

**NOTES FOR DCI BRIEFING OF  
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON 28 APRIL 1959**

**27 April 1959**

**TIBET**

- I. As far back as 1956, we began to receive reports indicating spread of Tibetan revolt against Chinese Communists through areas inhabited by Khamba tribes in eastern Tibet.**
  - A. Reports in late 1958 and early 1959 indicated rising tension among Tibetans especially as result of news of communalization in Communist China aroused apprehension.**
  - B. By early March 1959, stage set for serious outbreak.**
- II. Fear that the Chinese were planning to kidnap Dalai Lama apparently touched off the revolt on 10 March in Lhasa (population 80,000).**
  - A. Thousands of Tibetan demonstrators then took the Dalai Lama into protective custody in his summer palace just outside Lhasa.**
  - B. Well-organized supporters knocked out a Chinese outpost manned by 80 soldiers, interrupted communications with Peiping, and plastered walls of Lhasa with posters declaring "independent kingdom of Tibet."**
- III. At this early stage of the revolt, Chinese attempted to get Dalai to induce rebels to disband.**
  - A. Political representative of Peiping in Tibet sent three letters to Dalai and he sent three replies, designed to avoid armed clash.**
  - B. As late as 17 March, Dalai still hoped for peaceful solution, but when shells fell near summer palace, he decided to leave for India.**

- C. Dalai Lama, mother, and younger brother and two sisters individually slipped out of palace on 17 March and joined escape party.
  - D. Dalai Lama at this time requested asylum in India for himself and party. Serious fighting began on 19 March in Lhasa and continued for several days. On 22nd rebels driven from Lhasa, which apparently now under firm Chinese military control.
    - 1. Many Tibetans were killed in the capital; young men rounded up and sent away presumably to be put in forced labor gangs.
  - E. Dalai Lama, granted asylum by Nehru crossed Tibet's southeast frontier and entered India near Towang on same day.
- IV. Peiping dissolved the local Tibetan government on 28 March and replaced it with Communist-sponsored Preparatory Committee for Tibet.
- A. Chinese thus reversing policy which since 1951 had been that of working through local institutions and gradually replacing them with Communist organizations.
  - B. They will now probably push ahead on hard course, "socializing" all aspects of life in Tibet.
  - C. Chinese using their puppet--Panchen Lama--as temporary head of Preparatory Committee, leaving door open on slim chance that Dalai Lama can be persuaded to return.
- V. Chinese now mopping up rebels outside key strong points; total Communist troop strength is 61,000.
- A. Rebels in southeast Tibet have been hard pressed by Communist forces using aircraft and artillery.

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- B. Large group of Khamba tribesmen and other Tibetans are reported to be camped near the Indian border.
- C. They are short of food and ammunition and under constant Communist attack.
- D. They hope to obtain permission to enter India.
- E. So far, more than 1,000 refugees have fled to India and Bhutan and Nehru has said more would be granted asylum.

VI. Dalai Lama's 18 April statement at Tezpur, India, attacking Chinese Communists and stating he left Lhasa of own volition refutes Communist claim he was abducted.

- A. He appears determined to establish a "free Tibetan" government and work for Tibetan independence, and has expressed willingness to seek asylum outside India if New Delhi objects to such activities.
- B. Dalai Lama's desire to state such goals publicly has already created some difficulty with New Delhi.
  - 1. Nehru advising Tibetans that genuine autonomy only possible goal, although he recognizes the likelihood of this is extremely slim.
  - 2. Nehru has stated Dalai Lama is free to carry on spiritual activities but that India cannot permit him to carry out anti-Chinese Communist political activities.

VII. Nehru's policy reflects his conviction there is little India can do to aid Tibet.

- A. India formally recognized Tibet as part of China in 1951, hoping Chinese Communist promises of autonomy would be kept.
- B. Nehru's initial statements on revolt were cautious, but became

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**stronger as popular reaction in India grew.**

- VIII. Reaction to Tibet revolt from neutralist Asia extremely critical of Peiping.**
- A. Press and popular sentiment in all countries of South and Southeast Asia has run ahead of government reaction.**
  - B. Governments of some neutral countries--chiefly India and Burma-- have encouraged press and popular opposition while avoiding formal protests.**
- IX. Peiping bitter over Nehru's sympathy for the Dalai Lama, but has so far avoided formal actions which would force Nehru to respond on a government-to-government basis.**
- A. Premier Chou En-lai on 18 April said there was no reason why Sino-Indian friendship should be shaken by a "handful" of rebels.**
  - B. Since 23 April Peiping taking harder line, accusing "Indian officials" of abetting "vicious attacks on China" by releasing Dalai Lama's Tezpur statement.**
  - C. Chinese intend hard line as pressure on Nehru to curtail**

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**the Dalsi Lema's activities and statements.**

- D. Nehru in turn has criticized recent Chinese statements more openly than previously.**

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