

The People's Republic of China's 21st Century Underbelly

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I. The Myth of the Western World

According to the traditional line of thinking that "the spirit of selflessness will never die," some see the Tibet matter as an official plot by Western nations to "dismember China." Leaving aside whether that is imaginary or really grounded, we need to at least realize that the real Tibet matter is in another area, or that the unofficial opposition to China by Western society on the Tibet matter far exceeds the official stance in both intensity and breadth.

Officially, while no country holds that Tibet has grounds for independence, and no government recognizes the Tibetan government in exile, privately, the Western public and media support the Dalai Lama almost unanimously.

When Chinese leaders go abroad today, the most and largest demonstrations they encounter are often all Tibet related. To a considerable extent, it is precisely because the Western democratic system is characterized by its politicians being subject to public opinion that the Western private stance on the Tibet matter is often elevated to a higher political level and becomes a card played by politicians to all ends.

Why are Westerners so sentimental about Tibet? Westerners have always had a strong interest in Oriental mysticism. Tibet is located deep in the world's largest plateau, surrounded by snowcapped mountains and subject to "Buddhist" rule, which makes it even more mystical. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Tibet has gradually acquired great renown in the West as a closed territory, which has made zealous but unknowledgeable Westerners curious about it.

At the beginning of the 20th century, while a British army invaded Lhasa, since transportation means at the time were not up to breaking Tibet's geographic isolation, and the West was busy with two world wars in succeeding decades, its interest in Tibet was limited, with very few Westerners being able to enter Tibet. Once the People's Liberation Army [PLA] entered Tibet in 1951, Tibet was even more completely isolated behind the iron curtain. It was not until the 1980s that Western tourist groups began to be allowed to enter Tibet. On one hand, since Tibet has little capacity to entertain tourists, the numbers are limited. On the other hand, various controls still exist, with tourists allowed to

"sightsee" only within provided boundaries. So Tibet is like a veil that has not yet been fully lifted to the West, with the process of exploring the mysticism and idealism in the Western mind about China and other Oriental countries never having been finished. With the human race now connected into a "global village" by jet planes and communications satellites, what place in the world remains left for Westerners to place their mystical hopes on? Only Tibet is left.

As the flaws of Western civilization become manifest, and the spiritual world of Western society grows ever more confused, many Westerners hope to acquire new enlightenment from Oriental mysticism (such as the US English-speaking Buddhist Education Centre that is growing at a geometric rate). In the thirst of Westerners for Oriental wisdom, Tibetan civilization is the most appealing to them.

Chang Chun-yi, who once served in the Taiwan KMT government as chairman of its "Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission," commented as follows: "We . . . have found that modernization brings many social flaws that can hardly be remedied, such as the withering away of weak and small ethnic groups, the loss of traditional cultural legacies, the destruction of the natural environment, and concerns about the future due to nuclear proliferation. We naturally long for the lost past . . . Tibet, which is called the world's third pole, not only has a unique and closed geographic location, which has not yet been impacted by modernization, but the Tibetan race that lives there in relative isolation from the rest of the world and is quite content with its intellectual lot also has its ancient, unique, and mystical religious traditions. All of which fits in nicely with the Western concept of an ideal and lost past. So, in their minds, Tibet has become the world's last pure land, sacred and inviolable. Unfortunately, Tibet is under Chinese Communist rule now, with it being understood that the Han Chinese are stripping the Tibetans of the right to pass on their own ethnic culture, using migration means to eventually exterminate the race, and conducting nuclear tests in that pure land that could destroy the human race. How could that not fill post-modern Westerners who are ardent nature and peace lovers with bitter hatred, to arouse real sympathy? That is a basic reason why the Western public takes such an absolutely different and extremist stance on the Tibet matter than does their government, and is the basic reason why the Tibet matter has ultimately become an international one."

Besides this factor, the internationalization of the Tibet matter is directly related to the 14th Dalai Lama per se. The 14th Dalai Lama has now become one of the most influential figures in the international community, being more welcomed in the West than even the West's own religious leaders.

He has used his own success to guide the international community to focus on the Tibet matter. Why has the Dalai Lama been so successful in the West? When he escaped from Tibet, except for the wealth that he had buried in Sikkim, he had no other resources. But he had to ensure the survival of the tens of thousands of Tibetans, that had followed him into exile, continue Tibetan culture overseas, and fight China. As to such goals, the acquisition of resources was the key. That, in fact, has been precisely one of the work priorities for decades of his Tibetan government in exile. With the material world being

naturally endowed, in his international alms begging, he was faced with mostly the Western world, striving for sympathy and support from the West. This reality forced the exiled Tibetans to integrate with the international society that is governed by Western rules, where they took an open stance to learn Western ideals and values and established their own image by Western principles. There is no denying that through decades of constant interaction with the international community, the exiled Tibetans have succeeded in establishing their own image, and consequently have become the darlings of the international community.

The Dalai Lama has had dealings with the West for decades, claiming to be a great master who is proficient in Western affairs. It has learned well how to exploit Western social psychology and manipulate the Western media to break into Western affairs. He has Western advisers who have long served him, having hired the best legal firms in the United States to conduct extralegal proceedings for him. His speeches throughout the West are invariably about burning issues in the West such as human rights, the environment, peace, antinuclear . . . with his values and language also being particularly consistent with the Western model. The cleverness of the Dalai Lama, who is well aware of the Western humanitarian climate, can also be seen in that the movement that he leads does not take a purely political line. For instance, he avoids directly discussing Tibetan independence, always saying that he is most concerned about continuing Tibetan civilization. His suggestion for settling the Tibet matter is to make Tibet a naturally and culturally protected zone with neither an army nor environmental pollution, a peace zone overseen by the international community. Since this blueprint coincides exactly with the Western ideal of a pure land, it has won widespread support.

Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama goes about saying that he is not just taking from the West, but is giving the West a precious gift: Tibetan religion. He tries to exploit Tibetan philosophy and cultivation of moral character to mislead the Western society and public. As Buddhism becomes one of the fastest developing religions in the West, since Westerners feel that they are obtaining from Tibetans something that they never had before, they are more willing to work for the Tibetans. In short, the Dalai Lama has cleverly linked traditional religion to the fashion of Western society and has guided the exiled Tibetans into how to survive and develop in a rootless environment.

On 5 October 1989, the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced that it was giving the Dalai Lama the Nobel Peace Prize. Upon winning that prize, the Dalai Lama acquired a great deal more international space and capacity to act and operate. All Western nations threw open their doors to him, and all leaders met with him. International organizations and meetings are honoured to invite him, and the Western media treats him as a focus, to make him an international star in reality as well as name.

The Dalai Lama's personal success has brought huge progress in the international community to the movement of the exiled Tibetans. In 1990, the Tibetan Extralegal Action Group promoted the establishment in Norway, Canada, and Italy of parliamentary commissions, with representatives of 28 countries holding a "Tibet Friendship Rally" in India. A little later, representatives of 34 countries held a "Tibetan International

Consultation Rally" in London, in an attempt to join together congressmen from throughout the world who support the Tibetan exiles, with the Premier of Iceland having attended that rally. US President Bush signed a bill appropriating aid to Tibetan refugees, meeting in the White House with the Dalai Lama, who prior to that had essentially been unable to acquire a US visa. From the US Congress, 131 US Representatives signed a motion calling Tibet "an occupied country." In 1991, the Dalai Lama launched the "International Year of Tibet," with the Tibetan exile organization "Tibet Home" holding 60 actions in 36 countries during the month of October alone.

By now, the exiled Tibetans have set up offices in New York, Zurich, and New Delhi to deal with the United Nations, as well as stationing representatives in places such as London, Tokyo, Budapest, Geneva, and Kathmandu. A large number of the West's brightest film and pop stars have taken part in actions to support the exiled Tibetans, spurring countless numbers of Western teenagers to worship and support the Dalai Lama. The UN Human Rights Commission passed a resolution condemning China for "violating basic human rights and freedoms" in Tibet, which was the first resolution passed by a UN organization on Tibet since 1965. The European Parliament passed five resolutions on the Tibet matter, condemning China. The Russian Duma passed a resolution in November 1995, urging the government to recognize Tibet as an independent country. The New York City Government made 10 March "Tibet Day" in New York. In 1994, the Dalai Lama visited 17 countries. By the end of 1994, he had visited 49 countries (many of them more than once). In 1997, he also visited Taiwan, with Hollywood putting out three movies on Tibet in 1997 alone . . . On the Dalai Lama's 60th birthday, over 400 famous world politicians and figures attended a celebration, which raised his prestige to world-class heights.

In contrast, the work done by China on Tibet in the international community, particularly that aimed at the private community in the West, can essentially not be mentioned in the same breath. That should also be seen as another cause of the Dalai Lama's success.

II. The Dalai Lama Is Forced into a Double Bind

But the Dalai Lama's prestige is quite illusory. While he is seen as the embodiment of Tibet, he has not even crossed the Tibetan border in the last four decades. So despite his operations in the international community, he is at most exploiting the West as a means of pressuring China. At the beginning of reform, China saw a settlement of the Tibet matter as a bargaining chip for winning over the West. At the end of 1978, a week after the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping conveyed the news to the West that he was willing to reconcile with the Dalai Lama, as well as meeting subsequently in Beijing with representatives sent by the Dalai Lama.

While Deng Xiaoping set the keynote of "except for independence, everything can be discussed," the gap between the two sides was certainly too wide, which meant that it was hard to find grounds for discussion. After repeated contacts, the Dalai Lama gave two speeches, one to the US Congress in 1987 and the other to the European Parliament in 1988, laying out his formal recommendation for settling the Tibet matter. These speeches

can be summed up as follows: (1) It would have transformed all of Tibet into a peace zone. (2) China would stop its migration policy that threatened the survival of the Tibetan race. (3) It would respect the human rights and basic rights of the Tibetan race. (4) It would rebuild and protect Tibet's natural environment, with China abandoning its making of nuclear weapons and storage of nuclear waste in Tibet. (5) It would hold real talks on the future status of Tibet and matters of concern to the Tibetan people.

The Dalai Lama also said clearly for the first time that he was renouncing Tibetan independence, agreeing to keep Tibet within China, and to keep Beijing responsible for Tibet's foreign affairs and defence. But that compromise had the following attached restrictions: (1) The Tibet that aligned itself with China must be a "greater Tibet" that covered all of China's Tibetan regions. (2) Tibet would have a democratic political system completely different from that in the rest of China, with the Tibetans practicing a high degree of self government. (3) While Beijing would be responsible for Tibet's foreign affairs, the Tibetan government could keep a diplomatic office, to develop independent foreign relations and take part in international organizations in the "nongovernmental arena." (4) As to defence, it agreed only that, "until Tibet was demilitarized and neutralized, China could keep a few military installations in Tibet," limiting them to "a defensive nature."

We need to first explain the idea of a "greater Tibet." When mainland China refers to Tibet, it generally means the administrative unit of the "Tibetan Autonomous Region [AR]," with an area of 1.2284 million sq km, and a population of 2.3043 million, of whom 2.2359 million (1994) are of the Tibetan nationality. But as to the prevalent international idea of Tibet, besides the Tibetan AR, it also includes all of Qinghai Province, southern Gansu, western Sichuan, and northwestern Yunnan, covering the whole Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The Dalai Lama's definition of "the region where all Tibetans live," or the whole region of historic Tibetan civilization, has an area twice that of the Tibetan AR (which the Tibetan government in exile says is 2.5 million sq km), or more than one-fourth of all of China. That region has 4.5738 million (1990) Tibetans, as well as over 2 million Han Chinese and other ethnic groups. Since that is "greater Tibet," it is particularly important to distinguish the two ideas of Tibet. All discussion of the so-called "Tibet matter" has to first clear up which Tibet is being referenced. These different ideas of "Tibet" will and have caused much confusion.

As to China, is the Dalai Lama's verbal recognition that Tibet can stay within China enough to turn over more than 2 million sq km of national territory, which we have ruled solidly for decades and invested countless manpower and financial resources in, to rule by the Dalai Lama? We Chinese are amazed that the Dalai Lama has such "lion-mouthed" aspirations. In contrast, the terms that the Chinese government offers to the Dalai Lama show the great gap between the two sides. In July 1981, Hu Yaobang met in Beijing with the Dalai Lama's older brother Jiale Dunzhu, where he laid out the following five Chinese positions and promises on the Tibetan matter: (1) China is in a new age. (2) As to the history of 1959, all have forgotten it, so let it be. (3) The Dalai Lama and his followers are welcome to return and settle. (4) Once the Dalai Lama returns, his political and welfare treatment will be unchanged from that of before 1959, and he will still be

NPC and NPPCC vice chairman. As to Tibet, he must not return there, or hold concurrent positions in Tibet. (5) When the Dalai Lama returns, China will send a ministerial official to receive him, and to publish the news.

While it was long since anticipated that no results could come from discussing a difference of opinion of 2.5 million sq km of "self rule"

versus the agreement to bestow a vice chairmanship, the Dalai Lama was impatient. While he claims that he will live to 103, he should know that as he is 60-plus years old, he is in his waning years, not having much time to wait. His mentality can be seen in his talk. When someone consoled him that once China became democratic, the Tibet matter would be settled, he responded that: "I will tell you an allegory. When the Buddha Sakyamuni was born, a Brahman looked at him and saw that Sakyamuni would become the future teacher who would save mankind. But he cried, saying that, 'while the Buddha will complete his great cause, I will be dead by then.' So is it not likely in Tibet that, before a democratic China emerges, Tibet will be dead?"

So why does not the Dalai Lama adopt a wiser and more flexible negotiating position? While he wants a high degree of self-rule for Tibet, demanding an autonomous scope of "greater Tibet," even before he left in the 1950s, Tibet's autonomous scope was that of the current Tibetan AR (for a long time not even including the Qamdo region). Even during the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China (1912-1949), the Dalai Lama's administrative jurisdiction did not exceed Weizang (roughly equivalent to the Tibetan AR).

So upon his penniless return, to demand an autonomous scope twice that of before, how could the Chinese government accept that? As to the Dalai Lama's political perspective, he cannot but see the impracticality of that demand. But he can no longer retreat on that point.

Not to speak of his personal belief not letting him retreat, his social position first restricts him absolutely. While he is nominally the spiritual leader of all Tibetans, his real contacts are with only those Tibetans who followed him into exile, numbering around 100,000; that is the whole Tibetan society in which the Dalai Lama is grounded. The government in exile emerged from them, with its taxes being paid by them, its votes being cast by them, and the international image of Tibet also being represented by them. But those exiles come not only from Weizang [Tibet], but come in an even larger ratio from Anduo (Qinghai) and Kangqu (mostly western Sichuan). The armed "Tibetan rebellion" of the 1950s started first in Anduo and Kangqu, with a large number of rebellious Tibetans and their dependants fleeing to Weizang [Tibet] to escape the "suppression of the rebellion." After the Dalai Lama left, since they followed him into exile, Anduo and Kangqu people are a key part of the exiled Tibetans. Their influence can be seen in their ratio of seats in the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, which has 45 seats, 30 of which are assigned to the Anduo, Kangqu, and Weizang regions, with each region having 10 seats. So any plan that would abandon Anduo and Kangqu (even as a temporary tactic) would be unacceptable, as well as not being approved by the Parliament, to be even more intensely opposed by

the exiled Tibetans. That point alone means that negotiations between the Dalai Lama and the Central Government could almost never find common ground.

So the Dalai Lama is in a double bind, on one hand having to use reason and compromise to negotiate with the Central Government from a position of weak exiles, while on the other being forced to consider the intense nationalistic sentiments within the exiles. These two aspects are often so contradictory that they can hardly be reconciled. The Central Government holds that his recommendation is unfeasible while, among the Tibetan exiles, since he has agreed that Tibet will stay within China and turn over Tibet's foreign affairs and defence, he is similarly subject to strong opposition. Some hold that as many as 90 per cent of the exiled Tibetans oppose that aspect.

In this respect, the Dalai Lama has dug his own "pit." The Tibetan exiles have long made Tibetan independence their banner, with longstanding indoctrination leaving the second- and third-generation Tibetans who were born abroad seeing independence as the unalterable and irreversible goal.

To strengthen the fighting will of the exile camp and win international media support, the Dalai Lama has had to describe Chinese rule over Tibet as being totally unjust. Since the 1980s, while the Central Government has sharply improved its Tibet policy, Dharmasala (the Indian base of the Tibetan exiles) has never correspondingly adjusted its propaganda, rather winning more support from the human rights international political policy pursued by the Western nations, to intensify further the media attack, including deliberate misguidance and fabricated charges. Such an invective climate is not conducive to constructive talks, both losing the Central Government its grounds for talking with the exiled Tibetans, and making its compromises and concessions impossible to be understood and supported by the exiled Tibetans, which consequently leaves very little room for flexibility and accommodation.

The younger generation of exiled Tibetans who have had a good education and accepted Western democratic ideas do not have the blind faith in the Dalai Lama's authority that their parents' generation did, criticizing the Dalai Lama unreservedly, and even questioning his sacred status. The "Tibet Youth Congress," the strongest youth organization among the exiled Tibetans, has up to 10,000 members in over 50 local chapters throughout the world, with its key members being mostly young Tibetans with a Western college education. They are familiar with Western society, taking a radical stance, and far surpassing the elder Tibetan exiles in operating capability. A sizeable number of them endorse terrorist struggle, holding that terrorism brings the greatest results at the least cost, on one hand "making the Chinese so anxious that they will flee," while on the other having a widespread impact, to attract more international community attention to the Tibet matter. The series of bombings that have occurred in Tibet in recent years are the outcome of Tibetan terrorists pursuing such positions.

While the Dalai Lama is still generally keeping his spiritual influence, with his "nonviolent" position controlling the actions of the exiled Tibetans, such influence is waning steadily, with his growing age leaving him with few remaining days. Behind him,

there is no one who is holding up his banner. That is a longstanding problem for the transmission of the Tibetan religious system. Every time a Dalai Lama dies, they have to wait at least 20 years for his successor, or the next Dalai Lama, to grow into an adult, to take on the leadership of the Tibetan political and religious cause. That 20-year period is often a stage of weakness and susceptibility to problems. If the 14th Dalai Lama is unable to settle the Tibet matter in his lifetime, his death will leave the Tibetan exiles leaderless, which will likely land them in internal disorder and low morale. In the worst case, forces such as the "Tibetan Youth Congress" are quite likely to consequently dominate the exiled Tibetans, which will sharply increase the violence and destruction, to put Tibet in danger of becoming a Palestine or even a Chechnya.

Since the incident over the Panchen Lama, the ties that the Central Government had established with the Dalai Lama have been essentially broken, leaving both sides with nearly no room to negotiate. An analysis of the signs since then show that the Dalai Lama has shifted his hopes for settling the Tibet matter to a future Chinese social transformation.

III. A National Security Geo-Strategy

Chinese dissidents in exile are one of the Dalai Lama's current work priorities. While they mostly oppose Tibetan independence, they have generally accepted the Dalai Lama's proposal for "a high degree of Tibetan self-rule," with some of them even saying that Tibet could practice national or ethnic self-determination. Similar tendencies have also been seen recently in China.

In this respect, whether China undergoes a future social transformation, how it would occur, and what it would result in, needs to be faced up to squarely and considered carefully as a possibility from a national sovereignty and security perspective. The reasoning is because, if any sovereignty problem occurs, it often cannot be undone (such as with Mongolia), as opposed to feeling one's way along, to make the necessary changes.

1. The Dalai Lama has been advocating in recent years a settlement of the Tibet matter along the Hong Kong model of "one country, two systems," which history has proved to be infeasible. The "one country, two systems" model was certainly not created for Hong Kong first, with the "17-Term Agreement" that was pursued in Tibet in 1951 having been essentially the same thing, but without the "one country, two systems" name. Why did the Tibetan "one country, two systems" of the time fail through "armed rebellion" and "suppression of rebellion?" This shows a prerequisite for "one country, two systems," or that the "two systems" must be isolated. If people can move freely between two legal and social systems, the so-called "one country"

and "two systems" will eventually certainly hardly coexist, either separating into two countries or merging into one system, which process of division or merger will definitely be accompanied by sharp conflict and volatility. The Tibetan rebellion of the time started in the Tibetan regions of Qinghai and Sichuan, because they were practicing a social reform policy similar to the rest of China, while Weizang still had its traditional society.

While the legal standard was that Tibetan autonomy at the time was limited to Weizang, with China having the right to pursue its own policy in Tibetan regions beyond Weizang, that in fact did not work. It also did not work because the region was too large, making it impossible to use barbed wire and border defence arms to keep the "two systems" isolated like in Hong Kong (or isolated like Taiwan with the Taiwan Strait).

2. We also need to take into account the development trends after Tibet would practice "a high degree of self-rule." The French reporter Pierre-Antoine Donnet interviewed the Dalai Lama's younger brother Danzeng Qujia, saying that: "Danzeng Qujia held that Strausburg's statement was the proposal most likely to persuade the Chinese to sit down and talk together.

But then what? Would that not be a springboard for moving towards complete independence? The Dalai Lama's younger brother scratched his head and looked at me without saying a word. He was quite obviously deliberating on what he could say that would not cause Tibet diplomatic trouble. After some consideration, he decided, saying that: 'We will first seek autonomy, and then run the Chinese out! Just like Marcos was run out of the Philippines, and the British were run out of India! We are thinking of the world, of coming generations. Autonomy or self-rule is the start'."

With even the Dalai Lama's younger brother seeing autonomy as a temporary negotiating tactic, with Tibet ultimately needing to move towards full independence, that can be used to deduce the thinking of the other exiled Tibetans. While the Dalai Lama per se might be sincere, as to whether he can control coming developments, and as to how those who come after him will act, he has no control. So when considering the future prospects of the Tibet matter, we have to see Tibetan independence as a possibility that will always exist, rather than holding simplistically that just because the Dalai Lama says that he is not seeking independence, there will be no further Tibetan independence matter. As to the Tibetan independence matter, even if we do not consider it from the perspective of values such as "a righteous national cause," we at least have a bottom line that no country in today's world should overlook: national security. In the world's political shifts, anything could happen. To cope with such a world, we need to govern our country from the perspective of the worst possibility, not placing our hopes on the best one.

As it involves Chinese-Indian relations, Tibet becomes an extremely important factor. China has a 1,450-km border with India which, added to Bhutan and Sikkim that are annexed or controlled by India, gives our two countries an international borderline that is 2,250 km long, all of which is in Tibet. The Dalai Lama once said that, if an independent Tibet stood between China and India, the two countries would be isolated by Tibet, and therefore could not have any more conflicts. But that is absolutely not China's view, with China's perspective being that Tibetan independence per se would constitute the greatest threat.

Since Tibet has much space and little population, with bad natural conditions and a shortage of resources, if it was independent, the first problem that it would encounter would be the impossibility of establishing an effective border defence with its limited

might. This inherently means that Tibet has to depend on a great power either for the manpower and material to establish a border defence, or simply for that power to assume its whole national defence.

Since its geopolitical position has wedged it between two great powers, it has to be dependent on either China or India, having no other choice. So while Tibetan independence would free it from China, the separation inertia alone would naturally orient it towards India. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama and the tens of thousands of Tibetan refugees that he controls have been supported by India for decades. The Dalai Lama said about that with concern that "I hold unquestionably that India has more grounds than China for claiming sovereignty over Tibet."

Tibet has always had a high degree of spiritual identification with India.

Since Buddhism originated in India, devout Buddhist Tibetans consequently have always had a spiritual adoration and inclination towards India.

Geographically, India's transportation to Tibet is much easier and faster than China's. During the late Qing Dynasty and the Republican Period, many officials from China who were appointed to positions in Tibet went there through India. While that was a great detour, it was still much faster than going there directly from China. Before 1950, most of Tibet's trade was with India, with the children of its aristocrats studying in India, and letters from Tibet to China also going through India. So going to India when there is danger has been the custom of the Tibetan hierarchy this century.

Is India a great enough power to match China in providing Tibet with a border defence? We Chinese like to remember how the Indian Army could not withstand a single blow in the 1962 China-India War. But today's situation is not what it was then, which the Chinese troops stationed on the Tibetan border are most clear about. While certain Chinese border defence units still depend on mules (even humans) for transportation and logistics support, the Indian army generally uses helicopters. While India's national might is not up to China's, its military spending jumped to nearly twice China's in the 1980s. While China sharply increased its military spending in the 1990s, we have still not caught up to India. While the humiliating 1962 defeat was galling to the Indian Army, by the time of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, the Indian Army was making a good showing. Foreign military experts hold that India now has the world's best mountain troops, that they can withstand the most hardships and have the best equipment, and can successfully withstand any attack by China. According to international political rules, the existence of danger forces one to make the corresponding plans.

As stated above, when the Tibetan exiles demand Tibetan independence, or the Dalai Lama calls for a high degree of self-rule for Tibet, the scope they are referring to is "greater Tibet." But if the 2.5 million sq km of "greater Tibet" were separated from China, China's western border would shrink towards the interior by up to a thousand km. If we drew two diagonal lines on the Chinese map, they would converge in central China at Tianshui, Gansu. If "greater Tibet" was independent, Tianshui would be only a little

over 100 km from the "new border," which would make the current centre of China our border. In past Chinese national crises, inland Sichuan was often seen as our "greater rear area," for either "partial sovereignty" or as our "provisional capital." But Sichuan's capital of Chengdu would be only a little over 100 km from the "new border," making it a frontline border defence post. So once Tibet became independent and was forced to ally itself with India, India would advance thousands of km without firing a shot, with its armed forces marching into central China, and its missiles being able to hit all of China from the Tibetan Plateau. Without the natural Tibetan barrier and the time it would take to cross the Tibetan Plateau, war would be fought in central China, at a certainly high cost to life and property. So it is obvious that for China to lose such a vast barrier, which would expose our fatal "underbelly," would be unacceptable from a national security perspective.

Preparing for a possible future conflict with India is the bottom line as to why the Central Government cannot allow Tibetan independence. The Central Government cannot retreat or compromise on the demands for Tibetan independence or covert independence.

There is also another related factor that we need to be clear about, or that any special disposition of the Tibet matter could have a chain reaction among other minority ethnic groups. While the Han Chinese make up 93 per cent of the Chinese population, minority ethnic regions make up 60 per cent of Chinese territory, 89.6 per cent of our grasslands, 37 per cent of our forests, 49.7 per cent of our timber resources, and over 50 per cent of our water conservancy resources. So the minority ethnic group matter must be one of overall consideration, which is dealt with very carefully.

While all 55 of our minority ethnic groups would, of course, not demand independence or a high degree of self-rule along with Tibet, if even the Uighurs did so (which would be almost certain), the two places together would have an area of 4 million sq km, or more than two-fifths of Chinese territory. China's grim population explosion, spatial crowding, and resource shortage are the basic limiting factors as to why China cannot solve our minority ethnic group problem in the Soviet breakup model.

IV. Stable Sovereignty During Social Transformation

Chinese control of Tibet is now stable. While the actions of a few separatists at most cause certain troubles, but are no major challenge, an in-depth analysis shows grim potential dangers lurking behind the apparent stability.

Why has China never been able to control Tibet as solidly as it has Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia? "No one wants to go to Tibet," is a key reason. The "no one" here is mostly the Han Chinese from inland China.

Since we are the world's largest ethnic group, with centuries of population pressure steadily proliferating we Han Chinese towards our surrounding eastern, western, and southern borders, and Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang having become places of Han migration, why have we detoured Tibet alone with its over 2 million sq km of space? It is

because the Tibetan Plateau's high altitude, oxygen-shortage, harsh climate, and bleak environment are essentially unsuited to the Han nationality that cultivated an agricultural civilization.

Why was it that, until the Communist Party entered Tibet, Tibet had always been able to remain substantively independent? If it had been a contest of one to one alone, the difference in might between China and Tibet was certainly never smaller than it is now. So China's establishment of sovereignty over Tibet hinged not on a military victory, but rather essentially on the ability of the Han Chinese to go there and stay there.

No matter how large the Chinese population or how many could go to Tibet to control Tibet, if they would not go, no population superiority would be of any use.

Before the Communist Party entered Tibet, how many Han Chinese were there? The KMT government's Tibet Office Director Kung Ching-tung records that a 1943 poll found that around 500 Han Chinese families had settled in Tibet, for a little over 2,000 people, three-fifths of whom lived in Lhasa. They were mostly runners or servants, restaurant owners, or vegetable growers who had gone to Tibet during the Qing Dynasty with Chinese officials or armed forces and, when the officials and armed forces withdrew from Tibet, they had neither clan members to rely on nor money to return to China, so were forced to wander about destitute in Tibet. Since most of them became poverty stricken, dependent on coolie work or sporadic peddling to make their living, with their language customs tending to be mostly Tibetanized, and their spouses being mainly Tibetans, their descendants can no longer be called Han Chinese.

Not only did the common people of Han nationality not want to go to Tibet, Chinese officials have always avoided positions in Tibet. While the Qing Dynasty stationed an ambassador in Tibet, always having symbolic jurisdiction over Tibet, its officials in Tibet "were nothing but its ambassador and a few grain growers and soldiers." Of the petitions to the court by the last minister to Tibet, Lien Yu, over one-fifth were requests to send personnel and for ways to keep them, which shows the strong demand for personnel. His requests were merely to ". . . assign no less than 40 people to Tibet, because we are so short on talent." But he was finally forced to continue, sighing that "We officials now have only three or four runners and a few servants . . ." Even of the ministers to Tibet, while successive Qing governments appointed 135, those who did not go for various reasons numbered 23, or 17 per cent.

We can cite figures to show why inland officials evaded going to Tibet. Of the 112 ministers to Tibet that actually went there during the Qing Dynasty, plus the nine who started out but never arrived, or 123 [number as published], 32 died in Tibet or en route there, for a high 26 per cent, or one-fourth, most of whom died either from sickness or accidents on the road, with three others being killed by rebellious Tibetans.

It is precisely because so few Han Chinese went to Tibet that most Tibetans at the time "knew only about the Dalai Lama, but not the imperial court."

It was not until Mao Zedong's time, when the "spiritual atom bomb"

(ideological incentive forces) appeared, that the problem of "no one wants to go to Tibet" was solved for the first time. Countless Han Chinese went to Tibet then, numbering 45,000 local workers and 50,000 soldiers in the 1950s, to peak in the 1970s at over 300,000. In contrast, the Qing Dynasty was able to station only some dozens of civil officials and a little over 1,000 soldiers in Tibet, making it easy to see that China's ability to establish sovereignty over Tibet is determined by the number of Han Chinese that it can station there.

But today, "no one wants to go to Tibet" has again become a problem in the Chinese rule of Tibet. As the ideological incentive forces have broken up, with personal interests dominating the values of today's Chinese, and selfishness having become the crux of life, that honoured "old Tibetan spirit" of "being particularly able to suffer pain, endure, and fight" has no place left.

Meanwhile, since reform and opening has given Chinese society considerable freedom, with the restraints and penalties no longer being as pervasive as they once were, the administrative means of forcing people to go to Tibet have largely lost their impact.

As to Tibet, 1980 was the turning point in the transition from the age of Mao Zedong to the time of Deng Xiaoping. The number of Han Chinese in Tibet also changed that year, decreasing yearly from their peak in 1980 (the following statistical tables do not include soldiers stationed in Tibet).

Table 1. The decreasing number of Han people in Tibet		
	Year	No. of Han
	1980	122,400
	1982	91,720
	1984	76,323
	1985	70,932
	1990	67,407
	1991	65,101
	1992	66,318
	1993	64,890

Table 2. The regional distribution of the Han Chinese population in Tibet in 1990

Prefecture	Population	Percentage of Han Chinese
Lhasa	44,939	55.3
Qamdo [Chamdu]	7,019	8.6
Shannan [Lhokha]	5,725	7.1
Xigaze	4,920	6.1
Nagqu	2,961	3.6
Ngari [Ali]	1,435	1.8
Nyingchi	14,218	17.5
Total	81,217	100.00

These figures include only the Han Chinese who are registered permanent residents of Tibet. A sizeable number of the Han Chinese in Tibet were demobilized from the army in the 1950s and 1960s, or are officials and their dependants who were sent to Tibet from China. These "old Tibetans" are now generally reaching retirement age. It is provided that, once they retire, their permanent residence registration will be returned to China.

They now have no other aspiration than to muddle through until retirement age, when they can acquire the relevant pensions to return and retire in China. Their permanent residence registrations have certainly been leaving Tibet in growing numbers in recent years. Since they are Han Chinese with sentiments and influence in Tibet, as they leave, the government is continuing to lose people who it can depend on in Tibet. When they return to China, while it is provided that their children cannot move their permanent residence registration with them, such residence registrations may be staying, but not the people. Since they are young, getting a retirement pension is not as fatal a restraint on the younger generation as it was on their parents. Many young Han Chinese have already left Tibet on their own and returned to China to start new lives, essentially disregarding their lack of residence registration. So the above figures definitely include many residence registrations but not the people.

The Han Chinese with permanent residence registrations now make up only 2.8 per cent of the Tibetan population. They are showing another aspect of the tendency that "no one wants to go to Tibet," by doing everything possible to leave the grassroots and concentrate in central cities, particularly Lhasa. While we have only found data for 1990, it does illustrate the problem (Table 2). If we had current figures, they would definitely be even more glaring.

Nearly all of the Han Chinese in Tibet are in the cities. Since Lhasa had a population of 137,661 in 1990, that means that one-third of them were Han Chinese. With the migrant Han population doing business and labour in Tibet (mostly in Lhasa) and the soldiers stationed in Tibet, outsiders not only cannot see the problem of "no one wants to go to Tibet," rather having the impression that Tibet is full of Han Chinese. But these figures

show that throughout Tibet, except for Lhasa, there are only a little over 30,000 permanent Han residents (including temporary residents who essentially are concentrated in the capitals of each region, and are least in county towns). The age of Mao Zedong, when every township-level (commune) regime had Han officials, has changed into not one of Tibet's 928 townships having a single Han Chinese official. With the key to having effectively stable, sovereign control being the grassroots, that shows the extent of the current crisis.

In the early 1980s, around 4,000 Chinese college students volunteered to go and work in Tibet. They were called "the last generation of idealists." By 1985, the number of such college students volunteering to go and work in Tibet had plummeted to only nine, dropping further to only three to five a year, and even none at all. Once that group of college students had been there for 8 years, they sent a petition to the supreme authorities asking that they meet their initial promise to reassign them to China after 8 years in Tibet. The change from volunteering to go to Tibet to a collective demand to leave, reflects the all-out retreat of the Han Chinese from Tibet. By now, most of them have left Tibet.

The Dalai Lama claims in the international arena that 7.5 million Han Chinese have migrated to Tibet ("greater Tibet"), as well as that the Tibetan AR has more Han Chinese than native Tibetans. But the real figure is that even in greater Tibet, or the Tibetan AR plus 10 Tibetan autonomous prefectures, two Tibetan autonomous counties, and one Tibetan autonomous township in the four provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan, there are only 1.521 million (1990) Han Chinese, or only 26.9 per cent of the population of greater Tibet. Meanwhile, there is the same trend of decreasing numbers of Han Chinese (the region had 1.541 million Han Chinese in 1982), or no one going to Tibet.

Some might ask: Is going to Tibet by the Chinese a prerequisite for a stable Chinese sovereignty? Could we rely on Tibetans to stabilize Chinese sovereignty? While there are undoubtedly many Tibetan serfs who have "stood up," as well as a large number of officials cultivated by the Communist Party, the origin of the problem is that the current Tibet policy is an "enigma." The enigma is that since reform and opening, while the major advance in China's Tibet policy has been the pursuit of religious freedom, which will only continue, not be reversed, since all Tibetans are believers, with their religion per se meaning that its believers blindly submit to their religious leader, Tibet's religious leader is the Dalai Lama, who is also an enemy of the Chinese Government and the political leader of the Tibetan resistance.

The Dalai Lama is a key link in this "enigma." Since his spiritual influence over the Tibetan race as the spiritual leader of all believers is particularly easily converted into political appeal to guide the Tibetan race to follow him in resisting Chinese rule, that readily converts the Tibetan religion into his political tool.

Of course, the current situation is that it is only the military stationed in Tibet that keeps the separatists from shaking Chinese sovereignty. But the test of stable sovereignty is often not stability on normal terms, but rather at particular historic times. The military

role in sovereignty is only like a rope, which can tie Tibet to China, but cannot keep our bloodlines together over the long term. In peacetime, the rope is firm and unbreakable, but once a special juncture is reached, the rope can become unbearably weak.

The exploitation of China's 1911 Revolution to "run out the Han Chinese" by the Dalai Lama's predecessor, the 13th Dalai Lama, is a case in point. The Qing Dynasty also had a particularly strong armed force in Tibet in relation to the Tibetans. The 13th Dalai Lama was also in exile in India, pursuing a line of striving to get the great powers (Britain and Russia) to support Tibetan independence. The Qing Government had also completely given up on the Dalai Lama (even declaring that it had stripped the 13th Dalai Lama of his title), and had the strongest control over Tibet in history. So while the initiative seemed to be almost completely with the Qing Government, just at the moment when the 13th Dalai Lama was almost in despair, China's 1911 Revolution came like a godsend.

Once the dynasty fell, the armed forces that were loyal to the dynasty, not the country, inevitably lost their reason. The Qing army stationed in Lhasa mutinied, breaking up into factions, which each formed its own stronghold, and went its own way. So the Tibetans exploited the opportunity to act everywhere.

The 13th Dalai Lama immediately returned from India to Tibet, leading the Tibetans in an all-out war to drive out the Chinese, and personally giving the order that, "wherever there are Han Chinese, we will naturally clean them out, and where there are not, we will defend against them firmly, to stamp out the Han Chinese throughout Tibet, which is most important." The Han Chinese in Lhasa, including merchants and ordinary people, were all besieged by the Tibetans in their barracks, where they defended against attack for 8 months, "running out of food, to eventually turn to cannibalism."

When trouble had occurred in Tibet in the past, it had been completely dependent on Chinese troops for reinforcements, which was the basic deterrence in control of Tibet at the time. But with the country divided, and all were immersed in power struggles, where was the additional force to send to control borderland Tibet? While the Chinese attache in India at the time, Lu Hsing-chi, "telegraphed the centre, Yunnan, and Sichuan for help in plaintive tones," all were "tied up in the overall instability, unable to respond." So the Tibetan rebellion spread to Kangqu, with Border Defence Commander Chao Erh-feng killed in the revolution, the border left undefended, and the Kangqu troops unable to send help, so that most of the region was lost.

Subsequently, the Sichuan and Yunnan warlords finally sent troops in the interest of their own sphere of influence. Once Sichuan Governor Yin Chang-heng had broken the siege of Qamdo and stabilized the Kangqu region, and was getting ready to advance into Lhasa, he was stopped by Yuan Shih-kai [leader of the Northern Warlord Government and first president of the Republic of China]. The Republic of China had just been established, with the central government being very weak in all areas, to even exist in name only. To acquire the local command legitimacy, the task of top priority was to win the recognition of the great powers. The top great power at the time, Britain, threatened to refuse to recognize the Yuan Government, to keep China from occupying Tibet. Since the Yuan

Government was undoubtedly faced with a fatal threat at the time, confronted with such a choice, the politicians abandoned their talk of a "righteous national cause."

The Chinese troops in Tibet, who could not wait for reinforcements and were out of ammunition and food, finally made a raid to seize some of the Dalai Lama's dependents as hostages, so that both sides finally held mediated peace talks in Nepal. The Han Chinese turned over all of their arms and ammunition, and were driven out of Tibet. From then until 1951, when the PLA invaded Tibet, Tibet was essentially independent for nearly four decades, which period is still used as grounds by the supporters of Tibetan independence for "Tibet being an independent country."

The 13th Dalai Lama wisely noted at the time that, "Tibet's salvation is due to the Chinese revolution, not to any other cause." In 1949, the KMT Government was being routed by a strong Communist Party offensive, with its regime about to collapse. So the Tibetan Government held that another opportunity similar to the 1911 Revolution had arrived, sending troops to surround the KMT Government's organs in Tibet, closing down their radio stations, and then escorting all Han Chinese in groups to India, driving them out of Tibet, to once again break all ties with China.

A review of history shows that whenever Chinese sovereignty over Tibet gets out of control, the prerequisite is nothing but instability in China.

Today's Tibetan separatists are also undoubtedly waiting day and night for such a prerequisite to reoccur. Once Chinese society becomes riotous and out of control, the political nature of the Chinese military and the high dependence on logistics of a modern army would make our troops stationed in Tibet lose morale and logistics support, which two inevitable factors would quickly cause them to collapse (or at least cause their combat effectiveness to plummet). At that time, many variables would occur simultaneously: What would happen in Tibet? What would the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetans do? What would India do? What would the great powers do? Finally, what would be the outcome of the overall impact?While the chance of such problems occurring might be very small, since they would affect sovereignty and national security, they would have to be faced up to squarely, with no evasion.

As to the degree of the crisis, we say that it is greater in Tibet than Xinjiang because over 5 million Han Chinese have settled in Xinjiang (including nearly 2 million in villages at the grassroots). So, no matter what historic events take place, they would be solid soil, rooting Chinese sovereignty in Xinjiang. But with the only tens of thousands of Han Chinese in Tibet being unstable, with their families in China, which leaves them rootless and likely to leave at any sign of trouble, our sovereignty by that time would largely lose its backing.

V. Nationalism and Traditional Religion in the Course of Modernization

The current line of thinking on ruling Tibet is to speed up the pace of Tibetan modernization to win public opinion and break down religious control, and to use steadily

rising living standards to undermine the influence of the Tibetan separatists. Meanwhile, the integration of Tibet into China by the development of a modern economy will also restrain separatism.

By rough estimate, since the PLA invaded Tibet to the present day, the Central Government has given the Tibetan AR (not including other Tibetan regions) money and material worth around 40 billion yuan. At that figure, every person in the Tibetan AR could have received an average of around 500 yuan a year. In other words, even if all Tibetans did nothing all year, their annual income would be higher than that of most hardworking Chinese.

In Tibet, as to all matters that need money, tracking of the sources shows that it is nearly all central appropriations or Chinese support. So without Chinese support, Tibet's existing social system (at least in the cities) could hardly be maintained for even a few days.

As to the ever-growing appropriations to Tibet (which in 1993 were 163 times what they had been in 1952), the question is: How effective is the above line of thinking on ruling Tibet? In certain areas, it has been effective. For instance, a market economy has certainly helped to clear up the religion problem, particularly among the urban Tibetans who have gotten more deeply involved in market actions, where the religious mind set is being steadily downplayed, and the people are starting to take an interest in worldly enjoyment. A trip to Lhasa today leaves a strong impression that the once ancient "sacred city" is being secularized. But while economic development is downplaying the impact of religion, the space left by traditional religion is being filled up by another quasi-religion of modern society: nationalism. The weakening of religion is even probably becoming a term and catalyst for the spread of nationalism. In which sense, the Dalai Lama's might is certainly not weaker due to the weakening of religion, because he is not only Tibet's religious leader, but also its nationalist political leader. So while the secularization of Tibetan society is weakening his influence as a religious leader, it is simultaneously strengthening his influence as a political leader.

The facts show that the most secularized urban Tibetan youth are characterized by the strongest centrifugal force and nationalist sentiment.

They have been the major force in the resistance and street riots in Tibet in recent years. While one of the slogans at Lhasa disturbances is that "the barley-eaters will drive out the rice-eaters," those who shout it the loudest are often those who have long since stopped eating barley, and are enthralled with Chinese food and Western pastry.

On the other hand, no matter how urban religion is undermined by materialism, in Tibet's vast pastoral and rural areas, the harsh plateau life keeps the Tibetans in an inseparable relationship with religion. While money is only of occasional use to the Tibetans living in the snowcapped mountains, their gods are useful at all times. Without the guidance of their gods, people in such an environment are without support. In which sense, Tibetan religion cannot be really undermined in Tibet's vast regions and among the majority population. So nationalism and traditional religion have simultaneously become dual

weapons in the Dalai Lama's arsenal.

Consequently, when dealing with the ethnic matter, we need to keep clear heads about how much hope we can place on the economic factor. While the former Soviet Union had a high degree of economic integration, and its breakup was a considerable economic loss to all of the new countries, that certainly did not stop the Soviet Union from collapsing. The ethnic elite that is promoting ethnic independence is interested mostly in power, which can be won only through separation. The economic decline and lower living standards caused by breaking economic ties are borne by the common people.

But the ethnic elite explains that as being the necessary price of "give me liberty or give me death."

The elite class has a stronger sense of nationalism than other social classes, which could be said to be an international phenomenon. Besides elite factors such as thought capacity, intellectual quality, self-esteem, and independence, that is also determined by elite group interests. Since the current "sovereignty"-based international order means that sovereignty can be "undamaged and reestablished" through separation, as to a sizeable number of the ethnic elite, as long as they gain ethnic or national independence, they can immediately become equal members of the international community, no longer a "locality" or "minority ethnic group"

subordinate to another's sovereignty. A new country can undoubtedly provide the elite with many new opportunities. In which sense, in today's sovereignty makeup, as long as nationalism is the position, the resolution of ethnic conflict will forever be problematic.

So we need to always question and stay on high guard against nationalism.

We need to stay on guard against those who would try to use nationalism to create a modern mentality. In a multiethnic country like China, we need to take a particularly cautious stance towards nationalism. While plotting it today might be somewhat profitable, it would bring in exchange much harm tomorrow. So helping minority ethnic groups to free themselves from domination by their ethnic elite, to directly judge and choose their ethnic future in line with their own interests, is a likely way to resolve ethnic problems. This point needs to be considered in China's coming political reform.

VI. Current Remedies and Limitations

In dealing with the Tibet matter, we have never seen any breakthrough ideas, remaining essentially limited to discussing specific policies and means, and still not having broken with traditional conventions. But the "aid-to-Tibet" system that has appeared in recent years differs from past ones, so it should be considered a new means. The "Third Conference on Tibet Work" held in Beijing in 1994 decided to designate the richer Chinese provinces, cities, and central ministries and commissions to provide "counterpart support" to Tibet. The support scope is quite wide, including all areas such as funding, technology, construction projects, officials, scientists, and technicians. The "counterpart"

relationship is that all central ministries and commissions are responsible for their corresponding departments and bureaus in the Tibetan AR, with Beijing being responsible for Lhasa, Shanghai and Shandong for Xigaze, Guangdong and Fujian for Nyingchi, Zhejiang and Liaoning for Nagqu, Hunan and Hebei for Shannan, and Tianjin and Sichuan for Qamdo. Such counterpart relations have been temporarily set for 10 years.

This "counterpart support" has formed an institutionalized "official aid-to-Tibet" means, sending Chinese Party and government officials to Tibet, to solve the problem of "no one wants to go to Tibet."

The "official aid to Tibet" started in the early 1980s, being an emergency step at the time to deal with the talent shortage caused by the large number of Han Chinese returning to China. Certain officials were transferred temporarily from all provinces and cities, not moving their permanent residence registration, not taking their dependents, not changing their subordinate relations, being paid by their original units, working in Tibet for a short time, generally no more than 3 years, and returning to their original unit afterwards. Once the "counterpart aid to Tibet" was established in 1994, that "official aid to Tibet" was also made counterpart, with the assignment by counterpart provinces and cities to counterpart Tibetan regions (or counterpart ministries and commissions to counterpart Tibetan departments and bureaus), and the selection of the aid-to-Tibet officials, organization, management, wages, material incentives, and placement upon completion, all being the responsibility of counterpart provinces and cities.

This "official aid to Tibet" form is a mixed adaptation to suit its circumstances, with its ideological slogan remaining the same as in the past, and its propaganda being vigorous. But while its form has not escaped the "movement or campaign" framework, with its original driving force remaining administrative orders from above, a mechanism that is ultimately able to get people into Tibet has turned into mostly a profit exchange.

The substance of the "exchange" varies by the terms and financial might of each unit in all areas. But a one-grade elevation in rank for all officials going to Tibet is essentially unanimous for all regions. Other benefits are added too, such as housing assignment, resolution of the "transfer from agriculture to nonfarm industry" and jobs for spouses, child care and schooling, and even installing telephones at public expense in the homes of the families of aid-to-Tibet officials, to ensure that their dependents can keep in regular contact with them.

The first group of aid-to-Tibet Han Chinese officials numbered less than 700. Since the positions that they have taken up go all the way from senior officials at the top AR level and key posts in all departments and bureaus to lower level ones in all areas such as county assistant directors, secretaries, and deputy county executives, their impact is widespread, having an extensive involvement. As to the trend, this is likely to be the key means of assigning Chinese officials to Tibet in the future.

At present, this form has its advantages. For instance, it lightens the central fiscal burden

and placement responsibility. Since the benefits that it provides to aid-to-Tibet officials are not in Tibet, and are not the burden of Tibet, it avoids direct irritation of local officials. Since it does not occupy the local establishment, involving no problem of taking away positions, it arouses less resistance among Tibetan officials.

Meanwhile, since their assignment to Tibet is accompanied by economic "counterpart support" to Tibet by all provinces and cities, with the aid projects or investments that they attract to Tibet bringing real local benefits, as long as we stress the economic value of such "aid to Tibet,"

we can readily avoid conflict between the use of the aid-to-Tibet officials and the principle of ethnic self-rule, with there being no need to get it approved by the local "People's Congress." So this official aid-to-Tibet form seems to have very good prospects.

But just as with many other Chinese plans that have emerged between the cracks of difficult plights, while its circuitous maneuvering is laudable, it remains subject to the negative impact of dealing with one aspect at the expense of another. The most direct negative effect in Tibet of the "aid-to-Tibet official" system is that it fatally speeds up the breakdown of the Chinese ranks in Tibet who are called the "old Tibetans."

The "old Tibetans" have worked in Tibet for decades, sacrificing their generation, and even "sacrificing their youth and their descendants." Faced with the promotions in grade for going to Tibet, material incentives, public praise, and 3-year terms of the "aid-to-Tibet officials," they feel like they have been given the cold shoulder, which is hard for them to take. Having lost their original ideological incentives, their lifetime of "sacrifice" in contrast to the "aid-to-Tibetans" unavoidably leaves them with a sense of "loss" which, even if they do not have a "sense of claiming damages for," they at least will not continue to "sacrifice."

So some hold that the 700 "aid-to-Tibet officials" who were assigned to Tibet at such a high cost have offended in exchange the 17,000 "officials in Tibet." This 700:17,000 ratio is less pro than con. Once the "aid-to-Tibet officials" get to Tibet, they generally feel rejected by the "officials in Tibet," which is their first headache, while their relations with ethnic Tibetan officials are much better. If the ranks of the "old Tibetans" had already lost their fighting spirit previously, the arrival of this 700 "aid-to-Tibet officials" has probably had the impact of fundamentally shaking the ranks of the "old Tibetans."

Of course, if the "aid to Tibet" really supplants the past system, to play the role of stabilizing Tibet, the current conflicts will be nothing but a transitional problem which, once the system is completely replaced, will naturally be solved. The current "aid-to-Tibet" form certainly does entice certain Chinese officials to Tibet. While certain units have even seen long lines to sign up, with some units even having to balance them with "benefits" based on who needs real difficulties resolved, such as housing assignments or dependent jobs, which eventually determine who goes to Tibet, it is obvious just where the hearts of such people who go to Tibet are.

But other units cannot get anyone to sign up no matter how hard they try to mobilize them.

There is an absolute difference between the results of going to Tibet in formal status and going there with a real Tibet mind set. So even if the "aid-to-Tibet" system can really deliver Chinese officials to Tibet despite the cost, since the people go physically, but not in heart, the role that they can play in stabilizing Tibet is limited.

First, the aid-to-Tibet officials are all temporary, staying there at most for 3 years. For the first year, they do not understand the situation, not yet being physiologically acclimated, so the role they can play is limited.

It is provided that there is a furlough after working in Tibet for a year and a half, which lasts 5 months for county officials and 6 months for prefectural officials, plus a month for travel back and forth. Since those on furlough often receive certain "public expenses," they have grounds for returning late. That leaves the second year in Tibet wasted mostly on furlough. Then, since the third year is the last one in Tibet, everyone has long since started to prepare to return home, with their hearts no longer being in Tibet, and their work being perfunctory, at least not with any long-range considerations.

Despite the provision for a furlough after a year and a half in Tibet, many aid-to-Tibet officials are not in Tibet in the winter, leaving in November to return only in April or May of the next year. While they are nominally doing certain work, they have in fact returned home to rest, going to the hospital for physical exams and recuperation. Some counties actually let the aid-to-Tibet officials assigned to them spend most of their time in China, giving them nominal jobs to earn money for the county. The aid-to-Tibet officials who do not want to stay in Tibet would rather exploit their Chinese connections to make money, in exchange for the freedom and convenience of staying in China.

The provisional nature of each specific aid-to-Tibeter in this aid-to-Tibet system turns the whole system into a superficial form. The aid-to-Tibet officials cannot objectively understand the situation, and subjectively have no long-range plans. Since they do not learn the Tibetan language or develop relations with the masses, they cannot establish any authority.

Since their subordinates and the common people all know that they are just coming and going, will leave in a few years, and are not dependable, even when aid-to-Tibet officials are placed in top and important positions, they do not hold real power and authority. It could be said that the aid-to-Tibeters remain rooted in their original environment, only putting one foot into Tibet for a short time, and then leaving.

The current aid-to-Tibeters now go only as low as the county level. Their lifestyle, language, and workstyle all make it impossible and leave them unwilling to adapt to the Tibetan district and township grassroots level below the county level - such a harsh environment is one in which Han officials cannot survive. This is related to the loss of

belief incentives, as well as being the result of the relatively higher social status and living standards of the current aid-to-Tibet officials. While the report forms show that the aid-to-Tibet officials seem to be of particularly high quality as to education, qualifications, titles, and rank, the most important thing in stable autonomy is to hold grassroots political power.

What we lack are "down-to-earth" cadres that can get things done at the grassroots, not "leading cadres" that float around at the superstructure.

The temporary nature, perfunctory work, and inability to work at the grassroots level of those who go to Tibet, have been the three basic difficulties since China started to rule Tibet in the Qing Dynasty. These difficulties have always made it hard for China to consolidate its sovereignty over Tibet. These same difficulties are again troubling the government, with the "aid-to-Tibet" system sending only the people to Tibet, but not their hearts and minds, which in the final analysis remains a case of "no one wants to go to Tibet."

VII. A Reconsideration of China's Ethnic Policy

When many ethnic groups unite into a common country, it becomes a relationship of "different qualities within the same structure." The so-called "different qualities" are the qualitative differences of the various ethnic groups in areas such as race, history, and culture, with the "same structure" being the unity of various ethnic groups of different qualities into a common political framework, under united sovereignty.

Different qualities and the same structure are a contradiction. The best way to deal with a country's internal ethnic relations is to balance the two. Since the different qualities and the same structure are both indispensable, we should not be biased towards either. We need to allow and ensure that the different qualities survive, respect ethnic differences, and provide each ethnic group the room to develop according to its own ethnic features. Meanwhile we need to curb and prevent ethnic antagonism and separatism, to ensure stable and consolidated national sovereignty, so that all ethnic groups can peacefully coexist and jointly develop within a united political framework. That is the balance of different qualities with the same structure.

From the perspective of "different qualities within the same structure,"

China's ethnic policy has long been unbalanced, which can be divided into two stages by 1980. Before 1980, the imbalance was the slant or bias towards the "same structure" or, while ensuring the unity of the regime, we mandated the elimination of ethnic differences. But since 1980, the imbalance has been in a slant towards the "different qualities" or, while starting to tolerate ethnic differences, we have eased up on the unity of the regime.

While the first imbalance caused inner grumbling by ethnic minorities, since the regime at the time maintained absolute unity, it had strong control. Even though problems

occurred regularly, they were effectively suppressed, with stability being generally preserved.

While reform and opening righted the wrong of forcing ethnic minorities to assimilate, giving ethnic minorities the freedom to preserve their traditional cultures and lifestyles, which undoubtedly was particularly laudable progress, the lack of a balanced view on "different qualities within the same structure" resulted in an overcorrection. This encouraged and indulged the tendency towards regime or political power differences.

This tendency was relatively more pronounced in Tibet.

In 1980, we took two key steps in reference to the local Tibet regime. (1) We withdrew a large number of the Han Chinese officials and employees in Tibet back to China. (2) We invested Tibet with "discretionary powers" to not execute central orders.

The positions vacated by Han Chinese officials were quickly filled by Tibetans, which turned the Tibetan regime from that time on towards nationalism and localism. In an ethnic region with stable sovereignty, while such a change of regime certainly does not pose a threat, and should be seen as a progressive manifestation of ethnic equality, in an ethnic region with strong differences, the nature of the problem changes. The severity of the problem in Tibet is particularly in Tibet's distinctive "enigma." Since a high ratio (particularly at the grassroots) of Tibetan officials are believers (or covert believers), with belief meaning worshipping their god, and the Dalai Lama being the god of the Tibetan religion but also the enemy of the Chinese regime, the believing officials have a dual identity, with whether they will worship their god first or fight the enemy first always being a delicate matter. In which case, if they also are permitted the discretionary power to "not obey the centre," the variables and possible effects are particularly many, with the outcome being particularly hard to predict and control

Faced with the distinctive nature of the Tibet matter, the correct policy should be to fully tolerate, respect, and protect the differences of the Tibetans, while wisely, carefully, and effectively strengthening the unity of the local Tibetan regime. The status of the two should be the same, with no bias towards either side. Hopefully, in this way, we can preserve an opposite yet complementary relationship, tolerating ethnic differences while ensuring the unity of the regime, and doing both in the same ratio.

Such a balance cannot be achieved by adjusting the policy or sending certain key officials. The problem remains the same old one that "no one wants to go to Tibet." Since it took China up to a century to solve that problem the last time, how long might it take this time? These detailed facts fully show the protracted nature of the Tibet matter that is troubling China. So unless we make a transcendent breakthrough in thinking or means, China is going to be long troubled by the matter.

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