**Exposing the Occident s baseless lies about Xinjiang**

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Abraham Lincoln, American statesman and lawyer who served as the 16th president of the USA and led his nation through the American Civil War, (1861 to 1865), succeeded in preserving the Union, abolishing slavery, bolstering the federal government, and modernizing the U.S. economy. The sagacious president, besides his stellar achievements, left behind a legacy of pearls of wisdom, which some of his successors chose to ignore at the peril of damaging values of morality their nation once prided in.

One of his most famous quotes, “You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time” remains valid even today. Unfortunately, perhaps blinded by vested interest or myopic vision, some media organizations in the Occident continue to churn out a plethora of lies about how the Chinese government is maltreating the ethnic Uighur community, is engaged in eliminating, suppressing it committing genocide, enforcing sterilization, slave labour, impeding the practice of Islam (the faith of majority of Uighurs). It is deplorable that little or no evidence is provided apart from grainy interviews of some people of Uighur origin claiming to be victims of Chinese tyranny.

In this age of information technology and a wide network of resources, which can easily debunk the lies, some western governments accept “opinion as facts”, and based on shaky evidence, impose sanctions against China to castigate it. Possibly their verdict is clouded by “Tall Poppy Syndrome”-a term that was popularized in Australia-which occurs when people are attacked, resented, disliked, criticized or cut down because of their achievements and/or success.

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Prima facie, submerged by the onslaught of accusations, a lesser nation would have buckled under the assault but China, depicting maturity and patience, has let its news agency Xinhua, issue a ‘Fact Check: Lies on Xinjiang-related Issues Versus the Truth’. The detailed report picks up 24 of the most blatant accusations about China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and logically refutes the assault on China through hard evidence.

Normally this scribe would have no need to comb through Xinhua’s laboriously prepared “Fact Check”-not because I have blind faith on our Chinese brothers-but because seeing is believing. Since 1974 I have been visiting China, especially Xinjiang, which shares a common border with Pakistan. First as an Air Force officer, later as an analyst, academic and author of six books on China, researching for material.

Being an eyewitness to the economic growth of China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the population growth of the Uighur community, I can safely debunk the politically-motivated mudslinging being hurled by some elements in the west. In the last 47 years, I have personally watched Xinjiang grow from a backward, underdeveloped region into a modern progressive province equipped with amenities and services even the Occident does not provide to its areas in the boondocks. It is true that the western provinces of China lagged behind in the more opulent eastern regions-a weakness exploited by China’s detractors to instigate the Uighurs promoting violence, separatism and extremism. Creditably, the Chinese government adopted timely measures to ensure Xinjiang’s economic development and progress in poverty alleviation, simultaneously taking concrete steps to effectively counter terrorism and deradicalization. This scribe has toured every inch of Xinjiang and personally witnessed how the once underprivileged community is now enjoying perks of a higher quality of life ensured by President Xi Jinping’s mega development projects like the Belt and Road Initiative of which Xinjiang in general and the Uighurs in particular are the prime beneficiary.

Interestingly, since 2018, more than 1,200 people from over 100 countries have visited Xinjiang including this scribe. The visitors comprised UN officials, foreign diplomats posted in China, some countries’ permanent representatives to Geneva, journalists and religious groups. We personally observed a region thriving with stability and prosperity and commended its exemplary counter-terrorism and deradicalization efforts. Critics are oblivious to a reality that we Muslims, especially Pakistanis are quick to jump to the support of oppressed Muslims, be they Indian Muslims, Kashmiris, Rohingya or Palestinians. If we have not taken up the cudgel on behalf of the allegedly oppressed Uighurs, it is not because of our love for China but because we are privy to the truth that the accusations of suppressing the Uighurs are totally baseless.

The Xinhua “Fact Check” belies the indictment of China committing genocide or ethnic cleansing through verifiable hard statistics. During the period 2010-2018, the Uighur population in Xinjiang rose from 10.17 million to 12.72 million, an increase of 2.55 million or 25.04 percent. The growth rate of the Uighur population is not only higher than that of Xinjiang’s total population, which is 13.99 percent, but also higher than that of all ethnic minority groups, which is 22.14 percent, let alone the Han population’s 2 percent. All 3.09 million impoverished people in Xinjiang have been lifted out of poverty while from 2014 to 2019, the GDP of Xinjiang increased from 919.59 billion yuan to 1.36 trillion yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 7.2 percent.

It is pitiable that BBC Newsnight reports depict Uighur female Zamira Dawut claiming to have been “forced to go through sterilization” in a vocational education and training centre. Her own elder brother Abduhelil Dawut has confirmed that Zamira Dawut has never studied in any vocational education and training centre. Her charges of forced sterilization too are baseless as according to Urumqi Maternal and Child Care Service Centre records, having undergone three deliveries, she signed a childbirth consent form voluntarily to have a caesarean section and tubal ligation, negating her assertion of being sterilized or uterus removal. She also claimed that her aging father was repeatedly detained and investigated by Xinjiang authorities, and died not long ago from an unknown cause. In fact, her father had been living with his children until he died from heart disease on October 12, 2019. He had never been investigated or placed in detention, a fact substantiated by her brothers Abduhelil Dawut and Elkin Dawut. The Xinhua exposé lifts the shroud of conspiracy from the concerted effort to denigrate China and the usual culprit is a notorious racist Adrian Zenz, a member of the far-right group “Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation”.

The Latin judicial phrase Cui Bono (who benefits?) points towards the real perpetrators of the anti-China smear campaign.

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