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“They are our Prisoners:” The Gitmo Uighurs and the Making of the United States

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**“They are *our* Prisoners:”
The Gitmo Uighurs and the Making of the United States**

Olivia May
May 2014

Senior Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography

Adviser, Professor Joseph Nevins

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A note on phonetic spelling:

The word “Uighur” and the names of the Uighurs that I refer to are Uighur, Turkic names phonetically translated into the Latin alphabet. There is immense variation in the spelling, and the versions I have chosen to use here may not align with other reports and documents that I reference. I have, however, made spelling consistent throughout this paper.

A note on “Guantánamo”:

Throughout this project, I endeavor to maintain clarity in my vocabulary describing Gitmo; when discussing the detention facility at the U.S. naval base, I will use its military acronym GTMO or the derivative “Gitmo”. When I discuss Guantánamo Bay, I am referring to the region in Southeastern Cuba where the naval base is located. The distinction is not arbitrary. As Jana Lipman (2009) articulates, the language of “Guantanamo” itself is politically weighted. Almost every discussion of the detention facility refers to the place as “Guantanamo,” but “because ‘Guantánamo can signify both the base and the city, the shared name allows for a blurring of identities and territories’ (Lipman 2009: 11). Given that identity and territory are central to my project, it is vital to not be sloppy with my vocabulary. Additionally, the distinction of “Gitmo” as a naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, works to *place* the aspatial imaginary of “Guantánamo” as a placeless and lawless elsewhere. Gitmo is in Oriente, the most southeastern province of Cuba. It is Cuban land indefinitely occupied by the United States, rife with colonial history.

Chapter One

The Gitmo Uighurs: An Introduction to Territory and the War on Terror

In November 2001, a group of Uighur¹ men clandestinely crossed the Pakistani boundary, departing from their small, isolated community in the Tora Bora Mountains of Afghanistan. The Uighurs, who are Turkic, Muslim ethnic group, had settled in Afghanistan after fleeing violence, exploitation, and tumultuous social relations in Xinjiang Province in western China; however, following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States and the subsequent ‘war on terror’ waged against the abstract but ubiquitous entity of terrorism, Central Asia became the geographic and discursive center of a “global” conflict. As a result, the US military began bombing the remote Afghan mountain region in October 2001 and razed the Uighur settlement in the process.

After enduring the brutal and unanticipated bomb raid, the Uighurs subsisted for a month, foraging in the mountain terrain until they intersected the migratory trail of a large group fleeing mounting violence in Afghanistan. The United States’ military campaign in the region, tactfully called Operation Enduring Freedom, was pushing people out of Afghanistan and into neighboring Pakistan. As the Uighurs traveled across the boundary between the two states they were captured by Pakistani villagers and subsequently detained by Pakistani military forces. Ultimately, they were turned over to US forces in exchange for large monetary bounties offered by the US military for alleged “terrorists.”

Four other Uighur men were detained in Northern Afghanistan in the same months by the US CIA and its Afghan proxy army, the Northern Alliance, following a

¹ Also spelled *Uyghur*.

brutal and indiscriminating massacre of Taliban foot soldiers coming to surrender along with myriad others who were merely traveling through the same space as them. The Uighurs, like most others caught in this migration and subsequent massacre, were not moving for ideological or militaristic purposes but were part of a broad evacuation of the region as the United States' war on terror exacerbated already volatile conflict.

Although in both cases the Uighur men had no affiliation with Al-Qaeda or the Taliban² and were effectively refugees fleeing oppressive conditions in China, in June 2002 US forces relocated twenty-two Uighurs to GTMO ("Gitmo"), the US naval detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. They were among the first detainees in Camp Delta and although all of the Uighur men have since been released, they largely remain entangled in the messy ramifications of the war on terror.

The initial calculation of the Uighurs' threat by US forces seems to have hinged on their being Muslim bodies with transnational mobility. This comes in harsh contrast to the story told by US mainstream media and politicians, where the detainees at Gitmo were such active and powerful threats to US state security that indefinite detention and torture were necessary measures. President Obama uses this narrative in a speech given at the National Defense University on May 23, 2013: "We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war – a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self-

² According to Christoffersen (in Van Wie Davis: 2007, 45), there are over twenty different separatist groups in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, unofficially called East Turkestan by Uighur separatists. Some, in particular the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), have known links to militant Islamic organizations in Central Asia but others are pan-Turkic groups advocating Uighur cultural and political autonomy from the People's Republic of China and organizing resistance against state brutality.

defense” (Obama 2013). The necessity of action in “self-defense” justifies the state to deal with the detainees’ potential threat as an actual threat.

Over a decade since the Uighurs arrived at Gitmo, this story has long ceased to make sense in regards to the Uighurs. The United States now tells a new story about itself; the relocation of Gitmo prisoners such as the Uighurs to transfer nations or their home states revives and reifies the United States’ fundamental commitment to rights and justice. It is within this story that President Obama can declare: “[T]his war, like all wars, must end. That’s what history advises. That’s what our democracy demands” (Obama 2013). The concept of democracy, as an underlying force, neatens the complex and messy story of power and territory that has formed the Uighurs’ relationship with the US state.

Over eleven years after their internment began, Yusef Abbas, Hajiakbar Abdulghupur, and Saidullah Khalik were the last of the Uighurs to be released from Gitmo. They were transferred to Slovakia on December 31, 2013 despite a Washington D.C. district court ruling in 2008 that had ordered the immediate release of all of the remaining Uighur detainees into the United States. This ruling was in response to the government’s long indecision over what should be done with the Uighur men. The question was debated in governmental and media arenas and sparked at the nexus of the war on terror’s central contradiction: the preservation of supposed US-American democratic values and the pursuit of a global militaristic presence.

Although the men were conceived of as victims of a messy and misgauged form of warfare, they were simultaneously constructed as “would-be-terrorists” by those same mechanisms, such as detention at Gitmo. The meaning given to their mobility, rights, and practices vis-à-vis their sociopolitical context meant that they became an enduring albeit unsubstantiated threat. As such, Congress and the Obama Administration sideswiped the

2008 court ruling and the Uighurs were barred from traversing the boundaries of the territorial United States. Six years followed until the last three Uighur men were finally released from Gitmo.

In the years preceding, the United States functionally exiled the other nineteen Uighurs who were imprisoned at Gitmo to Albania, Bermuda, Switzerland, El Salvador, and the Republic of Palau, none of which are countries with pre-existing Uighur communities. They reside in a new form of prison without citizenship, without full economic rights, without state-sanctioned transnational mobility and without the option of returning home to China where they would face probable torture or execution. The transfer of the Uighurs to these fragmented locations only relocates, and does not resolve, their partial rights and liminal identities. However, the transfers have been lauded as a step towards resolving the “geopolitical saga” (CCR statement December 31, 2013) that has jeopardized, as John Kerry put it, “our fidelity to the rule of law” (Savage 2013).

I came to be interested in the Uighur detainees at Gitmo because of these fragmented and internationalized geographies that they traverse. In many ways, they seemed to epitomize the incongruities and irreconcilable contradictions that I saw within regimes of violence and the present ‘war on terror.’ The US detention center on occupied territory in Cuba itself posed a challenge to conventional conceptions of national territory and sovereignty; what form of state-making was operating such that Gitmo could be at the apex of US military action and simultaneously ‘outside’ of US legal processes and “human rights”? Gitmo was allegedly imprisoning “terrorists,” but like most of the 779 detainees the small group of the western Chinese ethnic minority had no direct connections to the United States or the Taliban. The detention and displacement of

twenty-two Uighur men and the making of Uighur bodies at various sites present an opportunity to interrogate the collapsed space between the individual and the state.

This leads me to my central question: by bounding the Uighurs at three scales – the international, the national, and the scale of the body – how is the United States ultimately producing itself? Further, how does the production of the Uighurs’ territorial boundaries, rights, and ways of being, work to delimit the US “homeland” and US-American citizen body, and how what does this say about the relationship between space, mobility, identity, and power?

An Introduction to Territory

In order to be legible as both terrorists and humanitarian subjects, the Uighurs are repeatedly (re)territorialized in the spaces of their detention and transfer; they are bounded – discursively and materially – in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cuba, and transfer nations. The notion of territorialization is critical throughout this project in order to make sense of the ways in which the Uighurs identities and boundaries are produced as well as how meaning and power are given territorial expression. With that in mind, I give here a brief introduction to territory and territorialization, which I will take up again throughout the paper.

As David Delaney (2005) sets forth, territory is a struggle over meaning and power (Delaney 2005: 16) which serves to reify identity and difference (Delaney 2005: 19). The ways in which spaces are made, maintained, described, and contested are consequential. At stake is the ability of individuals within and outside of a particular territory to access rights, mobility, and power.

The process of territorializing the Uighurs can be understood through Delaney's definition: "to 'territorialize' is to deploy territory in a particular context by linking some phenomenon or entity to a meaningful bounded space" (Delaney 2005: 16). The ways in which diffuse and fragmented spaces of the US state in the war on terror are made meaningful for the Uighur detainees renders them suitable for detention, punishment, pity, or transfer. In order to contest the discourse of the war on terror, I endeavor to interrupt prevailing conversations that normalize Gitmo and the US state. This enables a more genuine and robust conversation of the practices and processes that form these spaces and the lives of those within and without.

National Discourse and Sites of Exception

There are three categories that seem to encompass the ways in which national media and political discourse perceive the relationship between the US state, the naval base on occupied land in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba and the detainees held there. Either, Gitmo is necessary to secure the bounded *nation*, whatever this nation may comprise of; or, Gitmo undermines civil liberties and betrays the authority of the law and the Constitution; or finally, Gitmo is a space of isolated harm and dehumanization for the people detained there.

These narratives are linked by a shared tendency to conceive of Gitmo as an exceptional space (see Agamben 2008; Kaplan 2005); one which, while managed by the United States, lies necessarily outside of it. This is epitomized by accounts of Gitmo that describe it as a "legal black hole" (see Johan Steyn 2004) or as Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg put it, "I think Guantánamo, everyone agrees, is an animal, there is no other like it" (see transcript of *Rasul v. Bush* April 20 2004). Understanding it as an

anomaly, key political actors portray Gitmo as “a symbol around the world for an America that flouts the rule of law” (Obama 2013). Whether conceived of as a necessary means of securitizing the nation or as the ultimate betrayal of American civil liberties, the assertion is clear; Gitmo is exceptional.

For those that want to challenge Gitmo, then, the “solution” is self-evident: close “Guantánamo.” This was presented in the foreground of President Obama’s campaign platform. It also has a stronghold in national media conversations; actors who have been largely critical of Gitmo detention facility from its inception rarely push their analysis beyond this rally cry. In December 2013, for example, *New York Times* writer Nicholas Kristof made the assertion in an article following the death of Nelson Mandela; “to further honor Mandela’s legacy, President Obama could make a stronger push to close the prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and end that stain on American national honor” (published 11 December 2013). A reader comment reads, “Best tribute to #mandela by US would b to close #Gitmo & deliver justice to the inmates, 911 victims & uphold American values of Justice & Liberty” (Username: itsmycountrytoo).

While I unequivocally share a condemnation of the violence waged on detainees at Gitmo, I intend to push this narrative further. These voices reflect two core assumptions. First, as I mentioned above, is the notion that by closing Gitmo, something is resolved. This *something* is dealt with through the second assumption, which purports that the meanings of “American national honor” and “American values of Justice and Liberty” are self-evident, embedded in the stories the United States tells about itself.

Distinctly missing from these common narratives surrounding “Guantánamo” is an investigation of the ways in which the United States and US territory itself is produced. Gitmo resides in a hazy space between state and non-state. It is built on land

that the United States occupied and coercively made claim to in Cuba over a century ago and the naval base and detention facility are under the control of the US military. It plays a central role in the ‘war on terror’ infrastructure and promotes a notion of state security. Similarly, the logic of the war on terror places terrorists as fully and necessarily outside of the US state but always challenging it by breaching the stability state order.³ In this sense “terror”, while acting in ways that inflict violence on individual bodies – depicted most frequently through the image of suicide bombings or the death toll of the World Trade Center attack – is always constructed as an affront to the state. Therefore counter-terrorism is necessarily a state project and Gitmo itself is a mechanism for waging the state’s “war.”

Simultaneously, Gitmo is situated outside of the state in very important ways. State institutions seem to have a shaky jurisdiction in the face of military authority; myriad US court rulings dealing with the treatment of detainees have received tenuous translation into practice at GTMO.⁴ To the extent that the state is intended to be the political representation of the citizenry, the decision-making mechanisms of representative democracy do not extend to Gitmo. Beyond simply being not permitted into the space of GTMO as a US citizen, the US-American citizen is made to understand Gitmo as the extreme antithesis of the US state. Gitmo detainees are presented as the most extreme embodiment of the citizen’s Other. The narrative of complete dehumanization powerfully proposes that a US citizen and a Gitmo detainee are as far from one another as is possible.

³ See ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit (<http://www.ice.gov/counterterrorism-criminal-exploitation/>) for the ways in which terrorism is portrayed as an attack on U.S. national border security.

⁴ See *Kiyemba v. Obama*, 2008, and for a case that directly litigated on behalf of the Uighurs detained at GTMO.

These contradictory manifestations of the state suggest that Gitmo is created through flexible forms of state-making. But the question remains; where, then, is this hybrid space? Jana Lipman (2009) would offer a seemingly straightforward answer: Guantánamo is in Cuba. In other words, the place of Gitmo *matters* in an effort to resist the aspatial narratives such as a “legal black hole” (Steyn 2004) that powerfully regard the “exceptional” nature of Gitmo as unfathomable and irreconcilable. Excavating Gitmo as a physical place with real engagements with people, landscapes, and political processes works similarly to spatialize the Uighurs.

At the same time, a mapping of Uighur displacement within the war on terror exposes an internationalized geography of the state; Uighur statelessness is produced in relation to US state power in China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cuba, Albania, El Salvador, Switzerland, Bermuda, Palau, Slovakia and, were the scope of this project broader, numerous other spaces across the world.⁵ As such, to the extent that Gitmo and the US state are intimately intertwined, locating a single “space” – Cuba – of Gitmo is insufficient. The state, it seems, traverses multiple state boundaries in forming a broad and messy geography of Uighur displacement.

While there is a significant amount of literature documenting the waging of state violence on the Gitmo detainees, the narrative is predominantly one which renders them objects; the unilateral hierarchy of power reduces the detainees to the symbols of their

⁵ According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “Since 2002, more than 580 detainees have departed Guantanamo Bay for other destinations, including Albania, Algeria, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Bermuda, Chad, Denmark, Egypt, France, Georgia, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Palau, Portugal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and Yemen” (“United States Transfers Two Uighur Detainees From Guantanamo Bay to Switzerland,” DOJ FIND March 24, 2010).

detention: the orange jumpsuit, the shackles, the instruments of force-feeding. In a sense, this is a mechanism for rendering the detainees legible, ironing out the messiness of their actual stories. The detainees are constructed as numbers, symbols, and objects and this taxonomical obsession solidifies the state's unilateral control over representations of the men. As Gitmo detainee Shaker Aamer wrote, "Just the other day, they referred to me as a 'package' when they moved me from my cell. This is nothing new. I have been a package for 12 years now. I am a package when en route to Camp Echo, the solitary confinement wing. I am a package en route to a legal call. 'The package has been picked up ... the package has been delivered'" (Aamer, *The Guardian*: 5 January 2014).

Codifying detainees as objects of the state obscures the myriad ways in which the majority of the men detained and tortured at Gitmo do not align with the "terrorist" narrative. The Uighurs epitomize this misalignment; their ideology is so far from the militant rejection of the United States for which they are supposedly detained that they thought they were being rescued when they were turned over to the US military in Pakistan. Representing an oft-repeated sentiment, one Uighur reported: "I was not a [Taliban] soldier. I have nothing against the Americans... All Uighurs have one enemy, the Chinese. We have no other enemies" (Worthington 2007: 16). The detainees, then, must be made *into* terrorists. Largely, this is accomplished through a fixation on the established symbol of the racialized, gendered terrorist Other, or what I call the terror-object.

My intention is to invert the narrative of terror-object and to explore the ways in which the actions and practices that US authorities perceive as necessary in relation to the Uighurs so as to protect the homeland, ultimately work to produce US national space. The state, as such, is exposed as not immutable and monolithic, but flexible, malleable,

and constantly reproduced, albeit with serious consequences for the lives and rights of its subjects. Why is it that US national security must be produced at the expense of Uighur security? How is it that the United States can reify its own national space while articulating a war on terror that is distinctly transnational?

Theoretical framework and related theory

A significant body of literature exists challenging the static notion of a territorially bounded state and articulating the state, as I've begun to do, as flexible and unbounded. To establish a theoretical framework of the nation-state and the making of territory, I draw from three lines of scholarship in particular. The first attempts to destabilize the ways in which the nation-state is conceived of as interchangeable with territory. John Agnew (1994) presents a critique of conventional configurations of the state "as fixed units of sovereign space, the domestic/foreign polarity, and states as 'containers' of societies" (Agnew 1994: 53), and cautions that the "territorial trap" places serious limitations on how we think about the state; he writes that "in idealizing the territorial state we cannot see a world in which its role and meaning change" (Agnew 1994: 77). Gitmo, given its geographical location, already challenges the territorial trap. But I further draw from critiques of the territorialized state in order to unsettle the notion of the state as spatially contained. This is so as to "see" the state in Palau, Gitmo, Afghanistan, or inscribed on the Uighur body, and conversely, to consider the ways in which these spaces and processes construct US state space. At stake in challenging the territorial trap is the possibility of a richer and more critical analysis of the mechanisms and ramifications of US imperial power.

The second line of literature that I want to engage is responsive to the “territorial trap” and attempts instead to understand the internationalized nature of modern state-making. Jim Glassman defines internationalization of the state “as a process in which the state apparatus becomes increasingly oriented towards facilitating capital accumulation for the most internationalized investors, irregardless of their nationality” (Glassman 1999: 673). While the focus on capital accumulation is limited, Glassman facilitates a destabilization of the concept of nation-state as territorially bounded and argues that the context of globalization has not diminished the relevance of the state (as other theorists have predicted and argued) but that transnational alliances have formed that can only be understood by looking “beyond the nation-state container” (Glassman 1999: 673). In other words, interrogating the internationalization of the US state through the Uighurs’ story is not to privilege the international above the national, but to contend that the US state can only ever be understood by utilizing, amongst others, an international perspective. Glassman’s notion of the internationalized state thus provides a useful lens for exploring Gitmo, the state, and the transnational geographies of Uighur statelessness as dialectically co-constitutive.

By and large, existing literature on the making of territory and the internationalization of the state is preoccupied with the relationship between the nation, territory, power, and the “global” and how these form into constellations of governance that we call the state. What the works, largely, fail to address is the ways in which the contradictions of state space are manifested at the scale of the body. As such, I choose to employ a feminist geopolitical methodology, which Jennifer Hyndman articulates as “an embodied view from which to analyze visceral conceptions of violence, security, and mobility” (Hyndman 2004: 308). Through an engagement with “embodied

epistemologies,” feminist geopolitics elucidates the various sites and scales in which the geopolitical unfolds, in order to show that the international is produced at the scale of the body, in the quotidian and the mundane. In other words, a contextual knowledge-framework engaged with the expression and production of politics at the scale of the body has the potential to subvert dominant state-centric geopolitical narratives and unilateral projects of state securitization.

Challenging the prioritization of the state as the sole scale of analysis must move beyond a unilateral re-orientation of one’s spatial lens and instead engage a fundamental reconsideration of how scale is employed and how territories are defined. In reference to the territorialization of the Uighurs, conceiving of discrete scales of analysis and distinct bounded sites is insufficient. This “horizontal” treatment of territory “refers to ways of marking mutually exclusive ‘insides’ and ‘outsides’ such as domestic/foreign, private/public, allowed/prohibited” (Delaney 2005: 31). Yet, as I’ve explored throughout this chapter, the Uighurs never sit neatly within these binaries. They are at once within and outside of the US, at once rightless and protected, at once displaced and immobilized.

It is necessary, then, to look to David Delaney’s notion of verticality, which contends that every sociospatial position exists within “a dense matrix of multiple, overlapping... territorial configurations” (Delaney 2005: 31). By understanding territory as a constellation of innumerable heterogeneous layers, we can “see through” territory, excavating the production of power relations throughout. Meaning is created in the relationships between territories, in the spaces where territorial layers overlap and intersect. Critical to this analysis is Delaney’s understanding of power: power redistributed through layers of verticality is a territorial process “insofar as the relevant

participants are themselves territorialized” (Delaney 2005: 32). Employing this concept, we can move towards a richer analysis of US empire and state-making by considering the ways in which the war on terror is a territorial struggle and the transnational geography of the Uighurs is the repeated construction of Uighur bodies as territorially inscribed. Holding verticality as a central conceptual tool, this project attempts to “see through” territory by interrogating the relationship between meaning, agency, and power in the territorial formations of Uighur identities and the making of the US state.

Methods and methodology

Through the core of this project I maintain a commitment to the notion that in the spaces where the state and the individual “meet,” there is the possibility for a deeper and more complex understanding of violence, security, citizenship, and the state itself. For a methodology to inform this exploration, I draw from a feminist geopolitical approach.

Within this, I turn to Jennifer Hyndman’s suggestion that a critical feminist geopolitical approach must concern itself with matters of scale and mobility, contracting and expanding beyond the sanctity of the nation state as the sole category of analysis, as well as “employing mobility as an analytic of geopolitical power and accountability” (Hyndman 2000, 213).

As such, a feminist geopolitical ethic makes two central claims: the political is manifested, contradicted, and contested at the scale of the individual body, amongst others; and this embodied politics necessitates a concentration on the discursive and material creation of social difference and identity. Hyndman explains that social difference must be held front and center so as to “address the unequal and often violent

relationships among people based on real and perceived social, economic, political and cultural differences” (Hyndman, 2000). The story of the state in Gitmo is messy and multifaceted and by prioritizing the intersection of the state and the individual, we can begin to unearth the ways in which the making of the state sets the conditions of being and the viability of rights for the Uighurs and their US-American citizen counterpart.

Feminist geopolitics has been previously employed to interrogate Gitmo, most saliently by Jennifer Hyndman (2010) and Judith Butler (2004). However, this literature is limited in its scope to the confines of the detention facility – to indefinite detention, torture, and the suspension of legal protections and rights. I look to build off of this work by extending the scope of the process of state-making to an international imperial cartography: from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Cuba, to Palau, Bermuda, Albania, El Salvador, Switzerland, and Slovakia. This is the expansive geography of the US state in which the Uighurs move, and a feminist geopolitical engagement with matters of scale and social difference implies that state power and its violent and persistent implications are made meaningful at multiple scales and in myriad sites, beyond those formally sanctioned as “political.”

For my methods in this process, I began by compiling newspaper reports and primary source media accounts in order to understand how Gitmo and the Uighurs are represented in public discourse. From this, I gathered government documents, congressional hearings, and military tribunal transcripts to compare and contrast the discourse employed in spaces where the state is acting autonomously, with a particular eye to the way that the state describes itself in these spaces. Finally, I used secondary sources to gain a historical framework for the Gitmo, the war on terror, and US imperialism.

Chapter narrative

In the trajectory of this project, then, I take up the territorialization of the Uighurs at multiple scales in order to explore how state space is constructed at each. I organize my thesis by progressing through three nesting scales of territory: I begin at the international scale, then the scale of the naval base, and finally I approach the scale of the individual body. Despite the limitations presented by isolating each scale, I hold central in each chapter Delaney's challenge to see "through" and "past" territory in order to make sense of the production of power betwixt and between these scales.

In the next chapter, I take up the scale of the international. How are the Uighurs' transnational territorial boundaries delimited, discursively and materially? There are two frames that I use to answer this question; the first is the moment when the Uighurs 'meet' the US state in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the second is when the Uighurs are finally transferred out of Gitmo to various nations around the world in an extended form of statelessness, dressed up as humanitarian asylum. Both of these events serve as a lens to interrogate US empire as the catalyst for the Uighurs' detention, nationalization in Gitmo, and re-internationalization to transfer nations. As a result, the unevenness of the international comes into focus. By seeing "through" the stable territorial boundaries of Gitmo to a broader transnational space in which the Uighurs' socio-spatial identities are placed, the territorialization of the Uighurs can be understood as the produced by and productive of US state power in a global landscape.

In the third chapter, I turn to the scale of the naval base. In response to the myopic national narrative of Gitmo as a "legal black hole," I argue that Gitmo is a distinctly national site, in that the United States has unfettered agency to act and assert

control there. Placing the detention facility in its historical context, I consider the ways in which Gitmo serves as a vestigial colonial site to obscure the contradictions of US imperialism. Given this, how have the Uighurs' rights been territorialized at Gitmo? In particular, I focus on two events from the Uighurs' detention at Gitmo. The first is the allowance of a Chinese delegation to interrogate the men on the naval base. The second is the 2008 court decision that ruled the Uighurs must be released into the continental United States. In both cases, I keep an eye towards the response that these events elicited from political and media actors. Ultimately, I argue that these events illustrate how national territory is made to signify social order (Delaney 2005: 10); the categories of terrorist, homeland, and citizen are given territorial expression through the production of Uighur bodies in the nationalized site of Gitmo.

In chapter four, I move to the scale of the individual body. In particular, I am concerned with the ways in which different identities – of the Uighur and of the US American guard – are imbued with meaning and power in micro and quotidian interactions. What are the stories that the US is telling about itself through describing and producing the Uighurs' ways of being? While the actions and mobilities of the Uighurs in the Tora Bora Mountains are retroactively politicized as “terrorist” in their Combatant Status Review Tribunals, the labor of detention facility guards is simultaneously framed as politically neutral. Through a discourse of humanitarianism, US-American citizen bodies are reified as hard-working, efficient, and caring. As boundaries and territorial logic are reified between occupants of the same naval base, what does the construction of social difference say about the construction of the US state?

In the final chapter, I consider that the banishment of the Uighurs is described by powerful actors as resolving the “problem” of Gitmo and reestablishes the US state as

democratic, sovereign, and ethical. Displacement serves as a stand-in for a meaningful reconsideration of how categories of homeland, security, and the nation state are fought for and legitimized. I call this the “national territorial fix,” borrowing from David Harvey’s spatial fix, in which the Uighurs’ repeated territorialization and displacement functions to obfuscate the processes of state-making at work. In part, I implicate myself as a US citizen and question what it means to interrupt dominant narratives so that we might move towards a more deeply just world. I conclude by considering gaps in my analysis, and proposing further directions that this work might take.

Chapter Two

The International Scale: Moving within the global homeland

How can the refugee be made deportable again? – Hannah Arendt

The world is a battlefield, and we are at war – Anonymous Joint Special Operations Committee (J-SOC), from minute 44:40, “Dirty Wars”

In an interview with journalist Jeremy Scahill, an anonymous former Joint Special Operations Committee (J-SOC) operator made a powerful statement regarding the war on terror: “The world is a battlefield, and we are at war” (*Dirty Wars*, min 44:40). In the very different context of the 9/11 Commission Report, the global scope of the war on terror is reiterated through the sweeping claim that “the homeland is the entire planet” (9/11 Commission 2004: 362). There is no singular site of the war on terror. It is instead characterized by a flexible and internationalized geography in which the boundaries of modernity, security, and “freedom” are being constructed everywhere.

With sights set on a global horizon, the comments of the J-SOC operator and the congressional report contend that the war on terror is an intrinsically imperial project. Imperialism’s ends can be best understood as the “projection of political power across large spaces” (Ho 2004: 225). The means to this end are a laundry list of tactics including “colonies, mercenaries, gunboats, missiles, client elites, proxy states, multilateral institutions, multinational alliances” (Ho 2004: 225). Many of these tactics are apparent in the Uighurs’ history. They expose mechanisms of the state at the international and transnational scale that are made invisible or incoherent in existing discussions of Gitmo and the war on terror.

Throughout this chapter, I follow the internationalized and imperial intersection

of twenty-two Uighur men and the US state. I take two critical frames in this chronology to investigate the making of US empire. The first is in Afghanistan and Pakistan, when the Uighurs first “meet” the US state. For the majority of the Uighurs in Gitmo, the first direct interaction with the US state is in a Pakistani detention facility. For a group of four, it is the Qala-i-Janghi massacre in Northern Afghanistan. And for a handful, they first meet the United States in the form of covert US radio broadcasts transmitted in China, encouraging Uighurs to leave China (Worthington 2007: 76). The second juncture that I focus on is the transfer of the Uighurs out of Gitmo, through bilateral agreements with host countries, where in large part they become humanitarian objects with sustained – albeit controlled and legitimized – statelessness.

From the moment that the Uighurs “meet” the US state until their supposed “release” from US entanglement in their transfer to Palau, Bermuda, El Salvador, Switzerland, Albania, and Slovakia, the United States is being created as a warden of transnational mobility. By subsuming the Uighurs into the recesses of the nation-state infrastructure at Gitmo, rendering them stateless, and re-internationalizing them as the recipients of humanitarian diplomacy, the United States depoliticizes the Uighurs’ international movements and in turn, produces an uneven international arena in which US-American imperialism is furthered.

Defining the International

I isolate the “international,” recognizing that it is in and of itself a fraught distinction. The differentiation between the national and the international poses challenges, particularly in the context of the war on terror where the state acts unbounded from its territorial boundaries, committed to a project of securitization where

“the homeland is the entire planet” (9/11 Commission 2004: 362). Unilaterally assigning characteristics of scale assumes, in some ways, that the national and the international behave similarly through space and time. Recognizing these challenges, I proceed to interrogate the making of the US state at the international level because it offers a way to engage with the state at its margins, in both the globalized and deterritorialized borderlands where conflict and contradictions of state-making are struggled over.

To define the international, I begin at Kevin R. Cox’s observation that the state, amongst other things, is an entity which “enjoys the right to define what is legal - in legally defined ways - and to enforce the law within a bounded space: its geographically defined jurisdiction” (Cox 2002: 250). While this may seem a banal purview of the state, the inclusion and exclusion of laws and jurisdiction has been significant in the making of Gitmo and its detainees. Given that much of the public interest in the Gitmo detention facility revolves around questions of its legality, the monopoly over the parameters of the law offers a significant point of distinction between the national and the international. The international begins when the US is made to negotiate with other states; it is the borderlands of state monopoly and autonomy.

To further this distinction, Don Mitchell makes a critical claim: “It is more accurate to understand every *deterritorialization* as simultaneously a *reterritorialization*, perhaps at a different scale. Neither territory nor space simply dematerialize, and so neither do identities come untethered from the spaces that give them shape. What is changing is the geography through which power operates” (Mitchell 2000: 263). In other words, when the United States displaces the Uighurs through an international cartography of US empire – the spaces distinctly part and parcel of the international scale – local spaces do not cease to exist. Rather, they are embedded in a geography of power

that has both international, national, and micro territorial embodiments.

The first movement of *re*territorialization begins when the Uighurs migrate out of China and into Afghanistan. This was initially, in large part, facilitated through their already limited capacity for international movement. Most Uighurs are denied Chinese passports in response to extreme tensions between the Uighurs and the Chinese state. In the GTMO Combatant Status Review Tribunals (CSRTs), many of the Uighurs describe their struggles in finding documentation. For example, Hajiakbar Abdulghupur states in his tribunal that “[For thirty years], the government doesn’t issue passports for the Uighur people.” Salahidin Abdulahat, who now lives with three other Uighur men in Bermuda, recalls the difficulty of obtaining documentation to travel outside of China:

“I spent two years to get the passport. The Chinese told me I was too young to get the passport. For Uighurs, it is hard to get the passport. Then I almost lost hope, but I heard there was a special travel document. It is only good for travel to Pakistan, and no other places... I know I couldn’t go anywhere with that document, but I was leaving Chinese torture. Also, that document is only good for one month. When I got to Pakistan I tried really hard within that month to change that document into a passport to go somewhere else. I spent almost a month and a half in Pakistan trying to change it... Uighurs told me that there was a place in Afghanistan, they wouldn’t ask for a passport or visa... In August I left the travel document in Pakistan and went to Afghanistan... If I had a legal document to travel to some other country, I wouldn’t have gone to Afghanistan; I would’ve gone somewhere else” (CSRT, ISN 295: 3).

Abdulahat’s Combatant Status Review Tribunal transcript illustrates the ways in which the Uighurs’ transnational mobility and statelessness meet, in a sense, the nation-state at every turn. The Uighurs’ volatile citizenship and resistant mobility put them face-to-face with the international arrangements of territorial state power. The two groups of Uighurs who were brought to Gitmo both encountered the US state for the first time in the midst of conflict in Afghanistan.

At the Uighur settlement in the Tora Bora mountains, one man was killed by the

US air strike. Dawut Abdurehim recounts: “That night... we heard heavy, strong wars; the kind of war we’ve only heard on television. The ground was shaking and we were scared, so we ran outside. The next morning, we counted people and we found one person dead; his body was exploded. We looked for his body and we found his fingers and thumbs. Whatever we found, we brought back and buried him there” (CSRT, ISN 289: 5). Like so many others, his death has been written off as a necessary casualty of conflict. But the conflict was wholly contingent on the place that the Uighurs occupied. The criminalization of the region and its occupants subsumed a group of men with no prior connection to the United States. In fact, as I explore in chapter 4, it was only months later that the Uighur “camp” came to be considered a threat. Until the point of the air raid, the men were working to reconstruct the remote settlement, which consisted of a handful of houses and a small mosque. Despite this, the settlement is located in a geography of contested power – a region unilaterally defined as dangerous – and they have suffered deep violence as a result.

When the Uighurs were turned over to US military forces in Pakistan in early 2002, they were first taken in by a rural Pakistani community and offered food and shelter at the local mosque. They were then transferred to a US military prison in exchange for a bounty reward. Yusef Abbas describes this in detail;

We traveled to Pakistan and the local people there welcomed us since it was a holiday. They gave us meat and good food. They treated us like guests... They took us to a Mosque, there was an elder person with a long beard, they wanted to introduce us to their leader, they were going to take us to his house, then they put us in the truck. They took us directly to the prison... When we were in the Pakistan prison, I noticed a lot of nationalities there. There was a delegation of people from the other countries. During that time American soldiers came and took our pictures and took our fingerprints. Then we found out we were going to be in the America’s [*sic*] hands. We were happy because we were going to talk face to face to the country to help us get out [*sic*] independence. We were so

happy, all of us Uighur's [*sic*] (CSRT, ISN 275: 4).

The Uighurs, as transnational and effectively stateless migrants, were particularly vulnerable to the burgeoning illicit market of bounty-seeking abductions or “enforced disappearances” (www.amnesty.org, 22 July 2008). These disappearances were spurred by the mass distribution of leaflets throughout the region by the US military, which Donald Rumsfeld praised as “dropping like snowflakes in December in Chicago” (CCR, Houzaifa Parhat profile, ccrjustice.org). The leaflets offered \$5000 reward in exchange for “terrorists”; one, for example, simply stated “Reward for information leading to the whereabouts or capture of Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership” (Rouse, www.psywarrior.com) accompanied by a blurry photo of a bearded man and images of US-currency twenty-dollar bills (see Appendix: Image 1). Others promised “enough money to take care of your family, your village, your tribe for the rest of your life” (CCR, Houzaifa Parhat profile, ccrjustice.org). The rupturing of social and geographic affiliations (many of the abductions in Pakistan implicated other Pakistani civilian citizens as terrorists) speaks to the discursive power of security and terror, and perhaps more acutely, the persuasive power of US capital. What this also suggests is that non-state actors author the war on terror and US empire in unpredictable sites. When Pakistani village members made the decision to turn the Uighurs over to US forces in exchange for bounty money, they inadvertently contributed to reproducing the US state.

Because of US financial incentive, the Uighurs' territorial boundaries were redrawn; but they were not, by any means, exceptional. A paper on Gitmo reports that the “Government's [own] evidence is that 93% of the detainees were not apprehended by the United States” and that nearly two-thirds of detainees were captured by Pakistani forces at the same time that US forces were disseminating vast quantities of bounty

pamphlets (Denbeaux 2006: 14).

Without reducing the importance of monetary incentive in this practice of abductions, it is vital to note how the category of “terrorism” functions. The “terrorist” is a malleable category that reifies the racialized and gendered construction of the terror-object. Through the prism of US military presence and demands for complicity, the abstract “terrorist” is made real, made punishable, made interrogable. The unstable and highly contingent meaning of “terrorist” comes into contentious contact with financial incentive and forces new meanings onto mobile and migrant Muslim bodies. The Uighurs, while affiliated with neither Al-Qaeda nor the Taliban, fit the “part”; their bodies and movements were made legible and thus controllable through their classification as terrorists.

In a parallel event, as I mentioned in the introductory chapter, the other four Uighur men who were brought to Gitmo were part of a large migration of Taliban foot soldiers. Using the Northern Alliance, which was already engaged in a brutal and bloody civil war against the Taliban, as a proxy army, the US military quickly established itself in the region and led Taliban foot soldiers to surrender in the Northern regions. The foot soldiers, who came from all across the Middle East, Central Asia, and elsewhere, were “prepared to help the Taliban establish a ‘pure Islamic state’ by fighting the Northern Alliance, but unprepared for 9/11, the US-led invasion, and a ‘Global War on Terror’ in which they came to be regarded as terrorists” (Worthington 2007: 12). Also amongst the foot soldiers were myriad groups and individuals fleeing the brutality of the Northern Alliance, including the four Uighurs who were present at the horrific Qala-i-Janghi massacre. Of the four hundred and fifty people imprisoned and interrogated at Qala-i-Janghi by the Northern Alliance and the US CIA, only eighty-six survived (Worthington

2007: 16). Fifty of the survivors became the first detainees at Gitmo.

Imperialism and legible transnational mobility

From the beginning the Uighurs' mobility is suspect, perceived as a threat to the US state. Their unwillingness to accept the Chinese nation-state situates them as challengers to the rationality of the bounded state. Curiously, though, the United States' use of a proxy army against the Taliban in Afghanistan meant that they were "supporting (in practice) Afghanistan's ethnic minorities - the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras - against the Pashtun majority in the South and East" (Worthington 2007: 2). The nation state's project of securitizing, then, cannot be unilaterally defined as counter to the separatist struggles of ethnic minorities.

In fact, imperial power, as is evidenced throughout this story, allows the United States to determine what is right and wrong without having to justify itself. The Uighurs' separatist claims are not in and of themselves conceived of as threatening the homeland, but they become so when they cross international boundaries. In this sense, the Uighurs' mobility and mobile resistance has forced the United States and the war on terror to face contradictions of nationalized and internationalized challenges to the nation state. As long as the state is struggled over in a nationally bounded space, it is legible, manageable, and in the case of Afghanistan, co-optable. However, when the mobile Uighurs brought that struggle into internationalized space, it became a threat to the already internationalized US-American homeland, and therefore the United States' response exposes the ways in which the war on terror relies on a distinct division between the national and the international, between domestic unrest and global terror.

The histories of the meeting between the US state and the twenty-two Uighurs,

while only a fragment of the broader story of war and violence in Afghanistan, are significant in two ways. First, they represent the geopolitical moment in which the Uighurs “meet” the US state. Second, they unearth the ways in which the Uighurs’ story is, at its core, one of the internationalized state and transnational mobility. Like most of the men transferred to the detention facility at Gitmo, the Uighurs were not involved with 9/11 attacks, which served as the igniting spark and the discursive justification for the war on terror. However, their resistant, transnational mobility and the geopolitical landscape in which they moved were conceived of as threats to the nation-state. The men who were transferred to Gitmo were not, by and large, anti-American jihadists, but highly mobile actors engaged in various counter-national groups. In this internationalized borderland of conflict, the Uighurs challenged, shaped, and produced the US state as an imperial power posing as a territorially bounded nation-state.

Once detained at Gitmo, the Uighurs resided at the nexus of multiple overlapping constructions of nation. They could not return to China for the probable violence and punishment they face there. They would not be allowed to reside in the United States for reasons intimately related to (or born out of) the central assumption in the war on terror that the nation and the homeland must be securitized against the ‘enemy other,’ and that the space of the nation itself can be challenged by the mobility of the ‘terrorist.’ A telling manifestation of this is that the Congressional National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has included provisions until last year prohibiting the Obama administration from using Congressional funds to transfer Gitmo detainees elsewhere (H.R. 1960 NDAA, 2014: Section 1033) and continues to deny funding “to transfer, release, or assist in the transfer or release to or within the United States, its territories, or possessions (H.R. 1960 NDAA, 2014: Section 1034). Additionally, other nations risk jeopardizing economic

and diplomatic relations with China if they accept the Uighurs (as was the case with Costa Rica, whose offer to accept the Uighurs was thwarted at the last moment by pressure from the Chinese government). This is why multiple states with a precedent of accepting Gitmo transfers, as well as existing Uighur communities – particularly Germany, Australia, and Canada – refused to negotiate (Wells Dixon, CCR lawyer, personal communication, 26 February 2014). As such, it is clear that the conditions of life which the Uighurs are permitted are dependent on the international relations of nation-states and the practices of governance and state-making on the international scale.

Post-9/11 and the construction of an internationalized security apparatus

To further interrogate the production of the United States at the international scale through the Uighurs' detention at the US naval base, it is necessary to explore how the United States describes and distinguishes between the national and the international in the context of the war on terror. In particular, the disruption and reconstruction of international arrangements unearths the active production of the unevenness of the international scale.

In the 9/11 Commission Report, the result of a year-long bipartisan congressional committee, the imperatives of US national security institutions are compared to the Cold War era, concluding: “Instead of facing a few very dangerous adversaries, the United States confronts a number of less visible challenges that surpass the boundaries of traditional nation-states and call for quick, imaginative, and agile responses” (9/11 Commission 2004: 399). Amongst the five major recommendations that they make are “unifying strategic intelligence and operational planning against Islamist terrorists across the foreign-domestic divide” and “unifying the many participants in the counterterrorism

effort and their knowledge in a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional government boundaries” (9/11 Commission 2004: 399-400). These Commission recommendations indicate a substantial self-awareness on behalf of the US state about the relationship between the national and international - the “foreign-domestic divide” - as well as the necessary improvisational capacity of the spatial arrangements of boundaries and power. The report shows a hyperconsciousness about the increasing internationalization of the homeland and the necessary engagement with other nations in the war on terror.

The nation, it seems, must be flexible. This illustrates, as David Delaney suggests, that territoriality must be understood as “a social (and political, economic, cultural) *process* that unfolds not only in place but through time” (Delaney 2005: 2). The territorial organization of power is described in the Commission report not as stable and unshifting, but as responsive to the perceived globalization of terror. The state and its international imperatives are represented in direct relation to the geographies of threat and terror. Rather than a world of tessellated nation states, this representation of space in the war on terror presents a messier geography, one in which the layering of the nation, the international, and the transnational/counter-national ‘enemy other’ form an ever-shifting topography.

The Commission also articulates an increasing transnationalization of the state, where ‘terror’ and ‘threat’ are perceived as geographically unbounded. Reece Jones (2009) describes this shifting geographical imaginary as a “geopolitical boundary narrative.” He argues that the geopolitical boundary narratives which frame the “enemy other” in the global war on terror differ from previous narratives in two crucial ways: “First, the enemy other is described as outside the boundaries of modernity. Second, the

enemy other is represented as posing a global and interconnected threat that is no longer limited by geography” (Jones 2009: abstract). This shift is particularly apparent in the Commission Report and its implication that the Uighurs, as a pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic people, operate within a transnationalized geography of terrorism. The necessary engagement on the part of the US in new international alliances indicates one of the ways in which the war on terror has forced the US state to renegotiate its geopolitical boundaries and territorial relationships.

Re-internationalizing the Uighurs

To further interrogate the geopolitical boundaries narratives and the internationalization of the state in the war on terror, I return to the transfer of Yusef Abbas, Saidullah Khalik, and Hajiakbar Abdulghupur to Slovakia. Their relocation was widely reported in US media. Previous groups of Uighurs received media attention as well but the significance this time lay critically in the fact that these men were the last of the Gitmo Uighurs. Slovakia’s acceptance of Yusef Abbas, Saidullah Khalik, and Hajiakbar Abdulghupur was responded to in two primary ways. First, it was praised as a humanitarian gesture on the part of the Slovak government; as Wells Dixon, the Uighurs’ Center for Constitutional Rights lawyer articulated: “Slovakia deserves a lot of credit because they were willing to do what large countries like the United States, Canada and Germany were unwilling to do, which was to resist diplomatic pressure from China and the stigma of Guantánamo” (Fox News, 31 December 2013). Second, the agreement with Slovakia was considered a significant step on the part of the US government towards closing the Gitmo detention facility. Greg Craig, President Obama’s former White House counsel, for instance, evidenced this view in a public statement, saying: “From the

beginning, we knew that one test of our determination to close Guantánamo would be measured by what happened to the Uighurs. That the last of the Uighurs has now left Guantánamo is an important milestone. They didn't belong there in the first place" (Savage, 31 December 2013).

Critically missing from media coverage and government statements is the pervasive persistence of statelessness. While no longer living under the trauma and violence of indefinite detention, many of the Uighurs will not be granted citizenship or equivalent political and economic rights. As Abu Bakker Qassim, a Uighur now living in Tirana, Albania, described to the BBC (14 August 2012), the Uighurs transferred to Albania were given housing, welfare, and the right to work, but not Albanian citizenship or passports. Their livelihoods are now wholly dependent on the continued benevolence of their host country, maintaining a legally and politically untraceable existence in which the "humanitarian" state serves as a surrogate for the citizen's nation-state.

Similarly, the six men transferred to Palau continue to occupy a liminal space of legality and rights. Because Palau only agreed to accept the Uighurs from Gitmo as temporary transfers on the condition that they be permanently relocated elsewhere, the Uighur men only have temporary guest statuses. They have a limited right to work but cannot own a business and have struggled with employment (Wells Dixon, CCR lawyer, personal communication, 26 February 2014). In the absence of official political asylum, the men in Palau are particularly dependent on the humanitarian state to legitimize their right to be.

The transfer of the final three Uighurs out of Gitmo, as suggested earlier in the chapter, has been broadly lauded as a mark of progress; or as Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby remarked, "this transfer and resettlement constitutes a

significant milestone in our effort to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay” (as quoted in Savage, 31 December 2013). It is significant that the US can be discursively absolved of its liability for the Gitmo detainees, while the Uighurs remain stateless, in exile, and politically and socially disenfranchised. The Uighurs’ have produced the US state, serving as the lynchpin on which the ethical and legal obligations of the state are measured. And yet the Uighurs themselves - their material, political, and geographical limitations - seem to reside in a hazier, transnational - and perhaps global - topography of power, in which they continually reside in the margins.

Yusef Abbas, Saidullah Khalik, Hajiakbar Abdulghupur, as well as the other nineteen Uighur detainees, have challenged the boundaries and formations of the US state, necessitating that the state engage with new and creative transnational and international relationships. As US media and government statements fixate on the nation - on the spaces where the United States has a monopoly over its own legal institutions, citizen formation, and political discourse - the finality of the Uighurs transfer out of Gitmo holds weight as a bookend to the violence of indefinite detention. However, the globalized notion of terrorism and the war on terror necessitate an international framework. By stretching the spatial and temporal scope of the story of Uighurs beyond the razor wire of Gitmo, the ways in which the Uighurs challenge the stability of the neoliberal state and push it to its political and discursive limits are exposed.

By tracing the international geography in which the Uighurs are territorially bounded, the unevenness of the international is exposed. By “fixing” Uighur mobility as a threat and replicating it in a state-sanctioned formation (the transfer nations), the United States is producing the uneven arena of the international that in turn facilitates US imperialism. The United States is not just being created in Afghanistan, Gitmo, or places

typically understood as US territory. It is being created across a broad and international network. The territorialization of the Uighurs across and throughout an international landscape constructs, describes, and constrains Uighur mobility and boundaries, so as to produce the United States as a warden of transnational mobility and imperial power. Ultimately, the bounding of the Uighurs at the international scale helps to produce the United States as a state with a global reach that transcends, to a significant degree, its putative boundaries.

Chapter Three

The National Scale: Inclusion, exclusion, and the territorialization of rights at Gitmo

Their only hope of the Uighurs were [sic] that America would stand true to its principles of liberty, we believe that human rights, that people are granted rights, all people are granted rights... I would suggest to the Uighur community that they should not lose faith in the average American and the Americans who are in uniform who reflect our values as a people – Congressman Rohrabacher (Hearing, 16 July 2009: 12)

We construct ourselves normatively, morally – Kevin Cox (2002: 175)

The Uighurs became “terrorists” as they moved across international boundaries. Hajiakbar Abdulghupur expressed a hyperawareness of this geographically-contingent label; “[W]e wanted to be separate from the Chinese government and we want to create our own Uighur nation without the Chinese government... Uighurs inside the country they call a separatist group. Now we are outside and have the title of terrorists” (CSRT, ISN 282: 4). This elucidates that the translation of threat from one homeland to another more fragmented and internationalized homeland recreates the terms of being for the Uighurs. Their political and social position is reconfigured from national dissident to boundless terrorist to object of international humanitarianism, pushed from the margins of the Chinese state to the margins of the U.S. “homeland” to the stateless margins of international space.

This chapter is an investigation of how the bounding of the Uighurs at the national scale works to produce the United States. First, I establish the relationship of GTMO to US state space by providing a geographical history of the naval base, and argue that Gitmo must be understood as a US national space. Of course, it is embedded in “a dense matrix of multiple, overlapping territories” (Delaney 2005: 31). But while Gitmo diverges from the United States’ putative state boundaries, US national territory is

created in Cuba through conquest, which declaims control and allows the United States to author Gitmo without having to directly negotiate with other states. The national is further constructed through US institutions, particularly the flexible alliance of military tribunals and US courts of law; and by telling stories that shape the relationship between the detainees and the state.

Second, I use this chapter to explore the territorialization of the Uighurs at the national scale, within Gitmo. After establishing the relationship between Gitmo and US state space, I ask how this relationship works to produce and bound the Uighurs, materially and discursively. In particular, I investigate two critical junctures in the Uighurs' detention at Gitmo: the Congressional response to Chinese interrogators granted access to the Uighurs; and the Congressional backlash against a court ruling that they be released into the United States. In the highly disputed and elastic construction of the Uighurs' rights within the nationalized space of Gitmo, the social relationships of power between terrorist/citizen, inside/outside, or homeland/terror are in fact reified, and consequently, so is the US state. The United States selectively includes and excludes the Uighurs in drawing its territorial boundaries, so as to preserve the United States' discursive construction as a rights-respecting nation.

Conquest and Sovereignty in Guantánamo Bay: A Historical Geographic Account

The GTMO naval base, 118 square kilometers flanking Guantánamo Bay in southeast Cuba, grew out of a century-old history of US political involvement, curtailed sovereignty, and occupation in Cuba. The base is the United States' "oldest overseas military installation" (Ricardo 1994: 3) and has since created a precedent for US global militarism; its "lily-pad base" model (Lipman 2009: 10) has been reproduced throughout

the world in spaces specifically for military bases, particularly as neo-colonial spaces carved into or in place of island communities (for example, Diego Garcia; Guam).

The history of the United States' occupation of Cuban land provides an important framework for thinking about the naval base as a national space. The GTMO naval base, as the vestigial organ of an extensive occupation of Cuba, has not simply come into being as a lawless "site of exception," as the dominant narrative surrounding Gitmo suggests. Beginning over a century before the war on terror brought "Guantánamo" into the national spotlight, the naval base was rooted in constructions of state security, the US homeland, and US empire.

In 1898, the Cuban War of Independence from Spanish colonial rule was coming to its conclusion after decades of liberation struggles. In the war's final moments, the United States inserted itself into the Cuban struggle and renamed it the Spanish-American War. The catalyst for military intervention was the explosion of the USS Maine in Havana, Cuba on February 15, 1898. Despite no evidence that Spain had a hand in the explosion, the event was used to reframe the Cuban struggle as one of US military interest and security. In his "Wartime message" (McKinley 1898), then President William McKinley requested of Congress the power to intervene:

First, in the cause of humanity and to put an end to the barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries now existing there, and which the parties to the conflict are either unable or unwilling to stop or mitigate. *It is no answer to say this is all in another country*, belonging to another nation, and is therefore none of our business. It is specially our duty, for *it is right at our door...* In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop. (emphasis added)

McKinley's words reveal the imperial assumption that the sanctity of nation-state boundaries and the limits of conflict are legitimately breached in the name of security,

because “it is right at our door.” The US “homeland,” then, is at stake in Cuba well before the war on terror and the establishment of the GTMO detention facility in 2002. McKinley’s words both mark the legitimization of US occupation of Cuban lands and establish a flexible and transnational concept of security that works dialectically to support the construction of national spaces beyond the putative boundaries of the nation-state.

By positioning itself as liberator, as it so often does, the US military co-opted Cuban struggles for independence, community autonomy, and intersectional alliances for equity and social justice. Prior to US intervention, the revolution in Oriente (Cuba’s most Eastern province which includes Guantánamo Bay) was not solely about independence from Spain but about the “inclusion of black Cubans into the civic body, along with the promotion of women’s rights and collective land ownership” (Lipman 2009: 21). By asserting itself into the revolutionary struggle, the United States silenced the multifaceted fight. It set the precedent for US-American imperial ideology and its discourse of “security” to heighten power differentials by flattening complex and intersecting struggles for justice. As the Cuban struggle was subsumed by the new articulation of a Spanish-American War, its aims and efforts were dramatically abbreviated.

Following US interference in the Cuban liberation struggle, the colonial stranglehold transferred swiftly; the United States gained military control and proceeded to govern Cuba from 1899 to 1902, curtailing the decade-long fight for Cuban independence. From the beginning, the United States’ presence in Cuba was entrenched with ambiguities of power. The Teller Amendment, which was the initial Congressional authorization of military intervention, “disclaims any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island except for pacification thereof, and

asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people” (Article IV, Teller Amendment, www-rohan.sdsu.edu). In other words, permanent annexation and jurisdiction over Cuban lands was explicitly barred.

This commitment was tenuous from the beginning. As Jana Lipman notes, the *New York Times* almost immediately expressed that “the fine harbor [in Guantánamo] will make a good American base” (Lipman 2009: 21). Even a full century before, the expansionist gaze had fixated on Cuba when John Adams wrote that the annexation of Cuba was “indispensable to the continuation of the union” (Ricardo 1994: 10).

The pretense of a temporary occupation dissolved with the US Congress’s ratification of the Platt Amendment and Cuba’s incorporation of the amendment into its national constitution on June 12, 1901. While the amendment ostensibly ended the US governance of Cuba, it did so only under the condition that permanent sites of occupation be created for US military purposes. Amongst other things, the Platt Amendment mandated that “to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States land necessary for coaling or naval stations” (Article VII, Platt Amendment, history.state.gov). In part, what this shows is that the unevenness of the international has not only been produced through Gitmo, but the establishment of the base itself relied on a constellation of state power at the international scale which already empowered the United States produce national territories through coercion.

The amendment established the possibility for the United States’ continued occupation of specific territories in Cuba under the auspices of the anti-colonial, libratory

ideology of empire. This was codified in the Cuban-American Treaty of February 16, 1903, which stipulated the indefinite lease of Guantánamo Bay to the United States and granted the central US government “*complete jurisdiction and control*” over the territory.⁶

This laid a significant framework of ambiguous sovereignty that subsequently made possible the use of Gitmo as an externalized national space of detention. By defining Gitmo as under the ultimate sovereignty of Cuba but where the United States has complete control, Gitmo is located as distinctly US national, albeit outside the putative boundaries of the United States. In this sense Gitmo is authored as a colonial site, defined as “foreign presence in, possession of, and domination over bounded, local places” (Ho 2004: 211).

The current preoccupation with the detention facility as a “legal black hole” neglects to acknowledge that the precedent of malleable and tenuous legality, as well as the reproduction of marginal and ambiguous territorial constructions, is historically deep, inscribed into the naval base from its inception (see Kerber 2007). The relationship of GTMO to US state space is one of contradiction and ambiguity; as such, we have to take the colonial and territorial character of the space seriously, challenging the work that the state does to de-spatialize and normalize Gitmo.

Tactics of State Making: Nationalization and Codification of the Base

Since the installation of US naval forces in Guantánamo Bay, there have been two

⁶ The Treaty states: “While on the one hand the United States recognizes the continuance of the ultimate sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba over the above described areas of land and water, on the other hand the Republic of Cuba consents that during the period of the occupation by the United States of said areas under the terms of this agreement the United States shall exercise *complete jurisdiction and control* over and within said areas [...]” (emphasis added) (Agreement between the United States and Cuba, February 23, 1903: Article III, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/>)

distinct but interrelated processes of state-making concerning Gitmo. First, the naval base has become increasingly nationalized. The United States has concentrated its sovereignty within the territory and has pursued the severing of transnational reliance with Cuba. Second, and simultaneously, the base has been mythologized through the prism of the war on terror as a symbol of the state.

The nationalization of Gitmo has been pursued through the increasing militarization of the base's boundary (see Ricardo 1994); through the diminishing employment of Cuban labor (see Lipman 2009); and through claims to the land and resources. For example, the base has its own water desalination facility. It was built after the Cuban government suspended the supply of potable water to the base in 1964, following an event where "US authorities had kidnapped and imprisoned 38 Cuban fisherman" (Ricardo 1994: 8). This is one of many practices of spatial production that work to concentrate sovereignty at Gitmo. Additionally, the Defense Department has made public assertions regarding the global military imperative of nationalized bases. In 2004, the Defense Department announced its "new global posture initiative, emphasizing the importance of agility and flexibility," in which it would aim "to avoid the constraints foreign nations place over US bases, such as complex legal agreements" (Lipman 2009: 219). Given the ambiguous nature of ownership in Guantánamo Bay, processes such as these must be understood as sociospatial tactics of state-making.

A second process of state-making has accompanied the nationalization of the base: the codification of Gitmo as a symbol. As Kevin Cox explains in relation to nation-states broadly, symbols define "who belongs and who doesn't belong" (Cox 2002: 183); they tell a story about the nation they represent (as its protector or its antithesis) (Cox 2002: 183). Gitmo, presented as a necessary outpost to protect the homeland, is made to signify what

types of US-Americans belong, and what types of non-Americans belong. For example, the Uighurs belong when they are classified as enemy combatants, but no longer belong when that status is challenged.

National symbols signify the nation, simplifying and obscuring complex relationships in the process. The narrative produced by the US state erases the controversial and contested geographical history of the space. This happens in statements such as that from Representative Bill Young (R-FL): “these detainees are bad, bad people. They hate America. They’ve sworn to kill Americans and in fact they’ve done so on the battlefield. And that’s why they were captured and sent to Guantanamo. And that’s where they should stay” (quoted in Zengerle 2013). The significance of statements such as this is that they dehistoricize and depoliticize complex struggles to codify a simple dichotomy between the national and the Other. State power is marked and rendered unambiguous, manufacturing divisions of difference to further the goals of the state.

The state’s codification of “Guantánamo” as a symbol of difference and the simultaneous nationalization of Gitmo has resulted in a flexible cartography of the US state. These strategies of “constructive blurring” (Weizman 2012: 8) are available to the state, so as to “simultaneously obfuscate and naturalize the facts of domination” (Weizman 2012: 8). The expansive reach of US empire is furthered at the same moment that the US state is defined as acting within its territorial boundaries, depending on where and how those boundaries are delineated.

Creative boundaries: “They are our prisoners”

Almost as soon as the Uighurs were first detained at Gitmo, apologetic admissions of a grave mistake rose from mainstream media, bipartisan voices in government, and

human rights groups. Outrage has characterized the documentation of the Uighurs at Gitmo. But the challenges presented to the detention of the Uighurs rarely address the foundation of the war on terror itself and ultimately expand the grasp of the state. As it currently stands, much of the interest in Gitmo revolves around the legitimacy of state institutions and rule of law within the walls of the detention center, which I call the creative or improvisational capacity of the state. The territorialization of the Uighurs at Gitmo positions the naval base betwixt and between the bounded nation-state and the global empire, and in turn discursively “solves” the state’s contradictions by shuffling the Uighur men through a messy geography of flexible territories.

To better understand the creative capacity of state institutions within GTMO, I turn to two critical junctures in the Uighurs’ story where they both shape and reproduce the nationalization of the GTMO naval base territory; the first is the allowance of a Chinese delegation into the detention facility to interrogate the Uighurs in 2002 – a form of access not permitted to US Congressmen – and the debate which ensued in Congress. The second is the 2008 Washington D.C. District Court’s ruling that the Uighurs’ detention was unconstitutional and they must be released into the United States, encompassing the deep political backlash that ensued. In both frames, diverse actors – the Chinese officials, the US detention guards, US Congressmen, the judicial system – approach the Uighurs from heterogeneous perspectives, telling different stories. But the state is able to use both the territorialization of GTMO and the territorialization of the Uighurs to creatively rearticulate their manifold positions into a singular story of the US as a purportedly rights-based homeland.

In October of 2002, just months after the Uighurs were forcibly brought to the US naval base in Cuba, US authorities granted three Chinese delegates individual access

to all twenty-two Uighur detainees. The delegates stayed for a week, interrogating the Uighurs in regards to their activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, their work in China, their families and communities, and whether they intended to return to China.

Although US officials had committed to confidentiality in exchange for the Uighurs' personal information at the Kandahar prison in Pakistan, Abu Bakker Qassim, in a written statement submitted as evidence to a US congressional hearing, reported that identifying information was given to the Chinese officials who threatened to torture them and forcibly return them to China. Mr. Qassim wrote: "When we said that the U.S. had promised to keep our identity confidential and asked how come the Chinese were coming, they responded that everything about us would be kept confidential, Chinese would be there only to have a discussion with their citizens in accordance to the international law." He continues: "After the Chinese had left... I asked the interrogators why they released all our materials to the Chinese even though they promised to keep our information confidential; the Chinese could now randomly oppress our family members... The interrogators did not feel a bit ashamed about it, they apologized by saying that someone in Washington gave our materials to the Chinese" (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 2).

Dawut Abdurehim, in his Combatant Status Review Tribunal, further explains: "[The Chinese interrogators] said if I talked they would help me get back to my country and provide more comfort for me" (CRST, ISN 289: 4). The suggestion that the Chinese officials were "helping" to repatriate the men is a complex one; Khalil Mamut conversely describes how he was told "that they would take me by force when I returned to China, and that I would be beaten, and eventually killed" (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 4).

The US Department of Defense explained their reasoning for these interrogations in a statement submitted to Fox News; “We have permitted many countries from which detainees are from to visit 1) to see that they are being treated humanely and 2) to help us understand who they are and provide us with insight and information into the detainees” (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 8). On the one hand, we might disregard this statement as a tepid pretense by the US state for violating the Uighurs’ rights and outsourcing interrogation to the Chinese officials (see Neve Gordon 2002). On the other hand, it exemplifies a claim made earlier in the chapter, that the US state can creatively collapse multiple positions into a single narrative of a rights-based nation. The controversy of detention and interrogation is obfuscated and instead, as happens over and over again, the Department of Defense was able to assert that the United States is a humane and information-based warden.

Despite this, Congress raised significant challenges to the access that Chinese interrogators were granted to the Uighurs (although not to the substance of the interrogation itself). Ostensibly at stake was concern that Congressmen were not allowed parallel entitlements for questioning the detained men. In the congressional hearing devoted entirely to the question of communication with and access to information pertaining to the Uighur at Gitmo, Congressman Ted Poe made a telling declaration: “They are *our* prisoners” (emphasis added) (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 14).

Inferring the Uighurs’ interpretation of the US state, Congressman Rohrabacher added: “You can only imagine the Uighurs understood... that America would stand true to its principles of liberty.” He continued, turning to the question of the Chinese delegation: “[The Uighurs] know that is what America believes, and then you have American soldiers tasked with the job of holding them down while the Chinese are

interrogating them and holding them in place so the Chinese can take pictures of them and extract information about their families... I want to know who was to blame for that decision” (Hearing, 16 July 2009: 12). The Congressman buttresses an unwavering commitment to “American values” on the back of the Chinese interrogation. Of course, the content of the Chinese interrogation – data collection and punishing threats – pale in comparison to the catalogue of torture, tactfully referred to as “enhanced interrogation,” carried out by GTMO-Joint Task Force personnel and CIA operatives. The question at stake is clarified as not whether the tactics employed by the Chinese officials were appropriate, but who is legitimated in their use of those tactics within the boundaries of Gitmo. Congressman Rohrabacher concludes: “I would suggest to the Uighur community that they should not lose faith in the average American and the Americans who are in uniform who reflect our values as a people” (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 12).

Abu Baker Qassim in a written statement submitted to the Hearing, recounts that following the Chinese interrogation, “I started suspecting my trust with the American soldiers in Guantanamo because of their awful images that belong to a nation claiming to spread democracy around the world.” In a comment that parallels that of Congressman Rohrabacher, Qassim continues: “soldiers of a nation represent their nation’s reputation... [The American soldiers] were America’s enemies since they broke the law and oppressed us randomly” (US Hearing, 16 July 2009: 2-3). Qassim ruptures Rohrabacher’s logic, but simultaneously articulates an internalized familiarity with the narrative of US democratic imperialism. The uneven terrain of empire and US state power was established well before the Uighurs were brought to Gitmo, and shapes the parameters of the Uighurs’ self-articulation, as well as that of the US Congressmen and Department of Defense.

The Congressional hearing is also illuminating because the Uighurs were by no means the only detainees to be interrogated by non-US-American officials. In fact, according to Wells Dixon the majority of men detained were interrogated by foreign intelligence (personal communication, 26 February 2014). Why, then, is it that the Chinese delegation caused so much Congressional outrage? To answer this, I return to the representation of the Uighurs as “victims.” By the time of the hearing, there were few voices committed to the belief that the Uighurs were “terrorists.” As the same time, the Congressional hearing and public outrage with the Chinese delegation are preoccupied with the fate and treatment of the Uighurs so as to position them as exceptions. The Uighurs are sutured to a narrative of Gitmo and state space that necessitates not only bounding the Uighurs within the hybrid-national site of Gitmo but as distinct from the numerous other men detained there.

Further complicating the constellations of power, legitimacy and the national, I turn now to the second event in the story of the Uighurs and the production of the US state: the court decision which ruled they be released into the United States. The Uighurs have been represented in US courts numerous times. The Center for Constitutional Rights began litigating on behalf of the Uighurs for their right to challenge their detention in the US judicial system. In early 2008, a Washington D.C. Circuit Court heard a case regarding one Uighur, Huzaiifa Parhat, and ruled unanimously that his classification as an “enemy combatant” was unfounded. Later that same year, Judge Ricardo Urbina of the District of Columbia Circuit Court heard *Kiyemba v. Obama*, a habeas corpus petition filed on behalf of the seventeen Uighur men who remained detained at Gitmo. On October 17, 2008 Judge Urbina ruled that continued detention of the Uighurs was unconstitutional and that they must be immediately released into communities in the

United States. This was unprecedented in the legal history of GTMO and suggests that the Uighurs presented a particular challenge to the cohesiveness of US legal and political structures.

Immediately, the Obama administration requested a suspension of the case and appealed the order that they be released into the United States (the ruling that their detention was illegal was not appealed). The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case but ultimately never did because Palau materialized as a potential host nation for all seventeen remaining Uighurs (Wells Dixon, personal communication, 26 February 2014). Ultimately only six men were transferred there but it effectively kept the case from being heard in the Supreme Court.

Subsequently, members of the Obama Administration undertook efforts to bring the Uighurs into the United States in secrecy, two at a time. The relocation agreements were intended to release the men into a Uighur community in Virginia, and were laden with stipulations of intense and constant supervision and monitoring (Klaidman 2012: 104), indicating the powerful persistence of punishment. But the efforts fell apart when members of Congress were notified and the possibility of transfer to Bermuda arose as an alternative.

Despite multiple efforts to employ US courts and release the Uighurs into US communities, the prospect of fully nationalizing the Uighurs – in other words, resettling them in the United States – raised immense anxieties, particularly amongst members of Congress and national media. In a statement submitted to *Kiyemba v. Obama*, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a self-articulated “policy institute dedicated to supporting Government efforts to prevent deadly acts of terrorism, defending democratic values, and... engag[ing] in the worldwide ‘war of ideas,’”

positioned itself as gatekeeper, stating the need to reinforce “statues prohibiting entry into the Nation by aliens who threaten national security” (*Kiyemba v. Obama*, statement submitted on behalf of respondent: 2). In contradistinction to the production of the Uighurs as the objects of American beneficence regarding the Chinese delegation, the Uighurs are framed in this case as would-be-terrorists, who have received “‘military-type training’ from terrorist organizations” (*Kiyemba v. Obama*, statement submitted on behalf of respondent: 6). Although Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates concluded that it was “difficult for the State Department to make the argument to other countries they should take these people that we have deemed, in this case, not to be dangerous, if we won’t take any of them ourselves.” (Chow 2011: 794), the persistence of the terrorist threat effectively closed US borders for the Uighurs.

The persistent employment of the US legal system on behalf of the Uighurs met significant resistance, despite the preoccupation with the problem of Gitmo’s apparent lawlessness. As with the Chinese interrogation, the court rulings expose the ways in which various state actors discursively include or exclude the Uighurs from their representation of the United States. In the first frame, Congress describes the Chinese interrogation as a violation, naming the event as breach of US principles regarding human rights and security. Gitmo, and the Uighurs, are territorialized as within the United States, forming the state’s boundary between the Chinese interrogators and the Uighur detainees. In the second frame, the US court incited serious resistance by ruling that the Uighurs’ be released into the United States. Actors such as the dissenting Congressmen reinstate the terrorist trope and work to realign the boundaries of the homeland with the putative borders of the nation-state.

In both cases, the production of the Uighurs' rights is a tactic of state-making which operates in the elastic space of Gitmo. The salience of Gitmo is ultimately exposed not in its definition as a national site, by how and for whom it is nationalized. The colonial history of Gitmo and the simultaneous codification of the detention facility as symbolic of the war on terror do the work of territorializing and reifying boundaries of difference and belonging – terrorist/citizen, inside/outside, enemy/ward.

By conceptualizing space as a mosaic of independent bounded states or territories, we mark “mutually exclusive ‘insides’ and ‘outsides,’ ‘citizen’ and ‘terrorist,’ ‘the protected’ and ‘the rightless’” (Delaney 2005: 31). In other words, a “horizontal” notion of territory (the dominant one in how we are taught to understand our world) works to legitimize spatial arrangements of power that operate by producing distinct boundaries and binaries. Linda Kerber makes sense of this by arguing that the “boundaries of a state’s identity are secured by the representation of [what counts as] danger” (Kerber 2007: 731).

This process of securitizing in the context of US empire functions not only to differentiate and bound but also to subsume and encompass messy and multifaceted identities of difference in order to produce, amongst other things, state power. The Uighurs were not simply banished because they allegedly embody the antithesis of a secure homeland; they were first nationalized and confined to a space ostensibly under the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.

At the same time, Gitmo is a malleable national space, “an elastic geography” (Weizman 2012: 6), which is repeatedly remade to include or exclude the Uighurs. There are two interrelated processes at work: the discursive production of Gitmo as within or beyond the state and its institutional capacity, and the production of the Uighurs as “alien

unprivileged enemy belligerents” (US Legal Code 10, Section 948a) or as beneficiaries of US-American values. The selective extension of rights to the Uighurs is part and parcel of the discursive bounding of the US homeland that takes place within Gitmo. The United States does the work of nationalizing the homeland by employing a fragmented and ever-shifting vocabulary of the Uighurs’ position in relation to it. Ultimately, the state is “construct[ing] ourselves normatively, morally” (Cox 2002: 175), as an anti-colonial empire; as a rights-abiding nation; as a unified whole bounded by American values.

Chapter Four

The Scale of the Body: Producing difference and an ethics of care, work, and neutrality in US-American bodies

War, at the microlevel of the imprisoned body, means torture – Matthew Hannah, 2006: 634

For a typical day in the life of a detention facility guard... many skills are needed to be successful... whether it be working with visitors or the daily exchange with detainees – JTF-GTMO Sgt. Cassandra Monroe

In this chapter, I engage more deeply with the feminist geopolitical analytic (Hyndman 2000). I look to unsettle the dominant narrative surrounding Gitmo by suggesting that the state is also made at the micro scale in the interactions between the guards and the detainees. In this chapter, I follow the arc of preceding chapters; the Uighurs, as transnational actors, are nationalized in Gitmo and then re-internationalized to transfer countries, constructed first as separatists, then terrorists, then finally recipients of international humanitarianism.

I explore the space between the discursive and the material throughout this chapter. I center on how Uighur and US-American citizen bodies are made as each others' Other. I begin by discussing the retroactive representations of the actions of the Uighurs in Afghanistan as terrorism through the Combatant Status Review Tribunal transcripts. The United States produces Uighur bodies, and itself as their antithesis, by codifying them as suspect and militant. Place, too, is produced through the stories we tell about it and its antithesis, and as such, the US production of Uighur bodies and the place of the United States are directly engaged as parallel processes. I then turn to the reification of social difference within the space of Gitmo, in particular between the detainees and the US navy guards. How are the boundaries of the state made and maintained between the people that live, work, and are detained at Gitmo? How is work

framed to produce the hard working, non-ideological, and efficient US-American working body? What exactly does this work consist of? I turn to the ways that the guards deal with detainees' self-harm, by describing them as objects of humanitarianism. Finally, I return to the process of transferring the Uighurs out of Gitmo, and suggest that the US state is produced through the banishment of the Uighurs. Through making and re-making the Uighurs, the United States is ultimately producing state space and US-American bodies.

In the micro-site of Gitmo where Uighur detainees and US-American guards meet, two very different processes are at work. The Uighurs are continually described, codified, and punished as political bodies – as counter-state actors explicitly positioning themselves in relation to the nation-state. Simultaneously, the JTF-GTMO personnel and detention guards are presented as politically neutral, such that the US-American ideology of hard work and efficient labor discursively negate the ethics of detention and the context of war. Through and against the Uighurs, the US ideology and common sense of efficiency, hard work, and good intentions is reified.

Codified Actions: Reading Terrorism in the Uighur Community

In 2004, under the Bush Administration, every Uighur detained at Gitmo underwent a Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT). The ostensible purpose of the CSRT tribunals was to review the Uighurs' 'enemy combatant' classification. They were led by a Tribunal President and comprised questioning of the detainees, allowing the men to respond to accusations, as well as questioning of other detained Uighurs as witnesses.

The accusations are an important entry-point into the codification of the Uighurs as terrorists, and the retroactive criminalization of their movement through Afghanistan

and Pakistan. Primarily, the questions and accusations address the nature of the Uighur community in the Tora Bora Mountains and the Uighurs' intentions for traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The twenty-two tribunals expose the ways in which the state codifies certain practices, activities, or objects as militant.

The state presents the tribunals as outside of its own boundaries so that it can use them in creative and constructive ways. Through that very positioning, the state is able to produce and bound the state with little accountability. As Hyndman notes, it is necessary to “engag[e] relationally with processes that are made powerful by the existence of borders, or that appear to exist beyond borders” (Hyndman 2004: 310). In other words, it is specifically in their presentation as outside the realm of the state that the military tribunals hold discursive weight in producing both the Uighurs and the US state.

Four practices are particularly prominent and continually contested in the Uighur tribunals: cleaning and shooting a Kalashnikov rifle; reading the Koran; running; and living in a shared community in the mountains, referred to in the Tribunal hearings as “the camp.” The representation of these activities as signifiers of the ‘enemy other’ forms a vital link between the individual body and the state. An exchange during Abdul Gappar’s tribunal (1-2) illustrates the importance of the Kalashnikov rifle and “the camp”:

[Evidence summary] *a.4. The detainee attended a Uighur training camp in Afghanistan.*

DETAINEE: I didn’t attend the training camp. If they call that the training camp, I wasn’t in the training camp. I stayed in the place where the Uighur people stayed.

a.5. The detainee received training in the use of the Kalashnikov rifle and a type of pistol.

DETAINEE: Are you saying training? Do you mean when you use the weapons or when you see the weapons?

TRIBUNAL PRESIDENT: ...[D]id you handle a Kalashnikov weapon? Did they show you how to use it? Did they show you how to disassemble it and put it back together?

DETAINEE: I was shown the weapon by the other people because I was interested. Since I wasn't in my country, I had just seen it in the movies and I didn't see it in real life. Then I was happy. That's the thing that dictates to us in our home country, so I looked at it and how to use it and how to hold it but I didn't really use the weapon.

“The camp,” repeatedly referred to in each Uighur hearing, is described as four or five houses and a small mosque. The settlement was found abandoned and the exclusively Uighur community that re-inhabited it constituted eighteen men subsequently brought to Gitmo, and one man killed by a U.S. air raid. Many of the men describe their time at the settlement spent repairing the buildings and reconstructing the infrastructure. How, then, does place – a tiny, run-down settlement of nineteen men in the remote Tora Bora mountains – come to signify a “threat” to the United States? The settlement is defined as a threat because it occupies the broad geographical region that the United States has defined as violent and threatening in the war on terror. In other words, broad generalities of place promoted by the state can erase the heterogeneity and complex relationships that exist there.

Similarly the gun, despite clearly being a novelty object rather than a tool for “training,” comes to signify commitment to a broad and interconnected ideological “threat” to the US state. Of course, gun use is pervasive in the United States and in and of themselves do not constitute evidence against the Uighurs in a court of law.

This is also the case for the Uighurs' religious practice. In Abu Bakker Qassim's tribunal hearing (3), Qassim responds to an accusation that claimed he had studied the Koran for two months at the Uighur “camp.” He replies: “I studied for 2 months on the Koran. This is funny to me. How can you blame me?” Turning to the purported American values of religious freedom, Qassim compares American Democracy to the lack of religious freedoms in China. He asks, “how can I fight against the US by learning

the Koran?” In reference to the providing of Korans at Gitmo, Qassim asks, “as a Muslim person trying to learn the Koran, is that a crime? If it is a crime, then why are you providing us this crime at Guantanamo Bay. If the U.S. reads the Koran and it is a crime, what is the difference between the U.S. and China?” This last question in particular reaches towards a poignant questioning of the discriminatory inscription of certain practices as threatening on certain, but not all, bodies.

Qassim punctures the national narrative in his response, identifying core inconsistencies between the purported concept of American democracy and the actual methods of state-making in which it engages. What is significant in the tribunal, however, is that despite Qassim’s lucid articulation of the state’s contradictions, the United States maintains the ability to secure the ‘homeland’ by effectively positioning him as a terrorist. The ‘homeland’ is certainly at stake, but it is not at *risk*. In the tribunals, the state nullifies the discourse-disrupting potential of the Uighurs not by addressing their claims, but by rendering them irrelevant through the designation as “terrorists.” The delineation of the homeland ensures that the American body and the ‘other’, non-American body are dealt with accordingly.

Gitmo Guards: the Neutrality and Efficiency of State Labor

Beyond the military tribunals, the US state continually produces itself at the scale of the individual within the naval base and detention center. *The WIRE: The Official Publication of Joint Task Force Guantanamo* is the naval base’s biweekly publication, written by and for US personnel on the base. *The WIRE* primarily consists of base announcements, such as religious service listings (including Islamic service on Friday afternoons), and various articles for and about the base community and members, with motivational

articles on strength and perseverance, leadership and JTF personnel romances. There is always a movie review (rated in Banana Rats), but rarely is the War on Terror mentioned; political questions, broadly, are not raised.

Occasionally, articles in *The WIRE* refer to the hundreds of men indefinitely detained at the same base. In these articles the detainees, always described in the faceless, nameless plural, serve as the springboard from which the US-American citizen-guard is constructed. In “All the Small Things: Guards keep mission going with superb detail-oriented skills,” the Wire’s staff writer Sgt. Cassandra Monroe begins, “For a typical day in the life of a detention facility guard at the Behavioral Health Unit, many skills are needed to be successful.” One set of these she calls “Interpersonal communication skills,” and writes that they are continually being used and tested in Joint Task Force GTMO, “whether it be working with visitors or the daily exchange with detainees.” The description of work at Gitmo culminates with a quote from another guard, who notes: “You have to be understanding and be willing to work. You’re here to do a job and to maintain care, custody and control. That’s the job” (Monroe 2013). While perhaps in another context, this would appear a benign job description, the insistence on “care, custody, and control” is productive narrative. As Gitmo’s Director of Public Affairs wrote, “the men and women of JTF-GTMO are performing their jobs in a professional and consistent basis [*sic*]”... “Telling the military’s story is an important function, one that is everyone’s responsibility” (Navy Cmdr. John Filostrat, *The Wire*, April 4: 4). This lucid articulation of the relationship between the discursive and the material allows us to understand the claim, “you’re here to do a job,” as a way of telling a story about the state and its citizens, and the neutrality and efficacy of Gitmo.

Monroe describes the skills and qualities necessary to effectively carry out her role as guard: detail-oriented skills, interpersonal communication skills, control, and care. She goes on to write that these skills serve military personnel well in various white-collar jobs after their deployment with JTF-GTMO is over. Importantly, she does not situate the work of a guard in the context of the war on terror. Instead, the actions and activities of the guards are imagined as employment skills. Unlike the national conversation regarding human rights, torture, and the suspension of due process of the law at Gitmo, this article indicates the ways in which work, and the politics of work, are tempered and molded within the space of the base.

The role of the detention guard is framed as politically neutral work and the capacity to reflect on or assess the ethics of detention is consequently irrelevant. The state frames the men detained at Gitmo as terrorists, depoliticizing their struggles and resistance to beyond the bounds of reason. In turn, the state portrays itself as politically neutral. This neutrality comes in direct contradiction to the way that many theorists conceive of the political nature of bodies and interactions at Gitmo, such as the assertion that “war, at the microlevel of the imprisoned body, means torture” (Hannah 2006, as quoted in Hyndman 2010: 248). It seems that war, too, at the micro level means the ability obscure and hence, magnify, power and violence.

Similarly, the language of care and humanitarianism, as well as the public admission that the Uighurs have been wrongly detained, complicates the direct translation from war to torture. War, at the microlevel, has been managed and absolved through a discourse of care.

This is reiterated in a different issue of *The WIRE* (Vol.15, issue 36) Colonel John Bogdan, Commander of the Joint Detention Group, articulates a similar message. He

explains that their mission “is the safe, humane, transparent care and custody of detainees. While that sounds fairly straightforward, it has a plethora of unique and separate tasks that must be accomplished in concert to ensure our overall mission success.” Explicitly connecting the detention guard and the US state, Bogdan writes that the “individual desire to achieve excellence in job performance inspires your unit and our Nation as we execute this challenging and at times controversial mission. It takes enormous effort and self-discipline to endure daily aggression in the face of the enemy and then professionally respond with humane treatment.” Bogdan, writing for an audience of fellow base personnel, does the ideological work of implicating individual detention facility guards in a broader project of the Nation. The content and nature of this project remains abstracted, but the enemy is clearly and completely relegated to detained bodies.

Custodial State: the Right to Care and Torture

The language of care and custody echoes later praises of humanitarianism on behalf of the transfer host countries. In a sense, the Uighurs became worthy of care at the same moment that they were brought into the confines of Gitmo; as they are nationalized, they become embroiled in a politics of care, one which is deeply entrenched in the neutral ideology of work. In *The Wire*, a staff writer makes this connection: “We still respected everything about them. *We just did a job and we did our job humanely.* We tried to keep the order and discipline of the camp” (my emphasis) (Sgt. Nilmeier, April 4, 2014: 11). Ultimately, of course, this contradictory notion of care is most powerfully a means of establishing US-American identities and Gitmo guards as *caring*, rather than substantiating claims that the detainees are *cared for*.

This is most visible in the way that the politics of care manifests in efforts to deny the detained men self-harm or protest through their physical bodies. In his book *Inside Gitmo* (2009), Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Cucullu describes efforts within the detention facility to prevent the attempted suicide of Muhammad al Shihri and Murtadha al Said Makram, both Saudi detainees. Despite the fact that this is not specifically a story of the Uighurs, Cucullu's account merits interrogation regarding the politics of care and the conditions of life and death for the detainees. Cucullu writes: "[Joint Detention Group commander Colonel Michael Bumgarner] was aware that because of the hunger strikes that had begun in large numbers the previous fall, many Americans had a skewed perspective of Guantánamo. Detainee suicides would only exacerbate an already unpleasant image" (Cucullu 2009: xviii). He continues, "the entire guard force – all shifts, including those who would normally have rotated off-duty – had been mobilized to deal with the potential suicide crisis" (Cucullu 2009: xix). Donning all forms of protective gear, including batons and pepper spray, "the assigned mission was 'safe, humane care and treatment,' and that meant protecting detainees from harm, including injury they might inflict on each other or themselves" (Cucullu 2009: xix). Following raids of the men's cells, belongings, and bodies, eruptive resistance was met with rubber bullets. Bumgarner concludes, "they did a hell of a job under very difficult conditions. Most importantly we were able to prevent a suicide. That was our best accomplishment" (Cucullu 2009: xxiv).

The event Cucullu describes is one of guards mobilizing, using extreme force to prevent al Shihri and Makram from exerting that force upon their own bodies to a fatal point. Miriam Ticktin, although writing in a different context, offers insight into this event. She writes: "The driving force of the hunger strike [or the suicide attempt] lies in the challenge posed to the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. In the

contemporary biopolitical modernity, one does not have the *right* to kill oneself – the state has monopoly over both life and death... Taking one’s own life interferes with the sovereign power to administer and manage life” (Ticktin 2011: 203). This frame destabilizes the rhetoric of care that mobilizes guards in suicide prevention, leads to excessive and violent use of force feeding to disrupt hunger strikes, and underwrites the idea that US-American citizen guards approach their role as one of caring custody.

Although the Uighurs did not (to the best of my knowledge) participate in hunger strikes or attempted suicide, their refusal for transfer suggests another space of resistance in which the state is shaped. In 2008 the United States came to an agreement with the Republic of Palau, which agreed to accept all seventeen Uighurs that remained in Gitmo. Palau is a remote archipelago nation (and former US colony) with a population of 20,000 and no existing Uighur population. Six Uighur men – Abdul Ghappar Abdul Rahman, Dawut Abdurehim, Anwar Hassan, Edham Mamet, Adel Noori, and Ahman Tourson – accepted the offer, but the others refused. Under the dominant assumption that Gitmo is hell on earth (as most US media reports), this decision seems unfathomable. But hunger strikes and self-harm are ways to “reappropriate a body that had already experienced violence through imprisonment or deportation” (Ticktin 2011: 203). In a similar sense, it is significant that the Uighurs prioritized their social beings – placing immense weight on the existence of a Uighur community in the transfer country – over their physical, biological wellbeing given that Gitmo represents such a stripped down biolife. Ultimately, the concept of care, in the context of the war on terror, cannot be understood as a meaningful provision for the lives and livelihoods of the war’s subjects; it can only be understood as a mechanism – discursive and material – for constructing US-American citizen identities as providers of care.

Banishment and the Preservation of US Exceptionalism

Eventually, of course, all the Uighur detainees were transferred out of Gitmo. By the time Yusef Abbas, Hajiakbar Abdulghupur, and Saidullah Khalik boarded the plane on the naval base tarmac and departed for Slovakia, the story of the Uighurs had come to epitomize the Bush Administration's sloppy militarism and the problems of Gitmo. Most public discourse describes the Uighurs as victims of the war on terror, and very little maintains that their treatment in Gitmo was warranted.

But this neglects to recognize that by virtue of the Uighurs' statelessness, their transfer out of Gitmo actually amounts to banishment. The Uighurs still face economic, social and political marginalization at the margins of US empire, and as they shift through a geography of US imperialism, they are also denied the right to a discourse, to a story.

Banishing the Uighurs lets the United States present itself as acting on a commitment to resolve the unpleasant persistence of indefinite detention at the US naval base. Obama articulated this commitment as senator in a speech on foreign policy, stating: "In the dark halls of Abu Ghraib and the detention cells of Guantánamo, we have compromised our most precious values" (Obama, August 1, 2007). More recently, Obama reiterated that the "continued operation of the facility weakens our national security by draining resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners and emboldening violent extremists" (quoted in Goldman 2013). This statement is telling, as it situates Gitmo as being counterproductive to the interests of the US state rather than being strategically, much less morally or ethically, beneficial. The conviction that US

constitutional principles have a weight and viability on their own enduring terms obscures the state-serving nature of appeals to shut down the detention facility.

In banishing the Uighurs, the contradictions between US constitutional principles and anti-colonial imperial values are seemingly resolved. By displacing the Uighurs from Afghanistan to Pakistan to Cuba to Slovakia and the host of transfer countries, the conditions of Uighur statelessness are shaped and maintained. Ultimately, it is the US state that is being produced throughout the geography of Uighur statelessness.

Conclusion

Seeing 'Through' Territory: Interrupting the State's Logic

If this is 'security' one might reasonably wonder what insecurity would feel like – David Delaney (2005:3)

Dominant American discourse obscures the fact that Gitmo is embedded in and dialectically constructed by a global geography of US empire. This discursive isolation of Gitmo not only limits our possibilities for resistance but also inhibits our ability to identify what power looks like. In his book *Inside Gitmo*, Gordon Cucullu, mentioned in chapter 4, describes the amenities available to detainees: they have good food, running water, and more frequent access to medical care than the average US-American (Cucullu 2009: 27). He cites these examples to show that there is some form of fairness at work within the razor wire of Gitmo, a standard of treatment that stands in as proof that the United States is legitimized and righteous in its actions.

These claims only pass if the boundaries of Gitmo are taken as stable, uncontested, apolitical, and unhinged from a deeper context. Indeed, the success of US hegemony necessitates that we take them at their word, that we find substance in the claims of the Congressman who appeals to fundamental values of US-American democracy and liberty while legitimizing the detention of the Uighurs in Gitmo; that we read a familiar notion of nation and identity into Gitmo's golf course, McDonalds, KFC, Wal-Mart supermarket, Starbucks, and suburban architecture.

The same US-American hegemony is present when President Obama posits that we have sacrificed our most important values in the walls of the detention facility, or when Congressman Rohrabacher laments that America did not uphold its core commitments to liberty, justice, and democracy towards the Uighurs. The stability of the

American moral mythology requires that “Guantanamo” be fetishized as an asocial, apolitical exception to the national order.

This myopia helps to facilitate what I call the state’s “national territorial fix,” which has two critical steps in the story of the Uighurs. This first is the containment of the Uighurs within GTMO, the colonial exception in US empire; and the second is their transfer to a fragmented international geography. The United States reterritorializes the Uighurs at different sites and scales so as to obscure the ways in which US empire and the bounded US nation state are being co-produced as dominant.

To further interrogate this notion, I turn to a brief discussion of Marx’s concept of capital’s contradictions and crises. According to David Harvey, Marx conceived of contradictions not in an Aristotelian way, in which two things are “absolute and exclusionary,” but as an “unstable, internal dynamic” of a thing, a process, a relationship, etc. At the moment when contradictions “become heightened into an absolute contradiction,” (Harvey, 14 February 2013) they manifest as crises. Marx and Harvey are particularly interested in the contradictions of capital and capitalism’s creative capacity to “resolve” these inherent contradictions through a “spatial fix.” This project does not address the workings of capital, but the theory of spatially “fixing” sociopolitical contradictions offers a lens through which to understand the functioning of the US empire under the guise of a democratic, territorially bounded nation-state. For instance, while President Obama buttresses this guise by promising to close the anomalous space of Gitmo, “by his third year in office, Obama had approved the killings of twice as many suspected terrorists [with drones] as had ever been imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay” (Klaidman 2012: 118). New mechanisms for propelling state power can be understood as sites through which the state’s contradictions are transferred. Likewise, by shuffling the

Uighurs to Palau, Slovakia, or myriad other states to which Gitmo detainees have been sent, the United States pushes a chapter of its violent imperial history further to its geographical and discursive margins. The US state appears to resolve the contradiction between its national idea of a stable, moral homeland and its violent global imperialism while the Uighurs remain bounded in the flexible margins of empire. The national territorial fix is a tactic of the state that simultaneously creates the conditions of an uneven international landscape of power, as with the Uighurs' transfers, and engages with the stratified global space to discursively promote the ever-extending reach of the state.

As a distinctly imperial war, the war on terror has been framed as the waging of US-American modern democratic liberalism against the non-modern, anti-democratic other. Who the enemy other actually *is*, however, is unclear. On the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) website, the organization displays a world map of known terrorist organizations, representing "terror" as a global entity. As the same time, the map is missing two entire continents – North America and South America. The global has its limits, lying flush with the territorial boundary of "America." The map clearly declaims that terrorism is *everywhere*, just not *here*.

As long as the current hegemony shapes both the questions we ask and the solutions we arrive at, interrogators of the US state will continue to miss the heart of its contradictions and territorial formations. Questions such as who are the terrorists, what should be done with them, and how do we uphold our national values, and simple solutions like closing Gitmo or transferring Uighurs ultimately do very little to move us towards a meaningful critique of US empire and a more just global order.

Within this project, I have begun to engage the deeper processes at work. Holding Delaney's challenge to see "through" and "past" territory (Delaney 2005: 14) at the

forefront of my analysis, my intention has been to re-politicize the territories that we inhabit, lay claim to, and identify with. These spaces are the “products of [our] social practices and processes” (Delaney 2005: 16), and as such necessitate continual consideration in order to constructively challenge the ways in which our world is delimited.

This project, ultimately, is a challenge to me; how am I produced through the bounding of the Uighurs? This project is a challenge to the uneven distribution of harm and punishment and the construction of social difference between the Uighurs and US-American citizens. As inequality is produced and reproduced through Gitmo’s prism of detention, the root of US-American identity and imperialism is upheld. Ultimately, I am trying to interrupt this dominant narrative about the US state so that we might move towards a more deeply just world.

Justice for the Uighurs, however, will require more than just resisting the discursive and material power of the US state. In recent years there has been a rising media interest in the Uighurs, both those in Gitmo and those in East Turkestan, an area in China otherwise known as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Backlit by increasingly repressive and violent conditions in Xinjiang province, the Chinese government has repeatedly framed the Uighurs as terrorists and targeted them with excessive police brutality. The record of violence on the part of myriad media sources in the past years is extensive.

On June 28, 2013, Chinese police stormed a mosque during prayer in Hotan City in Xinjiang province; they proceeded to disconnect phone services to the area and shot and killed at least two Uighur men (WUC Report 2013: 7). On August 20, 2013 at least fifteen Uighurs were killed in Kargilik county in a police shootout. They were surrounded

while gathering for prayer, and accused of “terrorism” (rfa.org). A month later, on September 17, 2013, at least twelve Uighurs were killed in a raid on a “terrorist facility” and “munitions center” in Kashgar, conducted by almost eighty police officers (rfa.org). A report released by the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) suggests that a conservative estimate of the number of Uighurs killed by Chinese authorities between March and August 2013 based on police reports and media sources is 138, but that the actual number may be much greater (WUC Report 2013: 2).

Of course, violence is not carried out unilaterally and the increasing occurrences of police massacres are echoed by rising incidents of brutality attributed to the Uighurs. But there is a distinct power differential between the state apparatus and Uighur communities. The Chinese state has brought the “terrorism” narrative to bear in parallel and co-constitutive ways to the United States, legitimizing brutality in new contexts. The war on terror is not specific to the United States; rather, it is a highly elastic mechanism of state-making which works across a globalized geography. It discursively and materially constructs the conditions for the hegemonic state force to deny agency to those at its margins.

At the same time, the Chinese state violently bounds the Uighurs’ to limit their territorial rights and ways of being. For example, in October 2013, nearly 100 Uighurs were arrested and detained by Chinese authorities “on suspicion of trying to escape across the border” (rfa.com 2013, October 3). In March 2014, following a knife attack in Kunming attributed to Uighur separatists, “authorities... are deporting large numbers” of Uighurs living in Yunnan province back to Xinjiang (rfa.com 2014, March 12). The boundary logic at work is similar to that being employed by the United States at Gitmo; by confining the Uighurs within state boundaries, the Chinese state acts to further

exclude them from the sociospatial articulations of national identity and political plurality. The deep violations of the Uighurs' rights to mobility, to a home, and to a nation, in relation to the United States as well as the Chinese state, are produced as the necessary antithesis of the states' normative self-image.

Moving towards a more just global order, then, means resisting these forms of territorial, discursive, and material power, whether the principal actors are the US, Chinese, or other states.

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I chose to partition the chapters of this project through scale: from the international, to the national, to the scale of the body. This allowed me to push the conversation beyond the conventional geopolitical analysis, which privileges the scale of the nation-state. In that sense, my choice of scale was not simply pragmatic, but inherently political. It also provided a lens to understand the relationship between US empire, the bounded US state, and the US-American citizen; their co-production as well as fundamental contradictions.

At the same time, there are serious limitations in attempting to neaten scale. Territories are not neat, particularly those charged with partitioning power and security in our world. Weizman notes this about the relationship between space and the state generally: "highly elastic political space is often more dangerous and deadly than a static, rigid one" (Weizman 2012: 7). This elasticity and violence of territory has been at stake throughout this project, but there is also the possibility of losing some of these nuances by too faithfully subscribing to clear categories of analysis.

For example, at the scale of the body my analysis was limited to state-sanctioned descriptions of US-citizen identities, such as the Joint Task Force GTMO's motto: "Honor Bound to Defend Freedom." However, this needs to be put in conversation with how processes of state-making and exclusion are at work within the bounded United States, producing disposable youth that "defend freedom" in Gitmo because they have been militarized and marginalized within the United States. Similar processes seem to be at work within the nation state as bodies are territorialized at the margins so that the global reach of US power can be furthered. Nuances such as this are lacking in my project, given my decision to center the Uighurs. However, I would urge those that take up future iterations of this project to maintain a "critical bifocality" (see Fine and Weis 2012) where individuals and the power they possess are always seen embedded in broader processes, continually centering and de-centering, so as to negotiate the space between scales.

Further, the scope of this work often refers to the nation and the state as interchangeable. This is because in the space of Gitmo, which is dominantly state-controlled, the idea of the nation and the state are collapsed into a story of terrorism and security. But while the state and the nation are engaged in a co-constructive process of hegemonic place-making globally, they are distinct entities and further directions of this project would benefit from a more critical eye to their divergences, rather than solely their overlap. The state is the major producer of the national discourse, which it simultaneously uses to legitimate itself. But while the US state is directly engaged with territorializing the Uighurs in Afghanistan, Cuba, and Slovakia, ideas of the nation are bounding bodies and mobility across a global landscape, distinct from state mechanisms. In particular, racialized and gendered notions of "terrorists" have global translations that

further US supremacy in unanticipated sites, as I have begun to explore in the case of China.

I want to encourage others to build from and beyond this work, to challenge the making of US empire and the US state through the bounding of marginalized bodies in other contexts. The relationships between mobility, identity, power and space produce the uneven terrain in which we all move, and the ways in which we situate ourselves in the world can respond to, push against, and work to interrupt its violent implications.

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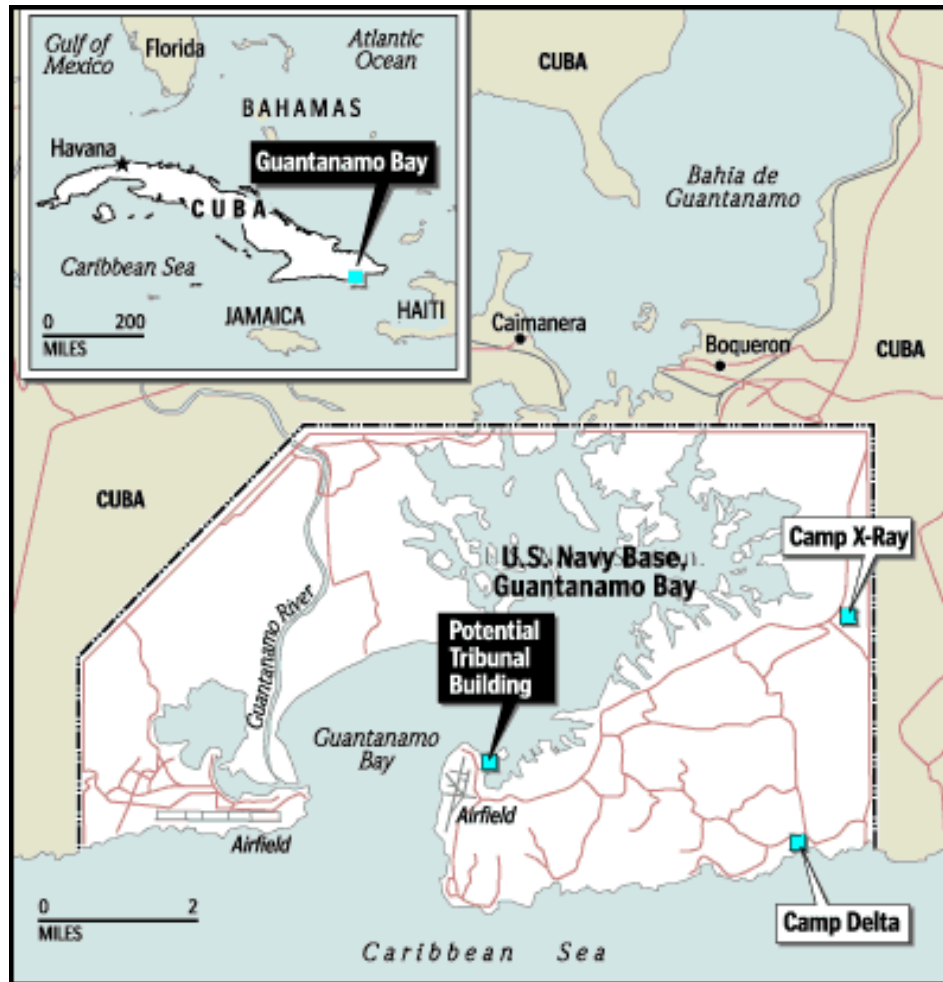
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Appendix A: Maps



Map 1: Xinjiang province, in relation to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other surrounding states of Central Asia.



Map 2: Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, including GTMO naval base, detention camps and tribunal facility (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/daily/graphics/guantanomotime_050104.htm)

Appendix B: Images



Image 1: Reward for information leading to the whereabouts or capture of Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership
<http://www.psywarrior.com/Herbafghan02.html>, leaflet AFG06



Behavioral Health Unit detention facility guards frisk a detainee following a shower, Dec. 13, 2013. The guards follow a strict series of Standard Operating Procedures to ensure tasks are done correctly during each of their shifts.

Image 2: Image from JTF-GTMO publication *The Wire*, representative of the portrayal of guards and detainees within. Caption reads: “The guards follow a strict series of Standard Operating Procedures to ensure tasks are done correctly during each of their shifts.”

<http://www.jtfgtmo.southcom.mil/wire/pdf/v15/The%20Wire%2015-34.pdf>