

# *Exploiting Ethnic and Religious Separatism as a Tool: U.S. Policy in Xinjiang during the Early Cold War\**

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## *Abstract*

In 1943, the United States established a consulate in Tihwa (Urumqi), signifying its deep involvement in Xinjiang politics. Following World War II, the former U.S.-Soviet alliance transitioned into Cold War rivalry, with Chinese Xinjiang emerging as a critical battleground in Eurasian geopolitics. The Peitashan Incident, focused on control over uranium mines in northern Xinjiang, intensified nuclear competition between the superpowers. After 1948, the Communist Party of China's (CPC) success in the Chinese civil war prompted a significant shift in U.S. policy, redirecting efforts from countering Soviet influence to obstructing the CPC's advance into northwest China. The U.S. strategy entailed covert support for ethnic minority armed forces in northwestern China to establish regional anticommunist and separatist regimes. The evolution of U.S. Xinjiang policy has consistently aligned with Washington's ideological commitment to anticommunism.

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