



# STUDY GUIDE

## China: Friend or Foe?

**KEY TERMS:**

Communist  
authoritarian

Capitalism  
principles

expansionist  
threat

<b>Detail Focus:</b> Complete this section <u>during</u> the video.	<b>Main Summary Focus:</b> Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
1. What was the idea behind United States leaders encouraging deep ties with China for so long?	1. What is it about the Communist Chinese government that makes it such a threat to the free world?
2. Why do China's Communist rulers manipulate supply chains?	2. What should the free world do to mitigate and to reduce the threat posed by the Communist Chinese government?
3. What is the Communist Chinese government using its economic clout to advance?	

## Discussion & Review Questions

1. At the beginning of the video, Governor Haley contends that, “Communist China is the biggest challenge America faces on the world stage. It’s a challenge that we ignored for far too long. For decades, United States leaders in both parties encouraged deep ties with China. The idea was that China would move away from Communism and embrace freedom and democracy. This idea was wrong. The Chinese Communist Party is now more oppressive at home and aggressive abroad than ever before. It uses every tool at its disposal to strengthen itself while weakening America.” In what ways, specifically, is Communist China a challenge for America? Explain. Why do you think America ignored the challenge for so long? Explain. Do you think it was right for America to try so hard to influence China to be more like America? Why or why not?
2. Later in the video, Governor Haley notes that, “During the Cold War, we [America] limited trade with the Soviet Union. We didn’t want the Communist country to use our innovation and economy against us and our allies. Now it’s time to take a similar approach with China.” What, specifically, do you think Governor Haley means by the phrase ‘use our innovation and economy against us?’ Explain. Do you agree that America should take the same approach with the Communist Chinese government? Why or why not?
3. Governor Haley goes on to point out that, “As it gathered economic strength, China became less free and more aggressive. Now we face an expansionist Communist China whose economic power vastly exceeds anything the Soviets could ever muster. China is using its growing economic clout to advance its authoritarian vision. The country’s rulers are determined to control or eliminate anyone who stands in their way.” Why do you think that during a time of such economic growth and prosperity, China became less free and more aggressive? Explain. Why do you think that the Chinese government is literally willing to murder people, including its own people, in order to maintain its authoritarian order? Explain.
4. After presenting numerous more egregious examples of the Communist Chinese government’s oppressive and expansionist behavior, Governor Haley explains that, “The simple fact is that Communist China will not stop. This is why America must respond- and lead. That starts with American resolve. To stand up to China, we need to stand up for our principles.” What is American resolve, and how can it help to stop Communist Chinese aggression? What, exactly, are ‘our principles,’ and how will standing up for them help to stop Communist Chinese aggression? Explain.
5. At the end of the video, Governor Haley concludes that, “Standing up to Chinese Communism will ensure that America has a safer, stronger, and more prosperous future. That’s what this is all about- and that’s why we must never lose sight of the Chinese Communist threat. Let’s get to work.” How, exactly, does standing up to Chinese Communism equate to America being safer, stronger, and more prosperous? Explain. What do you think Governor Haley means, exactly, when she invites us to ‘get to work?’

## Extend the Learning:

### Case Study Uighurs

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Concentration camps and forced labor: China’s repression of the Uighurs, explained,” then answer the questions that follow.

1. Who is Ilham Tohti, and what happened to him? How many Uighurs have been arbitrarily detained by the Chinese Communist Party, and what happens to them in ‘reeducation centers?’ How many detention centers have been documented by the Australians? In what ways are the Uighurs inside and outside of the camps exploited? What are Chinese authorities subjecting Uighur women to? What does the Chinese government claim the camps are for, and how has it justified the oppression in Xinjiang? How does Jewher Ilham characterize what is happening to the Uighurs? How many Uighurs live in Xinjiang? Who did the Chinese government blame for the riots in 2009? What is ‘de-extremification?’ What do the Chinese reeducation camps combine? Who is Chen Quanguo, and what did he do? What was the ‘Pair Up and Become Family’ program, and what was it designed to do? Who is James Millward, and how does he explain what is happening? How many people do experts think have been ‘disappeared’ into the reeducation camps? Government agencies overseeing the camps purchased how many electric cattle prods? What evidence exists that China is continuing to expand the detention of the Uighurs? What do anecdotal reports from women detained in the camps say they were forced to do? Who is Gulzira Mogdyn, and what happened to her? in addition to ‘brainwashing,’ what else are camp detainees subjected to? What did Nury Turkel have to say about the supply chain in East Turkestan? How many Uighurs were taken from Xinjiang and transferred to various factories around China? What legislation did President Trump sign into law relating to the plight of the Uighurs and what does the law do? What did the Trump administration put new restrictions on in September? Who is Olivia Enos, and what did she say should be a priority for any U.S. administration?
2. What do you think will happen to the Uighur people in the long term? Explain. Do you think that Jewher will ever get to see her family again? Why or why not? How do you think the Chinese government could have better handled the supposed problem of religious extremism? Explain.
3. Do you think that the Communist Chinese government should be allowed to continue to implement authoritarian principles and policies in China? Why or why not? Do you think that other countries have a moral obligation to interfere with the Communist Chinese government’s behavior towards the people in its nation? Why or why not?

# Concentration camps and forced labor: China's repression of the Uighurs, explained

There is more and more evidence of China's human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

By [Jen Kirby](mailto:Jen.Kirbyjen.kirby@vox.com) [jen.kirby@vox.com](mailto:jen.kirby@vox.com) Updated Sep 25, 2020, 4:52pm EDT



A Uighur man at a temperature checkpoint in Kuqa, China, on June 29, 2020. *David Liu/Getty Images*

Jewher Ilham said she had not heard from her father since 2017.

Her dad, Ilham Tohti, is an economics professor and prominent Uighur intellectual in Xinjiang, China. He ran a website, UighurOnline, that focused on issues pertaining to the Muslim ethnic minority group.

Chinese authorities repeatedly shut down the website. Jewher says the family received death threats. Chinese authorities also disappeared her father multiple times before detaining him in 2014 and quickly finding him guilty on separatism charges. He was sentenced to life in prison.

At first, Jewher told me, because her father was a political prisoner, the family could visit him every few months. But then the Chinese government cut off access entirely.

Jewher is in the United States; she still has extended family in Xinjiang, the northwestern region in China where most Uighurs live. She does not talk with them, either. “If they talk to me or if they receive a phone call from me, I don’t think anything good will happen to them,” she told me over the phone in July.

Jewher’s father was targeted by the Chinese government for his advocacy of Uighur rights. But in recent years, the Chinese Communist Party has arbitrarily detained between 1 million and 3 million other Uighurs in so-called “reeducation centers” and forced them to undergo psychological indoctrination programs, such as studying communist propaganda and giving thanks to Chinese President Xi Jinping. Chinese officials have also reportedly used waterboarding and other forms of torture, including sexual abuse, as part of the indoctrination process.

Researchers from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, using satellite imagery and other evidence, have documented more than 380 re-education camp detention centers and prisons in Xinjiang, with at least 61 having been expanded or updated within the last year.

It is the largest mass internment of an ethnic-religious minority group since World War II.

The concentration camps are the most extreme example of China’s inhumane policies against the Uighurs, but the entire population is subject to repressive policies. China has used mass surveillance to turn Xinjiang into a high-tech police state.

Uighurs inside and outside the camps are exploited for cheap labor, forced to manufacture clothing and other products for sale both at home and abroad. The New York Times revealed in July that some Chinese-made face masks being sold in the United States and other countries were produced in factories that relied on Uighur labor.

Another recent investigation found evidence that Chinese authorities subjected Uighur women to mass sterilization, forcing them to take birth control or have abortions and putting them in camps if they resist. Some have argued this attempt to control the Uighur population meets the United Nations’ definition of genocide.

The Chinese government, however, claims that the camps are merely vocational and training centers, and that they’re teaching people job skills. It has justified the oppression in Xinjiang as an attempt to clamp down on terrorism and extremism emanating from the Uighur separatist movement.

There have been incidents of violent unrest over the years, including a few deadly terrorist attacks, and at least one Uighur extremist group in the region, the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, has ties to al-Qaeda and the global jihadist movement. But most experts say Beijing's repression and subjugation of millions of Uighurs is vastly disproportionate to the comparatively minor terror threat in the region.

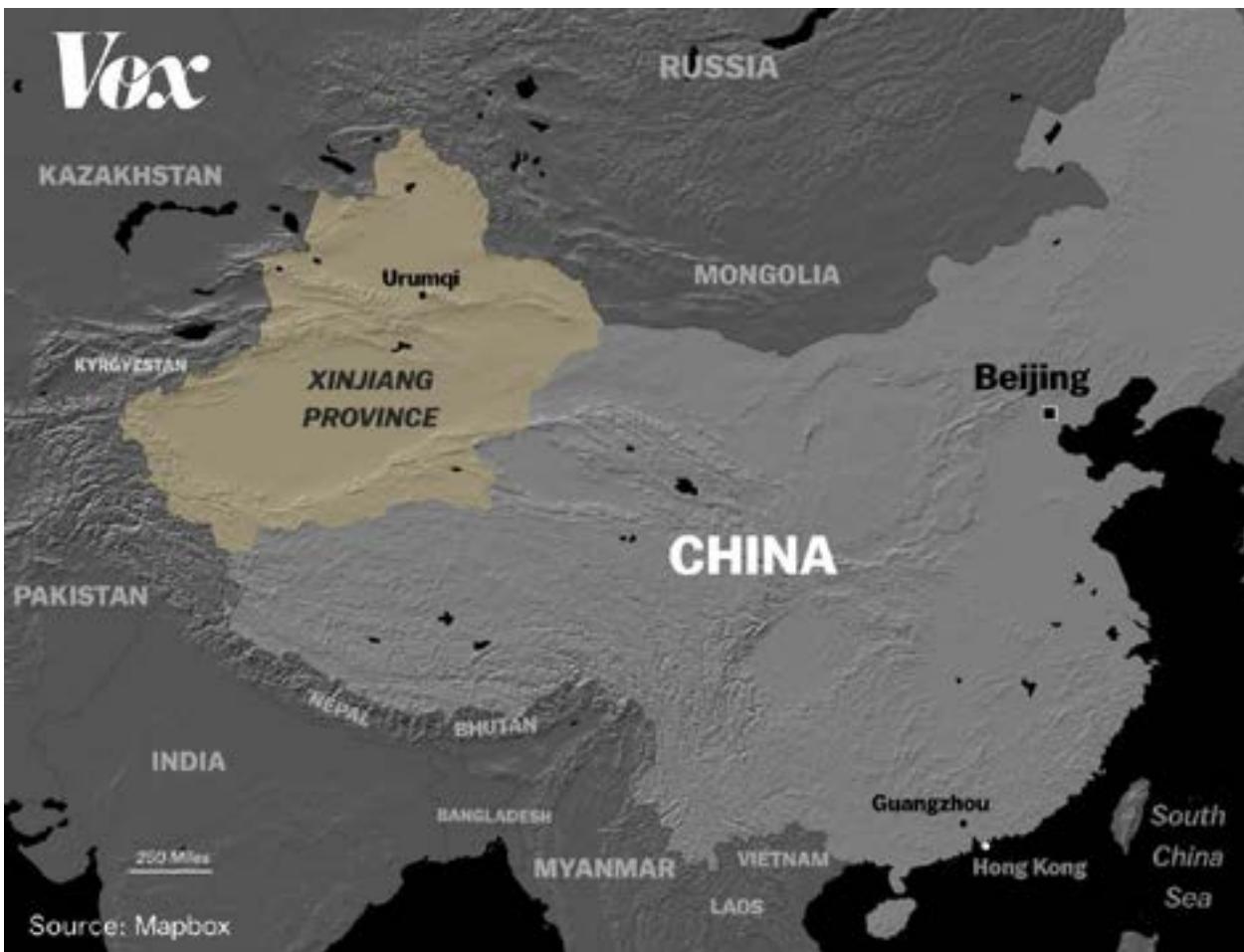
As more and more reports of the atrocities happening in Xinjiang are revealed, the international community is grappling with how to punish China for its abuses. The United States recently imposed sanctions on Chinese officials involved in persecuting the Uighurs and punished companies believed to be reliant on Uighur forced labor.

Advocates and bipartisan groups of lawmakers are calling for more forceful action, and earlier this week the House of Representatives passed overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation that requires companies to prove products from the Xinjiang region are not made with coerced Uighur labor.

Yet the persecution of the Uighurs continues and in full view of the world.

Jewher is now herself an activist for Uighur rights. She says knowing what is happening to Uighurs makes her more determined to preserve her culture, her history, and her language. "I don't think there's any other words to put for this action," she said. "I think it is genocide. It's genocide, period."

## **Why China is targeting the Uighur Muslim community in Xinjiang**



Javier Zarracina/Vox

Xinjiang, where about 11 million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities live, is an autonomous region in China's northwest that borders Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia. It has been under Chinese control since 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established.

Uighurs speak their own language — an Asian Turkic language similar to Uzbek — and most practice a moderate form of Sunni Islam. Some activists, including those who seek independence from China, refer to the region as East Turkestan.

Once situated along the ancient Silk Road trading route, Xinjiang is oil- and resource-rich. As it developed along with the rest of China, the region attracted more Han Chinese, a migration encouraged by the Chinese government.

That demographic shift inflamed ethnic tensions, especially within some of the larger cities. In 2009, for example, riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, after Uighurs protested their treatment by the government and the Han majority. About 200 people were killed and hundreds injured during the unrest.

The Chinese government blamed the protests on violent separatist groups, a tactic it would continue to use against the Uighurs and other religious and ethnic minorities across China.

The Chinese government justifies its clampdown on the Uighurs and Muslim minorities by saying it's trying to eradicate extremism and separatist groups. Attacks, some violent, by Uighur separatists have occurred in recent years, and some Uighurs have become foreign fighters, joining groups like ISIS. But there's little evidence of any cohesive separatist movement — with jihadist roots or otherwise — that could challenge the Chinese government, some experts tell me.

Xinjiang is also a major logistics hub of Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, a trillion-dollar infrastructure project along the old Silk Road meant to boost China's economic and political influence around the world. Xinjiang's increasing importance to China's global aspirations is a major reason Beijing is exerting its control in the region.

"This region is critical to China's future development and the Belt and Road initiative," Dru C. Gladney, a professor of anthropology at Pomona College in Claremont, California, who studies the region, told me. "All those roads go through Xinjiang."

### **China's "de-extremification" policies against the Uighurs**

China's crackdown on the Uighurs was initially part of a policy of "de-extremification." Under this policy, Beijing imposed draconian restrictions in Xinjiang intended to erase the Uighurs' Islamic religious and cultural identity, including imprisoning hundreds of thousands in so-called "reeducation" camps.

China has a dark history with reeducation camps, combining hard labor with indoctrination to the party line. According to research by Adrian Zenz, a leading scholar on China's policies toward the Uighurs and Senior Research Fellow in China Studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Chinese officials began using dedicated camps in Xinjiang around 2014, around the same time that China blamed a series of terrorist attacks on radical Uighur separatists.

In 2016, Xinjiang also got a new leader: a powerful Communist Party boss named Chen Quanguo, whose previous job was restoring order and control to the restive region of Tibet. Chen has a reputation as a strongman and is something of a specialist in ethnic crackdowns. The United States placed human rights sanctions on Chen and other Chinese officials in Xinjiang earlier this month.

Chen "is responsible for the system that used technology to round up Uighurs at such a rapid pace — not only in Xinjiang, but also similar models of convenience-style police stations were sort of tested in the Tibet region prior to being deployed in the Xinjiang context," said Olivia Enos, a senior policy analyst at the Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at the Heritage Foundation.

Increased and aggressive mass surveillance and police presence accompanied his move to Xinjiang, including his "grid management" policing system. As the Economist reported, "authorities divide each city into squares, with about 500 people. Every square has a police station that keeps tabs on the inhabitants. So, in rural areas, does every village."

Security checkpoints where residents must scan identification cards were set up at train stations and on roads into and out of towns. Authorities have reportedly used facial recognition technology to track residents' movements. Chinese officials also reportedly took blood and DNA samples, framed as mandatory check-ups.

Police confiscate phones to download the information contained on them to scan through later or track Uighurs through their cellphones. Police have also confiscated passports to prevent Uighurs from traveling abroad. Uighurs abroad say their families are targeted by Chinese officials, part of a pressure campaign to keep the diaspora from speaking out.

Some of the targeted “de-extremification” restrictions gained coverage in the West, including a ban on certain Muslim names for babies and another on long beards and veils. The government reportedly tried to promote drinking and smoking because people who didn’t drink or smoke — like devout Muslims — were deemed suspicious.

In October 2019, Radio Free Asia, a news agency backed by the US government, also reported that Han Chinese men were being sent to check in on and sometimes sleep with Uighur women, including those whose husbands were detained in the camps. The “Pair Up and Become Family” program, as it is called, is designed to “promote ethnic unity,” one local official explained.

Chinese officials have justified these policies as necessary to counter religious radicalization and extremism, but critics say they are explicitly meant to curtail Islamic traditions and practices.

The Chinese government is “trying to expunge ethnonational characteristics from the people,” James Millward, a professor at Georgetown University, told me in 2018. “They’re not trying to drive them out of the country; they’re trying to hold them in.”

“The ultimate goal, the ultimate issue that the Chinese state is targeting, [is] the cultural practices and beliefs of Muslim groups,” he added.

## **What we know, and don’t know, about the concentration camps**

“Reeducation camps” — or training camps, as they are also called in China — are perhaps the most sinister pillar of this de-extremification policy. Experts estimate as many as 3 million people have disappeared into these camps at some point, with about 1 million currently being held.

At first, the Chinese government denied these camps even existed. China’s state-run media at one time dismissed the reports of detention camps as Western media “baselessly criticizing China’s human rights.”

But China has since stopped pretending that the camps aren’t real. Instead, the government is trying to cast them as both lawful and innocuous. In October 2018, Chinese officials effectively legalized the “education camps” for the stated goal of eradicating extremism. Later that month, a government official in Xinjiang — who was himself an ethnic Uighur — compared the detention centers to “boarding schools” and its detainees to “students.”

“Many trainees have said they were previously affected by extremist thought and had never participated in such kinds of arts and sports activities. Now they realize how colorful life can be,” Xinjiang Governor Shorat Zakir reportedly told Xinhua, China’s state-run news agency.

What’s really going on in the camps is difficult to know because of China’s disinformation campaign and tight clampdown on information. But leaked official documents and chilling firsthand accounts from people detained in the camps have helped outside experts and researchers put together a disturbing portrait of the abuses that take place there.

These camps are much more like prisons than so-called boarding schools. A 2018 report by Agence France-Presse described camps in which thousands of guards carry spiked clubs, tear gas, and stun guns to surveil detainees, who are held in buildings surrounded by razor wire and infrared cameras. AFP journalists also reviewed public documents showing that government agencies overseeing the camps purchased 2,768 police batons, 550 electric cattle prods, 1,367 pairs of handcuffs, and 2,792 cans of pepper spray.

An investigation by Reuters in 2018 also found that, according to satellite imagery, 39 suspected camps almost tripled in size between April 2017 and August 2018. “Collectively, the built-up parts in these 39 facilities now cover an area roughly the size of 140 soccer fields,” the report said.

In 2019, another set of leaked documents revealed how tightly controlled the camps are. According to the BBC, detainees were “never” allowed to escape, and their “behavioral violations” would face discipline and punishment. The documents ordered surveillance of dorm rooms and classrooms. Leaked drone footage, believed to be recorded last August, appears to show hundreds of Uighur prisoners, blindfolded and handcuffed, being transferred by train.

**And** there is evidence that China is continuing to expand the detention of the Uighurs, even beyond the re-education camps. China has claimed since last year that detainees had graduated and been released, rejoining society because their indoctrination program worked. In August, Buzzfeed News used satellite imagery to document 2017 detention facilities built since 2017, one in every county in Xinjiang. According to Buzzfeed, as China sought to detain people, they repurposed government buildings, but, over time, these sites have become fortified, and more and more prison-like.

A report released this month by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) also found China’s network of detention centers continues to grow. ASPI documented 380 centers that had been built or expanded since 2017, and at least 60 new facilities have been built or expanded between July 2019 and July 2020 alone; about half are more heavily securitized facilities — maximum security prisons, basically. ASPI also found evidence that some of the earlier re-education camps had been decommissioned. It’s a sign this is just arbitrary detention, without even the pretense China had used before.

The Chinese government continues to target Uighurs outside the **camps**. In February 2020, a leaked 137-page spreadsheet from Karakax County in Xinjiang showed exactly how Uighur families were tracked by authorities. The spreadsheet contained 300 names of Uighur families,

including the identities of people committed to concentration camps, and those whom officials were monitoring. Some of those being tracked were as young as 16.

Among the things that caught the attention of authorities were obtaining a passport (whether or not they traveled), praying regularly, or even wearing a beard, according to the New York Times. Family members were monitored for participating in religious ceremonies like funerals or weddings. Uighurs were also sent to camps if they violated China's birth restrictions.

Additional research by Zenz and the Associated Press in June 2020 bolstered this finding, showing that Chinese officials were systematically trying to stop Uighur women from having children under the threat of internment if they violated the rules. According to the report:

The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilization and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show. Even while the use of IUDs and sterilization has fallen nationwide, it is rising sharply in Xinjiang.

The research backs up anecdotal reports from women detained in the camps, who say they were forced to undergo examinations and abortions.

In December 2017, Gulzira Mogdyn, a 38-year-old ethnic Kazakh and Chinese citizen, was detained in Xinjiang and put under house arrest. She told the Washington Post in October 2019 that during her detention, she'd been forced to undergo a physical examination. She was 10 weeks pregnant; a month later, doctors terminated her pregnancy against her will. "Two humans were lost in this tragedy — my baby and me," Mogdyn told the Post.

Inside these camps, detainees are reportedly subjected to bizarre exercises aimed at "brainwashing" them, as well as physical torture, rape, and sleep deprivation. Millward, the Georgetown professor, said the Chinese authorities see the camps as "a kind of conversion therapy, and they talk about it that way."

A source also told Radio Free Asia in 2018 that a Chinese official had referred to the "reeducation" process as similar to "spraying chemicals on the crops. That is why it is general reeducation, not limited to a few people."

The Washington Post published an account from Kayrat Samarkand, who was detained in one of the camps for three months:

The 30-year-old stayed in a dormitory with 14 other men. After the room was searched every morning, he said, the day began with two hours of study on subjects including "the spirit of the 19th Party Congress," where Xi expounded his political dogma in a three-hour speech, and China's policies on minorities and religion. Inmates would sing communist songs, chant "Long live Xi Jinping" and do military-style training in the afternoon before writing accounts of their day, he said.

“Those who disobeyed the rules, refused to be on duty, engaged in fights or were late for studies were placed in handcuffs and ankle cuffs for up to 12 hours,” Samarkand told the Post.

At a July 2018 hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China — a special bipartisan committee set up by Congress to monitor human rights in China — Jessica Batke, a former research analyst at the State Department, testified that “in at least some of these facilities, detainees are subject to waterboarding, being kept in isolation without food and water, and being prevented from sleeping.”

“They are interrogated about their religious practices and about having made trips abroad,” Batke continued. “They are forced to apologize for the clothes they wore or for praying in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

### The increasing use of forced Uighur labor

Beyond the detention camps, there is now growing evidence that Uighurs are being forced to work in Chinese factories. Given the ubiquity of Chinese manufacturing, that almost certainly means that the exploitation of Uighurs is embedded within global supply chains.

“It is becoming increasingly hard to ignore the fact that goods manufactured in East Turkestan have a high likelihood of being produced with forced labor,” Nury Turkel, chair of the board of the Uyghur Human Rights Project, told Congress in October 2019, using “East Turkestan” to refer to Xinjiang.

The forced labor is happening both within Xinjiang and in other parts of China, according to recent reports. A March 2020 report from the Congressional-Executive Commission on China also found Uighur forced labor taking place within internment camps.

According to a report from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), at least 80,000 Uighurs were taken from Xinjiang and transferred to various factories around China between 2017 and 2019, though it’s likely that’s a lowball estimate. Some Uighurs were taken directly from concentration camps to the factories, though the conditions mirrored those they faced in detention, according to that same study. Uighurs were under constant surveillance, forced to undergo Mandarin language instruction and other political teachings in their free time. Most critically, they cannot leave.

In July 2019, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported a story of a Uighur woman, 38-year-old Dilnur, who was sent to an internment camp along with her husband. In May, Dilnur had contacted her sister in Australia to tell her she’d be taken from the camps and sent to work in a technology factory in Urumqi. “660 people are brought in shackled and handcuffed and it is big,” she wrote.

Again, it’s hard to get full information out of China’s tightly controlled system, but leaked documents and testimony from some workers who’ve been forced into factories offer compelling

The ASPI found that at least 27 suspected factories are using laborers from Xinjiang, which potentially have connections to 83 major global brands. The Xinjiang region, specifically, is a major cotton hub for China, meaning Xinjiang cotton might end up in the final products of many clothing lines.

The Washington Post and ASPI found that the South Korean-owned Qingdao Taekwang Shoes Co. in Laixi, China, a Nike supplier for decades, employs about 700 Uighur workers. Though they could not confirm that the Uighurs were forced to work, eyewitnesses told the Post that the workers weren't allowed to leave freely.

Nike has since said it's in contact with suppliers to "assess potential risks" related to the employment of Uighurs. Other companies, like Apple, have said they found no evidence of forced labor but are monitoring their sources.

Another recent investigation in the New York Times found that forced Uighur labor is being used to make personal protective equipment, specifically those disposable surgical face masks that are ubiquitous in the time of Covid-19.

In July, more than 72 Uighur rights group and 100 civil society groups worldwide launched a campaign to end forced Uighur labor, demanding companies stop sourcing cotton, yarn, textiles, and finished products from Xinjiang, and for companies to cut ties with suppliers implicated in forced labor schemes.

### **The world is paying more attention to the Uighurs. It's still not enough.**

Zubayra Shamseden, the Chinese outreach coordinator with the Uyghur Human Rights Project, told me in July that Uighurs have faced discrimination for years in education and employment. "It just didn't get the attention of the world," she said.

The recent headlines, including those about birth control and forced sterilization, have helped change that. But, she said, anyone who really tried to see what was happening in Xinjiang could see if they looked. "It's clear it's there. It's just crystal clear," she said, adding that China is still denying all of it.

That the world is finally starting to pay attention is important, but it's not nearly enough. Activists say governments and international institutions need to do more to pressure China.

Uighurs in the diaspora are pushing for the International Criminal Court to investigate China for genocide and other atrocities. Naomi Kikoler, director of the Simon-Skjeldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, said in March that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that China is responsible for crimes against humanity." However, because China doesn't recognize the ICC's jurisdiction, that method might have its limits.

Some US lawmakers have been pushing for the US to get tougher on China on the Uighur issue, and the State Department has advocated for the Uighurs as part of its religious freedom

initiatives. And the Trump administration is finally beginning to take more forceful steps to punish China for its human rights abuses.

President Donald Trump himself had been pretty quiet on the topic until recently, and it seems his desire to negotiate a trade deal with China was a big reason why. “Well, we were in the middle of a major trade deal,” Trump said in June, when asked why he hadn’t yet imposed US Treasury sanctions on Chinese officials involved in the repression of the Uighurs.

Trump’s former national security adviser John Bolton also alleged that Trump personally gave Xi Jinping the green light to keep building the camps, telling Xi at a meeting in June 2019 that it was “exactly the right thing to do.” (The meeting was attended by only the two leaders and their interpreters, so Bolton is relying on what the interpreter told him after the meeting. Other US officials have denied Bolton’s account.)

In June, however, Trump signed into law the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, which imposes sanctions on foreign individuals and entities involved in abuses in Xinjiang and requires the president to periodically “send Congress a list identifying foreign individuals and entities responsible for such human rights abuses.”

Since then, the US has sanctioned officials, including Chen Quanguo, who’s in charge of Xinjiang and the mastermind behind its surveillance policies. The US also placed sanctions on the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau and its director, Wang Mingshan, under the Global Magnitsky Act, which targets human rights abusers around the world.

The US sanctions angered China, and Beijing retaliated by sanctioning US officials, including Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), who have been some of the most prominent voices in Congress in condemning China’s abuse of the Uighurs.

The US also blacklisted 11 Chinese companies in July because of their ties to human rights abuses in Xinjiang, which means those companies can’t easily access US technology or products. At least nine of the companies had ties to forced Uighur labor, including some named in the ASPI report that were connected to major clothing brands. Two others were added to the list because of their use of “genetic analyses” targeting Muslim minority groups.

Earlier in September, the Trump administration also put new restrictions on clothing, technology, and hair products from certain companies linked to forced Uighur labor. It’s already legal for Americans to import any goods made with forced labor, but the knottiness of supply chains has made this harder to detect. The administration is also considering a more sweeping ban on all cotton imports from Xinjiang.

But the Trump administration’s tougher approach toward China on the Uighur issue also comes as the administration has sought to put increasing pressure on China over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Tensions between Washington and Beijing are escalating, and the tit for tat is sinking the relationship between the two superpowers.

“I am concerned that once again the Uighurs are not being taken seriously, in and of themselves, rather than being used as kind of a pawn in a larger geopolitical strategy,” Gladney, of Pomona College, said.

Pressure on China for its human rights abuses — both in Xinjiang and in Hong Kong — should be a priority for any US administration. “I definitely think that there’s an effort to squeeze China in any way that it can possibly be done,” Enos said of the United States. “But I think there’s also this broader recognition that what’s going on in Xinjiang is definitely among some of the worst human rights atrocities taking place, certainly in this decade, maybe even in our generation.”

New details about atrocities inside the camps have added even more of a sense of urgency — though there’s still more to be done. Though Trump confronted China (virtually) at the United Nations this week for various misdeeds, he did not explicitly condemn China for its activities in Xinjiang.

Bipartisan lawmakers in the House of Representatives passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act this week, which would require that companies prove any products sourced from Xinjiang did not involve forced labor and would compile of list of Chinese companies that relied on forced labor. (It still needs to go through the Senate.)

Senators have also urged the Trump administration to make a formal declaration that atrocity crimes are happening in Xinjiang. Some advocates are also calling on consumers to boycott products that might have been made with Uighur labor.

Economic pressure — especially if it forces major corporations to break ties with some Chinese suppliers — may be one of the most effective tools, though that is also increasingly challenging in a world that’s consumed by the coronavirus pandemic and an economic catastrophe.

But the pandemic itself, Shamseden of the Uyghur Human Rights Project told me, is yet another reason for urgency. She saw it as another potential reason for China’s government to escalate its crackdown, under the guise of quarantine for Covid-19. “It’s going to be another good excuse to just detain people arbitrarily,” she said.



# QUIZ

## China: Friend or Foe?

- 1. What is the biggest challenge America faces on the world stage?**
  - a. North Korea
  - b. Communist China
  - c. Iran
  - d. Russia
  
- 2. The father of Capitalism, \_\_\_\_\_, wrote that, “Defense is of much more importance than opulence.”**
  - a. Thomas Hobbes
  - b. Adam Smith
  - c. John Smith
  - d. John Locke
  
- 3. As it gathered economic strength, China became less free and more aggressive.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 4. How many Muslim Uighurs have China’s Communist rulers forced into concentration camps?**
  - a. at least 50,000
  - b. at least 500,000
  - c. at least a million
  - d. at least a billion
  
- 5. To stand up to China, we need to \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. defend the integrity of the free market
  - b. ensure that security-related industries have American-friendly supply chains
  - c. support the Chinese people’s right to live free
  - d. all of the above



# QUIZ: ANSWER KEY

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  - c. John Smith
  - d. John Locke
  
- 3. As it gathered economic strength, China became less free and more aggressive.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 4. How many Muslim Uighurs have China’s Communist rulers forced into concentration camps?**
  - a. at least 50,000
  - b. at least 500,000
  - c. at least a million
  - d. at least a billion
  
- 5. To stand up to China, we need to \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. defend the integrity of the free market
  - b. ensure that security-related industries have American-friendly supply chains
  - c. support the Chinese people’s right to live free
  - d. all of the above