

## Separatism in Modern China: An Analytical Framework

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*This is an attempt to derive an analytical framework, using Boolean algebra or the theory of sets, to explain regional or ethnic separatism in the context of modern China. It identifies (1) lack of effective central government control, (2) organized separatist activities, and (3) the presence of foreign intervention as the major causes responsible for secessionist attempts, explains how these causes relate to one another, and develops a formula to describe how they combine to result in the presence or absence of secessionist or separatist claims.*

**KEYWORDS:** China; ethnic separatism; Boolean; intervention.

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This is an attempt to derive an analytical framework, based on Boolean algebra or the theory of sets, to explain regional or ethnic separatism in the context of modern China. It identifies three major causes of secessionist attempts: (1) lack of effective central government control, (2) organized separatist activities, and (3) the presence

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of foreign intervention. After explaining how these causes relate to one another, this author will develop a formula to describe how they combine to result in the presence or absence of secessionist or separatist claims. To the best of my knowledge, there has so far been no attempt to bring together for investigation, under an overarching analytical framework, the factors which have in the past led, and may in the future lead, to the assertion of independence by regional and non-Han (非漢族) ethnic minority authorities on the peripheries of the Chinese state. By doing this here, it is hoped that a tiny contribution will be made to the literature on secession or ethno-nationalism, especially with regard to such a large and increasingly influential country as China.

### **Separatists, Central Governments, and Foreign Involvement in China, 1911-49**

For more than a century, the search for national strength and unity has been the underlying theme of Chinese history. One of the fundamental goals of the Chinese revolutions of 1911 and 1949 was to restore a semi-colonized, warlord-ridden, and socially unstable China to its former greatness. In these circumstances, separatist attempts by regional authorities and ethnic minority groups have been perceived by Chinese nationalists as an existential threat to the Chinese nation, especially if the involvement of foreign governments was suspected. In April 1912, the new Chinese republic which had toppled the Qing dynasty (清朝) declared Tibet (Xizang, 西藏), Mongolia (蒙古), and Xinjiang (新疆) to be integral parts of its territory, in response to separatist pressures from these regions.<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙), founder of the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨) and the Republic of China (ROC), advocated a republic of five races—Han, Manchu (滿族), Mongolian (蒙古族), Tibetan (藏族), and

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<sup>1</sup>Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 31.

Muslim (回族). Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石), Sun's successor as head of the KMT and leader of China from 1928 to 1949, declared that the differentiation among China's peoples was due to regional and religious factors, not to race or blood.<sup>2</sup> No desires or aspirations on the part of ethnic minorities for real independence from China were ever seriously entertained or acknowledged by Chinese leaders.

Han Chinese nationalism from 1895 to 1945 was a product of military occupation, economic exploitation, and social disruption brought on by the powers of Europe and Japan, and a response to the successive failures of the ineffectual "alien" Qing Manchu court, regional warlords, and the Chiang Kai-shek regime to drive out these "imperialists." Like the KMT, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Han Chinese in general understood self-determination to be freedom from external intervention in the affairs of the Chinese state. Ethnic nationalism in China developed as a reaction against both the chaos in China proper and attempts by warlord regimes and Chinese governments to assert their control over affairs in the ethnic areas. The border regions of China have long been populated by large and compact ethnic groups with well-developed identities and consciousness, and Mongolians, Tibetans, and Uighurs (维吾尔族) had even established vast kingdoms in the past to rival that of the Han Chinese.<sup>3</sup> China's weakness and disunity in the first half of the twentieth century created opportunities for independence claims to emerge from Manchuria, Outer Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang, with backing from foreign powers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Dru C. Gladney, "Clashed Identities?" in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru C. Gladney (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 117.

<sup>3</sup>An ethnic group or nation is a group of people characterized by a myth of common ancestry. Hence nationalism is essentially the subjective self-identification in the emotional and psychological sense with people of the same felt kinship group. See Walter Connor, "Self-Determination: The New Phase," *World Politics* 20, no. 1 (October 1967): 30-53.

<sup>4</sup>William C. Kirby, "When Did China Become China? Thoughts on the Twentieth Century," in *Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 106-7; and Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Nationality and Difference in China: The Post-Imperial Dilemma," *ibid.*, 149.

In Manchuria, Japan controlled many railways, utilities, banks, shipping companies, and mining interests between 1912 and 1931, but had only indirect political influence with the local Chinese warlords, Zhang Zuolin (張作霖) and his son and heir Zhang Xueliang (張學良), and no sovereignty over the region.<sup>5</sup> These warlords derived their power and position from being members of the political hierarchy of Republican China, and were thus not prepared to renounce their allegiance to the largely powerless central government; although they practically governed their territory as an autonomous fief. Manchuria was largely populated by Han Chinese, and even after the Japanese invasion and creation of "Manchukuo" in 1932, with Chiang Kai-shek's acquiescence, no separatist nationalism existed.<sup>6</sup> Following Japan's surrender in 1945, the region was fought over by the KMT and the ultimately victorious CCP.

Outer Mongolia declared self-rule from China in 1912. However, pressured by Tsarist Russia, which had secured guarantees from the Chinese government to preserve its land rights, banking monopoly, and tax-free trading status in the region,<sup>7</sup> Mongolia reverted to autonomous status under Chinese sovereignty in 1915, and was further reduced to a province of China in 1919. With military backing from communist Russia, Mongolian nationalists expelled the Chinese in 1921 and declare a Mongolian People's Republic, which came under the tight control of Moscow. In exchange for a commitment from the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin not to support the CCP or the Uighur nationalists who were attempting to detach Xinjiang from China, Chiang Kai-shek recognized Mongolia's independence from the ROC in 1946.<sup>8</sup> This reality was accepted by the new government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.

<sup>5</sup>Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 48-51.

<sup>6</sup>Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 97-98.

<sup>7</sup>Fu Qixue, *Liushi nian lai de Waimenggu* (Outer Mongolia in the last sixty years) (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1970), 33-34.

<sup>8</sup>Wang Ke-wen, "Mongolian Autonomous Government," in *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. Wang Ke-wen (New York and London: Garland, 1998), 319-20.

Inner Mongolia was governed by the Chinese central government in Beijing from 1912 to 1928, and subsequently divided into three provinces (i.e., Rehe 熱河省, Chahar 察哈爾省, and Suiyuan 綏遠省) by the KMT government of Chiang Kai-shek. Inner Mongolian nationalists remonstrated repeatedly with Chiang to get him to reunite the provinces and halt Han immigration into the grasslands, but when their pleas fell on deaf ears, they established autonomous governments under Japanese sponsorship and control from 1936 to 1945.<sup>9</sup> Several separatist regimes then occupied parts of the region, but they were eliminated by the CCP by 1947.

Xinjiang was ruled with an iron hand by Chinese warlords from 1912 to 1932. Between 1933 and 1934, an uprising of Uighur Muslim radicals in the south, using smuggled Soviet arms, led to the establishment of the Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET), but this was crushed by Xinjiang's warlord Sheng Shicai (盛世才).<sup>10</sup> For the following decade, Sheng obtained from the Soviet Union troops to help him control Xinjiang, advisers for his government and security apparatus, and trade subsidies.<sup>11</sup> After Sheng's removal by central government forces, there was a large-scale uprising of Uighurs and Kazakhs in the "Three Districts" of Ili (伊犁), Tacheng (塔城), and Ashan (阿山) in the northwest. With Soviet arms, advisers, and troops,<sup>12</sup> the Islamic and ethnic nationalists established the Eastern Turkestan Republic (ETR) which lasted from 1944 to 1946. Stalin had hoped to limit the rising influence of the KMT in Xinjiang by support-

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 217.

<sup>10</sup>Andrew D. W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang 1911-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 121. According to another Xinjiang scholar, there were contacts between TIRET and the British consulate at Kashgar (喀什), but the regime failed to receive international recognition or foreign help. This could be an important reason why TIRET collapsed in little more than six months. See James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (London: Hurst, 2007), 201-6.

<sup>11</sup>James A. Millward and Nabijan Tursun, "Political History and Strategies of Control, 1884-1978," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, N.Y.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2004), 79-80; and Christian Tyler, *Wild West China: The Taming of Xinjiang* (Manchester: John Murray, 2003), 118.

<sup>12</sup>Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims*, 187-88; and Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang 1944-1949* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 138.

ing the ETR,<sup>13</sup> but after obtaining China's acceptance of Mongolia's independence, he pushed the secessionists into a coalition with the Xinjiang provincial government.<sup>14</sup> Distrust within the coalition government led to its collapse, and the independence of the "Three Districts" was again proclaimed in 1947. This regime existed unmolested until its absorption into the PRC in 1949.

Tibet declared its independence from China in early 1913, and the Tibetan government expelled all Chinese officials and refused to acknowledge Chinese authority.<sup>15</sup> Tibet participated in a convention organized by Britain at Simla, India, to demarcate Tibet's borders with China, but when the Chinese Republican government refused to ratify the agreement, the Tibetan authorities signed their own agreement with the British which declared the complete domestic autonomy of Outer Tibet (U-Tsang) and ceded territories south of the Himalayas to British India.<sup>16</sup> Britain would later provide weapons and training for a small Tibetan army,<sup>17</sup> select the staff for an English school in Tibet,<sup>18</sup> and dispatch espionage, postal, and trade missions there. After the British departed from India in 1947 and had no further use for Tibet as a buffer, the Tibetans engaged in an ultimately futile quest for foreign recognition as a state.<sup>19</sup> With the CCP about to enter Tibet in 1950, the 14th Dalai Lama (達賴喇嘛), spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, dispatched a delegation to Beijing to sign an agreement which recognized PRC sovereignty over Tibet, in exchange for guarantees to maintain his own status, the existing government structure, and Tibet's religion. Sporadic resistance to Chinese authority continued and even led

<sup>13</sup>David D. Wang, *Clouds over Tianshan: Essays on Social Disturbances in Xinjiang in the 1940s* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 1999), 31.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>15</sup>Goldstein, *The Snow Lion*, 36.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 33-34.

<sup>17</sup>Premen Addy, "British and Indian Strategic Perceptions of Tibet," in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, ed. Robert Barnett (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 32.

<sup>18</sup>Goldstein, *The Snow Lion*, 35.

<sup>19</sup>Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), 266.

to the training and equipping of a small Tibetan guerrilla force by the American Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>20</sup> A failed uprising in Lhasa in March 1959 forced the Dalai Lama to flee to India.

### **Separatists, Central Governments, and Foreign Involvement in China since 1949**

Like previous central governments of China, the PRC has, since its establishment on October 1, 1949, considered minority regions that have seceded before and may again break away to be an issue of Chinese sovereignty and national unity. Hence the CCP leadership opted for a system of nominal self-rule or autonomy by non-Han Chinese at local and regional levels under the Party's overarching tight control, with no right of secession<sup>21</sup> or tolerance for secessionist sentiments. Although land reforms, class struggles, and attacks on religion in minority areas were halted by 1979, resistance to Chinese rule has occasionally erupted since then and usually reflected complaints about the lack of religious freedom, Han Chinese immigration, actual or perceived discrimination against minorities in government employment, and the system of "fake" autonomy, under which all Party first secretaries and military commanders and commissars at regional level have been Han Chinese. Between the fall of 1987 and spring of 1989, opponents of Chinese authority led some twenty-one protests and riots of various sizes in Tibet,<sup>22</sup> at least four of which were large-scale and led to fatalities. Disturbances were also reported in the rural areas in 1993 and 1994.<sup>23</sup> In March 2008, severe rioting and burning took place in Lhasa and other Tibetan-inhabited areas, leading to many fatalities and mass

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 268; and Jane Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement: Political, Religious, and Gandhian Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 30.

<sup>21</sup>Starr, *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, 91.

<sup>22</sup>Solomon M. Karmel, "Ethnic Tension and the Struggle for Order: China's Policies in Tibet," *Pacific Affairs* 68, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 491.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 493-94, 507.

arrests. From 1990 to about 1998, Xinjiang was rocked by bus bombings, assassinations, attacks on police stations, riots, and protests.

The PRC views its power to check separatist tendencies in Taiwan as a reflection of its ability to unite China and fulfill its destiny as a great power. In Taiwan, "*Taidu*" (台獨, Taiwan independence) advocates consider the Taiwanese to be a distinct community with a separate consciousness from other Chinese, a result of fifty years of Japanese rule ending in 1945. They consequently aim to detach Taiwan from both the ROC and the PRC to form a "Republic of Taiwan."<sup>24</sup> For the KMT, which retreated to Taiwan in 1949 and came under U.S. military protection, advocating "Taiwan independence" was a crime of sedition under ROC law until 1991. In that year, the National Assembly (國民大會) elected in 1947 when the KMT controlled both the Chinese mainland and Taiwan was replaced with one elected entirely on Taiwan, and the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨) drew up a party constitution which swore to build "a Taiwanese republic with independent sovereignty." Since then the secessionist line has grown in strength within the party and gained legitimacy as a political discourse in Taiwanese society.<sup>25</sup>

Since the early 1990s, both Chinese state-nationalism and ethnic consciousness have been rising in China. To combat nationalist sentiments, particularly in restive Xinjiang, the Chinese government has adopted a "carrot and stick" strategy.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Xiaokun Song, "Intellectual Discourses in the Taiwan Independence Movement," in *Secession, History, and the Social Sciences*, ed. Bruno Copperters and Michel Huysseune (Brussels: Brussels University Press, 2002), 227-47.

<sup>25</sup>Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 45. Walker Connor considers the "Formosan Hanjen," or Taiwanese, as an example of an *offshoot nation*, formed when an important segment of the nation has been geographically separated from the parent group for a period of time sufficient for it to develop a strong sense of separate consciousness. See Walker Connor, *The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 80.

<sup>26</sup>Charles Hutzler, "Trade is China's Carrot to Muslim Separatists: Beijing Pairs Commerce, Political Crackdown in Restive Xinjiang," *Wall Street Journal*, September 21, 2001, A9; and International Committee on Tibet, "Official Chinese Statistics Show Dramatic Increases in Inequality in Tibet," June 14, 2005, <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=Official+Chinese+statistics+show+dramatic+increases+in+inequality+in+Tibet&id=10000> (accessed June 9, 2007).



One half of Beijing's battle with ethnic separatists and religious fundamentalists is a ruthless repression of their militant activities and destruction of their cells. In 1996, in response to periodic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, the authorities began a "strike hard" (嚴打) campaign to eliminate separatism, resulting in the arrest and sometimes execution of dissident political activists, "political re-education" for the clergy in mosques and monasteries that authorities most suspected of breeding separatism, and the strengthening of "watchdog" Party committees in places of worship, schools, and cultural organizations catering to ethnic minorities. The PRC authorities have accused the Dalai Lama, who in 1959 established a Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, of inciting the activities of "splittists" within Tibet, and they had banned the display of his portrait in Tibetan homes. The Chinese government has also alleged that the apprehension by invading U.S. forces of a handful of Uighurs among the ranks of Afghanistan's Taliban government demonstrates the existence of links between Uighur separatist groups, Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network, and worldwide Islamic terrorism.<sup>27</sup> Beijing has also denounced occasional statements of sympathy by the U.S. government for the cause of independence in Tibet and Xinjiang as "interference in China's internal affairs."

The other half of Beijing's two-pronged approach has been to open the borders of Xinjiang and Tibet to trade and investment from both foreign and domestic sources, and to raise the standard of living and narrow the urban-rural wealth gap in these places. Beijing fears that if ethnic minorities are economically deprived, then ethnic consciousness will rise and lead to mobilization and agitation. Beijing hopes that when ethnic minorities realize how much better-off they are economically compared to their brethren across the border in Central Asia, local support for separatist activities will be dampened. In 1992, the central leadership decided to set up thirteen special economic zones on the borders of China to promote free

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<sup>27</sup>PRC State Council Information Office, "East Turkestan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity," January 21, 2002.

trade and export-oriented industrialization.<sup>28</sup> To diversify the economies in minority areas away from heavy dependence on energy resources and livestock, the government is promoting tourism, hospitality, handicrafts, folk medicine, transportation, and local produce.<sup>29</sup> Since the mid-1990s, policies of market economic development designed and endorsed by the Party center have in practice marked the end of the affirmative action that had previously been the basis of China's policy toward its non-Han nationalities.<sup>30</sup> Special privileges for ethnic minorities such as tax breaks, quotas for state jobs, and lowered school entrance grades have been retained, but their purpose is to encourage and equip minority people to adapt to China's increasingly market-oriented economy. The government has also contributed money to building, maintaining, and restoring mosques and lamaseries. Although household consumption has risen and there is now a growing middle class in Xinjiang, urban-rural wealth disparities have increased, and since a majority of Uighurs lives in the countryside while most Han are city dwellers, there is potential for separatist discontent.<sup>31</sup>

Occasional intimidation of Taiwan has taken place in the form of military exercises in the Taiwan Strait. In 1995-96, the PRC launched missiles and held combined-arms exercises in response to a visit to the United States by President Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) of Taiwan and the subsequent holding of Taiwan's first direct presidential election. This incident brought U.S. aircraft carriers to the entrances of the Strait for the first time since 1979, when the United States switched diplomatic relations from Taipei

<sup>28</sup> Du Fachun, "Bianjing maoyi yu bianjiang minzu diqu de jingji fazhan" (Border commerce and economic development of border ethnic areas), *Minzu yanjiu* (Ethnic Studies), 2000, no. 1:59.

<sup>29</sup> Hu Angang and Wen Jun, "Shehui fazhan youxian: xibu minzu diqu xinde zhuigan zhanlue" (Social development first: a new catch-up strategy of the ethnic minority areas in China's west), *Minzu yanjiu*, 2000, no. 3:14.

<sup>30</sup> Kate Saunders, "New Tibet Party Chief in Leadership Shuffle," *Free Tibet Campaign — Special Report*, May 11, 2003, <http://www.freetibet.org/press/specialreport110503.html> (accessed June 9, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Colin Mackerras, "Ethnicity in China: The Case of Xinjiang," *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2004). <http://www.asiaquarterly.com/content/view/142/401> (accessed December 16, 2007).

to Beijing.<sup>32</sup> However, Beijing increasingly sees stronger economic links with Taiwan, through trade, investment, and the flow of businesspeople, entertainers and politicians, as the key to developing a "pro-Beijing constituency" on the island that would eventually pressure or entice the Taipei authorities into accepting the PRC's "one-China" principle. The PRC has repeatedly called for the opening of the "three links" (三通)—direct exchanges of mail, trade, and visitors—across the Taiwan Strait. Beijing has instituted rules that would make it possible for Taiwanese shipping companies to send their cargoes directly to mainland ports.<sup>33</sup> Since 2003, the PRC authorities have arranged with the Taiwanese aviation authorities for charter flights to carry Taiwanese businesspeople on the mainland to and from Taiwan over the Chinese New Year holidays. Beijing now allows Taiwanese fruit and vegetables to be imported into the PRC.

Especially since the Tiananmen Incident (天安門事件) of June 1989, "self-determination" has been seen by the Chinese leadership as an excuse for foreign "imperialists" to support the secessionist efforts of Taiwanese, Tibetan, and Xinjiang separatists, in an effort to bring down the CCP regime.<sup>34</sup> Jiang Zemin (江澤民), when he was president of the PRC, vowed to crush separatist and "non-patriotic religious activities" in China's ethnic minority regions, and labeled them "an old trick of Western anti-China hostile forces to use ethnic and religious issues to Westernize and split up China."<sup>35</sup> The PRC fears the separatist cause in Tibet, Xinjiang, and elsewhere may be aided by foreign powers under the guise of protecting "human rights, religious freedom, and a unique cultural heritage"; hence the Chinese authorities "cling tenaciously to the shield of sovereignty," and

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<sup>32</sup>Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 197-200.

<sup>33</sup>Patrick E. Tyler, "Beijing Now Sees Stronger Trade, Not Intimidation, as the Key to Quelling Taiwan Separatism," *New York Times*, October 12, 1996, A6.

<sup>34</sup>Ji Dachun, "Minzu zijue he Zhonghua minzu de zijue" (Ethnic self-determination and Chinese national self-determination), *Minzu yanjiu*, 2000, no. 2:102.

<sup>35</sup>Jiang Pledges to Crush Ethnic Separatism, Warns Foreign Forces," *World Tibet Network News*, September 30, 1999, [http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/1999/9/30\\_3.html](http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/1999/9/30_3.html) (accessed June 9, 2007).

in fact meld it with the imperative of national unity.<sup>36</sup> As such, Beijing continues to thwart Taiwan's attempts to join intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), to entice states which have diplomatic relations with Taipei into switching recognition to the PRC, and to protest against U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, in order to prevent its slide toward eventual independence.

As the existing international system favors maintenance of the territorial integrity of states, international law prohibits intervention, particularly unilateral and unprovoked physical intervention against a state, or any attempt to alter its "authority structure," save in certain exceptional circumstances such as self-defense or collective intervention authorized by the United Nations or a regional IGO.<sup>37</sup> The regime against intervention on behalf of secessionists applies primarily with regard to direct "physical" high-level involvement.<sup>38</sup> Even with indirect low-level support, involvement has often been secretive, and few states that appeared sympathetic or gave aid went so far as to publicly endorse the secessionists' right to self-determination.<sup>39</sup> While support from external parties is only one factor influencing the feasibility of a secessionist bid, without some form of external recognition of the "just cause" of the separatist struggle, unilateral secession has next to no chance of success in the international system of states. As we shall see, in the Chinese context, distinguishing between direct "physical" high-level involvement and indirect low-level support is a meaningful distinction in external intervention.

The PRC government recognizes that since the Western intervention in Kosovo in 1999, strict adherence to the idea of state sovereignty and the concomitant non-interference in the domestic (including ethnic) affairs of states can no longer be relied upon as a shield against involvement by other states. Beijing knows that external actors and intervention behavior can influence separatist leaders like Tibet's Dalai Lama or Taiwan's Chen

<sup>36</sup>Robert Legvold, "Foreword," *Pugwash Occasional Paper* 2, no. 1 (January 2001): 2

<sup>37</sup>Alexis Heraclides, "Secessionist Minorities and External Involvement," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 351.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 355.

Shui-bian (陳水扁) to adjust their positions on seeking independence and this affects their willingness to negotiate with the PRC leadership. Once a separatist leader is accepted as a legitimate political leader by the international community, that leader will be able to mobilize a constituency of foreign actors and acquire, expand, or maintain a position as the legitimate voice of his/her people,<sup>40</sup> thus becoming less willing to compromise with Beijing. Hence Beijing wants to assert direct control or global influence to sever this separatist-foreign linkage, or at least to take steps to restrict it to the non-political and non-diplomatic arena.

### **Deriving an Analytical Framework for Separatism in the Chinese Context**

We should now be able to derive an analytical framework, or model, to explain separatism in the context of modern China. The simplest, pithiest, and neatest model can be worked out by adopting the Qualitative Comparative Approach (QCA), which is a qualitative research methodology developed by Charles A. Ragin based on Boolean algebra,<sup>41</sup> or set theory.<sup>42</sup> QCA is very suitable for this project because the number of cases selected for the study is limited, and the approach requires the researcher to establish familiarity with the cases before attempting any analysis.

In QCA, the goal of the researcher is to identify how different combinations of causes produce different outcomes across the range of cases included in a study. The focus is on combinations of causes that yield the same outcome across a number of cases (e.g., independence claims on

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<sup>40</sup> Andrea Grove, "The Intra-National Struggle to Define 'Us': External Intervention as a Two-Way Street," *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (September 2001): 384-85.

<sup>41</sup> This methodology is set out in Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) and refined in Charles C. Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> Two classical texts on set theory or Boolean algebra are J. Eldon Whitesitt, *Boolean Algebra and Its Application* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1961); and R. L. Goodstein, *Boolean Algebra* (London: Pergamon, 1966).

behalf of a nationality) that (1) distinguish that category of cases from other categories (which leads to the outcome of a nationality demanding regional autonomy, for example) and (2) explains the outcome manifested by that particular category.<sup>43</sup> A common technique is to group together cases according to the same outcome. If different cases can be matched to different outcomes, then the research confirms the investigator's comprehension of the factors or causes that distinguish the cases.<sup>44</sup>

The outcome of interest here is whether or not, at certain times since the fall of the last imperial dynasty in China in 1911, authorities in peripheral regions of China (not hitherto considered part of the traditional Han Chinese domain of China proper) have asserted physical claims of independence or, equivalently, have taken action to deny the legitimacy of the Chinese central government's sovereignty claims over the region.

The outcome of interest is so defined because this author wants to understand why some regional authorities in China, during certain periods in modern times, have managed to assert independence claims against the central government for their own region, while the same regional authorities at other periods since 1911 have not managed to do so. The periods are divided according to the milestones in a region's history, as explained above. For stability, only secessionist regimes which lasted for at least six months are included.

Once a particular outcome has been specified, a set of causal conditions for the outcome is then identified, and evidence on cases can be represented on "truth tables" in Boolean algebra. For our study here, the truth table shows hypothetical evidence on historically significant occurrences (asserting independence) for certain geographical regions of China in different time periods (see table 1).

The truth table thus lists the causal conditions or explanatory variables that this author, on the basis of a careful examination of the relevant literature, believes to be important. Since both the presence and absence of

<sup>43</sup>Charles C. Ragin, *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, 1994), 106.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

the causal conditions or variables often appear as salient factors or contentious arguments in the official pronouncements, academic literature, and public debates concerning the controversial issue of separatism in China—or "splittism" in official PRC parlance—great care has been exercised in specifying these causal conditions or variables.

To account for the assertion of independence by a regional authority, which is denoted on the truth table by the letter **I**, I have posited three factors: (1) whether there is intervention by a foreign state government; (2) whether separatist groups exist to engage in activities to separate or split their region from China; and (3) whether there is physical assertion of control, or demonstration of authority, by a Chinese central government.

Foreign state intervention (**F**) for the purpose of encouraging or maintaining a claim of independence by the authorities of a region under discussion, is said to have taken place if a foreign country has diplomatic relations or treaty agreements with, a military presence in, or political control over the regional secessionist authority, or if a foreign country provides it with arms supplies and material aid, extracts economic concessions from it, or gives verbal or moral support to the separatists' cause. No matter how intense their scrutiny and criticism, human rights groups do not by themselves change the facts on the ground, and thus are excluded as a cause.

Separatist activities (**S**) are actions organized or motivated by separatist groups based within or outside the region for the purpose of detaching the region from the ROC between 1912 and 1949, or the PRC since 1949. Only organized activities or motivated actions on the part of separatist activists count; separatist sentiments alone do not. Separatist expressions may or may not lead to violence. Many warlord regimes existed in China from 1912 to 1949, but they could hardly be considered separatist. In the Chinese context, warlordism is a form of regionalism where the warlord is top military commander and self-governing authority of the region, but because he receives his titles of appointment from the central government he has no expressed desire to constitute the region as an independent state. Separatism is a form of local nationalism or national consciousness among people in a locality that leads them to wish to separate from China and seek self-rule by forming an independent state. As such, the term

"separatism" or "secessionism" may be replaced by "ethnic nationalism," and the terms "separatists" and "secessionists" are interchangeable with "ethnic nationalists."

Control (C) is demonstrated if and when the Chinese central government dispatches military personnel or civilian bureaucrats to a region, or endorses a local warlord as an agent of the government, in an attempt to establish or sustain its power over the region. This is a minimal definition of the (re)assertion of central government authority over the breakaway region. I do not wish to prejudice the discussion by positing as an explanatory variable the full exercise of central government control, as it could make our argument tautological, for it can be claimed that full central government control implies the absence of independence claims by a secessionist regional authority.<sup>45</sup> By changing the demographic facts, government-sponsored Han Chinese immigration into ethnic minority areas is an assertion of central government control; however, for the purpose of setting up our variable, this consideration is irrelevant, because this type of immigration follows rather than precedes the exercise of central government authority. For the purpose of our discussion, "Chinese central government" is taken to refer to the ROC between 1912 and 1949, and the PRC after 1949, since these are the regimes with the support of most Chinese during the stated periods.

The focus of the truth table is on the various combinations of the causal factors represented by F, S, and C.<sup>46</sup> Each logical combination of values or causal conditions is represented as one row of the truth table, with 1 denoting the presence of a cause and 0 denoting its absence. Thus, the

<sup>45</sup>The argument holds with respect to the state's construction of institutional barriers to collective secessionist actions, such as providing public goods, provisioning for defense, regulating freedom of speech and association, and protecting minorities' cultural values, as discussed in Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113-33.

<sup>46</sup>The method of analysis described below follows Richard Warnes, "A Boolean Approach to Qualitative Comparison: A Summary by Richard Warnes," <http://www.dur.ac.uk/case.2004/papers/Boolean%20Features.pdf> (accessed June 9, 2007); and Stephen P. Borgatti, "Algebraic Analysis of Coded Data," <http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/Handouts/algebrai.htm> (accessed June 9, 2007).



**Table 1**  
**Truth Table**

	F	S	C	I	Combinations 4	Cases 13
<b>Manchukuo (MC)</b>						
1912-31	0	0	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	3
1932-45	1	0	0	1		
1946->	0	0	1	0		
<b>Outer Mongolia (OM)</b>						
1912-15	1	1	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	7
1915-19	1	1	1	0		
1919-21	0	1	1	0	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	
1921-46	1	1	0	1		
1946->	1	0	0	1	<b>F*s*c = I</b>	
<b>Inner Mongolia (IM)</b>						
1912-27	0	0	1	0	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	
1928-36	0	1	1	0		
1936-46	1	1	0	1		
1947->	0	0	1	0		
<b>Xinjiang (XJ)</b>						
1912-32	0	0	0	0	<b>f*S*c = I</b>	2
1933-34	0	1	0	1		
1934-44	1	0	0	0	<b>F*S*C = I</b>	1
1944-46	1	1	1	1		
1946-47	0	1	1	0	<b>f*S*c = I</b>	(3 Districts)
1947-49	0	1	0	1		
1949-89	0	0	1	0		
1990->	0	1	1	0		
<b>Xizang/Tibet (TB)</b>						
1913-50	1	1	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	
1950-59	1	1	1	0		
1960-79	0	0	1	0		
1980->	0	1	1	0		
1959->	1	1	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	(Dharmasala)
<b>Taiwan (TW)</b>						
1945-49	0	0	1	0	<b>F*s*c = I</b>	
1950-78	1	0	0	1		
1979-90	1	1	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	
1991->	1	1	0	1	<b>F*S*c = I</b>	

**F** = Foreign state Intervention (diplomatic relations, military presence, political control, arms supply, economic concessions, aid)

**S** = Separatist groups (engaging in activities to separate region from ROC between 1912-1949 or PRC after 1949)

**C** = Physical assertion of control or demonstration of authority by central government

**I** = Independence claims or denial of legitimacy of central government claims over region

truth table has as many rows as there are logically possible combinations of values on the causal conditions.

Inspection of the data shows that there are cases (periods for regions) that have the same combination of causal conditions but different outcomes. For example, while **OM** 1915-19 and **TB** 1950-59 both show a causal pattern of 111 for an outcome of **0** for **F**, **S**, **C**, and **I**, **XJ** 1944-46 also shows a pattern of 111 for the same causal combination, but for an outcome of **1**. Cases that have the same presence/absence (**1**, **0**) values on all the causal conditions (**F**, **S**, **C**) yet have different outcomes (**I**, **I'**) [**I'** is read as the complement or absence of **I**] are used as bases for selecting additional causal variables.<sup>47</sup>

To resolve these contradictions, we must specify causal conditions more carefully by returning to the evidence and examining it more closely. The Chinese government has often charged that "splittist" activities were the result of interventions by foreign governments taking advantage of China's weakness and disunity. On further inspection, it can be observed that there are actually two rather different types of foreign government involvement, depending on the purpose of the intervention and the means of achieving it.

Alan M. James has observed that the notion of sovereignty may be divided into two related but distinct meanings—"sovereign status" and "sovereign rights."<sup>48</sup> While sovereign status is, in principle, either possessed or not, the exercise of sovereign rights may be expanded or curtailed. Thus we may expect an attempt to deprive China of sovereign status over a region to result in direct intervention to create an independent character for that region, but an attempt to deprive or curtail China's ability to exercise sovereign rights in a region will lead only to indirect support for a separatist regime. This corresponds in purpose to Alexis Heraclides' dif-

<sup>47</sup>Ragin, *Constructing Social Research*, 120.

<sup>48</sup>Alan M. James, "The Concept of Sovereignty Revisited," in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000), [http://www.unu.edu/p&g/kosovo\\_full.htm#20](http://www.unu.edu/p&g/kosovo_full.htm#20) (accessed June 9, 2007).

ferentiation of foreign intervention into physical "high-level" intervention and indirect "low-level" intervention, cited above.

Specifically, physical "high-level" intervention involves actions by foreign countries to alter the authority structure or constitutional makeup of a detached portion of the Chinese state, or to install or preserve a secessionist authority for the purpose of establishing or sustaining political control or a sphere of influence over that portion, and thus changing its relationship with the rest of China. This is typically done through a treaty or agreement with the separatist forces to dispatch troops, sell arms, or attach advisers to their regime. In the case of China, separatist forces have been cultivated, encouraged, or embraced by foreign powers at various times in Manchuria, Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang's "Three Districts," Outer Tibet, or Taiwan, for the purpose of colonization (Manchuria), establishing a satellite state (Outer Mongolia), bargaining for other territories and concessions (Xinjiang's "Three Districts"), or creating a security buffer (Outer Tibet and Taiwan).

Indirect "low-level" intervention entails the involvement of foreign governments in the affairs of an ethnic minority region of China for the purpose of limiting the full application of Chinese power in the region, obtaining tangible benefits from the region, creating political difficulties for the Chinese government, or projecting the interveners' own political sympathies or ideological support. For the separatist authorities or groups, welcoming this form of intervention would usually mean accepting covert supply of small arms; receiving financial aid or material contributions (or as the case may be, giving them to acquire recognition for their cause); selling mineral or primary products below market prices; allowing foreign ownership of mines, utilities, or economic infrastructure; and perhaps most important of all, obtaining expressions of moral support at international forums.

The Chinese examples have revealed that, if foreign involvement in China's ethnic governance (**F**) can be meaningfully divided into purposes and means that are direct (**A**) and indirect (**B**), then, although **B** has occurred time and again independently, **A** never occurs in the absence of **B**. The combination **Ab** is a mathematical possibility but does not exist

in our cases. This should not be surprising if we consider that there would be little point in a foreign state intervening directly to establish a new political-legal-constitutional order in, or entering into treaty relations with, a detached territorial entity, if it did not intend to extract tangible advantages from the secessionist regime, or use all possible means to prop it up. Therefore, not least for analytical purposes, disaggregating the **F** term into **A** and **B** would give our framework better explanatory power.

With the separation of **F** (foreign involvement) into **A** (direct foreign state intervention) and **B** (indirect foreign state support) as two distinct causes, or more exactly, two distinct groups of causal conditions, we resolve all existing logical contradictions regarding the formulation of the truth table. The apparent inconsistency between **XJ** (1934-44) and other similar formulations, with **A**, **B**, **S**, and **C** in this case showing **1**, **1**, **0**, and **0** for an outcome of **I** = **0**, instead of **1** as elsewhere, can be explained by the demonstration of strong Russian intervention in Xinjiang, not to promote ethnic separatism, but to prop up the Han Chinese warlord there and use the province as a buffer between the Soviet Union and advancing Japanese troops. This example thus demonstrates the need to know the case studies very well before engaging in an analytical exercise like this one.

**MC** (1912-31) and **XJ** (1947-49) are both re-recorded from **F** = **0** in the old truth table to **A** = **0** and **B** = **1** in the new, refined one (see table 2) to reflect economic concessions already given to foreign powers by the regional authorities in question. Japan obtained the South Manchurian Railway leases and the Liaodong Peninsula (遼東半島) in Manchuria from the Russians upon the latter's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. Soviet Russia continued to extract uranium from a mine in the "Three Districts" as they had done since the period of the ETR (1944-46) and coalition government (1946-47). **TW** (1991->) is re-recorded with **A** = **1** or **0**, to reflect the possibility that the sale of U.S. fighter jets to Taiwan in 1992 and the return of U.S. aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait in 1996 for the first time since 1979, may (or may not) be an expression of American will to defend Taiwan.

Table 2  
Refined Truth Table

	A	B	S	C	I	Combinations 5	Cases 14
<b>Manchukuo (MC)</b>							
1912-31	0	1	0	1	0	$A*B*s*c = I$	3
1932-45	1	1	0	0	1		
1946->	0	0	0	1	0		
<b>Outer Mongolia (OM)</b>							
1912-15	1	1	1	0	1	$A*B*S*c = I$	5
1915-19	0	1	1	1	0		
1919-21	0	0	1	1	0		
1921-46	1	1	1	0	1	$A*B*S*c = I$	
1946->	1	1	0	0	1	$A*B*s*c = I$	
<b>Inner Mongolia (IM)</b>							
1912-27	0	0	0	1	0	$A*B*S*c = I$	
1928-36	0	0	1	1	0		
1936-46	1	1	1	0	1		
1947->	0	0	0	1	0		
<b>Xinjiang (XJ)</b>							
1912-32	0	0	0	0	0	$a*B*S*c = I$	4
1933-34	0	1	1	0	1		
1934-44	1	1	0	0	0	Contradiction	1 (Three Districts)
1944-46	1	1	1	1	1	$A*B*S*C = I$	
1946-47	0	1	0	1	0		
1947-49	0	1	1	0	1	$a*B*S*c = I$	
1949-89	0	0	0	1	0		
1990->	0	0	1	1	0		
<b>Xizang/Tibet (TB)</b>							
1913-50	1	1	1	0	1	$A*B*S*c = I$	
1950-59	0	1	1	1	0		
1960-79	0	0	0	1	0		
1980->	0	1	1	1	0		
1959->	0	1	1	0	1	$a*B*S*c = I$	(Dharmasala)
<b>Taiwan (TW)</b>							
1945-49	0	0	0	1	0		
1950-78	1	1	0	0	1	$A*B*s*c = I$	
1979-90	0	1	0	0	1	$a*B*s*c = I$	
1991->	0/1	1	1	0	1	$a*B*S*c = I$	
						$A*B*S*c = I$	

A = Direct foreign state intervention (political-diplomatic relations, military presence, overt arms sales, advisers)

B = Indirect foreign state support (covert arms supply, economic concessions, aid, verbal support)

S = Separatist groups (engaging in activities to separate region from ROC between 1912-1949 or PRC after 1949)

C = Physical assertion of control or demonstration of authority by central government

I = Independence claims or denial of legitimacy of central government claims over region

We can describe all the cases in the truth table using **Boolean AND** and **OR** operators. The **AND** operator is written like multiplication: letters are written next to each other if they have the relationship of an **INTERSECTION** set. The **OR** operator is written like addition: letters are written with a plus sign between them if they have the relationship of a **UNION** set.

In Boolean analysis, the absence of a cause has the same logical status as the presence of a cause. The presence and absence conditions, when combined through Boolean multiplication and addition, lead to the outcomes we wish to investigate.

Thus we can describe the first **MC** case as having the pattern of conditions: **aBSc**. This means: **A** is absent **AND** **B** is present **AND** **S** is absent **AND** **C** is absent.

The second **MC** case is written: **ABSc**. This means: **A** is present **AND** **B** is present **AND** **S** is absent **AND** **C** is absent. Similarly, the first **OM** case can be written as: **ABSc**, and so on.

To refer to the second **MC** case and the first **OM** case, both of which resulted in independence claims against China by a regional government, we write:

$$ABSc + ABSc = I$$

This means "we are considering all those cases in which there is direct intervention by foreign governments **AND** indirect support by foreign governments **AND** no separatist activities **AND** no central government presence, **OR** there is direct intervention by foreign governments **AND** indirect support by foreign governments **AND** separatist activities **AND** no central government presence."

As the refined truth table shows, there are altogether fourteen cases in five causal combinations of **A**, **B**, **S**, and **C** leading to the presence of **I**, as listed below:

**ABSc (5 cases):** Outer Mongolia 1912-15; Outer Mongolia 1921-46; Inner Mongolia 1936-46; Tibet 1912-50; Taiwan 1995 onwards  
**aBSc (4 cases):** Xinjiang (Turkish Islamic Republic of Turkestan) 1933-

34; Xinjiang (Three Districts/"revived" Eastern Turkestan Republic) 1947-49; Tibet (Dharmasala) 1959 onwards; Taiwan 1991-95

**ABsc (3 cases):** Manchukuo (Manchuria) 1932-45; Outer Mongolia 1946 onwards; Taiwan 1950-78

**ABSC (1 case):** Xinjiang (Eastern Turkestan Republic) 1944-46

**aBsc (1 case):** Taiwan 1979-90

We can now summarize all the cases in which there are independence claims against China by a regional government as:

$$\mathbf{ABsc} + \mathbf{aBSc} + \mathbf{ABSc} + \mathbf{ABSC} + \mathbf{aBsc} = \mathbf{I}$$

If two rows of a truth table differ on only one causal condition yet result in the same outcome, the causal condition that distinguishes the two rows can be considered irrelevant and removed to create a simpler combination of causal conditions, in other words, a simpler term.<sup>49</sup> This simplification strategy is analogous to controlling for other variables in experimental design, where only one condition at a time is allowed to vary. If varying one of the conditions has no discernible impact on the outcome, it can be eliminated as a factor. It follows that whenever two terms with four conditions are combined, the new term has three conditions because one condition has been eliminated.

One approach is to compare each 4-character term in the equation and look for pairs that differ by just one character. For example, **ABsc** and **ABSc** share **ABc**. Evidently then, it does not matter what state the **S** or **s** variable is in; **ABc** will still lead to **I**.

Similarly, **ABsc** and **aBsc** share **Bsc**; **aBSc** and **ABSc** share **BSc**; **aBsc** and **aBSc** share **aBc**; and **ABSc** and **ABSC** share **ABS**. This leads to the secondary equation

$$\mathbf{ABc} + \mathbf{Bsc} + \mathbf{BSc} + \mathbf{aBc} + \mathbf{ABS} = \mathbf{I}$$

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<sup>49</sup>Ragin, *Constructing Social Research*, 125.

**Table 3**  
**Implication Table**

	ABsc	aBSc	ABSc	ABSC	aBsc
ABc	X		X		
aBc		X			X
Bsc	X				X
BSc		X	X		
ABS			X	X	

Sometimes, the process of reduction still results in redundant elements. Fortunately, a Boolean expression is said to imply another if the membership of the second term is a subset of the membership of the first. This concept of "implication" provides an important tool for minimizing sums-of-products expressions in set theory.

Rearranging the original and secondary equations in the form of an "implication" table, and marking with an "X" the columns (original terms) which are covered by the rows (secondary terms), we have table 3.

In the implication table, note that all four terms **ABsc**, **aBSc**, **ABSc**, and **aBsc** in the original equation are covered by the pair of terms **ABc** and **aBc** or the pair of terms **Bsc** and **BSc** in the secondary equation. Thus we can either delete the **ABc** and **aBc** pair, or the **Bsc** and **BSc** pair, and we are still left with a table in which every column is "covered"; that is, it has an "X" in it somewhere. This means that either **ABc**, **aBc**, and **ABS**, or **Bsc**, **BSc**, and **ABS**, are sufficient to generate all of the more complicated terms in the original equation. Since **ABc** and **aBc** share **Bc**, and **Bsc** and **BSc** likewise share **Bc**, the secondary equation  $ABc + Bsc + BSc + aBc + ABS = I$  can be further reduced to  $Bc + ABS = I$ , which "covers" the original equation by saying exactly the same thing but with fewer and simpler terms.

The equation  $Bc + ABS = I$  presents the following information:

1. Since **B** appears in both terms and can be factored out as **B** (**c** + **AS**), this means that indirect support is a necessary, though not sufficient, cause for independence claims by a regional authority against a Chinese central government to occur. This explains the obsession of Chinese gov-



ernments in the last hundred years with foreign involvement, no matter how limited, in the affairs of China's border minorities.

2. For independence claims by a regional authority against a Chinese central government to occur, there must be the presence of indirect support by foreign governments **AND** absence of central government authority, **OR** the presence of direct intervention **AND** indirect support by foreign governments **AND** presence of separatist activities.

3. Given that **Bc** covers all cases in the truth table pertaining to the causal combinations **ABsc**, **aBSc**, **ABSc**, and **aBsc**, and **ABS** covers **ABSc** and **ABSC**, we can immediately observe that of the groups or authorities that still claim or maintain "independence" from the central government of the PRC today, in the cases of Taiwan, (Outer) Mongolia, the "Tibetan government-in-exile" in Dharmasala, and dissident "East Turkestan" organizations, the causes allowing for the rise and continuation of these claims are fully described by the terms **Bc** and **ABS**.

4. Considering the contemporary application of our equation,

$$\mathbf{Bc + ABS = I}$$

(A) The first term allows us to say that involvement by foreign governments consisting chiefly of indirect support must come together with the absence of central government authority or control for independence claims by a separatist authority to take place against the Chinese central government. This combination of causes allows for the maintenance of separatist authorities in Dharmasala, India, of the "Tibetan government-in-exile" headed by the Dalai Lama since 1959; Taiwan; and (Outer) Mongolia.

Although out of reach of the PRC, the pro-independence Tibetan diaspora, made up of those who went into exile with the Dalai Lama and their descendants, has been trying to maintain the interest, attention, and financial contributions of the international community by publicizing human rights issues in Tibet, electing representatives to the "National Assembly" which constitutes the "government-in-exile" in Dharmasala, and arranging the Dalai Lama's foreign visits to the United States, Europe, and

other countries in order to preserve Tibetan nationalist consciousness and prevent their cause from being forgotten by the rest of the world.

This combination of causes also explains the acquisition of weapons and clamor for recognition by Taiwan's authorities. It also constitutes the basis of the PRC's irredentist claims over Taiwan, in the sense that "irredentism means an attempt made by an existing state to redeem territories and peoples it considers its own."<sup>50</sup> This is particularly the case since Beijing has often argued that it is the machinations of the United States and the weakness of the Chinese government that have prevented Taiwan from being reunified with the PRC.

In the case of (Outer) Mongolia, which became independent from China through Soviet devices, although the PRC has recognized its existence as a sovereign state since 1949 and it has been a member of the United Nations since 1961, there is always the possibility that, after the "Taiwan problem" is settled, a future PRC leadership or post-PRC Chinese regime might desire to recover Mongolia, as many Mongolians fear.<sup>51</sup> Hence the post-communist Mongolian leadership still maintains close relations with Russia, and actively seeks the friendship and assistance of Japan, South Korea, and the United States and other Western countries.

(B) The second term allows us to say that both direct intervention and indirect support by foreign governments must be present alongside organized separatist activities for local nationalist rule to occur. This combination of causes sustains the existence of a separate political community in Taiwan, and may give rise to the recurrence of separatist activities in Xinjiang.

Taiwan has not acknowledged the legitimacy of the PRC's sovereignty claim over it and believes that Beijing's threats and entreaties can be successfully met through the intervention of U.S. military forces, made possible by the Taiwan Relations Act enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1979

<sup>50</sup>Benyamin Neuberger, "Irredentism and Politics in Africa," in *Irredentism and International Politics*, ed. Naomi Chazan (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1991), 97.

<sup>51</sup>Tom Ginsburg, "Nationalism, Elites, and Mongolia's Rapid Transformation," in *Mongolia in the Twentieth Century: Landlocked Cosmopolitan*, ed. Stephen Kotkin and Bruce A. Elleman (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 253-56.

in response to the establishment of U.S.-PRC diplomatic relations; through the sympathy of friendly states and responsive non-state organizations; and by means of the strengthening of a distinctive Taiwanese character separate from that of mainland China, which includes promoting local cultures, the Taiwanese language, and the use of the title "Taiwan" on the cover of its citizens' ROC passports.

Since this term in the equation has not specifically ruled out the presence of the central government as a variable (by not asserting that it is absent), it can describe, if not predict, the potential occurrence of another uprising in Xinjiang, leading to the appearance of another "East Turkestan Republic" type of regime. This may particularly be the case if Beijing is unable to keep local grievances under control, or destroy Uighur separatist groups that are active locally but based, trained, armed, or funded across the border in Central Asia or elsewhere, or prevent a major power from actively supporting their independence claims and activities if its relations with the PRC were to turn bad.

(C) Since either term, or combination of causes, could lead to the existence, and allow for the preservation, of a separate communal consciousness and political authority in Taiwan autonomous from the PRC, it is of little surprise that Beijing is very concerned that the authorities in Taipei may do even more to consolidate their already *de facto* independence status by expanding relations with foreign states and international organizations, lobbying the U.S. Congress and administration and other Western governments, emphasizing a separate Taiwanese consciousness and identity, and refuting PRC pressures and entreaties to reunify.

5. If TW since 1995 is recoded as **aBSc** rather than **ABSc**, due to doubts about foreign commitments to help defend Taiwan should the PRC decide to use force to retake the island, then, since **aBSc** is a causal combination found under **Bc**, the first term of our equation in (4) will adequately explain how Taiwan's authorities are able to hold out against Beijing's demands and pleas to end the island's independent status.

It would be useful, not least for the PRC government, to assess the combinations of conditions associated with the absence of independence claims by regional authorities, ethnic or otherwise. There is a simple way

of doing that. This is by means of applying De Morgan's Law to the solution already derived, by first recoding a presence into an absence, and vice versa, and then changing a logical **AND** into an **OR**, and vice versa.

Therefore, if  $I = Bc + ABS$ , then  $I' = (b + C)(a + b + s)$  [ $I'$  being the complement, or the absence, of  $I$ ]  $= (ab + b + bs + aC + bC + sC)$  [since  $bb = b$ ]  $= b + aC + sC$  [since  $ab$ ,  $bs$ , and  $bC$  are subsets of  $b$  and hence absorbed into  $b$ ; we can simplify the terms using the Containment Rule of algebra through which logical redundancy is eliminated]. Rearranging, we have  $I' = b + C(a + s)$ .

Thus it can be inferred that independence claims by organized separatist forces in a region of China cannot occur if there is an absence even of indirect support by foreign governments, **OR** if the Chinese central government asserts authoritative control, such as employing the aforementioned "stick and carrot" strategy, to prevent direct intervention by foreign governments or remove causes/grievances giving rise to separatist sentiments, organization, and mobilization. This equation covers all cases in which separatism in China's context cannot exist.

Some human and minority rights activists have explicitly or implicitly blamed the assertion of central government authority over minority regions or its control over the personal lives of minorities for the occurrence of separatist activities. Indeed, a powerful and intrusive Han Chinese government presence may well breed separatist sentiments, which may surface in organized violence in the event of a collapse or severe curtailment of central government authority in minority regions. However, our investigation seems to bear out the assertion that, while Beijing's physical presence is still strongly felt, it can potently discourage separatist actions through allocating privileges to minorities and conducting harsh suppression of such actions should they arise.

### Conclusion

Our study has shown that for support of separatist activities in China to be effective, foreign governments and IGOs have to be directly or in-

directly involved at some point, yet at what times and to what extent they are involved, if at all, will be determined by their real interests. We have found that motives for foreign involvement in Chinese separatist causes are principally instrumental and pertain to reasons of international politics, such as strategic considerations, territorial expansion, or economic gain. For the foreseeable future, domestic division in foreign countries is likely to outweigh unity in shaping preference over China, unless the issue is one of national security. As long as the PRC is not perceived to be a military threat, no country wishes to damage a much larger economic interest in China by supporting ethnic nationalist aspirations. Furthermore, it seems that if a minority group believes that it enjoys no external support and minimal leverage against the center, it would likely choose to accommodate, even in the face of significant repression.<sup>52</sup> All these factors mean that unless Chinese security forces are seen to be openly and flagrantly abusing their own citizens on a grand scale, most governments will be only too willing to turn a blind eye to how the PRC authorities deal with their own minorities.

A fundamental interpretation of history in the PRC is that in order to keep China weak and disunited, foreign powers have sponsored separatist groups through various means to loosen China's hold over its border regions where most of the non-Han minority groups reside. This implies that if no country challenges the legitimacy of the PRC's borders, China's leadership can afford to carry out a more permissive policy toward its minorities. However, if outside threats should arise across China's borders, as occurred during the tenure of Mao Zedong (毛澤東, 1949-76), control over minorities and policies toward Taiwan would presumably harden.

The Chinese government should recognize that not all disputes pertaining to the periphery are necessarily secessionist. Protests, demonstrations, and mob disturbances may well occur over calls to redress economic disparities among regions, perceived misallocation of government jobs

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<sup>52</sup>Erin Jenne, "A Bargaining Theory of Minority Demands: Explaining the Dog That Did Not Bite in 1990s Yugoslavia," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004): 729, 750.

or housing, ethnic or religious discrimination, limits on child-bearing, pollution, high-handedness of petty local bureaucrats, and Han Chinese immigration into the region. Beijing should be able to distinguish non-separatist-related grievances from separatist demands and react accordingly, for if it seeks to impose a repressive solution indiscriminately, sentiments surrounding the former may well boil over to provoke the latter. For example, to promote ethnic harmony, persons inciting ethnic hatred and discrimination, or publishing materials that slight or insult minorities' sentiments, should be handled through the legal process, according to Provisions 249 and 250 of the PRC Criminal Law.

Since 1990, Chinese state-nationalism has been officially promoted as a "unifying ideology" to encourage patriotism and unity among all Chinese. The Party-state also believes that it now has sufficient control and power to take any measures necessary to suppress resistance to accelerated Han migration into ethnic areas.<sup>53</sup> However, even with acculturation of ethnic elites and economic prosperity, the overcoming of problems of ethno-national identity by China's non-Han ethnic groups in their autonomous regions is not guaranteed. In fact, Chinese efforts to form an integrated multi-ethnic state by suppressing separatism and those forms of ethnic consciousness that threaten state unity are responsible to some extent for the strengthening of local identities and cultures. As it is, the Chinese authorities are caught in a dilemma: when they suppress religion, religious minorities like the Uighurs and the Tibetans feel oppressed and oppose the government; when they allow it, these minorities have less reason to gripe against the government but their strengthened Islamic or Tibetan Buddhist practices lead them to feel more separate from and apathetic toward Chinese society. Many Uighurs still center their idea of the state away from Beijing, in an independent East Turkestan, or for radical Muslims, in a Central Asian caliphate;<sup>54</sup> and for Tibetans, their political

<sup>53</sup>Li Dezhu, "Xibu da kaifa yu minzu wenti" (The development of western China and the nationality problem), *Qiusi* (Seeking Truth), June 1, 2000.

<sup>54</sup>Nicholas Becquelin, "Staged Development in Xinjiang," *The China Quarterly*, no. 178 (June 2004): 377.

identity still rests on the spiritual and temporal roles of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism.

As was vividly demonstrated by the states of post-Soviet Central Asia, ethno-national claims can resurface even after one hundred and thirty years of imperial domination, long after they begin to appear only marginally important. Assimilation will never be complete or irreversible. Economic development or regional autonomy, no matter how advanced, can never entirely eliminate separatists or separatist sentiments, as shown by the troubles that Britain, Spain, and France have with the Irish Republican Army, and Basque and Corsican separatists, respectively. What can be reasonably expected from a government of a multi-ethnic state which has experienced separatist activities, though, is that it should be fair, vigilant, and concerned enough to tackle minority or regional grievances as early and earnestly as possible, before such causes are able to provoke and galvanize the discontented into organized mass violence.

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