



## China Reform Monitor No. 1355

January 3, 2019 **Joshua Eisenman**

**Related Categories:** Cybersecurity and Cyberwarfare; Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Science and Technology ; Terrorism; China; Southeast Asia

### **XINJIANG SPENDING ON SECURITY RISES EXPONENTIALLY**

In 2017, Xinjiang increased spending on "security-related facility construction" by 213% over 2016 levels, to nearly 20 billion yuan (\$2.9 billion), while the province's spending on vocational training in fell 7%. Satellite data also shows the expansion in new security facilities in 2017, which China claims are vocational training centers. Based on local government tendering documents, about a million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities have been detained in Xinjiang in highly secure political re-education camps. Officials claim they are part of a "vocational education and training program" with classes given on Chinese history, language and culture that helps people to "reflect on their mistakes and see clearly the essence and harm of terrorism and religious extremism." Former Uighur detainees, however, say they were forced to sing Communist Party songs and recite laws accurately or face beatings. (BBC, November 6, 2018)

### **A CAMBODIAN CRACKDOWN ON CHINESE FRAUD**

Police in Takeo, Cambodia have arrested 235 Chinese citizens accused of defrauding people in China via the internet, and will deport them to China. Cambodia has arrested and sent at least 1,000 Chinese and Taiwanese to China since 2012. Online scams by gangs that operate from foreign countries and target mainland Chinese are common throughout Southeast Asia and have been found in Kenya and Spain. The scammers call victims over the internet and use deception, threats and blackmail. Placing foreign internet calls is cheap and hard to trace. (Associated Press, November 26, 2018)

### **CHINA'S ORWELLIAN SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM BEGINS TO BITE**

Authorities published a detailed plan to implement their nationwide social credit system by 2020. People and organizations have already begun to be rewarded and punished for their "trustworthiness" across a range of measures. The aim is to make it "difficult to move" for those deemed "untrustworthy." Infractions include public smoking, buying too many video games, and posting "fake" news online. The plan stated: "We will improve the credit blacklist system, publicly disclose the records of enterprises and individuals' untrustworthiness on a regular basis and form a pattern of distrust and punishment." The plan also calls for "publicly disclosing the records of enterprises and individuals' untrustworthiness on a regular basis." As of May, the government had blocked 11.14 million people from flights and 4.25 million from taking high-speed train trips, 3 million people are barred from business class train tickets. Future punishments may include slower internet speeds, reduced access to good schools, banning people from certain jobs, limited access to certain hotels, and losing the right to own pets. (*The Independent*, November 22, 2018)

### **CHINESE SCIENTIST REVEALS "GENE-EDITED BABIES"**

He Jiankui of Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen caused outrage when he recently told the Human Genome Editing Summit in Hong Kong that he had altered the genes of twin baby girls so they could not contract HIV. He said the girls were "born normal and healthy" and they would be monitored over the next 18 years. He was on unpaid leave and funded the experiment himself while his university was unaware. Hundreds of scientists have criticized He, and China's National Health Commission said his work "seriously violates China's laws, regulations and ethical standards." The CRISPR gene editing tool he used was first discovered in 2012. It uses "molecular scissors" to alter a specific strand of DNA. (BBC, November 29, 2018)

### **GUNMEN ATTACK CHINESE CONSULATE IN KARACHI**

Three armed attackers from the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) killed two policemen as they stormed the China's consulate in Karachi, Pakistan on November 23rd. Security forces then killed all of the attackers who were members of the Fidayeen Majeed Brigade, a new force of the Baluch separatist movement created to carry out suicide attacks against Chinese targets. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan, denounced the attack as a "conspiracy" against China-Pakistan strategic cooperation and ordered an inquiry. The BLA and other armed Baluch separatist groups have frequently targeted Chinese personnel since the launch of the \$56 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "The objective of this attack is clear: we will not tolerate any Chinese military expansionist endeavors on Baloch soil," the BLA said in a statement. (Al-Jazeera, November 23, 2018)