



Stephen Sullivan, the publisher of <http://uygurletter.blogspot.com> - an Australian interested in Turkic Nations and peoples of Central Asia - in particular Uygur people of Xinjiang China, contributed this article to [Media Monitors Network \(MMN\)](#) from Australia.

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The Guantanamo Numbers: China's Duplicity Unmasked?

by Stephen Sullivan
 (Thursday 05 February 2004)

"The long awaited release of the breakdown of the Guantanamo detainees's nationalities threatens to expose China's use of the "War on Terror" as a mask behind which it attempted to hide the true purpose of its ethnic minorities policies from the world."

China has continually used the "War on Terror" as justification to the outside world for its harsh crackdown on the freedoms and rights of the Uygur ethnic minority living in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The PRC have stated ad nauseum (and sometimes with great contradictions) that the Uygur harbour large and well organised terrorist organisations which threaten peace not only within China but on an internationally level as well.

An article entitled "Revealed: The Nationalities of Guantanamo" (The Record, February 4, 2004) finally gives some numbers and nationalities to the 650 odd detainees in the US run detention centre. The article reports that there are twelve Uygurs identified as being among the 650 detainees held there since the American intervention in Afghanistan.

Finally, these figures give some credence to a point I have made many times, and that is, if there was such a strong and organised international Uygur terrorist movement active in China and abroad during the Taliban period, why were so few caught in Afghanistan?

Surely, given Xinjiang's proximity to Afghanistan, given the Muslim affinity and given what some would say were very comprehensible (if not justifiable) reasons for "Uygur terrorists" to align themselves with the Taliban and Al Qaeda, one would expect a sizeable presence of Uygur "terrorists" among the 650 captured.

The number of Uygurs in detention represents less than 2% of the total. By way of comparison Britain has nine and Australia and Canada have two apiece. It is interesting to note that the British, who have no internationally/UN recognised "terrorist organisations" as do the Uygur,

managed to have nine caught (and Britain is just a little farther away than Xinjiang). Another example is Jordan an ally of the US that has thirty representatives!

The Chinese have claimed on numerous occasions that there were one thousand Uygurs trained by the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. They further claim that there were close connections between Bin Laden and the East Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIM) the "organisation" listed by the US and UN as an international terrorist organisation at the insistence of China.

I can not help returning to the thought, that, if I were the leader of a well organised, effective and growing terrorist organisation, within walking distance of people and groups that could train, equip and fund my operatives, then I would have sent them to Afghanistan and have done so in significant numbers.

Uygur leaders and commentators in diaspora have long attempted to refute the PRC's claim as to the existence of an extensive Uygur terrorist apparatus and, it is interesting to note, that the number caught pretty much reflects their prior assessments. These Uygur representatives had stated on several occasions, that there were no more than between fifty and eighty Uygur involved with the Taliban forces in Afghanistan

It is doubtless that someone is going to say that the Uygurs in Afghanistan were probably able to slip back into Xinjiang or were able to easily blend in with the local populace and thus avoid detection, and, yes, this I would have to agree it is a possibility. But so could have many of the other nationalities, the Saudis for example. No, I think that it is reasonable to assume that relative numbers caught or escaped will have been similar for all the combatants of Arab/Turkic appearance.

Where then does this leave the PRC with their claims and foundations for their actions, and where does it leave the "Free Nations" of the world who have given them de facto support and effective encouragement by turning a blind eye to their ethnic policies?

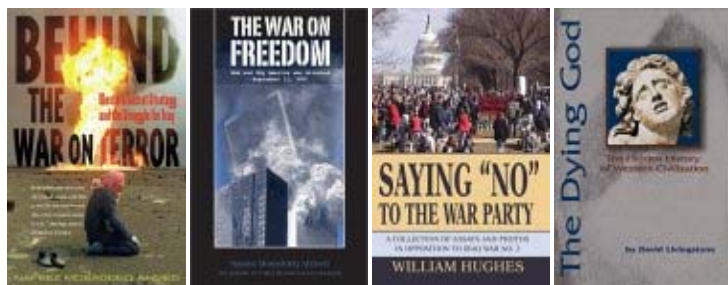
Well, I would suggest that the mask of the "War on Terror" used to hide the PRC's continued violations of the Uygur's human rights has well and truly slipped and in doing so has fully revealed the face of outright duplicity.

In now being able to look directly into that face the "free world" must finally be able to see that it has been well and truly conned.

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