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Report on Tibet Negotiations
P.L. 107-228 Section 613(b), of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of Fiscal
Year 2003

I. Executive Summary

The Dalai Lama's special envoys and Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department have not met directly since the ninth round of dialogue at the end of January 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in a substantive discussion that will work to achieve concrete results.

The U.S. government believes that the Dalai Lama or his representatives can be constructive partners for China as it deals with the challenge of overcoming continuing tensions in Tibetan areas. The Dalai Lama's views are widely reflected within Tibetan society and command the respect of the vast majority of Tibetans. His consistent advocacy of non-violence is an important factor in reaching an eventual lasting solution. China's engagement with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to resolve problems facing Tibetans is in the interests of the Chinese government and the Tibetan people. Failure to address these problems will lead to greater tensions inside China and will be an impediment to China's social and economic development.

II. Tibet Policy

Promoting substantive dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama or his representatives is an important U.S. foreign policy objective. We continue to encourage representatives of both the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama to hold direct and substantive discussions aimed at resolving differences, without preconditions. Such a dialogue provides the best hope for alleviating tensions in Tibetan areas and would contribute to the overall stability of China. We are very concerned that there has been no dialogue since early 2010 and that nine years of talks prior to that time have not borne concrete results. In May 2011, the Dalai Lama ratified amendments to the "Charter of Tibetans in Exile" that devolve his political authority to an elected Tibetan leadership. A tenth round of dialogue that makes progress on questions related to Tibetans' livelihoods and welfare would be a positive step at this critical time, but prospects for the Chinese government to resume the dialogue appear dim, at least in the short term.

In 2011, Chinese authorities continued to place the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas under increasingly intense and formalized systems

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of controls, many of which appeared to be aimed at facilitating enforcement of “social stability” and undermining the religious authority of the Dalai Lama. Increasing official interference in Tibetan religious and cultural spheres provoked acts of resistance among the Tibetan population. These in turn led authorities to intensify attempts to maintain control, thus creating a cycle of official repression and increasingly desperate acts by Tibetans, such as a series of self-immolations by Tibetan Buddhist clergy and laypersons in Tibetan areas.

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR or Tibet) and Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties in other provinces as part of the People's Republic of China. The Dalai Lama repeatedly has disclaimed any intention to seek sovereignty or independence for Tibet and said he seeks for China to preserve Tibetan culture and religion, and its fragile environment through genuine autonomy. We consistently urge China to respect the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of its Tibetan people and to fully respect the human rights and civil liberties of all of its citizens.

The U.S. government does not recognize Tibet as an independent state and so does not conduct official diplomatic relations with the Central Tibetan Administration, an organization based in Dharamsala, India. We maintain contact with a wide range of religious, cultural, political, and other Tibet-related groups, including Tibetans in the United States, China, and around the world. U.S. government officials also have met with the Dalai Lama in his capacity as an internationally revered religious and cultural leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

III. Steps Taken by the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State

President Obama called both publicly and privately for substantive dialogue between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government to resolve long-standing issues, consistent with the policy of previous U.S. Administrations. President Obama most recently met with the Dalai Lama at the White House in July 2011 following an earlier meeting at the White House in February 2010. During their July 2011 meeting, President Obama reiterated his strong support for the preservation of the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions of Tibet and the Tibetan people throughout the world. He underscored the importance of the protection of human rights of Tibetans in China. The President commended the Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence and dialogue with China and his pursuit of the “Middle Way” approach. The President stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that

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produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans.

Vice President Biden held extensive discussions with Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping on human rights during Vice President Biden's trip to China in August 2011, and during Vice President Xi's February visit to the United States, candidly discussing the inadequacies in China's protection of human rights and raising specific cases of concern and self-immolations in Tibetan areas.

Secretary Clinton consistently raised Tibet in meetings with her Chinese counterparts, such as during the annual U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogues, and in public speeches, such as during her November 2011 remarks at the East-West Center in Honolulu. She has called for the protection of human rights in Tibetan areas and for a resumption of substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

Other senior officials in the Administration and at the Department of State repeatedly have raised the importance of Tibetan issues and urged Chinese officials to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Maria Otero has served as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues since October 2009. As the special coordinator, Under Secretary Otero's responsibilities include promoting substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives and promoting the policy of seeking to assist the preservation of the distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage of Tibetans. In February 2011, she became the first under secretary to visit Tibetan refugee settlements in Southern India.

Under Secretary Otero has met with the Dalai Lama five times since assuming her position, most recently in July 2011. During the reporting period, Under Secretary Otero, assistant secretaries, and other senior officials met regularly and frequently with the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy Lodi Gyari, to discuss a wide range of Tibet-related issues. Under Secretary Otero also met with Lobsang Nyandak, representative of the Dalai Lama to the Americas. In addition, she regularly met with key civil society leaders active on Tibetan issues. On January 9, Under Secretary Otero hosted a public forum on the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and water security on the Tibetan plateau. Under Secretary Otero also coordinated with like-minded governments on Tibetan issues. Under Secretary Otero traveled again to India in February and met with the

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Dalai Lama's representative in New Delhi. As required by the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, the office of the special coordinator maintained close contact with religious, cultural, and political representatives of the Tibetan people

Under Secretary Otero formally raised Tibet in multilateral fora, including in her remarks before the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. Other senior U.S. officials also formally raised Tibet in multilateral fora, including Ambassador Ronald Goddard, who noted that the Chinese government maintains "restrictive policies that threaten the unique religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of Tibetans" in remarks before the 66th UN General Assembly in October 2011. Under Secretary Otero in her public statement on Tibet on January 24, and in her remarks for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on November 3, 2011 noted that "the U.S. government repeatedly has urged the Chinese government to address the counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and that threaten the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people." She noted that the U.S. government "call(s) on the Chinese government to resume substantive, results-oriented dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to address the underlying grievances of China's Tibetan population." She conveyed a similar public message in her July 13, 2011, statement before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Michael H. Posner and Deputy Assistant Secretary Daniel Baer raised U.S. government concerns about China's counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas during the April 2011 U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue and reinforced the Administration's call for resumption of dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives to solve long-standing issues. In addition, they raised the cases of Tibetan prisoners in their meetings, and Tibetans were included on the list of prisoners of concern handed over to the Chinese government. Deputy Assistant Secretary Baer publicly reiterated the call to resume dialogue in June 2, 2011, testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Assistant Secretary Posner again publicly raised the repression of Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhist religious practices in his September 13, 2011 remarks on the release of the International Religious Freedom Report.

U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke has regularly engaged the Chinese government on Tibet-related issues. The U.S. embassy in Beijing and the U.S. consulate general in Chengdu have consistently raised U.S. concerns about human rights and religious freedom in Tibetan areas with Chinese officials. In his December 10, 2011, statement on the occasion of International Human Rights Day,

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he noted the Chinese government's restrictions on the religious freedom and practices of Tibetans. He has indicated to the Chinese government his desire to travel to Tibetan areas. U.S. officials attempt to travel regularly to the TAR and Tibetan areas in other provinces of China to ascertain living conditions; raise our concerns; urge Chinese authorities to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives; and support the protection of the cultural, religious, and linguistic identity of Tibetans. However, access to many Tibetan areas remains limited, and permission to travel to the TAR routinely is denied. In meetings with Chinese counterparts in Washington, China, and in third countries, U.S. officials consistently have called on the Chinese government to allow access to Tibetan areas for journalists, diplomats, and other observers and to resume substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

The State Department Office of the Spokesperson issued a number of statements on Tibet during the reporting period, including on April 14, July 6, August 30, September 27, October 11, 18, 19, and 20, and November 4, 2011, and January 24 and February 10, 2012. These statements repeatedly urged the Chinese government to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and threatened the distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people. Statements repeatedly urged the Chinese government to engage in constructive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Daniel Russel in a February 10, White House Press Briefing noted that the United States "use[s] every opportunity to encourage the Chinese officials and leaders to exercise real restraint, and to safeguard the human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all of China's citizens, including in Tibet."

IV. Status of Discussions between PRC and the Dalai Lama's Representatives

The Dalai Lama's special envoys and Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department have not met directly since the ninth round of dialogue at the end of January 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in a substantive discussion that will work to achieve concrete results.

V. History of Discussions between PRC and the Dalai Lama's Representatives

The last three decades have seen intermittent efforts by the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China to resolve concerns and differences through dialogue. For a detailed history of such efforts, please refer to the State Department's 2010 Report on Tibet Negotiations.

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