



U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission

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REPORT RELEASED: CHINA'S RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

Washington, DC - Today, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission released a report prepared for the Commission by Murray Scot Tanner and James Bellacqua at CNA. CNA is a nonprofit research organization that operates the Center for Naval Analyses and the Institute for Public Research. The report, entitled [*China's Response to Terrorism*](#), examines the Chinese government's efforts to combat terrorism by analyzing China's definition and perception of its terrorist threat, its institutional infrastructure, strategy, and policies for combating terrorism, international counterterrorism cooperation efforts, and the opportunities for, and challenges of, U.S.-China cooperation on countering terrorism.

The report found that U.S.-China counterterrorism cooperation is complex due to the divergence of security interests and differences in American and Chinese legal systems and ideological values. While cooperation on port security, container security and airline screening has made progress, concerns about human rights and religious freedom have made the U.S. government reluctant to expand bilateral cooperation on terrorism. The Chinese government continues to reject the notion that its ethnic and religious policies are contributing to its domestic terrorism.

Due to these concerns, the report advocates that United States focus bilateral cooperation on areas that would provide concrete technical benefits to U.S. security interests; create an international environment that is inhospitable to terrorism; promote legal, policy, and institutional changes in China; and minimize or control links to topics where there are U.S.-China disagreements over human rights policies. In particular, the report recommends the continuation and expansion of bilateral training on improvised explosive devices and terrorist financing as well as joint research on international terrorism theory and global terrorist movements.

The report indicates that, overall, the Chinese government views its terrorist threats as primarily domestic, focusing predominantly on its largely Muslim ethnic Uyghur population in western Xinjiang. While the lack of detailed, independently corroborated information makes it difficult to identify, assess, and measure acts of terrorism in China, the report found the number of domestic and international terrorist attacks against Chinese citizens increased from 2012 to 2014. Domestic attacks are becoming more frequent, geographically dispersed, and more indiscriminately targeted. The Chinese government has sought to manage this rising domestic terrorism problem with enhanced regional economic growth, stronger internal security capabilities, and tighter controls over ethnic and religious activities.

The Chinese government, according to the report, has also been stepping up international counterterrorism cooperation with its neighbors in Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Much of this bilateral cooperation focuses on reducing instability in China's Xinjiang Province. While such cooperation has made it more difficult for terrorism to thrive, China's push for international recognition of its designated terrorist groups and extradition requests of former and current Chinese citizens has been more controversial due to concerns over political asylum and inability of international bodies to independently corroborate China's terrorism designations. Read the [full report online here](#).

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared at the request of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission to support its deliberations. Posting of the report to the Commission's website is intended to promote greater public understanding of the issues addressed by the Commission in its ongoing assessment of U.S.-China economic relations and their implications for U.S. security, as mandated by Public Law 110-161 and Public Law 113-291. However, it does not necessarily imply an endorsement by the Commission or any individual Commissioner of the views or conclusions expressed in this commissioned research report.