



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Tibetan History

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Tibet was a unique country with its own government, religion, language, laws and customs.

Tibet's history begins in 127 BC, and it was subsequently ruled by different dynasties and eventually under the Dalai Lamas from the 17th century until 2011. At different times, nations like China, Britain and Mongolia sought to exert control over Tibet, but with limited success.

International scholars agree that from 1911 until China's invasion in 1949, Tibet was a fully independent state even by modern standards. Since then, China has illegally ruled Tibet with an iron fist, and today, the survival of Tibetan culture is at risk.

HISTORY OF TIBET BEFORE THE CHINESE INVASION OF 1949

Tibetan Tibet has a history dating back over 2,000 years. A good starting point in analyzing the country's status is the period referred to as Tibet's "imperial age," when the entire country was first united under one ruler. There is no serious dispute over the existence of Tibet as an independent state during this period. Even China's own historical records and the treaties Tibet and China concluded during that period refer to Tibet as a strong state with whom China was forced to deal on a footing of equality.

At what point in history, then, did Tibet cease to exist as a state to become an integral part of China? Tibet's history is not unlike that of other states. At times, Tibet extended its influence over neighboring countries and peoples and, in other periods, came itself under the influence of powerful foreign rulers – the Mongol Khans, the Gorkhas of Nepal, the Manchu emperors and the British rulers of India.

It should be noted, before examining the relevant history, that international law is a system of law created by states primarily for their own protection. As a result, international law protects the independence of states from attempts to destroy it and, therefore, the presumption is in favor of the continuation of statehood. This means that, whereas an independent state that has existed for centuries, such as Tibet, does not need to prove its continued independence when challenged, a foreign state claiming sovereign rights over it needs to prove those rights by showing at what precise moment and by what legal means they were acquired.

China's present claim to Tibet is based entirely on the influence that Mongol and Manchu emperors exercised over Tibet in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively.

As Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire expanded toward Europe in the west and China in the east in the thirteenth century, the Tibetan leaders of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism concluded an agreement with the Mongol rulers in order to avoid the otherwise inevitable conquest of Tibet. They promised political allegiance and religious blessings and teachings in exchange for patronage and protection. The religious relationship became so important that when Kublai Khan conquered China and established the Yuan dynasty, he invited the Sakya Lama to become the Imperial Preceptor and supreme pontiff of his empire.

The relationship that developed and still exists today between the Mongols and Tibetans is a reflection of the close racial, cultural and especially religious affinity between the two Central Asian peoples. To claim that Tibet became a part of China because both countries were independently subjected to varying degrees of Mongol control, as the PRC does, is absurd. The Mongol Empire was a world empire; no evidence exists to indicate that the Mongols integrated the administration of China and Tibet or appended Tibet to China in any manner. It is like claiming that France should belong to England because both came under Roman domination, or that Burma became a part of India when the British Empire extended its authority over both territories.

This relatively brief period of foreign domination over Tibet occurred 700 years ago. Tibet broke away from the Yuan emperor before China regained its independence from the Mongols with the establishment of the native Ming dynasty. Not until the eighteenth century did Tibet once again come under a degree of foreign influence.

The Ming dynasty, which ruled China from 1368 to 1644, had few ties to and no authority over Tibet. On the other hand, the Manchus, who conquered China and established the Qing dynasty in the seventeenth century, embraced Tibetan Buddhism as the Mongols had and developed close ties with the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama, who had by then become the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet, agreed to become the spiritual guide of the Manchu emperor. He accepted patronage and protection in exchange. This "priest-patron" relationship, which the Dalai Lama also maintained with numerous Mongol Khans and Tibetan nobles, was the only formal tie that existed between the Tibetans and Manchus during the Qing dynasty. It did not, in itself, affect Tibet's independence.

On the political level, some powerful Manchu emperors succeeded in exerting a degree of influence over Tibet. Thus, between 1720 and 1792 the Manchu emperors Kangxi, Yong Zhen and Qianlong sent imperial troops into Tibet four times to protect the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people from foreign invasion or internal unrest. It was these expeditions that provided them with influence in Tibet. The emperor sent representatives to the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, some of whom successfully exercised their influence, in his name, over the Tibetan government, particularly with respect to the conduct of foreign relations. At the height of Manchu power, which lasted a few decades, the situation was not unlike that which can exist between a superpower and a neighboring satellite or protectorate. The subjection of a state to foreign influence and even intervention in foreign or domestic affairs, however significant this may be politically, does not in itself entail the legal

extinction of that state. Consequently, although some Manchu emperors exerted considerable influence over Tibet, they did not thereby incorporate Tibet into their empire, much less China.

Manchu influence did not last for very long. It was entirely ineffective by the time the British briefly invaded Tibet in 1904, and ceased entirely with the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, and its replacement in China by a native republican government. Whatever ties existed between the Dalai Lama and the Qing emperor were extinguished with the dissolution of the Manchu Empire.

1911 – 1950

From 1911 to 1950, Tibet successfully avoided undue foreign influence and behaved, in every respect, as a fully independent state. The 13th Dalai Lama emphasized his country's independent status externally, in formal communications to foreign rulers, and internally, by issuing a proclamation reaffirming Tibet's independence and by strengthening the country's defenses. Tibet remained neutral during the Second World War, despite strong pressure from China and its allies, Britain and the U.S.A. The Tibetan government maintained independent international relations with all neighboring countries, most of whom had diplomatic representatives in Lhasa.

The attitude of most foreign governments with whom Tibet maintained relations implied their recognition of Tibet's independent status. The British government bound itself not to recognize Chinese suzerainty or any other rights over Tibet unless China signed the draft Simla Convention of 1914 with Britain and Tibet, which China never did. Nepal's recognition was confirmed by the Nepalese government in 1949, in documents presented to the United Nations in support of that government's application for membership.

The turning point in Tibet's history came in 1949, when the People's Liberation Army of the PRC first crossed into Tibet. After defeating the small Tibetan army, the Chinese government imposed the so-called "17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" on the Tibetan government in May 1951. Because it was signed under duress, the agreement was void under international law. The presence of 40,000 troops in Tibet, the threat of an immediate occupation of Lhasa and the prospect of the total obliteration of the Tibetan state left Tibetans little choice.

It should be noted that numerous countries made statements in the course of UN General Assembly debates following the invasion of Tibet that reflected their recognition of Tibet's independent status. Thus, for example, the delegate from the Philippines declared: "It is clear that on the eve of the invasion 1950, Tibet was not under the rule of any foreign country." The delegate from Thailand reminded the assembly that the majority of states "refute the contention that Tibet is part of China." The US joined most other UN members in condemning the Chinese "aggression" and "invasion" of Tibet.

In the course of Tibet's 2,000-year history, the country came under a degree of foreign influence only for short periods of time in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Few independent countries today can claim as impressive a record. As the ambassador for Ireland at the UN remarked during the General Assembly debates on the question of Tibet, "[f]or thousands of years, or for a couple of thousand years at any rate, [Tibet] was

as free and as fully in control of its own affairs as any nation in this Assembly, and a thousand times more free to look after its own affairs than many of the nations here.”

From a legal standpoint, Tibet has to this day not lost its statehood. It is an independent state under illegal occupation. Neither China’s military invasion nor the continuing occupation has transferred the sovereignty of Tibet to China. As pointed out earlier, the Chinese government has never claimed to have acquired sovereignty over Tibet by conquest. Indeed, China recognizes that the use or threat of force (outside the exceptional circumstances provided for in the UN Charter), the imposition of an unequal treaty or the continued illegal occupation of a country can never grant an invader legal title to territory. Its claims are based solely on the alleged subjection of Tibet to a few of China’s strongest foreign rulers in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. If other countries were to make such tenuous claims based on their imperial past, how seriously would they be taken? Are we not, in even considering the merits of China’s arguments, accepting the right of powerful modern rulers to invade foreign countries in order to recreate lost empires of their ancestors?

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TIBET’S HISTORY SINCE CHINA’S INVASION

Despite 40 years of Chinese occupation, the Tibetan people’s determination to preserve their heritage and regain their freedom is as strong as ever. The situation has led to confrontation inside Tibet and to large scale Chinese propaganda efforts internationally.

1949-51 The Chinese Invasion

China’s newly established communist government sent troops to invade Tibet in 1949-50. An agreement was imposed on the Tibetan government in May of 1951, acknowledging sovereignty over Tibet but recognizing the Tibetan government’s autonomy with respect to Tibet’s internal affairs. As the Chinese consolidated their control, they repeatedly violated the treaty and open resistance to their rule grew, leading to the National Uprising in 1959 and the flight into India of the Dalai Lama.

The international community reacted with shock at the events in Tibet. The question of Tibet was discussed on numerous occasions by the UN General Assembly between 1959 and 1965. Three resolutions were passed by the General Assembly condemning China’s violations of human rights in Tibet and calling upon China to respect those rights, including Tibet’s right to self-determination.

After 1959: Destruction

The destruction of Tibet’s culture and oppression of its people was brutal during the 20 years following the uprising. 1.2 million Tibetans, one-fifth of the country’s population, died as a result of China’s policies, according to an estimate by the Tibetan government in exile; many more languished in prisons and labor camps; and more than 6000 monasteries, temples and other cultural and historic buildings were destroyed and their contents pillaged. In 1980 Hu Yao Bang, General Secretary of the Communist Party, visited Tibet—the first senior official to do so since the invasion. Alarmed by the extent of the destruction he saw there, he called for a series of drastic

reforms and for a policy of “recuperation.” His forced resignation in 1987 was said partially to result from his views on Tibet. In 1981, Alexander Solzhenytsin described the Chinese regime in Tibet as “more brutal and inhumane than any other communist regime in the world.” Relaxation of China’s policies in Tibet came very slowly after 1979 and remains severely limited.

Attempted Tibet-China Dialogue

Following the re-establishment of contacts with Beijing, two delegations were sent by the Dalai Lama to hold high-level exploratory talks with the Chinese government and party leaders in Beijing in 1982 and 1984. The talks were unsuccessful because the Chinese were, at that time, not prepared to discuss anything of substance except the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. The Dalai Lama has always insisted that his return is not the issue; instead, the question that needs to be addressed is the future of the six million Tibetans inside Tibet. It is the Dalai Lama’s opinion that his own return will depend entirely upon resolving the question of the status and rights of Tibet and its people.

Alarming Chinese Influx

In recent years the situation in Tibet has once again deteriorated, leading in 1987 to open demonstrations against Chinese rule in Lhasa and other parts of the country. One of the principle factors leading to this deterioration has been the large influx of Chinese into Tibet, particularly into its major towns. The exact number of Chinese is difficult to assess, because the vast majority have moved without obtaining official residence permits to do so. Thus, Chinese statistics are entirely misleading, counting as they do only the small numbers of registered immigrants. In Tibet’s cities and fertile valleys, particularly in eastern Tibet, Chinese outnumber Tibetans by two and sometimes three to one. In certain rural areas, particularly in western Tibet, there are very few Chinese. Regardless of the figures, the overall impact of the influx is devastating because the Chinese not only control the political and military power in Tibet, but also the economic life and even cultural and religious life of the people.

The Chinese military as well as the civilian build up in Tibet has been a source of great concern to India, as it impacts directly on India’s security. Tibet acted for centuries as a vital buffer between China and India. It is only when Chinese troops faced Indian troops on the Indo-Tibetan border that tensions, and even war, developed between the world’s most populous powers. The more Tibet is converted into a Chinese province, populated by Chinese, the stronger China’s strategic position along the Himalayas will be. China’s growing military reach has now become a source of concern to many Asian nations as well as to India.

CHRONOLOGY OF TIBETAN-CHINESE RELATIONS, 1979 TO 2013

1979-1990

1979: Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping invites Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of the Dalai Lama, and tells him that apart from the issue of total independence all other issues can be discussed and resolved.

August 5, 1979: First fact-finding delegation of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, led by Kalon Juchen Thubten Namgyal, begins tour of Tibet.

May 1, 1980: Second fact-finding delegation from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, led by Tenzin N. Tethong, begins tour of Tibet.

July 1, 1980: Third fact-finding delegation from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, led by Mrs. Jetsun Pema, begins tour of Tibet.

March 13, 1981: The Dalai Lama states in a letter to Deng Xiaoping that the three fact-finding missions found “sad conditions” in Tibet and therefore “genuine efforts must be made to solve the problem in accordance with the existing realities in a reasonable way.”

April 24, 1982: A high level Tibetan delegation arrives in Beijing to hold exploratory talks with Chinese officials. The delegation, composed of P.T. Taklha, Juchen Thubten Namgyal and Lodi Gyari, made no substantive headway.

October 19, 1984: The three-member exploratory delegation holds a second round of talks with Chinese leaders. Again, no progress toward substantive negotiations are made.

1985: Fourth fact-finding delegation from the exile Tibetan government leaves for Tibet, led by W.D. Kundeling.

July 24, 1985: 91 Members of the U.S. Congress sign a letter, urging Chinese President Li Nianian to initiate talk between China and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

September 21, 1987: The Dalai Lama presents a Five-Point Peace Plan on solving the Tibetan problem to the U.S. Congress. The plan includes a call for commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet.

December 22, 1987: The United States Foreign Relations Authorization Act declares that the U.S. “should urge the Government of China to actively reciprocate the Dalai Lama’s efforts to establish a constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet.”

June 15, 1988: The Dalai Lama presents his Strasbourg Proposal as a framework for a negotiated solution to the Tibetan problem, at the European Parliament. He also mentioned that a negotiating team is ready to meet with the Chinese side on the basis of Deng Xiaoping’s statements.

September 21, 1988: China responds indirectly to the Strasbourg proposal with an offer to talk. In a press statement, the Chinese side says: “We welcome the Dalai Lama to have talks with the central government at any time, and talks may be held in Beijing, Hong Kong or any of our embassies or consulates abroad. If the Dalai Lama finds it inconvenient to conduct talks at these places. He may choose any place he wishes.” The offer makes the talks conditional on the Dalai Lama “drop[ping] the idea of an independent Tibet.”

September 23, 1988: Tibetan representatives convey the following response to the Sept. 21 Chinese message: “We welcome China’s positive response to His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s call for talks on the Tibetan issue. We similarly welcome their leaving the choice of the venue for the talks to us. We would like the talks to be held in Geneva, Switzerland which is the most convenient and neutral venue. We would also like the first round of talks to be held in January”.

January 1989: China backs out of the proposed talks.

April 20, 1989: the Tibetan Government-in-Exile announces that “His Holiness the Dalai Lama is prepared to send representatives to Hong Kong at any time” to meet with Chinese representative in order to resolve any procedural issue with regard to starting negotiations.

March 15, 1989: U.S. Senate Resolution 82 calls upon the Chinese government to “meet with representatives of the Dalai Lama to begin initiating constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet.”

1991-2000

October 9, 1991: In an address at Yale University, the Dalai Lama appeals to the world for support in pressuring China to allow him to return to Tibet on a short trip. He states that he is ready to go “as soon as possible.”

October 10, 1991: The Chinese Foreign Ministry imposes the following conditions before he can return to Tibet: “The most important thing is that the Dalai Lama stop his activities aimed at splitting China and undermining the unity of its nationalities, and abandon his position on Tibetan independence.”

June 22, 1992: Ding Guangen, head of the United Front Department of the CCP Central Committee, meets Gyalo Thondup and reiterates their 1979 statement that they are willing to discuss any issue with the Tibetans except total independence.

May 28, 1993: White House report to Congress on MEN extension lists “[s]eeking to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives” as favourable step China should take to ensure MEN renewal.

April 28, 1994: The Dalai Lama meets with President Clinton and Vice President Gore in the White House. The White House press release states that President Clinton met the Dalai Lama “to inquire about efforts to initiate a dialogue with the Chinese leadership” among other topics. It also says: “The United States continues to urge high level talks between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama.”

November 1995: China tries to usurp the right to choose the next incarnation of the important Tibetan religious figure, the Panchen Lama. Relations between Beijing and Dharamsala plummet.

July 1997: The Clinton Administration announces its intention to establish a new position in the Department of State to coordinate Tibetan Affairs. A central objective of the position is to promote dialogue to resolve the issue of Tibet.

October 1997: During the Sino American Summit in Washington., President Clinton presses Chinese President Jiang Zemin in to initiate talks with the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan problem emerges as one of the top issues that the American people identify with Sino-U.S. relations.

October 31, 1997: Mr. Greg Craig is appointed the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issue at the U.S. Department of State.

April 30, 1998: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright makes it clear to President Jiang Zemin that Tibet is a high priority of the U.S. government for the June Summit in Beijing. “What we urge is a dialogue with the Dalai Lama,” Albright told a news conference after her meeting.

June 27, 1998: U.S. President Bill Clinton urges Jiang Zemin to open talks with the Dalai Lama at a press conference in Beijing. Televised live throughout China Jiang Zemin admits to the existence of unofficial channels of communication and says “door to negotiation is open”

**From “Dharamsala and Beijing; Countdown to Negotiation,” in Tibetan Bulletin, Oct.-Dec. 1998*

2001-2008

January 28, 2001: The Dalai Lama tells AFP that his latest efforts to send a delegation to China to pursue a substantial dialogue with Chinese leaders had produced no response from Beijing.

The Dalai Lama’s elder brother had traveled to Beijing in late October—reopening contact after a two-year freeze—after which the Dalai Lama proposed sending a full delegation to the Chinese capital. He said the Chinese welcomed his brother to come again, but the Dalai Lama added, “If my brother goes again, some people might get the wrong impression. “This is an issue for the whole Tibetan community, so sending some people from a Tibetan organization would be more appropriate.”

September 9-24, 2002: Following a nine-year impasse, contact between Beijing and the Tibetan-government-in-exile resumes when the Dalai Lama’s Special Envoy, Lodi Gyari, leads a delegation of four to Beijing and Lhasa. The trip is intended to create an atmosphere conducive for substantive negotiations. The team includes Kelsang Gyaltzen, Envoy of the Dalai Lama and two senior assistants, Sonam N. Dagpo and Bhuchung K. Tsering.

September 30, 2002: President Bush signs into law a foreign policy bill that includes the Tibetan Policy Act. The Tibetan Policy Act expresses both programmatic and political support for the Tibetan people, including that the President and Secretary of State should initiate steps to encourage the Government of the People’s Republic of China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet; and after such an agreement is reached, the President and Secretary of State should work to ensure compliance with the agreement.

May 25-June 8, 2003: A second round of talks is held between envoys of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership during the Tibetan team’s trip to Beijing and parts of Tibet. The Tibetans characterize the nature of these trips as “confidence building measures.”

September 12-29, 2004: A third round of talks is held between envoys of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership during the Tibetan team’s trip to Beijing and parts of Tibet. The international community views these visits as positive steps forward, but few governments make legitimate efforts to bring both parties to the negotiation table.

May 23, 2004: The Chinese government issues a 30-page White Paper on Tibet aimed at dampening expectations by Tibetans for genuine autonomy. The White

Paper is seen as a negotiating tactic that underscores the resistance of hardliners to move forward in good faith.

June 30-July 1, 2005: A fourth round of meetings between the Tibetan team and the Chinese leadership is held in Bern, Switzerland. The Tibetans say that the trip is designed to “move the ongoing process to a new level of engagement aimed at bringing about substantive negotiations to achieve a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibetan issue”. Meanwhile, China continues publicly criticize the Dalai Lama and reiterates its long-standing preconditions to negotiations.

July 10, 2005: During a visit to China, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asks Chinese leaders to “reach out to the Dalai Lama”, saying that the exiled Tibetan leader is no threat to China.

October 11, 2005: In its annual report for 2005, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China said, “The future of Tibetans and their religion, language, and culture depends on fair and equitable decisions about future policies that can only be achieved through dialogue. The Dalai Lama is essential to this dialogue. To help the parties build on visits and dialogue held in 2003, 2004, and 2005, the President and the Congress should urge the Chinese government to move the current dialogue toward deeper, substantive discussions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, and encourage direct contact between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership.”

February 15-23, 2006: The Dalai Lama’s envoys met in Guilin China. In previous meetings, the envoys had requested to visit other autonomous regions of China, which is why Guangxi Autonomous region was chosen. After the meetings concluded, Lodi Gyari reported that there was “a growing understanding between the two sides, though fundamental differences persisted.” However, he made clear that the Tibetans remain committed to the dialogue process and are hopeful that progress will be possible by continuing the engagement.

A full transcript of Lodi Gyari’s briefing, “The Current State of Discussions between the Dalai Lama and the Government of the People’s Republic of China” (A John L. Thornton China Center and Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies Briefing) is available for downloading at the website of the Brookings Institution. An edited transcript of questions and answers is also available on the Brookings website.

March 2007: At a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, Mr. Gyari focused on the status of the dialogue stating that “the difference in viewpoints are numerous,” but that “each now have a clearer grasp of one another’s divergent perspectives.” He went on to say that, “We have now reached the stage where if there is the political will on both sides, we have an opportunity to finally resolve this issue.”

June 29-July 5, 2007: The Dalai Lama’s envoys were hosted by the UFWD in Shanghai and Nanjing. Following this meeting the envoys reported that “our dialogue process has reached a critical stage” and that “we...made some concrete proposals for implementation if our dialogue process is to go forward.”

May 8, 2008: The Dalai Lama’s envoys reported back on talks with officials from the United Front Work Department in Shenzhen, China, on Sunday [May 4]. Special Envoy Lodi Gyari, speaking to press in Dharamsala, India, after briefing the Dalai Lama, referred to the significance of a comment by Chinese President and Party Secretary Hu Jintao yesterday that “our attitude towards contacts and consultation with the

Dalai Lama is serious”. Lodi Gyari said: “It is welcome that the leader of such an important nation stands in front of the world and says that China is serious about the relationship at the highest level. Not only was it a direct comment about the recent meeting that took place, but it was also in the context of a historic press conference [with Japanese PM Yasuo Fukuda].” President Hu’s visit to Tokyo marks the first time in 10 years that a Chinese president has visited Japan, and is widely regarded as an effort to repair strained relations between the two nations. Lodi Gyari added that it was encouraging because many Tibetans as well as many world leaders were skeptical, for good reason, about the dialogue process.

July 2, 2008: A day long discussion with Vice Minister Zhu Weiqun and Vice Minister Sithar took place at a crucial time in the dialogue process. The recent events in Tibet clearly demonstrate the Tibetan people’s genuine and deep-rooted discontentment with People’s Republic of China’s policies. The urgent need for serious and sincere efforts to address this issue with courage and vision in the interest of stability, unity and harmony of all nationalities of the PRC is obvious. In addition even though His Holiness the Dalai Lama is seeking a solution to the issue of Tibet within the PRC, it is a fact that it has become an issue of great international concern. In this context, there was hope that the Chinese leadership would reciprocate by taking tangible steps during this round of talks. On the contrary, due to their excessive concern about legitimacy the Chinese even failed to agree to a proposal of issuing a joint statement with the aim of committing both parties to the dialogue process.

While the Chinese side finally seems to have realized that their allegations against His Holiness for instigating the recent events in Tibet and in sabotaging the Olympics Games have become untenable, they are now urging His Holiness not to support violence, terrorism, and sabotaging the Olympics. The Tibetan delegation stated in the strongest possible terms that no one needs to urge this as His Holiness and the Tibetan struggle are universally acknowledged and appreciated for consistently rejecting and opposing such acts. While the Tibetan Youth Congress does not support the Middle Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and stands for independence of Tibet, we categorically rejected the Chinese attempt to label it as a violent and terrorist organization. His Holiness has repeatedly and clearly stated publicly he is not seeking separation and independence of Tibet.

October 31, 2008: The Tibetan Envoys presented the Chinese side with a Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People when they visited China for the eighth round of talks. Special Envoy Lodi Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen, accompanied by senior aides Sonam N. Dagpo and Bhuchung K. Tsering, both members of the Task Force on Negotiations, and Kalsang Tsering from the Secretariat of the Task Force, visited China from October 30 to November 5, 2008. They returned to India on November 6, 2008.

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on July 1 and 2, 2008, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and the Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Du Qinglin, explicitly invited suggestions from His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the stability and development of Tibet. The Executive Vice Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Zhu Weiqun, further said they would like to hear Tibetan views on the degree or form of autonomy they were seeking as well as on all aspects of regional autonomy within the scope of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

November 2008: The first Special General Meeting of Tibetans was held in Dharamsala from November 17 to 22, 2008. Over 581 delegates from 19 countries participated in it.

The meeting reaffirmed the Tibetan commitment to follow the Middle Way Approach. The meeting called upon the Tibetan leadership to terminate the ongoing talks with the Chinese leadership if the Chinese Government does not reciprocate positively to the overtures of the Tibetan people.

2009-2013

March 10, 2009: In his statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, the Dalai Lama said, “The Chinese insistence that we accept Tibet as having been a part of China since ancient times is not only inaccurate, but also unreasonable. We cannot change the past no matter whether it was good or bad. Distorting history for political purposes is incorrect.”

He added, “We Tibetans are looking for a legitimate and meaningful autonomy, an arrangement that would enable Tibetans to live within the framework of the People’s Republic of China.”

August 27, 2009: Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, head of the Central Tibetan Administration, explained on the misperception about “Greater Tibet”. In a keynote address to a roundtable discussion in Delhi, he said, “In recent times (after 1979) the authorities of the PRC coined the new term, “Greater Tibet”, to refer to the total areas habited by Tibetan nationality which are at present divided into Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties.” He added, “There is no greater or smaller Tibet. All Tibetans belong to one minority nationality among the 55 minority nationalities of the PRC.”

January 26-31, 2010: Special Envoy Lodi Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen, accompanied by two members of Task Force on Negotiations, Tenzin P. Atisha and Bhuchung K. Tsering, and Jigmey Passang from the Task Force Secretariat, visited China from January 26 to 31, 2010, for the ninth round of discussions with representatives of the Chinese leadership. This was after a gap of near 14 months.

On January 26, 2010, they formally presented to the Chinese side a Note relating to the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People that had been given during the previous eighth round in November 2008. The Note contained seven points that addressed the fundamental issues raised by the Chinese leadership during the eighth round and some constructive suggestions for a way forward in the dialogue process. The Chinese Government has made different comments and expression of concerns regarding the Memorandum and the Note was intended to address these and to offer some constructive suggestions for a way forward in the dialogue process. The Note was also intended to prevent the chance of misinterpretation and misconception by the general public.

They met with Mr. Du Qinglin, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference as well as Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, on January 30. They had a day-long discussion with Executive Vice Minister Zhu Weiqun and Vice Minister Sithar on January 31, 2010.

Since then there has been no further rounds of discussions between the two sides.

February 18, 2010: President Obama met the Dalai Lama in the White House for their first meeting. In a subsequent statement, the White House said, “The President commended the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way” approach, his commitment to nonviolence and his pursuit of dialogue with the Chinese government.”

March 5, 2010: Mr. Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama, gave a talk at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC on “The Way Forward on Tibet: The Status of Discussions Between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Government of the People’s Republic of China.”

He outlined the thinking behind the presentation of the Memorandum and the Note by the Tibetan side to the Chinese leadership. He mentioned that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has offered, and remains prepared, to formally issue a statement that would serve to allay the Chinese Government’s doubts and concerns as to his position and intentions on matters contained in the Tibetan Memorandum and the Note.

March 10, 2011: In his statement on the 52nd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, the Dalai Lama announced his intention to devolve his political authority to an elected Tibetan leadership saying, “As early as the 1960s, I have repeatedly stressed that Tibetans need a leader, elected freely by the Tibetan people, to whom I can devolve power. Now, we have clearly reached the time to put this into effect. During the forthcoming eleventh session of the fourteenth Tibetan Parliament in Exile, which begins on 14th March, I will formally propose that the necessary amendments be made to the Charter for Tibetans in Exile, reflecting my decision to devolve my formal authority to the elected leader.

“Since I made my intention clear I have received repeated and earnest requests both from within Tibet and outside, to continue to provide political leadership. My desire to devolve authority has nothing to do with a wish to shirk responsibility. It is to benefit Tibetans in the long run.

It is not because I feel disheartened. Tibetans have placed such faith and trust in me that as one among them I am committed to playing my part in the just cause of Tibet. I trust that gradually people will come to understand my intention, will support my decision and accordingly let it take effect.”

On March 14, 2011, in a message to the Fourteenth Assembly of the Tibetan People’s Deputies (Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile), the Dalai Lama proposed, “All the necessary amendments to the Charter and other related regulations should be made during this session so that I am completely relieved of formal authority.”

He also added, “As a result, some of my political promulgations such as the Draft Constitution for a Future Tibet (1963) and Guidelines for Future Tibet’s Polity (1992) will become ineffective. The title of the present institution of the Ganden Phodrang headed by the Dalai Lama should also be changed accordingly.”

May 28, 2011: The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile made amendment to the Charter of Tibetans in Exile reflecting the devolution of the Dalai Lama’s political authority to the elected Tibetan leadership. The Dalai Lama assented to the amendment on May 29, 2011 and made it effective.

July 16, 2011: President Obama met the Dalai Lama in the White House. In a statement, the White House said, “The President commended the Dalai Lama’s

commitment to nonviolence and dialogue with China and his pursuit of the “Middle Way” approach.” The statement also said that President Obama “stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans.”

August 8, 2011: Dr. Lobsang Sangay took over the reins of the Central Tibetan Administration as the newly elected Kalon Tripa at a ceremony in Dharamsala.

The Dalai Lama, in his remarks, said it was an important day in the more than 2000-year long history of Tibet. He explained, “.the Tibetan people are the masters of Tibet, and not the religious leaders and kings and their heirs. Therefore, I always say that it is wrong for the religious leaders to hold political authority. I feel proud to be able to implement what I firmly believe and tell others to put into practice my ideology that the world and countries belong to the general populace and the period of keeping control through power is outdated. Moreover, I will get more opportunity to speak strongly since I have implemented what I confidently and consistently emphasized – the separation of religion and politics.”

Dr. Sangay, in his remarks, said that the changes “should send a clear message to the hardliners in the Chinese government that Tibetan leadership is far from fizzling out — we are a democracy that will only grow stronger in years ahead” He reiterated that the Tibetan struggle is not against the Chinese people but that it “is against those who would deny freedom, justice, dignity, and the very identity of Tibetan people. Chinese authorities and our Chinese friends alike must realize that grievances of Tibetan people are many and genuine.”

September 24, 2011: The Dalai Lama issued a statement about how he envisaged the process of finding his reincarnation to work. He said, “When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas fo the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not.” He further said if the need for the institution is decided and “there is the need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama’s Gaden Phodrang Trust.” The statement added, “Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People’s Republic of China.”

October 10, 2011: A one-day meeting of the Tibetan Task Force on Negotiations was held in Dharamsala on October 10, 2011. This is the first meeting of the Task Force under Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

November 3, 2011: The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States Congress in Washington, DC heard testimony from Dr. Lobsang Sangay and from Kirti Rinpoche, the spiritual head of Kirti Monastery about the critical situation in Tibet and how the US could respond.

Dr. Sangay gave an overview of recent developments affecting the Tibet issue, such as asking for the US government’s continuing support and affirmation for the democratic processes now becoming firmly established in the Tibetan exile community; he re-iterated the Tibetan people’s support for the “Middle Way” proposal by the Dalai Lama for a non-violent resolution to the Tibet issue; and then went on to broadly describe the current human rights situation in Tibet, adding a request for

support from the US and the international community to call on China to abide by its international human rights obligation with regard to Tibet, to allow journalists and UN officials access to Kirti Monastery, and to urge continuation of the dialog process between representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government.

March 10, 2012: In his statement on the 53rd Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising of March 10, 1959, Dr. Lobsang Sangay referred to the ongoing crisis in Tibet and said, “To address the tragedy in Tibet, I call on Beijing to accept our Middle Way Policy, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the framework of the Chinese constitution and as proposed in the Memorandum and Note of 2008 and 2010 respectively.”

June 3, 2012: Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Head of the Central Tibetan Administration, accepted the resignations of Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama Lodi G. Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen. The resignations became effective June 1, 2012.

At the Task Force meeting on May 30-31, 2012 in Dharamsala, the envoys expressed their utter frustration over the lack of positive response from the Chinese side and submitted their resignations to the Kalon Tripa. They said, “Given the deteriorating situation inside Tibet since 2008 leading to the increasing cases of self-immolations by Tibetans, we are compelled to submit our resignations. Furthermore, the United Front did not respond positively to the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People presented in 2008 and its Note in 2010. One of the key Chinese interlocutors in the dialogue process even advocated abrogation of minority status as stipulated in the Chinese constitution thereby seeming to remove the basis of autonomy. At this particular time, it is difficult to have substantive dialogue.”

The CTA’s statement announcing the resignation of the envoys also said, “The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle-Way Approach, and strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue. The Tibetan leadership considers substance to be primary and process as secondary, and is ready to engage in meaningful dialogue anywhere and at anytime.”

September 2012: The second Special General Meeting of Tibetans was held in Dharamsala from September 25 to 28, 2012. Over 432 delegates from 26 countries participated in it.

The meeting made 31 recommendations to deal with the critical situation in Tibet and find a lasting solution to the Tibetan issue. It resolved to pursue the Middle Way Approach to find a meaningful solution through dialogue with the Chinese Government.

November 2, 2012: The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, in a statement, “urged the Chinese authorities to promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas.”

The statement said, “Social stability in Tibet will never be achieved through heavy security measures and suppression of human rights. Deep underlying issues need to be addressed...”

December 15, 2012: EU's High Representative Catherine Ashton issued a declaration concerning the Tibetan self-immolations and supported the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay of November 2, 2012. The EU statement said, "Finally, the EU encourages all concerned parties to resume a meaningful dialogue."

January 2013: A two-day meeting of the Task Force on Negotiations was held in Dharamsala from December 31, 2012 to January 1, 2013, chaired by Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

The meeting reviewed the deepening political crisis in Tibet, specifically the tragic spate of self-immolations, and discussed the urgent need for peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet. The meeting also discussed the changes in the Chinese leadership and their implications on the Tibetan issue.

Substantive assessments were made on the genesis of the Tibetan dialogue process, its future prospects and challenges, based on the situation in Tibet, China and in the international community. Various constructive opinions were expressed to continue the dialogue. The procedure for appointment of envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was also discussed.

The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle-Way Approach, and strongly believes that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue. "Substance being primary and process secondary, we are ready to engage in meaningful dialogue anywhere and at anytime", said Dr. Lobsang Sangay.

March 10, 2013: The Tibetan Parliament in Exile, in a statement on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, March 10, 2013, asked China to "Accept that the Sino-Tibetan dispute deserves to be, needs to be, and can be solved and begin at once peaceful negotiations on the basis of the mutually beneficial middle way approach."

Dr. Lobsang Sangay, in his statement on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, March 10, 2013, said, "The Kashag is fully committed to the Middle Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans, to solve the issue of Tibet. His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has shown this to be the most viable and enduring approach." He added, "From our side, we consider substance primary and process secondary, and are ready to engage in meaningful dialogue anywhere, at any time."

COLONIALISM AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN TIBET TODAY

The establishment of colonial political and economic structures followed the military invasion and occupation of Tibet. Tibetans are considered "backward" and of "low quality" and have been ruled as if they were children. Racism towards Tibetans is rampant, contributing to the de facto segregation of the races.

Many of the central subsidies and investments in Tibet go to either to the extractive industries (and the infrastructure and population connected to them) or to the Chinese administrators and settlers (and the infrastructure supporting them). For the most part, Chinese settlers have a much higher standard of living than do Tibetans.

An official study bluntly stated that Chinese settlers “cannot be expected to live on the local fare. They need good housing, hospitals, cinemas and schools for their children.” An official in one of Kanze’s largest work units said that they only hire and take care of Chinese settlers.

The TAR is the poorest part of China, with annual per capita income amounting to less than the equivalent of 100 dollars per year. Economic conditions in rural areas are extremely poor and have often changed little since the first half of the century. In many areas there is still no electricity or running water, and often no school or clinic. Clinics, schools, electricity and other social services are available in Chinese population centers in Tibet but are often far enough away from Tibetan communities to make them marginally relevant to the lives of most Tibetans. Tibetans who live near Chinese settlements are casual beneficiaries of government programs that would not exist in their present state but for the Chinese population. According to official Chinese statistics, 54% of school age Tibetan children attend school, 44% of the population is literate or semi-literate and the average life span is 65 years. Chinese statistics range from being notoriously unreliable to somewhat reliable. These figures are unconfirmed, and the life span average is particularly suspect.

History of Tibet Before the Chinese Invasion of 1949

Tibet has a history dating back over 2,000 years. A good starting point in analyzing the country’s status is the period referred to as Tibet’s “imperial age,” when the entire country was first united under one ruler. There is no serious dispute over the existence of Tibet as an independent state during this period. Even China’s own historical records and the treaties Tibet and China concluded during that period refer to Tibet as a strong state with whom China was forced to deal on a footing of equality.

At what point in history, then, did Tibet cease to exist as a state to become an integral part of China? Tibet’s history is not unlike that of other states. At times, Tibet extended its influence over neighboring countries and peoples and, in other periods, came itself under the influence of powerful foreign rulers – the Mongol Khans, the Gorkhas of Nepal, the Manchu emperors and the British rulers of India.

It should be noted, before examining the relevant history, that international law is a system of law created by states primarily for their own protection. As a result, international law protects the independence of states from attempts to destroy it and, therefore, the presumption is in favor of the continuation of statehood. This means that, whereas an independent state that has existed for centuries, such as Tibet, does not need to prove its continued independence when challenged, a foreign state claiming sovereign rights over it needs to prove those rights by showing at what precise moment and by what legal means they were acquired.

China’s present claim to Tibet is based entirely on the influence that Mongol and Manchuk emperors exercised over Tibet in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively.

As Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire expanded toward Europe in the west and China in the east in the thirteenth century, the Tibetan leaders of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism concluded an agreement with the Mongol rulers in order to avoid the otherwise inevitable conquest of Tibet. They promised political allegiance and religious blessings and teachings in exchange for patronage and protection. The religious relationship became so important that when Kublai Khan conquered China

and established the Yuan dynasty, he invited the Sakya Lama to become the Imperial Preceptor and supreme pontiff of his empire.

The relationship that developed and still exists today between the Mongols and Tibetans is a reflection of the close racial, cultural and especially religious affinity between the two Central Asian peoples. To claim that Tibet became a part of China because both countries were independently subjected to varying degrees of Mongol control, as the PRC does, is absurd. The Mongol Empire was a world empire; no evidence exists to indicate that the Mongols integrated the administration of China and Tibet or appended Tibet to China in any manner. It is like claiming that France should belong to England because both came under Roman domination, or that Burma became a part of India when the British Empire extended its authority over both territories.

This relatively brief period of foreign domination over Tibet occurred 700 years ago. Tibet broke away from the Yuan emperor before China regained its independence from the Mongols with the establishment of the native Ming dynasty. Not until the eighteenth century did Tibet once again come under a degree of foreign influence.

The Ming dynasty, which ruled China from 1368 to 1644, had few ties to and no authority over Tibet. On the other hand, the Manchus, who conquered China and established the Qing dynasty in the seventeenth century, embraced Tibetan Buddhism as the Mongols had and developed close ties with the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama, who had by then become the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet, agreed to become the spiritual guide of the Manchu emperor. He accepted patronage and protection in exchange. This “priest-patron” relationship, which the Dalai Lama also maintained with numerous Mongol Khans and Tibetan nobles, was the only formal tie that existed between the Tibetans and Manchus during the Qing dynasty. It did not, in itself, affect Tibet’s independence.

On the political level, some powerful Manchu emperors succeeded in exerting a degree of influence over Tibet. Thus, between 1720 and 1792 the Manchu emperors Kangxi, Yong Zhen and Qianlong sent imperial troops into Tibet four times to protect the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people from foreign invasion or internal unrest. It was these expeditions that provided them with influence in Tibet. The emperor sent representatives to the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, some of whom successfully exercised their influence, in his name, over the Tibetan government, particularly with respect to the conduct of foreign relations. At the height of Manchu power, which lasted a few decades, the situation was not unlike that which can exist between a superpower and a neighboring satellite or protectorate. The subjection of a state to foreign influence and even intervention in foreign or domestic affairs, however significant this may be politically, does not in itself entail the legal extinction of that state. Consequently, although some Manchu emperors exerted considerable influence over Tibet, they did not thereby incorporate Tibet into their empire, much less China.

Manchu influence did not last for very long. It was entirely ineffective by the time the British briefly invaded Tibet in 1904, and ceased entirely with the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, and its replacement in China by a native republican government. Whatever ties existed between the Dalai Lama and the Qing emperor were extinguished with the dissolution of the Manchu Empire.

1911 – 1950

From 1911 to 1950, Tibet successfully avoided undue foreign influence and behaved, in every respect, as a fully independent state. The 13th Dalai Lama emphasized his country's independent status externally, in formal communications to foreign rulers, and internally, by issuing a proclamation reaffirming Tibet's independence and by strengthening the country's defenses. Tibet remained neutral during the Second World War, despite strong pressure from China and its allies, Britain and the U.S.A. The Tibetan government maintained independent international relations with all neighboring countries, most of whom had diplomatic representatives in Lhasa.

The attitude of most foreign governments with whom Tibet maintained relations implied their recognition of Tibet's independent status. The British government bound itself not to recognize Chinese suzerainty or any other rights over Tibet unless China signed the draft Simla Convention of 1914 with Britain and Tibet, which China never did. Nepal's recognition was confirmed by the Nepalese government in 1949, in documents presented to the United Nations in support of that government's application for membership.

The turning point in Tibet's history came in 1949, when the People's Liberation Army of the PRC first crossed into Tibet. After defeating the small Tibetan army, the Chinese government imposed the so-called "17-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" on the Tibetan government in May 1951. Because it was signed under duress, the agreement was void under international law. The presence of 40,000 troops in Tibet, the threat of an immediate occupation of Lhasa and the prospect of the total obliteration of the Tibetan state left Tibetans little choice.

It should be noted that numerous countries made statements in the course of UN General Assembly debates following the invasion of Tibet that reflected their recognition of Tibet's independent status. Thus, for example, the delegate from the Philippines declared: "It is clear that on the eve of the invasion 1950, Tibet was not under the rule of any foreign country." The delegate from Thailand reminded the assembly that the majority of states "refute the contention that Tibet is part of China." The US joined most other UN members in condemning the Chinese "aggression" and "invasion" of Tibet.

In the course of Tibet's 2,000-year history, the country came under a degree of foreign influence only for short periods of time in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Few independent countries today can claim as impressive a record. As the ambassador for Ireland at the UN remarked during the General Assembly debates on the question of Tibet, "[f]or thousands of years, or for a couple of thousand years at any rate, [Tibet] was as free and as fully in control of its own affairs as any nation in this Assembly, and a thousand times more free to look after its own affairs than many of the nations here."

From a legal standpoint, Tibet has to this day not lost its statehood. It is an independent state under illegal occupation. Neither China's military invasion nor the continuing occupation has transferred the sovereignty of Tibet to China. As pointed out earlier, the Chinese government has never claimed to have acquired sovereignty over Tibet by conquest. Indeed, China recognizes that the use or threat of force (outside the exceptional circumstances provided for in the UN Charter), the imposition of an unequal treaty or the continued illegal occupation of a country can never grant an invader legal title to territory. Its claims are based solely on the alleged subjection

of Tibet to a few of China's strongest foreign rulers in the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. If other countries were to make such tenuous claims based on their imperial past, how seriously would they be taken? Are we not, in even considering the merits of China's arguments, accepting the right of powerful modern rulers to invade foreign countries in order to recreate lost empires of their ancestors?

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TIBET'S LEGAL STATUS

Recent events in Tibet have intensified the dispute over its legal status. The People's Republic of China (PRC) claims that Tibet is an integral part of China. The Tibetan government-in-exile maintains that Tibet is an independent state under unlawful occupation.

The question is highly relevant for at least two reasons. First, if Tibet is under unlawful Chinese occupation, Beijing's large-scale transfer of Chinese settlers into Tibet is a serious violation of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits the transfer of civilian population into occupied territory. Second, if Tibet is under unlawful Chinese occupation, China's illegal presence in the country is a legitimate object of international concern. If, on the other hand, Tibet is an integral part of China, then these questions fall, a China claims, within its own domestic jurisdiction. The issue of human rights, including the right of self-determination and the right of the Tibetan people to maintain their own identity and autonomy are, of course, legitimate objects of international concern regardless of Tibet's legal status.

The PRC makes no claim to sovereign rights over Tibet as a result of its military subjugation and occupation of Tibet following the country's invasion in 1949-1950. Thus, China does not allege that it has acquired sovereignty by means of conquest, annexation or prescription in this period. Instead, it bases its claim to Tibet solely on their theory that Tibet has been an integral part of China for centuries.

The question of Tibet's status is essentially a legal question, albeit one of immediate political relevance. The international status of a country must be determined by objective legal criteria rather than subjective political ones. Thus, whether a particular entity is a state in international law depends on whether it possesses the necessary criteria for statehood (territory, population, independent government, ability to conduct international relations), not whether governments of other states recognize its independent status. Recognition can provide evidence that foreign governments are willing to treat an entity as an independent state, but cannot create or extinguish a state.

In many cases, such as the present one, it is necessary to examine a country's history in order to determine its status. Such a historical study should logically be based primarily on the country's own historical sources, rather than on interpretations contained in official sources of a foreign state, especially one claiming rights over the country in question. This may seem self-evident to most. When studying the history of France we examine French rather than German or Russian source materials. I am making the point, however, precisely because China's claim to sovereignty over Tibet is based almost exclusively on self-serving Chinese official histories. Chinese sources

portrayed most countries with whom the emperor of China had relations, not only Tibet, as vassals of the emperor. When studying Tibet's history, Tibetan sources should be given primary importance; foreign sources, including Chinese ones, should only be given secondary weight.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN TIBET

Tibet is strictly governed by the Chinese Communist Party, with the active support of the military. The Party rules through branch offices in each province, autonomous region and autonomous prefecture. Subordinate to the Party is the government, which carries out policies designed by the Party. China has established the full panoply of Party and government offices to administer Tibet as exists in China. In Lhasa alone, there are over 60 departments and committees almost all of which are directly connected to their national offices in Beijing. Thus, Tibet is "autonomous" in word only; in fact, the Tibet Autonomous Region has less autonomy than Chinese provinces. The top T.A.R. post, the Party Secretary, has never been held by a Tibetan. China maintains an occupation army in Tibet of at least a quarter million strong. Military and police are often overwhelmingly present in Lhasa and elsewhere, though as of February 1992, security in Lhasa is dominated by undercover and plainclothes police. The military plays a greater role in the administration of Tibet than any Chinese province, and no Tibetan serves in the leadership of the military district governing Tibet.

Even though the Party still controls Tibet, its control is beginning to slip. There is a pervasive disillusionment with, and contempt for, the Communist Party and the government in Tibet which can even be found among Party members and government functionaries. Inefficiency and corruption have consumed some government operations to the extent that they barely function and are an enormous waste of government funds. During ICT's one-month tour of eastern Tibet, it became apparent that the Party's goals have been drastically reduced from its once grandiose plans of social, human and economic transformation to simply holding onto power, taking care of Chinese settlers and extracting Tibet's natural resources.

The Party now seems to have little left to offer Tibetans other than the repression which keeps Tibetans from mass rebellion. Nobody in Tibet is talking about how the Party can reform itself, for it has become something that most Tibetans must just tolerate and avoid. Some Tibetans use the Party for their own personal and professional advancement and try to improve conditions for Tibetans from within the system. The late Panchen Lama succeeded in wresting enough power from the system to improve conditions in a number of areas. The Panchen Lama was the only Tibetan who the Chinese feared.

