



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

MAY 21 2018

The Honorable
Edward R. Royce, Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act, PL 115-94, we are transmitting a report on the status of Tibet negotiations.

We hope this information is useful. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary K. Waters".

Mary K. Waters
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:

As stated.

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Report to Congress on Tibet Negotiations
Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act
P.L. 115-94, Sec. 13

Section 13 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act, P.L. 115-94, enacted on December 18, 2017, requires the President to provide reports to Congress concerning (1) the steps taken by the President and Secretary of State in accordance with subsection (a)(1) to implement the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002; and (2) the status of any discussions between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives. A report is due within 180 days of the enactment of that Act and annually thereafter until December 31, 2021. The President delegated issuance of this report, then required under different legislation, to the Secretary of State in Executive Order 133133 of July 2003. The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs has authority to submit this certification pursuant to Delegation of Authority 280-2. This report, prepared by the Department of State, is being submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

Executive Summary

Chinese government officials and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have not met in formal negotiations since 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue, without preconditions, to lead to a settlement that resolves differences. The U.S. government remains concerned by the lack of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans within China, ongoing violations and abuses of the human rights of Tibetans in China, and efforts by Chinese authorities to eliminate the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans. The United States believes the Chinese government must address these concerns to create conditions for a sustainable settlement, which is essential to the long-term stability of the region. The U.S. government has maintained close contact with Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders to underscore U.S. support, and has expressed its concerns regarding Chinese government actions in bilateral, multilateral, and public venues. The following report describes activities undertaken by senior U.S. officials from May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018 to encourage dialogue and create conditions for a sustainable settlement.

U.S. Policy on Tibet

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties in other provinces as part of the People's Republic of China. The United States' longstanding policy is to encourage meaningful and direct dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to lead to a settlement that resolves differences. The U.S. government believes that a negotiated outcome that results in meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, and ensures they are able to practice freely their religion, culture, and language, provides the best hope for long-term stability in the region. The United States believes that the most effective way to reduce tensions is for formal dialogue to resume and for the Chinese government to take steps to address Tibetan grievances.

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The United States continues to urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to revise its policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions; respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people; and permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution. The U.S. government continues to call upon Chinese authorities to allow diplomats, journalists, tourists, and others to have unrestricted access to Tibetan areas. The United States urges the Government of China to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in China, including the freedom of movement and the right to leave any country, including one's own.

The United States remains concerned by Chinese government interference in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders. The U.S. government believes that respect for Tibetan Buddhists' universal human right of religious freedom dictates that the succession or identification of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama, should occur without interference, in a manner consistent with their beliefs.

The Department of State maintains close contact with a wide range of religious, cultural, and political leaders of the Tibetan people, including Tibetans in the United States, China, India, Nepal, and around the world.

Information regarding human rights conditions in Tibet, including those related to religious freedom, appears in the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report and International Religious Freedom Report.

Steps Taken by Senior U.S. Officials to Encourage Dialogue and Establish Conditions for a Sustainable Settlement

In addition to encouraging direct and meaningful dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, the United States continues to call for the establishment of conditions necessary for a sustainable settlement. During the reporting period of May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018, such activities included the following:

The Secretary of State raised concerns about an increase in Chinese government policies that restricted the religious expression and practice of Tibetan Buddhists during remarks on August 15, 2017 to mark the release of the Department's International Religious Freedom Report.

The Acting Secretary of State highlighted concerns about Chinese government efforts to eliminate the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans during remarks on April 20, 2018 to mark the release of the Department's Human Rights Report.

The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs highlighted the United States' commitment to enhancing respect for the human rights of Tibetans and improving their economic, environmental, and humanitarian conditions during remarks on February 20, 2018 honoring Losar, the Tibetan New Year. In those remarks, he also reaffirmed the United States' belief that the Tibetan people must have a voice in their own future.

The Acting Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and Department Spokesperson issued a statement on April 26, 2018 to express concern about steps taken by Chinese authorities to eliminate the religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans. Her statement called for the Chinese government to release immediately the disappeared Panchen Lama, who it reportedly abducted over two decades earlier when he was six years old, and uphold its international commitments to promote religious freedom for all.

U.S. officials also maintained close contact with religious, cultural, and political leaders of the Tibetan people. This engagement underscored the United States' commitment to seeking to protect the distinct identity of Tibetans, improving respect for their human rights, addressing their humanitarian needs, and enhancing their economic opportunities. Numerous U.S. officials met with Lobsang Sangay, the Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). These included senior representatives of the Department of State's Bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL); East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP); Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA); Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM); and South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA); the U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom; and officials from the National Security Council. Department of State officials in Washington also met with Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leaders – including the Gyalwang Karmapa, who leads one of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism – as well as the Dalai Lama's Representative to North America, CTA officials and parliamentarians, Tibetan human rights activists, and members of the Tibetan-American community. The Administrator of USAID also met with the Dalai Lama's Representative to North America. The U.S. Ambassador to India and U.S. Embassy New Delhi officers met with Lobsang Sangay, the Dalai Lama's Representative in Delhi, and other CTA representatives in Dharamsala, India. The U.S. Consul General in Chengdu, other U.S. Consulate officials, and U.S. Embassy Beijing officials maintained contact with a wide range of Tibetan civil society representatives, religious leaders and practitioners, and entrepreneurs in the TAR and other Tibetan areas of China, although travel and other restrictions made it difficult to visit and communicate with these individuals.

U.S. officials also regularly expressed concerns to the Chinese government regarding severe restrictions imposed on Tibetans' ability to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The U.S. Consul General in Chengdu met with the TAR Executive Vice Chairman and TAR Standing Committee Member, the TAR National People's Congress Standing Committee Vice Chairman, and the Nyingchi (Linzi) Party Secretary. Other officials from U.S. Embassy Beijing and the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu met with the Chairman of the TAR People's Congress and the TAR Governor. U.S. officials emphasized the importance of upholding human rights in Tibet, and expressed concern about the TAR government's failure to protect the rights of people in Tibet to worship freely and assemble peacefully in public places. U.S. Embassy Beijing issued a statement on December 9, 2017 to honor International Human Rights Day in which it expressed concern regarding the detention of human rights defenders in China, including Tibetans. Embassy officers also attended the trial of a Tibetan activist facing criminal charges for his advocacy of Tibetan-language education.

The U.S. delegation to sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) repeatedly expressed concerns over the treatment of Tibetans in China. During the HRC Item 4 General Debate on Human Rights Situations Requiring Council Attention in June 2017, September 2017,

and March 2018, the U.S. delegation raised concerns about conditions akin to martial law imposed in some Tibetan areas. During the March 2018 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the United States expressed deep concern about particularly vulnerable religious minority groups, including Tibetan Buddhists in China, and called for the international community to do more to protect them. During the March 2018 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, the United States expressed concern about the lack of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, and affirmed U.S. support for the Special Rapporteur's statement critical of the Chinese government's charges of "incitement to separatism" against an individual who had called for respect for the distinct identity of Tibetans. The U.S. delegation also urged China to uphold its international commitment to respect the human rights of all individuals, including members of ethnic and religious minorities.

The Office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues continued to coordinate U.S. efforts to promote substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives; to protect the distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic identity of Tibetans; and to improve respect for the human rights of Tibetans. The Office of the Special Coordinator also provided strategic direction to U.S. government programs funded by USAID and the Department of State. USAID programs sought to support sustainable economic development, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and enhanced educational and public health systems in Tibetan communities in China, India, and Nepal. Department of State programs sought to meet the basic humanitarian needs of Tibetan communities in Nepal and India, advance the human rights of Tibetans, provide educational opportunities for Tibetans in the United States, and increase engagement and mutual understanding between Tibetans and the American people.

Status of Discussions between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama or His Representatives

Although the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have made intermittent efforts over the past four decades to resolve concerns and differences through dialogue, they have not met in formal negotiations since 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue, without preconditions, to lead to a settlement that resolves differences.