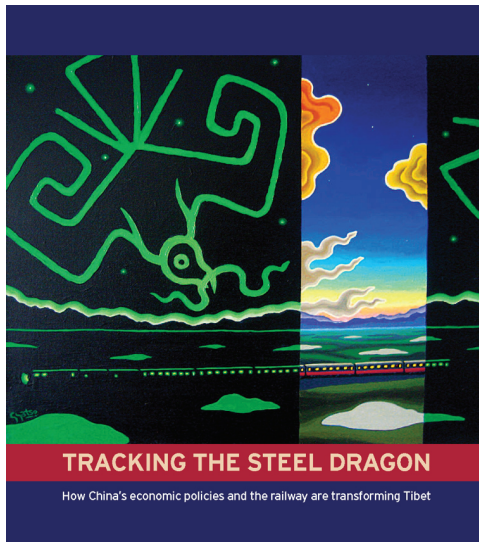


*“Tibetans have  
no real say in  
decision-making  
on their country’s  
future”*

—ICT



## TRACKING THE STEEL DRAGON:

New ICT report reveals the impact  
of Beijing's economic policies on  
Tibet and Asia

The first major report on the impact of the world's highest altitude railway across the Tibetan plateau reveals how it is changing Tibet, to the detriment of the Tibetan people and land, and details the dramatic implications for the rest of Asia.

‘Tracking the Steel Dragon: How China’s economic policies and the railroad are transforming Tibet’ will be released internationally on 28 February.

Commenting on the report, Mary Beth Markey, ICT’s Vice President for International Advocacy, said: “Tibet’s new railroad, hailed as a ‘golden path to prosperity’ by China, is quite the opposite. It is the most visible symbol of a political and strategic agenda aimed both at strengthening the Chinese state’s authority and control over Tibetan areas, and beginning large-scale extraction of Tibet’s natural and mineral resources for the first time. This coincides with a time in Tibet’s history when ordinary Tibetans have no real say in decision-making on their country’s future.”

“Before it is too late, we are urging governments to call for a proactive, affirmative and preferential policy towards Tibetans, while foreign investors in Tibet must implement guidelines that aim to ensure the genuine participation of Tibetans in the development of their economy.”

The railroad from Qinghai to Lhasa is the most high-profile symbol of China’s strategy to develop its western regions, which is one of the most important dynamics of contemporary China. The aim of its construction is to expand the influence and consolidate the control of the

Chinese Communist Party, which regards this as crucial to China’s successful rise in the 21st century. As the linchpin of China’s plans to begin large-scale extraction of Tibet’s mineral and other natural resources, the new railroad has changed the dynamic of investment, drawing foreign corporations to enter the Tibetan economy for the first time.

China seeks to present an image of progress and prosperity in Tibet to the outside world. It blocks any dissenting opinion or contradictory information, leading to a climate of fear about open discussion of the railway’s impact. Despite the increasingly oppressive political atmosphere in Tibet, ‘Tracking the Steel Dragon’ uncovers the facts behind the propaganda, bringing together the views and experiences of Tibetans, Chinese, foreign scholars and policy-makers with data gathered from the field.

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*"Most passengers on the railway are Chinese migrants, settlers and tourists."*

## Tracking the Steel Dragon...

ICT's new report, 'Tracking the Steel Dragon', documents the immediate impact of the railroad 19 months from its construction in the context of China's strategic and economic objectives and shows that Beijing's policies on the Tibetan plateau are:

- Leading to a 'second invasion' of Tibet by accelerating the influx of Chinese people;
- Causing the further exclusion of Tibetans from economic activity - which even some Chinese analysts believe risks provoking the very despair and opposition among Tibetans feared by the Chinese state in its quest for 'political stability';
- Damaging Tibet's fragile high-altitude environment, with disturbing implications for hundreds of millions of people in the entire Asian region;
- Threatening the extinction of one of the last examples of sustainable pastoralism on earth, though the enforced settlement of Tibetan nomads
- Heightening military readiness on the Tibetan plateau through the expansion of Chinese influence and construction of civil and military transport links, causing concern in neighboring India linked to disputed territory issues in the border areas between the two Asian giants;
- Causing serious concern for the survival of Tibet's culture and religion, which is integral to Tibetan identity and important not only to Tibet, but also to China and the wider world;

To obtain a hardcopy of 'Tracking the Steel Dragon: How China's economic policies and the railroad are transforming Tibet', email [eupolicy@savetibet.org](mailto:eupolicy@savetibet.org). To download a PDF copy, visit [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org) ■

## US and China to resume human rights dialogue

The United States and China agreed to resume their bilateral human rights dialogue, following discussions between U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Chinese officials in Beijing. However, Secretary Rice said no date had been set for the dialogue to resume. U.S. senior leaders have been pressing China for the resumption of the dialogue as part of a quiet human rights strategy leading up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"We are ready to resume the human rights dialogue," the Chinese foreign minister, Yang Jiechi, said at a news conference with Secretary Rice in Beijing on 26 February, Reuters reported. "We are willing to have exchanges and interactions with the U.S. and other countries on human rights on a basis of mutual respect, equality and noninterference in each others' internal affairs."

The last round of human rights dialogue between the two countries took place in December 2002, but the United States suspended its human rights dialogue in 2003 after its State Department cited the execution of a Tibetan and the arrests of pro-democracy activists as "troubling incidents" that showed China was "backsliding" on human rights. China first entered into bilateral human rights dialogues in the late 1990s after securing agreements from several Western countries to abandon their support for an annual resolution criticizing China at the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

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**US and China to resume human rights dialogue...**

Commenting on the news, ICT's VP for International Advocacy, Mary Beth Markey, said: "China stalled so long on the resumption of its dialogue with the United States because these dialogues, by their very existence, point to the need to elevate concerns for China's behaviors to the level of formal dialogue, a distinction only the most serious violating nations hold. Still, the bilateral dialogue is just one forum for pressing China on human rights, and the negligible rate of success coming out of the dialogues suggests that public and international forums must also be utilized." ■



Zhou Yongkang



Liu Yandong

**17th Party Congress promotes officials linked to harsh policies toward Tibetans**

The 17th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has resulted in the promotions of two high-ranking Party officials, Zhou Yongkang and Liu Yandong, whose recent posts associate them with harsh policies against Tibetans. Zhou and Liu are both members of the Party's highest ranking group focused on Tibetan issues, giving added weight to their promotions and their views on Tibet policy and its implementation.

**Central Coordination Group on the Struggle against the Dalai Clique**

Both Zhou and Liu play leading roles in the Party's top Tibetan policy work group, which seeks to end the Dalai Lama's influence among Tibetans and to prioritize economic development over protecting Tibetan culture. According to a 17 April 2007 Singtao Daily report, the group is believed to be formally known as either the "Central Tibet Work Coordination Group" or the "Central Coordination Group on the Struggle against the Dalai Clique." The group has "overall charge of Tibetan affairs" and its "main tasks" are "opposing the Dalai clique and maintaining Tibet's stability."

**Zhou Yongkang Promoted to the Standing Committee of the Politburo**

Zhou Yongkang is one of the most influential Party figures guiding policy and implementation with respect to public security and the process of investigating, charging, prosecuting, trying, and sentencing cases of alleged criminal activity.

Zhou served as the Secretary of the Sichuan Province Communist Party Committee from 1999-2002, a period that included the partial destruction of the Tibetan Buddhist Larung Gar and Yachen Gar monastic teaching institutions, located in Kardze (Ch. Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the expulsion of thousands of Tibetan Buddhist nuns and monks from the institutions. Zhou was also in charge at the time of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's detention in April 2002 (sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve, later commuted to life imprisonment) for conspiring to cause explosions and inciting splittism.

**Liu Yandong Promoted to the Politburo**

Liu Yandong, who served as Head of the Party's United Front Work Department (UFWD) from December 2002 until December 2007, has been promoted to the 25-member Politburo of the Central Committee. Liu's attainment of Politburo rank was concurrent with State Council Vice Premier Wu Yi's retirement from the Politburo and Central Committee, positioning Liu as China's highest-ranking female Party official.

The UFWD oversees the implementation of Party policy toward China's eight "democratic" political parties, ethnic and religious groups, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs, among other functions. In 2005, the UFWD established a new bureau to handle Tibetan affairs. The Seventh Bureau's mission is "to cooperate with relevant parties in struggling against secessionism by enemies, both local and foreign, such as the Dalai Lama clique, and to liaise with overseas Tibetans."

As Head of the UFWD, Liu Yandong has played a direct and important role since late 2002 in the ongoing dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama's representatives. The UFWD served as the host organization for the dialogue process between Chinese officials and the Dalai Lama's representatives, Special Envoy Lodi Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen, during all of their five visits to China. Liu's status as Head of the UFWD during four of the five visits to China by the envoys directly associates her with the current status of the dialogue, which the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy has characterized as at a "critical stage." ■

## Hong Kong commentator calls on China to be pragmatic on Tibet

Frank Ching, a Hong Kong based commentator and veteran journalist, has said that China should deal with the "Tibetan issue more pragmatically" and that it will do much to China's image if it stops being paranoid with other countries "especially where the Dalai Lama is concerned."

In an article in the South China Morning Post of 13 February 2008, Ching said, "Beijing insists that he is not only a religious leader, but is actually trying to split China." Ching added, "However, when the Dalai Lama is received by foreign leaders, it is solely in his capacity as a spiritual leader."

He continued, "No country in the world recognises Tibet as an independent country; China could greatly reduce complications in its relations with other countries by simply dealing with the Tibetan issue more pragmatically."

Saying, "A better human rights record would do wonders to improve China's image" Ching concluded, "If Beijing is serious about improving its international image, it should realise that what is needed is a better product, not better salesmen. The solution to China's problem lies in China's hands." ■

## Gyaltzen Norbu tipped to become minister at upcoming NPC

On 13 February 2008, Reuters reported that Gyaltzen Norbu, the boy installed by Beijing as the 11th Panchen Lama, has been tipped to become the country's youngest official holding a rank equivalent to cabinet minister.

Following the recognition by the Dalai Lama of the six year old Tibetan Gendun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama in April 1995, Chinese security forces took Nyima into custody and he has not been seen since. In November 1995 the Chinese government installed a different boy, Gyaltzen Norbu, as the 11th Panchen Lama. Norbu's selection as the Panchen Lama is overwhelmingly rejected by Tibetans but China increasingly uses the now-18 year old as a mouthpiece for its policies in Tibet.

Reuters quoted a source as saying: "He [Gyaltzen Norbu] is likely to become a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as early as next month." Another Reuters source was quoted as saying that Norbu would "eventually become a vice-chairman."

The National People's Congress is set to hold its annual session on 5 March in Beijing. Members voted to the Standing Committee hold a rank equivalent to cabinet minister.

Gyaltzen Norbu is reported to have met with Wu Bangguo, chairman of the NPC, last month, where Wu told him to "uphold patriotic Tibetan Buddhism ... and safeguard the unity of the motherland and national unity", according to Reuters. ■



*Gyaltzen Norbu receives a Tibetan scarf from President Hu*