



An Islamic institute located in Eastern Turkistan, where the selection process of students is in progress, as seen in the picture above: Never an 'inalienable' part of China, Eastern Turkistan has, in fact, remained a territory under Chinese occupation.

A Letter to the Editor

Ridiculous Rectification: A Rejoinder on Eastern Turkistan

Mr Zhai Jun, the Chinese Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy to Riyadh, rectified, in his letter of November 18, 1994, the name of Eastern Turkistan and claimed that the nuclear tests starting from 1980s, conducted by the Chinese government in Eastern Turkistan, have not brought harm to the people living in this region.

According to Mr Zhai Jun, Eastern Turkistan's legitimate name should be Xinjiang. "Xinjiang has been an inalienable part of China since ancient times and

the so-called 'Eastern Turkistan' was created by a small handful of foreigners." Being an Eastern Turkistani, I feel pity for Mr Zhai's lack of knowledge in history.

It is true that the term "China" (Middle Kingdom in Chinese) appeared in ancient times, but, geographically, this term covers only the areas between the valleys of Changjiang and Yellow Rivers, where live the Chinese nationality.¹ In 1922, the Declaration, approved by the Second National Congress of the Communist Party

of China, used the term "Chinese Metropolitan Territory," which means explicitly the Chinese-populated areas between the valleys of Changjiang and Yellow Rivers. The very Declaration also used the terms "Mongolia, Tibet and the Muslim Territories"² (Eastern Turkistan and other Muslim-populated regions such as Qinghai and Gansu)" which means that these areas are distinct from the "Chinese Metropolitan Territory." Such demarcation of territories and the specific terms applied on these territories have

been used for thousands of years by all the successive feudal and imperial dynasties. Mr Zhai Jun should have known of this before having contributed his article.

I don't want to make further explanation on the term "Eastern Turkistan" as numerous historical and present documents have applied and have been applying it. Perhaps, Mr Zhai Jun doesn't know that in some Chinese dictionaries one can also find precised explanation on the term of Eastern Turkistan.³ What I would like to add is that the term Eastern Turkistan has been used for more than one thousand years whereas that of Xinjiang was given by the Qing (Manchu) Empire in 1884 shortly after it was occupied and annexed to the Chinese territory.

As a matter of fact, Eastern Turkistan has never been an inalienable part of China since ancient times, but a country under Chinese occupation. During a period of more than one thousand years beginning from the last reign of Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) till that of Qing Dynasty (A.D. 1616-1912), the Chinese could only rule the Chinese Metropolitan Territory, which is actually within the Great Wall. The administrative areas of the dynasties of Yuan (Mongol) and Qing (Manchu) had extended out of the Great Wall, but both dynasties were ruled by non-Chinese. Although the dynasties of Han (B.C. 206 - A.D. 220) and Tang had partly extended their power to some parts of Eastern Turkistan out of the Great Wall, their jurisdiction was in fact titular and lasted for a very short time.

It would be ridiculous, if one claims that the Great Britain, France and the North Africa should belong to Italy just for the reason that the Roman Empire had once had jurisdiction over Western Europe and North Africa two thousand years ago. Furthermore, the Han and Tang dynasties had once exercised their admin-

istrative power over Korea and Vietnam, and this kind of jurisdiction also existed during the Qing dynasty. If the Chinese claim now that Korea and Vietnam are the "Sacred Territories" of China, it would certainly cause a worldwide great disturbance.

So far as the nuclear tests in Eastern Turkistan are concerned, I was surprised to see Mr Zhai Jun's attitude of denying the catastrophic effects of these tests on the population in this region. Born and grown up in Urumchi in Eastern Turkistan, a city of 1.5 million people and about 400 kilometres to Lop Nur, the nuclear test ground, I witnessed human tragedies caused by nuclear tests since China's first nuclear test was conducted on the 16th of October 1964 (not in 1980 as Mr Zhai Jun rectified!).

In 1970, my wife was sent to work in Pichan (Shanshan) County. During her one year's work there, we discovered that in most of the villages to the south of this county, women and men virtually became sterile because there we had never seen a child younger than five years and no birth had been recorded in those villages since 1965. Later, we came to know that these villages are among the nearest human populated areas to the nuclear test site (180 kilometres only!).

Although China never discloses official statistics on the nuclear victims in Eastern Turkistan, one can easily find out how serious the situation is. Take Urumchi as an example. The rate of human cancer is increasing at an astonishing speed. In the People's Hospital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region in Urumchi City, mortal cancer rate was only several cases a year in the late 1960s, it increased to several cases a month in 1970s and again further increased in 1980s. Now the number of cancer reports in this hospital is at least 70 per day compared with an average of 1,500 sick visits per day,⁴ which means that

every day the doctors in this hospital are discovering that out of every hundred patients some five are suffering from mortal cancer. In the areas that are nearer to the nuclear test ground, it was reported that cancers have become commonly encountered disease and doctors refuse to treat cancer patients of late stage as they see no hope to save them from death.

According to Dr Lius,⁵ a cancer specialist in the Urumchi Tumor Hospital, the mammary cancer and the carcinoma of uterus have become most widespread diseases among women. After a general health examination on the population conducted in 1993 in Urumchi City, more than ten per cent of women were found suffering from mammary cancer and the carcinoma of uterus.

The rapidly increasing number of cancer cases in Eastern Turkistan is not the only disease that may have been caused by nuclear tests, the increasing cases of congenital deformity among children, various human skin diseases and some unidentified diseases have been taking more and more lives of Eastern Turkistani people. I would like to remind Mr Zhai Jun of the fact that compared with other Chinese provinces, the case-death ratio in Eastern Turkistan is the highest.⁶

Notes

1. Jin Ji, *The New Macroeconomy: National Self-determination*. Kai Fang Magazine, Hongkong, November 1991, p.44
2. Idem, p.45
3. Wang Tongyi, *The English-Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary*. The National Defense Industry Press, Beijing, 1988. p.m5705-Uighur
4. 1993 Annual report of the Registry of the People's Hospital of Xinjiang Autonomous Region.
5. Mr Liu, of Chinese nationality, has been working in this hospital since it was founded in late 1980s. However, he doesn't want his full name disclosed.
6. Ministry of Public Health, 1993 Annual Report of Statistical Bureau, Beijing, March 1994.