

<https://www.savetibet.org/u-s-committed-to-supporting-the-aspirations-of-the-tibetan-people-says-under-secretary-steve-goldstein-at-state-department-losar-reception/>

U.S. committed to supporting the aspirations of the Tibetan people, says Under Secretary Steve Goldstein at State Department Losar Reception

The State Department hosted its annual reception for Losar, the Tibetan New Year, on February 20, 2018. Under Secretary Steve Goldstein and Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Samuel D. Brownback, addressed the gathering of Administration and Congressional staff, diplomats, NGO representatives, and members of the Tibetan American community. Representative Ngodup Tsering offered greetings on behalf of H.H. the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration while Capital Area Tibetan Association President Namka Tenzin spoke on behalf of the Tibetan American community. Khenpo Samdup of the Drikung Dharma Chakra center offered the opening prayers of auspiciousness. There was Tibetan cultural performance by Karma Gyaltzen and Tashi Yangzom, and observance of Losar rituals, including the offering of traditional *Chemar*, *Dresil*, *Kapse*, and *Chang*.

Following is the text of Under Secretary Goldstein's remarks as released by the State Department. The [Voice of America also carried an editorial](#) about Under Secretary Goldstein's remarks on February 23, 2018 saying, "Under Secretary Goldstein reiterated U.S. support for "the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct identity."

Remarks at a Reception Honoring the Tibetan New Year

I. Steven (Steve) Goldstein
Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
Washington, DC
February 20, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning and Losar Tashi Delek! Happy New Year. On behalf of the Department of State, I am very happy to welcome you to our annual celebration of Losar, the Tibetan New Year.

Please join me in extending a special welcome to our guests from the non-profit, academic, and diplomatic communities, as well as our colleagues from Capitol Hill.

And I would especially like to extend a warm welcome to the members of the Tibetan-American community, who have provided the Losar altar and the delicious Tibetan food and drinks.

We are here today to recognize the many contributions of Tibetans globally as well as Tibetan-Americans in the United States. That begins, of course, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose teachings have affected the lives of Tibetan Buddhists and others around the world - including countless Americans - for decades.

Tibetan-Americans also have made outsized contributions to spiritual and educational life in the United States, as well as by informing and shaping U.S. legislation and public policy.

Young Tibetan-American leaders also are emerging. We honor all of your accomplishments today.

We recognize that Tibetans face great challenges in other parts of the world, especially on the Tibetan plateau. The U.S. government remains committed to supporting the aspirations of the Tibetan people to safeguard their distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

For example, through the Tibetan Scholars Program, the United States has supported over 400 Tibetans from communities in India and Nepal to pursue a master's degree at U.S. colleges and universities in disciplines that address pressing needs within Tibetan communities.

Program alumni such as Sikyong Lobsang Sangay have returned to teach and inspire the next generation of Tibetan leaders.

I am delighted to note that on April 21, the U.S. government will celebrate the Tibetan Scholarship Program's 30 years of academic exchanges with an alumni event in Dharamsala, India. Through presentations and photo exhibits, program alumni will share how the knowledge, values, and relationships they gained while in America positively impacted their communities back home.

The United States also remains committed to enhancing the sustainable economic development, environmental conservation, and humanitarian conditions of Tibetan communities, including through humanitarian assistance to those living on the plateau and to Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal.

We also remain committed to improving respect for the human rights of Tibetans, including their religious freedom.

It is important that Tibetans be able to practice freely their faith and select their religious leaders in keeping with their own customs and traditions, without interference.

I also want to offer sincere condolences to the Tibetan community on the recent reported fire at the Jokhang temple. As the most sacred shrine in Tibetan Buddhism, we hope that the Jokhang's buildings and relics have not suffered serious damage.

Finally, and most importantly, we recognize that the Tibetan people must have a voice in their own future.

Again, thank you all for coming and sharing this special occasion with all of us.