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Anti-terrorism has assumed a higher place on China's domestic agenda – it occupies a higher place on the list of priorities. Last year, November 2015, China's People's Congress passed a law called the Anti-Terrorism Law, which defines terrorism and had a lot of measures, a lot of principles are expressed there, but there is not a lot of publicly available information about terrorist activities in China, and not very much coverage of terrorist activities abroad, for political reasons. Therefore, my information is based on some anecdotal stories from my friends who are doing research in that area or some isolated cases I learned from some sources.

Firstly, this is not publicly discussed or available, but we found that some suspected terrorists moved from Xinjiang to a province in the southwest called Yunnan, and they managed to stay there for a few days, they had some connections, and they smuggled themselves from Yunnan to part of Thailand. They then found their way from Thailand to the Middle East, where quite a few of them became members of Al-Qaeda or Daesh, and some wanted to come back to China. That worried the Chinese leaders very much, but still we do not have publicly available information about that. The only thing I know is that the security situation in that part of China has been worsening in the past few years, and Chinese leaders sent their envoys and representatives, including a politburo member of the Communist Party Central Committee, to neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar to talk about security in those countries and cooperation between those countries and China in fighting terrorism.

However, we still do not know very much about what is going on. The Chinese Government is very careful about not inviting trouble, and that is why, when there are terrorist attacks, the television reports do not name the organisations, like ISIS or other local organisations, but simply call them extremist groups or organisations, without specifying their identity. We have the right translation for Al-Qaeda but not for other organisations. That is done very carefully.

What does China do in fighting terrorism? Firstly, we give assistance to refugees and victims of terrorist attacks, along with support for humanitarian activities in Jordan and elsewhere, but it is beyond China's capacity to join military operations. We are joining neither the US nor Russia in their military operations in Syria. There are some quiet discussions among people, of course, that in the future China might need to send its military forces to rescue its own people or safeguard its companies or citizens abroad in those hotspots, but so far there have been no military actions, and they are still in the period of discussing the establishment of some kind of rapid deployment force or something like that.

China's principle is very clear – we support the legitimate governments of all these countries, and China does not really want to have more Arab Springs or any movements aimed at undermining legitimate governments in this country or that country. China's special envoy to the Middle East, Gong Xiaosheng, said yesterday that China wanted to be nice to everybody, to every government in the region, and does not really want to take sides. Nowadays we are talking about One Belt, One Road, and the Foreign Ministry, rather than other ministries, is taking charge of coordinating different government agencies in China to protect Chinese companies and citizens abroad. There are also, to the best of my knowledge, privately owned security companies established in China, and quite a few of these are in operation, but I think we are more concerned about our neighbouring countries. We sometimes talk about Pakistan, Afghanistan or some central Asian states as areas we should be more concerned about, because a great part of One Belt, One



Road is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes from Xinjiang through the occupied Kashmir region, all the way to Gwadar Port in Pakistan and to the Middle East.

That is a very important route for China to be concerned about, and China also wants to keep a good balance between India and Pakistan in their disputes as to who should be identified as terrorist organisations and so on. When I visited India they made a quiet protest against some Chinese positions, but then of course Pakistan is a very good friend of China and we want to maintain this relationship, but at the same time we understand the sensitivities on the part of India and some other neighbouring countries. That is what I wanted to share with you today.