TIBET: ISSUES FOR AMERICANS

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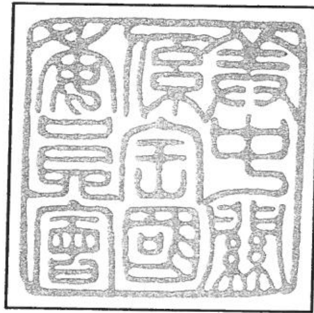

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PREFACE

The National Committee has had one bedrock objective since its 1966 founding: To increase mutual understanding between Chinese and Americans by addressing the principal issues in U.S.-China relations. This is to be done by maintaining balanced and open channels of communication between public and private sector leaders in the two countries, public education, and related activities. This objective, and the means for its accomplishment, requires that the Committee address the most controversial issues, at the highest possible levels.

And so, with the support of the Ford Foundation and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, the Committee embarked on a two-part project to increase mutual understanding on an explosive issue in its own right—and in U.S.-China relations—Tibet. The National Committee wants to take this opportunity to thank the Foundation and the United Board for their vision and courage in supporting this project.

In 1988, the Chinese Government approached the National Committee, asking whether or not the organization would receive a Chinese delegation to be sent to the United States to exchange views on Tibet with American scholars, opinion makers, and citizens. Beijing appeared to believe that American views would be different if Americans had a clearer idea of its point of view. In contrast, the Committee did not believe a one-shot mission to the United States would either be very enlightening or credible. Rather, the Committee thought that for any undertaking vis-à-vis Tibet to be valuable, credible, and constructive it would have to: provide broad and thorough access to Tibet; forthrightly address the issues of human/civil rights and economic development; involve more sustained and thoughtful interaction than a one-shot trip; and insure that activities be off-the-record and have a substantial scholarly character.

After protracted discussions with the Committee's counterpart in China, the State Nationalities Affairs Commission *(Min Wei)*, and with the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., agreement was reached to send an American group to China/Tibet and to receive a Chinese/Tibetan group in the United States. A centerpiece of each of the two visits would be a one- to two-day seminar in which scholars and others from both countries would exchange views on Tibet, human and civil rights there, economic development, and how the Tibet issue affects U.S.-China relations.

No sooner had this agreement been reached than martial law in Tibet (March 1989), followed by mounting demonstrations in Beijing in the spring and early summer, led to the indefinite postponement of the project. In early 1991, the Chinese renewed their agreement with the Committee and, after considerable Board and staff deliberation and consultation, the decision was made to move ahead.

The American group, led by former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold H. Saunders, visited China/Tibet from July 28 to August 7, 1991. Also on the delegation were: Professor Melvyn C. Goldstein, director of the Center for Research on Tibet at Case Western Reserve University; Richard Holbrooke, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Sidney R. Jones, executive director of Asia Watch; David M. Lampton, president of the National Committee; and, Professor Dwight H. Perkins, director of Harvard's Institute for International Development.

In Beijing, the Group met with a senior official of the State Council and other officials for Tibetan and minority issues. After an overnight in Chengdu, Sichuan, they flew to Lhasa. The Group was in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) for seven days.

While in the TAR, the Group travelled to the southeast of Lhasa (to the prefectural capital of the Shannan [Lhokha] Special District, Zetang [Tsetang] and north of Lhasa to a nomadic area in Damxung. In Lhasa itself, there was substantial independence to meet and talk with a variety of citizens (including monks), in addition to meeting with a broad range of local officials.

Given its interest in human rights issues, the Group met with public security, prison, procuracy, and law court officials and made a visit to Drapchi Prison on the outskirts of Lhasa. At Drepung Monastery, the Group had a remarkable two-plus hour unmonitored discussion with monks who spoke freely of their struggles over the decades and their aspirations for the future. In a nomad's tent and later at his nearby home, the delegation heard a Tibetan (chosen at random by the Group) speak of both daily life and his hopes for his family—his son, he hoped, would become a monk one day. In Zetang, the Group talked with local government officials, one of whom recounted that the high point of his life was riding by horseback across China to Beijing in the early 1950s as part of the Dalai Lama's song and dance troupe. In Zetang's market square, they talked with a Chinese entrepreneur from Sichuan who, somehow, managed to make money by trucking watermelon up to 12,500 feet from Gansu (using a government vehicle). And, they found stone cutters from Xiamen (Amoy) in Zetang helping to rebuild a local monastery that had been ravaged

in the Cultural Revolution. On its last evening in the TAR, the Group met with a vice chairman of the region.

The delegation's independence, and the utility of the entire undertaking, was greatly increased by the presence of Professor Melvyn Goldstein, who speaks fluent Tibetan and has spent protracted periods of time in the TAR, particularly nomadic areas, during the 1980s.

As mentioned above, this project consisted not only of a visit to China/Tibet, but also a return visit by a Chinese delegation to the United States in December 1991. The return group (Appendix) not only participated in a day and one-half-long seminar with the American delegation that had gone to Tibet, it also met with a broad range of Americans concerned with Tibet, minority issues, and related subjects.

Finally, the National Committee and the American participants in this project felt that in order to gain a more complete picture of conditions in Tibet and the issues surrounding that area, interaction with the Tibetan community in the United States and elsewhere was necessary. To that end, Group members met, on several occasions, with representatives of the Dalai Lama in the United States and with the Dalai Lama in New York on October 11, 1991. Finally, the Chinese group visiting the United States met with individuals in the American Tibetan community.

These three sets of activities (the reciprocal visits plus consultations with the Tibetan community in the United States), taken as a whole, combined with the fact that three of the six group members had been in Tibet previously (1981, 1983, and 1985-1990), form the foundation for this report. This document reflects the consensus of members of the Group, though each individual might place more or less stress on some items than on others. Further, these preliminary conclusions are those of the members of the Group, not those of the National Committee, its funders, sponsors, members, or the organizations with which members of the Group are associated.

We would like to thank the Starr Foundation for providing the support that made this publication possible.

David M. Lampton
New York, March 1992

OVERVIEW AND DOMAINS OF OBSERVATION, THE GROUP'S REPORT

The Group's purposes in undertaking this project were to provide Americans as much information as we could about current conditions and trends in Tibet and the implications of those conditions and trends for Tibetans, Chinese, and for U.S.-China relations. In addition, we sought to inform Chinese officials and policy makers about American thinking concerning Tibet, its people, and culture. Most fundamentally, the Group hoped to see if there might be a fresh way of thinking and talking about the Tibet problem—both within the United States body politic and in continuing dialogue with persons from Beijing and Tibet.

Our observations fall into four domains, domains which are important but which obviously do not address all of the issues of relevance to a consideration of Tibet, its future, and its implications for U.S.-China relations.

- We were able to make our own assessment of the present condition of Tibetan culture, Tibetan economic development, and the nature of the Chinese policy, presence, and role in Tibet, with the caveat that there are still vast lacunae in our knowledge, not the least of which is little understanding of the scope of the Chinese military presence in the TAR.
- Through separate meetings, including a prison visit and discussions with public security, law court, and procuracy officials, we began to clarify the organization of the penal system in Tibet as a context for continued monitoring of human rights observance.
- Through a wide range of discussions among ourselves, we began to identify the elements of a possible economic development strategy for Tibet designed to balance protection of Tibetan culture and identity with appropriate economic modernization.
- Through meetings with senior Chinese officials in Beijing and discussions with citizens in the TAR, we began to clarify issues that Tibet presents to American policy makers.

While it is important to specify the domains in which we were able to make observations, it also is imperative to identify those issues which the trip to the TAR, and the other activities described above, did *not* help us address.

- First, there is a fundamental definitional problem that is one of the nub issues in the dispute between the Dalai Lama and Beijing—the definition of Tibet itself. For the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community in exile, Tibet embraces about six million people and covers not only what the Chinese call the Tibetan Autonomous Region (population officially listed as 2.19 million persons), but areas inhabited by at least 2.9 million more Tibetans in five contiguous provincial-level units (Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, and Xinjiang) in what Beijing considers China proper. [These areas are referred to as Amdo and Kham by Tibetans.] Indeed, the Dalai Lama was born in a Tibetan ethnic area in what is now the Chinese province of Qinghai. This definitional, or territorial, mismatch causes confusion abroad and means that, in addition to the religious, cultural, and economic conflicts, there is also a very large territorial dispute at the root of the Tibet problem. By all accounts, the Tibetan areas outside of the TAR have absorbed much more Han in-migration (proportionally and absolutely) than the TAR itself. Regrettably, time did not permit the Group to visit areas outside the TAR. Nothing we observed pertains to Tibetan areas outside the TAR and certainly nothing we observed can resolve the ultimate question of, "Territorially, what should Tibet be?" But, it is clear from other conversations that this remains a fundamental issue.

- Second, Chinese claims to sovereignty and direct control over Tibet are anchored in an historiography that dates back to at least the thirteenth century's Yuan [Mongol] Dynasty. By all accounts, whatever influence China's rulers exercised over the centuries varied with the power of the reigning Chinese dynasty, the vigor of Tibetan leadership, and the strength of countervailing expansionism originating from outside powers, particularly those from central and south Asia. The Tibetan community abroad points to the long periods in which Chinese rule was largely ineffective or non-existent, paying particular attention to the general absence of Chinese control in the first half of this century, to the rather autonomous development of Tibetan culture and society since the seventh century, and to the fact that they have always had their own government, language, legal codes, and money. The periods of strong influence from China, they point out, were the Yuan (Mongol) and Qing (Manchu) dynasties, neither of which was ethnically Chinese. They further point to their declaration of independence when China's Qing Dynasty fell early in this century. The Chinese rejoinder is that not a single country in the world recognizes Tibet's independence of China. Obviously, nothing this Group observed, or could observe, can cast any useful light on this debate.

In short, the Group went to China/TAR in the hope of providing information to Americans about a topic of concern to them, and out of a desire to establish productive channels of communication with Chinese and Tibetans at various levels on this topic. In some important domains, we made observations that help us all broaden our thinking about Tibet and Tibet as an issue in U.S.-China relations. In other very important domains, we were in no position to assess developments nor can we assert that our values or predispositions should have any particular weight in the considerations of others. We view the trip as part of a continuing process.

In this report, we will concentrate on three areas in which we think there is something useful that can be said, and which the activities described above enable us to discuss: 1) the present condition of Tibetan culture, economic development, and the nature of the Chinese presence in the TAR—thinking about development in Tibet; 2) the organization of the judicial and penal systems in the TAR and the context for thinking about human/civil rights in the TAR; and, 3) the importance of dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama, implications for the United States, and a possible framework for U.S. dialogue with Tibetans and Chinese officials.

In the final analysis, the Group's visit to Tibet, plus the other activities enumerated above, lead us to suggest that, in its essence, the Tibet problem requires that the parties involved address at least six elements: political expression of Tibetan identity; preservation of Tibetan culture; economic modernization to meet basic human needs and enhance the physical quality of life, as Tibetans see it; respect for internationally-recognized human rights; mutual agreement between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama and his representatives over the relationship between Tibet and China; and, Chinese security concerns. There will be no solution to this agonizing problem

until there is a combination of these six elements acceptable to both the Chinese and Tibetan peoples.

THE SITUATION AS WE SAW IT AND THINKING ABOUT ISSUES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There can be little doubt that the influence of religion as both a way of life and as an institutional force is great in the TAR—and growing stronger. For two of the Group members who had been to Tibet in the early 1980s, the revival and comparative vitality of religion today was stunning. At Drepung Monastery, as in the nunnery we visited in Lhasa, we saw young [in the eleven to seventeen year-old age bracket] novitiates. In the early 1980s, the number of monks at Drepung was only several score [with no apparent recruitment into the monasteries permitted]; the formally recognized monks at Drepung now number about 440 (there is a permissible ceiling of 450), with several hundred who live in the monastery but are not legally (officially) part of this community. This is, of course, a far cry from the pre-1959 era when Drepung was the world's largest monastery. Nonetheless, current development is remarkable testimony to the power of religious practice and institutions in the TAR.

In Zetang, we visited a monastery being rebuilt from funds provided by the local community, with no government support whatsoever. In Lhasa, we saw a small nunnery rising from its own ruins, thanks to one aged nun who had survived. In the old commercial section of Lhasa surrounding the Jokhang Temple, the holiest of shrines in Tibetan Buddhism, one found monks from different parts of the TAR and neighboring provinces asking for financial assistance. Pictures of the Dalai Lama that were forbidden ten years before are now freely sold—indeed, some government offices even had pictures of the Dalai Lama. And the practice of religion is everywhere apparent. By their nature, religion and religious institutions in Tibet now are inseparable from a widely-felt nationalistic impulse among the populace.

Turning to market activity, ten years ago entrepreneurship and free commercial activity were scarcely visible. In 1991, the streets of Lhasa and Zetang were full of commercial activity. Much of it, it should be noted, conducted by Chinese "temporarily" residing in the TAR (an explosive issue to be addressed below). In short, the forces of religion and commercial activity are both growing more powerful with each passing day.

However, these twin developments also carry within themselves the seeds of further problems. With respect to institutionalized

religion, particularly in—but not limited to—Lhasa, the desire for political independence is deeply rooted in the monasteries. The monks not only are the bearers of religious teaching, they also desire an independent state. These impulses, however, run headlong into the Chinese commitment to resist full independence and to preserve as much of the status quo as possible.

The revival of both popular and institutionalized religion has, as in the rest of China, occurred in Tibet, albeit on a much more substantial scale. Nonetheless, there are still various limitations to religious expression (e.g., the right of monasteries to recruit new "registered" monks, and their internal administrative organization). These restrictions are an area of increasing resentment in both the monasteries and the lay community, and are often interpreted by Tibetans as evidence that the government is not serious about allowing Tibetans complete religious freedom.

However, because monasteries such as Drepung, Sera, and Ganden in Lhasa are at the forefront of demonstrations for independence, the government appears reluctant to remove such restrictions. So there is continuing tension in this area.

Thus, while it is clear from conversations with Han officials (from a senior State Council official in Beijing on down) that the Chinese have concluded that they cannot effectively minimize a religion that is so deep-rooted in the lives of Tibetans, they also have no intention of allowing it to attain the numerical and economic power it had in the pre-1951 period. And, to the extent that monks and religion continue at the forefront of political activity for full political independence for Tibet, the Chinese are absolutely determined to crush such movements at whatever cost.

In short, Beijing finds itself in an awkward situation. It has allowed the growth of socio-religious forces which have become the leaders in the struggle for independence, while at the same time not satisfying the full desire of Tibetans with regard to monasticism, thus further alienating the population.

With respect to economic entrepreneurship, Han Chinese are flowing into the region to take advantage of the opportunities. While it is laudable that freer internal migration and individual entrepreneurship is now permitted in China, it creates the very real danger that Tibetans in the TAR will be displaced or downgraded in their own economy, thereby fueling both inequalities and compounding the deep resentment that exists between Tibetans and Han Chinese.

It is these two macro-trends, then, that generate the ingredients of another serious explosion. They must be addressed by the Chinese and Tibetans if stability, peace, and prosperity are to come to this troubled area and if the core elements of Tibetan culture are to be preserved. There is relatively little that foreigners can do about these basic trends, but some significant possibilities lie in the area of economic development. Below, we present some of our thoughts concerning economic development and population issues in the region in the hope that the Group's observations may stimulate creative thought both within, and outside, China and the TAR.

THINKING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET

A development strategy for Tibet differs in important respects from the most appropriate development strategies for the rest of China. In most of China, the objective is, or should be, to raise the per capita GNP as rapidly as possible, consistent with relative price stability, reasonable equality, and considerations of sustainable development. The preferred method for achieving this goal is the increasing marketization of the economy and the removal of barriers to individuals and markets.

In Tibet, however, the objective most likely to appeal to the people living there is to raise the standard of living of the ethnic Tibetan majority of the population while, at the same time, assuring that they are not subordinated to Han Chinese economically. A policy that maximizes the rate of output regardless of who receives the benefits of that output is unlikely to be sustainable, and is, in any case, undesirable. Alternatively, a policy that eschews development altogether is neither realistic nor likely to be acceptable to most Tibetans. The commitment of Tibetans to their religion is as strong as that of any of the world's people, but a commitment to religion does not mean that Tibetans are unconcerned about better conditions for their children, or themselves. Increased incomes not only make possible better material conditions, they also increase the capacity of Tibetans to rebuild their temples and support those who want to commit themselves fully to religion by entering the monasteries.

The development strategy discussed here also assumes that Tibet will continue, for the foreseeable future, to be part of China, though many aspects of a desirable development strategy would be equally applicable whatever long-term relationship might develop in the future. Given the trends identified above, time is working against those who wish to preserve Tibetan culture and

traditions. Whether Tibet as a society and culture will thrive in the interim, or even survive, depends critically on what kind of development occurs over the next decade or two under the aegis of the Chinese government in Beijing.

DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET UP TO 1980

Under the "17 Point Agreement" of 1951, a document signed (Tibetans in exile say under duress) by representatives of the Dalai Lama and the central authorities in Beijing, Tibet was to be largely self-governing under the Dalai Lama. However, with the flight of the Dalai Lama to Northern India in 1959 after an uprising against the Chinese, the subsequent repression in Tibet, and the attendant dramatic increase in the control exercised by Beijing over the area (culminating in the 1965 establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region), whatever autonomy had existed in the 1950s vanished.

From 1959 until the early 1980s, the central government in Beijing carried out policies that were repressive during the more moderate years—the Cultural Revolution of the mid and late-1960s was particularly repressive. Except for eleven monasteries, and the Potala (saved by personal order of Premier Zhou Enlai), every monastery in Tibet was destroyed and all monks were sent home or to labor reform camps where countless perished.

The official Chinese economic statistics for the 1960-1980 period show considerable agricultural growth, except during the height of the Cultural Revolution period, but there is reason to be skeptical about data for these earlier years. The statistical reporting system had only a few years in which to get set up in the early 1960s before being decimated throughout China during the Cultural Revolution. In Tibet, there was the added difficulty of measuring output for a population largely nomadic and illiterate.

The attempt to establish communes in a rural society even less suited to the commune form of organization than the rest of China must have had a negative impact on the growth of output. Industry, commerce, and transport grew, but only because of large subsidies from Beijing. By 1980, subsidies of state enterprises had reached 80 million *yuan* per year, or roughly 40 *yuan* per person, in the TAR. The non-agricultural population grew from about 95,800 in 1959 to 132,800 in 1965, reaching 287,500 in 1980. One suspects that much of this growth was Han Chinese brought in to run bureaucracies and state enterprises, though the statistics are not detailed enough to permit certainty.

Figures for non-agricultural population also exclude members of the armed forces posted to Tibet and "floating" residents.

In the early 1980s, General Secretary Hu Yaobang visited the TAR and, according to reliable sources in China, was shocked by what he saw. He was highly critical of what Han cadres had done during the preceding twenty-plus years. After his visit, large numbers of Han cadres were promptly ordered out of Tibet. The official non-agricultural population figures show a decline of 38,000 persons between the end of 1981 and the end of 1982. Assuming that there were probably some new entrants into the non-agricultural labor force in this period, the report that 50,000 cadres and their families were ordered out of Tibet is consistent with the official population statistics. Reform of the Tibetan economic system did not really begin until these old line cadres had been replaced so economic reform, like the earlier communization effort, came later to Tibet than to the rest of the People's Republic of China.

There was substantial state investment in the TAR, surpassing 100 million *yuan* a year during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1976-1980), but it appears that most of this went for roads needed by the army and urban infrastructure needed for the post-1959 administration, much of which was Han. The economic benefits of Chinese investment to most Tibetans were probably minimal. There was a substantial increase in the Han population, enough to heighten Tibetan suspicions of a Han takeover and to foster rising ethnic tensions, although tensions already were very high as a result of the Cultural Revolution. This population issue and its ethnic dimensions are so central to the question of what is happening in the TAR that it must be looked at with care and in considerable detail, though the available data are quite imperfect.

THE ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF TIBET'S POPULATION

Four issues connected with Tibet's population are central to understanding the region's development program and prospects:

- What is the size of the Han population in the TAR today?
- How rapidly is it growing today?
- How rapidly has the Tibetan population grown?
- How and with what vigor is Beijing's population and family planning policy being implemented in the TAR in comparison to the rest of China?

The core question is whether or not there is a systematic effort to "drown" the Tibetans and their culture in a sea of Han Chinese,

more or less as was done to native Americans. We can only address this vital question for the TAR, not other Tibetan regions of China. The short answer to this broader question is that there does not appear to be any such deliberate policy in the TAR, but certain kinds of development could produce this result, whether intentional or not. To reach this conclusion, however, one must tread through the mine field of population statistics for the TAR.

The official population data for the TAR indicate that in 1990 there were 2,090,000 Tibetans and nearly 100,000 Han in the autonomous region. These figures, however, include only individuals whose permanent residence *(hukou)* is Tibet. Many of these Han probably are employees of government bureaucracies; central TAR offices, for example, employed 28,862 people in 1989, of whom 13,458 were listed as Han (46.6 percent). Assuming that each official had one or two family members living with them, they alone could account for one-third of the officially-registered Han population.

Two important population categories do not make it into the official data for the TAR (or presumably for other provinces). First, military personnel are not included and they may well number a couple of hundred thousand, of whom only a small percentage are Tibetan. Most of the military apparently are stationed in border areas distant from the population centers, although there was substantial evidence of their presence in Zetang. Most soldiers do not bring their families with them. We gained the impression that the army functions as an entity unto itself, supplying its own needs without drawing directly on the local economy, dependent instead on long overland supply routes. There are exceptions, however. Some military are located in cities such as Lhasa and some of these personnel are accompanied by their families, and we believe that the infrastructure to support the military in Lhasa is considerable.

Of greater concern here is what the Chinese call the "floating population." The figures given us showed a total "floating population" of 100,000 with perhaps one-third being Han. It is unlikely that either figure is based on much real evidence and the Han share is particularly suspect. In any case, it was presented to us as a guess, not a hard figure. The public security authorities who were said to possess hard figures did not share them with us. The "floating population" is made up of at least two broad categories—persons who stay for several years and must register with public security, and those who remain a few months and may, or may not, register. The "floaters" are mainly composed of

traders, construction workers and foremen, and people in various other service occupations. Walking around the streets of Lhasa and Zetang, it is clear that the great majority of people in these occupations in urban areas are Han, or non-Tibetan minorities. The majority come from Sichuan, but we also met people from Jiangsu, Fujian, Zhejiang, Gansu, and Qinghai. One TAR official explained their economic role as follows:

> *Ten years ago, you couldn't buy high quality vegetables and fruits, but now you can. There are lots of vegetables. Now there are a lot of restaurants. Clothing making is also important. These people have really raised the level of the service industry. They play an active role in Tibet's economic development.*

How large could this floating population be? The urban population figure in 1989 was 360,874, including 150,641 who were still considered to be farmers. The non-agricultural population in 1989 was reported to be 301,400. But these figures included only registered population. Most of the floating population is located in the cities, so the figures need to be added to the registered urban population to approximate a true urban total.

Furthermore, the TAR has only a handful of cities and prefectural capitals, and most of the latter are small with populations averaging perhaps 20,000 each. Only Lhasa and Shigatse have populations over 50,000. Conceivably, the urban population, excluding farmers, is as high as 400,000, if floaters are included, but it is unlikely to be 600,000—certainly not one million. If half of the people in these urban centers were Han (a probable upper limit estimate, given our observations), a reasonable guess, but a guess nonetheless, then the Han population (including "floaters") would be on the order of 200,000 persons, or about 10 percent of the TAR's registered population. Whatever their numbers, the Han are concentrated almost entirely in the urban areas where they are most visible and generate the most resentment. There are also a few Han in the villages (we ran into half a dozen in Shannan [Lhokha]), but there do not appear to be Han farmers outside the suburbs of cities like Lhasa and county seats like Nyindri, so that the number of Han in the countryside is surely very small.

What then is the range of the possible estimates for the Han population in the TAR? It could be as low as 150,000 (excluding the military) or as high as 300,000. It is very hard to come up with a plausible argument that the figure could be much higher, unless

one includes the military. In the Tibetan regions of other provinces such as Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan, by all accounts, the percentage of Han is very much higher. However, as we did not visit Tibetan areas outside the TAR, we are not in a position to comment on what is happening there. It also is important to note that the people with whom we spoke said that the TAR had placed no limit on the total number of "floaters"—the key was whether or not their "unit" in their home province would let them go.

What is happening to the Tibetan population itself, in the TAR? We only had limited ability to observe or discuss family planning policy. Ambiguities and questions aside, it is clear that the controls on family size in Tibet are looser than elsewhere in China, or among the Han in Tibet itself. The Han in the TAR are subject to the one-child policy applicable in the PRC's heartland provinces, whereas Tibetans are still allowed two, three, or more offspring depending upon their status. The result is that Tibetan population grew 2.0 percent per year in the 1984-1989 period, while the overall natural rate of increase for Tibet was 1.6 percent. The rate of increase for Hans would have had to be minuscule in order to produce that overall rate. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that many Han leave their families behind in their home province.

The future, however, could present a quite different picture from that painted above, depending on the nature of the development policies pursued by the Chinese in the decade ahead.

THINKING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s

There are three kinds of development strategies that could be pursued with various consequences for the Tibetans. The first, and worst, would be a development policy designed to maximize the inflow of Han Chinese. This, as we argue above, does not seem to be the case in the TAR at present.

The second strategy would be to follow laissez-faire policies in an increasingly market-driven economy. Such policies are frequently advocated for the rest of China, and reforms in this direction have had much to do with the rapid rise in the standard of living in China as a whole, including the TAR. But for Tibet, this approach carries with it the very real danger of disadvantaging the Tibetans in their own economy, unless compensatory policies accompany market-oriented strategies.

Market-oriented policies in the 1980s in the rest of China had a major, positive impact on the standard of living of the bulk of the population because these people were in a position to take full advantage of the opportunities generated by marketization; this was true for farmers, rural non-farm workers, workers in many urban enterprises, and those involved in the growing service sector. In many ways, rural and urban Chinese went back to what they had known and practiced before the imposition of the Stalinist system in the mid-1950s. Moreover, despite the anti-intellectual thrust and harsh treatment of China's intellectuals in most of the period from the mid-1950s onward, there, nonetheless, was a massive expansion of education–critical to entrepreneurial and business activity. Finally, during the late-1960s and early 1970s, there also was a sustained campaign to develop rural, small-scale industry. While different in many respects from its descendants of the current period, this rural small-scale industry set the stage for the current boom of such enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s.

Few of these favorable conditions are present today in the TAR. The one exception is in agriculture, including animal husbandry, where the abolition of communes has led to increases in the incomes of Tibetan farmers and herdsmen just as has been the case in the rest of China. Climatic variation and ecological fragility mean that Tibetan agricultural output fluctuates considerably from year to year, but average agricultural output in the 1981-1989 period was nearly 50 percent above the average for the 1971-1980 period, an increase of over 20 percent in per capita terms; an improvement that, while not as dramatic as that which occurred in the rest of China, is an improvement nonetheless.

There has been no rapid industrial growth in the TAR, however, and collective industry in 1989 was still well below the peak output levels achieved in the late-1970s. Most industry is state owned and is much more dependent on government subsidies than in the rest of China. Further, total industrial employment in 1989 was only 19,408. One suspects that a high percentage of these employees were Han, rather than Tibetan, though available data are not broken down by ethnic group. There may be room for the expansion of wool or leather products, but only a few Tibetans today have the education and experience needed to manage modern industries. Those Tibetans who do have such experience and skill probably are siphoned off into government service because persons with the requisite education are more or less guaranteed jobs in the government bureaucracy.

Two boom sectors in the latter-half of the 1980s and currently in Tibet are construction and commerce. If our delegation's observations are valid for the TAR as a whole, most of the people employed in these sectors are Han, not Tibetan. A few may be state employees, but most are probably collective private entrepreneurs/workers taking advantage of opportunities to make a profit. The Han Chinese in Tibet, in that respect, resemble their overseas Chinese brethren earlier in the century, a group that established vibrant economic outposts throughout the Pacific Basin. As in Southeast Asia, the Han are better prepared to take advantage of the economic opportunities in the TAR. Also as in Southeast Asia, the local population may receive some material benefit from the Chinese economic presence, but the local population in Tibet, like the Malays to the south, clearly resent the influx.

If the policies of the 1980s in Tibet continue unmodified through the 1990s, the share of the economy in Han hands may rise rapidly, and with that phenomenon, Tibetan resentment. No deliberate Sinicization policy is required. Large scale state investment in transport (emphasis is being placed on five roads) and urban construction will make the TAR not only more appealing and accessible to China's Han population, but free-market incentives in the TAR will provide the magnet of economic opportunity that has had such powerful attractive force for China's people over the centuries. Should these processes proceed unfettered, they will (or could) fundamentally alter the ethnic makeup of Tibet with major consequences for Tibetan culture.

What is the alternative? Some of the steps required to avoid the submergence of Tibetan culture are being taken, although much more needs to be done, as the figures below suggest. The expansion of primary and secondary education is the clearest case in point.

We were told that only 170,000 students were enrolled in primary and middle school in 1990 in the TAR, about 8 percent of the population. This compares to 18.3 percent for the PRC as a whole in 1975. While schools indoctrinate as well as teach skills, Tibetans will never be able to compete with the Han in their own region unless the abysmally low levels of literacy and basic modern skills are overcome. Beyond the age of eight, the dropout rate in Tibetan rural schools is still very high.

To fill higher level positions, specialized training needs to be added to what hopefully will be a much larger share of the age cohort that will begin to make its way through secondary school.

Some of these people are being trained elsewhere in China, but the numbers are still small. International assistance could play a significant role in this effort. Specialized training for agronomists, health care workers, auto, truck, and even bicycle repairmen, construction workers, stone cutters, and many others would not take much money, and would make it possible to employ more local Tibetans and give them a growing role in their own economy.

Training, combined with affirmative action steps to open up more positions to Tibetans, is already happening as best we could judge, but much more can be done. We would note, parenthetically, however, that affirmative action programs in the TAR carry with them the same problems observed elsewhere. In Tibetan higher education, for instance, special curricula and admissions procedures, well-intentioned as they may have been, are in danger of creating little pockets of Tibetans who are not fully prepared to compete upon graduation. "Mainstreaming" Tibetans in universities and colleges outside of the TAR runs into the criticism that this is an attempt to drain the TAR of intellectual talent and/or Sinicize the region's most promising youth.

Given the powerful attraction of economic opportunity to the Han, and given the substantial effort and time that will be necessary to allow Tibetans to become more competitive and thereby better able to protect their culture, what can be done? One controversial possibility, at least controversial to the outside world, would be policies designed to restrict the flow of Han Chinese into the TAR.

Without taking a position on migration policy, it is important to note that currently it is not possible for outsiders to acquire agricultural land in Tibet, although a few Han Chinese raise vegetables in the suburbs of Lhasa and elsewhere on land leased from Tibetan farmers. However desirable a land market may be elsewhere in China, it would be disastrous for the TAR if large numbers of land-hungry immigrants started to buy or otherwise acquire land from Tibetans. As far as we could see, no such policy change was being contemplated.

Should there be tighter restrictions on migrating traders and other workers? Would such restrictions be enforceable or, like so many quantitative barriers designed to work against market forces, would they simply provide more opportunity for official corruption, enriching regulators and leaving the initial difficulty little affected? Further, migration controls could easily lead to

greater bureaucratic controls over the free movement of Tibetans, as well as to other bureaucratic interventions. Affirmative action goals, particularly providing Tibetans with basic economic and technical skills that will make them competitive, in contrast, carry with them few such dangers.

Should there be continued development of Tibet's urban infrastructure? It is hard to argue against electricity, better plumbing, and improved housing, but the more attractive Tibet's urban areas become, the easier and more attractive it will be for outsiders to move in and establish permanent residence. Given that investment funds are limited, it would be preferable to spend those resources in rural areas where the bulk of Tibetans, and those most in need, live. The temptation to spend on the cities, however, may be too great to overcome, in Tibet as in so many other places in the developing world.

None of the efforts outlined above will, by themselves, bring about a reconciliation between Tibetans and Han, but they would make it easier for a policy of Tibetan autonomy with continued development to be realized. Temporary residents in Tibet possessed of a vastly different culture and comparatively strong skills, however good their intentions, are no substitute for programs designed and run by local people. But the local people must have the skills to go with the authority.

In the end, the people and culture of Tibet are in an uneven race against the forces of economic change and population pressure encroaching upon them. Action in Beijing and the constructive assistance of outside development agencies is needed.

THINKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN TIBET AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE DETENTION AND PUBLIC SECURITY SYSTEMS

In the course of its visit to the TAR, the Group met with public security, prison, procuracy, and law court officials, including a superficial and tense visit to Drapchi Prison. In the course of these visits and discussions, we developed some thoughts about the human rights situation in Tibet, and how the situation there differs, in some respects, from that in China's heartland provinces. We also learned some specific details about the structure of the penal system in the TAR. Of course, much of the nature of the problem, and the system, was deliberately kept beyond our view. Below we provide our findings, information we fully expect to be

supplemented by subsequent exchanges which we hope this Group's visit made more feasible.

THINKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TAR

Because human rights concerns in Tibet are a critical element in the debate in Washington over United States policy toward China, the National Committee and the Group decided to look at those concerns through discussions with relevant Chinese and Tibetan officials. We also decided to insist on access to Tibetan prisons where persons detained for political infractions are held, in the belief that the principle of access by outsiders is important. The Group did not consider itself a human rights fact-finding mission, but it did seek to understand better how human rights issues are perceived and how the administration of justice works in theory and in practice in the TAR.

Accordingly, in the course of its visit to the TAR, the Group had meetings with a combination of officials from public security, correctional institutions, the procuracy, and the courts. We had initially requested access to two prisons, knowing that as of mid-1991, foreigners had only been allowed inside one prison in the TAR, Drapchi (named after the area of Lhasa in which it is located). If we were granted access to a second, no matter which one, we would be breaking new ground. We were well aware of the risks to prisoners that our visit might cause, and so asked, but did not press for individual interviews.

As it developed, we too were only allowed to visit Drapchi, the TAR No. 1 Prison. The fear of endangering prisoners evaporated when it became clear that all male prisoners (save for two ill criminal offenders) had been removed from their cells prior to our visit. We were told they were "working." We visited the women's quarters, however, and managed, with the permission of one official, to exchange words with two of some 37 women in custody. Both were nuns, arrested for taking part in political demonstrations near Lhasa.

In the course of this prison visit and other meetings, we realized that information would be forthcoming, if at all, only if the terminology used was precise. "Prison" had to be distinguished from "detention center", "interrogation center", "labor reform camp" *(laogai)*, and "rehabilitation-through-labor center" *(laojiao)*. It turns out, for example, that Drapchi, administered by the TAR Justice Ministry office, is the only institution recognized as a "prison" in the TAR. "Arrest", which in China means formal

indictment, had to be distinguished from "taken into custody." We tried to sort through the varying levels of responsibility at the municipal, prefectural, and provincial levels. A detention center where many persons are reported to be held for political offenses is located in the section of Lhasa called Gutsa and is run by the Lhasa Municipal Public Security Bureau—not the TAR government. "Rehabilitation-through-labor" centers are located in every prefecture and run by Labor Reeducation Committees *(laodong jiaoyang weiyuanhui)*. One distinction between *laojiao, laogai,* and prisons is that the People's Armed Police actually live on the grounds of the latter two types of facilities.

The complexity of the penal system to which we were exposed helped us understand some of the problems involved in getting concrete information about the whereabouts of specific prisoners. It also makes it difficult to assess the accuracy of statistics on prisoners, particularly those held for political offenses. Do official statistics on prisoners detained for counterrevolutionary offenses include people detained but not formally indicted? Do they include people indicted but not yet tried? We were told by a senior official at Drapchi that the prison held 300 persons of whom about 20 percent (50 persons, we were told) were detained for counterrevolutionary offenses. Gutsa, the Lhasa detention center, was said to hold 100 inmates; the percentage of "counterrevolutionaries" was not clear. The reeducation-through-labor center in Lhasa, in an area called Sangyip, held 200 inmates, according to officials, of whom 30-40 were women. One could add up all the known figures for specific institutions and still not have a clear idea of how many other places of detention may exist (such as those run by the People's Armed Police) or what percentage of the total were detained for non-violent expressions of political or religious belief.

It was clear that there are major differences in perception over the nature of specific offenses and the punishments meted out.

To us, the most striking aspect of the human rights situation in the TAR is the detention (on suspicion of "counterrevolution") of monks and nuns for activities in support of Tibetan independence. Though such persons are not the only "counterrevolutionary" detainees (students, traders, artists, and others have also been arrested for participating in peaceful, pro-independence activities), the fact is that the monasteries and nunneries in and around Lhasa have become the standard-bearers of Tibetan culture and nationalistic activity. By international standards, the unfurling of a flag or the chanting of pro-independence slogans is a legitimate

exercise of freedom of expression. To the Chinese government, such individuals are "splittists", violating the Constitution.

Further, there is a very disquieting vagueness to the definition of "counterrevolutionary." In the Criminal Law there are 22 articles on "counterrevolutionary" behavior. When asked, "What is a counterrevolutionary?", we were told, "If his purpose is to sabotage or topple the socialist road or the proletarian dictatorship, he is a counterrevolutionary."

It is the nationalist aspect of the human rights problem in Tibet that makes it different from China's heartland. While many of the same kinds of abuses are reported from Lhasa as from Beijing—torture, incommunicado detention, trials without due process—the dissidents in Lhasa who become the victims of these violations would not necessarily be satisfied, as their Beijing counterparts might be, with political reform and a system characterized by due process, as welcome as such changes would be. The only way of reducing human rights abuses in any significant manner in the TAR is to somehow address the nationalist issue.

Another area of differing perception concerns the *laojiao* system, briefly mentioned above. It is worth recounting in some detail our discussion with one TAR official about *laojiao* because an explication of this domain in the penal system is critical for understanding not only the extrajudicial abuses to which such a system is subject, but also is indicative of long-held Chinese views about the relationship of man and state, the role of formal legal procedure, and the Confucian notion that the state has the obligation to make people better and to conform, even if there has been no legal infraction.

What follows is a rather extended paraphrase of the official explanation of the *laojiao* system which we were given:

> *People in laojiao are handled administratively, they are under the oversight of the Labor Reform Bureau. They haven't completely violated the criminal law, just half-way violations. The longest sentence to laojiao is three years. There are various Labor Reeducation Committees (laodong jiaoyang weiyuanhui). These committees are not under the leadership (as opposed to the "management" or "oversight") of the Reform Through Labor Bureau, but the committees are loosely linked to one another. The laojiao for Lhasa is also out by Sangyip, near Drapchi Prison. Sangyip is a place name and it has a labor reform team and a labor reeducation team. Laogai and laojiao detainees receive different treatment. One (laogai) is treatment of criminals and the other (laojiao) is for people with problems. We treat criminals according to law. As for jiaoyu (or laojiao), they can get holidays if their biaoxian (attitude and behavior) is good and they have priority to see relatives. As for management of laojiao, it is carried out by the Labor Reform Bureau. The People's Armed Police staffs prisons, but not laojiao. Sometimes, people with no crime can be placed in laojiao. The Procuracy does not decide to send people to laojiao, that is decided before. For example, a unit may have trouble with a person or a person may not listen to his parents. In a factory he may not work well, be stealing or robbing, or be a person who shifts from place to place and causes trouble. The factory manager can fire him and recommend him for laojiao. The main source for laojiao is the shifting population, the "floating population." The Public Security Bureau can make recommendations to the Labor Reeducation Committee, which is composed of representatives from the Education Department, the Public Security Bureau, the Labor Reform Bureau, the Justice Department, and the Civil Affairs Bureau. A vice mayor in Lhasa heads the Labor Reeducation Committee in Lhasa Municipality. People involved in riots can also be decided by these committees, but "counterrevolutionaries" are not handled by the Labor Reeducation Committees. There is only one Labor Reeducation Committee for Lhasa Municipality.*

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF TIBET AND FOR U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

Two domains of observation germane to international affairs. On July 30, 1991, we met with a senior State Council official in Beijing in a discussion that covered one area particularly germane to the concerns of this report. In the most significant part of our conversation, the official was asked by one participant whether or not the only way social stability and peace in Tibet could be secured, and the goal of protecting Tibetan culture and society achieved, would be to have the Dalai Lama return to his people and for the Tibetan people to have a high degree of autonomy—along the lines of the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg speech of 1988. The Chinese official was asked why "one country, two systems" was not an approach the Chinese were applying in Tibet. A

paraphrase of the official's response is recounted below:

> *Our consistent policy is to welcome the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. But once he comes back he cannot advocate independence or semi-independence. The situation in China is different from that in the Soviet Union. We are not a union of independent republics, we are a unified country with autonomous areas. In the United States you have states with some authority, but not even you are like the Soviet Republics now. So, if the Dalai Lama is a symbol of independence, he cannot come back. We have had contacts with the Dalai Lama and he is aware of our position and we can fully understand his views now. There is no problem for him to come back as a religious figure. Some people ask if we can have "one country, two systems" like Hong Kong and Taiwan. The situation is different in Tibet. This is not possible. We already have the "17 Point Agreement" of 1951 with Tibet where it was agreed on the status of Tibet. That is very clear. We already have an agreement on the status of Tibet. The Dalai Lama is regarded by many Tibetans as a living Buddha and he has a "transitional" government in India and he has a congress, though it is just composed of exiles. So, all this is not in conformity with his just being a religious figure.*

It is instructive to examine the "17 Point Agreement" in light of these remarks. If that document were to be honored, the Dalai Lama could return to Tibet with considerable authority. We cannot judge how the Chinese would negotiate based on this document, nor predict the outcome of any such negotiations, but it is an interesting point of departure. We note, however, in other statements the Chinese Government asserts that the Dalai Lama can play only a religious (not political) role.

It is clear, having talked (in the United States) with members of the Tibetan exile community (including the Dalai Lama), that the level of trust in Chinese promises is very low indeed. Further, there seems to be a feeling among many in the Tibetan exile community that now is not the time to negotiate with the Chinese authorities, given the end of the cold war and the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, we are aware of continuing high-level channels of communication between the Beijing government and representatives of the Dalai Lama.

Whether or not negotiation of a long-term relationship is

possible soon, the questions with which we opened this report are still relevant. How can Tibetan culture and society be protected effectively from the already described economic and demographic currents at work? In the absence of a concerted policy to reduce the impact of these forces (which the Dalai Lama seems most able to do), current trends will continue, or accelerate, and the potential for another bloody confrontation will increase.

This brings us to our second major observation, and this concerns American policy. In discussions with Tibetan intellectuals and monks, it is quite clear that these people (and we believe the Tibetan citizenry more widely) are highly aware of American (especially Congressional) expressions of support, and that they pay particular attention to expressions of support for their independence, apparently attaching less significance to the long-term Executive Branch policy of not recognizing Tibet's independence of China. Tibetans we met, for example, were aware of President Bush's meeting with the Dalai Lama in 1991 and the Dalai Lama's speech on Capitol Hill.

Our delegation makes no recommendations in this regard, and there is, in fact, no agreement among our Group's members on this issue, but it is important for Americans to recognize the potential consequences of those expressions. Economic frictions, Tibetan resentment against the Han influx, and the growth of institutionalized and popular religion have combined to produce a volatile situation. In addition, the Dalai Lama's movement appears not fully united over the issue of how vigorously to push for total independence, as opposed to a high degree of autonomy, and what means might be most effectively employed.

A POSSIBLE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT THE TIBET PROBLEM

The present U.S. policy debate takes place between two schools of thought: 1) those who argue for restricting the U.S. relationship with China until China's record on human rights and arms sales improves; and, 2) those who oppose formal restrictions and rely on steady diplomatic and people-to-people exchanges to improve China's performance. Tibet figures in this debate primarily as an especially serious case of a human rights problem. The assumed options regarding Tibet seem to be the alternatives of continued Chinese control and complete Tibetan independence.

After having spoken with high Chinese officials in Beijing, Chinese in Tibet, Tibetan officials and citizens in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Tibetan exile community in the United

States and the Dalai Lama, it seems to the Group that Americans should focus on the following points:

- As long as the Dalai Lama remains apart from his people, there will be continual unrest, resentment, discontent, and the potential for tragedy in Tibet. How he returns is for the Chinese and the Dalai Lama to determine, but his return is essential. It would be especially dangerous if he died in exile, thus creating conditions for a split over the selection of his successor.

- Time is not on the side of protecting Tibetan culture and language and developing an economic environment for sustaining them. If present trends of Chinese in-migration are not addressed, the risk of another dangerous confrontation increases. The interests of Tibetans, of the Chinese government, and of the U.S.-China relationship would be seriously harmed by such a confrontation. Creating an economic development strategy for enhancing Tibetan capacities to assume increasing responsibility for their own future is thus essential.

- One of the root causes of human rights violations in Tibet is the clash between the desire of some Tibetans for independence and the determination of the Chinese government to prevent it. Improvement of the human rights situation will depend to some extent on defusing that clash. In the meantime, the imprisonment of hundreds of political activists will continue to be a major obstacle in the U.S.-China relationship.

To address these issues, a dialogue or series of dialogues involving Chinese and Tibetan leaders, as well as others such as international organizations which are in a position to be helpful, could be initiated. The dialogues could focus both on short-term practical measures as well as on the broader question of the long-term political relationship.

Appendix
TIBETAN STUDY GROUP from the PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA to the UNITED STATES December 4 - 15, 1991

Delegation Leader

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