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**CHINA AND MUSLIM SEPARATISM:
THE CASE OF XINJIANG UIGHUR
AUTONOMOUS REGION**

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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

Signature

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Abstract

Today, confrontations and conflicts between different ethnic groups have become a major issue in many countries, which has been threatening the stability and unity of these countries. These issues have been highlighted in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Central Asia, by the destabilization of these states through a process of bloody disintegration. In consequence, many ethnic groups in multinational countries demand self-determination or secession from the dominant states by using violent action, therefore, there are many small independent states, which have emerged suddenly around the world.

Since ethnic issues can be used against a country's interests, the stability of a country to a great extent depends on the degree of the relationship among its different peoples. Among these issues, ethnic conflict is considered as one of the main sources of a series of localized, international confrontations. For this reason, the issue of ethnic conflict is likely to become a big concern for the state authorities and regional government.

China, composed of fifty-five nationalities, is a unified and multinational country. Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region is one of the largest provincial regions with the majority of its population being Muslim. In the last hundred years, several nationalities, including Uighur, Kazak and Kirghiz, have continually tried to secede Xinjiang from China. Meanwhile, violent incidents between Han Chinese and Muslims have frequently happened throughout the history of Xinjiang. Since 1949, the demands for the independence of Xinjiang from the ethnic groups of Xinjiang have become stronger. Since the early 1980s, the growth and characteristics of

Muslim separatist activities have been the major themes in China that this study will focus on.

This case study of Xinjiang Muslim separatism addresses the question of why the ethnic conflicts and confrontations between Muslim and Han Chinese have proliferated since the early 1980s. It also examines the impact that Muslim separatist movements have had on the unity of China, the power of the central Chinese authority, the Muslim-Han relationship, and the relationship between China and neighboring states. As a result, how the Chinese government responded to the Muslim separatist challenge will be analyzed.

Discussion of several violent riots occurring in Xinjiang in recent years and the major reasons for these both in domestic and international aspects, emphasizes the importance of government policies on the relationship between different nationalities, the stability of the society and the security of the region. In order to assist in understanding the national issue effectively, it attempts to identify some rules applicable to this case and discusses the constraints, which may influence the implementation and effectiveness of government policies towards ethnic groups.

This study examines the developing trends of Xinjiang Muslim separatism, explores the origin, characteristics, organizational structure of Muslim separatism, and foreshadows the uncertain future of the Xinjiang Muslim separatist activities. The conclusion is that there is no hope for the Xinjiang Muslim separatist claim for independence of Xinjiang, except in the event of the disintegration of the entity of China. Analysis the history experience suggests that sporadic and small-scale riots

instigated by Muslim separatists would continue and take place regularly in the future. The aim of this research is to provide a better understanding of Chinese Muslims, ethnic issues and the mystic region of Xinjiang. It also provides an example to other states, which may have the same problem as China.

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