

CTA's Response to Beijing's Comments on De-militarisation and 'Ethnic Cleansing'

5 September 2009

From 31 October to 5 November 2008, the two Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr. Lodi Gyari and Mr. Kelsang Gyaltsen, along with senior aides, visited China to present to the Chinese leaders the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People. The Chinese government rejected all the proposals in the memorandum. They said the latest proposal was nothing but another way of seeking Tibetan independence, semi-independence and 'independence in disguised form.'

A week after the rejection and to justify their rejection of the modest and moderate proposals by Dharamsala, the Chinese leaders went on the offensive. In an unprecedented move, the executive vice-minister of the United Front Work Department of the CCP, Zhu Weiqun held a press conference on 10 November. In attendance was Sithar, a vice-minister of the United Front. To give the impression that Beijing's comprehensive rejection of the Tibetan proposal had the support of the Tibetans in Tibet, Pema Thinlay, a Tibetan who is the vice-chairman of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, was hauled in to the meeting with the international media.

At the press conference, Zhu Weiqun raised two issues that are of concern to the Tibetan people: de-militarisation of the Tibetan plateau and the stopping and reversal of the population transfer into Tibet. On de-militarisation, Zhu Weiqun said, "Fourthly, the Dalai Lama and his clique ask us to disband and withdraw the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from the 'greater Tibetan-inhabited area,' meaning we have to evacuate our forces from our own territory... If we withdraw our armed forces, how could it be possible for the Central Government to provide national defense. Obviously, this is a deliberate lie!"

On the second point, Zhu Weiqun said, "Fifthly, the Dalai Lama and his clique request, in his so-called greater Tibetan-inhabited area, to purge all other ethnic groups other than ethnic Tibetans...the Dalai Lama will intentionally expel and purge these civilians affecting thousands who have been living there from generation to generation. Such a vicious initiative indicates to us that if one day the Dalai Lama held power and authority in 'Greater Tibet,' he would immediately, without any hesitation or mercy, exercise racial discrimination, isolation and ethnic cleansing."

The press conference was covered by the international media. It was also extensively reported and commented on in the Chinese media and duly played up. The holding of the press conference and the detailed explanation by Zhu Weiqun of the reasons for Beijing's comprehensive rejection of the Tibetan proposal was to avert any international criticism. More importantly, the press conference was held and widely publicized for domestic reasons. The anti-splittist rhetoric China constantly spews out has become a potent tool for the Chinese Communist Party to remain in power in the ongoing, sometimes loud, sometimes silent, three-way discourse between the ordinary people and "the vested interests on which it (CCP) depends for its power"¹ on the nature of the political arrangement for future China. The ordinary people are all those out in the streets every day, crying out for justice on one issue or the other whenever their interests have been trampled on. The vested interests are that vast interlocking network consisting of the bureaucracy and the business community and the patronage system that exists between the two and the patronage system that

exists within officialdom and the market. This system has been manipulated by the vested interests to their enormous personal enrichment. Minxin Pei, the author of *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy*, calls this a "predatory state." This is the system the CCP supervises and is dependent on for its legitimacy.

¹ *Will China implode?* By Isabel Hilton in *The Daily Beast*, 1 August 2009

Zhu Weiqun's press conference and China's comprehensive rejection of the Tibetan proposal and its comprehensive mis-interpretation, so publicly, of the ideas in the proposal is mainly addressed to these two constituencies on which the regime draws its legitimacy and on which its power rests. The spectre of the so-called "ethnic cleansing" and the old Tibetan proposal for a zone of peace are repeated and highlighted because the regime wants to deflect swelling public anger against official corruption away from officialdom to be focused on "splittists" and "splittist ideas." The press conference also re-assured the vested interests that their vast interests in Tibet are protected and the status quo will be maintained.

Otherwise, there is no earthly reason why the Tibetans' main request be mis-interpreted as those of "ethnic cleansing" and PLA withdrawal from Tibetan areas. The main Tibetan request in the latest proposal is that Beijing must carry out and implement the rights given to the minorities as they are enshrined in the constitution of the People's Republic of China. Tibet as a zone of peace and PLA withdrawal from Tibetan areas are old Tibetan suggestions made more than 20 years ago, nearly as old as the economic reforms that have transformed China. Why are the Chinese leaders citing old Tibetan proposals and ideas to reject the latest proposal? This is like insisting that China today is not a market-oriented society because the founder father of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, vowed to make China a socialist society based on a command economy. The inescapable suspicion is that the Chinese leadership is not serious about the talks. Or that Mao was not a true communist because his mother happened to be a devout Buddhist. Otherwise, if there is the will and resolve to solve the issue of Tibet based on the latest Tibetan proposal, this matter can be tackled within minutes. The latest Tibetan proposal is formulated within the Chinese constitution, not without. The constitution gives the right to the sovereign authority to place its armed forces where it wants. This is something China promptly proceeded to do when Hong Kong returned to the motherland's lap in 1997.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's idea that in future Tibet be transformed into a zone of peace and a sanctuary of environmental protection is his vision for his people and the plateau that has nourished the Tibetans for these thousands of years. This is not a pre-condition for any talks.

To label the Tibetan request that China's population transfer onto the plateau and the reversal of this process as "ethnic cleansing" is playing to the international gallery and the deep revulsion this provokes around the world. It is also a dishonest description of the Tibetan people's deep concern. China describes itself not as a nation state but as a multi-ethnic state. In a multi-ethnic state, the minorities have every right to protect and promote their culture. One way of doing this is to establish rules and regulations that ensure that Tibetans remain the majority in the areas they inhabit.

Such rules and regulations are established for Hong Kong to prevent the former British colony from being swamped by people from the Mainland. Article 22 (4) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region states, For entry

into Kong Hong Special Administrative Region, people from other parts of China must apply for approval. Among them, the number of persons who enter the Region for the purpose of settlement shall be determined by the competent authorities of the Central People's Government after consulting the government of the Region."

The Basic Law has specific rules and regulations on migrating and settling in Hong Kong, official, business and private visits. The Basic Law provides on a daily basis 150 One-way Permits (OWPs) for people who wish to go on a family reunification trips. 60 quotas are issue to children holding Certificate of Entitlement (CoEs) who enjoy the right of abode in Hong Kong, 30 to spouses separated for 10 years or more and their accompanying children, and 60 to applicants belonging to other categories. Included in other categories are spouses separated for less then 10 years and their accompanying children, unsupported children who need to join their relatives in Hong Kong, persons going to Hong Kong to take care of their aged parents and so forth.

These rules to regulate the flow of population from the Mainland to Hong Kong have helped preserve Hong Kong's prosperity and its distinct identity. The same rules can be applied to Tibet. There are more than 30 autonomous regions in the world.

In the great majority of autonomous arrangements, the state controls customs, borders and immigration of foreign citizens. These powers, though, can be exercised jointly or can be divided between the state and the autonomous government. Special attention must be paid to internal immigration and to residency requirements because immigration can have a profound impact on culture and can lead to cultural destruction, especially when citizens of the larger state immigrate into the autonomous territory.

The Holy See and the Federated States of Micronesia are exceptions as they have full control over customs, borders and all aspects of immigrations. While Canada has power over borders and customs on Inuit land, the Inuit may exclude non-Inuits, Canadians and foreigners from entering their territory. Canadian military exercises on Inuit land require Inuit agreement. Further, the Inuit have exclusive jurisdiction over deciding who is Inuit. Similarly, the Navajo Nation controls entry into its territory as well as who may reside there.

In some situations, these powers are divided between the state and the people. For example, in Palestine, Israel and Palestine jointly control the borders. The Hong Kong government administers and controls customs and immigration, subject to the ultimate jurisdiction of the PRC, while the PRC administers and controls these matters in the TAR.²

² *Autonomy and the Tibetan Perspective*, published by the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, New Delhi, 2005, p. 20-21

This arrangement to control population flow is not "ethnic cleansing." If this arrangement to control, regulate and supervise in-migration of the majority population into minority regions is not put in place, the result will be the ethnic annihilation of the minority nationality like the Manchus.

The tragic cases of the Manchus, the Mongols in Inner Mongolia and the Uighurs spell the same danger for the Tibetan people. The present-day north-eastern provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning constitute Manchuria, the traditional homeland of the Manchus, who were China's last imperial rulers. Now, because of mass Chinese migration, the Manchus are an irrelevant and forgotten minority in

what was once Manchuria. According to China's 2000 census, Chinese in Heilongjiang make up 95% of the population. The Manchus are only 3%. In Jilin, Chinese constitute 91% of the province's population. The Manchus are only 4%. In Liaoning, Chinese are 84% of the population and Manchus 13%. China's demographic bulldozing over the years of the Manchu ethnicity and culture has resulted in the fact that, according to a Xinhua report of 9 March 2007, there are less than 100 elderly Manchus who could speak the Manchu language.

The same, tragic fate awaits the people of Inner Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan or Xinjiang.

Chinese experts concluded that the natural resource of Southern Mongolia is good for only five million people to live on. However, there is currently a population of 30 million inhabiting there. When the Communist Chinese rule was established in 1947, majority of the population in most of Southern Mongolia's leagues were Mongolian and many leagues were populated with only Mongols. To take Sunit Right Banner of Shiliin Gol Aimag as an example, there were only two Chinese in the whole league in 1947, while in 1984, of the total population of 70,000, Mongolian population became less than even one third. There existed some control over the migration of Chinese population into Southern Mongolia between 1950 and 1960 but still five million strong Chinese were transferred into the region. However, after this period no control imposed at all and Chinese migrants moved into the region as they pleased. With China's reform of 1980s and the transition to market economy in the 1990s, with more Chinese investment coming into the region, Chinese migration into Mongolia became an issue that is not considered an "issue" Thus the Chinese migrants moved into Southern Mongolian like locust, causing the current ration between the Chinese and Mongolian population of 30 million against four million. From this ratio it is not hard to predict the future trend of population development of the region.³

³ A Road to Extinction: Statement of Inner Mongolia People's Party, 8 August 2007

The autonomous Xinjiang region currently has a population of 21 million, of which approximately nine million are Muslim Uighurs and eight million are Hans. There are also 45 other ethnic groups, but their numbers are comparatively small.

In 1949, Hans accounted for less than seven percent of Xinjiang's population - compared to almost 40 percent today. The Han population is concentrated in urban centres such as Urumqi, Shihezi and Karamay, where living standards are generally much higher than in the countryside.

Xinjiang is in fact a large, sparsely populated area that has been a site of heavy army and police concentrations since 1949, and is used as a base for nuclear testing, military training, and prison labor facilities. The population of 18 million includes several Turkic-speaking Muslim ethnic groups, of which the Uyghurs, numbering eight million, are the largest. The percentage of ethnic Han Chinese in Xinjiang has grown as a result of government policies from six percent in 1949 to 40 percent at present, and now numbers some 7.5 million people.⁴

⁴ www.uyghuramerican.org

Tibetans are concerned about what has happened to the Manchus and is happening in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. The Tibetan demand that China's ongoing population transfer of Chinese settlers to Tibet be stopped and reversed grows out of the fear that the Tibetans will be reduced to a dwindling minority in their own homeland and their culture made irrelevant and seen only in museums. Tibetan fears about being swamped by Chinese settlers grow out of China's demographic attrition of Tibet, especially after the People's Republic of China's

takeover of Tibet. *Tibet Under Communist China: 50 Years* explains.

Beijing's policy of Sinicising Tibet by transplanting a Chinese majority onto the plateau has been consistent since the early period of the Communist takeover. Beijing encourages Chinese settlers to migrate to western regions—including Tibet—by offering discriminatory incentives, such as preferential schooling and business opportunities and a more lenient childbearing policy in view of "the sparse population of those regions".

Mao Zedong gave the first public indication of Beijing's population transfer policy in 1952 when he proposed a five-fold population increase in the western half of Tibet, later named the "Tibet Autonomous Region".¹ Mao pronounced, "Tibet covers a large area but is thinly populated. Its population should be increased from the present two or three million to five or six million, and then to over ten million."

In 1955 Chinese President Liu Shao-chi told the late Panchen Lama that Tibet was a big unoccupied country and China had a big population which could be settled there.

Five years later, in 1960, Premier Zhou Enlai explained, "The Chinese are greater in number and more developed in economy and culture but in the regions they inhabit there is not much arable land left and underground resources are not as abundant as in the regions inhabited by fraternal nationalities." In that same year, an internal Chinese document advised that "Tibet's population of 1.2 million" should be increased to three million and should include settlers from China.

In February 1985 the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi announced its government's intention to "change both the ecological imbalance and the population lack" not just in Tibet but also in other "sparsely populated outlying regions". Chinese "migration should be welcomed by the local population, and should result in a population increase of 60 million over the next 30 years in those regions". The announcement went on to say, "This is a very conservative estimate. As a matter of fact, the increase might swell to a hundred million in less than 30 years."

Two years later, in June 1987, Deng Xiaoping admitted that Chinese were being encouraged to move to Tibet because, as he put it to Jimmy Carter, the local population "needs Han immigrants as the (Autonomous) Region's population of about two million is inadequate to develop its resources".

Then, on May 12, 1993, Beijing's high-level secret meeting—code-named 512 and held in Sichuan Province—envisaged that the further flooding of Tibet with Chinese nationals would offer the final solution to the Tibetan problem. This "solution" is aimed at making it demographically "impossible for Tibetans to rise as in the case of Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (East Turkestan).

Before 1959 the government of independent Tibet estimated the total population of Tibet—which includes Kham, Amdo and U-Tsang—at six million. In 1959, the Chinese Government indicated that the population of Tibet was over six million—nearly 1.3 million inside the "TAR" and nearly five million in Tibetan areas outside the "TAR". Again, in 1988, Beijing Review stated that of the total Tibetan population of six million, two million were living in the "TAR" and four million in the Tibetan regions outside the "TAR".

However, data compiled from Chinese publications issued between 1990 and 1995 put the Tibetan population across the plateau at only 4,906,500. These are

rather confusing statistics. It is fair to assume that the death of 1.2 million Tibetans and escape of over 100,000 must have resulted in the decrease of one million between 1959 and the 1990s. But such a steep decline between 1988 and the 1990s is hard to account for.

In addition, it has not been possible to get reliable data regarding the number of Chinese settlers in Tibet. Many Tibet-watchers believe that Beijing understates the size of the Chinese population on the plateau due to its increasing sensitivity to international criticism. Independent research carried out in the early 1980s showed over seven million Chinese settlers in Tibet. Since then, there has been a very visible increase in the number of Chinese economic migrants. However, official Chinese publications issued between 1990 and 1995 show only 5,280,500 non-Tibetans (Chinese and other minorities) in Tibet.

According to these statistics, the total population of Tibet is 10,102,000, out of which Tibetans constitute 4,821,500 (48 percent). In the "TAR", official Chinese publications of 1995 show a miniscule Chinese presence. The publications show Tibetans constituting 2,275,000 (96.4 percent) out of the total population of 2,360,000.¹² The largely barren and inhospitable terrain of the "TAR" explains why the proportion of Chinese settled in this region is substantially lower than in other parts of Tibet. Nevertheless, resident Tibetans and foreign visitors to the "TAR" maintain that the true number of Chinese population is many times more than the official claim. The Alliance for Research in Tibet states: "Given significant populations of Chinese in all TAR prefectural capitals and most county seats, a pattern identical to that observed outside the TAR, the true proportion of Chinese in the TAR is more likely to be nearer that of other autonomous Tibetan areas."

The Chinese population transfer to the "TAR" was carried out in earnest in the 1980s when Beijing launched the campaign to "Help Tibet Prosper". In May 1984 Radio Beijing reported that, "Over 60,000 workers, representing the vanguard groups to help in the construction work in the TAR, are arriving in Tibet daily [number of days not specified] and have started their preliminary work. They will be helping in the electricity department, schools, hotels, cultural institutions and construction of mills and factories." Another 60,000 Chinese "workers"—mainly from Sichuan Province—arrived in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" in the summer of 1985.¹⁶ By 1985 there were 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese civilian residents in Lhasa alone; and within three years this figure doubled.

The influx of Chinese settlers into the region accelerated further in the early 1990s due to Deng Xiaoping's personal encouragement of the movement of larger numbers of Chinese "comrades" into Tibet to "impart scientific and technological know-how and share their scientific expertise". In January 1991, Beijing Review reported that about 300,000 workers were prepared to join new construction projects in the "TAR". In Lhoka alone about 28,000 Chinese settlers arrived between 1987 and 1992; some 27,000 arrived in Nagchu between 1989 and 1992; and 43,860 in Ngari between 1986 and 1992.

During this boom period, Lhasa was described by resident Chinese entrepreneurs as the "Land of Gold", and few were inclined to leave. In one telling example, a Chinese official—having met with surprising success in an informal business venture—was prompted to send his wife back to China to sound out his friends and relatives. She returned with 30 of her enterprising compatriots. Around the same time, Mao Rubai, Vice-Chairman of the "TAR" government, was quoted as saying that there were one million Chinese settlers (excluding military personnel) in the region.

But it is the fertile borderland Tibetan territories outside the "TAR" which have the

highest concentration of Chinese migrants. These territories include the whole of Amdo and a substantial portion of Kham. Official Chinese statistics published between 1990 and 1995 show the total population of these regions as 7,742,000, of which Tibetans constitute 2,546,500 (32.89 percent). The publications show the break-up of population in these regions as follows:

Qinghai (Amdo) Province, total population 4,749,000, Tibetans 972,600 (20.48 percent). Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Kanlho and Tibetan Autonomous County of Parig in Gansu Province, total population 837,000, Tibetans 357,700 (42.74 percent). Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Karze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Mili Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan Province, total population 1,820,000, Tibetans 1,105,000 (60.71 percent). Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunan Province, total population 336,000, Tibetans 111,200 (33.10 percent).

Chinese settlement in these non-“TAR” Tibetan regions followed close on the heels of the invading PLA troops in 1949. Soon after Beijing’s military incursion, a contingent of civilians—administrators, staff and their families—arrived in these areas, paving the way for more civilians to establish themselves in larger towns. During three mass migrations—in 1955, 1959 and 1965—about 175,000 Chinese entered Amdo.

Apart from these conspicuous migrations, between 1962 and 1976 Beijing sent such a large numbers of prisoners to Amdo that the area acquired the sobriquet “China’s Gulag”. According to the human rights activist, Harry Wu, over one million prisoners were shipped to Amdo’s labour camps and jails which served as “human storehouses for victims of successive Chinese purges”. Most of the prisoners were not permitted to return to China on release. Instead, they were given employment in 26 prison-run factories in Amdo. Although the total number of employees in these factories is not known, some of them have a labour force numbering up to 100,000 each.

In the Kham area outside the “TAR”, the influx of Chinese escalated from 1962 onwards when thousands upon thousands of migrants from neighbouring Chinese provinces were sent there as “builders, workers, and technicians”, particularly to work clear-felling the region’s ancient forests in the state lumbering industries. Beijing claims that the migrants are needed to help develop Tibet’s economy. Tibetans, on the other hand, see no obvious benefits from their presence; they consider the mass migration of Chinese a drain on the economy and insidious attempt to Sinicise their country. In this context, the late Panchen Lama stated that, “The expense of keeping one Chinese in Tibet is equal to that of four in China. Why should Tibet spend its money to feed them? ... Tibet has suffered greatly because of the policy of sending a large number of useless people. The Chinese population in Tibet started with a few thousand and today it has multiplied manifold.”

During Beijing’s Third Forum on Work in Tibet, decisions were made to accelerate the integration of Tibet into China’s economic needs. The major thrust of the strategy was “to open Tibet’s door wide to inner parts of the country and encourage traders, investment, economic units and individuals from China to Central Tibet to run different sorts of enterprises.”

In recent years Beijing has conceived massive projects to help the migration of the poor or displaced Chinese population to Tibet. One of them is the Western Poverty Reduction Project. A component of this project is to develop agriculture in the Dulan area of Amdo and relocate 58,000 Chinese settlers there. In the year 2000 the World Bank withdrew its US\$40 million loan to this project in the face of

protests from Tibetans and their international supporters. However, China is adamant to go ahead with the project using its own finances.

The transfer of Chinese settlers into Tibet has had devastating economic effects on Tibetans. Settlers threaten the livelihood of Tibetans; they are central to the government's policy of integrating Tibet into the Chinese economy. Over the years, the settlers have come to dominate the Tibetan economy; they own virtually all the businesses in Tibet. In 1992 a western tourist conducted a covert survey in Tibet. He observed that there were 12,227 shops and restaurants in Lhasa city (excluding the Barkhor), of which only 300 were owned by Tibetans. In Tsawa Pasho, southern Kham, the Chinese owned 133 business enterprises whereas the Tibetans owned only fifteen. The ownership ratio was similar in other Tibetan towns: 748 to 92 in Chamdo, 229 to three in Powo Tramo. The situation is far worse in the urban centres of Amdo, where, according to one British journalist, Tibetans are reduced to "tourist curios".

Population transfer has also greatly impacted the kind of development that takes place in Tibet. Beijing's subsidies, and much of the infrastructure in place, are directed towards maintaining a distinct, controlling Chinese community in Tibet. This can be seen to be mainly urban, administrative, mercantile or military, and segregated from the bulk of Tibetan communities.⁵

⁵ Tibet Under Communist China: 50 Years, published by the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, in 2001 and reprinted in 2006, p. 45 - 49

It is against this background of the recent history of Chinese settlement in Tibet that the Tibetans continue to demand that the current Chinese population transfer be stopped and reversed. Our demands accord with the rights given to the minority nationalities as enshrined in the constitution of the People's Republic of China.

Article 4 of the constitution of the People's Republic of China states that "regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy...all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and custom." This article ensures that Tibetan people's distinct identity based on language, religion and culture will be preserved. But the continuing influx of the Chinese people on to the Tibetan areas threatens the very existence and identity of the Tibetan people. Therefore, such population transfer should be halted so that the aims and objectives of the article 4 of the Chinese constitution can be achieved.

As for the status of those Chinese who are already in the Tibetan areas, the two sides must decide on this issue through the adoption of just laws. We do not expect these Chinese to be withdrawn immediately from the Tibetan areas. We are aware of the present ground realities and the complications involved in such a withdrawal. However, we are against the presence of large number of Chinese population in the Tibetan areas not because we want to split from China, but to preserve the distinct identity of the Tibetan people.⁶

⁶ Briefing paper by the Kashag for the Offices of Tibet on the Sino-Tibetan Dialogue Process, issued by the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA, Dharamsala, 23 August 2006, p. 4

Instead of letting out shrill cries that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is advocating the de-militarisation of Tibet and plotting plans for the "ethnic cleansing" of Tibet, the Chinese authorities must come up with an effective medicine for China's Tibet headache. One medicine stares Beijing in the face. Christian Le Miere, the editor

of *Jane's Intelligence Review*, writing for *Foreign Affairs*, explains.

The Chinese Communist leadership aims to stifle any future dissent in the western regions through a dual strategy of economic development and demographic inundation. It is unlikely, however, that Beijing will be able to subjugate six million Tibetans and eight million Uighurs with just cash and karaoke. Higher incomes and modern lifestyles are seen as scant compensation for the perceived loss of more than a millennium of cultural and religious heritage.

If Beijing hopes to find a longer-term solution to its western problem, it will need to implement a far more radical policy. The best approach may already exist: China could expand the category of Special Administrative Regions (SARs), which now exist in Hong Kong and Macau, to the country's western provinces.

The concept of SARs was created in the 1990s, in an attempt to appease the United Kingdom and Portugal, the two imperial powers that previously ran Hong Kong and Macau, respectively. According to the laws establishing the SARs, the territories are afforded "a high degree of autonomy" and "executive, legislative, and independent judicial power."

In addition, the SAR arrangement requires security forces to be comprised of local citizens, while residents inside SARs are granted protections covering freedom of speech, press, assembly, privacy, and, perhaps most significant if such a program were to be adopted in Tibet, religion. The checks and balances built into the SARs' governance allows for the guarantee of these rights far more effectively than under the Chinese constitution, which nominally provides similar freedoms.

For China's western regions, the most appealing bylaw of the SARs would be Article 22, which requires Chinese citizens from outside the SARs to apply for approval from local authorities for entry.⁷

⁷ China's Western Front: Can Beijing Bring Order to Its Restive Provinces by Christian Le Miere in *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2009