



**East Turkistan: 60 Years under the People's Republic of  
China**

*Past, Present and Future*

**18 – 19 May 2009**

**Washington DC, USA**

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION AND OPENING SESSION</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 <i>Words of Welcome</i>	10
1.1.1 Speech by Rebiya Kadeer	10
1.1.2 Speech by Marino Busdachin	10
1.1.3 Speech by Carl Gershman	13
1.1.4 Speech by Hans Hogrefe	14
<b>2. PANAL I</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 <i>The War on Terror; persecution, stigmatization and preventive strike</i>	15
2.1.1 Presentation by Sarah McKune	15
2.1.2 Presentation by Sophie Richardson	16
2.1.3 Presentation by T. Kumar	17
<b>3. PANAL II</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Religious freedom; constitutional right in vain?	17
3.1.1 Presentation by Louisa Coan Greve	18
3.1.2 Presentation by Kara Abramson	19
3.1.3 Presentation by Amy Reger	19
<b>4. PANAL III</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Meaningful autonomy & politics of demography; economic, social & cultural challenges	20
4.1.1 Presentation by Ulrich Delius	20
4.1.2 Presentation by Joshua Cooper	21
4.1.3 Presentation by Marco Perduca	22

# Introduction

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Uyghurs are native to East Turkestan (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China), a territory on the fabled Silk Road bounded by the central Asian republics to the West and China to the East. East Turkestan has been a prominent centre of commerce for more than 2000 years, and has at various points in its history been a cradle to a number of great civilizations as well as a centre of scholarship, culture or power.

This culture is however now under threat following a period of marginalization and oppression that began with the region’s incorporation into the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Along with other minorities, such as Tibetans and Inner Mongolians, Uyghur communities have suffered from destructive assimilation policies. Strict controls on their language and Islamic religion have sought to undermine their distinct and unique national identity.

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) gathers human rights defenders from around the world to promote political and human rights, without which Uyghur communities will be unable to protect and preserve their culture. Working to raise awareness of the challenges faced by the Uyghur people, WUC works through exclusively nonviolent means to promote the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The current WUC President, Mrs. Rebiya Kadeer, is a Rafto Prize laureate and Nobel Peace Prize nominee who has devoted most of her life to the Uyghur cause. Once a successful business woman heralded by PRC authorities as a model of a new entrepreneurial spirit, Mrs. Kadeer fell out of favour with authorities when she began devoting herself to promoting the rights and development of her native Uyghur community. She was eventually arrested and held for six years. Although she has now been released and is able to continue her activism from abroad, Mrs. Kadeer’s family continues to be the target of harassment, with two of her sons currently facing lengthy jail sentences.

# Notes on Contributors

## **Ms. Rebiya Kadeer**

*President, World Uyghur Congress (WUC)*

Ms. Rebiya Kadeer is the democratic leader of the Uyghur people in East Turkestan (aka: Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China) who spent nearly six years in a Chinese prison for standing up to the authoritarian Chinese government. Ms. Kadeer, 63, is the mother of eleven children and a former laundress-turned-millionaire. Before her arrest by the Chinese government in 1999, she was one of the most prominent Uyghur businesswomen and 7th richest entrepreneur in China.

Ms. Kadeer was arrested by China's National Security agents on August 11, 1999 while on her way to meet a U.S. Congressional Research Service delegation investigating the situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). She was sentenced by the Chinese government to eight years in prison in a secret trial on alleged charges of leaking "state secrets" to the U.S. She was released by China to the U.S. on medical parole on March 17, 2005 due to persistent international pressure, above all from Washington.

Ms. Kadeer has been actively campaigning for the human rights of the Uyghur people since her release. She frequently meets with the State Department officials. Ms. Kadeer has testified many times before the U.S. Congress on Chinese human-rights violations in East Turkistan, such as the frequent execution of political and religious prisoners, discrimination against Uyghurs in education and employment, the forced elimination of Uyghur language and culture, the forced abortion of Uyghur children. Furthermore, she frequently visited European Union countries and briefed government officials on China's human rights violation of the Uyghur people.

Ms. Kadeer was the founder and president of the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation in Washington, DC. She was also elected as the president of the Uyghur American Association in May 2006. She was elected as the president of the World Uyghur Congress in November 2006. The Uyghur people in the U.S. and around the world closely rally behind her and support her efforts to change the terrible human rights situation of the Uyghurs in East Turkestan. Despite Chinese government efforts to demonize and discredit her, she is recognized as the most prominent Uyghur leader and the mother of the Uyghur nation by all Uyghurs.

## **Mr. Marino Busdachin**

*General Secretary, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)*

Mr. Marino Busdachin was born in Umago (Istria, Croatia) in 1956. He arrived as a refugee in Italy in 1961. Education: Law University in Trieste.

During the 70's he campaigned for civil rights in Italy mainly focusing on the rights to conscientious objection, divorce and reproductive rights. He was an active participant, well known in the political Italian scene. In 1974 he was elected for the

first time, member of the Federal Council of the Radical Party. Between 1978 and 1982 he was elected member of the City Council of Trieste.

During the 80's he was one of the most active promoters of international campaigns in support of the respect of human, civil and political rights in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He was arrested in Bulgaria (1982) and in the Soviet Union (1989). He led and coordinated the Transnational Radical Party (TRP) activities in the former Yugoslavia (1991-1993) and in the Soviet Union (1989-1993).

As of 1993 he worked in the United States on international campaigns for the establishment of the ad hoc tribunals on war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and on the campaign for a moratorium on the death penalty at the United Nations. He was the coordinator for TRP activities in the United States from 1993 until 1998. In 1995 he led the initiative of the TRP to be recognized by the UN as an NGO on first category.

He was the founder and General Secretary of the NGO "Non c'è Pace Senza Giustizia" in Italy (1994-1999) as well as founder and President of No Peace Without Justice USA (1995-2000). Both of the organizations were considered more effective NGOs, campaigning for the establishment of an International Criminal Court. At the United Nations Diplomatic Conference on ICC in 1998, Rome, he was invited to take the floor representing Civil Society.

From 1995 until 2000 he was UN representative in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

Mr. Busdachin was a member of the Extraordinary Executive Board of TRP (2000-2002). Currently he is member of the General Council of the Transnational Radical Party.

As of 1 July 2003 he was appointed Executive Director of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, to help revive the Organization. On 14 November 2003 Mr. Busdachin was appointed UNPO Ad Interim General Secretary, and on 26 June 2006 he was elected UNPO General Secretary.

**Mr. Carl Gershman**

*President, National Endowment for Democracy*

Mr. Carl Gershman is President of the National Endowment for Democracy, a private, congressionally supported grant-making institution with the mission to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. In addition to presiding over the Endowment's grants program in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Latin America, he has overseen the creation of the quarterly Journal of Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies, and the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program. He also took the lead in launching in New Delhi in 1999 the World Movement for Democracy, which is a global network of democracy practitioners and scholars. Mr. Gershman is currently encouraging other democracies to establish their own foundations devoted to the promotion of democratic institutions in the world.

Prior to assuming the position with the Endowment, Mr. Gershman was Senior Counselor to the United States Representative to the United Nations, in which capacity he served as the U.S. Representative to the U.N.'s Third Committee that deals with human rights issues, and also as Alternate Representative of the U.S. to the U.N. Security Council. While at the U.S. Mission to the U.N., Mr. Gershman also served as lead consultant to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, and helped draft the final report. Prior to his assignment at the United States Mission to the United Nations, Mr. Gershman was a Resident Scholar at Freedom House and Executive Director of Social Democrats, USA.

Mr. Gershman has lectured extensively and written articles and reviews on foreign policy issues for such publications as: Commentary, The New Leader, The New Republic, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The New York Times Magazine, Democratization, The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, The Washington Quarterly, and the Journal of Democracy. He is the co-editor of *Israel, the Arabs and the Middle East* (Bantam, 1972) and the author of *The Foreign Policy of the American Labor* (Sage, 1975). He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Council on Foreign Relations.

He received The Order of the Knight's Cross, Government of Poland; President's Medal, George Washington University; The Distinguished Person for Advancing Democracy in China, Chinese Education Democracy Foundation; International Campaign for Tibet's 2005 Light of the Truth Award and Romania's National Order of "faithful service."

Mr. Gershman was born in New York City on July 20, 1943. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Horace Mann Preparatory School in 1961; received a B.A. degree from Yale University, Magna Cum Laude in 1965 and M.Ed. from Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1968.

Mr. Gershman is married to Laurie Pfeffer. They have three children (Sarah, Joseph and Jacob).

**M Mr. Hans Hogrefe**

*Director, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission*

Mr. Hogrefe was appointed to the Democratic staff of the House International Relations Committee in April of 2003. His area of responsibility for the Committee is global human rights. In addition, Mr. Hogrefe serves as Democratic Staff Director of the newly created Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (H. Res. 1451, 110th Congress), the successor entity in the House of Representatives of the former Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

Mr. Hogrefe serves as Democratic Staff Director to Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Co-Chair James P. McGovern (D-MA). In this capacity, Mr. Hogrefe oversees the full implementation of H. Res. 1451, including the thematic advocacy of human rights and the administrative institutionalization of the Commission.

Prior to this appointment, Mr. Hogrefe served as Executive Director of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus from April 30, 1996. Founded in 1983, the

Congressional Human Rights Caucus is a bi-partisan working group on human rights of over 225 Members in the U.S. House of Representatives, which was co-chaired by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA). In his capacity as Director, Mr. Hogrefe identified, researched and brought to Congress' attention human rights violations throughout the world.

In 1995, Mr. Hogrefe was chosen as a Congressional Fellow of the American Political Science Association (APSA). APSA selects three international political scientists each year to work in a congressional office as a legislative fellow, as part of their U.S. program to provide the United States Congress with about 60 experts from the political science, defense, foreign affairs and health field.

Born in Herne, Germany, Mr. Hogrefe holds a Masters degree in English, Political Science and History from the University of Muenster, Germany.

**Dr. Sophie Richardson**

*Advocacy Director, Asia Division, Human Rights Watch*

Dr. Sophie Richardson is the advocacy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division. She has published extensively on domestic Chinese political reform, democratization, and human rights in Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, appearing in publications such as the Far Eastern Economic Review, La Libre Belgique, the Japan Times, JoongAng Daily, the Journal of Asian Studies, The Nation (Bangkok), The Phnom Penh Post, and The Wall Street Journal. She has also provided commentary on Asian issues to outlets such as Al Jazeera, the BBC, CNN, The Guardian, National Public Radio, and The New York Times.

**Mr. T. Kumar**

*Advocacy Director, Asia and Pacific, Amnesty International USA*

T. Kumar is the Advocacy Director for Asia & Pacific at Amnesty International USA. In this capacity he has worked on numerous initiatives to influence US foreign policy, including US-UN relations. He also frequently holds meetings with senior officials in the White House, Department of State and Department of Defense.

Kumar has worked in several Asian and African countries and served as a human rights monitor throughout Asia as well as in Bosnia, Haiti, Guatemala, and South Africa. He has also served as director of several refugee ships and refugee camps. He was invited by the US military for a fact-finding mission of military-run refugee camps in Guantanamo and Panama that held Cuban refugees.

Kumar frequently lectures at the Foreign Service Institute where U.S. diplomats are trained and he often testifies as an expert witness before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. He has also given numerous interviews to CNN, BBC and other news outlets. He is a Professor at Washington College of Law's Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. He holds an advanced degree in law from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Kumar has served as the United Nations Representative for Peace Brigades International and was a consultant to the Quaker United Nations Office. He also

monitored several elections around the world with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and with former President Carter. He assisted the Washington Board of Elections in running US presidential elections. He also served as a Judge of Elections in Philadelphia.

**Ms. Kara Abramson**

*Advocacy Director, Congressional-Executive Commission on China*

Ms. Abramson is Advocacy Director for the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, where she also focuses on ethnic minority rights and religious freedom in China. She holds a JD from Harvard Law School, where she focused on international human rights law. In addition she has studied law and researched the Chinese legal system as a Fulbright fellow to the Sichuan University Law School. She has published on topics including the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Chinese legal education.

**Ms. Louisa Coan Greve**

*Program Director for East Asia, National Endowment for Democracy*

Louisa Greve is Program Director for East Asia at the National Endowment for Democracy<<http://www.ned.org>>, which makes grants to pro-democracy and human rights organizations in more than 80 countries. She has studied, worked, and traveled in China since 1980 and has testified before Congressional committees on human rights in China and democracy promotion in Asia. She was a member of the Taiwan Policy Working Group (2007) and the Council on Foreign Relations Roundtable on U.S. National Security--New Threats in a Changing World (2002). She served as a member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA (1993-1998), and was a volunteer China and Mongolia specialist for Amnesty from 1990 to 1999. She is currently a member of the Virginia Advisory Council of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

**Ms. Amy Reger**

*Principal Researcher, Uyghur Human Rights Project*

Amy Reger is the principal researcher at the Uyghur American Association's Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), which works to promote human rights and democracy for the Uyghur people, and to raise awareness of human rights abuses that occur in East Turkestan. Prior to her employment at UHRP, she worked as the assistant director of the Laogai Research Foundation, a human rights organization working to promote awareness about China's forced labor prison camp system. Ms. Reger also previously worked as a researcher in both the Chinese Branch and the East Asia Research Center of the Voice of America. She has spoken on Uyghur human rights issues at events both in the U.S. and abroad, including in the U.S. Congress and the Bavarian Parliament, and has authored numerous reports and articles for publication, including the New Statesman. Ms. Reger studied the Chinese language and East Asian social and political issues at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center, National Taiwan University and Peking University.

**Mr. Ulrich Delius**

*Asia Expert, Society for Threatened Peoples, Germany*

Dr. Ulrich Delius has worked in a number of positions at the German branch of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) / Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (GfbV), an international human rights organization dedicated to the promotion of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. Since joining STP in 1986, he has specialized in ethnic, religious, social and military conflicts, including genocide, and slavery. He has been lobbying for Uyghur human rights since 1993.

**Mr. Joshua Cooper**

*Executive Director, Hawaii Institute for Human Rights, United States*

Director of the Hawai'i Institute of Human Rights since 2000, and he founded the Institute in 1998. An activist since his high school days in Germany and continuing as an undergraduate at the University of Hawaii and completed his Ph.D. there. Now teaching political science at Maui Community College and the UH Center on Maui. Lectures in the summer at the International Training Center for Teaching Peace and Human Rights in Geneva, where he also does advocacy work at the United Nations. Mr. Cooper also has traveled to South America, South Africa, Antarctica, and Japan for volunteer work. He conducts extensive UN training programs.

**Senator Marco Perduca**

*Italian Senator*

Mr. Perduca is a Member of the General Council of the Nonviolent Radical Party (NRP) and the UNPO Foundation and was recently elected to the Italian Senate. For 10 years he has represented the TRP at the United Nations in New York, Geneva, and Vienna, covering the UN also for Radio Radicale. Since 2002 he has directed the work of the International Antiprohibitionist League. In 1998 he also coordinated the work of a team of jurists that drafted the indictment of Slobodan Milosovic before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). His comments and letters have appeared in several Italian newspapers and political journals, as well the Financial Times, International Herald Tribune, and Christian Science Monitor.

# 1. Introduction and Opening Comments

## 1.1 Words of Welcome

### 1.1.1 Speech by Rebiya Kadeer

*President, World Uyghur Congress (WUC)*

Ms. Kadeer opened the conference by offering her greetings and thanks to all those that had come from all over the world to attend. She was extremely grateful for the support of the National Endowment of Democracy (NED), the Uyghur Association of America (UAA) and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. Without their support the conference would not have been possible. She said that they have always wanted a conference in Washington D.C., but that it has been very difficult and that there has always been a need to create new policies.

Ms. Kadeer continued by acknowledging those thousands of Uyghurs that are still in prison, who would have wished to attend the conference and that those in attendance are so blessed, and that those currently being repressed should be remembered because they cannot speak their mind. Those that were in attendance represent the hopes and dreams of the Uyghur people.

Due to Chinese repression, autonomy for East Turkestan has not been respected and that is why the conference is so important. Ms. Kadeer acknowledged that “the journey is long and hard, but a small river will become a big river, and with our allies we will peacefully make our cause.” In order to achieve this she recognized there was a requirement for less slogan and more real work, that those attending the conference represented the repressed Uyghurs and they are the ones that can help their own cause. She also acknowledged the Guantanamo Uyghurs, who would have attended had they been released, and she thanked those present for attending a very special conference.

She concluded by stating that “our horse is skinny, our journey long, but if we persist we will succeed”

### 1.1.2 Speech by Mr. Marino Busdachin

*General Secretary, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)*

Below is Mr. Marino Busdachin’s speech in full:

I am glad to be here in Washington, and grateful to have the opportunity to address you during today’s important meeting on behalf of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). Uyghurs were one of the founder Members of the UNPO in 1991 at the Peace Palace in The Hague. I am proud to convey to you the support and salutations of the 57 members of the UNPO. Many of them share your persecution and oppression.

First of all I’d like to say that it is an honor and a privilege to be in a Conference with such important and committed human rights defendants as Rebiya Kadeer, Carl Gershman, and Hans Hogrefe, and the other distinguished panelists. Time will not

consent an extensive and detailed introduction. I'll try to do my best to give you a picture, a sketch of the situation, perhaps not a very neutral one, considering my full support of the Uyghurs struggle for freedom and democracy.

Since 9/11, the international war against terrorism has firmly re-established full state sovereignty as the predominant principle in international relations. Undoubtedly China has exploited the war against terrorism to justify its harsh repression in East Turkestan and in Tibet as well. Today China greatly fears any step in the direction of self-determination, even internal self-determination such as autonomy, which could become a new norm in international relations. China also feared that the doctrine of "humanitarian intervention" or the most recent "right to protect" was balancing or supplanting the doctrine of state sovereignty.

Despite some small-scale progress on the implementation of the rights of minorities, the Chinese Government still fails to achieve a minimal standard of protection for minorities in the most important and crucial areas of China. The People's Republic of China has identified and recognized 56 ethnic groups. The populations of various ethnic groups differ greatly. The Han ethnic group has the largest population, those of the other 55 ethnic groups are relatively small, and so they are customarily referred to as "ethnic minorities". According to the census conducted in 2000, the 55 ethnic minority groups totaled 104.49 million, accounting for 8.41 percent of the entire population of China. They occupy over 60% of the country's total landmass, primarily along international borders. Minority areas are often located in resource-rich regions.

Around 40 of the groups have ethnic counterparts abroad, making the assurance of their loyalty a strategic concern of the Chinese government. The Constitution and the 1984 Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law guarantees numerous rights to minorities, including self-government within designated autonomous areas; proportional representation in the government; freedom to develop their own languages, religions, and cultures; and power to adjust central directives to local conditions. The Laws also guarantee minorities greater control over local economic development than was allowed in non-autonomous areas; the right to manage and protect local natural resources; and the right to organize local public security forces.

The implementation of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law has varied greatly across China. The Chinese government systematically denies some minorities their legal rights and arbitrarily arrests their members for exercising legally protected freedoms. The government has particularly failed to uphold the legal rights of minorities living in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous region.

China's Constitution guarantees protection of "normal religious activity". Despite this guarantee, the state's requirement that religion be congruent with patriotism has led to widespread repression of religion. In Tibetan and Uyghur areas, where peoples are trying to exercise their rights to have an internal self-determination; and where genuine autonomist sentiment often is interwoven with religious conviction, state repression of religion is particularly harsh.

Chinese authorities do not clearly distinguish between the peaceful expression of autonomist or separatist sentiment and terrorism, creating additional pressure on religious practices that do not embrace Chinese nationalism. Religious freedoms in China are mostly denied. Many major human rights violations are continuously reported to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. And the situation is not improving as is evidenced by an impressive list of submissions to the United Nations Human Rights Council during their Universal Periodic Review a couple of months ago.

50 million protestant Christians, 12 million Roman Catholics, 20 million Muslims and the Tibetan Buddhist people are de facto denied their fundamental human right to practice their religion in freedom. China's government and the Chinese Communist political system has had less tolerance for autonomous social or political groups than at any time in Chinese history, a history not noted for any such tolerance. But what I want to underline today is one of the greatest threats to Uyghur people, culture and environment is the massive influx of Chinese civilians and military personnel into East Turkestan, especially through population transfer programmes.

Based on China's official statistics in 1955 Uyghurs made up 74.7% of the total population of the Uyghur Autonomous Region and Han Chinese accounted for 6.1%. Today Uyghurs make up 45% and Han Chinese 41% of the population, a number that, as many international observers have pointed out, chronically underestimate military personnel and the large unregistered floating population of displaced Chinese peasants seeking work. With this large influx of migrants, the Uyghur language is being pushed out of the public sphere. Furthermore, the changing landscape within Uyghur urban centers threatens the preservation of traditional Uyghur culture and lifestyle.

According to PRC statistics, in 2007 an estimated 100,000 people from Autonomous Uyghur Region were working outside of the Autonomous region, mostly women. This transfer policy of intimidating the women and their family members in order to compel them to relocate can clearly be considered as forced transfer population practices. As a result of China's population transfer policy, Uyghurs have been marginalized in economic, educational, political and social spheres and the cultural tradition of the Uyghur people continues to be threatened.

Transfer population is a silent form of oppression and annihilation of culture, religion and traditions of a people. Secondly it is a crime. The International Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) clearly stated and defined it as so being, referencing the transfer population policy in Bosnia. The situation today is that the Uyghurs are becoming a minority, an oppressed minority, in their own land.

Currently, and thanks even to the economic world crisis, many powerful democratic countries are diminishing their support to the Uyghurs and Tibetan cause due to the continuous economic blackmail that China practices with success in Europe as well as in America. Many are developing a kind of sympathetic attitude to China's economic progress and tend to diminish the importance of the harsh policies against Uyghurs or Tibetans.

Are there going to be changes for the better or for the worse?

It depends: if you like to see the glass half empty or half full.

My opinion is that the glass is still fully empty.

### **1.1.3 Speech by Carl Gershman**

*President, National Endowment for Democracy*

Mr. Gershman opened by acknowledging that it is possible to say that the majority of people's lives in China have improved since Mao's death, but that it is not possible to say that this is true for the Uyghurs. He cited James Millward's book that highlights the way in which Uyghur people engage in subtle dissent because the Uyghur people are not allowed to partake in open revolt. Instead they sing political songs and tell political jokes.

Mr. Gershman highlighted the need for the conference to review all the ways in which the Uyghur people are oppressed because it has both an economic and social dimension. All the good jobs are given to the Han Chinese and there is no investment in the Uyghur people. The Uyghur language is being eliminated in the education of children and at the university level. There is also the so-called 're-education' of the Uyghur people so that they will engage in the teachings and propaganda of the Chinese communist policies. There are books where the rich Uyghur history is simply eliminated.

According to the infamous Document #7, there was a sweep of policies to eradicate the Muslim religion. Recently, this has taken shape in the form of the demolition of the traditional Uyghur buildings in Kashgar's old city involving the relocation of its people. This is one of the few remaining historical places associated with the Uyghur culture and religion. He argued that "all of this is in addition to actual repression – the armed, physical repression that is taking place in East Turkestan."

The Chinese government defines this as part of the War on Terror, but this oppression started long before September 11<sup>th</sup>. (Details of oppressions of the 1990s including the banning of the Mashrap: community gatherings aimed at addressing the symptoms of mass youth unemployment). According to Mr. Gershman the Chinese Government have claimed that "as long as the Uyghur people retain their identity, they will be unable to be integrated into Chinese society."

Mr. Gershman argued that the recent Indian elections has sent the message that can be heard over and over again, that they are democratic not because we want them to be democratic but because it is a means of survival. The only way they can carry on is if they are democratic. From this he concluded that "the same answer that India found is also the answer for China. China will be a stronger country with democracy – a more unified country."

Ultimately Mr. Gershman asked that we should approach "disputes in the national minority areas in China with an open mind... seeking ways to find a workable framework" and ultimately aim for a federation of groups in China. He called on those present not to "underestimate the vulnerability of a dictatorship... if the Uyghur people retain hope and continue on, they shall overcome."

#### **1.1.4 Speech by Mr. Hans Hogrefe**

*Director, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission*

Mr. Hogrefe called on those present to preserve hope and move forward comparing it to the fall of the Berlin wall, which he described as a 'political miracle'. Brave men and women got together and stood-up for their beliefs and that led to the fall of the wall. He argued that Charter 08<sup>1</sup> is vital to the Uyghurs and all the minorities in China, it is the best protection the future can hold.

Mr. Hogrefe continued by lending the support of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, saying that they will continue to stand with the Uyghurs and work for their rights until they are able to protect their own rights.

He said it was truly remarkable that despite the eyes of the world being focused on China during the Beijing Olympics the Chinese authorities had learnt from the clashes in Tibet and kept the treatment of the Uyghurs away from the media. It is only through the Uyghurs themselves that their treatment has become known. He continued by saying that we need to know how we move forward, we need to start thinking outside of the box, we cannot repeat what we have done in the past, when we are looking for new ways we cannot ignore those things that worked in the past. Mr. Hogrefe argued that as we review the ways of how we defend human rights our methods will be improved and that we need to make human rights a priority.

Mr. Hogrefe highlighted the fact that Uyghur people not only suffer but also produce extraordinary leaders such as Rebiya Kadeer. When he was visiting Xinjiang her children were imprisoned so he called upon everyone to remember that Uyghur rights are not an idea but they are really suffering. The Uyghurs not only have a courageous leader but also, the mother of all Uyghurs through her eloquence, has led to the suffering of the Uyghurs becoming known to the world. Their rights are an issue for the international community and they must come together.

In addition Mr. Hogrefe acknowledged that while we criticize china for false imprisonment, it is clear that we have to be aware how there are 17 in Guantanamo Bay that have been cleared but not free to leave. It is up to the USA not to violate their rights. The fairness we demand, we have to apply to ourselves.

He concluded by stating that the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission will stand with the Uyghurs, and that through the legacy of Tom Lantos they will continue their commitment to fight for Uyghur rights.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charter 08 is a manifesto signed by Chinese intellectuals and human rights activists to promote political reform and democratization in the PRC.

## 2. Panel I

### **2.1 The War on Terror; persecution, stigmatization, and preventive strike**

Since being launched in 2001 as a response to the 11 September terrorist attacks on New York, the War on Terror has been controversial. While many insist it strikes into the heart of Global Terrorism, others believe it serves as a *carte blanche* for minority persecution, the stigmatization of different religious beliefs and the dubious legitimization of preventative strikes.

#### **2.1.1 Presentation by Ms. Sarah McKune**

*Human Rights in China*

Ms. Sarah McKune focused on how the War on Terror has impacted on the Uyghur population, and how her organisation, Human Rights in China, has worked on this issue. She focused on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), an inter-governmental organisation concerned with mutual security. The members of the SCO are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These members have a few strong common interests, including their shared borders and the role of the region in the War on Terror. Ms. McKune highlighted that the SCO has grown since its establishment, now allowing observer states such as Pakistan, India, Mongolia and Iran. However they do not have a say on the decisions of the SCO. In addition to these there are also dialogue partners.

Ms. McKune claimed that the SCO appeared to have a strong gravitational pull to it and that its role in anti-terrorism within the international community could be quite strong, especially with the threat terrorism could pose. She also noted that the organization could play a major role in promoting peace within Afghanistan.

With the establishment of the SCO a document was signed pledging a commitment to combat terrorism, which it explicitly links with separatism. It contained a fairly 'standard definition of terrorism' that focused on the threat to individuals posed by those aiming to achieve certain results. Meanwhile separatism has been defined as an act to violate the territorial integrity of the state in a violent manner as well as planning and abetting. This Ms. McKune argued is vague enough to include Uyghurs. Finally extremism is not linked to individuals but to those seeking to change the constitution.

Ms. McKune contented that while the definition of terrorism is acceptable, those given for extremism and separatism raise large human rights concerns, and demonstrates dual standards in the approach to terrorism. This has led to a need for an international agreed definition of terrorism.

While the SCO focuses on non-interference and sovereignty and the respect of member's states for each other, a few of its normative documents do refer to human rights. A document of 'good neighborliness', and a declaration confirming member's obligations to protect human rights. However in February 2004 a joint Chinese and Russian statement identified those from East Turkestan and Chechnya as terrorists, a

position that has been reaffirmed since. A position Ms. McKune referred to as 'extremely questionable' and one that has used similar rhetoric that has been applied to the Tibetans.

Ms. McKune claimed that from this we can see that the SCO is focusing specifically on ethnic minorities in its approach to terrorism. Referring to East Turkestan this has manifested itself in a number of threats, including the assembly of troops who regularly practice peace missions and anti-terrorism drills designed to intimidate. It can be concluded that the definitions of terrorism given are politically motivated. It is not clear if there is an official list of terrorist organizations within the SCO with the group wanting a clear definition of terrorism in order to avoid political asylum. The few organizations that were noted as terrorists included East Turkestan groups.

Ms. McKune argued that such an approach has acute implications for civil society such as extraditions. However the most significant concern about the SCO is the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) that is being used to combat terrorism. It is a permanent acting agency of the SCO and 'follows the documents and decisions adopted within SCO and is designed for assisting, coordinating and interacting the competent agencies of SCO member countries on fighting with terrorism, separatism and extremism.'<sup>2</sup> It has become increasingly powerful and has led to fears of data sharing which the Special Rapporteur highlighted.

Ms. McKune concluded that the primary human rights concern is not how the SCO affects the international community but how it affects the state machine.

### **2.1.2 Presentation by Dr. Sophie Richardson**

*Advocacy Director, Asia Division, Human Rights Watch*

Dr. Richardson began by arguing that religion, education, and basic human rights are denied under banner of quelling terrorism. For example it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to gain employment in Xinjiang if you are a practicing Muslim. She argued that since 2001 the US, in its relentless persecution under the War on Terror basically gave Beijing carte blanche in promulgating what is marked as terrorism. The biggest mistake that arose from this, according to Dr. Richardson, was putting the East Turkestan Movement on the list of terrorists. This has also coincided with the Chinese government stretching its reach further into the international arena.

This, Dr. Richardson argued, is reflected by international reluctance to accept Uyghur inmates from Guantanamo Bay because of Chinese pressure. She reiterated Mr. Hogrefe's statement about the audacity of the US condemning China on issues of due process when the US has a 'horrible record' of treatment in relation of Guantanamo detainees, and the Uyghurs in particular. This, Dr. Richard contended, makes you wonder about a government that is that pervasive.

In conclusion Dr. Richardson recommended that the Chinese Government desisted discriminatory practices, which often caused natural tensions between Uyghur and Han Chinese populations. She also claimed there were now higher expectations for the US government in finding new, and innovative ways to handle this situation.

---

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.ecrats.com/en/> (last visited 30 June 2009).

### **2.1.3 Presentation by Mr. T. Kumar**

*Advocacy Director, Asia & Pacific, Amnesty International USA*

Mr. Kumar began by contending that “anti-terrorism is being used as a tool to muscle and abuse Uyghurs” and that he saw a shift in Chinese rhetoric towards Uyghurs after 2001. Practices towards Uyghurs include two categories, local and international handling.

Domestically Mr. Kumar argued one of the main issues is that whenever Uyghurs were charged for some offence they suddenly became terrorists. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is using terrorism as an excuse to repress any, and all, Uyghurs. They are using the cover of ‘fighting terrorism’ in cases of repression, arrests and executions.

The affect such an approach is having internationally is two-fold according to Mr. Kumar. Firstly any criticism from overseas to China on human rights abuses is answered with “this is a War on Terror we are fighting.” Secondly they are using this war as an excuse to urge other countries to hand over Uyghur refugees to the PRC, despite there being documentation of returnees being executed. In effect ‘the Uyghurs have nowhere to go.’

Mr. Kumar contended that China has the “muscle” to bring Uyghurs back into their net where other countries enveloped in the War on Terror do not. Even the people who fled China to Pakistan to enjoy safety have not joined terrorist organizations (to his knowledge), but still they are “embroiled in this mess.”

Mr. Kumar hopes that “other countries will also have the guts not to return the Uyghurs to meet persecution in China.,” but that “unfortunately, powerful countries are not standing up to China...That’s where foreign countries are failing.” He concluded that there is hope “that with a new administration here [USA], there will be change and China will be put on the spot in their abuse of the War on Terror for persecuting the Uyghurs.”

## **3. Panel II**

### **3.1 *Religious Freedom; constitutional rights in vain?***

In much of the Western world, the separation of Church and State is represented as one of the most fundamental pillars of society, most often entrenched in the constitution. In the People’s Republic of China, freedom of religion is granted by the constitution. However, the government limits the number of religions permitted to operate within China, strictly controls those religious groups, closely overseeing the ‘legitimate’ practice of religion and suppresses dissidents. Given this history of behavior from the Chinese government, to what extent is the constitutional right to religious freedom an empty rhetorical device, used to placate the international community?

### **3.1.1 Presentation by Ms. Louisa Coan Greve**

*Director of East Asia, National Endowment for Democracy*

Ms. Greve's presentation combined the human rights issues of Uyghurs and the approach of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). She said there was a contrast between government propaganda and the reality on the ground, such as the right to one's own language, cultural issues and religious freedom and its restrictions. These are the freedoms by which to define one's own ethnic identity.

What then is NED's interest in these issues? Ms. Greve said that the NED cannot support Uyghurs in East Turkestan who are working for democracy so it must support those communities already working within democracies. NED, she contended, is interested in the democratization of the entire globe and democratizing the PRC is one of its main goals.

However in order to achieve this she continued, NED needs those groups within China to speak up for their needs. So in the short term those working for democracy are working in exile, in order to truly understand this, they must understand that the issue must be part of the international discussion.

She also described a second NED project, which is to educate Chinese Democrats in Uyghur issues, and because democracy is fundamentally about their future those in exile can be a voice for those at home. Ms. Greve argued that in the long-term these exiled Uyghur groups can avoid conflict by strengthening pro-democracy groups and that they need to think about future democratic nation-building.

Ms. Greve contended that those in exile have education and freedom of speech that will allow them to discuss a possible future system, and that NED hopes that those groups can gain experience of the democratic process such as self-governance and elections.

In terms of their NED projects, Uyghurs, who make-up 1.2% of China's population receive 12% of NED China funds, as do Tibet, while Inner Mongolia receive 7%. NED grants are given to group works that aim to create democratic systems in its homeland, but not to those that aim to change territorial gains.

Ms. Greve outlined the program areas for Uyghur Democracy initiatives. These included freedom of information, democratic ideas and values, human rights, civic education and conflict resolution. NED support several Uyghur groups, the Uyghur America Association, the Uyghur Human Rights Project, the World Uyghur Congress and democracy leadership training, Independent Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation, International Uyghur PEN club, which is "a place where writers from all cultures meet to discuss, debate and communicate." She concluded saying that "it is important we never give up."

### **3.1.2 Presentation by Ms. Kara Abramson**

*Advocacy Director, Congressional-Executive Commission on China*

Ms. Abramson began by discussing China's framework for religion. There are laws that protect religious beliefs but these are limited by restricting the methods by which the religion is practiced. Chinese regulations do provide some limited religious practice but it always contingent on state approval. In fact the legal and policy framework is restrictive and, in addition, there are some gaps between the law and practice. For example some unregistered communities have been able to educate their children demonstrating some room to maneuver. China is also building laws that can be used to challenge the government.

Ms. Abramson then went on to describe the framework inside East Turkestan. The formal framework for limiting religion is harsher than elsewhere in China. There is no provision for religious freedom. Some formal legal provisions are harsher and they are bolstered by internal and public campaigns aimed at tightening the space for religious practice. As a result we see no evidence of those inside East Turkestan being able to defend their rights. As a result of religion being so politicized there is no opportunity to launch a religious rights movement.

She then went on to analyze how state policy is affecting religious policy. 11 September gave China more force to use religion as a reason to exploit certain regions. As a result there was more support for the regime's assertion that the Uyghurs were a real threat. Everyone knows the impact on Uyghurs; there was also an impact on the Uyghurs outside of China.

Ms. Abramson described how the Congressional-Executive of China has, on an annual basis, made recommendations to China, that they have supported legislation to draw attention to human rights in China and have urged officials to address problems in the judicial system in East Turkestan.

Ms. Abramson believes it will be hard to make real steps to improve religious freedom in East Turkestan. There is a need to draw attention to the human rights violations in China and to engage religious communities outside of China. Another important factor is to link Uyghur human rights issues to other human rights groups and issues within China. She also highlighted the need for the WUC to assess how it will reach its aims, how it will define and realize autonomy and ask for legal rights. She also highlighted the need for Uyghurs to address the reality that there is a negative attitude towards Muslims. This means there is a requirement to draw attention to Uyghur culture as well as their human rights issues.

### **3.1.3 Presentation by Ms. Amy Reger**

*Principal Researcher, Uyghur Human Rights Project*

Ms. Reger began by focusing on the systematic destruction of Uyghur religion and culture. She argued that there is a lack of religious freedom and that the situation is harsher today than ever before. The Chinese government is attempting to "stamp out" the Uyghur identity through these harsh policies.

Ms. Reger acknowledged that religion lies at the heart of the Uyghur culture and that anything that involves Uyghur cultural identity is under threat by the PRC. There are other areas of cultural repression, and these are different from other parts of the PRC, although there are many parallels there is evidence of a broad campaign to dilute Uyghur culture particularly.

Ms. Reger contended that there is a complete lack of open political discourse in East Turkestan unlike other parts of PRC (with the exception of Tibet). There is also a conflict between modernization and tradition, with a widespread conception of the 'backwardness' of Uyghur culture as opposed to modern Han society.

Ms. Reger also highlighted the education system that intends to remove Uyghur language in East Turkestan by enacting a monolingual system of Chinese language training. There is also specific targeting of Uyghur women through particularly harsh employment, population transfer and education restrictions. These kinds of policies are not seen amongst the Han populations in East Turkestan.

Ms. Reger concluded that China should honor the Rome Statute, despite not ratifying it, it is still bound by it and that the Uyghur Association of America is currently compiling examples of personal experience for an upcoming report on the persecutions taking place in East Turkestan.

## **4. Panel III**

### **4.1 Meaningful Autonomy & Politics Demography; economic, social and cultural challenges**

Autonomy is a particularly contentious subject within minority and indigenous politics, especially as it is all too often linked in the minds of the majority with secessionism. Here, demographics play a large role as well; there are those that argue that meaningful autonomy can only be achieved once a certain demographic density is reached. Is this true? And if it is, is it something that should be striven for? And what are the economic, social and cultural challenges that surround the issues?

#### **4.1.1 Presentation by Mr. Ulrich Delius**

*Director of Asia Desk, Society for Threatened Peoples*

Mr. Delius began by describing that in East Turkestan and Tibet, the PRC is systematically denying meaningful autonomy due to the economic potential of the regions. He described how autonomy is not entrenched in the constitution and that the inability of the autonomous government to enact positive development undermines any rule of law in East Turkestan. He claimed that there is no independent institution to solve conflicts between the region and the PRC.

Mr. Delius continued by outlining those conditions that must apply for meaningful autonomy to work: democracy, adequate economic opportunities, independent institutions to handle conflicts between the two parties, and there must be an enforceable constitution. Unfortunately, none of these systems apply in China.

He argued that it is necessary to understand the economic situation in order to understand the difficulties facing East Turkestan. The majority of the economy in East Turkestan is state owned, and its importance cannot be underestimated.

The PRC has announced they want to double their production of natural gas in 2010—extracted primarily from East Turkestan. East Turkestan also holds 40% of China’s coal reserves. Recently, a new reserve was found and the national Chinese coal company will invest several million dollars (US) in East Turkestan for the extraction. Alongside this, new nickel reserves have also been discovered. Rail lines will link the PRC with neighboring countries while cutting right through East Turkestan.

In conclusion Mr. Delius asks what is the prospect for autonomy in East Turkestan? This may be the only option for the region, but not as it is seen today, but rather in real autonomy and meaningful autonomy.

#### **4.1.2 Presentation by Mr. Joshua Cooper**

*Executive Director, Hawaii Institute for Human Rights*

At the beginning of his presentation Mr. Cooper looked at the Universal Periodic Review, which was discussed last year, where a stakeholder report for the Human Rights Council session was prepared. This brand new mechanism was focused on so when China came before this body they were at least faced with some questions of religious and other freedoms. The process was to be concluded in June (2009) when Uyghurs were able to take the floor and speak at the United Nations and where Ms. Kadeer was to put the Uyghur case forward. While this was an important step Mr. Cooper argued that we need to look at a greater interaction between academics, NGO’s and Uyghurs to give representation on the ground. There is one mechanism where this is possible and he asked those present to work towards initiating a shadow report for the upcoming Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (August 2009).

According to Mr. Cooper it will be important to identify those articles within CERD that are appropriate. The preamble of the document mentions a speedy and unconditional end to colonialism, measures necessary for China to adopt under international law. Article 2 is also important, and requires discriminatory laws and racist laws to be highlighted so they can be removed. Mr. Cooper therefore called upon Uyghurs to provide information in order to help create the society they have always desired.

Mr. Cooper believes it is important that Uyghurs suggest laws they desire, what legal measures that exist elsewhere should be implemented and how can they push and pressurize China. He also claimed that the International Criminal Court might also be an angle and the information gained from the CERD report could be applied here. In terms of the CERD experts are able to pose the questions so the research of the WUC is important. The questions that result can be put before the Chinese Government.

As a result Mr. Cooper asked for stories from Uyghurs that relate to specific articles within CERD so the experts can ask questions on their behalf. Important to this are aspects of discrimination that are faced in order to build the most credible case.

There is also a provision within CERD that uses early warning to implement urgent action, which has never been used before. Mr. Cooper argues that if we pick the most urgent issues in East Turkestan we can use everything under CERD to issue this 'early warning, urgent action' provision that would expose China to immediate review, which could "put them on the ropes." He claim that in Geneva a meeting could be organized with 18 experts in order to make this exercise as efficient as possible.

He concluded by highlighting the fact that there is no order to allow those in East Turkestan to live in freedom and express their culture and that this new campaign can follow-up the UPR and hopefully the world can stand-up in solidarity with the Uyghurs.

#### **4.1.3 Presentation by Senator Perduca**

*Executive Director, Hawaii Institute for Human Rights*

At the beginning of his presentation Senator Perduca described how Ms. Kadeer and himself were recently in Rome where they organized a meeting with the Italian vice-president. As well as highlighting the issue of human rights they also discussed what proposal Uyghurs want to promote to the PRC and the international community. Apparently everyone was pleased that discussions of autonomy were taking place amongst Uyghurs around the world.

The Senator claimed it was a surprise that the Uyghurs cause was not that well known, that the idea of Islam often colored impressions but how surprised politicians were by the Uyghur agenda. They were also glad to know that within the Chinese constitution there is ample opportunity to allow autonomy.

The Senator compared the issue of autonomy with that in Italy, which is the only none-federal European State to have autonomous regions. The statutes of special regions have been drafted to include language and cultural aspects while autonomy in Sardinia has predominantly liked to economic autonomy. Therefore we have two types of autonomy, ethnic and linguistic and economic. The French community in Italy is small and poor; the German region is large and situated in a wealthy area. There was violence and terrorism in an attempt to try and separate the north German region. In an effort to maintain Italian territory and sovereignty a large effort was employed to allow autonomy for that region.

Although the Senator acknowledged that he cannot say they lived together happily violence against each other ceased. In addition their right to speak their own language was recognized and they could speak in both private and public. In achieving this the central government invested in infrastructure and tried to compensate when a group was excluded from society. The situation improved again with the formation of the European Union, the most important aspect of which, according to the Senator, was that every country had to lift a bit of their national sovereignty. Renouncing this in order to honor supranational documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights, Europe shifted from national identity to individual human rights. As a result what had been an economic issue of a region became an administrative one.

Although acknowledging that this might not be the fairest example compared to East Turkestan, the Senator claimed that to the best of his knowledge this is the best example of dealing with a territory that was fought over by two territories. He argued that not many people remember but in Europe there was very violent separatism, Catalonia is another example, and that there is a comparison between what is occurring in East Turkestan to what happened in Europe for many years.

Moving forward the Senator argued that in order to engage a community in dialogue it is not possible to go alone, but you need the support of international community, and mechanisms such as the United Nations. The other possibility is to mobilize public opinion to support your cause in different ways, and this is what Ms. Kadeer has discussed. Accordingly the Senator contended that the focus must shift from self-determination to autonomy and women must be used to promote this instead of men.

Women politicians around the world should be found to promote the Uyghur cause and this could be a new way of promotion. Although there is no specific proposal, Tibet has been able to let the rest of the world know what they really want through a memorandum they produced, which is a form of response to Beijing, and the Senator claimed they have already been able to organize two meetings in the European Union to discuss it.

Senator Perduca urged that a document be produced, following discussions within the Uyghur community that could be used in a similar way. This, he argued, would be a step in the right direction.