

**CHINESE SOCIETY IN 2014:
SOCIAL INSTABILITY AND
STATE RESPONSES**

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Executive Summary

1. The year of 2014 in China sees rising terrorist attacks by Uighur minority in Xinjiang, as well as a number of massive protests caused by environmentally risky projects.
2. Uighur militants have launched over a dozen of violent or terrorist attacks, at least two of which took place in metropolitan cities outside Xinjiang. Innocent civilians have become the target of the attacks. The organisational or mobilisation skills of the attackers have seemingly improved.
3. Beijing adopted a two-pronged response: iron-handed tactics and fierce crackdown, and a new package of social and economic policies, including boosting employment and promoting bilingual education among ethnic minorities.
4. A number of environmental protests have highlighted rising public anxiety over China's deteriorating environment, as well as the middle class' maturing consciousness in life quality and rights issues.
5. Xi has continued with his hardline policy on public opinion and liberal intellectuals. After having effectively silenced public intellectuals on the internet, liberal-oriented media has become the target of economic crime investigation. Xi even held a Forum on Literature and Art, following Mao's tactics in the Yan'an era, calling intellectuals to be the spokespeople of the Party.
6. This year also witnesses a series of reforms in the party-state's security and legal apparatus. The National Security Commission was established to centralise efforts in coordinating policies and actions by the party-state or military agencies.
7. The Party's Fourth Plenum held in October 2014 vowed to lessen local protectionism in the legal proceedings to improve the judicial system for citizens to air their grievances through the legal channel.

8. The power of the Politics and Law Commission, the Party's leadership organ in charge of security and judiciary, has been redefined. The Commission is required to focus on general guidance instead of the daily monitoring of legal cases.
9. The Xi leadership has attempted to add sophistication to its social control machine as a response to rising civil society and ethnic tension in China. In the long term, however, this system may encounter more challenges as society becomes more diverse and citizens are more likely to embrace self-expression values.