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TIBET AND CHINA

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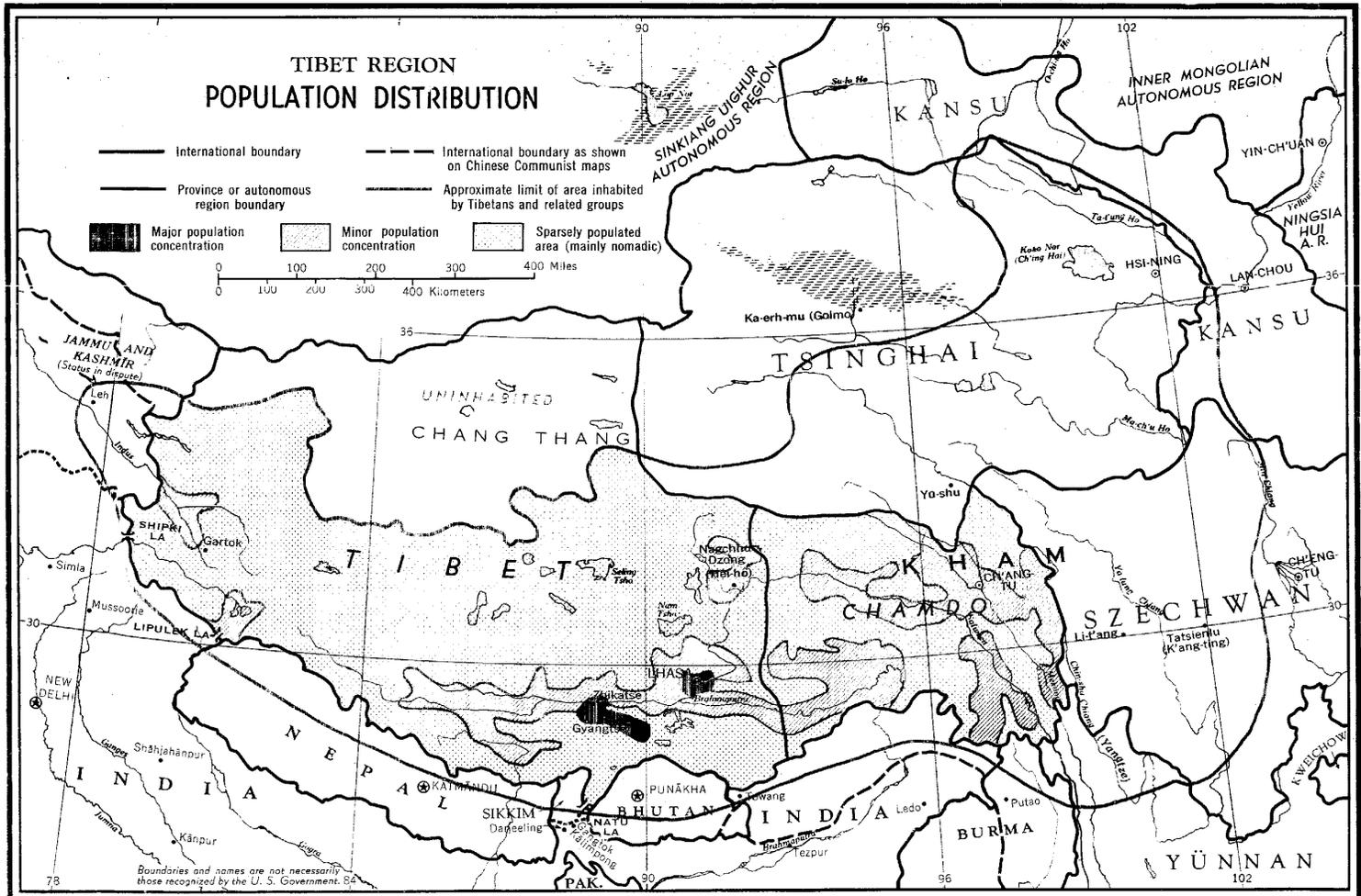
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TIBET AND CHINA

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TIBET AND CHINA

Introduction

The present situation in Tibet is similar in many respects to incidents that have occurred repeatedly throughout centuries of contact and conflict between Tibetans and Chinese. For this reason an understanding of past developments in Sino-Tibetan relations is essential to an assessment of the present. The basic factors which have continued to affect this relationship include the nature and persistence of native Tibetan institutions, the policies of various Chinese central governments toward Tibet, and the activities of other nations in the area. These factors have operated within the framework of the difficult terrain and climate of Tibet and its rigid social structure.

The area designated by the name "Tibet" has varied greatly. For the purposes of this discussion, "Tibet" will include the existing political entity consisting of Tibet proper and the Chamdo area immediately to the east. The eastern boundary of the region follows roughly the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. The area principally inhabited by ethnic Tibetans is much greater, but it includes territories traditionally governed by China, India, Nepal, and other border countries.

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I. Tibetan Institutions

The outstanding characteristic of the government of Tibet is that until recently it has been a functioning theocracy. While religious and political aspects of the government could be distinguished, the former were dominant. Events in Tibet cannot be understood, therefore, without some knowledge of the Tibetan religion and its coordinate leaders, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

The Tibetan religion is a form of Buddhism usually referred to as Lamaism. Subjected to a heavy admixture of primitive animism, it is regarded as unorthodox by adherents of the major schools of Buddhism. Because the early history of the region was characterized by constant contention among petty rulers, the monasteries, as symbols of continuity and security, acquired a considerable amount of political power.

The temporal power of the religious authorities was enhanced in the 13th century when invading Mongols were converted to Lamaism and established a Tibetan government under Mongol suzerainty. The subsequent conquest of China by the Mongols led to close relations between Tibet and the central government of China.

With the fall of Mongol authority in China in 1368, Tibet became largely independent and internal conditions became unsettled. About a century later there arose a Buddhist leader

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who instituted reforms in the Tibetan church and consolidated the position of a new sect. He was highly revered during his lifetime, and upon his death an infant was discovered who was declared to be his reincarnation. This marked the establishment of the institution of the Dalai Lama, of whom the present incumbent is the 14th reincarnation.

The temporal authority of the Dalai Lama was made absolute under the able fifth reincarnation, who ruled during the 17th century with the support of a Mongol Khan. As a mark of reverence for his aged tutor, the fifth Dalai Lama declared him to be a reincarnation of a Buddha. In addition, the tutor was granted a large and rich monastery as his headquarters and a court was established for him which resembled that of the Dalai Lama but on a smaller scale. Thus was founded the institution of the Panchen Lama, who has continued to share spiritual authority among Tibetans with the Dalai Lama. The present incumbent is the tenth in the line.

Both the Dalai and Panchen Lamas are selected from infants born within a reasonably short interval after the death of an incumbent. Delegations of religious authorities search out such infants, subject them to certain tests, and look for physical attributes which are supposed to indicate that the child is the reincarnation of the deceased Lama. The Lamas need not be born within the political boundaries of Tibet nor be of Tibetan parentage; a Mongol prince was once selected as Dalai Lama. As a

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practical matter, however, the search is conducted in areas inhabited largely by ethnic Tibetans.

From the point of view of Buddhist theology, the Panchen Lama is superior to the Dalai Lama since he reincarnates a being of higher rank. Practically, however, the Dalai Lama has continued to exercise paramount authority, both spiritually and temporally. The relationship between the two Lamas has frequently been one of rivalry which at times has broken out into open quarreling.

A significant instance of rivalry occurred during the reigns of the predecessors of the present incumbents. A long and bitter disagreement was climaxed by the flight of the Panchen Lama to China in 1923. After the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933 and the selection of a successor in 1935 the Panchen Lama began the journey back to Lhasa, but he died in 1937 while still in Chinese territory.

The present Dalai and Panchen Lamas, although they are ethnic Tibetans, were born and discovered outside the political borders of Tibet, in China's Tsinghai Province. The Dalai Lama, who was born in 1935, was brought to Lhasa four years later while the Panchen Lama, born in 1937, remained in a monastery in Tsinghai until 1952. Their relations have been outwardly amicable since that time, but recent events have brought their basic differences to the fore. These developments will be discussed below in connection with Chinese activities in Tibet.

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The system by which a Dalai Lama is selected has resulted in the growth of a strong regency as the center of political power in Tibet. In 1947 a dispute between the current regent and an ex-regent led to the outbreak of hostilities and the siege of the Dalai Lama's residence by the faction of the latter. The regent defeated his enemy, however, and severe reprisals were taken against the rebelling monks.

The traditional government consisted of two major divisions, one to administer ecclesiastical affairs and the other to handle secular affairs. Many principal posts were dual, held jointly by a monk and a layman. Even the command of the armed forces was shared in this manner. Most lay members of the government were chosen from the nobility, whose families often owed their positions to association with the church. The families of the successive Dalai Lamas, for example, have traditionally been elevated to the nobility and granted estates. The form of government was preserved under Communist domination until the recent outbreak of rebellion in Lhasa, at which time it was dissolved.

A prime minister--often the regent or ex-regent--served as intermediary between the Dalai Lama and the Kashag (cabinet). The Kashag, which consisted of one monk and three lay ministers, was responsible to a "Small Assembly" of mixed lay and ecclesiastical membership whose decisions it was obliged to carry out. All government acts, however, required the approval of the Dalai

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Lama before being put into effect. A "Great Assembly" of about 400 members representing major monasteries and noble families met only to consider important matters such as the selection of a regent or a declaration of war.

Tibetan society is characterized by rigid stratification based on the dominance of the clergy and nobility. Since the church has been the only road to advancement open to the common people, great numbers of young men enter monasteries. It has been estimated that about one sixth of the male population are monks, a factor which has tended to limit the growth of the Tibetan population and, in some parts of the country, led to the practice of polyandry.

The importance of the monasteries is not limited to political and religious matters. Because of the large proportion of the population living under their control, the monasteries are deeply involved in economic activities such as trade and the management of farms and herds. The monks also carry on a substantial part of the handicraft work which provides Tibetans with daily necessities.

After dissolving the traditional Tibetan government on 28 March 1959, the Chinese Communist authorities turned over administration of the area to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, which had been established in 1956 under the nominal chairmanship of the Dalai Lama. The nature

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and functions of this committee will be discussed in more detail below, in connection with relations between Tibet and the Chinese central government.

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II. Land and People

Various aspects of the physical environment in Tibet--particularly terrain, climate, and location--pose serious obstacles to domination by an outside power. Most of Tibet consists of very rugged, inhospitable terrain, with vast, desolate plateaus to the north and high mountains and deep river valleys in the east. These act as formidable barriers isolating and protecting the major centers of authority in southern Tibet, which are located principally in the middle reaches of the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) River and its tributaries. Here are located the chief urban centers and much of the cultivated land, as well as Lhasa, the capital and seat of political and religious power. Chinese activity consequently has focused on southern Tibet, and major efforts have been directed toward construction of communication links with Chinese bases across the outlying barrier regions.

Eastern Tibet, or Chamdo, Tibet's second most important region, contains the upper reaches of the Salween, Mekong, and Yangtze--rivers that flow in extremely deep, rocky, north-south-aligned gorges. On the interfluvial divides of 13,000 to 15,000 feet are grassy plateaus that permit considerable grazing. The northwestern portion of Chamdo is a transitional region--the characteristic features of the plateau of northern Tibet merge

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into the mountain and gorge terrain of southeastern Chamdo. The topographic complexity isolates the productive areas and severely restricts communications, thus contributing to the political fragmentation of Chamdo, the continuance of petty feudatories, and a favorable milieu for guerrilla warfare. Communist activity in eastern Tibet has been concentrated on the construction and maintenance of the Szechwan-Lhasa road and connecting routes and on the control of strategic centers such as Chang-tu.

Northern Tibet is a vast plateau (the Chang Thang) 14,000 to 16,000 feet in elevation, enclosed on the north and south by mountains more than 20,000 feet high. It is a region of internal drainage with numerous large, usually brackish lakes--particularly in the southeast. Although extensive grazing grounds--mainly in the southern half--support nomads and their flocks, much of the Chang Thang is desolate and uninhabited. Except for mineralogical exploration and the exploitation of borax, Chinese activity in this region has been nil.

Western Tibet (A-li) is a largely isolated area consisting of mountains, plateaus, and the gorges and ravines of the Sutlej and Upper Indus Rivers. Gartok is the regional capital. The principal activity of the few Chinese troops quartered here is directed toward political security--a matter of some concern to the Chinese because of the considerable trade and pilgrim traffic with India and Nepal. A recently constructed road connects A-li with Chinese supply bases in Sinkiang.

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The climate of Tibet varies considerably from region to region. In general, cold, arid conditions prevail in northern and western Tibet while there are more moderate temperatures and heavier precipitation in the southeast. The northern plateau of Tibet is characterized by extreme cold during much of the year (temperatures may drop to -40°F), great daily variations in temperatures, scanty precipitation mainly in the form of snow and hail, and frequent very strong winds. In the more sheltered valleys of southern and eastern Tibet, however, temperatures are more moderate, permitting a four-to-five month growing season. Precipitation is considerably greater and, in some favored areas, reaches 40 inches a year (about the same as for Washington, D. C.). Although only low grasses and shrubs can grow on the high plateau, the more moist conditions of southeastern Tibet result in some forested areas and extensive high altitude grasslands.

Climatic factors have posed serious problems for the Chinese Communists in Tibet. The Szechwan-Lhasa road--particularly the section west from Chang-tu to where it nears the Brahmaputra River--is subject to landslides and washout of roadbed and bridges during the summer rainy season and snow and ice are often problems along the higher sections during winter. The other main road from China, the Tsinghai-Tibet road, is likewise subject to some damage and blockage during the rainy season

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and occasional snow and ice problems; damage is generally less serious, however, because of lighter precipitation. The high elevations and bitter cold characteristic of much of Tibet have contributed to morale problems for Chinese personnel, most of them lowlanders with little liking or tolerance for the Tibetan environment.

The population of Tibet is estimated to be about 1,300,000 inhabitants, but there are at least as many Tibetans outside the political boundaries--primarily inhabiting the adjoining provinces of Szechwan, Tsinghai, and Yunnan--making the total Tibetan population in all of China almost 3,000,000. Additionally, there is a considerable admixture of Tibetans with various hill groups in northern Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the North-East Frontier Agency of India, part of Kashmir, and in other Himalayan border tracts of northern India. According to the Chinese Communists, the area of Tibet is 1,225,000 square kilometers--roughly comparable in area to the combined territory of Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma--but this figure includes an estimated 70,000 square kilometers of the North-East Frontier Agency shown on Chinese maps as part of Tibet. The population density of about 1 person per square kilometer (or slightly more than 2.5 per square mile) is the lowest of any province or comparable administrative unit in China, and makes Tibet one of the most sparsely populated areas in the world.

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Concentrations of population correspond closely to areas of relatively low elevation (generally under 14,000 feet), suitable temperatures and adequate water supplies to permit the growing of hardy grains and vegetables, and available natural vegetation suitable for grazing. Consequently, the major concentrations of population are in southern Tibet in the Brahmaputra Valley and along its major tributaries, and in lowlands and valleys of eastern Tibet. Outside of these comparatively few lower valleys and plains, the population is very scant and confined almost entirely to the more favored grazing lands. There are large uninhabited areas, in particular the cold, barren wastes of the northern portion of the Tibetan plateau.

The major urban centers of Tibet include the capital of Lhasa, located in the fertile Kyi Chhu Valley at about 12,000 feet--population about 80,000, including several thousand monks; Zhigatse, situated at the confluence of the Nyang-chu and the Brahmaputra rivers and the traditional seat of power of the Panchen Lama--population 20,000; and Gyantse, located on the Nyang-chu River some 50 miles southeast of Zhigatse--estimated population 10,000. Other population centers are much smaller, and villages of a dozen houses or less are typical.

Tibet has countless monasteries that may or may not be associated with a village or town. Although several monasteries, notably those near Lhasa, have 5,000 or more inmates,

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most are small with fewer than 100 inhabitants. In western Tibet near the Indian and Nepalese frontiers, several temporary trading encampments are established for several weeks each year--generally during late summer and early fall--at which time the nomads and Tibetan traders barter with traders from India and Nepal.

The pattern of distribution of the Tibetan population has both aided and hindered the institution and maintenance of Chinese control. The traditional concentration of Tibetan political and religious power in a very few urban centers has facilitated the imposition of Chinese authority. Most of Tibet, however, consists of rugged and remote uplands--the domain of the nomads. Because of the difficult and isolated areas in which they dwell and because of their mobility, nomadic groups have long enjoyed virtual independence from any central authority. The physical factors have proved significant obstacles to consolidation of Peking's control over the sparsely populated areas of Tibet, through which Chinese Communist overland supply routes must pass.

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III. Economy and Transportation

The traditional economy of Tibet prior to 1951 was largely self-contained. Although industry was practically nonexistent and the known resources largely undeveloped, the people were accustomed to a simple mode of life and there was little demand for industrial products. In general, the agricultural areas of southern Tibet supplied adequate quantities of the main food staples--barley, lesser amounts of other grains, and root crops--and meat and dairy products were available from the vast herds of sheep, yaks, and yak-cattle crossbreeds. The only significant dietary item not supplied in Tibet was tea, and this was obtained from China. Tibet's animal population also provided skins and wool for clothing and shelter, and the ubiquitous yak supplied dung for fuel throughout the sizable areas devoid of fuelwood.

Tibet did engage in trade with India, China, and the neighboring Himalayan states. Trade with India was of most importance, with the greatest volume carried over the Lhasa-Kalimpong (Gangtok) trade route that crossed the passes on the border of Sikkim. Several million pounds of Tibetan wool was exchanged annually for a wide variety of goods, of which cotton textiles, foodstuffs, and sundry consumer goods were of greatest importance. Trade between western Tibet and India likewise was important, and petty barter trade--normally salt from Tibet exchanged for grains--was common to the entire southern frontier of Tibet.

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After eight years of Chinese rule, Tibet's basic economic structure remains essentially unchanged. Aside from the construction of transportation routes, Chinese efforts have been directed towards a survey and appraisal of Tibet's resources, with emphasis on strategic minerals and food crops. Perhaps the most notable Chinese project has been the mining of borax from one of the numerous brackish lakes of the Tibetan plateau. The output from this deposit (at Panggog Tso, located some 160 miles west of Hei-ho) is one of the two major sources of China's production. Since total output is far in excess of known Chinese needs, much of this borax is believed to be exported to the Soviet Union and the European satellites. In addition to traditional uses, borax derivatives are potentially useful as missile fuels and as control materials in atomic energy production.

Economic progress in other fields has been slow. A truck-repair shop has been built in Lhasa, and an iron works to produce machine parts and agricultural equipment is under construction. Three small hydroelectric and steam power plants have been constructed at Lhasa, Zhigatse, and Chang-tu, the total generating capacity of which is only 800 kilowatts. A larger hydroelectric plant with a proposed generating capacity of 7500 kilowatts is under construction near Lhasa.

In agriculture, the Chinese have improved existing irrigation facilities, reclaimed unknown amounts of "wasteland," and

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experimented with the growing of grains and vegetables suitable to the Tibetan environment. The Chinese may be able to supply much of their vegetable requirements locally, and the Lhasa area reportedly supplies outlying garrisons. Despite Chinese efforts along these lines, however, the increase in food-grain production has apparently not kept pace with the growing number of Chinese personnel stationed in Tibet. An announcement from Lhasa in 1958 told of the "determination" of the Tibet Military District to be self-sufficient in food grains within the next three to five years.

Chinese statements that Tibet could provide land for "several million" peasants from overpopulated areas in China have been cited as one reason for Tibetan discontent. From an analysis of Tibet's physical environment and fragmentary statistics released by the Chinese, there appears to be little additional arable land actually available for prospective colonization. A Chinese report indicates that only 2,000 to 3,000 acres of additional farm land has been found in the fertile Brahmaputra Valley; roughly 20,000 acres of potential farmland is purported to be available in southwestern Chamdo. Even if these acreage figures were doubled, probably only 75,000 to 100,000 Chinese could be absorbed.

It is probable that improved grain varieties, greater emphasis on and improvement of irrigation facilities, and use of

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fertilizers could increase total food-grain output appreciably, but limitations of high elevations, low temperatures, a short growing season, and inadequate precipitation suggest that Tibet is not likely to become another Manchuria to the Chinese.

No major alterations in India-Tibet trade have occurred under Chinese occupation, even with the opening of the roads from Lhasa to China. In recent years a balance favorable to India has been recorded as a result of the increased Chinese demands for consumer goods, construction materials, and foodstuffs. Some attempts have been made through trade agreements with India and Nepal to limit the number of trade routes and markets.

Prior to the Chinese Communist occupation there were no motorable roads in Tibet. Caravan trails joined the major towns and areas, and a journey from Lhasa to Chinese centers in Szechwan and Kansu over the long difficult trails required from two to three months.

Initial work on a motorable road from the east, begun in 1950 in conjunction with the advance of Chinese Communist troops to Tibet, was completed to Lhasa in December 1954. Construction problems were numerous since the road, about 1,400 miles long, crossed some of the world's most difficult terrain, with mountain passes up to 15,000 feet and river gorges several thousand feet deep. Moreover, maintenance was difficult and costly since many sections of the route were susceptible to

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washouts, landslides, and, at higher elevations, ice and problems of freezing and thawing. The section in southwestern Chamdo where the road approaches the Indian border was particularly troublesome, due to the heavy summer rains. In 1956, Tibetan rebel forces apparently assisted the forces of nature, and since that time large sections--particularly in the west--have been inoperable most of the time. Construction of alternate roads north and south of the main road has been undertaken to bypass the troublesome portions of the Szechwan-Lhasa road.

In 1954 the Chinese also constructed a second road--about 1,300 miles in length--connecting Lhasa with Hsining, capital of Tsinghai Province. Because much of this road passes over high and barren but essentially passable plateau, "construction" in many areas simply meant the moving of a few rocks from a suitable area of level ground. Serious drawbacks to the use of this road have been extremely high elevations and intense cold and strong winds during much of the year. The Chinese have continued to improve this road, nevertheless, and it is now the major supply route to their forces in southern Tibet.

Additional roads within southern Tibet have been built, notably a road from Lhasa to Yatung, near the Sikkim border, via Zhigatse and Gyangtse. A road from Sinkiang has been constructed to supply their forces in distant western Tibet, but it is open only six months of the year. The alignment of this road apparently crosses some uninhabited high plateau and mountain country that normally is shown on Indian maps as part of Indian Kashmir.

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Although the construction of these roads represents significant engineering achievements, they were built at an unknown but probably considerable human cost, particularly the difficult Szechwan-Lhasa road. Forced labor has been used, including that of Tibetans, and this latter fact has been one of the many factors exacerbating Sino-Tibetan relations.

The key to continued Chinese occupation of Tibet is the maintenance of their transportation links with bases in Kansu and Szechwan. The eastern part of the Szechwan-Lhasa road and a new road to the south may enable the Chinese to supply their forces in eastern Chamdo, but to supply Lhasa via this route would mean the reconstruction of many sections. There is the strong possibility that the combined actions of man and nature would make this difficult and costly. The maintenance of the Tsinghai-Tibet road is less difficult, principally because the general plateau surface over which the road passes is far less susceptible to interdiction. This road is capable of supporting the present number of Chinese Communist troops in Tibet; additional measures of reserving the road for military traffic and increasing the number of trucks would enable the Chinese Communists to support a 50-percent increase in their current strength.

An air link between Tibet and China has been established, with the construction in 1956 of an airfield at Tang-hsiung in a 13,900-foot plain located about 100 miles north of Lhasa. Airlift support is possible but difficult.

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IV. Sino-Tibetan Relations to 1950

Relations between Tibet and the central governments of China have been marked by conflict since the first appearance of Tibet in historical records more than a thousand years ago. In general, vigorous and expansive Chinese dynasties have attempted to assert authority over Tibet, often by force of arms, while less dynamic ones have been content to maintain a merely ceremonial suzerainty over the area.

During periods of Chinese withdrawal, the rulers of Tibet tended to acknowledge the suzerainty of Mongol leaders. As noted above, Lamaism was made the state religion of the Mongol empire by Kublai Khan in the 13th century, and the fifth Dalai Lama became absolute ruler of Tibet in the 17th century through the intercession of another Mongol Khan. As a result of these close connections with the Mongols, Tibet had established contact with the Manchus even before the latter conquered China in 1644. The newly enthroned Manchu emperor did not immediately question the temporal power of the Dalai Lama, backed as it was by the armed force of a great Mongol Khan and the religious devotion of all the Mongols. Mongol authority was represented at Lhasa during this period by a Mongol king who administered secular matters under the control of the Dalai Lama.

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It was not until 1709 that the second Manchu emperor, Kang Hsi, sent a Chinese official to Lhasa to "assist" in the government. Certain Mongol tribes, believing that the Dalai Lama and the Mongol king of Tibet had become Chinese puppets, thereupon invaded Tibet, deposed the Dalai Lama, and killed the king. The Manchus responded with a counterinvasion and by 1720 had taken Lhasa and driven out the Mongols. The suzerainty thus gained by the Manchus included Bhutan and other Himalayan dependencies as well as Tibet itself. The Manchus enthroned a seventh Dalai Lama and permitted him and the Panchen Lama to retain both temporal and spiritual powers over the country.

A strong Manchu garrison remained in Tibet after the conquest, but a rebellion in 1727 compelled the Chinese government to take stronger measures. After that date, a Chinese resident was stationed in Lhasa and eastern Tibet was placed under the jurisdiction of two Chinese provinces. The Tibetan government was reorganized into the form which it retained until the present day, garrisons were increased, and communications between China and Tibet were assured.

After a further revolt in 1750, the Manchus tended to discourage foreigners from visiting Tibet and the Nepalese began to warn the Tibetans against the English, who were then pushing up from India. As a result of these influences Tibet started withdrawing into the isolation for which it later became noted.

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Some of the basic elements of later Chinese policy toward Tibet were instituted during the first decades of Manchu influence in the area. In the early years of Kang Hsi's reign the famous fifth Dalai Lama visited Peking at the invitation of the Manchu court: the Panchen Lama had declined because of his advanced age. The succeeding Panchen Lama, however, was granted honors by the Chinese government and thus became the first of several Panchen Lamas to be bolstered by various Chinese regimes as a counterweight to the authority of the Dalai Lama.

Peking's interest in Tibet was further asserted in 1792, when a Chinese force defeated a sizable invasion by Gurkhas from Nepal in mid-winter. The Manchus thereafter forbade any dealings between the Tibetan government and representatives of a foreign power.

By the beginning of the 20th century Tibet had become a pawn in the game being played in the area by China, Britain, and Russia. The Manchus held nominal control; in reality, however, no one had full authority, and Britain and Russia were maneuvering to secure the exclusive right to trade and develop the resources of Tibet. When a British request to send a mission to Lhasa to deal directly with the Dalai Lama was refused, Britain invaded Tibet and entered Lhasa in 1904, forcing the 13th Dalai Lama to flee to the Mongolian city of Urga, now Ulan Bator. The invasion resulted in a convention which strengthened trade

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relations between Tibet and India, and in a subsequent agreement in 1906 Britain pledged "not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet."

When it appeared that British influence was beginning to weigh heavily in Tibet, the Manchus tried to regain their position by force and in 1910 sent an army to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama, who had just returned from his Mongolian exile, then fled to India for British protection. The Chinese revolution of 1911 intervened, however, the Manchus were overthrown, and by 1913 the Tibetans expelled the Chinese from their territory and arrangements were made for the Simla conferences between China, Britain, and Tibet.

A tripartite agreement was initialed at Simla in April 1914, but China refused formal signature. The negotiations broke down over the question of the frontier to be established between China proper and Tibet. The British and Tibetan representatives were willing to recognize China's suzerainty over the whole of Tibet, provided China would agree not to convert it into a Chinese province and would recognize the autonomy of Outer Tibet--i.e., the western portion of the area, excluding Chamdo. The Chinese were to maintain a resident at Lhasa with not more than 300 troops; the British agreed to maintain only a visiting agent there.

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During the two decades after the failure of the Simla conference, British influence in Tibet increased at the expense of the Chinese. British missions were sent to Lhasa at various times, and trade between Tibet and India flourished. Meanwhile, fighting broke out on the Sino-Tibetan border in 1917 and again in 1931, and by 1933 Tibetan control had been extended almost to the Chinese province of Szechwan. Tibetan resistance was aroused in part by the action of the Nationalist Government of China in including parts of eastern and northeastern Tibet in the provinces of Sikang and Tsinghai, which had been created in 1928.

It was in 1924, during this period of unrest, that the ninth Panchen Lama fled Tibet as a result of a dispute with the Dalai Lama and took up residence in Chinese territory. Since he remained in China until his death in 1937 and his successor did not return to Tibet until 1952, nearly three decades passed during which there was no Panchen Lama in Tibet and the two successive holders of the title were under Chinese influence.

The Panchen Lamas stayed in Tsinghai--a province initially under the control of a local warlord, who owed only a tenuous allegiance to the Nationalist government at Nanking. When the ninth Panchen Lama died and a tentative successor was found in 1939, this warlord apparently saw an opportunity to extend his influence to Tibet by supporting the candidate. This action was in keeping with the long-standing tradition of the Panchen Lamas' pro-Chinese leanings.

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V. Chinese Communist Control in Tibet

When Communist forces moved into northwest China in 1950 the young Panchen Lama and his attendants had already been subjected to more than ten years of grooming as potential carriers of Chinese influence into Tibet. The new Communist authorities were quick to take advantage of this situation and held the Panchen Lama in Tsinghai only until their position had been consolidated in Tibet. After gaining the acquiescence of the Lhasa authorities, the Chinese Communists returned the Panchen Lama to his former headquarters near Zhigatse in June 1952, in the midst of a vigorous propaganda campaign asserting that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas were once again on friendly terms. It was not until 1954, however, when both were in Peiping, that a final agreement was reached between them.

The Tibetan government, apparently alarmed at the rapid gains being made by the Chinese Communist forces, expelled the representative of the Nationalist government from Lhasa in July 1949. The Tibetan authorities were prepared in February 1950 to deal with a Communist delegation in Hong Kong but would not consent to a meeting in Peiping which the Chinese demanded. The Chinese Communists opened hostilities in October 1950 and moved their forces into Chang-tu in the extreme eastern part of Tibet; they then issued a proclamation calling on the Tibetans to

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co-operate. Tibetan military forces, in the face of the military superiority of the Communists, capitulated after only token resistance. As the Chinese forces approached Tibet, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa and moved to a point near the Indian border where he remained for several months.

The captured leader of the defeated Tibetan forces, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, was named negotiator for the Lhasa government at Chinese Communist insistence. After an abortive attempt to seek aid from the United Nations, Lhasa sent a small group of representatives to Peiping to negotiate under Ngabo's leadership. On 23 May 1951, the Tibetan representatives signed an agreement between the "Government of the Tibet Region" and the Chinese Communist government which provided for the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet. The Chinese Communist forces were thus able to enter without further fighting.

The Sino-Tibetan agreement of 1951, which consisted of a preamble and 17 articles, served as the basic document governing the Chinese position in Tibet until 28 March 1959. The agreement began with the propagandistic assertion that the Tibetan people had "returned to the big family of the motherland--the Chinese People's Republic." The Chinese central government was given the right to station and maintain troops in Tibet and to conduct Tibet's foreign affairs. In return the Chinese professed to accord to Tibet the right of local self-government in internal matters. It was stipulated that the

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Chinese central government would not alter either the existing political system in Tibet or the established status and authority of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. Peiping further agreed to respect the religious beliefs of the Tibetans, to protect the monasteries, and to make no change in their revenues.

An article relating to "reforms" stated that the Chinese Communist authorities would not force them on the Tibetans, but that the local government of Tibet would undertake such reforms of its own accord following popular demands expressed through consultation with the "leading persons of Tibet." The Chinese conceded that former officials who had been "pro-imperialist" or "pro-Kuomintang" might remain in office, provided they severed their old relationships and did not engage in resistance.

Although the validity of the 1951 agreement has sometimes been questioned, the Tibetans did not openly repudiate it until the rebellion of March 1959. A case for invalidity might be made on the grounds of duress, since the chief Tibetan signatory had been captured by the Chinese Communists in the course of military operations; however, three of the other four Tibetan delegates who signed the agreement had been sent to Peiping for the express purpose of negotiating. In October 1951 the Dalai Lama, who by then had returned to Lhasa, addressed a telegram to Mao Tse-tung expressing approval of the agreement.

After the arrival of Chinese Communist military forces in Lhasa in September 1951, Tibet was incorporated into the

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Chinese military system as the "Tibet Army District." The number of Chinese troops in Tibet has varied according to the degree of resistance occurring in certain areas but has probably averaged about 50,000, the major portion of them stationed in the Lhasa area.

Chinese Communist propaganda has made much of the claim that Chinese forces in Tibet have not confined themselves to military tasks but have also reclaimed and cultivated patches of land and assisted the local inhabitants in the construction of small-scale irrigation works. As a means of spreading improved methods, the Chinese Army is said to run an agricultural training course in Lhasa for Tibetans and to have opened an experimental center there for agriculture and animal husbandry.

The 1951 agreement provided that the Tibetan local troops would be reorganized as part of the Chinese Communist regular forces. Although some senior Tibetan officials have been given high rank in the Chinese military command and Chinese officers have been assigned to the headquarters of Tibetan regiments, it appears that integration never proceeded very far. Press reports have referred to Tibetan local military units at major urban centers, and the Dalai Lama retained his bodyguard. It also appears that the Panchen Lama acquired a bodyguard, although he did not have one previously.

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The Chinese Communists apparently were quite careful to adhere to the letter of the 1951 agreement regarding religious and local political affairs. There was some indication that Peiping would attempt to build up the political authority of the Panchen Lama during the early years of Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet, perhaps with the intention of substituting him for the Dalai Lama as the highest temporal and religious leader of Tibet. This attempt was soon abandoned, however, and the Communists were scrupulous thereafter in acknowledging the Dalai Lama's supremacy.

The Chinese Communists have made a show of not meddling in the purely religious affairs of Tibet, just as they have usually been careful to avoid offending the religious sensitivity of the Moslems in other parts of China. Furthermore, Tibetan authorities on numerous occasions have warned the Chinese indirectly that interference with their religion would have serious consequences.

While attempting to maintain an appearance of observing the letter of the 1951 agreement, the Chinese Communists set about to undermine the religious and political systems of Tibet by other means. These have included propaganda, education, economic penetration, and the creation of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Chinese announced their intention to establish this committee in 1955, and it

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was formally inaugurated in April 1956 under the nominal chairmanship of the Dalai Lama. Technically the committee did not violate the 1951 agreement, since it was merely "preparatory" and did not actually take over the administration of the local government at that time.

The Panchen Lama and the commander of the Tibet Army District were first and second vice chairmen respectively of the Preparatory Committee, which included an additional 48 Tibetans and four Chinese. The Tibetan membership was made up of both ecclesiastical and noble personages. The committee was made subordinate to the State Council (cabinet) at Peiping and was given the task of preparation for regional autonomy "in accordance with the provisions of the Chinese Constitution, the 1951 agreement, and the concrete circumstances of Tibet." The committee was provided with a number of subordinate commissions and departments to deal with financial, religious, civil, economic, educational, and other affairs. Appointments to the key posts included a number of Chinese. Eight offices of the Preparatory Committee were set up in important towns throughout Tibetan territory.

The Chinese Communist party has operated in Tibet through its "Tibet Work Committee," which has its headquarters at Lhasa with branch committees at other important places. Before mid-1956, no Tibetans from Tibet proper appear to have joined the

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Communist party, although a number from border areas had done so, including one who helped pave the way for the entry of the Chinese Communists into eastern Tibet in 1950. Since 1956, however, there have been occasional reports of "Tibetans in Tibet" having joined the party. It is likely that Peiping has counted heavily on party recruitment as a means of facilitating control in Tibet.

Another arrangements made by the Chinese Communists which was not provided for in the 1951 agreement was the establishment of the office of the "Representative of the Central People's Government in Tibet." This official, Chang Ching-wu, first arrived in Tibet in 1951 and has held his position since then in spite of appointment to a high post in Peiping in 1955. Chang is also secretary of the Chinese Communist party's Tibet Work Committee.

Although the Chinese Communists did not attempt to impose sudden and drastic social and economic reforms within Tibet, they did introduce land reform and collectivization measures among some groups of ethnic Tibetans living in Chinese border provinces--measures which were greatly accelerated as a result of the intensive collectivization drive of 1955-56. These increased pressures led to revolts in Tibetan-inhabited "autonomous areas" within the Chinese provinces of Tsinghai and Szechwan. The Chinese Communists promptly revised their policies and a "comfort mission" was sent from Peiping to placate the inhabitants of these regions, but apparently with little success.

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In February 1956 a serious uprising occurred in a Tibetan autonomous area in Szechwan Province, during which the Chinese Communists resorted to aerial bombardment of at least two Lamaist monasteries which had become centers of resistance. Traffic on the road from Szechwan to Tibet proper was interrupted for a considerable time, and sporadic outbreaks continued for many months. Peiping admitted publicly the following June that the trouble had been caused by an attempt to impose land reform and to establish agricultural co-operatives, thus depriving the monks of income from their lands and from peasant donations. The monasteries had also been adversely affected by new policies concerning taxation and grazing lands and by the confiscation of their weapons, including those placed in temples as offerings to the gods.

The Chinese Communists attempted for a time to conciliate the Tibetans. The inauguration of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region has held in April 1956, and the principal Chinese speaker declared that "reforms in Tibet in the future must proceed from the upper to the lower level by peaceful consultation, and they must accord with the wish of the great majority of the people." In an attempt to allay the apprehensions of monks and nobles, the speaker assured them that "during and after reforms the government must take steps to guarantee the upper strata of Tibetans (including the upper strata of

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religious circles) that their political status and level of material life is not lowered."

A year later, in April 1957, the Chinese Communists went still further in postponing "reforms" in Tibet and announced that action would not be taken until after 1962. They promised that organizations established to prepare for reform would be reduced in size, and that many Chinese personnel who had entered Tibet to assist with reform would be withdrawn.

In spite of Chinese attempts to reassure the Tibetans, outbreaks of rebellion continued to occur in the eastern part of the region. In sympathy with their fellow Tibetans living in Chinese territory, the Khambas, a tribe inhabiting Chamdo, attacked Chinese garrisons and seriously interfered with road traffic between China proper and Tibet. Refugees from the disturbed areas began to appear in Lhasa in early 1956, and it became known that a Tibetan independence party--the Mimang--was functioning as the moving force behind anti-Chinese demonstrations. The Mimang also prepared petitions against Chinese policies and presented them to the Dalai Lama. The instances of revolt by Tibetans were on a relatively small scale, however, and constituted an annoyance rather than a threat to Chinese Communist domination.

During 1957 and 1958 the Chinese may have intensified their military countermeasures in an effort to stamp out the continuing uprisings. In addition, the highly publicized communalization

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movement in Communist China in the autumn of 1958 undoubtedly increased Tibetan apprehensions. Tension was further raised by the gradual drift westward of Khamba tribesmen into the vicinity of Lhasa, an area where violence had not yet occurred.

The Chinese Communists announced in March 1959 that the Dalai Lama had been named a delegate to the National People's Congress, scheduled to open in Peiping the following month. The Dalai Lama had attended the initial session of the congress in 1954, and his visit to Peiping had extended to eight months. The Tibetans had protested the departure of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa at that time, however, and the prospect of another journey to Peiping was probably even more alarming in 1959.

On 10 March 1959, the Dalai Lama was invited by the Chinese to attend a function in Lhasa. The manner in which the invitation was delivered may have helped to inspire rumors that the Chinese were about to abduct him, and violent anti-Chinese demonstrations occurred throughout the city. Disorders continued during the following days, and the Dalai Lama was spirited from Lhasa on 17 March. Open fighting between Tibetans and Chinese broke out in Lhasa two days later.

Peiping first acknowledged on 28 March 1959 that a violent rebellion was taking place in the Tibetan capital. In an attempt to minimize its implications, the Chinese Communist authorities claimed that the Dalai Lama had been taken from Lhasa under

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duress by the rebels. On the grounds that the Tibetans had, by their own actions, abrogated the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951, Peiping declared the Tibetan government dissolved, turned over its authority to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, and "temporarily" named the Panchen Lama chairman-- a position nominally held by the Dalai Lama. Chinese Communist armed forces in Tibet were enjoined to "thoroughly stamp out" the rebellion. It was claimed that the revolt involved "only about 20,000" insurgents in southern Tibet and other "very remote places" in Tibet and western China.

The Panchen Lama was sent to Peiping in April 1959 as a delegate to the National People's Congress. He was elected to its presidium and spoke out strongly in support of Peiping's action in suppressing the Lhasa revolt. Before leaving Tibet, he had called for the regimentation of ecclesiastical and secular members of Tibetan society and requested that they assist Chinese Army units. The Panchen Lama also suggested that reluctant acquiescence in Chinese Communist policies would no longer be tolerated, as "willingness to follow the path of socialism" is now mandatory for all Tibetans.

On 31 March the Dalai Lama entered India, where he was granted asylum as a religious leader. While the Chinese Communists have at their disposal ample military strength to quell the rebellion within Tibet, the presence of the Dalai Lama in India will provide a continuing reminder of the rebellion and its implications.

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VI. International Aspects

Outbreaks of rebellion against Chinese Communist authority will probably continue for some time in Tibet and Tibetan-inhabited areas of China but will not present a serious internal threat to the stability of the Peiping regime. Outside Communist China, however, the revolts and the repressive measures by which Peiping has quelled them have damaged its prestige among the Afro-Asian countries.

Peiping had entered into two international agreements which contain provisions regarding the status of "the Tibet region of China." A treaty concluded with India in 1954 governs the conditions under which trade and travel would be carried on between territories under the jurisdiction of India and Tibet, and a similar treaty was negotiated with Nepal in 1956. Both treaties permitted continuation of the locally important traditional trade across the southern borders of Tibet and the travel of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrims to holy places. New Delhi agreed to turn over Indian-owned postal and telegraph facilities to the Chinese, and both India and Nepal agreed to withdraw military escort forces which they had maintained in Tibet. The signatories were also authorized to set up trade agencies in specified places.

In these treaties India and Nepal acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, with the provision that the traditional

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Tibetan government would continue to administer local affairs. Indian and Nepalese representatives at Lhasa became consuls general accredited to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs rather than to the Tibetan government. The treaties subscribed to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" (Panch Shila), which include mutual "noninterference in internal affairs."

Even before the Dalai Lama had been granted asylum in India, Prime Minister Nehru had publicly expressed concern over the situation in Tibet and sympathy with the rebels, but without violating India's pledge of "noninterference." Nehru reiterated his government's hands-off policy toward the "Tibet region of China" before an aroused parliament on 23 March 1959, but his statement by implication put Peiping on notice that he regarded Chinese failure to respect Tibet's "autonomous" status as a violation of previous assurances. The Indian Parliament and press urged a much stronger stand than that publicly assumed by the government.

Peiping on 28 March accused India of permitting a "central headquarters" of the Tibetan revolt to operate at Kalimpong in the Indian state of West Bengal. The Chinese Communist communiqué implied that further discussion of Tibet in the Indian Parliament would be "impolite and improper." These charges were sharply rejected by Nehru with the comment that his government would not "submit to any kind of dictation from any

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country." His statement was balanced, however, with a plea for restraint and a reaffirmation of friendship for China.

After these initial exchanges of charges and rejections, it appeared for a time that Peiping would treat Indian sensitivities with greater regard, perhaps in the hope of inducing the Indian government to restrain the Dalai Lama from making public statements refuting Peiping's claims as to the nature of his flight. After the Dalai Lama's statement of 18 April, when he denied that he had left Tibet under duress, Chinese Communist attacks on the Indian government became more intemperate and carried hints that India must not permit the Dalai Lama to engage in political activity. Peiping did not, however, make a formal diplomatic protest to India.

One of the strongest Asian reactions to events in Tibet came from Malaya, where the foreign minister officially condemned the Chinese use of force and likened it to Soviet repression in Hungary. Cambodia's Premier, Prince Sihanouk, was quoted in France as expressing surprise that India was not firmer in exercising its "moral duty" to uphold the Tibetan cause.

Buddhist circles in Ceylon strongly protested Chinese Communist actions in Tibet. A delegation of Buddhist personages of high rank attempted to gain a hearing at the Chinese embassy in Columbo but was refused admittance, bringing further unfavorable publicity to the Chinese.

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Sections of the press in Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, the Philippines, Japan, and the United Arab Republic have voiced protests, some of them in publications which had previously tended to be uncritical of the Chinese Communist regime. The Japanese press has given the Tibetan developments especially heavy play, almost unanimously criticizing the suppression of the revolt and Peiping's callous disregard for its understandings with the Indian and Tibetan governments. Cairo radio joined the UAR press in denouncing Chinese repression in Tibet as "the new imperialism."

While India will not permit the Dalai Lama to carry on political activities during his residence there, his status as a refugee from Chinese Communist oppression cannot fail to have political as well as religious implications. His flight from Tibet and Peiping's dissolution of the Tibetan government have done more than any other development to damage the image of Communist China as champion of freedom for the Afro-Asian nations--an image the regime has been trying to set up in the four years since the Bandung Conference.