



DEVELOPMENT OF XINJIANG AND GWADAR PORT

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Abstract

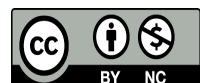
There is no denying to the significance of natural resources in the growth of the economy. There is not much that can be done in the economic sphere without sufficient raw materials. This is the rationale behind prioritising the extraction of natural resources from conveniently accessible places over those that require more effort. China follows the same model and has accelerated developments in coastal areas and left inland areas in the dust. Xinjiang, highly blessed with energy resources is going to be developed like the coastal areas of China. However, the main problem of this development is “Sea port”. Abundant in energy sources, Xinjiang, like the other areas of China, is prepared for rapid development. However, "Sea port" is the main obstacle to its development. Xinjiang is one of China's most ecologically sensitive regions since it is one of the driest locations and is the furthest away from any ocean or sea. China aims to connect Xinjiang to global markets through Pakistan's Gwadar port in order to promote rapid economic development. In actuality, China is interested in expanding Gwadar port for economic reasons. The growing importance of Central Asia's oil resources, China's rising energy needs from the the Gulf region, and China's "go west" programme to develop its west provences are major factors to motivate China for the development of port like Gwadar port in Pakistan. Here is a strong aurgument that China will utilize Gwadar port as a trade point for Xinjiang’s productions rather its own eastern ports in future.

Key words: China, Go west policy, Energy resources, Xinjiang, International trade, Gwadar port

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Introduction

Bordering eight nations—Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, occupying one-sixth of China's land, the province of Xinjiang is strategically significant to China because it has the largest oil deposits and hosts Lop Nor, the country's nuclear test site (Moneyhon, 2003). With a population of approximately 25 million, Xinjiang is home to thirteen significant ethnic minorities, including the Hans, who make up 42% of the population, and other minorities who make up 58% (Xinjiang govt census 2021). The abundance of mosques, headscarves worn by women, Uyghur skullcaps worn by men, and Arabic-based Uyghur calligraphy on stores and street signs all reflect the region's strong Muslim identity (Tsong, 2009). On the one hand, Xinjiang serves as a commerce route between China and West, Central and South Asia, and the East Europe. On the other hand it is the focal point of a major development initiative in western China. History shows that Xinjiang has had good relationships with the peoples of West Asia and Central Asia based on shared cultural and religious beliefs. These nations had a well-established system of folk commerce, and they are comparable in terms of their economic systems, environments, and natural resources (Cho & Turner, 2021).

Beijing sees Uyghur inclusion into China's diverse national family as essential to the stability of Xinjiang. The term "integration" refers to the "political, cultural, social, and economic structuring of a bigger state that sees the minorities preserving their own cultures and identities, but impacted by the majority, and not desiring independence" (Gul, Ali & Alam, 2020). The development of untapped resources throughout the region has been one of the main tenets of China's manifest destiny. China's largest cotton, lavender, and hop growing region is in Xinjiang, which is also a significant region for sheep and cow farming and the manufacture of quality wool (Hong Kong Trade Development Council 2017). In 2012, just the agriculture industry contributed 17.6% of the nation's GDP (ibid.). Xinjiang also has abundant mineral resources. The largest reserves of coal, natural gas, and oil are found there (ibid.). China has been a net oil importer since 1993 (Bovingdon 2010), and as long as its economy and populace continue to develop at their current rate, so will their energy consumption. As a result, China has come to depend more and more on Xinjiang for its energy needs (Sheives 2006). A number of gas/oil pipelines from CARs run through Xinjiang in order to satisfy the substantial energy needs of the developed and more populous

eastern coastline cities of China. Xinjiang is becoming more significant as a result of China's declining oil reserves in other provinces.



Source: Zhang Ping, statistics information group, energy data and modeling center

In 2008, Xinjiang rose to the top spot in China for gas output and to second place for crude oil production. Beijing's increased investment since 2000 under the "Go West" strategy is a reflection of the significance of Xinjiang. China is attempting to rebalance its economic growth using this technique. When this plan was put into place, Xinjiang's foreign trade increased to US\$22.21 billion in 2008, making it China's 12th important trade point overall and the 2nd important western municipalities (Yan, 2014)). History demonstrates that Xinjiang remained one of China's least developed regions. But because to significant investments made by the government since 1990, Xinjiang has had some of China's fastest economic growth (khan & alam, 2020). There is no appropriation of the advantages, despite the fact that the reform measures formed the cornerstone for the creation of riches in Xinjiang. More benefits are being given to the Han migrants than to the locals. Han people are in majority in urban population receiving more financial benefits than local minorities in rural areas (Zenn,2018). According to government data, the income of urban households was three folds higher than the income of rural households in 2001. Minorities are also struggling in the employment market due to language barriers, low educational standards, and cultural disparities (Kai,2014).

The Go West Policy

The economic reforms and opening up policy implemented by Deng Xiaoping in late 1978 brought about numerous significant developments in China. From inland China, officials' focus shifted to coastal regions, and light and labor-intensive sectors were given increased prominence. In the cities of Shenzhen, Shantou, Zhuhai, and Xiamen, Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were created in 1979, and this caused these cities to grow rapidly. These SEZs were established to tempt foreign direct investment (FDI), technology, technological awareness, and managerial learning for the development of China as a whole. The manufacture of commodities for export was also encouraged in SEZs to increase income generation. China's development was greatly aided by foreign direct investment (FDI). From 1997 to 2017, China's FDI increased by 426.95 USD HML on average, with a record high of 1262.67 USD HML in December 2015 and a record low of 18.32 USD HML in January 2000. (Trading Economics, 2017).

Foreign direct investment significantly supported China's development making people wealthy in the east, while yet living in poverty in the larger western regions (Xiaoying, 2017). In Xinjiang, where there are many minorities, economic disparities are causing ethnic tensions. The benefits of globalisation are still being fully reaped by China's coastal regions, but the country's west continues to suffer with poverty and debt. Today, the west is home to more than half of the world's poor people (Economist, 2006). People in China's western regions and those living in its coastal provinces earn very different amounts of money. Around 66% of China's geography is occupied by the western "poverty belt," which also has 23% of the country's population. Realizing the difficulties in the area, the Chinese government chose to address this issue by launching "The Go West programme," an economic development initiative (Moneyhon 2003).

It is a long-term programme that will last for almost twenty or thirty years and will benefit six regions in the western China. It will focus on the improvement and construction of infrastructure, technology enhancement, industrial set ups, higher education, improving the business climate, and planning projects to protect the environment. In 300 significant projects, mostly in the fields of energy and infrastructure, the Chinese government spent \$914 billion between 2000 and 2016 in western regions (Chinese state Council, 2016). Under the go west policy, the Xinjiang Regional Development Planning Commission identified thirty

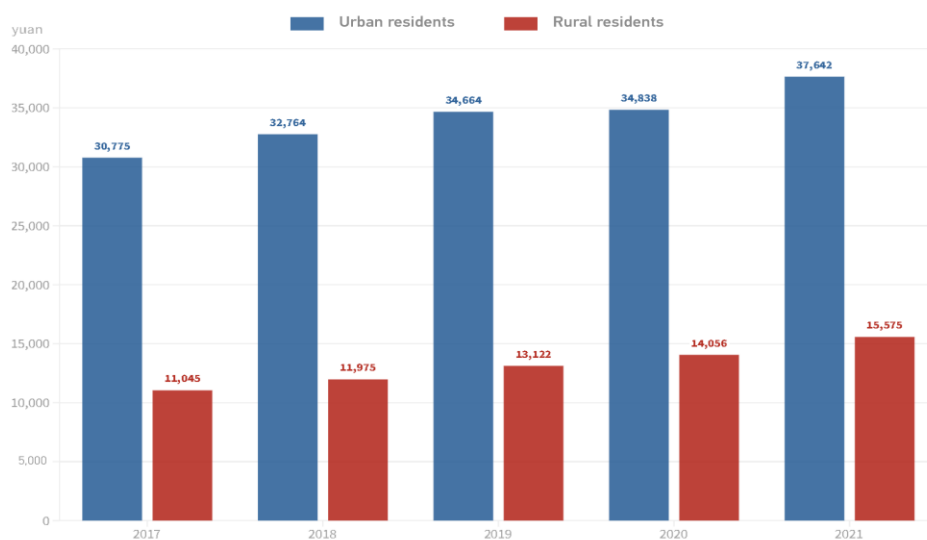
major projects. Three of these are related to the agricultural sector, four are related to the power sector, two are related to urban development, 3 are related to the petrochemical/ gas sector, 5 to water resource projects, 9 to infrastructure development, and 4 to other miscellaneous industries. Go West policy main focus is on covering economic goals in addition to the government's agenda of national integration and united China by ending ethnic unrest in western region(Moneyhon,2003).

The Uighur community, a Muslim one with strong ties to Central Asia, is the largest among the thirteen major ethnic groups represented in the 2010 census, which found 21.82 million people living in Xinjiang (Hsieh, 2014). The China Communist Party kept relocating Hans to various parts of China in order to integrate the Chinese periphery. The government has encouraged Hans' migration to Xinjiang in the same context under the pretence of transfer of talent. The Party asserts that its strategies for Xinjiang are intended to promote economic growth rather than demographic change (Gul, Khan and Ali 2020). Unrest has resulted from the migration of Hans to Xinjiang because Hans and Uighurs are competing with one another for a small number of jobs. Hans reside in more developed, industrialised urban areas, while Uighurs are more prevalent in rural areas (Yosaf, 202). Xinjiang is undergoing numerous economic development projects, but the region is still experiencing financial difficulties (Haider, 2005). Therefore, the Uighurs continue to perceive threats to their prosperity rather than relying on central government policies for development, which causes their discontent to give rise to separatist sentiment. Beijing joined the "Shanghai Six," (SCO), one aim of which is the provision of services against separatism and extremism on common grounds too, to deal with this challenging situation. The focus of the go west policy is to instil hope among people of west China, specially Uighurs, by the introduction of such economic plans that could decrease the disparities between eastern and western economies of China. It is believed that an equitable distribution of wealth will foster cooperation among minorities, which will eventually result in the creation of the United China. Chinese officials believe that increasing local populations' material well-being is the only way to control these separatist movements.

A poverty alleviation programme on an extensive level in Xinjiang under the go west policy is being launched by the chinese government to run the economic uplift smoothly for such a big area. The main purpose of such a programme is to develop the economy and cultural. Under the poverty allevation programme, due to wise and focused policies, the areas in the four municipalities of southern Xinjiang showed perfect results. 1.89 million people from

southern Xinjiang and 2.31 million as a whole in the western region of China were lifted from poverty in the years 2014 to 2018 (Zenn,2018). Similarly in 1992, due to the Chinese government announcement of retaining 80% of local taxes by minorities instead of 50%, Xinjiang showed more progress in its international Trade (Zhihong&Weihua,2010). Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is on the way to achieve socio-economic development, and an incessant step up is seen in people's livelihoods in recent years. The region has recently experienced social harmony, economic growth, stability, and incessant upgrading in people's standard of living. Between 2017 and 2021, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Xinjiang increased from \$162 billion to \$248 billion. There was increase in GDP of Xinjiang to 7.0 percent in 2021 from 3.4 percent in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The pillar industries of industrial sector in Xinjiang remained agriculture and manufacturing, and the service sector grew steadily, reaching 14.7 percent in 2021. In Xinjiang, urban residents' per capita disposable income increased from \$4,467 in 2017 to \$5,834 in 2021, while rural residents' per capita income raised from \$1,603 to \$2,414 in the same period.

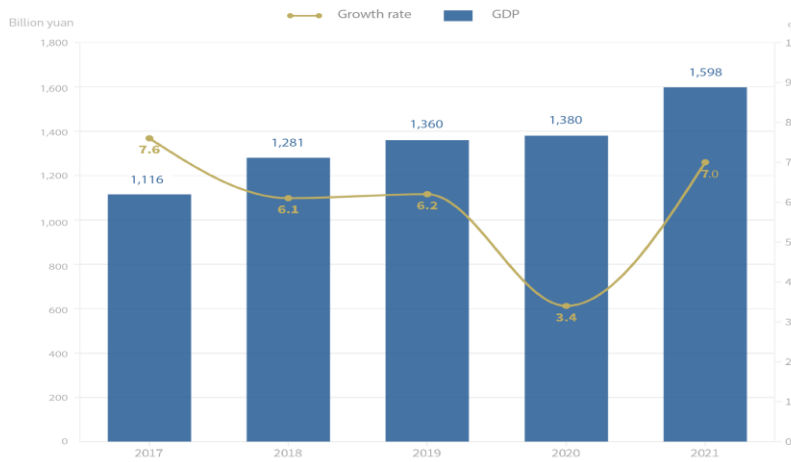
Per capita disposable income in Xinjiang, 2017-2021



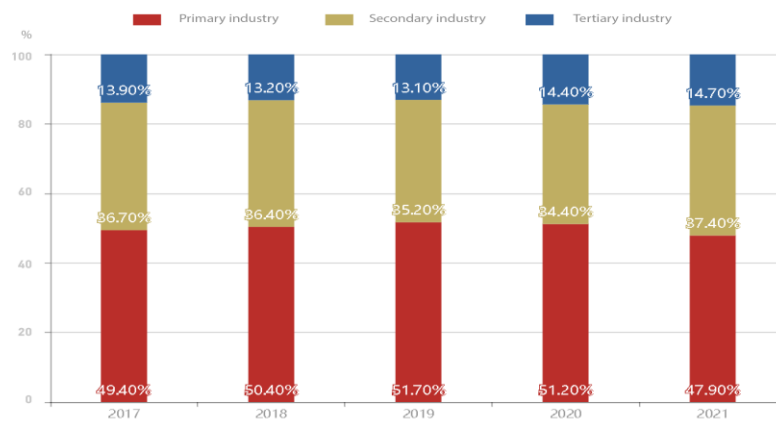
Source: Statistic Bureau of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

CGTN

GDP and growth rate in Xinjiang, 2017-2021



Proportion of industrial value added in Xinjiang, 2017-2021



Source: Statistic Bureau of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

CGTN

With the provision of safe water to 10.5 million rural population and by achieving 78.3% tap water access to them, Xinjiang has widely advanced the availability of water, electricity, and road access to remote and deprived regions. This has put an end to the history of the lack of basic necessities like water, electricity and transport facilities to the far remote areas (CGTN).

Xinjiang with neighboring countries

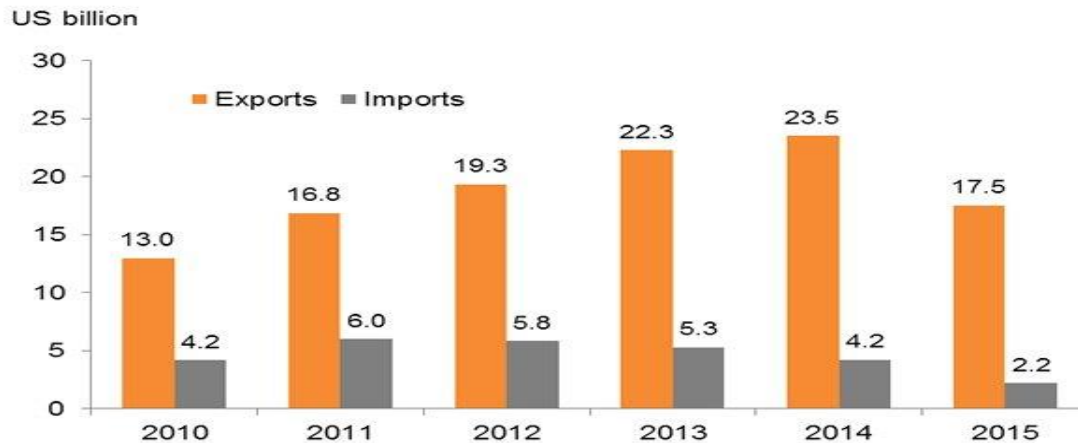
Infrastructure growth can help a region's economy to develop, that is why China's central government places so much emphasis on Xinjiang's infrastructure development and regional connectivity. The plan of China has resulted in significant infrastructure projects of pipelines, rail tracks, and roads in Xinjiang. Xinjiang government has adopted the strategies of “Joint

East for Exporting westward and Importing Westward forward East” to take full advantage of the local and international markets and resources resulting in speedy development of Xinjiang’s international trade. However, Xinjiang’s is still contributing very less in Chinese foreign trade (Xuegang,2008).

Utilizing its own geopolitical, cultural, and historical advantages and economic globalization, Xinjiang is aggressively developing regional economic cooperation with 10 neighbouring countries and has shown some success. Recently the level of regional economic cooperation has continuously increased, the models have innovated, the fields have expanded, the primary component has continued to enrich itself, the scales have expanded, and a pattern of multi-level, multi-directional, multi-forms, and multi-channel regional economic cooperation is gradually taking shape (Li ,2008). The regional economic co operation includes some Asian economic entities, like China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and others now, while previously it only included co operation with CARs. The progress in regional economic cooperation has drawn more widespread attention, particularly since the founding of the SCO. The main component of Xinjiang's and its neighbouring nations' foreign trade has undergone significant change in recent years. Few businesses with foreign trade rights existed in Xinjiang in 1978, which were largely state-owned. An increasing number of private, foreign-funded, collective, and business enterprises are now in action to enhance Xinjiang's international business, as China gradually decreased restrictions to business enterprises engaged in global import/export. The main driving force behind Xinjiang's trade is now non-state-owned enterprises, which include private, mix-ownership, and foreign-funded businesses. The value of trade has grown yearly as a result of the accelerated process of regional economic cooperation. In the first half of 2010, the region's international trade increased by 13% year over year (Zhihong&Weihua,2010). There is change in the structure of trade commodities among Xinjiang and neighboring economies. Gradual increase in the proportion of exports of industrial products, and also in high value-added products is seen in recent years. Increase of 63% in the total value of export of value added products happened from 1985 to 2005, while the proportion of primary products decreased with the same rate (Li, 2008). There is a high demand for imports in Xinjiang from CARs as these economies are expanding and Xinjiang is focusing on establishing deep marketable ties with these countries. From 2001 to 2011, Xinjiang's total foreign trade increased over tenfold, to US\$22.8 billion from just US\$1.8 billion. Although the global financial crisis caused a

decline in its trade performance in 2009, its exports still increased to US\$16.8 billion in 2011 from US\$700 million in 2001 and further to US\$46.14 billion in 2014. More than 85% of Xinjiang's total trade is with Asia, making it the region's top trading partner (Wong, 2016).

Xinjiang's Import and Export Trade



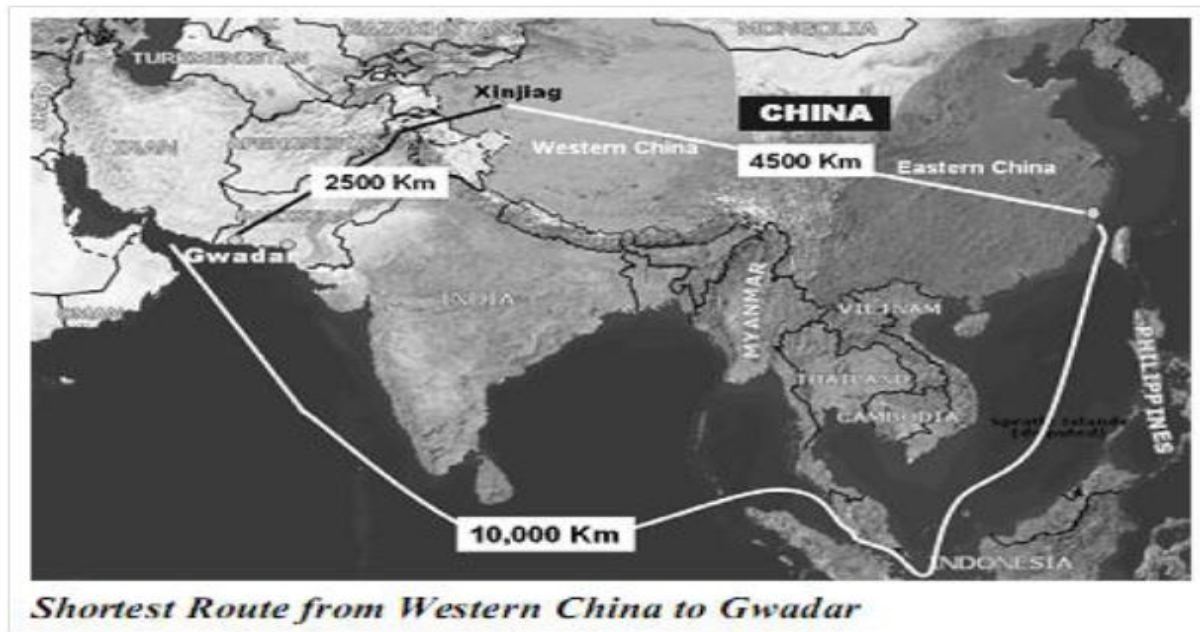
Source: *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2015*, Urumqi Customs

The type of commodities of trade changed to the great extent i.e from primary materials to industrial products in fields like textile industry, chemical industry, agricultural industry, construction industry etc. Xinjiang is also producing fabricated metal products, home appliances, electronics and even high-tech products. Xinjiang main exports to the surrounding countries in 1992 were live stock, frozen meat, sugar, rice, caustic soda, flour, alcohol etc while main imports were fertilisers, steel, electrolytic copper, wood, bulldozers, automobiles and parts of automobiles, excavators, non-ferrous metals, and other goods. while the main exports of Xinjiang to the neighbouring countries in 2015 were machinery, electronic, refined oil, products, household goods, food, alcoholic beverages, soil products, leather products, cereals, farm equipments/ machinery , pharmaceuticals, textiles machinery, paints, etc, while the main imports were copper, crude oil, cotton, timber, ferrous metal mining, paper, chromium ore, aluminium ingots, iron ore, , cotton picking equipment, chemicals, fur and other raw materials (Chinese Govt white paper, 2015). Xinjiang needs to take maximum advantage of its geo-strategic location. It must actively advance regional economic cooperation and pursue special cooperation in areas like energy, transportation, light industry, minerals, tourism, etc.

Gwadar port and Xinjiang

The infrastructure of Xinjiang needs to be improved in order to lessen its isolation from East China and the competitive markets of Europe and Central Asia. The available transportation options are insufficient. It will take less than a week to transport something from California to Guangdong, whereas it will take fifteen days to transport something from Turfan of Xinjiang, to the same location. It is abundantly clear that improving shipping capabilities and transportation links represents Xinjiang's biggest challenge. Pakistan and western China are already connected by the Karakoram Highway. Western China will have easier access to the rest of the world through Gwadar with the continued expansion and improvement of this highway and the connections with Gwadar through Khuzdar –Ratodero road. Pakistan and China have announced a \$446 billion plan for projects of infrastructure and energy in Pakistan, connecting their economies and highlighting the economic ambitions of China for Europe, Asia and beyond. The province of Xinjiang is a crucial point for the success of all the project under BRI because it links China with CARS and Middle Eastern countries. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the 6 main BRI land routes that pass through Xinjiang. The higher investment in the projects of infrastructure entails momentous risks for the frequent turbulence in Xinjiang. For example, a big amount of money has been invested for the development of Kashgar as part of CPEC, which is a hub city on the old Silk Road that CARs have historically claimed for. Beijing selected Kashgar to be a special economic zone because to it is a hub of commercial networking. President Xi Jinping specially came to Pakistan to preside over the signing of documents intended to develop a CPEC between China's western Xinjiang region and Pakistan's southern Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea. China's goal is to establish "Silk Road" land and maritime connections to markets in the Middle East and Europe (Business news, 20th April 2015). In order to import gas and oil, China intends to extend the Peace and TAPI pipelines to Xinjiang.

China is anticipated to choose Gwadar port over its eastern ports, which require a 10,000 km journey, for Xinjiang exports as well as imports from the Middle East. For trade and energy imports from countries in the Persian Gulf and East Africa, as shown in the above graph, Gwadar will cut the distance from more than 10,000 km to 2,500 km via Pakistan.



Source: Khan.(2013)

Compared to the maritime route through the Strait of Malacca, it will be more affordable, safe, and secure. Currently, it takes 20 days on average for Chinese oil tankers to arrive in the Gulf; however, after Pakistan develops its connectivity infrastructure as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project, oil tankers from eastern China would arrive in Gwadar, Pakistan, in just 48 hours(Khan,2013). Thus, it is conceivable that Gwadar port will be a trade route for Xinjiang one day. This enables trade (exports and imports) to be conducted through port that is close to Central Asia, Gulf region, Europe and Africa.

Conclusion:

China's largest and most populous province is Xinjiang. It has common borders with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, all of which are Muslim nations. Due to their differing religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions from the Han majority who had migrated there, the local ethnic Turks (Uighurs) in Xinjiang province have demanded the right to self-determination. However, Xijiang's economic laggardship and underdevelopment in comparison to China's eastern regions is one of the main causes of instability in the region. China's central government has adopted the policy of "Go West" for

the economic growth of Xinjiang in light of factors including its proximity to Muslim Central Asian countries, the presence of the Lop Nur nuclear test site, its access to warm waters via the Economic Corridor via Pakistan's Gwadar port, and the presence of oil. One of the main elements of the New Silk Route for regional and internal connectivity is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Because it acts as a bridge between South Asia and Central Asia, Xinjiang must take centre stage in China's new Silk Road initiative. On the other hand, Gwadar Port offers a route to Central Asia and landlocked Xinjiang. Construction of Gwadar port is very wise for the Chinese economy, particularly for the economic growth of its landlocked Xinjiang Province in the southwest. By travelling just 2500 km along an existing Silk Route, it gives China the option to take the quickest route to the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden. Though China has been building a number of ports, including those in Bangladesh, Sirilanka, Mayanmar, and the area around Tibet, Gwadar is the most crucial port for China. Furthermore, according to Adrew Small, "Gwadar is most likely to be developed by China because Pakistan is the only state where the level of trust between the two countries is high enough to make it a complete prospect." This strategy will also be seen as a chance for the economically underdeveloped Xinjiang, which can then enhance relations with nearby Muslims while also bringing about peace and stability through economic empowerment.

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