chinese Manchu dynasty in 1976 and thereafter, by the Communist Chinese in 1949. "Since that day, China's attacks against the Islamic religion and its Muslim population have not stopped, the Muslims' honor has been defiled, their possessions stolen, and the Muslims have been slaughtered by them. In addition, the bloody disasters which they experienced were diverse". According to Al-Haqq, China systematically treats the Muslim population with a heavy hand, on its own land, with the bloody events of July 2009, being an additional link in the chain of hostile events against them. However, despite the fact that the outcome of these events were detrimental for the Muslims, as many of them – who are considered martyrs – were killed in the riots, they should be seen as a positive change, in light of the Turkistan Muslim population's response. In other words, Al-Haqq applauds the Turkistan Muslims' activism in the recent July riots, and stresses that this is the correct and preferred way to deal with the Chinese threat, i.e. to turn to the Jihad: "we, the Muslims in Eastern Turkistan, have an obligation to continue the resistance relentlessly, without despair." Al-Haqq also turns to the Islamic scholars worldwide and ascribes a key Da'awa role to them, in dealing with the Turkistan Muslims' problems and advancing the awareness of the Muslim nation. He also calls upon the Jihadi organizations worldwide to stretch out their hands to assist the Muslims in China.³⁹

³⁹ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?s=d43e5bb3dd075c6efc348431d13c0d02&t=7075>. To see the video:



From the video "The Slaughter and Barbarism of China will not go Unanswered"

The fourth edition of the Party's publication, which was published in July 2009, also contains harsh criticism surrounding China's treatment of the Muslims in their country. The Party contends that there is an erroneous perception, unfortunately, amongst "Muslims who believe that China is not hostile towards Islam and the Muslims and that it does not assist Islam's enemies and is neutral and peace-loving towards the Muslims. It would therefore be appropriate for the Muslims to examine China through the eyes of the Muslims who live under the Chinese yolk. They will then be able to see a harsh bitter enemy, who is a contemptible infidel, who hates Islam and the Muslims, who does not miss an opportunity to oppress the Muslims, to treat them violently, to deprive them of their rights and to crush them day and night, whether secretly or openly".⁴⁰

http://www.jarhive.info/details.php?item_id=4997&sessionid=sp7047cic24f4q45prgkeqkq22

⁴⁰"Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 4, July 2009, p.3.

The Connection to Al-Qaeda

This criticism did not fall on deaf ears and it succeeded in generating support and calls for revenge attacks made by Al-Qaeda and its proxies, as well as by the members of the Jihadi forums. In the beginning of July 2009, the Al-Qaeda organization in the Maghreb announced its intention to attack Chinese workers who are working in North Africa⁴¹, as revenge for the murder of hundreds of Muslims in the July 2009 riots in China. In response to these threats, China raised its level of alertness and warned its citizens to keep their eyes open and be on their guard.⁴²

Particularly noteworthy is Sheikh Abu Yahya Al-Libi's statement following the July 2009 events. He is considered a senior member of the Al-Qaeda leadership. His reaction was published in a video entitled "Eastern Turkistan – the forgotten Wound", which was posted on Jihadi forums at the beginning of October 2009. Yahya stresses in the video that East Turkistan is an integral part of the Islamic nation and he therefore wishes to highlight the Muslims' past in this region which was conquered by the Muslims in the 9th century. He states that the Muslim nation, as well as Islam, are under constant attack by the west, the Crusaders and the Jews, as well as from the east, namely from Buddhist China. He contends that the Muslims are not sufficiently familiar with the front against the Islam in the east, i.e on the part of China, and therefore should be promoted to the forefront of the Muslim nation's awareness. Yahya endorses the East Turkistan Party's claim, according to which China is ostensibly striving to rid the above

⁴¹ Hundreds of thousands of Chinese are working in North Africa, in Algeria alone there are 50,000 Chinese workers.

⁴² http://www.marebpress.com/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=17582

<http://www.islammemo.cc/akhbar/arab/2009/07/14/85007.html>,
<http://shamikh.org/vb/showthread.php?p=237586>,
<http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=26207>,
<http://hanein.info/vb/showthread.php?t=114051>

mentioned region of its Muslim inhabitants and to blur its Muslim identity and he specifies the various means, sometimes using the analogy of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- a. Changing the name of the region from East Turkistan to the Chinese name of Xinjiang, just as Israel changed the name of Palestine to Israel. He claims that this step was intended, inter alia, "to cut off the connection between the population and its history".
- b. Encouraging Chinese citizens to move to East Turkistan and settle there, just as the Jews are doing in Palestine. He claims that the Chinese are investing enormous efforts in order to change the demographic balance of east Turkistan for the benefit of the Chinese, and therefore China is offering a package deal of incentives to its Chinese citizens, such as the promise of employment, apartments, plots of agricultural land, which it purloins from the Muslim population in Turkistan. He states that the present Chinese policies have been quite successful, as can be seen in the rise in the number of Chinese residents in east Turkistan which is estimated at over 60%. An effort to limit the rate of Muslim births to two children only through intimidation policies, by means of taxation etc. This results in a high rate of abortions.
- c. Closure of Muslim educational institutions and prevention of holding Quran studies in homes and mosques, particularly to those who are under 18 years of age.
- d. According to Yahya, if they do hold religious classes, then this is done under the direct supervision of the Chinese authorities whilst teaching their own values and glorifying their rulers.

- e. Plundering and continuous exploitation of the natural resources in the region such as oil, gold, iron, copper, etc.
- f. Experiments with missiles and nuclear bombs in one of the east Turkistan deserts. Yahya claims that these experiments caused the deaths of hundreds and thousands of Turkistani, the dissemination of strange diseases and the emigration of many of them to other areas.
- g. Forced transfer of Muslim girls into China and cutting them off from their families for lengthy periods, under the pretext of giving them professional training. The result of these policies was the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Muslim women against their will into China and even suicides of some of them in order to escape this reality.

According to Yahya, the July 2009 events were an expression of the growing anger amongst the Turkistan Muslims against the oppressive Chinese policies and constituted a significant change in their response. Moreover, Yahya defines these events as the intifada of the Turkistan people who raised their heads for the first time against the Chinese authorities. He also calls upon the Muslims worldwide to aid the Muslims in Turkistan in every possible way, first and foremost by a widespread information campaign, which will stress what is happening in this region. Adhering to Allah's faith and turning to Jihad against the Chinese authorities are an important component in answering this oppressive policy. Furthermore, Communist China's fate will be identical to that of the Communist Soviet Union, namely complete defeat.⁴³

⁴³ The video can be seen at the following link:
<http://www.muslm.net/vb/showthread.php?t=362102>,
http://www.jarchive.info/details.php?item_id=6008



Abu Yahya Al-Libi in the video "East Turkistan... The Forgotten Wound"

It should be noted that the Jihadi forums themselves deal intensively with the Muslim Uyghur East Turkistan issue, and they express their willingness to participate in the information campaign for the Muslim minority in China and in advancing their problem. The Jihadi forum "Shabakat Al-Mujahideen Al-Electroniya" for example, published a call on 17 July 2009, made by the Director of "The Sad Voice of the Uyghurs" site⁴⁴ – which deals with the Muslim minority in China, to the members of the forum, asking them to join the information campaign against the Chinese.⁴⁵ Another example is the willingness of one of the surfers of the Jihadi forum "Shabakat Al-Mujahadeen Al-Electroniya", to design a poster for the Muslims in East Turkistan in order to identify with their suffering and their desire to advance the information campaign on their behalf.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The site's address: <http://et.4t.com>

⁴⁵ <http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=26253>

⁴⁶ published on 12 September

2009: <http://www.majahdenar.com/showthread.php?p=144966>



The poster designed by one of the surfers on the Jihadi forums

From time to time the Jihadi forums report on executions which the Chinese carry out against the Uyghur Muslims, who participated in the July 2009 riots. They thereby continue to supply the fuel for continuing to deal with the problem of the east Turkistan Muslims.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ <http://alflojaweb.com/vb/showthread.php?t=94804>,
<http://alflojaweb.com/vb/showthread.php?t=94667>.



Images from the bloody conflicts in the city of Urumchi, as published in the Party's publication (Turkistan Al-Islamiyya, Vol. 4, pp. 33-34)



Photographs of Uyghur elderly woman confronting Chinese security forces during riots

On August 7th 2009 additional threats were made against China on the Jihadi forums following the claim made by one of the supervisors of the "Ansar Al-Mujahidin" Jihadi forum, that a group of armed Chinese in Algeria, whom he termed "idolaters and dog-eaters", attacked Muslims and brutally beat them. And all this with the ostensible backing of the Chinese government. In light of this event, the forum supervisor called upon the surfers to take revenge on those Chinese and "kill Chinese wherever they find them". In response to this call, one of the surfers remarked that "the solution was simple – multiplying Jihad attacks against the embassies, attaches, expatriates and Chinese government officials....."⁴⁸ It should be pointed out that there is no connection between this event and those of July 2009, other than to fan the flames of hatred against China.

⁴⁸ <http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=7400>.



Photographs of a Muslim who was attacked
by a Chinese armed group in Algeria

Terrorist Activity

Before the Olympic Games in Beijing, the Turkistan Islamic Party raised the consciousness, following the publication of a video clip made on 23 July 2008 and released on 25 July 2008, which contained a threat against the Chinese authorities to attack the smooth running of the Games and its main cities, in a manner not yet seen. The Party accepted responsibility in this video for the sequence of attacks which it perpetrated in China over the three months prior to July 2008:



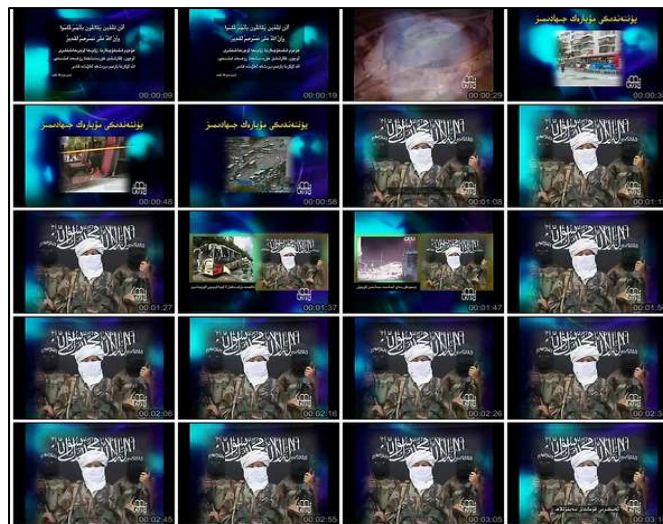
Photographs of a terrorist attack site in Shanghai on May 5th 2008 where two buses exploded, killing 3 people



A suicide bombing at the Police Headquarters in the city of Guangdong (جواندونغ) on May 17th



Photograph of terrorist attack sites in Wenzhou from July 17th 2008 and in the Yunnan region on July 21st 2008 where two buses exploded



Images taken from the video which was published on July 25th 2008

In an additional video tape which was made on August 1st 2008 and published on August 7th 2008, the Party's spokesman, Abdullah Mansur, warned the Muslims not to use the Chinese public transportation, owing to the intention to attack it and he announced an all-out war against the Chinese government.



Image of the video published on August 7th 2008

An article entitled "The enemy is panicked by our attacks" which was published on the group's online publication, states that the Chinese were in a panic due to the threats to attack the Olympic games. One of the main manifestations of this was to send large numbers of Chinese security forces to protect the games and the differing announcements made by senior government officials. According to the Group, the threats made were an inspiration to the Turkistan Muslims – whom he calls the Mujahideen – to advance the armed struggle or the jihad against China:

- August 4th, 2008 – four days before the opening of the Olympic Games, a car-bomb set off by two Mujahideen was set off against Chinese Special Forces. 16 soldiers were killed in the attack.
- August 7th, 2008 – One day before the opening of the Olympic Games, a shooting attack was perpetrated against the Chinese security forces in Yanqing. 8 people were killed in the attack.
- On the day of the opening of the Games, on August 8th, 2008, a Mujahideen exploded a bomb next to a police convoy in Ili. 9 people were killed in the explosion.



- On August 10, 2008, fighting broke out in the city of Koga between the Mujahideen and the police in the market. The Mujahideen attacked Chinese government buildings and shops.



- On August 12, 2008, in the Kashgar region and the city of Badaojiang, the Mujahideen killed three Chinese policemen who stopped them at a roadblock.

The article ends with the conclusion that “from these praiseworthy actions, we can determine that the East Turkistan Muslims are pining for the call to Jihad, as they have been oppressed by the Communist Chinese. Today they have awakened from their slumber and their sleep. If you wish to escape and be rescued from the Chinese oppression, then you must confront the difficulties and many problems in this way”.

The group also claims that on 20 October 2008 and the week thereafter, the group succeeded in shooting down two unmanned spy aircraft which were flying over North Waziristan. They claim that the spy aircraft were being used to spy on the Taliban activists, but this fact did not prevent its members from shooting it down and proving that at the top of its agenda, there was a religious obligation to aid their Taliban brothers and in their own words: “stand with your Mujahideen

sons at the side of the Taliban and the immigrants and do not despair". They added that the shooting down was a gift to Mula Mohammad Amar, to Sheikh Osama bin Laden and to Ayman Al-Zhawahiri.⁴⁹ The group also claims that it was able to catch Muslim spies who collaborated with the American and Afghan intelligence.



Photographs of the unmanned aircraft and its debris after being shot down

The On-Line publication "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya"

In July 2008, the group started to publish a new on-line publication in Arabic called "Islamic Turkistan". In the publication's first edition, the group explained its rationale and the decision which was behind the new publication. In their opinion, the media is an additional and significant tool in the war against the enemy and an important means of bringing the problems of the Muslim minority in east Turkistan to the forefront of the Islamic nation's awareness:

"The media's role – whether it is visual, auditory or written – has become the most important means for concentrating information and for getting to know others. The media war has become the confrontation arena against the

⁴⁹"Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 2, October 2008, p.10.

adversaries. The media is available today to all, after the oppressing countries had a monopoly. The Muslims also actively began to emphasize their problems and their thoughts. The window to the world started to open for them, so that everyone in this world will become aware of their issues...

We are publishing this magazine in order to clarify the reality where our east Turkistan Muslim nation is under the oppressive occupation of Communist China. We wish to expose the lies of the Chinese government and to show the world its crimes in an embarrassing light so that the world which acts justly will understand our problems and our rights and will know that we seek freedom and independence for our land and our nation. We wish to rule it according to Allah's Sharia and to have justice after the oppression. We are publishing our magazine in order to reach out to our brothers whom we do not know and who do not know us. However, the love of the faith and the heart are what ties us together. We are unable to meet with them, but through the true written word and the authentic knowledge, which they will feel through our correspondence, in order to open, together with them, the gates of debate and fruitful discussion surrounding our Islamic problem.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, p.1.



The cover page of the magazine's third edition March 2009

The online publication is dedicated, by the nature of things, to the east Turkistan region and therefore endeavors to give the reader an idea and information regarding this region. As with its geographical structure, its history stresses its Islamic history, its inhabitants etc.⁵¹ However, the second thread which passes through its entire length is the focus on the harsh reality in which the Muslim minority lives in east Turkistan, i.e. the injustices and the cruel oppression which the Chinese government inflicts.

In actual fact, the magazine is trying to place east Turkistan as an organic part of Islamic expanse; in order to depict it as occupied Islamic territory which must be liberated. Therefore, inter alia, it refers to east Turkistan's Islamic past. For example, it mentions the region's Islamization process, which commenced in the eighth century and thereafter.⁵² The year 1616 is mentioned as the beginning of

⁵¹ For example see article dealing with the Turkish nationals who inhabit this area. Ibrahim, "Turkish nationals and their geographical division", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, pp. 26-27.

⁵² See: Ibrahim, "The history of the Islamic occupation of east Turkistan", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, p. 25. See "Save Turkistan before it is too late", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, p.45.

the Chinese repression of the region, ruled by the Manchu dynasty, but nevertheless the magazine also sees fit to mention that the Muslims in this region did not remain indifferent to their fate and strongly resisted the oppression to this very day.⁵³

In this context, the Turkistan Islamic Party presents itself as the direct continuation of the passing of time and the Islamic history of being an Islamic fighting opposition, which today represents the only voice of the oppressed Muslim minority in this region.

Another important point, which the group seeks to stress, is the fact that it is a Jihadi Salafi group and not strictly a group with national aspirations.⁵⁴

In the first edition, the group's motives for the armed struggle against China under the heading "Why are we fighting against China?":

1. Religious and traditional justification: China is an aggressive enemy against this region where Muslims reside and the enemy occupied the lands of East Turkistan. There is no greater obligation against those who attack the belief in Allah than to repulse the enemy which attacks the Muslims' lands and destroys the religion and this world, as determined by the religious scholars. Following the occupation of the Muslims' lands, the desecration of their honor and the purloining of their money by the Communist Chinese enemy, every Muslim is obligated to carry out Jihad.
2. "We are fighting against China so that they will see that "there is no other God other than Allah and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah and so that they will take upon themselves the religion of Islam."

⁵³ See: Ibrahim "what do you know about east Turkistan", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, pp. 17-19; Abu Muhammad Al-Sadiq, "Enlightening pages from our Islamic history", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya, Vol. 3, March 2009, pp. 3-41. Ibrahim, "China and the Islamic Khalifas", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 3, March 2009 pp. 47-48.

⁵⁴ See example Abu Khalid, "From the faith of the Salafis", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, pp. 31-35.

3. "We are fighting against China in order to aid the weakest Muslims and so that we can remove the yolk of oppression from them. China opposed Islam and forced the Communist heresy on the Muslims. It prevented them from performing their religious rites, forced a Communist education on them, cancelled their religious education, and sealed their schools, institutions and universities, where they studied the Islamic religion."
4. "We are fighting against China in order to free the Muslim prisoners, who were thrown into prison, guilty only of saying "Allah is our God", and because they wished to be free as Allah had created them and as their mothers had given birth to them".
5. "We are fighting against China because they desecrated our honor, stole our lands and our possessions, starved our nation and forced us to live under internment.

"Because of these and other reasons, we will fight against China until they leave our country and leave our religion. The heretics will not become reconciled to us and we will not be reconciled to them until they join us or pay a head tax."

The article also gives reasons for the timing of the present armed struggle against China:

- a. Preference must be given to the struggle against the close enemy rather than to the faraway enemy, because "the danger from the close enemy is tangible and is in the midst of the Muslims, as in East Turkistan."
- b. There is a religious commandment in Islam, the believers must prepare for the campaign against the enemy for Allah.
- c. "The problem of Turkistan is a forgotten one." It does not have anyone to defend it, and it does not manage to make its voice heard. China took advantage of the Islamic and Arab world's involvement in international and

- local affairs, whether in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya or Somalia, in order to execute its plan and realize its goals in Turkistan, i.e. to put its policies of ethnic purification into practice, mass deportation of our Muslim nation, destroying everything that is Islamic, uprooting the Turkistan nation from its roots. It also took advantage of the American fabrication "the war against terrorism" and asked the international community to assist it in fighting the Turkistan Mujahideen. Under this cloak of lies, it deters its people and utilizes its resources in order to eliminate Islam and its people.
- d. Despite the fact that the western forces, headed by the United States, enjoy a military and technological advantage, Islamic history has shown that Allah stands besides the Muslims, even if they are in an inferior position numerically and militarily, as opposed to the enemy.⁵⁵

The article also praises the suicide attacks against the enemies of Islam, for their success in instilling fear amongst them. The article contends that the larger the campaign against Islam, the more money is required by the enemy, as in the case of the U.S. in Iraq. For example, it mentions the economic crises in the U.S. over the past two years, as one of the ramifications of American involvement in Iraq, in addition to human casualties and damage to property. All these, the article states, contribute to the demoralization of the aggressive countries' populations "who do not see any benefits in the occupation of foreign lands which will have to be liberated at some time". Therefore, if the power of the U.S. has been damaged due to its involvement in the war in Iraq, this will also be the fate of China. Moreover, because China's strength is not on a par with that of the U.S. and it will come out of the campaign against Islam defeated. "The Chinese people

⁵⁵ Sheikh Bashir, "why we are fighting China", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, pp. 6-9. This article was published in postings on the Al-faloja Jihadi forum: <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=45885>

are a crushed nation, which is unaware of its history. It went to war and was beaten. It was beaten by the Japanese in World War 2 and was beaten by Russia and Vietnam”.

In light of this reality, the Turkistan Islamic Party has positioned itself as the vanguard of the Turkistan nation, to return its honor and its unconcealed history to the days when the Muslims ruled in Central Asia.⁵⁶

The group wishes to harness the Muslim religious scholars, wherever they are, as an additional important fighting tool against the Chinese authorities. In its first edition, for example, the group turns to the Muslim religious scholars with a request to show more interest in their cause and to use their position, in order to raise awareness of the Muslim minority's harsh reality in Turkistan and to spread their predicament amongst the target populations. Therefore, the group specifies the requested assistance expected from the religious scholars:

- a. “The religious scholars must examine the Muslims' situation in Turkistan, to forward a true picture of the crimes against the Muslims in the east Turkistan region, and publish these heinous crimes on the podiums of the mosques, as was the case with the Afghanistan issue”.
- b. “Raising funds for charity from wealthy Muslims and send them to the righteous Mujahideen in order to strengthen them against the enemy”.
- c. “To call upon the Muslims in Turkistan to emigrate and leave for Allah and not to remain quiet about the oppression. Thereafter, they must be received by special bureaus for immigrants in the Islamic neighboring countries or Arab states.”

⁵⁶ Sheikh Bashir, “Why we are fighting in China”, “Turkistan Al-Islamiyya”, Vol. 1, July 2008, p. 9.

- d. A religious education for the sons of the emigrants must be provided, their problems and Islamic identity must be explained to them and they must be given books, Islamic videos and as many forms of preaching as possible.”
- e. “To call upon the technological and scientific experts to stand by their brethren in every sphere. To instruct them in the right way so that they can confront the enemy”.
- f. To request Islamic governments to pressure the Chinese government to grant the Turkistan Muslims independence and freedom. If the governments do not reply positively, this must be made public and they will be shamed, and their treacherous governments must be toppled”.
- g. “To call upon the Muslims worldwide to boycott Chinese manufactured products, not to buy them and to fight against all the companies who support them.”
- h. “To call upon the Muslims to organize demonstrations condemning the violation of human rights in Turkistan, as in Tibet, when the Dalai Lama called for the boycott of the Olympic Games”.
- i. If the Chinese do not halt these actions and do not recognize Turkistan's independence, then Chinese targets abroad must be attacked, their embassies, their bureaus and their concentrated areas, either by assassinations or kidnappings.⁵⁷

According to the opening article in the second edition, this approach was received positively by the religious scholars. However, the magazine did not publish a religious ruling following the call, which would reinforce its claim of the religious scholars' positive response. In its stead, the magazine published an old religious

⁵⁷ Sheikh Bashir, “The responsibilities of the religious scholars and the preachers to defend the east Turkistan problem, “Turkistan Al-Islamiyya”, Vol. 1, July 2008. pp. 37-38.

ruling which was first published on 19 June 2006, which states that every Muslim must aid his brethren in east Turkistan, to the best of his ability. This aid must be expressed by financial support, aid to widows and orphans and conducting propaganda regarding the Muslims' problem in east Turkistan.⁵⁸ It should be noted that this religious ruling was first published on the Al Shabaka Al-Islamiyya⁵⁹ network by the Center of Religious Rulings under the supervision of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Fakia (born 1964).⁶⁰

In the third edition, the Group again turns to the religious scholars, particularly to those in east Turkistan, to aid the armed struggle against the Chinese government and it credits them with great importance in this struggle:

"Fulfill your obligation to your Lord and your Muslim people. Do not forget the responsibilities lying on your shoulders, as you are responsible for defending the religion and protecting its people. This is a trust placed on your shoulders after the prophets, as you are the inheritors of the prophets. Explain and expose the oppression and present them in a shameful light and do not abandon your Turkistan brethren, they need your aid and support, as in the past, particularly after your Turkistan sons in the Turkistan Islamic Party declared the Jihad against China in 2008. A number of the Mujahideen brothers have perpetrated several successful military attacks against the Chinese. Therefore, the Chinese feelings of revenge against the Turkistan people have grown and they have imprisoned,

⁵⁸ "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 2, October 2008, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁹

<http://www.islamweb.net/ver2/Fatwa/ShowFatwa.php?Option=FatwaId&lang=A&Id=75447>

⁶⁰ Born in Mauritania. Graduate of Islamic Sciences at the University of Al-Quran Al-Karim in Sudan where he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. Today he serves as the Head of the Center of Religious Rulings on the above mentioned site in Qatar:

<http://www.islamweb.net/ver2/Fatwa/ShowFatwa.php?Option=FatwaId&lang=A&Id=35374>

murdered, imposed closures and carried out searches in the Muslims' homes and now T.G. the Jihad has started. If we do not kill them, they will kill us.⁶¹

The Group also approached the Muslim nation in general and urged them to intervene in the Turkistan Muslims issue. "Where are you Muslims regarding our problems? Are we not your religion brothers? Is not our honor your honor? Is our blood not your blood? What is this silence, this silence in the face of your Muslim people who are fighting for their faith and freedom? Do you not think of our future which is being threatened by hostile communists who wish to eradicate and wipe out everything which is Muslim in the hearts of the Muslims, so that they will not return to their religion! The Quran calls upon you every day and every hour to aid your oppressed brethren and to stand by them, even if it is only through prayer."⁶²

It is interesting to note that the online magazine succeeded in arousing a virtual debate between a number of Jihadi forums, with each of them claiming to be the first to publish. The Al Faloja Jihadi forum criticized two Jihadi forums Medad Al-Suyuf⁶³ and Al-Buraq⁶⁴, for professing to represent the Mujahideen's true voice, but they are not and are suspected of being hackers of the intelligence services. According to Al Faloja, the above two forums stole the magazine from the Al-Fajr media center, which serves as the main official global jihad propaganda voice. As soon as the editors of the magazine ascertained that there was a delay in the

⁶¹ Abd Al-Haqq Al-Turkistani, "A message to the religious scholars, "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 3, March 2009, pp. 19-23

⁶² Abd Al-Haqq Al-Turkistani, "Save Turkistan before it is too late", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 1, July 2008, p. 45.

⁶³ The forum was hacked into at the end of April by hackers who wanted to protest against the false messages and postings relating to the Mujahideen. <http://www.almedad.com/vb>

⁶⁴ <http://www.alboraq.info>

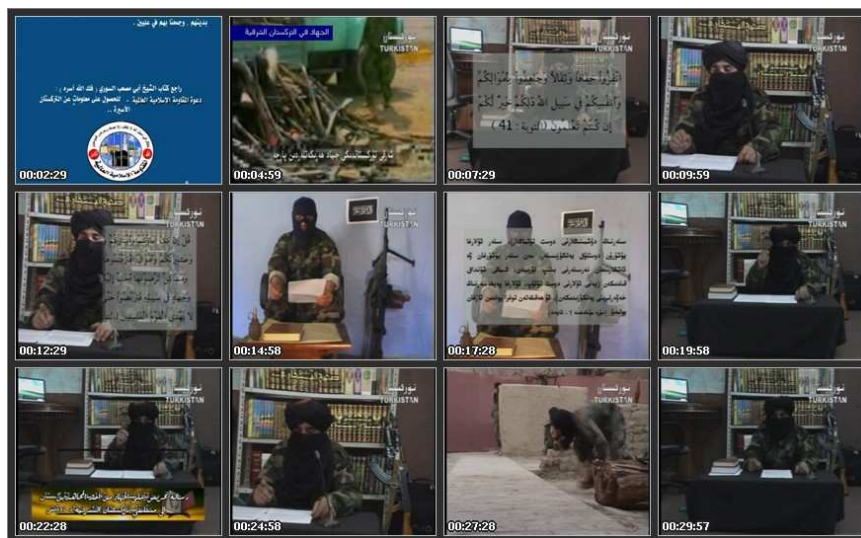
publication, they hastened to publish their issue on the other two forums. Finally, the Al-Fajr media center published the magazine, with a delay of two months.⁶⁵

The Group's Jihad Videos

In addition to the online magazine, the Group also uses video tapes which are distributed to the Jihad forums. The videos themselves are distributed in three languages: Arabic, Uyghur and Turkish, with the intention of reaching as wide a Muslim target audience as possible. On 8 November 2006, the Group distributed a video cassette to the Jihad forums entitled "The Jihad in Islamic Turkistan". The film opens with text relating to the Islamic history of east Turkistan and gives geographical and demographical details, as well as the modern history of the Muslims in this region and the Chinese oppression of the Muslim population. The film then shows the Group members' training camps, threatening messages from some of the Group's leaders to the Chinese authorities, declaration of a Jihadi war against them, a call for aid for the Muslims etc.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=48132>, <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=48815>.

⁶⁶ <http://www.shmo5alislam.net/vb/showthread.php?p=171510>, <http://www.mojahden.net/vb/showthread.php?t=18039>



Photographs from a short film entitled "Jihad in Islamic Turkistan"

On January 20th 2009, the media institute of the "Sawt Al-Islam" group (The Voice of Islam) produced a short film. The film, published in three languages (Arabic, Turkish and Uyghur) entitled "Persistence and Preparation for Jihad"⁶⁷, was distributed to the Jihadi forums only on April of that year. The film relates

⁶⁷ <http://www.shmo5alislam.net/vb/showthread.php?t=35001>. On the Jihadi forums in Turkish the video is called "Us and the Preparation for Jihad": <http://forum.takva.com/showthread.php?t=10647>

the story of the birth of the Turkistan Islamic Party and focuses on the ruthless Chinese oppression, striving, according to the film, for the destruction of the Muslim population in the region. In the film, the party leaders, including the group's Emir, Abd al-Haqq, address the Muslim nation, and ask it to uphold the commandment of Jihad and fight the Chinese government. The film also shows the camps where the party members undergo military training, as well as the arsenal of armaments at their disposal and the preparations made before leaving to carry out a terrorist attack. Seyfullah, one of the party's senior members, asks the Turkistan Muslims to join the training camps in Waziristan and states that: "Thank God, we trained them in various types of weapons available to us that are used by the Mujahideen around the world. We gave them lessons in Sharia, politics and the army – as well as on tactics and explosives, the use of light and heavy weapons and classes on intelligence and other military insight."⁶⁸



Flyer from the film "Persistence and Preparation for Jihad for Allah"

⁶⁸ "Persistence and Preparation for Jihad for Allah", film, January 20th 2009.



Images from the film "Persistence and Preparation for Jihad for Allah"

At the beginning of April 2009, another short film was distributed to the Jihadi forums (about 40 minutes long) entitled "The Will of the Shahid Osama Al-Turki", about the suicide bombing against Pakistani military forces in Waziristan. At first, the film focuses on some of the Arab World leaders (Abdullah, King of Jordan and Abdullah, King of Saudi Arabia), and mainly on the Pakistani ruler, Parvaz Musharaf, and depicts them as traitorous rulers who have become corrupt, following their cooperation with the United States. Later on, the film shows the will of the shahid, the process of the car bomb preparation, the despatch of the suicide bomber with the car bomb to attack the Pakistani military forces and the Pakistani soldiers, who were killed, as a result of the terrorist attack.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ http://www.jarchive.info/large.php?item_id=3604,
<http://www.shmo5alislam.net/vb/showthread.php?t=34255>



The suicide bomber, Osama Al-Turki

On August 25th, another short film was published in Uyghur, entitled "The Commitment to Believe and Help"⁷⁰ and on September 6th 2009 it was distributed again, together with a transcript in Arabic.⁷¹ The film displays a considerable propaganda effort in emphasizing the alleged existential threat to the Muslims in East Turkistan, in face of China's, alleged, deliberate policy to rid this region of Muslims. To that end, the film brings the real voice of one of the Muslims living in

⁷⁰ <http://majahden.com/vb/showthread.php?t=28499>

⁷¹ <http://www.majahdenar.com/showthread.php?t=29264>

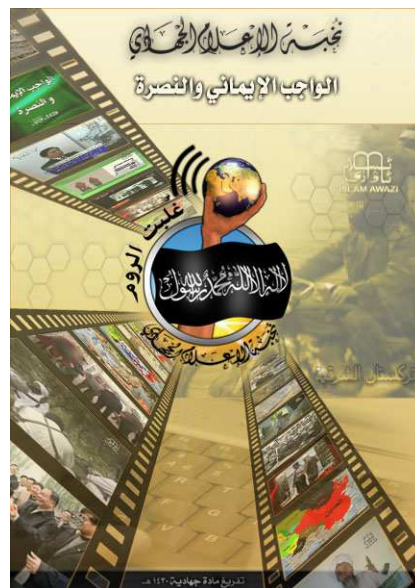
the Aksu Province in East Turkistan, named Uthman 'Umar Haji, in which he relates the hardships the Muslim residents of the region have to face under the Chinese rule and the harassment which they endure. According to him, in the early 1950s, China employed several harassment techniques, such as providing free medical aid and food in order to win the trust of the Muslim residents. In his eyes, and in accordance with the commentary provided on the film's background, these ruses were intended to camouflage China's true plans for its Muslim residents, that is to corrupt the Islamic identity of its residents and to spread Communist ideas. According to Haji, in order to achieve this goal, China has employed the policy of "divide and conquer". Thus for example, it has tried to sow seeds of conflict and dispute between its Muslim residents, *"by taking by force the wealth of those amongst them who are rich and eliminating them, and making the poor hate those who are employed, land owners and merchants."* He continues to state that *"The government has killed and imprisoned the rich merchants, in order to facilitate the seizing of their funds and lands, and later distribute them amongst the poor. In this manner, they wished to win over the sympathy of the poor and the weak to their plan."* According to him, whoever dared complain against the state's policy was accused of sedition and summarily sent to prison. In 1952, as related by Haji, China's treatment of its Muslim residents in East Turkistan, worsened. This manifested itself, as it did in the past, in the confiscation of the lands and money of rich Muslim residents living there, but this time the government refrained from distributing them to the poor and opted for confiscating them for the benefit of the state, *"The government took over all the treasures and goods of the people in East Turkistan. The people themselves [...] could not do anything or take anything without permission from the Chinese government."* Haji also refers to China's intolerance towards the

Islamic religion and the Muslims living there. He mentions, as an example, that in the 1950s, China first began prohibiting the wearing of a veil, and forcing equal rights between men and women: "The women were forbidden to sit at home, the spouses were forced to participate in local and national residences, they were forced to work on government farms."

Later on in the film, China is accused of abusing and plundering the natural resources in East Turkistan. Thus, for example, it is reported that China has invested 129 billion Yen in the building of railroads meant to connect East Turkistan with the Chinese Dong Province, "in order to facilitate the transfer of coal outside." To provide a basis for this claim, the film is strewn with short interviews with Chinese government employees, confirming this policy. Jankhum John, Governor of the Qmul Province, is quoted as attributing great strategic importance to the country's plan, to mine the natural resources "in the west part of the country, and to produce a million tons of coal and lay the railways to transport iron and coal from Turkistan to China" which he views as "an immense plan, that will grant the people happiness and relief."

After presenting this background information, a series of senior party members are portrayed, addressing the Muslim nation, clarifying the existential threat hovering over the Muslim community in China, and emphasizing that it is, in fact, a war between religions. In their eyes, Jihad is of the utmost importance and serves as a fundamental response to this threat, and therefore one should strive to it. Thus, for example, Abd al-Haqq claims that the commandment of Jihad is a personal duty (Fardh Ayn) incumbent on every Muslim. Another senior party member named Abdallah Mansur, also stresses the duty of Jihad, in face of the oppression policy China is allegedly using against the Muslim population. In fact, one can see that these same senior members wish to raise the morale of their

people and show that their resistance can prove itself. For example, Abd al-Haqq states that China's atomic weapons are no guarantee for its safety, as it cannot help it in its war against the Muslims. Muhammad Yasin, another senior party member, is optimistic as to the liberation of East Turkistan from the Chinese government: "We, the Muslims in East Turkistan, must ask ourselves how can we liberate our land from China? The obvious answer to this question is that we acknowledge our commitment to believe and act accordingly. With God's help we will be able to establish our Islamic country in East Turkistan. The decisive proof to that is that we can train ourselves, and we have gained military experience following our confrontation of the enemy [...] We are certain we are on the way to liberate our Muslim land. This is a divine promise for a clear victory Allah has promised his followers." Yasin stresses that in order to achieve this goal one must adhere to the path of opposition and to faith.⁷²



The cover page to the movie's Arabic transcript

⁷² <http://www.majahdenar.com/showthread.php?t=29264>



Images from the film:
"The Commitment to Believe and Help"



Uthman Umar Haji



Men and women work alongside each other



Sayf Allah



Muhammad Yasin

Summary and insight

The "Turkistan Islamic Party" professes to represent the "silent" voice of the Muslim minority in East Turkistan, oppressed by the Chinese authorities. In its eyes, this region and the disaster befalling its Muslim residents, do not garner enough attention in the Islamic world, to the point of disregard, and in its words: "It is true the Muslims in China and East Turkistan did not find anyone to take an interest in their affairs and write and publish facts about them. Their problem is

forgotten, as were in the past Andalusia, Bukhara and Samarkand.”⁷³ The extensive media campaign, led by the group in this matter, tells of an intense wish to bring down the virtual walls to the rest of the Islamic world and to break through the awareness of the Muslim people, that in East Turkistan, which was in the past an integral part of the Islamic Empire, there is also a Muslim population struggling not only for its life but also for its Islamic identity.

However, the extensive media campaign can teach us also of the distress amongst the group's ranks. That is, the dwindling of the manpower at the group's disposal in face of China's and Pakistan's determined activity to eradicate terrorist activity from their countries, added to the feeling of anxiety and the existential threat as well as to the feeling of urgency in promoting their problem. Therefore, we are witness to an enormous effort on the group's part to recruit additional activists to its ranks, both from amongst the Turkistan Muslim population and from amongst other Muslim populations. To that end, the group utilizes several tactics:

- a. Anchoring the past and Islamic nature of East Turkistan and depicting it as an integral part of the "Dar Al-Islam". That is, emphasizing East Turkistan as an inseparable part of the territory and the Islamic nation, in view of the Muslim regime that governed this land in the past during the first centuries of Islam.
- b. Using the commandment of Jihad. East Turkistan being under heretic rule in the form of Communist China and the ongoing Chinese oppression of the Muslim population compels every Muslim to come out in defense of his brother and fulfill the duty of Jihad.

⁷³ Abu Hadija, "The Truth on the Chinese Animosity towards the Muslims", "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya", Vol. 3, p. 64.

- c. Playing on the feelings of faithful Muslims by using personal stories of Muslims who experienced Chinese oppression, the trampling of the Prophet Muhammad's honor and so forth.
- d. Presenting the group as a Salafi-Islamic movement, guarding the ember of Islam's primal faith. With this act, the group wishes to attract Muslims identifying with the Salafi faith and strengthen the feeling of the necessity to help it.
- e. Showing solidarity with other Muslim brothers in distress and under an existential threat. For example, the Turkistan Islamic Party depicts itself as one that does not limit itself to its struggle in East Turkistan, but as one that helps its Muslim brothers, such as the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, attacked by the Coalition Forces after the September 11th attacks. With this act of solidarity, the group wishes to demonstrate a model of correct behavior that is supposed to serve as an example to other Muslims.
- f. Addressing Muslim religious clerics around the world asking them to promote the problem and thus encourage their followers to join the group's fighting ranks. This act also strives to obtain religious legitimization, if not to depict it as a sublime duty, to help the Turkistan Islamic Party.
- g. Addressing a Muslim target audience using three languages: Arabic, Turkish and Uyghur, so as to reach as wide an audience as possible.
- h. Distributing propaganda material such as video clips and the online magazine "Turkistan Al-Islamiyya" on the Jihadi forums.

As stated above, the group advocates an uncompromising Jihad war against the Chinese authorities, as the sole answer in coping with the Chinese oppression and in striving for a complete disengagement between East Turkistan and China,

which will eventually lead to the establishment of an Islamic Emirate. The Olympic Games in China (in the summer of 2008) afforded an excellent opportunity and a springboard for the group to obtain global awareness. The messages threatening to sabotage the Olympic Games and their execution at a delicate time when the world is battling terrorism, contributed to raising awareness for the problem in East Turkistan and to strengthening the fear of future terrorist attacks. It seems that the group's strength will grow, if its appeal is answered and many Muslims will join it, especially with the recent rise in the Taliban's power in Pakistan upon the retreat of the American forces from Iraq. A large scale terrorist attack in China may raise the group's prestige and encourage outside Muslim aid.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the events of July 2009 have succeeded in bringing about a certain shift in awareness, both amongst the Muslim residents in China and amongst the various Jihad organizations, headed by Al-Qaeda, regarding the issues of the Muslims in East Turkistan. It seems that the Turkistan Islamic Party itself attributes to these events great significance and views them as a positive turning point in promoting the outlook, that the Muslims in China are under an existential threat and attack by the Chinese government, and that the answer to this threat is by way of resistance. The participation of the Muslims in East Turkistan in demonstrations against China's policy towards the Muslims in the country was seen by the party as an encouraging sign of nascence of displays of activism on the part of the Muslim population, and as comfortable grounds for optional recruitment of Turkistan Muslims to its ranks. In the foreign relations arena, Al-Qaeda's attention to East Turkistan and its call to lend a hand in the Jihad against China is undoubtedly seen as a success of the party's propaganda raising this issue to the top of the Mujahideen's agenda. Furthermore, the

intensive discussions, on the Jihadi forums, of China's attitude towards Muslims and Islam, continues to supply fuel for the party's propaganda mechanism, and even results in political achievements, We can therefore witness, in the near future, a possible influx of Mujahideen into China or its borders, in order to participate in Jihad against it.