

UIGHURS AS POLITICAL ACTORS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

In the Middle Ages, the Uighurs, who are one of the oldest and largest peoples of Central Eurasia (CE), were driven into East Turkestan and then conquered by the Qing Empire. The Chinazation policy carried out in relation to these people led to the

mass exodus of the freedom-fighting Uighurs to the CE countries.

The Uighurs are vigorously engaged in economic activity; in other spheres they are traditionally closed and alienated from the outside world, which prevents them from be-

coming actively integrated into contemporary society.

This article analyzes the roots and reasons for this social phenomenon, which is

having a certain influence on the foreign and domestic policy of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR), as well as on political stability and security of the entire Central Asian region.

KEYWORDS: *Uighurs, Uighur diaspora, Kyrgyzstan, XUAR, PRC, Central Eurasia, Uighur separatism, East Turkestan Republic.*

Introduction

Uighur statehood dates back to the 3rd century. The Uighurs, whose power extended from Altai to Manchuria in the Middle Ages, deservedly consider themselves the direct heirs of the historical past of these territories. Despite their nomadic origin, they were the first to inculcate a sedentary civilization among the Turkic tribes and peoples of the Central Asian steppes. This resulted in the establishment of a powerful Uighur khaganate, which replaced the East Turkic Empire. It is worth noting that the Uighurs were the first Turkic peoples to adopt Islam.

In 840, the Uighur khaganate was destroyed by the Yenisei Kyrgyz, against whom it fought for 20 years. Under the attack of the Kyrgyz, the Uighurs moved to East Turkestan, where they established their own theocratic state. In the 18th century, East Turkestan was incorporated into the Qing dynasty and, consequently, was drawn into unending military, religious, and ethnic conflicts.

The Uighurs were one of the peoples who populated the Karakhanid state (9th-13th centuries), which was situated along the Great Silk Road. The cities of Balasagun and Uzgen, now present-day Kyrgyzstan, were the capitals of this powerful Muslim state. In the Middle Ages, the territory of Kyrgyzstan, which did not acquire its current name until the 15th century, was populated by numerous Turkic-Mongolian tribes (Turks, Karluks, Kidani, Turgeshi, Kara-Kitais, and others), including Uighurs.

The discovery of new sea routes from Europe to Asia and the wars of conquest carried out by the Mongols and Tamerlane led to the degradation of the Great Silk Road and the mass exodus of Uighurs to East Turkestan.

All of these references to the past are necessary to understand the true role and place of the Uighurs in the contemporary life of Kyrgyzstan and its foreign policy.

The Uighurs' struggle for independence in the 20th century ended twice in the declaration of independent republics that lasted for a very short time. These were the Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (1933-1934) and the East Turkestan Republic (1944-1949).

After the PRC was formed, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was established with its center in Urumqi, where the Uighurs comprise almost 50% of the population (more than 7 million people).

However, the Uighurs, who were essentially one step away from gaining their independence, did not give up the hope of restoring historical justice.

At present there are around 50 Turkic-speaking peoples in the world, but only six of them (Turks, Azeris, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Turkmen) have succeeded in establishing their own sovereign states.

Most Turkic peoples live compactly in Russia and the PRC. For example, the PRC has its autonomous regions of Uighurs, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs, the Russian Federation has Tatars, Bashkirs, Altaians, Tuvins, Yakuts, Khakas, Karachays, Balkarians, and Chuvashes, Moldova has the Gaga-

uz, and Uzbekistan has the Karakalpaks. As for the Kumyks, Nogais, Crimean and Siberian Tatars, Dolgans, Turkoman, and others, they do not have their own state-territorial formations.

General Description of the Diaspora

At present, there are Uighur communities in such countries of the world as the U.S., Canada, Germany, Belgium, Japan, Australia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the UAE, and others. There are also Uighur enclaves in Munich, Mecca, Beijing, Shanghai, Sydney, Almaty, and Dushanbe.

Today the size of the Uighur diaspora living in Kyrgyzstan amounts to 60,000 people (an even larger diaspora of these people lives in Kazakhstan). Analysts believe that soon the Uighurs could become the third largest ethnicity of Kyrgyzstan, which is due to the mass exodus of Russians from the country.

The Uighurs of Kyrgyzstan usually settle in groups (mallia), forming urban and rural communities (or quarters) with a very high level of mutual assistance. The Uighurs live, work, rest, celebrate holidays, and attend funerals together. They live compactly in Karakol and Bishkek (the Tokoldosh district), as well as in the villages of Lebedinovka, Novo-Pokrovka (the Chu Region), and a few others (situated primarily in the Jalal-Abad and Osh regions).

Of late, the Xinjiang Uighurs have begun settling in the Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan. After becoming full-fledged citizens of the republic, they officially have every opportunity to preserve and develop their own language, culture, national traditions, and customs. However, things are not so straightforward in reality.

Economic Activity

The Uighurs of Kyrgyzstan living in rural areas are engaged in farming, handicrafts, and commerce. In the cities, they are primarily engaged in commerce and the restaurant business. Uighur cafés are extremely popular among the population of Kyrgyzstan; they offer dishes that are part and parcel of contemporary Oriental cuisine.

The numerous markets called “Chinese” in Kyrgyzstan are mainly filled with Uighur merchants. Thanks to mutual assistance and their own enterprising nature, which is one of the distinguishing traits of their national character, many Uighurs are able to quickly rise from being ordinary merchants to the owners of markets, cafés, or restaurants.

So there is no reason to doubt that the Uighurs are becoming integrated into the Kyrgyz economy. However, in a country with prevailing Soviet values, the wealth of the Uighurs gives rise to common nationalism.

It should be noted that Kyrgyzstan has a large goods turnover with the PRC (approximately \$5 billion a year, which is approximately double the goods turnover with Russia), and earns significant dividends by re-exporting Chinese goods to other Central Asian countries. Due to the fact that the goods flow from China to Kyrgyzstan passes through XUAR, a large number of ethnic Uighurs are involved in this business. So the situation in XUAR cannot help but have an influence on the state of regional policy, security, and commerce.

Political Life

Uighurs participate less than other national diasporas in the domestic political life of Kyrgyzstan and are poorly represented in the legislative power structures, for which there are several reasons.

- First, the local Uighurs have a traditionally low educational level. The thing is that in Soviet times, Uighur students were very rare, which accounts for the low motivation to work in government structures.
- Second, in keeping with national legislation, which came into force after the country acquired its independence, the Jogorku Kenesh (JK) began determining the polling stations. This led to the territories densely populated by Uighurs being redrawn in favor of other nationalities. The majority election system did not allow the Uighurs to procure seats for their representatives in the country's parliament; they could only be elected to the local representative power structures—aul, district, city, and regional keneshes.¹
- Third, the Kyrgyz law-enforcement structures began treating the representatives of the Uighur diaspora with suspicion after international terrorism began gaining momentum, believing that they might be supporting their brothers-in-arms in Xinjiang. The influence of official Chinese sources on Kyrgyzstan and other states of the region is largely to blame for the Uighurs being treated as separatists.

Worried about being under the scrutiny of the law-enforcement structures, the Uighurs had to be extremely cautious regarding their political expression.

As we know, as early as the years of mass Stalinist repressions, many Uighurs were labeled “enemies of the people” and “Chinese spies.” So essentially there are no Uighurs among the members of opposition parties and movements. Well-known Uighur businessmen and public figures Parkhat Tulendybaev, Tursuntai Salimov, and others are recognized for their loyalty to the official authorities.

Parkhat Tulendybaev was an active member of the moderate party “Menin olkom” (My Country) and subsequently became deputy of the fourth convocation of the national parliament from the ruling Ak Zhol party (he was the first Uighur deputy since independence).

Tursuntai Salimov is a deputy of the current fifth convocation of the JK from the ruling SDPK party, the leader of which is the current head of state.

The facts presented above show that the Uighurs intend to continue taking active part in the political life of Kyrgyzstan and advance their interests. Kyrgyzstan's transfer to a system of party democracy and the introduction of quotas for seats for national minority representatives (15%) could give this a significant boost.

At present, the most well-known personality among the Uighurs of Kyrgyzstan is Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences, D.Sc. (Philos.), Professor Aziz Narynbaev. However, his career growth ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since then there have been very few scientists, physicians, or representatives of creative professions among the Uighurs of Kyrgyzstan, although this in no way detracts from their significant contribution to world science and culture.

There are almost no Uighur Kyrgyzstan citizens in the executive power system who confess the same religion and speak the same language as the population of Kyrgyzstan. At best, they occupy low posts at the district level. Only recently, one of them was appointed to the post of deputy director of the State Registration Service under the Kyrgyzstan Government.

There are two main reasons for the absence of Uighurs in the executive power structures: ethnic discrimination and lack of competitiveness due to their low level of education.

Analysts believe that it is their ethnic origin that prevents Uighurs from gaining access to government structures. Were this not true, the economically powerful Uighur diaspora could have long bought posts in the corrupted Kyrgyz state department (as other diasporas have been doing).

¹ There have been no regional or district keneshes in the Kyrgyz Republic for several years now.

Analysts also believe that different forms of propaganda (including the media) are implanting the myth about Uighur terrorism and extremism public consciousness. Mistrust and suspicion of the Uighurs is preventing them from being hired and promoted to state posts. "You never know what the authorities will accuse you of," said the delegates at a congress of the Uighur diaspora.

Culture

A high percentage of Uighurs have a command of their own and the Kyrgyz languages. Until recently, they were unable to obtain even primary education in their own language. Today, there is a specialized grammar school, No. 2, which teaches in Uighur, in the village of Lebedinovka. What is more, young Uighurs today usually speak Russian very well.

The contemporary Uighur elite is making an effort to ensure that young people today study and obtain a good education in the prestigious universities of Europe, the U.S., and PRC. Drawing Uighurs into the education process is accompanied by an increase in national self-awareness, which presumes, among other things, feeling oneself to be an integral part of a unified political, historical, and ethnocultural community.

It should be noted that in the context of the ongoing political and economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan, it is very difficult to find a job in one's field of specialization. So most Uighur graduates are unable to realize themselves in intellectual and political spheres, and go into business instead.

Marriages between Kyrgyz and Uighurs are still very rare, which is explained by the cultural differences between these ancient peoples (the Kyrgyz are nomads and the Uighurs are farmers). This essentially deprives the Uighurs of the opportunity to participate in government by taking advantage of kinship ties with Kyrgyz.

When analyzing the above, it can be concluded that the role of the Uighur diaspora in the life of Kyrgyzstan is gradually beginning to change for the better. Its traditional alienation from the outside world is having an increasingly negative effect on this process.

The Uighur diaspora in Kyrgyzstan is closely related to its Kazakh and Xinjiang compatriots. Gatherings in commemoration of outstanding Uighur cultural and art figures are regularly held at the republican level. In particular, recent years have seen celebrations of the anniversaries of 14th century thinker Lutfuliy, poet Zh. Kasymov, and composer N. Tursun, etc.

On Uighur "Separatism"

Uighurs migrated en masse to Soviet Central Asia in the mid-1950s. As already mentioned above, this was promoted by the elimination of the East Turkestan Republic and the Chinazation of Xinjiang.

When the Turkic peoples of Central Asia gained their independence, the Uighurs hoped that East Turkestan would soon be liberated. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the PRC hurried to establish diplomatic relations with all the CA republics, since the sovereignization of nations close to the Uighurs might cause a new wave of separatism among them. The Turkic peoples of CA did not buy into the ideas of pan-Turkism to the detriment of their own national interests, while the local Uighurs became a "convenient" factor in relations with China.

For example, the Uighur diaspora holds the Chinese secret services responsible for the murder of its former charismatic leader Nigmat Bazakov. The Kyrgyz authorities, on the other hand, think that the Uighur separatists from Xinjiang, whom he refused to finance, are to blame for this tragedy.

There is another, non-political, and more realistic version, according to which Nigmat Bazakov's murder was the result of internal contradictions in the Uighur diaspora. The post of chairman made him an influential business rival for its other members. It turns out that it was to the advantage of both the Uighurs and the Kyrgyz authorities to make a foreign policy issue out of this murder (just like other similar events).

Sources in the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry think that the so-called Uighur question has become the main trump card in relations with the PRC.

Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by democracy, the Uighurs at one time tried to register the East Turkestan Liberation Party. The Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice refused to legalize it, believing that its aim was "separation of the territory of an adjacent state." The matter ended in the establishment of the Ittipak (Unity) Uighur Enlightenment Center, which belongs to the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan.

There are also several autonomous Uighur organizations in Kyrgyzstan that are not related to each other. The Association of Uighurs of Kyrgyzstan, the Bishkek Human Rights Democracy Organization, and the Erpan Uighur Information Center are claiming the right to represent the interests of the diaspora. The reason for such fragmentation lies in the conflict of interests between Uighur businessmen and the intelligentsia. As experts believe, the businessmen do not want to risk their business for the sake of politics, while the representatives of the intelligentsia are accusing them of insufficient patriotism in the fight for the liberation of Uighurstan. This has resulted in a situation where even the official leaders of Ittipak have no influence on their diaspora.

The World Uighur Congress is the organization that unites all Uighur communities and associations.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Uighurs made several attempts to hold meetings and pickets in front of the Chinese embassy in Bishkek, but soon these forms of protest were banned by the Kyrgyz authorities. They did not want to spoil relations with their great neighbor, with whom very close and advantageous trade and economic ties had developed during the years of independence.² During the "bazaar economy" years in Kyrgyzstan, a powerful pro-Chinese lobby formed that is now in favor of stepping up integration relations with the PRC.

After 9/11, the Uighurs lost their support from the Western democracies³; before that, the PRC leadership, which carried out repression of activists of the separatist movement in XUAR, was severely rebuffed by them.

The West, Russia, and China pulled closer together regarding the activity of radical Islamic groups in the Central Asian region. In 2002, the U.S. administration included the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) on the list of terrorist organizations, which was held responsible for several terrorist acts in Western China. The Islamic organizations operating in XUAR were suspected of having relations with the Taliban movement and the al-Qa'eda international terrorist network. At the same time, the intense contacts between the American embassy in Bishkek and representatives of the Uighur diaspora perceptibly cooled off.

In 1998, several terrorist acts and scandalous murders supposedly organized by "Uighur separatists" were carried out in Kyrgyzstan, although many of them could have been the result of commonplace criminal blowups.

After the explosion in a shuttle bus in Osh that took human lives, four citizens of China, Turkey, and Russia of Uighur origin were detained. They were accused of organizing and carrying out the

² The defense and security structures of Kyrgyzstan have banned the Uighur diaspora from holding protest demonstrations, available in Russian at [www.rsscclub.ru/3309/43.html].

³ See: V. Grebenshchikov, "Uigury v Kyrgyzstan," available at [<http://zonakz.net/articles/13629>].

terrorist act and sentenced to death. The Kyrgyz media presented them as members of the East Turkestan organization.

The investigation insisted that the accused were members of an international terrorist organization that operated from Chechnia to Xinjiang. The aim of the terrorist act was an attempt to provoke a Kyrgyz-Uzbek clash and create a zone of instability in the border areas with China. The lawyers of the condemned thought that all the accusations against their defendants could not be proven and were based on pure speculation.

Since then, the Kyrgyz authorities have been attacking so-called Uighur extremism, representatives of which are supposedly active in the country.

In the spring of 2003, 19 Chinese citizens travelling in a bus from Bishkek to XUAR were killed in the Naryn Region of Kyrgyzstan. The newspaper *Vechernii Bishkek* saw signs of a certain "Uighur organization" in this event.

The diaspora leaders (who do not deny that some of the crimes could indeed have been committed by Uighur militants) are particularly concerned about the fact that very often no distinction is made between the few extremists and the main mass of the law-abiding Uighur population in Kyrgyzstan.

The Chinese embassy in Bishkek tries to avoid contact with its citizens, including former, regarding all these happenings. Chinese diplomats usually say that the Chinese embassy has no ties with the Uighur diaspora of Kyrgyzstan. The Uighur diaspora also agrees with this statement.

Two small Uighur monthly newspapers, *Ittipak* and *Vizhdan Avazi* (they have a circulation of 1,000 and 500 copies, respectively), are the mouthpieces of the legal protest against the Chinese. The activity of these newspapers is devoted to maintaining the national spirit of the Uighurs and providing information about what is going on in their historical homeland. With reference to the Uighur information agency in the U.S., they print articles about the Chinese genocide in Xinjiang and the death sentences of Uighurs accused of separatism and terrorism. At first the Chinese embassy tried to protest against such publications, but it soon understood that the newspapers' circulation was so small that it would be very ineffective in spreading information very far.

The restricted information field leaves the Uighurs to deal with their problems by themselves. The situation is also aggravated by the severe pressure from the Russian media, which liken them to the Chechens. According to Russian information policy, both the Uighurs and the Chechens are separatists aiming to destroy Chinese and Russian statehood.

After Chinese citizens (Uighurs fighting on the side of the militants) were imprisoned in Chechnia, Kyrgyzstan began making active use of the so-called Uighur factor, not only in its relations with China, but also with Russia. The country's government often inflates the importance of the Uighur question and turns it into foreign policy issue, which makes it possible for it to acquire financial assistance from both Russia and China. The integration of the PRC, Russia, and the Central Asian countries into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), one of the primary goals of which is fighting ethno-separatism, does not leave the Uighurs any chance of rapid liberation of their historical homeland.

The Uighurs living in Kyrgyzstan are concerned about the unfair attacks from the authorities justified by the struggle against Islamic extremism. They are right in thinking that they have become hostages of a political game being played by the government in the hope of pleasing dynamically growing China.

As some analysts, politicians, and law-enforcement structures believe, Kyrgyzstan is being played along by the Chinese special services, which benefit from accusing the Uighurs of terrorism and religious extremism. In their opinion, persecutions of the Uighurs gained momentum after Kyrgyzstan joined the SCO, a leading role in which is played by China.

The Uighurs first felt the pressure from the Kyrgyz authorities in the mid-1990s when they were accused of Wahhabism. The thing is that Uighurs are much more religious than the Kyrgyz; they

perceive Islam as part of their national tradition and the guarantor of ethnic self-preservation. However, the Kyrgyz special services see their following the regulations of traditional Islam as “religious extremism.”

Over time, the accusations of Wahhabism gave way to attempts to find ties between the Uighurs and the Hizb ut-Tahrir party, leaflets of which were found not only in the south (where Uzbeks live), but also in the north of the republic (in places of compact Uighur residence).

In 1999-2000, the south of Kyrgyzstan twice fell victim to attacks by international terrorists. So in order to support the antiterrorist coalition in Afghanistan, the republic’s government deployed the Gansa military base at the Manas airport. As a result of the successful military operation against the Taliban and al-Qa’eda, the threat of a new terrorist invasion was eliminated.

However, after their defeat in Afghanistan, international extremist and terrorist organizations stepped up their activity in the Central Asian region (including in Kyrgyzstan). In this respect, in April 2003, the Prosecutor General’s Office of Kyrgyzstan instigated court proceedings to recognize Hizb ut-Tahrir as extremist and the Turkestan Liberation Organization, East Turkestan Islamic Party, and Islamic Party of Turkestan as terrorist organizations. In November of the same year, according to the decision of the republic’s Supreme Court, their activity was banned in Kyrgyzstan. This step was taken as an effort by the international community to combat terrorism.

As we know, in 2002, on the initiative of several countries, including the U.S., the U.N. Security Council included the ETIM on the list of terrorist organizations. According to the U.S., the members of this organization, which maintains close contacts with al-Qa’eda, took part in combat action against the international forces on the side of the Taliban, and also carried out several hundred terrorist acts in China and the Central Asian region.

Proceeding from its national security interests, Kyrgyzstan is developing and intensifying mutually advantageous bilateral cooperation with the PRC with the help of the law-enforcement, border, and defense departments. It should be noted that in 1999 China rendered Kyrgyzstan timely support in rebuffing the attack of international terrorists. In addition, Kyrgyzstan receives assistance every year from the PRC in training personnel and fortifying the material and technical base of the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The legal basis for cooperation between the two countries in the law-enforcement sphere is also developing. Along with the Treaties on Extradition and Rendering Legal Assistance in Civil and Criminal Cases, in 2002, Kyrgyzstan and the PRC entered an Agreement on Cooperation in Fighting Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism. The sides also signed a Treaty on Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship, and Cooperation, which is based on principles of mutual respect of each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁴

XUAR-Kyrgyzstan: New Trends

There are close commercial and cultural relations between Kyrgyzstan and XUAR. Small businessmen (so-called shuttle merchants) constantly cross the border in both directions.

After the two state coups in 2005 and 2010, which plunged Kyrgyzstan into a long period of chronic political instability, there has been a trend toward Kyrgyz Uighurs returning to Xinjiang (the PRC) to take up permanent residence. There is also information that the Uighurs, increasingly re-

⁴ See: Statement by the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry on the status of the Uighurs in Kyrgyzstan, relations with China, and terrorism, available in Russian at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1076101440>].

pressed by China, have found a new tool for their self-preservation; striving to escape assimilation, they have been gradually moving to CA.

The Xinjiang Uighurs come to the border regions of Kyrgyzstan under the guise of merchants where they often succeed in gaining the support of big businessmen and high-ranking officials, as well as acquiring Kyrgyz citizenship. The Bayman Batyr market opened recently in the village of Khalmien in the Kadamjai district of the Batken Region and is slowly becoming a new center of the Uighur diaspora.⁵

In so doing, it should be acknowledged that the level of separatist moods among the Uighurs of XUAR could have some influence on the sociopolitical situation in Kyrgyzstan.

After the well-known events in Urumqi in May 2009, during which 196 Khans and Uighurs were killed, the Chinese authorities made several significant changes to their domestic national policy.⁶ For instance, all the national schools switched to teaching in Chinese and the law-enforcement structures stepped up their work with the ethnic minorities. Plans to modernize the main cities in the XUAR with a predominantly Uighur population, Urumqi, Kashgar, Khotan, Artush, and others, were also drawn up and adopted.

According to some sources, modernization will be carried out using funds raised from East coast twin cities. This will entail resettlement of up to 20 million residents from the interior regions before 2018, which will undoubtedly cause drastic changes in the national composition of XUAR.

According to the XUAR Housing and Urban and Rural Building Administration, from 2011 to January 2014, 74.25 billion yuan were spent on building housing in rural area and 3.6 million peasants moved into new houses. A total of 24 billion yuan has been allotted for resettling 300,000 families (around 1.5 million people) before the end of 2014. This will put an end to the mono-national districts where Uighurs are concentrated—makhallas. They have been home to many generations of Uighurs, who are largely the custodians of public opinion-forming national traditions. People are being moved to new Western-style cottages situated in districts created for mixed ethnic groups. The Chinese authorities most likely believe that this will help to subdue separatist moods.

However, these widespread undertakings have not yet led to the elimination of the separatist terrorist underground in Xinjiang. According to the official site of the newspaper *Renmin Ribao*, on 15 December, 2013 another terrorist act was carried out (in the Kashgar district).

On 14 February, 2014, 12 terrorists armed with explosives and hatchets attacked a police precinct in the district of Uchturfan of the Aksu region of XUAR; there is no information about the number of victims as a result of this attack.

On 1 March, 2014, 10 Uighur terrorists stormed the station in Kunming in the southwest province of Yunnan and attacked passengers; 33 people were killed and 130 were injured.

Terrorist groups consist of 10-12 members; they are often armed with only knives and hatchets. However the acts they carry out often generate the same number of victims as the terrorist acts in some other countries in which explosives or firearms are used.

Conclusion

An analysis of the most recent events affords us a new look at the incident relating to the penetration of a group of eleven Chinese citizens into Kyrgyzstan (in the area bordering on the mountainous borough of Ak-Shyirak) on 23 January, 2014. It was later revealed that they were Xinjiang Uighurs.

⁵ See: "Kamchibek Tashiev—a Kashgar Uighur? The Influence of Emigrants from China is Rising in Kyrgyzstan," available in Russian at [<http://www.paruskg.info/2012/05/14/62729>].

⁶ See: *Renmin ribao*, available at [[Russian.people.com.cn](http://russian.people.com.cn)].

ghurs. An employee of the hunting club who tried to detain the violators killed two of them and was killed himself. Using his rifle, the violators put up active resistance against the border guards who arrived; after a short fight, they were all killed.

The members of the group who entered Kyrgyz territory were around the age of 25 to 30; their only weapons were knives. We can only guess the purpose of their attempt to cross an inaccessible section of the state border in winter. Perhaps they were preparing to commit a terrorist act in Kyrgyzstan, or reach people who would provide them with documents and money and then move on to the al-Qa'eda bases in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Whereby the second version is not that far-fetched; it is enough to recall the large number of financially wealthy Uighur merchants at Madina, the largest fabric market in CA situated in Bishkek.

It can be presumed that the more severe the persecution of separatists by the Chinese special services, the more frequently they will be squeezed into Kyrgyzstan. Due to the significant length of the Kyrgyz-Chinese state border, its insufficient technical infrastructure, and small number of border troops, it could be fraught with a deterioration in the sociopolitical situation in Kyrgyzstan and an increase in the terrorist threat from the radical Islamic underground.

On the other hand, the dispute with the West could result in Kyrgyzstan's dangerous and long-term dependence on China.

So Kyrgyzstan's current policy regarding the Uighurs, who are traditionally closed to the outside world, and their expulsion from China into the CE countries will provoke instability in which not only Islamic terrorists might be interested, but also other forces striving for disintegration of the region as a whole and the PRC in particular.