

THE CHINA-DALAI LAMA DIALOGUE: PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS

ROUNDTABLE

BEFORE THE

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

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THE CHINA-DALAI LAMA DIALOGUE: PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2006

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The Roundtable was convened, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, David Dorman (Senate Staff Director) presiding.

Also present: John Foarde, House Staff Director; Carl Minzner, Senior Counsel; William A. Farris, Senior Counsel; Kara Abramson, Counsel; and Steve Marshall, Senior Advisor.

Mr. DORMAN. Before we get started, I would like to point out to everyone that copies of the Commission's 2005 Annual Report, and I believe copies of all our panelists' written statements, are on the table outside the door. So please feel free to take a copy if you would like. Now would be the time to do that, as we will begin in just a few seconds.

Let us get started. On behalf of our Chairman, Chuck Hagel, and our Co-Chairman, Representative Jim Leach, I would like to welcome our very distinguished group of panelists today to this Issues Roundtable on the China-Dalai Lama Dialogue: Prospects for Progress. As has been the procedure since we began these roundtables in 2002, I will begin with a short opening statement. Then we will move into an introductory period, where I will introduce each of our panelists, and then give each, in turn, an opportunity to make an opening statement. Once each panelist has had an opportunity to make an opening statement, we will begin a period of questions and answers.

Each person on the dais will have five minutes to ask a question and hear an answer, and we will continue to ask questions and hear answers until our 90 minutes are used up. Generally, that 90 minutes disappears very quickly during what are always very interesting conversations. We are looking forward to this roundtable today.

First, a brief opening statement.

Tension between the Chinese Government and Tibetans living in China persists as a feature of regional, political, cultural, and religious life. The U.S. State Department's third annual "Report on Tibetan Negotiations" noted the gravity of the issue, saying, "The lack of resolution of these problems leads to greater tensions inside China and will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations." The Dalai Lama, now in his early 70s, has said that he does not seek inde-

pendence and aims, instead, for a solution based on Tibetan autonomy within China. He has sent his envoys to meet with Chinese leaders five times, starting in 2002. Their most recent trip concluded on February 23, 2006. So far, Chinese leaders do not seem to recognize the benefits of moving forward in the dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his envoys.

In the Commission's 2005 Annual Report, the Commission made the following statement and recommendation: "The future of Tibetans and their religion, language, and culture depends on fair and equitable decisions about future policies that can only be achieved through dialogue. The Dalai Lama is essential to this dialogue. To help the parties build on visits and dialogue held in 2003, 2004, and 2005, the President and the Congress should urge the Chinese Government to move the current dialogue toward deeper substantive discussions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, and encourage direct contact between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership."

With that, I would like to introduce our first very distinguished panelist, Mr. Tashi Wangdi. Mr. Wangdi is Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Americas, Office of Tibet, New York. Mr. Wangdi, a senior official of the Tibetan government-in-exile, began service in the Tibetan government-in-exile as a junior officer in 1966, and has held several positions as a Kalon. He headed the departments of Religion and Culture, Home Affairs, Education, Information and International Relations, Security, and Health, and for many years was the Dalai Lama's representative in New Delhi. In 1988, the Dalai Lama appointed Mr. Wangdi as the potential head of a delegation that could be entrusted with conducting dialogue with the Chinese leadership about the future of the Tibetan people. It proved to be a role that went unfulfilled, but today Mr. Wangdi is a member of the Task Force set up to assist the Dalai Lama's envoys, Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltzen, who are actively engaged in dialogue with the Chinese leadership.

Mr. Wangdi, welcome. You have 10 minutes for an opening statement, please.

STATEMENT OF TASHI WANGDI, REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA TO THE AMERICAS, OFFICE OF TIBET, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. WANGDI. Thank you very much, Mr. Dorman, ladies and gentlemen.

May I, first of all, express my deep appreciation and gratitude for inviting me to be here, and for organizing this Roundtable to discuss the issue of China-Dalai Lama Dialogue: Prospects for Progress.

I would also like to thank the Commission for its excellent Annual Report. I think it is a very well-researched, very comprehensive, very balanced, objective report, and I would like to thank you for that.

I would like to say that the first direct contact between the Tibetan government-in-exile and the Chinese Government was established in 1979, when the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was invited to Beijing by the Chinese Government. When he was contacted in Hong Kong by Chinese officials, His Holiness gave

him permission to go for a visit to China. He had very good meetings with very senior Chinese leaders at that time, including Mr. Deng Xiaoping, who very explicitly told Mr. Gyalo Thondup that all issues relating to Tibet can be resolved, except the question of independence.

Now, this stand was very much in line with the position taken by His Holiness and the Tibetan leadership in exile. It was a position taken some years before that that contact was established. As His Holiness has stated in his March 10 statement this year, which I would like to quote, the position taken by the leadership was to seek a solution for genuine autonomy and not for complete independence. As His Holiness stated in this March 10 statement, and I would like to quote that particular portion of the statement, "Some time in 1974, we formulated the basic principles of the Middle Way Approach for resolving the issue of Tibet, trusting that the time must surely come when we would have the opportunity to engage in talks with the Chinese leadership. In 1979, we were able to interact directly with the leadership in Beijing. At that time, Deng Xiaoping said that, except for independence, all issues would be resolved through negotiations. Since then, I have pursued the Middle Way Approach with consistency and sincerity."

Therefore, when Mr. Gyalo Thondup came back with that message from Mr. Deng Xiaoping, His Holiness immediately responded to that and a number of high-level delegations were sent to China, and also for fact-finding delegations for Tibet. Unfortunately, the early relationship, which gave a lot of encouragement and hope for an early breakthrough, did not materialize. The relations often had gone through a difficult period. When members of our delegations have met with Chinese officials again and relations are reestablished, they also describe the spirit through which we have gone as "through many turns and twists," so it did not lead to a negotiated settlement.

But I think it will not be useful for me to go into those reasons, because that would not serve any purpose. We will leave it, as I said in my written statement. Future historians will be the best judge of this aspect. However, I have said in my statement that if the policies stated by Mr. Deng Xiaoping to Mr. Gyalo Thondup, and subsequently we felt these were being implemented to a large extent, especially when Mr. Hu Yaobang was the Party Secretary, would have been carried through, we have a sense that the problem may have been resolved by now. But, unfortunately, Mr. Hu Yaobang himself fell from his position, and after that the relations became very difficult. There was imposition of martial law. The policies of the Chinese Government toward Tibet and Tibetans have hardened.

But despite this reversal, His Holiness Dalai Lama continues to seek a peaceful resolution to the problem through dialogue on the basis of what Mr. Deng Xiaoping said and his own Middle Way Approach. His Holiness made the position clear to the Chinese leadership through communications directly addressed to them. Many letters were directly addressed to the Chinese leaders, explaining His Holiness' intentions and policies. Also through well-intentioned mutual friends, there were many people who were close

to Chinese leaders and also known to His Holiness. He also used these methods to convey his views to the Chinese Government.

His Holiness, of course, expressed his willingness to meet Chinese leaders. Many times he said, "Anywhere, any time." When then-Chinese Premier Li Peng visited India, it was again suggested that during that visit it may be a good idea for His Holiness and the Premier to meet. But, unfortunately, this initiative, these suggestions, were not responded to in a positive manner.

In the meantime, His Holiness, apart from trying very strenuously, also appointed two senior officials with the responsibility of trying to reestablish contact with the Chinese Government. In 2002, the two envoys were able to make contact and were able to make a visit to Beijing, with two senior aides. Their task was to reestablish contact, to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue, and eventually negotiations, and to explain His Holiness' positions, his policies to the Chinese leaders. So far, there have been five meetings of His Holiness' representatives and their Chinese counterparts. In the last nearly four years, the progress toward a meaningful dialogue has been almost non-existent. It has been a very frustrating and slow process, and basically one-sided.

But at the same time, we believe that there has been some movement forward in terms of the responsibilities given to the two senior officials. That is to say, to reestablish direct contact and to try to explain His Holiness' position. Of course, the relations now have been reestablished. Contact has been reestablished and stabilized. This has also been stated by the Chinese officials in their fourth meeting, when they said that the contact has been stabilized and that it has become an established practice. So that is an encouraging development.

Second, it also has been possible, through these meetings, to be able to have an opportunity to explain His Holiness' policies and his positions. Then there has also been some change in the format and the content of discussions also, and frequency of the meetings. The fourth meeting, as you know, was outside of China, at the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland. The gap between the fourth and fifth meetings has also been the shortest in the last four years.

The discussions from the fifth round onward had shifted from re-statement of general principles and unspecified allegations to more specific issues, mainly explaining the reasons why there is still a lack of trust, and certain misconceptions and misunderstandings about His Holiness' positions, his statements, and so on.

Our representatives found these discussions very helpful. When the more specific points are made, it is easier for us to respond to them. We have, of course, taken the points raised in all these meetings very seriously, and explanations and clarifications were given fully and truthfully, in writing, in the last two meetings.

We believe that this is the only way to remove all mistrust and suspicion, which seem to plague our present relationship and hinder efforts to enter into serious and meaningful negotiations. We believe that one of the biggest problems at this point is lack of trust. Unless we are able to remove this problem and make some breakthrough, it will be very difficult to start meaningful, substantive negotiations.

Of course, as stated by His Holiness' representatives in their latest press statement, and of course the other statements on the occasion of March 10, that is, the statement of His Holiness, which I have quoted from; the statement of the cabinet which also has bearing on this topic we are discussing today; and the statement issued by the delegation after it returned from the fifth round of meetings, I would like to place them in the record.

[The statements appear in the appendix.]

Mr. WANGDI. As the delegation has stated in their press statement on their return, they have very clearly, very candidly said that there are still big differences, including some fundamental differences. But the encouraging thing, the good thing, the positive development, is that even after the last round of meetings, that both sides have reconfirmed their commitment to continue this process of dialogue.

Also, in the last meeting it was possible to identify more clearly issues of differences in substance, which again is very helpful for us so that we are able to address these issues in a head-on way rather than trying to guess about what are the obstacles and difficulties in our dialogue.

We also feel that we have suggested to the Chinese Government that, in order to take the process forward, first to remove the trust and misunderstanding and so on, that it would be very important to increase the frequency of meetings.

To a fault, there has almost been an annual meeting. Between the fourth and fifth, as I said, there was a shorter period, and we hope that there will be occasion for the delegations to meet again soon. But we have suggested to the Chinese Government that the frequency of these meetings should be increased so that there would be an opportunity to have a much more intensive, vigorous exchange of views.

We feel, and have stated it many times, that if we remove the mistrust and misunderstandings, the fundamental differences that still exist are not that insurmountable. The basic concern of the Chinese Government is the unity, territorial integrity, and economic development of the country. We very sincerely believe that the Middle Way Approach adopted by His Holiness will not in any way undermine this Chinese Government priority. In fact, if it is understood in this proper context and with the sincere motivation behind it, it will help to remove this unfounded mistrust, suspicion, and fear.

But, as I said repeatedly, true, substantive, meaningful negotiations can only take place when there is sufficient mutual confidence, mutual trust. The best way, of course, apart from the delegations meeting more frequently and intensifying the discussions, the single most important thing, in our view, is personal contact at the highest level. Therefore, His Holiness has said many times in the past particularly that he is prepared to meet Chinese leaders at any time. When they visit foreign countries, there are occasions. We have suggested to them that this would be a good opportunity to meet.

So now we have suggested to the Chinese Government, and His Holiness has suggested to his envoys, that he would like to visit China on a pilgrimage. He has proposed this step before, and we

have again taken it up. So, we hope that this suggestion will be taken up by the Chinese Government, and the Chinese leadership would have the necessary vision, courage, and self-confidence to receive His Holiness.

Of course, there may be some fear that such a visit may create disturbances and may create problems, confusions, and that such a visit may be misused, if I may say so. But I can say confidently that His Holiness would use such a visit to build a better understanding, to develop closer contacts, and to build a more harmonious relationship. Therefore, we hope that the Chinese Government would respond to this suggestion very positively. This will be a very important development in our efforts to break the present deadlock.

As I said, we believe that differences, although they may sound fundamental, but in the positions taken by His Holiness and the Chinese leadership, these differences are not that insurmountable. We still feel that there can be a breakthrough in our relations.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wangdi appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you very much, Mr. Wangdi. The statements that you referenced will be placed in the roundtable record.

Our next panelist is Mr. Sonam Wangdu. Mr. Wangdu is Chairman of the United States Tibet Committee [USTC]. Mr. Wangdu has been a member of the board of directors of the USTC, a New York-based Tibet support group, since the 1980s, and an active figure in the Tibetan advocacy movement since 1973. He was one of the founding members of the Tibetan Association of New York and New Jersey in 1977, and served as its president from 1978 to 1982. He is a member of the Committee of 100 for Tibet, a group that advocates self-determination for Tibetans, and is an advisory board member of the International Campaign for Tibet. Mr. Wangdu served on the board of directors of the Tibet Resettlement Project, a 1991 undertaking to settle 1,000 Tibetan refugees in the United States, and as interim board director for the Students for a Free Tibet. He held positions in the Tibetan government-in-exile in India and the Office of Tibet in New York from 1960 to 1973. In New York, he worked in the banking and import-export sectors until he retired.

Mr. Wangdu, welcome. You have 10 minutes for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF SONAM WANGDU, CHAIRMAN, U.S. TIBET
COMMITTEE, NEW YORK, NY**

Mr. WANGDU. Thank you very much, Mr. Dorman. I am grateful to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for the opportunity to appear before you. I have been involved in the Tibet issue, first as an employee of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile from 1960 to 1973, and as an advocate, volunteering my time, in the free Tibet movement since then. I am currently the chair of the U.S. Tibet Committee in New York City, the oldest Tibet support group in North America.

I was born in Kham, Tibet, in 1942. My mother was forced to send me away to my uncles in central Tibet in fear for my safety

because it was rumored that young Tibetan boys were being shipped off to China for indoctrination. I was a child of eight years when I left my home. My eldest sister accompanied me across the country. My sister returned to Kham, and the next time we met again was after 36 years, in Nepal. In 1954, my uncles brought me to India where I was enrolled in English-medium schools. I never returned home nor saw my mother again.

For 42 years, I have lived in the United States. I have raised my children here and this country has been a host and a home to me, as well as an inspiration. I press on for independence for Tibet because I believe it can be achieved, and because that is the only way to preserve real freedom for Tibetans. I came to this country in 1964 and never left. I was deeply affected by the Presidential elections taking place at that time. I watched with much excitement and even envy at the freedom that the citizens of this great country enjoyed in choosing their leaders and deciding their destinies. I read about the American Revolution and was moved by the country's early leaders, in particular, Patrick Henry, whose call, "Give me liberty or give me death," rang so true to my ears because my own countrymen were also laying down their lives for many of the same ideals upon which this country was founded. I was equally touched by President Kennedy's pledge in his inaugural address that the United States "shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." It was not the hawkish stance that I admired in them, but the firm commitment to liberty that is so essential for us Tibetans to reclaim our country.

The official policy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is to achieve a "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China." However, I believe the vast majority of Tibetans desire independence for our country because of reports from inside Tibet and also because of the continuing arrests and imprisonment of Tibetans for even mentioning the name of the Dalai Lama. An independent Tibet is fundamental to protecting the rights of the Tibetan people and bringing peace in the region. The Middle Way Approach is a concession to enter into dialogue with China. And to date, the policy has not led to meaningful dialogue. It has succeeded only in encouraging the PRC to demand further concessions. Those who support the Middle Way Approach do so out of the highest regard for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Those of us who dissent also do so out of the highest regard for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a leader who has given us a lifetime of care and service characterized by extraordinary wisdom and compassion.

I would like to clarify or reiterate that a dissenting opinion of this policy does not in any way indicate an opposition to either the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. On the contrary, I believe that these are institutions we must have—the role of the Dalai Lama for us Tibetans has been vital to our cultural survival.

It has been 57 years since China invaded Tibet; a long time in the span of human life, but only a skipped beat in the history of a 2,133-year-old nation. In all these years, the hope that Tibet will be free again has not diminished. Most of the senior government

officials from all segments of our society, as well as many of my friends, family members, and colleagues have now passed away, but the shared hope for freedom is still very much alive.

I was a child when Tibet became an occupied nation, but the generation that followed mine has grown up never having known an independent Tibet. They are truly the children of exile and occupation, yet, they are tougher, better educated, and more skeptical than us older Tibetans. They are the future of the movement. Figures such as Tenzin Tsundue, who was recently profiled in the New York Times magazine; Jamyang Norbu, author; and Lhabsang Tsering; or the leaders of GuChuSum, an organization of former political prisoners now in exile; the Tibetan Youth Congress; or U.S.-based organizations such as the United States Tibet Committee, the Students for a Free Tibet, and the International Tibet Independence Movement, to name a few, approach the Tibet-China situation with greater media literacy, technical savvy, and an unwillingness to settle for anything less than total freedom for the country of their forbearers. These are Tibetans, but they are also citizens of the world, with passports that reflect a United Nations-worthy diversity.

I am a firm believer in peaceful conflict resolution; and in the case of Tibet, it is imperative that both Tibet and China be earnest and sincere in searching for an acceptable resolution. But as the situation is now, the Middle Way Approach has not brought us any closer to the resolution of the Tibet issue.

Contact with China in the new millennium has not shown any tangible progress apart from the Chinese leaders using these meetings to wage a public relations campaign to deflect criticism. Although the Chinese have entertained His Holiness the Dalai Lama's envoys four times in China and once in Bern, Switzerland, they have refused to recognize their official purpose or who they represent. Even as the Chinese host these delegations, they continue to imprison Tibetans loyal to the Dalai Lama, and combined with the lack of improvement in human rights, they have shown they have no interest in loosening their grip on Tibet.

China is using these "talks" to lower the pressure from the United States and the European Union, who have been pushing for these talks for many years. It seems clear that the Chinese leaders are just going through the motions without showing any real interest in providing "genuine autonomy" for the people of Tibet. Yet the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to create a "conducive environment" for the dialogues, continues to discourage her people and supporters from demonstrating against Chinese leaders during their visits overseas, and for the first time the officials of the New York-based Office of Tibet have been instructed not to participate in the March 10 demonstration this year. Concessions, be they voluntary or on demand, without reciprocity, are not inducements for serious talk. Despite these overtures and concessions by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, China still maintains a hard line on Tibet, and the protests continue against China by exiled Tibetans. Tibetans are now even taking their fight into the heart of China where Wangpo Tethong, a Swiss Tibetan, on March 8 displayed a banner that read, "Hu: You Can't Stop Us! 2008-Free Tibet.org" in Tiananmen Square. With all eyes on Beijing for the upcoming 2008

Olympic Games and the construction of the new railroad connecting China with Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, to promote tourism, this is the time and opportunity for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and supporters to bring attention to Tibet's real situation.

If the United States abides by Kalon Tripa—Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche's misperception of progress of these talks, the danger exists that China will continue to forestall negotiations in the hopes for a post-Dalai Lama scenario where the issue will die with him.

Rather than the issue dying away, there is a greater likelihood that the issue will destabilize Tibet, that future generations of very frustrated Tibetans will resort to other means to bring freedom to Tibet. The role and the position of the Dalai Lama has been a great stabilizer for the Tibetan community, the Free Tibet Movement, and even the world. The world has grown smaller, and the issue of Tibet cannot be treated as an isolated case that affects the people of Tibet only. This issue is now not simply a Tibetan issue, nor a nationalist issue, nor a human rights issue. The Tibet issue has now evolved into a global security and environmental issue. It requires international attention to keep peace in the region.

India's national security is at far greater risk now than ever before. We all saw this in the 1962 Chinese invasion of India from occupied Tibet. The dynamic has not changed; however, the destructive potential of a Sino-Indian conflict in modern times has the ability to go beyond the borders of the two most populous nations. Such a conflict would provide another dangerous rallying point for the world's clashing ideologies. It seems too clear that to allow Tibet to exist as an independent and neutral state is in humanity's best interest.

Tibet is located in a region of the world that is environmentally sensitive. Tibetans have for centuries learned to live in harmony with nature. However, following the Chinese occupation of Tibet, widespread environmental destruction from massive and unplanned deforestation, farming, and mining have had a profound effect on wildlife, soil erosion, and global weather patterns. I am not an expert in this area, but scientists have observed a direct link between natural vegetation on the Tibetan plateau and the stability of monsoons, which are indispensable to the breadbasket of south Asia. They have also shown that the environment of the Tibetan plateau affects jet streams, which are related to the course of Pacific typhoons and the El Niño phenomenon. Based on these expert opinions, preserving Tibetan's environment is just not in the interest of protecting an ancient and unique culture, but it is also in the interest of the whole human race.

In our own lifetime we have seen the emergence of former colonies as independent states, and the inconceivable events of the fall of the Soviet Union and of the Berlin Wall. I believe Tibetans can have their national flag fly in the capitals of many nations and at the United Nations. This goal is not easy to achieve, but it is not impossible. We Tibetans must depend on our resolve, our commitment, our confidence to continue our just cause. My generation inherited a torn, ravaged, and occupied Tibet. But for the sake of future generations of Tibetans, we have a duty to work hard to free Tibet.

I am grateful to the U.S. Congress for its support for Tibet. I request that the U.S. Government continue to urge the leaders of the People's Republic of China to publicly recognize the Tibetan delegations and to sincerely engage in meaningful dialogue with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I request that the U.S. Government continue pressuring China to improve the human rights situation in Tibet, including the right to self-determination. I request that the U.S. Government influence her allies to also urge the Chinese leaders to dialogue with the Tibetan delegations in their official capacity as representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. It is extremely important to keep the pressure on the Chinese leaders and to show that they are under your watch. Your voice and support are crucial to the Tibetan people. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wangdu appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Mr. Wangdu, thanks very much.

Our next witness is Tseten Wangchuk, who is a senior broadcaster of the Voice of America Tibetan language service. Mr. Wangchuk joined VOA as a journalist in 1993. He co-authored the 2004 East-West Center policy study, "Sino-Tibetan Dialogue in the Post-Mao Era: Lessons and Prospects," along with Tashi Rabgey, a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University. Mr. Wangchuk was born in Lhasa in 1961, before the Chinese Government established the Tibetan Autonomous Region. He was a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, and participated in CASS field research in both the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan autonomous areas outside the autonomous region.

Mr. Wangchuk, thank you very much for coming today. You have 10 minutes for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF TSETEN WANGCHUK, SENIOR BROADCASTER,
VOICE OF AMERICA, TIBETAN LANGUAGE SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. WANGCHUK. Thank you for the opportunity. For my statement, I would like to just make clear that whatever I say here is representing my own views, not representing Voice of America, although I work for VOA.

Mr. DORMAN. Understood, thank you.

Mr. WANGCHUK. Kasur Tashi Wangdi and Sonam Wangdu already gave you a very good look at the brief history of the contact between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government, and the sentiment of a lot of the Tibetans, I think, I would say probably the majority of Tibetans, on how they look at this thing. So I would like to just take this time to give you some brief analytical perspective on why China has this kind of policy right now. It is because in the 1980s, when the Chinese Government tried to stop contact with the Dalai Lama, and in the 1990s they firmly decided that they could isolate the Dalai Lama and they could leave the Dalai Lama outside of the political process in Tibet. Yet, at the end of the 1990s, they shifted the policy a little bit.

As we know now, since then the Dalai Lama sent representatives to visit China and the Chinese Government had contact with them quite recently. I do not think any outside people know exactly what is going on with the Chinese Government, but I would like to give

some perspective on this question. I think that most outside analysts see this change in policy as a result of international pressure. I think there is no question that international pressure has a very important role. As you can see, when the Chinese Government shifted this policy a little bit in the early 1990s, there was a really firm policy saying, "We are not going to talk to the Dalai Lama, we do not need the Dalai Lama in order to manage Tibet." But in 1997 or 1998, it started shifting a little bit more. It has really coincided with Jiang Zemin's, who was then the Chinese president, foreign policy. It has shifted a little bit and the U.S.-China policy is becoming the most important footing for the Chinese for foreign policy. With President Clinton's visit, and a lot of European countries' Prime Ministers and Presidents meeting with Jiang Zemin, really all of them addressed this very issue and urged the Chinese Government to talk to the Dalai Lama. There was no question that international pressure is very important in this political and policy shift.

But I do not think this is only as a result of international pressure. There are many elements of why China has shifted their policy a little bit so they will at least engage with the Dalai Lama. There are many such elements, but I would just like to address just a few of them. One of them, of course, which is very important, is the internal politics of China. They have this economic development inside Tibet. In the mid-1990s, they had really gained in confidence. This economic development was going really fast, and it seemed as though Tibet was not like in the 1980s, it was really apparent; no demonstrations happened or anything like that. So this is the source of the confidence that they do not need the Dalai Lama.

This is becoming a turning point, and the Chinese Government is seeing that their policies through the 1990s, in some ways are not working as they hoped, and for some of them, they see the sustainability is being questioned.

At the same time, within the Chinese political policy circle, there are people who really always thought about it. They think, "Maybe we should not exclude the Dalai Lama completely. We should leave some kind of space. Maybe we have to engage." So these people finally got another chance and they are starting to bring out different ideas.

I think, for example, six or seven years ago in Beijing that very few people even had space to even have doubts about this hardline policy. Nobody was even willing to take the risk and say, "Maybe we should talk to the Dalai Lama. Maybe we should have some kind of contact with the Dalai Lama." But now they do. There are a lot of them. That coincides with the whole thing.

It is not just in Tibet, but it is the whole change that took place in China. In China today, they are not like what we are used to. There are a lot of semi-independent think tanks, and at the universities, the scholars have become much more independent.

So I think opinions on Tibet have really diversified in the past couple of years. There are, of course, these predominant sorts of hardline policies that remain. But at the same time, there are government meetings and there are different opinions always coming in.

Institutional change also has really played a very important role. Tibet used to be pretty much managed by the Communist Party. But the Tibetan profile is becoming important internationally. The Chinese Foreign Minister is becoming very active in engaging on this issue, because they have to deal with this Tibet issue all the time with foreign counterparts. The Chinese military intelligence, Chinese national security department, and so many universities and think tanks outside of the control of the United Front now bring a very different, diverse set of ideas.

A lot of the people who are very interested in Chinese international strategies, what these people are pointing to are very different. They have fresh ideas about it. They say, "Maybe if we contact the Dalai Lama, it may bring an advantage to the Chinese Government. At the same time, maybe there is a chance we can solve the Tibetan problem itself." So, these, I think, are the pressures that are brought in.

In addition, you have this change within the Tibetan leadership, there are some very senior Tibetan cadres, Communist cadres, that for a long time could not have any real voice. These are people who are now just retired and are seniors. They are starting also to write memos and bringing up this idea about talking to the Dalai Lama. I think these buildup a kind of internal pressure in China to sort of make that political shift.

Also, Mr. Wangdi mentioned the regional sort of power changes, particularly the Chinese relationship with India. I mean, India is becoming very important regionally. Most Chinese scholars now see that Sino-Indian relations are going to be very important in the next 10 to 20 years. Right now, nobody knows what that relationship is going to be. Some people think that India is going to be aligned with the United States, going to become the containment force of the Chinese Government. And some people think China and India together can confront the United States. Anyway, it does not matter where that relationship is heading. In either one of them, the Tibetan issue is important.

I think that a lot of Chinese people who are addressing the government are saying, "We have to look at the Tibetan issue very carefully because this is going to be a part of that puzzle, how China is going to relate to India." So, that also brings a lot of pressure on China to re-think the Tibet issue, think again about how to manage Tibet.

Inside Tibet, although if you look at the statistics it seems very rosy, every year, the Tibet Autonomous Region's [TAR] GDP is going up 12 or 13 percent, but this GDP growth is really an artificial bubble that basically is only happening in urban areas. This is not really a solid economic sort of prosperity, but rather a bubble that is artificially created. All over China, they have a gap between the rich and poor that is causing a lot of problems. But in Tibet, the gap is the worst.

There was a study done by a Chinese economist from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He studied the rich and poor, urban and rural areas. He found that in China, the income gap ratio is like 3:1 between urban and rural areas, but the TAR had the highest gap. In just pure monetary terms, it would probably be 1:5. If you look at everything, it would be like 8:1, something like

that. Not even the sub-Saharan countries are so low. So the policy right now is not really sustainable. I think these are some of the elements that are in play in China.

So let me conclude with this idea. I came to my assessment—I mean, I could be completely wrong, because we really do not know what is happening inside China in the leadership's minds, how they are operating. Regarding a policy toward the Dalai Lama, China is at a crossroads. When I say "crossroads," I do not mean whether or not they want to give the Dalai Lama the things that he is asking for, general autonomy and an all-unified Tibetan area. I do not mean that. I mean a "crossroads" in the sense that whether or not they want to continue the hardline policy or whether they want to choose, or at least consider, an alternatively managed way in which their policy may include a role for the Dalai Lama in some way. I believe there can be this kind of crossroads.

That is why I think you can see all kinds of mixed signals from the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government is very reluctant to even acknowledge the Dalai Lama there, but recently the TAR Deputy Communist Party Secretary acknowledged him. They have had contact five times. Not only that, I think the most significant one was that the Party Secretary's comments were published in Wenhui Bao, the Hong Kong newspaper, which is not run by the Chinese Government but is a very pro-Beijing newspaper. Let me conclude with that.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wangchuk appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Well, thank you very much.

I have to say, and I think everybody on the dais will agree, that that was very useful, interesting, and thought-provoking testimony, so I look forward to our conversation for about the next 45 minutes.

I will start with a question. Mr. Wangchuk just brought up the issue of the Dalai Lama's envoys' recent trip to China, and the fact that Wenhui Bao and the vice chairman of the TAR actually acknowledged that visit, and I think said that—and of course I am not quoting, but something along the lines of—these were not substantive negotiations, but they were discussions. Something that Mr. Marshall pointed out to me—and I think all of you know him, he is the person who looks at these issues for our Commissioners—that the Foreign Ministry spokesman said something quite different.

How should we interpret these two differing statements? Is this an indication of less suspicion on the part of at least some within the Chinese Government or is it simply mixed signals? Could each of you comment on how you would interpret these messages or non-messages?

Mr. WANGCHUK. As some of my friends in Beijing often remind me, just because I lived in Beijing throughout the 1980s and think I know it, they say that China has changed. Do not read too much between the lines. Now there are different opinions, people willing to say different things, so it may not be completely an indication of a government policy shift. But I think at this time the atmosphere is favorable.

The day after he said this, another Tibetan high-ranking cadre said similar things. These people do not historically tend to express

their opinions, particularly on this issue. Therefore, I think the Foreign Ministry spokesman's remark on that is a little early, so these statements by Tibetan cadre are the most recent comments. So I would tend to think there may be a little change.

Not only that, but also I think that last year, even at the outset, they continued to not acknowledge His Holiness. But I think within the Chinese Government, in internal meetings, they are starting to refer to this delegation as the Dalai Lama's representatives. So, I think maybe there is a chance. Maybe this is a little shift.

Mr. DORMAN. Mr. Wangdi, Mr. Wangdu, would you like to comment on that?

Mr. WANGDI. Yes. I think we also noted the recent statements made by the two senior Tibetan officials, and then also I think some time ago in one of the meetings of a Chinese delegation in Australia, they again acknowledged this contact between the officials and the Chinese Government. I think they are making it more public, right from the first meeting. Of course, I think they did indicate to our delegation that they are being received officially, and officials were meeting them. They had instructions from the highest levels to meet with them, and so on. But in terms of public statements, I think they are now coming out more clearly.

Mr. DORMAN. The public statements themselves. Were those designed for consumption outside of China or inside China?

Mr. WANGCHUK. I think right now, it could be for domestic as well as foreign audiences. I think a couple of years ago, it could have been exclusively for the outside. But I think with the Internet, and I am sure the Chinese Government is aware, this is for consumption by a much larger audience.

Mr. DORMAN. Mr. Wangdu, I suspect that you may—

Mr. WANGDU. I think primarily those comments are strategically directed to an audience outside of China. The Chinese Government has ignored plenty of opportunities to recognize visiting Tibetan delegations since they resumed contact with them in 2002. I think we can't read too much into this one remark. I do not believe these are officials in high enough positions to make a difference at the decisionmaking level.

Perhaps it is a hopeful sign. But I think we have to make sure this progresses from here. What is most important is that as a start the Chinese Government must recognize the Tibetan delegations as representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The Foreign Minister of China must acknowledge their visits and meetings. President Hu Jintao must publicly acknowledge the delegations, both at home in China, and when he comes to the West, for instance to meet with President Bush. These are the things that will make a difference. Having remarks made by low-level officials to show some degree of recognition does not make for any changes within Tibet.

Mr. DORMAN. Good. Thank you very much. I have two minutes left. One thing all of our Commissioners are very concerned about, and of course look very carefully at, is the issue of the dialogue. Mr. Marshall, again, to my left, is looking very carefully at this issue in preparation for the Commission's Annual Report this year.

Official reports and other analyses have varyingly used the term "dialogue" as well as "discussion" or "meetings" to describe the on-

going interaction between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives. I noticed that Mr. Wangchuk, in his written statement, used the phrase: an "ongoing experimentation with dialogue." I wondered if Mr. Wangdi and Mr. Wangdu could comment on whether you would agree with that characterization. Are these "ongoing experimentation with dialogue" rather than true dialogue or discussion?

Mr. WANGDI. I think we have stated quite clearly that there is contact and dialogue. We normally describe it as a mutual confidence-building measure at this point. Over the last five meetings, it was basically to try to explain each other's positions. The problem, as far as we can see—we cannot be 100 percent sure—is the lack of confidence and the presence of fear. However many times His Holiness has said, and as a Buddhist, we have Buddhist recitations, mantras, he is always saying, "I am not seeking independence, I am not seeking independence." But the Chinese Government continues to allege that he is seeking independence, he is a splittist, he is a separatist, and so on. I know there is something missing there.

The only thing we feel at this point is the lack of trust and confidence. So the whole exercise until now has been to try to explain. The more specific they become in their statements and their views, the more we need to be more specific in allaying these fears and misunderstandings.

I think Sonam Wangdu was quite right when he said that the negotiations have not started. There are not negotiations, they are dialogues. I think actually he is stating the correct position. We also said that it is just contact.

Mr. DORMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wangdu, would you like to comment?

Mr. WANGDU. I think he is correct. Negotiations have not started. The talks have not started. I think China is just going through the motions. It is only a public relations gesture to give the indication that they are making efforts; that they are meeting with Tibetans to talk about the Tibet issue, but in reality they have not engaged in any meaningful dialogue. They have not said anything to indicate that we are moving in a good direction. The only thing they have done is call these meetings and say, "Oh, yes, we are talking. We will continue to talk." But if there are no results, no outcome except to convince the U.S. Government or the E.U. nations to relieve pressure, then these "talks" are worse than meaningless. They are intentionally counterproductive.

"Talk" itself does not save people. The Chinese Government is still breaking every code of the Human Rights Treaty. Tibetans are still dying; they are still being imprisoned. So what does "talk" really mean? We need substance, to which we can chart movement and progress. This is what is missing. We need to try and find a way where, if they say they are talking, well, fine, let us see some results.

Since 2002 we have not seen any progress. We can even go back to the 1970s, the 1980s when the first Tibetan delegations went on fact-finding missions to Tibet. All these things happened, but have not amounted to any improvement in the situation in Tibet.

The State Department's reports on human rights conditions always state that the conditions in Tibet are bad. Tibetan refugees who escape from Tibet consistently say the situation is bad. So clearly the situation has not improved. And any semblance of talks that has taken place is really just talk for the sake of talk and does not meet the requirements or the spirit of real dialogue. There has to be a goal. This is where I think Congress can play such an important role. You can put pressure on the Chinese Government to engage in timely and focused negotiations. Anything else would be beside the point.

Mr. DORMAN. Well, good. Thank you very much.

I would like to turn the questioning over, next, to my colleague, John Foarde, who serves as Staff Director for our Commission Co-Chairman, Representative Jim Leach. John.

Mr. FOARDE. Thank you, Dave. And thanks to our three panelists for sharing your time and your views with us this afternoon.

We have heard, both in the presentation by Mr. Wangdi, and also Mr. Wangdu's statements just now, that there is a slight shift in the request for just dialogue to substantive dialogue. You have touched on this a little bit, but I wonder if we can get a more specific idea of the topics that the Tibetan side is most keen to discuss in substantive dialogue with the Chinese side. Do you think the Tibetans will be able to convince Chinese leaders that it is in China's best interests to actually discuss them? This question is for any of you.

Mr. WANGDU. I think, as I said in my statement, that the Tibet issue is not an issue that concerns Tibet alone. I think it is an international issue, to which the world community must pay keen attention. If conflict between India and China were to take place today, such a conflict would most definitely not be on the small scale of the one back in 1962, when China invaded India from occupied Tibet. Today we are talking about two nuclear powers. So I think there is a valid argument to be made to China that it is in her own long-term interest to preserve Tibet as a neutral territory between her and India. By eliminating direct exposure between these two nations, we reduce the possibility of conflict as well. This perspective on the Tibet situation is very important for the international community to consider. Even if what is happening to the Tibetan people is not a motivating factor for them, surely they will be moved by the idea of the two most populous nuclear powers in the world on a collision course with each other. So, I think when you regard it like that, the Tibet issue has considerable relevance to peace in the region. The same thing is true with the environment. We are all concerned about the global warming effect. Well, where does it begin? When we destroy nature, that is how it happens. This is what is happening in Tibet. Again, it is an international issue. It is not an issue that concerns just the Tibetans. It is important for the international community to understand this. It is important for China to understand this as well.

Mr. FOARDE. Do either of the other panelists have specific issues, substantive issues, that you think the Tibetan side would like to talk with China about?

Mr. WANGDI. Well, I think there is a whole range of issues, issues concerning the very serious problem of demographic

changes, environment, culture, preservation of culture, spiritual tradition, language, economic development. I think all these issues are for discussion. We have stated very clearly that we are prepared to discuss this all within the context of the Chinese Constitution. It would have in mind the employment interests of all the people in that region. We are open to any suggestions. But these are the basic problems that need to be discussed. When the actual negotiations and actual discussions take place, these will be issues which will have to be addressed. At the moment, we are not able to enter into that arena of discussions. We are just talking about the political concerns.

Mr. FOARDE. Thank you.

Mr. DORMAN. Thank you, John. I will turn the questioning over to Steve Marshall, who is a Commission Senior Advisor. Steve.

Mr. MARSHALL. I would like to address this question first to Tseten Wangchuk. I am absolutely sure that Kasur Tashi Wangdi and Mr. Sonam Wangdu would like to say something about it.

The Chinese Government so far has emphatically rejected the suggestion by some Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government, that all of the areas of Tibetan autonomy, which span five provinces—or six provinces, according to some maps—could be consolidated to a single area of Tibetan autonomy, and that this could be done consistently with the Chinese Constitution. Tibetans and Chinese both have very strong views on this matter. My question: Is this a make-or-break issue? Tseten Wangchuk, do you foresee any innovative approaches to handling something that is so fundamental, yet so difficult?

Mr. WANGCHUK. Yes. It is very fundamental and it is difficult. The difficulty is, either way, what the Dalai Lama is asking is in some ways very reasonable. Of course, Tibet wants autonomy, it wants to unify this area. But in another way, looking at the Chinese political structure, it is a very difficult route. It is not just the question about issues facing Tibet, but in a way it is about the redistribution of power and restructuring the political system. These are the fundamental questions that the Chinese Communists are facing. Anything that they move forward on this front to change, and I think the Chinese are probably having the conversation, in a way this is about Chinese political reform. Yet, this is the most risky thing to do. So, I think it is bigger than Tibet.

In that sense, I think it is really difficult to see, in the short term, that there is anything concrete that the Chinese will take a risk to move forward on this issue. I think may be part of the reason that we are not seeing anything concrete during this dialogue. And I will not expect that anything is going to come concretely in the future, for a little while, at least.

But at the same time, I think these issues are very fundamental. The reason they are fundamental is that for Tibet, the idea of unifying those areas sometimes sounds unreasonable. But in other terms, if you look at it from the Chinese Government's managing perspective, this is really something they have to look at. The Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives signed a 17-point agreement in 1951. They had a kind of a "One Country, Two Systems" scheme set up in the Tibet Autonomous Region. In 1959, this arrangement was completely down the drain. There are

many reasons, but the fundamental reason is because that 17-point agreement was only implemented in the TAR, but not in other parts of Tibet. In another part of Tibet, this “democratic reform” or Chinese political tampering is still going on. When there is a problem in another part of Tibet, the problem does not stop at artificially drawn political boundaries. This is culturally a continuous area and any problems immediately cross these boundaries. Therefore, I think that any solution—I do not have any particular suggestions that would work—has to address all the Tibetan areas in order to be sustainable. If you address only one area, it is not going to be sustainable. In that sense, I think they have to address it. I do not know how it is going to be. But I think in terms of whether or not to have innovation, both sides should not get stuck on the issues when both sides cannot make concessions on that point. But if they can find some interim sort of goal to maybe move forward, sort of leave these things without agreeing on anything just for a little while.

One of the issues is His Holiness’ visit to China. I think this is a really great idea. Without making any agreement, let us see if we can make this kind of step. It is something that we can do.

Mr. WANGDU. I think, from the Tibetan perspective, the idea of dividing up the country and letting one part of it go will not serve the cause of all Tibetans. So I think it is important to make the Chinese people understand that the annexation of Tibetan territory is not historical. This is relatively recent. It happened in our lifetimes. They created the notion that Tibet is historically part of China. So if they can create it, they can dismantle it. I think it is quite simple. From the Chinese perspective, it is very complex, I suppose, because they have to give up something. The idea of giving up anything is not a very welcome one for anyone. But then, in this case, it is something that does not belong to them.

Hopefully, with the democratization or changes that seem to be taking place in China, people will become a little bit more reasonable and abide by the rule of law, that they cannot hold onto things that do not belong to them, that they have to give them back. We can create conditions where we are able to live together in harmony as neighbors, as good neighbors. I think it is a complex issue for China and it certainly needs a lot of thinking on both sides. But it will not do for them to give up only portions of Tibet. To give only part of Tibet back to the Tibetans will create instability. In such a situation, it would be no surprise if the regions of Tibet that remained under Chinese control would become rife with fervent pro-independence activities. Tibetans in occupied Tibet would most definitely not relent until they enjoyed the same freedom.

Mr. WANGDI. Yes. It is a very important issue, and a difficult issue. But I would like you to look at the statement of the Kashag. I think the entire statement addresses that issue, how it can be dissolved within the context of the Chinese Constitution, within the context of the principles of nationality, within the promises they have made.

When the 17-point agreement that my friend referred to was being signed, one of the issues on which there was an initial stalemate was on this definition of Tibet. The Tibet delegation asked for

the whole of Tibet, and the draft agreement was on the autonomous region, which is less than half the area of Tibet.

Now, it is on the record, and I am not saying it just for the sake of argument. But just on the record, at that time that Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Premier, told the delegation that the negotiation was stuck on that issue. Zhou Enlai told the delegation that this is something that can be discussed later. It is on the record, and not something that they are bringing up at this point.

But, again, I would say that there could be fear in the mind of the Chinese Government, or the leaders' minds, that if all of this vast area was reunited, then it is the border area. Then there is the likelihood of secession.

But we have made it very clear. We have requested that they look at the statement this year. Secession is not our intention. It will not happen in that way. But if Tibetans are to live as a race, maintain our own culture, our own traditions, and then there is the question of administrative difficulties. Of course, these Tibetan areas now are attached to huge Chinese provinces. There may be some resemblance, but also I am looking at the practical side. But in China itself there have been areas where borders have been drawn up.

In the case of India, one big state was divided into four big states in India about 10 years ago. Those states were divided. Of course, initially there was a lot of resistance from the state governments and the people. There was a huge political reaction—but for reasons I explained, when steps are taken to reassure people, it happened. So, I think it is possible. It is very important for the Tibetans if we want to maintain our own identity. We have shown the Chinese Government that it is possible administratively, and we have tried to assuage their feelings of fear of any kind of secession based upon the unification.

Mr. MARSHALL. We will put the Kashag's statement in the record.

[The prepared statement of the Kashag appears in the appendix.]

Mr. DORMAN. I would like to turn the questioning now over to Kara Abramson, a counsel on the Commission staff. Kara.

Ms. ABRAMSON. Thank you.

My question is for Mr. Wangdu. I am interested in your perspective on the likelihood and results of direct contact between the Dalai Lama and Chinese leaders.

Mr. WANGDU. I am sorry. Could you repeat?

Ms. ABRAMSON. I will speak a little more loudly. I am interested in your perspective on the likelihood and results of contact between the Dalai Lama and Chinese leaders.

Mr. WANGDU. Let me just give you a little historical background so you can see where I am coming from. In 1979, when His Holiness first came to the United States, I was in a meeting with a few other people where His Holiness posed the question whether or not we should establish contact with China. My immediate reaction was, yes, we must establish contact with the Chinese because they are the ones that we have to deal with. If we do not talk with them, there is no way we can reach any kind of agreement. So I said, "Yes, we need to talk." The establishment of contact and building a relationship is important. But at that time, I assumed

this would bring about some kind of change. I still believe contact is important. But having not seen any progress, I am skeptical of it happening while using the current approach. It is time to add some meat to it so we can chew on it. Just a bone itself is bad for the teeth.

Ms. ABRAMSON. Thank you.

Mr. DORMAN. Unfortunately, we are down to just about four minutes left. This is how our Roundtables generally turn out; we run out of time before we run out of questions. So, I am going to ask the forgiveness of my colleagues on the dais who have not had the opportunity to ask a question and go ahead and give Mr. Marshall what might amount to the last question, unless he can finish two questions in four minutes. Steve.

Mr. MARSHALL. First, I have got to apologize to my colleagues because I would have really enjoyed hearing their questions. I have got one here.

I want to go back a little bit more to the prospects for the Dalai Lama traveling to China. Both of the statements last Friday, the Dalai Lama's statement and the Kashag's statement, which will both be put into the record, focused 100 percent on the issue of dialogue. I have never seen anything like that before. They stressed that it could be resolved within the framework of the Chinese Constitution, and the Dalai Lama specifically said that he would like to travel to China as a Buddhist pilgrim, visit some of the holy sites, and to see how China has changed. He did not make any requests beyond that.

Tashi Wangdi, first, if you could give us a little more insight into what is the likelihood—and the timeframe—that we might hope to see the Dalai Lama visit China as a pilgrim, on a “see-with-his-own-eyes” basis.

Mr. WANGDI. Well, we honestly hope that there will be a positive response to this idea. But at the same time, I am not too sure it is going to happen in the very near future. I hope it will. The issue has been under discussion in the last several meetings. There are certain concerns or issues which have been linked with this visit. Again, we think that this is because of a sense of uncertainty, or feeling of uncertainty and fear. We are now trying to address those concerns, and hopefully, if there are a few more meetings, that we may be able to work on this proposal. Then it is more likely that the visit would then come to pass.

Mr. MARSHALL. Following on a little bit more from that, the biggest impediment that you have mentioned, and that all of you have mentioned, is the wariness, the lack of trust between the two sides. Do you think that if the Dalai Lama visited China and actually had direct contact with Chinese leaders and experts, this might be one of the most effective ways to dissolve some of that atmosphere of distrust?

Mr. WANGDI. Certainly, this is our hope and our expectation. As I said in my statement, this will be the most important development in terms of a breakthrough. We are quite sure, and that is why we have said many times very confidently that there should be a meeting.

As was mentioned, when Li Peng came to India, even about a year back when the Chinese Premier came again, we had made

this suggestion. We are making this suggestion with the confidence that, if there is a personal meeting, meeting face-to-face and exchanging views, then whatever concerns, fears, apprehensions they have can be dispelled. Restating the position taken by His Holiness in a face-to-face meeting would clearly then amount to having no major obstacles in the fundamentals.

Mr. DORMAN. That was a very quick 90 minutes, I have to admit. Unfortunately, I think we are going to have to call this Roundtable to an end. We can only keep the room for so long, and we have committed to our panelists that we would only keep them for 90 minutes.

Generally, the time of our Roundtables is too short, and 90 minutes has never been enough, but this is one example of a conversation that could have probably gone on for perhaps twice as long.

So, to each of you, thank you for coming today. On behalf of our Chairman and Co-Chairman, thank you for sharing your views, insights, knowledge, and experience on this very important issue.

With that, I will call the Roundtable to an end. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m. the Roundtable was concluded.]

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TASHI WANGDI

MARCH 13, 2006

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would first of all like to thank the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for inviting me to this Roundtable with my two other colleagues to address the issue of "The China-Dalai Lama Dialogue: Prospects for Progress."

The first direct contact between the Tibetan leadership in exile and the new Chinese leadership in Beijing was established in 1979 after a gap of nearly 20 years when the Chinese government contacted Mr. Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama who normally lives in Hong Kong. This was soon after the fall of the Gang of Four and gradual opening up of China to the outside world. Mr. Gyalo Thondup went to Beijing with the permission of His Holiness and met with all the top Chinese leaders including Mr. Deng Xiaoping who said to him among other things that all issues concerning Tibet, except the question of independence, can be discussed and resolved.

This stand was very much in line with the policy decision of seeking genuine autonomy and not independence taken by the Tibetan leadership in exile some years before. His Holiness the Dalai Lama had therefore responded to it immediately as he had stated in his March 10th Statement this year. I would like to place on record this Statement along with the Statement of the Kashag (Cabinet) on this occasion as well as the press statement issued by Mr. Lodi Gyari, head of the delegation for contact and dialogue with the Chinese government on his return from the 5th round of meeting middle of last month.

To highlight the point I would also like to quote the relevant part of His Holiness' statement:

Sometime in 1974, we formulated the basic principles of our Middle Way Approach for resolving the issue of Tibet, trusting that a time must surely come when we would have the opportunity to engage in talks with the Chinese leadership. In 1979, we were able to interact directly with the leadership in Beijing. At that time, Deng Xiaoping said that except for independence, all issues could be resolved through negotiations. Since then, I have pursued the Middle Way approach with consistency and sincerity.

There was, therefore, a broad convergence of views and a window of opportunity for finding a mutually acceptable and beneficial solution.

Unfortunately these high hopes and expectations lasted only for a brief period. The relations went from bad to worse and through many twists and turns as the Chinese side had described it. It came to a total break down towards the end of the eighties. However, I believe no useful purpose will be served by going into the reasons why this had happened at this point of time. Each side will have its own explanations and this blame game will not lead us any further. Future historians will be able the best judge when all facts are known.

However it will not be unreasonable to assume that if the policies stated by Mr. Deng Xiaoping and implemented by Mr. Hu Yaobang before his own down fall were carried through earnestly the problem of Tibet would have been resolved. But this was not to be. The relations turned for the worse with the hardening of Chinese government's policies and eventual imposition of Martial Law in Tibet.

Despite this reversal His Holiness the Dalai Lama continued to seek a peaceful resolution to the problem through dialogue on the basis of what Mr. Deng Xiaoping said and his own Middle Way Approach. His Holiness made this position clear to the Chinese leadership through communications directly addressed to them and also through well intentioned mutual friends. He also expressed his willingness to meet with Chinese leaders at any place and time of their convenience to move the process forward.

It took nearly 10 years for direct relations to be resumed when the Chinese government agreed to receive His Holiness's two envoys charged with the responsibilities of renewing contact and dialogue with the Chinese leadership.

In September 2002 the two envoys with two senior assistants were able to visit Beijing. Their two tasks were firstly, to reestablish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and create a conducive atmosphere for direct face-to-face talks and second to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach to assuage distrust and suspicions in the minds of the Chinese leaders.

Since this resumption of direct contact and dialogue there have been five meetings between the representatives of His Holiness and their Chinese counterparts. In fact the fifth round of meeting took place recently from February 15 to 23.

Although the progress has been frustratingly slow and basically one sided I believe the two envoys were able to achieve some progress in the tasks given to them.

Direct contact was not only established but it has been sustained and stabilized as stated by Vice minister Zhu in the fourth round of meeting last June. He said that the direct contact had become stable and an "established practice." Recently high Chinese and Tibetan officials in Tibet have publicly acknowledged for the first time that these contacts are taking place. We have also noted marked changes in the atmosphere of these meetings and the frankness and depth of exchange of views which we feel are very important for better understanding of each other's position and thus better trust and confidence in each other which is very essential if we are to make any head way in substantive negotiations.

There has also been some change in the format, content and frequency of meetings. The fourth meeting was held outside of China for the first time in the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland. The time gap between the fourth and fifth meetings is the shortest so far.

The discussions from the third round onward shifted from restatement of broad principles and allegations to more specific concerns of the Chinese government concerning His Holiness's policies and stand. In the fifth round of meetings both sides were able to clearly identify reasons for the present lack real progress toward actual negotiations.

His Holiness's representatives found such candid discussions and exchange of views very helpful. It gave them the opportunity to respond in full to the points raised. More specific are the concerns expressed by the Chinese side, easier it is for us to try to remove their misconceptions, misunderstandings, and unfounded fears.

We have taken very serious note of all their concerns and made sincere efforts to give explanations and clarifications fully and truthfully in writing. We strongly believe that this is the only way to remove all the distrusts and suspicions which seem to plague our present relationship and hinder efforts to enter into serious and meaningful negotiations.

Despite the frustrating and at times disappointing experiences at the lack of reciprocal goodwill gestures from the Chinese government's side we are still very steadfast in our commitment and effort to convince the Chinese leadership about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's sincerity in wanting to find a mutually acceptable solution within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic of China ensuring the unity, stability and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China.

As the representatives of His Holiness had stated in their recent press statement on their return from the latest round of meetings major differences including some very fundamental still continue to exist. Nevertheless the encouraging thing is that both the sides have reiterated their willingness and commitment to continue the process of contact and dialogue. As Churchill once said jaw jaw is better than war war.

It is our hope that the Chinese government will agree to our suggestions to increase the frequency of meetings for more vigorous and intensive exchange of views to narrow down the differences which in our view are not totally insurmountable. The basic concern of the Chinese government like any other government is the unity, territorial integrity and economic health of the country. The Middle Way Approach adopted by His Holiness will in fact reinforce and strengthen all this. It will not in any way weaken or undermine them if it is understood in its proper context unobscured by unfounded distrust, suspicion and fear.

A truly fruitful and substantive negotiation can take place only in an atmosphere of genuine mutual trust and confidence. When we reach such a stage in our contact I believe that the harsh and unreasonable preconditions set by the Chinese government for the start of real negotiations will become both unnecessary and irrelevant.

One of the most effective ways of creating the right atmosphere is through personal contact and face to face meetings. It is with this in mind His Holiness the Dalai Lama had conveyed to the Chinese government through his envoys his wish to visit some of the holy Buddhist pilgrimage sites in China. It is our hope that the present Chinese leaders representing a new generation will have the necessary vision, courage and self-confidence to welcome the visit.

One can empathize with the Chinese leaders on the need to have caution when dealing with the problems of such a huge country undergoing many changes but the proposed visit by His Holiness is a win win situation. The Chinese leaders should have no fear as to what might happen if such a visit is allowed. His Holiness will use the visit to bring about better understanding, harmony and friendship. It will

have a calming effect on the situation inside Tibet. We have no doubt the whole world will welcome such a move and China will win many friends all over the world.

In conclusion I would like to say that we are still hopeful of a break through and of finding a mutually acceptable and beneficial solution.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SONAM WANGDU

MARCH 13, 2006

I am grateful to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for the opportunity to appear before you. I have been involved in the Tibet issue first as an employee of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile from 1960 to 1973 and as an advocate, volunteering my time, in the free Tibet movement since then. I am currently the chair of the U.S. Tibet Committee in New York City, the oldest Tibet support group in North America.

I was born in Kham, Tibet in 1942. My mother was forced to send me away to my uncles in central Tibet, in fear for my safety because it was rumored that young Tibetans boys were being shipped off to China for indoctrination. I was a child of 8 years old when I left my home. My eldest sister accompanied me across the country. My sister returned to Kham, and the next time we met again was after 36 years in Nepal. In 1954, my uncles brought me to India where I was enrolled in English-medium schools. I never returned home nor saw my Mother again.

For 42 years, I have lived in the United States. I have raised my children here, and this country has been a host and a home to me, as well as an inspiration. I press on for independence for Tibet because I believe it can be achieved, and because that it is the only way to preserve real freedom for Tibetans.

I came to this country in 1964, and never left. I was deeply impacted by the Presidential elections taking place at that time. I watched with much excitement and even envy at the freedom that the citizens of this great country enjoyed in choosing their leaders and deciding their destinies. I read about the American Revolution, and was moved by the country's early leaders, in particular Patrick Henry, whose call "give me Liberty or give me Death" rang so true to my ears because my own countrymen were also laying down their lives for many of the same ideals upon which this country was founded. I was equally touched by President Kennedy's pledge in his inaugural address that the United States "shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." It was not the hawkish stance that I admired in them but the firm commitment to liberty that is so essential for us Tibetans to reclaim our country.

The official policy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is to achieve a "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China." However, I believe the vast majority of Tibetans desire independence for our country because of reports from inside Tibet, and also because of the continuing arrests and imprisonment of Tibetans for even mentioning the name of the Dalai Lama.

An independent Tibet is fundamental to protecting the rights of the Tibetan people and bringing peace in the region. The Middle Way Approach is a concession to entreat dialogue with China. And to date, this policy has not led to meaningful dialogue. It has succeeded only in encouraging the PRC to demand further concessions. Those who support the Middle Way Approach do so out of the highest regard for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Those of us who dissent also do so out of the highest regard for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a leader who has given us a lifetime of care and service characterized by extraordinary wisdom and compassion.

I would like to clarify that a dissenting opinion of this policy does not in any way indicate an opposition to either the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. On the contrary, I believe that these are institutions we must have—the role of the Dalai Lama for us Tibetans has been vital to our cultural survival.

It has been 57 years since China invaded Tibet; a long time in the span of a human life, but only a skipped beat in the history of a 2,133-year-old nation. In all these years the hope that Tibet will be free again has not diminished. Most of those senior government officials from all segments of our society, as well as many of my friends, family members and colleagues have now passed away, but the shared hope for freedom is still very much alive.

I was a child when Tibet became an occupied nation, but the generation that followed mine has grown up never having known an independent Tibet. They are truly the children of exile and occupation, yet they are tougher, better educated and more skeptical than us older Tibetans. They are the future of the movement. Figures like

Tenzin Tsundue, who was recently profiled in the New York Times Magazine, Jamyang Norbu, author, and Lhasang Tsering, or the leaders of GuChuSum, an organization of former political prisoners now in exile, the Tibetan Youth Congress, or U.S.-based organizations such as the U.S. Tibet Committee, the Students for a Free Tibet and the International Tibet Independence Movement, to name a few, approach the Tibet-China situation with greater media literacy, technical savvy and an unwillingness to settle for anything less than total freedom for the country of their forebears. These are Tibetans, but they are also citizens of the world, with passports that reflect a United Nations-worthy diversity.

I am a firm believer in peaceful conflict resolution; and in the case of Tibet, it is imperative that both Tibet and China be earnest and sincere in searching for an acceptable resolution. But as the situation is now, the Middle Way Approach has not brought us any closer to a resolution of the Tibet issue:

- Contact with China in the new millennium has not shown any tangible progress apart from the Chinese leaders using these meetings to wage a public relations campaign to deflect criticism.
- Although the Chinese have entertained His Holiness the Dalai Lama's envoys, 4 times in China and once in Bern, Switzerland, they have refused to recognize their official purpose or who they represent.
- Even as the Chinese host these delegations, they continue to imprison Tibetans loyal to the Dalai Lama, and combined with the lack of improvement in human rights, they have shown they have no interest in loosening their grip on Tibet.

China is using these "talks" to lower the pressure from the United States and the EU who have been pushing for these talks for many years. It seems clear that the Chinese leaders are just going through the motions without showing any real interest in providing "genuine autonomy" for the people of Tibet. Yet the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to create a "conducive environment" for the dialogues, continues to discourage her people and supporters from demonstrating against Chinese leaders during their visits overseas, and for the first time the officials of the New York-based Office of Tibet have been instructed not to participate in the March 10 demonstration this year. Concessions, be it voluntary or on demand, without reciprocity, are not inducements for serious talk. Despite these overtures and concessions by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, China still maintains a hard line on Tibet, and the protests against China by exiled Tibetans continues. Tibetans are now even taking their fight into the heart of China where Wongpo Tethong, a Swiss Tibetan, on March 8, displayed a banner which read, "Hu, you can't stop us! 2008-Free Tibet.org" in Tiananmen Square. With all eyes on Beijing for the upcoming 2008 Olympics Games and the construction of the new railroad connecting China with Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, to promote tourism, this is the time and opportunity for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and supporters to bring attention to Tibet's real situation.

If the United States abides by Kalon Tripa/Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche's misperception of the progress of these talks, the danger exists that China will continue to forestall negotiations in the hopes for a post-Dalai Lama scenario where the issue will die with Him.

Rather than the issue dying away, there is a greater likelihood that the issue will destabilize, with future generations of very frustrated Tibetans resorting to other means to bring freedom to Tibet. The role and the position of the Dalai Lama has been a great stabilizer for the Tibetan community, the Free Tibet Movement, and even the world.

The world has grown smaller, and the issue of Tibet cannot be treated as an isolated case that affects the people of Tibet only. This issue is now not simply a Tibetan issue, nor a nationalist issue, nor a human rights issue. The Tibet issue has now evolved into a global security and environmental issue.

It requires international attention to keep peace in the region. India's national security is at far greater risk now than ever before. We all saw this in the 1962 Chinese invasion of India from occupied Tibet. The dynamic hasn't changed; however, the destructive potential of a Sino-Indian conflict in modern times has the ability to go beyond the borders of these two most populous nations. Such a conflict would provide another dangerous rallying point for the world's clashing ideologies. It seems too clear that to allow Tibet to exist as an independent and neutral state is in humanity's best interest.

Tibet is located in a region of the world that is environmentally sensitive. Tibetans have for centuries learnt to live in harmony with nature. However, following the Chinese occupation of Tibet, widespread environmental destruction from massive and unplanned deforestation, farming and mining have had a profound effect on wildlife, soil erosion and global weather patterns. I am not an expert in this area

but scientists have observed a direct link between natural vegetation on the Tibetan plateau and the stability of the monsoons, which is indispensable to the breadbasket of south Asia. They have also shown that the environment of the Tibetan plateau affects jet-streams which are related to the course of Pacific typhoons and the El Niño phenomenon. Based on these expert opinions, preserving Tibet's environment is just not in the interest of protecting an ancient and a unique culture, but it is also in the interest of the whole human race.

In our own life time we have seen the emergence of former colonies as independent states, and the inconceivable events of the fall of the Soviet Union and of the Berlin Wall. I believe Tibetans can have their national flag fly in the capitals of many nations and at the United Nations. The goal is not easy to achieve but it is not impossible. We Tibetans must depend on our resolve, our commitment, our confidence to continue our just cause. My generation inherited a torn, ravaged and occupied Tibet, and for the sake of the future generations of Tibetans we have a duty to work hard to free Tibet.

I am grateful to the U.S. Congress for its support for Tibet. I request the U.S. Government to continue to urge the leaders of the People's Republic of China to publicly recognize the Tibetan delegations and to sincerely engage in meaningful dialogue with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. I request the U.S. Government to continue pressuring China to improve the human rights situation in Tibet, including the right to self-determination. I request the U.S. Government to influence her allies to also urge the Chinese leaders to dialogue with the Tibetan delegation in their official capacity as representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. It is extremely important to keep the pressure on the Chinese leaders and to show that they are under your watch. Your voice and support are crucial to the Tibetan people.

Thank you

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TSETEN WANGCHUK

MARCH 13, 2006

In this statement, I provide a brief assessment of the current conditions for dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama.¹ While I have been a broadcast journalist in the Tibetan service of the Voice of America since 1993, the comments I make today represent my personal opinion and do not reflect the views of the VOA.

BACKGROUND

The current round of talks has ended a decade of protracted stalemate. After Tiananmen, China maintained a hardline policy on Tibet, a position exacerbated in part by the exiled Tibetan leadership's uneven commitment to engagement. However, as Beijing's political environment shifted through the 1990s and Sino-U.S. relations moved to the center of China's foreign policy, there was high level reconsideration of the official policy of isolating the Dalai Lama from its broader strategy on Tibet. By early 1997, channels between Dharamsala and the Chinese leadership were quietly re-opened and three rounds of informal meetings laid the groundwork for Jiang Zemin's public acknowledgment in 1998 of the renewal of contacts.

While this initial foray into experimentation with contacts was abortive—due likely to institutional resistance to the policy of engagement and political rivalry within the elite leadership itself—the impetus to reverse the 1989 decision to isolate the Dalai Lama had nonetheless gained momentum. In the wake of the highly visible departures of Arjia Rinpoche and the young Karmapa—both key figures in China's national Tibetan elite—the official policy of excluding the Dalai Lama was formally overturned in 2001 at the Fourth Work Forum on Tibet. Within months of this decision, direct contacts were again re-established and the groundwork was laid for the current round of talks.

The ongoing experimentation with dialogue remains exploratory. Following the most recent visit in February of this year, Special Envoy Lodi Gyari acknowledged “major differences even in the approach in addressing the issue,” but described the proceedings as having resulted in “better and deeper understanding” of their mutual positions. While Dharamsala has maintained a cautiously optimistic stance toward the process, Beijing has sent mixed signals. Until recently, Chinese officials have been reticent to acknowledge the ongoing meetings at all. However, TAR deputy

¹For a more detailed assessment, see Tashi Rabgey and Tseten Wangchuk Sharlho, *Sino-Tibetan Dialogue in the Post-Mao Era: Lessons and Prospects* (Washington D.C.: East West Center, 2004).

party secretary Jampa Phuntsog's recent public acknowledgement of the five rounds of talks with the Dalai Lama's envoys—as reported in the pro-Beijing Hong Kong publication *Wenhui Bao* and elsewhere—could indicate a shift in approach. Phuntsog commented that the atmosphere was favorable (*qifen bucuo*), and noted that while these contacts have not yet resulted in substantive negotiations, the door was open for more dialogue.

In light of this public ambivalence, how should the China's stance on the dialogue process be assessed? While prospects for a negotiated resolution to the Sino-Tibetan dispute remain remote, the current political and socio-economic conditions suggest that Beijing is likely to remain cautiously committed to the policy of engagement.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

There is no doubt that the international factor has played a key role in shaping the recent dynamics in the relationship between Beijing and the Dalai Lama. Since the exiled Tibetan leadership turned to the international community for support in 1987, foreign diplomatic and political opprobrium have been an important factor in altering Chinese perception of the dispute. However, it is doubtful that international pressure alone could have altered China's policy. A survey of the factors conditioning Beijing's policy choices and political behavior in handling the so-called Tibet issue indicates that pressure to renew contacts with the Dalai Lama has come not only externally from the international arena, but also from domestic sources as well.

Chinese analysts and scholars of foreign affairs and international studies have in recent years begun pointing out the benefits of renewing contacts with the Dalai Lama from the standpoint of China's long-term strategic interests. In particular, it has been argued that Tibet constitutes a weak link in China's political system that will remain vulnerable to manipulation by hostile forces until resolved. Constructive engagement with the Dalai Lama, it is argued, would serve the dual purpose of removing an irritant in China's foreign relations while opening the door to the possibility of resolving the issue itself. The willingness of Chinese scholars and strategic analysts, in particular, to criticize hardline policies suggests that the internal pressure corresponds not to short-term political goals but rather to a reasoned and sober consideration of China's long-term interests.

This moderate position is in turn tied to growing concerns about the longer-term effects of the accelerated economic development program. Contrary to expectations, rapid economic expansion appears to be giving rise to widening disparities in wealth and a heightened sense of ethnic cleavage and dispossession among Tibetans. These socio-economic transformations raise questions about the sustainability of current conditions inside Tibet itself. The stability of the Tibetan region has been secured at an extraordinarily high cost and it is unclear what complex set of social and economic forces have been unleashed by this political driven investment.

The short run impact of this rapid economic growth has been to increase inequalities throughout the region. In particular, the startling increase in expenditure on the bureaucracy and administration has given rise to unprecedented affluence among Tibetan cadres, administrators, and other salaried government workers. But the dramatic rise in living standards among these elite, predominantly urban Tibetans, has only underscored the impoverishment of the overwhelming majority of Tibetans who remain rural, illiterate, and without access to rudimentary healthcare or primary education. The growing sense of dispossession engendered by the widening disparities in wealth is exacerbated by the continuing influx of Chinese migrants into Tibetan areas.

In addition to these key factors, a number of other structural changes could also potentially play a significant role in shaping Beijing's attitude toward talks with the Dalai Lama. One important development has been China's shifting global position. Fueled by rapid economic development, China's rise in international status could potentially cause Beijing to become increasingly impervious to international opprobrium. At the same time, however, China's growing confidence could also lead to a shift in the dominant Chinese framing of the Tibet issue. In fact, China's growing international stature has already prompted calls from Chinese strategists and public figures to abandon the narrative of victimhood that has long served as the filter for viewing China's place in the world, and to embrace instead a "great power mentality." The prevailing narrative of Chinese victimization has, until now, impaired the Chinese ability to view the Tibet issue objectively on its own terms. It is possible that a transformation in Chinese attitude could potentially create a political climate more conducive to constructive dialogue.

Another important structural change has been the ongoing shifts in regional strategic balance. In particular, India's growing prominence in south Asia is likely to affect China's strategic calculation in its strategy on Tibet. Regardless of whether

India becomes an ally with the United States “in the cause of democracy” in opposition to China’s regional power, or whether India and China form their own de facto geostrategic alliance to counterbalance the West, it is clear that the changing dynamics in the relationship between the two regional competitors will take center stage in the coming decade. In the process, Beijing’s incentive to find a long-term resolution to the Tibet issue is likely to increase.

A third and striking development has been Beijing’s institutional restructuring of its decisionmaking process in managing the Tibet issue. The management of the Tibet issue has become increasingly complex and institutionalized over the past twenty years. Many more stakeholders are now involved in the process of determining China’s Tibet policy. The decisionmaking process includes a broad range of institutions, including the military, the foreign ministry, the Ministry of National Security, and the State Council Information Office. Through the involvement of these various institutions, there is now a more comprehensive information gathering system in place. Consequently, the Chinese leadership’s access to information about the Dalai Lama and the Tibet issue in general has increased exponentially. There has also been a diversification of the sources of policy analysis from outside the government, as new research centers and thinktanks have begun to provide specialized opinions on Tibet. The effect of this increasing complexity is that the decision-making process is now more decentralized and plural. As this process has become more diffuse and a broader range of interests is represented, Chinese perspectives on the Dalai Lama and the Tibet issue have become more varied and competing interests have emerged.

At a bureaucratic level, the United Front’s infrastructure for managing Tibetan affairs has become significantly more complex. As the Party organ formally charged with the task of establishing broad alliances with non-Party organizations and interest groups, the United Front is responsible for managing the affairs of all national minorities. Despite this formal mission, Tibetan affairs are being accorded an extraordinary share of the United Front’s institutional resources. Above the United Front, a “leading small group” has been established to coordinate high-level management of Tibetan affairs. The creation of this high-level interagency coordinating body points to the policy importance of Tibetan affairs for the Chinese leadership.² In 2003, the foreign minister was also added to the membership of the group, a move that underlined the significance of the Tibet issue to China’s foreign policy. The establishment of the leading small group indicates not only that Tibet is now regarded as a key policy issue, it also suggests that the senior leadership intends to manage the issue through an institutionalized process of broad and formal consultation. As with the expansion of the United Front’s bureaucratic structure for handling Tibetan affairs, it is possible that this new form of high-level coordination will allow for less flexibility in the decisionmaking process on dialogue with the Dalai Lama, as Beijing’s institutional management of the Tibet issue becomes increasingly more complex and considerably less predictable. Regardless of how this coordination proceeds, institutional factors will play a major role in shaping the process of dialogue to come.

ASSESSMENT

Cumulatively, these disparate variables have had the effect of creating conditions more favorable to a strategy of engagement for Beijing. But while it seems likely that China will, for the time being, continue to pursue talks with the Dalai Lama, it seems equally unlikely that the two parties can expect to begin discussing matters of substance under present circumstances. For more than two decades of intermittent talks, Beijing and Dharamsala have remained in fundamental disagreement about the substance of what is—or should be—in dispute between them. The exiled Tibetan leadership has consistently raised two key issues in their efforts to open talks with Beijing: the need to find a solution for all Tibetan-inhabited areas (the “unification,” or “consolidation” issue) and “genuine autonomy.” For their part, the Chinese have been publicly adamant that there is no “Tibet issue” for discussion. Rather, they have characterized the dispute as solely a matter of the Dalai Lama’s personal return.

²Leading small groups have also been established for Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as for national security. See Medeiros and Fravel (2003).

Thus, while there is momentum on both sides to continue simply to talk about talks, the question now for Beijing is whether its deferral of substantive negotiations risks forgoing an historic opportunity to reach a lasting solution on the dispute over Tibet. Current political realities in Beijing militate against acceding to Dharamsala's demands for meaningful autonomy. Unless the Tibet issue should erupt as a violent conflict, the factors pushing Beijing to negotiate are likely to be regarded as insufficiently compelling to justify the risks entailed. On the other hand, if the current talks break off, Beijing will be going it alone as it manages the chronic threat of ethnonationalist discontent.

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

STATEMENT BY SPECIAL ENVOY LODI GYARI, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION SENT BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA TO CHINA, SATURDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2006; SUBMITTED BY TASHI WANGDI

1. In continuation of the process started with the re-establishment of direct contact with the Chinese leadership in September 2002, my colleague envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen and I, accompanied by two members of the Task Force, Sonam N. Dagpo and Bhuchung K. Tsering, visited China from February 15 to 23, 2006.

2. We had a day-long meeting with the Executive Vice Minister of the United Front Work Department, Zhu Weiqun, on February 22, 2006, in Guilin City during which we dealt with substantive issues.

3. As a result, today there is a better and deeper understanding of each other's position and the fundamental differences that continue to exist in the position held by the two parties.

4. This round of discussion also made it clear that there is a major difference even in the approach in addressing the issue. However, we remain committed to the dialogue process and are hopeful that progress will be possible by continuing the engagement. Our Chinese counterparts made clear their interest in continuing the present process and their firm belief that the obstacles can be overcome through more discussions and engagements.

5. As we had expressed an interest in looking at the situation of the different autonomous regions during our previous meetings, considering the time and the season, a trip was arranged this time to the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. We found the visit useful.

We have reported to His Holiness the Dalai Lama today on our discussion along with Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche.

6. Our host for this visit was the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party. Many other authorities, including the government of Guangdong and Guangxi, particularly Guilin City, have been involved in organizing our visit. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the officials at various levels for their hospitality and assistance.

DHARAMSALA, FEBRUARY 25, 2006

STATEMENT OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA ON THE 47TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIBETAN NATIONAL UPRISING DAY, 10 MARCH 2006; SUBMITTED BY TASHI WANGDI

Today, as we commemorate the 47th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, I extend my warm greetings to my fellow Tibetans in Tibet and in exile, as well as to our friends around the world. I also pay homage to the brave men and women of Tibet who have sacrificed their lives, and who continue to suffer, for the cause of Tibetan people.

From around 1949, Tibet had witnessed a series of unprecedented events, marking the beginning of a new era in its history. As stated in the documents, the issue of Tibet was purportedly decided in 1951 through an agreement between the central and local governments, taking into consideration the special status of Tibet and the prevailing reality. Since then, I have made every possible effort to secure implementation of the policy to allow self-rule and genuine autonomy to Tibetans within the framework of the People's Republic of China, thus helping to create conditions for our people to coexist in harmony and unity as a member of the big family of the Chinese nation.

In 1954–55, I visited Beijing as a representative of the Tibetan people. I took the opportunity of that visit to discuss the future of the Tibetan people with Chairman Mao Zedong and senior leaders of the party, government and military. These discussions gave me a lot of hope and reassurances. So I returned to Tibet with optimism and confidence. However, from late 1955 ultra-leftist excesses began to assail parts of Tibet. By 1959, the whole of Tibet was plunged in deep crisis. As a result, I and over a hundred thousand Tibetans were compelled to go into exile. We have been in exile for 46 years now.

Sometime in 1974, we formulated the basic principles of our Middle-Way Approach for resolving the issue of Tibet, trusting that a time must surely come when we would have the opportunity to engage in talks with the Chinese leadership. In 1979, we were able to interact directly with the leadership in Beijing. At that time, Deng Xiaoping said that “except for independence, all issues could be resolved

through negotiations". Since then, I have pursued the Middle-Way Approach with consistency and sincerity.

I have of course made criticisms whenever I saw unbearably sad developments in China, Tibet and the world over. But my criticisms were confined to addressing the reality of each individual case. I have never departed from my commitment to the Middle-Way Approach at any time and in any given circumstances. This is clear to the world. Unfortunately, Beijing still seems unable to overcome doubts and suspicions regarding my intention; it continues to criticise me of nursing a hidden agenda of separatism and engaging in conspiracy to achieve this.

Since the re-establishment of direct contact between us and the People's Republic of China in 2002, my envoys and the Chinese counterparts were able to engage in a series of frank and extensive discussions during which they were able to explain each other's position. This kind of discussion, I hope, will help to clear the doubts and suspicions of the People's Republic of China so that we can move on to settle the differences in our views and positions, and thereby find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of Tibet. More particularly, in the fifth round of talks held a few weeks ago, the two sides were able to clearly identify the areas of major differences and the reasons thereof. They were also able to get a sense of the conditions necessary for resolving the differences. In addition, my envoys reiterated my wish to visit China on a pilgrimage. As a country with a long history of Buddhism, China has many sacred pilgrim sites. As well as visiting the pilgrim sites, I hope to be able to see for myself the changes and developments in the People's Republic of China.

Over the past decades, China has seen spectacular economic and social development. This is commendable. The Tibetan areas have likewise seen some infrastructural development, which I have always considered positive.

Looking back at the past five decades of China's history, one sees that the country saw a great many movements based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. That was during Mao's era. Then Deng Xiaoping, through seeking truth from facts, introduced socialist market economy and brought huge economic progress. Following this, based on his theory of the "Three Represents", Jiang Zemin expanded the scope of the Communist Party of China to include not just the peasants and workers, but also three other elements, namely the advanced productive forces, the progressive course of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the majority. Today, President Hu Jintao's theory of "Three Harmonies" envisages peaceful coexistence and harmony within China, as well as with her neighbours and the international community. All these initiatives were undertaken in accordance with the changing times. As a result, the transition of political power and the development of the country have continued unabated. And today China is emerging as one of the major powers in the world, which she deserves considering her long history and huge population.

However, the fundamental issue that must be addressed is that in tandem with the political power and economic development, China must also follow the modern trend in terms of developing a more open society, free press and policy transparency. This, as every sensible person can see, is the foundation of genuine peace, harmony and stability.

Tibetans—as one of the larger groups of China's 55 minority nationalities—are distinct in terms of their land, history, language, culture, religion, customs and traditions. This distinctiveness is not only clear to the world, but was also recognised by a number of senior Chinese leaders in the past. I have only one demand: self-rule and genuine autonomy for all Tibetans, i.e., the Tibetan nationality in its entirety. This demand is in keeping with the provisions of the Chinese constitution, which means it can be met. It is a legitimate, just and reasonable demand that reflects the aspirations of Tibetans, both in and outside Tibet. This demand is based on the logic of seeing future as more important than the past; it is based on the ground realities of the present and the interests of the future.

The long history of the past does not lend itself to a simple black and white interpretation. As such, it is not easy to derive a solution from the past history. This being the case, I have stated time and again that I do not wish to seek Tibet's separation from China, but that I will seek its future within the framework of the Chinese constitution. Anyone who has heard this statement would realise, unless his or her view of reality is clouded by suspicion, that my demand for genuine self-rule does not amount to a demand for separation. The convergence of this fact with a gradual progress in freedom, openness and media will create conditions, I hope, for resolving Sino-Tibetan problem through negotiations. Therefore, I am making every effort to perpetuate the present contacts and thus create a conducive atmosphere.

The Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration has made a number of appeals to Tibetans and our international supporters to work toward the creation of a con-

ducive environment for negotiations. Today, I would like to emphasise that we leave no stone unturned to help the present process of dialogue for the resolution of the Sino-Tibetan problem. I urge all Tibetans to take note of this on the basis of the Kashag's appeal. I make the same request to Tibet supporters and those sympathetic to the Tibetan people.

By the same token, I would like to tell the People's Republic of China that if it sees benefit in sincerely pursuing dialogue through the present contact, it must make clear gesture to this effect. I urge the Chinese leadership to give a serious thought to this. A positive atmosphere cannot be created by one side alone. As an ancient Tibetan saying goes, one hand is not enough to create the sound of a clap.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to the international community for their consistent support to us. I would also like to express once again the Tibetan people's appreciation and immense gratitude to the people and the Government of India for their unwavering and unparalleled generosity and support to us.

With my thoughts on the situation and feelings of the Tibetans inside Tibet, I pray for all of them. I also pray for the wellbeing of all sentient beings.

THE DALAI LAMA, MARCH 10, 2006

STATEMENT OF THE KASHAG ON THE 47TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE'S UPRISING DAY, 10 MARCH 2006; SUBMITTED BY TASHI WANGDI

Today is the 47th anniversary of the Tibetan people's peaceful uprising for freedom in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. On this momentous occasion, the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration pays tribute to the heroic men and women of Tibet who have sacrificed their lives for our spiritual, political and people's cause. The Kashag also expresses its solidarity with the Tibetans who continue to suffer oppression in Tibet.

In the past 10 March statements of the 12th Kashag since it assumed office in 2001, we have taken stock of and reviewed the positive and negative aspects of past developments. In these statements we explained our policy on the implementation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach for resolving the issue of Tibet through negotiations, empowering the Tibetan people, and the recent reestablishment of Sino-Tibetan contacts and the creation of a conducive environment by the exiled Tibetan community for negotiations. Apart from these, we have also explained the Middle-Way Approach, which was specifically meant for the leadership of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, we have made necessary clarifications on the past visits to China by the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In these statements we have also articulated the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

This is the last 10 March statement of the present Kashag. Therefore, we will not repeat here what has already been said in the past statements. We will, instead, present a brief account of the status of the process of Sino-Tibetan dialogue concerning the future of the Tibetan people in and outside Tibet, and our future plans.

Under the wise guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we have been making every possible effort to find a negotiated solution to the Tibetan problem. This process was formulated under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in accordance with the inspiration of the Tibetans in and outside Tibet and was unanimously supported through a democratic process by Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies. In the process, the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama have already conducted five rounds of serious talks with the leaders of the People's Republic of China. They have also reiterated His Holiness the Dalai Lama's desire to visit sacred pilgrim sites in China. The Kashag, therefore, considers that the time has come when we need to work more than ever before on the Sino-Tibetan contacts and the current dialogue process.

Recently the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama returned from their fourth visit to China between 15-23 February 2006 and the fifth round of talks. In the latest round of talks, both sides were able to further identify the differences in their views and thinking and the reasons for these differences and the means to resolve them.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has adopted and pursued the Middle-Way policy in which he does not seek independence for Tibet. This is in accordance with Deng Xiaoping's assurance that except for independence all issues could be resolved through negotiations. Therefore, we believe that the fundamental differences between the two sides have already been resolved. Thus the present differences in views and perspectives are not fundamental issues. They are rather details regarding how to implement and carry forward our efforts. If the People's Republic of

China still sees any differences in the fundamental issue and implementation, it is contrary to reality. The People's Republic of China must review this.

The Middle-Way Approach is a flexible and mutually beneficial policy and the two sides can discuss this based on the situation and the needs of the people. As mentioned in last year's statement, we reiterate that the essence of the Middle-Way Approach should be understood and grasped. One side remaining rigid by attaching too much importance to a few words in background documents is similar to holding on to branches and offshoots rather than the root and is a means of finding excuse.

In essence, we have always said that the need to have genuine autonomy for the three provinces of Tibet or the entire Tibetan people is the basic principle. We cannot compromise on this principle. This has also been clearly understood by the leaders of the People's Republic of China. Therefore, it is important to make sure that both sides are not deceived by a few who try to distort things for their personal gain.

According to Marxism and Leninism, the nationality issue is the foundation of strength and stability. It is also regarded as an important principle for the progress of socialism. Therefore, Marx and Lenin formulated a new ideology that calls for the equality and unity of nationalities. This should be achieved, according to them, by completely eradicating the chauvinism of the majority nationality and local nationalism so that the system of suppressing nationalities practised under imperialism could be prevented. Based on this ideology, the constitution of the People's Republic of China has inserted a provision that grants to all minority nationalities the status of national regional autonomy. The only aim of this provision is to protect the unique characteristics of the minority nationalities, including their language and culture. Tibetans are also one of China's 55 minority nationalities. Moreover, before 1951 they all lived together in small, compact groups in a contiguous chain throughout Tibet. As a result, today they are either scattered or live in these areas with a majority nationality. Therefore, should they be reduced to minority in their own areas, it is not possible to protect their unique characteristics. Moreover, the complete eradication of chauvinism of the majority nationality and local nationalism will not be possible under such circumstances. Therefore, if things go in this direction it would be nothing but similar to the system of "divide and rule" practised under imperialism. Because of these reasons, we have proposed the need to have unification of all the Tibetans, with the status of genuine autonomy. This demand is in accordance with Marxist and Leninist principles and the provisions of the Chinese constitution. Therefore, this demand can be met. Moreover this has the possibility to establish a strong base on which genuine equality and unity of nationalities can be achieved, proving it the best way to prevent separatism.

We have been able to sustain Sino-Tibetan relations for the past four years. The continuing round of talks has given us the opportunity to clear up a lot of issues and gradually identify the differences that exist between the two sides. Needless to say these are the results of contacts and discussions held between the two sides.

At present it is extremely important for both sides to put more efforts to resolve the Sino-Tibetan problem as soon as possible by strengthening and improving the present contacts. This is also necessary to realise the wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit China for pilgrimage in the near future. Therefore, in order to achieve this, the Kashag once again urges Tibetans in and outside Tibet and Tibet supporters not to undermine the atmosphere.

This is well known to all that as long as we are committed to the Middle-Way policy there is no other way by which we can achieve our future goals, except through the dialogue process.

It is but natural that contacts and discussions can take place only through co-operation and harmony and not in an atmosphere of enmity and confrontation, and we would like to emphasise once again that this must be understood by all.

Finally, we pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the fulfillment of all his wishes. We also pray that the truth of the Tibetan issue prevails soon.

THE KASHAG, 10 MARCH 2006

