China's Terrorism From the Perspective of Global Geopolitics

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Abstract

The number of international terrorist activities has increased which have had a stimulating effect on China's terrorists. The risk of "returning to China" is increasing. In this paper, we analysis the terrorism situation in China based on the background of the international level. After deducing the relations of geographic politics and China's terrorism, I summarize the four features of current of terrorism in China. We conclude that members of the "Three Forces" are moving to the inland, hide and waiting for an opportunity to leave China. It is essential for the government to take all-dimensioned counter measures to fight against the terrorism.

Keywords

Counter- terrorism, three forces, Xinjiang.

1. Introduction to the Global Terrorism

It has become impossible that extremists are enticed to the centered base- Afghanistan and then spread extremism to where they are. To deal with this change, terrorist groups have gradually developed a new strategy, the essence of which is to mobilize extremists from all over the world to get trained through "Gujrat" to incite them to take advantage of the local resources, launch Local jihad and resist with non-leadership. Specifically, this strategy is reflected in the following two aspects:

1.1 Organizational Structure is Becoming More Flattened

Its recruitment system is more localized. Structural de-centralization enhances the base's ability of penetrating locally, which provides more possibilities for extremist organizations' local recruitment. The number of Islamic extremists is also rapidly rising as branches in the base and peripheral allies continue to expand. A research report released by Lander in 2017 demonstrates the fact: in the world, the number of "Jihad" terrorist groups was increasing from 20 in 2001 to 49 in 2013, which means that the terrorist members are augmenting from close to ten thousand to around forty thousand.[1] Some researchers have a bold assumption that the number of terrorists has soared up from less than forty thousand to over hundred thousand. Moreover, terrorists come from other parts of the world apart from the traditional Islamic world and show their existence in an expansive way. It has become a new feature of recruiting members of extremist groups to target and train Muslim immigrants and their descendants in Western countries as so-called homegrown jihadists.

1.2 Mobilization Mechanism is More Networked

Traditionally, extremist thoughts are mainly communicated in the places such as prisons, training camps, mosques and religious schools. The rapid development and popularization of Internet technology has been utilized as a new strategic means for extremism communication. Different from face-to-face mobilization, information can be quickly and directly conveyed to potential extremists in every corner of the globe via the Internet. This characteristic of Internet communication not only amplifies the communication effect of extremism, but also increases the difficulty of surveillance and prevention.

On the whole, the media's coverage of terrorist activities is an important part of counter-terrorism, which helps people to understand the cruelty of terrorist organizations and the efforts of the government in counter-terrorism activities, and enhance social cohesion and social recognition. During the process, however, there are some unavoidable contradictions: Firstly, even without subjective intent, it is hard for the media to avoid communicating some information related to

terrorism. Terrorist organizations often use the media to achieve their own publicity purposes, and some even intentionally catered to media coverage in the time, place and sign of the terrorist campaign. As a result, the media may objectively indirectly act as the sound train of terrorist organizations. Secondly, the struggle of counter-terrorism has its own particularity. Sometimes it is necessary to regulate and control the relevant information and its release. According to the Counter-terrorism Law of the People's Republic of China, the occurrence, development, response to and disposal information of terrorism incidents should be uniformly released by the provincial leading agencies for counter-terrorist work in the areas. Terrorism incidents that occur across provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities are directly released by the designated provincial leading agencies for counter-terrorist work. [2]This undoubtedly contradicts the timeliness and objectivity of news reports.

Up to now, terrorist groups or individuals communicate extremist thoughts mainly in three ways. First, make and upload videos and audios relating terrorism. For instance, audio tapes on promoting religious extremist thoughts, videos on beheadings, teaching videos on terrorist attacks or filmed suicide- attack documentaries on the so-called "Heroes' Road". Second, produce and spread some relevant e-books and electronic magazines, such as manuals for terrorist attacks or books relating extremist thoughts. The most influential ones are Swords of Prophets, Al-battar, Inspire and Resurgence. Third, instigate and recruit terrorists through online interaction in social networking websites or chat rooms.[3]

1.3 Information Transmission is More Internationalization and Intercultural

As we all know, counter-terrorism is a complicated systematic project concerning religious harmony, ethnic unity, social stability, national development and international relations. The application of communication to the counter-terrorism work is of great significance, but it also faces some prominent contradictions and severe challenges.The most prominent feature of current network communication is uncontrollable. It also has multiple subjects, high speed and widely range of communication. As a result, rumors and terrorist statements can rapidly spread in geometric order in an instant and it is difficult to find the source and to timely preventing and eliminating the impact that has brought enormous challenges to public opinion monitoring by the counter-terrorism department. On the other hand, supervision of network information is a complicated project that involves not only technical issues such as network access censorship, network communication and network defense system, but also many fields such as law, policy, management, organization, personnel and international cooperation, which requires a lot of coordination costs.

Nowadays, counter-terrorism is not only an international crime-fighting act, but also an intercultural international communication activity. In addition to the domestic spread, counter-terrorism issues are involving many countries. Because of political, economic and cultural differences among countries, the information flow in different countries will inevitably lead to lose or misread information. An important part of international communication is to find common ground between the culture of our country and that of the target country and to promote the identification of the culture by using the cultural contents with human consensus as a link so as to make it possible for foreign audiences to be more receptive to their own national news from the concept. In the external communication of the counter-terrorism issue, the interculturality of the audience is likely to become an obstacle to understanding and the communication effect will be greatly discounted.

2. The Relationship Between Geopolitical Cnanges and China'S Terrorist Activities

After 9•11 in the United States, a series of changes in international situation have had a considerable effect on China's geo-security.

the U.S. is increasing its military presence surrounding China, which is complicating and even worsening China's geo-security environment. The United States, after 9•11, entered Central Asia and broke its established geostrategic balance. After the Iraq war was over, the United States readjusted its military deployment and stepped up its military deployment in Central Asia. The U.S.'s long-term

military presence and military bases in Central Asia has been a new security challenge for the western parts of China. In the eastern part, the United States withdrew its military forces from the Philippines in 2000, but returned to the Philippines again in the name of counter-terrorism after 9•11. With the support of the United States, US-Japan alliance relationship is strengthening and Japan's military strategy is shifting from "home-defensive" to "overseas-offensive". Japan's will of military intervention and strengthened capabilities is becoming a potential threat to East Asia.

Frequent terrorist activities surrounding China has threatened the stability of China's border areas. In recent years, terrorism in the surrounding areas of China has been constantly developing. Afghanistan and Central Asia were once important bases and stages for international terrorism, national separatism and religious extremism. Although the above-mentioned "three forces" were severely hit by the U.S.-led Afghanistan war, they have not stopped their efforts and are still secretly building up their arms, planning new terrorist attacks. In Southeast Asia, terrorism further spread and developed after the Bali bombings in 2002. The local Islamic radical forces have colluded with al Qaeda and launched a series of terrorist attacks, which have become a real threat to the security of Southeast Asia. In South Asia, especially India, Pakistan and other countries, terrorist activities also take on a new momentum of development. Due to geographical proximity, together with the international mobility and proliferation of terrorism, the spread and development of terrorism in the surrounding areas of China will inevitably threaten China's security and stability. Particularly, "three Forces" in central Asia and "the East Turkistan" separatists inside and outside Xinjiang, China collude with each other, posing a real threat to Xinjiang' social stability and China's unification.

The East Turkestan forces in China hooked up with the international terrorist forces. Currently, the number of terrorist attacks happening in the world is on the rise. A succession of terrorist attacks in France, Belgium and Turkey are likely to exert a demonstration effect on domestic violent activities. [4]At the beginning of state-founding, the Islamic State claimed that Xinjiang, China will be included in its future territory and has recruited hundreds of members of "East Turkistan". The police have already captured a Chinese terrorist who was dispatched by the Islamic State to China. Terrorist forces from "East Turkistan" continue to connect with domestic extremists via instant Internet communication tools to spread extremist thoughts and instigate a local "jihad". At the same time, they try to identify the potential targets with a valid passport and no crime records, brainwash and provide them with violent terrorist training. Those well-trained targets return to China bypassing the third country, which is extremely concealing.

Against the backdrop of the harsh and complicated situation of international terrorism, especially the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, the international terrorist extremists represented by the Islamic State not only exert far-reaching influence on counterterrorism in the Middle East and the world, but also spread in the form of magnetizing and overflowing. "Glorious records" of terrorist extremist groups such as the Islamic State instigate the extremist terrorists in Xinjiang to take risks and carry out similar terrorist attacks. At the same time, the terrorist threats to neighboring countries of China have risen. The Islamic State is infiltrating into Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Southeast Asian countries. The escalating links between the violent forces in Central Asia and South Asia have increased the threat to China.

3. The Changes of Terrorism in Xinjiang After the 1990s

Since the 1990s, under the influence of the changing international situations, the separatist activities in Xinjiang have shown an upward trend. Separatist organizations with various names have sprung up, increasing the frequency of terrorist attacks with cruel and horrible means. In the programs seized by the police, the "East Turkistan Islamic Party" and the "East Turkistan Opposition Party" explicitly stated that they should "armed struggle" and "launch all kinds of terrorist attacks in densely populated areas." Terrorists declared in their pamphlet "Is There Hope for Independence?" that it was necessary to create a horrible atmosphere in kindergartens, hospitals, schools and other public places. Incomplete statistics show that from 1990-2001, terrorist forces represented by "East Turkistan" made more than 200 terrorist attacks in China, where 162 people killed and more than 400 people wounded.

For example, they made riotous activities. On April 5, 1990, the terrorists created a riot in Barren Town, Akto County, killing eight people armed police and militiamen included and seriously wounding seven other people.

3.1 The Developing Trend is More International

During this period, the trend that terrorism developed toward internationalization was prominent. Terrorists tended to have overseas training, overseas command and domestic implementation. It was only in 1998 that the overseas "East Turkistan" terrorist groups dispatched more than 100 members to China. This skepticism is noted by Zhou who points out that despite China's acknowledgement of domestic terrorism and designation of some groups such as "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" (ETIM) as terrorist groups some foreign experts and countries have refused to acknowledge the existence of the problem in China. [5] They also incite religious fanaticism and carry out separatist activities in the disguise of religion. For example, in the "2 • 5" incident happening in Yining in 1997, more than a thousand rioters took a copy of the Qur'an, chanting the slogan "Founding the Islamic Kingdom", attacked the Han Chinese people and had riotous activities in the parade. In 1998, related agencies investigated and dealt with 209 underground sites, 17 martial sites and 2,203 were caught participating in these illegal activities. In 1999, 118 underground sermon sites were investigated and banned with over 600 people involved in there.

At present, Xinjiang is in a period of proactive terrorist activities, a period of intense counter-separatist struggle and a period of "interventive remedy" which tangled together. Terrorists attempted to gamble for a chance to launch terrorist attacks. The overall social situation in Xinjiang is stable and controllable, and the counter-terrorism struggle has entered a new phase which is more complex than ever before.

3.2 People Involved are Becoming Younger and Activities is Becoming Expanding

On July 20, 2013, 90% of 11 suspects wanted by the Xinjiang Public Security Department were born after the 1980s. On the early morning of May 25, 2014, Xinjiang police carried out the "Zero O'clock" plan, clearing 23 criminal gangs involved in terrorism and religious extremism, arresting more than 200 suspects most of whom were born after 80s and 90s.

The scope of activities is characterized by expansion and migration. In recent years, there has been a tendency for terrorist activities in Xinjiang to move east of Xinjiang and even to central or eastern China. For that, on the one hand, convenient traffic information provides possibilities for the terrorists. On the other hand, as mutual exchange accelerates, an increasing number of ethnic minorities choose to work, do business and study in the eastern parts of Chinas. Some members of the "three forces" or sympathizers disguised in such migration trend to raise fund, recruit members, gather information, and even hide or transfer criminals. "Migration" refers to that the gang of "Gujarat" influenced by the thought-"jihadist martyrdom into paradise" fabricated by overseas separatist forces, is active and tend to collude with international extremists.

3.3 Terrorism Attacks Takes on Characterized Feature

From the perspective of means of operation, it takes on the features of small groups, family-style and lone-wolf style. With the improved investigative capacity of political and legal institutions and the higher intensification of crackdowns, the living space of the traditionally established and large-scale tyrannical gangs has been greatly compressed. Terrorist activities based on small groups, clan and lone-wolf gangsters have currently become a new tendency.

From the point of means of terrorist attacks, "hot weapons" are frequently used. Attack means are characterized by antagonism and hazardousness. Traditional methods of terrorist attacks in Xinjiang are mainly knife-cutting, car-grinding, and arson-based attacks. Hot weapons such as explosions and gunshots are occasionally used. At present, terrorist groups are increasingly premeditating or utilizing explosive devices and have markedly improved their ability of making materials, detonating and destructive power compared with the previous ones.

3.4 Online Terrorism Information Becomes the Main Source to Radicalize People

For the way of recruiting, videos and audios concerning terrorism has become one of the biggest threats to Xinjiang's stability. This year, almost all the terrorists captured by the police in Xinjiang have watched, heard audios and videos relating terrorism. For example, Nurmat Matilda Abidimmi, who involved in the killing of Imam Gyama Ta'il Damallah of the Aitgar Mosque in Kashgar, confessed that his decision in engaging in "Jihad" was largely influenced by the books on videos and religions.

At any rate, no matter how terrorism in Xinjiang changes, its essence of separating China has always remained unchanged. Therefore, on the one hand, we must advance Xinjiang's economy and raise the living standards of all ethnic groups so that they can obtain tangible benefits from modernization construction and firmly follow the party's guidelines. On the other hand, we must firmly fight against ideological separation and raise the national consciousness and the concept of the rule of law of all the ethnic groups. In the meantime, we must constantly improve the capacity of political and legal institutions of fighting against separatism and completely shatter any separatist attempts to challenge the territorial sovereignty of China.

Radios and videos on terrorism released by "East Islamic movement" pose a real threat to China. First of all, the number of audio-visual videos released has risen sharply. In 2010, less than 10 audios and videos were released, while more than 10 in 2011 and more than 30 in 2012. However, in 2013, more than 100 were produced, beyond the totals in the previous years. In 2014 and 2015, more than 120 and nearly 200 audio-visual videos were terribly released, including horror videos, "Islamic Voice Broadcastings", e-books and magazines about Jihad, all of which were released in more channels and categories. Second, they actively recruit members, develop strength in Turkey and Syria. Turkey has become a "connection station" for "East Islamic Movement" to come to the aid of the terrorists migrating from China. It is also a "new platform" for audio-video making, uploading, publishing magazines and keeping in touch with external resources.

4. Coclusion

At present, the overall social situation in China is stable, however, under the influence of various complicated factors at home and abroad, the overall counterterrorism situation in China is still complicated and grim. On the whole, the national situation is manageable, the number of violent crimes in Xinjiang is increasing and violent activities in the interior of China are spreading. Extremist terrorist activities in Xinjiang are rapidly growing. Members of the "Three Forces" are moving to the inland, hide and waiting for an opportunity to leave China. It's more obvious to launch "jihad" in local points. The terrorist threat in the interior of China is greater. In addition, terrorist organizations such as the "East Islamic Movement" continue to incite infiltration and destruction and spread extremist religious thoughts and explosion-making technologies on the Internet. The rampant international extremist terrorist attacks motivate the extremist groups in China to take a risk, which is also a very important threat facing the central government.

Acknowlegements

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