

China's Political Stability and Comprehensive National Power: A Case Study of the Conflict in Xinjiang*

Wuttikorn Chuwattananurak
Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand

The concept of comprehensive national power (CNP) is proposed and developed by several Chinese scholars and academic institutions. Many material capabilities, for example, economic growth and military might, are incorporated into the concept to measure China's national power *vis-à-vis* other major powers, especially the U.S. This paper, however, contends that understanding China's CNP through material capabilities is only part of the story. Yet, China's political stability is by no means assured and fully incorporated into the concept. China has undoubtedly faced many threats and challenges to its political stability. Apart from the Two Ts' problem (Taiwan and Tibet), the conflict in Xinjiang not only threatens China's political stability since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, but also affects its CNP as a whole. This paper concludes that measuring the genuine CNP should be based on the factors from which a country would earn or benefit, and also on those of which it would have to pay a price. Needless to say, the conflict and political instability in Xinjiang are an example of the price which China has to pay.

Keywords: China, political stability, comprehensive national power (CNP), conflict, Xinjiang

Since initiating the open door policy and economic reforms in 1978, China has shifted from a centrally planned to a market-based economy, and experienced rapid economic growth and remarkable social development. China's economy has grown about 10% a year for over three decades. Life expectancy of its population increases from 69.7 years old in 1991 to 73.3 in 2010 (The World Bank, 2011). Military expenditure has been growing year by year from USD 16,600 million in 1989 to USD 129,272 million in 2011, ranked second in the world's top military spenders (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2011). China is home to the world's largest population of nearly 1.4 billion (Population Reference Bureau, 2012), covering the total area of over nine million square kilometers, ranked third after Russia and Canada. China also enjoys its international status as one of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and one of the five nuclear weapon states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Currently, it is the world's second largest economy by size of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after the U.S.

With the remarkable success in economic growth and considerable political and diplomatic influences on the world stage, "China's rise" becomes one of the most significant international relations narratives in the 21st

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Corresponding author: Wuttikorn Chuwattananurak, Ph.D., lecturer, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Naresuan University; research fields: Chinese politics and foreign policy, international relations theory, Southeast Asian security affairs, terrorism, and nuclear strategy. E-mail: wuttikornc@nu.ac.th.

century. While most Western scholarly literatures have focused on the questions of whether China's rise will be peaceful or violent, or how the U.S., other great powers and its neighboring countries should accommodate or interact with the rising power (Choo, 2009; Johnston & Ross, 1999; Kang, 2007; Kirshner, 2010; Li, 2009; Ross & Feng, 2008; Shiraishi, 2012; Tammen & Kugler, 2006; Zhu, 2005), several Chinese scholars have instead tried to attain a deeper understanding of such phenomenon and China itself through the concept of comprehensive national power (CNP) in order to measure China's national power *vis-à-vis* other major powers, especially the U.S.

However, this paper contends that understanding China's CNP through material capabilities, for example, economic growth and military might, is only part of the story. Yet, China's political stability is by no means assured and fully incorporated into the concept. China has undoubtedly faced many threats and challenges to political stability. Apart from Taiwan's controversial status and Tibet's sovereignty debate or the so-called "Two Ts' Problem", the conflict in Xinjiang also represents a major headache for China. Not only does it threaten China's political stability, but it also affects China's CNP as a whole.

The first part of this paper will explore the concept of the CNP developed by Chinese scholars and academic institutions, while the significance and the need for incorporating China's political stability into the concept will be elaborated in the second part. The third part will examine the conflict in Xinjiang as a case study to show how seriously China's political stability has been threatened. Implications of the Xinjiang case for China's CNP will be discussed in the final part and the conclusions.

The Concept of the CNP: A Need to Revisit

The concept of the CNP or *zonghe guoli* was first introduced in China in 1984 after Deng Xiaoping had called some Chinese scholars to explore the future security environment as part of the study of China's strategic defense for the year 2000 (Pillsbury, 2000, p. 225). The CNP is the comprehensive national strength in various aspects. It includes territory, population, natural resources, military power, economic wealth, political power, social conditions, domestic politics, foreign policy, cultural influence, education, etc. (Pillsbury, 2000, p. 203; Qiu, 1998, p. 16; Mori, 2007, p. 27). According to Hu Angang and Men Honghua of Tsinghua University, the CNP is defined as the quantity of the nation's total power or strength in terms of economy, military might, science and technology, resources, and influences (Hu & Men, 2004, p. 2). It is thus the aggregate of all these factors, as Deng Xiaoping stated: "In measuring a country's national power, one must look at it comprehensively and from all sides" (Pillsbury, 2000, p. 204). From the Chinese perspective, measuring the CNP has two main objectives: calculating the capabilities of great powers as to who would win or lose if there is a war; and evaluating the potential of its strategic partners as well as adversaries.

The concept of the CNP has been proposed and developed by several Chinese scholars from various academic think tanks and institutions, including the Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army (AMS PLA). Huang Shuofeng of the AMS PLA rejects the equation of national power developed by Western scholars (Pillsbury, 2000, p. 225). To him, the national power index developed by Ray Cline, a former high-ranking U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official, lacks dynamics since the component of science and technology is overemphasized (Nye, 2011, p. 4). Wilhelm Fucks's proposal, which heavily focused on material or hard power, also disregarded spirit or soft power (Tellis, Bially, Layne, & McPherson, 2000, p. 29). Developed by Huang, his CNP Index System comprises four major index subsystems: (1) material or hard power index subsystem, e.g., natural resources, economic wealth, science and technology, and national defense;

(2) spirit or soft power index subsystem, e.g., political power, foreign affairs, culture, and education; (3) coordinated power index subsystem, e.g., the line of command, administration, leadership in policy decision-making; and (4) the environmental index subsystem, e.g., international environment. Moreover, each of the components of the major subindexes is a sub-subindex in itself, and together, they all form what Huang refers to as a CNP appraisal index system. Political power subsystem, for instance, includes national strategy goals, political stability, nation's leadership, decision-making capability, etc. (Golden, 2011, p. 98; Pillsbury, 2000, pp. 222-224). According to Huang, the U.S. still ranks first in 2020, followed by China, Germany, and Japan, respectively (Ghosh, 2009, pp. 44-45; Golden, 2011, p. 104), but if China's economy grows higher than 5.8% a year, China is likely to overtake the U.S. as the world's superpower.

China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) also developed its own CNP concept. There are eight components with 64 indicators (Pillsbury, 1999, p. 111; Pillsbury, 2000, p. 229):

- (1) Natural resources, including human resources (total population, life expectancy, etc.), land resources (total land area, forest area, etc.), energy resources (coals, crude oil, natural gas, etc.);
- (2) Economic activities, including economic strength (GDP per capita, etc.), economic structure (proportion of tertiary sector as a percentage of GDP);
- (3) Foreign economic activities, including international reserves, gold reserves, etc.;
- (4) Science and technology, including proportion of research and development in the GDP, number of scientists and engineers, etc.;
- (5) Social development level, including education (expenditure in education per capita, etc.), culture (literacy, etc.), health care [expenditure in health care per capita, number of physicians (per 1,000 population)], communications [number of mobile phone users (per 100 population)], and urbanization;
- (6) Military capability, including military manpower, military expenditure, number of nuclear warheads, etc.;
- (7) Government regulation and control capability, including proportion of government expenditure as a percentage of GDP, etc.;
- (8) Foreign affairs capability.

The researchers also determined the weighted coefficients for the different components. With the total weighted coefficient of 1.00, for instance, the component of natural resources has the weighted coefficient of 0.08; and that of economic activities 0.28. Additionally, the different indexes within each of the major factors are assigned weights. For example, within the science and technology factor, both the index for proportion of research and development in the GDP and that for technology personnel have the weighted coefficients of 0.30. Unlike Huang, the CNP ranking by the CASS made projections that Japan will rank first in 2020, while China ranks seventh (Golden, 2011, p. 104). However, both Huang and the CASS share a common view. They refuted the unipolarity led by the U.S. and attempted to show that America is in decline.

Similar to the study of the CASS, the CNP proposed by Hu Angang and Men Honghua of Tsinghua University comprises eight types of resources with 23 indicators:

- (1) Economic resources, e.g., GDP and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP);
- (2) Human capital, e.g., total population and total workforce;
- (3) Natural resources, e.g., total cultivation area, total use of fresh water by volume, electric power consumption, etc.;
- (4) Capital, e.g., foreign direct investment (FDI), market capitalization, etc.;

(5) Knowledge and technology, e.g., number of patents, number of personal computers, number of internet host, government expenditure in R&D (research and development), etc.;

(6) Government resources, e.g., central government expenditure;

(7) Military resources, e.g., military expenditure, military manpower;

(8) Foreign relations, e.g., total imports and exports, total number of receipt of royalty and license fee, etc.

By measuring the CNP, each type of resources has different weighted average. For example, both natural resources and human capital have the weighted average of 0.1, while economic resources and knowledge and technology have 0.2 (Hu & Men, 2004, pp. 20-21). The weighted average of Hu and Men is quite similar to the weighted coefficients developed by the CASS. However, according to Hu and Men, the U.S. remained the world's superpower from 1980 to 1998 (Hu & Men, 2004, pp. 23-24), and has now remained so.

Apart from the AMS PLA by Huang, the CASS, and Hu and Men, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University adopted a relatively simple approach to measure the CNP. The CICIR scores the CNP with six major factors: manpower, natural resources, economy, politics, military, history, and culture. It was found that by the 2020s, China's CNP will be behind only the U.S. CNP (Ghosh, 2009, pp. 46-47). Yan Xuetong, however, calculated the CNP by incorporating distinct types of power. The military expenditure, the number of nuclear warheads, and total military manpower represent the military power. Political power is epitomized by the status as a permanent member of the UNSC, and the economic power can be measured through the GDP. In Yan's view, despite the fact that China's CNP still follows the U.S. CNP, its comprehensive power is relatively strong in all aspects. Moreover, with the different political systems of the two countries, China has a stronger political mobilization capability than the U.S., since it possesses more administrative mechanisms to mobilize its people. Yet, in the realm of international affairs, China's political mobilization capability is weaker than that of the U.S. (Yan, 2006, pp. 18-21).

Although there is no consensus among Chinese scholars about the components, indicators, and factors in their CNP concept, material capabilities such as military might and economic wealth remain the predominant factors for the CNP assessment. However, non-material capabilities such as culture, historical background, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and political stability need to be incorporated into the concept as well. While some were successfully encompassed, "political stability" still falls short of an ideal.

Despite political stability not fully incorporated into the CNP concept, Zheng Shiping (2012) attempted to assess China's political stability and place China on the global scale of comparisons with other countries, both advanced and developing in the world, including the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). With the analysis based on 12 sets of fragility and instability indexes, including Political Instability Index (PII) of *The Economist* Intelligence Unit, Failed States Index (FSI) of *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace, Global Political Risk Index (GPRI) of Eurasia Group, he found that China has faced many threats or challenges to political stability. However, with China being no longer more politically unstable or fragile than Russia and India, he finally concluded that China has no reasons for celebration and, at the same time, for paranoia. If so, what prevents China from celebrating its political stability?

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) faced several major crises and political instability since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The failure of the Great Leap Forward led to the tragic consequences, causing over 36 million people to die because of famine and torture for those who were against the policy (Yang, 2013, p. 13). Over a million people were killed during the Cultural Revolution, and more than three million suffered imprisonment, seizure of property, torture or general humiliation (Ebrey,

Walthall, & Palais, 2009, p. 472). The CCP was widely condemned and the economic sanctions were imposed by international community after the 1989 massacre in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Even a highly centralized unitary state under the rule of the CCP was challenged after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Lam, 2006). However, despite the fact that the CCP went through such unpleasant experiences and succeeded in stabilizing its ultimate power by maintaining the economic growth, the issues pertaining territorial integrity have not yet been assured.

The principle of territorial integrity is one of the cornerstones in the UN (United Nations) system as well as the post-Second World War international order. Apart from the references to the territorial integrity in the context of the prohibition of the use of force, and the limitation on the right of self-determination appeared in the UN Charter and its declarations (Zacher, 2001, p. 221; Vidmar, 2012, pp. 707-709), the territorial integrity relates to the right of existence of the state. It enables the state to exert its sovereignty, ensure its own survival, represent its people, and preserve the unity or completeness of its territory (Ouali, 2006, p. 635).

The territorial integrity is then inseparable from the principle of state sovereignty. The state always claims its authority and legitimacy to have relations with other states and, at the same time, claims its authority and control over territory and its citizens. As Stephen D. Krasner asserts, there are four forms of state sovereignty: (1) international legal sovereignty, which relates to the matters of the recognition of a state, e.g., political independence, state capacity to preserve territorial integrity, the existence of the government and its population; (2) Westphalian sovereignty, which concerns the autonomy of the state, e.g., the respect of the principle of non-interference; (3) domestic sovereignty, which is referred to as the exertion of authority of the state and its capabilities to control its domestic affairs; and (4) interdependence sovereignty, which pertains to the state control over the flow of information, thoughts, people, pollution, or even the capital (Krasner, 2009, pp. 179-180). The territorial integrity, therefore, involves not only the relations between states in the realm of international affairs, but also the role and responsibility of state to exert and preserve its authority in the realm of domestic ones.

How is the territorial integrity related to political stability, particularly in the case of China? When the state is politically unstable, it is unable to fully exert its full authority and sovereignty, represent its citizens, and maintain unity or completeness of its territory. Political instability, in addition, provides room for the intervention from outside (Fravel, 2007, p. 715). Political stability is thus the prerequisite for the state to be immune from the threats from outside and the challenges within, particularly the problematic territory which is not fully incorporated or perfectly integrated. For China, as noted earlier, the issue of territorial integrity directly affects and relates to its political stability. First, apart from human rights, corruption, or democratization, the territorial integrity has become one of the major concerns for the Chinese regime. Second, analyzing the territorial integrity through state-society relations could demonstrate the grievance and tension among ethnic groups as well as political vulnerabilities which pose a threat to China's political stability, particularly in terms of authority and legitimacy of the state. Third, pursuing the stability by maintaining China's territorial integrity is one of the main objectives for the Chinese communist regime. Failure to do so will beg a question of its existence and survival. Last, the territorial integrity is viewed as one of the core goals to be achieved in a nation's foreign policy, especially the great powers. It would be difficult for the rising power to play a leading role in the world stage as long as its territorial integrity is still under threat.

The first task for the CCP after its establishment in 1949 was to incorporate and unite all separate territories into one. The CCP put a lot of efforts into controlling Mongolia and intended to integrate it as a part

of Republican China. However, after being under intense pressure from the Soviet Union, Mongolia as the Soviet satellite achieved independence and was recognized by China in 1950. To prevent Mongolia from being an independent state or being incorporated as a part of its neighboring countries, the CCP had mobilized its capabilities to take control over the rest. Inner Mongolia had been under control before gaining independence or becoming a part of newly independent Mongolia. The Uygur movements for establishing Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR) were deterred and rebellions in Xinjiang were suppressed. The aim of the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama to achieve independence was not successful. The nationalist forces in Taiwan were attacked but not completely defeated due to the Korean War and the containment policy led by the U.S. (Rossabi, 2014, pp. 371-376). Although Hong Kong and Macau were successfully incorporated as an integral part of the PRC in 1997 and 1999, respectively, China's territorial integrity remains unfulfilled. Apart from the Two Ts' (Taiwan and Tibet) problem, the conflict in Xinjiang is not only threatening China's political stability and territorial integrity, but also affecting its CNP as a whole.

China and the Conflict in Xinjiang: Incorporation Without Integration

Even though Xinjiang was incorporated as a part of China like other regions, it has never been fully integrated. The conflict and the resistance in Xinjiang are unique and violent. The sense of ethnic identity and nationalism among Uygur people remains strong and powerful. The resentment and discontent are widespread, and the hatred and hostility among ethnic groups are deep and outright. The conflict in Xinjiang is viewed as a major headache for the CCP and the most serious threat to China's political stability and territorial integrity.

Xinjiang in 1949-1990: Han Rule and the Uygurs Resist

The incorporation of Xinjiang as an integral part of China was well established after the peaceful liberation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Xinjiang had completed in 1949. The PRC under the leadership of the CCP continued to integrate Xinjiang by completing the Qing government's unfinished mission—the sinicization of Xinjiang—to ensure the region's territorial integrity. In March 1950, the policy of cultural assimilation was implemented when the CCP encouraged the immigration of a large number of Han Chinese to Xinjiang. Counter-revolutionaries such as landlords, Muslim ulama in sedentary agricultural areas, nomadic peoples who have feudal and traditionalist elements are primarily targeted for suppression from 1950 to 1952, followed by the land reforms from 1952 to 1953 (Forbes, 2010, p. 227). However, the first major incident of resistance to the CCP control over Xinjiang was the Hotan uprising of December 1954 in Southern Xinjiang by the Amin group. They were against the CCP policies, particularly the Han immigration and declared their intention of establishing the Islamic state. Over 140 rebels were arrested but later were released while the core rebels remained in custody (Dillon, 2004, pp. 52-55).

To ensure the consolidation of CCP power in Xinjiang, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) or *the bingtuan*, and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) were established in 1954 and 1955, respectively. For the XPCC, it has its own administration, equivalent of the province and under the direct control of Beijing, not the XUAR. The main objective of XPCC is twofold: to open cultivation areas and to guard the frontier. As a result, the XPCC has dual responsibilities of development and defense. In peacetime, the XPCC has a mandate to develop the cultivation areas for agriculture, farming, and animal husbandary, but if there is a conflict or tension, the XPCC will turn itself to restore order and stability (Kerr & Swinton, 2008, p. 120). In 2005, the XPCC employed more than 2.5 million under the command of 14 divisions with 179

regiment-level farms and ranches. It has its own 1,339 enterprises and companies, including a number of schools, universities, hospitals, and research institutes (People's Daily, 2007) together with courts, prisons, and more than 120,000 police forces and military troops. The economic proportion of the XPCC is about one-sixth of the total GDP in Xinjiang (The Economist, 2013). The XPCC is thus one of the most powerful government agencies in Xinjiang, apart from the CCP party organization and the XUAR as one of the XPCC senior executives said, "Once you step on the land of Xinjiang, you have to come to our company... We are everywhere here" (Fenby, 2012, p. 110). However, only a few Uygurs are employed. In one view, the XPCC is the so-called another branch of the CCP party organization to ensure the order and stability in Xinjiang (The Economist, 2013).

Apart from the XPCC, there was also restructuring of the region's administration. Xinjiang Province was transformed into XUAR in order to administer the regions with ethnic differences. Although the idea of "nationality" was influenced by the Soviet model, the autonomous region in the Chinese sense is another story. For the Soviet model, non-Russian ethnic groups are allowed to establish their own republic, but for the PRC, all non-Han ethnic groups are under the leadership of the CCP and have the autonomy only at the provincial and local levels (Millward & Tursan, 2004, p. 91). This CCP action was definitely contrary to its policy in the 1930s as appeared in the Article 14 of its 1931 Constitution mentioning that "The party recognized the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and to the formation of an independent state for each minority" (Saich, 1996, p. 555). Despite the fact that the Uygurs have been appointed to the important positions, e.g., the chairperson of People's Council or the XUAR governor, the ultimate power is still in the hands of the CCP party secretary in Xinjiang, who have already been Han Chinese. In the Chinese view, the autonomous region is not the region with autonomy as generally understood. It is just a region with ethnic groups as the majority of the population.

Apart from a sense of frustration among the Uygur population living in the autonomous region without genuine autonomy, the discontent among the Uygurs increased and was widespread due to the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Great Leap Forward Policy, and the Cultural Revolution. During the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the leaders of the CCP encouraged intellectuals and non-party members to criticize the government and offer advice. In Xinjiang, there was the storm of criticisms which followed the campaign such as the environment degradation done by the XPCC, the demand for genuine autonomy and authority for non-Han population, the demand for the expulsion of Han Chinese from Xinjiang, and the declaration of a newly independent state. However, when Mao Zedong perceived it as a threat to his regime and halted it in 1957, he began an "Anti-Rightist" campaign and silenced any opposition. A number of local nationalists were arrested and suppressed for fear that the opposition view in Xinjiang, especially from the Uygurs, might threaten its stability and territorial unity. Muslim political leaders were purged from their power, including Seypidin Ezizi, the chairperson of People's Council in Xinjiang. It is believed that there were 1,613 local nationalists arrested and sent to the labor camp for thought reform (Millward & Tursan, 2004, p. 93). Furthermore, the implementation and repercussion of the Great Leap Forward Policy exacerbated the situation in Xinjiang. The unfair grain rationing system, the immigration of over millions of Han Chinese to Xinjiang resulting from famine in their home province, and the competition between the XPCC and the local ethnic minorities for cultivation areas, water supplies and animal husbandry, caused a major disturbance in 1962 when the protesters set fire to the government and communist party buildings in Yining (Chang, 1997, p. 406). The disturbance also created fear which caused more than 60,000 Uygurs and Kazaks to flee to the Soviet-satellite Kazakhstan. For

Xinjiang, the situation became more complicated as a result of the Sino-Soviet split. The immigration of Uygurs and Kazaks aroused suspicions among the CCP leaders toward Soviet intention and ethnic minorities, the Uygurs in particular, after the Soviet silently approved of the Uygur movements and organizations in its territory such as Turkestan People's Liberation Committee to destabilize the CCP. The Soviet support for such movements, in one view, did shape the Uygur identity, which later has become one of the major motives for the resistance and anti-Chinese movements since the 1990s (Clarke, 2013, pp. 119-120; Dillon, 2004, p. 56).

The Cultural Revolution was regarded as one of tragedies in Chinese history. Not only did Han Chinese fight and destroy each other, but the Uygurs were also threatened and their culture and identity were humiliated by the leftists and the Red Guards. A number of copies of the Quran were burned. Muslim imams were intimidated. Muslim mosques were destroyed. Ethnic minority intellectuals were humiliated. Pigs were penned in the mosques. Uygur Muslim girls were forced to cut their long hair, and the ethnic minorities were prohibited from wearing their traditional dress. All these came from the xenophobic reactions of Jiang Qing, a leader of the so-called Gang of Four (Clarke, 2013, p. 120; Millward & Tursan, 2004, p. 97). However, the political turmoil in China gave a group of the Uygurs the opportunity to establish Eastern Turkestan People's Revolutionary Party (ETPRP) between 1967 and 1968. It rejected the Chinese rule in Xinjiang and called for reestablishment of the ETR, which had collapsed earlier. It is believed that the party received tremendous support from the Soviet Union and had around 300 members. There were party branches in many cities in Xinjiang, e.g., Urumqi, Yining, Aksu, and Tacheng. However, after the new CCP leaders had regained its power, the ETPRP was later suppressed by the PLA (Dillon, 2004, p. 58). The Cultural Revolution also exacerbated the social and economic situation which led to the ethnic tension between the Han Chinese and the Uygurs, for example, workers in Shihezi and oil-field workers in Karamay went on strike in 1974, or the unrest in 1975, when there was an order that all workers, including the Muslim, had to work on Fridays (Chang, 1997; Clarke, 2003, p. 210).

Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, economic development and modernization instead of the ideology of class struggle have become the key to solving the ethnic conflict and tension. The government policy toward ethnic and religious groups was relaxed. Muslim mosques were reopened. Islamic religious seminars were allowed. Copies of the Quran were reprinted. The proportion of non-Han Chinese government officials increased, and the ethnic minorities were given a greater role in the party organization. Despite the approval of liberal and reformist CCP Secretary General Hu Yaobang, the appointment of ethnic minorities as the First Secretary of Party Committee at every level, after the compromise among conservatives and liberals in the CCP, the position of the First Secretary of Regional Party Committee was still monopolized by the Han Chinese (Clarke, 2013, p. 121; Rodriguez, 2013, p. 136; Bovingdon, 2010, pp. 347-348). Despite the reform, the monopoly of the ultimate political power in the hands of the Han Chinese upset the Uygurs with the feeling that the XUAR is not for the Uygurs. It is not genuinely autonomous either (Bovingdon, 2010, p. 342). With the upset and frustration of the Chinese monopoly of political power in Xinjiang, and the government relaxing policy toward ethnic and religious groups, there were the underground movements in Xinjiang. Many Islamic schools were secretly opened, including one run by Abdul Hakeem, the leader of Islamic Party of Turkestan or Turkestan Islamic Movement in the 1940s. Among his most significant students was Hasan Mahsum, who studied at a school in Kargilik or Yecheng and later became the founder of Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in 1997.

Deep discontent and widespread resentment among the Uyghurs erupted again when the CCP continued the immigration of Han Chinese to Xinjiang for the sake of economic development and cultural assimilation. The conflict and tension between the Han Chinese and the Uyghurs led to the disturbances in Aksu in 1980, Kashgar in 1980 and 1981, and the rebellion seeking independence in Payzawat or Jiashi county in 1982. The 1981 violent disturbance in Kashgar was the most violent incident in Xinjiang since 1949 as a result of a criminal trial in which a young Han man was accused of killing a Uyghur youth during a fight. Serious riots spread throughout the whole part of Kashgar city. People were armed with knives, cudgels, and whips. They were shouting “Down with the Han”, “Down with the *Heidaye* (Chinese) government”, and “Long Live the Republic of Uyghuristan”. Over 600 people were attacked, over 200 injured, and two people dead. The continued immigration policy came in the hope that the majority of immigrant Han Chinese would help maintain order and stability in Xinjiang like its success story in the case of Inner Mongolia which the Mongol population recently accounts for only 14% of total population in the region. It is estimated that between 1940 and 1982, the proportion of Han Chinese and Hui Muslim immigrants to Xinjiang increased over 2,500% and 520%, respectively. From 1990 to 2000, the number of immigrant Han Chinese to Xinjiang increased from 5.69 million people in 1990 to 7.49 million people in 2000, accounting for 40% of the total population in Xinjiang (Clarke, 2013, p. 124; Dillon, 2006, p. 103; Gladney, 2004, pp. 112-113; Dillon, 2004, pp. 59-60). In addition, the ethnic nationalism among the young Uyghurs also increased. In 1985, Uyghur students in Beijing protested against the use of Xinjiang as a base for nuclear testing. A month later, over 2,000 students from seven universities in Urumqi demonstrated that during the local elections, when the regional governor was replaced by Tomur Dawamat, an Uyghur but a *protégé* of the Han CCP Secretary Wang Enmao. They chanted slogans such as “Han out of Xinjiang”, “Independence, Freedom, and Sovereignty for Xinjiang”, and “Long Live Xinjiang’s Independence” (Dillon, 2004, p. 60). However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the ethnic nationalism among the Uyghurs became stronger and more powerful and that led to the new episode of political instability in Xinjiang in the 1990s.

Xinjiang in 1990-2001: The Uyghurs’s New Hope and the CCP Strikes Hard

The victory of the mujahedeen in Afghanistan over the Soviet Union, the unrests in Baren of Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture or Yili in 1990, and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, which led to the emergence of the newly independent states in Central Asia such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan lit the candle of hope among the Uyghurs that China would not be invincible. There were several movements and organizations for achieving independence such as Uyghur Liberation Organization (ULO) and International Uyghur Union (IUU) in Kazakhstan. In Xinjiang, apart from street protests, the attack of the government and party buildings, and the confrontation with the police forces, there were around 80 violent unrests and bombings between March and May 1992 in Urumqi, Kashgar, Yining, Hotan, Kuchar, Korla, Chochek, and Bortala with total damage of several millions of Chinese yuan.

The violent incidents in Xinjiang continued from 1993 to 1996. The government building in Kashgar was bombed in 1993. It was followed by the confrontation between Chinese police forces and the Kazakhs in Yining, who demanded the establishment of their own republic as a part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and a wave of bombings in many cities along the Tarim Basin or Altishahr in Southern Xinjiang. In 1995, there were major disturbances in Yining when over 50,000 people protested against the Chinese rule over Xinjiang, followed by the strike of over 100,000 teachers, workers, and shop owners calling the end of

Chinese rule in Xinjiang and incorporating Xinjiang as a part of Kazakhstan. In Zhaosu and Gongliu, Chinese government officials and police stations were surrounded by more than 3,000 people. Some guns and police vehicles were stolen. It is believed that only in Zhaosu, over 220 people were killed and injured. Over 8,500 rounds of ammunition were fired, and more than 20,000 troops were called from in both Xinjiang and Gansu Province. In addition, there was a protest in Hotan in July 1995 after a Muslim imam was arrested, as well as the disturbances by separatist groups between February and April 1996 in Aksu (Dillon, 2004, pp. 66-70; Dillon, 2006, pp. 107-108).

To restore order and stability in Xinjiang, the CCP issued the CCP Central Committee Document No. 7 (Document No. 7) in March 1996. It viewed that national separatism and illegal religious activities are the main threats to the stability of Xinjiang. And the “Strike Hard” campaign was launched after that (Wang, 2010, p. 54; Jones-Leaning & Pratt, 2012, p. 331). More than 18,000 troops were sent to 18 problematic counties. A mass of 20,000 people at every local level distributed over 1.547 million propaganda leaflets and more than 120,000 local activists worked together with party members and militia to maintain order in the local areas (Tong, 2010a, p. 7). However, the insurrection led by the ETIM erupted again in February 1997 and was considered to be the most violent confrontation between the Uygurs and the Chinese forces. It is estimated that over 400 people were killed (300 of them were Uygurs), but the CCP Secretary in Xinjiang—Wang Lequan denied the figure (Dillon, 2006, pp. 109-110). He only mentioned that apart from the damage of properties, buildings, and vehicles, 198 people were injured, 50 people seriously injured, and seven “bystanders” were killed (Tong, 2010b, p. 4).

Although the members of the ETIM were suppressed or killed, and a number of weapons and thousand rounds of ammunition were seized, stability and order in Xinjiang were not yet restored. Between February and April 1998, there were 14 bomb explosions in Kargilik or Yecheng, causing eight people to die. The total damage was worth USD 120,000, including the government buildings such as Public Security Bureau. Between July and September 1999, the government officials and buildings and Han Chinese were attacked, while the cotton warehouses in Hotan were burned. One person was killed (probably the terrorist leader) and 21 people were arrested (Millward & Tursan, 2004, pp. 18-19).

However, apart from the “Strike Hard” campaign, one of the most instrumental and significant factors for China to suppress terrorist and separatist movements in Xinjiang is to cooperate with its Central Asian neighbors. Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) was established in 1996. It was later renamed Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 after the inclusion of Uzbekistan. It can be argued that among all disputes and conflict between China and its neighboring countries, such as the civil war in Tajikistan, the conflict in Kashmir and Afghanistan, the unstable situation in Ferghana Valley bordering Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the conflict and tension in the countries bordering Xinjiang are what the Chinese authorities were mostly concerned about (Clarke, 2003, p. 215). China’s leading role in the SCO has been considerably successful. Since its establishment, the Uygur movements in its Central Asian neighbors have been limited. The exiled Uygurs in Kazakhstan were deported to China. Uygur terrorists in Kyrgyzstan were detained (Rodriguez, 2013, p. 140). Only a few Uygur newspapers were allowed to publish. Institute of Uyghur Studies in Almaty was closed and merged into Institute of Oriental Studies, which focuses on the promotion of Uygur culture (Berlie, 2004, pp. 129-130).

However, even though the hope among the Uygurs for their independence has not yet been fulfilled, their discontent and resentment against the Chinese rule and its assimilation policy remain deep and strong. China’s

ethnic discrimination against the Uygurs after 9/11 not only exacerbates the chronic conflict in Xinjiang and the tension between ethnic groups, particularly between Han Chinese and the Uygurs, but also brings a new episode of resistance and instability not only to Xinjiang, but also to the rest of China.

Xinjiang in the Post-9/11 Era: Three Evils Are Everything

In the post-9/11 era, which saw the U.S.-led anti-terrorist wars throughout the world, U.S. declared the terrorist groups, particularly Al Qaeda and those involved or genetically related to Al Qaeda, as the major threats to the U.S. benefits and security. After the arrest of the ETIM members with the severe charge of plotting against the attack of the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan in 2002, U.S. included the ETIM in the Terrorist Exclusion List, which made it possible for the U.S. to seize property and freeze any financial transactions (U.S. Department of State, 2004). The ETIM to the U.S. was closely related to the Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2002), although Hasan Mahsum, a group leader who was later killed by the Pakistani force in October 2003, rejected the close ties (Davis, 2008, p. 22).

The inclusion of the ETIM in the aforementioned list is therefore related to China's interest, which issued the document concerning Eastern Turkistan terrorism in 2002 entitled "Eastern Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity". The objective was to pressure and discredit any Uygur-led groups or movements which had weakened China's authority and legitimacy over Xinjiang throughout the 1990s (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2002). Besides the ETIM, China included East Turkistan Liberation Organization (ETLO), World Uyghur Youth Congress (WUYC), Eastern Turkistan Information Center (ETIC), United Revolutionary Front of East Turkistan (URFET), Uyghur Liberation Organization and other groups such as East Turkistan Islamic Party of Allah and Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party (Millward, 2004, pp. 23-27). However, U.S. rejected the inclusion of ETLO in the list as well as the deportation of an Uygur native who had been arrested in Afghanistan as requested by China (Davis, 2008, p. 22). The WUYC, according to the understanding of the press outside China, organizes political activities such as a regular meeting of World Uyghur Leader and Youth Congress, while the ETIC, whose office is in Munich, is generally known as the unit which reports news and issues related to Uygur people and Xinjiang on the website. Therefore, both the WUYC and the ETIC denied all the allegations of terrorism made against them (Millward, 2004, pp. 27-28).

What can be clearly noticed about the reaction of the CCP to the conflict in Xinjiang after the 9/11 attack is the CCP's frequent use of "Eastern Turkistan" to relate with any movement of organizations and groups for terrorism, separatism, or extremism, which are considered to be the "Three Evils". This is to distinguish it from "Xinjiang" and display the reaction of the majority of Uygur people to be attached with China. The CCP also uses the word "terrorism" extensively to label organizations or groups suspected of masterminding the attacks or riots despite the fact that they were previously perceived as being organized by the criminals or being categorized as criminal activities (Shichor, 2006, p. 101). Labelling them as "terrorists" may justify China's more violent suppression, but that cannot restore stability in Xinjiang.

While riots may be associated with terrorism, they are sometimes a criminal act with no clear political or separatist goals. In the case of Xinjiang, Islam and Jihad are used by some groups to achieve political goals or establish the identity of the Uygur people rather than to act in the name of God since most Uygurs are not radical or possess extreme religious ideas, which is well noted, even by Chinese local officers (Shichor, 2006, p. 105).

Although several violent incidents erupted in the early 1990s, thanks to the effective suppression policy and the close relations with other neighboring countries in Central Asia, the situation in Xinjiang became less aggravated and could not be labeled as “terrorism” (Millward, 2009, p. 348). However, China’s hosting the 2008 Olympic Games became a major condition for some Uygurs to weaken China’s authority and legitimacy, for example:

(1) The attempted hijack and attack of the plane from Urumqi to Beijing in March 2008 by two passengers, one of whom was a 19-year-old Uygur girl who later confessed to hijacking and attacking the plane;

(2) The attack of 70 members of People’s Armed Police Forces (PAPF) during the morning military exercise on August 4, 2008, in Kashgar, only four days prior to the Olympic opening ceremony, killing 17 and injuring 15 police officers. Two attackers, a truck driver and a vegetable vendor, were sentenced to death by a local court five days later and were executed on that same day;

(3) At least 12 bomb explosions in several spots including supermarkets, hotels, and the government office in Kuqa County on August 10, 2008, killing eight people, seven of whom were suspected of being assailants and one of whom was a security officer. Ten more people were killed during the attack with the police officers, while two of them were arrested and three of them made their escape.

The Chinese authority identified that the three incidents above could be part of the ETIM’s terrorist plan to disrupt the Olympic Games, while some Western analysts doubted that the ETIM was behind it, particularly the incident in Kashgar. However, the ETIM did not claim responsibility for the incidents (Gunaratna, Acharya, & Pengxin, 2010, pp. 75-77). The irony is that prior to this, the ETIM claimed responsibility for several incidents which occurred outside Xinjiang such as the explosion in Shanghai on May 5, 2008, the attack of the police booth in Wenzhou, Zhejiang on July 17, 2008, the bomb attack of the plastic factory in Guangzhou on the same day, and the explosion on three buses in Kunming on July 21, 2008. The explosion in Kunming gave a warning signal to the Chinese Government that attacks of the Olympic venues might be possible, but the Chinese authority denied those claims and viewed that those incidents were no more than crime, accidents, or attempts of some Han people to call for attention (Gunaratna et al., 2010, pp. 78-79). Not only do those discriminatory views fail to establish stability in Xinjiang and win the hearts of the Uygur people, but they also widen the ethnic and hatred gaps between Han and Uygur people, as evidenced by the unrest in Urumqi in July 2009. The unrest was not only a consequence of the incident at Xuri Toy Factory in Shaoguan, Guangdong on June 26, 2009 after the news (whether it was true or a rumor) about at least two Han women who were raped by the Uygurs was spread (Watts, 2009), but it was the most violent conflict in Xinjiang since the Baren unrest in 1990. Both incidents in Shaoguan and Urumqi mark several significant points as follows:

First, the policy implementation of China still reflects discrimination and double standards against ethnic minorities, particularly the Uygurs. While the protest staged by Uygur people on July 5, 2009, in order to demand that the Chinese Government accounts for the incident at Xuri Toy Factory was suppressed by the Chinese Government, with 197 people being killed, 1,700 injured, and 331 shops and 1,325 cars destroyed and burned down, several hundreds of Han Chinese who staged a protest to seek revenge by beating an Uygur vendor on the pavement two days later were not prosecuted. Moreover, while images of the bodies of Han Chinese covered with blood were presented, images of violence depicted through Uygur people who were attacked by Han Chinese have been banned from being broadcast (Millward, 2009, pp. 352, 354; Watts, 2009).

Second, the internationalization of the Xinjiang problem is a double-edged sword for the CCP. The CCP has always reiterated that the Xinjiang problem is China’s internal affairs. When the violent incident occurred,

the CCP put their efforts into terminating all internet connections and telephone lines throughout Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities surprisingly invited the foreign press and media to visit Xinjiang on July 6, 2009, and made a news report to the world community. On the one hand, the Chinese Government was praised by the foreign media for its transparency and opening of Xinjiang. On the other hand, the incident regarding unarmed protestors beaten with a cudgel and punched by local police and over 200 Uygur women demanding that the Chinese authorities release their male relatives who had been arrested earlier were broadcasted worldwide (Bovingdon, 2010, pp. 349-350).

Third, the 2009 Urumqi conflict is not only the Uygur problem, but also the Han problem in Xinjiang. For the Han Chinese in Xinjiang, they have portrayed themselves as the major actors who support the nation-building exercise in an ethnic region or a special region which is remote and both culturally and physically barren. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the central government to support and improve their livelihood (Cliff, 2012). Stability in Xinjiang is what the central government has to pay for the service as long as the stability and the development are the core interest of the CCP for their ultimate power and survival. The purge of Wang Lequan from the position of Party Secretary in Xinjiang by Han demand illustrates not only the failure of Wang Lequan to guarantee the safety and livelihood of the Han settlers, but also the bargaining power among the Han Chinese in Xinjiang as a partnership of stability in Xinjiang.

Fourth, both incidents in Shaoguan and Urumqi show deep hatred and hostility among ethnic groups, particularly between the Uygurs and the Han Chinese. A local Han man in Shaoguan who participated in the assault as he was angered by the rapes having gone unpunished said,

I just wanted to beat them. I hate Xinjiang people. Seven or eight of us beat a person together. Some Xinjiang people hid under their beds. We used iron bars to batter them to death and then dragged them out and put the bodies together.

Another Han man who was furious when the government was lying about the death toll said, "When I see the news and they say only two people died, I am so angry". Because he claimed that he helped to kill seven or eight Uygurs, battering them until they stopped screaming. He thought the death toll is more than 30 (Watts, 2009). During the unrest in Urumqi, the Uygurs kept shouting "Kill the Han, smash the Hui, drive the Mongol out!". Although there was the switch between the ethnic group and the verb, the cause "Kill the Han" always came first (Palmer, 2013). However, if the CCP continues showing disregard for this concern, and keeps waiting until Xinjiang is stabilized after the majority of Han Chinese, the 2009 unrest in Urumqi will not definitely be the last violent one. Compared with other ethnic minorities including the Tibetans, the sense of ethnic identity and nationalism among the Uygurs remains strong and powerful (Wang & Shakya, 2009, p. 135).

Lastly, the 2009 Urumqi unrest clearly demonstrates the deep tension between the Uygurs and the Han Chinese without any signs of separatist sentiment, jihadism, or even Islamic terrorism which have always been perceived by the Chinese authorities. Uygur protestors' waving the Chinese flag signaled that they wished to cooperate rather than separate from China. The view that the 2009 Urumqi unrest was terrorism and separatism is a big mistake. The allegation by the Chinese authorities that Rebiya Kadeer, the chairperson of World Uyghur Congress (WUC) and WUC members, was a terrorist and separatist served to raise her international profile. On July 5, 2009, she became more famous and attracted more attention from the public than she was on July 4. This is thanks not to the unrest but to statements from the PRC and the Chinese press (Millward, 2009, pp. 335-336; Xinhuanet, 2013a).

However, the “Three Evils” remained a political rhetoric and instrument for the CCP to suppress the riots in Xinjiang or conducted by the Uygurs. On the contrary, there were several violent incidents conducted by the Han Chinese but not perceived or viewed by the Chinese authority as the “Three Evils”. On July 10, 2013, there was a bomb explosion at Beijing Airport detonated by the wheelchair-bound Ji Zhongxing, who demanded justice after his petition for the punishment of security guard had been ignored. After the Beijing court had sentenced him to six years’ imprisonment, he received a lot of sympathy from the public. His act was not viewed by the Chinese or even the Chinese authorities as extremism (Boehler, 2013; Ding, 2013).

Since Xi Jinping’s ascension to power in late 2012, the rhetoric of “Three Evils” has become more obvious and the hardline suppression policy has been adopted as the key to ensuring China’s stability and development (Buckley, 2013; Xinhuanet, 2013b). The attack in Lukqun township, Turpan on June 26, 2013, marked the most serious riot since the 2009 Urumqi unrest, when the religious extremists led by Ahmatniyaz Sidiq and 17 members attacked the police station, government building, private shop, and beauty salon. Many cars and motorcycles were burned and destroyed, and several government officials and innocent people were killed. After the attack, 24 people were killed (16 Uygurs and eight Han Chinese), and five of them were decapitated. Twenty-one people were injured and at least four attackers were arrested (Xinhuanet, 2013c). It was followed by the attack on the police station in Kargilik or Yecheng on August 20, 2013, killing 16 people (15 Uygurs and one Han police officer) (Hoshur, 2013).

The most deadly incident which challenged China’s stability and legitimacy as well as the images of the CCP was that the Mercedes-Benz SUV car attack in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square on October 28, 2013, killing five people and injuring 42 people. Meng Jianzhu, a member of Standing Committee of Political Bureau, claimed that the attack was premediated and masterminded by the ETIM, while that allegation remained in doubt among experts. A former classmate of the driver, Usmen Hasan, believed that the attacker might have been motivated by vengeance for a brother killed in a mysterious traffic accident several years earlier (Rajagopalan, 2013; Jacobs, 2013). If the assumption of Hasan’s former classmate is correct, it may prove that the CCP’s assumption is wrong. The CCP believes that the improved livelihood under the scheme of economic development is the major determinant of achieving ethnic unity and stability. Moreover, General Peng Yong, Commander-in-Chief of PLA in Xinjiang was removed from his position six days later (Jacobs, 2013).

After the attack in October in Beijing, there were many violent incidents in Xinjiang and other major cities in China. There was a bomb explosion near the CCP building in Taiyuan, Shanxi on November 6, 2013, killing one people and injuring eight people. Over 20 vehicles were damaged (Beech, 2013). There was also an attack on the railway station in Kunming, Yunnan, in March 2014, killing 29 people and injuring 130 people (China Daily, 2014a). It was followed by the explosion at Urumqi railway station on April 30, 2014, killing two people and injuring 79 people (China Daily, 2014b), and the attack on Guangzhou railway station on May 6, 2014, injuring six people. All the three attacks were viewed by the CCP as the “Three Evils”, particularly as terrorism premediated by the Uygur extremists and the ETIM.

The Conflict in Xinjiang and Its Implications for China’s CNP: An Analysis

The conflict in Xinjiang is not only a crucial case study which indicates China’s political stability in connection with territory integrity, but it also affects and correlates with China’s CNP in various components and indicators. The components which will be taken into consideration are population and human resources,

economic development and growth, education and culture, science and technology, and military capability and government expenditure.

As regards population and human resources, the ethnic conflict and tension in Xinjiang have made a profound impact on population and human resources as evidenced by several riots which claim many lives and cause a number of injuries, for example, the Kashgar riot in 1981, where 600 people were attacked, causing 200 injuries and two deaths, the riot in Zhaosu, Ili in 1995, which produced an estimated number of 220 deaths and injuries, the Yining riot in 1997, where 198 people were injured, 50 of them seriously injured, and two were killed (according to some sources, there were as many as 400 deaths, 300 of whom were Uygur people), and the riot in July 2009, where 197 people were killed and over 1,700 people were injured. Although the Xinjiang riots have caused from time to time the number of deaths and injuries which seem small when compared with those numbers caused by crimes or natural disasters such as the major earthquake in Sichuan in 2008, those people (including those of the Uygurs) as an indispensable factor in considering CNP should not have died or been injured for no reason if Xinjiang were to achieve sustainable stability. In addition, even though there is no systematic collection of statistical data regarding the age of people killed and injured in the riots, those affected by the riots are likely to belong to the working-age population and somewhat crucial to China's economic development and growth.

The conflict in Xinjiang also mirrors certain consequences of China's economic development and growth. The GDP per capita of Xinjiang people has multiplied since China had initiated the open door policy and economic reforms in 1978, and Xinjiang is not the region with some of the lowest GDP per capita as evidenced by its GDP per capita of USD 5,372, which despite lower than that of the Chinese population of USD 6,091, is much higher than the GDP per capita of the people in Guizhou of only USD 3,100. However, the massive income gap and the unequal development rate among cities in Xinjiang have led to the ethnic tension and conflict. While Xinjiang is a region rich in natural resources and energy resources such as coals, oil, and natural gas, as well as one of the world's five largest coal producers by volume (Collins & Erickson, 2012) and China's largest oil and natural gas producers (Yuan, 2014), wealth is solely attributed to cities in the north of Xinjiang i.e., Karamay, Shihezi, Urumqi, and other areas ruled by the XPCC, whose population is mostly Han Chinese. Karamay has an average GDP per capita of USD 21,389, which is even higher than that of the people in Tianjin, Beijing, and Shanghai, whereas cities in the south of Xinjiang, where 80% of the population is Uygur, lag behind those in the north in terms of an average GDP per capita. Kashgar, Kizilsu Kyrgyz or Yili, and Hotan in particular have an average GDP per capita of only USD 2,030, 1,725, and 1,111, respectively (Lee, 2014, p. 11), which means that even though Karamay and Hotan are in the same region, their GDP per capita are 20 times different.

Moreover, when urbanization that is one indicator used to measure the CNP is taken into consideration, it was found that in the year 2000, Xinjiang was ranked 17th in terms of an urbanization rate at the percentage of 33.82, while Tibet was the bottommost with the percentage of only 18.93. Regarding the ratio of city and rural incomes, Xinjiang had a level of 3.60, which was the fourth most critical after Tibet, Yunnan, and Guizhou. Despite the fact that Xinjiang has a rather high urbanization rate, such development is likely to distribute wealth to the Han people in the northern city areas, while people in the southern rural areas who are predominantly ethnic minorities, particularly the Uygurs, do not benefit from such economic wealth and are still impoverished. Although Uygur people account for 47% of the total population in Xinjiang, only 19.76% live in the city areas. More importantly, the economic system in the south relies heavily on agriculture, making most employment

mainly at the primary sector (Cao, 2010, pp. 971-972; Cheng, 2011), but in the industrial and service sectors, the ethnic minorities are employed at a minimal rate. The arson of cotton stocks from July to September 1999 is a good reflection of frustration. As cotton is a significant cash crop of Xinjiang and employment is mostly offered to Han immigrants from other neighboring regions, the sustainable CNP has to be derived from equal economic development which is not solely granted to any particular group of people or city.

Unequal development also corresponds with the level of education which is one of the CNP's components. According to the study of Timothy A. Grose (2010), although the number of Uygur people who received primary education increased from 37% in 1982 to 43% in 1990 and those who received tertiary education from 0.1% to 2.1%, education among the Uygurs still lag behind that of Han people, particular at the high school and tertiary levels. In 2006, only 6.9% of Uygur people over 15 years of age finished high school and only 3.1% graduated from universities. The reason behind a small increase in the proportion of people who receive education is not only the financial restrictions, but also the fact that the government attempts to integrate culture by making knowledge of the Chinese language an important requirement for all ethnic minorities who want to study at the tertiary level, which instead erects educational barriers. It was found that 82% of Uygur people over 15 years of age are illiterate and approximately 10.8% have difficulty reading Chinese. Some Uygur people view such requirement as unfair as stated by one Uygur graduate from a university in Beijing who is currently working for a government newspaper in Urumqi: "There are nearly 10 million Uygurs in Xinjiang, but we cannot use our own language... We are all nationalities, but only in China are we a minority". Besides, the government's Xinjiang Class Project in 2000, which granted students in Xinjiang who are mostly the Uygurs an educational opportunity to further their studies at the high school level at schools in the eastern cities of China, such as Beijing and Shanghai, in order to promote unity between the Han and the Uygurs, produced a contrary effect. Most Uygur students were opposed to such cultural integration by maintaining their use of the Uygur dialect for communication outside of the classroom and in their daily lives. Meanwhile, some of the students who finished their high school were willing to return to their hometown with a determination to develop Xinjiang for Xinjiang, not Xinjiang for China (Grose, 2010, pp. 99-101, 104-105). It is evident that not only did the government's cultural integration through education have an impact on the educational level and the literacy rate amongst the Uygur population, it had also become a factor promoting resistance and ethnic tension which ultimately led to the conflict which destroyed Xinjiang's stability.

Xinjiang riots have caused an impact on the components in science and technology which play a part in measuring the CNP. During the riots in July 2009, apart from a considerable number of death tolls and injuries, the government disabled the internet connection and shut down all the telephone systems in Xinjiang, particularly in Urumqi, where the internet connection was disabled for almost a year and prevented all the websites with Xinjiang-based domain and web servers from accessing information. Not only did such an internet cut-off directly affect the development of economy, education, and tourism in Xinjiang, but it also decreased the number of internet and telephone users, which is one of the components for measuring the CNP.

Military capability, particularly in terms of military expenditure, has also been affected by the conflict and political instability in Xinjiang. While Xinjiang is the region bordering other neighboring countries in Central Asia which are already prone to unstable political situations and require more military and police forces for territorial defences than other regions (Fravel, 2007, p. 724), with an estimated number of PLA and PAPF in Xinjiang around 250,000 to 500,000 (Bachman, 2004, p. 180), the conflict and political instability in Xinjiang emphasize the need for that. Therefore, China's military expenditure as part of measuring the CNP is not fully

allocated for developing military capability as it needs to be partly allocated for maintaining the stability and suppressing the conflict in Xinjiang. This can be supported by the Yining riot in 1995, which costed more than 20,000 military forces and 8,500 rounds of ammunition in the suppression, the 1996 government policy of sending 18,000 military forces to 18 problematic counties in five regions, and the recruitment of 120,000 local activists to cooperate with party members and militia to maintain order and stability. Meanwhile, the great military exercise of the PLA in Xinjiang with 50,000 military forces displaying military capability through powerful weapons in the heart of Kashgar for almost a month in 2001 (Davis, 2008, p. 18) seemed to be a budget-consuming mission. Although it is common for the amount of money to be spent on such a military exercise, the conflict, and the political stability which arise in Xinjiang might motivate the government to demonstrate its military capability to the opposition groups as Kashgar is not only the center of Southern Xinjiang, whose people are predominantly the Uygurs, but it used to be meaningful to the Uygur people as a Turkish Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan in 1933. One major reason why the central government has to maintain its budget allocation in support of the existence of XPCC or the *bingtuan*, which comprises 120,000 military forces, is the political instability in Xinjiang, and it is the instability that is regarded as a guarantee that XPCC will definitely receive continuous budget supports from the government.

The conflict in Xinjiang which clearly correlates with and affects the components for measuring the CNP is the government regulation and control capability as considered from the central and local government expenditure. In lieu of allocating budget for developing the country as a whole, the government has to overspend the budget on compensation of loss and disaster relief, for example, the recruitment, development and training of government staff to serve the demand for the lost number of forces, the restoration of basic infrastructure, facilities, and government offices which were destroyed such as the offices of the government and the Communist Party, the police stations and the railway stations, or even the construction and restoration of the mosques which were ruined or destroyed as a result of the change in the government policy or the instability in China, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. In addition, the budget has to be allocated for XPCC, as evidenced by the Yining incident in 1962, where government buildings and those of the Communist Party were burned down, 80 explosions in several cities in Xinjiang from March to May 1992, which cost several million Chinese yuan in loss, 14 bombings in Kargilik or Yecheng, which cost more than USD 120,000 including government buildings, or the attack on the PAPF in August, for example.

Conclusions

This paper explored the case of the conflict in Xinjiang to show that “political stability” is an essential component and should be incorporated into the concept of CNP for the CNP assessment. Although economic growth, military might, natural resources, etc., become predominant factors that play a crucial role in the assessment of China’s CNP, it is just a part of the story.

For China, political instability in Xinjiang has become a major concern challenging the authority and legitimacy of the CCP since its establishment in 1949. Lack of genuine autonomy and the policy of assimilation adopted by the CCP have brought about discontent and resentment that finally led to numerous violent incidents. Moreover, the suppression campaign in the 1990s and labeling most Uygur-related movements and incidents as “Three Evils” since the 9/11 incident has worsened the stability not just in Xinjiang, but also the rest of China.

With the current CNP assessment and components proposed by Chinese scholars and academic institutions

as noted earlier, the conflict in Xinjiang also affects the China's CNP. Apart from a profound impact on population and human resources as evidenced by several riots which claim many lives and cause a number of injuries, the conflict in Xinjiang also mirrors repercussions of China's economic growth and social development such as the massive income gap and the unequal education. Violent incidents, for example, the July 2009 riot that led to the internet cut-off for almost a year have caused an impact on China's CNP in terms of science and technology. Furthermore, China's military expenditure has not fully been allocated for increasing its military capability since a part of its needs to be allocated for managing politically unstable Xinjiang. The genuine CNP assessment should rely not only on the factors from which a country would earn or benefit, but also on those of which it would have to pay a price. Needless to say, the conflict and political instability in Xinjiang are an example of the price which China has to pay. It is hoped that this paper will trigger discussion and debate amongst Chinese academics and think tanks about the significance of incorporating "political stability" into the concept of CNP in order to understand and assess the genuine China's CNP *vis-a-vis* other major powers.

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