IPI

Geographic Intelligence Report

TRANSITION IN TIBET

CIA/RR GR 62-2

May 1962

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Research and Reports

Geographic Intelligence Report

TRANSITION IN TIBET

CIA/RR GR 62–2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Research and Reports

CONTENTS

Tables

Maps

TRANSITION IN TIBET*

Summary

The Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet has been marked by considerable Tibetan resistance to the imposition of Communist programs. Although a postponement of further "reforms" was announced in December 1960, changes introduced during the past 3 years have slowly strengthened and consolidated the Chinese position in Tibet.

The traditional administrative structure of Tibet was abolished in early 1960 and was replaced by standard Chinese Communist local government units. Although effective local government is possible in predominantly agricultural areas, the sparsely populated nomadic areas of northern Tibet present unique problems and have to a large extent remained outside the pale of Chinese administration and the instituting of Communist programs. The actual functioning of local government units in carrying out higher level policy directives has been hindered by an insufficient number of trained and reliable Tibetan and Chinese cadres.

The lack of adequate transportation from China to Tibet historically has been a major problem in the maintenance of Chinese control in Tibet. Road construction has been pushed, particularly since 1959, with emphasis upon an improved network in southern Tibet. In southern and southwestern Tibet, much of the terrain consists of extensive plains in which little construction is needed to permit the use of motor vehicles. In the rugged and compartmentalized ridge and gorge terrain of eastern Tibet, however, road construction has been much slower and more costly. In spite of improved road connections from China, Chinese personnel in Tibet depend almost entirely upon long and difficult routes for food and supplies.

To lessen their dependence upon food transported from China, Chinese authorities have stressed the necessity for increased agricultural output in Tibet. Some increases are likely through the expansion of irrigation, greater use of fertilizers, and the introduction of other improved techniques. It is possible that improved rations for the Tibetans and self-sufficiency for the superstructure of Chinese troops, administrators, and cadres may be achieved during the next few years. The limitations of

* The conclusions contained in this report represent the best judgment of this Office as of 1 April 1962.

unsuitable terrain, high elevations, low temperatures, and insufficient precipitation, however, make it unlikely that enough additional land can be brought under cultivation to permit significant numbers of Chinese immigrants to settle in Tibet.

In 1959 and 1960, after the international publicity given Tibet by the March 1959 revolt and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India, consultative bodies to the United Nations made authoritative appraisals concerning the legal status of Tibet. These appraisals help to clarify the complexities of international law surrounding the status of Tibet; and, by concluding that Tibet was an independent state in 1913 when it was a signatory to the Simla Convention, they also give some support to the Indian position on the validity of the McMahon Line.

I. Introduction

Chinese Communist efforts to bring about a "socialist transformation" in Tibet have met with frustration repeatedly during the past several years. In December 1960 the Chinese announced that the socialization of Tibet would be postponed for 5 years.* This policy retreat followed the tacit admission that the introduction of land reform and the organization of mutual-aid teams during 1959-60 had met with considerable opposition. The Chinese leadership therefore decided that conditions in Tibet were not suitable for the furtherance of present Party policies; instead, emphasis should be placed upon "consolidation" of the "democratic revolution." The continuance of logistical problems in supplying the Chinese personnel in Tibet, numbering roughly 100,000, via long and difficult supply routes also had a dampening effect on the pursuit of unpopular programs that might spark additional Tibetan resistance.

Although major Chinese Communist programs now have been shelved, the Chinese position in Tibet is slowly being strengthened through the implementation of less spectacular measures. The local Tibetan administrative structure has been replaced by standard Chinese administrative organs, staffed by Chinese and pro-Chinese Tibetans. Motorable roads continue to be built, particularly in southern Tibet. The Chinese also continue to stress the need for increased agricultural production and suggest ways of achieving it. Significant gains in this undertaking might permit the Chinese to supply their considerable food requirements locally and thus allow them to be less dependent upon the tenuous road links with Kansu and Szechwan.

---

* After the inauguration of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1956, the attempt to curb the power of the monasteries and related restrictions helped spark sizable anti-Chinese outbreaks, particularly in eastern Tibet. Consequently, a 5-year moratorium on the introduction of so-called democratic reforms was announced by Mao Tse-tung in early 1957. In spite of this promise of postponement of "reform," the outbreak of heavy fighting in March 1959 and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India led to a renewal of Chinese efforts to prod the truculent Tibetans into taking the first steps on the "road to socialism." But considerable Tibetan resistance to both land reform and the organization of mutual-aid teams forced another Chinese "reexamination" of Party policies in 1960, and this examination was followed by the retrenchment announcement of late 1960. In spite of the 1960 moratorium, however, a fundamental change in Tibetan society was accomplished during the land-reform program by the confiscation or "buying out" of the large land holdings of the monasteries and the nobility, thus removing the economic base from which much of their power was derived.

The legal status of Tibet came under scrutiny in 1959 when the General Assembly of the United Nations debated the "question of Tibet," including the charges that the Chinese Communists had practiced genocide and violated human rights in Tibet. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the International Commission of Jurists prepared two reports on the situation. The Commission included in its findings the judgment that Tibet was in fact an independent state from 1913 to 1950. Although the findings have little practical effect on the present status of Tibet, the implication of Tibetan statehood at the time the Simla Convention was signed in 1914 lends weight to the Indian contention that the McMahon Line is a valid boundary. To this extent the Commission's findings support the Indian case in the Sino-Indian border dispute.

II. Administrative Changes

In January 1960 the Chinese Communists announced that Tibet had been organized into 7 special districts (chuan-ch'ü) and 1 municipality (shih) through which the 72 newly created hsien would be administered (see Table 1 and Map 35255).* This reorganization marked the end of the traditional administrative system of Tibet, which had been based on a level of local government called the dzong (tsung), as well as the end of Chinese efforts to implement policy directives at the local level through the mechanism of traditional institutions. Chinese dissatisfaction with the existing situation had become apparent in 1959 when press releases in China noted pointedly that the administrative units of Tibet were staffed almost entirely by Tibetans. It was these Tibetan officials, charged the Chinese Communists, together with the "reactionary clique of the upper strata" -- the clerical and lay nobility -- who were the leading instigators of the rebellion. In July 1959 the pro-Chinese Tibetan, Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, who holds the title of Vice Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, called the traditional Tibetan administrative system "irrational and inconvenient for administrative management." 1/** Jigme further suggested making a "rational" administrative redivision based upon topography, communications, economy, defense, and similar factors. 2/ Administrative changes of this type were made, and the present administrative structure became effective in January 1960.

Most of the 72 hsien of Tibet are located in the south and east, where sedentary agriculture is possible. The population of the agricultural areas is estimated at 900,000, distributed by administrative division as shown in Table 2.*** The 300,000 Tibetans who are classified as nomads are scattered throughout Tibet wherever pastures can be found, but the majority are located north of the Tsangpo on the high grasslands of the Chang Thang, or northern plateau. The traditional independence of the nomads and the obvious difficulties of maintaining satisfactory control over pastoral people located in a bleak and inhospitable physical environment have posed perplexing problems for the Chinese. The chief shortcoming of democratic reform in Tibet is that, as the Panchen Lama succinctly stated in December 1960, "a set of work experiences has not yet been found which will suit the characteristics of the pastoral areas in which there is a large stretch of land but a small population and in which the people live widely apart and move frequently from one place to another." 3/

---

* Table 1 follows on p. 8; Map 35255 inside back cover.
** For serially numbered source references, see Appendix B.
*** Table 2 follows on p. 10.

The creation of the special districts resulted in the abolition of the Chamdo Local Area (Ch'ang-tu Ti-ch'ü), a political unit at the province level governed by the Chamdo Liberation Committee. The Chamdo Local Area was established early in the Communist rule of Tibet to govern the territory extending roughly from the upper Yangtze River west to the older provincial border between Tibet and Sikang.* Although Chamdo representatives were included on the 51-member Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (organized in 1956) and the inference was that Chamdo would be a part of the future Tibet Autonomous Region, some confusion about the status of Chamdo remained even after 1956. It was shown as a separate unit, not part of Tibet, on Chinese Communist maps and was listed in administrative tables as a province-level unit. When Chamdo officially became a part of Tibet through the 1960 reorganization, however, the ancient political boundaries of Tibet were restored.

Although a Chinese Communist administrative structure has been forced upon Tibet (see Figure 1), the actual functioning of the system that was set up to achieve effective implementation of Party policies is dependent upon the staffing of local government organs by trained and dependable Tibetan and Chinese cadres. Official reports made by the Panchen Lama in 1960 and 1961 have included statements concerning the necessity of having "a considerable number of Han cadres and cadres of other brotherly nationalities to work in Tibet." 4/ Chinese press releases frequently have referred to the incompetency of the cadres in Tibet and the consequent difficulty in carrying out Party directives. 5/ Improvement in cadre quality obviously will be a key factor in the furtherance of Communist objectives in Tibet.

* When the Sikang Province of China was organized in 1928, its western border was drawn nearly 400 miles west of the upper Yangtze River. At that time the Yangtze marked the somewhat fluctuating line between territory controlled from Lhasa and that controlled by Chinese authorities in Szechwan Province. Despite any semblance of Chinese administration west of the Yangtze during the period from 1912 to 1951, the fiction of Chinese control was maintained by maps that showed hsien seats in this area and a Sino-Tibetan border drawn only 75 miles east of Lhasa. Thus the creation of the Chamdo Local Area, coinciding in territory with this western portion of Sikang Province (abolished in 1955), perpetuated the problems of defining the political borders of Tibet.

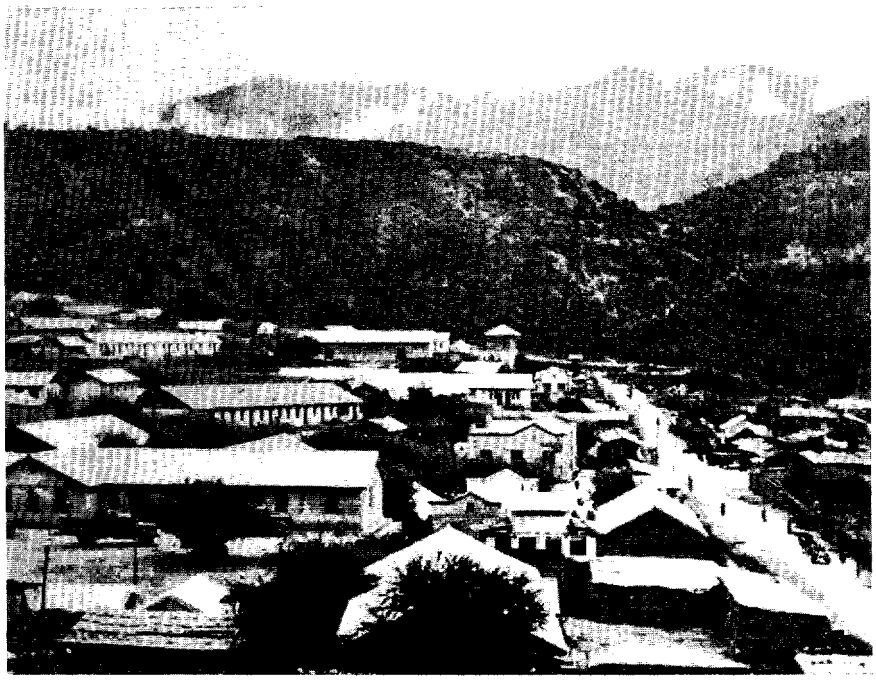


Figure 1. The town of Lin-chih in southeastern Tibet. Lin-chih is the administrative headquarters of the Lin-chih special district. The numerous new buildings constructed by the Chinese Communist occupation forces and trucks such as those in the left foreground make a visible imprint on Tibetan communities. Southeastern Tibet is mostly below 10,000 feet in elevation, lower than other parts of the country, and receives a considerable amount of rain. Consequently, the slopes here are covered by shrubs and trees, in sharp contrast to the barren hills so characteristic of most of Tibet.

Table 1

Administrative Divisions of Tibet a/

Special District	Municipality	Administrative Seat	Hsien
A-li		Ya-sha (unlocated) Possibly Gar Dzong, which previously has been accepted as military headquarters for western Tibet.	Cha-ta Chung-pa Jih-t'u Kai-tse Ko-chi Ka-erh P'u-lan
Ch'ang-tu (Chamdo)		Ch'ang-tu	Ch'ang-tu Ch'a-ya Chiang-ta Kung-chiao Lei-wu-ch'i Lo-lung Ning-ching Pa-su Pien-pa Sang-ang-ch'u Ting-ch'ing Tso-kung
Chiang-tzu (Gyangtse)		Gyangtse	Chiang-tzu Jen-pu Lang-k'a-tzu Pai-lang Ta-lung Ya-tung
Jih-k'o-tse (Zhikatse)		Zhikatse	Ang-jen Chi-lung Hsieh-t'ung-men Jih-k'o-tse La-tzu Nan-mu-lin Nieh-la-mu Sa-chia Sa-ko Ting-chieh Ting-jih

Table 1

Administrative Divisions of Tibet a/
(Continued)

Special District	Municipality	Administrative Seat	Hsien
Lin-chih		Lin-chih	Chia-li Hsueh-pa Kung-pu-chiang-ta Lin-chih Mi-lin Mo-t'o Po-mi
Na-ch'ü		Nagchhu Dzong (Hei-ho)	An-to Hei-ho Nieh-jung Pa-ch'ing Pan-ko Pi-ju Shen-cha So-hsien Ta-mu-sa-chia
Shan-nan (Loka)		Tsethang	Cha-nang Che-ku Chia-ch'a Ch'iung-chieh Kung-ka La-chia-li Lang-hsien Lo-cha Lung-tzu Nai-tung Sang-jih Ts'o-na
	Lhasa Shih	Lhasa	Ch'u-shui Lin-chou Mo-chu-kung-k'a Ni-mu P'ang-to Tang-hsiung Ta-tzu Tui-lung-te-ch'ing

a. 6/. For a comparison of the present administrative structure with the earlier organization, see 7/.

Approved For Release 2000/04/17 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000300070001-4

Table 2

Population and Area Statistics of Tibet

Special District	Population			Area		Remarks
	Agricultural	Pastoral	Combined	Cultivated Land (Acres)	Total (Square Miles)	
A-li	5,000 a/	25,000	30,000 b/	2,500 c/	155,000 b/	Extensive barren and uninhabited areas with limited cultivated land, principally in river valleys near the Indian border. Important markets for Indian, Nepali, and Tibetan traders held each summer in southwestern A-li. Major pilgrimage sites for Hindus and Buddhists at Manasarowar Lake and Mt. Kailas.
Ch'ang-tu (Chamdo)	250,000	50,000	300,000 d/	125,000 c/	50,000 e/	Includes most of eastern Tibet. Characterized, particularly in the south, by very deep, rocky gorges of the Mekong, Salween, Yangtze Rivers and their tributaries. Small patches of agricultural land on valley floors and on adjacent slopes. Rolling plateau pasture lands along many interfluvial divides inhabited by nomads.
Chiang-tzu (Gyangtse)	100,000	10,000	110,000 f/	62,000 f/	12,900 f/	Includes agriculturally productive Nyang Chhu (near Gyangtse) and Chumbi Valleys.

Special District	Population			Area		Remarks
	Agricultural	Pastoral	Combined	Cultivated Land (Acres)	Total (Square Miles)	
Jih-k'o-tze (Zhikatse)	187,000 g/	N.A.	h/	94,000 c/	i/	Contains numerous villages and considerable cultivated acreage in valleys south of the Tsangpo. North of the Tsangpo, nomadic areas in southern part of the large northern plateau (Chang Thang).
Lin-chih	66,000 c/	N.A.	h/	33,000 j/	25,000 e/	Includes relatively low tributary valleys of the Tsangpo, many heavily forested. Most extensive forested area in Po-mi hsien. Principal agricultural area in Ni-yang Valley between T'ai-chao and Lin-chih.
Na-ch'ü	N.A.	N.A.	h/	N.A.	77,200 k/	Contains important agricultural communities in upper Salween Valley and tributary valleys. Extensive nomadic areas in the west. Important borax mines in Pan-ko hsien.
Shan-nan (Loka)	130,000 c/	30,000 c/	160,000 l/	65,000 l/	19,000 l/	Includes numerous relatively fertile valleys south of the Tsangpo. A few high valleys and limited plateau areas suitable for grazing.

Approved For Release 2000/04/17 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000300070001-4

Table 2

Population and Area Statistics of Tibet
(Continued)

Special District	Population			Area		Remarks
	Agricultural	Pastoral	Combined	Cultivated Land (Acres)	Total (Square Miles)	
La-sa Shih (Lhasa municipality)	N.A.	N.A.	170,000 m/	70,000 m/	13,000 e/	Includes Kyi Chhu Valley, one of most productive agricultural areas in Tibet. Major grazing lands, particularly the extensive valley in which Tang-hsiung airfield is located, northwest of Lhasa.
Totals for Tibet	900,000	300,000	1,200,000	465,000	470,000	Figures for agricultural and pastoral population and cultivated total area are those usually given in press releases for the whole of Tibet.

Approved For Release 2000/04/17 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000300070001-4

a. 8/
b. 9/
c. Estimated acreage under cultivation. Where district acreage figures are unavailable an arbitrary factor of 0.5 acres of cultivated land per person has been used to estimate the number of acres under cultivation. This factor was derived by dividing the total number of acres of cultivated land (465,000) by the total number of persons in agricultural areas (900,000). Conversely, the same factor has been used in estimating the agricultural population of a district where only the cultivated acreage is known.
d. 10/
e. Computed from areas of special districts as shown on accompanying map.
f. 11/
g. 12/
h. Total population figures are not available for the special districts of Zhikatse, Lin-chih, and Na-ch'ü. The following estimates are suggested for these areas:

Zhikatse. At least 200,000 (based on 187,000 in the agricultural areas) to possibly 250,000, depending upon the extent of nomadic territory included within its boundaries.

Lin-chih. A derived figure of 66,000 persons in agricultural areas is based upon cultivated-land statistics. Because little pastoral land is available, a total of 50,000 to 100,000 seems reasonable.

Na-ch'ü. Using the high and low estimates for the above areas, the population of Na-ch'ü probably is in the 80,000 to 180,000 range. An estimate on the low side is more likely.

i. District includes unknown amounts of pastoral lands in northern Tibet, largely without hsien seats, and therefore area measurements have not been considered feasible.
j. 13/
k. 14/
l. 15/
m. 16/

Approved For Release 2000/04/17 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000300070001-4

III. Road Construction

Road construction in Tibet was greatly accelerated after the March 1959 revolt, particularly the building of new roads to the Nepal, Bhutan, and northeastern India frontiers. Roads now connect most of the important Tibetan towns in the Himalayan border region, and an east-west road (actually parts of several roads) now parallels the entire southern border of Tibet (see Map 35428).* Most of these roads were hastily built to support Chinese military operations against areas of dissidence, many of which were located between the Tsangpo and the Himalayas. After the more immediate military requirements of 1959 had been satisfied, the further extension of the road network enabled the Chinese to maintain tighter control of the southern border regions of Tibet. Through the construction of a road net along the southern border, the southward movement of Tibetan refugees can be regulated, possible overland smuggling of military supplies into Tibet can be checked more easily, and Chinese military capabilities against India, Nepal, and Bhutan are enhanced.

One of the more significant of the roads built during the past 3 years is the 600-mile road linking Zhikatse with Barkha, a point on the Sinkiang-Tibet road in western Tibet. The completion of this road link, which has been rumored as under construction for many years, should now permit the movement of supplies from the major Chinese bases at Lhasa and Zhikatse to western Tibet. Up to now, western Tibet has been dependent upon goods brought from Sinkiang over a road that is probably closed to traffic during much of the winter and early spring.

Another recently constructed road of considerable importance connects Zhikatse with Tingri Dzong, a strategic Chinese base near the Nepalese border. From this road a number of feeder routes probably have been built or are under construction to such points as Tingkye Dzong, Sar, Nyalam Dzong, Jongkha Dzong, and other places near the border. The importance of the Tingri Dzong route was increased by the signing, on 15 October 1961, of an agreement between Nepal and Communist China for the construction of a road link between the two countries.

The relatively open valleys and level plateaus that are characteristic of much of southern Tibet permit roads to be "constructed" with minimal effort and in little time. Most of the roads built since 1959 probably have been "simple highways"** with natural earth surfaces (see

* Inside back cover.

** Roads in Communist China are classified in six basic types according to construction specifications, type of surface, and traffic capacity. The lowest class, Type VI-B, is a "simple highway," designed as a single-lane, low-capacity road with a natural earth [footnote continued on p. 16]

Figure 2). 17/ An October 1959 Chinese Communist press report stated that after the suppression of the rebellion, simple highways were built to connect most of the hsien in southern Tibet. 18/ The speed of construction can be explained by the relatively open terrain and the likelihood that existing caravan tracks were used as road alignments. Most roads are estimated to be motorable during all but a few weeks of the year. Although precipitation generally is light in southern Tibet, occasional heavy rains and resultant flooding during summer may disrupt traffic, particularly on simple highways where smaller streams may not be bridged. In some of the protected plains and lower valleys near the Nepalese border, winter snowfall has been known to halt transport for several days at a time. Depending upon the importance of the route and the availability of alternate means of transport, many of these original simple highways probably will be improved through the realignment of difficult sections, widening, bridging, and the addition of aggregate to road surfaces (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Part of the road between Khamba Dzong and Tingkye Dzong in southern Tibet. Open, flat valleys such as the one shown here are characteristic of much of Tibet, permitting roads to be built with little in the way of actual construction. This would be characterized as a "simple highway."

surface. The building of such a simple road in Tibet, as suggested by its construction specifications and surface characteristics, may involve nothing more than the use of stones to outline a roadbed across flat barren or grassy plains.

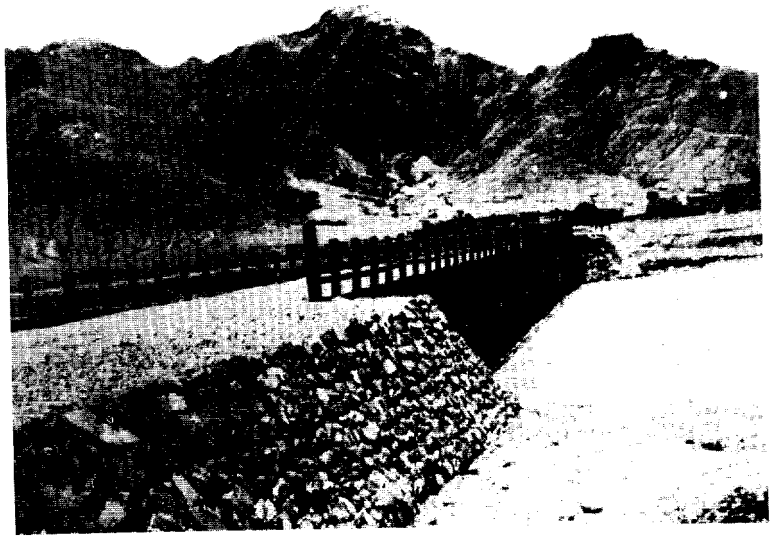


Figure 3. Bridge over the Shap Chhu. Although relatively small streams can be forded, improvement of a road usually includes the construction of bridges such as this one on a road in southern Tibet between Sakya Gompa and Zhikatse.

Although Chinese Communist transportation capabilities have improved markedly in southern Tibet, poor communications remain a problem in many areas of eastern Tibet (see Figure 4). Here deeply incised rivers and streams have dissected the plateau into an intricate mosaic of deep canyons, sharp ridges, and precipices. Thus the northwest-southeast alignment of these terrain features greatly hinders east-west communications. The main Szechwan-Lhasa road, particularly the section between Ch'ang-tu and Lin-chih, has been plagued since its completion in late 1954 by maintenance problems because of ice and snow on the higher stretches during winter and frequent landslides in areas of lower elevation where rainfall is comparatively heavy. To bypass this section of the route and to improve over-all Chinese Communist control, new roads have been under construction for several years, notably a southern route via Batang, Ning-ching, Pang-ta, and Sung-tsung, and a northern road, apparently uncompleted, from Ch'ang-tu to Ting-ch'ing to Nagchhu Dzong. Where political and economic conditions warrant and the terrain permits their construction, branch roads lead from the major routes into side valleys. Data are insufficient, however, to plot the location of all these roads on the accompanying map.

Figure 4. A section of the Szechwan-Lhasa road. The terrain of eastern Tibet is extremely rugged and mountainous. Rocky, north-south aligned ridges must be crossed by roads from Szechwan to Lhasa and southern Tibet. Construction is very difficult, costly, and time consuming.

IV. Air Transport

An air link between Tibet and China has existed since 1956, when the airfield near Tang-hsiung, some 60 miles due north of Lhasa, was completed (see Figure 5). The Tang-hsiung field is built on a plain at an elevation of 14,000 feet and has the distinction of being the highest airfield in the world. Numerous reports during the past several years have mentioned other airfields under construction in Tibet, but -- with the possible exception of a field located near Nagchhu Dzong, some 150 miles north of Lhasa -- none is believed to be operational.

Figure 5. Tang-hsiung Airfield near Lhasa. The Tibetans in the foreground are welcoming the first plane that landed on the new field, in June 1956. The airfield is 14,000 feet above sea level; the peaks of the Nyenchhen Thanglha in the background rise several thousand feet higher.

The extensive and generally hard-surfaced plains that are common to many areas of Tibet facilitate the construction of airfields. Possibly some sites could be utilized as landing grounds with little more than a ground check to remove stones and other minor obstacles. Much of the reported construction activity related to airfields, therefore, may be in the nature of preliminary work designed to provide emergency landing fields in areas of possible future air operations.

The high elevations and severe climate of Tibet affect air operations as well as the construction of airfields. Frequent gales, low temperatures, and changeable weather hamper air operations. In the rarified air of the Tibetan Plateau, extraordinarily long runways are essential.

V. Agriculture

A major problem for the Chinese Communists in maintaining control of Tibet is the necessity of transporting foodstuffs from China to supply the large numbers of Chinese troops, cadres, and technicians (see Figure 6). Because major increases in the amount of food transported into Tibet are not likely to occur until (or if) the Hsi-ning--Lhasa railroad is constructed, emphasis probably will continue to be on measures designed to increase local production.

Figure 6. Truckloads of grain at Lhasa. The need to import food supplies into Tibet via long and costly truck hauls to feed the large numbers of occupying Chinese is one of the major problems of Communist control of Tibet.

Estimates of the total amount of land cultivated suggest a figure between 450,000 and 500,000 acres -- far less than 1 percent of Tibet's total area. (See Map 35953* for approximate distribution of agricultural land.) In general, most of the flat land in river valleys below 14,000 feet in elevation is cultivated. The principal crops are barley, wheat, buckwheat, and root vegetables. In a few places where elevations drop below 10,000 feet -- such as the Chumbi Valley and parts of Lin-chih in southeastern Tibet -- a greater variety of foodstuffs, including rice and fruit, can be grown. As indicated on Map 35953, not all river valleys below 14,000 feet can be cultivated. Portions of the Tsangpo Valley between Zhikatse and Tsethang, for example, are covered with great

* Inside back cover.

sand dunes; some of the valleys of southeastern Tibet are still in forests; and the deep canyons characteristic of rivers and streams of eastern Tibet restrict cultivation to isolated valley flats and scattered fields on the upper slopes. As a consequence of the paucity of cultivated land and the limitations on output imposed by the severe Tibetan climate, agricultural production has been barely adequate for the local populace. Traditionally the Tibetans have carried on a limited border trade by exchanging wool and salt for foodstuffs from India and Nepal.

Feeding the Chinese stationed in Tibet aggravates an already difficult problem of procuring an adequate food supply. Chinese efforts to increase and stimulate agricultural production have been centered at their Lhasa Experimental Station, located in the fertile and protected Kyi Chhu Valley (see Figure 7). Common garden vegetables in wide variety have been grown successfully, and experimental test plots have been planted with different varieties of barley and wheat. By 1959 the Chinese Communists claimed to have achieved self-sufficiency in supplying vegetables to their personnel in Tibet. 19/ A 1960 report claimed that some 50 percent of their meat requirements also were met through their own efforts. 20/ The validity of these statements, however, is doubtful, in spite of the probability that many permanent Chinese installations include vegetable gardens and that Chinese personnel engage in animal husbandry to some extent. In Lhasa in January 1962, a conference on production by government organizations gave a less optimistic picture of the present and a qualified view of future production by stating that if ideological, planning, and policy problems are settled "all Tibet government organizations may well be self-supporting in food crops, edible oils, meat, vegetables, and cattle fodder in years to come." 21/

The possibility that agricultural production could be dramatically raised by reclaiming large tracts of land has been suggested occasionally (see Figure 8). According to Anna Louise Strong, a pro-Communist author who visited Tibet in 1959, Chinese officials professed to have no statistics available on the amount of land reclaimable. 22/ In her talks with numerous officials in Lhasa, however, the consensus was that cultivated land could be increased by 50 percent and possibly doubled. 23/ Considerable labor would be needed to drain swamps, build irrigation ditches, and carry out other measures that are required to open up additional land. There have been various claims that the area under cultivation has been increased, but the major Chinese effort continues to be toward increasing yields from land now in crops. 24/ Because of the relatively primitive state of Tibetan agriculture, higher yields could be achieved through increased fertilization -- although, in view of the transport problems, local supplies of animal manure will probably have to be used instead of chemical fertilizers. Manures, however, may be in short supply in some agricultural areas that are deficient in fuelwood, because dried dung is commonly used for fuel. The use of improved seeds,

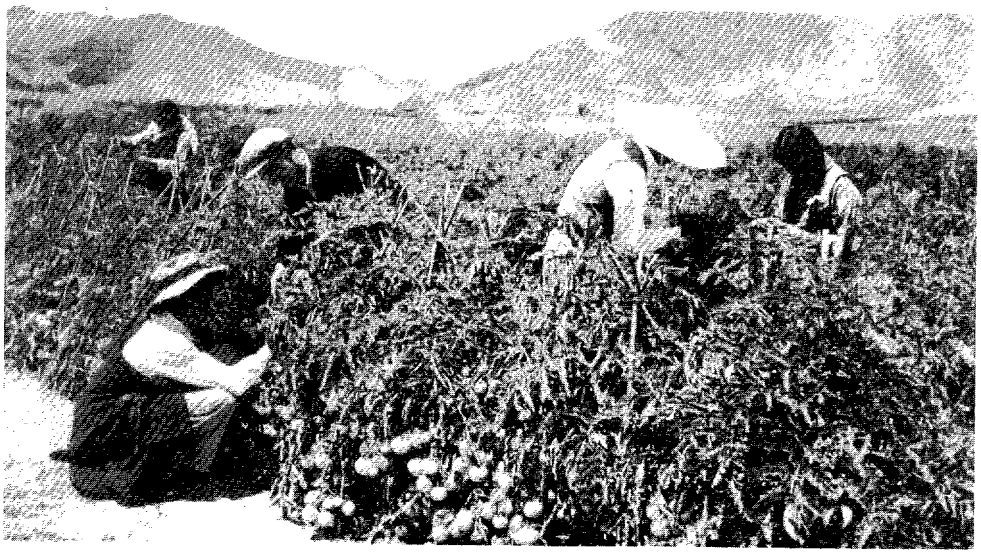


Figure 7. The Lhasa Experimental Station. Solidification of Chinese Communist control in Tibet is closely related to attempts to make the Chinese community self-sufficient in grain and vegetables. Plots of vegetables and grains at Lhasa have been undergoing trial during the past several years to find those varieties best suited to the harsh Tibetan environment.

Figure 8. A promising section of unused land in Lin-chih. Some attempts have been made by the Communists to reclaim land or to open up new areas for agricultural production. It would appear that here Chinese cadres are explaining the use of a plow to the local Tibetans.

extension of irrigation works and better maintenance of them, and other agricultural techniques may also increase output significantly.

Discussions of land reclamation are often tied in with the assertion that Tibet could be populated by millions of Han Chinese immigrants. Although it is likely that substantial increases in agricultural output can be realized during the next few years, it is unlikely that this increase will be so great or new land so extensive that Han Chinese would be permitted to settle in any more than token numbers. Probably the increases in production will provide little more than improved rations for the Tibetans and self-sufficiency for the superstructure of Chinese troops, administrators, and cadres.

VI. Other Economic Developments

Aside from improving agricultural practices, few attempts have been made to develop the economy of Tibet. A major exception has been the mining of borax at several places near Pan-ko Hsien in northern Tibet. In 1959, some 10,000 tons of borax were exported to the Soviet Union; with the inclusion of exports to other Bloc nations, this figure probably had doubled by 1961. 25/ Other development has been of local significance only, consisting of the construction of a small hydroelectric station near Lhasa (see Figure 9), the opening of coal mines near Lhasa and in northern Tibet, and the establishment of motor-vehicle shops, farm-tool manufacturing plants, and leather-tanning and similar handicraft industries in Lhasa and other urban centers. 26/ Agriculture remains the first priority, and Chinese Communist officials have stated that industrial development of Tibet is dependent upon its first becoming agriculturally self-sufficient. 27/

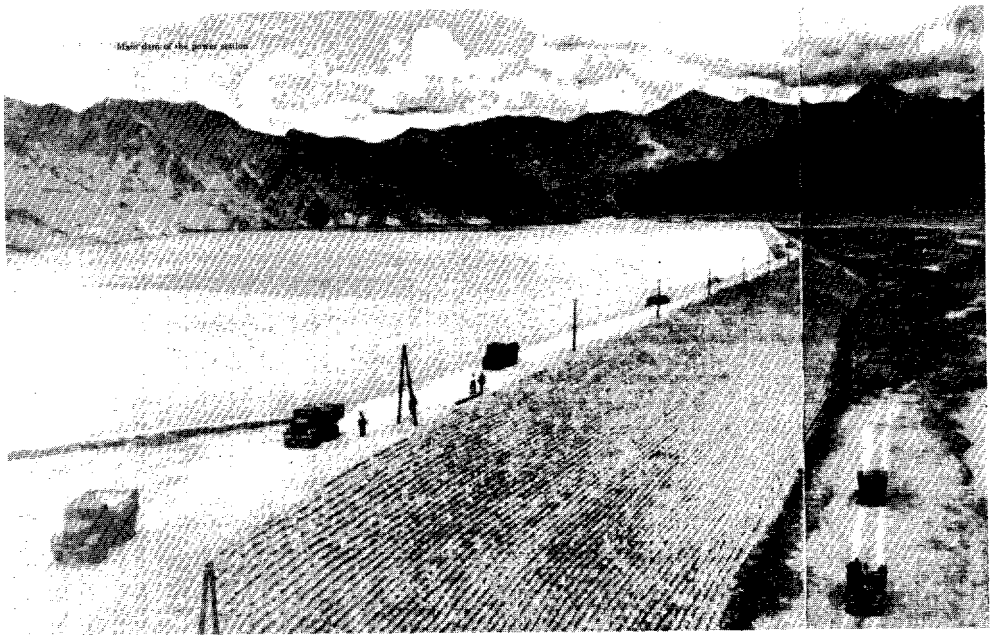


Figure 9. The dam near the Na-chin hydroelectric powerplant, built in 1960. This earthen dam east of Lhasa channels water from the Kyi Chhu to the powerplant, which presumably supplies Lhasa and its environs with electric power.

VII. Legal Status

Before the March 1959 revolt the world was little concerned about or interested in the legal status of Tibet. This indifference resulted primarily from (1) the physical isolation of Tibet and its almost non-existent external contacts, and (2) the continued claims of past and present Chinese governments that Tibet was an integral part of China.* The latter point was reinforced by the undeniable fact that Tibet was a dependency of China for nearly two centuries prior to 1912. The flight of the Dalai Lama to India in March 1959 and the confirmation of large-scale fighting between Chinese and Tibetans sparked considerable interest in Tibet and its relationship with China, including debate in the United Nations over the reported Chinese violation of human rights and the practice of genocide against the Tibetans.

The activity of the United Nations in Tibetan affairs included the investigation by the International Commission of Jurists, an organization with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Both reports prepared by the Jurists -- a preliminary one by the Commission in July 1959 and a more detailed study by the Legal Inquiry Committee that was specially convened under the aegis of the Commission in 1960 -- concluded that Tibet was at the very least a de facto independent state at the time of the 1950 Chinese invasion. 29/ The jurists were satisfied that from 1913 to 1950 Tibet had demonstrated the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law: a distinct people inhabiting a definite territory and having a government that conducted its domestic affairs free from outside control and also conducted its own foreign relations. Although its foreign relations were few, the evidence showed that the Tibetan government exclusively conducted its own affairs after 1913. Also, countries with whom Tibet had foreign relations treated Tibet as an independent state. The findings of the Commission are largely of academic interest as far as any practical change in Tibet's present status is concerned, inasmuch as Tibet is and apparently will continue for the foreseeable future to be a de facto territory of Communist China.

A more tangible result of the jurist's deliberations is additional backing for the Indian position regarding the legality of the McMahon

---

* The Government of the Republic of China, as well as the Communist regime on the mainland, maintains that Tibet is an integral part of China. After the March 1959 revolt, President Chiang restated the position of the Chinese Nationalist Government that "when the mainland is recovered," it would "assist the Tibetan people to realize their own aspirations in accordance with the principles of self-determination." 28/

Line. If, as the jurists contend, Tibet was an independent state in 1913, then it was in a position at the Simla Conference of 1913-14* to negotiate and sign the Simla Convention of 1914 that included a map on which the McMahon Line was delineated.

* The Simla Conference of 1913-14, attended by representatives of Great Britain, China, and Tibet, was called in an attempt to settle the status of Tibet. A primary objective of the Conference was to partition Tibet into an Inner Tibet, where Chinese sovereignty would be recognized, and an Outer Tibet that would be autonomous. In the course of determining this Sino-Tibetan border, a boundary between India and Tibet east of Bhutan was defined and drawn on a map. This boundary became known as the McMahon Line. Although the Chinese representative refused to sign the final agreement, the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries concluded the Simla Convention on 3 July 1914 using the map on which the McMahon Line had been drawn.

VIII. Conclusions

The difficulties encountered by the Chinese Communists in their attempts to control Tibet and the Tibetan people are similar to those faced by earlier Chinese regimes. Perennial obstacles to Chinese domination in Tibet include the great distances separating centers of Tibetan authority from Chinese bases as well as the high cost of maintaining communications between them; the size of Tibet, in which large areas are sparsely populated by mobile nomadic groups who traditionally have resisted any form of external control; and the widespread antipathy between Tibetans and Chinese, which is sharpened by their contrasting ways of life.

The construction of motorable roads seemingly should have eased considerably the problems of transportation between Tibet and China, but adequate supplies of indigenous food and other necessities are lacking and the large numbers of Chinese in Tibet are still largely dependent upon supplies brought long distances over difficult roads. The transportation situation is not likely to improve in the near future because air-supply capabilities are limited and the proposed railroad from Tsinghai to Lhasa is a questionable project with a completion date many years in the future.

Basic Sino-Tibetan animosities remain, and the Chinese leadership has admitted that among the "masses" an understanding of socialism is imperfect -- which, in effect, means that the Chinese have experienced determined Tibetan opposition. The lack of trained cadres, either trusted Tibetans or reliable Chinese, who could implement Party policies at the local level continues to be a problem.

In spite of the opposition of the Tibetans and the other vexing problems with which the Chinese Communists have been confronted, the record of 10 years of Communist occupation has been one of halting but continuing alteration of the social, political, and economic structure of Tibet. The apparent breaking up of the vast power of the monasteries by confiscation of most of their large land holdings through programs of land reform and the resultant general depopulation of the monasteries are perhaps the most far-reaching and significant of the Communist "reforms." The Chinese Communists have reiterated that, in spite of the present moratorium on new programs, the political need for eventual reform persists. They seem determined to proceed toward their goal of transforming Tibet into a pliant and socialized territory under complete Communist domination.

APPENDIX A

GAPS IN INTELLIGENCE

Although considerable information from Chinese Communist sources on the political-administrative measures introduced in Tibet over the past several years has been published, reliable data on the implementation and effectiveness of these measures are fragmentary and lack areal coverage. In particular, information is lacking on the type and degree of Chinese control over the nomadic groups in northern Tibet. Complete statistical coverage of the population breakdown by administrative unit also is lacking. Maps depicting the administrative boundaries at the special-district level are not available. No reliable data are available on the amount of cultivated land and land that could be cultivated nor on the areal distribution of cultivated and cultivable land. Little information is available on the numerous branch and feeder roads that have been built from the major transport routes.

APPENDIX B

SOURCE REFERENCES

Evaluations, following the classification entry and designated "Eval.," have the following significance:

Source of Information	Information
Doc. - Documentary	1 - Confirmed by other sources
A - Completely reliable	2 - Probably true
B - Usually reliable	3 - Possibly true
C - Fairly reliable	4 - Doubtful
D - Not usually reliable	5 - Probably false
E - Not reliable	6 - Cannot be judged
F - Cannot be judged	

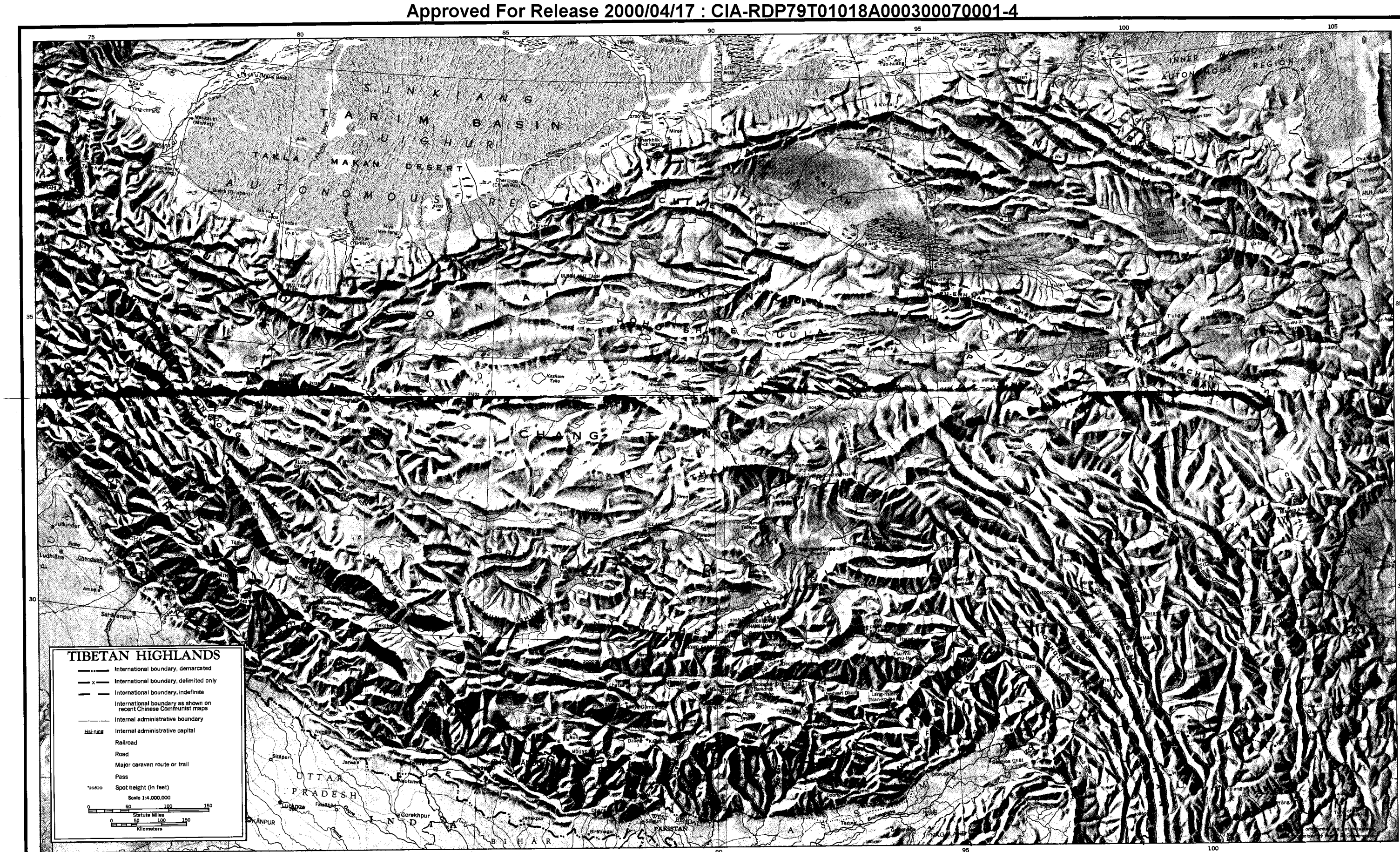
"Documentary" refers to original documents of foreign governments and organizations; copies or translations of such documents by a staff officer; or information extracted from such documents by a staff officer, all of which may carry the field evaluation "Documentary."

Evaluations not otherwise designated are those appearing on the cited document; those designated "RR" are by the author of this report. No "RR" evaluation is given when the author agrees with the evaluation on the cited document.

25X1A

[redacted]

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt



Approved For Release 2000/04/17 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000300070001-4