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Major Speech by Congressman Wolf Mentions 'US policy on Tibet'

Wednesday, 28 July 2010

Dharamshala: US CONGRESSMAN Frank Wolf, co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and a long-time advocate of human rights around the world, delivered a major speech in the House of Representatives on Friday (23 July) urging the Obama Administration to "find its voice" on human rights.

In his statement, Mr Wolf informed the House about the current inadequate staffing levels at the office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetans. Approved as a part of its Tibet policy act of 2002, Congress had approved that the office 'consist three professional full-time staff members and additional support staff, as needed, in addition to the special coordinator, he said.

Mr Wolf also brought to the notice of the House about the delay in submission of the "congressionally mandated Report on Tibet Negotiations" to Congress as on 31 March every year.

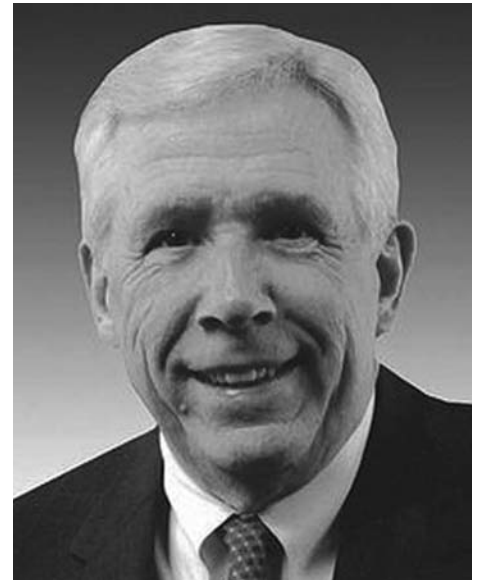
He called on the Obama administration

to place more priority on the issue of Tibet.

Mr Wolf presented a comprehensive assessment of the US government's role in promoting and protecting the basic human rights and religious freedom in countries such as Sudan, China, Vietnam, North Korea, Iraq, Egypt and Morocco. He specifically highlighted the struggles of different faith communities, including Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Ahmadi Muslims, Coptic Christians and Baha'is.

He called on Congress to "stand in the gap" when the administration fails to advocate for those around the world whose voices have been silenced.

Wolf acknowledged that there are multiple dimensions to America's bilateral relations with countries around the globe, but said if the United States of America cannot be relied upon to speak out on behalf of the vulnerable and oppressed, then it is indeed a dark day for millions around the world yearning to breathe the



Frank Rudolph Wolf, Member of the US House of Representatives/Wikipedia photo

sweet air of freedom.

"America must stand up for the ideals upon which our own experiment in self-governance was founded. America must strike out against injustice, whatever form it takes. America must believe that even the mightiest walls of oppression can tumble and work toward that end," he added. ■

A Tibetan appointed to the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

Wednesday, 28 July 2010

New York: The Washington State Governor has appointed a Tibetan American and resident of Seattle, Tashi Namgyal Khamshitsang, to the State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

The State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs looks after the well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the Washington State by ensuring their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, and other areas. The Commission also serves as an Asian Advisory Council to the Governor. The Commission was instituted by the 43rd State legislation



passed on February 26, 1974.

In her appointment letter, Governor Christine O Gregoire says, "We need people like you, who are willing to give of their time and abilities to our state". She further adds that "As a member of my team I ask you to take personal responsibility and hold our boards and commissions and their management accountable for results".

Tashi Namgyal is appointed for a three-year term, which begins on 1 July 2010 and ends on 30 June 2013.

He is a former President of the Tibetan Association of Washington State. Tashi Namgyal, before migrating to the United States in 1999, served the Tibetan

Administration-in-Exile for 26 years in various capacities including the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Nepal. ■

Report filed by Tsewang Phuntso, Office of Tibet, New York

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Tibet News

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UN 'Concerned' Over Nepal's Forcible Repatriation of Tibetan Refugees



Thursday, 29 July 2010

Dharamshala: THE UNITED NATIONS has expressed deep concern over the Nepalese government's move to forcibly deporting three Tibetan refugees to Chinese border police in early June this year

"It is a very serious issue and we are extremely concerned," Nini Gurung, spokeswoman for the UN refugee agency in Kathmandu, was quoted as saying by AFP.

The UN refugee agency said it had written to the Nepalese government about the incident in early June.

Two of the refugees, a Buddhist monk and a young woman, are serving jail sentence in Tibet after they were detained in western Nepal and handed over to Chinese security forces in Tibet, according to International

Campaign for Tibet (ICT).

Nepal is duty-bound under the "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) to ensure the safe transit of Tibetan refugees through its territory," said ICT president Mary Beth Markey.

"We urge the Nepal government and the UNHCR to work together to investigate this incident, including China's extra-territorial role, and to adopt remedies that prevent future occurrences of refoulement (forced return) from Nepal."

ICT published in June this year a detail report on the deteriorating situation for Tibetans – both those in transit and those residing in Nepal - due to increased Chinese pressure on the host government. (click here to read

ICT's Dangerous Crossing: Conditions impacting the flight of Tibetan refugees 2009 Update)

The report made a set of recommendations to the UNHCR to urge the Nepal government to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement of Tibetan refugees by taking the adequate policy and administrative steps, which include written policy instruction to all the border immigration and police, and training of Nepalese police, security forces and immigration authorities in proper procedures (as per the Gentlemen's Agreement) and international human rights standards.

Tibetans who arrived in Nepal after the 1989 amnesty date and without proper documents face routine threat of detention and deportation, and the government uses heavy handed approach in dealing with peaceful demonstrations by Tibetans against China's repressive rule in Tibet, the report said.

The UN agency was called on to press the Nepal government on finding durable solutions for the long-staying Tibetan refugee population in Nepal, including issuance of Registration Certificates.

The report recommends the UNHCR to make every effort, in concert with supportive governments such as the US and EU, to preserve the Tibetan Refugee Reception Center in Kathmandu and its integrity as a secure place of temporary refuge and respite for Tibetans fleeing Tibet through Nepal and onward to India. ■

Written Interview with Kalon Tripa on "Greater Tibet"

By BI Yantao Boxun News

Thursday, 25 February 2010.

Prof. Bi Yantao: GREETINGS! I am very happy for having this opportunity to ask on issues which are closely followed by the people inside China.

When looking at the Tibet issue, I pay special attention to the term "Greater Tibet". I have repeatedly read the text of your statement on 'Greater Tibet' (including the English version). You said, "Tibet is Tibet. There is no greater or smaller Tibet". However, the fact of the matter is, during the dialogue process between the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Beijing, the issue of one autonomous administration for all the Tibetan people has been raised. Obviously, it seeks to unify Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai Provinces into the present day Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Given the size of administration, it is indeed a 'Greater Tibet'. Therefore, on account of that, the 'Greater Tibet' which Beijing asserts is not wrong because the reference was made from the present status of Tibet. You have, on one hand opposed the usage of word 'Greater' as in 'Greater Tibet', while on the other hand, maintained that 'size should not matter whether big or small'. Are not these two statements contradictory?

Kalon Tripa Prof. S. Rinpoche: Before answering your questions, we would like to stress two important points which are the root cause of difference in perceptions between Dharamsala and Beijing. The first is lack of trust and confidence in the mindset of Beijing's leadership as illustrated by the popular Tibetan saying, "Tibetans are ruined by hope, and Chinese are ruined by suspicion." Beijing views everything with suspicion and always fear that to consider anything which is proposed by Dharamsala will bring consequences of disaster or loss of face. Therefore, they always project every petty issue as a potential threat of separation. With such mindset, Dharamsala could not convince Beijing, no matter how sincerely the Tibetan side puts its faith in the People's Republic of China's (PRC) leadership, or, no matter how rational and reasonable the request is.

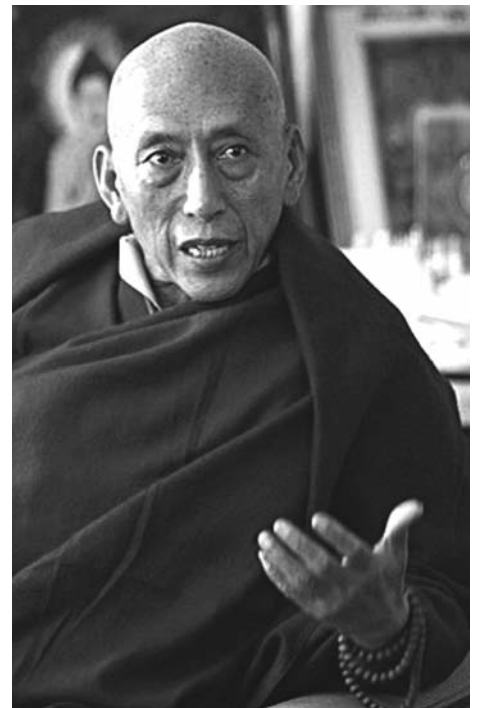
The second is lack of political will in the PRC's leadership to find a solution to the Tibet problem. The leadership always suffers from immeasurable fear that if

they do anything with Tibet issue, it might bring more problems or may lead to the loss of Tibet. It is for this reason that we are not able to communicate with each other from a right perspective and in a positive manner.

National integrity cannot be maintained without mutual trust. We are afraid that if the present PRC leadership's approach to minorities in general and Tibetans in particular remain unchanged, it might lead to separation or annihilation of the minority nationalities. Either of these ends will not be in the interest of anyone. If both sides are able to view each other with trust and self-confidence, this problem can be resolved quickly and amicably. Both sides will be in a win-win situation. Another, small but important point is the nature of language. In Chinese and Tibetan languages, there is no difference in expression of "Great" and "Greater". In the English language there are two different words. Thus "Great Tibet" may be understood as honorific word but when we use the word "Greater Tibet" it may create more confusion. This expression might encompass the national boundaries and may include the cultural and language domain. Therefore, in this reference we better use "Great Tibet" in English instead of "Greater Tibet".

Now coming to your question, what I mean by saying - Tibet is Tibet - is that there is no smaller or bigger Tibet in the context of the constitutional provisions of national regional autonomy for the minority. The Tibetans are one minority nationality among the 55 minority nationalities of the PRC. One minority nationality must not be divided into "small, great or greater". Of course, if all these autonomous areas are administered by one administration, then the area of administration of the autonomous region will definitely be enlarged compared to the present areas which are administered by several autonomous administrations. But it does not mean that the Tibet or Tibetans are becoming bigger or greater. So therefore, there is no contradiction in my statement.

Our basic concern is how the PRC presents this issue to the world. As a matter of fact, Tibetans are asking for one administration for all the Tibetan autonomous areas. But the tone of language in saying that Tibetans are demanding the "Great Tibet or Greater



Tibet" sounds as if we are seeking separation or re-demarkation of Tibetan areas. This sentence appears to us as being formulated intentionally to mislead people.

Prof. Bi: The Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has raised the need of 'One administration' for the whole of Tibetan areas. However, others find this very intricate and complicating. Perhaps, the Dalai Lama's side did not feel it necessary to condense the expression "One administration" by some other word which is more comprehensible and rich. Beijing's assertion of 'Greater Tibet' is similar to giving a name to the concept of 'One administration'. This is true according to economics of language. If in case the Tibetan government in exile (TGiE) has used a definite term from the very beginning, then there is no reason for the PRC to pronounce it differently. Therefore, does the TGiE feel the need and importance to have a specific term? How does it plan to respond to this in future?

Kalon Tripa: The constitution provides that "Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy". In accordance with this provision Tibetans

live in a concentrated community in a particular geographical area which is not scattered over different parts of the PRC, nor are these areas separated or divided by non-Tibetan areas.

Therefore, one organ of self-government is sufficient for all the Tibetans and that is the essence of the constitution too. We do not find any other word more suitable than "one administration or self-government" to define our aspiration. We also don't believe that if we substitute this word by any other expression it will be acceptable to the PRC authority. If anyone can suggest more appropriate expression, we would welcome.

The basic objective for seeking one administration is not for political or economic interests. It is only for preservation and promotion of the unique Tibetan language, culture, spiritual heritage and traditions. One administration can easily execute uniform policy of education and culture, etc.

Prof. Bi: You have said, "Moreover, we are not seeking additional areas to be included in the Tibetan autonomous areas. It is only to make alterations in the administration. Instead of having several autonomous administrations, one autonomous administration should be established. It neither affects China's borders with other countries nor its domestic boundaries between autonomous areas and non-autonomous areas, nor..." In my view, this explanation, has created more confusion. Whether TGIE's request to unify all Tibetan areas under one administration implies redrawing of the boundaries of the provinces and autonomous region? If not, then how do you propose to implement one administration to all Tibetan areas?

Kalon Tripa: At present, autonomous areas in various provinces are already having well defined boundaries. There is no need to change these boundaries. What is going to be changed is the administration. Those with several self-governments will be substituted by one self-government and that self-government will be directly controlled by the central government instead of by several provincial governments.

One may argue that the administrative areas of those provinces will become smaller if autonomous areas within their province are governed by one self-government. Yes, this may be true but if the provisions of national regional

autonomy are implemented in all sincerity then the provinces do not have much role to play in the autonomous areas. Therefore, the incorporation of autonomous areas outside the provinces or remaining within the provinces will not make much difference to the concerned provinces.

Prof. Bi: It is true that there is precedence of boundary re-adjustments in the PRC. If the 'Greater Tibet', which the Dalai Lama's side seeks, is to be constituted, it is going to be the biggest re-drawing of the boundaries between provinces and autonomous regions since the inception of the PRC. This will, therefore, certainly mean redistribution of benefits, and it invariably relates to the issue which does not go well with the sentiment of the people. However, everyone knows that to maintain status quo is less expensive than to change it. Therefore, if the boundaries of the provinces and autonomous region are to be re-adjusted, there must be strong and compelling reasons to do so. I personally think that the central government would not take the political risks of such magnitude and the TGIE alone is not powerful enough to advance the re-drawing of the boundaries. How does the Dalai Lama's side think and speculate on this matter?

Kalon Tripa: As mentioned in response to question no 3, we do not perceive that the change of administration does not necessitate the redrawing of boundaries. As a matter of fact, boundaries between provinces or autonomous regions may not have much importance as all of them will remain as an integral part of the country. Nevertheless, changing boundaries between autonomous areas to non-autonomous areas may have some importance for the provinces and autonomous regions but we have never asked for inclusion of any non-autonomous areas into the Tibetan autonomous region.

Our recommendation is to integrate into one administration those Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties which are already defined and recognised as autonomous areas.

Prof. Bi: You mentioned Beijing's approach of "dividing concentrated areas of minority nationals" is unconstitutional. However, the constitution explicitly states that "Regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of

self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy". It does not specifically mention about establishing one autonomous organ for each minority nationality. Article 2 of the National Regional Autonomy Law further adopts that national autonomous areas shall be classified into autonomous regions, prefectures and counties. Therefore, the present approach of the central government is in accordance with both the constitution and autonomy law. I think your understanding of the constitution and autonomy law is different from anyone else. How do you intend to settle this difference?

Kalon Tripa: The basic concept of national regional autonomy aims to preserve and promote the unique identities of the minority nationalities. To achieve this objective there is need to maintain administrative unity within same nationality, unless this unity is impossible due to geographical conditions. Apart from that, article 4 of the constitution says, "Any act which undermines the unity of the nationality or instigates division is prohibited".

It is stated in the autonomy law that national autonomous areas shall be classified into autonomous regions, prefectures and counties. But it should be determined by the size and population of a particular minority nationality, in accordance with their areas of habitation, in establishing an autonomous region just as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. There is no reason or need to deliberately divide a particular nationality by establishing many autonomous prefectures and counties.

Dividing the Tibetan nationality despite the fact that they have lived together for centuries in one contiguous area is considered as a violation of the spirit of the constitution. This is the imperialist policy of "divide and rule". If a minority nationality cannot integrate within itself, then it will become more difficult to integrate with the PRC. Emotional integrity is the sustainable cause for national integration.

Prof. Bi: If one autonomous administration is being implemented for Tibet, it implies that other minority nationalities can also claim the same. This means total upheaval of China's minority nationality policy and a major shift in central government's approach towards regional governments. At present, Han nationals whether residing in provinces,

autonomous regions or municipalities directly under the central government, are all governed directly by their respective governments like the Tibetans. Both Han and Tibetan nationals are equal in this regard. If Tibetans were administered separately under one administration and the Hans under several administrations, as usual, doesn't it mean inequality among nationalities? How do you look at this issue?

Kalon Tripa: Perfect equality among nationalities is the fundamental principle of Marxism and I hope even today this principle is being respected by the PRC. In order to maintain this equality and prevent the majority's domination or chauvinism, the concept of national regional autonomy is envisaged. Therefore, the opportunity of self-rule for all the minorities is necessary.

The question regarding one administration or several administrations should be determined in accordance with their areas of habitation. Minority nationalities like Mongolians and Tibetans, who inhabit one contiguous region, can be governed by one administration and those minorities who do not inhabit one region may be governed by several administrations. These arrangements will not be in any way contrary to the principle of equality. On the other hand, it will grant equality to all the nationalities, regardless of their size or population.

Prof. Bi : The "Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People", submitted to Beijing by the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, raises the issue of public security in the Tibetan areas. In your presentation on 'Greater Tibet' in New Delhi, you have mentioned that establishment of one administration for all the Tibetan areas will help to contain local nationalism and ensure unity and stability of the PRC. In my opinion, there are several perspectives or standpoints on this. It is possible that the central government may thoroughly evaluate the effect of establishing an administration of the 'Greater Tibet'. Under such circumstances, crucial point will be how far the central government is going to trust the administration of the 'Greater Tibet'. In my opinion, it is very hard to believe, at present, that the central government will agree that one administration will contain local nationalism and enhance unity and stability in China. How do you think to break this entrenched ice?

Kalon Tripa: This question is difficult to answer because it does not relate to facts and principles. But it is related with the mindset and attitude of the present leadership.

Logically speaking, if they wish to achieve stability through emotional integrity and mutual trust, one administration will definitely enhance the possibility of unity. Even if they believe in using force in order to maintain unity and stability, it will be much easier to use force if there is one centralised administration.

Nevertheless, we do not have any handy methods to break the ice. However, whether we are able to break the ice or not, we shall have to put forward our aspirations and ideas clearly and sincerely without any ambiguity. There is no any other way.

Prof. Bi : I think 'Greater Tibet' is the biggest obstacle for people inside China to understand the issue of Tibet. Apart from that, other concerns of the TGiE such as religious freedom, economic development, promotion of education, protection of the Tibetan culture, etc. are understandable and I believe people inside China will also extend their support. However, it appears that the 'unification of all Tibetan areas' is the biggest difference between Beijing and the TGiE at present. If the dialogue process does not move forward, will the TGiE change its position on 'One administration for all Tibetan areas' in the future? Will the Dalai Lama's side change its strategy of the dialogue process?

Kalon Tripa: This question cannot be entertained at this moment because there are no alternative suggestions that are forthcoming.

From our side, we consider the request for one administration for all the Tibetan nationality as reasonable and constitutional, apart from being the legitimate right of the Tibetan people. There will be no problem in implementing it if there is political will in the PRC leadership. As we have mentioned before the objective of our request is for the preservation of Tibetan language, culture and spiritual heritage. If there is more logical and convincing alternative suggestions coming forth, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is always very open to any idea which is based on truth and reason. ■

(The Chinese translation of this interview has been published in Beijing Spring, February Edition 2010)



Lhakpa Tsering on the Australian leg of his Free Tibet World Tour

Lhakpa Tsering's Australian leg of his Free Tibet World Tour

August 24, 2010

Tibetans and Tibet supporters in Australia gathered in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Tasmania to welcome and support Lhakpa Tsering on the Australian leg of his Free Tibet World Tour. Lhakpa Tsering set out on his motorcycle from the United Nations building in New York, USA on 10th March, 2010 to spread the word about the plight of fellow Tibetans in Tibet all across the world.

He arrived in Canberra 18th August. A dinner reception was organized by the Tibetan Community in ACT and was attended by Sonam Daggio, His Holiness The Dalai Lama's representative in Australia and Tibetans and supporters in the ACT. Lhakpa Tsering shared his life story, about how he was inspired to do a world tour for Tibet when he saw bikers touring in India while he was in school.

He has traveled in adverse weather conditions in USA, Canada, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, UK, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, Japan and South Korea. On his motorbike with his TIBET1 license plate and the Tibetan flag fluttering in the back, he has been able to freely spread the truth about the Tibetans in Tibet. His tour has been followed online by Tibetans in Tibet where possible, and he has been able to remind them that their fellow Tibetans living outside Tibet in a world of free speech have not forgotten their sacrifices and sufferings and those we are continually trying our best to support them. Lhakpa Tsering left Canberra to continue his tour around Australia, stopping at the Parliament House to meet his supporters, Tibetan Community members and journalists who were present to bid him adieu and good wishes for the remaining journey with offerings of khatag (white silk scarves). He will be traveling to India after his tour in Australia and will end his World Tour on October 23rd, 2010 in Dharamsala, India, where he will no doubt receive a hero's welcome. ■

(Report filed by Tenzin Dolma Daggio for TIO)

In Tibet they'd die for a hung Parliament

by Michael Danby

1 September, 2010

WHILE WE IN PEACEFUL democratic Australia have been conducting our political battles at public meetings and settling our disputes at the ballot box, in less fortunate places politics is being conducted by other means.

In Tibet, where the Chinese authorities have launched a new crackdown, these include arrests in the night, secret trials, long prison sentences on spurious charges, and beatings and other forms of violence.

In early August He Guoqiang, a member of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo and head of its Central Commission for Discipline, visited Tibet. Apparently he was not pleased by what he found, despite the intensive repression that has taken place in Tibet since the riots in 2008 in which at least 200 people were killed. He ordered a fresh crackdown on Tibetan "separatists" and intellectuals, particularly the Buddhist monks and nuns who have been at the forefront of the protests against Chinese rule over the past few years.

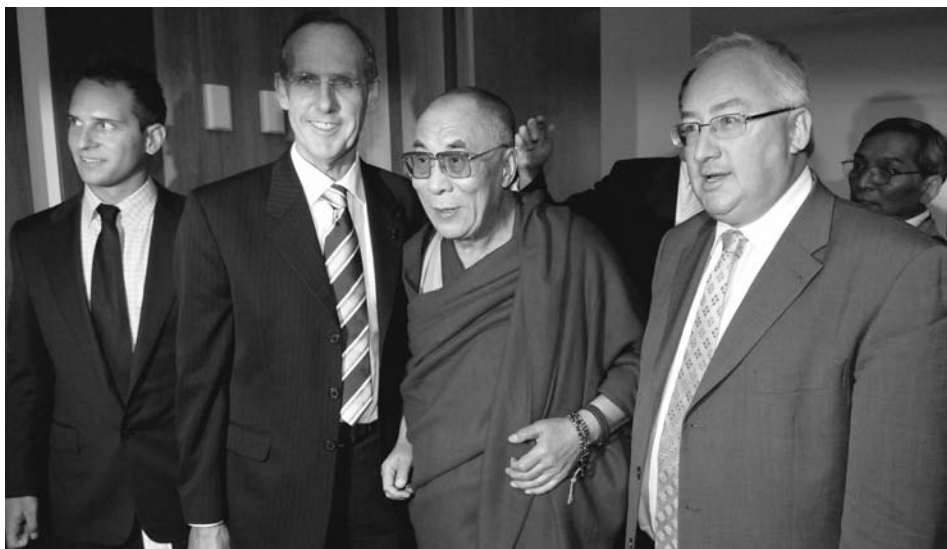
A notable aspect of this crackdown has been the focus on Buddhist monasteries. The Chinese Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and the Chinese government claims that Tibetans are free to follow their particular form of Buddhism, with its emphasis on monastic life. But following He Guoqiang's visit, Party officials have launched demands for tighter political control of the monasteries.

Du Qinglin, head of the United Front Work Department of the Party's Central Committee, has demanded "democratic management" in the monasteries. "Monks and nuns who are politically reliable, learned and respected should be selected to monastery management committees," he said. In

China "democratic management" is usually a code expression for "control by the Communist Party."

In a letter to me last month, the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, reported that hundreds of monks and nuns are being expelled from monasteries, leaving only a few as guides for tourists. "The Chinese plan to turn the monasteries into mere showcases like museums, manned by only a few monks as caretakers. Such plans represent a systematic, long-term strategy to eliminate all remaining vestiges of Tibetan identity and cultural heritage," he wrote.

The Chinese authorities remain extremely



Senator Bob Brown and Michael Danby with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Australia 2009

sensitive about the influence of the Dalai Lama and other exiled Buddhist leaders. Recently they banned photos of the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, who escaped from Tibet in 1999 and now lives in India. The Karmapa is 25 and is seen by some as the Dalai Lama's eventual heir as Tibet's spiritual leader. He is also a strong campaigner on environmental issues including climate change, and has been critical of the degradation of Tibet's environment by mining companies under Chinese government patronage.

The Chinese government refers to all those in Tibet who oppose its rule as "separatists." In fact most Tibetan leaders, including the Dalai Lama, are opposed to separatism. The Dalai Lama asks only that the Chinese implement their own Constitution, which says that Tibet should be an autonomous region, not a Chinese colony. He asks that the Tibetan language and Tibet's religious, cultural and environmental heritage should be respected, not trampled on as at present. For over a decade now he has been trying to have serious negotiations about these issues with Beijing.

The Dalai Lama wrote to me last month: "We need a comprehensive solution to the Tibetan issue. Despite nine rounds of talks between Chinese officials and my envoys, there have been no tangible results. Indeed, it seems unlikely that a result will be achieved any time soon. Nevertheless, our commitment to finding a mutually beneficial solution to the Tibetan issue remains unchanged."

I hope that Australians who care about human rights, and particularly my fellow parliamentarians from all parties, will continue to speak up on behalf of people who don't have political and religious freedom we take for granted, such as the people of Tibet. ■

Michael Danby is Labor MP for Melbourne Ports and Convenor of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet

Annual General Meeting of the Tibetan Community of Australia (NSW) Inc. Held.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Tibetan Community of Australia (NSW) Inc. was held on 18th September, 2010 at the hall of St. John's Church in Dee Why. President Jigme Dorjee read the reports of the community for 2009 - 2010 and placed the financial report for the members information. Mr. Dorjee Dadul, Cultural Secretary reported on the cultural activities for the year. Mr. Sonam Dagpo, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was invited as the chief guest and others spoke at the meeting. The members were divided into working groups and discussed on the various agendas for the improvement of the workings of the community. The rapporteurs reported their groups' decision to the house. A large number of Tibetans attended the annual general meeting. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN TIBET

INTRODUCTION

SINCE THE ERUPTION OF HISTORIC UPRISING of 2008 in Tibet, Tibetans inside Tibet face increasingly severe violation of their fundamental human rights and freedoms. Despite the evident failure of China's Tibet policies, authorities of the People's Republic of China continue to embark on the same path. In confirmation, a senior Chinese leader on 16 August 2010, urged the monks in Tibet to "promote patriotism" and "to contribute to the prosperity and ethnic unity in Tibet". He further called upon the government and people of Tibet to strive towards "achieving leapfrog development and lasting stability".

I. AREAS OF CONCERN

(a) Civil and political rights

Tibetans continue to protest amidst harsh and unfair sentencing by the PRC authorities. Characterized by strategic non-violent actions, Tibetan protests are political in nature. Their protests are pleas to let Tibetans be Tibetans, to express themselves as Tibetans and to allow space and substance for regional autonomy as guaranteed in China's constitution, autonomy laws and minority policies.

For exercising their right to express all of the above aspirations and many others, 227 Tibetans have died under China's brutal crackdown either through firing, torture or suicide; 448 Tibetans are known to have been sentenced; five Tibetans are currently facing death penalty excluding two who were executed in 2009; thousands have been either detained or disappeared. These figures are conservative estimates drawn since March 2008.

(b) Religious Freedom

The PRC authorities consider Tibetan Buddhism as a source of challenge to state legitimacy. Such concern emanates from the fact that the Tibetan identity is strongly intertwined with Tibetan Buddhism. Secondly, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who China consider as "separatist", is revered as the spiritual head and root guru of Tibetan Buddhism by devout Buddhists. Thirdly, monks and nuns have been at the forefront of almost all the political protests in Tibet. The official hostility towards and crackdown against the monastic community, therefore, has been severe. China tries to use Tibetan Buddhism as a tool and the monastic community as a willing participant in their effort to achieve their overriding concern of social stability.

The PRC authorities conduct "patriotic re-education" campaign for the monks and nuns; impose limits on the strength of the monastic community; engage in anti-Dalai Lama campaign; usurp traditional role of abbots in the monastic administration and education by installing Democratic Management Committee members; and interferes in the selection of reincarnation of lamas and trulkus through the issuance of Interim Measures of the "TAR" on Religious Affairs in 2006 and Order Number Five or the Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in 2007. All such attempts frustrate the Tibetans. It grossly interferes in the transmission of real, essential and internal philosophies and practices of Tibetan Buddhism.

(c) Freedom of Expression

Especially in the aftermath of 2008, China blanketed Tibet, impose restrictions on media, and block YouTubes, search engines and internet containing "sensitive" information on Tibet. After 2008, a group of brave Tibetan writers, singers and artists inside Tibet sporadically conveyed through their artistic spheres what has happened in Tibet in 2008 and what has been happening since then. Their arts and writings defy state policies in Tibet. Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet reported on

this new phenomenon of Tibetan cultural and literary resurgence and subsequent official crackdown, "...cases of more than 50 Tibetans, including 13 writers, involved in the art and public sphere who are either in prison, have disappeared or have faced torture or harassment due to expressing their views".

(d) Development

Any official initiative and effort to develop Tibet is welcome as long as it is Tibet-centric, environmentally friendly and has right-based and need-based approach towards development policies in terms of its formulation and implementation.

Contrary to what China invest in infrastructure development and externalized modernization in Tibet, their spending on education, health and agriculture is relatively less. Almost 80 percent of the Tibetan population who are nomads and farmers do not benefit from this urban-oriented development. Tibetans are fast becoming a marginalized group in the development process because of lack of skills and education. This is confirmed by an investigative report by Chinese lawyers and scholars in 2009, "The people drawing the greatest benefit from the thriving economy are the incomers, non-Tibetans; and because Tibetans lack capital and skills, this is contributing to them becoming increasingly marginalized."

Secondly, China's education policies in Tibet are assimilationist and discriminatory in practice. As the underlying theme of education in China is to love China, the ideo-political content is prominent in school curriculum as well as in the conduct of "patriotic re-education" campaign in monasteries and lay community. There are legal guarantees for linguistic rights to minorities and the practice of bi-lingual education policies in Tibet. But the prominent use of Chinese language in administration and commerce has significantly sidelined Tibetan language. Contrary to China's claims of positive developments in education, Tibet's illiteracy rate is put as high as 74.31 percent while others consider Tibet as one of the least literate regions in China.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to:

- Enter into meaningful dialogue with the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to reach a negotiated settlement on substantive autonomy for Tibet. Despite sincere and sustained efforts from His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration towards resolving the issue, there is no sign of progress on this front;
- Provide full accounting of all Tibetans who have been detained, sentenced, disappeared and dead since the 2008 uprising;
- Allow immediate and unfettered access for international observers to all detention centres and prisons in Tibet;
- Open Tibetan areas to independent monitors and media;
- Review its nationality policies based on the core needs and aspirations of the minority people.

Environmental Concerns and Implementation of Unsustainable Development Policies on the Tibetan Plateau

1) Mining concerns:

Uncontrolled mining on the Tibetan Plateau against the will of the local residents has been one of our greatest concerns. We are informed that these mining activities are carried out without any or very poor corporate commitments and responsibilities. We were told by a witness that at the drilling site/ mining area, loud announcements are carried out in the streets everyday declaring that 'the central government needs to develop and needs these mineral ores. Anybody found revolting against mining would be considered as revolting against the state'. But even under such

circumstances, in the past two years, we have witnessed several local oppositions against the mining activities - mostly gold and copper ores in the Tibetan areas as follows;

- March 2009, Bathang county, Kham Karze (Eastern Tibet)
- May 2009, Ser Ngul Lo, Lhara Village, Markham county, Chamdo (Eastern Tibet)
- June 2009, Meldro Gyama, Meldro Gungkar county near Lhasa
- May, 2010, Wu Yug Sogchen of Namling district in Shigatse (Central Tibet)

In most of the above cases, when local people took to the streets, it often involves when the concerned mining company directly disregards the aesthetic and social value of the local residents. Or when the higher authorities have turned a blind eye on their grievances against these companies.

The recent mudslide/ landslide incident at Drogchu (Ch: Zhouqu), in the south-east of Kanlho -Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, that took more than thousand innocent lives was also triggered by uncontrolled mining, logging and hydropower projects in that area for many years.

2) Implementation of Unsustainable Development Policies:

For centuries, the Tibetan nomads and herders have successfully maintained a sustainable and mobile lifestyle, traveling from winter to summer pasture lands and autumn to spring pasture lands. In the name of modernization and conservation, (but also to maintain a tight grip over the nomadic community), the nomads have been removed from their ancestral pastoral grounds to concrete blocks.

The new policy, tuimu huancao in Chinese, meaning closing pastures to restore grasslands. Like most simple ideas, it is overly simple. On practical ground, this policy demands the herders to 'abandon their herds to restore grasslands'. It assumes that the only way to conserve China's upper watersheds is to remove animals and nomads. It took Chinese scientists 50 years to discover what the nomads have always known, and Chinese policy remains far behind the latest scientific knowledge. State power has relocated nomads into concrete block settlements on the edges of their former lands, with basic rations to ensure they do not die of starvation. Instantly, all their skills, risk management strategies, environmental services, carbon sequestration, traditional knowledge and biodiversity conservation are gone, redundant, as if they had never existed. As of today we know that more than 700,000 nomads has been removed from their ancestral pastoral lands. Recent scientific findings tell a different and more technical view about the regeneration of the grasslands and the vital role of grazers in replenishing the degraded grasslands. According to these

research papers, the carrying capacity of some grasslands were far exceeded partly due to inappropriate land management practices implemented in the 1950s.

Some Chinese researchers have blamed the degradation of these grasslands on many factors such as permafrost degradation, irrational human disturbance (mining, road construction, conversion of grassland to cropland, gold mining, overgrazing etc..) and climate warming. More recent studies (Julia et al, 2008; Tony Lovell and Bruce Ward, 2009) revealed that grazing actually helps in regenerating the grasslands by improving the soil Carbon/ Nitrogen ratio and prolonging/ extending the growing season.

Herders are being forcibly evicted to make rooms for large-scale projects, like dam and roads. Many are relocated to small concrete blocks, and forced to slaughter their livestock. Furthermore, their lack of other skills prevents them from finding alternate means of making a living.

3) Tourism boom and waste management concerns:

We are worried that many sanctified areas and urban centers inside Tibet as a result of mass tourism might turn into an open dumpsites to manage the inflow of waste generated by tourists, let alone for the loss of Tibetan cultural and social values. This will severely cripple the already dilapidated municipalities that are managing these solid wastes - attracting unwanted scavengers and spreading diseases.

The ongoing campaigns of boosting Tibet's economy by investing huge amounts in tourism and industries would not only impact the marginalized Tibetan community but also encourage the mass influx of Chinese migrant workers and their extended families. According to an official Chinese media, the Tibetan Plateau drew in 1.8 million tourist for the first half year of 2010. It is true that tourism has favored a few Tibetan families but the majority of the households are not able to react to the changes identically or on equal basis. Chinese researchers and academicians have also mentioned that the cash economy is rapidly replacing the traditional self-sufficient economy and exposing the farmers to more volatile market-oriented economic crops and activities, to which they have never coped with earlier.

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) National Development and Reform Commission plans to provide 682 billion Yuan (US\$100bn) as financial support for the western region over the next few years. The funds will be used for 23 new infrastructure projects, including railways, roads, airports, coal mines, nuclear power stations and power grids. Recently, China mentioned that it had completed the drawing up of a detailed "Action Plan for Building Lhasa into an International Tourist City in Five Years". ■

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