

China Building Secular Schools for Muslims in Xinjiang Province. Western Media Critique

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Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

China's recent building-spree of schools in its underdeveloped and remote region of Xinjiang – in a saner world – would be good news. But for editors at the BBC it is being depicted as sinister and dystopian.

The BBC's article, "[China Muslims: Xinjiang schools used to separate children from families](#)," attempts to depict boarding schools – a concept popular in the UK itself – as a "form of internment" and "cultural re-engineering."

The BBC's article claims:

China is deliberately separating Muslim children from their families, faith and language in its far western region of Xinjiang, according to new research. At the same time as hundreds of thousands of adults are being detained in giant camps, a rapid, large-scale campaign to build boarding schools is under way.

The "new research" conducted by the BBC is admittedly not even being done in China itself. The BBC admits:

China's tight surveillance and control in Xinjiang, where foreign journalists are followed 24 hours a day, make it impossible to gather testimony there. But it can be found in Turkey.

"Testimony" gathered in Turkey – one of the nations that used to support [US efforts](#) to fuel radicalism and separatism in Xinjiang in the first place – is accompanied by satellite photos taken from outer space of vacant lots in Xinjiang being transformed into newly built schools complete with football pitches and jogging tracks.

The images are only proof that China is building schools in Xinjiang. Not of any of the claims being made by the BBC of "internment" or "cultural re-engineering." The inclusion of the images is meant to serve as convincing stand-ins where actual evidence of the BBC's otherwise baseless accusations should be.

The BBC Omits the Real "Cultural Re-Engineering" in China's Xinjiang

The BBC has been one of the leading voices promoting claims of Xinjiang "concentration camps," "one million Muslims" being detained, and now the "internment" of children in schools.

The BBC – however – has been relatively quiet for years over genuine cultural re-

engineering taking place in Xinjiang – funded by the United States, Saudi Arabia, and abetted by [nations like Turkey](#) and even the UK itself through its propaganda and political support of such efforts.

The LA Times in a 2016 article titled, “[In China, rise of Salafism fosters suspicion and division among Muslims](#),” would reveal:

Salafism is an ultra-conservative school of thought within Sunni Islam, espousing a way of life and prayer that harks back to the 6th century, when Muhammad was alive. Islamic State militants are Salafi, many Saudi Arabian clerics are Salafi, and so are many Chinese Muslims living in Linxia. They pray at their own mosques and wear Saudi-style kaffiyehs.

The article also noted (emphasis added):

Experts say that in recent years, Chinese authorities have put Salafis under constant surveillance, closed several Salafi religious schools and detained a prominent Salafi cleric. **A once close-knit relationship between Chinese Salafis and Saudi patrons has grown thorny and complex.**

And that:

...Saudi preachers and organizations began traveling to China. Some of them bore gifts: training programs for clerics, Korans for distribution, funding for new “Islamic institutes” and mosques.

This pervasive radicalism has translated directly into real violence – another fact omitted completely from the BBC and other Western media coverage of events in Xinjiang.

China’s efforts to reverse the growing influence of Salafism – such as collecting deliberately mistranslated copies of the Koran published and distributed by Saudi Arabia to promote radicalism – have been depicted by the Western media as religious oppression with all context intentionally omitted.

That the BBC claims China building schools teaching Mandarin and Chinese culture *in* China is “*cultural re-engineering*” while overlooking Saudi Arabia building Salafist networks thousands of miles away from its borders fuelling very real extremism in western China to begin with – helps fully reveal recent BBC reports on Xinjiang and China’s Muslim community as pure propaganda.

Salafism as a Geopolitical Tool

Not only does the BBC intentionally omit mention of extremism and violence in regions like Xinjiang or how it came to be, the BBC is also omitting the fact that Salafism itself was admittedly spread worldwide by Saudi Arabia as a geopolitical tool.

In the pages of the [Washington Post](#), the Saudi Crown Prince would recently admit:

Asked about the Saudi-funded spread of Wahhabism, the austere faith that is dominant in the kingdom and that some have accused of being a source of

global terrorism, Mohammed said that **investments in mosques and madrassas overseas were rooted in the Cold War, when allies asked Saudi Arabia to use its resources to prevent inroads in Muslim countries by the Soviet Union.**

Wahhabism is closely related to Salafism and the terms are often used interchangeably. The Crown Prince's admission refers specifically to the Cold War and the Soviet Union, but it is abundantly clear that these networks didn't simply vanish with the collapse of the Soviet Union, they evolved.

They are now used to help feed extremists into Washington's many proxy wars around the globe including in Libya and Syria. They are also being used to pressure nations across Asia and to create a pretext for [a continued US military presence in Asia-Pacific](#).

And clearly they are being used to fuel [US-backed separatism inside China](#).

Just as the Western media deliberately misrepresented terrorists waging proxy war on the West's behalf against Libya and Syria - the Western media is deliberately misrepresenting China's Uyghur minority, the extremists within that minority, who funds and encourages them, and why.

We're left with articles like the BBC's - attempting to undermine China's global standings by depicting very real efforts to confront very real extremism as "oppressive" and "authoritarian." It is partly to help provide cover for ongoing efforts to divide China from within, but also to demonize China among global Muslim communities.

Never mentioned by the BBC in its efforts to depict China as persecuting all Muslims - rather than a minority of extremists who just so happen to be Muslims - is the fact that China's oldest and most important ally in Eurasia is Pakistan - a Muslim-majority nation. Also omitted is the fact that China has many other Muslim minority groups within its borders who live without conflict.

These facts - along with ham-handed attempts by the BBC and others to depict newly constructed schools in a previously underdeveloped and remote region as "oppressive" - help one understand the true obstacles impeding global stability and progress. It is not Beijing - it is those claiming Beijing building schools and confronting real radicalism through reform rather than perpetual war are "villains."

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