

Uyghurs protest anniversary of China in US capital

Servet Günerigök / 02.10.2021



More than 100 activists dressed in black shirts lined up in Lincoln memorial area

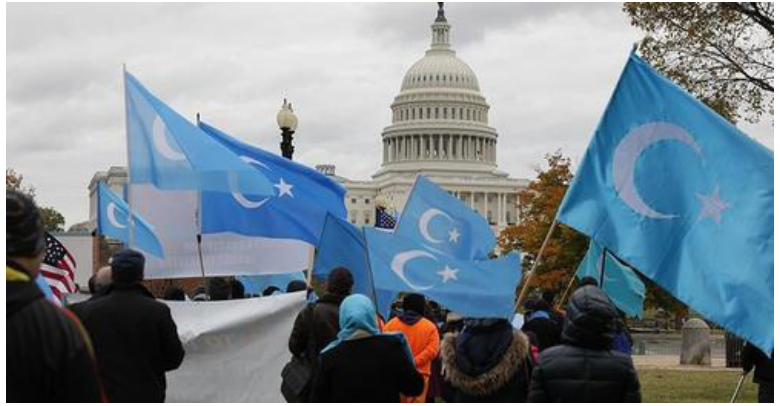
A group of Uyghurs gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in the US capital on Friday to demand China end its treatment against the Muslim minority.

More than 100 activists dressed in black shirts, lined up in the memorial area while speakers addressed the crowd.

Among them were Republican congresswoman Vicky Hartzler from Missouri, Democratic congressman Tom Suozzi from New York, Rabbi Jack Moline and Nury Turkel, vice-chairman of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

Hartzler said US companies doing business in China have an ethical and moral obligation to move their supply chains out of the Uyghur region.

Suozzi said he is with Uyghurs "100 percent" against China's "genocide." Activists also demanded an end to the



encampment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang province.

According to UN data, at least 1 million Uyghurs are held against their will in places Beijing calls "vocational training centers" and what the international community defines as "re-education camps." China does not provide information on how many camps are in Xinjiang, the number of people held and how many have returned to social life.

While the UN and other international organizations reiterated calls for the camps to be opened for inspection, China has allowed just a few designated centers to be partially viewed by a small number of foreign diplomats and journalists.

Several countries have accused China of ethnically cleansing Uyghurs in Xinjiang, Beijing has denied any wrongdoing, dismissing the allegations as "lies and (a) political virus."

Friday marks the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.



‘There’s cameras everywhere’: testimonies detail far-reaching surveillance of Uyghurs in China

Johana Bhuiyan, 30 Sep 2021

China’s surveillance machine has grown with the aid of Chinese and international technology companies. But few have faced repercussions

Abdusalam Muhammad recalls local police interrogating him and his family in their home of Yakan in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region as early as 1995. At the time, his family was deeply involved with the local mosque. His father was the imam, and his grandfather was the mosque’s secretary. As for Muhammad, he said he prayed five times a day, was a “non-smoker” and a “well-behaved man”.

That was enough to raise red flags for local authorities charged by the Chinese government with monitoring religious activity of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, according to testimony Muhammad gave at a tribunal convened in London earlier this month. “The head of the religious affairs of our village noticed me and reported everything to the police,” a translation of his statement submitted to the tribunal read.

Muhammad was among dozens of survivors of Chinese detention and re-education camps who spoke at the first and second round of hearings of the non-governmental tribunal, which was organized by a group of lawyers, professors and advocacy groups such as the World Uyghur Congress, to bring attention to



A camera is mounted on a watchtower at a high-security facility in East Turkistan, believed to be a re-education camp where Uyghurs are detained. Photograph: Greg Baker/AFP/Getty Images

the treatment of Uyghurs in China.

When Muhammad temporarily returned home in 2014 after being detained for a year, he said he found “whole communities” barricaded with iron gates; “and cameras ... installed everywhere”.

The surveillance machine has grown with the aid of Chinese and international technology companies. Still, many of those companies have seen little to no consequences for their contribution, even as they have been flagged by the US government for aiding in a humanitarian crisis.

The US has accused China of committing genocide and crimes against humanity for running a mass detention, repression and sterilization campaign against Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic minorities. Countless

reports have detailed detainees enduring torture, coerced abortions as well as re-education in what former secretary of state Mike Pompeo described as the “forced assimilation and eventual erasure” of Uyghurs by the Chinese government.

The surveillance system propped up by these often global companies serves to facilitate that genocide, argues Dolkun Isaa, president of the World Uyghur Congress advocacy group.

“The goal of these surveillance tactics is not only to instill fear in Uyghurs’ minds that every aspect of their behavior is monitored, but most importantly to single out Uyghurs for detention in the internment camp system,” Isaa said.

At a press conference leading up to the tribunal, China’s ambassador to the UK, Zheng Zeguang, called it a “farce” and said allegations of genocide were “absurd”. Zheng was banned from the UK parliament just days later.

‘Cameras installed everywhere’

By 2018, camera surveillance had become a feature of daily life for Uyghur Muslims and members of other ethnic minorities in China,



Buildings in East Turkistan region are believed to be a re-education camp for Uyghurs.

Photograph: Greg Baker/AFP/Getty Images

both inside and outside the gates of the camps, testimony from survivors and experts at the tribunal detailed.

Baqitali Nur testified he was detained in 2017 ahead of a visit to sick relatives in Kazakhstan. Police accused him of attempting to flee the country and harboring “ideological problems”, he said, and he spent a year in a camp where he endured food deprivation and beatings and was forced to learn and sing Chinese songs.

“There were only singing songs and torture,” Nur testified.



China: removing 'Arab-style' features from country's biggest mosques the latest move in campaign of Muslim assimilation

Laura Hood, September 28, 2021



Islamic landmark in China: the Dongguan mosque in Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, western China. David Stroup, Author provided

In the normally quiet city of Xining, capital of northwest China's Qinghai province, everyday interactions between the city's ethnic groups – Han Chinese, Hui Muslim, Tibetans, Turkic Salars and others – usually pass without conflict or fanfare. But thanks to the municipal government's controversial demolition of the

entrance hall of the city's famous Dongguan Mosque, one of the largest in China, the city finds itself squarely in the cross-hairs of a nationwide campaign to make Islam more Chinese or "sinicise"

it – in official language, “to guide Islam to be compatible with socialism”.

The removal of the “Arabic-style” domes and minarets from the front gate of the mosque has sparked backlash from local residents, and even captured the attention of foreign diplomats. The story of the Dongguan’s renovation signals the expansion of an ongoing crack-down on Islam in China, which has thus far largely been enacted against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.

On July 9 2021, images of a notice from the Xining municipal government announcing the renovation of the front gate of the Dongguan Mosque circulated on social media sites such as Sina Weibo and Zhihu. Similar changes were enacted at the city’s other mosques – at least ten of which stand in the city’s central Chengdong District, alone. Twitter users in Xining documented and shared images of these changes as they swept across the city.

The displeased reaction of the local Hui Muslim community – which comprises 16% of Xining’s population – was palpable. On July 15, a woman wearing a hijab prostrated herself in prayer on the street in front of the mosque while she sobbed. Captured on video, the woman’s lone protest spread online, inspiring a cartoon that went viral.

But protests proved futile. On September 13 a tweet from Christina Scott, the British deputy head of mission to China, who was visiting the city, compared the photo of the building in a recent guidebook which displayed its Arabesque features, to the current state of the building, denuded of its dome and minarets.

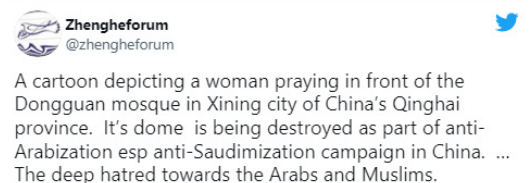
The sinicisation of Dongguan Mosque suggests a worrisome trend toward a state-driven, coercive assimilation of Muslim minorities by the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

For Hui communities, this crackdown has resulted in foreclosure of non-state approved expressions of faith. Internal party speeches have likened Islam to a “virus”. It’s this mentality that drives the regime to curtail overtly Islamic architecture in public spaces.



The Nanguan mosque in Yinchuan underwent a similar transformation in 2020. Linxia Hui Autonomous County in Gansu removed loudspeakers (usually used to broadcast the call to prayer) and Arabic signs from mosques in June of 2018. In December of the same year, three mosques in Yunnan were demolished, having been declared “illegal unregistered buildings”.

By late 2019, reports from Henan, and Shandong pointed to the nati-



onal expansion of the campaign. Even shops and restaurants have seen their Arabic signage sinicised.

Centre of Islam

The symbolic importance of the Dongguan mosque is hard to understate. Politically, the Dongguan has long represented power within the region. When I visited the area several years ago to research my forthcoming book, *Pure and True: The everyday politics of ethnicity for China's Hui Muslims*, one of the people I interviewed referred to the neighbourhood it dominated as the “de-facto Islamic capital of China”. The area is home to countless businesses, restaurants and cultural resources. The mosque provides classes in Arabic and posts collection boxes for donations to charitable projects.

As a place of worship, the Dongguan is the only Yihewani mosque in Xining that holds weekly Friday afternoon prayers. As many as 70,000 people attend in a typical week, spilling out into the street. During Ramadan, more than 200,000 people might gather for Friday prayers, with Eid celebrations drawing as many as 300,000.

Friday prayers at the Dongguan Mosque were

seen as prominent examples of cooperation between local government and the mosque. The local government assisted in crowd management by sending traffic officers to direct heavy traffic on the street during prayers.

Even though the mosque's front gate, a recent addition built in the early 1990s, is not by any means a “heritage” feature, it still stands as a visible cultural symbol at the community's heart. The fact that it is being stripped of iconography which visually links it to Islam is jarring. The emotional impact of this decision on community members will undoubtedly be significant.

The future of Islam in Hui communities

To date, sinicisation has been met with little resistance. In August 2018, in rural Weizhou township, east of Qinghai, the proposed demolition of the community's Grand Mosque sparked demonstrations by the clergy in protest. While the building was ultimately spared from total demolition, its “Arabian-style” architectural features were sinicised, its dome removed and remodelled with a Chinese-style roof.

On my visit in early 2016, residents of Weizhou expressed pride in their mosque as a sign of their community's ascent to moderate prosperity from the depths of rural poverty. The demonstrations of 2018 spoke to the residents' shock that their symbol of successful cooperation with the state could be targeted for demolition.

As the sinicisation campaign arrives on the doorstep of China's most prominent and culturally important mosque, such sentiments of discontent will only magnify. In enacting aggressive measures of standardisation the party threatens to undermine the stability it seeks to preserve. The demolition of the front gate prompted frustration and mobilisation, suggesting that strong currents of dissatisfaction run beneath the surface.



Hub of the community: Friday prayers at Dongguan's mosque. EPA/How Hwee Young au said.

Chinese businessman claims billionaire ex-wife who vanished four years ago has been held by communist government

By AIDAN WONDRAZ, 27 September 2021

*Chinese businessman exposed dark underbelly of communist party in memoir
Desmond Shum claimed partner Whitney Duan was abducted in Beijing in 2017
He was preparing to publish explosive claims in memoir when he received a call
The call was from his wife pleading with him not to publish the scathing attack*

A Chinese businessman has blamed the authorities in Beijing for the mystery disappearance of his former wife four years ago.

Desmond Shum is certain that his billionaire ex-partner Whitney Duan, also known as Duan Weihong, was abducted from Beijing in 2017.

Mr Shum accused the Chinese government of targeting and silencing rich business people in his new memoir, 'Red Roulette: An Insider's Story of Wealth, Power, Corruption and Vengeance in Today's China'.

The distraught businessman spoke out on 60 Minutes on Sunday and revealed he had his suspicions about his wife's fate confirmed when he received an unexpected call in the lead-up to the publication of his book.

The call was from his estranged ex-wife who urged him not to go public with the allegations.

'The purpose of the call is to ask me to stop

the book launch. That's exactly what she said,' he told 60 Minutes.

Mr Shum believes his former partner had been reading from a script when she suggested the publication of the book was jeopardising lives.

'Are we talking about my life? Our son's life? Or is it your life?' he said.

Ms Duan was one of the wealthiest women in China, managing investments from relatives of former Chinese premier Wen Jiabao. She then suddenly vanished without a trace leaving behind her husband and their 12-year-old son.

Mr Shum fled with his son to live in the UK believing that Ms Duan had died.



A Chinese businessman has blamed the Chinese Communist Party for the mystery disappearance of his former wife after she vanished four years ago

He said the brief conversation he had with his former partner during the phone call indicated she had been kept in isolation for the last four years.

'Her mum passed away in June. She didn't know that,' he said.

'She didn't know the pandemic was going on for two years.'

Ms Duan has joined a long list of high-profile figures to mysteriously disappear with Australian television anchor Cheng Lei and businessman Jack Ma.

Mr Shum believes his former partner was abducted by the Chinese Communist Party over her business dealings.

'I would guess most likely she's associated with the wrong crowd or the wrong faction of the power struggle,' he said.

'Or maybe she learned something that's very inconvenient for the leadership.'

Ms Duan also had business dealings with Sun Zhengcai who was being groomed as a potential successor to Xi Jinping.

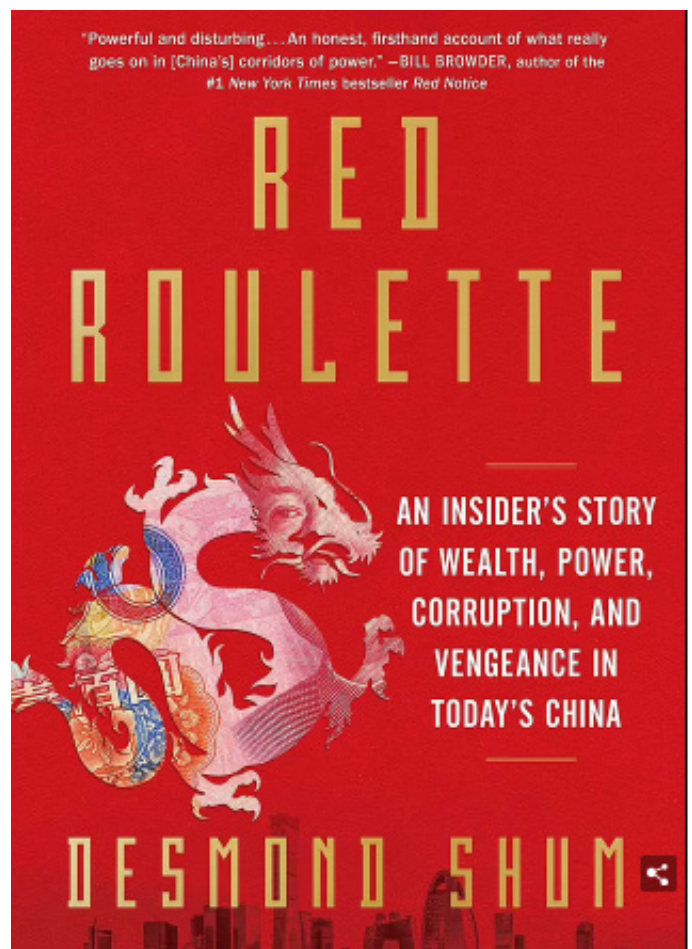
Xi then launched an anti-corruption campaign, which critics say is a pretence for targeting his political opponents, and jailed Mr

Zhengcai in 2018.

He said the phone call with his wife was the first conversation he had with her in four years.

'In two phone calls that I believe were made at the behest of high-placed Communist Party officials and monitored by China's security services, Whitney told me that she's on temporary release and could be re-detained at any time,' he told Australian Financial Review.

'She asked me to cancel the book's publication. She said if I refused to do that, it may anger the Chinese government and security services. She used the Chinese warning: 'No good comes to those who oppose the state''



Desmond Shum is certain that his billionaire partner Whitney Duan , also known as Duan Weihong, was abducted after she mysteriously vanished from Beijing in 2017

Desmond Shum is certain that his billionaire partner Mr Shum accused his government of targeting and silencing rich business people in his new memoir, 'Red Roulette: An Insider's Story of Wealth, Power,



The Chinese regime has occupied and oppressed East Turkistan for 72 years.



Since the occupation of East Turkistan, the Chinese Communist regime has been constantly intensified its state terrorism policy in these 72 years and committing genocide against the people of East Turkistan at the moment.



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