

106. Earnestly launching the “digging and shovelling” campaign

We are working in Tugemanbeshi village (Yingerike Town, Awat County), which is heavily influenced by religious extremism and evil forces. The religious atmosphere is extremely strong here. There are hardly any people who dare to smoke, drink, sing, dance in public. Secular life has been distorted by religious extremism thoughts. Plus, the village is backward in terms of its development. The grassroots party organization is weak, leading to widespread underground Quranic-teaching activities. Large numbers of people have taken part in several kinds of illegal and terrorist activities, and become involved in complicated enemy situations. Since our arrival, we have consistently stuck to the “three in one” (*sanwei yiben* 三位一体) working mechanism,¹ actively assisted the “lifting the lid” strike hard campaign,² following the “four lines, five steps” method to evaluate, find, and eliminate tumorous people who are dangerous to social security in a step-by-step process. Through this we will achieve great results.

First, we have to carefully organize and plan to strengthen the Party’s lead. According to the unified arrangements of Township’s Party Committee, we set up the village’s “lifting” working group led by County’s Party Secretary and Secretary of Discipline Inspection Commission, with members from some officials in township government, other working group members, members of the villages’ “two committees” (the Party Committee and the Villagers’ Committee), and village’s police officers. The working group formulates the plan, implements the “lifting and digging” work responsibility system, setting up five special working units responsible for each of the following: investigation, interview, sorting out information, forming files, and conducting evaluations. It has organised several meetings among working group members, party members, and religious people to discuss how to

¹ According to another state document the “three in one” mechanism refers to the coordination between the “two party committees” of local village officials, working groups of sent down state workers, and the village police working to form a strong united force (<https://archive.ph/L3jr4>). In many of the documents it appears as though these mostly urban Han sent-down state workers are often the guiding force in this mechanism.

² Overtime the lifting and digging campaign came to refer to a process of digging up the soil in Muslim communities revealing “the roots” that can then be extracted by “the shovels” of the village teams. The origins of the campaign stem from a speech by Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian at the start of the People’s War on Terror when he described a campaign of “lifting the lid, eliminate the nest, dig behind the veil” (揭盖子、端窝子、挖幕后):

(<https://archive.ph/qjclU>). In 2016 new Party Secretary Chen Quanguo expanded on this, elaborating on the “digging” metaphor (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170815101632/http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1110/c117005-28851317-2.html>). Maisumjiang Maimuer, a religious affairs official, interpreted this as “break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections and break their origins” and “completely shovel up the roots of ‘two-faced people,’ dig them out, and vow to fight these two-faced people until the end” (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190707104805/https://www.weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2309351000444139144631708028>). Eventually it came to refer to mass investigation and evaluation campaign that led to the mass internment of so-called extremists, terrorists and separatists, and the “two faced” government workers who supported them.

<https://www.hrw.org/node/378448/printable/print>

improve this “lifting and digging” work. The working group should also clarify the direction of the “lifting” work, unify our thinking, and strictly implement the “three in one” working mechanism, and integrate forces to substantially solidify the community around the “lifting and digging” strike hard campaign.

Second, we must actively initiate training and make the organisations play their roles. We have to complete the strengthening of the members of the village’s Party committee and Party Secretary, perfecting the role of the “ten teams” including the Communist Youth League, and the Women’s Federation, etc. We must make some adjustments regarding some of the village’s officers, trying hard to develop back-up officers, particularly women officers and active participants who want to be absorbed into Party organisation. We must also initiate specific training for the “ten teams”, especially learning the necessary skills of the “strike hard” campaign, including measures and methods of collecting and sorting intelligence, determining and detaining the targets of strikes, helping, educating and monitoring the detainees’ relatives, in order to build a team who are not afraid of “digging and shovelling” work and capable to carry out the “strike hard.” We must provide the organisational back-up for the “strike hard” and “lifting and digging” campaigns. In addition, we must strengthen the constraint of working discipline, on the one hand removing people from the “ten teams” whose stances are not firm and thoughts are vacillating, on the other hand reinforcing the study of political theories and regulations for existing team members, improving their sense of discipline, to make the work regular and standardised, preventing new evil and extremism forces to be produced in the village.

Third, we must strengthen education and guidance, urging on the exposure of cases of law-breaking. We make clear to villagers the detriments of participating in terrorist activities and believing in extremist religious thoughts. We must also clarify that achieving a beautiful life comes only with difficult struggle, guiding them to confess the illegal activities in their daily life. We will do this using several forms such as full village meetings, centralised training sessions, and culture and entertainment activities. For people who behave abnormally, we separately organise concentrated training sessions, correcting their distorted psychology, helping them to correctly ascertain good from evil. We must fully mobilise the role of “ten teams” including party members, village officials, religious people, and the heads of the “ten family joint defence”³ adopting the methods of “dividing the groups and family responsibility”, the “ten family joint defence” itself, combining with informants who collect intelligence to mobilise people to do thought work, family by family, finding evidence, testing attitudes. Through propaganda, investigations, and interviews, we must mobilise the masses to actively submit

³ The Ten Family Joint Defence (TFJD), also known as Double Family Defence Stability Maintenance (维稳双联户), is a security mechanism that puts every ten families/shops together as a security unit responsible for surveilling each other, doing security patrols, and checking within their territory (see more here: <https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/glossary/#family-joint-defence>).

issues related to the 51 problems, hand in the 11 items associated with the “three illegals”⁴, and the 21 items of abnormal clothing.



The working group held a meeting to mobilise the "lifting the lid and digging behind veil" campaign.

Fourth, we should strengthen information evaluation and analyse the underlying threats towards social security. We must pay attention to people who behave abnormally, and particularly guard against people who abruptly quit smoking, drinking alcohol, and going out, monitoring and following them closely. We must pay attention to the “targeted” floating population, investigate people who leave the village for a long time, suddenly come back and leave for outside areas frequently, so that we have a grasp on the specifics of their behaviour.⁵ We must pay attention to the surrounding environment, analyse the security threats in the village comprehensively, and take a number of measures to prevent them and tackle them if they do occur. We must analyse and focus our education efforts on a number of groups, including village officers, religious people, “post-80s, post-90s” young people, students in school, and women. We must strengthen the investigation and interrogation of the “seven categories of people” (*qilei ren yuan* 七类人员) and the “two focus areas” (*liangge zhongdian lingyu* 两个重点领域) while evaluating their threats case by case.

Fifth, we should make every effort to deeply investigate and locating

⁴ Three Illegals refers to “illegal religious activities, illegal religious materials, spreading illegal religious networks,” (<https://archive.ph/t0t33>) See further discussion of this element of the campaign and its effects here, from Darren Byler here “Life after Xinjiang Detainment.” (<https://supchina.com/2021/01/06/life-after-xinjiang-detainment/>)

⁵ As the scholar Sam Tynen demonstrates, rural origin Uyghur migrants, or “floating” populations, were viewed as a key threat in need of “reeducation” by Xinjiang authorities, (<https://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n9354/pdf/ch08.pdf>).

where the tumours are located. We must formulate regulations to reward people who report information, and improve the positivity of the masses in providing valuable evidence. We must conduct interviews in several ways, including repeatedly interrogating people who behave abnormally in a many-to-one manner without breaks, urging them to confess themselves or report the facts of illegal activities of others. We must actively nurture informants who collect intelligence, proactively approach suspects, observing and collecting their contacts and facts of their illegal activities. We must industriously draw diagrams to figure out the complicated interpersonal relationships in the village, combining the “four lines, five steps” mechanism to analyse different kinds of enemy information. We must set up open-air alcohol drinking events to counter the fallacy that smoking and drinking alcohol are “haram,” and contribute to reducing the religious atmosphere in the village.

Sixth, we should strengthen education and control, consolidating the results of the “strike hard” campaign. For the 82 immediate family members and 143 extended family members of those affected by the “strike hard” campaign, the work mechanism of “first divide, second construct, third guard, fourth put in place” (*yifen, erjian, sanfang, si daowei* 一分二建三防四到位) was strictly implemented, so as to achieve good education, good guidance, good management and control, and good service. We must effectively consolidate the current achievement and prevent unstable factors from being revitalised and nurturing new cases to undermine social stability.

By using the “digging” campaign to attack the foundation of the evil forces, the situation of the whole village has obviously improved: first, grassroots organisations have become stronger and firmer, the cohesion and efficacy of village party committees has improved greatly. The respect for village officials has improved. They now dare to speak and manage, as well as vow their loyalty to the Party. All of their decisions are welcomed by the masses. Villagers now actively sign up to become party members, and young men are more willing to become police assistants. Second, the effects of propaganda and education are also apparent. We now use modern culture to lead the masses, organising numerous cultural and sports activities. As a result the village party committee has become more popular, with more smiles and more cohesion. Third, religious affairs are now regulated in an orderly manner. Religious people dare to actively vow their loyalty to the Party, promise that they will not maintain long beards, and educate their relatives to not cover their faces using Islamic veils. They no longer wear abnormal clothes, and they do not participate in illegal religious activities. In the whole village, we have nearly eliminated the phenomena of “covering faces by using veils”, “saying Nikah and Talaq” to marry and divorce, not smiling during marriage ceremonies and not crying in funerals.⁶ Secular life has nearly almost returned. Fourth, the legal awareness of villagers has generally improved, the habits of following guidelines and laws have been formed, and

⁶ See “75 signs of religious extremism” for an annotated description of these so-called terrorism and extremism activities,

<https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/chinese-sources/online-sources/identifying-religious-extremism/>

they actively take part in the “strike hard” and “digging and shovelling” campaigns, providing numerous forms of intelligence and information.

Working group of Discipline Inspection of Awat County (Awati xian 阿瓦提县) Yingerike Township (Yingairike xiang 纪委住英艾日克乡) Tugemanbeshi village (Tugemanbeixi cun 吐格曼贝希村)

Special thanks to volunteer translator Richard L.