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**Michael E. Clarke. Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009: A History. London: Routledge. 2011.**

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**Michael E. Clarke. *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009: A History*. London: Routledge. 2011.**

In 2011, two years after the violent protests in the city of Ürümqi, the northwest province of China, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), citizens from Europe, Canada, United States, Turkey, Japan, Kazakhstan, and Australia demonstrated in cities throughout the world to show their support for the Uyghur rights.<sup>i</sup> On July 5, 2009, violence escalated, spawning a series of riots during which one hundred and eighty-four people died, and over one thousand people were injured. These events marked a turning point in the daily lives of the Uyghur people: In response to what it perceived as Uyghur separatist activity, the Chinese government committed itself to violently suppressing such activity. Immediately following the conflict, approximately 1,500 individuals were arrested, nine were executed, and 17 additional individuals were sentenced to death. No less swiftly were texting and Internet services disabled and thousands of surveillance cameras added to the Xinjiang landscape. The People's Republic of China forcefully maintained that the Xinjiang region was an integral part of the "motherland."

Within days of the second anniversary of these tragic events, violence broke out in Xinjiang again. On July 18, 2011, another confrontation between Uyghurs and Chinese police occurred in Khotan, leaving close to twenty people dead. Fewer than two weeks later, on July 31, another violent outbreak occurred in Kashgar, with reports of up to another twenty casualties. A portrait of this ongoing hostility between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government in Xinjiang opens this timely book, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia, 1949-2009: A History* and frames many of the book's inquiries. Altogether, Michael E. Clarke, currently a Research Fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Australia, offers a comprehensive examination of the PRC's political mechanics and strategies for incorporating Xinjiang into modern China.

Throughout *Xinjiang and China's Rise*, Clarke attempts to answer questions regarding Chinese reaction to the riots of 2009. Toward that end, the first chapter primarily outlines answers to many of the questions that may vex the reader regarding the history of the region. He examines, for example, what constitutes the region of Central Asia that was historically defined as 'China's Xinjiang' and which people made up the population of the region, thus becoming Chinese citizens. He goes on to explore the ways in which the PRC has implemented policies to integrate and maintain Xinjiang within its borders. These questions are explored in order to help the reader understand China's increased power and influence in Central Asia as such power relates to the country's evolving integrationist policies in Xinjiang.

Clarke presents three central arguments in his analysis of the PRC's implementation of policies with respect to the Xinjiang region. First, he posits that since the nineteenth century, the incorporation of the Xinjiang region has been part of the *territorialization* of modern China. (Chinese political authority has often been authored in the Westphalian sense, and land in China is sovereignly governed and defined by exclusive borders. As such, says Clarke, incorporation of Xinjiang into the nation has always been among the PRC's primary political objectives). Second, the author asserts, despite its political interest in the Xinjiang region, Chinese political authority failed to fully penetrate Xinjiang, leaving the territory to be governed by alternative sources of

political authority. As a result, the inherently contentious political environment within the Xinjiang region created there a state of Foucauldian 'permanent provocation,' in which the state's desire for integration and the Xinjiang's desire for self-governance created ongoing contestation. Finally, Clarke argues that China continues to regard Xinjiang as a potentially strategic and economic asset in the region that serves to strengthen China's regional and global power. Therefore, he says, it serves the PRC's own foreign policies in Central Asia to sustain a domestic policy of integrationism toward the Xinjiang region.

*Xinjiang and China's Rise* examines the political integration of Xinjiang over the *longue durée*. Clarke wisely situates his study of modern Xinjiang in the pre-modern history of the region. In chapter two, he delineates the historical legacy of the imperial incorporation of the *New Dominion (xinjiang)* by the Manchus and the power struggles between various local military leaders during the Republican Era. The third chapter outlines the two periods during the twentieth century that most clearly demonstrate the Chinese Communist Party's dual goals of (1) integrating Xinjiang into Chinese control and (2) isolating the Xinjiang region from Soviet influence. In the first period, during the initial years of the PRC's control of the region (1949-1955), emphasis was placed on strengthening political control of the region. In the second period (1956-76), the Chinese political authorities attempted to more fully incorporate Xinjiang within the nation, economically, socially, and politically, thereby hoping to shield it from potential Soviet influence. The goals of incorporating Xinjiang and minimizing Soviet influence in the region were pursued through military-agricultural colonies (such as the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps), Han colonization of the region (largely by the immigration of Han into Xinjiang), and the co-opting of local religious and political leadership.

In chapter four, Clarke delineates the contentious dynamics that emerged in Xinjiang during the reform period of 1976-1990. Between those years, the PRC was forced to address two issues: First, it had to resolve the internal social and ethnic unrest created by Han in-migration into the Xinjiang region. In addition, the government had to counter external interference from other nations within Central Asia, interference that in part resulted from the PRC having inserted itself into the policies of those other nations as a part of its own outwardly-focused economic development. The tensions that were created as a result of the PRC's attempting to balance domestic policies vis-à-vis the political and social integration of the Xinjiang region with its own foreign policies of external economic development boiled over in the violent uprisings in 1990 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Chapters five through seven divide Chinese policy into three phases: the post-Soviet independent Central Asia period (1991-1995), the Shanghai Five era (1996-2001), and the post September 11 era (2002-2009). In the first stage, the PRC's policy focused its attention on the internal security of Xinjiang, while still attempting to capitalize on the Xinjiang region's historical economic, cultural, and social links to the newly independent Central Asian states. During the second stage, in the late nineties, China focused on exerting its influence in Central Asia with the creation of a multilateral mechanism (the Shanghai Five) to partner in developing the region. Local policy in Xinjiang during that time focused on thwarting separatists while developing the region economically in order to further influence the Central Asian nations. In the third period, post 2001, China generally continued its policies both within the Xinjiang region and in Central Asia and

remained focused on (1) Han in-migration, (2) the economic and infrastructural development of Xinjiang, and (3) the widening of the influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Central Asia. On top of these goals, the post September 11 “War on Terrorism” furnished the PRC with a new framework through which to tackle the continued discontent of many of Xinjiang’s Uyghur inhabitants. The local suppression of separatists was now framed in light of the global fight against Islamic extremism.

Overall, Clarke has done a wonderful job of piecing together a political history of Xinjiang’s strategic importance for Chinese policy in Central Asia. The achievement of *Xinjiang and China’s Rise* is in Clarke’s analysis, which is intelligent and comprehensive and offers a new perspective for framing Xinjiang in the larger global dynamics of contemporary politics. While he presents little new information, he offers a clear synopsis of the best scholarship on Xinjiang (including the works of Becquelin, Benson, Dillon, Fletcher, Garver, Gladney, Kim, Mackerras, Millward, Newby, Nyman, Purdue, Roberts, and Wang, which guides those unfamiliar with the history of this region) and places Chinese contemporary policy within historical context. His work is clearly influenced by these early scholars, especially Owen Lattimore, Andrew Forbes, and Donald McMillen. Clarke has succeeded in melding these three scholars’ methodologies of exploring Xinjiang’s importance in the region. He employs Lattimore’s broad geopolitical approach to Eurasia (*Pivot of Asia*, 1950), Forbes’ detailed analysis of local politics (*Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia*, 1986), and McMillen’s strategy of understanding state policies within the region (*Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang*, 1979), thus achieving a presentation that recognizes both the micro- and macro-level political dynamics in Xinjiang. Interested readers will be those in China studies, Central Asian studies, Turkish studies, political science, international studies, and history.

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<sup>i</sup> Uyghurs, one of the largest Muslim ethnic minorities in China, have various socio-political goals, including the desire for an independent Xinjiang, which is presented by many global commentators as the primary goal of all Uyghurs.