INTRODUCTION

During the second half of 2017, most international scholars studying Uyghurs and/or the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) recognized that something was seriously wrong as our Uyghur colleagues and friends in the region began disappearing. Many Uyghur students studying abroad were called back to their homeland by the government at this time, and Uyghurs in diaspora were told by relatives inside China to stop contacting them.[1] This coincided with a time when western scholars and journalists were reporting on an unprecedented securitization of the XUAR under recently appointed regional Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, who was turning the region into an Orwellian surveillance state.[2] Although Chen had implemented similar securitization tactics in Tibet, where he had previously served, in the XUAR it was bolstered by a new massive system of electronic surveillance, which included an extensive database on Uyghur residents' habits, relations, religiosity, and other traits that could be used to assess their 'loyalty' to the state.[3]

These measures appeared to represent yet another intensification of repressive policies in a region where securitization and suspicions about Uyghurs' loyalty to the state had been increasing for decades. Nonetheless, these trends towards increased repression in the XUAR did not prepare people for the shocking revelations in late 2017 that the People's Republic of China (PRC) had created extrajudicial mass internment camps for Uyghurs and other indigenous Muslims throughout the region.[4] By 2018, estimates of the number of Uyghurs and other local Muslims in these camps had been set

around 1 million, with some suggesting that it could be closer to 2 million.[5] These camps' ethnic and religious profiling of Uyghurs and other indigenous Turkic groups has raised fears that the world is witnessing the preamble to yet another genocide.

While the use of the term 'genocide' to describe what is happening to the Uyghurs inside the XUAR, like any use of this word, is controversial, with time it has become clear that the PRC is at the very least committing acts of 'cultural genocide' against the Uyghurs. In effect, the Chinese state has launched a campaign to destroy Uyghur identity as we know it. This is being accomplished through a complex of policies, which work together to attack the cultural products and practices, religious beliefs, and social capital that define Uyghurs, while simultaneously transforming the landscape of the XUAR, which Uyghurs consider to be their homeland. The internment camps, in which a significant portion of the Uyghur population has been detained indefinitely and without due process, are at the center of this complex of policies.

Inside these camps, the internees are subjected to prison-like conditions, forced to study the Chinese language for hours on end, followed by additional hours of being force-fed Communist Party propaganda, much of which targets Islam and related Uyghur cultural practices as a dangerous ideology.[6] Some accounts suggest that internees are prevented from speaking their native languages and even from casually communicating with each other, and there are numerous reports of severe torture plus multiple claims by former detainees of having been forced to take unidentified drugs.[7] While there are reportedly criteria for being put into the camps, which are designated for suspected 'terrorists,' 'extremists,' and 'separatists,' detention appears to be quota-based and largely arbitrary, leading to the internment of Uyghurs and other indigenous Muslims from all walks of life.[8]

While these internment camps, which have been compared both to Nazi concentration camps and Stalin's gulags, are the most headline-grabbing aspect of the surge in PRC repression of Uyghurs since 2017, they are only part of a larger system of control and coercion that has been unleashed on all Uyghurs inside the XUAR. The largely arbitrary criteria for detention in the camps creates an omni-

present fear of internment throughout the local indigenous population. Uyghurs who have not been interned have reported that they wait every evening for a 'knock on the door' from authorities who might take them to the camps, and that they fear talking about the camps with even their closest friends and families, since being overheard doing so is likely to end in one's internment.[9] Additionally, there is a growing distrust, even within the Uyghur community, as people live in fear that co-workers or neighbors on the basis of petty personal grudges might report them as 'terrorists,' 'extremists,' or 'separatists,' categories of population which the PRC has framed collectively as the 'three evils' and one of the most existential internal security threats to state and society.

Furthermore, this fear is reinforced by a widespread system of surveillance, which was put in place just prior to mass internment and serves to track virtually every Uyghur in the region – their movements, their interactions, and their thoughts. The backbone of this surveillance focuses on public spaces that are closely watched by frequent check-points, omnipresent small police stations, and a massive network of CCTV cameras equipped with facial recognition software. However, this surveillance network reaches even beyond public space and also invades the private lives of Uyghurs.[10] Spyware that is forcibly installed on the smart phones of Uyghurs is able to track their whereabouts via GPS, surveil their communications, and observe any media held on their devices. Uyghurs are also subjected to constant evaluations of loyalty to the Party conducted at their workplaces and in their neighborhoods by authorities.[11] Finally, in perhaps the most surreal part of this system of mass surveillance, upwards of a million Party cadres have been tasked with visiting and temporarily living with Uyghur families throughout the region, allowing them to report on their household décor, their private discussions, their personal habits, and their spirituality as potential signs of the 'three evils.'[12] All of these data points are incorporated into a massive database, which provides security organs with vast information on individual Uyghurs and can determine their fate, whether they are interned, imprisoned, or allowed to continue their lives for the time being.[13]

In effect, this network of surveillance, indoctrination, and internment is serving to destroy Uyghur identity by breaking the linkages of social capital, discouraging Uyghur language use, and dismantling any aspects of Uyghur cultural practices the state deems threatening. At the same time, it serves as a potent force to coerce compliance with other policies promoting Uyghur assimilation and the transformation of the landscape of the XUAR in an attempt to strip it of signs of indigenous culture, except when packaged in a sanitized form for tourists. The Uyghur language is gradually being removed from public spaces, there is a campaign to destroy mosques and Muslim graveyards throughout the XUAR, and neighborhoods of traditional Uyghur housing are being demolished.[14] Many of those Uyghurs and other indigenous Muslims who remain outside of the mass internment system and prisons, especially those in rural areas, are being pushed into either working within the security system or taking part in new large residential industrial brigades detached from their families and communities.[15] Additionally, they are encouraged to engage in ethnically mixed marriages with Han citizens, and their children are being sent to boarding schools where they are taught Chinese language and culture without the socialization into Uyghur culture offered by parents.[16] If they do not take advantage of such opportunities when offered, they inevitably come under suspicion and consideration for either imprisonment or internment.

This campaign to destroy Uyghur identity will be discussed in much more detail in the book's final chapter, which will also elaborate on its nature as a form of cultural genocide, but it is important to convey to the reader at least the extent and scale of this campaign's atrocities at the book's outset. The book seeks to explain how this repressive campaign evolved, why it is being undertaken, and how it is being justified to both Chinese citizens and the world. Overall, the book argues that the campaign's intent is to once and for all forcibly integrate and assimilate the territory of the XUAR and its people into the PRC's vision of a modern China, something Uyghurs have long resisted. In this sense, the campaign is reminiscent of settler colonial projects from the last three centuries, which sought to break the will and destroy the communities of indigenous populations, quarantine

and decimate large portions of their populations, and marginalize the remainder while subjecting them to forced assimilation.

Modern China has a long history of colonial relations with Uyghurs and their homeland. While this region has nominally been part of modern China since the mid-eighteenth century, the Qing Empire and Republican China largely failed in their efforts to integrate its territory and people into a modern Chinese polity. Since 1949, the PRC has been more forceful in this goal, significantly changing the demographics of the region and subjecting its population to state-wide policies, but as late as 1990, the region remained marginal to the politics and economy of the PRC and its population resistant to assimilation into PRC-led Chinese society. The present campaign of cultural genocide has its roots in the 1990s when the PRC first began developing this region as part of its economic reforms, recognizing that its geographic location on the borders of the former Soviet Union could be an asset to China's growing export-oriented economy. However, after almost three decades of increased development and incentivized assimilation measures, the PRC found that the region's people remained resistant to its attempts to integrate and assimilate this territory and its population into the state's vision for the future of its polity and society. It is in this context that the state, emboldened by the authoritarian turn of Xi Jinping and his vision of a unified and uniform PRC, has resorted to the tactics of forcible assimilation and cultural genocide.

While during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such a fate befell countless Indigenous Peoples around the world, including the Native Americans of both North and South America and the Aboriginals of Australia and New Zealand, since the late twentieth century, global norms have generally recognized that the excesses of cultural genocide were unjustified in the name of 'modernization' and 'development' and should not be repeated. UN Conventions and Declarations on Genocide, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the rights of ethnic minorities, while not necessarily preventing such acts, have flagged them as unacceptable and open to condemnation. Nonetheless, we now appear to be witnessing cultural genocide's return in the twenty-first century, aided by all of the information

technologies of this century that were once imagined to serve as a democratizing force in the world.

A central argument of this book is that this return of cultural genocide in the twenty-first century is largely facilitated by a particular ideology that is unique to this century – that of the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT). As will be further argued below, GWOT has allowed the use of the 'terrorist' label to justify the blatant suspension of human rights for entire populations, based on their racial, religious, and/or ethnic profile, conveniently lending itself to genocidal strategies. In the context of GWOT, the 'terrorist' label marks an existential threat that has been used to justify a variety of atrocities against those whom become branded with this label. Furthermore, since what constitutes a 'terrorist' is not clearly defined, but is assumed to refer to a threat that is hidden within a larger population, the identification of a 'terrorist threat' within any given group of Muslims can quickly justify the suspension of human rights for, and perhaps genocidal acts against, an entire category of people.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the PRC, after initially denying the existence of its mass internment and related repressive policies in the XUAR, has justified all of these measures by claiming that those being subjected to them have become adherents of Islamic 'extremist' ideologies and, thus, pose a grave 'terrorist threat' to Chinese society.[17] In this context, the Chinese state suggests that its policies are not seeking to destroy Uyghur culture, but merely to eradicate an 'extremist' ideology it claims has infected that culture. In making this argument, the PRC readily deflects international criticism of its actions vis-à-vis Uyghurs as being little different than the actions taken by western states against alleged 'terrorists' since 2001. Likewise, it has employed this narrative extensively in the domestic sphere, ensuring that most Chinese citizens, including state officials, understand what is happening in the XUAR to be an appropriate response to an existential 'terrorist threat,' not a blatant attempt to forcibly assimilate Uyghurs and colonize their homeland.

In this context, the book demonstrates how the intersection of GWOT with a history of colonial relations between modern China

and Uyghurs has created the unprecedented repression we are witnessing in the Uyghur homeland today. In doing so, it places blame for this situation at the feet of both the PRC and the international community. While the repressive measures presently being carried out against the Uyghurs are undoubtedly the initiative of the Chinese government, which should be held accountable for them, it has been the international obsession with combating a vaguely defined 'terrorist' enemy that has allowed the PRC to implement these measures with impunity and that, at least in part, has inspired their excessively brutal and genocidal nature.

WHO ARE THE UYGHURS?

The Uyghurs are a mostly Muslim people speaking a language from the Turkic linguistic family, and they primarily inhabit the northwest region of China presently known officially as the XUAR, but often referred to by Uyghurs as 'Eastern Turkistan.' In this region, which Uyghurs consider their homeland, the group's population is over 11,300,000.[18] Additionally, an estimated 500,000 Uyghurs live around the world, with particularly large populations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Culturally, linguistically, and historically, they share much more with the peoples of former Soviet Central Asia than they do with the Han ethnic group of China. Within the greater Central Asian cultural region, they are primarily identified with the settled traditions as opposed to those of the nomadic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen, and their language is mostly mutually intelligible with that of the Uzbeks, who likewise have a long history of settled agriculture, urbanism, and trade.[19]

Islam has a long history among the Uyghurs, and today most Uyghurs identify as Muslims. While Islam in the Uyghur homeland is usually depicted as being affiliated with the Hanafi School of Sunni Islam, local practices are very diverse and syncretic, drawing from a long history of mystical Sufi traditions and indigenous religious practices.[20] While Uyghurs have long made the *Haj* pilgrimage to Mecca, the distance of their homeland from the Islamic centers of the Middle East has always left them on the margins of

the Muslim world and global Islamic movements. Furthermore, in their homeland today, there are numerous Uyghurs who are not religious at all, but adopt various Muslim practices as part of their cultural traditions. However, Islam has played an important role in the development of Uyghur identity and, during the modern period, has served as a means for this population to differentiate itself from the dominant Han people of China.

While modern Uyghurs generally draw their lineage from an ancient Uyghur empire that ruled much of their homeland in the eighth and ninth centuries, like most modern ethnic groups, they are actually an amalgamation of different peoples who have inhabited this region at different times historically.[21] In particular, the Uyghurs developed from a combination of different Turkic peoples, who entered the region first in the sixth century, and various Indo-European peoples, who are assumed to be the earliest inhabitants of their homeland.[22] As a result, the physical appearance of Uyghurs is varied enough to include types one might associate with a significant number of different peoples throughout Eurasia. This diverse genetic history makes it difficult for most Uyghurs to pass as Han Chinese, hampering any efforts to fully assimilate them into the Han population. The fact that Uyghurs are the largest ethnic group in China that is obviously differentiated physically from the Han has imbued the relationship between Uyghurs and Han with a clear racial dimension, which has undoubtedly impacted the Uyghurs' place in modern China and marked them as 'others' in a society that has generally associated homogeneity with stability.

While the concept of a unified Uyghur nation did not develop until the twentieth century, the gradual Islamization and Turkification of their homeland that took place between the tenth and thirteenth centuries did much to develop a unified culture in this region and to lay the foundations for the modern Uyghur identity. By the time that the Qing Empire conquered this region in the mid-eighteenth century, this unified culture was apparent in the local population. While they had yet to adopt the Uyghur ethnonym, this population was united by a shared sense of space, customs, language, religion, and the oral transmission of texts.[23] In this sense, Uyghurs today

should be considered as the Indigenous People of the region they view as their homeland. According to the UN, Indigenous Peoples are those inhabiting a region prior to the conquest, occupation, and/ or settlement of that land by those of different ethnic or cultural origins who come to dominate that territory.[24] However, the PRC is adamant that Uyghurs are not indigenous to their homeland and that this region has always been part of a larger China, an assertion that fuels tension between Uyghurs and the Chinese state.[25]

This tension has generally been over one critical question related to the Uyghur homeland: to whom does this region belong and, thus, to whom should be given authority over the governance and development of its population and territory? Perhaps the most vivid indicator of the opposing attitudes of modern Chinese states and Uyghurs towards this question is the divergence between the names each gives to this territory. Modern Chinese states assert that the region's rightful name is Xinjiang (or 'New Frontier'), a name given to the region by the Qing Empire after its conquest and the official name given to it since the 1880s when the area was first incorporated into a modern polity based in China. Most Uyghurs consciously don't utilize this name in their everyday discourse given its obvious colonial overtones. Some Uyghurs prefer the name *Shärqi Turkistan* (or 'Eastern Turkistan'), which stresses the indigenous nature of its Turkic population and evokes the history of two short-lived independent states of the same name that were established in parts of the region in the 1930s and 1940s respectively. Other Uyghurs inside China prefer the use of *Uyghur Diyari* (or 'Uyghur Region') as a means of avoiding the use of Xinjiang, a preference that is more pronounced today as authorities now view the use of 'Eastern Turkistan' as 'extremist' behavior.[26]

I have chosen to generally avoid calling this region either 'Xinjiang' or 'Eastern Turkistan' in an effort to avoid being perceived as taking a stance on political questions of sovereignty. Instead, I employ the terms 'Uyghur region' or 'Uyghur homeland' to describe this territory, except when referring to state or Uyghur nationalist characterizations of the region. While acknowledging this area as the 'Uyghur homeland' may appear to be a political stance in the eyes of the

Chinese government, I believe this is an objective description of the historical relationship between Uyghurs and this territory. As such, it is not meant to reflect a position on the political question of whether this region should be an independent state or a part of the PRC.

The debate about this territory's rightful name is symbolic of the tenuous relationship between Uyghurs and modern China and the long simmering conflict that characterizes this relationship. This conflict has varied in intensity historically, sometimes being manifested in low-level resistance and at other times fostering outright violent conflict, but it has been consistently present on some level since the Qing conquest of the Uyghur homeland. A central argument of this book is that the PRC's decision shortly after 11 September 2001 (9/11) to characterize the ongoing resistance of Uyghurs to Chinese rule as an international 'terrorist threat' fundamentally altered the relationship between modern China and Uyghurs, perhaps rendering their long-simmering conflict ultimately unresolvable for the foreseeable future.

One of the reasons that the PRC was able to so readily implicate Uyghurs in GWOT was that the war was declared against an ambiguous enemy. 'Terrorism' itself has no universally accepted definition and is primarily a political label used to discredit non-state actors engaged in armed resistance against a state or society. But since my analysis relies in part on a determination of whether Uyghurs have represented an *actual* 'terrorist threat' to the PRC and the world, it is critical that the book adopts a working definition of 'terrorism' to clarify its perspective on what should and should not be considered a 'terrorist threat.' In doing so, the book also takes a stance on what should be considered as legitimate and illegitimate political violence perpetrated by non-state actors by holding non-state actors to the same standards as states in terms of the international regulation of armed conflict.

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

Famously, in his historical examination of 'terrorism,' Walter Laqueur suggested that the phenomenon defied definition because any attempt to achieve international consensus on the subject

'would lead to endless controversies.'[27] Implied in Laqueur's statement is both that 'terrorism' has long been characterized as an illegitimate form of armed struggle, and that many international actors seek to maintain a vague definition of the phenomenon because such imprecision allows them more latitude to use the label selectively, omitting it to shield those non-state militant movements they support and employing it to condemn those they oppose. This political manipulation of the 'terrorist' designation is frequently evoked via a quote from a 1975 novel about the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland: 'one's man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.'[28]

However, GWOT fundamentally changed the calculus involved in the political arbitrariness of being branded a 'terrorist' historically. Prior to GWOT, it was assumed that those deemed to be 'terrorists' by one global power could usually rely on another global power to recognize them as 'freedom fighters.' While I would argue that the politically motivated arbitrariness of branding a group as 'terrorists' did not disappear with the advent of GWOT, after September 2001 there was a concerted, albeit overtly political, effort to establish an international consensus about who should be considered 'terrorists' and, thus, enemies in this new global war. Through political 'horse trading,' numerous states sought to get non-state Muslim actors with whom they were in conflict on this new list of global enemies. China was one state that succeeded in this endeavor in 2002 when it received international recognition that it faced a 'terrorist threat' from a small group of Uyghurs who had settled in Afghanistan. This book argues that this recognition was unwarranted and politically motivated, but to make such a claim, it must do something first that the international community has failed to do. It must define 'terrorism' or at least provide a working definition of this term as it is used in this book.

The book's critical analysis of GWOT is not meant to be dismissive of 'terrorism' as a real concern to the world. The events of 9/11 were horrific and should be considered crimes against humanity, as should the 2004 Beslan School Massacre in Russia; the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India; the 2011 mass attacks on Utoya, Norway; the 2014 attacks in Gamboru and Ngala in Nigeria; the 2014 knife

murders in Kunming; the 2015 mass killings in Paris, France; the 2019 attack in Christchurch, New Zealand; and hundreds of other similar attacks, including the politically motivated mass shootings that have plagued the US in recent years.

What is universally contemptible about all of these acts of violence is neither the ideology and political aims that are behind them (although these are frequently reprehensible) nor the identity of those who carried them out and the groups to which they belonged. Rather, the characteristics of these acts of violence that make them all worthy of condemnation is that they deliberately targeted innocent civilians who had no direct connection to the political grievances of those who carried out the attacks. In my opinion, any objective definition of 'terrorism' and subsequent condemnation of 'terrorist acts' should address this core point as a means of protecting innocent people from the violence of political conflict, regardless of the nature of that conflict.

In essence, this position is an attempt to hold non-state actors accountable to the same standards as states in political armed conflict. Whether or not one agrees with either side of an armed conflict is a purely political question that is dependent upon one's values and interests in that conflict. However, the international system has recognized that violent political conflict is part of global reality and has often been a necessity for given populations to realize their rights and defend themselves from repression or conquest. This is why the international community has created rules of engagement for war and has established institutions to enforce these rules. Among those rules is the stipulation that, during war time, parties to the conflict should not deliberately target civilians. State actors that do so are considered war criminals, and non-state actors who do so should be as well, thus rightfully earning the stigmatized label of 'terrorists.'

This is not a radical position. In fact, it was proposed in 2002 by an eminent Israeli expert on 'terrorism,' Boaz Ganor, as a means for making GWOT a more rationalized and winnable war and for truly protecting innocent civilians from the violence of political conflict. As Ganor writes:

> A correct and objective definition of terrorism can be based upon accepted international laws and principles regarding what behaviors are permitted in conventional wars between nations. These laws are set out in the Geneva and Hague Conventions, which in turn are based upon the basic principle that the deliberate harming of soldiers during wartime is a necessary evil, and thus permissible, whereas the deliberate targeting of civilians is absolutely forbidden. These Conventions thus differentiate between soldiers who attack a military adversary, and war criminals who deliberately attack civilians.[29]

As Ganor suggests, this same principle which is applied to states during wars should be extended to non-state actors engaged in political conflict. Non-state actors who deliberately target civilians for politically motivated violence should be considered 'terrorists,' and those who attack military, police, and state institutions for such purposes should be understood as engaged in guerilla warfare. It is certainly reasonable that a state would respond to such guerilla warfare with the use of force against its perpetrators under internationally recognized rules of engagement for war, but that does not mean that those they are attacking should be considered 'terrorists' and universally condemned.

By Ganor's logic, such a distinction both protects innocent civilians and recognizes the right of non-state actors to partake in armed resistance. After all, if all non-state actors were denied such rights, neither our modern world system nor democracy as a form of modern governance would exist. There would have been no anti-colonial liberation movements resulting in independent post-colonial states, and there would have been no revolutions replacing the age of monarchies with the forms of modern statehood that exist today. For Ganor, this objective and action-based distinction also resolves the 'terrorist-freedom fighter' divide that is so obviously plagued with political subjectivism.

According to Ganor's proposed definition of 'terrorism,' which this book adopts as its working definition, the criteria marking a 'terrorist act' are that the act is violent, politically motivated, and deliberately targets civilians.[30] For the purposes of the book's working definition, I would add that this suggests implicitly that the act is premeditated and usually (but not necessarily) undertaken as a

means of striking fear in the larger population. It should go without saying that anybody carrying out such a 'terrorist act' should be held accountable as a 'terrorist' and forced to face punishments that, like those for war criminals, are both severe and founded on objective analysis and concrete evidence.

This working definition relies on a strict interpretation of what constitutes a civilian. For example, it differs from the definition provided by the US State Department. In the US government definition, 'the term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.'[31] As Ganor points out, the US definition protects military personnel, security organs, and state institutions in ways that they are not protected in a war between states, since it would be considered 'terrorism' for a non-state actor to conduct a surprise attack on them while they are not actively engaged in combat, whereas such tactics are acceptable and expected in conventional warfare.

According to this working definition, very few acts of violence perpetrated by Uyghurs can be clearly determined to be acts of 'terrorism,' going back as far as the early 1990s and especially up until 2013. Furthermore, the lack of confirmed details about those violent acts allegedly perpetrated by Uyghurs that might be considered 'terrorism' prevents one from conclusively determining whether or not they should be characterized as such. This brings into question the PRC's insistence on, and the international community's recognition of, an allegedly viable 'terrorist threat' within the Uyghur population in the early 2000s.

While the book provides this working definition as a means to salvage the concept of 'terrorism' from meaningless subjectivity, it still employs 'scare quotes' when using the term in the text to signal that it is being employed subjectively, usually by the Chinese state as a means of discrediting Uyghur resistance and even dehumanizing the Uyghur people as a whole. When the book refers to its own working definition of this term in order to objectively determine whether, in my opinion, an act should be universally condemned as 'terrorism,' it explicitly notes this. Likewise, the book uses scare quotes when

it refers to the related terms of 'extremism' and 'separatism,' which the Chinese state frequently employs interchangeably with 'terrorism' as interrelated threats embodied in what it refers to as the 'three evils.' However, it is important to note that, in my opinion, the subjective and politically charged nature of the terms 'extremism' and 'separatism' renders them virtually useless as objective descriptors and unworthy of more objective working definitions.

While this explicit recognition of the subjectivity of these terms may appear to be a minute academic point to some readers, it is critical to de-construct these terms' subjectivity precisely because they have become so ubiquitous and powerful. As a result, much of the world has been de-sensitized to the ways that states have suspended human rights and committed acts of brutal violence in the name of combating an undefined enemy that we all assume we know. This is because the label of 'terrorist' serves to ultimately dehumanize those whom it designates. In the context of this book, this term's power to dehumanize is particularly evident in the ways that the PRC has justified its cultural genocide against the Uyghur people in the name of 'counterterrorism.'

THE DEHUMANIZATION OF BEING BRANDED A 'TERRORIST'

Given the horrific events of 9/11, it is not surprising that GWOT quickly succeeded in dehumanizing 'terrorists' in a manner that was unprecedented in modern warfare. This dehumanization was not as much a product of the rhetoric of the war as it was of the manner in which this conflict has been waged and against whom. This has not been a war against another state with vested interests, but a conflict with a category of people, which is considered to be irrational and amorphous. This enemy has no boundaries, but can recruit its ranks from anywhere. Thus, the US assumed at the war's outset that the rules governing state-to-state conflict need not apply because it was not fighting a rational enemy, but protecting society from an existential threat that could draw its ranks from society itself. As the philosopher Slavoj Zizek suggests, this was part of a new way of thinking about conflict that was already taking hold prior to 9/11.

As he states, 'we no longer have wars in the old sense of a regulated conflict between sovereign states in which certain rules apply (the treatment of prisoners, the prohibition of certain weapons, etc.).'[32] In place of such regulated wars between states, Zizek suggests that 'new' conflicts have few rules and are posited as being about the mitigation of threats from rogue populations who are considered as *'unlawful combatants*, criminally resisting the forces of the universal order.'[33] According to this logic, states play a benevolent role in the conflict by bringing peace and order through the eradication, pacification, or quarantining of the populations posing the threat. GWOT, which is the epitome of these new types of conflicts, constructs its 'terrorist' enemy as unlawful and illegitimate, neither politically motivated combatants nor simple criminals. Instead, the 'terrorist' enemies of GWOT are outside the realm of civilized life and undeserving of the rights afforded those inside. They are portrayed almost as a biological threat to the civilized world, which must be either eradicated or indefinitely quarantined by any means necessary before their ideology spreads to others like a disease.

In this sense, Michel Foucault's articulation of the concept of 'biopolitics' is particularly useful in understanding the logic of GWOT. For Foucault, biopolitics represents a modern political regime in which the state frames all of its actions as ensuring the health of society, which includes protecting society from threats to that health emanating from either inside or outside its own population. He suggests that a biopolitical regime imagines society as a living organism, the health of which depends upon fostering the productive actors within it while excluding the infectious potential of those who are unproductive or, even worse, counter-productive. As such, the state must defend society from being infected by these unproductive and counter-productive elements, which must be 'banished, excluded, and repressed' in order to keep the organism of society healthy.[34] This logic is evident in Foucault's explanation of the goals of war in a system of biopolitics: 'the enemies who have to be done away with are not adversaries in the political sense of the term; they are threats, either external or internal, to the population and for the population … in other words, killing or the imperative

to kill is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but in the elimination of the biological threat to … the species or race.'[35]

Applying these concepts to GWOT, one can understand the ways in which the war has served to dehumanize its 'terrorist' enemies. By framing them as a threat as opposed to a foe, it strips them of any political aims or history of oppression. Rather, like a cancer, they are imagined as merely irrational purveyors of death and destruction. As such, they also do not warrant the rights provided to those within 'healthy' society. For this reason, Zizek argues that the 'terrorist' enemies of GWOT have become the modern equivalent of the ancient Roman concept of *homo sacer* ('sacred' or 'accursed' man), those who were banished from the religious and political community and not afforded the protection of Rome's laws.[36]

This construction of GWOT's 'terrorist' enemies as *homo sacer* was perhaps first most apparent in the decision of the US government to extra-legally intern suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay Detention Center, quarantined indefinitely without the status of either 'prisoner of war' or 'criminal,' outside the protection of the law.[37] But it is also a truly global phenomenon, where states around the world have used the narrative of 'terrorism' to construct a transnational geography of uncontrolled spaces inhabited by dangerous populations, which need not be afforded legal protections, but must be quarantined or eradicated to prevent them from becoming a security (or infectious biological) threat to others.[38] This is obviously also the logic of China's mass internment camps in the Uyghur homeland and its attempts to eradicate Uyghur culture in the way that one would seek to cure a disease.

In addition to being characterized as an existential threat to society, the enemies of GWOT are also culturally profiled. They are all Muslims. The threat they pose is seen as emanating from a certain 'extremist' strain in Islam that could hypothetically infect any Muslim. Thus, at the war's outset, the US and other western states sought to counter this threat by making a distinction between 'good' or 'moderate' Muslims and 'bad' or 'extremist' Muslims. However, with time this led to profiling any Muslim as a potential carrier

of the 'extremist' strain of Islam, leading to Islamophobic calls for the exclusion of all Muslims from society as a means of protecting society from this 'extremist' strain. This logic is apparent in Donald Trump's 'Muslim travel ban' in the US as well as in the rise of hate crimes against Muslims with no affiliation to 'terrorist organizations' in both Europe and the US.[39] Similarly, in many minority Muslim countries around the world, including China and India, Islamophobic calls for the exclusion of Muslims have become apparent both in state policies and in popular discourse. I would argue that GWOT's biopolitical logic of eradication or quarantining a threat that is culturally profiled as an 'extremist' strain within Islam fosters an aggressive Islamophobia that is ultimately pregnant with genocidal tendencies. This has been apparent in Myanmar's exclusion of the Rohingya and, more importantly to this book, in China's mass internment of Uyghurs and its more general war on Uyghur culture and identity.

In this context, one can understand the potential traumatic effects of being labeled as a 'terrorist' in the age of GWOT. It immediately brands a population as a virtual biological threat to the entirety of the global system and as deserving not just of marginalization, but of complete obliteration or intensive quarantining. For this reason, the international recognition of an alleged 'terrorist threat' within the Uyghur population in 2002 is a critical juncture in the story of how a cultural genocide has unfolded in the Uyghur homeland since 2017. While the biopolitical logic of GWOT is not the primary reason that China began its all-out assault on the Uyghur people and their identity, it certainly informs and justifies the inhumane manner in which this assault is being administered.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book's analysis sits at the nexus of local and global phenomena. On the one hand, it examines how the Uyghurs' present situation has been in part facilitated by a global narrative about the perceived threat of Islamic 'terrorism' since 9/11. On the other hand, it analyzes how this narrative has been employed by the Chinese state

as a means of engaging with a much longer and localized history of colonial relations between modern China and the Uyghurs. While this intersection between localized and globalized analysis is present throughout the book, the first two chapters respectively set up the local and global contexts of the Uyghurs' present dire situation inside China.

The first chapter frames the local context of the book's analysis through a *longue duree* history of Uyghur relations with modern China up to 2001, emphasizing the colonial nature of this relationship. Chapter 2 shifts the book's narrative to the global phenomenon of GWOT and its impact on the Uyghurs and their relationship to the Chinese state. Chapter 3 proceeds to develop an alternative narrative about the alleged 'terrorist threat' posed by Uyghurs up to 2013, which is based on my own research, arguing that the alleged 'terrorist threat' to Chinese society from Uyghur jihadist groups was virtually non-existent up to 2013 and has remained minimal ever since.

The last three chapters of the book chart developments on the ground inside the Uyghur homeland since 2001, examining how the intersection of Chinese settler colonialism and the narrative of the presence of a 'terrorist threat' within the Uyghur population contributed to an increasingly tense relationship between Uyghurs and the state. Gradually, this led to an increased targeting of Uyghurs as a dangerous and ultimately existential threat to Chinese society, a logic that has eventually resulted in the state-led strategy of cultural genocide we are witnessing today.

Chapter 4 explains that, despite the narrative of a 'terrorist threat' from Uyghurs established internationally in 2002, very few, if any, Uyghur-led premeditated acts of political violence took place inside the Uyghur homeland during the first decade of GWOT. As a result, PRC policies towards the Uyghurs in the early 2000s initially differed little from those implemented by the Chinese state in the 1990s, albeit applied more aggressively and with more impunity given their framing as a 'counterterrorism' effort. Chapter 5, which covers the period 2013–2016, demonstrates how the first decade of the PRC's disingenuous claims of a significant Uyghur 'terrorist threat' as a justification for the suppression of Uyghur dissent eventually led

to a self-fulfilling prophecy of Uyghur militancy both in China and abroad. This process was largely initiated by the PRC's increased scrutiny of Uyghurs as a 'dangerous' population following the 2009 Urumqi riots, but it was also reinforced by several acts of Uyghur-led violence in 2013–2014, which increasingly looked like actual 'terrorist' attacks, in Beijing, Kunming, and Urumqi. Chapter 6 explains how the events of 2013–2016 laid the foundations for the campaign of cultural genocide that began in earnest from 2017. The chapter provides details of the intensity and invasiveness of this campaign, demonstrating that it is systematic, violent, and ultimately aimed at eliminating Uyghur identity as we know it. In particular, the chapter focuses on the complex of policies that have driven the campaign, including the mass internment system, the pervasive surveillance network, and attempts to transform both the landscape of the Uyghur homeland and the lives and culture of Uyghur people.

The concluding chapter examines the likely future outcomes of the cultural genocide presently taking place in the Uyghur homeland by seeking to answer three critical questions. How will the present crisis end? What are its ramifications for the future development of GWOT? And what can be done to stem the present processes of cultural genocide in the Uyghur homeland? This is followed by some final words about what the Uyghur cultural genocide tells us about the ominous direction in which the world is headed in the twenty-first century.