6/ Tibet and China in the Twentieth Century

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Chinese policies toward Tibetans and their language, culture, and religion are no longer the esoteric domain of area specialists. They have become a part of American domestic politics and Sino-American relations.

No issue is more difficult or important for the foreign policy and strategic interests of the United States and the stability of Asia than America's relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Tibet is a part of that. Crafting (recrafting) a coherent and effective China policy in the coming decade(s) is clearly a priority. Accomplishing this will entail reexamining a number of volatile problem areas, such as Taiwan, nuclear proliferation, trade imbalances, and human rights. It will also require addressing Tibet[1] and the Tibet question (the question of what should be the status of Tibet vis-à-vis China).

The Tibet question has attained enormous international visibility and is today a contentious component of American domestic politics. America's long-cherished Wilsonian ideals and the increasing support for integrating universal human rights in international affairs has facilitated moving the Dalai Lama and the Tibet question from the dark recesses of the State Department to the spotlight of domestic politics. Over the past fifteen years, Congress has become the major force pushing Tibet into Sino-American relations and policy. Congressional interest, moreover, is unusual in that it cuts across normal party lines and ideological persuasions (Tom Lantos and Jessie Helms, for example, both support a pro-Tibetan policy for the United States). Congressional activism on the Tibet issue has taken a number of directions, including funding Tibetan-language broadcasts by the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia and passing a number of (nonbinding) resolutions that characterize Tibet as a "captive nation."

But Tibet's visibility goes well beyond Congress. In the broader global arena, the Dalai Lama is widely known and respected, draws huge audiences wherever he lectures, and receives favorable coverage in the world's media and editorial pages. In addition, there has been a proliferation of private Tibet "support" groups, such as the International Campaign for

Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, the Tibet Information Network, and the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet. These groups have frequent input into the public and political arenas and have lobbied hard and effectively in Washington. Human-rights groups such as Asia Watch and Amnesty International have also repeatedly criticized China's treatment of Tibetans, again raising the visibility of the Tibet question in the United States and in the international community.

Tibet, therefore, is today an integral part of Sino-American relations, and it is an area whose volatility may increase in the future. The Dalai Lama and his government in exile deplore current Chinese policies in Tibet and argue that they threaten the future viability of Tibetan religion and culture. Some Tibetans, therefore, talk of the need for more militancy if progress toward resolution is not forthcoming. Widespread condemnation of the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 has made a turn to violence by radical Tibetan nationalists very unlikely but does not preclude a shift to more militant forms of "civil disobedience," such as hunger strikes. As the United States struggles to craft a stable policy for U.S.-China relations, it will be hard pressed to ignore the situation of Tibetans in the PRC. In 1999, for example, Sino-American relations were shaken when a seemingly innocuous World Bank poverty-alleviation project in China's remote Qinghai Province became a major political controversy because the project would have altered the demographic composition of a Mongolian-Tibetan minority prefecture. The project generated widespread (and organized) criticism from Tibet support groups, members of Congress, academics, and human-rights groups, and this outcry pressured the Clinton administration to vote against funding the measure, despite the fact that this would infuriate Beijing. It also persuaded the World Bank to empower an independent inspection panel to reexamine the proposed intervention, which ultimately led to its demise as a World Bank project.[2]

Reassessing America's China policy in the new Bush administration, therefore, will require addressing the Tibet conflict and developing policy options for it within the context of Sino-American relations. In turn, that will require understanding objectively what has happened in Tibet since it became part of the PRC in 1951, what is occurring there now, and what concatenation of forces has interacted to produce these results. It will also require understanding the strategic options available to the parties in the conflict and the constraints they face in choosing among them.

The Tibet issue today differs from the other core problem areas in Sino-

American relations because not only has there has been relatively little first-hand scientific research in the Tibetan areas in China but there has also been a tidal wave of misleading and often dissembling partisan writing and rhetoric generated by the combatants and their supporters. Both sides have expended an enormous amount of time and effort to spread their representations of past history and contemporary politics, the result being diametrically opposed constructions of reality that make it difficult for any but specialists to assess.

At the core of the conflict is the historical dispute over the status of Tibet. The Chinese vociferously argue that Tibet has been part of China for hundreds of years and therefore properly is a part of China now. Tibetans equally adamantly contend that Tibet was not a part of China until its conquest by the PRC in 1951 and is today a captive nation with the right to independence. While no short essay can adequately explicate the complex history of Sino-Tibetan relations, this chapter will address some of the core issues in this bitter conflict and present a balanced account of how the conflict has evolved during the past century and where it stands now.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

All sides agree that Tibet was independent of China until the Mongols arose on the Asian scene in the thirteenth century. Chinese claims over Tibet begin with the creation of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty in China (1271–1368), when Tibet, already subordinate to the Mongols, became part of that empire. Tibetans, however, do not see this as evidence that Tibet is a part of China because they contend that they were not part of China but rather of a Mongol empire that had also conquered China. Moreover, they argue that the relationship between the Mongol emperors of China and Tibet's lama rulers was that of "priest and patron," the Mongol rulers serving as patrons of Tibet in return for the spiritual guidance of Tibet's great lamas.

The period after the fall of the Mongol dynasty in 1368 is also contested. China claims that the ethnically Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644) ruled Tibet, but Tibetans contend that although contacts between Tibetan lamas and the new Ming emperors continued, China exerted no authority over Tibet during this period.

The conquest of China in 1644 by a non-Chinese confederation, the Manchu, soon led to Tibet's subordination to the new Qing dynasty (1644–1911). It sent armies to Tibet four times in the eighteenth century

and, in the process, established a loose protectorate over Tibet, which, however, did not become an integral part of China because it was not ruled by Chinese laws, language, and institutions. The Qing dynasty's Tibet policy was aimed at controlling the religious and lay leaders of Tibet and did not seek to incorporate Tibet or to assimilate and sinicize Tibet's culture, institutions, and bureaucracy. Tibet, therefore, continued to be ruled by Tibetans, using their own language and customs.

From the apex of its power in Tibet at the end of the eighteenth century, the Manchu dynasty's hegemony gradually declined. In the nineteenth century, the Qing dynasty was weakened by internal disorder and external attacks by Western imperialists. Tibet became a backwater of little strategic interest, receiving little attention in Beijing. The Qing dynasty continued to post imperial commissioners *(amban)* to, and station a garrison in, Tibet, but by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Tibet paid only lip service to China. The arrival of the British in the Himalayas changed the situation, threatening China's hegemony and stimulating a renewed Chinese interest in solidifying its position in Tibet.

During the nineteenth century, the British colonial government in India expanded its political influence from the Indian subcontinent to Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan in the Himalayas. Through a series of agreements with these kingdoms, it enlarged the territory of colonial India. Darjeeling, for example, was ceded by Sikkim to the British in 1835.[3] However, as British India sought to develop relations and trade with Tibet, it ran into a stone wall. The Tibetan government refused to meet and discuss this with British officials, and when Britain sought to open relations with Tibet through its nominal overlord, China, Tibet still refused.

In 1903, after years of frustration and failure, the British invaded Tibet with the aim of forcing the thirteenth Dalai Lama to negotiate. The Dalai Lama again disregarded Chinese urgings to talk with the British and in 1904, fled to Outer Mongolia as the British Expeditionary Force was about to enter Lhasa. The British troops compelled the Tibetans to sign an agreement granting the invaders a number of important concessions, such as the establishment of trade marts in Tibet and the payment of a large indemnity.[4] Known as the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904, this agreement between Great Britain and Tibet would have excluded Chinese authority in Tibet and made Tibet a virtual British dependency if it had been implemented as originally written.

However, London felt that the head of its expeditionary force had exceeded his mandate and decided to water down the terms of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention. Although it agreed that some concessions secured

from Tibet were useful, it did not want to create an international issue by making Tibet its dependency. So when China stepped in and offered to pay the indemnity levied against Tibet, Britain agreed and began negotiating with Beijing to secure China's agreement to the concessions. In 1906, Britain and China signed an Anglo-Chinese convention that confirmed the concessions and reaffirmed the legitimate authority of China over Tibet. Tibet was not consulted about this. This Anglo-Chinese convention was itself "affirmed" in 1907 via an Anglo-Russian agreement on Tibet.[5]

The British invasion of Tibet and the diplomatic aftermath was a defining event in Sino-Tibetan relations. Though the British knew that Tibetans were running their own government and that China had no real authority there, Britain decided to lend diplomatic validation to Beijing's contention that Tibet was subordinate to China.

At the same time, the invasion refocused Chinese attention on Tibet. From Beijing's vantage point, Tibet had almost been lost because the thirteenth Dalai Lama and his government had been ignoring Chinese instructions with impunity. Consequently, although the Manchu dynasty was on its last legs, it responded forcefully, taking steps to increase its direct control over Tibet. A new imperial commissioner was appointed who pursued a more hard-line policy that sought greater control over the government in Tibet. The new Chinese commissioner began to make plans to train a modern army and secularize the Tibetan government by creating lay governmental boards. Discussions were also held to build roads and telegraph lines and to make use of Tibet's natural resources. Similarly, a new Chinese school was opened in Lhasa in 1907 and a military college in 1908; new Tibetan stamps with Chinese script were issued, and more officials were sent to Tibet. At the same time, China (under General Zhao Erfeng) had taken direct administrative control over most of the ethnic Tibetan areas east of the Yangzi River in today's Sichuan Province. In 1909–10, Zhao sent an army to Lhasa, this action precipitating the flight of the thirteenth Dalai Lama to exile in India and his deposition by the Manchu emperor. Had this new integrationist policy continued for long, Tibet would likely have been converted into a directly administered part of China.

Tibet, however, escaped this fate when the Qing dynasty was overthrown by Chinese nationalists in 1911–12. By 1913, the thirteenth Dalai Lama had expelled all Chinese troops and officials and declared complete self-rule. For the next thirty-seven years (1913–1951), Tibet functioned as an independent nation, conducting all governmental functions without interference from China or any other country. However, Tibet's status was far

from settled, since the new Chinese Republican government continued to claim Tibet as a part of China. Tibet, therefore, was going to have to negotiate a new status with China or be prepared to defend its de facto independence.

Tibet quickly sought to reach an agreement with China's new rulers and received assistance in this from British India. The government of British India had found China a bad neighbor during the 1905–11 period of direct Chinese power in Tibet and wanted to prevent any recurrence of such direct control. It pressured the new Chinese government to participate in a conference with itself and Tibet in Simla, India, in 1913.

The Tibetans initially asserted their independence from China at this conference, but the final draft of the Simla Convention was a compromise. While declaring that Tibet would be completely *autonomous* from China, it acknowledged Chinese *suzerainty* over Tibet. Tibetans would administrate Tibet with their own officials in accordance with their own customs and laws, and China would not be permitted to station large numbers of troops or officials in Tibet. However, China could maintain an imperial commissioner and an escort of three hundred men there. This compromise was not the independence Tibet wanted, but nonetheless, it was acceptable to the Tibetan elite because it met their nationalistic sensibilities by guaranteeing that they would retain complete control over Tibet's affairs, including the army, currency, and so forth. It would also legitimize a mutually agreed upon identity for Tibet vis-à-vis China. Both sides agreed to this political compromise. What proved impossible to reconcile was the delineation of the border.

Britain proposed a number of compromise solutions regarding the frontier, but in the end, the Chinese government repudiated these and refused to ratify the Simla Convention. Britain and Tibet signed a bilateral note that bound each other to the terms of the unsigned Simla Convention, but since China did not agree to Simla, Tibet's status was not settled. China continued to vociferously claim that Tibet was part of China although it was unable to transform its verbal claims over Tibet into on-the-ground reality because of the Japanese invasion and World War II. But China was enormously successful on the publicity and diplomatic fronts, and Tibet's de facto status as an independent polity was not accepted internationally. The relevant Western countries, such as Britain, Russia (the U.S.S.R.), and later, the United States, refused to alienate China over Tibet. Consequently, as the Chinese Communists came to power in 1949, Tibet was operating as a fully de facto independent polity but was not recognized as independent by the international community, including newly inde-

pendent India. All, in one form or another, accepted Tibet as a part of China, albeit an autonomous part.

TIBET AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The founding of the PRC on 1 October 1949 began a new chapter in Chinese history and in Sino-Tibetan relations. Tibet's inability to reach a satisfactory settlement of its status with the precommunist governments of China meant it now had to deal with a very much stronger Chinese communist government. The PRC, like previous Chinese regimes, considered that Tibet had been and should again be a part of China and was committed to reuniting it. Its reasons were both nationalistic and strategic. Redressing the humiliations China suffered at the hands of the imperialists was a goal of all nationalistic Chinese, and reunifying the disparate parts of China under a strong central government was seen as a means to that end. One of the stars on the PRC's flag represents Tibet; the idea of allowing such a huge area to go its own way was unpalatable, particularly since not reintegrating Tibet presented serious national-security dangers. The United States' anticommunist crusade and the anti-Chinese bent of Tibet's leaders made it likely that an independent Tibet would be pulled into the American anti–Communist China orbit. If this occurred, China's potential enemies would be sitting right at the edge of Sichuan, China's largest province. The new communist government, therefore, from the beginning, unconditionally asserted its sovereignty over Tibet. And with an army of several million battle-hardened troops, there was little doubt it could impose its views on Tibet.

The question for the new rulers of China was not whether to incorporate Tibet but how best to do so. The early nationality policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was modeled after the U.S.S.R.'s nationality system, wherein major nationality areas were given the status of republics, with considerable autonomy (on paper) and *theoretically* even the right to secede from the Soviet Union. By the 1940s, however, the CCP had shifted its policy on ethnic minorities to favor what it called "autonomous regions" for minority peoples. Conceptually, these autonomous regions were less "autonomous" than the U.S.S.R.'s republics and did not, for example, have the right to secede. Nevertheless, China's political system gave minority groups living in compact communities the right to exercise authority over an autonomous region where their language could be used and their customs and culture preserved. How much cultural, religious, and political autonomy was allowed, however, differed in each region.

In the case of Tibet, Mao Zedong was willing to militarily "liberate" Tibet if necessary, but he decided from the start that this was to be done only as a last resort. Mao understood that Tibet was very different from other minority areas because it had been operating independently for four decades and because there were no Chinese living there. Mao decided, therefore, that China should make a major effort to "liberate" Tibet peacefully, that is, with the agreement of the Dalai Lama and the government of Tibet. If China could accomplish this, the risk of Tibet's status becoming internationalized as part of the Cold War would be avoided and Tibetans themselves would come to accept the legitimacy of Tibet's being a part of China.

To facilitate this goal, Mao formulated a special policy of moderation and gradualism for Tibet, in which socialist reforms would not be emphasized immediately and the government of the Dalai Lama would be allowed to continue to function internally. Mao's policy focused on first winning over Tibet's religious and aristocratic elites, especially the Dalai Lama, to being part of China and to the value of socialist reforms and modernization. Since Tibet's elites did not consider themselves part of China and were strongly committed to religion, Mao conceded that it would take time to persuade them to change their views.

China tried hard to persuade the Dalai Lama to send officials to negotiate Tibet's reunification with China, offering relatively liberal terms. Tibet, however, was not interested. It was adamantly opposed to giving up its de facto independence and becoming part of an atheist, communist China. Negotiations with Beijing, therefore, never got off the ground, and in October 1950, Mao ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to invade Tibet's eastern province. The aim of this attack was not so much to conquer Tibet as to force the Tibetan government to negotiate "peaceful" liberation. Thus, after quickly vanquishing the Tibetan opposing forces in the east, the PLA stopped, and China again asked Lhasa to negotiate an agreement. Militarily disorganized and bereft of outside help, the fourteenth Dalai Lama sent a negotiating team to Beijing. It reluctantly signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet in May 1951. This agreement formally recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet for the first time. It also allowed units of the PLA to move into Tibet, to defend the borders, to establish a Tibet Military Area Headquarters to gradually absorb the local Tibetan army, and to create a Military Administration Bureau in Tibet to oversee the administration of the agreement. Tibet was now an integral part of China, but it also had a unique status in the PRC, since China agreed not to unilaterally alter the existing polit-

ical system in Tibet or the established status, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama. Tibet, it said, had the right to exercise regional autonomy under leadership of the central PRC government. This meant that the CCP allowed the feudal system, with its serflike peasantry, to persist, and it allowed the Dalai Lama's government to continue to rule Tibet internally in accordance with its own language and traditional laws. All issues such as taxes, land tenure, crime, disputes between Tibetans, and appointments were handled by the Dalai Lama's government without consultation with the Chinese generals in Tibet or Chinese law.

However, the Seventeen-Point Agreement also indicated that reforms would come at some time in the future:

> In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.[6]

But there was no timetable for reforms, and the traditional Tibetan government headed by the Dalai Lama actually continued to rule Tibet internally until the Dalai Lama's flight to exile in 1959.

While these events were unfolding, the United States tried hard in 1951 to convince the Dalai Lama to denounce the Seventeen-Point Agreement and flee into exile. Washington even offered to permit him to move to the United States with a few hundred of his leading officials.[7] The American initiative, however, failed, as the Dalai Lama believed the U.S. offer of support was inadequate. It did not contain a clear commitment to support Tibet as an independent country and also failed to pledge substantial military aid to defeat China. The Dalai Lama, therefore, decided to try to live under the new agreement with China. But the role of the United States as a hostile force trying to drive a wedge between Tibetans and Beijing had begun. Some in China see today's U.S. Tibet policy as a new version of that position.

In the fall of 1951, Chinese troops and officials peacefully entered Tibet, and a sensitive interregnum began, in which both sides coexisted under the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The Chinese officials concentrated on setting up garrisons, offices, and roads, that is, on stabilizing their position in Tibet. They presented themselves to Tibetans as "new Chinese," who were there not to exploit and abuse the Tibetan people, as had Chinese in the past, but rather to help develop Tibet. The Chinese

military administrators in Tibet showed respect for Tibetan culture and religion, giving alms, for example, to all twenty thousand of the monks in the Lhasa area. No attempts were made to incite the poor serfs to challenge the Dalai Lama's government. This gave Tibet a unique status in the PRC.

However, from the beginning, some within the Chinese military in Tibet proposed a different, "hard-line" strategy regarding how China should handle Tibet. General Fan Ming advocated moving quickly to implement political and socioeconomic reforms in Tibet. His faction felt that the CCP should show preference to Tibet's second highest lama, the Panchen Lama, since that lama and his top officials were, in Chinese communist parlance, "progressives." In particular, Fan argued that a separate autonomous region should be set up in the Panchen's area. There, the Panchen Lama on his own would be able to initiate the process of land reform, knowledge of which would spread to the Dalai Lama's region; this would raise the consciousness of the serfs there, who also would quickly demand land reform, thus forcing the Dalai Lama's government to yield.

Mao, however, disagreed. He reasoned that the Tibetan peasantry was too backward and too enthralled with religion for this hard-line approach to achieve China's long-term goal, so he consistently rejected it and in the early 1950s, blocked all attempts at prematurely forcing reforms or favoring the Panchen Lama over the Dalai Lama.

For Tibetans, the Seventeen-Point Agreement and the arrival of a large contingent of Chinese troops and officials created an enormous crisis. Though they knew that they had been independent since 1913 and abhorred the atheism of communism, they had lost the war in their eastern province and, unlike South Korea, had been unsuccessful in securing effective Western support. To prevent a total invasion and the inevitable destruction and bloodshed it would create, they had accepted the Seventeen-Point Agreement and now had to decide how to deal with their new rulers.

The Tibetan government initially had no clear strategy and no unified policy: Should the government now move quickly to modernize and reform Tibet's exploitative traditional system (in the hope that it could devise methods to accomplish this without destroying key religious and cultural institutions, as well as its political autonomy)? Or should it hamper and obstruct the Chinese so that they would find Tibet too troublesome to rule directly and allow it to operate as a protectorate-like entity (as it had under the Manchus)? Issues such as these were not formally decided. The Tibetan government outwardly tried to maintain polite rela-

tions with the Chinese, but from the beginning, key Tibetan officials went out of their way to insult the Chinese generals and make life difficult for the Chinese forces. For example, the Tibetan government refused to replace the flag the Tibetan army carried on parade with the Chinese national flag, citing the somewhat disingenuous reason that this was not a Tibetan national flag but only the flag of the Tibetan army. At the same time, a Tibetan People's Party was organized with the covert backing of key Tibetan officials to protest the Chinese presence in Tibet. In 1952, violence between the Chinese army and the People's Party was only narrowly averted. This threat was diffused after the Dalai Lama dismissed the two main anti-Chinese prime ministers in 1952, but anti-Chinese hostility and anger continued among a large portion of the Tibetan elite who considered Tibet's theocratic system exemplary. These anti-Chinese sentiments and activities were encouraged by a small group of former Tibetan officials (including one of the Dalai Lama's elder brothers, Gyalo Thondup) who had gone into exile in India rather than live in Tibet under the Seventeen-Point Agreement. They urged their fellow countrymen not to acquiesce to the Chinese political and military presence in Tibet, dangling the possibility of active U.S. support for Tibet before their eyes.[8]

There was, therefore, no Tibetan consensus among the religious and secular elite as to how to deal with the agreement and the Chinese so as to preserve Tibetan autonomy and institutions. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama personally favored reforms. In later years, he stated:

> In 1954, when I was in China, I really developed a feeling that Tibet could be transformed into a modern society through socialism, with the help of the Communist Party. Many Tibetan communists felt the same way and very strongly. They made [a] commitment to achieve this. On several occasions, I discussed my impression . . . with Chairman Mao. . . . I personally felt [at] that time that there were very positive signs, hopeful signs.[9]

These progressive views were welcomed in Beijing and Mao believed that the Dalai Lama would be the vehicle through which his "gradualist" plan for winning over the feudal and religious elites (and then the masses) would come to fruition. However, after the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet in 1955, he did not seek to persuade his people to support reforms and a modern Tibet under China. In fact, the situation deteriorated quickly.

China's decision to implement socialist land reform in the ethnic Tibetan areas east of Tibet proper in 1955–56 (in the Kham and Amdo

regions of Sichuan and Qinghai Provinces) precipitated a bloody rebellion in these areas. Although these regions were not included in the Seventeen-Point Agreement because they had not been part of Tibet in 1950–51, events there generated enormous sympathy and anger in Lhasa, and when large numbers of defeated rebels and refugees began to pour into Lhasa in 1957, a new, more serious wave of anti-Chinese activity began in Tibet proper. The rebellion in Sichuan also brought the United States directly into the picture, and by 1957, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was training and arming Tibetan guerrillas.

Mao made a last attempt to salvage his gradualist policy in 1957, when he reduced the number of Han cadre and troops in Tibet and cancelled proposed trial reforms there. He also promised the Dalai Lama in writing that China would not implement socialist land reforms in Tibet proper for the next six years, adding that if conditions were not ripe at the end of this period, he would postpone the reforms even further. But the Dalai Lama could or would not quell the unrest within Tibet. In March 1959, despite the fact that the old society continued in Tibet, with monasteries and aristocratic lords still in control of their estates and serfs, and with the Dalai Lama's government still ruling internally, an uprising broke out in Lhasa that ended with the Dalai Lama's flight into exile in India. The Dalai Lama then renounced the Seventeen-Point Agreement and sought support for Tibet's independence and self-determination. The Tibet question reemerged as an international and Cold War issue. Mao's gradualist policy had failed.

At the same time, the Tibetan rebellion also failed dismally. The CIA's support for the guerrillas was ineffective, and the Tibetan guerrilla forces were unable to hold on to any territory within Tibet as a "Free Tibet" base of operations. The CIA subsequently assisted the guerrillas in establishing a safe-haven base of operations in northern Nepal,[10] but this had no impact on the political situation in Tibet.

After the uprising, the Chinese government also renounced the Seventeen-Point Agreement and adopted a diametrically different policy for how it would treat Tibetans and their culture. The central authorities terminated the traditional Tibetan government, confiscated monastic and aristocratic estates, and closed down virtually all of Tibet's several thousand monasteries. The old society was over and a new, hard-line cultural policy installed. The gradualist policy, with its moderation and sensitivity to the continuance of Tibetan culture and values, was supplanted with a new policy that promoted class warfare and made the creation of proletarian solidarity the supreme goal. This policy reached its zenith dur-

ing the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when Tibetan customs were attacked and, in many cases, banned. Chinese policy in Tibet now denigrated Tibetan culture and civilization, characterizing them as feudal and backward. The 1950s policy of trying to persuade Tibetans to modernize and adopt socialist political and economic institutions while permitting them to retain all of their language, religion, and culture was over. Tibetans were encouraged to internalize the universalistic values of socialism and discard the particularistic values of Tibetan ethnicity. The primary identity for the overwhelming majority of Tibetans who were members of the proletariat, therefore, was socialist, not Tibetan; their core loyalty was to be with proletarian Han and other proletarian *minzu* (peoples) rather than with other Tibetans who were not members of the proletariat. Cultural identity was now marginalized and trivialized.

The eight-year transition period from 1951 to 1959, therefore, ended poorly for both Tibet and China. On the Tibetan side, the Dalai Lama and his government were unable to develop and implement a realistic compromise strategy that could persuade the Chinese to allow them a niche within China in which they could maximize Tibetan long-term autonomy and institutions. Different elements in the Tibetan elite pursued contradictory policies, the result of which was a premature and ineffective military confrontation that resulted in the destruction of the old society, including Buddhism and all that they were seeking to preserve. On the Chinese side, ideological zeal in prematurely implementing socialist changes in Tibetan areas in Sichuan thwarted the goal of gradually winning over Tibetans to accept being part of socialist China. Tibet and the Dalai Lama were now under the wing of the United States, and the Tibet question was again visible on the international stage.

The events of the 1950s also gave credence to the views of those in the CCP who had advocated a more hard-line approach to dealing with the question of how best to integrate Tibet into China. The hard-liners had argued that the best way to integrate Tibet into China and win over the people was rapidly to eliminate the system of serfdom (together with the elites who ruled the system, since they would never accept socialist reforms on their own). Consequently, another, less explicit consequence of the failure of Sino-Tibetan relations in the 1950s was that within the CCP, many now came to accept that it had been a mistake for the Party to coddle Tibet's religious elites and institutions. They discretely mentioned that the Party had been misguided in its views about the progressive attitudes of the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama, they asserted, had been duplicitous when he met Mao and Zhou Enlai in Beijing and gave them

the impression he was a progressive in favor of reforming Tibet when in reality he was pursuing "splittist" policies. Although this view was not accurate with regard to the Dalai Lama, these cadres blamed the Party's gradualist strategy for the 1959 rebellion and the reinternationalization of the Tibet question; today, some in China consider this "moderation" policy to be one of the Party's (Mao's) greatest failures. If China had eliminated the old system quickly, they say, there would have been no revolt and no Dalai Lama in exile.

The hard-line, anti-Tibetan cultural policy of the post-1959 era appeared on the surface to achieve China's basic strategic goals in Tibet. The Chinese leadership in Tibet believed that the Tibetan masses, the previously exploited classes, were grateful and happy to have the old system ended. The view projected to Beijing from Lhasa was that the Tibetan proletarian masses had been won over to being loyal citizens of China and to socialist values and institutions. Hatred of the old society and hatred of class exploitation had supplanted ethnic and religious solidarity.

POST-MAO TIBET, 1978–

The rise to power of Deng Xiaoping produced major changes in China. Communes were disbanded and land was returned to the peasants under a long-term lease arrangement called the "household-responsibility" system, wherein the household again became the basic unit of production. Major changes also occurred in the cultural arena, as prohibitory rules about dress, customs, and religion were gradually ended. Similarly, normalization of relations with the United States and new initiatives to reconcile two outstanding conflicts that concerned the unity of the PRC—Taiwan and the Tibet question—were launched.

With regard to Tibet, China made a number of unilateral gestures in 1978, including releasing a group of prisoners and announcing that Tibetans would be able to visit relatives abroad. This developed quickly into a move to try to resolve the Tibet question by persuading the Dalai Lama and his followers to return to China. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping invited Gyalo Thondup to Beijing. Deng told the Dalai Lama's Chinese-speaking elder brother that apart from the question of total independence, all other issues could be discussed and all problems could be resolved. He also invited the Dalai Lama to send fact-finding delegations to Tibet. Beijing obviously believed that the delegations would be impressed by the progress that had been made in Tibet since 1959 and by the solidarity of the Tibetan people with the nation. It also believed that after twenty years

in exile, the Dalai Lama would be eager to reach an agreement that would permit his return to Tibet. They were wrong.

Contrary to what the Chinese expected, the fact-finding delegations revealed to the exiles that Chinese proclamations of socialist progress in Tibet had little substance. The living standard of the Tibetan people was poor, economic development was minimal, and the Tibetan masses, despite twenty years of communist propaganda, still believed strongly in the Dalai Lama and had strong feelings for Tibetan religion and nationalism. Proletarian solidarity, in fact, had not replaced ethnic loyalties. Thus, the overall impact of the delegations' visits was precisely the opposite of what Beijing had hoped for, in that it bolstered the confidence of the exiles.

Beijing's external Dalai Lama strategy was paralleled by the development of a new internal strategy. Pushed by Party secretary Hu Yaobang, who admitted that the CCP had made serious mistakes in Tibet, the strategy had two main components: (1) an economic component—rapidly to improve the standard of living of individual Tibetans, and (2) a cultural or ethnic component—to make the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) more Tibetan in overall character by fostering a revitalization of Tibetan culture and religion (including more extensive use of the Tibetan language) and the withdrawal of large numbers of Chinese cadres, who would be replaced with Tibetans. In a speech in Lhasa, Hu announced a 180-degree shift from the antiethnic, antiminority cultural ideology of the Cultural Revolution, saying,

> So long as the socialist orientation is upheld, vigorous efforts must be made to revive and develop Tibetan culture, education, and science. The Tibetan people have a long history and a rich culture. The world-renowned ancient Tibetan culture included fine Buddhism, graceful music and dance, as well as medicine and opera, all of which are worthy of serious study and development. All ideas that ignore and weaken Tibetan culture are wrong. It is necessary to do a good job in inheriting and developing Tibetan culture.[11]

After the hard-line policies of the post-1959 era, this was a partial return to Mao's policy of moderation in the 1950s. Being "Tibetan" was again publicly valued by the state as an end in itself.

Not surprisingly, this ethnically conciliatory strategy evinced strong objections from a faction of hard-line Chinese and Tibetan civil and military leaders, who insisted that allowing religion and monasteries to flour-

ish again in Tibet would inevitably fan the flames of nationalism and "splittism." Nevertheless, Beijing started to liberalize within Tibet. It also invited the Dalai Lama to send a negotiating delegation to Beijing. The Dalai Lama accepted, and in October 1982, three exile representatives arrived in Beijing. This was their first official contact since 1959. An end to the Tibet question seemed at hand.

The problem facing the Dalai Lama and his leaders was what kind of a compromise to seek. They genuinely felt that they deserved self-determination and independence. However, they also understood that China was a powerful nation and they had few bargaining chips. The focal decision, therefore, was whether they should take a tough approach, demanding semi-independence (i.e., total internal political control and a reunification of all Tibetans in China under one government as part of a "Greater Tibet"), or whether they should adopt a more conciliatory and realistic posture wherein they would accept far less (in the belief that this was a unique moment for them to secure a deal that would allow the Dalai Lama and the exiles to return to Tibet). These very difficult choices prompted months of in-depth discussions in Dharamsala, but in the end, there was no consensus as to how low the Dalai Lama's "bottom line" should be drawn regarding political concessions. The Dalai Lama, consequently, sent high-level representatives to Beijing with a brief to talk only in general terms—for example, to present historical arguments about Tibet and Sino-Tibetan relations and issues such as the "priest-patron" relationship. The discussions, therefore, did not get down to substantive issues about terms for the Dalai Lama's return, and from the beginning, there were tensions that revealed the enormous gap that existed in thinking (e.g., the Chinese insisted that the Tibetans refer to Tibet as "the local area of Tibet," while the exiles used the term meaning "Tibet as a separate country"). In the end, the Tibetans made only a single comment about their political position, stating in passing that if China was willing to offer Taiwan the "one country–two systems" option, then Tibet should receive far more, since Tibetans are different culturally, linguistically, and racially.[12] The Chinese response to this is revealing of Beijing's thinking—Tibet is already liberated and Taiwan is not.[13]

Thus, though Deng Xiaoping had announced that anything other than independence could be discussed, Beijing had no intention of allowing real political autonomy in Tibet. The extent to which Tibetan language, culture, and religion could be practiced was negotiable, but a different political system was not. Beijing was thinking about the Dalai Lama and the exiles returning to China and being integrated into the existing insti-

tutions of the TAR as loyal citizens of a multiethnic nation, whereas the Dalai Lama's representatives appeared intent on returning to Tibet as rulers of an autonomous region. The Chinese, therefore, were disappointed by the Tibetans' attitude and by the exile's unwillingness to accept their fundamental given—that Tibet would remain ruled by the CCP. Beijing, which had power and international acceptance on its side, wanted rapprochement, but only on its terms. It did not want to enter into a genuine give-and-take with the exiles over the issue of making changes in the political control of the TAR, let alone about the possibility of reuniting all ethnic Tibetans in China, as the exiles wanted.

In the end, therefore, this historic meeting not only produced no new movement toward resolving the Tibet question, but it began to raise serious questions in Beijing about the feasibility of rapprochement with the Dalai Lama. And when the exiled leadership continued to attack Chinese policies and human-rights violations in Tibet (e.g., with charges of Chinese genocide),[14] opponents of the new "moderation" policy in China interpreted the Dalai Lama's response as a sign of his insincerity. In fact, those who believed that China should settle the Tibet problem without the Dalai Lama explicitly saw this as déjà vu—as a replay of what they considered the duplicitous behavior of the Dalai Lama and his government in the 1950s. This may not be fair, but given the history of the two poles of Chinese strategic thinking about how to end the Tibet problem, it is not surprising.

Nevertheless, a second face-to-face meeting between Tibetan representatives and China was held in Beijing in 1984. At this meeting, the Tibetans came with a developed negotiating position that included the creation of a Greater Tibet, comprising all ethnic Tibetans in China (i.e., the 1.8 million in Tibet proper and the 2.1 million in the neighboring Chinese provinces).[15] This Greater Tibet would be demilitarized and would have a different political system than the rest of China. This strategy turned out to be unsuccessful. Beijing was seeking to enhance its stability and security in Tibet, not lessen it by turning over political control of Tibet to its adversaries in Dharamsala, let alone give up control over a Greater Tibet. If China let Tibet have a different political system, how could it refuse requests from Xinjiang or Shanghai? Dharamsala's leaders, in one sense, had misjudged both their own leverage and Beijing's desire for an agreement, but in another sense, the exile leaders *simply could not bring themselves to contemplate accepting anything less.* They were not sure they wanted to make any agreement that would entail their renouncing independence, much less, one where they would simply return as citizens of

China. Both, therefore, became angry and frustrated by the other's intransigence. In this strained atmosphere, a proposed visit of the Dalai Lama to China (Tibet) fell by the wayside.

Beijing, in the meantime, continued its "internal" reform strategy by allocating increased funds for economic development and allowing greater expression of minority culture (e.g., allowing monasteries to reopen as religious centers). Dharamsala, therefore, found itself in an awkward situation. It was clear that Beijing had no intention of allowing them to rule Tibet with a different political system, and it was also clear that Beijing was pursuing, with at least some success, their worst-case scenario, in that its new reforms and valorization of "being Tibetan" might gradually win the support of Tibetans. At the same time, China's economic power and international prestige and stature were increasing. Thus, there was a danger that the exile's role in the Tibet question would be marginalized.

Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama responded in 1986–87 by launching a new political offensive. In what we might think of as their "international campaign,"[16] they sought to secure new Western political and economic leverage that would force Beijing to offer concessions. In essence, they were trying to move the Tibet question from the cloistered realm of the U.S. State Department to the front stage of American domestic politics. At the same time, they thought that the campaign would give Tibetans in Tibet new hope that the Dalai Lama was on the verge of securing U.S. and Western assistance to settle the Tibet question (i.e., that it would shift Tibetans' attention from Beijing to the Dalai Lama). It was a dangerous undertaking, since having the Dalai Lama make an international appeal was certain to infuriate Beijing and further inflame the distrust that many in Beijing and Lhasa had about his and the exiles' motives.

DHARAMSALA'S INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

The key innovation in the campaign was having the Dalai Lama for the first time carry the exiles' political message to the United States and Europe. Prior to this, he had traveled and spoken only as a religious leader and in fact, first visited the United States only in 1979, having previously been denied a visa for ten years. Now, with the help of Western supporters and sympathetic U.S. congressmen and congressional aides, a campaign was launched in the United States (and Europe) to gain support for the exiles' cause and enhance the stature of the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama made his first political speech in America before the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus in September 1987. It laid out

the argument that Tibet had been independent when China invaded and began what the Dalai Lama called China's "illegal occupation" of the country. Specifically, he said, "Though Tibetans lost their freedom, under international law, Tibet today is still an independent state under illegal occupation."[17] The speech also raised serious human-rights charges, referring twice to a Chinese-inflicted "holocaust" on the Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama's speech and visit stunned the leaders in Beijing and had an almost immediate impact in Tibet, where less than a week afterward, nationalistic monks from Drepung Monastery in Lhasa staged a political demonstration in support of Tibetan independence and the Dalai Lama's initiative. They were arrested, but four days later, on the morning of 1 October, another group of twenty to thirty monks demonstrated in Lhasa to show their support for the Dalai Lama and the first group of demonstrators. When they demanded the latter's release from jail, police quickly took them into custody and started beating them. A crowd of Tibetans who had gathered outside the police headquarters demanded these monks be released, and before long, this escalated into a full-scale riot. In the end, the police station and a number of vehicles and shops were burnt down, and anywhere from six to twenty Tibetans were killed when police (including ethnic Tibetans) fired at the crowds.

Beijing was taken aback by the riot and the anti-Chinese anger it expressed. There had been clandestine nationalistic incidents for years in Lhasa, but now Beijing had to face the reality that thousands upon thousands of average Tibetans were angry enough to defy death and prison by participating in a massive riot against the government and Chinese rule in Tibet. Although there was no specific issue Tibetans wanted resolved, anger with the past twenty-five years of harsh Chinese rule and with the privations suffered under the Cultural Revolution and the communes was coupled with resentment over the increasing numbers of Han and Hui (Chinese Muslims) coming to Lhasa to work. These feelings coalesced when the Dalai Lama's successful visit to the United States offered Tibetans what seemed like a realistic alternative to China to achieve their aspirations—it gave them new hope that with the work of the Dalai Lama and the power of the United States, some form of independence or total autonomy was just around the corner. While this might seem naive, it was what the monks and common Tibetans believed. In addition, Lhasa Tibetans generally felt that this was the time that they should show Beijing and the world the extent of their support for the Dalai Lama.

In the months after the riot, Lhasa saw more demonstrations by monks and nuns, and another major riot occurred in February 1988. The situa-

tion in Tibet had become an international embarrassment to China. A few months later, in June 1988, the Dalai Lama made the first *public* announcement of his conditions for returning to Tibet in a speech in Strasbourg. Its main points were that a Greater Tibet should become a self-governing political entity founded on a constitution that granted Western-style democratic rights. This enlarged political Tibet would operate under a different system of government than the rest of China and would have the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and Tibetans. China would remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy, although Tibet would maintain and develop relations through its own Foreign Affairs Bureau in nonpolitical fields such as commerce, sports, education, and so forth. China could maintain a limited number of troops in Tibet until a regional peace conference was convened and Tibet was converted into a demilitarized zone. This came to be called the Dalai Lama's "middle way," that is, his compromise between the current Chinese system and independence. The Dalai Lama indicated he was ready to talk with the Chinese about this.

Although this proposal was simply a restatement of Dharamsala's position in the 1984 Beijing talks, that position had never been publicly discussed, and it created a stir in exile politics, where it was criticized by some as a sell-out.[18] This public offer for new talks evinced some initial interest in Beijing, but the more hard-line view predominated, and Strasbourg was rejected as an indirect form of independence. The Dalai Lama's inclusion of a Dutch national as the negotiating team's legal advisor clearly did not help convince Beijing of his sincerity.

Meanwhile, in Tibet, the situation deteriorated further when a third bloody riot in Lhasa was precipitated by monks demonstrating in commemoration of International Human Rights Day in December 1988. Soon after this, the sudden death of Tibet's second highest incarnate lama, the Panchen Lama, produced an unexpected new initiative from Beijing. In early 1989, China secretly invited the Dalai Lama to visit Beijing to participate in the memorial ceremony for the Panchen Lama. This initiative was meant to give the Dalai Lama an opportunity to return for a visit to China without any overt political connotations or preconditions. He would go ostensibly as a religious figure but would informally hold discussions with top Chinese officials. The rationale behind this approach was the belief by some in China that the negotiations had failed because Beijing had been unable to talk directly with the Dalai Lama, who they felt was more moderate than his officials and was being held back by them. Beijing was interested primarily in the Dalai Lama, not the exile community, so coming

to an agreement with him to return to China would have met their strategic needs. Consequently, it was thought that given the poor situation in Tibet, allowing the Dalai Lama to visit China informally was worth the risks, since it might provide an opportunity to break the deadlock.

Dharamsala, however, was reluctant simply to accept the invitation. The Chinese had indicated the Dalai Lama would not be allowed to visit Tibet, so there was some concern that Tibetans in Lhasa would feel abandoned if he went to China but not to Tibet. Some exile-government officials also worried that China might treat the Dalai Lama in a humiliating way, ignoring him or treating him as a minor figure. And there was suspicion that it would yield nothing of value in terms of settling the Tibet question but would provide the Chinese with a propaganda victory. With events going well in their view, the Dalai Lama, in essence, declined. An extraordinary opportunity to meet face-to-face with no preconditions had been lost.

Meanwhile, Beijing's situation in Tibet deteriorated still further in 1989. Tibetans in Lhasa continued to mount repeated small nationalistic demonstrations, one of which, on 5 March, turned into a fourth Lhasa riot. At this juncture, Beijing accepted the fact that the situation in Tibet was out of control and initiated strong measures to quell the unrest—it took the drastic step of declaring martial law.

Nineteen eighty-nine brought another dramatic setback for Beijing when the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Tibetans everywhere considered this a major victory—an indirect but powerful statement that their cause was just and valid and a sign that the world was lining up behind the Dalai Lama in his fight with China. On top of all this, 1989 also brought the Tiananmen debacle. Although this had no direct impact on the situation in Tibet because Tibetans had little interest or sympathy in what they considered a "Han" affair, it fostered a more hard-line political policy in China and made it easier to use such a policy in Tibet.

By 1989, therefore, Beijing's internal and external strategies for Tibet were in disarray. Unless China was willing to agree to relinquish direct political control in Tibet and accept a Strasbourg-like dominion status there, the exiles appeared bent on continuing their international campaign. This would certainly encourage more demonstrations internally and new accusations internationally. The momentum appeared to have shifted to the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama's international initiative had successfully turned the tables on China, placing Beijing on the defensive both internationally and within Tibet. Forty years after the Seventeen-Point Agreement had brought Tibet within the PRC's fold, Beijing had not attained

the popular acceptance and legitimacy that were the goal of Mao's gradualist policy.

BEIJING'S SHIFT BACK TO A HARD-LINE STRATEGY IN TIBET

The separatist threats in Tibet directly affected China's national identity and strategic interests and were not taken lightly in Beijing. Just as it had after the 1903–04 invasion and the 1959 revolt, China now moved to a more hard-line policy that emphasized national integration and downplayed ethnic differences. The historical parallelism of Mao's policy to support the Dalai Lama precipitating the 1959 rebellion and Hu Yaobang's cultural and religious liberalization precipitating the 1987–89 riots was not lost in Beijing. The consensus was that it had to stop coddling the "reactionary" and "superstitious" Tibetans before matters got completely out of hand. Operationally, this had come to mean that allowing too much minority culture was creating an unwanted divide between Tibetans and Han, so Tibetan culture and religion should be carefully regulated and constrained. Once again, political reality determined how Beijing would implement its ideology regarding *minzu* autonomy.

The new strategy had a number of dimensions, the most obvious of which was the enhancement of the security apparatus in Tibet. These measures have been extremely effective: during the twelve years since martial law was lifted in 1990, there have been no new riots. This success has created confidence in Beijing that it can handle whatever tactics Tibetan dissidents (or exiles) try. A second aspect of the new strategy involved strengthening the leadership of the party in Tibet by appointing better-educated and more highly skilled personnel (non-Tibetans) who could help to modernize the area and its people. As a result of this approach, Han officials have come to play an even more dominant role in Tibet than they had in the 1980s.

A cornerstone of the Chinese government's new policy was (and is) economic growth and modernization—that is, accelerating economic development in Tibet by providing large subsidies for development projects aimed at building infrastructure and productive capacity. The new strategy is premised on the view that the key to winning the loyalty of Tibetans is to improve their standard of living and modernize their society and that to do this effectively, Tibet has to be rapidly developed. Over the past decade, Beijing has expended billions of yuan for new infrastructure and development projects and has just begun building a multi-

billion yuan railway to Lhasa. Thus, Beijing seeks to solidify its position in Tibet by investing substantial funds for development rather than by making more concessions to ethnic sensibilities.

Many Tibetans have benefited economically from this program, but the policy has also created resentment, as it has greatly increased the influx of non-Tibetan laborers and businessmen into Tibet. There are no accurate data on the numbers of such people in Tibet, but they have dramatically changed the demographic composition and atmosphere of cities like Lhasa, and the process is beginning to expand to smaller "urban" towns and even county seats. The number of these non-Tibetans is unprecedented in Tibetan history and has turned Lhasa, the heart of Tibet, into a city where non-Tibetan residents appear to equal or exceed the number of Tibetans.

This influx has also resulted in non-Tibetans controlling a large segment of the local economy at all levels, from street-corner bicycle repairmen to firms doing major construction projects. There have been many complaints about this from Tibetans who argue that this influx should be stopped or severely curtailed because Tibet is a special minority "autonomous region" where Tibetans, not outsiders, should be the primary beneficiaries of the new-market economic growth. There is also a strong feeling among Tibetans that they cannot compete economically with the more industrious and skilled Han and Hui, so without government intervention to ensure the welfare of the citizens of the autonomous region, they will become increasingly marginalized, economically as well as demographically. It has also been argued that allowing this process to continue is counterproductive, as it will fuel anti-Chinese hatred in Tibetans and make Tibet less secure in the long run. Notwithstanding these criticisms, Beijing has not agreed to stop or impede the flow of non-Tibetan workers coming to Tibet. Instead, it has responded to critics by saying that Tibet is poor and that these people have more skills and business know-how than Tibetans and thus are necessary to develop Tibet quickly.

To some extent, Beijing's refusal is, of course, political. The large numbers of non-Tibetans living and working in Tibet inextricably link Tibet closely to the rest of China and provide Beijing with a new and significant pro-China "constituency" that increases its security there. Although these Chinese do not see themselves as permanent colonists, the reality is that at any given time, there are a large number of ethnic Chinese residents in key urban areas in Tibet. This has created a kind of "facts on the ground" for Beijing. One can easily imagine China promulgating new laws to make the large Han presence permanent if its control over Tibet was seriously threatened.

Equally important to the hard-line strategy is the expectation that these Chinese will provide a powerful model of modern thinking and behavior that Tibetans will see and gradually emulate. Based on the history of other minority areas, this strategy is banking on a process of acculturation, in which the more "advanced" Han will open Tibet to new ideas and attitudes and create a new, "modern" Tibetan in the process, one who will not be so influenced by religion and lamas. It valorizes a national identity as a citizen of China over a specific identity as a Tibetan living in a Tibetan Autonomous Region. Thus, although Beijing realizes that its open-door policy will likely create hostility among many Tibetans in the short run, proponents of the view feel that this is the price they must pay for modernizing Tibetan society so as to succeed in the long run. To this end, Beijing has also tried to use the education system to create a "modern" Tibetan elite who are comfortable being a part of China. For example, besides operating the standard school system in Tibet, Beijing initiated a program to create special Tibetan lower-middle schools in other parts of China in 1985, and the program was expanded substantially after 1987. Today, there are roughly ten thousand Tibetan youths attending such schools throughout the rest of China, and more attend special Tibetan upper-middle and vocational schools.

Finally, as mentioned above, Beijing's current policy also seeks to curtail the extent to which Tibet is dominated by Tibetan language and culture. Tibetans are still free to speak Tibetan and adhere to Tibetan customs, but Beijing has not permitted additional changes that were under consideration in 1987–88 that would have enhanced the cultural distinctness of Tibet. For example, reforms that would have made Tibetan an official language, along with Chinese, in government offices have not been pursued, and a plan to use written Tibetan in the secondary-school science curriculum has been set aside in favor of continuing the dominance of Chinese. Similarly, the commitment of CCP first secretary Hu Yaobang in the early 1980s to require Han officials in Tibet to learn Tibetan has been ignored. The government has also become far more intrusive in the organization and operation of monasteries. It has been unwilling to eliminate or substantially increase its limits on the number of monks and nuns and has also carried out divisive political-education campaigns in the monasteries. The operating notion is that Beijing should not allow changes that make Tibet more isolated in language, culture, and values from the rest of China because they will impede the diffusion of a national identity wherein Tibetans see themselves primarily as loyal citizens of a multiethnic state. Elevating and inculcating

national culture while constraining and de-emphasizing *minzu* culture is the essence of the approach.

Nor is Beijing willing to consider the argument that relative demographic homogeneity is needed for Tibetan culture to flourish. In essence, Beijing's post-1989 hard-line policy has implicitly redefined and diminished what is meant by ethnic or cultural autonomy in Tibet. There are still some subsidies and preferential treatment for Tibetans, but the basic policy has moved from the view that Tibet and Tibetan culture has a special status in China because of Tibet's past history and the Seventeen-Point Agreement to the view that Tibetans are just another ethnic group in a multiethnic state. Tibet is now seen as a region in which Tibetans can practice their culture if they wish, but there are no special commitments on the part of the government to limit the number of non-Tibetans living and working there, to make Tibetan the language of higher government offices and secondary schools, or to allow monasteries and religion to flourish freely. Recently, for example, a new campaign in Tibet prohibited all Tibetans earning government salaries from keeping religious chapels in their homes or participating in other religious activities. Such campaigns reinforce the hard-line message that Beijing will determine what aspects of Tibetan culture will be permitted, and if some Tibetans do not like it, too bad. If this is autonomy, it's autonomy with a small *a*.

For Tibetans, one of the most disturbing aspects of the intensification of the hard-line policy in the 1990s was the vocal and vitriolic campaign to attack and demean the Dalai Lama. In addition to banning the popular annual celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday (held in a park in Lhasa) and the sale of his photograph, top officials in Tibet repeatedly attacked his integrity and honesty in the media. Insulting Tibetan religion, the Dalai Lama, and Tibetans as an ethnic group was no longer taboo for Beijing's top leaders in Tibet. This was a new, "in-your-face" Tibet policy that sent the clear message to Tibetans that *you* have to adapt to *our* sensibilities, not vice versa. It was a far cry from the sympathetic rhetoric of Hu Yaobang.

Thus, although the cultural freedoms given to individual Tibetans were not rescinded in the 1990s and rural Tibet is still Tibetan in language, custom, religion, and demographic composition, the overall thrust of the Hu Yaobang approach of the early 1980s was rejected by Beijing as counterproductive, since it appeared to enhance rather than reduce separatist sentiments. In its place, a more hard-line policy was implemented in which crushing dissidence, modernizing Tibet, and creating a new breed of "modern," less ethnic Tibetans took precedence over catering to ethnic sensibilities and interests.

The international campaign of the Dalai Lama, therefore, had failed. It sought to compel Beijing to resolve the conflict by giving Tibet more political and ethnic autonomy, but it achieved the opposite. Now, Tibetans in Tibet and in exile see their demographic and cultural homogeneity being lost right before their eyes. The Dalai Lama continues to experience great international sympathy and has tremendous influence over the attitudes and emotions of the local Tibetans in Tibet, but his strategy did not compel China to yield to his demands. Beijing, therefore, has turned the tables on Dharamsala, and the triumphs won by the Dalai Lama's international campaign look more and more like pyrrhic victories.

However, in another sense, China's hard-line policy itself can be said to have failed. It appears to have alienated many Tibetans, in all walks of life, including educated Tibetan cadres who once supported modernization and Tibet as a part of China. Tibetans are incensed by Han cadres' lack of respect for their culture and by the Han chauvinism evinced by some over the past decade. The tacit categorization of Tibetans who advocate a more Tibetan TAR as enemies who are putting the interests of their own nationality above those of the nation has embittered Tibetan cadres, since it means that to succeed in Tibet, they have to minimize their ethnicity. The hard-line policy of the last decade, therefore, has illuminated for many Tibetans the reality that twenty years after the fall of Maoist leftism in China, they are still not equal partners and cannot control the ethnic character of their own autonomous region. It has heightened their feeling of powerlessness and has evinced troubling memories of the anti-ethnicity policies of the Cultural Revolution, when Han leaders looked down on and deprecated the worth of Tibetan culture. As such, some say it has stimulated more Tibetan nationalism among educated younger Tibetans than existed a decade earlier.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

At one level, both Beijing and the Dalai Lama would like to settle the Tibet question. The Dalai Lama finds himself standing on the sidelines, unable to impede or reverse changes in Tibet that he deplores and feels threaten the future of his homeland and culture. Time seems to be running out. A settlement could reverse this trend and preserve the kind of culturally and demographically intact Tibet he desires.

The Chinese government also has good reasons for wanting the conflict settled. Beijing finds itself continuously embarrassed and under attack internationally because of its policies in Tibet, and, as mentioned above, ani-

mosity in Tibet has probably been increased as a result of its hard-line policies. The recent flight of two high-profile lamas (Arjia Lobsang Thubten from Kumbum [Taer] Monastery, in Qinghai, in 1998 and the Karmapa Lama from Tshurpu Monastery, near Lhasa, in 2000) reflected this discontent with Chinese hard-line policies. These defections shocked Beijing, since this could not be passed off facilely as exile lies or Western misunderstandings of events in China. These were favored lamas who were considered loyal to China, yet they secretly fled to exile because of their anger with Chinese nationality and religious policies for Tibetans. Thus, despite its hard-line approach to the Tibetan issue, Beijing continues to actively scrutinize conditions to see if the settlement it wants can be made, and on a number of occasions, such as in 1993, 1997–1998, and again in 2000 and 2001, it flirted with restarting talks with the Dalai Lama. However, in the end, Beijing and the exiles were unable to go forward. Though this is not the appropriate place to examine in depth each of these failed "flirtations," there are several general issues that warrant mentioning.

Despite rhetoric in the West asserting that if China would only agree to sit down with the Dalai Lama, both sides could solve the conflict to their mutual satisfaction, as this chapter has shown, there are actually enormous hurdles that will have to be overcome before a settlement of this conflict can occur, or even before meaningful talks can be held.

One enormous hurdle, of course, is the issue that undermined the 1982 and 1984 talks, namely, the kind of autonomy a TAR in China should exercise. This issue includes the amount of internal autonomy Tibet should have, the role of the exile Tibetans in a TAR government, and whether the agreement should reunite all ethnic Tibetans in China into a new Greater Tibet autonomous region.

The Dalai Lama has publicly stated and restated that a settlement should allow Tibet real political autonomy, but this, as was discussed earlier, is far more than China is willing to give (and has been since 1979, when attempts at rapprochement began). Consequently, if the Dalai Lama is firmly wedded to this view, given the current balance of power, he will not get a settlement. He can continue to inflict public embarrassment on China in the international arena, but there is no compelling reason to believe that one more award, one more high-profile glitterati benefit, or one more protest demonstration when China's top leaders travel abroad will change Beijing's policies any more than they have in the past. Despite his outward public stance that "sooner or later, China will have to understand the global sentiments on the Tibetan issue,"[19] depending on global

opinion seems unrealistic. To force major concessions from China, the Dalai Lama will have to escalate his campaign and inflict far greater pain on Beijing than he has been able to do to date. Thus, if real political autonomy is the least the Dalai Lama will agree to, there is little point to a new round of discussions at this time. They would simply be a replay of the 1982 and 1984 negotiations.

However, informed sources suggest that the Dalai Lama's public demand for political autonomy is merely a negotiating ploy and that in reality he is ready to accept substantially less than that. Thus, the idea of face-to-face talks and an eventual compromise settlement is not completely unrealistic.

What such a compromise settlement would look like is difficult to specify, as there are many conceivable permutations, but there are a number of basic issues that would likely have to be addressed. For many Tibetans, the key to an acceptable compromise is to ensure the preservation of a Tibetan homeland, where ethnic Tibetans predominate demographically and Tibet language, culture, and religion flourish. This is what Tibet has always been, regardless of whether it was subordinate to Mongols or Manchus or was de facto independent. Such a compromise, moreover, is possible within the current political and legal structure of China. For example, Beijing could move in stages to appoint reform-minded, ethnically sensitive Tibetan cadres to head major party and government offices, including the first party secretary position, and it could gradually increase the overall percent of Tibetans in the government. In the cultural sphere, a variety of measures could be implemented to enhance substantially the degree to which Tibetan culture predominates (e.g., eliminating or reducing restrictions on the number of monks in monasteries and mandating far greater use of written Tibetan language in government, high school, and college). And in the critical demographic and economic spheres, Beijing could take measures that would decrease substantially the number of non-Tibetans living in Tibet and reduce outside economic competition so that Tibetans become the main beneficiaries of economic development in the TAR. The end result of such a process would be a Tibet that was predominantly Tibetan in culture, language, and demographic composition. It would continue to modernize and would also continue to be run by the CCP, albeit a CCP headed by a new, reform type of Tibetan cadre. This kind of Tibet would likely meet with the approval of the overwhelming majority of Tibetans in Tibet. But is this enough for the Dalai Lama?

The Dalai Lama's overt abandonment of the quest for independence

at Strasbourg in 1988 produced strong criticism in the exile community. Tibetan independence "hard-liners" objected, contending, among other things, that if the Dalai Lama accepted Chinese sovereignty and returned to China he would be throwing away the last hope of Tibetans to ultimately attain an independent Tibet. Influential Tibetan-exile groups, such as the Tibetan Youth Congress, today continue to advocate independence rather than a compromise that would leave the CCP in control in Tibet. While such views seem naive and unrealistic, given the power of the PRC, the history of the collapse of the U.S.S.R. is a powerful legitimizing precedent for these Tibetans and their projected scenario. Consequently, if the Dalai Lama were to accept a cultural-autonomy compromise, such as the one outlined above, he could well undermine the already fragile unity of the exile community. This would be the case especially if such a compromise did not unite all Tibetans into a new Greater Tibet autonomous region, something that is unlikely to occur because Beijing fears that uniting all Tibetans in China under one government would create a greater danger of separatism. Because of these real issues, the Dalai Lama would have to be convinced that the payoff for making painful concessions would be worth the risks, and he would have to be ready to move forward without the support of important segments of the exile community.

But even if we assume the Dalai Lama would be willing to make such concessions to reverse the hard-line policy that he deplores, an enormously difficult hurdle remains—trust. If the Dalai Lama worked out terms for his return to China, could he trust the Chinese to implement the agreement honestly, given all the enmity the conflict has engendered over the past century and the history of major shifts in Chinese politics? This is an issue that looms large for the Dalai Lama and his supporters, who fear that China's leaders will change their minds after he returns and renege on key terms of the agreement or that new leaders will come to power with different views on Tibet. This is the nightmare "lose-lose" scenario: the Dalai Lama definitively accepts Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, ends the international campaign, returns to China, and a few years later, finds that policies change and that he (and the Tibetans) end up with something far less than they agreed to. Consequently, it is difficult to see how he could return to China without some guarantees (for example, involvement by the U.N.). China, however, has defined the Tibet question as an internal matter and has been adamantly opposed to mediation or interference from outside countries or organizations. Nothing is insurmountable if both sides genuinely desire a solution, but this is a major issue that will not be easy to finesse.

There are also many problems that make China dubious about entering into new talks, let alone making major concessions to bring about a resolution to the Tibet question. It is essential to understand that for the past decade, one of the aims of the hard-line policy has been to convince Tibetans in Tibet that the Dalai Lama is unable to help them and that Beijing is in total control of their future—that they must look to Beijing, not India or the United States. Consequently, they will not readily enhance the Dalai Lama's stature in Tibetans' eyes by agreeing to hold talks with him unless they are convinced he is sincere about returning to China on their terms. This means the Dalai Lama must not only publicly accept a major compromise but also demonstrate that his acceptance is genuine.

If he returned, the Dalai Lama would be an even more towering figure in the eyes of Tibetans and would have enormous influence with them. He would also likely become a major religious figure for Chinese spiritual seekers. The crux of the matter for Beijing, therefore, is how he would use this power. Would he genuinely use his stature to heal the enmity of Tibetans and induce them to accept being loyal and patriotic citizens of China? Or would he use the agreement and his return as a stepping stone, that is, as a time for coalescing, unifying, and positioning Tibet and Tibetans to separate from China when the first opportunity arose? When the Dalai Lama speaks in the West of peace and reconciliation, leaders in China wonder: Is this the Dalai Lama who told Mao in 1955 that he wanted reforms and a modern Tibet but then did not deliver and allowed the 1958–59 revolt to occur? Or is this a new Dalai Lama, one who genuinely wants to return to China and heal old wounds? One of the unpublicized reasons for the breakdown in communications in 1998 is said to have been China's discovery of a Dharamsala document that discussed compromise with China as merely a preliminary step in a long-term strategy to attain independence. It is hard for Beijing to know what the Dalai Lama will do, so consequently, it scrutinizes not only everything the Dalai Lama says, publicly and privately, but also everything he does and *does not do* that is relevant to China. They are forever looking for a major sign that he is genuinely committed to a new course, such as stopping all or a major part of the international campaign or agreeing to various preconditions.

The Dalai Lama has been reluctant to do this publicly without guarantees from Beijing that they will reciprocate, and as of now, Beijing has declined. It has not been persuaded by the Dalai Lama's words and actions that the potential benefits of reopening talks outweigh the potential risks. In large part, this is because many in China distrust the Dalai Lama's motives and argue that it is not in China's best interests to permit him to

return. The hard-liners believe that China will be better able to settle the Tibet question to its advantage after the Dalai Lama dies and Tibetans have no unifying leader. Since he is now 67 years of age, they argue it is well worth the wait, given that the current policy is, in their eyes, working. Time, they feel, is on their side.

This strategy is attractive to Beijing because it engenders few risks, at least in the short term, and it can solidify China's position in Tibet regardless of what the Dalai Lama or Tibetans think or do. Hard-liners in Beijing and Lhasa argue that this strategy will ultimately create a new generation of Tibetans who will consider themselves loyal citizens of China. Moreover, even if it does not, it will so radically change the demographic composition of Tibet and the nature of its economy that this failure will not weaken Beijing's control over Tibet. Beijing's security measures are functioning effectively, and in the absence of a credible U.S. or Western threat of sanctions, they are free to pursue the hard-line policy with impunity. Consequently, the dominant opinion on the Chinese side holds that conditions now are not conducive to making a serious compromise to meet the needs of the Dalai Lama.

Thus, though there are good reasons for each side to desire a settlement, the prospects are not good for one, notwithstanding the repeated calls of the Dalai Lama and other world leaders for new talks, as well as the backdoor signals from the Chinese side that they are still interested in a settlement. The Tibet question, therefore, appears to have reached a stalemate. Both sides seem incapable of taking the risks necessary to work out a compromise solution, preferring instead to continue adversarial strategies and tactics designed to thwart their opponent and register gains for their own side. However, while Dharamsala and Beijing's efforts to achieve rapprochement are stalemated, the hard-line policy in Tibet is moving forward inexorably.

Where does that leave Tibet and the Tibetans living there? Although the dominant view in Beijing is that the hard-line policy serves the long-term interests of the PRC, other elements in China believe this policy is creating ethnic anger and enmity among both the Tibetan masses and cadres and is not creating the long-term security and goodwill China wants. For example, a group of retired former military officials who served in Tibet in the 1950 and 1960s (in the Sichuan-based Eighteenth Army) submitted a ten-thousand-character critique of current policy in Tibet that, among other things, tried to refute the contention that the Dalai Lama had been duplicitous in the 1955–59 period and argue that he is someone China can negotiate with today.

If Tibetans and Chinese are to ever reach a secure and meaningful rapprochement, at the very least, the Tibetans' deep-seated ethnic sensitivities must be addressed. Since a settlement with the Dalai Lama is remote, the most likely avenue to accomplish this would be the revival in China of an ethnically conciliatory "internal" strategy that would answer most of the issues that currently concern and anger Tibetans. Such an internal policy would reverse the hard-line policies of the 1990s with regard to cultural, linguistic, and religious issues and make a major shift in economic policy by creating a new set of ground rules that restrict Han and other non-Tibetan workers and businesses in Tibet, or at least begin a process of doing that. For Tibetans to feel they are equal partners in a multiethnic state, they need to believe that the state views them with respect and dignity and that they are in control over policies in the TAR to a greater extent than exists today. To accomplish that, Beijing needs to empower a new breed of ethnically sensitive Tibetan leaders who have pride in their culture and civilization and who can give voice to the feelings and aspirations of Tibetans residing there. This would, of course, entail risks, but it holds out the possibility of enormous gains, as it could provide the very security and loyalty Beijing has sought, without great success, since it incorporated Tibet in 1951. It would also silence Western criticism of China's treatment of Tibetan religion and culture and greatly enhance China's moral stature on the international stage. Tibetans in Tibet have reached a point in their thinking where such a unilateral "internal" policy would likely be genuinely welcomed.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE TIBET QUESTION

The United States has had a long, and at times, intimate, involvement with Tibet, and the Tibet question in part is the result of its policies regarding China and Asia.

U.S. interest in Tibet began during World War II, when the United States conveyed its position on Tibet's political status in a 1942 response to Britain:

> For its part, the Government of the United States has borne in mind the fact that the Chinese Government has long claimed suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese constitution lists Tibet among areas constituting the territory of the Republic of China. This Government has at no time raised a question regarding either of these claims.[20]

The following year, the United States, as part of the war effort, decided to send two officers from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) through Tibet to China. Washington quickly found that notwithstanding Chinese claims that Tibet was a part of China, Chiang Kai-shek exercised no authority there and could not secure Tibetan permission to admit such a U.S. mission. The United States turned to the British to recommend them to Lhasa and then, for the first time, dealt directly with the Tibetan government. Lhasa agreed to the U.S. request and the two officers visited Lhasa in 1943, carrying a letter from President Roosevelt to the Dalai Lama. The OSS officers were sympathetic to Tibet's needs, but the United States remained unwilling to recognize and support Tibet as an independent country after the visit, despite the fact that Washington now had first-hand evidence of Tibet's de facto independence.

In 1948, the Tibetan government wanted to send an official trade mission to the United States, using its own passports. When they approached the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, the State Department instructed its ambassador that the Tibetan trade mission could be received in the United States only on an informal basis and that the United States would not recognize the Tibetan passports, since it did not recognize Tibet as a country:

> It should be recalled that China claims sovereignty over Tibet and that this Government has never questioned that claim; accordingly it would not be possible for this government to accord members of the projected mission other than an informal reception unless the mission enjoyed the official sanction of the Chinese Government.[21]

Consequently, during the period of Nationalist Party (Guomindang) rule in China, the United States supported the position of its ally Chiang Kai-shek. Knowing that China did not exercise authority over Tibet, and had not since the fall of the Qing dynasty, the United States dealt directly with the Tibetan government (without reference to China) when it had to. But it refused to recognize Tibet's de facto status as de jure because it felt that its larger national interests lay with China.

In 1949, as the Guomindang government was collapsing and about to flee to Taiwan, the United States reexamined its Tibet policy. The State Department now showed some new flexibility regarding Tibet's status vis-à-vis China, although it still considered the "sensibilities" of Chiang Kai-shek to be paramount:

1. It is believed to be clearly to our advantage under any circumstances to have Tibet as a friend if possible. We should accordingly maintain a friendly attitude toward Tibet in ways short of giving China [the Guomindang] cause for offense. We should encourage so far as feasible Tibet's orientation toward the West rather than toward the East.
2. For the present we should avoid giving the impression of any alteration in our position toward Chinese authority over Tibet such as for example steps which would clearly indicate that we regard Tibet as independent, etc. We should however keep our policy as flexible as possible by avoiding references to Chinese sovereignty or suzerainty unless references are clearly called for and by informing China of our proposed moves in connection with Tibet, rather than asking China's consent for them.[22]

The inauguration of the PRC on 1 October 1949 quickly changed the situation. Tibet was now facing a communist regime to which the United States was hostile, and it was about to become embroiled in the Cold War. The PRC set the "liberation" of Tibet as an immediate goal. From the Chinese perspective, Tibet had been, and should again be, an integral part of China, so this was really the reunification of a wayward part of greater China. The Dalai Lama's government disagreed and desperately sought diplomatic and military aid from India and the West, especially the United States. It received none.

In the meantime, the Tibetan government stalled sending a delegation to negotiate its "liberation" with China, so Beijing sent in troops to invade Tibet's eastern province. There, they defeated the Tibet army in a two-week campaign, forcing the Dalai Lama to send a negotiating team to Beijing, where in May 1951, its members signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement. At this time, the Dalai Lama was living in a Tibetan town on the Indian border waiting to decide if it was best for him to flee into exile or return to Lhasa.

In Washington, Tibet was now a victim of communist aggression, and the United States was eager to enlist the Dalai Lama in its Asian anti-communist crusade. It actively sought to persuade him to renounce the Seventeen-Point Agreement, the terms of which he had not approved before finalization, and flee into exile. Washington conveyed to the Dalai Lama that the

> US Govmt believes Tibet shld not be compelled by duress accept violation its autonomy and that Tib people should enjoy rights

> of self determination commensurate with autonomy Tibet has had many years. US therefore will indicate publicly its understanding of the position of DL as head of an autonomous Tibet.[23]

This was more than the United States had indicated previously but fell short of what Tibet wanted. Tibet insisted it was independent, not autonomous, and did not want to be a part of China. Although the United States wanted to use the Dalai Lama against the PRC, at the same time, it did not want to undercut the position of Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China on Taiwan, which continued to claim Tibet as part of China, nor did it want a dispute with Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who strongly opposed U.S. intervention in Tibet. The United States, therefore, would not commit itself to support more than autonomy for Tibet under China, and it would not agree to recognize the Dalai Lama as the head of a government-in-exile if he left Tibet.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government considered this offer inadequate and returned to Lhasa in August 1951 to live under the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.[24] Despite this disappointment, the United States made another effort to persuade the Dalai Lama to flee from Lhasa, sweetening the offer by agreeing, for the first time, to allow him to live in exile in the United States. But it was not enough. U.S. claims of friendship and support rang hollow to the Tibetan government, inexperienced as it was in international diplomacy. The Tibetans felt that Washington wanted to use the Dalai Lama in the Cold War, not wield its tremendous power and international influence to support Tibet's aspiration to continue living freely. Consequently, the Dalai Lama decided that the interests of Tibetans were better served by trying to work with Beijing than by depending on Washington.

The refusal of the Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa was a setback that temporarily dampened the enthusiasm of the United States. However, an outbreak of rebellion in the ethnic-Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province in 1956 brought the United States back actively. The CIA quickly became involved in a covert initiative, and by 1957, it was providing training and support for Tibetan guerrilla forces (without the permission of the Dalai Lama). Nevertheless, the situation in Tibet deteriorated and led the Dalai Lama to flee to India in 1959.

With the Dalai Lama in exile, the United States now had to decide how to deal with him. This led to a new discussion in Washington about whether its Tibetan policy should change and if so, how much.

The United States covertly helped the Dalai Lama bring his case to

the U.N., helped set up Tibetan guerrillas on the Nepal-Tibet border, and helped finance the guerrillas and the Dalai Lama,[25] but it continued to accept that Tibet was jurally part of China. Moreover, it insisted that the Tibetans focus their publicity on the communists' violations of human rights rather than on the core political issues the Tibetans wanted to raise, that is, Beijing's invasion and occupation of their country. The U.S. ambassador in New Delhi, Winthrop Brown, for example, told the Dalai Lama that the United States felt that the Tibetan case at the U.N. would command the greatest support if it was presented primarily in terms of human rights.[26]

Thus, even at this juncture, the United States still would not recognize the Dalai Lama as the head of a Tibetan government-in-exile or support his political goal of getting the international community to recognize Tibet as an independent country that had been illegally invaded and conquered. The U.S. strategic goal for Tibet was to generate "sympathy for the Tibetan people on human rights grounds"[27] around the world. This was just the kind of limited response the Tibetan government had feared would happen when it was considering the U.S. plea to leave Tibet in 1951.

However, within these limits, the United States now began to call Tibet "an autonomous country under Chinese suzerainty," although it did not spell out what "autonomous country" meant:

> As to the position which the U.S. government takes with regard to the status of Tibet, the historical position of the United States has been that Tibet is an autonomous country under Chinese suzerainty. However, the U.S. government has consistently held that the autonomy of Tibet should not be impaired by force.[28]

The United States has never recognized the pretension to sovereignty over Tibet put forward by the Chinese Communist regime.

And for a brief period, there were indications that Washington was willing to go even further by saying it would support the Tibetans' right to self-determination. On 20 February 1960, Secretary of State Christian Herter, in a letter to the Dalai Lama, wrote:

> As you know, while it has been the historical position of the U.S. to consider Tibet as an autonomous country under the suzerainty of China, the American people have also traditionally stood for the principle of self-determination. It is the belief of the U.S. government that this principle should apply to the people of Tibet

> and that they should have the determining voice in their own political destiny.[29]

This letter, however, turned out to be an aberration and was not the start of a new, proactive U.S. policy for Tibet. So the Dalai Lama found himself in exile in India, with strong U.S. support for a campaign to castigate the PRC for genocide and the like, but no support for Tibet's claim that Tibet was now a captive nation. The reasons for this reluctance to launch a new policy appear to have been laid out in a State Department internal memo written the previous year:

> FE [Far Eastern Affairs] has completed a study . . . of the question of the United States' recognition of the independence of Tibet in which the considerations both for and against such action are examined in detail. Taking these factors into account, we have concluded that on balance the arguments against recognition of Tibetan independence under present conditions are stronger than those in favor. I consider this conclusion valid from the standpoint of both United States national interest and from that of the Tibetans. We share with the Tibetans the objective of keeping the Tibetans' cause alive in the consciousness of the world and maintaining the Dalai Lama as an effective spokesman of the Tibetan people. I believe that United States recognition of the Dalai Lama's government as that of an independent country would serve neither purpose well. Since very few countries could be expected to follow our lead, our recognition now would make the Dalai Lama the leader of a government-in-exile obviously dependent on the United States for political support. This would almost certainly damage the prestige and influence he now enjoys as one of Asia's revered leaders and would hamper his activities on behalf of the Tibetan people.[30]

In the late 1960s, the shift in China policy initiated by President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger led to the United States stopping all funding for the Tibetan guerrillas in Nepal,[31] as well as to diminished American interest in and involvement with the Tibet question in general. For the decade of the 1970s, Tibet remained an obscure issue in U.S. foreign policy. The Dalai Lama was not even granted a visa to visit the United States until 1979, and then only as a religious leader.

The early record of U.S. involvement with Tibet is, therefore, mixed. At the same time that the United States was arming and training Tibetan

insurgents to fight the PRC, it was also spurning the Dalai Lama's request for U.S. political recognition of Tibetan independence or a Tibetan government-in-exile. With the isolated exception of Herter's 1960 letter to the Dalai Lama, U.S. policy toward the Tibet question supported the position that Tibet was rightly a part of China, albeit an autonomous part. This lack of support was frustrating for Tibetans, who saw and read of America's international crusade for democracy and self-determination yet found in their case that the United States was unwilling to support it politically or militarily. Thus, although the United States was in one sense clearly a friend and supporter of Tibet, it is hard not to conclude that in a more basic sense, it was a "bad" friend or at least not a "good" friend. This is particularly clear when we compare the United States' support for Tibet with the U.S.S.R.'s support for Mongolia. Stalin, at Yalta, persuaded Roosevelt and Churchill to support a plebiscite for Mongolia and then compelled Chiang Kai-shek to accept it. That is why, although Tibet and Mongolia were politically similar at the end of the Qing dynasty, in 1911–12, Mongolia is today independent and a member of the United Nations and Tibet is not.

Events in the 1980s brought the Tibet question to the forefront again. The riots in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama's international initiative garnered strong sympathy and support for Tibet in Congress, in the human-rights community, and among citizens' lobbying groups. U.S. policy toward Tibet now acquired a new dimension, with Congress expressing strong pro-Tibetan political views independent of administration or State Department foreign policy.

The following quotes illustrate these two "policies." The first is from a 1991 Congressional (nonbinding) resolution on Tibet that was attached to a State Department authorization act (and signed into law by the first President Bush at the end of that year):

> It is the sense of the Congress that . . . Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai, is an occupied country under established principles of international law.
>
> Tibet's true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile as recognized by the Tibetan people.[32]

By contrast, a State Department report on Tibet prepared for Congress (in 1994) included a tough statement on Tibet with the United States categorically accepting Chinese sovereignty:

> Historically, the United States has acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Since at least 1966, U.S. policy has explicitly recognized the Tibetan Autonomous Region . . . as part of the People's Republic of China. This long-standing policy is consistent with the view of the entire international community, including all China's neighbors: no country recognizes Tibet as a sovereign state. Because we do not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the United States does not conduct diplomatic relations with the self-styled "Tibetan government-in-exile."[33]

The start of the Clinton administration appeared to usher in major changes in U.S. foreign policy on Tibet. As part of President Clinton's new policy of giving high priority to human-rights issues in foreign affairs, he took a tough stance with China, announcing on 28 May 1993, for example, that the secretary of state would not recommend Most Favored Nation (MFN)status for China in 1994 unless China made significant progress with respect to a series of human-rights problems. What was striking was that he included among these "protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage." Six months later, when President Clinton met CCP general secretary Jiang Zemin face-to-face in Seattle, he urged Jiang to improve cultural and religious freedom in Tibet and to open talks with the Dalai Lama.[34] The United States, for the first time since rapprochement with the People's Republic of China in 1971, appeared willing to try to force changes in Chinese policy toward Tibetans in China, although the United States was careful to focus on cultural and religious survival rather than political status. Nevertheless, 1993 seemed a turning point in U.S.-Tibetan relations—if MFN status was denied to China in part because of its policies in Tibet, the Tibetan exiles would have attained the kind of new leverage they had been seeking through their international campaign. However, as we know, Clinton was forced to back down and in 1994 announced he would not use economic sanctions to try to induce political changes in China, let alone Tibet.

After that, the Clinton administration's China policy reverted to previous policy, placing geopolitical and economic interests ahead of human rights–democracy issues and steering away from a public, confrontational style that could harm Sino-American relations. Consequently, although some involved with U.S. foreign policy still contended that assisting Tibet was a matter of principle and conscience—that Tibet was an important test of the United States' will to take the lead in forging a new, more democratic and morally just post–Cold War world—the dominant view

was that the United States had no intrinsic strategic interest in Tibet so should avoid worsening relations with China by supporting Tibet or the Dalai Lama.

However, the new domestic realities (especially the strong interest of Congress in this issue) meant that Tibet could no longer be ignored, as it had been in the 1970s. So while the Clinton administration refused to support the Dalai Lama's political goals vis-à-vis China, it supported the Dalai Lama by criticizing Chinese human-rights violations in Tibet, calling for Beijing to take steps to ensure the preservation of Tibetan religion and culture, urging Beijing to reopen talks with the Dalai Lama, and quietly working behind the scenes to try to bring this about. For example, the State Department's report cited above also stated:

> The United States continues, however, to urge Beijing and the Dalai Lama to hold serious discussions at an early date, without preconditions, and on a fixed agenda. The United States also urges China to respect Tibet's unique religious, linguistic and cultural traditions as it formulated policies for Tibet.[35]

Ideologically, the Clinton administration rationalized its approach by arguing that the best way to influence China regarding Tibet was by developing good relations with China. Confrontation would not work:

> The ability of the United States to promote respect for human rights by the Chinese authorities is closely related to the strength of our bilateral relations with China. A serious disruption of U.S.-China relations would gravely undermine any hope for the United States to foster greater respect for the human rights of ethnic Tibetans in China.[36]

Nevertheless, the Clinton administration also took a number of steps in response to pressure from Congress and the Tibet lobby. For example, it authorized a separate section on Tibet in the annual State Department world human-rights assessment and appointed a special coordinator for Tibetan affairs in the State Department (to promote Sino-Tibetan dialogue and facilitate the preservation of Tibetan religion and culture). Although these moves irritated China, which denounced them as interference in its domestic affairs, they were crafted in a way that did not contest China's sovereignty over Tibet.

Consequently, after the 1987–89 riots and martial law, questions about

how China was treating and should treat its Tibetan minority became part of the United States' China policy, first in Congress and then in the Clinton administration. It became a visible part of Sino-American relations.

The Clinton administration, therefore, forged a new, more nuanced, dual-level Tibet policy. Tibet was no longer ignored but was supported only in a relatively "safe" way. The United States would not use its power to try to force China to change its policies in Tibet, nor would it deviate from the United States' absolute recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. And the administration worked hard to prevent the Tibet question from disturbing the more important economic and security dimensions of Sino-American relations. But at the same time, the benign neglect of the 1970s and the first Bush administration ended. The Clinton administration supported the Dalai Lama by publicly committing the United States to the goal of preserving Tibet's unique religion and culture while it sought behind the scenes to foster a resolution to the conflict.

In the end, however, the Clinton administration's China-Tibet policy failed. It failed to produce a new set of direct talks between the Dalai Lama and China, and according to most assessments, it was unable to protect Tibet's cultural and religious heritage by impeding or restraining China's hard-line policy in Tibet. If the Dalai Lama is correct, the future of Tibetan society and culture was at far greater risk at the end of the Clinton administration than when President Clinton took office in 1992.

The second Bush administration, therefore, inherited a difficult situation. The Dalai Lama and the pro-Tibet lobby were charging that the conditions in Tibet were deteriorating and the future of Tibetan religion and culture was in doubt. In the face of this, the new administration had to decide whether to continue the nonconfrontational policies of the previous administration or to play a more proactive, confrontational role to reverse the hard-line policies employed in Tibet.

Initially, the new administration set out to take a much tougher line with China and, apparently, the Tibet question. Bush referred to China no longer as a partner but rather as a "strategic competitor," and although Bush himself did not publicly comment on Tibet, Secretary of State Colin Powell gave some inkling of the early thinking of the administration at his confirmation hearing on 17 January 2001, when he made a very strong statement in support of Tibetans in Tibet and of the Dalai Lama:

> It's a very difficult situation right now with the Chinese sending more and more Han Chinese in to settle Tibet. What seems to be a policy that might well destroy that society. I think we have to

> reenergize our discussions with the Chinese to let them know that this is another example of the kind of behavior that will effect [*sic*] our entire relationship. And show our interest in solidarity with the Dalai Lama and the people of Tibet.[37]

These tough comments are eerily reminiscent of the early days of the Clinton administration. As with the Clinton administration, however, over the past year, the tough Bush rhetoric on China has vanished in the face of real issues affecting U.S. national interests. Even before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack, the Bush administration was back-pedaling, and after the warming of Sino-American relations following 11 September, it is not likely that the administration will risk a worsening of Sino-American relations by taking major steps in support of Tibet (such as by threatening to change its position on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet or by recognizing Dharamsala as a government-in-exile if China does not improve its policies in Tibet). So although President Bush, like Clinton, is quietly trying to persuade both sides to open new talks, as of now, he has been unsuccessful. The dual policy honed by the Clinton administration appears to have been appropriated by the Bush administration, but with no greater success.

In conclusion, there are no simple solutions to the Tibet question in either its internal or international dimensions, and the future of Tibetans in Tibet and China is uncertain. Tibetan villages (in which 85 percent of the population live) are entirely Tibetan in ethnicity, language, and culture and will certainly remain so in the near future. Life is changing, as the amount of land per capita decreases and villagers are pushed to supplement farm income by seeking jobs as migrant laborers, but the essential character of village life is still completely Tibetan.[38] The urban areas, however, are very different. The growing sinicization of Tibet's cities and towns (and probably, in the next decade, its county seats as well) may create a situation that is somewhat analogous to the situation in Inner Mongolia, where the cities are demographically and culturally dominated by Han, and Mongolians predominate only in the more distant rural-grassland herding areas.[39] Thus, unless a resolution with the Dalai Lama is reached or Beijing unilaterally returns to an ethnically conciliatory internal approach, the future for a predominantly Tibetan Tibet is not good.

NOTES

Parts of this chapter are adapted from Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989);

idem, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); and idem, *The History of Modern Tibet, 1951–1955* (forthcoming).

1. Tibet here refers to political Tibet, the polity ruled by the Dalai Lama. It does not include the various ethnic Tibetan areas in Kham and Amdo.

2. It is interesting to note that in January 2002, China announced it was starting the population transfers using its own funds (Agence France-Presse, "China Revives").

3. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia.*

4. See Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet: 1913–51,* and Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia.*

5. See Goldstein, *Snow Lion.*

6. Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951,* 767–768.

7. Ibid., 703ff.

8. Gyalo Thondup, author interview, May 1987.

9. Department of Information and International Relations, "Dalai Lama."

10. See Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War.*

11. New China News Agency, *Summary of World Broadcasts.*

12. Anonymous Tibetan exile-government official, author interview. See also the comment of delegation member Jurchen Thupten Namgyal cited in "News Report," 5.

13. Department of Information and International Relations, "Dalai Lama."

14. In October 1982, the Office of Tibet in New York City submitted a fourteen-page document titled "Chinese Human Rights Abuses in Tibet: 1959–1982."

15. These population figures come from Zhang and Zhang, "Present Population," 48.

16. The new strategy was finalized, it appears, after a series of high-level meetings between key Tibetan and Western supporters in New York, Washington, and London. The history of these developments has not yet been well documented.

17. Cited in Goldstein, *Snow Lion,* 77.

18. It was strongly criticized by, for example, the Tibetan Youth Congress, the European Tibetan Youth Association, and another of the Dalai Lama's elder brothers, Thupten Norbu. The latter sent a letter to Tibetans throughout the world attacking his brother's decision to relinquish the goal of independence.

19. McElroy, "No Response."

20. "Aide-Memoire Sent by State Department."

21. U.S. National Archives: USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8–2147, dispatch no. 46, 28 October 1947.

22. U.S. National Archives: USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/1–849, 12 April 1949.

23. U.S. National Archives: USFR, 793B.00/7–1251 telegram no. 107, 12 July 1951.

24. U.S. offers of military aid also were perceived as inadequate because they were contingent on agreement by the Government of India, which was on record as being against this.

25. In 1964, for example, the CIA provided a total of $1,735,000 in support, including $500,000 for the support of twenty-one hundred Tibetan guerrillas in Nepal, $180,000 as a subsidy for the Dalai Lama, $225,000 for equipment, trans-

portation, and training, and $400,000 for covert training in Colorado ("Memorandum for the Special Group, 9 January 1964," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–68,* 731).

26. "Telegram from Ambassador Brown to the State Department, 4 September 1959," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–60,* 778.

27. Ibid.

28. On 3 November 1959, the Republic of China's ambassador to the United States, Dr. George Yeh, was informed by the director of the Office of Chinese Affairs and the assistant secretary for Far Eastern Affairs that "the United States had made a decision to go somewhat beyond its previous position with regard to Tibet, namely that it is an autonomous country under the suzerainty of China" ("Memorandum of Conversation," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–60,* 801).

29. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–60,* 809.

30. "Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to Secretary of State (Herter), 14 October 1959," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–60,* 798.

31. Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's brother and his liaison with the CIA, said that the United States came to tell him in 1969 that they had to discontinue Tibet's assistance. He said that Kissinger made a promise to the Chinese to cut off diplomatic ties with Taiwan and cease support for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan resistance (Author interview, Hong Kong, 11 April 1994).

32. *Tibet Press Watch.*

33. U.S. Department of State, *Relations of the United States with Tibet,* Washington, D.C.: 1995, 4.

34. *International Herald Tribune,* 22 November 1993, 1.

35. U.S. Department of State, *Relations of the United States with Tibet,* Washington, D.C.: 1995, 4.

36. *International Herald Tribune,* 22 November 1993, 1.

37. Phillips and Meserve, "Senate Foreign Relations Committee."

38. Goldstein, Jiao, Beall, and Tsering, "Fertility and Family Planning."

39. The percentage of Han in Tibet, however, will not soon approach the levels found in Inner Mongolia, where 81 percent of the total population is Han.