

## **Statement Presented to the Congressional-Executive Committee on China**

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### **Escalating refoulement of Uyghur Refugees**

The Uyghur American Association is deeply concerned about the rising number of peaceful Uyghur dissidents being returned to the People's Republic of China. Although media attention has raised the deportation of Tibetan refugees from Nepal and caused governments to act, no such attention has been paid to the escalating phenomena of peaceful dissents being returned from Central Asian states and Pakistan under pressure from the Chinese government.

Before the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Chinese diplomats would bring accusations of criminal wrongdoing against Uyghur refugees and seek their deportation. Wanted posters in Chinese and the local language have been posted on the streets in many cities. The pressure employed against the refugees and their place of refuge can be summed up with this excerpt from a 1996 internal Chinese Communist Party Document;

"Limit the activities of outside ethnic separatist activities from many sides. Bear in mind the fact that Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the home-bases for the activities of outside separatist forces. Through diplomacy, urge these countries to limit and weaken the activities of separatist forces inside their border. Take full advantage of our political superiority to further develop the bilateral friendly cooperation with these countries. At the same time, always maintain pressure on them. Considering the ethnic separatism activities outside of the border, carry out all necessary dialog and struggle. Strengthen the investigation and study outside of the border. Collect the information on related development directions of events, and be especially vigilant against and prevent, by all means, the outside separatist forces from making the so-called "Eastern Turkistan" problem international."

Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Document Central Committee (1996) No.7 Record of the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the maintenance of Stability in Xinjiang

When the SCO was formed, official contacts started in the Central Asian war on terrorism. At that point, the campaign against 'East Turkistan separatists' had not been internationalized, but quietly, dissidents continued to be arrested and returned to face imprisonment, torture and even death, just for leaving the Peoples Republic of China.

After the events of September 11, 2001 and the beginning of the US war on terrorism, Chinese government officials began to equate the peaceful expression of thought with terrorism. In many official Chinese government statements, terrorism and separatism appear side-by-side as crimes to be fought.

The criminalization of peaceful ideas is not condoned by the US Constitution nor any international body or agreement, yet such a tactic is used to repress dissent in countries that neighbor the PRC. The entire process should be viewed as an extension of the Chinese government Police State.

The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provides that 'no State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.' The principle of non-refoulement is a basic right of all people that flee tyranny and oppression and clearly, according to the annual US Department of State Human Rights Report, the Peoples Republic of China abused the rights of citizens accorded under their constitution. Abuses included instances of extrajudicial killings, torture and mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, arbitrary arrest and detention, lengthy incommunicado detention, and denial of due process. Such compelling evidence from the US State Department merits attention to safeguard the human rights of people escaping oppression in the Peoples Republic of China.

The Uyghur American Association recommends that the US government, in its official dealings with Central Asian states, including Pakistan, Nepal, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan,

- Reinforce the ideal of the rule of law, namely, the principle of non-refoulement with regard to people escaping persecution and oppression from the Peoples Republic of China;
- Raise concerns about the treatment of refugees and their rights as guaranteed under the UN Declaration of Human Rights;
- Raise the issue of forced repatriations, the abuse of human and civil rights before the proper UN bodies, and
- Press for meaningful reform and change within the People's Republic of China such that so many do not feel compelled to flee their homeland.

**Signed,**

**UAA Board of Directors**