

TIBET DIGEST

MAY 2024

FOUNDATION FOR
**Non-violent
Alternatives**
To inform and shape policy on Tibet and the region



FOUNDATION FOR NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES (FNVA)

Tibetdigest is a monthly publication curated by FNVA, offering comprehensive coverage of significant developments pertaining to Tibet, Chinese politics, and Sino-Indian relations as gleaned from various open-source media outlets.

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Summary- May Tibet Digest

In May, Tibet remained in the spotlight with a series of significant events across various domains. Reports surfaced detailing forced displacement of Tibetan communities, China intensifying its crackdown on activities related to Tibetan independence and Chinese authorities continuing to suppress the Tibetan language in schools, efforts to reshape Tibetan Buddhism in line with Chinese government directives were also exposed, Tibetan activists also faced harassment and intimidation during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visits to Europe.

These developments underscored the complex challenges faced by Tibetans in their struggle for justice, freedom, and cultural preservation amidst ongoing repression and international scrutiny. This summary is limited to May news on China's Tibet policies, developments within the exile community, and the Tibetan Government-in-exile, climate of the Tibetan Plateau and finally Xi Jinping's visits.

Apart from the summary topics like all previous issues, this month's Digest also carries news on Military and infrastructure, China in the region, Sino-Indian relations and some pertinent commentaries and op-eds.

China's Tibet Policies

Teen Monk Suicide: Kunzang Longyang, a 17-year-old Tibetan monk, tragically took his own life after being forced to leave his monastery and join a government-run school, highlighting the pressures young Tibetan monks face due to restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities.

Forced Displacement: Reports detail forced displacement of Tibetan communities by state-sponsored projects, leading to environmental degradation and human rights violations. The construction of dams and coercive relocation tactics have sparked protests and resistance.

Protest Against Tourism: Children in Tibet protest "genocide tourism" by throwing stones at passing tourist trains, signaling resistance against staged tours that conceal cultural genocide and repression.

Clean Energy Transmission: Tibet plans to transmit clean electricity to 16 other provincial regions in China, emphasizing its role in clean energy production and carbon emissions reduction.

Crackdown on Advocacy: China issues a manual banning activities related to Tibetan independence, reflecting its ongoing crackdown on expressions of Tibetan identity and cultural practices.

Surveillance and Control: China intensifies surveillance measures and touts tourism development in Tibet while implementing policies to control Tibetan religious and cultural life, emphasizing control over the region.

Repression and Arrests: Tibetan singer Gyegjom Dorjee is arrested for singing a song lamenting the absence of the Dalai Lama and criticizing Chinese leaders, highlighting restrictions on freedom of expression.

Language Suppression: Chinese authorities ban Tibetan language in schools, contributing to the erosion of Tibetan culture and language, despite claims of protecting ethnic minority rights.

Aid to Nepal: Tibet plans to provide financial aid to Nepal's northern border districts for social and economic development initiatives over five years, reflecting China's support for development projects in the region.

State-driven Forced Displacement: The Turquoise Roof's report details violent suppression of protests against the Kamtok hydropower dam on the Drichu River, leading to displacement and environmental risks affecting

downstream regions. Another report by Human Rights Watch highlights coercive relocation tactics and economic impacts on rural Tibetans.

Cultural Suppression: Tibetan activists and leaders voice concerns about China's policies leading to cultural genocide and the disappearance of Tibetan identity. Efforts to address these impacts are underscored by the urgent need for dialogue and action.

Resistance and Surveillance: Tibetan protesters face increased surveillance and repression following anti-dam protests, highlighting ongoing resistance against controversial development projects.

Tibetan Singer's Arrest: Gyegjom Dorjee's arrest for singing a song critical of Chinese leaders demonstrates the extent of repression and limitations on freedom of expression in Tibetan regions.

Language Policy: Chinese authorities impose restrictions on Tibetan language use in schools, contributing to the erosion of Tibetan culture and language fluency among Tibetan youth.

Aid to Nepal: China's Tibet Autonomous Region pledges financial aid to Nepal's border districts for social and economic development, reflecting China's strategic interests in the region.

Buddhism

Beijing's Influence on Tibetan Buddhism: The International Campaign for Tibet report exposes Beijing's strategy of using the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) to reshape Tibetan Buddhism, aligning it with Chinese government directives. This includes controlling the recognition of reincarnations, such as future Dalai Lamas, indicating Beijing's determination to assert authority over Tibetan religious practices.

Chinese Crackdown During Holy Month: During the Buddhist holy month of Saga Dawa, Chinese authorities crack down on religious activities in Lhasa, instructing Tibetan students, government workers, and retirees to refrain from such activities. Heightened security measures, including increased checkpoints and facial recognition technology, are reported around key religious sites, highlighting the Chinese government's suppression and Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Climate Change Impact on Tibetan Plateau Lakes: A study published in Nature Geoscience forecasts a significant increase in land-locked lakes on the Tibetan Plateau by 2100 due to climate change-induced increased rainfall. This exponential growth poses risks to agriculture, human habitation, and infrastructure, emphasizing the need for urgent planning and policies to address these impacts on the region's ecology and population.

China's Glacial Water Aid to Maldives: China has gifted 1,500 tonnes of Tibetan glacial water to the Maldives, marking the second such donation. This assistance, part of ongoing aid since pro-China Mohamed Muizzu became President, aims to alleviate water scarcity exacerbated by climate change in the Maldives.

Expansion of National Park System in Tibet: China plans to establish the world's largest national park system by 2035, with 70% of candidate areas located on the Tibetan Plateau. This initiative raises concerns about displacing Tibetan farmers and nomads from their ancestral lands, potentially impacting local ecosystems and traditional livelihoods.

Lithium Mining's Ecological Impact on Tibetan Plateau: China's increasing demand for lithium, critical for electric vehicles, has led to intensified mining efforts in Tibet. This exploitation raises environmental concerns and threatens the livelihoods of Tibetan farmers and nomads, exacerbating ecological biodiversity threats in the region.

China's Hydropower Projects in Tibet: China's construction of mega dams on Tibet's rivers poses significant social and environmental risks, according to a report by Free Tibet's research partner Tibet Watch and Turquoise Roof. The planned Kamtok hydroelectric dam threatens mass displacement of local residents and destruction of

invaluable Buddhist monasteries, highlighting the urgent need for international action to safeguard lives, livelihoods, and Tibetan culture and landscapes.

Tibet in Exile

PM Modi refers to his frequent talks with the Dalai Lama in election speech

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned his frequent discussions with the Dalai Lama in an election speech ahead of voting in Himachal Pradesh on June 1. Modi highlighted India's Buddhist heritage, coinciding with a courtesy visit by the state's Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu to the Dalai Lama. Around 800 Tibetan exiles are registered voters in this election, underlining the Tibetan community's significance in the region.

Central Tibetan Administration Appreciates the US Senate's Unanimous Passage of Resolve Tibet Bill

The Central Tibetan Administration praises the US Senate's unanimous endorsement of the Resolve Tibet Bill (S. 138), led by Senators Jeff Merkley and Todd Young. This legislation reaffirms the US commitment to facilitating dialogue between China and Tibetan representatives to resolve the Tibet-China conflict. The bill counters Chinese disinformation about Tibet and supports Tibetan cultural and historical identity. It rejects China's territorial claims over Tibet and advocates for a resolution based on international legal principles. The US State Department is tasked with coordinating international efforts to resolve the conflict. The bipartisan support in Congress highlights the unified American stance in favor of Tibetan rights and interests.

Panchen Lama

The Central Tibetan Administration, along with Tibetan representatives and advocacy groups, views the Senate's approval of the Resolve Tibet Act as a positive development in advancing the cause of Tibetan rights and autonomy. It sets the stage for constructive engagement between the US and China on the Tibet issue, offering hope for a peaceful resolution under President Biden's administration.

The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) marks the 29th anniversary of the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was taken by Chinese authorities at age six. His whereabouts and those of his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche remain unknown despite international efforts. The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and global supporters condemn China's refusal to provide information. CTA spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay calls for the Panchen Lama's immediate release and transparency. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 35th birthday, observed in absentia, highlights the ongoing struggle for Tibetan autonomy and religious freedom.

The US Department of State issued a statement on the 29th anniversary of the Panchen Lama's abduction, reaffirming support for Tibetan human rights and urging China to disclose Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's whereabouts. At a Tibet workshop in Japan, Zeekgyab Rinpoche called for immediate action to secure the Panchen Lama's release, condemn China's human rights violations, and support the Dalai Lama's vision for peace. Japanese lawmaker Furuya Keiji pledged support for Tibetan religious freedom and proposed urging China not to interfere in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. Shimomura Hakubun emphasized Buddhism's role in peace and condemned China's human rights abuses. Lawmakers discussed media censorship, forced relocations, and the cultural significance of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and the Panchen Lamas.

On May 17, the Tibet Support Group in Vilnius protested outside the Chinese Embassy to mark the 29th anniversary of the abduction of the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. They urged Lithuanian and European politicians to address human rights violations in Tibet and demanded China reveal the Panchen Lama's whereabouts. Demonstrators displayed flags and placards, chanting "Free Tibet." Media coverage by LRT raised awareness about the event and Tibet's plight.

Sikyong's Europe tour

Representative Rigzin Genkhang and Parliamentarian Thupten Wangchen, accompanied by Wangpo Tethong from ICT, visited the Spanish Parliament on May 10, 2024, at the invitation of the Association of Former Parliamentarians. They met with President Juan Van-Halen, Secretary General Fernando Sanz Alonso, and former Senator Robert Nahar to discuss the critical situation in Tibet, emphasizing human rights violations and the Chinese government's efforts to suppress Tibetan culture. The delegation highlighted Tibetan resilience and garnered solidarity and support from former Spanish Parliament members, laying the groundwork for future collaboration.

During his European tour, Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with the Parliamentary Intergroup Italia Tibet in Rome to discuss Tibet's situation and counter China's repression. He urged action on issues like the sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, language, and the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. Concerns about China's attempts to divide the EU were also discussed. Additionally, Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio and 13 other Senators urged President Macron to address Tibet's worsening human rights situation with President Xi during his Paris visit, emphasizing the need to prioritize Tibetan rights in France's China strategy. In Vienna, Austrian Members of Parliament welcomed Penpa Tsering to the Austrian Parliament, expressing solidarity with Tibet against China's human rights abuses. Discussions emphasized Europe's increasing support for Tibet and the urgent need to protect Tibetan religious freedom. Austrian MPs pledged to advocate for Tibet in multilateral forums to hold China accountable for its actions.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering concluded his Berlin visit by urging German leaders to address China's state-run boarding schools in Tibet and protect Tibetan religious freedom. He called for holding China accountable and advocated for a strong European stance on China. His meetings with government officials and media aimed to garner support for Tibet's rights and freedoms.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with French President Emmanuel Macron before Xi's visit, presenting a photo of Macron with the Dalai Lama and urging support for Tibet. China, which opposes any engagement with Tibetan exile leaders, maintains strict conditions for talks, only willing to engage with the Dalai Lama's representatives and not the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Despite a stalemate in previous talks, there are continued calls from the US and European countries for China to resume meaningful dialogue with Tibetan leaders. Xi's visit is expected to intensify focus on the Tibetan issue, emphasizing the need for global advocacy for Tibetan right.

Lastly, Sikyong Penpa Tsering's meeting with President Kompatscher of South Tyrol underscored the need to address Tibet's deteriorating situation. Discussions focused on challenges faced by Tibetans, including China's colonial boarding schools. President Kompatscher pledged to lead parliamentary initiatives to spotlight Tibet's plight and announced plans for a new Provincial Library in Bolzano to represent Tibet and the Tibetan movement.

Other News from Tibet in Exile

Sikyong's Address

Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressed the closing of the Tibetan Cooperative's conference, emphasizing community cohesion and job creation for younger generations. He proposed guidelines for collaboration between relevant departments and highlighted the recent unanimous passage of the Resolve Tibet bill by the U.S. Senate.

The Tibetan Digital Library

The Tibetan Digital Library Initiative commenced in Dharamshala-based monasteries and cultural centers, transitioning ancient scriptures from scrolls to screens. After a successful workshop, the initiative's task force initiated research and digitization of scriptures housed within monastic repositories on May 15. Supported by USAID funding, the project provides mechanical facilities, training, and salaries to monastery staff for digitization efforts in 20 monasteries by September, showcasing international backing for preserving Tibetan cultural heritage through modern technology.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama extends greetings

His Holiness the Dalai Lama extended warm congratulations to His Excellency Lai Ching-te on assuming the Presidency of the Republic of China. In his letter, His Holiness praised Taiwan's firm establishment of democracy and its achievements in both prosperity and the preservation of cultural traditions. He wished President Lai success in addressing the challenges ahead and fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the Taiwanese people.

Central Tibetan Administration Congratulates New Co-Chair for Australian Parliamentary Group for Tibet, Senator Barbara Pocock

Representative Karma Singey of the Tibet Information Office in Canberra met with Australian Green's Senator Barbara Pocock at Parliament House, delivering congratulatory messages from Tibetan leaders on her new role as Co-Chair of the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (AAPGT). Accompanied by Dr. Zoe Bedford of the Australia Tibet Council, Singey praised Pocock's commitment to human rights and social justice, introduced the Central Tibetan Administration, and discussed an upcoming visit by a Tibetan Parliamentary delegation in August 2024.

Tibetan In Exile Reveals Cousin's Ordeal

Namkyi, a Tibetan refugee in India, revealed the ordeal of her cousin, Gendun Phuntsok, who was detained in 2015 for protesting for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama's return. At 16, Gendun, a monk at Kirti Monastery, staged a solo protest in Ngaba County on 8 March 2015 and was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to four years in prison. He endured forced labor and severe mistreatment.

Namkyi also protested seven months later and faced extreme torture. Now in Dharamsala, she has shared their experiences. After Gendun's release on 8 March 2019, his health worsened. His family spent 10,000 Chinese yuan for his treatment in Chengdu, where he was diagnosed with a severe illness resembling tuberculosis.

Gendun's health remains poor, and he is cared for by his family at home, unable to return to the monastery. Gendun Phuntsok is from Pema Lhathang Village in Ngaba County and joined Kirti Monastery as a young boy before his arrest.

Long-time supporter of Tibet awarded US Presidential Medal of Freedom

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, a staunch advocate for Tibet and a close ally of the Dalai Lama, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the US. President Biden praised her as the "greatest Speaker of the House of Representatives in history," acknowledging her leadership and legislative achievements. Pelosi's groundbreaking roles as the first female Speaker in 2007 and her re-election in 2019 were celebrated. Her support for Tibet, including championing the Tibet Policy Act of 2019 and opposing China's meddling in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, was highlighted. The 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile expressed gratitude with a resolution in 2023. Established in 1945, the Presidential Medal of Freedom recognizes significant contributions to US security, world peace, and public or private endeavors.

Ex-Chinese Spy Exposes CCP's Global Campaign Against Dissidents

Former Chinese spy Eric exposed the Chinese Communist Party's covert operations against dissidents abroad. Over 15 years, he infiltrated pro-democracy groups and monitored regime critics, attending a gathering in Dharamshala in 2016 where he met the Dalai Lama and reported on the exiled government's China policy. He also located a YouTuber critical of President Xi Jinping in 2018. Coerced into collaboration due to his social media activity, Eric's disclosures shed light on Beijing's extensive transnational repression tactics, including surveillance and intimidation, to silence voices advocating for human rights and democracy.

CECC Annual Report Highlights Ongoing Human Rights Violations in Tibet

The latest Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) report reveals ongoing severe human rights violations in Tibet from July 2022 to June 2023. Key findings include:

- **Lack of Dialogue:** No renewed talks between the PRC and the Dalai Lama's representatives since 2010.
- **Religious Interference:** PRC control over the selection of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama.
- **Surveillance and Control:** Collection of DNA, blood samples, and iris scans to monitor and repress Tibetans.
- **Language Restrictions:** Closure of schools teaching in regional languages and forced enrollment in Mandarin-only boarding schools.
- **Religious Suppression:** Increased restrictions on religious activities, especially around the Dalai Lama's birthday, with severe punishments for non-compliance.
- **COVID-19 Measures:** Strict lockdown policies led to criticism, protests, and discriminatory detention practices.
- **Tech-Enhanced Repression:** Use of emerging technologies for surveillance and censorship.

CECC Recommendations:

- **UN Involvement:** Advocate for UN human rights officials to visit Tibet independently.
- **Legislation:** Ban American companies from supplying equipment to Chinese law enforcement in Tibet.
- **International Pressure:** Collaborate globally to pressure China to respect Tibetan religious freedoms.
- **Dialogue and Release of Prisoners:** Encourage dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama, and call for the release of Tibetan political prisoners.
- **Panchen Lama Visibility:** Urge China to allow international meetings with Gedun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama.

The CECC report underscores the urgent need for international action to address human rights abuses in Tibet.

16th Kashag Convenes 6th Permanent Strategy Committee Meeting

The 16th Kashag convened its 6th Permanent Strategy Committee Meeting in Switzerland on 13 May 2024. This three-day bi-annual meeting aims to follow up on the implementation of measures from previous meetings, assess ongoing strategic programs, and discuss future advocacy initiatives. The Permanent Strategy Committee, established after the dissolution of the Task Force on Sino-Tibetan Negotiations, held its first meeting in November 2021 and has met bi-annually since.

No Interest from PRC to Resume Dialogue: US Congressional Committee on China

The 2023 annual report from the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) reveals China's disinterest in resuming dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives. Despite the Dalai Lama's aim for Tibetan autonomy, China refuses to discuss this and will only engage with his personal representatives, not officials from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, whom they label as "separatists." This follows Sikyong Penpa Tsering's disclosure of informal back-channel talks since last year. Initial dialogue began in 1979, with exploratory talks in 1982 and 1984, followed by nine rounds of discussions from 2002 until 2010, when the Dalai Lama's envoys resigned due to worsening conditions in Tibet and perceived insincerity from China.

Office of Tibet in Taiwan Leads Efforts to Revive Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet

The Office of Tibet in Taipei, in collaboration with the Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan, launched a lobbying campaign to re-establish the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet in the 11th Legislative Yuan. Representative Kalsang Gyaltzen Bawa led efforts to engage Taiwanese legislators, urging their continued support for the Tibetan cause. The Tibetan delegation held discussions with various Taiwanese lawmakers, presenting appeals on issues such as dam construction in Kham Derge and the Tibetan refugee visa process. More than 30 legislators expressed their intention to join the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet, signalling strong support for Tibetan rights and autonomy. Preparations are underway for the re-establishment ceremony scheduled for 17 May, coinciding with the enforced disappearance anniversary of the 11th Panchen Lama. The initiative underscores the enduring solidarity between Taiwan and Tibet in advocating for human rights and freedom.

Zeekgyab Rinpoche Appeals to Japanese parliamentarians

During a Tibet workshop, Zeekgyab Rinpoche urged Japanese parliamentarians to:

1. Secure the release of the 11th Panchen Lama.
2. Condemn China's human rights violations and interference in Tibetan religious affairs.
3. Support the Dalai Lama's vision for peace through dialogue.

Lawmaker Furuya Keiji pledged support for Tibetan religious freedom and proposed a statement against China's interference in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. Shimomura Hakubun emphasized Buddhism's role in peace and Japan's past resolutions against China's actions in Tibet. Lawmakers discussed media censorship, forced relocations, and the importance of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and the Panchen Lamas in Tibetan culture.

Gyari Dorjee Youdon, female warrior who fought Chinese army passes away at 92

Gyari Dorjee Youdon, a formidable but often overlooked figure in Tibetan history, has passed away at 92. She rose to prominence in 1956 when she courageously led revolts against invading Chinese forces in Nyarong, Kham region. Despite her lesser-known status, her cremation ceremony in India was attended by dignitaries from the Tibetan exile community, honoring her remarkable life and contributions.

Xi Jinping's visit

Tibetan Protesters Face Harassment During Xi Jinping's Visit to Hungary

Tibetan protesters faced harassment and intimidation during Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Budapest, Hungary. Despite attempts to display Tibetan flags, protesters were met with opposition from Chinese activists, with Hungarian police accused of standing by without intervention.

Tibetan activists, including Tibor Hendrey of the Tibet Aid Society, encountered resistance as they attempted to raise Tibetan flags alongside Chinese flags on Gellert Hill. Witnesses reported Chinese activists covering Tibetan flags and disrupting peaceful demonstrations.

Two Tibetan Women detained

In Paris, two Tibetan women were detained during a peaceful demonstration coinciding with Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit. Despite complying with police instructions, one woman was detained for holding a tote bag with "FREE TIBET" written on it. Video footage captured the incident, sparking concerns about freedom of expression and Chinese influence on Western democracies. This highlights Tibetans' vulnerability under Chinese rule and raises questions about Western democratic principles.

President Macron Urged to Raise Tibet with President Xi and Put Tibet at the Heart of French Strategy Towards China

In anticipation of Chinese President Xi's visit to Paris, Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, President of the French Parliamentary group for Tibet, penned an open letter to President Macron. Co-signed by 13 other Senators, the letter urges Macron to address Tibet with Xi Jinping, emphasizing the worsening human rights situation and Tibet's geopolitical and ecological significance. The Senators advocate for placing the resumption of dialogue and respect for Tibetan rights at the core of France's strategy towards China. President Xi is set to meet with Macron and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission during his visit.

Tibetan, Uyghur protesters greet Xi Jinping in Paris

Uyghur, Tibetan, and Chinese activists in Paris protested Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit, unfurling banners and waving flags to denounce human rights violations in Tibet and Xinjiang. Tibetans voiced anger over religious and cultural restrictions, while Uyghurs highlighted mass detentions in Xinjiang. Joined by supporters from various regions, they urged European leaders to confront Xi on these issues. After France, Xi will visit Serbia and Hungary, where concerns over authoritarian shifts and China's Belt and Road Initiative persist.

Tibetan activists to protest Xi Jinping's visit to Paris

The upcoming visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Europe, including stops in France, Hungary, and Serbia, has prompted preparations for protests, especially by Tibetan activists. Groups like Students for a Free Tibet plan to highlight human rights issues in Tibet and advocate for international scrutiny.

CHINA'S TIBET POLICY

EXCLUSIVE: Teen Tibetan Monk Takes Own Life After Being Forced to Leave Monastery

29 May 2024, [RFA](#), Sonam Lhamo and Dorjee Damdul

A 17-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk who was forced to leave his monastery and join a government-run school committed suicide after authorities said he could no longer wear his maroon robes, three sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Radio Free Asia.

Kunzang Longyang died in mid-April in Qinghai province's Drakkar County, the sources said on condition of anonymity, citing safety concerns.

The death comes as young Tibetan monks are facing immense pressure because of growing restrictions on practicing Buddhist religious and cultural traditions.

The restrictions include a requirement since 2018 that young monks below the age of 18 be removed from monasteries across the Tibetan region. Chinese authorities have said that young monks are too immature to think for themselves and should serve society instead.

Chinese authorities have long sought to restrict the size and influence of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, traditionally a focus of Tibetan cultural and national identity.

"Even during their school winter and summer break, the young monks are not allowed to return to their monasteries or go on visits," one of the sources told RFA.

"Government officials send people to monitor if monasteries are allowing young monks to visit or return, and monasteries are threatened of severe consequences if they allow the children to return," the source said.

Depressed at school

Three years ago, Longyang was removed from Yulung Monastery in Drakkar County after Chinese government officials enforced the under 18 rule, the three sources said.

Afterward, Longyang was made to join a local school where he was told he couldn't continue wearing his monk's robe and would have to wear regular clothing while attending class.

At the school, he became severely depressed, stopped eating for many days and became ill, the source said.

"This happened several times and each time, school authorities called his family to take him home," the source said.

Initially, school administrators made some exceptions. Longyang wasn't required to be present throughout the school year, and he was allowed to wear his robes when he was at the school for examinations and inspections run by government officials, the three sources said.

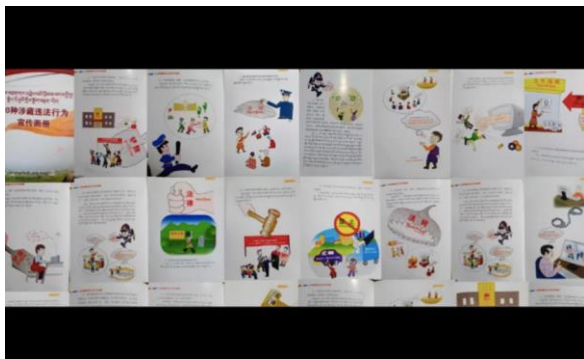
The exceptions ended a few months ago when school authorities again mandated that Longyang and other young monks disrobe and stay permanently in school. This caused much distress for Longyang, the sources said.

"He was adamant that he would not take off his monk's robes," one of the other sources said. "He had said that if he would be permanently stripped of his robes and required to go to school in his plainclothes, then he would kill himself."

Longyang was again sent home from school in April, shortly after falling into depression following the recent announcement. That's when he took his own life, the sources said.

China issues manual banning activities related to Independence of Tibet

28 May 2024, [Phayul](#)



An image of the manual banning 20 activities that are deemed as advocating for independence of Tibet by China (Photo/Tibet Times)

The Chinese government has released a manual detailing 20 activities deemed illegal in connection with advocating for independence of Tibet. This directive marks a yet another incident of clampdown on expressions of Tibetan identity, cultural and religious practices inside Tibet.

According to a report by *Tibet Times*, the manual issued by the information department of Thinren County, is titled "A Picture Book of Information on 20 Illegal Actions Related to Tibet Independence." It outlines various activities considered illegal under Chinese law, including displaying the Dalai Lama's image and the act of self-immolation, a form of protest linked to Tibetan activism resorted to by over 159 known cases of Tibetans who have self-immolated to protest against the Chinese illegal occupation of Tibet.

The manual also outlaws activities promoting the Tibetan language and environmental or protection of animals if it is perceived as an effort towards promoting separatism. It also prohibits entering other countries illegally and participating in religious activities in other countries.

The regulations extend to controlling information dissemination where Tibetans are prohibited from

spreading, selling, or possessing books, images, videos, and soundtracks discussing Tibetan independence. The use of foreign media outlets, such as *Voice of America*, considered to encourage separatist sentiments by the Chinese government is also banned. Any online communication about Tibetan independence risks facing severe penalties, the new directives warned.

The manual targets religious practices and social gatherings, prohibiting Tibetans from participating in foreign religious activities or raising images of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan independence fighters. Traditional practices like incense offerings, setting animals free, and lighting butter lamps for self-immolators or their families are banned. Even gathering to recite prayers during Tibetan auspicious events is forbidden if deemed supportive of independence.

The manual also includes prohibitions on believing Tibet is an independent country, and spreading or selling materials about Tibetan thoughts. It also bans collecting donations for what China deems separatist forces, discussing Tibet independence in schools, working with external so-called separatist forces, organising prayers for the Dalai Lama during Tibetan events, and inciting others under the guise of religious and traditional activities.

Observers and right groups have maintained that China's heavy-handedness is apparent through these vague and blanket laws that snubs any and all voices of dissent. Any activity that expresses the unique identity and voice are deemed as separatist activities and severely persecuted.

China to Punish Tibet Officials who Support Dalai Lama

28 May 2024, [Naharnet](#)

China will severely punish officials in Tibet who support the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader and Nobel laureate, the region's top Communist leader said according to state media reports Wednesday.

Chen Quanguo, Tibet's Communist party chief, vowed to root out officials who support the Dalai Lama and to quash separatist activities in the region, according to a front-page report in the *Tibet Daily*, the ruling party's regional mouthpiece.

"Party members, especially leading cadres, at all levels must safeguard the unity of the motherland," Chen was cited as saying.

"Cadres who harbour fantasies about the 14th Dalai Group, follow the 14th Dalai Group, and participate in supporting separatist infiltration sabotage activities, will be strictly and severely punished according to the law and party disciplinary measures."

The current Dalai Lama is the 14th to hold the title.

Chen's comments came after the head of an anti-corruption inspection team from the Communist party's internal watchdog said officials in Tibet must concentrate on fighting separatism and maintaining social stability, according to the state-run Global Times.

The Dalai Lama, branded a terrorist by Beijing, fled Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule and has lived in exile ever since.

More than 130 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 in protest at what they describe as Beijing's religious and cultural repression, according to Radio Free Asia, which is supported by the U.S. government. China accuses the Dalai Lama of seeking to split Tibet from the rest of China and of fomenting unrest in the region.

The Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, catapulting him into the global spotlight, and in the decade that followed he was courted by U.S. presidents and Hollywood stars alike as he crisscrossed the world campaigning for greater autonomy for his homeland.

But a quarter of a century later some Western leaders are turning their backs on the Tibetan spiritual leader -- sometimes reluctantly -- under pressure from China, a rising power and the world's second-largest economy.

A summit for Nobel peace prizewinners set to take place in South Africa was cancelled last month after he was denied a visa, and during a visit to Norway government officials declined to meet him so as not to offend Beijing.

Surveillance ramped up after anti-dam protests

28 May 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

"Residents in Jomda county face patrols and house to house searches as CCP tries to "strengthen social control"

Our research partner Tibet Watch, has learned that two villages in Jomda County listed for relocation to make way for the Kamtok hydropower dam were subjected to house-to-house checks in March. The measures followed protests against the dam by residents of the neighbouring county of Dege in February.

According to a news report published on the official WeChat platform of Wopotoe Township, Dege County, between 13 and 14 March 2024, Huang Jun, Secretary of the Leading Party Group and Chamdo Municipal Bureau of Statistics, who also serves as the Deputy Director of Chamdo City, went to the villages of Chage and Zhouge of Wopotoe Township to oversee "the entry of thousands of cadres into thousands of villages, scrutinising the conflicts and potential security risks".

In February, a Tibet Watch source named both Chage and Zhouge among 12 villages that are set to be relocated to make way for Kamtok dam.

Information about all Tibetan farmers and nomads in Wopotoe Township – including the two villages Huang Jun visited- is expected to have been collected through door-to-door visits under the campaign of One household and One file (*yī hù yī dǎng*) – a household information management system that came into force in the Tibet Autonomous Region since last year.

The village-based party cadres conducted door-to-door "investigation, watching and interrogation" visits, which are also known to be used to extract opinion and political sentiments about the Chinese Communist Party and its policies from residents, and to coerce residents into complying with government orders.

The same news report added that in the name of "strengthening social control", the village-based cadres have been patrolling the villages, monasteries and other sensitive sites. This task has been carried out alongside members of the village-level party committees and the heads of the double-linked households in Wopotoe Township. The latter is a system of social control in which households are divided into groups of 10 to monitor each other's activities for the dual purpose of maintaining public security and ensuring poverty alleviation.

Informed supplied by [Tibet Watch](#)

China touts Tibet's tourism development, 'ethnic unity' on 73rd illegal annexation anniversary

27 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While the anniversary of China's illegal annexation of Tibet went seemingly unnoticed among the Tibetan diaspora, in Beijing, a press conference was held to commemorate the occasion. The people of Xizang (China's new name for the western half of Tibet proper which it demarcated as Tibet autonomous Region (TAR), if only in name) broke free from the fetters of invading imperialism, embarking on a bright road of unity, progress and development with all the other ethnic groups in China, reported China's official *globaltimes.cn* May 23. China has to this day not named any "invading imperialist" power it claims to have saved Tibet from.

The press conference was reported to have been addressed by Yan Jinhai, chairman of the TAR government, and Xu Zhitao, its vice chairman, with focus especially on "ethnic unity", a frequently used official euphemism for the insidious dilution of the ethnographic identity of Tibet, and on the region's development in tourism and clean energy. The officials have clearly avoided any mention of China's massive,

environmentally devastating mining industry in the Tibetan homeland.

Over the past 73 years, under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the region has strived to forge a new path for high-quality economic development, with people from different ethnic minorities living happily together. Tourism resources continue to attract visitors from both home and abroad, the report cited the TAR officials as saying at the press conference.

“Now, the various ethnic groups of Xizang residents are living in a favourable atmosphere of political stability, ethnic unity, religious harmony with improving living conditions. All of this is closely related to the agreement signed 73 years ago,” Xiong Kunxin, a professor at Minzu University of China in Beijing, has said.

China compelled a Tibetan government delegation to sign at gun-point on May 23, 1951 a 17-Point Agreement which promised a form of “one country two system” policy for Tibet. China trashed that agreement in 1959 after a popular Tibetan uprising that started in capital Lhasa on Mar 10. China then unleashed a violent policy of Sinicization of the region along with its economic modernization and development.

The region will work on enhancing the range of tourist offerings and improving the efficiency of processing documents for foreign visitors entering the region, the report cited the two TAR government officials as saying on Thursday (May 23), “the 73rd anniversary of the Xizang peaceful liberation”.

Yan – said to be a Tibetan from Qinghai province with Chinese name – has said that in 2023, the number of trips paid to the region reached 55.17 million from home and abroad, and the tourism revenue reached 65.1 billion yuan (\$9 billion), up 83.7% and 60% respectively compared with the previous year, both reaching record highs. He has added that nearly 20,000 foreign tourists visited TAR in 2023 and the number of foreign visitors reached 4,300 in the first quarter of this year.

Referring to TAR as the “city of sunshine” where the annual sunshine time is 3,500 hours, Yan has said the region has a potential solar energy development capacity of 9.8 billion kilowatts, 1.7 billion kilowatts of hydropower resources, and 1.8 billion kilowatts of wind energy, excluding geothermal and pumped storage energy. The total installed capacity exceeds 10 billion kilowatts, all of which are clean energy sources, Yan has added.

The report cited Xu, an ethnic Chinese, as saying the region will enhance the range of tourist offerings and improve the efficiency of processing documents for foreign visitors entering TAR. He has said that initiatives focusing on language translation and e-

payment systems will further enhance the appeal of TAR to international tourists.

He has also said TAR will open more direct flights to mainland cities and international markets, “which will attract more investment enterprises to enter the local cultural tourism market.”

China’s United Front ensures CCP control over Tibet

26 May 2024, The Sunday Guardian, [Khedroob Thondup](#)

The United Front Work Department has been instrumental in implementing policies aimed at controlling the religious and cultural life of Tibet.

The legacy of the Dalai Lama and the issue of his reincarnation are pivotal to the future of the Tibetan movement. The Dalai Lama’s role transcends spiritual leadership; it embodies the cultural and national identity of Tibet. As the current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, advances in age, discussions about his succession have intensified, especially considering the geopolitical implications.

The Dalai Lama has historically been both a spiritual and political figure for Tibetans, and his reincarnation is a deeply religious process that is believed to be influenced by his own will and merit. However, the Chinese government has expressed its intent to control the reincarnation process, aiming to appoint a successor that aligns with its political interests and to assert sovereignty over Tibet. This has led to concerns that there could be two successors: one recognized by Tibetans and the other by the Chinese government. The Dalai Lama’s approach to his reincarnation and legacy is strategic, focusing on the sustainability of the Tibetan cause. He has emphasized the importance of democratic governance and the separation of the religious and political roles of the Dalai Lama, which was evident when he devolved political power to the elected Tibetan government-in-exile. This move was aimed at ensuring that the Tibetan struggle remains resilient and adaptable to future challenges.

The Dalai Lama’s legacy is also preserved through his teachings and the values he promotes, such as non-violence, compassion, and dialogue, which continue to inspire and guide the Tibetan community and its supporters worldwide. His reincarnation will not only be a religious event but also a significant moment for the Tibetan struggle, potentially impacting the direction and nature of the movement. The international community’s response to the Dalai Lama’s succession will also be crucial. The US has enacted the Tibet Policy and Support Act, which supports the right of Tibetans to choose their leaders without interference. This law, among other international stances, could play a role in legitimizing

the Dalai Lama's successor and maintaining the momentum of the Tibetan movement.

In summary, the Dalai Lama's legacy and the circumstances of his reincarnation are indeed central to the Tibetan cause, influencing not only the spiritual continuity of Tibetan Buddhism but also the political and cultural resilience of the Tibetan people. The relationship between China and Tibet has been complex and contentious, with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people often at the centre of this dynamic. The concept of "United Front" tactics refers to the range of strategies used by the Chinese government to integrate and manage different interest groups, especially those it considers potentially subversive or separatist.

In the context of Tibet, the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been instrumental in implementing policies aimed at controlling the religious and cultural life of the region. This includes efforts to manage the succession process of the Dalai Lama, a central figure in Tibetan Buddhism and a symbol of Tibetan identity and autonomy aspirations.

Historically, the Chinese government has sought to undermine the Dalai Lama's influence by promoting alternative religious leaders and restricting his ability to communicate with the Tibetan people. The CCP's approach has evolved from outright suppression to more subtle methods of co-optation and control. For instance, the Chinese government has asserted its right to approve the reincarnation of Tibetan lamas, including the Dalai Lama, which is a deeply spiritual matter traditionally decided within the Tibetan Buddhist framework.

Furthermore, the UFWD has been involved in orchestrating dialogues with Tibetan representatives, although these talks have often been criticized as insincere and unproductive. The Chinese government's narrative portrays the Dalai Lama as a separatist, despite his repeated calls for genuine autonomy within the framework of the Chinese constitution, rather than full independence. The use of United Front tactics extends beyond the religious sphere, encompassing economic and social policies designed to integrate Tibet more closely with the rest of China. This includes infrastructure development, the promotion of Mandarin Chinese language over Tibetan, and the encouragement of migration from other parts of China to Tibet, which some argue dilutes Tibetan cultural and demographic characteristics.

In summary, China's United Front tactics in Tibet are multifaceted, aiming to consolidate control over the region while attempting to diminish the influence of the Dalai Lama and the traditional Tibetan way of life. These tactics have significant implications for the

preservation of Tibetan culture, the autonomy of the region, and the rights of the Tibetan people.

Children Protest "Genocide Tourism" to Tibet

20 May 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Lopsang Gurung



A woman demonstrates the use of "urduo." From Weibo.

When trains with tourists pass, the traditional stone-throwing ropes called "urduo" are used to express disapproval of the staged tours.

"Genocide tourism" is an expression used by the Uyghurs to oppose tours to Xinjiang where tourists visit villages where everybody smiles and dances under the watchful eye of the Chinese authorities. The reality is different, but tourists do not see it. It is the reality of concentration camp, repression, and physical and cultural genocide.

Tourism in Tibet is not much different. Domestic Chinese and some international visitors are only shown what the CCP wants to show. They may spend several days in Tibet, visit some monasteries, photograph some monks, and not understand at all that a cultural genocide is happening there, with Tibetan culture systematically denied and Buddhist religion allowed only if it accepts to serve as a propaganda mouthpiece of the regime and the Chinese occupation.

Protesting this state of affairs is difficult and exposes the protesters to long jail sentences. Or perhaps you will not go to jail if you are a child?

Children in the area around the prefecture-level city of Nagku, in Northern Tibet, have devised an original and moving form of protest. They use the traditional "urduo," a rope or whip made of yak or goat hair. It is used by herdsmen to drive cattle but also to throw stones to show the road to the livestock or scare away wild animals.

The herdsmen's children take the "urduo" when trains with tourists pass their area and whip the passing trains or throw small stones. They do not intend to hurt anybody; they just want to tell the tourists that staged tours are not welcome.

The CCP has now warned parents that they will be held responsible for the behavior of their children. It is a small incident, but it shows that even children share the indomitable spirit of the Tibetan resistance.

'Tibet' to supply clean electric power to 16 other provincial regions of PRC

19 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which is roughly the western half of Tibet proper, will transmit two billion kWh of clean electricity to 16 other provincial-level regions of the People's Republic of China (PRC) this year, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency May 19, citing the regional power company.

The report cited the State Grid Xizang Electric Power Company as saying clean energy is expected to help China's central and eastern regions reduce the emission of carbon dioxide by 1.6 million tonnes and sulphur dioxide by 50,000 tonnes, respectively. "Xizang" or "Xizang Autonomous Region" is China's name for TAR.

The report noted that the TAR boasts abundant solar, hydraulic and wind power resources, which enabled it to begin sending electricity to other provincial-level regions of the PRC for the first time in 2015.

As of 2023, the region had delivered more than 13.9 billion kWh of clean energy, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20.64 million tonnes, and creating economic benefits of about 3.7 billion yuan (about 520.8 million US dollars), the report added.

China subjects Tibetans to political education for protesting, rejecting paltry compensation for their pastureland

17 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

For protesting against their ouster from their grassland and the payment afterward of a laughably paltry compensation for it, Chinese authorities in Markham County of Chamdo City, Tibet Autonomous Region, have subjected the affected Tibetan herdsmen to a series of political education sessions, according to the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* May 16. They also remain under threats of criminal prosecution as the local authorities have labelled their protest as political opposition.

Besides, area officials were preventing the Tibetan herdsmen from petitioning higher authorities in Chamdo for a fair compensation for their land, the report said, citing two sources with knowledge of the situation, speaking on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation from the authorities.

One source has said local authorities had misrepresented the facts by painting the herdsmen's protests and pleas for a fair compensation as political in nature in their reports to the city and TAR authorities. And they used that as their justification for subjecting the Tibetans to political education sessions. The herdsmen's grassland had reportedly been sold illegally to business owners by county officials early

last year. However, no one knew anything about it until last month when the new owners sent people to remove the Tibetans and take over their pastureland.

It led to the affected families, numbering 25 Tibetan families in Taktsa village in the county's Luoni Township, to submit petitions and hold protests. Four of the protesters were taken into custody on Apr 10, subjected to beating, and then let out on Apr 16.

The release was made with the announcement of a paltry compensation of just 3,000 yuan (US\$415) per family, which the Tibetans rejected offhandedly.

The officials have reportedly branded the Tibetan herdsmen's actions as political opposition and subjected them to a series of political education sessions. More than 30 Chinese county officials from various departments at different levels of the county government conducted the political education over the past month, the report cited the sources as saying. In addition, Chinese authorities are stated to have announced rewards for anyone providing information that could help them identify an individual who shared news of the land grab protest with outside parties. The political education sessions were stated to have begun on Apr 16 with the Luoni Township Party Committee organizing what was called a Chinese Communist Party discipline study and political education meeting before an array of over 30 Chinese officials. They were stated to include "members of the township party committee, all party members of directly affiliated branches, at-home cadres, temple management committees, police stations, health centres and school administrators."

After the meeting, members of what has been described as the "Chinese Working Affairs Committee" were stated to have visited each family to provide political education.

They were stated to have told the Tibetans that the Chinese government would address any problems they faced, but warned against committing the crime of sharing information with people living outside Tibet because it would compromise national dignity and reflect poorly on the Party.

But far from solving their problems, the local authorities have used what the report described as "political manoeuvres" to prevent the local Tibetans from appealing their case to the Chamdo city authorities.

The 1.5-km long, 1 sq-km land taken from the herdsmen is stated to be worth about 5 million yuan, (US\$692,000).

However, the authorities' compensation offer totals only 75,000 yuan (at 3000 yuan per family). And even this was stated to be denied, with the Tibetans facing imprisonment, if they protested or refused to comply with the authorities' orders.

Tibetans undergo political education for protesting land grab

16 May 2024, [RFA](#)

Tibetans who protested the seizure of their pasture land by Chinese authorities in Markham county in April have been subjected to a series of political education sessions after they were accused of protesting for political reasons, two sources with knowledge of the situation said.

Area officials are also preventing the Tibetans from petitioning higher authorities in Chamdo, a city in the eastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region, for fair compensation for their land, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation. County officials have misled higher-ranking officials in Chamdo and in Tibet's capital Lhasa into thinking that the protest by Tibetan residents was political in nature, rather than an appeal against the land grab, said the first source.

"[They] have used that as an excuse to organize a series of political education sessions in the area," he said.

In early April, 25 Tibetan families from Taktsa village in Markham county learned their land had been sold without their knowledge to businessmen by county officials, when the new owners sent people to clear it. Four Tibetans were arrested April 10 for protesting the land grab and later released on April 16, but they were beaten while in detention.

Chinese authorities in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in Tibetan-populated areas of nearby Chinese provinces often ignore residents' concerns about mining and land grabs by local officials, who routinely rely on force to subdue those who complain or protest, according to human rights groups.

Rejecting low compensation

In April, the Tibetans rejected 3,000 yuan (US\$415) in individual compensation that was belatedly offered to them by Chinese authorities, saying the amount was too low for the pasture land that had been sold by Chinese county officials to businessmen in 2023.

Since then, the Tibetans have had to attend a series of political education sessions, with more than 30 Chinese county officials from various departments visiting the area over the past month, said the two sources.

Chinese authorities in Markham county also announced a reward for information that could help them identify an individual who shared news of the land grab protest with outside parties, the sources said.

"This is the first time we have seen such rigorous political education sessions and monitoring in the area, with so many levels of officials visiting the place to conduct group political education sessions and going door-to-door," said the second source.

On April 16, the Luoni Township Party Committee, where the village is located, organized a Chinese Communist Party discipline study and political education meeting with over 30 Chinese officials. They included members of the township party committee, all party members of directly affiliated branches, at-home cadres, temple management committees, police stations, health centers and school administrators.

"Following the meeting, members of the Chinese Working Affairs Committee visited each family in their homes to provide political education," the second source said.

They told the Tibetans that the Chinese government would address any problems they faced, but that they couldn't share information with people living outside Tibet because it would compromise national dignity and reflect poorly on the Chinese Communist Party, thereby constituting a criminal act, the second source said.

Police monitoring

Since the protest, around 10 policemen have been deployed to patrol the area day and night to monitor the Tibetans' activities, the sources said.

"Instead of addressing the core problem, Chinese authorities are using political maneuvers and have prevented local Tibetans from appealing their case in Chamdo," said the first source.

The first source said the land taken from the Tibetans is 1.5 kilometers (one mile) long and covers an area of 1 square kilometer (0.4 square miles), and is worth about 5 million yuan, or US\$692,000.

Officials told the residents to accept their offer of 3,000 Chinese yuan each without protest or face imprisonment for noncompliance.

The Chinese police and Markham county officials are now threatening the Tibetans by labeling the protests as political in nature and intimidating locals about likely consequences, given that protests of a political nature amount to a criminal offense, the sources said.

Tibetan singer arrested for song lamenting Dalai Lama's absence

14 May 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar and Tenzin Dickyi



Tibetan singer Gyegjom Dorjee performs 'Tearful Deluge of a Sorrowful Song' at a concert in Khyungchu county, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in southwest China's Sichuan Province, Jan. 15, 2024.

*"In this land where the Victorious One is absent,
Leaders exist, but false ones.
The Tibetans are bereft of direction,
Like a deer lost in the midst of a fog..."*

A Tibetan performer who sang these lyrics, publicly yearning for the Dalai Lama and blasting Chinese leaders as "false," was arrested in early February in China's Sichuan province, two sources with knowledge of the situation said.

Gyegjom Dorjee, in his early 30s, sang "Tearful Deluge of a Sorrowful Song" alongside other artists at concert on Jan. 15, as part of pre-Losar, or Tibetan New Year, celebrations, said the sources on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

The song alludes to life under Chinese government rule, likening Tibetans to "birds confined in a cage." The use of "Victorious One" refers to the Dalai Lama, seen by Beijing as a separatist. Even carrying a picture of the leader of Tibetan Buddhism is considered a crime.

In a video of Dorjee's performance, an audience of more than 100 Tibetans can be seen clapping and cheering uproariously at the end of his two-minute song. But nearly a month later, Dorjee was summoned to a police station in Khyungchu county, or Hongyuan in Chinese, in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, and subsequently arrested, the sources said.

Since then, his whereabouts remain unknown, they said. "The Chinese government said his song had political connotations and raised concerns about its lyrics," the first source told Radio Free Asia.

Security threat

Tibetan artists like Dorjee, who peacefully express disagreement or discontent with China's policies in the Tibetan Autonomous Region or Tibetan-populated areas of Chinese provinces, are branded by Chinese authorities as dangers to "national security" or "social stability."

In particular, Tibetan writers, artists and singers who advocate for Tibetan national identity and culture or voice criticism of China's governance often face detention.

A nomad with a passion for singing and engaging in traditional Tibetan cultural performances, Dorjee often has been called upon to perform at local events and festivals, the first source said. Following his arrest, Dorjee's family tried to get information about the charge and his whereabouts from the Khyungchu police station, but police turned them away without providing it, said the second source.

"They were told Dorjee was being interrogated because of the provocative nature of his lyrics and thoughts, and that there were 'political problems' with his song lyrics and ideology," he said.

'Red-faced ones'

Dorjee's lyrics also made references to "this place of inequities/injustice" and the discrimination suffered by the "red-faced" ones, using an old epithet used to describe Tibetans.

"The song expresses the common grievances held by the Tibetans against Chinese rule and criticizes the repressive policies of the Chinese party-state," the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy said in a statement. "In the current climate of heightened repression, local Tibetans have little to no avenues to exercise basic human rights including the right to freedom of expression or peaceful dissent," it said.

Some Tibetan artists have taken their protests against the Chinese government to an extreme.

In 2022, Tsewang Norbu, a well-known contemporary Tibetan singer, set himself on fire in front of the iconic Potala Palace in Lhasa to demonstrate his opposition to Chinese policies in Tibet.

Radio Free Asia later learned that Norbu's act was an attempt to draw attention to his grievances, and that he succumbed to his injuries.

Students banned from speaking Tibetan in Sichuan schools

08 May 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar and Tenzin Dickyi

Chinese authorities have banned students in schools in a Tibetan-populated area in China's Sichuan province from speaking their native language when they communicate among themselves and with their teachers, two sources from inside Tibet said.

Students and teachers at elementary, middle and high schools in Nyagchu county, or Yajiang in Chinese, are required to use only Mandarin to communicate, they said, insisting they not be identified for fear of their personal safety.

The measure is another blow to Tibetan culture and language, which the Chinese government seems intent on wiping out and replacing with Mandarin and Han Chinese culture. Last year, a ban was imposed on Tibetan language classes in schools in another part of Sichuan province, in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Since 2020, the Chinese government has further tightened its restrictions on language rights in Tibetan, forcing the closure of private Tibetan schools in Tibet and intensifying Chinese-language education in the schools in the name of promoting uniformity in the use of textbooks and instructional materials.

In 2021, Chinese authorities also began prohibiting Tibetan children from participating in informal Tibetan language classes or workshops during their winter breaks.

Activists fear the moves could lead to the extinction of the language in the region and endanger its viability across the country.

Limiting home visits

Authorities also have restricted the number of holidays the schoolchildren can take to limit interactions in their native tongue between them and their families, the sources said.

“Traditional breaks like spring and summer holidays, which allowed for family time, have been eliminated, forcing children to remain in boarding schools for extended periods,” the first Tibetan said.

“This separation has contributed to a decline in the number of young Tibetans proficient in the Tibetan language in Nyagchu,” he said. Tibetans make up about 90 percent of the prefecture’s 1 million inhabitants.

In the past, the Chinese government-run boarding schools allowed Tibetan children to return home on weekends and provided longer breaks during the April-June period so they could help their families with the harvesting of caterpillar fungus — a source of income for many.

But now, the children are not being sent home for these breaks, significantly limiting their contact with relatives and leading to a decline in Tibetan language fluency among the younger generation of Tibetans in Sichuan’s Kardze prefecture, said the sources.

Tibetan parents previously sought out private schools where their children could learn the Tibetan language, but the imposition of the ban in Kardze has made finding such alternative options increasingly difficult, said the second Tibetan source.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, told RFA he did not know the specifics of this development but added that the Chinese government protects the freedom of ethnic minorities.

“In accordance with the law, the Chinese government protects the freedom of ethnic minorities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and the freedom of religious belief of the people of all ethnic groups,” Liu said in an email.

School closures

And yet in 2021, the Chinese government closed several private Tibetan schools, including Phende School and Chaktsa Tevey Private Elementary School in Za-Sersul county, Sengdruk Taktse School in Darlak, or Golog, county, three schools in Machen county, one school in Gadhey county, two schools in Chikdril county, and the Gedhen Buddhist School in Drago Monastery.

Each of Nyagchu county’s six towns and 10 villages has an elementary school, but these are now all residential schools — which activists term “colonial-style” and where they say Tibetan children are forcefully

separated from their families and taught a Chinese-language curriculum.

It is critically important to introduce children to the Tibetan language during their formative years, said Sangye Tandar Naga, editor and department head of the Cultural Research and Publication Department at Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, India.

“This early exposure is crucial because it becomes significantly more challenging for adults to learn the language later in life,” Naga told RFA Tibetan at a May 2-4 event in Dharamsala where over 24 Tibetan educators, writers and cultural scholars convened to develop strategies to preserve the Tibetan language.

The 7th Ling Rinpoche, the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama’s principal tutor, told RFA in an interview that the role of parents in teaching their children about the significance of preserving the Tibetan language is crucial to the language’s survival.

Tibet to provide financial aid to Nepal’s northern border districts for five years

03 May 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#)

Ministry of Local Development is selecting projects needed in 15 districts bordering China.

China’s Tibet Autonomous Region is set to fund a five-year initiative in Nepal’s northern border districts, offering different kinds of logistical and material support, mostly for social and economic development projects.

Officials familiar with the development told the Post that the Tibetan government will provide 20 million yuan or around Rs370 million each year under the initiative for the next five years.

To execute the initiative, the first preparatory meeting was held in Lhasa on April 23 and 24. It was co-chaired by Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, joint secretary of the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration of Nepal, and Baiman Yangzong, director general of the Foreign Affairs Office of China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, according to a statement issued by the Nepal’s Consulate General in Lhasa.

“The discussions were focused on the coordination mechanism of aid projects by the Tibet Autonomous Region, China to Nepal in terms of work schedule, selection modality of the projects, and the ways of implementation and monitoring,” said the statement.

During his Nepal visit in November, Wang Junzheng, the CPC secretary for the Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region of China, had informed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha that Tibet would provide Nepal 20 million yuan for administrative reform and development needs in Nepal.

The Chinese assistance will be used for building schools and health posts, installing solar electricity, and funding other small projects in the northern 15 districts of Nepal, said a Nepali official who attended the meeting in Lhasa last week.

The 15 districts are Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Bajhang, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla and Darchula.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to hold the meeting of aid projects twice in the first half of the year, so as to focus on the projects' arrangements, and twice in the second half of the year for the implementation and review of the implemented projects.

Furthermore, the two sides discussed enhancing support for improving the livelihood of the people residing in the border districts through various projects, according to the statement.

The next meeting in Kathmandu that is supposed to take place in May-June will select projects, according to Nepali officials.

The Ministry of Local Development is currently compiling a list of projects needed in the 15 districts that share a border with Tibet. Xizang is the new name for Tibet that China started using from last year.

The 'Second Meeting of the Aid Projects to Nepal' will take place on a mutually convenient date in May 2024, said the statement by Nepal's Consulate General in Lhasa.

China has been implementing small-scale aid projects in the northern border districts of Nepal.

In the past, the Chinese government had provided each of these districts Rs3 million for the development of village development committees (VDCs), then local administrative units, in the districts.

In 2014, in a deal between the two countries, China had agreed to provide 10 million yuan (USD 1.63 million) annually from 2014 to 2018 through the Tibetan government in areas like health, education and road sectors to improve the livelihood of the residents in those districts.

Later in 2018, the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), China's external foreign aid agency, signed a cooperation agreement with Nepal's Ministry of Finance to provide development assistance in Nepal's northern district and agreement was signed in 2019 but no substantive progress has been made.

In April 2019, during the state visit of the then president Bidya Devi Bhandari to China, Nepal and China signed the Northern Area Infrastructure Development and Livelihood Improvement Project (NAIDLIP), where Beijing had pledged to provide funds for implementing the project, which was estimated to cost 20 million yuan.

According to the local development ministry, the project will support roads linking settlements, schools, health facilities, market centers within or among local units. The project also aimed to support agriculture and irrigation sector, surface or solar lifting irrigation, micro irrigation, commercial agro-veterinary, business promotion, solar dryer, dairy industry, cold storage and fruits or medical plant processing units, and solar energy. But the scheme was severely impacted by the Covid pandemic, said officials.

In October 2022, the Chinese government provided 14 excavators to 14 municipalities of 14 different districts bordering China. The Tibetan government also supported food supplies and other essentials worth over 200 million yuan to the 15 districts in the past five years.

BUDDHISM

Beijing uses Chinese Buddhist group to transform Tibetan Buddhism: report

30 May 2024, [ANI](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), the world's largest Tibet support group based in Washington, released its report on Wednesday that exposed the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) strategy of using a Chinese Buddhist group to transform Tibetan Buddhism in China's image.

The report titled 'Buddhist Association of China Takes A Leading Role In China's Attempts To Control and Forcibly Reshape Tibetan Buddhism' mentioned that, since the takeover of Xi Jinping President of China, the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) has become a key tool in assimilating and transforming Tibetan Buddhism. Especially concerning the search for and recognition of reincarnating lamas. The BAC has a special Tibetan Buddhism Working Committee, which oversees the implementation of CCP directives in Tibetan monasteries.

The report documents a change in the charter of BAC to fit the CCP's political agenda. According to the report, " In 2020, it was amended to include "Sinification of Buddhism in China" as one of its objectives and to "support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system, study and implement Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and adhere to the direction of the Sinification of Buddhism in China."

According to the report, the BAC has adopted an extreme political tone, leaving no stone unturned in pushing forward the CCP's agenda. The BAC is forced to form a party-oriented committee within the BAC, even when the decisions of the BAC are made by local religious leaders. It has been strengthening its institutional foundation in recent years, which includes five-year plans and shaping monastic training to meet political goals, the report says.

The report further elaborates that the CCP has introduced measures, regulations and initiatives to exercise control over the recognition of centuries-old traditions related to the future reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. (ANI)

China cracks down on Tibetans during holy month

28 May 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar and Sonam Lhamo

Authorities are preventing worshipers from visiting temples and performing religious rites.



A Tibetan monk prays in the rain as he circumambulates clockwise around Tsuklakhang, also known as Dalai Lama's Temple complex, in Dharamsala, India, March 12, 2024.

Chinese authorities have instructed Tibetan students, government workers and retirees to refrain from engaging in religious activities in Tibet's capital Lhasa during the Buddhist holy month of Saga Dawa, four sources said.

The Saga Dawa festival occurs during the fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar and runs from May 9 to June 6 this year.

For Tibetan Buddhists, it marks the period of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana — the state entered after death by someone who has attained nirvana during their lifetime.

During the holy month, thousands of religious pilgrims visit temples and walk sacred *kora* routes around Lingkhor and Barkhor streets in Lhasa, encircling the revered Jokhang Temple.

The ritual *kora* — making a circumambulation around sacred sites or objects as part of a pilgrimage — holds immense significance for Tibetan Buddhists who believe that virtuous deeds performed during Saga Dawa are magnified based on their location.

A video obtained by Radio Free Asia showed heavy police presence surrounding the Barkhor area — the heart of the capital with its famed pilgrimage circuit — on May 22, the eve of the 15th day of the fourth month of the Tibetan Lunar calendar, considered one of the holiest days during Saga Dawa.

Since the start of Saga Dawa, Chinese police have tightened security around key religious sites, including Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, and the Barkhor area, the sources told RFA.

The measures illustrate the deterioration of religious freedom in Tibet under the Chinese government's

suppression and Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism — a policy that seeks to bring the religion under the control of the Chinese Communist Party.

Police everywhere

While devotees were seen on pilgrimage on the other days of Saga Dawa, the 15th day on May 23 saw heightened restrictions, with police stationed along the pathways leading to the Sera, Gandhen and Drepung monasteries, said the sources who declined to be named out of fear of retribution by authorities.

"There isn't any place where you don't see police and interrogation stations," one of the sources told RFA.

The Chinese government has increased the number of police checkpoints in and around Lhasa, and authorities have been interrogating Tibetans spontaneously, the person said.

Individuals who do not have a *shenfenzhang*, or Chinese resident identity card, are prohibited from visiting temples, leading to the heightened restrictions now in effect, said a second source.

"During our visits to circumambulate the holy sites, Chinese police regularly inspect everyone's identity cards and engage in arguments," said a third source.

"Having to engage in disputes with the Chinese police takes an emotional toll on us, and this is one of the reasons why many are afraid of engaging in religious activities as often as they'd like," he said.

Facial recognition technology is pervasive at key pilgrimage sites and authorities regularly frisk Tibetans making pilgrimages, said a fourth source.

Flag-raising festival

Additionally, during the Ngari Flag Raising Festival in Purang county, called Pulan in Chinese, of Ngari Prefecture in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Chinese authorities increased security as people gathered on May 23 for the annual ceremony, and banned the use of drones during the event, according to the sources.

The annual tradition of hoisting a large central prayer flag pole in front of Mount Kailash in Tibet began in 1681 during the time of the 5th Dalai Lama.

In a government notice dated May 16, the Pulan County Public Security Bureau in Talqin said the use of drones and other aircraft during the Saga Dawa flag raising festival was prohibited and that violators would be punished.

Tibetans who attended the event were subjected to extensive questioning and coerced into agreeing to uphold social order and refraining from causing discord, said one of the sources.

Police instructed people not to share photos or videos of the festival on social media, he said.

STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

Lakes on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau growing rapidly, study finds

30 May 2024, [China Daily](#), Palden Nyima and Daqiong

Chinese scientists have found that over the past three decades, the area of lakes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has expanded by over 10,000 square kilometers and is continuing to grow, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced recently on its website.

The research carried out by the institute's environmental change and multisphere processes team, led by Zhang Guoqing, predicts that by the end of the 21st century, the lake area on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau will expand by approximately 50 percent, equivalent to about 20,000 square kilometers, under a low-emission scenario.

This expansion will increase water levels by an estimated 10 meters, resulting in a staggering increase in water volume of about 652 billion metric tons, which is four times the increase over the past 50 years. The research is a pivotal advancement in the study of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau lakes. It was published in the esteemed international academic journal *Nature Geoscience* on Monday and is poised to provide crucial scientific guidance for future planning on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

Described as the "Asian Water Tower," the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau boasts the world's highest and most extensive plateau lake group, accounting for over 50 percent of China's total lake area.

Xu Fenglin, one of the authors of the published research paper and a doctoral student at the institute, said that the research highlights that lakes in the northern plateau are experiencing the most significant expansion and will potentially double in area under high-emission scenarios.

"The lakes in the central region of the plateau are projected to expand by over 50 percent, while lakes in the southern region, previously in a state of shrinkage, are anticipated to transition to expansion in the near future," Xu said.

"The expansion of lakes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau will increase lake-atmosphere exchanges, potentially leading to an increase in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, thereby exacerbating global warming."

Warmer Climate Risks Societal, Ecological Impact on Tibet

28 May 2024, [The Mirage](#)

While recent reports have stated that more than half the world's largest lakes, including lakes in the Tibetan plateau, are drying up, a paper in *Nature Geoscience* today (27/5/24 DOI 10.1038/s41561-024-01446-w)

suggests that, by the end of this century, land-locked lakes on the Tibetan Plateau are set to increase exponentially, resulting in major land loss and related economic, environmental and climatic impacts.

Climate and weather predictions suggest that increased rainfall due to climate change will enlarge these lakes, and see water levels rise by up to 10 metres.

The volume of water caught in these land-locked lakes is estimated to increase fourfold by 2100 according to the research by Dr Iestyn Woolway of Bangor University (UK) and colleagues in China, Saudi Arabia, USA and France.

The increased lake surface area will also mean the loss of critical land area, for agriculture, human habitation, critical road and rail networks and economic disruption.

Dr Woolway commented,

"Climate change is making the Tibetan Plateau greener and more habitable, attracting more people to higher altitudes due to better access to water. However, rising lake levels require urgent planning and policies to mitigate impacts on the region's ecology and population."

The resultant land loss could also lead to a change in the landscape, as lakes merge and the course of the rivers which feed and inter-connect the lakes are altered.

This could lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions and a positive feedback loop, amplifying climate change. An increase in freshwater, and in flow between lakes could also cause a change in ecology and affect wildlife. As an example, when the Zonang Lake in Hoh Xil Nature Reserve burst its banks in 2011, the Tibetan Antelope found their migration route blocked.

China sends second consignment of glacial water from Tibet to Maldives

25 May 2024, [The Pioneer](#)

China has gifted 1,500 tonnes of water from the Tibetan glaciers to Maldives, the second such donation in less than two months, a media report said on Friday. This is the latest in the multiple grants and aid that China has promised the Maldives, especially since pro-China Mohamed Muizzu took over as the President in November 2023.

China's Xizang Autonomous Region has gifted 1,500 tonnes of mineral water to the Maldives government on Thursday. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the donated water will be distributed to island communities, for use during times of drinking shortage, news portal Sun.mv reported. Earlier on March 27, the Maldives government had announced

that it had received a similar consignment of 1,500 tonnes of water from China.

Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer, while speaking at a ceremony where Wang Lixin, the Chinese Ambassador to the Maldives, handed over the donation, said that China continues to remain a "good friend to the Maldives," especially during the challenging times and crisis.

The minister also expressed his gratitude to the people of Xinjiang Autonomous Region for the kind gesture and to the government and people of China for their continued support and goodwill. "Grateful to receive 1,500 tonnes of mineral water from the people of Xizang Autonomous Region, PRC. This generous donation will greatly support our island communities during water shortages. Thank you for your support and friendship," Zameer said on his official X handle late on Friday and tagged Wang while posting photos from the ceremony.

The Maldives has 26 atolls and its 1,192 islands are mostly composed of coral reefs and sandbars, a combination that makes groundwater and freshwater extremely scarce, and the problems are exacerbated due to climate change.

The country has tried between 2011 and 2015, a UN-funded 'Increasing Climate Resilience through an Integrated Water Resources Management Programme' but with limited success.

In December 2014, India carried out 'Operation Neer' during one of its worst water crises following a massive fire in the Male Water and Sewerage Company complex on December 4, 2014.

While announcing the earlier consignment in March, the government had said that the decision to provide Maldives with drinking water was reached during the official visit in November 2023 of China's Tibet Autonomous Region's Chairman, Yan Jinhai to the Maldives, when he met President Muizzu.

At that time, it was deliberated to donate water that is produced out of frozen water procured from glacial regions which are highly clean, clear, and rich in minerals. Moreover, Tibet (Xizang in Chinese) Autonomous Region is known to produce high-cost premium brands of water, the Maldives Foreign Ministry said then.

Previously, China had been exclusively known for its assistance in the urban and economic development of the Maldives. But since Muizzu assumed office, China has been helping the country with the supply of defence equipment too.

Ancient DNA Unveils Western Tibetan Plateau's Past

23 May 2024, [Mirage](#)

Combining the recently sequenced data with previously published ancient genomic data, the

evolutionary history of the populations in the western Tibetan Plateau over the past 3,500 years has now been reconstructed.

This study is a systematic, long-term genomic study of ancient populations in the western Tibetan Plateau. It is of great significance for the in-depth understanding of the history of interactions between ancient western plateau populations and ancient populations within the plateau and in neighboring South Asia and Central Asia, according to the researchers.

Genetic characteristics of ancient western plateau populations and their interactions with ancient populations within the plateau

Previously, the understanding of the genetic history of the ancient populations of the western plateau was extremely limited. Based on only one site dating back 2,300 years ago, researchers had speculated that genetic influence occurred between western plateau populations and Central Asians. However, the specific time, place, and extent of this influence were unknown. In this study, the researchers reconstructed the population evolutionary history in the western plateau over thousands of years using genetic information from various ancient Tibetan populations. They showed that the ancient Ngari populations of 3,500 years ago had genetic components similar to the populations of the southern plateau and did not carry additional genetic components from Central Asia or South Asia.

This genetic composition has been stably maintained in northwestern Ngari Prefecture for more than a thousand years: The genetic composition of the late Gebusailu and Laga populations of 2,300 years ago is almost the same as that of the Gebusailu population of 3,500 years ago. In other words, the Ngari population during this period mainly carried the genetic components of ancient populations in the southern plateau, while genetic components from Central Asia and South Asia were introduced much later.

After that, starting from 2,300 years ago, Central Asian components appeared in some sites in northwestern Ngari Prefecture, but until 150 years ago, the proportion of Central Asian components was still less than 15%. Overall, local Ngari genetic components remained dominant from 3,500 to 150 years ago.

The researchers also found complex population interactions and migrations within the plateau. The genetic components of ancient populations in the southern and western parts of the plateau 3,500 years ago were very similar, indicating that population migration and expansion from south to west may have occurred earlier.

In addition, compared with the population in northwestern Ngari, populations from 1,800 to 1,600 years ago from the Kongque River to the upper reaches of the Xiangquan River in southeast Ngari

were further influenced by ancient populations from the southern plateau. This indicates that the southern plateau people may have begun to expand westward again before the Tubo Empire expanded westward in the early 7th century.

In summary, the interactions between the ancient populations of the southern and western plateau were far more complex than recorded in historical documents. As early as 1,800 years ago, multiple east-to-west human migrations between the two places had occurred, and a gradient of genetic components introduced by the expansions can be observed in these east-to-west populations.

Interactions between ancient populations in the western plateau and outside the plateau

Although Central Asian components began to affect some Ngari populations around 2,300 years ago, the proportion of Central Asian components in the genomes of these populations is low

Beginning 2,000 years ago, genetic components related to South Asia also affected the Ngari Prefecture region. Interestingly, the South Asian-related genetic components that affected the ancient Ngari populations came from mixed populations that settled in Central Asia. These populations are genetically related to Central Asians but are culturally typical South Asians. Previous research suggested that they were immigrants from the Indus Valley Civilization who settled in Central Asia.

This is the first identification of South Asian-related genetic components in ancient populations on the Tibetan Plateau, providing clues to the interactions between ancient populations on the plateau and those related to the Indus Valley Civilization.

In the 9th century AD, with the decline of the Tubo regime, descendants of the Tubo royal family established the Guge Kingdom in what is now Ngari Prefecture. It was not until the 17th century AD that the Guge Kingdom collapsed. As the continuation of the Tubo lineage, the Guge population is an important window into the genetic characteristics of the last Tubo people. An ancient human sample collected by the researchers from the Guge Cave showed the influence of Central Asian populations, and the proportion of Central Asian components was as high as 31%. This admixture event is estimated to have occurred around 1,353 AD, coinciding with the prosperity of the Guge Kingdom. This new result shows that in addition to its historical connections with South Asian kingdoms, the Guge Kingdom also had population interactions with people from Central Asian kingdoms.

Kinship practices in early western plateau communities

The researchers also examined kinship among individuals from early western plateau sites. At the Gebusailu tomb dating back 2,300 years ago, a second-

generation family structure consisting of a father and two sons was discovered. At the same time, individuals at this site and the 1,800-year-old Pulanduowa site were mainly male, and the diversity of Y-chromosome haplotypes is evidently lower than that of mitochondrial haplotypes, indicating that both may have been communities dominated by paternal inheritance.

The 1,600-year-old Qulong sazha tomb includes a family line in which the second- and third-generation descendants are related by maternal kinship, suggesting the role of maternal kinship in the family line. Combined with the sex ratio and paternal and maternal genetic diversity, this pattern reflects a relatively balanced paternal and maternal inheritance structure.

Nevertheless, this study is a preliminary exploration of the kinship practices at early plateau sites, and future research with more samples will shed more light on the details and diversity of the community structure of ancient Tibetans.

Due to the high altitude and harsh natural environment of the western Tibetan Plateau, anthropological and archaeological research in this region is relatively limited. In particular, large gaps exist in previous research on the evolutionary history of early ancient western Tibetan Plateau populations and their interaction with ancient populations in neighboring areas. Using a combination of genetics and archeology, the researchers thoroughly investigated the evolutionary history of ancient populations on the western plateau over the past 3,500 years. While the major genetic components of the ancient western plateau populations show continuity, those populations had complex and frequent interactions with the ancient populations in the adjacent southern plateau region, Central Asia, and South Asia off the plateau.

Since the Tibetan Plateau is a bridge between East, Central, and South Asia, the results of this study are important for understanding the genetics of ancient populations on the plateau and those populations' interactions with ancient Central and South Asians.

China targets Tibet to establish world's largest national park system

23 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China will strive to establish the world's largest national park system by 2035, reported the official *Xinhua* news agency May 22. However, 70% of the candidate areas for achieving this goal are on the Tibetan Plateau, raising serious concerns about the plan's brutal implications for Tibetan farmers and nomads who are bound to be forced to relocate from their ancestral land.

The report said that in 2021, China established its first batch of national parks, spanning a protected land area of 230,000 square km. These included the Sanjiangyuan National Park, the Giant Panda National Park, the NCTLNP, Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park and Wuyishan National Park.

Of them, the Sanjiangyuan National Park in Qinghai Province is fully within a Tibetan populated territory. Besides, a significant portion of the Giant Panda National Park is located in the historically Tibetan populated regions in Sichuan and Gansu provinces. These have entailed large-scale forced relocation and impoverishment of Tibetan farmers and nomads.

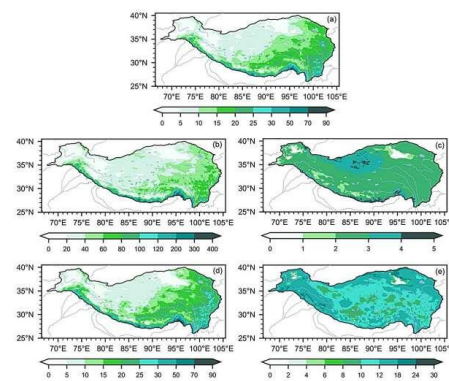
And now, in order to achieve its 2035 goal, China has designated 49 candidate areas, covering around 1.1 million square km, as national park space, the report said, citing a spatial layout plan made public in 2022.

Notably, the Tibetan Plateau, which is the highest plateau in the world, has 13 candidate areas. They cover an area of about 770,000 square km and account for 70% of the total area of national park candidate areas, the report said.

One of these candidate areas is the Qiangtang Nature Reserve in Nagchu City, northern Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). A section of the relocation of Tibetans from this area to southern TAR has been covered recently by China's official media.

Study investigates extreme precipitation events across diverse regions of the Tibetan Plateau

22 May 2024, [Phys.org](#)



Spatial distribution of extreme precipitation thresholds and extreme precipitation indices in summer on the TP. Credit: Science China Earth Sciences (2024). DOI: 10.1007/s11430-023-1321-6

Researchers have identified three distinct spatial types for summer extreme precipitation on the Tibetan Plateau: Northwest, Southeast, and Southern Himalayas types based on predefined thresholds for extreme precipitation. The study is published in the journal *Science China Earth Sciences*.

The Northwest and Southeast types are primarily influenced by anomalously signals in the mid-to-high latitude regions upstream of them, while their wave

train shapes exhibit significant differences. The precursor signals of the Northwest type propagate predominantly from west to east along the latitudinal 40°N, whereas those of the Southeast type occur at higher latitudes, with anomalous signals originating from the north polar region and propagating in a northwesterly-southeasterly direction.

On the other hand, the Southern Himalayas type is mainly governed by localized subtropical anomalous circulation anomalies and exhibits little association with wave train activity from mid-to-high latitudes.

The identification of significant disparities in the characteristics of extreme precipitation events, along with their associated influence on circulation patterns and precursor signals on the plateau, could offer a more robust foundation for accurately predicting extreme precipitation events during the summer season in this region.

This study was led by Ding Zhiyuan, Dr. Ha Yao, and Dr. Zhong Zhong from the College of Meteorology and Oceanography at the National University of Defense Technology.

Occupying Tibet's Rivers

21 May 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

China's policy of constructing mega dams on Tibet's rivers and extracting its resources risks social and environmental catastrophe in Tibet and throughout Asia. This is according to a new report released today by Free Tibet's research partner Tibet Watch and research organisation Turquoise Roof.

Occupying Tibet's Rivers: China's hydropower 'battlefield' in Tibet is being released on the three-month anniversary of rare, large-scale protests in Dege County in eastern Tibet in February 2024.

That month, despite the risks to their safety, hundreds of Tibetans protested against the planned Kamtok hydroelectric dam. If it proceeds, the dam threatens the mass displacement of local residents and the flooding of their homes. It also threatens at least six Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, some of which contain invaluable 14th century Buddhist frescoes that survived the Cultural Revolution but are now threatened with destruction.

In response to these protests, police detained hundreds of Tibetans and beat protesters so badly that they were hospitalised. The local area was subsequently put under lockdown with paramilitaries deployed and no further communications with the outside world possible. No photos or videos have emerged from the area since the end of February. The second part of the report details the wider context, noting that the huge Kamtok dam is itself only one of 13 dams planned on the upper reaches of the Drichu (Ch: Yangtse) River and that China is forcing through

construction of dams on all of the rivers originating in Tibet. The dams are part of a long-term plan to provide key Chinese industrial hubs such as Chengdu and Chongqing with water and electricity at the expense of rural Tibetans, who have been forced from their pastures in their millions to make way for extraction and energy projects. Eight of the world's largest river systems flow from glaciers on the Tibetan plateau and are a critical resource for the densely populated nations surrounding it. This now faces a tipping point as what was once one of the most undisturbed environments on Earth is now strangled by dams and threatened by increased instances of landslides and food insecurity due to the mass displacement of rural Tibetans who have stewarded its pastures for generations. For the first time, China's dam-building is now reaching upriver to the sources of Asia's great wild rivers in landscapes that were previously among the least disturbed habitats on earth. The planned Kamtok dam in the upper reaches of the Yangtze (Drichu in Tibetan) risks a cascade of adverse consequences both on the plateau and downstream in China. The policy of dam construction is being driven directly by the Chinese government and driven by giant Chinese Communist Party-controlled energy conglomerates, including Huaneng and Huadian. The report highlights that Huadian signed a cooperation agreement with German multinational company Siemens Energy in March 2024. The report draws from a wealth of resources, including Tibetan sources, Chinese government announcements and procurement documents, satellite imagery and the knowledge of researcher and Tibetan environmental expert Gabriel Lafitte. It is accompanied by a 3D satellite map pinpointing key locations related to the Kamtok dam and the protests by the residents of Dege County. *Occupying Tibet's Rivers* concludes with a detailed series of recommendations to actors at every level from international governments and the United Nations to environmental and cultural rights groups, warning that due to China's extractive policies, "lives, livelihoods and irreplaceable Buddhist culture and landscapes of Tibet hang precariously in the balance."

China's Greed for Lithium is Killing the Tibetan Plateau

13 May 2024, [Japan Forward](#), Pema Gyalpo



A vehicle is seen near a lithium smelter in Yichun, Jiangxi province, China March 30, 2023. (@REUTERS/Staff/File Photo)

Why did China invade Tibet? There are several reasons, one of which is because Tibet is very rich in natural resources. This fact is supported by Chinese sources. The rising demand for electronic vehicles has given rise to a new race for lithium mining across the globe. Lithium, primarily used in lithium-ion batteries, is considered a suitable replacement for fossil fuels.

China has huge deposits of lithium. It has long been indulged in the mining, processing, and exporting of lithium to the rest of the world. The recent discovery of lithium deposits in the Tibetan Plateau has attracted the attention of hundreds of lithium industries. This has threatened the ecological bio-diversity of "the roof of the world."

A report titled "Tibet, a New Frontline of White Gold Rush in Global Race for Renewable Energy" was published in October 2023 by Turquoise Roof. According to the report, China's geologists have recognized that eastern Tibet has at least 85% of all reserves of lithium in China.

It further highlights that the Tibetan plateau has been assessed to hold at least 3.655 million tons of China's estimated 4.047 million tons of lithium. Electric vehicle manufacturers like Tesla and BYD are heavily reliant on Tibet's lithium exploitation, especially on hard rock lithium (spodumene) available in the region. New factories have been set up while existing factories have doubled their production of lithium.

Xi Jinping's Campaign

As per the Turquoise Roof report, lithium extraction and its processing involve waste generation, pollution, and highly energy-consuming processes. These further damage the local rivers and livestock.

The report further stressed that this large-scale exploitation of Tibet has been initiated and supported by Xi Jinping himself under his "Made in China 2025" campaign. During his visit to Qinghai Province in 2021, Xi called for the escalation of lithium extraction on a

large scale. Apart from lithium, Tibet is home to the world's largest deposits of critical minerals used in various technologies in critical industries like pharmaceuticals and electronics.

Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet in the late 1950s, China began mining work in the Tsaidam Basin for chromium and bauxite. Its second biggest mining work was launched in the 1980s for the mining of gold in the river basin of Kham and Amdo.

Following the discovery of large deposits of copper, Tibet saw an increase in mining in the 21st century. Recently, the discovery of huge deposits of lithium has attracted the world's largest electronic manufacturers from all across the globe. This has led to further exploitation of the natural ecology of the area. Lithium has long been used as the energy source in lithium-ion batteries.

Water and Soil Pollution

However, the continuous mining in the area has had a devastating impact on the ecology of the Tibetan Plateau, raising the pollution level. It not only polluted rivers and streams but, in several cases, even diverted their flow. This has severely affected the flora and fauna of the region. The government in Beijing seems least concerned about the negative effect of continuous mining across the Tibetan Plateau. Its whole focus is on making money.

Rivers have been affected the most, and they are far from recovery. The Tibetan Plateau is the origin of mighty rivers like Mekong and Yarlung Tsangpo (known as Brahmaputra in the Indian sub-continent). These rivers have been the living force for millions of people in Southeast Asia and South Asia.

Continuous mining activities along these rivers have badly impacted the essential minerals present in the water. This has led to a decline in fisheries, which are the primary source of food in the Southeastern nations. The economies of Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and southern Vietnam are heavily dependent on the Mekong River fish.

The shortage of fish has created a situation like a food crisis in these countries. On the other hand, hundreds of people die every year due to the consumption of polluted water and infected aquatic animals from these rivers.

Pollution and waste from the Gyama Copper Poly-metallic mine has poisoned the water flowing adjacent to the city of Lhasa. This has affected the health of thousands of local Tibetans in Lhundup County.

China's 'Dumping Ground'

Another problem is the contamination of soil. During lithium extraction, several chemicals come into contact with soil. Rivers and floods further aid this contaminated soil to reach agricultural fields, affecting the growth of crops. Apart from poisoning the nearby surface water, it also has severe effects on the groundwater.

In many cases, mine workers and surrounding inhabitants have been seriously affected and later diagnosed with various medical implications. Some have even died due to leaks of these chemicals and gases. In many parts of the Tibetan Plateau, hundred acres of vegetation and agricultural land have been impacted, further complicating the food security issues in the region.

China has made false promises at platforms like the Conference of Parties (CoP) summits and other environmental protection summits. Little has been achieved in maintaining ecological biospheres around Tibet.

On the contrary, Tibet has become a dumping ground for Beijing. Glaciers are melting, tens and hundreds of small rivers and streams have dried up, the air is polluted, and floods have become normal occurrences. Many critically endangered species are on the verge of extinction. The "roof of the world" is going through the biggest turbulence while Beijing is busy extracting "white gold."

Inside the exquisite Tibetan monasteries salvaged from climate change

01 May 2024, BBC, [Tulsi Rauniyar](#)



Lo Manthang's climate-ravaged monasteries have been meticulously restored by the local community (Credit: Tulsi Rauniyar)

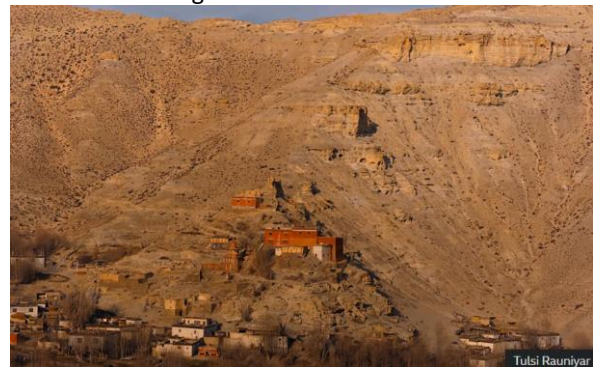
Extreme weather is threatening these intricate 14th Century Tibetan monasteries, but local people are rising to the challenge to preserve them.

Tashi Kunga stands before the Kag Choede monastery, built into the Dhaulagiri mountain range on the Tibet-Nepal border. The monk's carmine robes glint in the rain, as he recounts the ancient legend of Guru Rinpoche's battle with a demon.

The legend goes that centuries ago, a demon wreaked havoc on a monastery in Tibet. Guru Rinpoche chased it south to Upper Mustang in Nepal and defeated the demon following a ferocious battle, burying the demon's remains across the mountain range. The people of Mustang honoured the sacred grounds by building monasteries atop the demon's body parts.

"And right on the demon's heart, the capital of Lo Manthang [was built] in 1380," says Kunga, pointing towards the narrow alleys, ancient monasteries, and flat roofs adorned with prayer flags of one of the last medieval walled cities in the world.

For centuries, Lobas, the indigenous people residing here, have thrived in this remote region situated on top of the Tibetan Plateau. One thing that has remained constant is the monasteries, locally known as "Gonpas", the most treasured heritage of the region. But almost two decades ago, many of these monasteries, which date back to the 14th Century, started crumbling.



The ancient monasteries of Mustang, Nepal, have started crumbling due to climate impacts (Credit: Tulsi Rauniyar)

Experts sounded the alarm, attributing the collapse to the severe impacts of climate change. Data indicates a significant increase in the intensity of storms and rainfall across the region. Increased rainfall saturates the rammed-earth buildings, as moisture in the soil is drawn upward into the walls, leading to issues such as leaking roofs and rising damp.

"For us, Buddhists, the paintings and the artifacts in the monasteries are embodiments of the gods themselves, and we can't worship a half-damaged idol," says Kanga. "There was no one to repair it. Our heritage was slowly decaying away. We thought the deities were angry."

Buddhist monasteries have long been revered as the foundation of Tibetan culture, serving as a vital hub for the creation and safeguarding of both tangible artifacts and profound intellectual traditions. But as unprecedented weather patterns pose a threat to their cultural heritage, local community members have stepped up to restore them. Local people have gained diverse skills, from reinforcing walls to crafting metal statues and restoring paintings.

Over the past 20 years, a team of local Lobas trained by Western art conservationists have replaced the old, leaky roofs of the temples with round timbers, river stones, and local clay for waterproofing, and have restored the wall paintings, statues, sculpted pillars and the ceiling decorations, giving these centuries-old monuments a new life.

Luigi Fiegni, the lead art conservator at Lo Manthang, has spearheaded the restoration project. Transforming a community of farmers into conservators has been challenging, he says. Most of the Lobas had never held a pen or a paint brush before, and undertook extensive training before they began restoring the 15th Century paintings.

"But it all worked out," says Fiegni. "Tourists visiting Mustang were keenly interested in religion. So we felt these sacred artifacts needed preservation not only for their historical significance but also for sustaining livelihoods here."

The team, initially made up of 10 members, has grown to 45 conservators, mostly women, although there was initial reluctance to accept any women in the group. According to local tradition, women are prohibited from touching sacred objects. However, women did eventually take part in the Lo Manthang restoration project.

"It took years of discussion and negotiation with the local clergy and community, but we succeeded in including local women in the wall-painting conservation team," says Fiegni.

Married Tibetan women are typically responsible for cooking, cleaning, milking the animals, churning the butter and collecting yak dung for fuel. Tashi Wangmo, 40, used to spend her time herding yak, collecting and selling herbs, and doing various odd jobs, but it never provided much income. When she received the opportunity to pursue new training and earn a daily wage in the restoration project, she jumped at it.

"It enabled many of us [women] to break free from the limits of our homes, expand our skillsets, and find new opportunities," she says. "Otherwise, life remains stagnant for us, confined to the corners with little purpose or prospects."

Another female restorer Dolma Tsering, 42, wasn't there just to learn art or refine her painting skills. She believed that by participating in the monastery's restoration, she would earn spiritual merit and contribute to the promotion of Tibetan Buddhism through her work.

"Once you compare the faded, scraped-off outlines of deities and the vibrant expressions of revived figures, you will recognise the incredible scale of everyone's efforts. It has increased the cultural value of Lo Manthang," says Tsering. "And as women, we were able to play [a role] in it."

But the community continues to face challenges amid the onslaught of climate change. The Himalayas are particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures and climate impacts. When rainfall comes, it pours in abundance, but prolonged drought is also common. In 2023, heavy rainfall flooded many small rivers and brooks in Mustang, leading to widespread flood damage in neighbouring villages.

The roads facilitating easy transport in the region have also contributed to rapid population decline, with many Lobas moving to cities in search of economic opportunities, says Gurung.

Tashi Gurung stands out as a prime example of a farmer-turned-restorer who chose to remain in the region. He wasn't exposed to Tibetan Buddhist art as a child, but today he owns an art gallery in Lo Manthang. His gallery showcases a remarkable array of thangkas, portraying the Buddha, his teachings, and various deities and other spiritual beings such as the bodhisattvas. His art sales not only sustain himself but also enable him to send his children to school.

Reflecting on his decision to stay, Gurung acknowledges the profound impact of monasteries on his life. "If it weren't for the monasteries, I might have followed my friends who left Mustang for better opportunities abroad," he says.

The restoration efforts have sparked a cultural renaissance, according to Fiegni. Numerous women and young people have received training in traditional craftsmanship, long-forgotten festivals have been revived, magnificent wall paintings restored for religious purposes, and monasteries and nunneries are thriving once again, he says.

"Om mani padme hum," the students at the Lo Monastic School chant the mantra that Tibetans use to invoke the bodhisattva of compassion, who is also Tibet's patron saint. Today, Kunga says, the danger imperilling the walled city of Lo Manthang and its age-old monasteries doesn't stem from mythological demons, but rather from the impacts of climate change.

"If we want to save our culture, we all need to join hands and save the monasteries because everything here spins around religion," says Tsering.

TIBET IN EXILE

Chinese ambassador reprimands Estonian MP for visiting Tibetans in D'shala last month

30 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In a belated, angry reaction, the Chinese Ambassador to Estonia has written to an Estonian MP, reprimanding him for visiting the exile Tibetan community in India at Dharamshala and meeting with their Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) leaders late last month, reported *news.err.ee* May 29.

The Ambassador, Mr Guo Xiaomei, has also requested a meeting with the MP, Mr Juku-Kalle Raid, who is the chairman of the parliamentary support group for Tibet in the Riigikogu, Estonia's unicameral parliament.

"No country or government in the world has ever recognized 'Tibetan independence'," the report quoted Guo as having written to Raid. "As a responsible politician, a member of the Riigikogu should firmly adhere to international norms, respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, become more familiar with facts related to Xizang, and cease any form of interaction with the so-called Tibetan government in exile."

Raid has dismissed Guo's complaint as "a very old and tired tune in which China always reacts very painfully to questions about Tibet."

"But not only that. Beijing was similarly enraged by a visit to Taiwan, and the same happens every time someone draws attention to the Chinese regime, which relentlessly harasses minority peoples," Raid has said.

Raid led an Estonian parliamentary and Tibet Support Group (TSG) delegation to Dharamshala late last month. The delegation included Estonian parliament members Henn Polluaas (former speaker) and Tarmo Tamm; former MP Andres Herkel; journalist Roy Strider and Estonian Tibet Support Coordinator; and TSG members Eleri Porroson and Annabel Piiritalu.

The delegation took part in the commemoration on Apr 25 of the 35th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet's second most prominent religious figure abducted and disappeared by the Chinese government when he was six years old, in 1995. His fate or whereabouts have continued to remain unknown to this day. China has appointed its own 11th Panchen Lama to replace him.

In his address to the gathering at that time, Raid, who is said to be also a member of the Estonian government's Foreign Affairs Commission, said, "We have had a similar past, and the past was similarly terrible, but we hope we will have a similar future that is not terrible."

Raid also met with the Dalai Lama and visited the Tibetan Parliament in Exile during the visit, said the CTA in its *Tibet.net* website reports Apr 25 and 26.

PM Modi refers to his frequent talks with the Dalai Lama in election speech

25 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed that he talked frequently with the Dalai Lama in his May 24 election speech in Mandi constituency, which covers almost two-thirds of the state of Himachal Pradesh, reported the *IANS* news service May 24. The state votes on Jun 1 to elect four members to the Lok Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament.

Modi's BJP and the Congress are the main rivals for all the four seats. The BJP candidate for the Mandi Lok Sabha constituency seat is the well-known Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut. Soon after her nomination for contesting the seat, Ranaut called on the Dalai Lama on Apr 15, accompanied by the state's former BJP Chief minister Jairam Ramesh Thakur. She called her experience of the meeting "very emotional", and something she will "cherish all my life."

Meanwhile, in his election speech in Mandi, Modi has said, "India is the country of Buddha and the Modi government has vigorously promoted this heritage," while highlighting places of Buddhism in the state.

Modi's remarks came after reports that the actress was shown black flags at the Buddhist-dominated Kaza in Lahaul and Spiti. It was reported as a protest against her for what was seen as a critical online Tweet on the Tibetan spiritual leader by her in Apr 2023, although the actress later apologised after protests and said it was meant to be a harmless joke and that she respected the Dalai Lama.

Referring to that episode, the Congress candidate Vikramaditya Singh on May 22 targeted Ranaut, saying, "People of the tribal area worship Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama as their God and if someone passes any remarks against their God, they will surely not like it and protest," reported the *PTI* news agency May 22.

The report cited Ranaut as saying the Congress was behind the protest against her at Kaza.

The Mandi constituency seat includes Kullu, Mandi and some areas of Chamba and Shimla districts, besides the tribal-dominated Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti, which are dominated by Buddhists.

Interestingly, Modi's assertion came just hours after the state's Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu made a courtesy call on the Dalai Lama, said the *IANS* report said.

Sukhu sought blessings from the Dalai Lama, who praised the state and India's religious respect, reported the *PTI* May 24.

The report also said around 800 Tibetan exiles had registered as voters in this election.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Addresses Participants of Conference Themed 'Investigating the Impact of Contemplative Practices'

24 May 2024, [CTA](#)

Thekchen Chöling, Dharamshala, HP, India, 24 May 2024: This morning His Holiness the Dalai Lama met 200 people from, or associated with, Emory University, who have come to Dharamshala to take part in a conference on the theme 'Investigating the Impact of Contemplative Practices'. Executive Director of the Emory Compassion Center, Geshé Lobsang Tenzin Negi, introduced the occasion.

"Your Holiness, on behalf of everyone present I would like to express our gratitude to you for inviting us to this conference co-hosted by Emory University and the Dalai Lama Trust.

"Among us are Emory faculty, staff and students; Emory-Tibet Science Initiative (ETSI) students, teachers and staff; Tibetan teachers and students who are following Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning (SEE Learning) programs, as well as other observers and participants.

"For the first time, Tibetan monastic scholars who have systematically studied modern science are presenting the first outcomes of their research in the field of contemplative practice. This is an historic event, the fruit of your visionary introduction of science to the Tibetan monastic centers of learning about 20 years ago. Science has become an integral part of Tibetan monastic education. As a result of this education, monks and nuns are emerging as scientists. "Before handing over to Dr Barbara Krauthammer, Dean of Emory University, I'd like to introduce David Nassar, Vice-president of the Templeton Foundation and John Cunningham, Executive Director of the Templeton Foundation. We are grateful for their presence and the Foundation's support of the ETSI Program over the last ten years."

Dr Negi explained that Emory students who are studying Tibetan culture, Buddhist philosophy and the Buddhist science of mind; ETSI students and Tibetan school-children would each put a question to His Holiness.

On behalf of Emory University Dr Barbara Krauthammer thanked His Holiness for his vision and kindness.

"I have nothing special to say today," His Holiness replied. "From our study of Buddhism, we have access to a great deal of information about psychology, the workings of the mind and emotions. When they talk about religion, people are generally referring to matters of faith not how to conduct an investigation. However, the Nalanda Tradition places emphasis on taking a critical, analytical approach, and its scholars are learned when it comes to the study of the mind.

“When the Indian master Shantarakshita came to Tibet in 8th century he recognized that Tibetans have an ability for deep thought. This was a measure of his kindness to us.

“I like to talk about secular ethics and what make them important is that they can be applied by anyone whether they are religious or not. The crucial issue is to discover how to achieve peace of mind. Buddhists also have to understand that what’s important is not the conduct of rituals, but whether we can endow others and ourselves with peace of mind. And the way to do this is by employing the mind.



Barbara Krauthamer, Dean of Emory College of Arts and Sciences, thanking His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his vision and kindness during the meeting with participants of the conference about the impact of Contemplative studies, co-organised by Emory University and The Dalai Lama Trust, at his residence in Dharamshala, HP, India on 24 May 2024. Photo by Tenzin Choejor

“In the monastic curriculum we learn about the four Buddhist philosophical schools, but when we interact with other people it’s more practical to talk about how our mind and emotions work. This is something of common interest. The way we can help other people is to discuss how to relax and achieve peace of mind from a scientific point of view.

An Emory University student asked His Holiness how to keep hope alive in our world today.

“A lot of the time,” His Holiness replied, “we have all sorts of expectations, but what we have to keep in mind is that bad as well as good things can happen. We have to use our intelligence to solve the problems we face. We have to examine what is really going on. Sometimes we may turn to religion in search of a solution, but much more effective is to employ our intelligence and our ability to reason.

“When we engage in formal debate in the monasteries, it’s customary for challengers to cite quotations from scripture to support their assertions. The defenders take off their hats to indicate their respect, but then reply that what has been cited is not logically necessary. Instead, they declare that what’s important is to employ our critical faculties.

“A scientific approach is an excellent tool for assessing the reality of any given situation. The Nalanda Tradition too teaches us how analyze and investigate without resort to scripture.”

A monk from the ETSI program asked how monastics who have studied science can contribute to society. His Holiness responded:

“The very purpose of studying is to be able to serve others better. As I’ve already said, we have to use our intelligence with reason and logic. Of course, there is a great deal we learn about the mind from reading books, but we must understand that we will learn more and in greater detail if we examine our minds in a scientific way.”

Noting that His Holiness is keen to encourage an appreciation of secular ethics and that their essence is compassion, a Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) student asked what the nature of compassion is.

“Different traditions teach us how to be more considerate and well-mannered,” His Holiness told her, “but compassion in terms of active concern for others is the key issue. Secular ethics provides us with the means to guide society, but on a person-to-person level, what everyone appreciates is warm-heartedness.”

Two science books published by ETSI were presented to His Holiness. The visitors gathered in their various groups around him to have their photographs taken, and then they departed for the first session of their conference.

Central Tibetan Administration Appreciates the US Senate’s Unanimous Passage of Resolve Tibet Bill

24 May 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the media during a press conference held on the US Senate’s passage of Resolve Tibet Bill following the conclusion of Tibetan Cooperative’s Conference. Photo / Tenzin Phende / CTA

The Central Tibetan Administration commends the US Senate’s unanimous passage of the S. 138, titled “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act”. The US Senate passed the bipartisan and bicameral legislation on 23 May 2024, sponsored by Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), co-chair of the

Congressional-Executive Commission on China, along with Senator Todd Young (R-IN).

Known as the Resolve Tibet Bill, this act reaffirms the U.S. policy of advocating for direct dialogue between the People's Republic of China and representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, or with democratically elected Tibetan leaders, without preconditions, to address the Tibet-China conflict. It acknowledges that the Tibet-China conflict remains unresolved and that Tibet's legal status is yet to be determined in accordance with international law. Additionally, the legislation aims to combat Chinese government's disinformation about Tibet, including fabricated narratives concerning Tibet's history, culture, people, and institutions, including that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Senator Merkley said, "All peoples around the world have inalienable rights to freedom and self-determination, including the Tibetans. Our bipartisan, bicameral Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act is a direct response to the tactics of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which continues to trample on the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people. The bill supports a peaceful resolution to the ongoing dispute between the PRC and Tibet and counters disinformation from the PRC about Tibet and its history. It now heads back to the House, and we will work to get it to President Biden's desk to help put the people of Tibet in charge of their own future."

Senator Young said, "The Chinese Communist Party's aggression towards Tibet is self-serving, with negotiations and even the very definition of Tibet on the CCP's terms. We must refresh U.S. policy towards Tibet, and push for negotiations that advance freedoms for the Tibetan people and peaceful resolution to the CCP's conflict with the Dalai Lama. The Senate's vote to pass this legislation demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo – both in Tibet and elsewhere – is not acceptable."

Sikyong Penpa Tsering on the Senate's passage of the bill said, "On the very auspicious day of the Saka Dawa, the US Senate unanimously passed the Resolve Tibet Bill. This is an essential step, advancing us significantly toward the bill's enactment and moving us toward right direction. The bill's progress thus far is a result of collective efforts that cannot be accomplished by one person or group alone. Despite our limited human and financial resources, we have demonstrated that by working together, we can achieve our goal. We are particularly grateful to the sponsors of the bill, Senator Jeff Merkley and Senator Todd Young and all the cosponsors for championing this bill and the senate for the decisive support to the bill."

Senate approval sends bill back to House for eventual US mandate to help resolve Tibet's status

24 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The United States Senate has on May 23 unanimously passed the bipartisan Tibet bill titled "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" (or "Resolve Tibet Act" in short). Though already passed by the House of Representatives in Feb 2024 by overwhelming majority, the bill now heads back to it for its concurrence on a few Senate amendments before it could be sent to President Joe Biden for being signed into law.

The bill questions the legitimacy of the Chinese occupation rule in Tibet and seeks to make it a US policy to promote a resolution of the Tibet-China dispute in accordance with international law. It specifically rejects as "inaccurate" China's claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times."

In keeping with this fact, the bill, once it becomes law, will empower the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues to actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government and Communist Party, while US government statements and documents will also be required to do the same.

Also, it will require the US government to promote substantive dialogue without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community, leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

The proposed new law will task the US State Department with the responsibility to coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

The US government will also be required to encourage China to address the aspirations of the Tibetan people regarding their distinct historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

President Tencho Gyatso of Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet has thanked Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Ore) and Todd Young (R-Ind), who had introduced the bill in the Senate, for their dedication to the cause of freedom and justice for Tibetans.

Senator Merkley has called the bill a direct response to the tactics of the People's Republic of China (PRC), "which continues to trample on the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people." He has said "he bill supports a peaceful resolution to the ongoing dispute between the PRC and Tibet and counters disinformation from the PRC about Tibet and its history."

Condemning China's ongoing aggression towards Tibet as self-serving, Senator Young has said, "We must refresh US policy towards Tibet, and push for negotiations that advance freedoms for the Tibetan

people and peaceful resolution to the CCP's conflict with the Dalai Lama. The Senate's vote to pass this legislation demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo – both in Tibet and elsewhere – is not acceptable."

Namgyal Choedup, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America has said: "Senate passage of the Resolve Tibet Act is a clear message that China's systematic oppression and erasure of Tibetan identity is never the answer to resolving the Tibet-China dispute."

Sikyong (executive head) Penpa Tsering of the CTA sees the Senate's unanimous passage of the bill as auspicious, saying, "On the very auspicious day of the Saka Dawa, the US Senate unanimously passed the Resolve Tibet Bill." The full-moon day of the Sakadawa (4th month of the Tibetan calendar) marks the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddhas Shakyamuni and it fell on May 23 this year.

Senator Merkley has vowed to work with others to get the bill to President Biden's desk to help put the people of Tibet in charge of their own future.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Addresses Closing Ceremony of Tibetan Cooperative's Conference

24 May 2024, [CTA](#)



The participants of the 3-day Tibetan Cooperative Society's Conference, 24 May 2024.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration attended the closing ceremony of the 3-day Tibetan Cooperative's conference today, 24 May 2024, at the CTA training centre located inside the premises of the Tibetan Reception Centre. In his keynote address as the event's chief guest, Sikyong stressed the purpose of this meeting, which aimed to draft proposals for establishing a cohesive and robust exiled Tibetan Community through the initiatives of Tibetan Cooperative Societies backed by DoH and FTCL. Sikyong encouraged the workshop participants to perform their duties according to the noble wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to continue the legacies of His Holiness-led older Tibetan generations. Given the

fact that one of the key objectives of Tibetan Cooperative Societies is to make Tibetan settlements viable and sustainable, Sikyong suggested meeting the work demands of younger generations in settlements by creating additional job opportunities through innovative schemes. Sikyong further proposed creating guidelines for future reference to promote healthy functioning and collaboration amongst the DoH, FTCL, and member Cooperatives Societies.

On a sideline event, Sikyong Penpa Tsering also brought attention to a significant development- the U.S. Senate's Unanimous passage of the Resolve Tibet bill on 23 May 2024. This news, undoubtedly, brings a sense of hope and optimism for the Tibetan community.

Alongside Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the concluding ceremony of the conference was graced by the presence of other esteemed individuals. These included Home Secretary Palden Dhondup, Additional Secretaries Tenzin Norbu and Jampa Phuntsok, and Pema Delek, Chairman of the Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives in India (FTCI).

Kharge calls upon scholars to unearth hidden history of Buddhism to enlighten next generation

23 May 2024, [The Hindu](#)

Stressing on the need for digging into history and unearthing the facts about Buddhism in the country, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge questioned why the Krishna, the banks of which provided a lot of clues on Buddha, was neglected in historical research as compared to the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the Cauvery.



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge paying floral tributes to Buddha at Buddha Vihar on the outskirts of Kalaburagi on Thursday. | Photo Credit: ARUN KULKARNI

"History is hidden sometimes. It is unearthed some other times. It is also distorted often. Numerous archaeological evidences found along the banks of the Krishna and its tributary the Bhima indicated that Buddhism flourished in southern India. But, there is no further research to unearth more facts about

Buddhism and reconstruct its history. Our mythology has plenty of references to the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the Cauvery and it hardly had any reference to the Krishna and the Bhima,” Mr. Kharge said.

He was speaking at the celebration of the 2568th Vaishakha Purnima, the birth anniversary of Gautam Buddha at Buddha Vihar on the outskirts of Kalaburagi on Thursday.

“King Nagarjuna was a great patron to thousands of Buddhist monks. When he faced stiff resistance to his patronage of Buddhism, he sent the monks to China, Tibet, and other countries. We must pick up such history, which is hitherto hidden, and pass it on to the next generation, no matter what resistance we face,” Mr. Kharge said.

Expressing his discontentment over the poor response to Buddhist thoughts in India, Mr. Kharge said that the number of foreigners visiting Sarnath was more than Indians visiting the place.

“People from Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and other countries increasingly visit Sarnath. How many people from India are visiting the place which is just 16 km from Varanasi? It is the place where Gautama Buddha taught his first sermon to his five disciples after attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya,” he said.

Upholding the Buddha as a great philosopher and social reformer who enlightened the world with his revolutionary and scientific thoughts, Mr. Kharge, who is the founder of Buddha Vihar Trust in Kalaburagi, called upon the people understand, internalise, and follow Buddhist philosophy to get enlightened and lead a more humane life.

“We all must read, understand and internalise Buddha. Those who follow Buddha will be enlightened and lead a meaningful life. All religions have a bunch of fairytales and legendary stories. The followers of those religions exaggerated them to impress the people. However, Buddha had never lied. There was no exaggeration in Buddhist stories. All his words are facts and based on real-life experiences. His philosophy is rational and scientific. This is what exactly Basavanna [the 12th-century social reformer and poet in Karnataka] had advocated through his Vachanas [poems]. We need to think of and follow such scientific and progressive ideologies to lead more meaningful life,” Mr. Kharge said.

The event was attended by Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil, MLAs Allamprabhu Patil and M.Y. Patil, MLC Tippannappa Kamaknur and Congress leader Jagadev Guttedar.

Apart from Mr. Kharge’s wife Radhabai and several Buddhist monks arrived from different places.

“Buddha never advised his followers or the people at large what to be done and what not to be done. He never said he was a god. He simply went on to share his experiences. Buddha is regarded as the ninth

incarnation of Vishnu. Is Buddha receiving the same treatment that Rama, Krishna, Parashuram, and other deities who were regarded as the other incarnations of Vishnu are receiving? When we had raised such valid questions, Prime Minister Modi alleged that we are making divisions between deities,” Mr. Kharge said.

Writer H.R. Swamy, who gave a special lecture on Buddha and his thoughts, said that Albert Einstein, who was regarded as the greatest scientist of all times, had termed Buddhism as the religion based on scientific foundation.

“The Buddhist thoughts are the basis for the revolutionary and progressive thoughts of the 12th century reformer Basavanna and Mahatma Gandhi,” he said.

Resolve Tibet Act unanimously passes Senate

23 May 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The United States Senate unanimously passed the bipartisan Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act today, May 23, 2024.

Also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, this bill will strengthen US efforts to push the Chinese government to resolve the longstanding Tibet-China dispute through dialogue with Tibetan leaders.

In a statement, International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) President Tencho Gyatso lauded the advance of the bill and emphasized that China must resume dialogue with the Tibetans, saying, “I hope Beijing will now see that this dispute must be resolved through negotiation, instead of an assault on Tibet’s unique and ancient civilization.”

Steady advance through Congress

The House version of the Resolve Tibet Act was passed earlier this year with overwhelming bipartisan support. Although additional procedural hurdles remain, passing the Senate is a crucial step forward for the bill.

This day arrived following ongoing advocacy efforts ICT, the Office of Tibet, Tibetan Associations around the country, and other prominent Tibet groups that included postcard campaigns to members of Congress, letters from Tibetan Associations to their elected representatives, and numerous grassroots efforts by Tibet support groups including a record-breaking turnout at the 2024 Tibet Lobby Day, organized by ICT. After 65 years of Chinese occupation, Tibet’s global freedom score has now dropped all the way to zero, watchdog group Freedom House says in a recent report.

Quotes from Congress members and Tibetan leaders

International Campaign for Tibet President Tencho Gyatso said: “Today’s Senate action is an indication that American support of Tibet will never waver. The

Resolve Tibet Act is crystal clear; it is incumbent on China to resume dialogue, and the United States will not accept China's disinformation about Tibet, particularly when it concerns the historical status of Tibet. I thank Senator Merkley and Senator Young for their dedication to the cause of freedom and justice for Tibetans, and I hope Beijing will now see that this dispute must be resolved through negotiation instead of an assault on Tibet's unique and ancient civilization."

Senator Jeff Merkley, D-OR, said: "All peoples around the world have inalienable rights to freedom and self-determination, including the Tibetans. Our bipartisan, bicameral Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act is a direct response to the tactics of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which continues to trample on the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people. The bill supports a peaceful resolution to the ongoing dispute between the PRC and Tibet and counters disinformation from the PRC about Tibet and its history. It now heads back to the House, and we will work to get it to President Biden's desk to help put the people of Tibet in charge of their own future."

Senator Todd Young, R-IN, said: "The Chinese Communist Party's aggression towards Tibet is self-serving, with negotiations and even the very definition of Tibet on the CCP's terms. We must refresh U.S. policy towards Tibet, and push for negotiations that advance freedoms for the Tibetan people and peaceful resolution to the CCP's conflict with the Dalai Lama. The Senate's vote to pass this legislation demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo – both in Tibet and elsewhere – is not acceptable."

Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America Namgyal Choedup said: "Senate passage of the Resolve Tibet Act is a clear message that China's systematic oppression and erasure of Tibetan identity is never the answer to resolving the Tibet-China dispute. The Central Tibet Administration remains fully committed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision of a Middle Way to find a mutually beneficial and long-lasting negotiated solution to the Tibet-China dispute. We are grateful for Senator Merkley and Senator Young's leadership in showing that America will not concede to China's false claims and refusal to follow international law. Until China comes back to the negotiating table in good faith, the Tibetan people will never abandon hope and will remain resilient in their non-violent resistance. Ending the Tibet-China dispute is within grasp—if China is willing to abandon lies for truth."

What the bill does

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act states that it is US policy that the dispute between Tibet and China remains unresolved in accordance with international law.

The legislation also:

- Empowers the Special Coordinator for Tibet to actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government and Communist Party, including working to ensure that US government statements and documents counter disinformation about Tibet.
- Rejects as "inaccurate" China's false claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times."
- Promotes substantive dialogue without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community. The US could also explore activities to improve prospects for dialogue leading to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.
- Affirms the State Department's responsibility to coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.
- Encourages China's government to address the aspirations of the Tibetan people regarding their distinct historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

Reports detail forced displacement and violent reprisals against protest in Tibet

22 May 2024, [China Digital Times](#), Arthur Kaufman

Two research reports published this week underscore how authorities in Tibet have displaced local communities to impose state-sponsored projects, undermining environmental protection and human rights. The collaborative research network Turquoise Roof published the first report, "Occupying Tibet's rivers: China's hydropower 'battlefield' in Tibet." The report details how violent paramilitary reprisals have stifled protests against the construction of the planned Kamtok hydropower dam along the Driчу (Yangtze) river, threatening the displacement of villages and Buddhist monasteries:

The protests draw urgent attention to China's extractivist plans that are carving up the Tibetan landscape, risking landslides, earthquakes and food insecurity, and impacting tens of millions living downstream in China, India and elsewhere in Asia. State-owned conglomerates are accelerating the construction of mega dams and associated infrastructure in Tibet despite the inherent dangers of a seismically unstable region where river systems are increasingly unpredictable due to climate change.

For the first time, China's dambuilding is now reaching upriver to the sources of Asia's great wild mountain

rivers in Tibet in landscapes that were previously among the least disturbed habitats on earth. Tibet is described by Chinese engineers as “the main battlefield of China’s hydropower construction”, while a Chinese chief engineer warned that the process of constructing a dam in the upper reaches of the Drichu river is like building “high-rise blocks on tofu”.

[...] The plans involve the entire population of the area – monks and lay, old and young – being uprooted and displaced in their thousands from villages and monasteries that have flourished upstream in the sacred mountains of Gëndong alongside the Drichu or the upper Yangtze River, the longest and largest river on the Eurasian continent.

[...] The construction of the Kamtok dam risks a cascade of adverse consequences both on the plateau and in China, serving as a reminder that China’s policies in Tibet – where water is regarded as a ‘strategic asset’ by the Communist Party state – affect global climate systems already challenged by food and water insecurity involving glacial melting and erratic monsoon cycles. A leading Tibetan professor based in Beijing has revealed data showing that the rivers of Tibet are becoming more and more unpredictable.

Protests against the dam began in mid-February in Derge County (also known as Dege) in Sichuan Province, where authorities reportedly arrested over 100 Tibetan Buddhist monks and other residents. Videos of the protests showed black-clad forces pushing around Tibetan monks who were peacefully protesting. Similar dynamics were observed in mid-April, as Tibet Watch reported that the government had already started relocating around 60 households located near another planned hydropower station on the Machu river in Qinghai Province.

A second report was published by Human Rights Watch and titled, “Educate the Masses to Change Their Minds: China’s Forced Relocation of Rural Tibetans.” The report draws on over 1,000 official Chinese media articles between 2016 and 2023 as well as government publications and academic field studies. It shows that Chinese media reports in many cases contradict official claims that all those relocated gave their consent and instead indicate that participation in “whole-village relocation” programs in Tibet is in effect compulsory:

The official press reports indicate the extreme forms of persuasion—that is, coercion—used by officials to pressure villagers and nomadic people or nomads to agree to whole-village relocation. These methods include repeated home visits; denigrating the intellectual capacity of the villagers to make decisions for themselves; implicit threats of punishment; banning of criticism; and threats of disciplinary action against local officials who fail to meet targets. In some cases, officials of increasing seniority visited families at

their homes to gain their “consent,” visits that sometimes were repeated over several years. Some official press reports and videos obtained by Human Rights Watch show officials telling residents that essential services would be cut to their current homes if they did not move. Others showed authorities openly threatening villagers who voiced disagreements about the relocations, accusing them of “spreading rumors” and ordering officials to crack down on such actions “swiftly and resolutely”—implying administrative and criminal penalties. This report includes three case studies that show in detail the timelines, objectives, arguments, and methods used to obtain the “consent” of residents of entire villages to relocate.

[...] Official statistics suggest that between 2000 and 2025, the Chinese authorities will have relocated over 930,000 rural Tibetans (see Appendix I). Most of these relocations—over 709,000 people or 76 percent of these relocations—have taken place since 2016. Among these 709,000 people relocated, 140,000 are moved as part of the whole village relocation drives, 567,000 as part of individual household relocations.

[...] The relocation program in Tibet contravenes international human rights law standards. International law prohibits “forced evictions,” which have been defined as the removal of individuals, families, or communities against their will from their homes or land without access to appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions include those that lack meaningful consultation or compensation, and which do not consider “all feasible alternatives” to relocation. Otherwise, lawful evictions must still be carried out in compliance with relevant international human rights law and “in accordance with general principles of reasonableness and proportionality.”

The report stated that over three million Tibetans have been forced to give up their traditional nomadic lifestyles based on yak herding and agriculture, and that “most relocation programs in Tibet move former farmers and pastoralists to areas where they cannot practice their former livelihood and have no choice but to seek work as wage laborers in off-farm industries.” Providing more details from the report, Marrian Zhou from Nikkei Asia highlighted the involuntary nature of the relocations and their detrimental economic effects:

In one case, 200 out of 262 families in a village in the nomadic area of Nagqu initially refused to move almost 1,000 kilometers away. Villagers eventually consented and there has been no record of anyone who was able to avoid relocation.

“The Chinese government says that the relocation of Tibetan villages is voluntary, but official media reports contradict this claim,” said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. “Those reports make

clear that when a whole village is targeted for relocation, it is practically impossible for the residents to refuse to move without facing serious repercussions.”

[...] Government officials also ask poorer families to move away from areas that are deemed “more suitable for income generation,” according to the report. Researchers found that local officials sometimes lied about the economic benefits of relocation to get the families to move, leaving them financially stranded in their new neighborhoods.

[...] Chinese laws require that families who relocate demolish their former homes to prevent them from returning. Researchers found that local officials in Tibet often enforce the demolition as well.



International Campaign for Tibet · May 22, 2024

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ICT President Tencho Gyatso says, “China’s coercive mass displacement of Tibetans destroys Tibetan way of life and culture under the misleading policy labels of ‘poverty alleviation’ and ‘ecology protection’. Tibetans have had lived on the Tibetan plateau for thousands of years..”



International Campaign for Tibet

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way before China came into existence, adapting genetically and socially on how best to live and protect the high-altitude environment. China’s reckless displacement policy and programs is pulling apart Tibetan society, its ancient cultural and environmental best practices.”

7:30 PM · May 22, 2024



1



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State-driven forced displacement has put Tibetan culture under threat. President of the Tibetan government-in-exile Penpa Tsering told France Culture this week, “We need to talk with the Chinese government. We try to find dialogue. But if you see what the government is doing all over China : everything is aimed at eradicating Tibetan culture. It is a true cultural genocide. We are dying a slow death, and so are the Uyghurs.” Covering the Human Rights Watch report for VOA, William Yang showed that Tibetan activists shared Penpa’s fears about the eradication of Tibetan identity:

Some Tibetan activists worry that the mass relocation or displacement of Tibetan communities may eventually “eradicate the Tibetan identity.”

“It takes many years for [a community] to flourish in one land, and you can’t easily build that in a place where you are not willing to go,” Tenzin Choekyi, a senior researcher at Tibet Watch, told VOA by phone. In her view, the implementation of the relocation policies hasn’t taken the Tibetan community’s

opinions and thoughts into consideration. “The Tibetan identity is in the hands of the Chinese party-state and is being eradicated under different policy directives,” she said.

This week, Tibetscapes, a research collective at the Indian Institute of Technology–Madras, shared a preview of R. Madhumitha’s recently submitted M.A. thesis that connects the themes of forced displacement, urbanization, Tibetan identity. It is titled, “Fiction as a Window to Contemporary Tibet: Understanding the Tibetan Experience of Sedentarisation & Urbanisation”:

Madhumitha’s thesis examines Tibetan responses to Chinese state-making as they emerge through modern Tibetan fiction in English and English translations of Tibetan writing. She argues that 21st-century Tibetan literature has framed an uneasy confrontation with the state’s processes of sedentarization and urbanisation as a central element of the modern Tibetan identity and captures diverse and nuanced lived experiences of Tibetans.

Last year, CDT produced an interview series about Tibet and spoke with Tenzin Norgay, Lhadon Tethong (part one and part two), Bhuchung Tsering, Dechen Pemba, and Tsering Yangzom Lama. The latest interview in the series was with Lobsang Yangtso, Environmental Researcher at the International Tibet Network, who argued that the Chinese government’s interpretation of environmental protection in fact prioritizes extractive economic policies at the expense of sustainability and participatory governance:

The kind of environmental problems that we see in Tibet, all of them are very urgent. But one thing that I would like to highlight is how the Chinese government interprets environmental protection in the name of clean energy and so-called ecological civilization. They bring policies to Tibet and then remove people from their land in the name of protection: people are relocated, nomads are removed from their land. According to the Chinese government, removing nomads is essential to protect the grassland from degradation, and also to elevate the nomads from poverty. This is a really significant issue because nomads are losing their livelihood. And the nomadic way of life is their identity, their culture. The participation of nomads in the decision making is completely missing in the current policy that we see in Tibet. This has an economic, cultural, and political implication as well. So I feel this is very, very urgent.

[...] When we talk about environmental policies from the government, the one problem that I see is that, in this whole policy of the Chinese government, economic development is the main emphasis, and in the name of economic development, they try to gain legitimacy from the local people. For them, economic development is more important than environmental protection in Tibet. So many policies like urbanization,

especially when we specifically focus on border areas, specifically on the Brahmaputra, that kind of infrastructure development—the roads, the railways, the airports that we see have a lot of impact on water. Slowly, with these infrastructure developments, it will bring more army, more Chinese, and then slowly they will do mining, and then tunnel-building. Everything is all about gaining and extracting the resources from Tibet and then neglecting the respect for the whole nature and ecosystem. For us, we believe in nature reserves and we believe the rivers are sacred, but these concepts have not been really included in the policymaking. Right now, we are under the colonial occupation of China. And yes, the whole global world is facing climate change, but Chinese political control and colonialism has further degraded the whole Tibet environment.

China accelerates forced relocation of rural Tibetans to urban areas, report says

22 May 2024, [VOA](#), William Yang

In a newly released report, Human Rights Watch says China has been accelerating the forced relocation of Tibetan villagers and herders in the name of “poverty alleviation” and environmental protection since 2016. While Chinese authorities describe the relocations as voluntary, the New York-based international rights organization’s report cites more than 1,000 Chinese state media reports and government publications that it says contradict that assertion.

“The news articles indicate that participation in whole-village relocation programs in Tibet is in effect compulsory,” the report said, adding that many Tibetans asked to relocate express “high levels of reluctance.”

China’s official data suggests that more than 930,000 Tibetans in rural areas have been relocated since 2000, and around 76% of these relocations happened since 2016, the report said.



FILE - Yaks graze around tents set up for herders to live in the during the summer grazing season on grasslands near Lhasa, in western China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, on June 2, 2021.

Of that total, at least 140,000 rural Tibetans were moved as part of what authorities called “whole-village relocation.” In some cases, rural Tibetans are relocated to places hundreds of kilometers from their homes.

And while some Tibetan villagers are reluctant to take part in the government’s relocation program initially, state media reports show how local authorities have used coercive measures, including repeated home visits, threats of punishment or the banning of criticism, to push these Tibetans to comply, the report said.

“In some cases, officials of increasing seniority visit families to gain their ‘consent’ [while] some official reports show [local authorities] telling residents that essential services would be cut to their current homes if they didn’t move,” the report wrote.

Human Rights Watch also found that higher-level authorities would routinely pressure local officials to use coercive measures to achieve the goal of relocating rural Tibetans. The higher-level authorities would “routinely characterize the relocation program as a non-negotiable policy coming straight from the national capital, Beijing, or from Lhasa, the regional capital,” the report said.

Maya Wang, the interim director at Human Rights Watch, told VOA that the forced relocations are part of the Chinese government’s efforts to “assimilate” Tibetans into the majority Han Chinese society.

“The whole project has an impact of transforming Tibetans’ way of life,” Wang said, adding that the relocations “undermine the Tibetan language, culture and religion.”

During a press conference in 2020, China’s State Council Information Office said 266,000 rural Tibetans had been relocated to 965 areas established by the Chinese government as part of its efforts to “alleviate poverty” in Tibet.

Misleading promises



In addition to the “whole-village relocation,” the report said around 567,000 rural Tibetans may have been relocated as part of the government’s “individual household relocation” program since 2016.

While individual household relocation involves less coercive measures, Human Rights Watch found that officials would try to gain Tibetan families’ consent by providing misleading information about the economic benefits of moving to a new place.

“Surveys carried out by official scholars at relocation sites in Tibet concluded that many of those relocated ‘cannot find suitable jobs to support their families’ and ‘satisfaction with relocation is low,’” the report said.

These Tibetans “have to leave their animals and move to an area near a town where they can’t farm,” Robert Barnett, an expert on Tibet at King’s College London, told VOA by phone.

He said in other cases, rural Tibetans are relocated to areas they are not familiar with culturally, and one of the requirements for them to find jobs in urban centers is to acquire Chinese language skills. “There are lots of question marks about whether the Chinese government thought through this strategy,” Barnett said.

To help Tibetans find jobs, Barnett said the Chinese government has tried to set up industries and projects for them to work on. “I’m not sure it’s a very satisfying form of income for the Tibetans, as they’ve spent their entire lives being their own bosses,” he told VOA.

In response to the report, the Chinese embassy in the United States said the assertion that Tibetans have been forcefully relocated is “entirely groundless.”

“No one has been forced to become ‘transferred laborers’ in Xizang [China’s official name for Tibet] and workers of all ethnic groups in Xizang choose their professions according to their own will,” Liu Pengyu, the spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in the U.S., told VOA in a written response.

Violation of international law

Despite the Chinese government’s defense of its relocation program in Tibet, Human Rights Watch said the two relocation programs and other government programs that require rural Tibetans to rebuild houses or adopt “a sedentary way of life” if they are nomads have affected most of the 4.55 million Tibetan population in rural areas.

“While such mass relocations of residents have been occurring elsewhere in poor rural areas in China, these drives risk causing a devastating impact on Tibetan communities,” the report wrote.

Maya Wang told VOA that the involuntary nature of these relocations constitutes forced eviction, which is prohibited by international law. “This is a classic Chinese development behavior towards minorities that in many ways violates international human rights law,” she said.

Some Tibetan activists worry that the mass relocation or displacement of Tibetan communities may eventually “eradicate the Tibetan identity.”

“It takes many years for [a community] to flourish in one land, and you can’t easily build that in a place where you are not willing to go,” Tenzin Choekyi, a senior researcher at Tibet Watch, told VOA by phone. In her view, the implementation of the relocation policies hasn’t taken the Tibetan community’s opinions and thoughts into consideration. “The Tibetan identity is in the hands of the Chinese party-state and is being eradicated under different policy directives,” she said.

From Scrolls to Screens: Tibetan Digital Library Initiative Begins in Dharamshala-based Monasteries and Cultural Centres

21 May 2024, [CTA](#)



From Scrolls to Screens: Tibetan Digital Library Initiative Begins in Dharamshala-based Monasteries and Cultural Centres

As part of its ongoing Tibetan Digital Library Initiative, the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration, convened a two-day introductory workshop on 13 and 14 May 2024. The workshop’s primary objective was to acquaint the staff and dealing personnel from three Dharamshala-based Tibetan monasteries and cultural centres with the sophisticated tools and methodologies provided by Wadhvani AI and the Buddhist Digital Resource Center’s application.

With the successful conclusion of the workshop, the task force responsible for the initiative commenced the pivotal phase of researching and digitising ancient scriptures housed within the monastic repositories on 15 May.

Under this initiative, the project will render mechanical facilities, along with training and a year-long salary, to dealing staff of the monasteries to realise this digitisation initiative in 20 monasteries by forthcoming September.

The project was funded by USAID.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Congratulates the New President of Taiwan

21 May 2024, [CTA](#)

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to His Excellency Lai Ching-te to offer warm congratulations on his assuming the Presidency of the Republic of China.

“It is wonderful to see how firmly rooted democracy has become in Taiwan,” he wrote. “The Taiwanese people have not only developed a flourishing, robust democracy, but have also achieved great prosperity, while at the same time preserving their rich cultural traditions.

“May I wish you every success in meeting the challenges that lie ahead in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people of Taiwan.”

The only power China lacks is moral power

21 May 2024, [NZZ](#), Marco Kauffmann Bossart



The head of the Tibetan exile government, Penpa Tsering, calls for autonomy for Tibetans living under the Chinese state.

The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama, is as famous as the pope. Few people know the political leader Penpa Tsering. On trips abroad, the president of Tibet's government-in-exile lobbies for autonomy in Tibet, the highlands which were occupied by the young People's Republic of China in 1951.

The communist regime rules the so-called autonomous region of Tibet with an iron fist. It monitors monasteries, and insists on having a say in the naming of the next dalai lama. The officially atheist government in Beijing even had a law passed stating that his reincarnation must take place in China. Tibetan Buddhists believe that the dalai lama is reincarnated after death and can be identified. The 14th dalai lama, the current holder of the title, announced that his reincarnation would take place in a free country, thus ruling out the possibility of his successor being discovered in the People's Republic of China.

Out of consideration for Beijing's sensitivities, Tibetan politicians are rarely received by members of the

government. This made the brief meeting between Penpa Tsering and French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris at the beginning of May all the more remarkable. In Switzerland, the president of the exile government met with members of the Tibet Parliamentary Group.

A delegation of employees and assistants accompanied him to the interview on the roof of a hotel in Bern. The 57-year-old surveyed the snow-covered mountain ranges of the Bernese Oberland, stubbed out a cigarette, and was then ready for the first question.

Mr. Penpa Tsering, the wars in Gaza and Ukraine are dominating the world's attention. Is it still possible to arouse interest in the needs of Tibetans?

Especially now, when bloody conflicts are captivating the world, it is important to promote peaceful solutions. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and the government in exile are striving for a nonviolent «middle way» for Tibet.

What does this middle way look like?

An autonomous status for Tibet, not only in name, but also in reality. However, a middle way can emerge only on the following condition: We must recognize that we are starting from two completely opposite poles. One is the historical status of Tibet as an independent state. The other pole corresponds to Tibet's current situation under the repressive Chinese communist government. *Beijing claims that Tibet has always been part of China. You devote considerable energy to refuting this characterization. Why is this fight so important?*

Regardless of whether we are talking about the occupation of Ukraine or what happened in Tibet 70 years ago, we are talking about the same international law. Tibet was occupied by force. Under international law, this occupation should be null and void. In fact, the Chinese government knows very well that its rule of Tibet has no legitimacy. Otherwise the communists would not be trying with all their might to convince the international community that Tibet has always belonged to China.

For 12 years, there was radio silence between Beijing and the Tibetans in exile. Informal talks have been resumed during your term of office. How did this come about?

The Chinese side approached us at the beginning of 2023. They are obviously aiming to reopen an official channel for talks. But we have no great expectations. You have only to look at what is happening under President Xi Jinping.

What are you alluding to?

China's leadership is aiming to destroy the identity of the various nationalities, especially in Tibet. Boarding schools have been established where everything is taught in Mandarin. Tibetan lessons have been reduced to just four hours per week. University entrance exams and exams for Chinese jobs are all in

Chinese. This reduces the value of the national languages, and thus weakens the foundation of national identity.

Five years ago, your predecessor said that China would never succeed in destroying Tibetan culture. Is that no longer true?

His assessments reflected the situation in 2019. The situation in Tibet is changing, and there are reports that they may altogether eliminate use of the Tibetan language. If that happens, it will have even more serious consequences for Tibetans. A whole generation of Tibetans would become Chinese. A generation without a Tibetan identity.

You say that China's leadership is intensifying its repression in Tibet. So why are they simultaneously seeking dialogue?

I don't know the exact reasons, but one obvious reason is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He is 88 years old. The possibility that he may die soon cannot be ruled out. Beijing is more concerned about the next dalai lama than the living one. The Chinese know that they can control the Tibetan people as long as they control the next dalai lama. So I have no doubt: China wants to control the next dalai lama.

The Chinese leadership wants to influence the selection of the next Dalai Lama. Does that worry you?

His Holiness – and only His Holiness – is responsible for his reincarnation. In 2011, he wrote in a document that he would say more after he turned 90. There is nothing the Chinese government can do about this. Moreover, we do not believe that an atheist regime has any credibility on this issue. If the Chinese government is really serious about reincarnation, it would first have to believe in life after death.

So no need to worry?

Not really, for the reasons mentioned. On the other hand, we also know that China will try to pressure other countries to adopt its view of things – as it is doing with regard to the history of Tibet. They use all their economic influence to push others to support their position. When you took office, you set yourself the goal of «solving the Tibetan question.» That sounds unrealistic.

We aren't striving for independence. But despite this, the Chinese government continues to refer to the Dalai Lama as a separatist. They also call me a separatist. My question to the Chinese government is: Who wants to separate from China? His Holiness repeats: middle way, middle way, middle way. Like a mantra. And the Chinese shout: separatist, separatist, separatist!

Is rapprochement impossible, and the Tibet question insoluble?

In the short term, yes. The conflict has been going on for 70 years. I can't wave a magic wand and solve the problems in a year or two. But things are changing in China, that much we know. President Xi Jinping lives in

a paranoid world in which he sees enemies everywhere, abroad and at home. So when we talk about China's military and political strength, it comes from the country's economic position. The only power China lacks is moral power.

From Beijing's perspective, the communist leadership has done a great deal for Tibet, especially with regard to advancing the region economically.

That has been good. But the Chinese way of thinking falls short. They are fixated on economic development. But this does not correspond to the reality of our nature, our existence, which has more dimensions. Thus, people are seeking more than economic development. You don't believe in a god? You don't believe in life after death? That's all right. But we also need to respect people who have a faith. Xi Jinping must understand that his policies are being rejected in Tibet.

You live in exile. How do you learn what is actually happening in Tibet?

We have our sources within Tibet. And for decades, Tibetans have been crossing the Himalayas and fleeing to Dharamsala in India, the seat of the exile government.

You said in a speech that frustration and anger were growing among the Tibetans over the complicated situation. Is there a threat of radicalization?

I can't make any predictions. Theoretically there is a risk. But let's look at what is actually happening: In Tibet, around 160 Tibetans set themselves on fire between 2009 and 2022. Most of the people who did this were between 16 and 35 years old. They had never experienced independence. They did not live through the invasion of Tibet by China. They only saw what the Chinese government is doing to the Tibetan people today. And this act of self-immolation is an act of desperation.

There is a sense of frustration in the diaspora. I can understand that. When I was young, I wanted to fight with every single Chinese person. But no one has allowed themselves to be provoked into acts of violence. Why? The Dalai Lama is committed to nonviolence. And I have also radically changed my attitude. Wherever we meet with young people, we repeat the core message: violence generates counterviolence.

Penpa Tsering

As a child of Tibetan refugees, Penpa Tsering studied economics in India. In 2021, around 60,000 Tibetans in over 40 countries elected him as political head (Sikyong) of the exile government, the so-called Central Tibetan Administration. Like the Dalai Lama, who handed over his political functions to the secular Sikyong in 2011, Penpa Tsering resides in Dharamsala, India, at the foot of the Himalayas.

Tibet Support Group in Vilnius Organises Peaceful Protest to Free Panchen Lama In Front of the Chinese Embassy

19 May 2024, [CTA](#)



The members of the Tibet Support Group organised a protest action in front of the Chinese Embassy in Vilnius

On 17 May, on the 29th anniversary of the abduction of the Panchen Lama, members of the Tibet Support Group organised a protest action in front of the Chinese Embassy in Vilnius. The protesters demanded that Lithuanian and European politicians pay attention to human rights problems in Tibet.

On this day in 1995, six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who had been proclaimed as the incarnation of the XI Panchen Lama just three days earlier, was kidnapped and forcibly disappeared by the Chinese government. Robertas Mažeika, a member of the Tibet Support Group, stressed that China must be pressured to reveal the whereabouts of the recognised Panchen Lama. He also noted that in response to the deteriorating situation in the region, Tibetan communities and representatives in Lithuania and abroad are calling on present and future Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to sign a pledge to support Tibet.

Vytis Vydūnas, head of Tibet House and a lecturer at Vilnius University, admitted that the question of the Dalai Lama's successor may seem exotic to the Lithuanian public, but noted that it is a cultural aspect of global significance. "Tibetans are our natural allies. The Uighurs are our natural allies, just as the Chinese regime is an ally of the monstrous and inhuman regime that is currently in Russia. We must support the Tibetan struggle," said Mr. Vydūnas.

The picketers carried Tibetan and Lithuanian flags, and placards reflecting the demands of the action read "Free Panchen Lama", "Respect human rights in Tibet", "Stop cultural genocide of Tibetans: close colonial boarding schools!" and more. They also chanted "Free Tibet".

The national broadcaster LRT produced a TV report and distributed information about the event on its website, [lrt.lt](#).

DIIR Statement on the 29th Enforced Disappearance Day of the 11th Panchen Lama

17 May, 2024, [CTA](#)

29 Years On: Still "Missing"

Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, was abducted by the authorities of the People's Republic of China on this day in 1995. At that time, the mere six-year-old was then recognised as one of the highest religious leaders in Tibetan Buddhism. On 14 May 1995, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama had publicly announced the young boy as the 11th Panchen Lama and officially bestowed him the name Jetsun Tenzin Gedhun Yeshi Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo. Three days later, on 17 May, the young Panchen Lama "disappeared" along with his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche, the abbot of the Panchen Lama's seat Tashi Lhunpo monastery. Rejecting His Holiness the Dalai Lama's recognition of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation, the Chinese authorities appointed another boy in his place for political motives. 29 years on, the Panchen Lama, his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche are still "missing", without a trace.

Over these years, the international community, various governments, organisations, supporters and Tibetans around the world made extensive efforts on many accounts to ascertain the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama, who was popularly known by his birth name Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Some even raised concerns about the Panchen Lama's health and whereabouts directly with PRC delegations, including in the United Nations on several occasions but to no avail.

"We condemn China's prolonged enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama and reiterate our call on the PRC government to immediately release the Panchen Lama who has remained in captivity for 29 years," states Tenzin Lekshay, the spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and Additional Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations. "Where else would it be possible but under the PRC government that an adult is kept completely oblivious of what's happening and hidden from the face of the earth that there is not even a single reliable information or photo of the abducted Panchen Lama of recent times? We demand the PRC government to release verifiable information of the well-being and the location of the Panchen Lama, and that of his parents and Chadrel Rinpoche. Until the light of truth is shined, we will continue to demand for their freedom," he further exclaims.

Last month, on 24 April, the Panchen Lama turned 35 years of age. The CTA observed his birthday in absentia, along with many others around the world. As long as the PRC continues to keep him “disappeared”, the CTA’s efforts in advocating for the Panchen Lama’s release will continue, the search will continue.

Marking 29 Years Since the Panchen Lama’s Disappearance

17 May 2024, [US Department of State](#), Matthew Miller

Today marks 29 years since the People’s Republic of China (PRC) abducted the 11th Panchen Lama, one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism, as a six-year-old child. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima remains missing and has not appeared in public since that day. The PRC government is denying members of the Tibetan community access to this important religious figure and instead continues to promote a state-selected proxy.

The United States supports Tibetans’ human rights and their exercise of those rights in connection with their distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic identity. Tibetans, like members of all religious communities, should have the ability to select, educate, and venerate their own leaders, like the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, according to their own beliefs and without government interference.

We urge PRC authorities to immediately account for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima’s whereabouts and well-being and to allow him to fully exercise his human rights in line with the PRC’s international commitments.

Central Tibetan Administration Congratulates New Co-Chair for Australian Parliamentary Group for Tibet, Senator Barbara Pocock

16 May 2024, [CTA](#)

Representative Karma Singey of the Tibet Information Office, Canberra, met Australian Green’s Senator Barbara Pocock at the Parliament House yesterday and delivered her Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma of the Department of Information and International Relations’ congratulatory messages on her assuming as the new Co-Chair of the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet (AAPGT). Representative Karma Singey was accompanied by Dr Zoe Bedford, Executive Officer of Australia Tibet Council.

Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel has, in his message, said, “On behalf of the 17th Tibetan Parliament in Exile, I extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption as the new Co-Chair of the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. You were awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in

2010 for your services to social justice, and your dedication to climate change, LGBTQ rights, refugee rights, and anti-nuclear policies resonate with the just cause of Tibet and Tibetans.”



Representative Karma Singey with Senator Barbara Pocock, New Co-Chair of AAPGT.

Kalon Norzin Dolma wrote, “Your appointment as Co-Chair of AAPGT is a testament to your unwavering commitment to human rights and dedication to amplifying the voices of those who are oppressed and marginalized. As a Representative of the Tibetan people, I want to express my deep appreciation for your willingness to champion the rights and freedom of the Tibetan people.”

During the meeting, Representative Karma Singey took the opportunity to present a brief introduction of the Central Tibetan Administration and an overview of his role and responsibilities as a Representative. He also briefed Senator Barbara and her staffers about some of the important upcoming events, including the visit by a Tibetan Parliamentary delegation in August 2024.

Tibetan In Exile Reveals Cousin’s Ordeal

16 May 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

A Tibetan refugee in India has revealed the ordeal her cousin brother faced since his detention in 2015 after he called for freedom and the return of the exiled leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Gendun Phuntsok, a monk at Kirti Monastery then aged only 16, staged a solo street protest in Ngaba County on 8 March 2015 holding up a photo of the Dalai Lama, shouting “We want freedom and equality in Tibet! Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet!” His home county of Ngaba is where the first and the largest number of Tibetans had burned themselves alive in protest against the ruling Chinese government.

Although his arrest was reported at the time by Tibetan exile media, it was not known that seven months later, in October 2015, his cousin sister, Namkyi, had also taken to the street with the photo of the Dalai Lama calling for freedom. She too was subsequently taken into custody and subjected to extreme torture, including being confined to a narrow cell without ventilation that stifled them with extreme heat and sweating.

Namkyi, 24, now living in Dharamsala, home to the 89-year-old Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile, is one of the handful Tibetan refugees to have escaped alive into exile after being imprisoned and tortured for her courageous protest calling for freedom in Tibet. She is also amongst the only few refugees to have spoken publicly about her life since detention (full interview forthcoming), as well as that of her brother. “Ngaba County police arrived and arrested him. He was then taken to People’s Court in Tashi Ling (Ch: Li) County in Ngaba Prefecture and sentenced to four years in prison. He was imprisoned at Deyang Prison in Huangxu City in Sichuan province. In Deyang prison, he was put in forced labour such as sewing clothes in the prison factory. Before he was imprisoned, he was tortured inhumanly during the interrogations by police authorities at a detention centre in Ngaba County. He suffered from head ache and his ribs were broken due to the police torture at the detention.”

“On 8 March 8 2019, Gendun was released and he was taken from the prison to Ngaba County police custody where he was kept under detention for a few more days and then his illness became worse. His family asked the concerned police authorities to allow him to see a doctor in Ngaba County but the county hospital said that they can’t treat his illness and suggested taking him to a better hospital in Chengdu City.”

“When he was checked in Chengdu City hospital, they found out that Gendun had an illness that looks like tuberculosis and his stomach was full of some fluid. So Gendun was operated and treated at the hospital for two months and finally saved his life. He almost died at that time. Later his illness became better but now Gedun’s health deteriorated and became an unhealthy person. His family paid 10,000 Chinese yuan for his treatment at the hospital. Gendun didn’t go to the monastery due to the injuries he sustained in both Chinese detention and prison labour. Currently, he lives at home under his family’s care.”

Gendun Phuntsok (དགེ་འདུན་ཕུན་ཚོགས།) is from Pema Lhathang Village (པལ་ལྷ་མང་ཐོག་གྲོང་ཁྱེར།) in Lower Charo Chugra (གཞལ་མོ་རྩུག་ས་ར་འགལ་མ།), Ngaba County. He joined Kirti Monastery as a young boy and studied there until his arrest in March 2015.

Former Chinese spy expose covert operations against dissidents overseas

15 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Eric (fourth from left) with the exiled spiritual leader H.H. the Dalai Lama in 2016 (Photo/ABC News)

A former Chinese secret agent named Eric, once a dissident himself, has come forward with crucial information exposing the Chinese Communist Party’s covert operations targeting dissidents overseas. He was assigned to infiltrate pro-democracy organisations and target dissidents critical of the Communist regime for 15 years since 2008, reported *ABC News*.

In a revelation, Eric disclosed that in 2016, he received an invitation to attend a gathering of activists in Dharamshala, the headquarters of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. During this event, he also had a meeting with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Speaking to *ABC News*, Eric admitted to submitting a detailed report to his handler, outlining the exiled government’s policy on China. He further stated that this report was “well received.”

The former Chinese spy disclosed that he undertook missions in multiple countries as an agent for Chinese Communist Party’s covert operations aimed at dissidents abroad. In 2018, Eric received orders to locate Edwin Yin, a YouTuber known for his staunch criticism of Chinese President Xi Jinping.



Former Chinese spy Eric worked for the Communist party for 15 years since 2008 (Photo/Keana Naughton)

He further revealed that before working as a Chinese spy, he was a university student who joined the US-founded China Social Democratic Party in 2007 out of admiration for Western democracy. Unaware of surveillance, he shared about the party's annual meeting on social media, leading to a visit from the police who coerced him into collaboration. "They forced me to work with them. I didn't have a choice," he said.

Eric's story exposes the Chinese government's extensive history of Beijing's transnational repression that includes monitoring, harassing, and silencing dissidents abroad. The CCP employs various tactics, including surveillance, intimidation, and even abduction, to suppress dissenting voices that challenge its authority or advocate for human rights and democracy, according to multiple independent observers.

Congressional Executive Commission on China's Annual Report Finds Persistent Human Rights Violations in Tibet

15 May, 2024, [CTA](#)

The latest annual report from the Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) underscores the persistent severe limitations on international human rights, evidenced by the punishment of Tibetans for exercising their fundamental rights. These include expressing religious beliefs, critiquing PRC policies, and sharing information online. The 2023 annual report, which covers human rights and rule of law developments in the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, notes the lack of renewed negotiations between the PRC and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representatives since 2010 and the PRC's interference and attempt to control over the selection and recognition of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnated lamas, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The report outlines the DNA, blood sample, and iris scan collection programs employed by the PRC as forms of social control, surveillance, and repression of Tibetans. It also highlights PRC policies aimed to restrict the use of Tibetan and other regional languages, such as shutting down schools, banning language instruction in anything other than Standard Mandarin, and establishing a network of boarding schools where Tibetan children are forced to enrol.

The report also finds PRC authorities intensifying restrictions on religious activities, particularly around significant events and sensitive dates. Examples include prohibitions on celebrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday, increased surveillance during such occasions, and warnings against sharing images of His Holiness. Additionally, individuals have faced

detention for unauthorized social media groups celebrating religious figures' birthdays, warnings against commemorating His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthdays online, and severe consequences for sending donations abroad, with monks receiving prison sentences for supporting exiled leaders. Tragic incidents, such as deaths in custody and allegations of police torture, further highlight the oppressive environment faced by Tibetans.

The report also delineates the impact of strict "zero COVID" measures following the COVID-19 outbreaks in Tibet, causing criticism and protests due to inadequate support during lockdowns. Authorities censored dissent, detained hundreds, and discriminated against Tibetan detainees. Despite partial relaxation of restrictions, protests continued, especially by Han Chinese migrants seeking to leave Tibet, highlighting ongoing tensions.

The 2023 annual report includes a new chapter titled "Technology-Enhanced Authoritarianism", acknowledging how emerging technology facilitates surveillance, censorship, and repression of freedoms in China and globally.

Recommendations from the CECC for Members of the U.S. Congress and Administration officials:

Members of the U.S. Congress and Administration officials are encouraged to take the following actions:

- Work with the United Nations to help set up visits by U.N. human rights officials, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, to Tibetan areas of China to independently assess the human rights situation there, free of any restrictions or hindrances by Chinese Communist Party or government officials, to be followed by a full report to the United Nations on their findings.
- Adopt and implement appropriate legislation to prohibit American companies doing business with Chinese police and other law enforcement agencies in Tibet from selling or providing equipment used by those forces in gross human rights violations, including mass coercive biometric data-gathering and surveillance programs.
- Work with government officials, parliamentarians, and nongovernmental organizations in like-minded countries to pressure the Chinese government and Communist Party to respect, as a matter of the right to religious freedom and as recognized under Chinese and international law, that it is the right of Tibetan Buddhists to identify and educate all religious teachers, including the Dalai Lama, in a manner consistent with Tibetan Buddhist practices and traditions.

- Urge the Chinese government to cease treating the Dalai Lama as a security threat, and encourage the resumption of genuine dialogue, without preconditions, between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.
- In interactions with Chinese officials, call for the release of Tibetan political prisoners currently detained or imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of their human rights. The records of detained Tibetans in the Commission's Political Prisoner Database provide a useful resource for such advocacy. Urge the Chinese government and its law enforcement and security forces to end the use of arbitrary detention, disappearance, beatings, torture, and intimidation to suppress and punish Tibetans for the peaceful exercise of their rights.
- Urge the Chinese government to invite representatives of governments and international organizations to meet with Gedun Choekyi Nyima, whom the Dalai Lama recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama, and his parents, all three of whom disappeared shortly after his recognition as Panchen Lama in 1995.

16th Kashag Convenes 6th Permanent Strategy Committee Meeting

14 May 2024, [CTA](#)



6th Permanent Strategy Committee Meeting of the 16th Kashag

The 16th Kashag convened 6th Permanent Strategy Committee Meeting in Switzerland on 13 May 2024. The 3-day bi-annual meeting will follow up with the implementation of measures chalked out at the previous five meetings and additionally, will discuss the progress of the ongoing strategic programs and deliberate on future advocacy initiatives as per the committee's objectives. Sikyong Penpa Tsering will chair the meeting which will be attended by the members of committee comprising

Kalon (Minister) Dolma Gyari (Department of Security), Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma (Department of Information and International Relations), former Kalon Tempa Tsering and former envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen, Political Secretary Tashi Gyatso of Kashag Secretariat Secretary Karma Rinchen (Department of Security), Secretary Karma Choeying (Department of Information and International Relations), Secretary Dawa Tsering of the Tibet Policy Institute (TPI), Secretary Ngaba Tsegyam of Gaden Phodrang office, and Additional Secretary Lobsang Choedak of Kashag Secretariat.

Following the dissolution of the previous Task Force on Sino-Tibetan Negotiations by the 16th Kashag, this new Permanent Strategy Committee was established. The Committee held its first meeting in November 2021, the second meeting in July 2022, the third meeting in November 2022, the fourth meeting in April 2023, the Fifth meeting in November 2023 in Dharamshala.

No interest from PRC to resume dialogue: US Congressional Committee on China

14 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The 2023 annual report of the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) released on Friday stated that there is no interest from the People's Republic of China (PRC) in resuming the long-stalled dialogue with the representatives of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The commission on China urged the Chinese government to stop treating the Dalai Lama as a "security threat" and to facilitate the resumption of genuine dialogue, without preconditions, between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

Despite the Dalai Lama's consistent stance on seeking autonomy rather than independence for Tibet, a position reiterated over time, the Chinese government has persisted in its refusal to engage in talks regarding Tibetan autonomy.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin stated on April 26 that Beijing would only engage with the Dalai Lama's representatives, excluding officials of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, and dismissed any possibility of dialogue concerning the long-pending demand for autonomy for Tibetan people. Wang also dismissed any reports of back-channel discussions between the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese government, categorising the Government-in-Exile as a "separatist" entity during a press briefing in Beijing. "First, we would only have contact and talks with the personal representative of the 14th Dalai Lama, not the so-called 'Tibetan government-in-exile'

or the ‘Central Tibetan Administration.’ The Chinese government will not be dealing with it,” he said.

This statement came after the President of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile Sikyong Penpa Tsering disclosed to a group of journalists in Dharamshala a day earlier, that informal back-channel engagements had been ongoing since last year. “We have had back-channel (engagement) since last year. But we have no immediate expectations from it. It has to be a long-term (one).” Insisting that the talks are “very informal,” Sikyong Penpa Tsering said. “I have my interlocutor who deals with people in Beijing. Then, there are other elements also trying to reach out to us.”

The dialogue between Beijing and representatives of the Dalai Lama began with fact-finding Tibetan delegations visiting Tibet in 1979 and 1980, followed by exploratory talks in Beijing in 1982 and 1984. From 2002 onwards, nine rounds of discussions took place between envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and China’s United Front Work Department.

Throughout these talks, the Tibetan delegation advocated for genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of Chinese constitutional principles and the Law on Regional National Autonomy, culminating in the presentation of a memorandum and note to the Chinese leadership. However, the ninth and final round of talks occurred in 2010 and 2012, the Dalai Lama’s envoys resigned after the ninth round, citing the deteriorating situation in Tibet and a perceived lack of sincerity and willingness from the Chinese side.

Representative Genkhang-led Tibetan Delegation Visits Spanish Parliament to Discuss Tibet

13 May 2024, [CTA](#)



Tibetan delegation with President Juan Van-Halen, Secretary General Fernando Sanz Alonso & former Senator Robert Nahar

On the invitation of the President and Secretary General of the Association of Former Parliamentarians, Representative Rigzin Genkhang and Europe-based Tibetan Parliamentarian Thupten Wangchen visited the Spanish Parliament on Friday, 10

May 2024, to discuss the critical situation in Tibet. They were joined by Executive Director of ICT, Wangpo Tethong.

The visit underscored the importance of raising awareness about the plight of Tibetans and advocating for their rights on the international stage.

During the discussions, Representative Genkhang outlined the systematic violations of human rights and the ongoing deliberate attempt of the Chinese government to Sinicise Tibetan language, religion and culture. The Representative also highlighted the resilience of the Tibetan people and their commitment to non-violence in the face of adversity, emphasising the need for international support to address the issues, while Parliamentarian Thupten Wangchen and Wangpo Tethong focused on freedom of religion in Tibet and the Tibet issue in Europe in general.

Former members of the Spanish Parliament showed great interest in the Tibetan cause and engaged in a constructive dialogue and expressed their concerns and solidarity with the Tibetan people in their freedom struggle. They acknowledged the importance of raising awareness about the situation in Tibet and pledged to support the initiatives.

Overall, the visit of the Representative to the Spanish Parliament marks a significant milestone laying the foundation for future collaboration.

The event was made possible by the efforts of former Senator Robert Nahar and a good friend of Tibet.

The visit was covered by El Mundo, the second largest printed daily newspaper in Spain.

Tibetan women detained over ‘Free Tibet’ bag in Paris

13 May, 2024, [RTV](#)



Two Tibetan women were reportedly detained by the French authorities for several hours during a peaceful demonstration when Chinese President Xi Jinping’s convoy passed through Paris. One of the women was carrying a white tote bag with the slogan “FREE TIBET” inscribed on it. The two Tibetan women, who were walking home from work, encountered a gathering of people waving Chinese flags in anticipation of Xi Jinping’s arrival. One of the women, upon seeing the crowd, took out a pen and wrote “FREE TIBET” on her

bag. As Xi's motorcade approached, she held up her bag amidst the crowd of Chinese people and flags, standing alone in her protest.

The French police intervened and demanded that she leave the area. She complied by stepping a few meters away but continued to hold the "FREE TIBET" bag. Despite her cooperation, the police detained her and kept her in a dark detention vehicle until Xi Jinping's motorcade had passed.

The video footage obtained by Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) captured the tense encounter between the Tibetan woman and the French police. In the video, the police can be heard instructing the woman to "remain for 10-15 minutes." One of the detained women, speaking from a jail cell, expressed their distress, stating, "Everyone, please, now I have been captured. I have been captured. They have put me in some sort of vehicle. I am with my cousin sister, they have captured us both." The detention has sparked widespread attention and raised concerns regarding freedom of expression in a free country like France, due to Chinese pressure. Netizens have taken to their social media platforms to voice their opinions regarding Xi Jinping's arrival in Europe, interpreting it as emblematic of China's ambition to reshape the global order. They argue that this signals a potential threat to Western democracies, which could face continued undermining.

Moreover, the detention of the two women has reignited concerns about the safety of Tibetans, both within and outside Tibet, from Chinese rule. Some commentators suggest that this incident shows the vulnerability of Western democracies, which appear to be easily swayed by economic opportunities while ignoring fundamental human rights and democratic principles.

Sikyong Continues Advocating for Tibet and Acknowledges Italy's Longstanding Support for the Tibet Cause

12 May 2024, [CTA](#)

Continuing his whirlwind tour, Sikyong Penpa Tsering made a brief halt in Rome, Italy on Thursday to meet with Parliamentary Intergroup Italia Tibet. This visit follows his packed itinerary spanning Berlin, Munich (Germany), Innsbruck (Austria), Bolzano, Trento, Milan (Italy), Paris (France), and Zurich (Switzerland) starting 28 April. Accompanied by Representative Thinlay Chukki and Phuntsok Topgyal from the Tibet Bureau Geneva, Sikyong Penpa Tsering and the delegates were warmly received in the Italian senate chambers.

While on that day, the Italian Senate was bustling with various party conventions and also hosting visits from the Italian president, the MPs accorded utmost significance to their meeting with Sikyong Penpa

Tsering and the Tibetan delegates. They engaged in an in-depth discussion with the Sikyong, deliberating on the current situation in Tibet and devising actionable future plans to deter China's intensified repression of the Tibetans in Tibet.



Senator De Priamo Andrea, President of the Parliamentary Intergroup Italia Tibet receives Sikyong Penpa Tsering at the Senate in Rome, Italy, 9 May 2024

Sikyong Penpa Tsering, in his remarks, underscored the deep historical ties between Italy and Tibet, dating back to the late 16th century when Jesuit missionaries ventured into Tibet. Recognising Italy as the first European nation to engage with Tibetans on the roof of the world, he highlighted the significance of Italy's longstanding support for the Tibetan people and the cause. Sikyong also extended an invitation to the Parliamentary Intergroup Italia Tibet, led by President Senator De Priamo Andrea, to spearhead a high-level parliamentary delegation to Dharamshala in the near future.

The members present included: President of Parliamentary Intergroup Italia Tibet – Senator De Priamo Andrea; Vice President and member of Chamber of Deputies On. Ilenia Malavasi members of the Intergroup Senator Terzi di Sant'Agata Giulio who is also a former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Domenica Spinelli, President of the Italia Tibet Association Mr. Claudio Cardelli, President of Tibetan community Italy Tseten Lunghini, and Matteo Angioli, general secretary of Global Committee for the Rule of Law, also represents Radio Radicale.

Building on his advocacy in Germany and the other nations he visited the past two weeks, Sikyong urged the intergroup to spearhead parliamentary initiatives spotlighting some of the most critical issues threatening the survival of the Tibetan culture and Buddhist traditions, including China's unprecedented sinicization of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and Tibetan language.

As part of his tasks, Sikyong implored the MPs to push for an official policy affirming that the authority of decisions concerning the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama rests solely with His Holiness the Dalai

Lama himself, and to reject any governmental inferences. Sikyong also rallied for swift parliamentary intervention to hold China accountable on its operation of colonial style boarding schools in Tibet. Senator De Priamo Andrea and the MP delegates stressed the urgent need to intensify support for Tibet and briefed Sikyong on ongoing initiatives by the intergroup focusing on the crackdown on the peaceful protests by Tibetans in Derge and the colonial boarding schools in Tibet.

Senator Terzi echoed concerns about China's attempts to divide the European Union and emphasised the importance of coordinated action in countering China's transnational repression.

Sikyong further warned of the economic implications of Europe's trade deficit with China, underlining how China's foreign exchange surplus fuels its aggressive pursuits, including space technology investments and expanding debt economies in regions like Africa and South Asia. He called for a coordinated multilateral strategy to push back against what he called China's economic colonialism.

Following the meeting, Sikyong spoke to Radio Radicale, and held meetings with longtime friends of Tibet, as well as members of the Tibetan community. During the discussion, Sikyong proposed a collaborative project documenting the early relations between Italy and Tibet, which received positive feedback from the members. Discussions further ensued on the yearlong celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday in 2025, which will be marked as the Year of Peace.

In the evening, Sikyong departed for Vienna, Austria.

Xi Jinping's Visit to Hungary: Hiding the Flag, mysterious Chinese Policemen and 18 Agreements

11 May 2024, [Sarajevo Times](#)



Chinese President Xi Jinping ended his European tour with a visit to Hungary where he held a series of meetings with Hungarian officials, including Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

On the last day of the visit, Orban hosted a lunch attended by his wife Anika Levai and Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Li-yuan.

On that occasion, journalists had the opportunity to ask Orban and Xi several questions, and one of them was a review of the anti-Chinese protests that were organized before the visit of the Chinese president. On that occasion, Tibetan activists unfurled the flag of Tibet on Gellert Hill, and the police quickly chased them away, and they hung the flag of China at that place.

"It is an old debate. The position of the Hungarian government is clear. At home there is freedom of expression, but the guests who come have the right to be guests. These two rights must be harmonized. We will not allow the value of the visit of the guests who come here to be destroyed. Demonstrations and reception they must be spatially separated from each other," explained Orban.

What is interesting is that the Pro-Tibet protesters were driven away by policemen from China who were in civilian clothes performing the duty of securing the event. Although there were police officials from another country, Orban did not see anything objectionable in all of this.

"It is not a question of national security, but of ensuring public order and peace," said the Hungarian Prime Minister.

The media in Hungary also referred to the results of Xi Jinping's visit. According to information from Budapest, Orban and Xi signed a total of 18 agreements and new plans and goals were defined.

The agreements include, among other things, the construction of a railway line, a railway bypass around Budapest, and the construction of a border crossing between Serbia and Hungary to facilitate the transport of people and goods.

"Hungary and China will consider the option of building an oil pipeline between the two countries, and there is also a willingness to expand cooperation in the field of nuclear energy," Orban said.

In addition to Hungary, Chinese President Xi Jinping previously visited France, where he met with President Emmanuel Macron, and Serbia, where he held meetings with the country's leadership, including President Aleksandar Vucic, Klix.ba reports.

Austrian MPs host Tibetan government in exile, pledge support

11 May 2024, [The Print](#)

In a show of solidarity, Austrian Members of Parliament opened their doors to Penpa Tsering, president of the Central Tibetan Administration, for a discussion on the plight of Tibetans amidst China's human rights abuses. The meeting, held on Friday

within the halls of the Austrian Parliament in Vienna, marked a pivotal moment in European support for Tibet's struggle against cultural oppression and political suppression. Penpa Tsering, on a diplomatic mission across Europe for the past ten days, has been advocating for international awareness regarding China's systematic violations in Tibet. His visit to Vienna saw him engaging with members of the Austrian People's Party and the GREENS, shedding light on China's egregious targeting of Tibetan children, and Buddhist monks, and the relentless assault on Tibetan cultural heritage.



Austrian MPs host Tibetan Government in Exile, pledge support (Photo/ANI)

During the parliamentary rendezvous, Penpa Tsering underscored two critical concerns: the grave implications of China's operation of state-controlled boarding schools in Tibet and the urgent need to safeguard Tibetan religious freedom and Buddhist heritage.

He laid bare the reality of China's tight grip over the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan-populated areas, stifling political dissent and trampling on cultural and religious expressions.

In his impassioned plea, Penpa Tsering called for a nuanced understanding of China's behaviour, emphasizing its ramifications not only for Tibet but also for Europe's own interests.

He urged recognition of Tibet's historical independence and endorsed the middle-way approach for autonomy as a viable solution. His words resonated with the Austrian Parliamentarians, who acknowledged the imperative of sustained international support for Tibetans in their quest for fundamental rights.

Gudrun Kugler, MP from the Austrian People's Party and spokesperson for human rights and displaced persons, along with Faika El-Nagashi, MP from the GREENS, joined forces with a delegation from Save Tibet, Austria, and Friends of Tibet, Austria, in reaffirming their commitment to upholding human rights. They pledged to amplify the Tibetan cause in

various multilateral forums to hold the Chinese government accountable for its transgressions. (ANI)

Calligraphy Day keeps alive Tibetans' written language

11 May 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar, Pasang Tsering and Dolma Lhamo

For several years now, Tibetan Calligraphy Day has been a way for Tibetans to keep their language and heritage alive amid China imposing restrictions and bans on use of the language.

On April 30, Tibetans across the Tibet Autonomous Region, in northern India as well as in Chinese provinces where Tibetans live participated in competitions, festivals and displays of calligraphy to mark the day on April 30, sources told Radio Free Asia. The Tibetan Language Preservation Committee, a group based in Gangtok in northern India that is dedicated to preserving the Tibetan language, observed the day by organizing a calligraphy competition.



Participants in a calligraphy competition observe Tibetan Calligraphy Day at Karma township in Chamdo, western China's Tibet Autonomous Region, April 30, 2024.

"His Holiness the Dalai Lama has consistently urged Tibetans in exile to safeguard and preserve our invaluable Tibetan language," said Tenzin Tsephel, president of the Gangtok Regional Tibetan Youth Congress.

Tibetans throughout Tibet shared their writings and opinions on Tibetan calligraphy and the significance of the Tibetan language on social media platforms.

Several monasteries and educational institutions in Tibet and in Tibetan-populated areas of China organized events to commemorate the day. Over 300 participants gathered in Barkham county of Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in northwestern Sichuan province.

Videos posted on social media showed Buddhist monks in crimson robes who gathered with brushes, ink and paper to display their writing skills at the Tsangkor Sholma-gon Pel Ngedhon Tashi Choekorling Monastery in Qinghai province on April 30.

The Labrang Calligraphy Association in Sangchu county of Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province also organized calligraphy exhibitions in all county schools.

Banning Tibetan

Since 2020, the Chinese government has tightened its restrictions on the use and study of Tibetan, closing private Tibetan schools in Tibet and intensifying Chinese-language education in the schools in the name of promoting uniformity in the use of textbooks and instructional materials.

Just recently, authorities banned students in schools in a Tibetan-populated area in China's Sichuan province from speaking their native language, following a similar case in another part of the province.

Tibetan Calligraphy Day began in 2017 following a Tibetan calligraphy conference held at Qinghai Nationalities University in western China.

The significance of the date – April 30 – lies in its numerical representation: The number four symbolizes the number of vowels in the Tibetan alphabet, while 30 represents the number of consonants.

Given the importance of Buddhism to Tibetans, many traditions in Tibetan calligraphy come from religious texts written by monks in monasteries.

Despite the absence of a dedicated Tibetan school for children in Gangtok, a youth congress there began a Sunday school program in 2018 to teach children how to read and write Tibetan.

The day is more than just commemorating Tibetan calligraphy and hosting writing competitions, said Tsering Dhondup, a volunteer Tibetan teacher at the Sunday school.

“We must also consider Tibetan alphabets, vowels and the Tibetan language as a whole, given its vast richness in representing Tibet,” he told Radio Free Asia.

Preserving a culture

Pema Tsultrim, a renowned Tibetan calligrapher based in Tibet, organized the Pema Golden Pen Competition in Chengdu, attracting about 100 Tibetan calligraphy experts, historians and writers from across Tibet who discussed the significance of Tibetan calligraphy.

He said the contest aimed to preserve the rich heritage of Tibetan calligraphy and to provide participants with a platform to display their talent.

Among the more than 1,200 calligraphy submissions from Tibetans various regions of Tibet, Dhondup Norbu, a resident of Lhasa, was chosen as the contest winner.

“Calligraphy holds significant importance in preserving Tibet's unique traditions,” said Geshe Lobsang Monlam, a Buddhist scholar, lexicologist and leading innovator of Tibetan information technology.

Through various calligraphy styles, we can understand writings that date back over 1,000 years,” he said. “Despite the presence of numerous dialects within

Tibet, our ability to communicate and understand one another is facilitated by these Tibetan calligraphies.”

The day was observed in Tibetan communities around the world.

The Latse Project, a U.S.-based volunteer nonprofit group that promotes Tibetan language use and literacy, along with the Center for South Asia and the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison held an event on Tibetan calligraphic arts on April 26-27.

In 2018, The Latse Project organized the first Tibetan Calligraphy Day to be held outside Tibet in New York City, and held subsequent calligraphy exhibits in Paris, France, and at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Representative Kelsang Gyaltzen Bawa Meets with Ukrainian Cross-sectoral Delegation

10 May, 2024, [CTA](#)



Representative Kelsang Gyaltzen Bawa Meets with a Group of Ukrainian Cross-sectoral Delegation

Representative Kelsang Gyaltzen Bawa held an hour-long discussion with a group of Ukrainian cross-sectoral delegation from Liberal Democratic League of Ukraine (LDLU), Ukraine+Taiwan Forum, Kyiv Independent, and International Renaissance Foundation on 23 April 2024, sharing information about their respective causes, exchanging experiences, and presenting views on the future endeavours.

Headed by Yevheniia Fedotova, the Vice President of LDLU, the delegation, consisting reporter Asami Terajima from Kyiv Independent; a war-related volunteer and expert in post-war rebuilding Uliana Dzhurliak; and Head of the direction of minimisation of corruption risks in the sanctions policy of the National Agency on Corruption Prevention of Ukraine Agiya Zahrebelska, introduced the objectives of their mission that aimed to enhance mutual understanding between key decision-makers in Taiwan and various sectors of Ukrainian society, including civil rights campaigners and volunteers, media professionals, and

public affairs stakeholders during the meeting. The visitors also expressed their deep respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and stated, “The resilience of the Tibetan people for decades serves as a source of inspiration to the people of Ukraine, who are defending the values of lasting and just peace, human dignity, and freedom, these days. The Chinese invasion of Tibet was the first major attack on the rule-based international order without the appropriate attention of democratic stakeholders. Eventually, the path started by the People’s Republic of China was continued by Russia in Ukraine through the occupation of Crimea (2014) and the ongoing full-scale invasion (2022). Taking this into account, the Liberal Democratic League of Ukraine considers supporting a free Tibet as a lifelong mission of every freedom-seeker.”

In response, the Representative extended his greetings on behalf of the Office of Tibet in Taipei and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people’s current situation. He vocalised his optimism that Ukrainians will prevail over the ongoing conflict, citing strong backing from democratic and justice-loving allies.

Additionally, Representative Bawa further promised to forward their suggestions to the Central Tibetan Administration and report their ideas for collaboration to the Tibetan NGOs. During the Q&A session of the meeting, Representative Bawa presented a brief overview of the Offices of Tibet and their undertakings, particularly about the one inside Taiwan.

The Ukrainian cross-sectoral delegation was met by members of prominent Taiwanese political parties, NGOs, and the general public, most notably by the Vice President-elect, Hsiao Bi-Khim.

Sikyong Advocates for Tibetan Rights & Religious Freedom in Germany, Calls on Europe to Stand Against China’s Authoritarian Regime

10 May 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering, accompanied by Representative Thinley Chukki, during the meeting with Anke Oppermann, Director of the Unit of the Federal Government Commissioner for Freedom of

Religious and Belief at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering concluded a series of engagements in Berlin, focusing on two critical issues: addressing China’s state-run colonial boarding schools in Tibet and the safeguarding Tibetan religious freedom as well as unique Buddhist traditions, including the succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Citing the US policies on these two issues, Sikyong urged leaders in Berlin to consider similar instruments and also use multilateral forums to hold the Chinese government accountable.

A key highlight of Sikyong’s visit was his meeting with Anke Oppermann, Director of the Unit of the Federal Government Commissioner for Freedom of Religious and Belief at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, on 7 May.

During their hour-long meeting at the Commission, Anke Oppermann briefed Sikyong on the German Federal Government’s Third Report on the Global Status of Freedom of Religion or Belief and on forthcoming initiatives by the Commission aimed at bolstering religious freedom advocacy.

Sikyong, in turn, thanked the Commission, particularly Commissioner Frank Schwabe, for his statement on Panchen Rinpoche’s enforced disappearance. Sikyong urged for sustained international attention and called on the Ministry to join like-minded nations in affirming the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a purely religious matter that should be free from governmental interference.

In another significant engagement, Sikyong Penpa Tsering met with Hon. Roderich Kiesewetter, a member of the German Bundestag who is also the representative of foreign affairs for the CDU/CSU Caucus, as well as Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Oversight Panel. Sikyong discussed the pragmatic lessons that can be learned from Tibetans in facing China’s authoritarian regime. Both reiterated their shared commitment to upholding human rights, with the Honourable MP lauding the enduring relevance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s message of peace and non-violence as well as the strategic nonviolent struggle of the Tibetan people.

Throughout 5 to 6 May and 8 May as well, Sikyong engaged in closed-door meetings and round tables with high-level government officials and relevant figures. Additionally, he addressed prominent German media outlets, including Table Media, RBB Radio, DieZeit, and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, advocating for a robust European policy on China.

On 6 and 8 May, respectively, Sikyong met with key Tibetan advocacy organisations in Berlin, namely Tibet Initiative Deutschland and ICT Germany, to strategise

on forthcoming projects addressing the deteriorating situation in Tibet.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering's overarching message in Germany was to urge Europe, particularly Germany, to leverage its strengths in dealing with China and to draw inspiration from Tibetans in confronting the authoritarian regime. He called on Germany, as a leading nation, to champion the values and freedoms cherished in Germany.

On 9 May, Sikyong Penpa Tsering will hold a one-day engagement in Rome, Italy, followed by a visit to Vienna, Austria, on 10 and 11 May. From 12 to 15 May, Sikyong will hold closed-door meetings in Zurich, Switzerland.

Chinese volunteers joined Hungarian security to harass Tibet protesters during Xi Jinping visit

10 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)



Tibetan protesters displayed Tibetan flags next to Chinese national flags on Gellert Hill to oppose Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Budapest, Hungary, May 9, 2024. (Photo courtesy: AP)

Chinese people not only turned up in strength to welcome their President Xi Jinping who arrived for a state visit to Budapest on May 8 evening but also harassed and bullied Tibet protesters and others as well while the country's police joined force with them, according to various media reports. Tímea Szabó, co-chairman of the opposition party Párbeszéd, hung a Tibetan flag from his window on May 8 and within minutes received threats from the Speaker of the Hungarian House of Representatives László Kövér and the secret service, reported *dailynewshungary.com* May 9. Before the arrival of Xi for a ceremonial welcome on May 9, Tibor Hendrey, president of the Tibet Aid Society (Tibeti Segítő Társaság), stretched the Tibetan flag on the cross fence in Gellért Hill. However, within minutes Chinese activists covered it with the Chinese flag.

The report cited Hendrey as saying later that he was searched by police three times that day. The report also cited witnesses as saying the police only looked for Hungarians at the scene, and no Chinese at all. Pro-China activists waved at least 16 Chinese flags to hide

from view Tibetan flags the protesters were holding, reported the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* May 9. Also, Tibetan protesters tried to hoist a "Free Tibet" banner along with the Tibetan flag on the Elizabeth Bridge, under which Xi's motorcade would have had to pass on its way to the presidential palace in Budapest on May 9 morning. But the Chinese activists disrupted them again, the report said.

"These guys just came and ripped our banner, and they are still allowed to be here, pushing us further and further out," Chime Lhamo, campaigns director of Students for Free Tibet, has told journalists on the street. "Is this a free country?"

Hungarian police standing nearby did not intervene, the report added.

After the street encounter, the protesters were followed by what appeared to be about eight undercover police officers on their way to the Budapest airport, one of them has said.

In fact, "over the last few days, we were followed, harassed and intimidated by undercover Hungarian police, as well as Chinese people and police everywhere in the city," Tenzin Yangzom from the International Tibet Network has said. "Everywhere in the city is swarmed by them."

"We had come here to peacefully protest Xi's genocidal policies in Tibet, East Turkistan, Hong Kong and beyond and the treatment of Tibetans, Hong Kongers, Uyghurs and Chinese people," she has added. Márton Tompos, vice-president of the opposition party Momentum, wanted to place the EU flag at the Elisabeth Bridge in Budapest but was prevented by Chinese volunteers wearing red caps working for their embassy. He was even asked which flags he wanted to put up and why, said the *dailynewshungary.com* report.

It appears that no flags other than those of China will be displayed in Budapest while Xi is in town, the report added. "Budapest is full of Chinese volunteer gendarmes wearing red caps to protect Xi Jinping, known as Winnie the Pooh, from the 'unfriendly' Tibetan and Taiwanese flags," Tompos was stated to have written in a video post.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Hungary and the two countries have decided to elevate bilateral relations to an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership for the new era during Xi's meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Frequently at loggerheads with the EU, Orbán has been advocating an "Eastern opening" foreign policy since his return to power in 2010, seeking closer economic ties with China, Russia and other Asian countries. Beijing has invested billions in Hungary and sees the EU member as an important foothold inside the 27-member trading bloc. In December, Hungary

announced that one of the world's largest EV manufacturers, China's BYD, will open its first European EV production factory in the south of the country — an inroad that could upend the competitiveness of the continent's auto industry, noted the *AP* May 9.

The state visit to Hungary is the last leg of Xi's current European tour after France and Serbia, his first since 2019. His visit to France, marking 60th year of establishing diplomatic relations, was cordial but also highlighted tensions between Beijing and the EU over the war in Ukraine and global trade.

His visit to non-EU, non-NATO member Serbia, known for its staunch alliance with Russia, took place on the 25th anniversary of NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy at Belgrade during the Yugoslavia conflict, which Xi said his country will never forget despite the issue being settled with payment of compensations.

Office of Tibet in Taiwan Leads Efforts to Revive Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet: Over 30 Legislators Poised to Join

10 May 2024, [CTA](#)

The Office of Tibet in Taipei, in collaboration with the Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan, initiated a lobbying campaign at the end of March to re-establish the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet in the 11th Legislative Yuan (Taiwanese Parliament). Representative Kalsang Gyaltzen Bawa from the Office of Tibet, along with Secretary Mingyur Yudon and executive member of the Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan, Tashi Tsering, paid a courtesy call upon distinguished parliamentarians to congratulate them on their election and implored them to remain a member of the group during their new tenure. The elected members were also appreciated and thanked for their years of constant support for the Tibetan cause and the Tibetan people's right to self-determination.

On 29 March, the Tibetan delegation paid a visit to Hong Shenhan, the 10th Legislative Yuan's vice chair of the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet, to discuss holding a ceremony of re-establishment of the group on the day (17 May) of 29th enforced disappearance of His Serenity the 11th Panchen Lama Tenzin Gedhun Yeshe Trinley Phuntsok Pal Sangpo. The meeting also discussed dispatching Tashi Tsering to extend invitations to representatives of the Kashag and the Tibetan Parliament in Exile for that occasion. Similarly, the Representative-led Tibetan delegation called on several other Taiwanese legislators, including Huang Jie on 1 April, Wang Dingyu on 3 April, and Shen Boyang, Qiu Zhiwei, Zhang Yalin, and Chen Peiyu on 11 April. On 15 April, the team met with parliamentarian

Chen Zhaozi, followed by Qiu Yiyi and Fan Yun on 17 and 23 April, respectively.

During the meetings with the aforementioned Taiwanese lawmakers, the Tibetan delegation presented the Central Tibetan Administration's appeal letter concerning the recent issue of Dam construction in Kham Derge, 16th Kashag's vision paper, and calendars and paperweights engraved with His Holiness' message and the symbolic "Ah Ka Ma" words to enlighten the new members on Tibetan political history. While extending gratitude to the old members, the Tibetan team beseeched newer members to join the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet to bolster support.

In addition, the issue of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's reincarnation and the Chinese government's misappropriation of it, current human rights situations inside Tibet, the representations of "Ah Ka Ma" words that were visualised in sacred Lhamoi Lhatso lake during the recognition of current Dalai Lama, and seeking assistance in lessening the difficulties faced by Tibetan refugees in obtaining visas to enter Taiwan were discussed during the interactions with Taiwanese parliamentarians.

More than 30 Taiwanese legislators expressed their intentions to join the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet.

On 3 May, the delegation held a prep meeting with Parliamentarian Hong Shenhan to discuss programmes for the forthcoming re-establishment event of the parliamentary support group for Tibet which is scheduled to hold on 17 May.

Tibet's Derge printing house's historic printing blocks earn UNESCO recognition

11 May 2024, [Phayul](#)



Workers printing texts using wooden blocks at the Derge Printing House (Photo/Tibet Travel)

The printing blocks housed at the Derge Printing House in Tibet have been included in this year's UNESCO's Asia-Pacific regional register of memory of the world on May 8.

Listed among this year's 20 successfully inscribed items to the MOWCAP Regional Register for Asia-

Pacific, the Dege Printing House is the largest of the three major Sutra-printing houses in the Tibet, alongside Lhasa sutra-printing house in Meru monastery, Lhasa which was built more than 400 years ago, during the days of the 5th Dalai Lama and Lhapuleng House in Laprang Monastery in Amdo region.

Dege Printing House is in the Gonchen monastery, founded by Thang Tong Gyalpo also known as Derge Monastery, the printing house was built in 1729. The monastery, located in the Kham region of Tibet, was completely destroyed during the Chinese invasion of Tibet and was later restored in the 1980s.

On the ground floor of the monastery lies the famous Derge Parkhang (printing house), where Buddhist scriptures such as the Kangyur and the Tengyur, along with other religious, historical, literary, medical, astronomical, and calendrical works in Tibetan, are still printed from wooden blocks using traditional handwork.

The printing house continues to employ ancient techniques without the use of electricity. Approximately 217,000 engraved blocks of scriptures from all Tibetan Buddhist sects, including the Bon tradition, are housed here, with about 2,500 pages produced by hand each day in the traditional manner. The inclusion of the Dege printing blocks in UNESCO's Memory of the World (MOW) acknowledges human innovation and imagination in the Asia-Pacific region. This recognition was decided at the 10th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP), held from May 7 to 8 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

UNESCO initiated the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme in 1992 to safeguard against collective amnesia by preserving valuable archive holdings and library collections worldwide and ensuring their wide dissemination. The programme aims for the world's documentary heritage to be fully preserved, protected, and permanently accessible to all, respecting cultural differences and practical considerations.

CTA Prez calls for unified action against CCP to catalyze positive change

08 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The President of the Tibetan government in Exile, Penpa Tsering called for unified action from various oppressed people representing different causes against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in pursuit of meaningful change within China, at the 20th anniversary of the World Uyghur Congress on May 3 in Munich.

As the guest speaker for the opening ceremony, the Sikyong reminisced about the historic collaboration

between Erkin Alptekin, founding President of the World Uyghur Congress, and the late Lodi Gyari, former Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He emphasized their efforts to establish an allied committee, showcasing the longstanding bond between the Tibetan and Uyghur communities.

"I consider the Uyghurs, Mongolians, now even the Manchus, Tibetans, Hongkongers, Pro-Democracy leaders in China, and, if you want to include, Taiwan also. We are all travelling in the same boat against the brutal storm of Communist China," the Sikyong asserted, highlighting the imperative of unity in the face of Chinese oppression.



Sikyong Penpa Tsering delivering his speech during the opening session of the 20th anniversary of the World Uyghur Congress in Munich on 3 May 2024 (Photo/CTA)

Expressing gratitude for the collaboration with Rebiya Kadeer and Dolkun Isa, former and current Presidents of the World Uyghur Congress, Sikyong stressed the importance of collective action. "If we have to bring positive changes to China, then we need both internal and external forces. And we are the internal forces," he stated.

In a bold move, the Sikyong proposed organizing a large rally in Europe, uniting Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hongkongers, Mongolians, Taiwanese, and pro-democratic Chinese leaders. "If you are willing to do that, we are willing to join you or take the leadership," he declared, a call to action for solidarity against Chinese oppression.

The former president of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Dr Lobsang Sangay was also present at the event, in his keynote speech on **May 4** as a guest speaker, he said that despite the Chinese government's attempts to erase Uyghur and Tibetan culture, the younger generation born in Germany remains steadfast in preserving their identity and heritage, pledging to stand proudly in their Uyghur identity inherited from their elders, sending a resounding message to Beijing that their cultural resilience will endure despite attempts at suppression.

In addition to his participation in the World Uyghur Congress anniversary, Sikyong Penpa Tsering embarked on a week-long journey across Europe, engaging with Tibetan communities and forging alliances. His itinerary included visits to Zurich, Switzerland; Milan, Trento, and Bolzano in Italy; Innsbruck, Austria; and Berlin, Germany.

In Innsbruck, Sikyong's meetings with university leaders bore fruit as Vice-Rector Prof. Dr. Bernhard Fügenschuh extended a fully funded scholarship opportunity for Tibetan students.

Currently in Berlin for closed-door meetings with high-level government officials, Sikyong Penpa Tsering continues his advocacy for Tibetan rights and international solidarity against Chinese oppression.

Zeekgyab Rinpoche Appeals to Japanese parliamentarians

08 May 2024, [CTA](#)



A group photo with the parliamentarians

The Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia organised a Tibet workshop for the Japanese parliamentarians at the Japan Lower House International Conference Hall in Tokyo on 7 May 2024. Tibet supporters and media people also participated in the workshop. The theme of the workshop was "Human rights violations and religious atrocities in Tibet".

Ishibashi Rintaro, a Liberal Democratic Party Member, moderated the event and in his opening remarks, he briefed the lawmakers on the Panchen Lama issue and how even after nearly three decades his whereabouts are still not known.

Representative Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya of the Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia thanked the lawmakers, Tibet supporters, and media members for attending the workshop. He introduced Zeekgyab Rinpoche and spoke on how the situation in Tibet has worsened and how the CCP is trying to destroy Tibetan identity and religious culture through colonial boarding schools and continued interference in Tibetan religious matters, including selections of high reincarnate Lamas.

Zeekgyab Rinpoche, Chief Abbot of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in South India, spoke on the disappearance

of the real Panchen Lama and the continued Chinese interference in Tibetan religious matters.

"I make this heartfelt appeal in the context of the dire situation in Tibet. The severe oppression and inhumane restrictions imposed on the Tibetan people, their movement, and their freedoms continued to worsen. The people of Tibet suffer in silence. Today, my primary appeal is for your help in the immediate release of the 11th Panchen Lama and addressing the long-standing plight of the Tibetan people in Tibet—their native land." He said.

Speaking on the CCP's repressive and colonial policy toward Tibet he appealed to the lawmakers and the supporters on three points:

- 1) Japanese parliament members exert every possible effort and pressure on the Chinese government to immediately release and announce the whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama.
- 2) To adopt a resolution condemning China's human rights violations and interference in the Tibetan religious matters, including the selection of the reincarnation of H.H. the Dalai Lama.
- 3) To support the vision of H.H. the Dalai Lama in making Tibet a zone of peace and resolution of the Tibet issue through dialogue and the Middle Way Approach. Writer scholar Miura Junko translated for Rinpoche.

Lawmaker Furuya Keiji, Chairman of the Japanese parliamentary monitoring China's human rights violations, thanked Rinpoche for his statement and promised full support for religious freedom in Tibet. He called on the lawmakers to study the three points and expressed the possibility of issuing a statement urging China not to interfere in the selection of H.H. the Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

Shimomura Hakubun, Chairman of the Japan Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet, spoke on the contribution of Buddhism in bringing peace and harmony at societal and national levels. He spoke on the resolution the Japanese Parliament passed in 2022 condemning China for human rights violations in Tibet and other occupied territories. He talked of the visits of the two Sikyongs of the Central Tibetan Administration to Japan and their interaction with the parliamentarians.

Lawmakers in the audience asked questions about the current situation in Tibet and information and how news is sabotaged. Zeekgyab Rinpoche and Dr. Arya attended to the lawmaker's question and informed the audience on the colonial boarding schools, Larungar and Yachen gar situation, the destruction of the Buddha statue and prayer wheels in Drago, self-immolation of 157 Tibetans, and the recent forced relocation of Tibetans for dam buildings.

Lawmaker Ishikawa Akimasa, Vice Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Digital Ministry and General Secretary of the Japan Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet,

spoke on the Tashi Lhunpo monastery which he read from Japanese sources and how the monastery and the Panchen Lamas played important roles in Tibetan religious culture.

President Macron Urged to Raise Tibet with President Xi and Put Tibet at the Heart of French Strategy Towards China

06 May, 2024, [CTA](#)

Ahead of Chinese President Xi's visit to Paris, Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, President of the French Parliamentary group for Tibet addressed an open letter to President Macron urging him to raise Tibet with his Chinese counterpart.

In the letter, co-signed by 13 other Senators, Senator Eustache-Brinio highlights the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet under President Xi, underscores Tibet's geopolitical and ecological importance. She further stresses that in the face of the many ongoing conflicts in the region, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet is more relevant than ever before.

"Therefore, the resumption of dialogue and respect for the rights of the Tibetan people must be at the heart of France's strategy towards China", say the Senators.

President Xi Jinping arrived in Paris on Sunday, 5 May, and is scheduled to meet President Macron and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission today.

Tibetan, Uyghur protesters greet Xi Jinping in Paris

06 May, 2024 , [RFA](#), Roseanne Gerin



Activists display a giant banner from Pont Dauphine as Chinese President Xi Jinping's motorcade drives along Boulevard Périphérique in Paris, May 5, 2024.

Unfurling banners and waving flags, Uyghur, Tibetan and Chinese activists took to the streets to protest Chinese President Xi Jinping's two-day visit to Paris "Free Tibet. Dictator Xi Jinping, your time is up!" declared a large white banner that his motorcade had to drive under on the Boulevard Périphérique after his

arrival on Sunday, on his way for a state visit with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Atop the banner was the flag of Tibet — a symbol of the Tibetan independence movement that has become known as the "Free Tibet flag." The visit was Xi's first European tour since 2019 and marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Franco-Chinese diplomatic relations.

Ethnic Tibetan from France, Belgium, Hungary and elsewhere gathered to express their anger over Beijing's restrictions on religious and cultural expression in Tibet — which China invaded in 1950 and now controls — and human rights violations.

Uyghurs also rallied in Paris, seeking to draw attention to the abuses their families and friends have suffered in the far-western region of Xinjiang, including mass arbitrary detentions in prisons. The United States and some Western parliaments have identified China's persecution of the Uyghurs as a genocide and crimes against humanity.

The protesters were joined by Chinese, Taiwanese, Mongolian and Vietnamese human rights activists as well as Hong Kong pro-democracy supporters.

"Under Xi Jinping's rule, the situation in Tibet has gone from bad to worse," Tenzin Yangzom, campaigns coordinator at International Tibet Network, said in a statement.

"Today, we confronted Xi with our message that his time is up and Tibet will be free as he was forced to drive under our banner and Tibetan flags," she said. "President Macron and European leaders should not be rolling out the red carpet for a man guilty of genocide."

More than 1,000 demonstrators gathered in the city's Place de la République on May 5, displaying Tibetan flags and placards in French, calling for an end to repression inside Tibet, the release of Tibetan prisoners and a stop to China's construction of dams in the region.

As street performers depicted the dismal human rights situation inside Tibet, they then marched to the Place de la Bastille, where they remained for over four hours.

Within Xi's sight, Tibetan activists waved Tibetan national flags — an action banned in Tibet by the Chinese government and punishable by arrest, Students for a Free Tibet said in a statement.

French politicians

Even French politicians got into the act, calling on Macron to raise the Tibet issue with Xi in a letter signed by 14 senators on May 2.

"The resumption of Sino-Tibetan dialogue and respect for the rights of the Tibetan people must be at the heart of the French strategy vis-à-vis China," the letter said, in a reference to the Chinese government's cutoff of talks in 2010 between Beijing and the Dalai Lama on genuine autonomy for Tibetans.

Uyghurs gathered at Madeleine Square, close to the French president's residence, to show their opposition to Xi, said Dilnur Ryhan, president of the European Uyghur Institute.

Some pro-China activists holding Chinese flags attacked the group in three waves, one after the other, while Chinese agents wearing dark sunglasses were positioned around the square, closely monitoring their activities, she said.

Gulbahar Haitiwaji, a Uyghur detained in "re-education" camps for two years but who now lives in France, urged Macron to address the plight of those still detained in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses there.

Not all agree

Anti-Xi activists from China also participated in the protests, including one who identified himself as Jiang, an artist living in Paris who represents the group Freedom Square.

Jiang said Xi Jinping's views and actions do not have the support of all Chinese, including his "ethnic cleansing" of Tibetans, his comprehensive surveillance of Chinese citizens, aggression towards Taiwan and suppression of Hong Kong.

"These views are actually different from ours," he said. "We want to convey to the outside world that China does not only have one voice, and Xi Jinping does not represent us."

Xi is a dictator, said Liu Feilong, a Chinese dissident who lives in the Netherlands, who decided to go to Paris and participate in the demonstrations after seeing protest announcements on social media.

"Xi Jinping not only harms people living in China, but also infiltrates democratic countries in Europe and America, posing a serious threat to universal values," he said. "I escaped from China for freedom and found the freedom I wanted in the Netherlands, so I should also defend freedom and universal values."

After France, Xi will visit Serbia and Hungary — two European countries that are shifting towards authoritarianism and are big beneficiaries of Xi's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to connect China with other nations.

It includes plans for a Budapest-Belgrade high-speed railway financed mainly by China to transport Chinese goods from the Greek port of Piraeus into Europe.

Long-time supporter of Tibet awarded US Presidential Medal of Freedom

05 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

A notable figure in the Tibetan advocacy movement in the United States and a close friend of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Rep. Nancy Pelosi was honoured with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour of the United States on Friday.

During the ceremony, US President Biden took a moment to highlight each honouree, commending their unwavering commitment to "curiosity, innovation, creativity, and optimism." He specifically lauded Speaker Pelosi as the "greatest Speaker of the House of Representatives in history," attributing her remarkable achievements to her extraordinary leadership and legislative prowess.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi's historic milestones were also recognised during the event. In 2007, she made history by becoming the first woman to assume the role of Speaker of the House, marking a watershed moment in American politics. Subsequently, in 2019, she made history once more by being re-elected to this prestigious position. Notably, President Biden emphasised how she utilised her exceptional abilities to pass some of the most transformative laws in the nation's history through Congress.

The former Speaker of the House has long been an advocate for the Tibetan cause. In 2020, during her tenure as Speaker, she delivered an address on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of H.R. 4331, known as the Tibet Policy Act of 2019, bipartisan legislation aimed to support the aspirations of the Tibetan people in safeguarding their unique cultural identity.

In her remarks, she voiced strong support for the Tibet Policy Act of 2019, expressing, "I rise in support of the Tibet Policy Act of 2019: strong, bipartisan and urgently-needed legislation to strengthen America's commitment to the Tibetan people and their right to safeguard their distinct identity. If we don't speak out for human rights in China because of commercial interests, then we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights in any other place in the world. I urge a strong vote for this legislation and support the Tibetan people as they seek to defend their culture, their identity, and their pursuit of a future of freedom and dignity."

Among other priorities, Speaker Pelosi has consistently criticised the Chinese regime for its interference in the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. As a closely of the His Holiness Dalai Lama, she has actively supported the 'Middle Way Approach' a policy advocated by the Tibetan leader seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet. "I heard His Holiness first describe his 'Middle Way Approach' for Tibet, and it was an approach about autonomy, not about independence. So when the Chinese say that it's about independence, that's not what it ever has been about as far as His Holiness's presentation on Capitol Hill, or to the world."

"In 1987, when I first came to Congress, I heard Tom Lantos — I mentioned the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission — Tom Lantos invited me to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to be in a small meeting with him. I heard His Holiness first describe his 'Middle Way

Approach' for Tibet, and it was an approach about autonomy, not about independence. So when the Chinese say that it's about independence, that's not what it ever has been about as far as His Holiness's presentation on Capitol Hill, or to the world," she also said in support of the Tibet Policy Act of 2019.

In 2023, during the fourth day of its budget session, the 17th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile unanimously passed a "Resolution of Gratitude" to honour Nancy Pelosi. The resolution acknowledged Speaker Pelosi's unwavering support and tireless advocacy on behalf of Tibet and Tibetans in holding China accountable for its oppression of the Tibetan people and its denial of their fundamental rights.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom, established by President Harry S. Truman in 1945, is one of the highest civilian awards of the United States, presented to individuals who have made especially exceptional contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or cultural or other significant public or private endeavours.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Meets President Kompatscher; the Latter Assures to Lead Parliamentary Initiatives to Spotlight Tibet's Deteriorating Situation

04 May 2024, [CTA](#)

Sikyong Penpa Tsering on Thursday met with President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, South Tyrol, marking his second official visit to the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, South Tyrol. Sikyong last met President Kompatscher in October 2021 on his first formal visit to South Tyrol.

Lasting an hour, their discourse focused on the dire situation in Tibet, where the political, socio-cultural, and economic rights of Tibetan people have significantly deteriorated, ranking Tibet as the least free country on earth alongside South Sudan and Syria.

Sikyong addressed the alarming reality of China's state-run colonial boarding schools in Tibet, which have forcibly separated over a million Tibetan children from their families and their cultural roots as part of China's policy of sinicisation.

Despite these challenges, Sikyong highlighted the resilience of the Tibetan spirit, drawing inspiration from the successful autonomy model exemplified in South Tyrol which he deemed a profound contribution to humanity and particularly meaningful for the Tibetan people. Sikyong also extended an invitation to President Kompatscher to visit the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala as part of a forthcoming event being organized by the CTA, which the President graciously accepted.

Responding to Sikyong's specific appeals, President Kompatscher assured to lead parliamentary initiatives to spotlight the deteriorating situation inside Tibet. Furthermore, he committed to furthering collaborations between South Tyrol and Tibet, as part of which the President unveiled plans for a new Provincial Library in Bolzano, ensuring representation for Tibet and the Tibetan movement in the Library's Documentation Center for the Protection of Minorities and Autonomy. Sikyong was accompanied by Representative Thinlay Chukki and Dr. Guther Cologna to the meeting.

While in Bolzano, Sikyong also met with the local Tibetans over a dinner gathering, attended by Dr. Gunther Cologna and other longstanding friends of Tibet.

At the esteemed EURAC Research Center, Sikyong engaged with resident researchers, discussing the relevance of the CTA's Middle Way Approach in today's tumultuous world and advocating for Tibet's historical status in support of the Middle Way. The researchers expressed eagerness to enhance collaboration between EURAC and CTA.

Sikyong later gave interviews to the Communications team of EURAC and three prominent news media outlets, including ORF Austrian TV.

Prior to his visit to Bolzano, Sikyong visited the Tibetan community in Milan, Italy on Wednesday, 1 May. Led by the President and Vice-President of the Tibetan community Italy, the Milan Tibetan community hosted a rousing reception in honour of the Sikyong's second official visit. The reception held at Ghe Pel Ling Institute for Tibetan Buddhist Studies was joined by Filippo Scianna, President of the Italian Buddhist Union, among other longtime friends of Tibet.

Following the community engagement, Sikyong proceeded to Trentino to visit the 'Ice Stupa Zanskar' exhibition at the invitation of Roberto Pinter, a former councillor of Trentino and president of Trentino For Tibet. At the exhibition, Sikyong was warmly welcomed by the Vice Mayor of Trento and local Tibetans in Trento. The total population of Tibetans across Italy is estimated at approximately 198.

Calls for freedom on Panchen Lama's 35th birthday

03 May 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

As the Panchen Lama spent a milestone birthday in captivity last week, supporters around the globe called on China's government to finally free the Tibetan Buddhist leader.

"On the occasion of the 35th birthday of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima of Tibet, we call on the Chinese authorities for his immediate release along with his family, teacher and other Tibetan political prisoners," Els Van Hoof and Samuel Cogolati,

chair and deputy chair of the external affairs committee of Belgium's Federal Parliament, said in one of several statements by global officials last week. The Panchen Lama, one of Tibetan Buddhism's most important leaders, turned 35 on April 25, 2024.

Born in Chinese-occupied Tibet, he was recognized by the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the previous Panchen Lama at age 6. Just three days later, the Chinese government abducted him and his family. The Panchen Lama has not been seen since.

The Panchen Lama's birthday last week was "a day of great importance to be observed with celebrations by all the Tibetan people, both inside and outside Tibet," the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile said in a statement.

"However, this day has also become one of great sadness for the people of Tibet, as it has been decades since we last saw him or heard his teachings."

US leaders

In the United States, several officials spoke up for the Panchen Lama as he turned 35.

"Today marks Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 35th birthday," Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya, who serves as the US special coordinator for Tibetan issues, said on Twitter/X. "On this day, [the United States] renews our calls for the [People's Republic of China] to immediately provide proof of his whereabouts & well-being and reaffirms our support for Tibetans to select, educate, and venerate their religious leaders free of government interference."

"The PRC should provide the location and status of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama, who turns 35 today," added US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain. "Like members of all religious and spiritual groups, Tibetan Buddhists should be able to select, educate, and venerate their leaders, free from interference."

Members of the US Congress also spoke up for the Panchen Lama on his birthday.

Rep. Chris Smith, R-NJ, and Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Wash., chair and co-chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, called for "confirmation of his whereabouts and safety, immediate release for him and his parents, and an end to PRC interference in the religious traditions of #Tibetan Buddhism."

The Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, which carries on the legacy of late Congressman Tom Lantos, tweeted: "Holding a spiritual leader as a political prisoner for decades does not erase his position, nor does it lessen his deep connection to his people. On the occasion of his birthday, our wish is to finally get an answer to the question #WhereisthePanchenLama?"

Other US officials also raised their voice for the Panchen Lama.

David Curry, a commissioner of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, said: "Today is the Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 35th birthday,

and still no proof of his whereabouts. Nearly 30 years have passed since Chinese authorities abducted him & his family."

Curry added that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken "must demand answers."

Nury Turkel, the commission's chair, said: "The #CCP brutally suppresses Tibetan Buddhists, including interfering in the succession process of the Dalai Lama & other religious leaders—a right that belongs to the Tibetan Buddhist community alone."

According to Radio Free Asia, a State Department spokesperson said, "We are saddened that the PRC continues to separate the Panchen Lama from his community and deny him his rightful place as a Tibetan Buddhist leader."

Around the globe

Alongside Van Hoof and Cogolati, the two Belgian parliamentarians, several officials around the globe raised the Panchen Lama's disappearance on his birthday.

Germany's Commissioner for Global Freedom of Religion Frank Schwabe tweeted that China's kidnapping of the Panchen Lama was "an act of enforced disappearance."

"I urge the Government of China to disclose precisely his whereabouts, to allow an independent monitor to visit him + to ensure that Tibetan Buddhists are able to freely practice their religion, traditions + culture without interference according to international human rights law," Schwabe added.

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03 May 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)



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"I urge the Government of China to disclose precisely his whereabouts, to allow an independent monitor to visit him + to ensure that Tibetan Buddhists are able to freely practice their religion, traditions + culture without interference according to international human rights law," Schwabe added.

A delegation from Estonia's parliament traveled to Dharamsala, India—the exile capital of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people—for the Panchen Lama's birthday.

The delegation members held a press conference where they called for the Panchen Lama's release and expressed unwavering support for Tibet, which China has brutally occupied for over 65 years.

Juku-Kalle Raid, a member of the delegation, said after meeting the Dalai Lama: "As His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] mentioned today, the issue at hand is not just about the Panchen Lama; it is a global matter involving unlawful acts, forced occupation, and the violations of human rights. We are committed to raising awareness on these issues in the European Parliament."

Tibetan leaders

In Dharamsala, the Central Tibetan Administration, which provides democratic governance for Tibetan exiles around the globe, led a celebration of the Panchen Lama's birthday at the Tsuglagkhang temple. Along with the Estonian delegation, Buddhist officials, Tibetan leaders and others took part in the events.

The abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the traditional home of the Panchen Lama, implored all Tibetans to pool their efforts in advocating for the Panchen Lama's release.

Zeekyab Rinpoche, the abbot, earlier joined other Buddhist leaders from the Himalayas to release a five-point appeal for the Panchen Lama to foreign

governments, the United Nations and the international community.

Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, said on Twitter/X: "For 29 years, [the Panchen Lama's] whereabouts remain unknown. I urge governments and the international community to advocate for his release. #FreePanchenLama."

The Tibetan Sikyong (President) Penpa Tsering tweeted: "On the occasion of the 35th birthday of the 11th #PanchenRinpoche, Tenzin Gendun Yeshe Thinley Phuntsok, we pray that Rinpoche may soon be able to break the shackles of Chinese government's illegal captivity and assume his rightful throne of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery."

Gyari Dorjee Youdon, female warrior who fought Chinese army passes away at 92

02 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Gyari Dorjee Youdon in an undated photo (Photo/Facebook)

Gyari Dorjee Youdon, a significant yet an overlooked figure in Tibetan history, passed away at the age of 92. Despite her lesser-known status, she played a pivotal role as a female warrior leading revolts against invading Chinese armies in 1956 in Nyarong, in eastern Tibet's Kham region.

Her cremation ceremony, held in Mindroling, Clement Town, India on April 29, was a solemn occasion attended by dignitaries from various sections of the exile Tibetan set up. His Eminence Khokim Rinpoche presided over the ceremony, paying tribute to her remarkable life and contributions.

In 1956, Gyari Dorjee Youdon emerged as a courageous leader amidst the turmoil of Chinese oppression in Nyarong. The Chinese Communist soldiers, as part of their aggressive agenda, implemented a series of so-called "democratic reforms," which included brutal tactics such as "struggle sessions" (thamzings). These sessions involved public criticism, denunciation, and even physical violence against prominent citizens, lamas, and village headmen, often resulting in executions. Upon learning of these atrocities, Gyari Dorjee Youdon, alongside her husband Gyari Nyima and his senior wife Norzin Lhamo, recognised the urgent need

for action. Despite being less of a public figure compared to her husband and Norzin Lhamo, Gyari Dorjee Youdon took the lead in organising a rebellion in their local area to protect her community from the ruthless tactics of the Chinese military.

Accounts from Jamyang Norbu, a well-known Tibetan writer and historian, described Gyari Dorjee Youdon, clad in the attire of a man and armed with a pistol strapped to her side, fearlessly led her warriors into battle against the Chinese invaders. She attacked Chinese columns and outposts across Nyarong.

Dorjee Youdon also led an assault on the Drukmo Dzong, the former Gyaristang family palace where the Chinese were stationed. After freeing the chieftains, she attacked the castle with her 1400 troops. Lacking sufficient artillery to breach the walls, they surrounded it to cut off supplies. In the ensuing battle, they killed most of the Chinese soldiers and lost 26 of their own. She offered a ceasefire on two conditions to the Chinese: release of captive chieftains in Dartsedo including her husband, Gyari Nyima, and cessation of the Chinese democratic reform program.

Gyari Dorjee Youdon's name may not be as widely recognised as other figures in Tibetan history, historians believe that her legacy as a courageous female warrior and leader of the revolt against Chinese oppression will endure. They say, her life serves as a reminder of the resilience and indomitable spirit of the Tibetan people.

Tibetan activists to protest Xi Jinping's visit to Paris

01 May 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Chinese President Xi Jinping is set visit Europe later this week from May 5-10, with scheduled visits to France, Hungary, and Serbia. This marks his first visit to Europe in five years.

Ahead of Xi's visit to France, the head of the Tibetan government in exile, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday. During the meeting, an autographed photo of the Dalai Lama and Macron was presented to the French President during a ceremony honouring Mr. André Gattolin, a former Senator known for his support of Tibet.

As anticipation builds for President Xi's upcoming visit to France, the country finds itself bracing for potential protests, particularly from the Tibetan community there. Activist group Students for a Free Tibet is gearing for what it called the "biggest unwelcoming of Xi's Europe trip", urging fellow protestors to call out the Chinese President. France has the largest population of Tibetan exiles in Europe and is expected to voice concerns over China's policies towards Tibet and broader human rights issues.

Preparations are underway as demonstrators gear up to make their voices heard during Xi's visit. The protests aim to draw attention to the ongoing challenges faced by Tibetans under Chinese rule and advocate for greater international scrutiny of human rights violations in the region.

Experts say that the primary motive behind the visit to Europe and particularly to Italy is linked with the recent decision to withdraw from China's New Silk Road program, a decision to be finalized by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in Beijing in July, following some initial hesitation. Italy's departure from the initiative elevates the importance of Hungary and Serbia which are strategically positioned in central and eastern Europe, for China's access to the EU through land.

An agreement with the Italian government is expected to be postponed until after Xi's European tour concludes in May, during which he aims to assess the intentions of other European nations. The Belgrade-Budapest freight railway emerges as a focal point, shedding light on the gravity of Xi's visits to these neighbouring capitals.

Tibetan Sikyong meets with French President ahead of state visit by Chinese president

01 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Ahead of the arrival of Chinese President Xi Jinping for a state visit, President Emmanuel Macron of France had a brief meeting with the Sikyong (executive head) Mr Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) at his official Élysée Palace on Apr 30 evening during an award ceremony.

The occasion was a ceremony to present the National Order of the Legion of Honour awarded to Andre Gattolin, a former French senator known for his strong support for the issue of Tibet.

It was a brief yet consequential visit to Paris for the Tibetan Sikyong, said the CTA, which is effectively the Tibetan government in exile, on its Tibet.net website May 1.

The Sikyong was stated to have presented to Mr Macron an autographed picture of the latter with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, while urging him not to forget Tibet.

Although the main purpose of the Sikyong's palace visit was the award ceremony, it still remains to be seen how China will react, if at all. China sees any foreign leader's meeting with an exile Tibetan leader as encouragement of Tibetan independence despite the fact that the latter only seeks autonomy, not independence from Chinese rule.

Chinese President Xi Jinping is paying state visits to France, Serbia and Hungary from May 5 to 10 at the invitation of Mr Macron, President Aleksandar Vucic of

the Republic of Serbia and President Tamas Sulyok and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary.

The upcoming visits show that both China and Europe are striving to explore the space and prospects of cooperation in an era when major power strategic competition intensifies and geopolitics returns, China's official [globaltimes.cn](#) Apr 29 cited Chinese and European experts as saying. The report painted the visits as charting of blueprint for ties.

The visits are expected to shape the future of relations between China and Europe at a time when ties with the USA show little prospects for normalization in the foreseeable future.

Before Paris, the Sikyong visited Switzerland where he took part in closed-door meetings with prominent leaders and senior officials of the Swiss administration, said another Tibet.net report May 1.

He was also hosted in the Swiss parliament in capital Bern on Apr 29 by its Parliamentary Group for Tibet (PGT). The event was led by Maya Graf, Vice President of the PGT; Barbara Gysi; Fabian Molina, Co-president of the PGT; and Nik Gugger, Co-president of the PGT, joined by the group's founder 35 years ago, Rene Longet. The Sikyong was also stated to have been hosted a luncheon in the parliament building.

The Sikyong was also stated to have had a dinner engagement later in the evening with Eric Nussbaumer, the Speaker of the Swiss National Council, or lower house of parliament.

The Sikyong also met with the Tibetan community in the country, delivering a speech and answering their questions on a range of issues.

French president urged to put human rights, Tibet at heart of Xi Jinping talks

01 May 2024, [RFA](#), Tenzin Pema, Tashi Wangchuk, Yeshi Dawa

Government officials will meet only with representatives of the Dalai Lama, says a foreign ministry spokesman.



Sikong Penpa Tsering, leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile, gestures after an interview with AFP in his office in Dharamsala, India, Feb. 19, 2024.

The Chinese government says it will only talk with the representatives of the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, while ruling out any scope for “contact” with the India-based Tibetan government in exile.

Beijing called the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), as the government is known, a “separatist” bloc demanding autonomy for Tibet – a line that experts say it has long upheld and signals no change in Beijing’s stance towards engaging meaningfully with the Tibetan side since previous talks fell through in 2010.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, who made the comment on April 27, was reacting to a statement by Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the democratically elected leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, or CTA, about his government engaging in back-channel talks with the Chinese government.

Wang told a press conference there were two main conditions for any “contact or negotiations” on Tibet.

“First, we would only have contact and talks with the personal representative of the 14th Dalai Lama, not the so-called ‘Tibetan government-in-exile’ or ‘Central Tibetan Administration,’ he said.” The Chinese government will not be dealing with it.”

“Second, any contact or talks will only be about the personal future of the 14th Dalai Lama himself, or at most, a handful of people close to him, not the so-called ‘high degree of autonomy for Tibet,’” he added. Following the Chinese government’s statement, Tsering said negotiation was the only way forward to resolve the Tibet-China conflict and the CTA would continue appealing to the government and international community to urge the Chinese government to resume dialogue.

Sino-Tibetan dialogue began in 2002 in an effort to consider prospects of “genuine” autonomy for Tibet, as called for by the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, as part of his Middle Way policy.

The approach accepts the formerly independent Himalayan nation’s status as a part of China but urges greater cultural and religious freedoms, including strengthened language rights, guaranteed for ethnic minorities under provisions of China’s constitution.

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said time and again that the Tibet issue is the issue of six million Tibetans and not his personal matter,” CTA spokesman Tenzin Lekshay told Radio Free Asia.

“The Central Tibetan Administration’s Middle Way Policy seeks genuine, meaningful autonomy for the Tibetan people within the framework of the Chinese constitution and the Regional National Autonomy Law of China,” he said.

“Resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle Way Approach is mutually beneficial,” he added.

False sense of hope

The Sino-Tibetan talks ground to a halt in 2010 without any breakthrough following nine formal rounds of discussion and one informal meeting.

Chinese officials rejected proposals by the Tibetan delegation — which included the Dalai Lama’s special envoy Lodi Gyari and senior envoy Kelsang Gyaltsen — in which they called for greater autonomy for Tibet within China.

Both Gyari and Gyaltsen resigned from their posts two years after the talks stalled, citing frustration over the lack of a positive response from the Chinese side.

Reacting to the Chinese government’s latest statement on conditions for talks to resolve the conflict, Gyaltsen told RFA that Wang’s statement reflected the Chinese government line as usual.

“In fact, I can see that the Chinese government has intensified its tough stance on Tibet and, the statement signals a negative turn as now there is no scope even for a discussion on autonomy,” he said.

Wang’s statement also appeared to be “an attempt by the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, to create a false sense of hope among Tibetans and create further differences within the Tibetan communities,” he added.

London-based Tibetologist Robert Barnett of London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies, echoed Gyaltsen’s assessment, noting that the Chinese ministry spokesperson “does not deny that there are back-channel talks.”

“Basically, he confirms it. ... That might also explain why it is so aggressive. They want to distract Chinese listeners at least from realizing that they are talking with the Tibetans, perhaps,” Barnett told RFA, referring to the two conditions China laid out for talks. What China was saying in public differed from what Chinese officials were saying behind the scenes, Barnett said.

“It is not credible that the Chinese will only talk about the Dalai Lama’s personal situation, as they claim,” he said. “They may well refuse to discuss autonomy, but we can be fairly sure that they will be talking about other issues besides the Dalai Lama’s personal position and that of his retinue,” he said.

Push for ‘meaningful’ dialogue

Some governments, including those of the United States and European countries, have made repeated calls for the Chinese government to resume talks with the Dalai Lama or Tibetan leaders.

On Tuesday, a U.S. State Department spokesperson told RFA that the U.S. government would work with its allies and partners to encourage China to return, without preconditions, to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama, his representatives or the democratically elected Tibetan leaders to achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and ensure they can preserve their religion, culture and language.

In April, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved a bipartisan bill urging China to resume negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, and address the aspirations of Tibetans regarding their historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

“The CCP has oppressed the Tibetan people for 70 years and will not stop until their culture is eliminated,” U.S. Rep. Young Kim, a California Republican, told RFA. “The only way that there will be a peaceful resolution is if the voice of the Tibetan people is included in any conversations with the CCP.”

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in February, and now needs to pass the Senate for it to become law.

The bill notes that an obstacle to further dialogue is that the Chinese government continues to impose conditions on substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama, including “a demand that he say that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times, which the Dalai Lama has refused to do because it is inaccurate.”

The European Parliament in December 2023 adopted a resolution in which it repeated its call for the Chinese government to re-engage with the Dalai Lama’s representatives to establish genuine autonomy for Tibetans within China.

The resolution also urged Chinese authorities to release the Panchen Lama, Tibet’s second most senior Buddhist monk abducted by Chinese authorities in 1995, and refrain from interfering in the designation of the next Dalai Lama.

CHINA POLITICS

Statement From the Tiananmen Mothers on the 35th Anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre

30 May 2024, [Human Rights in China](#)

Human Rights in China has translated the following statement by the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of survivors and families of the victims of the Tiananmen Massacre, in honor and remembrance on the 35th Anniversary.

Today, we, the families and relatives of the June Fourth victims, are gathered in Beijing to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre. As we gaze upon the photos of our loved ones, our hearts are filled with a mix of grief and anger, and the pain arises suddenly.

We will never forget that day on June Fourth, 35 years ago, when your vibrant lives were struck by bullets, crushed by tanks, and snuffed out! The missing people whose remains could not even be found, and whose family members could not wipe the blood from your bodies and bid you a final farewell. These events happened in peacetime, on Chang'an Avenue in Beijing, the capital of China. It was too cruel! The injustices were too many to name!

For the past 35 years, we have never been able to forget the sight of you leaving home, and the gunshots in the night sky of Beijing which made us worry that something happened to you when you did not return home on time. We anxiously searched day after day, asking about you at major hospitals and all levels of government offices, tirelessly striving to find you and bring you home. When we finally heard the bad news, our anxious tension completely collapsed. We were heartbroken, devastated. Every family then seemed to live in darkness without light, and some could only shed endless tears.

Some of the wounded that Beijing citizens brought to the hospitals were hovering on the line between life and death. The doctors saved lives in one operation after another, hoping that there would be a miracle. Your family and loved ones were by your side day and night, praying that you could have a chance to reunite with your parents, wives and children, and that there would be the same harmony and warmth in your families as before. However, the Chinese authorities issued inhumane and indifferent orders mandating that the injured were not to be rescued, that blood transfusions were not to be given, martial law forces were to investigate the injured in major hospitals, and so on, so the hospitals had no choice but to conceal your injuries as other diseases. What's more, when those young lives were struck by bullets and fell to the ground, some citizens desperately tried to rescue them, but the soldiers did not allow citizens to even come close, and even stabbed the injured again with their bayonets several times.

The Geneva Convention of the International Red Cross clearly states: "Both sides of a conflict should observe humanitarian principles regarding prisoners of war, ensure the neutrality of the wounded, and in the event of war, they should make every effort to rescue the wounded regardless of nationality, ethnicity, and religious belief, and reduce deaths."¹ China is a signatory to this convention. The 1989 June Fourth Massacre, which occurred in peacetime, was a result of the Chinese military shooting at students and citizens who were petitioning for peace, and no rescue of the resulting casualties was allowed. This was antithetical to the laws of nature and humanity! Every human being on this Earth has the right to life and human dignity, and no ruler or leader has the right to arbitrarily deprive others of their lives.

Some students came from other provinces, full of youthful optimism. Carrying the expectations of their parents and fellow villagers, they came to the capital Beijing alone for their studies. The students of the '80s were the most idealistic and ambitious group of young people after the college entrance examinations were reinstated, and they would have become the pillars of the country. Instead, with the sound of a gunshot, their young lives were forever frozen on Shili Chang'an Street, and their blood stained the streets. Thirty-five years have passed, and the marks of that year have been erased by merciless time, but the traces of their blood and souls forever remain in the hearts of the witnesses, and in the hearts of their parents and loved ones. A mother from one of those faraway provinces once said: "My child went to Beijing to study, I never thought that my child wouldn't finish school, but would lose their life instead!" How heartbroken she was, and how helpless she must have felt against the government for her to say that.

As we stand here today, looking at the pictures of our loved ones, we feel incomparably sad. We can't help but ask China's ruling party and the Chinese government: Do society's problems have to be resolved by taking the lives of others?! Behind every life is their family, their parents, their siblings, their wives, and their children. For the families, the sudden loss of a loved one overnight is like the sky has fallen, and we are unable to accept the cruel truth. As a group of family members and relatives of the victims, we have the right to know the truth about the June Fourth Massacre, how many people were killed, how many people were injured, and how many people were implicated in this massacre that shocked China and the rest of the world. It is the responsibility of the government to give an explanation to society about this tragic incident that is in line with the facts, to publish the names of those who died, to make a public apology in the government's name, and to return fairness and justice to us.

Thirty-five years have passed, and the authorities remain silent. All that can be seen on the Internet is A Concise History of the Communist Party of China, which says that a tragic incident was caused by the student movement in 1989. We cannot accept or tolerate such statements that ignore the facts. In the student movement triggered by Hu Yaobang's death, the slogans put forward by the students were anti-official and anti-corruption, demanding the disclosure of officials' personal assets and the people's right to know the truth. These demands solicited extensive responses and support from people from all walks of life. The people had good intentions; they wanted to express the people's wishes to the government in this way, hoping that the government would listen to the people's demands, and bring about a vision of a clean and honest government. Isn't the current government also fighting corruption and discussing the proposal of "officials disclosing their assets" at the National People's Congress?

Thirty-five years have passed, and we ask the Chinese ruling party and the Chinese government again: Where were the counter-revolutionary riots that took place during the June Fourth Massacre, who were the counter-revolutionary rioters, and which key departments of the party and government leaders were hit on the day of the June Fourth Massacre? What was the behind the scenes information? What were the rumors being spread? After the army cleared Tiananmen Square, the government spokesman said in public that no shots were fired in Tiananmen Square and no one was killed. Since no shots were fired and no one died, how could the counter-revolutionary riots in Tiananmen Square come from that instigated by the counter-revolutionaries? Why did the "Concise History" mention Tiananmen Square without mentioning the students? Why did the "Concise History" not mention what the decisive measures were? Not mention the army's indiscriminate killing of innocent people, which filled the hundreds of thousands of people on Chang'an Avenue that day with fear? Only when history is factual can future generations in China reflect on it and learn from it.

Since June Fourth, the government has ignored the legitimate demands of the family members and relatives of the innocent victims of the Tiananmen Massacre and has continued to interfere with the daily lives of the remaining family members and relatives in various ways. The government's propaganda emphasizes that the principles and policies of governing the country must be implemented according to the law and must put people's interests first. However, the demands of the family members and relatives of the June Fourth victims have been ignored, completely deviating from the ruling philosophy of upholding the supremacy of the people and the supremacy of life.

Over the past 35 years, we have repeatedly appealed to our national leaders, hoping to have a sincere dialogue with the government on the following matters related to the June Fourth Massacre:

(1) Publish the list and number of the deceased persons in the incident;

(2) Provide appropriate compensation to the victims of June Fourth and victims' families in accordance with the law;

(3) Investigate those responsible for the incident in accordance with legal procedures.

These are also the three demands of truth, reparations, and accountability that our group has always adhered to.

On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the June Fourth Massacre, we once again sincerely appeal to President Xi Jinping and the government to engage in dialogue with us on these issues. The June Fourth Massacre is a historic and tragic event that the Chinese government must face and needs to explain to the people. It cannot be ignored, and there are members of government from that time who should bear legal responsibility for indiscriminately killing innocent people. For 35 years, we have suffered the loss of our loved ones. Many parents who lost their children have already passed away, carrying with them endless regrets. If the government sincerely addresses this tragedy, it would be the greatest consolation to the parents who are still alive.

This year, another victim and another bereaved family member in our group passed away due to illness. One is the disabled Mr. Qi Zhiyong, who died on January 2 at the age of 68. He was injured in the Liubukou area of Xidan. He had a high-limb amputation on his left leg, contracted Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion, and had suffered for 35 years. He once had a happy home, but the June Fourth Massacre completely changed his life. Another victim, Mr. Jia Fuquan, died at the age of 80 on March 7 due to a new coronavirus infection. On the morning of June 4, 1989, his wife, Mu Guilin, an employee of the No. 3 Jingmian Factory, went out to buy breakfast for her family when she was shot by a military vehicle at the Chaoyangmen overpass. She died on the spot.

We take this opportunity to mourn the both of them. May their souls rest in peace! We will continue to hold on to your last wishes until the day of justice arrives!

Signed:

You Weijie, Guo Liying, Zhang Yanqiu, Wu Lihong, Zhu Zhidi, Ye Xiangrong, Ding Zilin, Zhang Xianling, Zhou Shuzhuang, Qian Putai, Wu Dingfu, Song Xiuling, Sun Chengkang, Yu Qing, Sun Ning, Huang Jinping, Meng Shuying, Yuan Shumin, Liu Meihua, Xie Jinghua, Ma Xueqin, Kuang Ruihong, Yang Darong, He Tianfeng, Liu Xiuchen, Shen Guifang, Xie Jingrong, Yao Furong,

Meng Shuzhen, Shao Qiufeng, Tan Hanfeng, Wang Wenhua, Chen Mei, Zhou Yan, Li Guiying, Xu Baoyan, Di Mengqi, Wang Lian, Guan Weidong, Liu Shuqin, Sun Shanping, Liu Tianyuan, Huang Dingying, Xiong Hui, Zhang Caifeng, He Ruitian, Tian Weiyan, Yang Zhiyu, Li Xianyuan, Wang Yuqin, Fang Zheng, He Xingcai, Liu Ren'an, Qi Guoxiang, Han Guogang, Pang Meiqing, Huang Ning, Wang Bodong, Zhang Zhiqiang, Zhao Jinsuo, Kong Weizhen, Liu Baodong, Qi Zhiying, Fang Guizhen, Lei Yong, Ge Guirong, Zheng Xiucun, Gui Delan, Wang Yunqi, Huang Xuefen, Guo Daxian, Wang Lin, Zhu Jingrong, Mu Huailan, Wang Zhengqiang, Ning Shuping, Cao Yunlan, Feng Shulan, Fu Yuanyuan, Li Chunshan, Jiang Yanqin, He Fengting, Xi Yongshun, Xiao Zongyou, Qiao Xiulan, Lu Yanjing, Li Haoquan, Lai Yundi, Zhou Xiaojiao, Zhou Yunjiao, Chen Yongbang, Liu Yongliang, Zhang Jingli, Sun Haiwen, Wang Hai, Lu Sanbao, Yao Yueying, Ren Gailian, Ni Shishu, Yang Yunlong, Cui Linsen, Wu Weidong, Wang Deyi, Shi Jing, Yuan Ren, Bao Limei, Xi Guijun, Zhong Junhua, Ya Aiqliang, Chen Weidong, Hao Jian, Zhang Suying, Lin Li, Duan Changqi (114 people in total)

At the suggestion of fellow sufferers, we have decided to append the list of deceased signatories from previous years to honor their final wishes:

Wu Xuehan, Su Bingxian, Yao Ruisheng, Yang Shiyu, Yuan Changlu, Zhou Shuzhen, Wang Guoxian, Bao Yutian, Lin Jingpei, Kou Yusheng, Meng Jinxiu, Zhang Junsheng, Wu Shouqin, Zhou Zhigang, Sun Xiuzhi, Luo Rang, Yan Guanghan, Li Zhenying, Kuang Diqing, Duan Hongbing, Liu Chunlin, Zhang Yaozu, Li Shujuan, Yang Yinshan, Wang Peijing, Yuan Kezhi, Pan Muzhi, Xiao Changyi, Ya Weilin, Liu Jianlan, Suo Xiunu, Yang Ziming, Cheng Shuzhen, Du Dongxu, Zhang Guirong, Zhao Tingjie, Lu Masheng, Jiang Peikun, Ren Jinbao, Zhang Shuyun, Han Shuxiang, Shi Feng, Wang Guirong, Sui Lisong, Tian Shuling, Sun Shufang, Chen Yongchao, Sun Hengyao, Xu Jue, Wang Fandi, Li Xuewen, Wang Shuanglan, Zhang Zhenxia, Xiao Shulan, Tan Shuqin, Gao Jie, Jin Yaxi, Xing Chengli, Zhou Guolin, Hao Yichuan, Lu Yubao, Cao Changxian, Yin Min, Liu Qian, Lin Wuyun, Jin Zhenyu, Feng Youxiang, Wang Huirong, Zhu Yuxian, Zhang Shusen, Wang Guangming, Qi Zhiyong, Jia Fuquan (73 people in total)

Former China politics lecturer slams curbs on university research

27 May 2024, [RFA](#), Song Danyang and Qian Lang for RFA Mandarin

Since he published an open letter criticizing "Cultural Revolution-style" ideological controls of China's higher education system, former Tsinghua University politics lecturer Wu Qiang has found it a little harder to move around Beijing.

Wu, whose former school is the fictional location for the gruesome Cultural Revolution political 'struggle session' scene that opens Liu Cixin's popular science fiction trilogy *The Three-Body Problem*, told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview that he is now regarded as a "sensitive person" by the country's state security police, which means restrictions on his day-to-day activities.



Former Tsinghua University lecturer Wu Qiang is photographed at his apartment in Beijing in June 2021. (Leo Ramirez/AFP)

"The Beijing police stop me from entering the embassy district because I have a lot of contact with foreign journalists and diplomats," Wu said. "I get identified through facial recognition technology, then my ID card gets checked at the next intersection, and I'm told to leave."

"Ten minutes after that, I may get a call from state security police telling me not to remain in the area," he said.

Wu studies mass protests and demonstrations, a highly sensitive topic termed "mass incidents" by the increasingly security-obsessed ruling Chinese Communist Party.

He was suspended from his lectureship at Tsinghua University in 2015 for researching the 2014 Occupy Central pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, as well as protests and land-related campaigns in the rebel Guangdong villages of Taishi and Wukan.

Since the Chinese Communist Party enshrined Xi Jinping's personal brand of ideology -- Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era -- into the party charter in 2017, colleges and universities have scrambled to launch research programs and institutes to study "Xi Jinping Thought."

Stepped up surveillance

In January, RFA reported that the ruling party was taking more direct control over colleges and universities, with the ongoing mergers of university-level Communist Party committees with university presidents' offices, something that didn't even happen during the political turmoil of the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution.

It is also using technology to step up surveillance and monitoring of anyone deemed a potential threat to state security, including Wu Qiang.

Just a decade ago, it usually took the authorities at least a few days to put an end to Wu's research activities, Wu told RFA.

"Now it takes them just 10 minutes," he said. "Even normal communication with foreigners has become dangerous, even though I have no access to any secrets -- the system is highly sensitive."

The increased restrictions came after Wu penned an open letter in March to newly appointed Tsinghua University President Li Luming calling on him to drop a lawsuit against him which the school is pursuing despite its having been rejected by a Beijing court in 2021.

Wu, who was placed under house arrest around the same time, also took the opportunity to note that many former politics lecturers and professors at top schools in Beijing, Shanghai and across China have fled overseas to escape the political repercussions of doing their jobs.

Intimidation

A friend of Wu's who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals said he believes the lawsuit against Wu is a form of intimidation.

"I believe that the plaintiff is trying to make an example of Wu Qiang by repeatedly suing him, so as to tame other Tsinghua lecturers," the friend said.

A former colleague who gave only the surname Hu for fear of reprisals said the authorities have targeted Wu entirely due to his academic interests.

"Tsinghua University blacklisted Wu Qiang in the spring of 2020, and continues to do so to this day," Hu told RFA Mandarin. "They have banned him from living on campus, and they are demanding so-called liquidated damages of more than 1 million yuan."

"A court has already ruled that the school has no jurisdiction, but Tsinghua University just keeps filing these trumped-up lawsuits, which means that this a form of persecution," he said.

The school has also targeted Wu's colleagues, including the outspoken sociology professor Guo Yuhua, who was last year stopped by border guards while trying to leave China, and former law professor Xu Zhangrun, who was fired from his post in July 2020 after he called online for political reforms.

'Truth has been ripped to pieces'

Wu has continued with his research despite being banned from lecturing, but is finding it more and more difficult to make headway, something he blames on an overriding obsession with the political security of the regime under Xi Jinping.

"There is no regular field research happening any more," Wu said. "Everything is performance-based from top to bottom."

"Just as communities were locked down during the three years of zero-COVID, China has been shut off from the rest of the world, and the truth has been ripped to pieces," he said. "Isolation is what is happening to China, and it's also what's happening to me."

Wu started studying social movements for his PhD in political science at Germany's University of Duisburg-Essen, and was able to continue fieldwork for a few years on his return to China, although the authorities began obstructing his work as early as 2003 in various ways.

"It became increasingly difficult to obtain that kind of material [first hand]," he said. "I was followed by police while carrying out fieldwork and had them carry out checks on me in the middle of the night at my hotel."

"I even got expelled from one city," said Wu, who studies popular protest and resistance to the government, including spontaneous mass demonstrations and long-running attempts to redress grievances through official channels by petitioners.

Xia Ming, a professor of political science at New York's City University, confirmed Wu's account.

"Major universities in China are all infiltrated and tightly controlled by the state security police, the regular police, the political security police ... and so on," Xia said.

He described Wu as a rare and professional scholar capable of facilitating communication between China and the rest of the world.

Yet that's precisely what makes him a target.

"What Tsinghua has done to Wu Qiang is an indicator for the tightening of controls over colleges and universities in China generally," said Xia, who has previously worked at Fudan University in Shanghai. "Influential universities in China are always subject to selective control by the Chinese Communist Party."

"Very active and influential academics with international academic connections are monitored, warned, and eventually heavily persecuted," he said.

Translated by Luissetta Mudie. Edited by Malcolm Foster.

China's political advisors discuss fortifying strong sense of community for Chinese nation

25 May 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

BEIJING, May 24 (Xinhua) -- The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top political advisory body, on Friday held a fortnightly consultation session to discuss forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of

China Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, presided over the session.

To foster a strong sense of community and a shared sense of belonging for the Chinese nation, it is imperative to follow the guidance of the core socialist values and promote interactions, exchanges and integration among all ethnic groups, Wang said.

Calling for increased research and proposals in this regard, Wang urged political advisors to contribute their insights toward building China's independent systems of historical records, discourse, and theory for the community of the Chinese nation.

Ten political advisors and experts voiced their opinions at the meeting. Highlighting the role of civilization, culture, and language, they called for constant efforts to nurture a shared sense of belonging for the Chinese nation.

They also proposed efforts to forge a strong cultural identity and promote high-quality development of ethnic minority areas, among others.

China's latest AI chatbot is trained on President Xi Jinping's political ideology

24 May 2024, [ABC News](#)

China's latest artificial intelligence chatbot is trained on President Xi Jinping's doctrine, in a stark reminder of the ideological parameters that Chinese AI models should abide by.

China's cyberspace academy earlier this week announced the chatbot trained on Xi Jinping Thought, a doctrine which promotes "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

The chatbot was trained on seven databases, six of which were mostly related to information technologies provided by China's internet watchdog, the Cyberspace Administration of China, or CAC.

Xi Jinping Thought was the seventh database that the chatbot was trained on, according to a WeChat messaging service post by CAC's magazine about the AI model.

The Xi-trained large language model is the latest effort by authorities to spread the Chinese leader's ideology and ideas. Students have had to take classes on Xi Jinping Thought in schools, and an app called Study Xi Strong Nation was also rolled out in 2019 to allow users to learn and take quizzes about his ideologies.

Xi Jinping Thought — also known as "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" — is made up of 14 principles, including ensuring the absolute power of the Chinese Communist Party, strengthening national security and socialist values, as well as improving people's livelihoods and well-being.

The chatbot was created primarily to demonstrate the development and practical applications in

cybersecurity and IT research, according to the China Institute of Cybersecurity Affairs, which had launched the AI model for internal use.

The AI model would be able to generate report outlines on topics like AI development and productivity, according to the CAC magazine's WeChat post.

"Users can choose different categories of knowledge bases for intelligent question and answer. The professionalism and authority of the corpus ensure the professionalism of the generated content," the post said.

The AI model will also be able to create reports, summarize information and provide translations in Chinese or English for users who have access to it.

However, it's not clear if the Xi-trained chatbot will be meant for public use.

The unveiling of the chatbot comes as the U.S. and China are locked in a race for AI supremacy.

Though San Francisco-based OpenAI's generative AI model ChatGPT has been widely credited as one of the most important developments in the field, China too has ambitions to become the global leader in AI by 2030.

China's access to a population of 1.4 billion also allows the country to amass troves of data to train systems for facial recognition and autonomous driving.

Technology firms such as Alibaba and Baidu have already rolled out primarily Chinese-language AI models similar to ChatGPT for public and commercial use.

However, these AI models tend to be more restricted as they have to abide by China's strict censorship rules. This means that Chinese AI models will often not answer any politically sensitive questions posed to them.

"Educate the Masses to Change Their Minds"

21 May 2024, [Human Rights Watch](#)

Since 2016, the Chinese government has dramatically accelerated the relocation of rural villagers and herders in Tibet. The government says that these relocations—often to areas hundreds of kilometers away—are voluntary and that they will "improve people's livelihood" and "protect the ecological environment."

This report, drawing on over 1,000 official Chinese media articles between 2016 and 2023 as well as government publications and academic field studies, shows that China's own media reports in many cases contradict the claims that all those relocated gave their consent.

The news articles instead indicate that participation in "whole-village relocation" programs in Tibet is in effect compulsory. The articles describe high levels of

reluctance to relocate among many Tibetans from those villages. In one case, 200 households out of 262 in the village did not initially want to relocate to a new location which was nearly 1,000 kilometers away. In another village scheduled for relocation, all the residents except for a Chinese Communist Party activist initially disagreed with the plan to move the village. In all cases, the reports say these villagers eventually gave their consent to move. Human Rights Watch has not found any case where a village or any of its members scheduled for relocation has been able to avoid being moved.

The official press reports indicate the extreme forms of persuasion—that is, coercion—used by officials to pressure villagers and nomadic people or nomads to agree to whole-village relocation. These methods include repeated home visits; denigrating the intellectual capacity of the villagers to make decisions for themselves; implicit threats of punishment; banning of criticism; and threats of disciplinary action against local officials who fail to meet targets. In some cases, officials of increasing seniority visited families at their homes to gain their "consent," visits that sometimes were repeated over several years. Some official press reports and videos obtained by Human Rights Watch show officials telling residents that essential services would be cut to their current homes if they did not move. Others showed authorities openly threatening villagers who voiced disagreements about the relocations, accusing them of "spreading rumors" and ordering officials to crack down on such actions "swiftly and resolutely"—implying administrative and criminal penalties. This report includes three case studies that show in detail the timelines, objectives, arguments, and methods used to obtain the "consent" of residents of entire villages to relocate.

These coercive tactics can be traced to pressure placed on local officials by higher-level authorities who routinely characterize the relocation program as a non-negotiable, politically critical policy coming straight from the national capital, Beijing, or from Lhasa, the regional capital. This leaves local officials no flexibility in implementation at the local level and requires them to obtain 100 percent agreement from affected villagers to relocate.

In addition to whole-village relocations, there is also a second form of relocation in Tibet—that of individual households. This form of relocation typically involves officials selecting poorer households for relocation in areas presented as more suitable for income generation. While participants can decline to take part, Human Rights Watch found in many cases that officials provided families misleading information about the economic benefits of relocation to gain their consent. From previous projects, it should be evident to the officials that many rural people relocated would

be unable to find sustainable work in their new environment.

Even surveys carried out by official scholars at relocation sites in Tibet—which tend not to criticize the government—variously concluded that many of those relocated “cannot find suitable jobs to support their families,” and “satisfaction with relocation is low.” A 2014 review of an earlier relocation program in eastern Tibet found that even after 10 years, 69 percent of relocatees were still facing financial difficulties and 49 percent wished that they could move back to their original homes on the grasslands. False expectations created by officials who knowingly provide rural Tibetans misleading or false information about the economic benefit of relocation likely contributes to the dissatisfaction.

In both whole-village and individual-household relocations, Chinese law requires those who have been relocated to demolish their former homes to deter them from returning. Our research found that officials in Tibet are often enforcing this requirement. Official statistics suggest that between 2000 and 2025, the Chinese authorities will have relocated over 930,000 rural Tibetans (see Appendix I). Most of these relocations—over 709,000 people or 76 percent of these relocations—have taken place since 2016. Among these 709,000 people relocated, 140,000 are moved as part of the whole village relocation drives, 567,000 as part of individual household relocations. In this same period between 2000 and 2025, 3.36 million rural Tibetans have been affected by other government programs requiring them to rebuild their houses and to adopt a sedentary way of life if they are nomads, without necessarily being relocated.

Given that there are 4.55 million Tibetans living in rural areas in the People’s Republic of China, these figures suggest that most rural Tibetans have been impacted by Chinese government relocation or rehousing policies in the past two decades. Many of them have had to move or rebuild their homes more than once. While such mass relocations of residents have been occurring elsewhere in poor rural areas in China, these drives risk causing a devastating impact on Tibetan communities. Together with current Chinese government programs to assimilate Tibetan schooling, culture, and religion into those of the “Chinese nation,” these relocations of rural communities erode or cause major damage to Tibetan culture and ways of life, not least because most relocation programs in Tibet move former farmers and pastoralists to areas where they cannot practice their former livelihood and have no choice but to seek work as wage laborers in off-farm industries.

The relocation program in Tibet contravenes international human rights law standards. International law prohibits “forced evictions,” which have been defined as the removal of individuals,

families, or communities against their will from their homes or land without access to appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions include those that lack meaningful consultation or compensation, and which do not consider “all feasible alternatives” to relocation. Otherwise, lawful evictions must still be carried out in compliance with relevant international human rights law and “in accordance with general principles of reasonableness and proportionality.”

As detailed below, Chinese government policies that pressure or coerce Tibetans to relocate do not meet these standards. Authorities do not explore “all feasible alternatives” prior to relocation, ensure that those evicted receive “adequate compensation,” have a right to return where possible if dissatisfied, or other procedural protections.

China-proposed river ethics initiative wins support

23 May 2024, [China Daily](#), Hou Liqiang

International experts have spoken highly of a river ethics initiative that China proposed during the ongoing 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia, saying that it will help to realize the harmonious coexistence between humans and rivers, many of which have been jeopardized by human activities.

They made the remarks following the unveiling of the report “River Ethics and China’s Practices” on Tuesday at the eight-day forum, which concludes on Saturday. Underscoring river ethics as a new guiding philosophy to deal with the relationship between humans and rivers, the report compiled by the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research delves into the theoretical logic, the rules of practice and the development path of river ethics in China.

The report hopes that the nation’s experiences will prove useful in overcoming the crisis involving rivers worldwide, which is currently challenging global sustainable development.

While unveiling the report, Minister of Water Resources Li Guoying said that in accordance with Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization and President Xi’s perspective on water governance, developing river ethics means treating rivers as living entities and respecting their basic rights for survival and health.

“This perspective necessitates adjusting our values, moral codes, responsibilities and behavioral norms governing the interaction between humans and rivers,” Li said, adding that the core objective of a river ethics initiative will be to uphold the harmonious coexistence between humans and rivers.

Cecilia Tortajada, a professor at the United Kingdom-based University of Glasgow’s School of Interdisciplinary Studies, expressed her support for

the China-proposed river ethics initiative, saying that she believes it will have positive impacts.

Such an initiative will not only improve the water quality in every river in China, but also offer important lessons for other countries, she said.

"Because what you need is the practices, and China is a very big laboratory," Tortajada said. "I have great expectations for this initiative from China, because it's going to be positive for China and also for the world."

Asit K. Biswas, a visiting professor at National University of Singapore's School for Public Policy, said that in the 21st century, when most rivers are overexploited, both in terms of quantity and quality, it is important to note what the ethical requirements are with regard to river management.

Rivers play an important role in people's lives by maintaining the ecosystem and improving people's socioeconomic conditions, so the question is what ethics human beings should have in order to live in harmony with nature, Biswas said.

In March last year, during the 2023 United Nations Water Conference, Li, the minister, proposed that the world should look into river ethics as one of the four important areas of water management.

Biswas said: "I'm glad this is being done, because the river has been mostly a neglected topic. It will be good to have some principles. What are the, let's say, 10 to 14 principles of river ethics, which we human beings should follow, so that rivers can exist in harmony with human beings and nature?"

Slobodan P. Simonovic, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the International Conference on Flood Management, said that when discussing river ethics, it is fundamental to adopt a global view that doesn't prioritize humans over rivers, but sees them as interconnected elements of one complex system.

This perspective recognizes that rivers are not merely resources to be exploited for human benefit, but are dynamic ecosystems with their own intrinsic value and rights, he stressed.

"Just as humans have rights, proponents of environmental ethics argue that natural entities like rivers should also have (rights). ...This perspective sometimes is referred to as the river rights or the rights of nature," Simonovic said.

"And it recognizes rivers as living entities, deserving legal protection and respect," he added.

Thailand: 'Swap Mart' Targets Foreign Dissidents, Refugees

17 May, 2024, [Human Rights Watch](#)

Thai authorities are assisting neighboring governments to take unlawful actions against refugees and dissidents from abroad, making Thailand increasingly unsafe for those fleeing persecution, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today.

These targets of transnational repression have gotten caught up in a "swap mart" in which foreign dissidents in Thailand are effectively traded for critics of the Thai government living abroad.

The report, "'We Thought We Were Safe': Repression and Refoulement of Refugees in Thailand," details Thai authorities' upsurge in repression directed at foreign nationals seeking refugee protection in Thailand. Foreign governments have subjected exiled dissidents and activists living in Thailand to harassment, surveillance, and physical violence, often with the cooperation and knowledge of Thai authorities. In a number of cases, Thai officials arrested asylum seekers and refugees and deported them without due process to their home countries.

"Thai authorities have increasingly engaged in a 'swap mart' with neighboring governments to unlawfully exchange each other's dissidents," said Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin should break with this practice and prosecute Thai officials wrongfully collaborating with foreign governments acting on Thai soil."



Suspected Uyghurs are transported back to a detention facility in the town of Songkhla in southern Thailand, March 26, 2014. © 2014 Andrew RC Marshall/Reuters

The term "transnational repression" describes efforts by governments or their agents to silence or deter dissent by committing human rights abuses against their own nationals or members of the country's diaspora outside their territorial jurisdiction.

Human Rights Watch analyzed 25 cases that took place in Thailand between 2014 and 2023 and conducted 18 interviews with victims, their family members, and witnesses to abuses, along with representatives of local and international nongovernmental organizations. The governments responsible include member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as China and Bahrain, among others.

In one case, a Cambodian dissident who had fled to Thailand in July 2022, said he started receiving letters from Cambodian officials urging him to defect from

the main Cambodian opposition party. After he had received these letters for months, unidentified men attacked him in August 2023. “They did not say anything to me, they just came out and started beating me,” the Cambodian dissident said.

In recent years in Thailand, dissidents from Vietnam have been tracked down and abducted, Lao democracy advocates have been forcibly disappeared or killed, and a Malaysian LGBTI rights influencer was targeted for repatriation. Thai authorities have detained and unlawfully deported Chinese dissidents and refugees, seemingly at the request of the Chinese government. Thai authorities also detained a visiting professional football player from Bahrain with Australian refugee status, and nearly returned him to Bahrain.

At the same time, a number of Thai activists have been killed or disappeared in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The mutilated bodies of two missing activists were later found floating in the Mekong River.

“Swap mart” arrangements increased under Thailand’s National Council for Peace and Order military government that came to power after the May 2014 coup and continued under the post-2019 government of Prime Minister Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha. The Thai authorities, in addition to facilitating assaults, abductions, enforced disappearances, and other abuses, repeatedly violated the principle of nonrefoulement: the prohibition on returning anyone to a place where they would face a real risk of persecution, torture, or other serious ill-treatment, or a threat to life.

Thai authorities have arrested and summarily deported exiled critics and dissidents, even those with refugee status determined by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). One Cambodian activist pleaded with Thai police, saying he would “be killed or put in jail ... if deported.” Yet Thai authorities forcibly returned him to Cambodia within days of his arrest.

Thailand’s actions violate customary international law as well as the UN Convention against Torture and other treaties that Thailand has ratified barring refoulement. The actions also violate Thailand’s Act on Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearances, which came into effect in February 2023. It states that “no government organizations or public officials shall expel, deport, or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that the person would be in danger of torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, or enforced disappearance.”

The Thai government should thoroughly and impartially investigate alleged harassment, threats, surveillance, and forced returns from Thailand by foreign governments against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand and the role of Thai officials in those actions, Human Rights Watch said.

“Prime Minister Srettha should act to restore Thailand’s deserved reputation as a country that is a safe haven for dissidents from abroad,” Pearson said. “He should immediately order a full and transparent investigation into arbitrary arrests, violent assaults, and forced returns of refugees and political dissidents.

Chinese nationalist groups are launching cyber-attacks – often against the wishes of the government

14 May, 2024, [The Conversation](#), Lewis Eves

The UK’s national security agency, MI5, warned in April that British universities participating in military research are targets for cyber-attacks by foreign states. More recently, news broke of a cyber-attack against the UK’s Ministry of Defence, which exposed the personal details of 270,000 armed forces personnel. China is the main suspect behind these attacks.

China is often presented as a monolithic entity, entirely at the whim of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). However, the reality is more complex. Many Chinese cyber-attacks and other kinds of digital interference are conducted by Chinese nationalist groups.

Some of these groups are funded by and act under the direction of the CCP. The 50 Cent Army (五毛党), for example, is a group who post pro-CCP messages on social media. Its name is derived from reports that the CCP pays recruits 0.5 yuan (US\$0.69) per post.

But many of these groups operate independently. There are even cases of Chinese nationalist groups engaging in online warfare against the wishes of the CCP.

The fact that cyber-attacks are being launched independently of the CCP and against its directives suggests that China’s nationalist movement is escaping the government’s societal controls. This could become a headache for China’s president, Xi Jinping, as the number of cyber-attacks grows.

China’s nationalist movement is very sensitive to what it considers insults to the Chinese nation. This is due to the careful construction of Chinese nationalism through stories like the “century of humiliation”, a period from roughly 1839 to 1949 in which China was exploited and victimised by foreign imperialist powers. Chinese nationalists now act against what they perceive to be renewed attempts by foreign powers to again humiliate China. They take action through “online wars” against those who they believe pose a threat to China’s interests.

In 2016, Taiwan elected Tsai Ing-wen, an anti-Beijing candidate, as president. During and after the election, a group of predominately young, female cyber-nationalists known as the Little Pinks (小粉紅) waged a “meme war” against Taiwan.

This involved thousands of Little Pinks posting a deluge of pro-Beijing memes on the social media profiles of President Tsai and numerous Taiwanese news outlets. The memes emphasised China's claim that Taiwan is a Chinese province and not an independent nation state.

Some cyber-nationalist groups have gone a step further by engaging in hacktivism. This involves targeting institutions and organisations through cyber-attacks to pursue the nationalist agenda.

In 2008, an informal group of hacktivists called the Red Hacker Alliance (中国红客联盟) attempted a denial-of-service attack against US media company CNN. The attack was in response to CNN's reporting on anti-Beijing protests in Tibet, which has been occupied by China since 1950. It caused the company's website to be briefly unavailable in some parts of Asia.

In another example, a group called the Honker Union (紅客) launched cyber-attacks against the Philippines in 2014. Triggered by the attempted arrest of Chinese fishermen in a disputed area of the South China Sea, the Honker Union hacked into the website of the University of the Philippines. Hackers posted pro-Chinese slogans and a map showing China's territorial claims on the university's homepage.

The CCP's societal control

The CCP leans into nationalist sentiment to legitimise its regime, presenting itself as the vanguard of the Chinese nation. But this reliance on nationalism has given China's nationalist movement considerable influence. The CCP cannot be seen to contradict its nationalist credentials by constraining nationalist activity too heavily.

As a result, cyber-nationalists have escaped the CCP's societal controls, such as its ability to direct China's nationalist movement through propaganda. In doing so, cyber-nationalists undermine the CCP's authority and occasionally contradict its foreign policy.

In 2020, the CCP called for restraint among nationalist groups following foreign criticism of China's crackdown on Hong Kong. However, cyber-nationalists still undertook an anti-foreign smear campaign on social media. Even the Communist Youth League, a nationalist organisation with formal links to the CCP, took part against the CCP's instruction.

As part of this campaign, hacktivists also launched cyber-attacks such as hijacking the Twitter account of the Chinese embassy in Paris. The hacktivists posted a picture of the US as the personification of death visiting Hong Kong.

The embassy quickly deleted the image and apologised to France and the US. But the incident speaks to a CCP that is struggling to control cyber-nationalists who are evading its societal controls and are willing to hijack state propaganda infrastructure to pursue their goals.

There have also been hacktivist cyber-attacks directed against the Chinese state, usually coinciding with periods of discontent with the CCP. In 2014, one group briefly seized control of a television network in the eastern city of Wenzhou and broadcast nationalistic and anti-CCP messages. This cyber-attack was made in protest of the detention of Wang Bingzhang, a nationalist activist and political dissident.

Another group hacked into a Shanghai police database in 2022, leaking 23 terabytes of personal information that the state had collected on the Chinese people as part of its programme of mass domestic surveillance. The information was later made available for sale on online forums from an anonymous hacker referred to as "ChinaDan".

In the west, we assume that Chinese cyber-attacks reflect a malicious Chinese state. The reality is more complex. As cyber-nationalists continue to take matters into their own hands, increasing numbers of cyber-attacks also reflects a major domestic problem for the CCP – one that showcases the limits of its societal controls.

Xi Stresses Breaking New Ground in Ideological, Political Education

12 May 2024, [Women of China](#)

President Xi Jinping has stressed efforts to continuously break new ground in ideological and political education at schools in the new era.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in an instruction on the development of ideological-political courses for schools.

Xi said that the CPC Central Committee has always made developing ideological-political courses in schools a priority for education since the 18th CPC National Congress and the Party's leadership in this regard has been fully strengthened.

Developing ideological-political courses on the new journey of the new era should follow the guidance of the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and the fundamental mission of fostering virtue should be carried out, Xi said.

He underscored the importance of developing a system of textbooks with a focus on the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and integrating political education across all levels from elementary schools to universities.

Xi stressed the need for efforts to uphold fundamental principles and break new ground to develop ideological-political courses, and to make the courses more targeted and appealing.

He stressed that Party committees and leading Party members groups at all levels should make it a priority to develop ideological-political courses.

Schools of various types should consistently break new ground in ideological and political education in the new era, and foster talented individuals who are loyal to the Party, patriotic and dedicated, and capable of shouldering the mission of realizing national rejuvenation, he said.

Xi's important instruction was conveyed at a meeting on boosting the development of ideological-political courses for schools held in Beijing on Saturday. Ding Xuexiang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, attended the meeting and delivered a speech.

Ding, who is also vice premier, called for thorough study and implementation of Xi's important instruction and urged continuous efforts to push forward the reform and innovation of ideological-political courses.

Stressing the importance of helping students better understand national conditions and consolidate their ideals and faith, Ding said the mechanism for guaranteeing proper status and salaries for teachers of the courses should be improved.

How China's latest government overhaul is shaping up, and what it says about the Communist Party's priorities

12 May 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Since taking the helm of the Communist Party in 2012, President Xi Jinping has constantly been overhauling China's massive system of state and party organs to reflect Beijing's shifting priorities.

In the latest restructuring plan, rolled out in the spring of 2023, Beijing moved to assert more direct party control over a wide range of key policy areas, including science and technology, the financial sector and social stability.

A year later, the nature and scale of the restructuring is starting to take shape as new agencies covering these areas have been set up by central and local governments.

Looking closely at their operations provides an opportunity not just to see how they operate in practice, but also helps shed more light on Beijing's policy priorities and the challenges it faces.

For example, the establishment of new financial regulatory bodies by both central and provincial governments highlights the sense of urgency around tackling financial risk, while the newly established National Data Administration will play a key role in China's plans to develop artificial intelligence by managing data resources.

The top Hong Kong and Macau policy office will also report directly to the party's Central Committee, rather than the State Council, the country's cabinet, to improve coordination with other branches of government as Beijing seeks to tighten its control over the city.

The overhaul is an "important part of the ruling Communist Party's effort to channel nationwide resource-to-technology self-reliance, while strengthening the party's control over financial and social risks", as it faces an increasingly hostile West, according to Alfred Wu, an associate professor with the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

"In China's party and state-led governance model, setting up party commissions or government bureaus are usually the best way to influence the resource allocation on priorities as it is trying to shift the key economic growth engine from property to technology," he said.

"It is a painful and long process. China hopes to use the party-led finance model to pump more money into research and development, while keeping an eye on social stability because of higher unemployment."

The efforts to ensure stability extend all the way down to the grass roots, where social work departments – which have to handle petitions and grievances from the public – are being established at county level, the only new bodies to operate at such a low level.

While departments supervising economic matters only make sense on a larger scale, the opposite is true for social stability, according to Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University.

"It has to reach the grass roots level to know what is wrong on the ground and take immediate action," said Xie.

At the central level, Beijing appointed Wu Hansheng, a veteran party administrator, as head of the Social Work Department in July 2023.

At a meeting in February, Wu and his lieutenants set out this year's key tasks, telling provincial social control teams to quickly formulate plans to find ways to better handle petitions and listen to grass-roots grievances and suggestions. They were also urged to deploy more staff to identify and defuse any potential social risks.

The central department is also tasked with asserting the party's leadership over various sectors of society, including industry federations and party branches in private companies. It also aims to extend the party's reach into the gig economy and among the growing number of self-employed people.

Most of the provincial officials who attended the event were the secretaries of local new economy and new social organisation work committees, which have been established since 2016 to extend the party's reach into

the private sector and new internet industries, where the party previously had a limited reach.

A Zhejiang cadre said building a social organisation network across the country is still a work in progress.

“We are still in the process of clarifying our new lines of reporting, finding duplicate functions and streamlining them. But the instruction from the top is very clear, get it done before the end of the year – and they won’t accept excuses,” he said.

The first new body to be established was the National Administration of Financial Regulation, which was set up in May last year – indicating the leadership’s belief there is an urgent need for better oversight of the financial sector.

In March last year Beijing also said it would replace local financial regulatory bodies with the provincial outposts of the National Administration of Financial Regulation in a clear sign of Beijing’s distrust of local governments when it comes to tackling the problem – especially since giving them free-rein over regulation is seen as a major source of corruption.

Most of the regional financial regulatory heads have been sent from central offices in Beijing

As part of this drive another body, the Central Financial Work Commission, headed by Premier Li Qiang, was set up later in the year to design, coordinate and supervise financial polices for better stability and development.

A political scientist from Nanjing University said the leadership has grave concerns about financial risk and corruption, because the damage it can cause to ordinary people’s lives is “nuclear grade”.

“If you compare the damage from different sectors ... financial sector corruption is definitely going to lead the chart as they can influence the flow of or have access to the whole financial markets worth trillions of yuan.

“While other officials are taking bribes in thousands or millions of yuan, the financial sector’s corruption can easily reach billions, leaving big holes and major headaches in the system,” he said.

He cited the case of Lai Xiaomin, the former chairman of Huarong, one of China’s largest state-controlled asset management firms, who was executed in 2021 for taking almost 1.8 billion yuan (US\$277 million) worth of bribes – a crime the supreme court said had a “particularly severe” social impact.

The political scientist said the government shake-up showed “Beijing is very clear about this now. The financial sector shall not have its own agenda. It shall just serve its role of moving capital to where the party wants it to go”.

Three regional officials involved in the overhaul said the new local financial bodies will only operate in provincial capitals and a handful of major cities.

“So in Guangdong, you will see a provincial financial regulatory bureau and two municipality level bureaus

in Guangzhou, the provincial capital, and Shenzhen, a city under separate state planning. That is all,” a Guangdong official said.

An official in Guizhou concurred. “We will only have a provincial financial regulatory body and municipal financial regulator in our provincial capital Guiyang. Many cadres working in the financial area will be redeployed, especially those in smaller cities,” he added.

An official involved in the institutional overhaul in Shanghai, China’s financial and commercial centre, said the overhaul is aimed at removing the responsibility for developing markets from the municipal financial office to focus on regulation.

“The financial works office’s job was to serve local governments and financial institutions, coordinate financial resources, help to obtain more credit to finance local development projects, and assist local companies to go public.

“Now it is different. The central government’s priority for us is to identify potential financial risks within our jurisdiction and manage them before it blows up,” said the Shanghai official.

“It is not just changing the plate outside our office. It requires a drastic change in how we run the bureau, our mentality, how to regulate the interactions between officials and the financial institutions to avoid corruption etc. We are just embarking on it.”

When it comes to data management the implementation at a provincial level is more patchy.

AI is seen as the next major area of competition between China and the US, and data is a vital resource for developing and training the technology.

After the launch of the National Data Administration, 20 out of the mainland’s 31 provinces, regions and municipalities have so far set up their own data management offices to fit with Beijing’s blueprint to develop China’s data infrastructure and integrate and share data resources.

The plan will see national hub nodes set up in some of the country’s key economic hubs, such as the Yangtze and Pearl River Deltas as well as around Beijing, and in less populated areas including Inner Mongolia, Gansu and Ningxia.

Except for Ningxia, all other provinces and regions mentioned in the plan have already announced new data agencies, led by directors with professional backgrounds in computers and big data.

Some provinces – Shaanxi, Hebei, Inner Mongolia and Guangdong – have also included “government services” in the name of their data agencies, suggesting a clear expansion in their role to allow residents to have one-stop access to government services.

The most mysterious of the new party organs are those set up to coordinate scientific development,

with little information being released about their operations across the country.

The Central Science and Technology Commission was set up to oversee the sector from the top, but the only public reference to this new party body is a statement on the Ministry of Science and Technology's website in July that said cadres had studied the outcome of its first meeting.

Unlike the other newly established party organs, even the leadership of this body is unknown, something analysts said may be a sign of China's concerns about scrutiny from the West and may even indicate it has links to the military.

"China needs to avoid attention from the West so that it can push forward its science and tech development agenda with relatively fewer obstacles and intervention," said Tsinghua's Xie,

He noted that China's ambitious tech development and talent attraction plans – such as the Made in China 2025 blueprint and Thousand Talent Plan – has been used by the West to track the new industries China is betting on and its international talent recruitment, so "staying low-key is the natural response".

Information about science bodies on the provincial levels is also very limited. As of the end of April, only Henan and Inner Mongolia had announced the establishment of their own science commissions, which were chaired by senior officials.

National University of Singapore's Wu said it is still too early to say if the overhaul is effective as such drastic organisational changes need time to clear up any confusion or internal disputes they may cause.

"Many companies take years to complete their merger and acquisition process, not to mention mega-Chinese party and state machines which have faced three major reshuffles since Xi came to power."

Xi's three rounds of institutional reform – announced in 2013, 2018 and last year – have all aimed to centralise power in the hands of party apparatchiks and streamline the ever-ballooning bureaucracy to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

"Deciding on the organisational structure and the staffing are probably the easiest parts of the latest reshuffle. It can be done in two years. Going forward, the bigger challenge is for the new agencies to prove themselves," Wu said.

Senior Chinese leaders' tours round country offer clues to economic policy agenda ahead of key meeting

11 May 2024, [SCMP](#), Vanessa Cai

Several senior Chinese officials have been touring the country this week, offering some clues as to what will be top of the agenda at a key policy meeting that will set out the country's general economic direction.

The four emphasised technological self-reliance, social stability and high-quality development during the trips, the first made by members of the senior leadership after the announcement that the third plenum would be held in July after an unexplained delay.

It is a tradition for senior officials to make domestic inspection tours before a plenum, a party gathering that will announce goals to be followed up by government agencies with specific policies.

This week, four of the seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee – Premier Li Qiang, the country's top lawmaker Zhao Leji, top political adviser Wang Huning and first Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang – were touring the country while President Xi Jinping was in Europe with other senior officials.

Li visited Xinjiang between Tuesday and Thursday, saying the northwestern region should strengthen international exchanges and promote its role as a trade link between inland provinces and other countries, state news agency Xinhua reported.

His itinerary included visits to local companies, where he stressed the need to support the development of industries showcasing local strengths such as energy and equipment manufacturing. He also said the region should promote stability.

Li's trip followed Xi's call to accelerate the development and opening-up of western China during a visit to Chongqing last month. The area – including Chongqing and 11 provinces and autonomous regions – is considered strategically important for energy security and national defence.

On Friday, the premier travelled to the eastern province of Anhui, where he stressed the importance of technological self-reliance and innovation.

That was also a focus for vice-premier Ding Xuexiang during his three-day trip to northeastern China's Liaoning province that concluded on Thursday. He visited the capital city Shenyang and port city Dalian, where he highlighted the need to develop the advanced manufacturing sector.

Ding visited a university, several tech companies and a research lab. He said business should play a stronger role in scientific innovation and collaboration between enterprises, academia and research institutes should be promoted.

Wang Huning, the party's No 4 official and former ideology chief, travelled to southern China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region between Monday and Wednesday.

He said the region, which has one of China's highest proportion of non-Han ethnic groups, needs to enforce Xi's vision of "forging a strong sense of the community of the Chinese nation" that calls for greater integration of minorities.



Wang Huning stressed the importance of implementing Xi Jinping's vision for integrating ethnic minorities during his visit to Guangxi region. Photo: Xinhua

This has also been a theme in his inspection trips last year to places such as Xinjiang, home of the Uygur population, Tibet and Yunnan.

The third plenum is traditionally used by the Communist Party to set out the country's economic strategy for the next five to 10 years. July's meeting is expected to cover a wide range of areas, from the economy to social development.

When announcing the date last month the Politburo, a key decision-making body, emphasised the risks "lurking in key areas" of the economy and the need to advance reforms and gain a strategic advantage over foreign competitors.

It has not spelled out the July meeting's agenda, saying only that the Central Committee would discuss "further comprehensive reforms" and pushing forward "Chinese modernisation".

The third plenum will last for up to five days and will be attended by the 376 full and alternate members of the Central Committee, the party's top governing body.

'Resist temptations': China's top spy agency warns overseas staff are being targeted for hi-tech secrets

10 May 2024, [SCMP](#), Phoebe Zhang

China's top intelligence agency has warned that overseas entities have been approaching and tricking Chinese personnel stationed in their countries to steal China's hi-tech industrial secrets.

In a post on its official WeChat account on Friday, the Ministry of State Security warned that the methods used by foreign spy agencies can be "quite deceptive" and overseas Chinese employees should take precautions.

When such entities identify overseas Chinese personnel overseas, they usually approach them in three stages, the ministry said.



Chinese Ministry of State Security app on WeChat. Photo: Handout

First, they create a "chance encounter", where they pretend to be friendly and helpful to their targets. Then, they make frequent contact with their targets, invite them to dinners, and share information about their lives to gain trust. Finally, when the targets have lowered their guard, the spies trick or threaten them to sell state secrets, according to the post.

When stationed in an unfamiliar environment far from families and friends, the Chinese staff may be inclined to socialise, the ministry said, but cautioned they should be calm and rational and avoid risks.

"They should stay on guard about the motivations others may have when they make friends, have a strong awareness to keep secrets and resist temptations," the ministry said.

Over the past year, the ministry has been more active on social media, warning the public about threats of foreign spies, and urging people to report suspicious activity.

The posts have raised alarms on a range of risks, including underwater spyware found in Chinese waters, espionage disguised as consultations and overseas students being approached to obtain information. China's revised counter-espionage law, which came into effect last July, expands both the definition of spying and the investigative powers of the country's national security agencies. An amended state secrets law that took effect in May added a dozen new clauses that expand the depth and reach of its coverage.

The ministry had previously disclosed "classic examples" of people stationed overseas who were persuaded to spy.

In April, the ministry discussed the case of Zhang Xiangbin, a translator with a Chinese ministry who was stationed in a "foreign country". He was approached by a spy, who befriended him and later paid him for intelligence.

For years, Zhang worked as a spy in the host country and had two children with a government officer in that country, the state security ministry said.

Zhang later quit his job when he realised Chinese intelligence might have been on to him. Before leaving, he took 5,200 files and documents, many of which were designated as secret.

In 2019, Zhang was sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve.

Australian study says China uses global apps, games for propaganda

10 May 2024, [VOA](#), Phil Mercer

An Australian study claims that China's monitoring of global internet users' online habits — a practice that has made TikTok controversial in the United States — extends far beyond the popular social media app to numerous other platforms and even online games.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a research organization that receives funding from the Australian government and others overseas, said in a May 2 report that Beijing's propaganda chiefs are forging ties with Chinese tech companies to gather personal data from a wide range of social media apps or platforms and popular online games.

They include ride-sharing app DiDi, the action game Genshin Impact, and Temu, the popular online marketplace.

The Australian study claims that China's ambition is to harvest "strategically valuable" data from media, gaming, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

It states that China is "working to extend its influence abroad to reshape the global information ecosystem ... to strengthen its grip on power, legitimize its activities and bolster China's cultural, technological, economic and military influence."

There has been no response, so far, from Chinese authorities. Beijing has previously accused the Australian government of "anti-China hysteria" over various geopolitical and trade disputes.

Samantha Hoffman, the lead author of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute report, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation this week that data obtained from apps, platforms and games could be valuable to China.

"That could be data on the way that users make decisions. [With] Temu, it could be preferences that indicate the likes and dislikes of particular demographics," she said. "If China is trying to shape the way that the world perceives and understands truth and reality, then this data will help to make those efforts more successful over time."

The report urged policymakers to "develop robust defenses and countermeasures to safeguard against future information campaigns orchestrated by Beijing."

It also asserts that much attention has been given to the Chinese-owned platform TikTok because of concerns that the user data it collects could be shared with Chinese authorities. It cautions, however, the problem "runs much deeper than just TikTok."

TikTok's Chinese owner, ByteDance, has said it will mount a court challenge in the United States to what it called an "unconstitutional" law making its way through Congress that could require the platform to be sold or banned in that country.

ByteDance has denied collusion with the Chinese government.

Marina Zhang, an associate professor at the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology Sydney, told VOA she thinks the Strategic Policy Institute report is exaggerated.

"[The] Chinese propaganda machine is huge, but to link all social media apps [to] this propaganda machine is a bit of overstretching," she said.

Zhang said she believes technological collaboration, and not confrontation, is in China's best interests.

"If segregation is going to happen and if reports like this [are] going to happen, China will be isolated from the rest of the world," Zhang said. "So, we do not want to see a total technological decoupling between China and the West in terms of not just applications but also eventually in technological infrastructure. That is not going to be good for anybody."

Last year, Australia said it would ban TikTok on government devices, including cell phones, because of security and surveillance fears.

Senior official with China's new financial regulator targeted in corruption probe just a week into the job

08 May, 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

A senior official from China's new financial regulatory body has been detained by the country's top anti-corruption watchdog, according to official announcements.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) said on Tuesday that Ren Chunsheng, leader of the preparatory team for the Complaint Mediation Centre of the National Financial Regulatory Administration (NFRA), was under investigation because he was "suspected of serious violations of discipline and law" — a euphemism for corruption.

Ren, 55, appears to have joined the administration earlier this month, serving at the agency for about a week before his detention. He is the first senior official at the new financial regulator to be targeted in an anti-corruption investigation.

The NFRA was established in March of last year as part of a major overhaul of Communist Party and state organs.

As part of that overhaul, Beijing established a powerful Central Financial Commission, led by Premier Li Qiang, to decide the general direction of financial regulation. The NFRA was founded to serve as the execution and enforcement arm of the commission's decisions.

The NFRA's Complaint Mediation Centre will be a key mechanism to coordinate the handling of consumer and market complaints about financial institutions' products and unfair practices and to deal with actions that infringe on consumers' rights and interests.

Ren stepped down as the party secretary and chairman of the Shanghai Insurance Exchange (SHIE) in late April, a position he had held since July 2021.

One Shanghai official who knew Ren said friends had not been able to reach him since his departure from SHIE.

SHIE, an insurance service platform launched in June 2016, raised 2.24 billion yuan (US\$310 million) in capital and aimed to become the main exchange for Chinese and overseas insurance companies to register and trade their insurance and reinsurance products.

Before his stint at SHIE, Ren was the party secretary and chairman of China Insurance Investment Co, Ltd, a position he assumed in February 2019.

Ren has spent most of his career in top Chinese financial regulatory authorities. Before his appointment to China Insurance Investment group in 2019, he was the director of the Insurance Fund Supervision Department of the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, which was abolished and replaced by the NFRA during the overhaul last year.

While there, he was mainly responsible for monitoring insurance fund risk and providing early warnings. His team carried out on-site and off-site inspections of insurance company investments.

China's anti-corruption authority has set its sights on China's financial system in recent years. In the first four months of 2024, more than 20 senior financial officers were detained by the CCDI, according to a tally on the disciplinary watchdog's website.

The highest ranking financial official caught so far this year has been Li Jiping, 69, former vice-president of China Development Bank. The CCDI announced his detention on March 13, more than eight years after he retired.

The tally also shows that in 2023, the CCDI announced the detention of more than 100 cadres in China's banking, insurance, securities and other finance-related fields. Nearly 70 per cent of the financial officials investigated were from state banks, with "using bank loans for personal gains" the most common accusation against them.

New rules let China's state security police check people's devices

May 8, 2024, [RFA](#), Qian Lang

China's state security police will be given sweeping powers to search electronic devices including smartphones and laptops from July 1, as part of a nationwide campaign to ensure "national security," a broad term often used by the government to include detailed economic data and political dissent.

The documents issued by the Ministry of State Security on April 26 empower its officers to gather "electronic data" relating to an investigation including "mobile phone text messages, emails, instant messages and group chats," along with "documents, images, audio and video, apps and ... log records" from electronic devices.

Police may "make inquiries" simply by presenting their police ID card, and may "collect evidence" if at least two officers present their ID card, according to the rules on administrative cases.

"The collection and extraction of electronic data shall be carried out by two or more investigators," the orders read.

However, police can investigate purely to determine "basic information about the suspect," and even whether an illegal or criminal act has taken place.

Billed by the ruling Chinese Communist Party's official *Legal Daily* newspaper as a set of guidelines for implementing the "national security concept," the documents come amid an ongoing nationwide campaign to encourage people to spot any kind of behavior that could "endanger national security," including being on the lookout for foreign spies in their daily lives.

In its report on the new rules, the nationalistic *Global Times* newspaper mentioned the campaign, citing the cases of Canadian nationals Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor as examples of foreign spies operating in China.

Similar rules were issued governing investigations run by market regulatory agencies on April 4.

Stop and search

Legal scholar Lu Chenyuan said the new rules mean that state security police officers can stop people and search their devices without the need for a warrant, or even an ongoing criminal investigation.

"This is very bad, because they can actually check people's cell phones as part of administrative law enforcement," he said. He was referring to a type of law enforcement that goes after people who have allegedly broken the law, but whose infractions aren't deemed serious enough to warrant a full criminal prosecution.

Dissidents and rights lawyers have previously been initially held under an administrative sentence of up to

15 days, at which point police either transfer them into "residential surveillance at a designated location" or place them under criminal detention pending further investigation.

Administrative sentences have also been widely used to target petitioners, internet users who post the wrong thing on social media, and people who took part in the November 2022 "white paper" protests across China.

Lu said the state security orders will likely contribute to an atmosphere of fear in China, and encourage people to censor themselves more than they already do.

"I think their purpose is to create a situation where everyone feels as if they could be in danger," Lu said. "They want people to carry out strict self-censorship, for example, not being in contact with anyone outside the country."

He said the authorities could also be looking for people with encrypted messaging apps like Signal or Telegram installed on their phones.

An academic who gave only the surname Liu for fear of reprisals agreed, saying the move is part of the current "national security" campaign.

"They want to push this idea of national security to everyone, to create a pervasive atmosphere of fear in everyone's daily lives," Liu said.

Border checks already happening

Anecdotal evidence from people who frequently travel in and out of China suggests that police at the borders are already carrying out spot checks of people's phones when they cross the border.

A Hong Kong resident who gave only the surname Kong for fear of reprisals said she saw border guards examining the mobile phone of a woman at Futian Port over the weekend.

"As I was going through immigration in Shenzhen, I noticed two female border guards checking a woman's mobile phone," Kong said. "They were asking her if she had any other phones because she had more than one with her."

She said she had seen officers checking people's phones recently at airports in Nanjing and Hangzhou, too.

"They look at what's on your phone, what photos are there," Kong said. "I cleaned up my phone that day, deleting any content that could be highly sensitive."

A Shanghai resident who gave only the surname Shao for fear of reprisals said he had also spotted customs officials checking a man's phone at Shanghai's international airport on his way home from Japan.

"I saw a Chinese man being stopped by customs, who looked at his phone and then let him go," Shao said. "So it seems they didn't find anything problematic on his phone."

It was unclear whether the new rules will mean that such checks will be more frequent in future.

Repeated calls to customs authorities in Shenzhen and Shanghai rang unanswered during office hours on Monday.

Former Chinese defence minister Wei Fenghe emerges after months of speculation

08 May, 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

A floral tribute at the funeral of a senior official on Monday suggests China's former defence chief and rocket army veteran Wei Fenghe may be politically safe, after his absence from state events sparked months of speculation about his fate.

Wei's name was spotted on a wreath at the funeral of Oyuqemag, 81, who served as vice-chairwoman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee from 2008-2013.

In a prime-time news bulletin on state broadcaster CCTV, Wei's tribute was visible among those from other former state councillors at the side of the funeral hall, with wreaths from President Xi Jinping and other incumbent officials in the middle.

Wei, who headed the PLA Rocket Force from its formation on December 31, 2015, as part of Xi's military overhaul, disappeared from the public eye after his successor, Li Shangfu, was abruptly sacked as defence minister in October last year, without explanation.

Li, who like Wei spent most of his career in the PLA's rocket wing, was also stripped of his rank as a state councillor and removed from top decision-making body the Central Military Commission (CMC).

Wei's indirect reappearance indicates he may have escaped the purge of the People's Liberation Army's top brass, including commanders of the rocket force – which manages China's nuclear arsenal – that followed Li's disgrace.

Direct and indirect appearances in official settings are important indicators of political fate in China's opaque system, where little information is given away.

Wei's absence from an official National Day reception last year was the first sign that he may be in trouble. He was also not included in a list of around 130 retired senior officials who received Lunar New Year greetings from the Communist Party leadership in February.

The annual formality is usually reserved for retired senior officials who have achieved state councillor rank or above.

His predecessors – former defence ministers Chang Wanquan, Liang Guanglie, Cao Gangchuan and Chi Haotian – all featured in the list released by state news agency Xinhua.

The PLA purge included Zhou Yaning and Li Yuchao, the rocket force commanders who succeeded Wei after his promotion to defence minister in 2018, a position he held until his retirement in 2023.

Both men were removed from positions in China's top legislative body, the National People's Congress, in November, along with seven senior PLA officers, including two of their deputies and a head of the rocket force's equipment development programme.

In its first communique of 2024, released in February, the NPC Standing Committee confirmed that all nine were involved in corruption investigations.

The PLA is yet to fully iron out the aftermath of the purges. Defence Minister Dong Jun – who took over from Li in December and is the first navy chief in the role – has yet to be named as a state councillor, or given a place on the CMC.

All previous defence ministers have received the political status of membership on the CMC, which is chaired by Xi.

The military has been one of the main targets of Xi's far-reaching anti-corruption campaign. Two of the most prominent to fall were Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, both former CMC vice-chairmen. Guo was jailed for life for bribery in 2016. Xu died of cancer in 2015 while facing court martial.

British lawmaker – and China critic – denied entry to Djibouti

07 May 2024, , [RFA](#), Sonam Lhamo Singeri and Tashi Wangchuk



Conservative MP Tim Loughton from the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, speaks during a press conference in central London on March 25, 2024.

British lawmaker Tim Loughton, who was deported from the small East African nation of Djibouti in April, has warned that the move serves as more proof of China's global influence in targeting those like him who are vocal critics of Beijing's policies.

Djibouti, located on the Red Sea across next to Ethiopia, is home to China's first overseas military base, and is heavily indebted to China.

Authorities in Djibouti questioned Loughton, who was scheduled to meet with the British ambassador there for a debrief on his recent visit to neighbor Somaliland, for over seven hours on April 8 before he was told he would not be allowed entry.

"This is a further warning that China poses a serious threat not just to those within China's borders, but those beyond it as well," he told Radio Free Asia.

Loughton, a Conservative member of parliament and former children's minister, was one of seven British parliamentarians sanctioned by Beijing in 2021 for criticizing human rights abuses in China – which Beijing referred to as spreading "lies and disinformation."

He said the experience gave him more impetus to speak out against the human rights abuses suffered by Tibetans, Uyghurs and others in China.

"Certainly, it's a further indication of just how far the tentacles of the Chinese Communist Party extend well beyond China around the world, and those of us who have been prepared to speak out are subject to the clutches of those tentacles, apparently even in countries as remote as Djibouti," he told RFA Tibetan. But the incident pales in significance to "the constant harassment, torture and violence" that many people inside China face, particularly Uyghurs, Tibetans and those from Hong Kong, where there has been a clampdown on freedom amid the imposition of a strict new national security law, Loughton said.

"We will continue to speak out in the British Parliament to highlight China's abuses at home and overseas," he said.

China critic

Loughton is a leading member of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, an international cross-party group of lawmakers from over 18 democratic countries working towards a collective response to Chinese trade, security and human rights policies.

He is also co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, which has highlighted China's record on human rights abuses, and in 2019, introduced the Reciprocal Access Bill in the House of Commons designed to bar entry to the UK for Chinese officials found to block freedom of travel to Tibet by British citizens.

Loughton, who traveled to Somaliland as part of a British parliamentary delegation, said the visit itself was successful but that China was a frequent subject of discussions because of its close ties with Djibouti.

About 2,000 Chinese troops are permanently stationed at the military base, which appears large enough to dock a Chinese aircraft carrier, he said.

China has invested heavily in the country and is also the biggest creditor to the highly indebted Djibouti government, Loughton said.

"So, basically, what China wants, Djibouti tends to jump, and that became very clear with what happened to me," he added.

Loughton said he had all the necessary requirements for entry into Djibouti, but that when he presented his

passport, he was questioned extensively and asked about his occupation.

“When I revealed that I was a British member of parliament, then things turned decidedly frosty,” he said. “I was planted in the naughty corner in the arrivals lounge. ... I was then rather rudely put into a room which had doors locked behind me, and I was left there for several hours, not knowing exactly what was going on.”

Authorities eventually told Loughton that he was not allowed into the country and that he would be put on the first plane out.

Even the British ambassador’s deputy, dispatched to the airport to help him, couldn’t persuade authorities to change their minds.

“There was no reason for me not to be allowed to go into Djibouti,” Loughlin said.

“Clearly, some of the comments that the delegation had made expressing our concerns about the influence of China in the area had been picked up, and, clearly, those sanctioned British parliamentarians are on a blacklist,” he said.

A tale of two slogans

07 May 2024, [RFA](#), Chen Zifei

Judicial bodies in China no longer serve the people, but instead pledge to serve ‘the overall situation.’

Emblazoned in huge gold characters at the gate of the ruling Chinese Communist Party headquarters at Zhongnanhai, the words “to serve the people” has a different meaning in China depending on whom you talk to.

The phrase is often echoed by supporters of late supreme leader Mao Zedong, and often used sarcastically to highlight official wrongdoing by people with grievances. It’s now being quietly ditched by the country’s top judicial bodies in favor of the much more nebulous “to serve the overall situation.”

A May 2 article signed by China’s top prosecutor Ying Yong in the Communist Party’s ideological magazine Qiushi was titled “Serve the overall situation, deliver justice to the people, take responsibility for the rule of law.”

The article came as the Supreme People’s Procuratorate and other judicial bodies also replaced the slogan “Serve the People” on official documents and in public buildings with the words “Serve the Overall Situation,” according to social media posts in recent weeks.

Some comments quipped that the “overall situation” refers to the “boss,” while others played on a character in the word for “situation” that is also in the word for “bureau.”

“What bureau is more important than the people?” one Netease user commented sarcastically on a blog post about the slogan change.

The phrase “To serve the people” comes from a 1944 speech by late supreme leader Mao Zedong, and was intended to describe idealistic Communist Party officials and People’s Liberation Army soldiers who are willing to do anything to bring about a better society, known at the time as the “New China.”



A screenshot shows an article on the news channel Jinri Toutiao discussing the change in slogans. (RFA)

“If we have shortcomings, we don’t fear criticism from others, regardless of who it is pointing it out, because we serve the people,” says the speech.

“The Chinese people are suffering. We have the responsibility to save them, and we must work hard.”

‘Safeguarding the status’ of the Party

The phrase has since become something like a national motto, inscribed, often in Mao’s own calligraphy, in big gold letters or large red characters on official buildings, including the entrance to Zhongnanhai.

It has also been turned around as a form of criticism of government corruption and wrongdoing, particularly by the army of ordinary Chinese who seek redress through official channels as petitioners.

In 2008, a caller to a RFA Mandarin talk show said the tainted baby formula scandal that sickened hundreds of infants showed that “Chinese officials do not serve the people.”

In 2009, former People’s Liberation Army soldier-turned-whistleblower Zhang Shijun accused the ruling party of hypocrisy for claiming that the army served the people after he wrote about being sent to Beijing in 1989 to enforce martial law during the pro-democracy movement on Tiananmen Square.

More recently, the phrase popped up during three years of strict zero-COVID restrictions that included grueling urban lockdowns, mass quarantine camps and compulsory daily testing regimes, this time to criticize the white-clad “enforcers” who at times

welded people into their own apartments in a bid to prevent local outbreaks from the virus.

U.S.-based rights lawyer Wu Shaoping said the judicial agencies and courts once used the slogan “to serve the people” far more frequently, and that the move highlights a shift in attitude at the very top.

“The people have been booted out ... and they have brought in a bunch of evil laws like the Patriotic Education Law, the Counterespionage Law, and national security laws to serve the Chinese Communist Party’s overall interests, calling it the rule of law,” Wu said.

“The people are increasingly losing out, so the overall situation means they are willing to sacrifice lives to ensure their own safety,” he said.

Independent political commentator Chen Daoyin said there wasn’t much difference between the two phrases in practice, because the slogan “to serve the people” is rarely implemented in practice.

“A realistic way of seeing this might be that ... safeguarding national security is the top priority right now, which means safeguarding the status of the Communist Party regime,” Chen said. “That is their fundamental interest.”

‘Anything can be the overall situation’

Feng Chongyi, a professor at the University of Technology in Sydney, agreed, saying that the claim that the ruling party served the people had always been a dubious one.

“To serve the people has always been a lie and a scam,” Feng said. “The overall situation is a very pragmatic idea, because anything can be the overall situation.”

“Under Mao Zedong, it would have meant maintaining Mao’s absolute power, while in the wake of Deng Xiaoping’s suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests, it would have meant the dictatorship of the Communist Party,” he said.

“Today, the overall situation is the one-man dictatorship [of Xi Jinping], which means that the party will destroy whatever it needs to destroy, and strip people of whatever rights they have to maintain it,” Feng said.

The topic has also prompted a number of comments on social media as people tried to figure out what the new phrase actually means.

“Some netizens have quipped that the overall situation ... is that some people have wealth beyond the imagination of most people, but they have to keep it secret,” blogger “Looking at History, Looking at Reality,” wrote on the Netease blogging platform.

“Meanwhile, some people are so poor that they struggle to get enough to eat, but they have to be kept a secret too.”

The blog post quoted another answer as saying: “Some people have amassed a large amount of wealth through various means and methods, and through

family relationships, and they need to hide it and even transfer their wealth out of the country, to avoid public resentment.”

“Of course, these are joke answers, but I personally think there’s some truth in it,” the blogger wrote.

Warrantless Phone Searches Allowed Under New Chinese National Security Regulations

07 May 2024, [RFA](#)

On April 26th, China’s Ministry of State Security announced two law enforcement regulations which state that local law enforcement officers will be granted the power to inspect electronic devices. This means that, beginning on the implementation date of July 1st, tourists visiting China may have their phones or laptops checked by local officers. Customs officers in Shenzhen and Shanghai have already started randomly checking phones and laptops of incoming travelers.

The new “Administrative Law Enforcement Procedures” and “Criminal Case Procedures” regulations allow state security officers, with approval from superiors at the municipal level or above, to legally inspect individuals’ and organizations’ electronic devices, facilities, applications and tools. In emergencies, officers only need approval from municipal-level superiors to inspect someone’s devices on the spot after showing their police or investigator credentials.

A Ms. Jiang returning from Shenzhen told Radio Free Asia that she saw customs officers checking a female tourist’s phone at the border, asking if she had any other phones. Mr. Shao from Shanghai said he witnessed customs officers searching a man’s phone after returning from Japan recently.

A Chinese legal scholar Lu Chengyuan said the regulations aim to create an atmosphere of self-censorship and fear of contacting foreigners or using encrypted messaging apps like Signal, violating constitutional free speech rights. He criticized the decision to allow administrative law enforcement officers to search phones without first obtaining a judicial warrant, calling it a blatant violation of privacy rights.

Another scholar, Mr. Liu, said that extending the justification of national security into people’s everyday lives has created an omnipresent atmosphere of state security terror. The regulations lack clarity on what qualifies as an “emergency” allowing officers to search phones.

Macron, Xi call for worldwide 'Olympic truce' during Paris Games

06 May 2024, [Politico](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron called for "a truce" in Ukraine and other global conflicts during the Paris Olympic Games. "The world is far from being tranquil and, as a permanent member of the United Nations, China calls for a worldwide truce during the Olympic Games," Xi said Monday during press statements after a marathon day of talks in Paris.

Xi is on a two-day state visit to France, which also takes him to the Pyrenees where Macron enjoyed childhood holidays with his grandmother. It's the Chinese leader's first visit to Europe since 2019.

Hungary and Serbia — two countries that have signaled their closeness to Moscow — are next on Xi's itinerary.

Sitting alongside Xi at the Elysée Palace, Macron thanked his Chinese counterpart for backing his idea of a temporary truce. "I thank you for showing your desire during our talks to ask all parties to have an Olympics truce," he said.

The French president also hinted a possible opportunity to work toward a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. "Maybe this could be an opportunity to work toward a sustainable resolution [of conflicts] in the full respect of international law," he said.

Macron had previously called for an 'Olympic truce' during the upcoming Paris games in the face of ongoing international conflicts including the war in Ukraine.

Talks of a truce, however, go against the signals coming from the battlefield in Ukraine, where Russian forces have taken advantage of Ukraine's dwindling supplies in recent months while also reportedly gearing up for a possible offensive in the coming months. A French diplomat said a truce could help start a more political process, but noted that European demands on territorial integrity would remain unchanged.

Xi and Macron also discussed China's ongoing support for Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, amid repeated calls from France for the Asian powerhouse to use its influence to halt Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

With heavy sanctions on Russia impacting the country's trade with the United States and the EU, China now supplies Russia with the lion's share of its consumer goods as well as key technologies for the battlefield. The two sides enjoy what Xi has called a "no-limits partnership."

Macron, meanwhile, welcomed Chinese "commitments" to "abstain from selling any weapons" to Russia and "closely control the export of dual-use

equipment," saying that such statements were "reassuring."

Xi in turn warned Ukraine's backers against focusing too much on Beijing's support for Moscow, hinting at Washington's role in the conflict. "We oppose those who use the crisis and throw the responsibility on a third party, and call for a new Cold War," he said.

Earlier in the day, Xi, Macron and their wives attended an official welcome ceremony at the Invalides monument in Paris, during which the French Republican Guard played the national anthems of the two countries. They also reviewed the troops and exchanged pleasantries about the features of the 17th century monument.

The Chinese leader held three-way talks with Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that focused on the brewing trade war between the EU and China. During opening comments, von der Leyen warned that Europe "would not waver from taking action" to defend its interests as it pursues several investigations into suspicions of unfair trade practices in China.

China has jailed more journalists than any other country

04 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The People's Republic of China is the world's largest prison for journalists, and its Communist party-state conducts a campaign of repression against journalism and the right to information worldwide, said Paris-based global press watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), releasing its 2024 World Press Freedom Index on May 3.

Although China's ranking has improved to 172nd out of 180 countries – compared to 179th last year – it is still the world's largest jailer of journalists, with more than 100 currently detained, the group said. Those ranking below China include Bahrain, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan, Syria, and Eritrea in that order, with the group's analysis being based on political, economic, legislative, social, and security indicators.

The group has noted that the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party sends a detailed notice to all media – all state-owned or controlled – every day that includes editorial guidelines and censored topics. The state-owned *China Global Television Network (CGTN)* and *Radio China International (RCI)* spread the regime's propaganda all around the world.

This is because to the ruling regime, the media's function is to be the party's mouthpiece and to impart state propaganda. Independent journalists and bloggers who dare to report "sensitive" information

are often placed under surveillance, harassed, detained, and, in some cases, tortured.

Journalists with the state media are kept on a tight leash. They are required to download the "Study Xi, Strengthen the Country" propaganda application that can collect their personal data in order to receive and renew their press cards.

The group said that to further silence journalists, the government accuses them of "espionage", "subversion", or "picking quarrels and provoking trouble", three "pocket crimes", a term used by Chinese law experts to describe offences that are so broadly defined that they can be applied to almost any activity.

Besides, independent journalists can also be legally placed in solitary confinement for six months under "Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location" ("RSDL") in China's "black prisons", where they are deprived of legal representation and may be subjected to torture.

The group accuses President Xi Jinping, in power since 2012, of having restored a media culture worthy of the Maoist era, in which freely accessing information has become a crime and to provide information an even greater crime.

While China's state and privately-owned media are under the Communist Party's ever-tighter control, the administration creates more and more obstacles for foreign reporters.

The Chinese regime uses surveillance, coercion, intimidation and harassment to keep independent journalists from reporting on issues it deems "sensitive", the group said.

The report was released on the day designated by the United Nations as the World Press Freedom Day.

Chinese Communist Youth League Reports Membership of 74 Million

03 May 2024, [News CN](#)

On May 3rd, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League announced that, as of the end of December 2023, there were 4.167 million Communist Youth League members and 4.316 million Communist Youth League organizations across the country. In 2023, a total of 4.605 million new members were recruited.

The youth league has 3,000 local committees, 193,000 grassroots-level committees, and 4.12 million branches. There were 1.905 million school organizations with 38.245 million members; 910,000 enterprise organizations with 7.21 million members; 360,000 organizations in government agencies and public institutions, along with 4.419 million members; 942,000 organizations in urban streets, townships, residential communities, and administrative villages,

with 21.737 million members; and 199,000 organizations within societal groups and other fields, with 2.556 million members.

China's amended secrets law sparks fears over widening state powers

01 May 2024, [RFA](#), Jing Wei and Chen Zifei

Law broadens the definition of what makes a 'secret' while new rules extend state security police powers.



Soldiers dressed as ushers stand guard in front of the Great Hall of the People before the opening session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing, China, Saturday, March 3, 2012.

Recent changes to the way the Chinese government will investigate cases involving "state secrets" and sensitive information have sparked concerns that foreign nationals and companies could be a target of a renewed focus on security under ruling Communist Party leader Xi Jinping, analysts told Radio Free Asia. China's newly revised State Secrets Law, which takes effect on Wednesday, sets higher security requirements for companies and introduces the concept of a "work secret," while a slew of guidelines from the Ministry of State Security gives new powers to state security police to investigate Chinese citizens outside China, and arrest them if they return.

"Everyone is definitely feeling the chilling effect now," U.S.-based current affairs commentator Li Hengqing told RFA Mandarin. "The more the Chinese Communist Party keeps going with this, the more it will discourage foreign businesses and entrepreneurs from investing in China."

"This runs entirely counter to preferential policies that would encourage foreign investment."

The Law on Safeguarding State Secrets was revised and adopted by the National People's Congress Standing Committee on Feb. 27, the latest in a slew of new security legislation to be passed by Beijing in recent months.

The move follows a number of police raids last year on foreign consultancy firms including Mintz Group and Bain & Co, prompting concerns from foreign

investors that Beijing's widening national security focus could hurt investor confidence.

Taiwan's government warned its citizens on Tuesday to avoid non-essential travel to China, saying the amended law has "greatly increased the risk of potentially breaking the law."

"The risks for foreign institutions operating and investing in China will also put pressure on non-profit or academic and scientific research exchanges and cooperation," the Taiwanese government's Mainland Affairs Council said, warning that conversations or any collection of information could run afoul of the new law, describing its definition of a "work secret" as vague and unpredictable.

According to the amended law, only the Ministry of State Security and military agencies have the power to decide what constitutes a state secret.

'Everything is seen as a secret'

Xia Ming, a professor of politics at New York's City University, said any foreign company operating in China will need to carry out market research, putting it at risk of violating China's growing body of security legislation.

"The first thing any company investing in China needs to do is carry out market research," Xia told RFA in a recent interview. "But China regards all kinds of data as confidential, because it touches on the political security [of the ruling party]."

"They think that even real economic data can be interpreted in a way that is politically unfavorable to the regime, so everything is seen as a secret," he said.

Li said the ongoing insistence on "national security" under Xi Jinping suggests that the current administration is willing to sacrifice economic growth on the altar of regime stability.

"Everything is done with the stability of the regime in mind," Li said. "They don't admit that this will come at the expense of the economy, but actually they don't care much about that, nor about the welfare of the people."

Xia said none of the recent amendments appear to target those higher up who have access to highly classified documents.

Instead, they are aimed at ordinary people or foreigners who might get hold of sensitive information, he said.

'An invisible expansion of powers'

Independent political commentator Chen Daoyin said the new provisions from the Ministry of State Security massively expand the powers of state security police to dictate the actions of organizations throughout China, if it deems that "national security" is at stake.

"State security agencies will be able to go into other organizations to carry out activities and provide training," Chen said. "If some organizations aren't doing enough to protect national security, they can tell them to do better."

"This is an invisible expansion of the powers of state security agencies ... making their presence felt in all areas," he said.

Exiled human rights lawyer Wu Shaoping agreed.

"State security police can hold the Sword of Damocles and use it to extract confessions from criminal suspects, even if they choose not to talk during interrogation," Wu said.

The effects of the new regulations will also be felt far beyond China's borders, he warned.

"If a Chinese citizen goes abroad and makes comments critical of the Chinese Communist Party, or blows the whistle on some scandal, or leaks information that the Chinese government considers secret, state security police will be able to arrest him if he one day returns to China," Wu said.

"Through these provisions, the Chinese Communist Party is engaging in long-arm law enforcement on foreign soil, and reaching out its tentacles to Chinese living overseas," he said.

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

Chinese lawyers decry official supervisory interferences during court trials

19 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While it is an all too well-known fact that the very idea of an independent judiciary is anathema to the Communist Party of China-state's approach to delivering justice, many lawyers in the country were still shocked to see a judge of a county court in Qinghai province receiving real-time instructions from his supervisors in the middle of a trial earlier this month, according to the *scmp.com* May 19.

About an hour into the trial on May 11 at the Tianjun (Tibetan: Themchen) county court in Haixi (Tsonub) Mongol and Tibetan autonomous prefecture, the presiding judge suddenly adjourned the proceedings, the report said, citing a public letter published on the microblogging site *Weibo* by a group of lawyers who were defending clients in the case.

"Afterwards, we accidentally found the criminal court judge of the Haixi intermediate court and the director of the Tianjun county court were remotely giving instructions in a *WeChat* group," the letter was quoted as saying, referring to a messaging and the social media platform.

One of the lawyers involved in the trial, Liu Zheng of the Beijing Zebo Law Firm, took a photo of the judge's computer screen, which displayed a *WeChat* group that included several judicial officers and staff of local courts, the report said, citing the liberal-leaning newspaper *Southern Weekly*.

The photo was stated to show the county court director Fan Xuhua saying in the group chat: "You don't have to communicate with him about it."

Following it, Hasi Chaolu, president of the criminal court at Haixi intermediate court – the court that will hear the case if it is appealed – was stated to have directed the county court judge to "just interrupt" and "be tough, don't speak randomly".

The public letter was stated to have condemned these actions of the judicial and court staff, saying, "Their actions blatantly sabotage our legal system where the appeal court's decision is the final one, and those involved should be probed for malpractice or even criminal activity."

The Qinghai provincial prosecutor's office and the Qinghai Higher People's Court have said they will investigate after the lawyers reported the incident to them.

On the other hand, the Haixi intermediate court has issued a notice on *Weibo*, saying the lawyer had disobeyed court discipline in taking the photo.

It was also reported to have said the case belonged to one of four categories that could seek "key supervision", and that Haixi had followed protocols in

its instructions to a lower court. It has only admitted that the manner of instruction was irregular.

Still, many lawyers around the country have spoken up to say they disagreed with the Haixi court after the incident went viral online.

Wang Cailiang, a Beijing-based criminal lawyer, has written on *Weibo*, “The superiors’ instruction sabotaged the court’s right to independently exercise judicial power,” saying, “if a court and its superior could collude in a lawsuit ... then why do we need evidence? Why do we need the law?”

He has said that when the higher court’s supervision weakened, cases are wrongly decided and not corrected on appeal. Others have said the Haixi court had abused the idea of “key supervision”.

As regards the four types of cases in which could require “key supervision”, a document issued by the Supreme People’s Court in 2021 was stated to have listed them as: complex and sensitive cases, cases that might affect social stability, those that might have a conflicting judgment with a similar case, and if the judge was reported to have engaged in illegal conduct during the trial.

When a case is classified as one of these four types, the presiding judge may supervise certain aspects that need attention during a trial, such as demanding a report on case progress, evaluating the results, reviewing case files or sitting in on a trial, the report said.

However, “if the judges directly gave instructions or interfered with the case, then they are not following protocol,” Lao Dongyan, a prominent China policy critic and law professor with Tsinghua University, has said during a live-streamed discussion on *Weibo* earlier this month with the Hongfan Institute of Legal and Economic Studies, a private liberal think tank.

Well-known lawyer Xu Xin has written on *WeChat* that such incidents were quite common, and that he had experienced or heard of at least four. These included one in Zhangzhou Intermediate People’s Court in Fujian province ten years ago and one in Zoucheng, Shandong province, in 2022.

Ms. Rei Xia’s Speech at the 16th Annual Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy

18 May 2024, [Yibao](#)

Editor’s Note: Ms. Xia is a Chinese dissenter and a former political prisoner. As a brave young human rights activist, she was detained and tortured by CCP solely for her outspokenness during the White Paper Movement in 2022 and her white paper Halloween costume in 2023. Citizen Power Initiatives for China is proud to arrange for Ms. Xia to deliver her powerful speech at the 16th Annual Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy on May 16, 2024.

Here is her speech script:

Imagine one day you wake up to realize that you’ve turned into a caterpillar, with your short limbs barely touching the ground, your eyes blindfolded, and your tongue cut off. You’re trapped inside an empty cement room and can’t feel anything except cold air flowing over your skin. A giant incandescent lamp hangs over your head; so bright that you can see a red halo when you close your eyes. You can hear people talking around you and water flowing through the ground. You know this is only an illusion created by your devastated brain. But you are grateful to hear anything – even if it’s not real.

That was my life inside a Chinese detention center after the ‘white paper protest’ in 2022. They threw me in solitary confinement twice, for a total of 65 days. When they finally released me, I was in a state of schizophrenia, with slurred speech.

Now, I tell my story as a queer feminist activist in China and survivor of extreme police brutality by the CCP regime.

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020, I was living in Scotland, pursuing an undergraduate degree. I moved back to Shanghai to wait out the pandemic and dove into feminist and LGBTQ activism. Almost immediately, I could tell that Chinese authorities saw us as a threat to their pro-masculine ideology. Police would shut down anything with even a hint of feminism or queerness.

But it wasn’t until 2022 that I had my first direct encounter with the state apparatus. It started with the Xuzhou Chained Woman Incident. You almost certainly remember the video if you saw it online. It showed a woman imprisoned inside a dirty cellar, chained to the wall by her neck. Her so-called husband in the video had raped her repeatedly and forced her to give birth to nine children over 20 years. The video went viral online.

Initially, local officials denied her being a victim of human trafficking, saying that her marriage was legal. Without proper investigative reporters, we the grassroots feminists had to find our way to uncover the truth. It turned out that she had been kidnapped and sold since 1996. We were not at all surprised, as we knew that her experience was just a tiny window into the pervasive and systematic human trafficking of women in China.

But the secret police wanted to stop us. They forcibly disappeared visitors to her village. They found me & my friends and threatened us to stay away. Also, they took down everything we posted online. As a result, we had to be creative in bypassing the censorship machine. We repost other people’s posts before they were deleted. We’d blur and distort text into photos,

and translate them into minor languages so AI couldn't read them.

As marginalized groups, we had always practiced to make our voices heard. We had to act in a way that is completely decentralized, both spontaneous and loosely connected at the same time. That's why feminists and queer activists could play a major role in the white paper protest, as characterized by its lack of leading role and highly spontaneous.

Throughout the year, the sense of anger and powerlessness didn't go away. In April, the government mandated COVID lockdowns in Shanghai. Many people were forcibly taken away for isolation, and many others died at home from starvation and suicide.

In November, a building fire killed 10 Uyghur people in Urumchi. And this wouldn't have happened without China's strict zero-COVID policy. It turned out to be the last straw.

In major cities across China, people gathered on the street to commemorate the deceased Uyghurs. We brought candles and flowers. We held up blank paper to symbolize the power of silence and mock the censorship. No words were written on the paper, but all the accusations are in our hearts. They destroyed our language long ago, and self-censorship is embedded in the way that we speak. But, here at the protest, we felt each other's physical presence for the first time.

When I was on the street with other protesters, I lost control of myself and cried so hard. The last time China saw widespread protests was still in 1989.

We were lost and disorganized, like newborn babies experiencing fresh air outside the womb. But I could feel the fearlessness among us, and our oppressed emotions finding their way out onto the street. Here in Shanghai, for the first time, we shouted out Voldemort's name: 'Down with Xi Jinping, Down with CCP.'

The police showed up in full force, blocking the roads, randomly beating up people, and arresting them away. I was also arrested and thrown onto their bus. I saw people screaming in panic attacks, their faces covered in bruises and dripping with blood from open wounds. We were forced to hand over our phones and passwords. Anyone refusing to do so was beaten into submission.

At the police station, they took our fingerprints, scanned our irises, and stripped us naked for examination.

After my release, I learned from my friend that she was beaten severely at the police station. Along with her, there was a girl beaten to concussion, another being kicked hard in the stomach. I did not think much and decided to post this on Twitter. It was a moment when keeping silent meant abandoning one's conscience.

One day later, police knocked on my door and took me away in front of my mom.

I was charged with "Picking Quarrels and Provoking Troubles," a common crime used against political activists. They sent me to the detention center and threw me into solitary confinement for 37 days. I couldn't shower, read, write, or speak to anyone. They took away my glasses so I could barely see my surroundings. During the day, I sat cross-legged on a wooden board. Every minute felt like an hour. On the sleepless nights, with the incandescent lamp on, every single minute felt like a year. There were four surveillance cameras in my cell, two in the front, and two at the back, just above the squat pit I used as a toilet. But losing my basic privacy couldn't even compare to the torture I endured just waiting for time to pass. I experienced auditory hallucinations. I lost my sense of time, and I could barely see the line between life and death.

This is the price for speaking out in China. It's not strange to see China ranks second to last on the World Press Freedom Index, because any journalist with dignity ends up living in jail.

After my release, I had 1 year of border control. Police harassed me constantly. They evicted me from my apartment and forced me to a mental hospital for psychiatric evaluation. I couldn't tell my friends what happened to me because I knew the CCP retaliation would fall on them as well.



At the summit, Xia once again raised the symbol of the White Paper Movement—a blank sheet of paper—to protest the tyranny of the CCP regime

Throughout the year, I felt like I was suffocating in a bigger cell. That's why I took to the streets again during Halloween, my clothes covered in layers of white paper. It was my way of commemorating the white paper protest and mourning our loss during the three-year lockdowns that the regime now refused us to discuss.



(Xia's white paper costume in the Halloween parade on the streets of Shanghai in November 2023, one year after the White Paper Movement, led to her second detention by the CCP's secret police)

This time, I was arrested by Guobao, or the secret police, and the rule of law does not restrict them at all. They forbid me from having a lawyer and threatened my mom as well. They beat me, molested me, and tied me to a wooden sleeping board for three days. They also threatened to rape me, shave my head, and detain me for months longer. They forced me to record a staged confession which I refused. 28 days later, I was released and forbidden to enter Shanghai again.

It is still traumatizing to speak about my experience, diving back into the enduring pain inside the single cell. But I've never regretted going onto the street, nor do I regret speaking up against police violence. My courage doesn't come from within myself. It comes from my fellow Chinese human rights defenders, feminists, queer activists, and countless ordinary people that stood together on the streets during the white paper protest.

China's crackdown continues today. Feminist and queer activities have almost entirely disappeared from the public eye. Journalists & lawyers waste away in jail. Their ethnic cleansing of Uyghurs and Tibetans continues.

And Uyghur participants of the White Paper protest are still in jail, including Kamile Wayit and Yashar Shohret. Director Chen Pinlin still waits for his sentence after producing a documentary on the white paper protest.

They hope us to forget. They hope us to turn a blind eye to what is happening in our own land. Above all, they hope us to live in fear. But our voices will not be silenced. And our own existence will never be censored

China Tries to Erase the History—of 2022

May 15, 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Hu Zimo

Keeping filmmaker Chen Pinlin in jail is part of a massive effort to cancel all traces of the victorious fight of students and citizens that compelled the CCP to abandon the "Zero COVID" policy.



The protests in Shanghai after the Urumqi fire, November 2022. From Chen Pinlin's documentary.

There are many ways in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) tries to erase history. What may seem futile to the non-Chinese readers of "Bitter Winter" may actually work in China. All traces and references to the Tiananmen Square June Fourth Incident of 1989 are carefully cancelled. The event does not exist in textbooks about China's history and even Internet searches about the incident are blocked. Of course, the CCP cannot prevent the world outside China to remember and celebrate June Fourth. But its efforts are not entirely fruitless as many Chinese born in the 21st century have never heard of the event.

The CCP is now engaged in an even more ambitious endeavor. It tries to cancel all traces of something that did not happen 35 years ago—not to mention older crimes and massacres of Chairman Mao's times—but in 2022. The massive effort is worth following, as it confirms that what some called the White Paper Revolution of 2022 is a subject of both embarrassment and great concern for the CCP.

It all started on November 24, 2002, and it started in Urumqi, Xinjiang, with a tragedy that in a few hours gave the lie to both the rosy propaganda about happy Uyghurs singing and dancing their gratitude to the CCP and the black propaganda depicting Uyghurs as terrorists. China woke up on November 25 with a feeling that Uyghurs were simply fellow suffering human beings.

What had happened in the night between November 24 and 25 was a fire that had erupted in an 18-storey building inhabited by Uyghur families in Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi. Some trapped inside the building were able to post terrifying images on social media. As Uyghurs commentators writing in "Bitter Winter" noted on the first anniversary of the tragedy, "The screams of mothers and children coming out of the fire spread through the buildings to Urumqi and reached

the world via the internet; but no one could help them. Because this was the period when the region was under lockdown with China's plan to reduce the COVID to zero, and therefore the doors of buildings and houses were locked from the outside. Moreover, since the parents and husbands of some of those who burned in the fire were in prisons and camps, women and children in the buildings did not have the physical strength to break down the doors."

This was the proverbial drop that broke the camel's back. Students first in the main cities of China, many other citizens later, not only took to the street to protest on behalf of the suffering Uyghurs. They had enough of the idiotic and ineffective "Zero COVID" policy, that had condemned them to the worst lockdown in the world without stopping the pandemic and causing many local tragedies that did not reach the mediatic impact of the Urumqi fire.

Chinese started gathering spontaneously in streets named after Urumqi in Shanghai, Beijing, and many other cities, lighting candles, praying, sometimes (but not often and not always) even shouting anti-CCP slogans. When the police arrived and told them that holding signs was a crime, they started holding pieces of white paper, showing to the world that claiming their freedom of expression and writing anything on them was something the CCP would not tolerate. Some tried to persuade the police officers to join their fight. CCP officials came and told the crowd that they were manipulated by "foreign forces." They were ridiculed, with the students telling them that the only "foreign forces" they had been exposed to in school were Marx and Engels.

As the days passed, Xi Jinping realized that the protest would not go away. He had two alternatives, replicating the June Fourth incident of 1989 and killing thousands in multiple cities, or abandoning the Zero COVID policy. We will never know, at least will not know for many years, what deliberations within the CCP led Xi to choose the second alternative, just as we will not know for long how many really died in the Urumqi fire.

What we know is that by December 2022, Zero COVID was gone, and on January 8, 2023, Xi proclaimed that COVID-19 was no longer, and he had defeated it. The attempt to transform a defeat into a victory did not fool many. Not surprisingly, the sudden re-opening after the harsh lockdown caused an outbreak of the virus and, again, casualties whose numbers we may never know. Certainly, crematoriums were unusually busy for months.

More dangerous than the COVID deaths for the CCP was the fact that, unlike in 1989, a popular protest had succeeded, and the government had to renounce a policy it had just declared beneficial, successful, and irrevocable. Perhaps, if one protest succeeded, other protests may succeed too. In fact, after 2022, public

protests on a variety of subjects are becoming more common in China. Each time they are called unprecedented and surprising, but soon they will become routine.

What happened in 2022 was important, and Xi and the CCP may have seen the writing on the wall. They decided the wall should be cleaned immediately. With patience, the authorities are scouting all possible Internet repositories of stories and images of what happened in 2022 and erasing them. The emblematic story of this campaign concerns filmmaker Chen Pinlin, who goes under the nickname Plato and posted on YouTube (which is blocked in China) a documentary on the protests in Shanghai. He called the documentary "Not the Foreign Force." He was arrested in January 2023, charged in February with "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" (a serious crime in China), and kept in jail.



Protesters continued to demand the end of the "Zero COVID" policy. From Chen Pinlin's documentary movie.

Is the CCP afraid of the 2022 movement? The answer is yes. Did 2022 change China forever? We don't know yet. While some anti-regime slogans were heard, they did not dominate the protests. Subsequent popular demonstrations all focused on limited, often local grievances. Even 2002 did not aim at overcoming the CCP regime. Its aim was to eliminate the Zero COVID policy. We should not read too much in the new spring of popular protests in China. But we should not ignore them either. Perhaps one day some event or movement will arise, able to coordinate the local protests into a national claim that oppression should cease.

A growing number of Chinese Indonesians are winning political offices

May 14 2024, [VOA News](#), Devianti Faridz

This October, 45-year-old Kevin Wu will serve in the Jakarta House of Regional Representatives for the first time, becoming part of a minority of ethnic Chinese elected officials in the Indonesian legislative body. Wu has been a staunch advocate for Chinese-Indonesian rights since 2008 and helped to establish a Buddhist house of worship in the predominantly Muslim

country. Now, he is an entrepreneur who advocates for small businesses.

“If we witness injustice, we have two choices — to accept our fate or to strive and hope for change. I chose to do the latter,” he said.

Wu said he was inspired to fight for Chinese-Indonesian rights by late President Abdurrahman Wahid, who was known for his support for ethnic and religious tolerance.

x In February, nearly 205 million Indonesians were eligible to cast their votes in the country’s presidential and parliamentary elections. According to the last census in 2010, 1.2% of Indonesia’s total population is of Chinese ethnicity, at over 2.8 million people.

Johanes Herlijanto, chairman of the Indonesian Sinology Forum, a group that seeks to promote Indonesia-China relations, said that in this election he saw more names of Chinese-Indonesian politicians vying for the 500 seats in the national Parliament as well as in the District Representative Council, Provincial Council and Local Council than there were during the parliamentary elections in 2019.

Herlijanto said that political activism among the Chinese-Indonesian community strengthened in the last 26 years, since the Jakarta riots in May 1998 that saw many Chinese Indonesians being persecuted. He said he has seen more Chinese Indonesians serving in public offices ranging from regent, mayoral and legislative.

Herlijanto explained that there have been organizations that provided political education to Chinese Indonesians since the late 1990s.

“This allowed Chinese Indonesians who previously were uncomfortable, to be involved in politics, to now being elected and actively improving public welfare as politicians,” he said.

For decades, under President Suharto, many Chinese Indonesians faced discrimination, persecution and social restrictions, such as being banned from using their Chinese names, practicing their traditional beliefs, showcasing Chinese culture and having their full citizenship recognized.

It was only after former President Wahid came into power in October 1999 that government discrimination against Chinese Indonesians was abolished with the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 6, which protected minority rights. Wahid – commonly known as “Gus Dur” – was the former head of Indonesia’s largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, and had Chinese, Arab and Javanese ancestry. Wu joined the Indonesian Solidarity Party, or PSI, in 2024, founded by a Chinese Indonesian TV news anchor-turned-politician, and said he was attracted to the party’s dynamic “start-up”-like work environment and idealistic approach to politics. Wu is also a member of the Young Entrepreneurs Association and the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“I am keen to support industries that open up more job opportunities, offer quality human resources development programs and ease the application process for business permits and industries,” he told VOA.

Daniel Johan, 52, a Buddhist, has been a legislator for the past decade and will serve his third five-year term for the Indonesian Renaissance Party, PKB, in October 2024. He said Gus Dur, and another PKB leader, Muhaimin Iskandar, both inspired him.

Johan is active in the Chinese Clans Association of Indonesia and shared with VOA that it took months of working in the community for his constituents, who are mostly Muslims in West Kalimantan, to trust and vote for a Chinese Indonesian politician.

“This term, I will be working on issues regarding food security, food independence and how to improve the management of natural resources and better monitor the implementation of the Mineral and Coal Production Law,” he said.

Although political activism and involvement is on the rise in the Chinese Indonesian community, politicians and leaders of Chinese associations in Indonesia are still aware that stereotypes remain, especially in rural areas.

Herlijanto said that the campaign teams for all three presidential candidates in the recent elections had Chinese Indonesian supporters, “so taking on divisive identity politics is not a prudent political strategy.”

However, the tides could turn against ethnic and religious minorities if divisive identity politics were to be used again in future elections. Herlijanto noted the case of former Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Chinese-Christian governor known as “Ahok,” who was sentenced to two years in prison in 2017 under Indonesia’s blasphemy law, based on claims he insulted the Quran during his campaign for reelection. Ahok denied wrongdoing.

“Although radicalism based on religious beliefs, or a narrowed interpretation of nationalism, has faded in recent years, its re-emergence is possible and is an issue Chinese Indonesians are cautious about. That’s why it’s important for Chinese Indonesians to be inclusive, strive for equality and welfare and show that we stand for all Indonesians,” said Herlijanto.

I Wayan Suparmin, head of the Indonesian Chinese Association in Jakarta, said Chinese Indonesians must strive to be more inclusive in their surroundings and better understand that in a community everyone’s lives are truly intertwined. A notion that Johan agrees with, “Moving forward, Chinese-Indonesian politicians need to be more sincere, humble and avoid being deceitful or scandalous. The majority of people can sense politicians’ sincerity and intentions.”

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

China's PLAAF Deploys Stealth J-20, J-10 Fighters At Shigatse Air Base Just 150 Km From Indian Border

30 May 2024, [The EurAsian Times](#), Sakshi Tiwari

After China deployed the J-20 Mighty Dragons in a cross-strait show of force against Taiwan, the stealthy Chinese fighter appeared just 150 kilometers from the Indian border, also known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

A set of satellite images obtained by 'All Source Analysis' shows at least six J-20 fighter jets stationed at the Chinese Shigatse Air Base, located just over 150 kilometers from the LAC.

The satellite imagery (shown below) appears to have been obtained by Planet Labs on May 27. In addition to the six J-20 stealthy fighters, at least eight J-10 aircraft and one KJ-500 Airborne early warning and control aircraft can also be seen parked at the air base in Shigatse, which is close to the eastern sector of the LAC.

The airport is one of the highest in the world and functions as a dual-use airport. At the time of writing this report, the Indian military had not taken cognizance of the deployment. However, experts noted on social media that the Indian side remained aware of these deployments, which have not been uncommon since the 2020 stand-off began.

The deployment of the J-20s at Shigatse is significant. It is located less than 300 kilometers from Hasimara Air Base in West Bengal, home to the Rafale fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Indian military bloggers expressed alarm over the deployment, highlighting the gap between the two air powers. India, unlike China, does not have a fifth-generation aircraft in its arsenal.

The IAF has strategically deployed the Rafales in Hasimara so that they can be quickly scrambled in case of a threat at the border with China.

The Rafales are believed to be one of the strongest systems in the IAF's inventory against the Chinese threat that refuses to die down. Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, former Indian Air Force (IAF) chief, recently pointed out that China deployed five times more J-20 stealth fighters than India's then newly-procured Rafale jets during the standoff.

Although this is not the first time J-20s have appeared at an airbase near the Indian border, it has been flagged as one of the biggest deployments in recent memory. The aircraft were photographed on multiple occasions at the Hotan airbase in Xinjiang.

The Chinese PLA Air Force first deployed J-20 jets close to Indian territory at the height of the conflict in 2020. According to government sources, the J-20s were reportedly spotted flying from the Hotan airbase in

China's Xinjiang province, where strategic bombers and other fighters were stationed. This move came in response to the perceived threat posed by India's Rafale jets, which had begun conducting night flying exercises at the time.

In June 2022, for instance, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) stationed around two dozen frontline combat aircraft at Hotan, including the J-11 and the J-20 stealth fighter jets, as previously reported by EurAsian Times.

J-20s Continue To Project Power

The J-20s have become synonymous with the Chinese assertion of power. This was on display recently when the PLA Eastern Command published a video of J-20s in action, emphasizing the aircraft's "cross-strait" lethality.

The video was published right after the unprecedented military drills launched by the PLA as "punishment" for new Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's inaugural speech on May 20, in which he reiterated his commitment to Taiwanese independence and sovereignty. China has repeatedly called the new Taiwanese President a "separatist."

The Chinese fifth-generation stealth jets, the J-20 Mighty Dragons, are projected as major assets in any potential conflict the country may have to contest. The PLAAF has already positioned a few J-20s in all five theatre commands. By 2026, each command will have at least one to two J-20 brigades. China has recently announced that the J-20 will be modified to carry nuclear weapons.

The J-20, which has nearly replaced previous PLAAF aircraft as the workhorse, is believed to have sophisticated electronics. It has sensors to help pilots make the best tactical and combat judgments. The recently released video made this clear, and it also underlined the Chinese military's evolving—and now entrenched—belief in "intelligentized combat."

The J-20 is meant to function as a "sniper" in warfare, eluding fighter screens and taking out susceptible targets like airborne early warning planes and air-to-air refueling tankers with near-invisibility.

The Chinese media, however, continues to assert that the Rafale was a generation behind the J-20. It lacked stealth capability and would "find it very difficult to confront a stealth-capable" J-20. The comparison between the two jets has been debated by discerning analysts who believe that the two aircraft are built for performing completely different sets of roles.

Earlier, in one of the simulation drills against India, conducted in 2020, Beijing claimed to have shot down 17 Rafale fighters using J-20 stealth jets. A Chinese pilot belonging to the Wang Hai Air Group under the PLA Eastern Theater Command, along with his colleagues, claimed to have shot down Rafale fighters. The Wang Hai Air Group is the first air wing that is using the J-20 fighter jets.

Nonetheless, some Indian officials and experts continue to assert that the Rafale has an impressive combat history and the ability to perform different roles, which puts it above the J-20s. The J-20 is still in the inception stage, while the Rafale has been combat-proven for 20 years in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya, and Syria.

It is almost ironic that while the Chinese J-20s are currently sitting close to the Indian border, the Indian Rafales have flown to the United States to take part in the US Red Flag military exercises to bolster their combat capability and hone dogfighting skills.

Incredible new £34bn train line that's 1,012 miles long and will cut journeys by 35 hours

26 May 2024, [Express](#)



When complete, the full length will be around 1,012 miles long (Image: Getty)

This extensive new higher-speed railway, when completed, will reduce travel times of about 48 hours to just 13.

When fully complete, the line will connect Chengdu (in Sichuan, China) and Lhasa (in Tibet), meaning the full length will be around 1,012 miles long and will become the shortest railway connection between the areas.

The Sichuan-Tibet Railway began back in 2014, and currently two sections of the line - from Chengdu-Ya'an and the Nyingchi-Lhasa - are operational. The former opened in 2018, with the latter following three years later.

The third section, linking Ya'an to Nyingchi, began construction in November 2020, and is expected to continue until the early 2030s.

The railway will officially be a "higher-speed rail" (HrSR), also known as a high-performance rail, with train speeds higher than conventional rail, but not as high as high-speed rail services including that which connects Tokyo and Osaka in Japan. This will be the region's first electrified railway and the first higher-speed rail on the plateau. The first section, at 87 miles long, has a design speed of 124mph, while the second, at 270 miles long, runs at 99mph. This reduces travel

time between Lhasa and Nyingchi from about five to about three and a half hours, while journeys between Shannan and Nyingchi now can be completed in about two hours as opposed to six by car.

The incomplete section, which will be a staggering 628 miles long, is expected to run at speeds between 75 and 124mph. In total, it will cut travel time from about 48 hours to 13 hours.

This railway will be the second line into the Tibetan region, the first being Qinghai-Tibet, which was a notoriously challenging network to construct, opening in 1984 and 2006. While the previous network was deemed sufficient to support the rather small resident population of 3.5 million, compared with 1.4 billion in China, there were higher requirements for transport to access Tibet's rich resources. The new railway line was pitched in 2011.

Allegedly, there are over 100 types of minerals found in Tibet, with currently only 22 developed and utilised. Tibet has also been described as the "water tower of Asia", having extremely rich hydropower resources, expected to reach 200 million kilowatts. It was also deemed to be conducive to promoting exchanges and economic development between Tibet and Eurasian countries, and have major impacts on tourism.

Guangming Daily: the Importance of Chinese-Built International Communications Platforms

13 May 2024, [Theory.gmw.cn](https://www.theory.gmw.cn)

Guangming Daily published an article saying that it is important for China to build its own international communications platforms.

"With the advancement of technology, international communication now presents a new characteristic: "platformization." It is transitioning from "individual content going overseas" to "communication platforms going overseas." International communication is entering an era of platformization. The core of the success or failure of international communication in this era of platformization lies in the ability to control the communication platforms. However, current international communication platforms are in a state of monopoly [by Western powers] and opposition [to China]. Western countries (led by the U.S.) are monopolizing communication platforms through technological advantages and are thus able to wield so-called "hostile" communication platforms to gain advantages in political discourse. This puts other countries in a situation where they have no platforms to use. Thus, the creation of such communications platforms is an important facet of [China's plan to] build international communications capabilities. [Such Chinese-built platforms] would provide an important means to breakthrough Western platform monopolies and through opposition from Western platforms. It is

evident that the enhancement of cultural soft power relies on the support of international communication platforms."

China launches new satellite into space

May 12 2024, [China.org](https://www.china.org)



A Long March-4C rocket carrying the satellite Shiyang-23 blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, May 12, 2024. [Photo/Xinhua]

China on Sunday launched a Long March-4C rocket, placing a satellite in space.

The rocket blasted off at 7:43 a.m. (Beijing Time) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China and sent the satellite Shiyang-23 into preset orbit.

The satellite will mainly be used for space environment monitoring.

It was the 522nd flight mission of the Long March series rockets.

China militarizing its entire population in new defence build-up?

07 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](https://www.tibetanreview.com)

China appears to have embarked on a campaign to militarise its entire population as its economy falters while having adopted bullying or combative tactics to assert its outlandish South China Sea, Taiwan, and India-Tibet border claims. The Communist Party of China apparently hopes that this campaign will be good for ensuring its continued hold on political power at a time when its history of cataclysmic policy failures – dating from the Great Leap Forward Movement, through the decades-long draconian one-child policy, to the recent years-long heart-renting Covid-lockdown measures – threatens to overshadow the success of its economic opening up policy.

The country has proposed a new legislative measure that would require military training at high schools and universities in order to promote awareness of national defence in children as young as elementary school.

The aim is to teach all members of society the "theory, knowledge and skills associated with national

defence," *asia.nikkei.com* May 7 cited draft revisions to the National Defence Education Law as saying.

The report pointed out that the move to amend the law for the first time since 2018 had come amid rising tensions with the US over Taiwan and the South China Sea. Some universities have already allowed students to train with live ammunition and tanks.

The draft had its first reading by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress late last month, has been opened to public comment, and could be enacted as early as this year, the report said.

The draft is said to call for instilling some degree of national defence awareness among elementary school children. Middle schoolers are to learn basic knowledge and skills, while high school and university students would undergo mandatory military training. This education and training would be guided by the government and the People's Liberation Army.

Once implemented, local governments would need to include defence education costs in their budgets. Besides, state agencies, universities and other organizations would be held accountable for violations of the law.

"The aim is to make the public aware that war could break out and to make it easier to mobilize them in the event of an emergency," Masafumi Iida, who specializes in Chinese foreign and security policies at Japan's National Institute for Defence Studies, has said.

With regard to Taiwan – which China threatens to annex should it move to declare independence, though it is already independent – Fuzhou University in China's Fujian Province, located across the strait from Taiwan, hosted a military skills competition in July. About 500 university students from around the province competed in target shooting, hand grenade throwing and first aid, the report said.

Besides, China Central Television (CCTV) was stated to have reported on an exercise involving tanks and armoured personnel carriers at a university in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Some schools have new students experience crawling through mud or firing rocket launchers, the report said.

Another aim of expanding national defence education is said to be to recruit tech talent. Expertise in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics and space are in great demand as China rushes to modernize its military. Xi has designated such "emerging areas" in March and called for strengthening the military's capacity in them, the report noted.

"For Chinese university leaders, one basis for earning the approval of the Communist Party is how many good students their schools can send to the military," Iida has said.

The *People's Liberation Army Daily* was stated to have reported that the number of Chinese university students applying to join the military in 2020 had

topped 1.2 million, a roughly sixfold increase over seven years. Local government programmes are stated to provide incentives for signing up. Beijing, for example, offers assistance with tuition, medical insurance and employment after discharge from the military.

China's next defense buildup: mandatory military training for students

07 May 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Yukio Tajima

China wants to promote awareness of national defense in children as young as elementary school under proposed legislation that would require military training at high schools and universities.

The aim is to teach all members of society the "theory, knowledge and skills associated with national defense," according to draft revisions to the National Defense Education Law.

The move to amend the law for the first time since 2018 comes amid rising tensions with the U.S. over Taiwan and the South China Sea. Some universities have already allowed students to train with live ammunition and tanks.

The draft had its first reading by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress late last month and has been opened to public comment.

The draft calls for instilling some degree of national defense awareness among elementary school children. Middle schoolers are to learn basic knowledge and skills, while high school and university students would undergo mandatory military training. This education and training would be guided by the government and the People's Liberation Army.



Universities are a growing source of recruits for China's military. (CCTV)

Local governments would need to include defense education costs in their budgets. State agencies, universities and other organizations would be held accountable for violations of the law.

"The aim is to make the public aware that war could break out and to make it easier to mobilize them in the event of an emergency," said Masafumi Iida, who specializes in Chinese foreign and security policies at Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies.

Deliberations on the amendments will continue in the Standing Committee, which in principle meets every

two months. The legislation could be enacted as early as at this year.

Across the strait from Taiwan, Fuzhou University in China's Fujian Province hosted a military skills competition in July. About 500 university students from around the province competed in target shooting, hand grenade throwing and first aid.

China Central Television (CCTV) reported on an exercise involving tanks and armored personnel carriers at a university in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Some schools have new students experience crawling through mud or firing rocket launchers.

China's government has also sought to attract talent from medical schools across the country. President Xi Jinping urged students and staff during a visit to the Army Medical University in Chongqing in March to serve the battlefield and work to build a "world-class army medical school."

Another aim of expanding national defense education is recruiting tech talent. Expertise in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics and space are in great demand as China rushes to modernize its military. Xi designated such "emerging areas" in March and called for strengthening the military's capacity in them.

"For Chinese university leaders, one basis for earning the approval of the Communist Party is how many good students their schools can send to the military," Lida said.

China's revised conscription rules, which went into effect in May 2023 in China, specify university students as eligible for calling up. Universities are tasked with recruiting students for military service. Under the revised rules, students can be drafted either in their hometown or at their school.

The People's Liberation Army Daily reports that the number of Chinese university students applying to join the military in 2020 topped 1.2 million, a roughly sixfold increase over seven years. Local government programs provide incentives for signing up. Beijing, for example, offers assistance with tuition, medical insurance and employment after discharge from the military.

China takes measures against 12 U.S. military-linked firms

22 May 2024, [Reuters](#), Liz Lee

China said on Wednesday it had taken measures against 12 companies involved in the U.S. military-industrial complex and their senior executives, in response to the U.S. arming of Taiwan and sanctions on Chinese companies.

The U.S. companies included units of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and General Dynamics, China's Foreign Ministry said.

The measures, which include freezing assets in China and banning senior executives from entering the country, took effect from Wednesday, it added.

The action follows U.S. "indiscriminately imposing unlawful unilateral sanctions on a number of Chinese entities on the basis of so-called Russia-related factors," the ministry said in a statement.

China said the U.S. had "ignored its objective and impartial position in the Ukrainian crisis", and had instead "engaged in unilateral bullying and economic coercion".

The ministry said the U.S. has also continued to sell arms to Taiwan, which "seriously violates" the one-China principle and joint communiqués between both countries, and "seriously undermines" China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

CYBER SECURITY

China's local governments shut down social media accounts as budgets shrink

24 May 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Once a key tool in China's campaign to spread its message to the public, government-run social media accounts are being shut down amid a squeeze on public finances.

The online platforms of government agencies at all levels are being consolidated, reversing more than a decade of feverish development that led to many redundant apps and sites.

Local officials and analysts said the trend showed local governments must scale back development and merge functions as a result of institutional reform, shrinking funds, and rising fatigue among the low-level cadres tasked with maintaining the platforms.

The video player is currently playing an ad. You can skip the ad in 5 sec with a mouse or keyboard

Dozens of cities in the provinces of Guangdong, Sichuan, Yunnan, Hunan, Shaanxi, Shandong and Jiangsu, as well as Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, have announced plans so far this year to cut back on government department websites, social media accounts and smartphone applications, research by the Post shows.

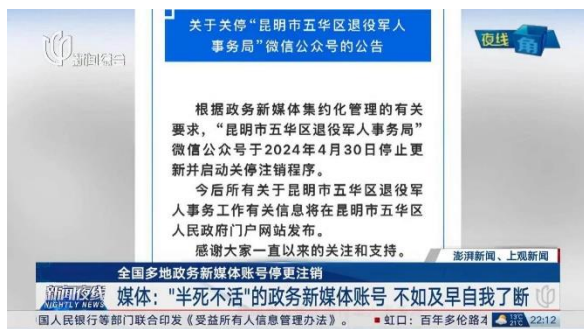
One of the latest to do so is Longgang district in the southern megacity of Shenzhen. In the first week of May, it announced that web services for its land supervision and state-owned assets bureaus would be shut down, as both bodies had been merged into other agencies.

That same week, Guangxi shut down the website and social media accounts of its sugar industry development office. This has been absorbed into the Guangxi Development and Reform Commission, the region's top economic planning agency.

On April 28, the city of Bazhong in Sichuan province said it would shut down the website and social media accounts of its rural revitalisation bureau, financial work bureau and government services and public resource service centre, as they had been merged into other government bodies.

Some others to exit the internet include the Wuhua district veterans' affairs bureau in the city of Kunming, the Yuhua district market supervision bureau in Changsha, the Zhenxing subdistrict of the city of Jinan, the Weiyang district culture, tourism and sports bureau in Xian, the Linwei district judicial bureau in Weinan, Shaanxi province, and the urban management bureau of Nanjing's Jiangning district.

While these offices continue to exist, their websites, social media accounts and smartphone apps have been absorbed by higher-level municipal agencies, according to the announcements.



The WeChat account of the Wuhua district veterans affairs bureau in the southwestern city of Kunming announces its closure in late April, as China's local governments streamline their online information services. Photo: SMG

The streamlining efforts come less than six months after the Cyberspace Administration of China issued a directive ordering local governments to consolidate “similar and duplicate functions”, as many online platforms were white elephants or even “zombies” controlled by internet trolls.

A Shenzhen official involved in a few municipal web platforms said the frenetic pursuit of online engagement had caused “lots of stress to the ground staff”.

“After posting content to our account, we have to mobilise our colleagues and friends to help us to click on them. I even ask my parents and grandparents for help,” she said, adding that consolidation was “indeed necessary”.

“Many are happy to see the consolidation efforts. I hope one day we will not need to sit for the whole day to post and click on repetitive content.”

Ma Liming, an associate professor at Jinan University’s school of journalism and communication, echoed those views in an interview with Chinese media earlier this week.

“It is becoming way too complex as even subdistrict-level governments need to have their own government affairs new media platforms,” Ma told Cnwest.com, the official news portal of Shaanxi province.

“For grass-roots staff without media-related backgrounds, maintaining these zombie accounts has become a burden.

“[And] is this really convenient and beneficial to the people if they need to follow a lot of accounts for government information services?”

Reductions in staff headcounts at local government agencies have also made the situation worse, as many have had to cut contract workers who are typically responsible for noncore functions such as updating websites and social media accounts.

Earlier this month, the Post reported that Chinese regional governments had cut thousands of positions in recent years.

The Chinese government started ramping up its online presence from November 2009, when Yunnan’s provincial propaganda department started using the microblogging platform Weibo to respond to public concerns about a massive protest triggered by sudden rent increases at a wholesale market in the provincial capital Kunming.

Local government affairs websites and social media accounts quickly became popular, especially after the State Council, China’s cabinet, released an official instruction in 2013 recognising that these platforms could help to strengthen government transparency and credibility.

According to China’s official Internet Development Report released on March 26, more than 146,000 government bodies had an official presence on Chinese social media platforms as of the end of last year.

Some government agencies, such as the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission – the Communist Party’s top security body – and Shenzhen’s health commission, created popular social media accounts by using internet slang, cartoons and short videos to deliver their messages.

But many local government accounts have become neglected, with some taken over by hackers or internet trolls.

The Weibo account of the urban management team of Wuhan’s Wulijie subdistrict was found to have published a number of posts soliciting surrogacy and even prostitution from 2017 to 2019. The local government did not respond until 2021, saying the account had been hacked by criminals.

CHINA IN THE REGION

China - Hong Kong

'Hong Kong 47' trial: 14 activists found guilty of conspiracy to commit subversion

30 May 2024, [The Guardian](#), Helen Davidson

Western governments condemn verdict in biggest case since introduction of national security law

Fourteen people have been found guilty of subversion by a court in Hong Kong in the biggest case against pro-democracy campaigners – against a group known as the “Hong Kong 47” – since China imposed a national security law to crush dissent.

A panel of judges handpicked by Hong Kong’s government found that the convicted people – one organiser and 13 candidates, almost all of them former politicians – had committed the national security offence of “conspiracy to subvert state power” by holding unofficial election primaries in 2020.

The 10-month trial finished in December, more than 1,000 days after the cohort were first arrested. Among the guilty are former lawmakers and activists including the politician Helena Wong, the veteran campaigner Leung “Long Hair” Kwok-hung, the journalist Gwyneth Ho, and the Hong Kong-Australian dual national Gordon Ng.

Condemnation from rights groups and western governments was swift. Human Rights Watch’s acting China director, Maya Wang, said the convictions showed “utter contempt for both democratic political processes and the rule of law. All Hong Kong wanted was a chance to freely elect their government. Democracy is not a crime, regardless of what the Chinese government and its handpicked Hong Kong court may say.”

Australia’s foreign minister, Penny Wong, said Canberra was “deeply concerned” by the verdicts and maintained “strong objections” to the broad application of national security legislation to target opposition and civil society.

The UK’s minister for the Indo-Pacific, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said: “Today’s verdict will only further tarnish Hong Kong’s international reputation. It sends a message that Hongkongers can no longer safely and meaningfully participate in peaceful political debate.”

Two defendants, Lawrence Lau Wai-chung, a former district councillor, and Lee Yue-shun, a former social worker, were acquitted. The pair had run as candidates in the primaries and theirs are the first acquittals to be granted after a prosecution under the 2020 national security law (NSL). The justice secretary’s legal team said he would appeal against the acquittals, and the judges agreed to extend most of the pair’s stringent bail conditions in the meantime.

The 16 people were the only ones to plead not guilty from a group of 47 charged in early 2021 after mass dawn raids on their homes and offices by national security police. Most of the group have been in jail ever since. The 31 who pleaded guilty, including four who testified for the prosecution, are still awaiting the outcome of their cases. The judges had decided to complete the trial of the others before moving on to sentencing.

The 45 convicted campaigners face sentences of up to life in prison.

On Thursday morning all 16 defendants sat in the docks behind a glass panel as the three-judge panel announced the verdict.

Outside court the acquitted men thanked their supporters and urged people to maintain their concern over the other defendants. Lau, a barrister, also urged people to pay close attention to the “reasoning, logic, [and] perspectives of our judges” shown by the verdict.

The judgment, published online, said the cohort’s plan to gain a majority in Hong Kong’s legislative council – in order to block budgetary bills and force the resignation of the chief executive if she did not agree to the pro-democracy movement’s demands – was a violation of Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, the Basic Law.

Any act that would “seriously interfere in, disrupt or undermine the performance duties and functions of the government was clearly an act which would endanger national security in Hong Kong”, it said.

It also set a significant precedent in finding that non-violent acts, like the primaries, could be considered subversion under the wording of the NSL.

The pre-election primaries were held on 11 and 12 July 2020, organised by Benny Tai, a legal scholar and activist who was also an organiser of the 2014 “umbrella movement” protests, for which he served four months of a 16-month prison sentence.

They were not the first primaries to be held in Hong Kong, including by pro-establishment camps, but they occurred less than a fortnight after the introduction of the NSL, imposed by Beijing to help Hong Kong’s authorities crush the remaining pro-democracy movement after mass protests in 2019.

In the days prior, the Hong Kong minister Erick Tsang warned in an interview that the primaries could violate the NSL. But organisers went ahead, and more than 600,000 Hong Kong residents took part, in what was widely interpreted as an act of protest against the government crackdown.

The election that the primaries were preparing for was later postponed by the government, ostensibly because of the pandemic. By the time it was rescheduled, the government had overhauled the electoral system to ensure that only pro-Beijing “patriots” could run.

Thursday’s guilty verdicts had been largely expected, but outside the court, supporters wept. Hundreds had attended the hearing, some lining up overnight to secure a seat. Grandma Wong, a well-known activist, waved a Hong Kong flag outside and shouted in protest.

One supporter had arrived at 4am. “I want to go inside to show my support [for the defendants],” she said. “This is a case about the election and I think the government is putting some unreasonable charges against them, and it’s not acceptable.”

She declined to give her name for fear of being identified, but said she was not worried about attending court in support of the pro-democracy figures. “It’s our right to have an open court and to go inside and listen.”

The case has been widely criticised by human rights and legal groups and foreign governments. It has been accused of being politically motivated, and of denying procedural fairness with a judge-only trial that stretched out over the course of months with repeated delays.

The Hong Kong government crackdown has left the city with essentially no active political opposition. Scores of people have been arrested or jailed, others scared into silence. Many have fled overseas, including some who were facing charges. The Hong Kong government has issued large bounties for several “fugitives”, leading several countries hosting exiled Hongkongers to tear up their bilateral extradition agreements.

Hong Kong trade offices 'keep an eye' on 'anti-China' activities

21 May 2024, [RFA](#), Kit Sung and Kwong Wing

A top adviser in the Hong Kong cabinet appears to confirm that the offices are engaged in political espionage.



Pro-democracy demonstrators, seen wearing masks depicting former British consulate worker Simon Cheng, gather outside the British Consulate-General building in Hong Kong on Nov. 29, 2019.

The role of Hong Kong's overseas Economic and Trade Offices has changed, and should include "keeping an eye" on 'anti-China' activities, a top government adviser has said, appearing to confirm claims that the offices have been targeting pro-democracy activists on foreign soil.

Regina Ip, a former secretary for security who is currently convenor of the city's Executive Council, or cabinet, made the comments after British Police three men with spying for the Hong Kong authorities, accusing them of running surveillance and other operations targeting exiled democracy activists on U.K. soil.

Hong Kong and Chinese officials typically refer to pro-democracy activists at home and overseas as "anti-China" forces, accusing them of trying to undermine the government with the help of foreign powers.

Ip appeared to refer to those activists in an interview with Hong Kong's Now News on May 18.

"A group of anti-China members in [the U.K. Parliament] and some Hong Kong exiles are causing trouble there, often introducing bills against the city and even calling for sanctions," she said.

"The [trade office] must pay attention, probably by gathering intelligence," she said in comments reported by the English-language *South China Morning Post* newspaper. "Such so-called gathering of intelligence means merely paying attention to these developments."

Ip's comments came as Bill Yuen, an office manager at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London who holds dual Chinese and British nationality, prepares to appear at the Old Bailey on May 24 charged with "assisting a foreign intelligence service" and "foreign interference" under the National Security Act 2023.

Yuen's co-defendants, Peter Wai, 38 and Matthew Trickett, 37, face similar charges, and the trio stand accused of forcing and entering a property in the U.K. and of targeting exiled Hong Kong activists on British soil, according to the Metropolitan Police.

The accusations come amid growing concerns over Chinese Communist Party infiltration of all aspects of British life, and warnings from Hong Kongers in exile over growing acts of violence by Beijing supporters and officials alike.

More than economic activities

Political commentator Benson Wong said Ip's comments will likely damage the reputation of the trade offices.

"Regina Ip's comments ... seem to confirm that some staff working in the London office aren't engaged in economic and cultural activities," Wong said.

"It's still unclear whether the Economic and Trade Office will be required to abide by certain commitments, or even have some of its privileges canceled," he said.

U.S.-based exiled activist Anna Kwok, who heads the U.S.-based Hong Kong Democracy Council, said the Hong Kong offices have long spied on overseas activists wherever they are located.

"We've always had good reason to believe that the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices are carrying out a lot of activities including monitoring Hong Kongers, not just in the U.K., but in the United States as well," she said.

"We've heard in the past few years of Economic and Trade Offices monitoring Hong Kongers in the United States," said Kwok, who has an arrest warrant and a bounty on her head issued by Hong Kong's national security police.

"The simplest example is that when we go to a demonstration, people we suspect are employees of the Economic and Trade Offices take photos of everyone there to identify them."

"One person told us that he was asked about the Hong Kong Democracy Council at a very ordinary dinner by a member of staff at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, including personal information about the Council's members," Kwok said.

Kwok said the Hong Kong Democracy Council will step up its campaign for a bill banning the offices to be introduced to Congress.

Gathering intelligence

Meanwhile, Regina Ip said foreign consulates in Hong Kong likely also engage in such activities.

"I believe that each of the consulates based in Hong Kong is gathering intelligence. Some of the intelligence is publicly available, [such as] TV programmes, media and online information," she said.

"If our personnel are making similar collection efforts at the [trade offices], why would it be against the law? I really do not understand," Ip said.

U.K.-based Hong Kong activist Simon Cheng, who has reported being followed on April 9 in central London by unidentified people speaking Mandarin, said Ip should know the difference between a consulate and Hong Kong's trade offices, which aren't regulated by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

"Some countries allow the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices a quasi-diplomatic status, but that's up to the host country to allow them that courtesy," Cheng said. "Some countries may do this according to agreements signed with the Hong Kong government, but such agreements aren't regulated by the Vienna Convention either."

"Such diplomatic courtesies can easily be revoked unilaterally," he said.

Cheng, a former trade representative for Scotland based at the British consulate in Hong Kong who was detained and tortured by Chinese state security police during the 2019 protest movement, said consulates have teams of staff dedicated to gathering

news and information about their host country or city, but such newsgathering is part of legitimate attempts to understand the places they are posted to, and to get a feel for public opinion there.

China's ambassador to the United Kingdom Zheng Zeguang expressed "serious concerns" to the British government about the spying accusations on May 15, saying the case had been "fabricated" to "smear and attack" the Hong Kong government.

"All those accusations are groundless and slanderous," Zheng said in comments posted to the embassy website, accusing the British police of "wantonly harassing, arresting and detaining" Chinese citizens in the U.K.

Eleven people including Yuen, Wai and Trickett were arrested in a nationwide operation but eight were later released without charge, the Metropolitan Police said on May 13.

"This constitutes a grave provocation against China and severely contravenes basic norms of international relations. It is totally unacceptable," Zheng said.

YouTube agrees to remove videos of banned Hong Kong protest song

15 May 2024, [VOA](#)

YouTube says it will block access in Hong Kong to videos of performances of a banned protest song.

Hong Kong's Court of Appeal ruled last week that "Glory to Hong Kong," which emerged as an anthem for protesters during the massive anti-government protests in 2019, is illegal to sing or play in the city. The ruling said the song's composer intended for the song to be used as a "weapon."

There was no immediate comment from the government in Hong Kong.

The ban covers anyone who either broadcasts or distributes the song with the intention of promoting Hong Kong's independence or misrepresents it as the city's official anthem. Hong Kong is a semi-autonomous city.

YouTube said in a statement Wednesday that it will block access in the Chinese city to 32 videos of the song, which the court deemed was "prohibited content."

"We are disappointed by the Court's decision but are complying with its removal order," the online video sharing service said. The company said it shared concerns with human rights organizations about the chilling effect the ban would have on free speech online, and that it is considering options to file an appeal.

A search for the 32 videos in Hong Kong resulted in a message saying they were "not available on this country domain due to a court order."

The song has mistakenly been played at sporting events as the official anthem of Hong Kong. The city does not have its own anthem, instead using mainland China's official anthem "March of the Volunteers."

The appeal court's ruling overturned a previous decision issued last year by the High Court, which cited free speech concerns. The government went to court last year to have the song banned after Google and other internet service providers refused to remove it from their search results.

YouTube and Google are owned by California-based Alphabet.

The ban is the latest action taken by the government to silence dissenting voices since Beijing passed a sweeping security law for Hong Kong in 2020 in response to the protests. The law punishes anyone believed to be carrying out terrorism, separatism, subversion of state power or collusion with foreign forces.

Since the law took effect, hundreds of pro-democracy advocates have been arrested, tried and jailed, and the city's once-vibrant civil society has been stifled.

George Chen, the co-chair of digital practice at the Washington-based business and policy consultancy Asia Group, said the ban could hurt Hong Kong's reputation as a global financial hub if officials pressure online platforms on a daily basis to remove content, as it could raise questions about its willingness to allow the free flow of information.

Some information for this report came from The Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France-Presse.

Beijing adds 8 mainland Chinese cities to Hong Kong solo traveller scheme, with residents in parts of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet to benefit

11 May 2024, [SCMP](#), Cannix Yau and Jeffie Lam

People from eight mainland Chinese cities in remote regions such as Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet will be able to visit Hong Kong without the need to join group tours after Beijing announced it would further expand a solo traveller scheme to boost the tourism sector.

The National Immigration Administration said on Saturday residents in the cities would be able to apply to visit from May 27.

The eight cities are all provincial and regional capitals: Taiyuan in Shanxi; Hohhot in Inner Mongolia; Harbin in Heilongjiang; Lhasa in Tibet; Lanzhou in Gansu; Xining in Qinghai; Yinchuan in Ningxia; and Urumqi in Xinjiang.

Under the Individual Visit Scheme, tourists can apply for a visa which allows them to stay in Hong Kong or Macau for up to seven days at a time. They can choose from single-entry or double-entry visas valid for three months or a year.

Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu expressed gratitude to Beijing for further expanding the scheme, which brought the number of cities covered to 59.

"I thank the central government for its keen concern for Hong Kong and its full support ... The central government once again actively responded to the Hong Kong government's suggestions," he said.

Lee said at the end of last month that he would urge Beijing to expand the scheme.

"[The expanded scheme] covers all provincial capital cities across the country, carrying great significance for boosting Hong Kong's tourism industry and overall economic development, and promoting people-to-people ties between mainland and Hong Kong residents," he said on Saturday.

Lee noted the eight newly added cities all had large populations, high levels of consumption and had recorded rapid economic growth.

He added the move would bring in a huge amount of tourism dollars.

"Further expansion of the individual travel scheme will effectively boost the economic activities of Hong Kong's tourism, retail, catering, hotel and related industries, bringing a large amount of revenue, and at the same time promoting two-way travel between Hong Kong and different provincial capital cities," he said.

Tourism minister Kevin Yeung Yun-hung also pledged to strengthen coordination and maintain communication with relevant agencies and the industry.

"We'll strive to establish and enhance direct flight capacity between Hong Kong and the eight cities, while ensuring the smooth operation of border control points, tourist facilities, hotels and public transport networks to welcome tourists," he said.

Authorities announced the move just two days after Xia Baolong, the director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, told Yeung that the local administration must revitalise its offerings amid "profound changes" in the market and treat every corner of the city as a -potential spot to lure visitors.

The sector has been struggling to recover, with the number of trips to the city over the Labour Day "golden week" holiday earlier this month hitting just two-thirds of pre-pandemic levels.

The growing trends of mainland visitors making only day trips to the city or choosing to spend their nights in cheaper hotels across the border have also added to the pressure.

Beijing expanded the scheme in February to add tourists from Xian and Qingdao, although the move generated a lukewarm response.

Some residents in the two cities said the arrangements did not change much, suggesting individual travellers who held group tour visas had made independent trips

to Hong Kong for years. Travel agents also said there had been no jump in bookings.

Pang Yiu-kai, chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, called the latest expansion a "gift" for the sector, saying Beijing's decision to update the scheme twice in three months reflected its "full support and confidence" in the city.

He said the eight newly added cities had a combined population of more than 33 million.

"With the new measures facilitating visitor arrivals to Hong Kong, the city will be able to tap into a broader range of source cities and explore new sources of visitors," Pang said.

The Tourism Board said it would immediately step up promotional activities in these cities, including partnering with mainland social media platforms, the travel trade and airlines to promote the latest offerings.

Hong Kong Tourism Association executive director Timothy Chui Ting-pong also hailed the move as a "big gift" from Beijing and said it would provide a great boost to the industry, which was a key driver for the city's economic recovery.

"They are all wealthy cities with good spending power. In the past there might not be many chances for them to travel outside. Hong Kong may be their first cross-border destination in recent years," he said.

"These groups of additional mainland tourists will definitely stay overnight in Hong Kong, with many expected to use up the seven days allowed under the visa."

Chui also described the expanded scheme as a "strategic move" as it would prove helpful for the city's role as an aviation hub and a gateway for new groups of mainland tourists to travel to the rest of the world for business purposes.

"It will prompt local airlines to strengthen their capacity and extend their aviation network to provide more direct flights between Hong Kong and these mainland destinations," he said. "This will definitely enhance Hong Kong's role as an international aviation hub."

The Airport Authority said it currently had direct flights with four of the eight additional cities, adding that airlines were planning to start scheduled flights to and from Harbin and add more flights to and from Urumqi next month.

But Simon Lee Siu-po, an honorary fellow at the Asia-Pacific Institute of Business at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, took a less optimistic view of the scheme's expansion, saying the new initiative would not bring tremendous benefits.

"There will be some positive effects. But the mainland economy continues to be sluggish with shrinking purchasing power," he said. "It may not produce an immediate result and the impact will only be short term."

Lee said Hong Kong should avoid relying on mainland authorities for more sweeteners under the solo travel scheme, adding it should focus on strengthening its competitiveness and attraction to overseas tourists.

Hong Kong court ban on pro-democracy anthem 'Glory to Hong Kong' sparks new fears over heightened censorship in Hong Kong

08 May 2024, [HongKong Watch](#)

Today a Hong Kong appeals court approved the Hong Kong government's application to ban the pro-democracy anthem 'Glory to Hong Kong', overturning a lower court ruling in July 2023 that rejected the government's bid due to free speech concerns. The judgement comes in the wake of the enactment of the Safeguarding National Security Bill, known as "Article 23 legislation", in Hong Kong, which will further criminalise internationally-guaranteed rights and freedoms in the city.

Three Court of Appeal judges ruled that the government's injunction was "necessary" to remove "problematic videos" from online platforms. This follows numerous incidents at international sporting events in which 'Glory to Hong Kong', popularised during the 2019 protests, has been mixed up with the People's Republic of China's anthem 'March of the Volunteers'.

The injunction will prohibit anyone from "[b]roadcasting, performing, printing, publishing, selling, offering for sale, distributing, disseminating, displaying or reproducing in any way" the song and its lyrics "with the intent of...inciting others to commit secession," "with a seditious intention," or "in such a way...as to be likely to be mistaken as the national anthem" of Hong Kong, "suggest that the [Hong Kong Special Administrative Region] is an independent state... with intent to insult the national anthem." The injunction will apply to "any internet-based platform or medium" and their global operations.

When the Hong Kong government first bid to ban 'Glory to Hong Kong' last year, Hong Kong Watch led more than 24 civil society organisations in writing a joint letter to Daniel Ek, CEO of Spotify, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple Inc, Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet Inc and Google LLC, Linda Yaccarino, CEO of Twitter Inc, and Mark Zuckerberg, CEO and Chairperson of Meta Platforms Inc., urging them to oppose the injunction that will effectively ban intermediaries from broadcasting or distributing online, including on YouTube, the 2019 protest song. The letter emphasised how the injunction will have a disastrous impact on the rights to freedom of expression and access to information not only in Hong Kong, but also globally.

Benedict Rogers, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Hong Kong Watch, said:

"It is profoundly disturbing and revealing that the Hong Kong authorities find a song a threat to their security. Hong Kong Watch remains gravely concerned about the implications of this injunction that will be used to censor 'Glory to Hong Kong' in Hong Kong and around the world. This case has dire implications for internet freedoms and the operation of internet service providers and technology firms such as Google and Apple.

We urge the international community to respond to this act of censorship by calling out the dangers of the city's national security laws that do not defend national security, but safeguard the authorities' increasing repression of the rights and freedoms of individuals. Business is not as usual in Hong Kong."

China – Mongolia

A Letter to UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers by the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center

20 May 2024, [SMHRIC](#)

Her Excellency Ms. Margaret Satterthwaite United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers OHCHR-UNOG

Your Excellency Ms. Margaret Satterthwaite,

We write to you once again, following up on our previous correspondence from last autumn. We trust this letter finds you well. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your impactful visit to Mongolia last autumn, followed by your insightful report. Your efforts have undoubtedly shed light on the critical need to fortify judicial independence and uphold human rights within the country.

As a coalition of organisations, comprising individuals of Mongolian heritage residing abroad and advocating for the rights of our respective Mongolian heritage communities, we are deeply troubled by the worsening state of democracy, civil rights, and judicial independence in Mongolia. Our collective concern extends to the enduring adverse impact on individuals of Mongolian heritage residing outside Mongolia, particularly those under the jurisdictions of authoritarian regimes such as China, Russia, and others. It is therefore imperative that we address these pressing issues to safeguard the rights and well-being of our communities. Currently subjected to colonisation and authoritarian rule, our communities face further adversity due to Mongolia's deteriorating democracy and the encroaching influence of authoritarianism from its immediate neighbours.

Recent developments indicate grave interference in electoral processes by the Mongolian People's Party (MPP), led by Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, in anticipation of the upcoming parliamentary elections. The actions of the MPP appear aimed at solidifying their victory and severely curbing dissent. Political interference in the judiciary, reminiscent of old Communist tactics, is intensifying. This interference has led to a crackdown on journalists and citizens under the guise of national security, utilising restrictive tort laws excessively and abusively. Of particular concern is the ease with which individuals, including journalists, can be charged with crimes such as defamation against the Prime Minister, the President, and infringement of others' rights, in effect stifling dissent and criticism. Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai has gained notoriety for exploiting these laws to suppress dissenting voices. The erosion of democratic values and principles is evident, with the use of tort laws to silence dissent posing a grave threat to freedom of expression and the rule of law in Mongolia.

We urge the international community, including your esteemed office, to intensify efforts to closely monitor the situation in Mongolia and to take decisive action to address our concerns. Specifically, we call for condemnation of political interference in the judiciary, advocacy for the protection of journalists and freedom of the press, support for initiatives promoting transparency and accountability, and consideration of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for human rights abuses. Finally, we call upon the international community to bring pressure on the Mongolian government to uphold the rule of law abiding by international conventions of freedom and justice.

Furthermore, we draw your attention once again to the case of Mr. Munkhbayar Chuluundorj, whose unjust imprisonment symbolises the broader challenges facing Mongolia's judiciary system as well as the transnational repression exerted by the government of the neighbouring People's Republic of China (PRC). Mr. Chuluundorj's journalism, which includes critiques of the Chinese government's treatment of Mongols in China and the Mongol-Sino relationship, has long irritated the Communist authorities in Peking. The timing of his arrest, closely following the Prime Minister's return from Peking, begs the question of whether it was truly coincidental. An especially alarming recent development in this case is the suspension of legal licenses of two of Mr. Chuluundorj's attorneys without due process, terminating their ability to earn a living in their profession. Additionally, it is worth noting that aside from the potential persecution of Mr. Chuluundorj at China's behest, the Prime Minister harbours personal animosity towards Chuluundorj due to his outspoken

criticism of the Prime Minister's politics and conduct, as well as calls for his resignation. We implore you to prioritise this case and utilise your platform to advocate for Mr. Chuluundorj's release and the restoration of justice.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. We trust in your dedication to upholding the principles of democracy, freedom, and justice, and eagerly anticipate your continued efforts to support the democratic aspirations of the Mongolian people.

Sincerely,

Altan Seseg - Buryat Folk Dance Ensemble, USABuryaad Mongol United Association Inc., USACommittee of Buryat Independence, USACongress of the Buryat People, USAHazara Organization for Peace and Equality (HOPE), USANner Mongolia People's Party's, JapanInterMongol Network, USAKalmyk Mongolian Buddhist Center, USAMongol Heritage Foundation, USAOirat-Kalmyk People's Congress, USASouthern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, USATusgaar Buryad Mongolia, USAWorld Mongol Federation - Europe, SwedenWorld Mongol Federation - Japan, JapanWorld Mongol Federation - USA, United StatesZerd - Mongol Folk Music Group, USA

An Open Letter to the International Community Concerning the Deterioration of Democracy in Mongolia by the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center

20 May 2024, [X](#)

We are a collective of individuals residing abroad, advocating for our respective communities of Mongolian heritage who live outside the current borders of the country of Mongolia yet still on their ancestral Mongolian homeland. We are writing to you with grave concerns about the deteriorating state of democracy and civil rights in the independent country of Mongolia over the recent decade or so, most particularly during the past eight years under the leadership of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP), formerly the Communists. Of utmost concern are the outcomes of the last two election cycles in Mongolia, marked by pervasive patrimonialism, corruption, and manipulation orchestrated by the MPP.

This issue deeply concerns us because, as members of the Mongolian diaspora, we are intimately familiar with the stark contrast between the democratic values cherished in Mongolia and the harsh realities faced by our brethren living under Chinese and Russian rules.

The democratic system, freedom of expression and assembly, and the free elections enjoyed by our brothers and sisters in Mongolia has been a source of great joy, pride, comfort as well as hope for our people. Especially for those whose homelands are

unjustly deprived under oppressive regimes. Therefore, we deeply understand that principles of democracy, freedom of expression, and the rule of law are not only fundamental to the well-being and prosperity of societies but are also deeply intertwined with the preservation of national sovereignty and ethnic and cultural identity.

Mongolia, sandwiched between two totalitarian states with historical ambitions over its territory, stands as a beacon of hope and resilience in a region fraught with geopolitical tensions. The erosion of democracy in Mongolia not only undermines the rights and liberties of its citizens but also poses a grave threat to the sovereignty and independence of the state. As members of the Mongolian diaspora, representing diverse ethnic backgrounds and geographic regions, we view the preservation of Mongolian democracy not merely as a political aspiration but as a matter of existential importance.

We urge the international community, legislative and executive authorities in the leading democracies of the world to closely monitor the situation in Mongolia and to use their influence and leverage to address these pressing concerns. Specifically, we call upon your government or organisation to:

1. Condemn the erosion of democracy and civil rights in Mongolia under the leadership of the MPP and Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai.
2. Advocate for the protection of fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly, and the press, in Mongolia.
3. Pressure the Mongolian government to respect the rule of law and uphold the principles of democracy and human rights.
4. Support efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in Mongolia.
5. Consider imposing targeted sanctions or other diplomatic measures against individuals responsible for human rights abuses and anti-democratic actions in Mongolia.

Furthermore, we implore democratic societies to exert pressure on the current Mongolian authorities, urging them to facilitate fair and equitable opportunities for all political parties, safeguard individual political rights, and rectify the grievously mismanaged electoral processes in Mongolia. The current ruling party and its government must cease their ruthless, calculated, and systematic efforts to undermine a united and effective opposition, stifle dissenting voices within the public sphere, erode the basic legal and constitutional rights of its citizens, and perpetuate the unchecked expansion and empowerment of the state bureaucracy with its predatory inclinations. We urge you to call upon the government of Mongolia to allow independent monitoring and reporting of national elections to ensure a fair, free and robust electoral process.

The international community, together with the community of democracies and the people of Mongolia, must steadfastly oppose any attempts, whether internal or external, to undermine their freedoms and democratic aspirations. It is imperative to stand in solidarity with democratic groups in Mongolia, preserving it as a beacon of democracy amidst an otherwise turbulent geopolitical landscape. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We trust that you will take the necessary actions to address the deteriorating situation in Mongolia and to support the aspirations of the Mongolian people for democracy, freedom, and justice.

Sincerely,

Altan Seseg - Buryat Folk Dance Ensemble, USABuryaad Mongol United Association Inc., USACommittee of Buryat Independence, USACongress of the Buryat People, USAHazara Organization for Peace and Equality (HOPE), USANner Mongolia People's Party's, JapanInterMongol Network, USAKalmyk Mongolian Buddhist Center, USAMongol Heritage Foundation, USAOirat-Kalmyk People's Congress, USASouthern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, USATusgaar Buryad Mongolia, USAWorld Mongol Federation - Europe, SwedenWorld Mongol Federation - Japan, JapanWorld Mongol Federation - USA, United StatesZerd - Mongol Folk Music Group, US

China recruits Mandarin-speaking teachers to move to Inner Mongolia

06 May 2024, [RFA](#), Qian lang



Mongolians protest against China's plan to introduce Mandarin-only classes at schools in the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia, at Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia on September 15, 2020.

Chinese authorities in the northern part of Inner Mongolia are hiring teachers from across China, offering attractive packages to encourage fresh graduates who are native Mandarin speakers to settle in the region, according to recent recruitment notices.

The move appears to be part of a nationwide move to eradicate the use of Mongolian in primary and secondary education, overseas activists said.

Primary and secondary schools across the region were ordered to end Mongolian-medium instruction and to offer only Chinese-medium teaching from Sept. 1, 2023.

Authorities in Otag Front Banner, a county-like administrative division outside Ordos city, are looking to recruit 40 high-school teachers of Chinese, math, science, English as well teachers of history, geography and "ideology and politics," according to a recruitment ad dated April 25 posted to the Gaoxiaojob.com jobs board.

They are also looking for 30 primary school teachers, nine to teach Chinese, with other vacancies available for teachers of math, English, science and other subjects, the notice said.

It added that successful applicants from top-tier universities can expect to receive a "resettlement allowance," with accommodation provided. Applicants must be under 30 years of age, according to the ad.

Similar advertisements have also been posted by authorities looking for 70 primary and secondary teachers to fill posts in Ordos city, and 20 people to teach preschool in Shilingol Banner, near the border with the independent country of Mongolia.

The recruitment drive comes as Inner Mongolia Vice Gov. Bao Xianhua called in a signed opinion article in the ruling Chinese Communist Party's official mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*, for "a team of teachers with excellent skills, providing a strong guarantee for the building of a strong regional education system, who will write the next chapter of the modernization of Inner Mongolia, Chinese-style."

Phasing out Mongolian

Activists said the move is part of the government's bid to erase Mongolian language and culture from the region's schools.

It comes as schools complete the phasing out of Mongolian in favor of Mandarin as a medium of instruction for non-language classes including history, math and science — a policy that sparked mass protests by parents and students followed by a nationwide crackdown when it was announced in September 2020.

An ethnic Mongolian teacher from Shilingol League who gave only one name, Tana, said that ethnic Mongolian teachers in the region's primary and secondary have been left out in the cold by the switch to Mandarin across the board, and are struggling with delivering class in their second language.

"It's a bit easier in primary schools, but junior high school teachers who used to teach in Mongolian are suddenly having to teach in Mandarin," Tana said.

"This generation of teachers finds it very hard to teach

certain subjects now that they suddenly have to teach in Chinese."

Tana said her school had informed teachers who are unable to make the transition to Mandarin would need to retire early or be redeployed in the pastoral team.

"They called a meeting of ethnic Mongolian teachers and said that either we have to teach in Chinese, or take jobs in the dormitories or the canteen," she said.

Nearly impossible expectation

Ordos-born Yang Haiying, a professor at Japan's Shizuoka University who has written a history of the "genocide" of ethnic Mongolians during the political violence of the Chinese Communist Party's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, said it's almost impossible for many native speakers of Mongolian to suddenly switch to teaching their subjects in Mandarin.

"They are expected to teach chemistry in Chinese. Equations, physics, theory, etc.," he said. "This is tantamount to forced layoffs, because [the government] knows very well that the ethnic Mongolians won't be able to do this."

The fact that authorities in the region are recruiting heavily for the next academic year suggests that many ethnic Mongolians have either left, or are on their way out of, the workforce.

"They're recruiting from the rest of China for young people to bring their families, which is a disguised settlement program," Yang said.

Japan-based ethnic Mongolian activist Haas, who goes by a single name, said the aim is to marginalize ethnic Mongolians, who were trained in their native language to teach in that language.

"The Chinese Communist Party's policy is not to allow them to stay on [in their posts]," Haas said. "They want to separate them from mainstream society, because the authorities fear they will obstruct the policy when it comes to be implemented."

"So they're trying to kick all of the ethnic Mongolian teachers out."

'Colonial policy'

Authorities began merging Chinese-medium and Mongolian-medium schools across the region, forcing around 1 million ethnic Mongolian children from rural areas into more than 2,000 boarding schools, according to a Feb. 21, 2024, report by the head of the New York-based Southern Mongolia Human Rights and Information Center, Enghebatu Togochoog.

"[The] boarding school system ... is an integral part of China's overall colonial policy of wiping out the language, culture and identity of the entire Southern Mongolian population as a whole," the report said, adding that it had gone hand-in-hand with government policies aimed at ending Mongolian herders' nomadic way of life.

"Now the Chinese government is targeting the Southern Mongolians' last defense of national identity that is the language," Enghebatu Togochoog wrote.

"From kindergartners to college students, from teachers to professors, from ordinary herders to party members, the entire [ethnic] Mongolian population is subjected to [a] massive training program."

During the "training" sessions, ethnic Mongolians are condemned for expressing their ethnic identity, for singing Mongolian songs and wearing Mongolian clothes, as well as for not having enough Han Chinese friends or being nice to Chinese people, he said.

Instead, they are expected to embrace Han Chinese language, culture and traditions.

China – Nepal

'You dare to lie:' Chinese ambassador to Nepal snaps at senior journalist over Pokhara loan claim

29 May 2024, [The Print](#), Keshav Padmanabhan

Chen Song demanded an apology from Gajendra Budhathoki, chief editor of Taksar Magazine, for saying loan interest for Pokhara airport could be higher than reported.



Chinese ambassador to Nepal Chen Song. (Photo Credit: Chen Song twitter handle)

Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, verbally sparred with a Nepali editor over his [claim](#) that the actual interest rate for the loan given by a Chinese bank to the Pokhara airport was much higher than previously reported.

Song retorted on X with an [angry post](#): "Worst lies that I ever saw. It is public information, yet you dare lie about it." In a different post, Chen demanded an apology from journalist Gajendra Budhathoki and also from "whoever the people you represent".

On 27 May, Budhathoki [posted](#) that he had the signed document of the \$215.96 million loan agreement for the Pokhara International Airport, which shows the interest rate offered by the Export-Import Bank of China (Exim Bank) as 5 percent, despite public reports of it being 2 percent.

The Pokhara airport, first envisioned in 1975, was finally completed and inaugurated on 1 January, 2023 – after a 50-year wait for the second most populous

city of Nepal. The project was made possible due to the \$215.96 million from the Exim Bank of China.

Opened to much fanfare, the airport has become emblematic of another of Beijing's white-elephant development projects, saddling the local partner with high debt. There have been no international routes linked to the airport, for more than a year after it opened.

Another controversy surrounding the airport is whether it is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – the \$1 trillion "project of the century" envisioned by Chinese President Xi Jinping to develop two transport routes connecting China to the world.

Navita Srikant, a geopolitical and security analyst and an India-Nepal relations observer, said when the airport was inaugurated on 1 January 2023, the Chinese ambassador had called it "the flagship project of the China-Nepal BRI cooperation".

"He reiterated this a few months later, after the successful landing of an international flight. Last summer, however, the then Nepalese Foreign Minister, N.P. Saud denied the above-made Chinese assertions and assured in his Parliamentary address that no project under BRI has been implemented thus far," Srikant said.

Srikant added: "This is a loss of image for China — they have been promoting the BRI for so long but their first project in Nepal did not get that tag."

The perceived loss of image due to the difficulties faced by the project could be attributed to the Chinese ambassador's public defensiveness regarding the Pokhara airport, explained Shivam Shekhawat, a junior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation.

Speaking to ThePrint, Shekhawat added that the airport failing to "achieve the kind of traffic that was envisioned" is something that matters for Chinese public diplomacy in Nepal.

In recent months, the Nepalese government has been trying to convert the loan for Pokhara airport into a grant, given that the project has not achieved its goals. "During the recent nine-day trip of Nepali Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha to China, discussions included negotiations to convert a portion of the loan to Pokhara Airport as a grant. From 2026, Nepal has to start repaying the loan, including the interest," explained Srikant.

Habitual offender

This is not the first time that Song has pushed the boundaries of acceptable actions by a diplomat in a foreign country. At a public event in September 2023, Song asserted that India's "policy" towards Nepal was not "friendly" while adding that New Delhi's ties are also "not so beneficial" to the country, [according](#) to media reports.

"This Twitter spat and use of undiplomatic language hints at a certain BRI-related anxiety of China in Nepal. However, there is a sense that Chinese ambassadors

have habitually crossed diplomatic norms in Nepal. Even previously, the statement on India-Nepal trade crossed the line way too far,” Srikant told ThePrint.

“The defensiveness, however, is not proportionate to the response made by the ambassador in a public verbal spat. No country would be okay with an ambassador attempting to intimidate their journalists,” added Shekhawat.

In 2020, the then-Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Hou Yanqui, interfered in the affairs of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) and attempted to keep the party united during the political split occurring at the time.

After prolonged, tortuous Covid closure, China finally reopens 14 Tibet-Nepal border trade points

26 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

There is probably no other part of the world, including in China itself, where Covid-19 restrictions did not end years ago. To the local populations on the two sides of Nepal and Chinese-occupied Tibet border areas, the Covid pandemic restrictions ended only yesterday. China finally decided to reopen most of the border crossings from May 25, with the prolonged, tortuous delay in doing so begging explanations.

The two sides reopened their traditional border trade points on May 25, marking a step forward in enhancing bilateral economic and trade ties, reported China’s official *Xinhua* news agency May 25. Bilateral ties did not move forward thus far apparently because China failed to restore a left front government in Nepal by cobbling together a coalition of the country’s communist parties despite its strenuous efforts. But politics has once again brought together the two major communist parties of Nepal to form the government at Kathmandu, with support from other, smaller parties.

The border points reopening ceremony took place in Zhentang (Tibetan: Drenthang, Ting-kye County) Township on the Tibet-Nepal border in the city of Shigatse, the report said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha of Nepal and Vice-chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region Silang Nima jointly opened the traditional trading points, reported the *kathmandupost.com* May 26.

The report said the leaders from the two sides announced the reopening of 14 of the 21 trading points in various districts along Nepal’s mountain range after a gap of four years.

The report said Chinese authorities had closed the border passes in Jan 2020 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, which hugely affected the Nepalis living in the remote mountain villages close to Tibet.

The report cited Shrestha as saying 14 trading points of Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha, Gorkha, Mustang, Dolpa and Darchula districts were reopened on May 25. He has added that the Chinese side would gradually reopen the remaining seven border points as well.

The minister has said talks had been going on at the diplomatic level for long on reopening the border points. “It was agreed during my China visit in March to reopen the 14 traditional border trading points,” he has said, adding four such points were reopened in 2023.

The report said the border closure in early 2020 affected a large number of Nepali traders, seasonal workers and residents of several mountain districts. People of the settlements near the Tibet border had difficulties managing essential supplies as they could not travel to the otherwise more accessible markets across the previously open border.

For example, as a result of the border closure “people of several remote settlements in Bhotkhola had to buy food and other supplies from Khandbari, the district headquarters of Sankhuwasabha, paying heavily to transport them.” But now “they can buy essential commodities from Dendang and Changa markets in Tibet,” Wang Chhedar Bhote, chairman of Bhotkhola Rural Municipality in Sankhuwasabha, has said.

He has said the local unit and the district administration had repeatedly urged the Chinese authorities to reopen the border, but to no avail. But now “the residents of Kimathanka, Chyamtang, Chepuwa, Hatiya and other settlements of Bhotkhola will have a huge relief with the reopening of the border after four years,” Bhote has said.

Besides, as a result of the prolonged border closure, hundreds of people on the Nepal side had been unable to meet their relatives in Tibet. People of border villages of Tibet and Nepal have marital links. They will now be able to visit their relatives across the border, the report added.

Tibet traded with 175 countries and regions last year. Its imports from and exports to Nepal, its largest trading partner, totalled approximately 2.77 billion yuan (about 389.5 million US dollars), up 77.2% year-on-year, the report said, citing the customs bureau in Tibet’s capital Lhasa.

2 schools rebuilt with China aid handed over to Nepal

16 May 2024, [News CN](#)

Two public schools rebuilt with Chinese assistance in Nepal’s Dolakha district were handed over to local authorities on Thursday.

The new buildings have well-furnished classrooms, laboratories, computer labs, libraries, dormitories, halls and teacher rooms, noted Shankar Babu

Shrestha, chairman of the district's education development and coordination unit.

"These buildings stand as the symbols of friendship between the two friendly nations," Shrestha said at the handover ceremony held in Dolakha. "Now it is our responsibility to manage, protect and use these facilities for the better education of our children."

The schools in Jilu and Singati of the district were damaged in the 2015 massive earthquake, and Sinohydro Bureau 6 Co., Ltd. under the Power Construction Corporation of China undertook their demolition and reconstruction under an assistance agreement signed by the governments of Nepal and China.



This photo taken on May 16, 2024 shows a scene during a handover ceremony for two public schools rebuilt with Chinese assistance held in Dolakha, Nepal. Two public schools rebuilt with Chinese assistance in Nepal's Dolakha district were handed over to local authorities on Thursday.

The schools in Jilu and Singati of the district were damaged in the 2015 massive earthquake, and Sinohydro Bureau 6 Co., Ltd. under the Power Construction Corporation of China undertook their demolition and reconstruction under an assistance agreement signed by the governments of Nepal and China. (Photo by Nirana Raj Bana/Xinhua)

Two teaching buildings, one dormitory building and a canteen were built on each campus as the main part of the public school recovery project.

"China has been attaching special importance to our bilateral education and human resources cooperation," said Xie Yu, counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Nepal.

Noting that China has built other schools in Nepal in recent years, Xie added that "Dolakha schools will also be a life changer for local kids, honoring China's enduring commitment to help Nepal to pursue prosperity and sustained development."

On the occasion, Sinohydro Bureau 6 Co., Ltd. donated bookshelves, books and schoolbags to the schools along with China Foundation for Rural Development and Yunnan Energy Investment Co., Ltd. of China.

The schools in Jilu and Singati have 874 and 570 students, respectively.



This photo taken on May 15, 2024 shows the newly-rebuilt Sarba Secondary School in Jilu of Dolakha, Nepal.

Two public schools rebuilt with Chinese assistance in Nepal's Dolakha district were handed over to local authorities on Thursday. The schools in Jilu and Singati of the district were damaged in the 2015 massive earthquake, and Sinohydro Bureau 6 Co., Ltd. under the Power Construction Corporation of China undertook their demolition and reconstruction under an assistance agreement signed by the governments of Nepal and China. (Photo by Nirana Raj Bana/Xinhua)

China's hand seen in Nepal's new currency-note-map claims on Indian territory

05 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

India-Nepal ties may be headed for turbulence as the latter's new left front coalition government, long lobbied for by China, included as belonging to Nepal a set of three strategic pieces of territories in India bordering Tibet in a new map featured in its new Rs 100 currency notes.

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' decided to print the new map of Nepal, which includes the territory of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani in the Rs 100 denomination bank notes, reported the Indian news agency PTI May 4, citing government spokesperson Rekha Sharma.

"The cabinet approved to re-design the banknote of Rs 100 and replace the old map printed in the background of the bank note during the cabinet meetings held on Apr 25 and May 2," Sharma, who is also the Minister for Information and Communication, has said.

All the three contested, interconnected areas lying across western Tibet's Ngari region, have been fully under India's control over the past 60 years or so, with the people living in them being Indian citizens, paying taxes in India, and voting in the Indian elections, the report noted.

Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states – Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

The three disputed areas cover a total of about 370 sq km (140 square miles), Nepalese officials have said.

Nepal's provocative move came despite the fact that in Jun 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart vowed to resolve the boundary dispute under the spirit of friendship during the latter's visit to India.

The Kalapani area is strategically significant in South Asian diplomacy as it is at the tri-junction between India, Chinese occupied Tibet, and Nepal. Given that Nepal is a "buffer state" between China and India—both countries have power aspirations in the region, with ramifications on the relations between the three, noted *eurasianimes.com* May 4.

The strategic Lipulekh pass connects Uttarakhand with Chinese occupied territory of Tibet. It is a strip of land on the northwestern edge of Nepal, lodged between Nepal, India, and Tibet. It is a far western point near Kalapani, another disputed border area between Nepal and India.



Nepal decided to print the new map of Nepal, which includes the territory of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani in its new Rs 100 currency notes.

Nepal's claim to the Limpiyadhura Pass area arises from its claim over Kalapani as it lies adjacent to it in India across Tibet's Ngari border.

The entirety of the Limpiyadhura-Kalapani-Lipulekh area is under Indian administration as part of Pithoragarh district in the Kumaon Division of the Uttarakhand state. However, Nepal has been claiming it since 1997, saying it lies within its Darchula district, Sudurpashchim Province.

Nepal's claim is based on the Sugauli Treaty signed with British East India Company in 1815. Under it, the India-western Nepal border is marked by the course of the Kali River, called the Mahakali downstream. But there was no map attached to it. The Mahakali has two tributaries—one starting at Lipulekh and the other at Limpiyadhura further west. The treaty did not specify

which of these two tributaries would be considered the Kali for the purpose of delineating the boundary. India says the Kali starts at Lipulekh, while Nepal says Limpiyadhura is the river's source, noted a *Kathmandupost.com* report Jun 4, 2020.

In 2020, India inaugurated an 80-km road to facilitate pilgrims visiting Kailash-Mansarovar in Tibet, which is around 90km from the Lipulekh pass. This road originates from Ghatiabgarh and terminates at Lipulekh Pass, the gateway to Kailash-Mansarovar. It was approved by the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security in 2005 and was made following recommendations of an inter-ministerial China Study Group.

The road has strategic value for India as it will be the first to provide connectivity to the Indian troops deployed on the Line of Actual Control with China in Uttarakhand.

The Lipulekh issue flared up in May 2015 when India and China agreed to develop the region for trade and transit. Kathmandu sent diplomatic notes to New Delhi and Beijing, alleging violations of Nepal's territorial integrity.

Then in 2019, India released a new political map showing the disputed territories within its international border. The Nepali public erupted in protests, seeking to amend the Nepali Constitution to include these disputed territories.

India-Nepal relations, which had been under strain since 2015 after India imposed an unofficial economic blockade on Nepal, degraded further, noted *eurasianimes.com* May 4.

Then in 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India underscored the fact that his government had built a road via the disputed Lipulekh to Manas Khand, a gateway to the Mansarovar Hindu pilgrimage site in Tibet.

The speech aimed at the Hindu electorates in Uttarakhand state triggered protests in Nepal. It led the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu to issue a press release on Jan 15, saying New Delhi's position has been "consistent and unambiguous."

This in turn was followed by Nepal's foreign ministry issuing a counter-statement on Jan 17, reaffirming Kathmandu's claim over Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani, calling on India to cease unilateral construction or development works in those territories.

The then Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane (retired) hinted that the objections by the Nepalese government over the construction of a strategic link road in Uttarakhand on the border with Chinese-occupied Tibet could have been done at the "behest of someone else."

This implied suggestion of Chinese pressure led Nepal to raise the issue with India.

China considers Nepal a key partner in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and wants to invest in Nepal's infrastructure as part of its grand plans to boost global trade.

In 2022, it offered Nepal a Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network which included blasting tunnels through the mountainous Tibetan plateau to build a railway line under its flagship BRI. But no BRI project has taken off so far, marred by delays over financing and other issues. As regards the railway project, a pre-feasibility study suggested that it would be "an engineering feat" and costly but not an "impossible task". But while Nepal insists on China building it as an aid project for fear of becoming debt-trapped otherwise, the latter insists that Kathmandu take a costly BRI loan from it for its building.

China pledges five-year development assistance for Nepal's Tibet-border districts

May 3, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Chinese government of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which constitutes roughly the western half of Tibet proper, is to fund a five-year initiative in Nepal's northern border districts, offering different kinds of logistical and material support, mostly for social and economic development projects. The inhabitants of these districts are ethnically Tibetan or of Tibetan-origin, with most of them practicing Tibetan religion and culture.

The TAR government will provide 20 million yuan or around Nepali Rs 370 million each year under the initiative for the next five years, reported the *kathmandupost.com* May 3, citing officials familiar with the development.

In order to execute this initiative, the first preparatory meeting was held in Lhasa over Apr 23-24, co-chaired by Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, joint secretary of Nepal's Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration of Nepal, and Baiman Yangzong, director general of the Foreign Affairs Office of the TAR government, the report said, citing a statement from Nepal's Consulate General in Lhasa.

The report noted that during his Nepal visit in Nov 2023, Wang Junzheng, the Party Secretary of TAR, had informed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha that Lhasa would provide Nepal 20 million yuan for administrative reform and development needs in Nepal.

The assistance will be used to build schools and health posts, install solar electricity, and fund other small projects in the northern 15 districts of Nepal, a Nepali official who attended the meeting in Lhasa last week has said.

The districts have been named as Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha,

Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Bajhang, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla and Darchula. The two sides will meet twice in the first half of the year with focus on the projects' arrangements and twice in the second half of the year for the implementation and review of the implemented projects, the report said.

The statement has further said the two sides discussed enhancing support for improving the livelihood of the people residing in the border districts through various projects.

Nepal's Ministry of Local Development was stated to be currently compiling a list of projects needed in the 15 districts that share a border with Tibet.

The report noted that China has already been implementing small-scale aid projects in the northern border districts of Nepal, providing each district Nepali Rs 3 million for the development of village development committees (VDCs), then local administrative units, in the districts.

The report suggested that the initiative began in 2014 when China agreed to provide 10 million yuan (USD 1.63 million) annually from 2014 to 2018 through the TAR government in areas like health, education and road sectors to improve the livelihood of the residents in those districts.

Later in Apr 2019, during the state visit of the then Nepali president Bidya Devi Bhandari to China, the two countries signed the Northern Area Infrastructure Development and Livelihood Improvement Project (NAIDLIP), under which Beijing pledged to provide funds for implementing various development projects, which was estimated to be 20 million yuan, the report said.

China - Pakistan

China supports Pakistan in further investigating terror attack on Chinese: spokesperson

27 May 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China supports Pakistan in continuing investigation into a deadly terror attack on Chinese nationals and bringing to justice all the perpetrators, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Monday.

China attaches great importance to the key progress made by the Pakistani side on the investigation, and will continue to work with Pakistan to strengthen security cooperation and ensure the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects, and institutions in Pakistan, Mao said at a press briefing.

On March 26, a suicide bomber riding on an explosive-laden vehicle attacked a convoy of Chinese nationals heading towards a hydropower project, killing five Chinese and their Pakistani driver in the Besham area of Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Pakistan's National Counter-Terrorism Authority Coordinator Muhammad Tahir Rai said Sunday that security forces have arrested 11 suspects accused involved the attack.

Mao said that terrorism is a common enemy of humanity and a scourge against regional development and stability.

China calls on countries in the region to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation, root out all terrorist organizations, remove their breeding ground, and protect the common security and development interests of all countries, she said.

Chinese Propaganda in Pakistan: "Xinjiang Is Having Its Best Time in History"

24 May 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Massimo Introvigne

A seminar in Islamabad presented the region, where a genocide of Muslim Uyghurs is taking place, as a land where freedom of religion reigns.



Chinese diplomat Shi Yuangqiang addressing the seminar's participants.

Several Parliaments in the Western world have acknowledged the persecution of Uyghurs and other Turkic people in Xinjiang as "genocide," while the United Nations and the European Parliament stated that China is committing "crimes against humanity" in the region.

Yet, it was solemnly proclaimed in Pakistan that the "Xinjiang region is enjoying the best time in its history," a provocative comment about a region whose inhabitants are targeted by crimes against humanity and genocide. The statement was uttered by the Chinese Deputy Chief of Missions (DCM) of Beijing's Embassy to Pakistan, Shi Yuangqiang, at a seminar on "Dynamics of Xinjiang in Pakistani Perspective" hosted on May 18 in Islamabad by the Overseas Chinese Association Rawalpindi. It was as if German diplomats in Nazi times had tried to persuade their audiences that Jews in Germany were "enjoying the best time in their history."

The seminar was attended by politicians and journalists. Shi particularly insisted that Uyghurs in Xinjiang "are enjoying the

religious freedom that rejects the malicious propaganda campaigns of Western think tanks."

Shi praised Pakistan as one of the "best friends" of China and promised more economic support.

A sad but emblematic moment was where Uyghur children brought to the event had to lip sync in Chinese, i. e., pretend to be singing while in fact just moving their lips in synchronicity with pre-recorded songs.

This was an emblematic moment: Uyghur's youth cannot really sing their own songs, but they are admitted to lip sync the songs of their colonizers, while Pakistani VIPs applaud.

Pakistan scrambles for relief on \$15bn energy debt owed to China

24 May 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Adnan Aamir

UAE surprises with \$10 bn investment in promising sectors of economy.

Cash-strapped Pakistan is moving to restructure more than \$15 billion in power-plant debt owed to Chinese energy producers, in a move that threatens to dampen Beijing's appetite for future investment.

The South Asian nation is already on the hook for about \$1.9 billion in unpaid operating bills at 20 China-backed power plants across the country. Most were built under the \$50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a key part of Beijing's globe-spanning Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

But Islamabad announced last weekend that it was seeking to restructure \$15.4 billion in loans linked to the construction of those China-funded plants.

Pakistan wants to extend the maturity of the loans by five years to save roughly \$2 billion in debt-servicing costs over the next several years, according to an official involved in the process who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak with the media.

Delaying payment could give the government some wiggle room to avoid raising electricity prices in the midst of soaring summertime demand. An energy price hike last year triggered widespread protests.

The surprise announcement came as Pakistan negotiates another bailout package in the range of \$6 to \$8 billion with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has called on Islamabad to stop subsidizing the energy sector.

"It reduces the [debt] burden [of Pakistan] when it comes to negotiating with the IMF," Aadil Nakhoda, an assistant professor of economics at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi, said of the restructuring plan.

Pakistan's investment prospects have been dim, hampering its low-growth economy. This month,

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman delayed a visit that Islamabad had hoped would generate billions of dollars in business deals.

In a rare bit of good news, however, the United Arab Emirates announced Thursday that it would invest \$10 billion in promising sectors of Pakistan's economy, although more funding from China remains crucial.

Pakistan is aiming to get its proposed debt restructuring approved before Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visits China next month. But observers said convincing Beijing could be difficult. The request comes amid tensions between the two countries after a series of deadly militant attacks on Chinese nationals and economic interests in Pakistan.

Abdul Rehman, a Pakistan-based energy market expert, said Chinese officials will not agree to restructure the multibillion-dollar loans.

"China will give new loans, which can be used to repay the existing loans of power projects," Rehman said. "In this way, the debts will not be restructured and Pakistan's forex accounts will also get a breather."

Chinese companies have repeatedly called on Pakistan to settle its outstanding power bills, stoking fears that producers could suspend their operations to force Islamabad's hand. Pakistan is paying some of the operations' variable costs, such as fuel, and it is unlikely the Chinese companies would take such a drastic step, Rehman said. But "Chinese power producers' payment problems will surely affect future Chinese investment in Pakistan," he added.

This month, Chinese investors called for Pakistan to place funds in a foreign bank account to ensure that debts owed to power producers are paid on time. Pakistan has not accepted this demand, but it is under mounting pressure to placate them as a meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) got underway Friday. The body makes decisions for the broader China-Pakistan investment framework, including about future funding and the suspension of existing projects.

"Given its burgeoning economic problems, Pakistan expects major investments from China at the next JCC meeting," another government official told Nikkei on condition of anonymity. "We fear that Pakistan's failure to honor commitments to pay Chinese power producers has made our investment pitch to China a very hard sell."

Interview: Pakistan firmly upholds one-China principle -- president

22 May 2024, [News CN](#), Deng Kaiyin, Jiang Chao, Zhang Jingyao

Pakistan abides by the one-China principle as the country always chooses to stand on the right side of

history, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said during a recent interview with Chinese media.

Tuesday marks the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. Recalling the rapport between the previous generations' leaders of the two countries, Zardari said: "My late father-in-law, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the nation to look east, to look towards China."

Zardari, who had visited China nine times during his first term as Pakistani president, said Pakistani people love China as "there is no conditionality between us." In the interview, the first one with foreign media after being re-elected as Pakistan's president for the second time in March, Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's stance of upholding one-China principle, rejecting any form of "Taiwan-independence."

"Taiwan is part of China. There's no other way," the president said, adding that Pakistan will always stand with China and safeguard China's core interests.

Commenting on the development of Gwadar Port, a starting point of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Zardari said many things have been done in Gwadar port since the launch of the CPEC 11 years ago, noting that the port will always welcome investors from all over the world.

Zardari said Pakistan is encouraging more schools to adopt the Chinese language into their compulsory curriculum. Emphasizing the importance of strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, he called for more policies to facilitate the movement of people between the two countries.

Speaking highly of the development achievements made by the Chinese people, Zardari said that ensuring the continuation of policies is one of the key reasons behind China's success, adding that Pakistan hopes to be more involved in China's development process.

"Long live Pakistan-China friendship!" Zardari said in Chinese while concluding the interview.

Today is the 73rd anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relation

20 May 2024, [Pakistan Today](#)

In the limelight of international relations, there exists a thread woven with the deepest hues of solidarity and trust. Pakistan and China, bound by an unbreakable bond, stand as testament to the enduring power of friendship amidst the tumult of global politics.

From the towering peaks of the Himalayas to the bustling streets of Islamabad and Beijing, their diplomatic embrace echoes with the whispers of shared history and common aspirations.

Pakistan and China's diplomatic journey, which commenced on the 21st of May 1951, has transcended time, evolving into a formidable alliance with each passing day and year. This cherished relationship, rooted in mutual recognition and respect, has blossomed into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, epitomizing the unwavering commitment of both nations' leadership to propel it forward. Pakistan, among the first nations to embrace the People's Republic of China, holds China dear as its Iron Brother, while China, in turn, cherishes Pakistan as one of its closest friends and partners. This deep-seated camaraderie is underpinned by feelings of mutual trust, respect, and goodwill, fostering a regular exchange of high-level visits and strategic consultations between the two neighbors. Economically, China's stature as Pakistan's largest trading partner and a major investor, particularly in infrastructure and energy sectors, amplifies the bilateral synergy. The official launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under President Xi Jinping's "One Road, One Belt" initiative, marks a significant milestone, elevating the bilateral relationship to unprecedented heights. CPEC, envisioned to enhance connectivity and infrastructure, has catalyzed monumental developments, fostering socio-economic prosperity and job creation across Pakistan. This transformative journey, facilitated by a robust mechanism of Joint Cooperation Committees and Working Groups, underscores the depth of commitment towards mutual progress and shared prosperity. As Pakistan and China continue to script a narrative of unparalleled friendship and cooperation, their enduring partnership serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring a more harmonious global community. Pakistan's diplomatic ties with China have stood the test of time, evolving into a robust alliance with multifaceted dimensions. Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China, their relationship has grown from strength to strength. Throughout the years, their partnership has become a cornerstone of regional stability and economic growth.

In the early years, the two nations established their camaraderie on the foundation of countering common threats and challenges. As the geopolitical landscape evolved, their alliance served as a strategic counterbalance to the influence of neighboring India. Moreover, China's substantial investments in Pakistan's infrastructure, including the transformative CPEC, have not only fueled Pakistan's economic growth but have also deepened the bond between the two nations.

Over time, their collaboration expanded beyond economic ventures to encompass defense and security cooperation. With a shared commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring regional security, China and

Pakistan have engaged in intelligence sharing and military exchanges. Pakistan's pivotal role in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) further solidifies their partnership, with CPEC emerging as a flagship project under this ambitious endeavor.

Their friendship extends beyond bilateral interests, manifesting in unwavering diplomatic support in international forums. Through thick and thin, China and Pakistan have stood by each other, forging a bond based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit. As they continue to navigate the complexities of global politics, the China-Pakistan relationship remains a beacon of stability and cooperation in an ever-changing world.

– 1949: The People's Republic of China was established.

– 1950: Pakistan becomes one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China.

– 1951: Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China are formally established.

– 1962: The Sino-Indian War strengthens Pakistan's ties with China as Pakistan supported China during the conflict.

– 1963: The Sino-Pakistani Agreement is signed, transferring territory from Pakistan-administered Kashmir to China.

– 1971: During the Bangladesh Liberation War, China supports Pakistan, leading to further strengthening of bilateral relations.

– 1978: China's reform and opening-up policies begin, leading to increased economic cooperation between China and Pakistan.

– 2013: China announces the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, enhancing economic collaboration between the two countries.

– 2024: China and Pakistan celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, highlighting the strong and enduring friendship between the two nations.

These milestones highlight the close and strategic partnership that has developed between Pakistan and China over the years. Further developments in Pakistan-China relations include ongoing military cooperation, cultural exchanges, and economic collaborations. The CPEC has emerged as a flagship project, aiming to enhance connectivity and promote economic development in Pakistan. Both countries continue to support each other on various international platforms, maintaining a strong strategic partnership. People-to-people exchanges, educational cooperation, and mutual support on regional and global issues further cement the bond between Pakistan and China.

The bilateral relationship between the two countries remains vital for regional stability and economic development in the broader context of South Asia and beyond. Worth mentioning that Pakistan and China's diplomatic relations have evolved into a multifaceted

partnership with several key aspects driving their enduring bond. Firstly, their strategic partnership stands as a pillar of regional stability, with both nations collaborating closely on security, defense, and counterterrorism efforts. Secondly, economic cooperation forms a cornerstone of their relationship, with China emerging as a major investor in Pakistan's infrastructure projects, notably through the CPEC. Additionally, military cooperation between the two countries is robust, encompassing joint exercises, technology transfer, and defense collaboration. Diplomatically, China consistently extends support to Pakistan on various international platforms, while Pakistan aligns itself with China on matters of mutual interest. Finally, people-to-people ties foster cultural exchanges, educational collaborations, and tourism, strengthening the bond between the peoples of both nations beyond official channels. As Pakistan and China celebrate the 73rd anniversary of their diplomatic relations, these five aspects underscore the depth and resilience of their friendship, which continues to shape the geopolitical landscape of the region. This relationship goes beyond mere strategic cooperation; it embodies a deep-rooted friendship that has weathered the tests of time and emerged stronger. Their partnership is characterized by a shared commitment to fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. The bond also extends beyond bilateral interests, manifesting in a robust diplomatic support system in various international forums. Whether it's advocating for each other's positions on critical issues or standing shoulder to shoulder in times of global challenges, the two countries exemplify the true essence of solidarity and collaboration. At its core, the friendship between Pakistan and China is built on a foundation of trust, respect, and mutual benefit. This symbiotic relationship allows both nations to leverage their respective strengths and resources for collective advancement. From infrastructure development projects like BRI & CPEC to joint military exercises, their collaboration spans across diverse sectors of mutual interest. In an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape, the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan serves as a beacon of stability and cooperation. As both countries navigate complex global challenges and opportunities, their shared commitment to each other highlights the importance of fostering genuine relationships in the realm of international politics. By continuing to stand by each other through thick and thin, China and Pakistan set a commendable example for the world on how genuine friendship can transcend borders and contribute to a more harmonious global community. As we reflect on the remarkable journey of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations, spanning over seven decades, it becomes evident that the bond between

these two nations is not merely defined by geography or shared interests, but by the enduring spirit of friendship and cooperation. With a border stretching over 5000 kilometers, their relationship stands taller than the mighty Himalayas, symbolizing the strength and resilience that characterize their partnership. Like the sweetness of honey, their relations are imbued with warmth and sincerity, transcending borders and cultural differences. As the old saying goes, "Iron brothers" indeed, their bond is unbreakable, and their commitment to each other unwavering. Through thick and thin, Pakistan and China have stood by each other, and their friendship will last forever, ever, a testament to the power of genuine camaraderie in shaping a brighter future for generations to come.

Pakistan, China on path to new heights of friendship

13 May, 2024, The Nation, [Shafqat Ali](#)

Pakistan and China are on the path to new heights of friendship amid top Pakistani leaders continuing visits to Beijing and the proposed trip by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The anticipation is palpable as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar prepares for his journey to China today. The PM will also fly to China within days.

Beijing's unwavering support, manifested through financial aid and strategic partnerships, has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's economic stability in tumultuous times.

The recent extension of a multi-billion-dollar loan was not just a lifeline but a symbol of solidarity in the face of adversity.

The agenda for Dar's visit is ambitious yet crucial. Discussions of paramount importance include bilateral trade, cooperation, and the evolution of the monumental China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

This ambitious initiative, representative of President Xi Jinping's vision encapsulated in the Belt and Road Initiative, holds the promise of transformative change for both nations.

Against the backdrop of geopolitical shifts and regional dynamics, the dialogue between Dar and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, transcends mere diplomatic niceties.

It will delve into the heart of mutual interests and shared aspirations, exploring avenues for deeper collaboration in the face of evolving challenges.

For Pakistan, the spectre of financial obligations and security threats loom over the CPEC project, underscoring the delicate balance between ambition and pragmatism. Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling

its end of the bargain is unwavering, but the road ahead is fraught with challenges.

As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China is on the anvil, the stakes are higher than ever. The 13th meeting of the joint cooperation committee on CPEC held the promise of accelerating progress and realizing shared ambitions. It was a testament to the enduring bond between Pakistan and China, forged in the crucible of mutual trust and shared aspirations.

China hands over data collected from Pakistan's first satellite mission on Chang'e-6 lunar probe

11 May, 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

China on Friday handed over the data collected from Pakistan's first satellite mission on the Chang'e-6 lunar probe to the Pakistan side, and together they unveiled the first image captured by the CubeSat, the Global Times learned from the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Friday.

China has carried out four international projects with the Chang'e-6 probe, including the European Space Agency's lunar surface ion analyzer, France's radon detection instrument, Italy's laser corner reflector, and the first-ever CubeSat from Pakistan, the CNSA previously revealed.

The CubeSat, named iCube-Q, is a remote sensing satellite co-developed by Pakistan's national space agency SUPARCO and Shanghai Jiao Tong University. It was launched in early 2023.

The iCube-Q and the orbiter separated near the far side of the Moon in a 12-hour elliptical lunar orbit on Wednesday, and subsequently successfully captured the first image. The project achieved its goal of "successful separation and obtaining telemetry," marking the smooth completion of Pakistan's first-ever lunar project, the CNSA said.

Through this mission, the CubeSat successfully validated nano-satellite lunar orbit detection technology, and explored the cooperation model between China and Pakistan in lunar and deep space exploration, laying the foundation for deeper cooperation between the two sides in future missions. After its grand liftoff on May 3, the Chang'e-6 lunar probe on Wednesday entered its circumlunar orbit after performing a near-moon braking procedure.

Later, the Chang'e-6 probe will adjust the altitude and inclination of its circumlunar orbit with the support of China's Queqiao-2 relay satellite, and implement the separation of the orbiter-returner combination from the lander-ascender combination.

The latter will then make a soft landing on the lunar surface at the South Pole-Aitken Basin, which is widely considered by industry insiders to be one of the most challenging tasks in space exploration.

A number of countries have struggled with this maneuver previously. Early in January, Japan's SLIM

moon lander, took a tumble as it touched down on the lunar surface. This was described as a "success" by the Japanese space agency JAXA, even though the lander's solar panels were not angled properly to harness sunlight and power up the probe.

India protests China's building of road in Ladakh territory ceded to it by Pakistan

03 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

India has lodged a strong protest to China last week over the latter's building of a road in Shaksgam Valley which belongs to it, and which also has the potential to threaten Indian defences in Siachen Glacier. This 5180 square-kilometre Indian territory was illegally ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963, noted the *hindustantimes.com* and other reports May 3.

India lodged its protest against China both in New Delhi and Beijing. Besides, road could be part of an alignment that links Karakoram Highway to Upper Shaksgam Valley, bordering the Siachen Glacier.

India's ministry of external affairs (MEA) said India has never accepted the so-called China Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China, and India has consistently conveyed its rejection of the same, noted the *timesofindia.com* May 3.

"We have registered our protest with the Chinese side against illegal attempts to alter facts on the ground. We further reserve the right to take necessary measures to safeguard our interests," the report quoted MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal as saying May 2.



India maintains that under the 1963 agreement, Pakistan illegally ceded to China 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in Shaksgam Valley from areas illegally occupied by it in the Union Territory of Ladakh. It has also maintained that China continues to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 sq kms of Indian territory in Ladakh for the past six decades, the report said.

The new road transverses through 16333 feet Aghil Pass and could provide an alternative alignment to Karakoram Pass via Upper Shaksgam and thereon to Khunjerab Pass in Northern Areas of Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The *hindustantimes.com* report said the matter was of serious concern to India for if China extends the road to Upper Shaksgam Valley, then the Indian positions on Siachen Glacier will face twin threats — Pakistan in the South and China to the north. It is only logical to assume that the Indian Army will have to plan long term defences to deal with Chinese expansion in the Occupied Shaksgam Valley.

The report said that although the current road construction is a patch between two possible alignments in the long term, it is quite evident that China wants to link Lower and Upper Shaksgam valley through road and military outposts in order to pressurize Indian Army positions on Siachen Glacier and Salto Ridge.

India is stated to have been raising the issue of Shaksgam Valley in the Special Representative Dialogue on Boundary Resolution, the last of which was held in Dec 2019. This dialogue has, however, virtually been put on the backburner after Chinese PLA threw all the bilateral agreements out of the window and transgressed in East Ladakh in May 2020. India has no intention to allow Beijing to unilaterally impose the 1959 line on East Ladakh.

The report added that by lodging at least two protests in the past two years on road construction in Shaksgam Valley, India made it clear to China that it is right to protect its territory and will take measures to ensure that road construction is halted in the illegally occupied territory.

China pledges five-year development assistance for Nepal's Tibet-border districts

03 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Chinese government of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which constitutes roughly the western half of Tibet proper, is to fund a five-year initiative in Nepal's northern border districts, offering different kinds of logistical and material support, mostly for social and economic development projects. The inhabitants of these districts are ethnically Tibetan or of Tibetan-origin, with most of them practicing Tibetan religion and culture.

The TAR government will provide 20 million yuan or around Nepali Rs 370 million each year under the initiative for the next five years, reported the *kathmandupost.com* May 3, citing officials familiar with the development.

In order to execute this initiative, the first preparatory meeting was held in Lhasa over Apr 23-24, co-chaired by Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, joint secretary of Nepal's Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration of Nepal, and Baiman Yangzong, director general of the Foreign Affairs Office of the TAR government, the

report said, citing a statement from Nepal's Consulate General in Lhasa.

The report noted that during his Nepal visit in Nov 2023, Wang Junzheng, the Party Secretary of TAR, had informed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha that Lhasa would provide Nepal 20 million yuan for administrative reform and development needs in Nepal.

The assistance will be used to build schools and health posts, install solar electricity, and fund other small projects in the northern 15 districts of Nepal, a Nepali official who attended the meeting in Lhasa last week has said.

The districts have been named as Taplejung, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Bajhang, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla and Darchula. The two sides will meet twice in the first half of the year with focus on the projects' arrangements and twice in the second half of the year for the implementation and review of the implemented projects, the report said.

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China-Taiwan

Exiled Writer Yuan Hongbing Reveals Chinese United Front Strategy Targeting Taiwan's Legislature

28 May 2024, [China Scope](#)

In February, exiled Chinese writer Yuan Hongbing revealed that China aims to use the Kuomintang's (KMT's) influence in Taiwan's legislature to advance its united front strategy, sparking a political storm. Yuan stated in an interview that the information came from a "princeling" (child of a Chinese revolutionary leader) whom Xi Jinping does not dare to challenge. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wants to turn the KMT into the vanguard force of the People's Liberation Army to achieve unification of Taiwan with mainland China from within.

According to Yuan's analysis, the CCP is not just using military intimidation to destabilize Taiwan; it is also using propaganda, deployment of agents, and expansion of the KMT's legislative power to override the Taiwanese administration. Yuan said that the CCP wants the KMT to pave the way for Xi Jinping to fully occupy Taiwan, and that the recent military drills are aimed at supporting the CCP's agents in Taiwan.

While some members of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party may have been co-opted by Beijing, Yuan said that the party as a whole rejects CCP influence. This stands in contrast to the political attitude of the pro-China KMT party.

Yuan stated that the CCP's Taiwan policy has shifted from coercion and enticement to psychological warfare, aiming to demoralize Taiwanese. He praised the peaceful protests outside the of Taiwan's Legislature as social forces advocating for self-defense that could resist Beijing's intimidation.

Yuan, a former Beijing University law professor, was exiled from China for supporting the 1989 pro-democracy movement.

Most countries support one-China principle, oppose Taiwan region's participation in WHA: FM

24 May 2024, [Global Times](#)



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin Photo:

fmprc.gov.cn

The support by a majority of countries for China's position on the Taiwan region's participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) proves again that the one-China principle represents the will of the international community and the trend of the times, and also fully reflects the majority of countries holding a stance for justice on the Taiwan question related to the WHA, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Friday.

There is but one China in the world. The government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, the spokesperson reiterated.

China's position on the Taiwan region's participation in the activities of international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), is consistent and clear: it must be handled under the one-China principle, which is also a fundamental principle demonstrated by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1, said Wang.

Most countries have reiterated their commitments to upholding Resolution 2758 of the UNGA and firmly supporting the one-China principle, opposing Taiwan region's participation in WHA, the spokesperson said. For eight consecutive years from 2009 to 2016, The Chinese central government made special arrangements for the Taiwan region's participation in the WHA on the basis of adherence to the one-China principle. But since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities came to power, they have obstinately adhered to the separatist position of "Taiwan independence" and refused to admit the 1992 Consensus embodying the one-China principle, which means that the political foundation for the Taiwan region's participation in the WHA no longer exists, said Wang.

The 77th WHA will open on May 27. Upholding the one-China principle, as well as the sanctity and authority of relevant UNGA and WHA resolutions, China has decided not to approve the Taiwan region's participation in this year's WHA, a move that has been widely understood and supported by the international community, said Wang.

Leaders and senior officials of many countries, as well as those of international organizations, such as officials from the UN Geneva Office, have recently restated that their countries or organizations abide by the one-China principle and the UNGA Resolution 2758.

When asked about a question related to China, Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, said, "it means in terms of our standing on

Taiwan as a province of China," according to a UN daily press briefing on Thursday.

Any attempt to violate the one-China principle or play the "Taiwan card" for political manipulation are doomed to fail, Wang said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin also slammed the US' false narrative on UNGA Resolution 2758. The past few weeks saw repeated ill-intentioned comments from some US officials challenging the authority of UNGA Resolution 2758. "Those comments distort the facts and history, tread on international law and the basic norms of international relations, and breach the US' own commitment," Wang said at a press briefing on May 15.

PRC Military Drills near Taiwan

25 May 2024, [State.gov](#), Matthew Miller

The United States is deeply concerned over the People's Liberation Army joint military drills in the Taiwan Strait and around Taiwan. We are monitoring PRC activities closely and coordinating with allies and partners regarding our shared concerns.

We strongly urge Beijing to act with restraint. Using a normal, routine, and democratic transition as an excuse for military provocations risks escalation and erodes longstanding norms that for decades have maintained peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, which is critical for regional and global security and prosperity and a matter of international concern. The United States remains committed to its longstanding one China policy, guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances.

Beijing says Taiwan politics don't change 'fact' there is 'one China'

20 May 2024, [CNA](#)



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin speaks during a news conference in Beijing, China on Mar 3, 2022. (File Photo: REUTERS/Carlos Garcia Rawlins)

Beijing said on Monday (May 20) that Taiwan's internal politics did not change the "fact" it is part of China, warning that efforts towards the island' It has

described Lai as a "dangerous separatist" for his past comments on Taiwan's independence - rhetoric that he has moderated in recent years. Asked about his inauguration on Monday, foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said that Taiwan independence was "a dead end".

"No matter under what guise or banner, the pursuit of Taiwan independence and secession is doomed to fail," he added. "No matter how the internal political situation in Taiwan changes, it will not change the historical and legal fact that both sides of the strait belong to one China," Wang warned.

"The day of China's complete unification will come eventually."

As Lai took office, Chinese state media reported that Beijing had imposed sanctions on three US defence companies over their sales of weapons to Taipei.

Though the United States formally recognises Beijing, it is Taipei's main partner and supplier of arms.

Wang on Monday accused "some politicians in a small number of countries" of engaging in "political manipulation ... on the Taiwan issue, severely interfering in China's internal politics".

Chinese social media network Weibo also blocked hashtags referencing the inauguration, preventing them from trending on the platform used by hundreds of millions in China.

In his inauguration speech, Lai directly addressed the threat of war following years of growing pressure from China to bring Taiwan under mainland rule. Lai said a "glorious era of Taiwan's democracy has arrived" and thanked citizens for "refusing to be swayed by external forces, for resolutely defending democracy". Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office - which manages relations with the island - slammed Lai's speech as sending a "dangerous signal", state news agency Xinhua reported. Office spokesman Chen Binhua was quoted as saying Lai's remarks "wantonly advocated separatism, incited cross-strait confrontation and sought independence by relying on foreign support and by force". He went on to accuse Lai of ignoring Taiwan's "mainstream public aspiration ... for peace and development".

Chinese agents highly active in democratic Taiwan, dissidents say

19 May 2024, [RFA](#), Hsia Hsiao-Hwa

On Jan. 13, 2023, Guangdong dissident Xiao Yuhui crossed the 10-kilometer (6-mile) stretch of water from China to Kinmen, a small island that is still controlled by Taiwan, paddling across on a surfboard. But Xiao's bid to escape the influence of the Chinese government didn't end there.

He believes the ruling Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping is now focusing closely on "cleaning up"

opposition voices overseas, and has spotted people he believes to be Chinese agents a number of times at public events in democratic Taiwan.

According to a former Chinese agent who spoke recently to Australian broadcaster ABC, this is exactly what's going on. Former Chinese spy "Eric" told the station that he has been involved in surveillance, abductions and the silencing of targets around the world since 2008.

The Spanish-based group Safeguard Defenders, which has warned the world about China's secret police stations, its network of "consular volunteers" and its targeting of dissidents and activists overseas, has now launched a "one-stop shop" legal advice center to help fight transnational repression by Beijing.

"The Chinese Communist Party kidnaps and threatens people at home, and they do the same thing overseas," Xiao said, in response to a question about the ABC report.

The sight of unidentified people he suspected were agents of the Chinese state filming and recording at pro-democracy events in Taiwan worried him enough that he now stays away from protests, rallies and other public events that are seen by Beijing as "anti-China." He's not the only one who's worried, either.

"Both the Taiwanese government officials and the human rights groups who have assisted me have said they hope I won't take part in so many activities or give public interviews, which could lead to my whereabouts being exposed," Xiao told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview.

"They told me this because [China] has so many political collaborators in Taiwan," he said.

Strange behavior

Li Jiabao, a former exchange student from China who applied for political asylum after speaking out against constitutional amendments allowing Xi to abandon term limits for his own job, said he has been continually targeted by authorities in China since then. One unidentified person approached Li as he took part in a documentary in 2019 about his life story and situation, demanding that the director delete all footage, he said.

"[The director] didn't even know whether he had captured the person following us or whether he was just a very suspicious sort of person," Li said. "The man seemed very nervous and panicky, and behaved unacceptably, threatening us."

On another occasion, Li spotted someone who appeared to be following him in a park near his home. The man would watch him, but then looked at his phone if Li looked in his direction.



Chinese exchange student Li Jiabao shouts 'defend freedom of speech' and 'defend Taiwan's sovereignty,' at a protest in Taiwan's southern port city of Kaohsiung, April 7, 2019. (Hsia Hsiao-hwa/RFA)

Li noticed people exhibiting similarly strange behavior at rallies he attended in Taipei to mark the anniversaries of the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen massacre, he said. Shortly after his denunciation of Xi, someone contacted him claiming to be a journalist, and sent him emails in a bid to have him download an app to his phone.

"He used a disposable account," said Li, who later realized what had likely happened after reading media reports of Chinese agents posing as journalists. "Turns out he was phishing me."

"The main thing they want is to get access to your contacts ... as well as the Telegram, Facebook and other chat records commonly used by dissidents," he said. "They can also be used to track your location at any time, to know who you are meeting, what you did and what activities you took part in."

Money for spying

Li has also been approached and offered money to spy on fellow dissidents in Taiwan, he revealed.

"Someone asked me how much you can make a month in Taiwan, said I must be short of money, and told me to go and film the Falun Gong, and the next day to film dissidents, including asking them how they're doing," he said.

"They told me just to live my life, and that they would contact me via a Hong Kong account if I thought it was too sensitive," he said. "The Chinese want to find out if you're willing to do stuff for them for money. I always refuse."

Xiao said the Chinese agents clearly knew of his love of photography, because he remembers being approached in October 2023 to take photos of planes taking off and landing at Taipei's Songshan Airport, home to a Taiwanese Air Force base that runs the flying service for the president and vice president of Taiwan.

"They give you some simple tasks to do and some financial support, to see if you can be bought, then more work would follow," he said.

Xiao smelled a rat at the time, and turned down the offer.

Threats to family members back home are another key part of the Chinese state security police playbook, according to dissidents overseas.

Li said he once received a message from his family asking if he was "being used by overseas or foreign forces."

Xiao said the authorities back home had visited his mother at her home and tried to get her to call him and find out his whereabouts and future plans.

Abduction threats

Sometimes, the goal is to get the target to a location where they can be handed over to the Chinese police, the former Chinese agent, who gave only the pseudonym "Eric," told ABC.

During the program, it emerged that RFA political cartoonist Rebel Pepper, whose real name is Wang Liming, was one of the targets, with Eric detailing a plot to lure Wang to Cambodia, using a Chinese-owned conglomerate that has become one of the fastest-growing companies in Cambodia – the Prince Group – to carry out the scam.

RFA has verified that Prince was the company used for the recruitment and has also spoken to "Eric."

Li has already encountered a similar situation, as his Chinese passport is due to expire in October, and he will soon be undocumented.



Guangdong dissident Xiao Yuhui paddled across from China on a surfboard, yet continues to be targeted by Chinese agents in democratic Taiwan. Undated file photo. (Hsia Hsiao-hwa/RFA)

He was recently contacted by someone with China connections offering to renew his passport if he traveled to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand or elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

"[They told me] as long as you're willing to leave, we have the connections to renew your passport here," he said.

"He and some of his staff also tried to get me to try walking the line into the United States, via the Netherlands and Ecuador," Li said. "The reason I didn't go is that at least I'm safe in Taiwan."

"Once I leave, who's to know if someone would report my whereabouts to the Chinese Communist Party," he said. "I could be threatened, kidnapped or killed along the way, despite not needing a visa to go [to Ecuador]."

Deception

Li said he is very careful about who he is in contact with, as even fellow democracy activists are suspect these days.

"They sometimes pretend to be democrats who care about China, and try to deceive you ... so I'm usually very careful not to meet with strangers unless it's necessary," he said.

"The best way to be sure is to talk to them over time, because no matter how good their cover is, sooner or later they will have to carry out work given them by the Chinese Communist Party, so they will be exposed eventually."

Li said he wasn't surprised by the ABC expose about "Eric", and warned: "Be careful not to accept money or contacts from unknown sources."

Xiao believes that Taiwan still isn't nearly tough enough on Chinese spies operating in its territory, saying that sentences handed down to Chinese spies are typically far too lenient, and not enough to be a deterrent.

Taiwan, despite being a democracy, has plenty of people willing to travel to China and be in contact with authorities there, he said, while certain political parties and civil groups actively campaign for closer ties with Beijing.

Taiwanese star forced to publicly support 'one China' policy

10 May 2024, [RFA](#), Jenny Tang

Taiwanese TV and movie actor Wu Mu-hsuen was recently forced to sign a pledge to support China's territorial claim on democratic Taiwan, or the show she had just finished filming would be ditched, according to multiple local media reports.

Wu was approached by the film crew after wrapping up filming of the online drama "Hey! Come a bit closer" in China last year, and told to sign the agreement or the show would never be aired, her agent Chen Hsiao-chih told several Taiwanese media outlets in recent days.

According to Wu's agent, the practice is now commonplace when Taiwanese artists work in China, and plenty of other stars have been forced to sign agreements pledging that Taiwan is "a part of China," and that there can be no independence for the island, according to reports in the island's Central News Agency, Liberty Times and TVBS.

Taiwan has never been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party, nor formed part of the 74-year-old People's Republic of China, and most of its 23 million people have no wish to give up their sovereignty or democratic way of life to be ruled

by China, according to multiple public opinion polls in recent years.

The news about the agreements has highlighted concerns over China's "soft power" influence over Taiwan, as Beijing vows to achieve "peaceful unification" with the island through propaganda and economic pressures.

Signing agreements

A former film and television industry worker who gave only the surname Chen for fear of reprisals said such requests are common, and don't typically come from Chinese officials, but from the production team of the show that Taiwanese artists are working on.

"The Chinese producers have put a lot of money into filming these shows, and they're afraid that if the artist gets into trouble after filming is done, the whole drama will be thrown out [by ruling Chinese Communist Party censors]," Chen told RFA Mandarin in an interview on May 9. "So they ask the artists to make a commitment in that regard."

He said all artists, including Chinese nationals, are asked to sign commitments to refrain from drugs or pornography or anything else that could endanger the reputation of the show.

The version of the agreements handed to Taiwanese artists also includes a commitment to support Beijing's claim on China, or to refrain from supporting independence for Taiwan, Chen said, adding that anyone who doesn't comply will likely be added to a Chinese government blacklist, which means the huge and lucrative Chinese market is closed to them.

"Artists need to be very clear about this — it's unreasonable to criticize them and to still want to make money from them," Chen said, adding that most artists "aren't very political," and are willing to comply.

"The Chinese market is so big, that they don't see the need to offend people just to make a fuss about something," Chen said.

He said the deals have become more ubiquitous with the rise in tensions across the Taiwan Strait that followed the landslide victory of ruling Democratic Progressive Party President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016.

'Forced to take sides'

While it has refused to rule out invading Taiwan by military force, Beijing vowed in January to step up its efforts to achieve "peaceful unification"

with the island after Taiwanese voters in January elected Beijing's least favorite candidate Lai Ching-te — Tsai's right-hand man — as their next president.

"Peaceful unification" refers to the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to bring the island under its control through propaganda, threats and infiltration rather than armed invasion, analysts have told RFA in recent interviews.

"They wouldn't be asking artists to sign such deals if the leaders on both sides of the Taiwan Strait were in a state of harmony," Chen said. "When there are high-level political tensions, then people further down are unlucky enough to be forced to take sides."

An employee of Taiwan's terrestrial broadcaster TTV who asked to be identified only by the surname Wang said she, too, would steer clear of hiring people with known political views to make entertainment shows.

"We're a purely commercial TV station with no political affiliation, so we would definitely consider when filming TV shows and movies whether someone we hire has a specific political orientation," Wang said. "We would avoid hiring politicians."

"While professional criteria are given priority, we would still be concerned if the political overtones were too strong," she said.

She said some shows that do showcase political themes simply won't sell in the heavily restricted Chinese market.

"There are a lot of people in the film and TV industry who are unable to sell their shows or movies due to political leanings," Wang said.

"But it's a choice — some see the Chinese market as very important, so won't go anywhere near politics, while others give politics top priority," she said.

China ramps up pressure on Taiwan ahead of presidential inauguration

06 May 2024, [VOA](#), William Yang

China has initiated a series of influence campaigns against Taiwan ahead of the island's inauguration of president-elect Lai Ching-te on May 20. Beijing has increased the scale and frequency of military activities near Taiwan while partially relaxing travel and import restrictions.

Some analysts say Beijing is trying to test how the incoming Taiwanese government will respond to the

increased pressure from Beijing while further eroding the longstanding status quo across the Taiwan Strait at a time when Taiwan is preparing for a transition of power.

“In the short term, Beijing is trying to see how the new Taiwanese government under Lai may respond to its pressure campaign,” said Chen Fang-yu, a political scientist at Soochow University in Taiwan.

“At the same time, the Chinese government is attempting to change the status quo across the Taiwan Strait when Taipei is focusing on the inauguration,” he told VOA by phone.

Taiwan’s defense ministry detected 26 Chinese military aircraft and five Chinese naval vessels near the island between May 2 and May 3, including 17 Chinese military aircraft crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait. Some Chinese aircraft got as close as about 76 kilometers from Taiwan’s northern port city of Keelung, which hosts an important naval base.

Meanwhile, the director general of Taiwan’s National Security Bureau, Tsai Ming-yen, told Taiwanese lawmakers on May 1 that the Chinese military had incorporated new tactics into its joint combat readiness patrol near the island, including staging night-time combat patrols and using landing ships and minesweepers during these exercises.

Additionally, he said Taiwanese authorities are tracking the increased patrols carried out by the Chinese coast guard near Taiwan’s outlying island, Kinmen. On April 29, Beijing said the Fujian Coast Guard had organized a fleet of ships to increase the frequency of patrols in waters near Kinmen since April. Beijing also announced plans to allow residents from its southern province of Fujian to travel to Taiwan’s outlying island of Matsu while lifting import restrictions on Taiwanese pomelos and two types of seafood late last month.

The news came after a group of lawmakers from Taiwan’s main opposition party, the Kuomintang, which advocates closer ties between Taipei and Beijing, visited China.

Some experts say the measures rolled out by Beijing in recent weeks are all part of its influence operation against Taipei, which involves using disinformation campaigns, economic coercion, and gray zone operations to impose pressure on Taiwan.

“China’s overall strategy is still to increase pressure on Taiwan but they are also offering some small favors to Taiwan’s opposition parties,” said Su Tzu-yun, a military expert at the Taipei-based Institute for National Defense and Security Research.

While recent developments should be viewed as part of China’s overall influence operation against Taiwan, Su said part of Beijing’s long-term goal is to increase its control over the Taiwan Strait.

“By increasing the frequency of deploying Chinese coast guard vessels to restricted waters near Kinmen

and flying Chinese military aircraft closer to Taiwan’s main island, Beijing is hoping to eventually turn the Taiwan Strait into its territorial water,” he told VOA by phone.

Beijing has repeatedly threatened to achieve reunification with Taiwan through force in recent years, and the Chinese government views Taiwan’s president-elect Lai as an advocate of Taiwan independence.

Since the Chinese military usually concentrates military exercises between June and November, Su said the incoming Taiwanese government needs to closely monitor any increase in Chinese military activities around the island after May 20.

In addition to threats posed by a possible buildup of Chinese military activities, some security analysts say Taiwan should also be mindful of Beijing’s efforts to create division in Taiwan’s domestic politics.

“There is every reason to believe that [the Chinese Communist Party] is ramping up efforts to use Taiwan’s democracy against itself,” J. Michael Cole, a Taipei-based security analyst, told VOA in a written response. He said China will rely on China-friendly political forces in Taiwan to “sabotage the Lai administration” and these efforts will have “serious ramifications for Taiwan’s ability to counter Chinese infiltration and the Taiwan government’s ability to function.”

Prioritizing policy continuity

In light of the increasing Chinese pressure, Lai has appointed some current cabinet members to key positions in charge of national security, foreign policy, and cross-strait relations in his cabinet.

Taiwan’s current foreign minister Joseph Wu will be the secretary general of the National Security Council. The current head of the council, Wellington Koo, will be the new defense minister in the Lai administration. On the foreign policy front, the current secretary general of Taiwan’s presidential office Lin Chia-lung will be the new foreign minister, and Chiu Chui-cheng, a former deputy political minister for Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, which handles cross-strait relations, will be the new head of the council.

Cole said Lai’s personnel picks for national security and foreign policy reflect his intention to continue the policy agenda of the outgoing administration under President Tsai Ing-wen, who has focused on strengthening Taiwan’s relations with like-minded democracies including the United States and Japan.

The decision “will play a major role in reassuring allies and partners around the world that Taiwan will remain committed to the kind of responsible foreign policy that existed under the Tsai administration,” he told VOA.

Chen at Soochow University said the incoming Taiwanese government’s cabinet lineup will benefit the U.S.-led efforts to strengthen security-related

cooperation among democratic countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Since some of his cabinet members are holdovers from the current administration, they have already established relationships with officials in other countries, and some of the existing cooperations can continue," he told VOA.

Taiwan reports second Chinese 'combat patrol' in a week

02 May 2024, [Reuters](#)

Taiwan's defence ministry on Thursday said that China had carried out a "joint combat readiness patrol" near the island for the second time in a week.

Over the past four years, China's military has significantly ramped up its activities around democratically-governed Taiwan. Beijing views the island as its own territory, a position the government in Taipei strongly rejects.

The ministry said that starting from 4 p.m. (0800GMT) on Thursday it had detected 15 Chinese military aircraft, including Su-30 fighters, carrying out "joint combat readiness patrols" with Chinese warships around Taiwan.

Ten of the aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line, or areas nearby, and flew into air space to the island's north, centre and southwest, the ministry said. The median line used to serve as an unofficial border between Taiwan and China, but Chinese military aircraft now regularly cross it. China says it does not recognise the line's existence.

China's defence ministry did not answer calls seeking comment on Thursday, the country being in the middle of its Labour Day holiday.

Taiwan reported a similar Chinese combat patrol on Saturday.

The island's top security official said on Wednesday that Taiwan is on alert for China to carry out military exercises following the inauguration of President-elect Lai Ching-te later this month.

Taiwan National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Ming-yen said China had begun using unusual new tactics, including staging night time combat patrols.

China has a strong dislike of Lai, believing him a dangerous separatist. China's government has rejected his repeated offers of talks, including one made last week.

Lai says only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

Taiwan on alert for post-inauguration Chinese drills

01 May 2024, [Reuters](#), Ben Blanchard

Taiwan is on alert for China to carry out military exercises after the inauguration of President-elect Lai Ching-te this month, the island's top security official

said on Wednesday, adding China has already begun using unusual new tactics.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has a strong dislike of Lai, believing him a dangerous separatist. China's government has rejected his repeated offers of [talks](#), including one made last week.

Lai, like current President Tsai Ing-wen, rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims; both say only the island's people can decide their future. Lai, now vice president, will be inaugurated on May 20.

Speaking to reporters at parliament, Taiwan National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Ming-yen said maintaining stability in the Taiwan Strait was in the interests of everyone in the international community, including China.

China is currently using a carrot-and-stick approach toward Taiwan, hoping to influence the incoming government's China policy, added Tsai, who shares a common family name with the president but is not related to her.

"What needs special attention is that following May 20, from June to November, is when the Chinese Communists hold their regular military drills," he said. "Whether the Chinese Communists use this hot season as an excuse to carry out some military drills to further pressure Taiwan is a key point the National Security Bureau is focusing on."

China's defence ministry did not answer calls seeking comment outside of office hours on Wednesday, the start of the Labour Day holiday.

China's military has during the past four years massively increased its activities around Taiwan.

NIGHTTIME PATROLS

Taking lawmaker questions, Tsai said China had been observed three times so far this year carrying out "joint combat readiness patrols" at night, something he described as a new development.

"In addition, inflight refuelling aircraft are being used during the joint combat readiness patrols" to extend the time combat aircraft can remain in the air, Tsai said.

Landing ships and minesweepers have also been observed joining these patrols, he added.

"These are new patterns for this year."

Taiwan's defence ministry last reported a Chinese combat readiness patrol, where warships and warplanes operate together in the skies and waters near Taiwan, on Saturday.

In 2022, China carried out major war games near Taiwan after a visit to Taipei by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and again last year after President Tsai met then-House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on a stopover in California.

Taiwan-based security sources have repeatedly warned China could show their displeasure with Lai using the military.

Since Lai's January election victory, China has kept up a steady stream of pressure on Taiwan, including coast guard patrols near a group of Taiwanese-controlled islands that sit next to the Chinese coast, and opening new air routes in the Taiwan Strait that Taipei says threaten aviation safety.

But Beijing has also offered to resume, albeit in limited form, Chinese tourism to Taiwan, a proposal the government in Taipei is still considering, as it wants a full resumption of visits by Chinese tourists.

China – Xinjiang

Mosques demolished, texts censored: How China is repressing Muslims in Xinjiang

28 May 2024, [Times of India](#)

NEW DELHI: The Chinese government's crackdown on the Islamic faith, particularly among the Uyghur Muslim population in Xinjiang, has garnered significant international attention and condemnation due to human rights abuses and allegations of cultural genocide.

In a recent investigation, UK's Sky News has shed light on China's increasing control over Islamic practices within the country.

The report underscores the mounting restrictions and surveillance faced by Muslims, particularly in regions with significant Islamic populations.

One poignant scene described in the report occurs in a cold, dusty part of central China, where a local Muslim leader stands alone in the courtyard of a small mosque. "Religion is dying," he laments, highlighting the severe constraints imposed by the Chinese government on religious activities.

The report details how the Chinese authorities have intensified efforts to monitor and restrict Islamic practices, including demolishing mosques, banning religious attire, and censoring Islamic texts. This crackdown is part of a broader campaign to align religious practices with the state's ideology and to curb any potential dissent.

The Chinese authorities have taken numerous steps to curb the practice of Islam:

Demolition of mosques: Many mosques have been demolished, particularly those that do not conform to the government's architectural standards or those deemed too conspicuous.

Banning religious attire: Traditional Islamic attire, such as headscarves and long beards, has been banned in certain areas. This is part of an effort to assimilate Muslims into the broader Han Chinese culture.

Censoring Islamic texts: The government has also censored Islamic texts, removing any content that could be perceived as promoting extremism or

dissent. This includes altering the Quran and other religious literature to fit the state's narrative.

Surveillance and Repression

The report highlights the extensive surveillance network that monitors Muslim communities. High-tech surveillance systems, including facial recognition cameras, are prevalent in areas like Xinjiang, home to a significant Uyghur Muslim population. These systems track individuals' movements and behaviors, ensuring strict compliance with the government's regulations.

Impact on daily life

The restrictions have permeated all aspects of daily life for Muslims in China. Religious education for children has been heavily regulated, with many religious schools being shut down. Additionally, community leaders and imams are required to attend government-run re-education programs to ensure they propagate state-approved messages, the Sky News report said.

The international community has responded with concern over China's treatment of its Muslim population. Human rights organizations have condemned the actions, calling for greater transparency and respect for religious freedoms. The Chinese government, however, maintains that these measures are necessary to combat extremism and ensure national security.

In Xinjiang, China's security chief calls for 'normalisation of counterterrorism'

27 May 2024, [SCMP](#)

China's top security official Chen Wenqing has called for the "normalisation" of counterterrorism efforts in Xinjiang, where a crackdown on extremism among Uygurs and other Muslim minorities has been under way for years.

During a visit to the far western region from Wednesday to Sunday, Chen said authorities must "insist on cracking down on terrorist crimes in accordance with the law and make efforts to promote the normalisation of counterterrorism", state news agency Xinhua reported on Sunday.

Chen is a member of the Communist Party's elite decision-making body the Politburo, and secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, which oversees the country's law enforcement agencies.

In Xinjiang, Chen visited the region's capital, Urumqi, as well as Kashgar and the Kazakh prefecture of Ili. He urged local officials to "always give top priority to maintaining social stability" and to "accurately prevent and crack down on violent terrorist crimes", according to Xinhua.

The report said Chen visited Khorgos, a town in Ili on the border with Kazakhstan, and the Tashkurgan Tajik autonomous county in the region's southwest, which borders Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. He told law enforcement officials to "strongly defend border security".

A day after the visit, the Ministry of Public Security said in a statement on Monday that China had not seen a terrorist attack in more than seven years.

Decades of ethnic tensions and unrest in Xinjiang prompted Beijing to impose measures in 2016 that it said were aimed at cracking down on terrorist attacks. But the measures have led to allegations of widespread human rights abuses, including that at least 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities were held in mass internment camps. Beijing denies the claims and has said the centres were for "vocational training".

Xinjiang authorities have claimed an "overwhelming victory" over terrorist attacks, but security remains a major concern.

In its annual work report in January, the Xinjiang government stressed that the region would maintain a "tough stance" to safeguard social stability, meaning combating terrorism.

A white paper released by the State Council Information Office the same month praised Xinjiang's anti-terrorism measures as improvements in China's legal system over the past decade.

It highlighted Xinjiang's de-radicalisation regulations, introduced in 2017 and revised in 2018, which list behaviours considered extremist by the authorities including growing an "abnormal" beard and wearing a veil.

In August, President Xi Jinping said "social stability" was a top priority for the region's authorities when he visited Xinjiang, and he called for more efforts to combat terrorism and religious extremism, as well as stressing the need for economic development.

In recent years, the Xinjiang government has tried to improve its image by touting economic development and inviting foreign media on carefully choreographed tours to promote the region.

A decade of uncertainty: the fate of detained Uyghur refugees in Thailand

12 May, 2024, [VOA](#)

Dozens of Uyghurs who fled China a decade ago and have been indefinitely detained in Thailand are getting conflicting explanations from the U.N. refugee agency and Thai authorities on why their cases are still in limbo.

"If we speak out about our condition or our situation here, it will attract media attention, the world will know, Thai authorities will find out. Then our situation

here will worsen, and we might lose all communication with the outside world," said one detainee in a rare interview with VOA.

"That's why we refrain from speaking out for the time being," added the man, asking to be identified only as Ahmad.

Ahmad said Uyghur detainees do not have phones to communicate with the outside world but said they sometimes can borrow a phone from a new detainee. That's how Ahmad and others were able to communicate with VOA.

Rights organizations accuse Beijing of repressive policies that amount to human rights violations and even genocide against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, which China has repeatedly denied.

Ahmad said Uyghurs who escaped China in 2014 with the help of traffickers crossed into Thailand and were arrested by Thai authorities for illegally crossing the border. They have been held in immigration detention since then.

"We fled repression in China," Ahmad said. He added that he and other Uyghurs in Thai detention feel they have been "abandoned" by the world over the past decade.

Over the years, there have been several news reports on the plight of the Uyghurs in Thai detention, but so far, their situation has stayed the same.

"The world has heard our appeals, but the rules of the United Nations and other [international] organizations have not yet worked in our favor," he said.

UNHCR vs. Thai authorities

Earlier this month, an investigation by The New Humanitarian news agency obtained documents that showed the Thai government in 2020 petitioned the U.N. refugee agency, or UNHCR, "to play a more active role in resolving the Uyghurs' indefinite detention, and that agency staff advised against doing this."

UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch stated that due to confidentiality constraints and a desire not to undermine efforts to resolve this sensitive matter, the UNHCR cannot publicly elaborate on its approach to addressing the situation.

"Despite requests, however, at no stage have we been permitted to access the group or engage with them for the purpose of facilitating solutions. We are engaged in close discussions with the Thai authorities," Baloch told VOA in an email. "UNHCR has and continues to proactively raise this issue with the Thai authorities."

Thailand has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and does not have laws that give refugees legal status, but according to the UNHCR, Thailand hosts 82,400 refugees from Myanmar in temporary shelters.

Life in detention

A rights activist familiar with the situation in Bangkok, who requested anonymity due to fear of reprisals from Thai authorities, said 43 Uyghurs are being detained at the Suan Phlu Immigration Detention Center in

Bangkok. Additionally, five Uyghurs who attempted to escape immigration detention and were later arrested are imprisoned in Thailand.

"At least five to six people live in a room measuring four meters wide and eight meters long," the activist said. "There are around 25 rooms on each floor of the five-story detention building, with one toilet and shower in each room," and the detainees sleep on the floor.

The activist said when the Uyghurs first crossed the border into Thailand 10 years ago, there were more than 350 of them.

"Initially, with humanitarian assistance from Turkey, over 170 women and children were taken to Turkey and settled in the city of Kayseri in 2015," the activist told VOA. "Subsequently, Thai authorities handed 109 mostly male Uyghur refugees to China weeks later," leaving more than 50 Uyghurs still awaiting their fate in Thai detention.

"After Thai authorities deported 109 Uyghurs to China, Uyghurs in Turkey protested and stormed the Thai consulate in Istanbul, which made Thai authorities very uncomfortable with the Uyghur issue," he said. "Since then, Thailand has been reluctant to deal with the rest of the Uyghur refugees."

At the time of publication, Thai officials had not responded to numerous requests for comment from VOA.

Last year, Human Rights Watch reported that two Uyghur refugees in their 40s died while in Thai immigration detention and called on Thailand to "end the indefinite detention" of Uyghur asylum seekers from China.

According to a February letter to Thai authorities from a group of United Nations special rapporteurs, the deaths of two Uyghur refugees last year brought the total number of Uyghur deaths in Thai immigration detention centers to five, including two minors.

"We would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the detention conditions of 43 Uyghur migrant individuals that may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or even torture," the letter said.

'Significant' Volume of Xinjiang Cotton Mislabeled as US or Brazilian

10 May, 2024, [Sourcing Journal](#), Jasmin Malik Chua

A recent report reveals that a significant amount of cotton from Xinjiang is being falsely labeled as American or Brazilian. Despite bans on Xinjiang cotton due to forced labor concerns, 19% of more than 820 tested samples in the United States contained Xinjiang cotton, highlighting ongoing struggles to combat forced labor in global supply chains. The study,

conducted by Applied DNA Sciences, used isotopic testing to identify the mislabeled cotton. Concerns persist about Xinjiang cotton's presence in global trade, prompting calls for increased testing and collaboration to address human rights and regulatory issues.

Jailed Uyghur official highlights Chinese-Uyghur land disputes

10 May, 2024, [RFA](#)

A former Uyghur government official in Xinjiang, China, received a 10-year prison sentence for siding with local farmers who refused to surrender their farms to Chinese developers without adequate compensation, Radio Free Asia recently reported. RFA said this case reflects broader disputes over land rights amid allegations of coercion by Chinese developers.

INTERVIEW: Lawyer debunks China's historical narrative of control over Xinjiang

08 May, 2024, [RFA](#), Alim Seytoff

In an interview with Radio Free Asia, international lawyer and inner Asia expert Michael van Walt disputed China's claim over Xinjiang, using history as proof. He said Xinjiang, which Uyghurs call East Turkistan, has not been continuously under Chinese rule for 2,000 years, rejecting China's unified state narrative. Van Walt described Beijing's territorial claims as colonialism.

Dozens of Uyghur refugees who fled China 10 years ago remain detained in Thailand and face uncertain futures amid conflicting explanations from Thai authorities and the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR. One activist told VOA about dire living conditions and deaths in detention, urging an end to indefinite incarceration and swift international action. Rights organizations accuse Beijing of repressive policies against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, which China has repeatedly denied.

1 in 26 Uyghurs jailed, accounting 1/3 of China's prison population: Uyghur Human Rights Project report

04 May 2024, [ANI](#)

An annual report by a Uyghur advocacy group revealed ongoing persecution in China's far-western Xinjiang province, with an estimated 1 in 26 Uyghurs jailed, accounting for a third of China's prison population, 3.5 times the world's highest rate of imprisonment. A new Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) report indicates that Uyghurs, Turkic and other non-Han peoples in the Uyghur Region account for more than a third (34 per cent) of China's estimated prison

population, despite making up only one per cent of China's overall population. When accounting for the total regional population, the Uyghur region has the highest prison rate in the world at an estimated 2,234 per 100,000.

A UHRP Insights column by Ben Carrdus, UHRP Senior Researcher, and Peter Irwin, UHRP Associate Director for Research & Advocacy suggests that Uyghurs, Turkic and other non-Han peoples in the region are imprisoned at a rate of 3,814 people per 100,000. In comparison, Han people throughout China are estimated to be imprisoned at a rate of 80 per 100,000. In other words, Uyghurs and other non-Han people in the Uyghur Region are estimated to be imprisoned at just over 47 times the rate of Han people.

"The actual situation in Xinjiang may even be worse, said UHRP senior researcher Ben Carrdus, who wrote the report."

The findings are based on information from Xinjiang High People's Procuratorate annual reports, which prosecutes criminal defendants, as well as data from the website of China's Ministry of Justice. The report estimates that a total of 578,500 Uyghurs or other Turkic people were in jail as of 2022. The report indicates that Uyghurs experience higher death rates in prison than other ethnic groups in China, though death penalty figures are not publicly available because they are considered a state secret. The UHRP believes Uyghurs receive severe sentences, such as at least 10 years in prison for minor actions like studying the Quran or teaching it to children, so that the rate of death sentences among them may be higher.

The situation of Uyghur persecution in China is deeply concerning and has drawn international attention. The Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority group primarily located in the Xinjiang region of China. Reports and testimonies from various sources, including human rights organisations, indicate widespread human rights abuses and repression targeting the Uyghur population. These abuses include arbitrary detention in internment camps, forced labour, cultural and religious suppression, mass surveillance, and torture. The Chinese government has consistently denied allegations of mistreatment, instead portraying its actions as counter-terrorism measures aimed at maintaining stability and security in the region. The international community has called for an independent investigation into the situation in Xinjiang, however, the issue remains complex due to China's geopolitical influence. (ANI)

China: Phone Search Program Tramples Uyghur Rights

04 May, 2024, [Human Rights Watch](#)

Police in the Xinjiang region of [China](#) rely on a master list of 50,000 multimedia files they deem "violent and terrorist" to flag Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim residents for interrogation, Human Rights Watch said today. A Human Rights Watch forensic investigation into the metadata of this list found that during 9 months from 2017 to 2018, police conducted nearly 11 million searches of a total of 1.2 million mobile phones in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital city of 3.5 million residents. Xinjiang's automated police mass surveillance systems enabled this phone search.

"The Chinese government's abusive use of surveillance technology in Xinjiang means that Uyghurs who simply store the Quran on their phone may trigger a police interrogation," said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. "Concerned governments should identify the technology companies involved in this mass surveillance and social control industry and take appropriate action to end their involvement."

Human Rights Watch has repeatedly raised concerns about China's approach to countering acts it calls "terrorism" and "extremism." China's counterterrorism law defines "terrorism" and "extremism" in an overly broad and vague manner that facilitates prosecutions, deprivation of liberty, and other restrictions for acts that do not intend to cause death or serious physical harm for political, religious, or ideological aims.

The Human Rights Watch searches found a total over 1,000 unique files on about 1,400 Urumqi residents' phones that matched those on the police master list. The analysis of these matched files revealed that over half of them – 57 percent – appear to be common Islamic religious materials, including readings of every *surah* (chapter) of the Quran, the central religious text of Islam.

The list is part of a large database (52GB) of over 1,600 data tables from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region leaked to the [United States](#) media organization the Intercept in 2019. The Intercept [reported](#) that Urumqi police conducted surveillance and arrests from 2015 to 2019 based on texts of police reports that were part of this database.

The master list of multimedia files that Human Rights Watch examined is located in a different part of the same database and has not been previously reported on or analyzed. Some of the numbers in this reporting have been rounded up so that the authorities cannot identify the source of the leak.

The analysis of the metadata of this master list reveals photo, audio, and video files that contain violent

content, but also other material that has no evident connection to violence. The media files contain materials that:

- Are violent or gruesome, including content depicting beheadings or forms of torture that appear to have been carried out by armed groups such as Mexican and other drug cartels, Chechen fighters, or the Islamic State (ISIS);
- Involve foreign organizations, including the East Turkistan Independence Movement, which the Chinese government labels a separatist group; the World Uyghur Congress, a group run by Uyghur exiles; and a Uyghur-language broadcasts by Radio Free Asia, a US government-funded media outlet;
- Contain pro-democracy audiovisual content such as the “Gate of Heavenly Peace,” a documentary about the Chinese government’s Tiananmen Square massacre of student-led protests in 1989;
- Mention the names of cities in Syria, including documentaries about Syrian history and two 2015 episodes of a popular Chinese-language travel show, “On the Road” (侣行), that include references to the Syrian conflict; Human Rights Watch also found another related list in the database that has the same MD5 hashes – the unique signature of these files. This list apparently contains the search result of the Jingwang Weishi app, a surveillance application. The search results spanned 9 months between 2017 and 2018. This data shows the app surreptitiously conducted nearly 11 million searches involving a total of 1.2 million phones and found a cumulative total of 11,000 matches of over 1,000 different files on 1,400 phones.

The Human Rights Watch analysis of the file names and the police's own labeling, or coding, of the approximately 1,000 files found that:

- 57 percent of the 1,000 files are common religious materials, including readings of every chapter (surah) of the Quran.
- Nearly 9 percent of the matched files include violent content, including crimes committed by members of the Islamic State (ISIS);
- 4 percent of the matched files include calls for violence, for example by urging “jihad;”
- 28 percent of the matched files cannot be identified based on the available information alone (for example, the file name and police labels).

Human Rights Watch further analyzed those 1,400 phones that were flagged by police:

- Nearly 42 percent of phones contained violent or gruesome material;
- 12 percent of phones contained common Islamic religious material;
- 6 percent of phones contained files that are overtly political, such as an anthem to “East Turkistan” – the name some Turkic Muslims use to refer to the region that the Chinese government calls “Xinjiang” – videos about the Syrian war, and pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong;
- 4 percent of phones contained files that call for violence, such as “jihad;”
- 48 percent of phones contained files that Human Rights Watch could not identify.

International law obligates governments to define criminal offenses precisely and to respect the rights to freedom of expression and thought, including holding views considered offensive. Criminalizing mere possession of material deemed extremist even if the accused has no intent to use it to cause harm to others is a particularly severe threat to freedom of belief, privacy, and expression. These rights are guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China has signed but not ratified.

The United Nations Human Rights Council should urgently establish an independent, international investigation into grave rights violations and the suppression of fundamental freedoms in Xinjiang by the Chinese government against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, Human Rights Watch said. An unprecedented number of UN independent human rights experts and hundreds of nongovernmental organizations from around the world have recommended such action.

“The Chinese government outrageously yet dangerously conflates Islam with violent extremism to justify its abhorrent abuses against Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang,” Wang said. “The UN Human Rights Council should take long overdue action by investigating Chinese government abuses in Xinjiang and beyond.”

For additional details about the situation and findings, please see below.

Abuses in Xinjiang and the Role of Mass Surveillance

The Chinese government’s Counterterrorism Law does not comport with international human rights standards and has been frequently abused.

In May 2014, the Chinese government began the “Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism” (严厉打击暴力恐怖活动专项行动) in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. Since 2017, this abusive campaign, which conflates the peaceful religious and cultural expressions of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims with terrorism, has significantly escalated.

During this period, Human Rights Watch has documented mass arbitrary detention, pervasive surveillance, and attempts at cultural and religious erasure that amount to crimes against humanity across the region. A groundbreaking 2022 report by the UN human rights office similarly found that these crimes “may constitute ... crimes against humanity.”

What is central to these crimes is the use of new technologies, including the mass collection of biometric data from Turkic Muslims, artificial intelligence, policing apps, and big-data systems to monitor the entire population. These systems flag people as potentially “untrustworthy” using broad and arbitrary criteria, such as using too much electricity, and send their names to the police. The police then interrogate and often detain them in so-called political education camps or sentence them to prison terms following perfunctory, closed trials without access to lawyers. As of September 2022, an estimated half-million people remained in prison following the crackdown. Since 2017, Human Rights Watch and other organizations have uncovered many of these systems, but the precise relationships among them remain unclear. This database is part of a police surveillance system named iTap, built for the Urumqi Police Department by the Chinese surveillance tech company Landasoft (蓝灯), according to the Intercept. Landasoft’s chief executive officer claimed that the company wanted to be the “Chinese version of Palantir,” the US company that is providing profiling and analytic capabilities to law enforcement and intelligence agencies globally.

With massive amounts of information on each individual, and the integration of their contacts, location, vehicle information, financial accounts and internet accounts – all without their consent – the software allows the police to monitor every resident of Urumqi, including uncovering people’s hidden relationships through network analysis.

This research has shown for the first time that iTap is receiving data from the Jingwang Weishi and Fengcai apps. Human Rights Watch wrote to Landasoft on April 4 about this database but has not received a response. Various media have increasingly reported that police are conducting abusive checks on people’s phones throughout China, such as to find out who carried out the December 2022 “white paper” protests – where individuals used blank signs to signal opposition to the government’s strict Covid-19 measures or the Chinese Communist Party’s authoritarian rule. The government has also conducted such checks in Tibetan areas to pursue the government’s aggressive assimilationist policies. In these cases, though, it appears that the police are conducting manual checks, swiping through people’s phones.

The Chinese government has also increasingly required people throughout China to install various government and Communist Party apps purportedly for fighting online fraud, controlling the Covid pandemic, and spreading its ideology. Many of these apps collect copious amounts of personal data, including location information, health data, and other identifying information such as national ID numbers, with little transparency on how the data is used and stored.

At the same time, Chinese authorities have also made app stores remove apps they dislike, such as censorship circumvention apps, encryption apps, and religious apps, including a prominent Quran app used by millions of people around the world.

Methodology: Authenticating the Leaked Database

The master list that Human Rights Watch found in the leaked database contains a list of about 50,000 rows as of March 2018, with each entry containing metadata such as filename, size, filename extension (such as mp3) and the file’s MD5 hash – a unique signature of the file the police use to identify files on residents’ phones.

Human Rights Watch has found that the MD5 hashes in this list match those in lists previously reported by two other organizations, which separately conducted investigations into two of Xinjiang’s policing apps that the authorities used during crackdowns:

- In February 2018, the US-based organization Open Technology Fund (OTF) reverse engineered [Jingwang Weishi](#) (净网卫士), an app that Urumqi police forced local residents to install. The Open Technology Fund found that in addition to extracting the phone’s various identifying information such as its brand and model, IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity), IMSI (International Mobile Subscriber Identity), and MAC (Media Access Control) address and phone number, the app also searches the target’s phone against a list of MD5 hashes and automatically reports any files deemed “dangerous” to the authorities.
- In July 2019, the New York Times reverse engineering efforts revealed another list of MD5 hashes extracted from another app named Fengcai, which the Xinjiang police routinely installed on travelers’ phones at border crossings. This list contained 73,314 unique MD5 hashes. The vast majority of the hashes that Human Rights Watch examined can also be found in this list, which suggests that in the span of one year, between 2018 and 2019, Xinjiang police had added over 21,000 items to the list of “violent and terrorist” multimedia files. Only 29 files in the

Human Rights Watch list were not in the list that the New York Times analyzed.

The fact that this same list of 50,000 files is included in two distinct Xinjiang-specific policing apps, as well as in this leaked database, suggests that the Xinjiang authorities use this same list as a master list to determine whether a resident has what they deemed to be “violent and terrorist files” on their device.

In regards to the related list in the leaked database that has the same MD5 hashes as the master list, Human Rights Watch determined that it contains the search results of the Jingwang Weishi app based on the fact that its format perfectly matched the output format described in Open Tech Fund’s reverse engineering of that app. The search results contain the unique identifying information— IMEI, IMSI, MAC addresses – of every phone searched and, if found, a record of the name, size and file type of the “violent and terrorist” file.

Punishing the Possession of ‘Extremist’ Material

Many of the people arbitrarily detained and imprisoned in Xinjiang were rounded up for possessing “violent” or “terrorist” multimedia materials, according to information in leaked official lists of such individual and previous Human Rights Watch interviews with family members and former detainees.

A leaked list of over 2,000 detainees held in a political education camp from Aksu prefecture that Human Rights Watch obtained in 2018 showed that about 10 percent (over 200) of the people on the list were being held for “terrorism” or “extremism” because they had downloaded or shared such “violent and terrorist” multimedia content, or for being related to someone who had downloaded or shared such content.

In 2018, a Uyghur interviewee told Human Rights Watch that one of his fellow detainees held in a police detention center cell during the crackdowns was a 60-year-old man who had sent an audio of an Islamic religious teaching to his daughter, who passed it to a friend. The father and daughter received six-year and three-year prison sentences, respectively, and alleged that detainees in these facilities were tortured.

Uyghurs have highest rate of imprisonment in world: report

02 May 2024, [RFA](#), Irade

An estimated 1 in 26 Uyghurs have been jailed, accounting for a third of China’s prison population.

An estimated one in 26 Uyghurs in China’s far-western Xinjiang region are behind bars, the world’s highest rate of incarceration, according to a report by a Uyghur advocacy group.

Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples there are imprisoned at an estimated rate of 3,814 per 100,000

people — 47 times higher than China’s overall rate of 80 per 100,000, the group said.

That’s also more than three times higher than in El Salvador, which has the world’s highest known incarceration rate at 1,086 per 100,000 people, according to the April 25 report by the Uyghur Human Right Project, or UHRP.

All told, 578,500 Uyghurs or other Turkic people were in jail as of 2022, the group estimates. That’s just over one-third of China’s total prison population, even though they comprise only 1% of China’s overall population. That figure is likely the same or higher today, the group says.

A prominent imprisoned Uyghur is Rahile Dawut, a Uyghur folklore expert and ethnographer convicted in December 2018 for “splittism” and sentenced to life in prison.



Rahile Dawut poses for a photo in Urumqi, capital of northwestern China’s Xinjiang region, in August 2006. Dawut, a prominent Uyghur scholar specializing in Uyghur folklore and traditions, was sentenced to life in prison on the charge of ‘splittism.’ (Lisa Ross via AP)

Another example is Gulshan Abbas, a retired Uyghur doctor and the sister of Rushan Abbas, a former Radio Free Asia employee and current executive director of Campaign for Uyghurs. She was sentenced to a lengthy prison term on “terrorism” charges after she disappeared along with another relative in September 2018.

The U.S. State Department has said that Dawut and other Uyghur intellectuals have been unfairly imprisoned for their work to protect and preserve Uyghur culture and traditions.

The report’s findings are based on data from annual reports from the Xinjiang High People’s Procuratorate — which prosecutes criminal defendants — and information published on the website of China’s Ministry of Justice, covering the period 2017-2022. During that period, one in every 26 Uyghurs or members of other Turkic ethnicities in Xinjiang was incarcerated.

Many of those imprisoned have been convicted of crimes related to practicing Islam, such as studying the Quran when they were young or teaching it to others.

Reality may be worse

The actual situation in Xinjiang may even be worse, said UHRP senior researcher Ben Carrdus, who wrote the report.

"These are just people who have been put in prison. It doesn't include people who might still be in internment camps," he told Radio Free Asia, referring to the estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and others arbitrarily detained in what the Chinese government said were vocational training centers.

The camps were, in fact, places where Uyghurs were subjected to political indoctrination and severe human rights abuses, including torture, the forced sterilization of woman and forced labor.

China claims that the camps have been closed.

When China says it's ruled by law, it actually means that the law is whatever the Chinese Communist Party wants it to be, Carrdus said.

"Using laws doesn't mean they are using justice. What they've done is use the instruments against the Uyghur people," he said. "Thousands and thousands of people have been sentenced to prison mostly through the courts where China has used very unjust rules."

The report indicates that Uyghurs experience higher death rates in prison than other ethnic groups in China, though death penalty figures are not publicly available because they are considered a state secret.

The UHRP believes Uyghurs receive severe sentences, such as at least 10 years in prison for minor actions like studying the Quran or teaching it to children, so that the rate of death sentences among them may be higher.

John Kamm, executive director of the U.S.-based human rights group The Dui Hua Foundation, emphasized the importance of highlighting the number of Uyghurs in prison to attract the attention of international media and governments in hope that they will push for their release.

Carrdus urged the international community not to forget the Uyghurs.

"I can say that with 100% confidence, things are not getting better," he said, adding that although authorities in Xinjiang have been closing down the internment camps, they've been sending Uyghurs to prisons instead.

US labor official calls on companies to exit China's Xinjiang

01 May 2024, [Reuters](#)

WASHINGTON, April 30 (Reuters) - International companies cannot responsibly operate in Xinjiang and should leave the western Chinese region due to forced

labor concerns, a U.S. Labor Department official said on Tuesday.

The U.S. government says Chinese officials continue to commit genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and rights groups have pressured Western companies there to audit their operations over forced labor concerns.

China's government vehemently denies allegations of abuses.

Thea Lee, deputy undersecretary for international affairs at the Labor Department, told a U.S. congressional hearing that Beijing had made it "essentially illegal" to conduct independent human rights audits in Xinjiang.

"If it is impossible to do that, then the only responsible thing to do is not to operate in that atmosphere," Lee told the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, without naming individual companies.

China's embassy in Washington said in an emailed statement that the allegations of forced labor were "nothing but a lie concocted by the U.S. side in an attempt to wantonly suppress Chinese enterprises."

Chinese officials have acknowledged "vocational training centers," in Xinjiang, but say were intended to curb terrorism, separatism and religious radicalism. They have also said the "Sinicisation" of Islam in the country is inevitable.

On Feb. 9, German chemicals giant BASF (BASFn.DE), opens new tab said it would sell its stakes in two joint ventures in Xinjiang, after rights groups documented abuses including forced labor in detention camps.

Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE), opens new tab too has said it was in talks with its joint venture partner in China over the future direction of its business activities in the region.

Beijing in 2017 launched a harsh security crackdown in Xinjiang. Some experts say alleged mass internment of Uyghurs peaked in 2018, but that abuses have continued with labor transfers becoming more prominent.

Still, China's government has sought to make Xinjiang a heavy industry hub, and it is important for the processing of aluminum and for producing auto parts, solar components and other goods that make their way into global supply chains.

The U.S. Congress has passed laws to pressure China over its Xinjiang policies, including the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act that bars imports from the region. The Department of Labor does not set rules on how U.S. companies can operate in China.

Lee said China's transfer of Uyghur laborers to other parts of the country had been growing, but that it was difficult to verify the extent of the program.

"I have not seen an effective way to address the challenges of monitoring the labor transfer program of workers outside of Xinjiang," Lee said.

She said data on Chinese websites is periodically removed, and that there is no free access to workplaces to assess workers' origins.

China and US

The Chinese Communist Party is infiltrating the US from the inside

24 May 2024, The Hill, [Anouk Wear](#)

At the start of May, three men were arrested and charged in the United Kingdom for allegedly violating the UK's 2023 National Security Act by assisting Hong Kong's intelligence service and engaging in foreign interference on behalf of Hong Kong.

They are Bill Yuen, Peter Wai and Matthew Trickett, British and Hong Kong nationals aged 37-63. They are accused of surveillance, harassment and even attempting to break into a home of Hong Kong people who are settled in the UK under the BN(O) Visa Scheme, which has enabled more than 210,000 Hong Kongers to apply to move to the UK and start the path to British citizenship.

Bill Yuen was a manager at the London Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO), which is Hong Kong's representative office in the UK. He is accused of acting on behalf of the London HKETO in hiring Wai and Trickett to target Hong Kong pro-democracy activists in the UK. Bank records show transfers from the London HKETO to Wai's security firm. Trickett was later found dead; the police state "[it] is currently being treated as unexplained. The case is ongoing.

There are 14 HKETOs around the world, representing Hong Kong with an annual budget of HK\$601.5 million (\$76.90 million USD) to engage in commercial relations, public relations and investment promotions. Many of them have diplomatic privileges and immunities, including three such offices in the U.S.

Under its high degree of autonomy, Hong Kong was granted overseas representative offices, which are distinct from Chinese embassies and consulates around the world. In the U.S., there are HKETOs in Washington, D.C., New York City and San Francisco in addition to other Chinese and Hong Kong government-affiliated cultural and business institutions.

However, Hong Kong is beginning to lose this autonomy. This means that the Chinese Communist Party is increasingly controlling Hong Kong, and that Hong Kong's overseas representative offices, the HKETOs, are increasingly under their direct control as well.

Since 2019, Beijing has aggressively cracked down on Hong Kong by ordering the brutal suppression of pro-democracy protests, imposing a national security law and introducing other new reforms, regulations and

policies that assert their direct oversight. In just a few years, Hong Kong has morphed from one of Asia's freest cities to another Chinese Communist Party-controlled territory.

Hong Kong people have relentlessly fought for democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms. We now have political prisoners behind bars, many of whom are awaiting or going through trials today. Newspapers have been shut down, editors are on trial, over 100 civil society organizations have disbanded and the list goes on. Just today, in the Hong Kong 47 case — the biggest national security law case since the law was imposed in 2020 — former and aspiring legislators were found guilty of violating the law for organizing peaceful "unofficial" election primaries. They are punished for attempting to have democracy.

The U.S. has supported the Hong Kong people by introducing the 2019 Human Rights and Democracy Act and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, and by offering Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status for Hong Kong people in the U.S. This has not gone unnoticed, but it is simply not enough.

Today, the three HKETOs in the U.S. maintain their status, including diplomatic privileges and immunities. Even after the U.S. has acknowledged Hong Kong's diminishing autonomy, it has not reviewed the HKETOs. In other words, the Chinese Communist Party has two outposts with diplomatic privileges in Washington, D.C., New York City and San Francisco.

We can already see the UK government arresting and charging HKETO staff for national security violations and transnational repression. It is likely just a matter of time before the HKETOs and their staff in the U.S. commit the same violations, if they are not doing so already. The writing is on the wall.

Last week, HKETOs in the U.S. supported Hong Kong Financial Secretary Paul Chan's visit to the United States. Despite his key role in Hong Kong's leadership, he was not sanctioned by the U.S. This week, Secretary of Education Dr. Choi Yuk-lin will be visiting the U.S. as well, on a similar propaganda trip, no doubt with the HKETOs' support and with little criticism.

This is not only a threat to Hong Kong pro-democracy activists in the U.S. — some of whom have received arrest warrants and bounties from the Hong Kong government, and assurances from the U.S. — but also to U.S. national security.

Two of these activists spoke at the House Select Committee on the CCP's hearing last week, where they called for the review and closure of HKETOs in the U.S. They mentioned passing relevant legislation including the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act.

It is detrimental to U.S. national security to have so many Chinese Communist Party outposts (HKETOs in addition to the embassy and consulates) in the middle

of our cities, with diplomatic privileges and immunities including tax benefits and diplomatic staff. This is a threat to Hong Kongers who seek safety in the U.S., as well as Americans, and a gift to the Chinese Communist Party that we must stop granting as soon as possible.

The U.S. must review the status of the HKETOs and urge the Chinese Communist Party to grant Hong Kong its high degree of autonomy if they are to retain HKETOs under the current status — or strip them of their benefits.

China's gray zone social media war comes to America

18 May 2024, [Asia Times](#), Denny Roy

China employs various “gray zone” tactics – moderately aggressive actions that are not egregious enough to provoke conventional military retaliation – against multiple adversaries. One such tactic is deployed within the United States: undeclared influence operations through social media. Chinese government-linked activity has recently become more worrisome. Previously the principal danger was People's Republic of China (PRC) propaganda lulling the US into uncritical acceptance of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) foreign policy agenda. Now, the Chinese government is adding its weight to the forces tearing at America's national fabric from the inside.

Until recently, the main thrust of PRC-sponsored messaging aimed at Americans through social media was to cultivate a positive image of China and its current government and to promote Beijing's point of view on China-related controversies such as Taiwan's political relationship with China, Chinese treatment of Uighurs and Tibetans, and the restriction of civil liberties in Hong Kong.

The content of social media posts was similar to what Chinese diplomats based in the US were saying when they gave public speeches and TV interviews or wrote editorials for newspapers.

This contrasted with the messaging promoted by the Russian government, which generally disparaged the US government and amplified highly divisive US domestic social and political issues, suggesting the Russian goal was to foment political instability in America. This seemed consistent with the respective Russian and Chinese relationships with the US. Vladimir Putin wanted to hurt the United States. He held deep grudges over

- the loss of Russia's great power status in the 1990s;
- humiliating US treatment of Russia through the expansion of NATO and disregard for Russian sensibilities as America waged conflicts in Iraq, Libya and Syria;

- the publication in 2016 of the so-called Panama Papers, which Putin said was an attempt by the US government to embarrass him; and
- US sanctions against Russia for its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Putin likely would welcome an American fall into anarchy and economic collapse. China, on the other hand, needed Americans to continue buying Chinese goods, educating Chinese students and transferring cutting-edge technology to China. Hence the goal of Chinese strategic messaging was to defeat any threats to business as usual with the United States.

The attempt to foster positive US attitudes toward China has continued. During the 2022 election campaign in the United States, PRC-linked entities promulgated messaging supportive of China-friendly candidates in a few electoral races. TikTok has promoted short videos to millions of its users that support the PRC propaganda lines about Xinjiang and other controversial political issues.

But now there is an even darker aspect of PRC messaging.

The US director of national intelligence notes “growing [PRC] efforts to actively exploit perceived US societal divisions,” through which “the PRC aims to sow doubts about US leadership [and] undermine democracy.”

According to Clint Watts, general manager of Microsoft's Threat Analysis Center, “More recently, [PRC government] efforts have shifted to exploiting existing partisan divides in the US,” including “the Chinese actually going into US audience spaces, masquerading as Americans and posting inflammatory content around current events or social issues or political issues.”

A report by Microsoft published in April 2024 found efforts by the PRC to “spread conspiratorial narratives on multiple social media platforms.” Accounts that appear to be CCP-affiliated “post about divisive US domestic issues such as global warming, US border policies, drug use, immigration and racial tensions.”

As an example, these posts said the deadly August 2023 wildfires in Maui, Hawaii resulted from the US military testing a “weather weapon.” Chinese-linked accounts also published speculation that the US government caused the derailment of a train in Kentucky in November 2023 and was “hiding something” in the aftermath. Microsoft concluded that the apparent objective of such posts is “encouraging mistrust of and disillusionment with the US government.” In another report also published in April 2024, Microsoft's Threat Analysis Center assessed that Chinese government-sponsored social media activity “aims to destabilize” the US and other democracies.

The change in the content of PRC-promoted messaging in the social media that Americans

consume has two important drivers. The first was the coronavirus pandemic. Just before the virus began to severely impact the United States in early 2020, US President Donald Trump was praising the Chinese government for its counter-pandemic response and touting a bilateral agreement that was supposed to end the “trade war” and restore normalcy to US-China trade relations.

As US fatalities mounted, however, Trump blamed China for unleashing a “plague” on the US. The PRC government responded by ratcheting up its criticism of the US government.

Chinese officials and government-controlled media not only decried the botched management of the pandemic in the US but extended the critique to add the argument that America’s political system is broken and that the US does not deserve a role in global leadership. Heavier emphasis on these themes in PRC strategic communication became a new norm.

A second boost came from Russia’s expanded invasion of Ukraine that started in February 2022. The war pulled China into stronger diplomatic support for its “no limits” quasi-ally. This has led to closer alignment between Russian and Chinese propaganda messaging. The Chinese government, for example, repeats the Russian position that NATO is responsible for causing the war.

As the conflict in Ukraine has deepened the sense among the democracies of an increasingly dangerous authoritarian bloc, Russia and China are further incentivized to work to delegitimize US influence and the international appeal of the liberal political model that threatens both Xi Jinping and Putin.

Researchers have found large numbers of China-linked social media accounts spreading pro-Trump and anti-Biden messaging, suggesting that China prefers Trump over Biden as the next US president. For the Russian government, there is no question which of the two major party presidential candidates in the upcoming US election is preferable. Trump has consistently maintained a friendly and respectful stance toward Putin and often criticized US aid for Ukraine as well as the NATO alliance. For Beijing, however, the question is more complicated. Biden has major predictable downsides for the PRC. He would continue to frustrate Chinese desires for freer access to US markets and technology. The Biden administration maintained the Trump-era tariffs against Chinese imports and restricted China’s access to advanced technologies. Biden’s team has also repaired and strengthened US alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, obstructing PRC domination.

But Trump is a wild card for China. The Chinese like that he is transactional and seems to lack either a strategic or ideological vision demanding a US policy of what the Chinese would call “containment.” Trump is respectful toward Xi and has sometimes uncritically

absorbed CCP views such as “Korea actually used to be a part of China.”

On the other hand, Trump brought advisors into the White House during his first term who dramatically toughened US policy toward China. Trump himself has at times harshly criticized China, as during the pandemic. He recently said he might increase tariffs on Chinese imports into the US to over 60%. At his worst, Trump might be worse for China than Biden.

Has the top leadership in Beijing now decided that China’s interests are best served if America descended into chaos? That is unlikely given that CCP officials continue to emphasize that their wish is for Washington to stop worrying about national security and allow China maximum opportunity to extract wealth and know-how. But they also want Americans to feel less confident in promoting the liberal democratic model of governance worldwide. Chinese leaders want to fortify their country against demands for political liberalization.

This is part of the reason why the PRC government keeps harping on the importance of the “Bali consensus” in US-China relations. According to Beijing, this “consensus” is a list of five policy renunciations that Biden agreed to during his meeting with Xi in Bali in 2022, one of them his assurance that “the United States does not seek to change China’s system.” (There is no parallel list of policies that China renounces in the Chinese summary of the meeting, and the US official readout does not include a list of five US renunciations.)

That the Chinese government is involved in such a campaign is both ironic and expected.

It is ironic because Beijing so often and so strenuously insists that “China never interferes in the affairs of other countries.” PRC officials specifically deny that China ever has or ever will attempt to influence the US electoral process, saying the accusation indicates American “paranoia” and a penchant for “slinging mud at China to divert attention” from US governance failures. Yet a surreptitious Chinese attempt to subvert an adversary’s government is not surprising, because the Chinese government is itself obsessed with the danger of subversion. The 2013 internal PRC government memo Document No 9 summarizes the Xi regime’s fear of “Western anti-China forces” overthrowing China’s political system by smuggling in liberal ideas and values.

The document emphasizes that CCP authorities must “ensure that the media leadership is always firmly controlled by someone who maintains an identical ideology with the Party’s Central Committee” and “allow absolutely no opportunity or outlets for incorrect thinking or viewpoints to spread.”

PRC leaders and government-controlled media speak often of the threat posed by “color revolutions” and routinely blame “hostile foreign forces” or “black

hands" for causing unrest within China that actually results from discontent with Chinese colonization or CCP repression.

If the Chinese government thinks subversion from the outside is potentially effective, Beijing will not fail to employ the same tactic against its own adversaries.

The many broken promises from PRC officials, including Xi, to behave ethically in international affairs demonstrate bad faith and cynicism. To dissuade Beijing from continuing to meddle in American politics, a US response is justified.

As with other Chinese gray zone operations, however, hitting back is problematic. The PRC does not have real elections or open debate about domestic political issues, and the social media outlets that the PRC exploits to reach American audiences are banned in China.

A possible proportionate US response would be to target a weak spot of the ruling regime: its fear of losing legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese public.

Xi's government has already suffered a decrease in prestige because of widespread public pessimism about the government's ability to successfully manage China's economy, plus fresh bad memories of the government's counter-Covid policy, which included draconian lockdowns followed by acquiescence to a mass die-off.

In 2012, a New York Times article documented the immense wealth built up by family members of PRC Premier Wen Jiabao. The expose clearly jabbed a raw nerve in Zhongnanhai; the Chinese government scrambled to censor the story and discussion of it, officially called it false and later expelled a New York Times reporter as retaliation.

Current top-ranking Chinese leaders are similarly vulnerable to damaging revelations about their personal hypocrisy (such as, for example, sending their children to colleges in the United States) from a credible foreign source.

In normal times, the US could disregard Chinese social media influence operations as insignificant. Unfortunately, this Chinese push occurs at a time when US domestic politics are highly polarized, conspiracy theories are widely believed and procedures and institutions vital to the proper functioning of US democracy are under stress.

PRC interference reinforces harmful trends that already have momentum. Under such circumstances, this malign influencing activity might contribute to outcomes that not only would be bad for America but that even Beijing might regret.

US committee targets Georgia Tech's alleged ties to Chinese military linked research

10 May 2024, [Reuters](#), Michael Martina

A U.S. congressional committee on China has asked leading research university Georgia Institute of Technology to detail its collaboration with a Chinese university facing U.S. government restrictions due to its alleged ties to the country's military.

Georgia Tech partnered with China's northeastern Tianjin University on cutting edge technologies despite its documented ties to the People's Liberation Army (PLA), John Moolenaar, the new Republican chairman of the House of Representatives' select committee on China, wrote in a letter on Thursday to the U.S. school's president Angel Cabrera.

ut the Georgia Tech scientist who led the project defended the research, saying all the results were available to the public, that it had passed extensive legal reviews, and that only a small portion of the funding came from the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), which is heavily sponsored by the Pentagon.

The letter noted that Tianjin University and numerous affiliates had been added in 2020 to the Commerce Department's export restrictions list for actions contrary to U.S. national security, including trade secret theft and research collaboration to advance China's military.

"While Georgia Tech is now prohibited from exporting sensitive technologies to Tianjin University due to the Entity List's prohibitions, it has collaborated with Tianjin University and at least one other PLA-linked entity on developing sensitive technologies," Moolenaar said.

The Tianjin research center is affiliated with a Chinese company with subsidiaries that supply the PLA, the letter said.

A Georgia Tech press release, opens new tab from January said its researchers based in Atlanta and at the Tianjin International Center for Nanoparticles and Nanosystems had created the world's first functional semiconductor made from the nanomaterial, graphene, which it said could lead to a "paradigm shift" in electronics and yield faster computing.

The U.S. and China, in the midst of an intense geopolitical and scientific rivalry, both view semiconductors as a strategic industry with civilian and military uses, including quantum computing and advanced weapons systems.

A spokesperson from Georgia Tech said it welcomed the congressional inquiry, but that GTRI "does not have a collaboration, research partnerships, or provide any funding to Tianjin University."

"We are continuously monitoring the evolving relationships between China and the United States

and have implemented additional procedures and protocols to ensure security and maintain vigilance," Abigail Tumpey, the spokesperson told Reuters in an email.

In a published article, researchers credited financial support from GTRI, which counted the Defense Department and the U.S. military as customers for more than 90% of its research, opens new tab in fiscal year 2023, according to its latest annual report.

Moolenaar said Georgia Tech's collaboration with Tianjin University raised questions about its entity list compliance, and asked Cabrera to thoroughly disclose all of its joint work.

GTRI, Tianjin International Center for Nanoparticles and Nanosystems, and China's embassy in Washington did not respond immediately to Reuters' requests for comment.

Walter de Heer, the Georgia Tech professor who directed the program, told Reuters that only one Atlanta-based student had derived funding from GTRI for "nonproprietary" research related to the collaboration, which involved reproducing samples made in Tianjin.

He said deteriorating U.S.-China relations had derailed what had been a fruitful scientific endeavor with Chinese researchers. He said the research was still about a decade away from viable implementation, but that he had been unable to obtain U.S. government or private sector funding for follow-on research despite its promise.

"Everything I'm doing is public domain and open source," De Heer said.

The letter marks one of the first actions Moolenaar has taken as head of the bipartisan committee, a post he assumed in April after former Representative Mike Gallagher left Congress. No Democrats on the committee signed the letter.

The U.S. Justice Department under the Biden administration ended a Trump-era program called the China Initiative intended to combat Chinese espionage and intellectual property theft, but which critics had said spurred racial profiling toward Asian Americans and chilled scientific research.

Still, U.S. agencies and Congress have stepped up scrutiny of China's state-sponsored influence and technology transfers at American colleges and universities, concerned that Beijing uses open and federally funded research environments in the U.S. to circumvent export controls and other national security laws.

Various congressional bodies have recommended stricter China-related measures be added to the Higher Education Act of 1965 that requires U.S. colleges and universities that receive federal funding to disclose foreign ownership, control, gifts and contracts.

US confronts China over Volt Typhoon cyber espionage

09 May, 2024, [Reuters](#), Zeba Siddiqui

U.S. officials confronted the Chinese government in Beijing last month about a sweeping cyber espionage campaign through which Chinese hackers have broken in to dozens of American critical infrastructure organizations, a senior U.S. cyber official said.

Under the campaign named Volt Typhoon, American officials say China aims to leverage the access it has gained into U.S. organizations in the event of a war or conflict - a nod to escalating U.S.-China tensions over Taiwan. The Chinese have previously dismissed such allegations as groundless.



Brandon Wales, Acting Director Cybersecurity and Information Security Agency at U.S. Department of Homeland Security speaks before a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing in Washington, D.C., U.S., May 11, 2021. Tasos Katopodis/Pool via REUTERS/ File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

"We have had direct conversations with the Chinese about it," Nathaniel Fick, U.S. ambassador at large for cyberspace and digital policy, told Reuters in an interview at the RSA Conference in San Francisco on Tuesday.

"We raised it directly with the Chinese government at very senior levels, and made clear that this kind of behavior is dangerous, escalatory, and it's not acceptable," Fick said. He said he spoke to the Chinese officials with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was in China from April 24 to 26.

Asked how the Chinese responded, Fick said: "Same way they have to previous attributions ... They have said before that it's a ploy by various U.S. agencies to get more budget dollars."

The Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

The U.S. and several of its allies sounded the alarm on the campaign a year ago, warning that the Chinese

could launch cyberattacks against oil and gas pipelines, rail systems and other critical industries.

It is unclear how many U.S. organizations have been compromised by the hackers, but "any number we give you is likely an underestimate," said Brandon Wales, the executive director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, during a separate media briefing at the same conference.

"Chinese targeting of our critical infrastructure is broad-based," he added.

"It is against a broad swath of small and medium-sized companies that are potentially critical in individual supply chains, or just capable of causing societal panic in some place around the country."

House Oversight Seeks More Briefings on U.S. Government Response to China's 'Political Warfare'

06 May, 2024, [National Review](#), Jimmy Quinn

The House Oversight Committee is launching the second phase of its sweeping investigation into the U.S. government's response to the Chinese Communist Party's influence operations and malign behavior, NATIONAL REVIEW has exclusively learned.

Representative James Comer (R., Ky.), the panel's chairman, sent letters to nine federal agencies today requesting briefings on how each of them is grappling with threats posed by Beijing. Previously, the committee had sent a first tranche of letters to several other agencies in March, and it held a hearing last month focused on Chinese influence campaigns.

"China experts—with decades of experience in U.S. intelligence, national security, and the military—testified before the House Oversight Committee that the CCP's ambitions to influence the United States are destructive, dangerous, and jeopardize the safety of all Americans," Comer said today, in a statement issued to NATIONAL REVIEW.

"The Committee has a responsibility to ensure that the federal government is taking every action necessary to protect Americans from the CCP's ongoing political warfare," he said.

The letters today were addressed to the heads of the FBI, the State Department, the Commerce Department, the National Institutes of Health, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Department of Education, the Food and Drug Administration, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Department of Energy.

While each letter focused on a set of issues specific to each agency, they all warned that Beijing uses a united-front strategy to influence people who are not members of the party in order to induce them to do the regime's bidding.

The letters all also refer to a 1999 book written by People's Liberation Army officers, titled "Unrestricted

Warfare," which set out several tactics that China could use to "defeat America through political warfare," as Comer put it.

"As all Americans are targets of the PRC's warfare, federal agencies have responsibilities to (1) conduct outreach to citizens about the dangers they may encounter, and (2) provide appropriate incentives for Americans to proactively protect themselves—their communities, schools, houses of worship, businesses, finances, food, and more—from the threat," he wrote.

Comer attributes his understanding of these threats to three of the witnesses who appeared at the committee's first hearing on China: Robert Spalding, a retired brigadier general who served on the Trump-era National Security Council; Grant Newsham, a retired Marine colonel; and former CIA analyst Peter Mattis.

The letters raised a wide-ranging set of concerns, touching on political-influence operations, medical supply chains, intellectual-property theft, America's reliance on "cheap products made in China," Chinese government-backed activity on U.S. campuses, espionage targeting Department of Energy-run national laboratories, and more. They gave each agency one week to respond and set up a briefing addressing a specific set of questions.

In his letter to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Comer expressed particular concern about the party's efforts to cultivate influence among state and local officials. Because they focus on economic development and job growth, they are "soft targets for the CCP's political warfare.

He cited federal government warnings that the united-front system leverages its relationships with lower-level officials to pressure Washington. He also pointed to recent reports about CCP influence campaigns in Utah and to NATIONAL REVIEW's reporting about New York City mayor Eric Adams's ties to the Chinese regime.

Comer wrote that he wants to look at how the Commerce Department's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs can play a role in liaising with state and local officials to educate them about the risks of engagement with Chinese government entities.

At various points in some of the letters, Comer criticized the Biden administration's handling of China policy.

In a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Comer questioned Foggy Bottom's promotion of efforts to expand "people-to-people" ties with China, noting that the email account of U.S. ambassador to China Nicholas Burns was hacked by people based in the country. Comer wrote that the department should not promote tourism to China without acknowledging the risks posed by traveling there.

In a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland, he said that the Justice Department had “abruptly and mistakenly” ended its China Initiative.

US annual int’l religious freedom report red-flags China’s move to acculturate Tibetan Buddhism

03 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Releasing its 2024 report on May 1, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that China be again listed as a “country of particular concern”, along with 16 others, for reasons that include its move to assimilate Tibetan Buddhism to bring it in line with the prevailing values and policy priorities of the atheist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictatorship.

Speaking at a virtual launch of the report, the commission’s vice-chair, Frederick A Davie, has referred to the report’s recommendation that the US State Department designate China with the status of a “country of particular concern” (CPC) in terms of religious freedom violations.

The commission’s main findings highlight increased surveillance and security measures on Tibetan Buddhists, leading to restrictions on their peaceful religious activities. These were stated to have led to Tibetan Buddhists being arrested and imprisoned for engaging in such activities or for possessing materials related to the Dalai Lama. Some have been reported placed in “political re-education” camps to prevent self-immolation, with Tibetan Buddhist monks dying in prison.

The report’s Freedom of Religion or Belief Victims List, an online database, includes 93 Tibetans.

The Commission has identified the Chinese government’s multifaceted “Sinicization of religion” policy as the significant factor in the deterioration of religious freedom under which all major religious groups are forced to obey the CCP and its ideology and policies.

On the Sinicization-of-Tibet drive, which includes the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, the report criticizes China for its forced separation of over 1 million Tibetan children from their families by placing them in state-run boarding schools where the curriculum marginalizes the teaching and practice of Tibetan language and culture.

Besides, the report notes, some local authorities had banned parents from teaching religion to Tibetan children; that the government has controlled the ordination of Tibetan monks and reiterated its intent to interfere in the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation by appointing his successor.

As regards what entails the implementation of China’s Sinicization of religion policy, the report states: “Sinicization requires groups to follow the CCP’s

Marxist interpretation of religion, including by altering religious scriptures and doctrines to conform to that interpretation.”

In Tibet, the commission states, “Sinicization entailed forced assimilation of local populations that threatened their religious and cultural identities.”

The USCIRF is a federal government commission created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor religious freedom in other countries and to advise the US president, secretary of state and Congress on how best to promote it.

Commissioner Nury Turkel has spotlighted the fact that the Chinese government’s continued targeting of diaspora ethnic and religious communities with ties to China, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, Christians and Falun Gong practitioners in 2023. Also, the commission’s report expresses concern over the fact that “the Chinese government used its economic and geopolitical influence to pressure foreign countries, including Turkey, Morocco, Thailand, Nepal, and Pakistan, to repatriate Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Protestant Christian refugees to China, where they could face severe human rights abuses.”

US Commission highlights China’s growing ‘Sinicization’ of Tibetan Buddhism

02 May 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom’s 2024 annual report, published May 1, highlights the deterioration of religious freedom in Tibet due to the Chinese government’s intensified suppression and “Sinicization” of Tibetan Buddhism. Sinicization is a Chinese policy that aims to bring Tibetan Buddhism under the control of the Chinese Communist Party.

China a country of particular concern

Speaking on behalf of USCIRF during the virtual launch of the 2024 annual report, the commission’s vice-chair, Frederick A. Davie, recommended the US State Department designate China as one of the 17 countries with “country of particular concern” (CPC) status in terms of religious freedom violations.

The commission’s main findings reveal increased surveillance and security measures on Tibetan Buddhists, leading to restrictions on their peaceful religious activities. Tibetan Buddhists have been arrested and imprisoned for engaging in such activities or for possessing materials related to the Dalai Lama. Some have been placed in “political re-education” camps to prevent self-immolation, with Tibetan Buddhist monks dying in prison.

The commission’s Freedom of Religion or Belief Victims List, an online database, includes 93 Tibetans.



The US Commission on International Religious Freedom commissioners released their 2024 annual report on May 1.

Forced assimilation of Tibetan children

Highlighting the forced separation of over 1 million Tibetan children from their families in state-run boarding schools and the government's measures to stop Tibetans from freely practicing their Buddhist faith, the commission spotlighted that:

The government separated one million Tibetan children from parents, putting them in state-run boarding schools to forcibly assimilate them. Some local authorities banned parents from teaching religion to Tibetan children. The government controlled the ordination of Tibetan monks and reiterated its intent to interfere in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation and appoint his successor.

Human rights sanctions

Commissioner Susie Gelman emphasized the commission's role and the US government's implementation of targeted human rights sanctions in 2023, including sanctions on Chinese officials and entities. As an example, she cited the Biden administration's sanctioning of Chinese officials "who forcibly separate Tibetan children from their families and seek to eliminate religious freedom in Tibet."

Sinicization of religion

The Commission identifies the Chinese government's multifaceted "Sinicization of religion" policy as the significant factor in the deterioration of religious freedom under which all major religious groups are forced to obey the Chinese Communist Party and its ideology and policies.

The commission in its annual report states that "Sinicization requires groups to follow the CCP's Marxist interpretation of religion, including by altering religious scriptures and doctrines to conform to that interpretation." Highlighting the effects of the Chinese government's Sinicization of religion policy in Tibet, the commission states that "Sinicization entailed forced assimilation of local populations that threatened their religious and cultural identities."

25th anniversary of the commission

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is a federal government commission created by the International Religious

Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292) to monitor religious freedom in other countries and advise the US president, secretary of state and Congress on how best to promote it.

The 2024 annual report marks the 25th anniversary of the creation of the commission.

Transnational repression

USCIRF Commissioner Nury Turkel spotlighted the Chinese government's continued targeting of diaspora ethnic and religious communities with ties to China, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, Christians and Falun Gong practitioners in 2023.

Highlighting the Chinese government's continued perpetration of transnational repression, the commission's annual report highlighted that "the Chinese government used its economic and geopolitical influence to pressure foreign countries, including Turkey, Morocco, Thailand, Nepal, and Pakistan, to repatriate Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Protestant Christian refugees to China, where they could face severe human rights abuses."

'Xenophobia' behind India and China's economic troubles, says US President Joe Biden

02 May 2024, [The Indian Express](#)

"One of the reasons why our economy's growing is because of you and many others. Why? Because we welcome immigrants," Biden said.

Arguing that immigrants have made the United States stronger, President Joe Biden Wednesday said that xenophobia from India, China, Russia and Japan has stalled their economic growth, news agency Reuters reported.

"Why is China stalling so badly economically, why is Japan having trouble, why is Russia, why is India, because they are xenophobic. They don't want immigrants. Immigrants are what makes us strong," Biden remarked.

The US President was speaking at a Washington fundraising event for his 2024 re-election campaign, which also marked the start of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. "One of the reasons why our economy is growing is because of you and many others. Why? Because we welcome immigrants," Biden said.

Biden, who is up against Republican candidate and former president Donald Trump in the presidential race, has often criticised his rival for his "anti-immigrant" rhetoric. Trump has promised to curb illegal immigration and restrict legal migration if elected to office. During his campaigning, he has blamed immigrants for the rise of violence in the country.

Biden, meanwhile, has advocated for a more humane-stance on the issue of migrants. Since coming to power, Biden has eased the Trump-era crackdown on migrants and introduced new “parole” policies, which allow certain migrants to enter legally for humanitarian reasons.

However, research shows that Biden is facing criticism from voters over unemployment and immigration. A poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that over half of US adults think that "Biden’s presidency has hurt the country on cost of living and immigration".

Modi's uncoordinated approach on Tibet gives China the advantage

29 May 2024, [Himal SouthAsian](#)



A Tibetan monk holds a picture of the Dalai Lama at a 2024 event in Delhi to mark the 65th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising. India appears to adopt multiple policies on Tibet and Tibetans – some proactive, others not. Photo: IMAGO/Zuma Wire

This story is part of 'Modi's India from the Edges', a special Himal series presenting Southasian regional perspectives on Narendra Modi's decade in power and possible return as prime minister in the 2024 Indian election. To read the series and support Himal's work on it, click [here](#).

In April this year, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, outlined his priority on India–China relations in an interview to *Newsweek*. "It is my belief that we need to urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that the abnormality in our bilateral interactions can be put behind us," Modi said. The very next day, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry responded to the comment, saying, "The boundary question does not represent the entirety of China-India relations, and it should be placed appropriately in bilateral relations and managed properly."

This latest public exchange between India and China draws attention to an unstated but critical issue between the two countries – Tibet. The "borders" or the "boundary question" are nothing but references to the Indo–Tibetan border, which became a point of contention between the Asian behemoths after the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959. In less than a month, in the wake of India's ongoing general election, Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may form a government in New Delhi for a third consecutive time, or the Indian National Congress and its allies may cause a major upset and take power. The new Indian government, however it is constituted, will have to contend with a poor near-term outlook for India–China relations, with Tibet continuing to be the elephant in the room.

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

'China allegedly invaded India in 1962': Congress' Mani Shankar Aiyar sparks row with remark

29 May 2024, [Business Today](#)

The fallout from Aiyar's remarks saw Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh take to X to announce Aiyar's subsequent unreserved apology for his choice of words. Ramesh explained that the veteran leader had apologised for mistakenly using the term 'alleged invasion'.

Senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar sparked a fresh controversy by saying that China "allegedly" invaded India in October 1962. This statement has led to criticism from the ruling BJP, which condemned it as a "brazen attempt at revisionism".

The fallout from Aiyar's remarks saw Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh take to X to announce Aiyar's subsequent unreserved apology for his choice of words. Ramesh explained that the veteran leader had apologised for mistakenly using the term 'alleged invasion'.

Acknowledging Aiyar's age, Ramesh emphasised that the party had distanced itself from the original phrasing used by Aiyar during his speech at the book launch event 'Nehru's First Recruits' held at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Delhi.

During the event, Aiyar recounted a personal anecdote about his application to the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and shared his experience of being denied entry amid speculations linking him to leftist ideologies. These statements, however, raised eyebrows and invited criticism from various groups, including from within his own party.

Realising the gravity of the situation, Aiyar later sought to clarify his stance, admitting that his choice of the term 'alleged' was inappropriate, particularly during an election period.

In response, BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya lambasted Aiyar's comments as an attempt to whitewash history and criticised Congress leaders for their supposed favourable stance towards China.

While noting Aiyar's subsequent apology, Jairam Ramesh also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his handling of recent Chinese invasions, highlighting past instances of Chinese aggression towards India.

Aiyar's recent statement adds to a string of controversial remarks he has made in the past, including urging India to respect Pakistan for its nuclear capabilities. These comments have sparked backlash from political leaders, with Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah condemning Aiyar's views.

The Chinese strategy of 'resettlement villages' aims at colonising LAC

27 May 2024, [First Post](#), Mahesh Ranjan Debata

Beijing seeks to settle Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Gorkhas along the nearly 3,500 km long Line of Actual Control from west to east through 'resettlement villages' or border defence villages

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has surprised the world many times with its skullduggery. India too has fallen prey to the Chinese perfidy in 1962, further in 2020. The latest Chinese trickery is all about the sinister design to settle Uyghurs, Tibetans, and the Gorkhas along the nearly 3,500 km long Line of Actual Control (LAC) from the western sector to the eastern sector through 'resettlement villages' or border defence villages (*Xiaokang*). China's central government has planned several hundred resettlement villages along its border with various countries, but the main target at present is India.

The Chinese policy of resettling Tibetans along the India-China border in Tibet, especially along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh, is not a new phenomenon. The Chinese are pursuing, even forcing Tibetans on their battlefield with India. During an interaction with some villagers from Koyul village near Hot Spring in Ladakh Union Territory, which has been one of the friction points along the India-Tibet border, this author found an authentic local source of information in 2018 about the establishment of resettlement villages.

Similarly, there are reports in international news media that China is mulling over forcing the Uyghurs and other ethnic minority groups to settle down along Xinjiang's border with Ladakh as part of its specific plan to checkmate the overarching Indian presence along the Xinjiang-Ladakh part of LAC following the Galwan clashes on June 20, 2020. The Chinese may claim this strategy as a counterbalance against what the Indian public, media, intelligentsia, and defence veterans have been vociferously calling for since the Galwan incident—the use of the "Uyghur card" to put the Chinese on the back foot.

But what is more disturbing and a matter of grave concern is the apprehension in the Indian psyche that the brave Gorkhas, who have been the mainstay of the Indian military for decades, may be used as a shield along the LAC, especially on the eastern flank. China wants to take advantage of the issues related to Gorkhas's unhappiness and resentment after the Indian government announced the Agniveer scheme for a short stint in the Indian Army and the subsequent announcement by the Nepal government in 2022 not allowing the Nepalese citizens, especially Gorkhas, to join the Indian defence establishment. This is a golden opportunity for China to fish in the troubled waters. It

will not fail to inject venom in the Gorkhas' minds to show hatred for India and use them against India.

No Chinese plan is devised without a strategy. The Chinese pretext in this context is that both Tibetans and Gorkhas, being acclimatised to the inclement weather and high altitude, will be a better bet than the mainland Han Chinese soldiers for mountainous warfare with India. The Chinese strategy is to provoke a war between Indian soldiers and the Tibetans, or Gorkhas, deployed along the border as the first line of defence. China will not leave any stone unturned to instigate India deliberately, as it has been doing for the last seven decades, for minor skirmishes that can turn into full-fledged war. If any war occurs in the future along the LAC, no Han Chinese soldier will be killed, but the poor and innocent soldiers on the front, be they Uyghurs, Tibetans, or Gorkhas, will be killed.

Chinese propaganda mechanisms will not fail to spread rumours about India's treachery against the Tibetans and Gorkhas. If India shows any consideration for Tibetans or Gorkhas during the war, it will lose badly. This will be a win-win situation for the Chinese, at least on the domestic front, but it will be an irreparable loss for India. For instance, the Chinese government will get a reprieve from the ire and resentment it faced on the home front after the Galwan clash that led to the deaths of several Chinese soldiers.

India will lose the considerable goodwill it has been enjoying amongst the Uyghurs, Tibetans, or Gorkhas across the globe. But the grand Chinese design will be to use the Gorkhas to create instability along the border and inside India, exactly the way it has done in the Indian hinterland (Kashmir) with the help of Pakistan. The same may be recreated in West Bengal (especially Darjeeling), Northeastern states, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim, where a substantial population of Gorkhas live. Since there has been demand for a separate Gorkhaland out of the Indian state of West Bengal, Chinese efforts will be to exacerbate the situation further by providing men, money, and materials. Now, with the help of another South Asian state, Nepal, which has not a very amicable relationship with India at the present juncture, it will not hesitate to create internal instability in India. Earlier, for over seven decades, China had been using the South Asian nation of Pakistan to vitiate the atmosphere in Kashmir.

India will now face huge challenges on multiple fronts. The Chinese will ensure India curries the disfavour of the Tibetans and Gorkhas, who have been culturally, spiritually, and emotionally close to India. Particularly, the Gorkhas, who have had a strong bond with Indians for the last few centuries and who have been part of the Indian military, contributing immensely and sacrificing their lives for India, would nurse a grudge against India. By doing this, the Chinese are following

in letter and spirit one of the teachings of Chinese philosopher Tsu Nzu, "killing your enemies without losing a single bullet," described in his masterpiece, *The Art of War*. Two important points can be made here. China will set India right along the border by putting her at risk of taking any action against Tibetans and Gorkhas. Further, the old-age ties between India and Tibetans and India and Gorkhas will be severed.

If the Chinese government becomes successful in its plans and strategy against India, the disturbances and internal instability India endured in Kashmir for over seven decades (till August 2019) will reverberate with a new tone and tenor, jeopardising India's security and stability. It is high time the Indian government pondered this critical state of affairs. The Indian government and its defence establishment must find a counter-strategy to deal with the Chinese design. Military intelligence and thinkers must understand Chinese strategies and accordingly prepare the necessary defence against them. The Indian government has strategised its Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) in 2023 in response to China's *Xiaokang* initiative for the comprehensive development of some sensitive villages along the LAC, such as Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh Union Territory. The government must ensure that it does not lose its most important constituency against China, the Tibetans. Further, the Gorkhas should not fall into Chinese hands, which is not going to augur well for India.

China Is Upgrading Dual-Use Villages Along Its Disputed Indian Border

May 16 2024, [China Power](#), Jennifer Jun and Brian Hart

In the desolate and inhospitable Himalayas, China is constructing and expanding hundreds of "*xiaokang*" (小康) villages along its hotly disputed border with India.¹ These villages, often accompanied by military and dual-use infrastructure, are an important "gray zone" tool enabling China to assert and defend its claims near disputed areas. Commercial satellite images provide a glimpse into China's activities and show that China is making rapid and significant progress on these border villages despite the harsh environment.

In July 2017, the government of China's Tibet Autonomous Region announced plans to construct hundreds of border villages and accompanying infrastructure as part of a major push to develop China's remote border regions. Between 2018 and 2022, the region reportedly built 624 villages, and work has continued on additional villages. Many of these are clustered along the eastern sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the *de facto* border separating

China and India. The eastern sector borders Arunachal Pradesh, a state administered by India but largely claimed by China as “South Tibet” (藏南).

Capturing high-resolution satellite imagery in this region is challenging due to heavy cloud cover, but images from recent months have enabled the analysis of four locations within a small 65 square kilometer (km²) area. These locations—Zhuangnan, Majiduncun, Yarao, and Kuiqiongmen—were chosen to represent different development phases and types, including military, civilian, and dual-use infrastructure. Together, these sites serve as a microcosm of developments underway along much of the 3,500-km border.

Just seven kilometers northwest of the LAC sits the border village of Zhuangnan (庄南), where a likely military or paramilitary facility has undergone significant work in recent years.

Historical satellite images show a walled complex with at least eleven buildings built there by 2019. By 2020, however, seven of the buildings were razed and new buildings were built.

Additional work was done there in the years that followed. Satellite imagery from October 22, 2022, shows an upgraded walled complex encircling four buildings that appear to be barracks, as well as another large building and a radome or communication tower.



Use the slider to compare images. View October 22, 2022, image and December 31, 2023, image.

More recent images show two additional complexes being developed near the main complex since 2022. In an image from December 31, 2023, a new facility is visible due south of the main complex. It features high walls surrounding six buildings with vehicles throughout. Imagery also shows yet another new complex with a perimeter wall encircling a small, green-roofed building. Given its proximity to the nearby facilities, walled perimeter, and irregular shape, the green-roofed building is likely dedicated to observation or operational support.

The barracks, perimeter walls, and radome/communications tower located at these complexes indicate the likely presence of China’s military, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). It is also possible these facilities are operated by the paramilitary People’s Armed Police (PAP). Under

China’s Land Borders Law, these two forces share responsibility for defending China’s borders from armed attacks or other encroachments.²

While the exact purpose of these facilities is unclear, their position so close to the LAC suggests they may offer the PLA or PAP a vantage point for monitoring activities along this area of the border.

Expanded Village and Likely Military Activity at Majiduncun

Approximately 2 km north of Zhuangnan—and less than 10 km northwest of the disputed border, is the relatively large village Majiduncun (马及墩村), which has been significantly improved over the past two years.³

Majiduncun previously comprised a smaller number of buildings and two helipads, but by November 2018 the area started to be razed to make way for new building complexes. Imagery from October 22, 2022, shows village construction was still underway, with several of the new grey-roofed buildings to the north already complete.

Imagery captured about a year later, on November 8, 2023, shows the village’s new buildings externally completed, with well-paved roads throughout the area. Notably, the two existing helipads are still present. Given the region’s mountainous terrain, helipads play a key role in facilitating the swift movement of people, equipment, and supplies in the area, especially during emergencies.



View October 22, 2022, image and November 8, 2023, image.

On the northern edge of the village is a likely PLA or PAP facility that shows signs of continued activity. The facility includes a gated entrance, a satellite dish, and changing numbers of likely military heavy trucks in the parking lot over the past year.

The presence of military or dual-use facilities is a common feature within *xiaokang* villages. China’s Land Borders Law codifies border defense into the responsibilities of border area governments, calling for them to “strengthen the construction of mass defense forces [群防队伍] to maintain border security.” Furthermore, a 2021 article in the official newspaper *PLA Daily* emphasizes the “need to strengthen the construction of border infrastructure and encourage people of all ethnic groups to root themselves in the

border areas, guard the homeland, and build their hometowns” in this region.

This emphasis on leveraging civilian villages to support the military bears the hallmarks of China’s “military-civil fusion” (军民融合) strategy, which aims to fuse together China’s economic and military development to support overall national objectives.

It is also indicative of China’s efforts to use gray zone tactics to advance its strategic and security interests in disputed areas while staying below the threshold of armed conflict. By building civilian villages, China can increase the population of remote border areas, adding legitimacy to its territorial claims. This simultaneously creates the necessary infrastructure to better support military and police forces, which, in turn, helps to protect local civilians from perceived threats across the border.

New Village at Yarao

Situated approximately 26 km northwest of the border is another example of one of China’s *xiaokang* villages, called Yarao (亚绕). Roughly 30 buildings were constructed at Yarao between 2018 and early 2022, but work there accelerated in 2022.

Satellite imagery shows that at least 65 new buildings of identical shape were built between March and November 2022. Workers also added a new road leading to two new helipads due east of the village.



View March 6, 2022, image and November 2, 2022, image.

The images available in November show that some of the new buildings at Yarao were not yet roofed, but more recent imagery analyzed by the authors shows that the buildings were externally completed by December.

The speed of construction at Yarao is a testament to China’s capacity to rapidly build infrastructure to support new *xiaokang* villages. China’s progress is particularly impressive given the inhospitable terrain of the Himalayas. Yarao sits at a breathtaking 3,900 meters above sea level, where the thin air can pose health risks, and harsh temperatures and weather can create logistical challenges.



New Potential Military Outpost at Kuiqiongmen

Between these far-flung villages, China is constructing new roads and what may become small security outposts. One such potential location is visible near Kuiqiongmen (亏穷们), approximately halfway between Majiduncun and Yarao.

Satellite imagery from March 13, 2020, shows a winding road along a steep hillside more than 3,700 meters in elevation leading to a small, blue-roofed building with a courtyard.

The original building was externally completed in early 2018 and then razed sometime between March 2020 and March 2022. Satellite imagery captured on November 16, 2023, shows significant work underway to expand the grounds formerly occupied by the building. Visible in the image are construction vehicles, equipment, and likely gabion walls to support continued hillside excavation. Along the road to this construction site, areas were cleared for open-air storage of construction materials and equipment.

It is not yet clear what kind of facilities will be built here but given the location’s remoteness from other villages and its position on a hillside overlooking a valley, it is likely that this location could serve as a military or police outpost.



View March 13, 2020, image and November 16, 2023, image.

Conclusion

The four locations analyzed here comprise only a meager swath of the expansive disputed border. China has built hundreds of villages along the border in recent years, and it continues to expand and upgrade both civilian and military infrastructure in the area. China is not alone in developing infrastructure along the border. Alarmed by China’s border buildup, India also launched its own program to build villages in

Arunachal Pradesh and other border states. However, China has demonstrated an enormous capacity to develop these regions, and India will find it challenging to keep pace with China.

China will continue developing these areas to support its strategic objectives. As it does, analysts should continue to observe China's activities to stay informed about its evolving approach and capabilities in the region.

Open airing of serious differences belie border settlement hopes as China's new envoy arrived in India

16 May 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

As China finally appointed an ambassador to New Delhi after keeping the post vacant for 18 months, the two sides have reiterated their complaints against and criticisms of each other on the four-year-old border standoff in eastern Ladakh, belying hopes, if any, for a new determination to resolve the issue at an early date.

India's External Affairs Minister, Mr S Jaishankar, reiterated New Delhi's desire for a resolution of remaining issues with China in a recent interview, highlighting that normal bilateral ties depended on peace and tranquillity at the border.

But while expressing a seemingly positive stance, Jaishankar indicated that the remaining (border) issues mainly revolve around "patrolling rights and patrolling abilities," decried China's official [globaltimes.cn](#) May 13.

This is because China has repeatedly opposed this stance of India, arguing that the border issue need not be a hindrance to normalizing bilateral ties in other areas.

The report said Chinese scholars and military experts, reflecting the official line, strongly objected to these remarks, "cautioning that they effectively annex the current disputed areas into Indian territory, constituting a severe infringement of Chinese sovereignty."

The report complained that Jaishankar had made the remarks during an exclusive interview with the *PTI* news agency, emphasizing that resolving border issues is a foundation on which the relationship between the two countries can come back to normal.

What the report took as "seemingly positive" was the fact that Jaishankar had commented on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks to the *Newsweek* magazine last month that the border situation needed to be addressed urgently and that stable and peaceful ties between India and China were important for not just the two countries but for the entire region and the world.

Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow with the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, has called on China to remain highly vigilant on Jaishankar's remarks. His "patrol rights" remarks actually incorporate the current disputed areas between China and India into Indian territory, severely infringing upon Chinese sovereignty, the report cited Hu as saying.

Hu is of the view that while Modi downplays the Chinese-Indian border issue, Jaishankar adopts a tougher stance, indicating that the softening of Modi's attitude may be only for the sake of domestic elections, a stratagem to woo a group of swing voters. He has accused Jaishankar of deliberately provoking China.

Zhang Junshe, a Chinese military expert, has accused Jaishankar of blaming China for the current border standoff. "It's quite obvious that the current border issues are entirely caused by India's continuous provocations in recent years. As long as India stops provoking, the problem can calm down."

He wanted both parties to "place the border issue in an appropriate position within their bilateral relations."

If India attempts to use the border issue as leverage against China, it won't work because China is equally determined to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Zhang has maintained.

The report noted that Chinese ambassador-designate to India, Xu Feihong, had said during an interview on May 10 that the Chinese side believed that China-India ties should not be defined by any single issue or area, and the boundary question is not the entirety of the relationship.

The report also noted Xu's remark that China was ready to work with India to accommodate each other's concerns, find a mutually acceptable solution to specific issues through dialogue at an early date, and turn the page as soon as possible.

But given China's hardline expansionist position, calling for "a mutually acceptable solution to specific issues" appears to be a devoid of any meaning.

Meanwhile, Jaishankar has reiterated India's position on May 14, saying the deployment of forces at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China (ie, occupied Tibet) was "abnormal" and the security of the country should not be disregarded.

Speaking at an event organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata, Jaishankar has said India responded to the Galwan Valley clash by counter-deployment of forces there.

"In 2020, the Chinese, in violation of multiple agreements, brought a large number of forces to our border and they did it at the time when we were under Covid lockdown," [news18.com](#) May 14 quoted Jaishankar as saying.

Jaishankar on India-China standoff: 'Abnormal deployment along LAC'

15 May 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

External affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Tuesday described the deployment of forces at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China as 'abnormal', adding that the security of the country should not be disregarded.

"After 1962, Rajiv Gandhi went to China in 1988 in many ways that was the key step towards normalising the ties (with China)...there was a clear understanding that we will discuss our boundary differences but we will maintain peace and tranquillity on the border. And the rest of the relationship will carry on," the minister was quoted by PTI as saying at an event in Kolkata. "What changed now is what happened in 2020. In 2020, the Chinese, in violation of multiple agreements, brought a large number of forces to our border and they did it at the time when we were under COVID lockdown," Jaishankar said. The minister asserted that India responded by counter deployment of force and for four now, the forces have been deployed ahead of the normal base positions at Galwan. "This is a very abnormal deployment along the LAC. Given the tension between the two countries... As Indian citizens, none of us should disregard the security of the country...it is today a challenge", he said. There is also an economic challenge, he said, which is due to "neglect of the manufacturing and infrastructure sectors in the previous years. "Why is Indian business buying so much from China... Is it good to be so dependent on some other source?" Jaishankar added. The relations between India and China are strained since the June 2020 clashes in Galwan valley. Last week, Jaishankar had said that New Delhi hopes for a resolution of the remaining issues with Beijing. The minister asserted that a return to normal bilateral ties hinges on peace and tranquillity at the border. "We would hope that there is a resolution of the remaining issues out there. These issues mainly pertain to patrolling rights and patrolling abilities there," Jaishankar had told PTI.

China is India's top trade partner, enjoys a huge trade surplus

12 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Despite what India has been saying about the normalization of its overall ties with China being subject to the resolution of the ongoing four-year-old border standoff in eastern Ladakh, trade between the two countries has been rising, and in China's favour.

China has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with \$118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, slightly edging past the US, said a *PTI* news agency report May 12, citing data from economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

The US was the top trading partner of India during 2021-22 and 2022-23.

China continues to enjoy a huge trade surplus with India. The data were stated to show that India's exports to China rose by 8.7% to \$16.67 billion in the last fiscal. The main sectors which recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/made-ups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic and linoleum.

Imports from China increased by 3.24% to \$101.7 billion.

"This growth in imports led to an expanding trade deficit in India, rising from \$53.57 billion in FY2019 to \$85.09 billion in FY2024, highlighting concerns over stagnant exports amidst rising imports," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava has said.

China's new envoy to India appears accommodating, but belittles border standoff issue

12 May, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China's new envoy to India, who arrived in New Delhi on May 10, appears to have expressed willingness on the part of his government to be accommodating in talks on settling the ongoing, nearly four-year-old border standoff in eastern Ladakh. India has accused China of being inflexible, trying to create a new border status quo by refusing to withdraw its troops from new patrolling areas they have been in occupation since its mid-2020 incursions.

China is ready to work with India to "accommodate" each other's concerns and find a mutually acceptable solution to "specific issues" through dialogue at an early date, the *PTI* news agency May 11 cited Xu Feihong as saying.

The report cited Xu, 60, as saying he regarded his posting in New Delhi as an "honourable mission and a sacred duty" to improve and advance the bilateral ties. "China is ready to work with India to accommodate each other's concerns, find a mutually acceptable solution to specific issues through dialogue at an early date, and turn the page as soon as possible," Xu has said.

The post of the Chinese ambassador in New Delhi has been lying vacant for 18 months before the appointment of Xu, who ranks as an Assistant Minister. Relations between the two countries hit a new low ever since the eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Tso (lake) area. The two sides have so far held

21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff, the report noted.

India has been pressing the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas, persistently making it clear that there could not be a restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations so long as the border situation remained abnormal.

The report cited the Chinese military as saying that so far, the two sides had agreed to disengage from four points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra).

Earlier, in what was seen as a softening of India's tone or stand on its defiant posture on the tense Tibet-border situation with China, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said the two sides should "urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that the abnormality in our bilateral interactions can be put behind us".

"I hope and believe that through positive and constructive bilateral engagement at the diplomatic and military levels, we will be able to restore and sustain peace and tranquillity in our borders," Modi had added in an interview published Apr 10 by the US magazine *Newsweek*.

Xu has referred to these remarks from Modi, saying "I noted Prime Minister Modi's comments on the importance of China-India ties, and the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson responded to that right afterwards."

However, Xu has then referred to China's oft repeated stand, which India has pointedly rejected so far. "The Chinese side always believes that China-India ties should not be defined by any single issue or area; the boundary question is not the entirety of the relationship.

"Speaking at the Indian Council of World Affairs in September 2014, President Xi Jinping said that we must not focus our attention only on differences and forget about our friendship and cooperation, still less should we allow the differences to stand in the way of our development and interfere with the overall growth of bilateral relations," Xu has said.

Indian Embassy in China holds first meeting with students hit hard by COVID visa bans

05 May 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The Indian Embassy here has held its first interactive session with the Indian students who suffered the most during the three-year COVID-19 period following China's visa bans prolonging their academic periods for several years.

Around 80 old and new students from more than 13 Chinese universities took part in the "welcome and

interaction ceremony" held on May 4. Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat, and Counsellor Nitinjeet Singh interacted with the students and heard their grievances and experiences during Saturday's meeting.

The meeting also included a detailed presentation by Amit Sharma, Second Secretary (Education) on various services offered by the Embassy, Dos & Don'ts for students, the Embassy posting on X said.

Until the coronavirus struck China in early 2020 over 23,000 Indian students mostly studying medicine in Chinese universities constituting the second-highest number of foreign students after Pakistan.

Currently, the numbers reportedly come down to around 10,000 across China.

Chinese medical universities became preferred destinations in the past as private medical colleges in India charged exorbitant fees while admissions to government institutions became extremely competitive.

However, they have to write the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination in India to qualify for practice in India.

When COVID-19 struck China, most of the Indian students left for home at the height of lockdowns and could not return until early last year due to China's visa bans and restrictions.

Many of them started returning in the latter part of 2022 while the Chinese universities began a new intake of students last year.

Some of the old students in their media interactions said they are shattered by China's COVID visa bans and feel that Beijing could have handled the crisis more compassionately taking into consideration the impact of the restrictions had on their academic careers and meagre budgets as most of them hail from middle-class backgrounds.

Saturday's meeting was the first held by the Indian Embassy here to step up its interactions with the students considering their plight and the issues they faced.

During the height of the COVID visa bans, the Embassy actively pursued with China to permit the early return of the students considering the damage the delay caused to their studies.

Students said they were told at the meeting to remain cautious and disciplined strictly abiding by the local laws.

According to recent reports, three Indian students were under detention in China on charges of criminal offences.

COMMENTARIES

Modi Mentions Dalai Lama: Anticipation Builds for Possible Meeting

31 May 2024, [FNVA](#), Tenzing Dhamdul

On 1st June 2024, a total of eight states, including the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, will go to the polls as part of the final phase (phase 7) in India's General Elections. Amidst this, on 24th May, the incumbent Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) campaign in Himachal Pradesh, taking part in a mega rally at Mandi.

In this rally, Narendra Modi stated, "I frequently talk with the Dalai Lama; the Dalai Lama is the being who guides our entire universe," which, according to some, is an indication that Narendra Modi, may have some positive plans to Tibet with a meeting with His Holiness Dalai Lama seemingly in line. With several exit polls indicating that the BJP and its NDA alliance will once again form the government, some even go as far as mentioning that the incumbent Prime Minister would invite the Dalai Lama for his oath to office ceremony. Tibetans in the past have been invited, with the then Sikyong (President) and Kalon (Minister) of the Tibetan Government in Exile Lobsang Sangay la and Gyari Dolma la both attending the oath to office ceremony of 2014.

Narendra Modi has already met the Dalai Lama when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat; however, he has yet to meet him since assuming the role of Prime Minister.

Since the BJP's formation as a separate political party in the 1980s, it has had two Prime Ministers: Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi. The former frequently met with the Dalai Lama even during his tenure as Prime Minister of India. The Dalai Lama stated, "His eloquent support of the Tibetan people began in the late 1950s. Since then, he regularly took Indian governments to task in parliament, prompting them to take a stronger stand on Tibet," highlighting the firm support that Atal Bihari Vajpayee had towards Tibet and the Tibetan people. There are various movements and instances indicating that a possible meeting between Narendra Modi and the Dalai Lama is on the cards:

1. Narendra Modi and the Dalai Lama attended the same event last year; the Global Buddhist Summit organised by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), with the former being the Chief Guest on the 1st Day and the latter being the Chief Guest on the 2nd Day. They were so close yet did not meet, most likely due to pressure from Beijing in my opinion. However, with India advancing and taking great strides forward, including positioning itself towards achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047, there will come a time when

Beijing will not be able to pressure New Delhi anymore.

2. Furthermore, Narendra Modi has frequently been publicly wishing the Dalai Lama on his birthday through his social media handles in the last few years.
3. In December 2021, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), with its Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat and National Executive Indresh Kumar (founder of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch), met the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala. Considering the strong and firm linkages between RSS and BJP, there is a high possibility of the BJP leadership including Narendra Modi also meeting the Dalai Lama.

The Indian National Congress (INC) the other national political party of India that has formed the government several time, has had its leaders including its Prime Ministers, meeting with the Dalai Lama. One can refer to FNVA's recent policy brief '2024 Election: Tibet in INC's Election Manifesto' for more detail on this.

With the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh going to the polls several notable Indian political leaders have arrived to Dharamshala and met the Dalai Lama recently. Many of them also had events with the Tibetan publics, where both the BJP and INC (from the NDA and India Alliance respectively) engaged with the Tibetans in Dharmshala in the lead up to the election.

Growing Repression in Tibet: A CECC Report Confirms

29 May 2024, [FNVA](#), Tenzin Tsultrim

The US Congressional-Executive Commission on China's (CECC) 2023 Annual Report highlights escalating repressions in Tibet, emphasising religious persecution, mass biometric surveillance, transnational repression and linguistic suppression. The report reveals intensified restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism, with severe measures to enforce the Sinicization of religious practices. Additionally, the collection of DNA samples from Tibetans, including monks, has augmented the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) surveillance capabilities. It also underscores the forced assimilation of Tibetan children into Han Chinese culture through state-run colonial style boarding schools. Furthermore, the CCP's transnational repression efforts aim to silence Tibetan activism abroad, posing a threat to democratic values globally. Read more [here](#).

From Tibet to Xizang: China's strategic moves

26 May 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Gyanendra Keshri

Changes in education and infrastructure in Tibet are indicative of the Chinese government's strategies to solidify its position in the region

At No 8 Middle School in Lhasa, a 13-year-old girl, along with other students, is learning about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the manufacturing of electronic devices. She speaks broken English, along with Tibetan and Mandarin.

"Our main focus is on skilling. Nearly half the time, students practice using different tools," says Caiyang Zhuoma, principal of the school. While more than a dozen distinct local dialects are spoken in the high plateau region, the focus at the boarding schools is on teaching Mandarin and English.

The transformation of education and infrastructure development is among the key strategies of the President Xi Jinping-led Chinese government to solidify its position in the Tibetan issue.

The name 'Tibet' has been dropped in official references. In all official communications, the region is now referred to in the Mandarin name, 'Xizang'.

It started with the release of a white paper in November 2023. The paper, titled 'CPC (Communist Party of China) Policies on the Governance of Xizang in the New Era: Approach and Achievements', outlines development in the region since President Jinping came to power in 2012. Now in all official communications, the region is referred to as 'Xizang Autonomous Region'.

While the Lobsang Sangay-led Tibetan government-in-exile has termed the move as "Sinicisation of Tibetan Buddhism", as per Chinese authorities, the name change is intended to strengthen national identity in the ethnic minority region.

Ren Wei, the Executive Vice Chairman of the People's Government of Xizang Autonomous Region, says the government fully guarantees the freedom of religious belief.

Wei points out that China is a multiethnic country, having 56 ethnic groups. Han is the largest ethnic group, accounting for around 92 per cent of the country's population. The remaining 55 ethnic groups, including Tibetan Buddhists and Muslims, are categorised as ethnic minorities.

As per China's national census data from 2020, Tibetans account for 86 per cent of the Xizang region's total population of 3.65 million. However, between 2010 and 2020, the share of Tibetans in the population declined from 90.5 per cent to 86 per cent.

Reports suggest that there are concerted efforts from the Chinese government to encourage its majority Han population to work and live in the Tibet region. Consequently, there has been a sharp jump in the Han

Chinese population in the region. As per official data, the share of Hans in the total population of the Xizang Autonomous Region jumped to 12.2 per cent in 2020 from 8.2 per cent in 2010.

The region hosts around 1,700 sites for Tibetan Buddhism activities, with nearly 46,000 Buddhist monks and nuns, as per data provided in the white paper.

Han Chinese are more urban, educated and mobile. Luxury cars and high-rise apartments in the capital city of Lhasa and Shigatse, the second-largest city in the region, demonstrate the changing demographics.

High-rise apartments have come up on the outskirts of Lhasa city, especially along the Kyichu river, which is also known as the Lhasa river. "My dream is to have a house in any of these apartments," said a Tibetan, pointing to the high-rise apartments developed along the Kyichu river.

Those who opt to work in the Xizang Autonomous Region are paid substantially higher salaries when compared with other parts of China. In most cases, it is almost double. This acts as a major incentive for the Han Chinese population to relocate to the region, where oxygen level is only about 60 per cent of that at sea level.

A Chinese government employee, who did not want to be named, said the government pays higher salaries to those working in the Xizang Autonomous Region because the living conditions are tough. Low oxygen levels pose serious health concerns. The Tibetan plateau has an elevation of over 4,500 meters (14,800 ft) above sea level.

Belt and Road Initiative

Tibet acts as China's bridge to South Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), President Xi Jinping's most ambitious foreign policy programme. Under this initiative, China has financed or proposes to finance billions of dollars of investment in roads, railways and other infrastructure in several countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. This includes India's neighbours Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Tibet borders India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar in the Himalayas. The world's highest peak Mount Everest, which rises to 8,850 metres (29,035 feet) is on the Nepal-Tibet border. This makes Tibet immensely important from China's strategic point of view.

Due to its harsh and rugged terrain, Tibet is sparsely populated. In terms of area, Tibet is around two-thirds the size of India, while its population is just around a quarter of Bengaluru's population. A majority of the population lives in cities like Lhasa and Shigatse. Historically, there have been very few people in Tibet living close to its border with India, Nepal and Bhutan. However, in recent years, China has built hundreds of villages in Tibet, close to the India and Bhutan borders. Officially, such villages have been developed to provide better living conditions and alleviate poverty,

but the location and population mix indicate that the main focus is strategic and military in nature. Reports suggest that some villages have been built on the disputed boundary with Bhutan. The population in such villages is a mix of Chinese troops and locals.

Border infrastructure

China has invested heavily in the development of roads, railways and other infrastructure along Tibet's border near Nepal, Bhutan and India. Gyirong Port on the Nepal-Tibet border is one of the key land routes to connect the northern and southern regions of the Himalayas. The Nepali side of the border is called Rasuwagadhi, which is around 160 km from the capital city, Kathmandu. From the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, the border is around 820 km. While on the Nepali side, the condition of the road is bad, to say the least, the Tibetan side has four to six-lane highways. There is a stark difference.

China plans to develop railways between Kathmandu and Shigatse, which is the seat of the Panchen Lama. Shigatse is already connected through high-speed trains with Lhasa. China's move is seen as a counter to India's projects to connect with Kathmandu through a cross-border railway via Raxaul in Bihar.

Nyingchi, which is on the Tibetan border close to Arunachal Pradesh, was recently connected to Lhasa by high-speed bullet train. Nyingchi airport, located along the Brahmaputra river is very close to the Indian border.

China has significantly ramped up its airport infrastructure in the Tibet region. It has an international airport named Lhasa Gonggar Airport, which is located around 60 km from Lhasa city. China aims to develop 30 airports in the Tibet region.

Village relocation

A large number of Tibetans living in rural areas have been moved to new settlements. The village resettlement process has been accelerated since 2016. As per a white paper released by the Chinese government, since 2021, Xizang has built a total of 300 "beautiful and livable" villages and created and certified 505 "demonstration villages".

As per Chinese authorities, the relocation is voluntary and the main objective is poverty alleviation and raising the standard of living. However, a report by New York-based Human Rights Watch shows that Chinese authorities have been using coercive tactics to mass relocate Tibetan villagers and herders in order to assimilate them into the majority Han Chinese society. The report notes that most rural Tibetans have been impacted by Chinese government relocation or rehousing policies in the past two decades.

While such mass relocations of residents have been occurring elsewhere in poor rural areas in China, these drives risk causing a devastating impact on Tibetan communities.

Together with current Chinese government programmes to assimilate Tibetan schooling, culture and religion into those of the “Chinese nation,” these relocations of rural communities erode or cause major damage to Tibetan culture and ways of life, the report said.

Gen Sundarji gave a China strategy 4 decades ago. India failed to execute it at LAC in 2020

23 May 2024, [The Print](#), Lt Gen H S Panag (Retd)

It has been 25 years since General Krishnaswamy “Sundarji” Sundararajan faded away to Valhalla. He had a chequered and tumultuous tenure as the 13th Chief of the Army Staff and left behind a fiercely disputed and controversial legacy. He conceptualised, planned, and began the transformation of the Army to fight the wars envisaged for the next 15-20 years. Simultaneously, on all fronts, he was engaged in war-like confrontations with China in the north, Pakistan in the west and our own little Vietnam in Sri Lanka in the south.

Even his worst critics agree that no other General of the Indian Army possessed his intellectual depth, strategic perspective, and the will to transform. In his two years and four months’ tenure, he dragged the Army by its bootstraps into the 21st century.

Soon after taking over, General Sundarji wrote a vision paper with a 15-year perspective—Indian Army Perspective Plan 2000—virtually spelling out the contours of national security strategy, defence policy, and military strategy. He personally signed the document—the first, and so far, the last time by any service Chief. The paper unambiguously laid down the military strategy to cater to the threat from both Pakistan and China and the framework of the Army’s transformation required to execute it.

Perspective Plan 2000

The strategy against Pakistan was to create and maintain an “offensive deterrence” to destroy its military potential and seize large swathes of territory to impose political will. Against China, the strategy was to maintain a “dissuasive deterrence” due to the qualitative, quantitative, terrain and communications disadvantages. “Dissuasive deterrence” meant that the Army will move from a depth defensive posture, followed since 1963, to a forward defensive posture on dominant terrain close to the LAC to safeguard our territory and give the Chinese a bloody nose. Tactical offensive was built into this strategy.

The government, without formal approval, supported Perspective Plan 2000 as far as Pakistan was concerned, but remained apprehensive about disturbing the status quo on the northern borders. Both by design and due to strategic circumstances,

General Sundarji got a chance to test his military strategy simultaneously on both the fronts.

A major mechanised forces predominant exercise—Brasstacks (November 1986-March 1987)—to test the “offensive deterrence” against Pakistan was converted into a quasi war-like situation in the form of Operation Trident due to an apprehensive Pakistan’s counter moves and allegedly due to perception management by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS). In Operation Trident, objectives ranged from capturing Skardu, destroying mechanised forces, and capturing a large swathe of territory in the desert/semi-desert terrain of South Punjab bounded by rivers Indus and Sutlej apart from limited territorial gains all along the front.

On the northern front, near simultaneously with Brasstacks/Operation Trident, a minor intrusion by China in Sumdorong Chu river valley in June 1986 gave General Sundarji the opportunity to post haste adopt the forward posture and force a stalemate on China in the ensuing confrontation that lasted until mid-1987.

Execution of “dissuasive deterrence” strategy

Since 1962, our main defences were well in the depth on dominant terrain with a very large un-held buffer zone patrolled by the ITBP and Assam Rifles with effect from 1980. Little or no effort had been made to develop the roads in the buffer zone due to the fear of annoying the Chinese. The deployment of the PLA followed a similar pattern across the LAC, but with good communications for rapid deployment.

The plan until 1986 was to delay the enemy in the extended forward zone and fight the main battle from well-prepared defensive positions up to which roads had been constructed. In 1983, the Cabinet Committee on Security had taken a decision to defend Tawang, but the same could not be fully executed due to tardy development of roads.

India had established an observation post in the Sumdorong Chu valley manned by the Special Service Bureau, in 1984. The post was vacated in the winter. The PLA claimed that it was on their side of the McMahon Line/LAC and preempted its occupation in June 1986. Despite India’s protests, the Chinese continued to deploy more troops and built permanent defences.

On the face of it, it seemed to be a localised incident with the Chinese seeking to reimpose their version of the ML/LAC. In reality, there was a bigger motive. India and China had been engaged in border negotiations since 1981. In the first four rounds of talks, from 1981 to 1983, the discussions focussed on evolving a framework for concrete negotiations wherein China wanted to swap its gains in Aksai Chin and Eastern Ladakh for giving up claims in the Northeast by accepting the McMahon Line as was its stand since 1959. India wanted a sector by sector approach to which China agreed in the fifth round in 1984.

However, in the sixth round in 1985, China took a U-turn and sought substantial concessions in the Northeast, which subsequently included the whole of then-North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and now Arunachal Pradesh. With our defences in depth, it would have been a cakewalk for China to seize the entire Tawang Sector without a fight.

Keeping these factors in mind, General Sundarji seized the opportunity to implement the “dissuasive deterrence” strategy to occupy a forward posture in the whole of Tawang Sector. In September–October 1986, he ordered mobilisation and lifted a brigade by helicopters to Zimithang and quickly occupied the dominating Hathung La and Langrola Ridges, making the Chinese intrusion untenable if hostilities began. Precautionary deployment was carried out all along the front including Eastern Ladakh.

China was taken by surprise by India’s operational strategy and it mobilised 53 and 13 Army Groups (equivalent of a Corps each). Deng Xiaoping twice issued a warning to “teach India a lesson” in October 1986 and March 1987. The Indian government was alarmed by the bold operational strategy, which could have led to war. However, General Sundarji stood firm, reminding the government of its own 1983 CCS decision and the consequence of not adopting a forward posture to safeguard our territory. As a result, the dissuasive deterrence strategy got whole-hearted political support. Arunachal Pradesh was created in December 1986.

The confrontation continued throughout the winter and until May 1987 when the visit of the Indian foreign minister paved the way for disengagement, but final de-escalation took place only in 1995. General Sundarji gave the final shape to the “dissuasive deterrence” strategy and forward posture in 1987 by conducting Exercise Chequerboard apart from the ongoing Operation Falcon, for which 10 divisions were mobilised.

On the eve of his retirement in April 1988, he moved a combat group of mechanised forces to both Eastern Ladakh and North Sikkim, and left a blueprint for additional induction as the resources became available to not only strengthen the dissuasive deterrence strategy but also take the battle to the Tibetan Plateau.

Did the ‘dissuasive deterrence’ fail in 2020?

A question often asked is, why did the dissuasive deterrence fail in 2020, resulting in the loss of 1,000 square km of territory and China re-securing the 1959 Claim Line for the first time since 1962? Unlike the Northeast, where the forward posture was on ridge lines dominating the ML/LAC, in Eastern Ladakh, vast frontage and disadvantageous terrain configuration of the LAC precluded deployment along the LAC and the forward posture per force had to be in relative depth on dominating terrain.

The key to the execution of the dissuasive deterrence was to keep the forward zone under fail safe surveillance and domination with mechanised forces predominant covering troops. Based on surveillance, contingency plans were required to preempt the PLA by securing areas on/across the LAC. The author had the privilege to induct and command the first combat group into Ladakh in July 1988 and conceptualise the employment of mechanised forces.

All that happened in April–May 2020 was foreseen and planned for 32 years ago. For example, Sirijap, east of Finger 8, was a preemptive task for my Combat Group through an amphibious operation across the Pangong Tso lake. Also, there was a need to reorganise the forces in Ladakh into combined arms grouping in the form of Integrated Battle Groups with additional induction of mechanised forces.

What happened in 2020 was not a failure of the “dissuasive deterrence” strategy, rather it was the execution that failed. We started constructing roads in sensitive areas without precautionary forward deployment of combined arms units. Our surveillance and reconnaissance failed and allowed the PLA to achieve absolute surprise. Consequently, contingency plans could not be executed. The formations were not reorganised as combined arms groupings and the available mechanised forces were inadequate.

Even after the Galwan clash, when adequate forces were available, the riposte in form of a quid pro quo on/across the LAC was timid. Rather than secure the entire Kailash Range from Helmet to Changla Pass in the Indus Valley, it was restricted to a 30 km belt up to Rechin La.

The “dissuasive deterrence” strategy has withstood the test of time and remains our best bet to stalemate China albeit with necessary modifications.

Global Watch | Seventeen-Point Agreement: A Story That Traces Origin of China’s Betrayal of Tibet

22 May 2024, [News18](#), Arun Anand

The Tibetan issue still remains alive with the support of the international Tibetan community. Their struggle against Chinese imperialism shows that China’s goal of forceful assimilation of Tibet has yet not materialised fully.

Around 73 years ago, on 23 May, the ‘Seventeen-Point Agreement’ was signed between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Tibetan government headed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Claimed by China as the “Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”, this agreement officially established Chinese legitimacy over Tibet. However, the 1951 Seventeen-Point Agreement and the developments in its aftermath soon attracted controversy, exposing the Chinese government’s imperialist intent and the start of what is currently known as the decades-old Tibetan issue,

reflected in Tibetans' prolonged fight of protecting their identity and territorial autonomy.



China's annexation of Tibet has continued to trigger protests from Tibetans since the 1959 uprising. (Image: Reuters)

The Tibetan issue is essentially a conflict over history, for the Chinese and Tibetans have had contention regarding Tibet's sovereignty prior to the 1951 agreement. While the Chinese believe that Tibet did not possess any sovereignty when the Qing dynasty fell in 1912, the Tibetans are of the opinion that Tibet has always been a sovereign nation, with occasional suzerainty over it exercised by the Mongolian, Nepalese, Chinese and the British at different periods of time.

Notwithstanding the contention, the fact remains that the Seventeen-Point Agreement is the only agreement that the Chinese government has signed with any non-Han ethnic group. Which brings to the question, why did China enter into an agreement in 1951, if Tibet was already a sovereign part of China? Traditionally, Tibet comprised three provinces – central Tibet (called Chamdo), Kham (in the south) and Amdo (in the northeast). The first attack on Tibetan sovereignty by the CCP took place in 1950, what came to be known as the Battle of Chamdo.

However, fearing Tibetan resistance, the Chinese quickly opted for negotiations to subjugate the entire Tibet under the garb of peaceful agreement. This resulted in the CCP-drafted Seventeen-Point Agreement in 1951, with Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, former Chamdo's governor-general, representing the Tibetan delegation.

These were salient points of the agreement: The agreement recognised Tibet as part of China (Point 1), with China being responsible for Tibet's external affairs (Point 14). Moreover, with the Tibetan government's assistance, the Chinese military was to enter Tibet and consolidate its national defences (Point 2). At the same time, Tibet's right to exercise autonomy was also recognised (Point 3). The CCP also

guaranteed that the existing political system, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama would remain unaltered (Point 4), while the religious beliefs and customs of the Tibetan people would be respected and protected (Point 7). Internal reforms were to be implemented only after consultation with the Tibetan leaders (Point 11).

Thus, the Seventeen-Point Agreement states the liberation of Tibet from internal and external enemies, under the impression of a "one country, two systems". Negotiations and the final signing of the agreement took place in Beijing under the strict watch of the CCP, whereby the Tibetan delegation was not allowed to have any contact or discussion outside Beijing. The Chinese thus were able to push through their agendas by arm-twisting the Tibetan delegation. However, the façade of the Seventeen-Point agreement was short-lived and soon actions of the Chinese in Tibet brought forward a reality far from the one promised in the agreement.

CCP soon violated the terms of the agreement in an attempt to establish quick and complete control over the Tibetan region. The land reforms were introduced by the CCP in Tibet without consulting the Tibetan government, marginalising Tibetans in their own country. It included attacks on Tibetan culture and language, gave Chinese control over economic and natural resources and favoured Han Chinese immigration.

In 1956, the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region (PCTAR) was established by the CCP to make way for political authority to be transferred from the Tibetan government to a Chinese-created and controlled administration, thus violating the Seventeen-Point Agreement. These measures paved the way for growing discontent among Tibetans, leading to the rise of Tibetan armed rebels.

It is recorded that between 1952-58, the Chinese Army crushed 966 such rebellions and killed about 10,000 Tibetans in Kanlho's northeastern region. By 1956, the rebellion against the Chinese began to gain full momentum in Kham and Amdo and further spread to U-Tsang and Lhasa. Despite the rebellion, the CCP went on to implement democratic reforms in eastern Tibet, gaining legal rights over Tibetan property. Another reform under the Commune System gave the Chinese direct access over Tibetan agricultural resources.

All these measures were a gross violation of the Seventeen-Point Agreement which ultimately led to the Tibetan Uprising of 1959 against Chinese occupation. To cull down the uprising, the Chinese undertook major military intervention, which forced the Dalai Lama to flee Tibet anticipating arrest by Chinese forces, and sought refuge in India. In India, the Dalai Lama repudiated the Seventeen-Point

Agreement, claiming it to be signed by the Tibetan delegation under duress, without the knowledge of the Tibetan government.

Meanwhile, the Chinese annexation of Tibet was completed after the violent suppression of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising by the Chinese military. In China's White Paper on Tibet, it is claimed that it is in 1959, that "90 per cent of Tibetans were freed from serfdom." In 1965, the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) was established by Beijing, replacing the former Tibetan administration, marking the death of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Thus began China's assimilationist policy in Tibet, endangering Tibetan autonomy guaranteed (by China) in the Seventeen-Point Agreement (Points 3,4,7 and 11).

Championed by Mao Zedong, the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) unleashed further brutality of the Chinese government, proving to be a disaster for Tibetan culture. During this time, Tibet became Beijing's test ground to implement Mao's calling to crush the four olds (thoughts, customs, habits and culture). Tibetan religious texts, flags and even photographs of the Dalai Lama were burned and Tibetan schools were shut down, essentially targeting Tibetan identity and traditions. Jokhang Temple's (Tibetan Buddhist's most sacred site) teaching courtyard was converted as a venue for "Struggle Sessions", a practice during the Cultural Revolution whereby people accused of being political rivals were subjected to public humiliation, abuse and torture.

Most people subjected to struggle sessions in Jokhang Temple were Tibetan monks, businessmen, landowners and those associated with the former Tibetan government. It is believed that at least 92,000 Tibetans subjected to China's "struggle sessions" died or were driven to commit suicide, while 173,000 Tibetans died in various labour camp prisons. Moreover, the Tibetan monasteries were plundered and desecrated by the Red Guards. It is estimated that by the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, more than 6,000 monasteries in Tibet were destroyed. This remained as one of the early attempts by the Chinese government to eradicate Tibetan identity and culture, in its efforts to assimilate Tibetan identity into majoritarian Han culture.

China's annexation of Tibet has continued to trigger protests from Tibetans since the 1959 uprising. The Tibetans are relentlessly raising their voice for their independence that was unjustly snatched by the Chinese communist rule. This was reflected in the 1987 protests, the 2008 protest and the self-immolation protests witnessed from 2009-2012. At the same time, China continued with its draconian measures to suppress the Tibetan voice, reflected in its bilingual education policy aimed at erasing Tibetan identity, imposition of martial laws in 1989, strike hard

campaign in 2009, or Sinicisation of Tibet policy in 2021.

However, the Tibetan issue still remains alive with the support of the international Tibetan community. Their struggle against Chinese imperialism shows that China's goal of forceful assimilation of Tibet has yet not materialised fully.

'Thread of Beads': China's Cartographic Aggression Against India

21 May 2024, [Domino Theory](#), Tenzing Dhamdul

China is renaming locations in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, as part of its strategic encroachment into Indian territory through occupied Tibet.

The wind caught me differently and the people were all welcoming wherever I went. They spoke Hindi rather than Mandarin and proudly identified themselves as Indians. This was Tawang,¹ a majestic district in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering not only Tibet (occupied now by China) but also Bhutan. My visit to this region and China's recent actions, particularly the renaming of 30 locations in the region on March 30, 2024,² reignited my focus on Arunachal Pradesh, prompting me to collaborate with my friends Tenzin Sherap and Tenzin Younten on an issue brief to delve deeper into the matter.

Our research, published under the title "Thread of Beads: An analysis of China's renaming of 62 locations in the India state of Arunachal Pradesh since 2017,"³ sheds light on the broader narrative and objectives underlying China's actions. By contesting and encroaching upon sovereign Indian territory, China seeks to advance its "Chinese Dream,"⁴ which it wants to fulfil by 2049, directly impinging upon "Viksit Bharat,"⁵ India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047. The timing of these actions, notably coinciding with India's general and state elections, including elections in Arunachal Pradesh, raises suspicions regarding China's motives, which have been highlighted by many China observers and researchers in India.⁶

The response from the Indian government,⁷ the Indian media and other stakeholders has predominantly been dismissive and reactionary. While such responses are warranted, it is imperative to recognize the significance of these frequent and concerted actions, particularly in the context of China's utilization of the "Three Warfares"⁸ strategic framework, which was adopted around 2003. Despite India's response, there is a palpable concern that China may be gaining ground in this form of engagement.

The Three Warfares are public opinion/media warfare, psychological warfare and legal warfare, also known as “lawfare.”

Our analysis has revealed China’s calculated efforts in weaving what we termed the “Thread of Beads” across the Northern Himalayan front of India. Analogous to the “String of Pearls”⁹ strategic initiative in the Indo-Pacific region, China’s actions along its border with India are methodically conditioning the area for potential annexation. Of particular concern is the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which our study has focused on. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of “South Tibet”¹⁰ (Zangnan, 藏南), as seen in official Chinese maps. South Tibet spans over 90,000 km², as per official Chinese documents, news outlets, social media platforms and other agencies,¹¹ all of which possess a wider reach than their Indian counterparts. China’s territorial claims over regions in Arunachal Pradesh derive from its historical occupation of Tibet and Tibet’s erstwhile legitimate claims to certain regions of northern Arunachal Pradesh, including Tawang. However, Tibet’s claims were addressed through the 1914 Shimla Convention,¹² where the “McMahon Line”¹³ was delineated and mutually agreed upon by then-independent Tibet and British India. Despite China’s participation in the convention, it refrained from signing the eventual agreement. Tibetans even now see Arunachal Pradesh as an inalienable part of India’s sovereign territory. In our issue brief we have proven this by the 2001 Tibet and Adjacent Areas under Communist China’s Occupation Map by Amnye Machen Institute: Tibetan Centre for Advanced Studies,¹⁴ which clearly shows Arunachal Pradesh as part of India, aligning with Indian official records, the Tibetan government in exile and widely cited by scholars in the field of Tibetan Studies. Among the 62 locations recently renamed by China in Arunachal Pradesh, two sites hold major significant historical ties to the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet:

1. Ugyenling (Wujianling, 烏間嶺)¹⁵: Designated as the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsyang Gyatso, this location holds profound spiritual and cultural importance in Tibetan Buddhism. The inclusion of Ugyenling in China’s official mapping efforts raises questions regarding China’s intentions and motivations in asserting control over areas with historical ties to Tibetan religious figures. Ugyenling was renamed Wujianling on April 13, 2017.
2. Hathung-La (Hadong Shankou, 哈東山口): This strategic ridge near Khinzemane Village holds particular significance due to its association with the Dalai Lama’s escape from Tibet in 1959. The village served as a pivotal point in the Dalai Lama’s journey to

seek asylum in India, marking a momentous event in Tibetan history. The anecdote of the Dalai Lama planting his walking stick,¹⁶ which later grew into the Holy Tree at Khinzemane, further adds to the site’s cultural and spiritual significance. It is noteworthy that China did not assert claims over this territory as part of its proclaimed “South Tibet” during the Dalai Lama’s escape in 1959.¹⁷ Hathung-La was renamed Hadong Shankou on March 30, 2024.

Since 2017, China, under the Ministry of Civil Affairs, has been assigning standardized names to a total of 62 locations, along with the release of official maps depicting these locations. Our research indicates that these 62 locations are strategically positioned and can be categorized according to their geography or the district in which they are located:

Figure 1: Geographical features of the 62 locations renamed by China in Arunachal Pradesh since 2017

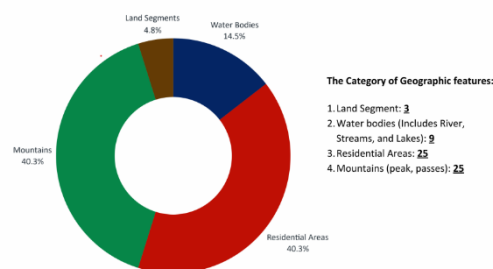


Image courtesy of the Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives (FNVA) and the Center for Contemporary Studies in Security and Technology (CCSST)

1. Geographically:
 - The 62 locations cover the geographic terrains of mountains, bodies of water, residential areas and land segments (地片).
 - Mountains and residential areas are associated with 25 locations each, totaling 50 out of the 62 locations. The targeting of mountains and residential areas is perhaps not surprising, given both would be crucial variables in an actual hot war.
2. District-wise:
 - There are 26 districts in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The 62 renamed locations are located in 17 of these districts.
 - The majority of the renamed locations are in six districts: Papum Pare (the district inside which the capital city Itanagar is located, with Itanagar also having the special status of being a separate district); Tawang; Dibang Valley (the largest district in size and sharing some of the longest borders with Tibet); Upper Siang (borders Tibet); Upper Subansiri (borders Tibet); West Kameng (formerly Tawang was part of this district); and East Siang. More than six renamed locations are located in each of these districts. Seven

renamed locations are in West Kameng and East Siang each.

China creates a 'Thread of Beads' in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh



Since 2017 a total of 62 locations have been renamed by China creating an encirclement in the entire region

Image courtesy of the Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives (FNVA) and the Center for Contemporary Studies in Security and Technology (CCSST)

China's modus operandi in its territorial expansionist agenda often begins with a standardized naming and mapping exercise, as evidenced by its past actions in Tibet and Bhutan. Through the gradual establishment of legitimacy over sovereign territories among its populace, China proceeds to illegally annex these areas. A striking example is the case of the Kula Kangri Peak area,¹⁸ where China's persistent pressure, starting with standardized mapping and naming, eventually led to Bhutan conceding to Chinese claims.¹⁹ This process underscores the significance of understanding China's tactics in territorial disputes and their broader implications.

In Tibet, China, first under the Nationalist government, initiated its territorial assertions through the standardization of maps and names, laying the groundwork for subsequent illegal annexation. Through establishing a sense of legitimacy over Tibetan territories among its populace, China gradually expanded its control, with the Communist government ultimately invading Tibet in 1950.²⁰ The case of Tibet serves as a blueprint for China's approach to territorial expansion, highlighting the importance of standardized mapping exercises in advancing its geopolitical objectives.

The precedent set by China's actions in Tibet and Bhutan carries significant implications regarding the standardization of maps and names, which serves as a precursor to illegal annexation, highlighting the need for vigilant monitoring of China's territorial assertions. Moreover, the willingness of neighboring countries to concede to Chinese claims underscores the asymmetric power dynamics at play and the challenges faced by smaller nations in resisting Chinese influence.

However, India is certainly not Bhutan, or Tibet for that matter (the latter being officially part of China, with China only recognizing a portion of its territory based

on the Shimla Convention, which it uses as per its convenience). India's heightened security measures and development of infrastructure in Arunachal Pradesh show it is taking China's cartographic aggression seriously. The recent inauguration of the Sela Pass tunnel²¹ sparked strong condemnation from China. To give an idea of the scope of the strategic infrastructural development that has taken place on India's side of the border, on a previous visit, I found it hard to get a 4G signal. Now one can conduct entire video call sessions without issue. This, despite India's continued geographical challenges in the mountainous regions on its side of the border, which is less of an issue for China, as Tibet is largely a plateau.²²

There is a clear push here from China, and with the exercises carried out in Tibet, we should remain cognisant of how effective China's Three Warfares framework and other policies have been, especially when it comes to renaming locations. Many identify Tibet and its major cities by "Standardized" Chinese names now, and China last year replaced the use of Tibet with Xizang on official documents.²³

This may be the fate of locations in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, if India does not adopt a multifaceted approach that encompasses diplomatic, strategic and narrative countermeasures to safeguard its territorial integrity, national interests and the livelihoods of its people in the regions China covets.

History, culture are foundations for understanding China's politics: renowned Spanish expert

20 May 2024, [Global Times](#), Xie Wenting and Bai Yunyi



Xulio Rios Photo: Xie Wenting/Global Times

GT: In your opinion, what are the differences between Chinese modernization and Western modernization?

Rios: This is a complex comparison. In my view, the trajectory of modernization in China and the West has significant differences. The modernization of developed Western countries is largely built on the conquest and exploitation of other countries, while China's modernization is built on its own social and economic development.

There are also important differences in development models. China's economic model combines both market and planning elements. However, in many Western countries, we do not see this kind of integration. I believe that this both market-oriented and government-planned economic model has achieved positive results and remains effective.

One of the most important characteristics of the Chinese path to modernization is that it preserves true sovereignty. China makes decisions based on its own interests, and sets its own pace and model, rather than accepting externally imposed decisions. This is a completely different experience and produces different results.

GT: You have said in previous interviews that China has achieved its goals through its own development path and approach, and that many of China's experiences will undoubtedly be worth learning from. In which areas do you think China's experiences are worth learning from for other countries?

Rios: One of the most important lessons from the Chinese path to modernization for other countries is to think for themselves, make their own judgments on issues, and determine policies based on their overall interests rather than external evaluations or waiting for external guidance. I think this is a key point. Besides, I believe it is necessary for many countries to deeply analyze China's policies in various aspects, which may be applicable to some countries and not to others. I have noticed that some developing countries have established economic zones like China, some of which have been successful and some not so successful, due to differences in education levels, labor force, and capabilities in the public and private sectors.

However, undoubtedly, China's model can serve as a reference for many countries, which can then adjust according to their own circumstances. Just as China has said, it cannot copy the models of other countries, nor does it want to impose its own model on other countries. Copying is not a good solution, but Chinese experiences such as strengthening the capacity of the public sector and re-examining collectivist values can serve as reference points for other countries.

GT: *In your opinion, what has been the biggest misunderstanding about China by the West in recent years?*

Rios: I think the biggest misunderstanding about China by the West in recent years is about China's strategic intentions. Some Westerners believe that China wants to revive its past glory, weaken the West, and put the West in a difficult situation.

Therefore, there is a great deal of disagreement about China's rise, with some believing that they must protect themselves from the threat of a powerful China. But for another part of the Western population,

China represents an opportunity. They want to engage in dialogue and understand China's policies. We cannot expect China, with highly developed productivity and technology, to exist in Asia in isolation. As its strength grows, it is logical for China's position on the global stage to rise. However, it will take more time for (Western countries) to adapt to this process and adjust their responses accordingly. But one thing is very clear: We cannot push China aside to manage this world.

India needs to counter China's united front tactics

19 May 2024, [Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

United front tactics involve the mobilization of various groups to serve a singular strategic interest.

In the complex geopolitical landscape of the 21st century, the art of statecraft has evolved beyond traditional diplomacy and military engagements. One of the most nuanced forms of this evolution is the concept of "united front" tactics—a strategy that China has been increasingly employing in its interactions with India.

At its core, united front tactics involve the mobilization of various groups to serve a singular strategic interest. For China, this translates into a multifaceted approach towards India, aiming to influence its political decisions, economic policies, and public opinion to align with Chinese interests.

One of the most covert aspects of China's united front tactics is cyber warfare. Reports of cyberattacks on India's critical infrastructure, such as the power grid, have raised alarms about the silent invasion that could cripple a nation without a single soldier crossing its borders. These digital strikes are not just about immediate disruption; they are a psychological tool, instilling a sense of vulnerability within the Indian state.

China's strategy extends to influence operations that target the very fabric of Indian society. By cultivating relationships with influential individuals, think-tanks, and cultural organizations, China seeks to create a narrative conducive to its worldview. The Confucius Institutes, for example, have been at the centre of controversy, with allegations of them being a front for espionage and propaganda.

The battleground has shifted from physical territories to the cognitive realm. Disinformation campaigns and the manipulation of media narratives are part of China's arsenal to destabilize and confuse. The aim is to create a parallel reality where facts are malleable, and truth is what the Party deems it to be. China's united front work also includes soft power initiatives. Cultural exchange programs and outreach to the Indian diaspora are designed to foster a positive image of China, countering the negative press it often

receives. These efforts are subtle yet powerful, as they shape perceptions over the long term.

The Doklam standoff and the clashes in the Galwan Valley are stark reminders of the military dimension of China's united front tactics. These confrontations serve a dual purpose: demonstrating China's military might and testing India's resolve. They are a physical manifestation of the psychological and political pressure exerted through other united front activities. India stands at a crossroads, facing a neighbour that wields united front tactics with strategic finesse. The challenge for India is to recognize these manoeuvres and counter them with a united front of its own—a coalition of democratic nations, robust cybersecurity measures, and a resilient civil society that can withstand the allure and assault of China's strategic chessboard.

As we navigate this era of new-age warfare, it is imperative for India and like-minded nations to develop a comprehensive understanding of united front tactics and devise counter-strategies that uphold their sovereignty and democratic values.

The importance of being Tibet's 14th Dalai Lama

19 May 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Mohan Guruswamy

The 14th Dalai Lama (spiritual name: Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso), who was born on July 6, 1935, has been resident in India since 1959, and is the highest spiritual leader and most revered head of Tibetan Buddhism. When I had visited Tibet, it was common to see ordinary Tibetans discreetly wearing his medallion. It was also very common to see his pictures in most Tibetan-owned shops in Tibet, Yunnan and Qinghai. The Dalai Lama's ecclesiastical influence extends into India's border areas such as Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh. Despite a historical political identity entwined with China, Tibet has traditionally looked towards India for moral and spiritual sustenance. Tibet has had a long history of struggle with China and the present Dalai Lama is not the first one to seek refuge in India. The British had an active policy to create a buffer against China in the form of an independent Tibet. The Chinese Amban (plenipotentiary) in Lhasa watched the Younghusband expedition's exertions in Tibet passively and one immediate consequence of this was an assertion of Tibet's independence. After the establishment of the Republic of China with Sun Yat Sen as President on January 1, 1912, in April that year the 13th Dalai Lama declared the end of Tibet's relationship with China and expelled the Amban and all Chinese troops. Almost immediately after their civil war triumph in 1949, the Chinese Communists reasserted control over Tibet, which had by then enjoyed over four decades of independence. Since then, India has tried to head off

the Tibet problem by accepting its annexation into the People's Republic of China. In the years since, the Chinese Communists tried to solve the Tibet problem by attempting to wipe out Tibetan nationalism and Buddhism with Mao's Communism. It didn't succeed. This policy has now been replaced by the creeping "Hanisation" and massive doses of economic development. These too have worked only partially for the Chinese, but they seemed to do better with this than with the Maoist iron hand.

Though Tibet is now relatively passive, it still remains a dry tinderbox and the Chinese dread the likelihood of any spark that may set off a fire. For India too, the policy has worked partially. Over 150,000 Tibetan refugees now live in India, and India has willy-nilly become the fulcrum of a worldwide struggle by the Tibetans to regain their nation. In short, the Tibet issue, though dormant now, is still very much alive and whether India likes it or not, it is being played out in its front yard. Central to this sustained struggle has been the international stature of the Dalai Lama, who has become the symbol of many ideals and images. The mix of new age spiritualism, ethics, ecological values and politics has won for the Dalai Lama many influential and wealthy Western adherents to Tibetan Buddhism and supporters of Tibet's cause. Today, the tiny enclave of McLeodganj, a suburb of Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh, is a magnet that draws large numbers of young Westerners seeking a new meaning to and purpose in life. It draws top political personalities like Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, and top Hollywood actors like Richard Gere and Uma Thurman. Both China and India must worry about a post-Dalai Lama period. Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama to be a living God. But he is also human and must die like all humans. He is now 88 years old, and time is certainly not on his side. As long as he is alive, he keeps the embers of Tibetan nationalism from conflagrating with the blanket of the new age Buddhism that he has woven. When this Dalai Lama is gone, the embers might just combust. The chosen leadership of the exiles will not go unchallenged. The Chinese Communists will almost certainly try to foist their own incarnation and will try to legitimise it with all the power available to them. It is unlikely that they will succeed, but it will certainly obfuscate the situation and preclude any future compromise on the issue of the spiritual leadership of the Tibetan Buddhists. While the spiritual leadership may be contested, it is almost inevitable that a new generation of Tibetan exiles will stake a claim for the temporal leadership of the Tibetan nationalist movement. If this is contested by the regency around the India-based incarnation, then we will almost certainly see a competition for the hearts and minds of young Tibetans and this will inevitably lead to more assertive postures as the

different factions jockey for power. Such internal struggles often result in greater militancy, with India has its base. On the other hand, we may see a duality of leadership emerging among the Tibetan exiles, a spiritual leadership that tends to the soul and a militant leadership that leads the struggle for attainment of political goals. It is due to the Dalai Lama's foresight and sagacity that the contours of such a dual leadership is now emerging, with the second tallest Buddhist ecclesiastical figure, Ugen Thinley, the Karmapa (now in Germany), and the Sikyong (president) of the government-in-exile, Tempa Tshering. Both now enjoy much stature among émigré Tibetan groups and within Tibet. From the Indian perspective, the rise of an alternate religious leader in the interim would well prevent the splintering of the Tibetan Buddhist movement. The young Karmapa might well provide this. Geographically and ethnically, much of Ladakh is an extension of the Tibetan Changthang, and the main language spoken is a Tibetan dialect. The Tawang tract in the other end was, till it was annexed by India in the early 1950s, under the temporal control of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa. We must not forget that the border dispute with China is in reality a border dispute with Tibet. It is another matter that if Tibet was truly independent, it would have been unable to assert its claims in the way that the Chinese did. The Chinese claims to "Tawang and surrounding areas" is largely based on a claim made by the present Dalai Lama in the late 1940s, when he wrote a letter to the government of newly independent India laying formal claim to it. Two decades from now, China will be an aging nation and hence it feels that it must make the best of the present opportunity. Its periodic aggressiveness with India has more to do with this, than any parcels of land. The transition of Tibetan leadership is a major consideration.

Onus on India to exert pressure on China over Tibet

18 May 2024, [Tribune India](#), Gen. Ashok Mehta



Takeover: The most worrying aspect of recent developments in Tibet is the depth and scale of Sinicisation of the region. istock

AFTER needling China for its unilateral breach of protocols and attempts to alter the status quo in eastern Ladakh, India went on to call China a bully and expressed hope — for the first time since 1962 — that the US would come to its aid against the Dragon (going by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane's statement at the India-US Defence Summit in February). A few weeks ago, India reached out to the Philippines with a pledge to stand by it in its dispute with China in the South China Sea and sold it BrahMos missiles.

All this is quite something, but New Delhi has stopped short of talking about Tibet, even though Beijing has continued to rename in Mandarin several places in 'south Tibet' (parts of Arunachal Pradesh). The last time New Delhi upped the ante over Tibet was in 2010, when it stopped talking about the One China policy during parleys with Beijing. Of late, former Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane has spoken at public forums on Tibet's annexation and its demand for autonomy. The Forum for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA), an NGO, is espousing the Tibetan cause. It has several former government officials and veterans supporting it. Since 2008, it has issued policy papers, with the most recent in 2022: Resetting India's Tibet Policy. Prior to Independence, Gen Sir Francis Tuker, in his paper, Defence of India, had highlighted the strategic salience of Tibet and advised early occupation to pre-empt the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) from doing so. The rest is history.

On April 25 in Dharamsala, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, repeated its longstanding demand for the return of the 11th Panchen Lama at a function to celebrate his 35th birthday. Panchen Lama, who was abducted by the Chinese government, has been missing for the past 29 years. Tsering informed journalists at the ceremony that the Tibetan government in exile had been engaged in back channel talks with Beijing since last year; dialogue being resumed after nine rounds ended in 2010. Tibetans are pitching for greater autonomy in sync with the Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy.

Promptly, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin, without refuting the back channel claim, reacted: "China does not legitimise government in exile at Dharamsala; the so-called Xizang (Chinese for Tibet) government in exile is totally against the Chinese constitution and laws and is illegal. No country has recognised it". He clarified that talks had been held with representatives of the Dalai Lama and not with the envoys of the government in exile. In February, the US House of Representatives had passed a Bill that would push China to resolve the outstanding Tibet-China dispute through talks with the Dalai Lama's envoys.

In response to the BJP seeking public suggestions for its election manifesto, the FNVA sent

recommendations to the saffron party and the RSS — re-establishing India's diplomatic mission in Lhasa as a quid pro quo for additional Chinese missions/offices in India; no foreign interference in the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama; preservation of Tibetan Buddhism; and creating a joint India-China commission on the Brahmaputra river, similar to the one in the Indus Water Treaty Commission with Pakistan. Other recommendations were the restoration of pilgrimage routes to Kailash Mansarovar through Nathu La, commencing one from Demchok and reviving the routes via Nepal; and encouraging China to continue with an outcome-related dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives for early resolution of the Tibet-China dispute.

The ruling party has not bitten the bullet, though in the 1970s, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh had sought autonomy for Tibet in its manifesto.

The most worrying aspect of recent developments in Tibet is the depth and scale of Sinicisation of the region. Since President Xi Jinping took charge in 2013, China has been trying to erase Tibet's cultural identity of Tibetan Buddhism. A white paper issued in November 2022 titled CPC Policies on the Governance of Xizang in the New Era: Approach and Achievements is silent on the colonial boarding school system and massive relocation programme to diminish Tibetan culture. Around 8,00,000 children/youngsters in the age group of six to 18 years are being educated in Chinese in a highly politicised curriculum. Tibetans are forced to send their children to these schools in cities. If parents refuse, they are blacklisted, their welfare benefits are stopped and kids can't go to school ever. Their political indoctrination is systematic. Inter-marriage with Hans yields a reward of 20,000 yuan.

The military buildup is spectacular: six-lane highways, double-line railway to Shigatse from Lhasa and from Lhasa to Gormu. Of the seven million Tibetans, only around 8,000 have joined the PLA, but that will change with military conscription being ordered in the mainland. Reports suggest that over 2.3 lakh Han Chinese were settled in Tibet till 2020. The Tibetan population in Dharamsala is diminishing as Tibetans are unable to flee Tibet since Nepal has clamped down on free passage. A decade ago, 2,000 youth used to escape from Tibet every year. Now, it is just a trickle of six to eight persons. Last year, two women — Namkyi and Tsering Kyi — escaped from Tibet via Nepal and reached Dharamsala to narrate the grave human rights violations in their homeland.

At this rate, the Tibetan population in US could overtake the 66,000 Tibetans left in Dharamsala, and the government in exile might consider shifting there. The Central Tibetan Administration is frustrated with India for its silence on Tibet but extremely grateful for the sanctuary and hospitality. It is time for India to take a call on Tibet as Beijing digs deeper into Arunachal

Pradesh and continues with Sinicisation of Tibet. China's latest warning was on the construction of the Sela tunnel and the planned deployment of an additional 10,000 troops opposite central Tibet. As China ratchets up its claim to south Tibet, India needs to gently open the Tibet front by urging Beijing to settle the Tibet-China differences and follow up with reopening its mission at Lhasa. After a hiatus of 18 months, China has sent an ambassador, Xu Feihong, who arrived in New Delhi recently. And with the election results next month, the new normal is going to change.

China's 'virtual invasion' of India and the cultural genocide of Tibet

18 May, 2024, [RFA](#), Marco Respinti and Aaron Rhodes

There is no border between India and the People's Republic of China (PRC). In the northwest and northeast, India adjoins Tibet. It is not necessary for your Indian interlocutor to be a die-hard nationalist to think this way.

As a matter of fact, this is what a large number of Indians have believed since 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in Beijing. Their reasoning is that Tibet is a sovereign political entity occupied by the People's Republic of China, and that it should regain independence within its historical borders.

On the other hand, the CCP claims that Tibet has always been a part of China.

Powered by this claim, one of the weapons of the PRC's foreign offensive are geographical maps where boundary disputes are used as tools for sinicization of Tibet. In this pursuit, the CCP is indefatigable.

On March 30, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the PRC committed its latest misappropriation of Indian toponyms, changing 30 placenames in the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Eleven residential areas, 12 mountains, four rivers, one lake, one mountain pass and a piece of land were given new Chinese names in simplified Chinese ideograms, Tibetan script and pinyin rendering as well as in the Roman alphabet.

Chinese names

For each of those places, geographical coordinates are also duly furnished as well as a high-resolution map. The CCP ceremoniously celebrated the event with all the technicalities needed to make it seem an important and legitimate operation..

The sinicization of toponyms in Arunachal Pradesh is only the latest offensive in an ongoing campaign that Beijing has launched in recent years.

The inaugural step of the campaign took place on April 13, 2017, when the ministry officialized the change of six place names. The second move was made official

on Dec. 29, 2021, and it included the change of 15 toponyms . The third came on April 2, 2023, when 11 place names were sinicized as well.

It is noteworthy that the official announcement of the first change explicitly defines it as the “first batch,” implying there was more to come. However, nowhere is it written that the new March 2024 fourth batch in this series should be constructed as being the last one. It is a bit like playing a board game. None of the newly renamed real places in Arunachal Pradesh came under the PRC’s sovereignty as a result of the contrived Chinese maps, and the occupation of sovereign Indian territory that the new toponyms seem to indicate has not happened.

Chinese logic

But the CCP’s move is consciously aiming to achieve a clear psychological effect – achieved by presenting the change of names as the direct consequence of a specific logic.

The territory that India calls Arunachal Pradesh doesn’t exist as such, the CCP asserts. It is just a portion of the PRC’s sovereign territory, it maintains. So, it concludes, place names can’t be Indian and must be Chinese, and new maps must show this to the entire world.

The CCP’s claim that Arunachal Pradesh doesn’t exist is based on the view that the Indian state by that name is simply a part of Tibet, which, the CCP underlines, has always been an integral part of China.

According to CCP propaganda, that part of “China’s Tibet” that Delhi Indianizes under the “fake” name of Arunachal Pradesh is simply a portion of Southern Tibet, or “Zangnan,” as the Chinese regime calls it.

This assertion has been continuously perpetrated by the PRC since 1950, with the annexation and then military occupation of Tibet, which was in fact, a different, independent country.

Cultural genocide

The Chinese invasion of Tibet, completed with the Battle of Lhasa in 1959 and its suppression of Tibetan identity, harsh religious persecution and other serious encroachments on liberty amount to a cultural genocide, as Tibetan leaders in exile have repeatedly asserted.

Playing chess with the lives of millions of people has always been the policy of the Chinese regime in Tibet. This war of maps is rooted in the disputed border lines that separate India and PRC, where de facto, agreed-upon, and legal borders have not coincided since the time of British India.

This dispute was complicated by the emergence of a highly ideological and aggressive regime in China in 1949. The game of maps that the CCP plays is quite sophisticated: It alternates its claim that some Indian territories are Tibetan – therefore belonging to China – with the dismemberment of “ethnic Tibet.”

Thus, the sinicizing of Arunachal Pradesh is a cynical attempt to legitimize the permanent subjugation of an entire people as a *fait accompli* confirmed by an international border.

This curtailment and disrespect of India’s sovereignty shows that what the PRC wants, the PRC gets – even if it comes at the price of culturally and politically attacking a foreign nation.

For its part, India rebukes this aggression, repeating that any boundary dispute regarding Arunachal Pradesh or other bordering lines, these must be discussed with Tibet, not the PRC – because Tibet is not the PRC, and will never be.

Totalitarian arrogance may pretend to change history and reality. It devastates societies, traditions and individual freedom, but it will ultimately fail.

Will China Succeed in Creating an Asian Security Order?

18 May 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Richard Ghiasy and Jagannath Panda

China’s vision for the Asian security order has a strong emphasis on cooperative security, but Beijing, despite new initiatives, is not quite sure how to make it happen. From April 18-23 2024, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a three-nation tour of Cambodia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. The trip is part of a packed diplomatic agenda that’s been in motion since the start of the year which looks to consolidate China’s status in Asia as the prime geoeconomic and geopolitical influencer.

Visits by leaders and other high-level officials, including from Russia, the Global South and rich European states like Germany, to China and by China’s President Xi Jinping and high-level Chinese officials to various parts of the world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, will test the waters for China’s three world order-building projects: namely the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI).



Credit: Depositphotos

Diplomatically, politically, and economically, China has already leapfrogged ahead of other regional giants, taking its place among the global superpowers. Yet, thus far, China has been lagging in building an effective Asian security order, one naturally centered on Chinese interests. Importantly, China appears to be very aware of the complexity of promoting and developing an Asian security order: that is to say, the institutions and principles that guide security relations between states.

Could the three new initiatives be the solution for an Asian security order?

A Pan-Asian “Processual” Chinese Vision?

To a degree, China has a vision for Asia’s security order through its emergent GSI. Still, it is primarily processual, i.e., the process and principles of multilaterally achieving a (as-yet undetermined) security order rather than a set-in-stone vision for an Asian security order. This processual vision is pan-Asian, but China’s rhetoric changes by region, reflecting regional realities.

There is, of course, no single Asian security order or architecture. Nor is there unanimity on the number of security orders in Asia, their scope, and their specifics. Therefore, one way to “dissect” the Asian security order is regional – even if these do not operate in silos. The five Asian regions – West (the Middle East), Central, South, Southeast, and East Asia – have dissimilar and varying degrees of security order.

China’s geographic position in Asia grants it a unique (dis)advantage: China is positioned amid these five regions. If we include Afghanistan in West Asia, China is contiguous to all five Asian regions – the only Asian nation to which this applies. This gives China a stake and role in all of Asia’s security orders, from landlocked Central Asia to the other four with their strong maritime dimensions.

How do these five regions figure in China’s security ordering priorities?

Ranking Asia’s Regions in China’s Security Order

Distant as it sits from China, the West Asian security disorder does not amply affect China’s security, and its substantial fossil fuel imports have seen little impact from regional armed conflict. Rather, Central Asia and its periphery have historically been a significant threat to China’s security. Today that is no longer the case. Russia, the Central Asian states, and China have found a calm, predictable *modus vivendi* in a region with a wide range of mostly Russian-dominated security-ordering institutions.

Like West and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, too, lacks a resident great power. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a “soft-edged,” non-threatening supranational body that touts its centrality and normative value, i.e., inclusive, cooperative, and multilateral security ordering norms. It is no threat to China. Yet, the geographic crux of the

U.S.-led Indo-Pacific strategy sits right at Southeast Asia and its waters, and it is in this theater that China-U.S. contestation arguably plays out the strongest.

Unlike Southeast Asia, South Asia has a minimal security order, primarily due to the geopolitical rift at the heart of the region between the most prominent players, India and Pakistan. To thwart India’s rise and to establish a more permanent role in the region and the Indian Ocean –the site of crucial supply lines – China is quite actively engaged in the security ordering process in South Asia.

China is also unnerved by India’s growing high-tech-oriented cooperation with the United States, as well as India’s newly found resonance within the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad, comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S.). China is especially averse to the Quad and looks at it as a Cold War-era relic (an “Asia-Pacific NATO”).

Notwithstanding the diverse regions of interest, it is in East Asia, where the United States with its treaty alliances with Japan and South Korea has been holding strong, that China – the region’s foremost resident leader – will be looking to reconfigure the Asian security order. Yet, it is also the most complex region in which to do so.

China’s East Asian Paradox

Of the five regions, China has the most paradoxical relationship with the U.S.-led East Asian security order. When the U.S.-led West welcomed China to the Western liberal order in the 1970s, China acquiesced to U.S. security hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. As a result, China has been a significant beneficiary, perhaps the largest in Asia, of the primarily U.S.-led and sustained liberal international order.

Economically, this order powered the globalization that has driven much of China’s modernization, and the increasingly more networked U.S.-led hub-and-spokes alliance system in the Asia-Pacific has helped keep the peace in China’s maritime periphery so that it could prosper.

However, this is the flank from which the most consequential security threats emanate for China’s core interests, increasingly driven by expanding Indo-Pacific strategies and actions, because China’s primary urban and industrial centers lie at or near its eastern and southeastern shores. China, thus, has significant issues with the U.S. alliance system, which functions as security architecture through its firm mutual defense commitments.

However, these issues have been around since long before China (re)gained great power status. China already called for revisions in 1997 when, in a joint declaration with Russia, it called for greater multipolarity in the international order, touted Westphalian sovereignty and territorial integrity, spoke of a “new era,” and opposed (U.S.-led) security alliances. China thus questioned the U.S. security role

and collective security principles long before it had the capabilities to supplant Washington.

Changing Security Concepts: Will the GSI Gain Traction?

Importantly, it was also in 1997 that China proposed a “new” interpretation of security, “the New Security Concept.” This vision promoted “common security,” in later concepts also referred to as “universal security” and increasingly as “indivisible and cooperative security” (the prior is a concept also endorsed by Russia but with 1970s European origins). The New Security Concept promoted the centrality of the United Nations and U.N. Charter, emphasizing multipolarity, multilateral security cooperation, dialogue, and diplomatic and economic cooperation over regional military blocs and military alliances (i.e. “collective security”).

However, under Xi Jinping, China has increasingly promoted geographically more ambitious and marginally more specific security visions. These include the “New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation” in 2014 and the 2017 “Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation” white paper, culminating in the broad-principles anchor concept of the GSI in 2022, and the updated 2023 version that calls for global input.

The GSI, an operational work in progress, delegitimizes the United States’ collective and highly material security approach. Unlike the U.S. security order, the GSI links security with development and emphasizes non-traditional security issues. The GSI may shape perceptions and principles across Asia and the globe, particularly among those disillusioned with the U.S.-dominated international security order and those who want to avoid a destabilizing Sino-U.S. showdown. It may gain traction in Central and West Asia and parts of South and Southeast Asia, undermining the United States’ role and vision for an Asian security order.

The Realities Behind China’s Security Vision

Zooming out from the regional to the continental, in a sense, China is forced to adhere to an open-ended multilateralist vision for Asia’s security order, for reasons of scope and geography, civilizational diversity, geopolitics, power balancing, and legitimacy. From a security lens, China needs to consider the role of 14 diverse land neighbors and a range of maritime neighbors.

These neighbors include three great/major powers (Russia, India, and Japan), four nuclear-armed states (Russia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea), a “recalcitrant” North Korea, a rising Vietnam, two great technological powers (Japan and South Korea), and the increasingly more-networked U.S. alliance system. From a maritime perspective, contrary to the United States, Europe, and India, China is “boxed in”

l security allies and partners.

Moreover, unlike Europe and the U.S. in their respective continents, China must deal with the wardens of four civilizations with distinct characteristics and aspirations: Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, and Western through the U.S. presence and influence – all spread over a gigantic terrestrial and maritime expanse.

In addition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, there are regional flashpoints and territorial disputes, arms races, intense regional and extra-regional geopolitical rivalry, and an increasing range of non-traditional security threats. Furthermore, many actors, such as India and ASEAN, seek to absorb and dilute Chinese centrality in Asian security order-building through multilateralism.

China’s Global South-Oriented Non-Western Forum Outreach: A Game Changer?

Operating in such a challenging environment, China creatively seeks to create a new Asian security order. One vital way has been to financially and geopolitically influence the Global South countries via outreach through non-Western-led forums such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), as well as through its widespread Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – not just an infrastructure project but a **geopolitical tool** to undermine the U.S.-led order. Then there is the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the pan-Asian security forum with the largest number of Asian participants, which China is looking to **transform** into a security-oriented multilateral platform. Notably, both CICA and the SCO have greater resonance in continental Asia.

These forums have indeed become the fulcrum of China’s Global South wooing. The expansion of the SCO and BRICS, as well as the growing interest in being included in these forums (Argentina’s rejection of the BRICS membership notwithstanding), is being heralded in the Chinese media as a sign of “**political autonomy**” for the developing world.

In the era of the receding multilateralism and resurgence of dormant wars (in Eastern Europe and West Asia, to name two), as well as the increasing importance of middle/smaller states to major powers, the argument is compelling enough. Moreover, China projects itself as a developing country – something Xi emphasized at the 2023 BRICS summit. To capitalize on the developmental aspects with continuous stress on building a “shared future for mankind” through solidifying bilateral relations is a part of this Chinese narrative. This was on display in Xi’s recent visit to Europe, particularly to Serbia and Hungary, if not France.

There is a bit of a contradiction here, as Beijing’s self-identification with the marginalized Global South is somewhat at odds with China’s financial clout, which

is what makes it an attractive partner. Nevertheless, could such a collaboration lead to an Asian security order?

It's unlikely, given Asia's sheer geographic size and the multitude of actors, large and small, including extra-regional actors such as the U.S., the EU, and the U.K. For example, throughout maritime Asia, China operates in a gray area between complicity with and resistance to the U.S.-led security order. The latter's perceived legitimacy by regional countries is robust going by the "exceptional durability" of the U.S. alliances/partnerships and its track record in sustaining a safe Asian maritime environment since the end of World War II.

Now, as the U.S. security architecture seeks to balance China, Beijing has struggled to undermine this legitimacy. Given China's claims over most of the South China Sea (now demarcated by a 10-dash line), incursions into disputed waters, and lack of experience in providing public security goods or security guarantees to other states, why would Asian states unreservedly give up a long-time security guarantor, the United States, for an untested China?

As a result, China needs a sound strategic alternative to the status quo. Even then, China must accept a multipolar maritime Asia that includes the United States and other major powers, including Russia, India, and ASEAN. Beijing's open-ended and processual-oriented security visions reflect pragmatic awareness and acceptance of this reality. However, a plural Asia where external actors, such as the United States, play a limited role would be Xi's (and the Chinese Communist Party's) strongly preferred outcome.

In sum, even as China progressively enhances the institutional capacity and membership of preferred and near-exclusively Asian security platforms such as CICA and the SCO and conceptualizes newer forms of security initiatives and principles such as common security, it is to be seen to what degree its GSI reverberates among Asia's political and security elites. Xi's "Asia for Asians" call at CICA 2014 mostly fell on deaf ears, but we shouldn't automatically expect the same from the GSI.

China's Supposed "Change" in Policy Towards Chinese Overseas: Nothing to See Here

17 May, 2024, [Fulcrum](#), Leo Suryadinata

For decades, China sought to blur the distinction between foreign nationals of Chinese descent (*huaren*) and Chinese nationals living outside China (*huaqiao*). This was understandable, given Beijing's desire to tap on the former to pursue China's national interests. Recently, a senior Chinese official appeared to indicate, at least theoretically, that Beijing has had a change of heart. But there is more than meets the eye.

Liu Jianchao's remarks received a lot of mainstream Chinese media coverage that raised expectations of a change in China's overall policy towards Chinese overseas. Liu, the Minister of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party of China and a prospective foreign minister, touched on the topic during a Future China dialogue chaired by Lee Huay Leng, the Editor-in-Chief of the Chinese Media Group (which is owned by SPH Media).

At the dialogue, Lee enquired if China recognised that Southeast Asian Chinese regarded cultural identity (*wenhua rentong*) and political identity (*zhengzhi rentong*) differently. Liu answered that China understands that Southeast Asians of Chinese descent (often called *huaren* or *huayi*) possess separate identifications. Their political identification lies with the Southeast Asian country where they have acquired citizenship. Hence, the Southeast Asian country is their "fatherland" (*zuguo*). However, they possess some cultural identification with China as the country is their ancestral land (*zujiguo*). He stated that China views political loyalty as separated from cultural links. However, Liu noted that these ethnic Chinese can serve as a bridge between China and Southeast Asia. He added that there are Chinese nationals living overseas (*huaqiao*). These *huaqiao* possess both political and cultural loyalty to China. He noted that *huaqiao* should abide by the laws of the country they reside in and that their legal rights will be duly protected by China.

The discussion about the loyalty of Southeast Asian Chinese is significant due to the recent case of businessman Philip Chan, a Singapore citizen of 30 years who was classified as a "Politically Significant Person" because he was assessed by Singapore authorities to have shown susceptibility to being influenced by foreign actors, and willingness to advance their interests. In 2023, Chan was a "representative of overseas Chinese" at China's National People's Congress and had remarked to the Chinese media after the Congress that it is the responsibility of Chinese overseas "to tell China's story well" and serve the interests of China because their futures are linked to China. As a "Politically Significant Person", Chan would need to report the political donations he receives and explain his association with a foreign country. Indeed, with the rise of China, some *huaren* have identified with Beijing, forgetting their political loyalty to their adopted country.

Chan could be, as defined by Liu, playing the role of a bridge (*qiaoliang*). But it is not easy to be a bridge between a Southeast Asian state and China. Citizens of a Southeast Asian state can (and should) only serve the national interests of the country that they belong to. This national interest includes national security, territorial integrity, economic benefits and welfare of the people, and national values or ideology. While the

national interests of China and some Southeast Asian states can sometimes converge, they can also be in conflict at times. In the case of the latter, *huaren* should defend the interests of their Southeast Asian country.

“... under Xi, there appears to be a stronger momentum to appeal to Chinese overseas to support China. This is evidenced by the OCAO being placed under the United Front Work Department since 2018, the practice of inviting *huaqiao* and *huaren* to Chinese business association conventions, and the annual invitations to *huaqiao* and *huaren* as representative of overseas Chinese at China’s Two Sessions parliamentary meetings.”

Liu’s reference to loyalty to citizenship-country — the country that *huaren* have adopted the nationality of — appears to differ from the policy introduced when Hu Jintao came to power. Hu sought to blur the distinction between *huaren* and *huaqiao*. Subsequently, the administration of Xi Jinping appealed to Chinese overseas in Southeast Asia and beyond to assist China economically and serve the national interests of China. To both Hu and Xi, Chinese overseas, regardless of their citizenship, are regarded as a part of the Chinese nation. This indicated that Beijing sought to blur the distinction between *huaqiao* and *huaren*.

There are many instances of such appeals. They can be found in this author’s *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas*. In April 2012, Li Yinze, the chairman of the Beijing Branch Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO, or Qiaoban) delivered a speech at the Indonesian Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Jakarta, appealing to young Chinese Indonesians to learn Mandarin “to strengthen their identification with the Chinese Nation”. He also noted that Chinese Indonesians should not be afraid as there is a strong China backing them. In September 2014, Qiu Yangping, the chairperson of OCAO, made a speech at the Indonesians of Chinese Descent Association (INTI) conveying a similar message. In June 2014, President Xi talked about a “Big Chinese Family” (*zhonghua da jiating*), thus including foreign citizens of Chinese descent (*huaren*) at the 7th Conference of World Federation of *Huaqiao* *Huaren* Associations.

While Mr Liu might appear to be taking a different line from Hu and Xi, Beijing’s policy of blurring the distinction between *huaqiao* and *huaren* remains unchanged. In fact, under Xi, there appears to be a stronger momentum to appeal to Chinese overseas to support China. This is evidenced by the OCAO being placed under the United Front Work Department since 2018, the practice of inviting *huaqiao* and *huaren* as representatives of overseas Chinese at China’s Two Sessions parliamentary meetings. Most recently, the 2024 “Chinese New Year Gala Performance” (“四海同

春”全球华侨华人春节大联欢) constituted an event that was specifically directed at *huaqiao* and *huaren* globally. In view of the above, Liu’s remarks should be seen in context. It does not constitute a change in China’s policy towards Chinese overseas. In fact, he was merely responding to a question with a politically correct answer.

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Editor’s Note: The term “overseas Chinese”, according to Professor Wang Gungwu, is the direct translation of *huaqiao*, referring to Chinese nationals who live outside China. Prof Wang suggests that “Chinese overseas” be used to refer to “all Chinese living abroad, both Chinese nationals and ethnic Chinese” (i.e. *huaqiao* and *huaren*, or foreign nationals of Chinese descent).

Xi Jinping’s strongman politics is China’s ‘new normal’

17 May 2024, [The Hill](#), Joshua Eisenman and Thomas S. Sexton

After Xi Jinping took power in China in 2012, he promptly began a series of purges and ideological crackdowns that have set the tone for his rule.

To some experts, this is only a temporary problem. According to them, Xi Jinping’s strongman politics represent a deviation from China’s long-term path of reform and opening up, a reference to the relatively liberal economic and political policies begun under Deng Xiaoping more than four decades ago. In this optimistic view it is possible, perhaps even likely, that the next Chinese leader will revert back to this policy. Because Xi cannot rule forever, they argue, more liberal-minded Chinese and foreigners can simply wait him out.

For instance, long-time China-watchers David Lampton and Thomas Finger maintain that Chinese politics has two distinct governance traditions: one that prioritizes “national and regime security over economic growth” and the other that prioritizes “the gains to be made through interdependence and openness.” In their telling, Xi Jinping “embraces the first,” while a future Chinese leader might well opt for the second.

The University of Hong Kong’s Jiwei Ci agrees that “there is no reason to believe that political affairs will not resume their ordinary course in a post-Xi China.” So does Robert Daly, the Kissinger Chair at the Wilson Center. He argues that Xi “represents a major strand in the Chinese braid — the nationalist, isolationist, paranoid, totalitarian strand. But there are other strands — including that of liberal internationalists — that are equally thick. They are just not in the ascendancy right now.” He makes the case that

“Chinese progressives have not gone away” and that “the pendulum will swing again.”

But the hope that Xi Jinping’s increasingly totalitarian China is likely to “swing” back toward liberalization after his eventual passing is almost certainly fool’s gold.

This is because what some see as different “strands” of governance are not as distinct as they might appear. It is worth remembering that party cadres overwhelmingly blessed Xi Jinping’s accession, not because they hoped he would liberalize the country, but because they wanted a strong leader to clean up their system.

Back in 2011 and 2012, corruption and rent-seeking were endemic, eating away at party legitimacy. As a result, a consensus emerged both within the Chinese Communist Party and among the populace that it was necessary to crack down on malfeasance, enhance party cohesion, reinvigorate ideology and reassert control over the economic sphere.

“The swift shift from collective leadership to strongman rule during Xi Jinping’s early years in office...was the result of a widely shared consensus among China’s ruling elite that the regime was facing a severe crisis that necessitated a return to such rule,” explains Nimrod Baranovitch. Indeed, as Yu Zeyuan of Singapore’s Lianhe Zaobao newspaper observes: “Xi seized on the people’s abhorrence of corruption, and with unprecedented boldness. This struck fear among the corrupt as well as his opponents within the party, and won him widespread praise.”

Simply put, the selection of a strongman was very much part of the plan, not a deviation from it.

It has also become a common refrain that Xi Jinping’s authoritarian governance is a departure from that of predecessors Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, who instead sought to balance power among competing voices. This argument presumes that China’s past leaders would not have preferred to have the type of unitary control that Xi now exercises. In fact, all three struggled with rancorous factional politics and power-sharing arrangements that obliged them to make concessions to rivals.

Throughout the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping’s cycles of economic and political openness and tightening were the result not of his preference for collaboration and compromise, but rather the necessity to navigate competing pressures from the rivalrous conservative and liberal members of his coalition. Hu Jintao was also compelled to balance between his “Youth League Faction” and Jiang Zemin’s powerful “Shanghai Faction.”

Indeed, these competing elements within the party did constrain executive decision making. But in Beijing, these limitations were widely seen as hurdles to, rather than aspects of, effective governance. There was also a profound sense of disappointment in

China’s leader at the time, Hu Jintao, who was regularly criticized for his “inaction.” “China is nothing close to harmonious,” Zhang Ming of Renmin University lamented as Hu was stepping down in 2012. Conflicts and contradictions have become worse. In fact it is reaching a crisis point.”

Seen in this light, it is not Xi Jinping’s desire to consolidate decision-making in his own hands that distinguishes him from his predecessors, but rather his success in exerting his authority over his unwieldy comrades.

Furthermore, the foundations of China’s extensive internet controls — which Xi Jinping has built upon — were created in the early 2000s under Hu.

“Hu’s regime...showed little tolerance towards political opposition, rounding up the most vocal dissidents and social activists, putting them in prison, under house arrest or making them disappear for weeks,” as CNN reported back in 2012.

Under Hu, the party also kept traditional media outlets on a leash while expanding its supervision over the hundreds of millions of bloggers who were forced to register using their real names. Xi has invested in the social surveillance and control mechanisms established by his predecessors, who were hardly supporters of free expression.

Indeed, perhaps the most important reason to resist the siren song of unfounded optimism about China’s future political trajectory is the unprecedented power and scale of the country’s AI-driven techno-totalitarianism. China now has hundreds of millions of cameras linked to supercomputers that can identify persons of interest to the state in real time. These systems are now fully institutionalized and deeply integrated with the security state at every level.

It is hard to imagine how even the most liberal-minded future Chinese leader could uproot such a system. Rather, with each passing day, China’s high-tech surveillance systems (from payment systems to ride hailing to shopping and food delivery) will collect ever more amounts and types of personal data. And if China remains a techno-totalitarian state, it cannot, by definition, become a more free and open society.

Rather than go “back to the future” after Xi (who may yet rule for decades), China is unlikely to liberalize. In the absence of a succession plan, the reins of power are most likely to end up in the hands of a Chinese version of Vladimir Putin — some currently anonymous apparatchik within the security state apparatus who understands how to wield power in the system.

Xi's alternative world order

16 May, 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) is attempting to create an alternative international world order to the US-dominated model. China has benefited hugely from the current order since former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) opened up its economy five decades ago.

Countries can be categorized as continental or maritime, and to a great degree this determines their optimum foreign policy. China is continental, as is Russia. The US initially followed a continental foreign policy, before it settled on a maritime model. The British empire was so successful because a tiny island kingdom built a formidable naval presence.

The US-dominated world order, stabilized by its maritime policy of ensuring unobstructed trade and shipping passage and therefore wealth creation, helped the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) achieve its impressive feat of lifting millions of Chinese out of poverty. Xi now appears to believe he can now move on in creating a new order he believes would benefit China in ways that the current model does not. This is one framework in which one can understand the apparently self-destructive approach that the CCP has taken under Xi.

Xi has just returned from a five-day trip to Europe, where he visited France, Serbia and Hungary, countries relatively friendly to China.

French President Emmanuel Macron's emphasis on European "strategic autonomy" coheres with Xi's vision of a multipolar world; Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, and Hungarian President Tamas Sulyok and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban rolled out the red carpet. One could say the trip was successful, but there is a sense in which Xi was in damage limitation mode, mitigating the foreign policy missteps of the past few years that continue to alienate China from many European countries.

Xi has sought to achieve a network of trade connections and allies with his audacious Belt and Road Initiative. This has been successful to a degree, but has also created complications and cannot compete with the free flow of trade in the international order he seeks to replace.

Closer to home, Xi seems to be building a navy not to protect a maritime order, but to consolidate an extension of his continental holdings. Many believe his ambitions go beyond the annexation of Taiwan and control of the near coastal waters, and regional powers are on tenterhooks.

US academic Sarah Paine predicted six years ago in a speech to the Hudson Institute that this "territory grab" would lead to the formation of an opposing alliance system that would present the US with a

perfect opportunity to consolidate its own influence in the area.

Paine also said that no continental power in its right mind would consider opening up two fronts of conflict, and yet Xi has angered India to the west and allowed a US-affiliated opposing alliance to form in maritime neighbors to China's east.

The joint US-Philippines exercises that took place between April 22 and Wednesday last week is an indicator of such an alliance. France and Australia also took part in the exercises, but the list of 14 observers, including Brunei, Canada, Germany, the UK, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, would have been considering how they would deal with a crisis in the West Philippine Sea, which could easily spill into the Taiwan Strait.

Many of these countries would be expected to help the US and Philippines out due to the web of security alliances between them. Taiwan, too, would be expected to offer assistance, just as it would hope that the web of alliances would kick in should China attack Taiwan.

Xi seems to be willing to make things difficult for himself just to prove a point.

Himalaya in Dilemma

16 May, 2024, [Khabarhub](#), Binoj Basnyat

Just a month after India and the US concluded the 18th edition of their joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' in the eastern Himalayas, held in Auli, Uttarakhand from November 16th to December 2nd, 2022, another clash occurred between Chinese and Indian forces in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, in the western Himalayas on December 9th, 2022.

This event once again underscores the significant strategic and geostrategic consequences for prominent world powers and the South Asian region. It reiterates Beijing and New Delhi's appeals and claims regarding borders, as well as the diplomatic stance of smaller nations on such occurrences, which steer long-term political, economic collaboration, and political-security cooperation.

The Himalayan region, covering a disputed border of 3,379 kilometers (2,100 miles) between China and India, constitutes the largest disputed border in the world.

China controls 38,000 sq km of territory that New Delhi also claims in the west, while to the east, India holds 90,000 sq km that Beijing claims as its own.

However, the far western Himalayan region bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the far eastern Himalayan region with Myanmar, remain relatively silent but not peaceful.

Power competition persists in the far west with China-Iran-Russia and in the eastern Himalayas with China-India spheres of influence.

The central sub-region bordering Bhutan and Nepal also experiences disputes, though they are not publicly acknowledged.

Interestingly, while political tensions simmer in Sino-Indo relations, economic ties have transcended, with China becoming India's top trading partner in FY2024 with USD 118.4 billion in two-way commerce, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative.

India's exports to China rose by 8.7 percent to USD 16.67 billion, while imports increased by 3.24 percent to USD 101.7 billion.

Conversely, exports to the US dipped slightly by 1.32 percent to USD 77.5 billion, and imports decreased by about 20 percent to USD 40.8 billion, whereas Washington was the top trading partner during 2022-23. In December 2022, the US Embassy in New Delhi tweeted that the joint military exercise reinforces commitment to the Indo-Pacific Region, improves interoperability, and takes the US-India partnership to new heights.

The Indian Army also mentioned the synergy between both armies.

Yudh Abhyas is conducted annually with the aim of exchanging best practices, tactics, techniques, and procedures between the armies.

The October 2021 exercise was conducted at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska.

South Asia, with almost two billion people, emerging powers, important shipping routes, and sensitive autonomous regions, is in a geopolitically imperative position in both maritime and continental realms.

It has expanding economic-political-security strategic paradigms, leading the region into the Indo-Pacific as a sub-region of disputation flanked by small and big powers.

The rivalry between Asia's biggest powers, China and India, reveals itself in many spheres, despite both being rising powers, nuclear-armed, with large populations and political ambitions as global players.

New Normal in the Himalayas

End of the colonial period in South Asia in the mid-1940s, the annexation of Tibet in 1950 by China, India and Pakistan's long-running disputes over Jammu and Kashmir, and cross-border terrorism with a number of wars, ongoing conflicts, and military standoffs.

The 1962 war between China and India, in addition to the aspirations of China and India in shaping the imminent geostrategic environment, has been the basis for border disputes that could garner attention for domestic nationalist politics and external trepidations.

The mutually acceptable 2003 Agreement on the political parameters guiding principles for the settlement of India-China Boundary questions was

signed on 11 April 2005 after five meetings of the Special Representatives, which were initiated in 1981. Border incidents resurfaced in 2013, such as the Depsang incursion or Daulat Beg Oldi incident near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The 2014 standoff in the LAC, later withdrawn to pre-September positions after three weeks, even while President Xi Jinping was on a State visit to India, signed 12 bilateral agreements.

The year 2014 was declared as the Year of China-India Friendly Exchanges, issuing a Joint Statement on Building an Even Closer Partnership for Development.

In 2015, both were locked in confrontation in the Burtse area of the Depsang plains of Ladakh, where Indian troops destroyed a Chinese surveillance tower. Though skirmishes were evident, four occurrences of strategic significance were evident that have plunged the Sino-Indian relationship.

In June 2017, a 73-day Doklam standoff of territory claimed by both Bhutan, an Indian ally, and China ended in August with the commitment of 1949 and replaced the 2007 "New Friendship Treaty" between Bhutan and India.

The 1959 Tibetan uprising and the 14th Dalai Lama's arrival in India inscribe the significance of the Bhutan-China border. Donglong, Doklam, is an area disputed between Bhutan and China located near the tri-junction with India.

Bhutan's border with Tibet has never been officially recognized nor demarcated. Bhutan withdrew its representative from Lhasa with the 17-point agreement between the Tibetan Government and the central government of the People's Republic of China. China claims Doklam based on the 1890 "convention of Calcutta between Britain and China with acceptance from former Indian Prime Minister (PM) Jawaharlal Nehru and showing large parts of Bhutanese territory as part of China in the maps of 1958.

Bhutan stresses that it was neither a party nor was consulted before signing, though the boundary talks began in 1984 with an agreement reached in 1988 and 1998 to discourage the use of force and encourage adherence to peaceful means.

Xi Jinping and PM Modi reiterated on the sidelines that having a good relationship was in the interest of both nations with a 'forward-looking' approach and closer communication between defense and security personnel being a necessity during the 9th Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) summit in September 2017.

Second, the eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted in May 2020 in the Pangong Lake area followed by a clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020.

In December 2022, the Tawang Sector in northeastern Arunachal Pradesh on the Line of Actual Control witnessed another clash between the Chinese and the

Indian military, evidence of a serious military conflict between the two sides after four and a half decades. Lastly, a 'new' map was brought to light by China in August 2023 claiming northeastern Arunachal Pradesh as well as the disputed Aksai Chin Plateau, which was dismissed by Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Nepal has urged China to use Nepal's official map, in addition to revising the map that places Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as part of Indian territory. The decision to print a new NRS 100 currency note with a map showing the territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani comes barely a few months after ruling Maoist Centre Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal forged a leftist alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist), along with a few other fringe parties, in the federal parliament.

India's Foreign Minister Jaishankar expressed dissatisfaction, labeling Nepal's move as unilateral. He said, "Our position is clear, even if the map changes, the reality on the ground does not change." The new normal is manifested with 'No War' and 'No Peace,' stressing the 'Five Fingers of Tibet,' attributed to Mao Zedong in his 1940 speech, as relevant to Chinese 21st-century foreign policy.

The founding chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao, termed Bhutan and Nepal as China's tributary states on November 15, 1939.

Tibet is considered China's right-hand palm, with five fingers on its periphery: Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the North-East Frontier Agency or Arunachal Pradesh.

Bhutan, Nepal, and Sikkim were claimed as suzerainty and asserted by the Chinese amban in Tibet in 1908, who wrote to the Nepalese authorities that Nepal and Tibet, "being united like brothers under the auspices of China, should work in harmony for mutual good," in the face of British opposition.

China's Strategic Opening Out

From 1950 to 1959 to 2013, a series of strategic proceedings occurred, ranging from annexation to attempts by the Government of Tibet to gain international recognition, efforts to modernize the military, military conflicts in the Chamdo area of western Kham, the Seventeen Point Agreement by the government of Tibet under Chinese pressure, to the Tibet uprising and the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative.

These demonstrate political aspirations to the south, west, and along the Himalayas, especially in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan. With the foundation of the CCP and the 1978 economic reform, along with accessible geography, China has managed to transform into a new economic, military, and

political power. A joint research report by a five-country think tank team, including the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, released that China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to surpass that of the US, with the country becoming the world's largest economy by around 2035. With the growth of its economy, China has emerged as a global actor.

South Asia has two strategic gateways, through the land, maritime, or both. Maldives and Sri Lanka are in the maritime region, while Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Myanmar are in the continental region, and Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Myanmar have both maritime and land routes. Geostrategic measures involve bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral, multilateral, and global initiatives.

China provides economic assistance as a key creditor and in the form of grants. According to the World Bank's international debt report, developing countries owe about USD 180 billion.

Chinese loans to Pakistan rose from USD 7.6 billion in 2016 to USD 26.5 billion in 2022, accounting for 72 percent of the total external debt and 57 percent of debt repayment revenue.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign loans, triggering massive turmoil, and bankruptcy rose from USD 4.6 billion in 2016 to USD 8.8 billion in 2022, accounting for 57 percent of the total external debt and 54 percent of debt repayment revenue.

Bangladesh's loan is USD 6 billion, Maldives' is USD 1.2 billion, and Nepal's is USD 0.26 billion.

Though small in figure, it accounts for 24 percent, 68 percent, and 27 percent of foreign liabilities, respectively.

Nepal's PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) has said that the process has been initiated to ask China to convert the Pokhara International Airport loan into a grant to ease the financial burden of the USD 215 million loan, out of the USD 305 million with 2-3 percent interest from the Export-Import Bank, with repayment in 25 years, while other international monetary institutions provide loans with interest rates ranging from 0.25-0.75 percent.

The Asian Development Bank and the 12-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for International Development contributed USD 37 million and USD 11 million, respectively.

An example is the arrival of Chinese experts in Kathmandu for a feasibility study of the China-Nepal cross-border railway in December 2022.

Conclusion

Landlocked, sea-locked, and all countries in South Asia have choices with vulnerability and invincibility, while the two Asian giants' regional strategic interests are politically competing, economically cooperating, and militarily confronting in the Himalayas.

Deepening cooperation between India and the West, particularly the US, in addition to the US-led West with the rest, has made China feel on edge, and the risk of new outbreaks of fighting perseveres.

China's economic strength, political conviction, and military engagement have expanded in India's neighborhood with an all-weather relationship with Pakistan and regime-centered relationships with other South Asians, externally balancing India.

Xi's continuation for more years or decades after the removal of the two-term limit on the presidency, endorsed by the annual sitting of the National People's Congress in 2018, and the likelihood of Modi 3.0 with the elections taking place, will present a sterner test than the last decade, with heightened nationalism and geopolitical tensions.

Both Beijing and New Delhi appeal to Eastern governments of their preference in South Asia.

A political success will, in fact, serve to divide and fragment South Asian nations domestically.

This will function for the goodwill of the favoring power rather than addressing their strategic necessities and falling into the strategic trap.

Together with resuming dialogue and reopening communications between Xi and Modi and through existing mechanisms like the 1996 "mutual and Equal security" to reaffirm de-escalations in the Himalayan borders.

It is arduous when Beijing depicts the border situation as normal and New Delhi apprehensive.

At the same time, the small states in South Asia should strengthen state institutions, assemble a strong civil society that is besieged to contend with implication, create experts to match implications of geopolitical activism to policy, and augment local awareness of the extent of 'privileged detained' political status.

Nepal, as a vulnerable country facing special challenges as a buffer between the opening and the potency of big power politicking on one side and, on the other, domestic capacity to manage and palliate political-economic-diplomatic-security risks.

With vulnerability, Nepal should also engage in infrastructure development, connectivity in international relations with unilateral and multilateral environments.

Bilateral undertakings will assist neutrality and will avoid being part of the upcoming global bipolarity between China, a communist nation, and the US, a democracy, and the risks that rivalry can pose.

This will navigate from plunging into the strategic trap in addition to strategic outreach and policy recommendations that manifest domestic political and economic reality as big powers' competition prevails in South Asia, questioning national credibility. Nepal must build on with the traditional and customary practices, analyzing the domestic implication with India and other South Asian

neighbors and at the same time secure opportunities with China and other donor nations, particularly the US-led West, in its strides to addressing the people's aspirations and national obligations with no compromise on national interest or falling into the geopolitical long game.

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China removes the PLASSF and establishes ISF: Implications for India

15 May, 2024, [ORF](#), Kartik Bommakanti

The People's Liberation Army Strategic Support (PLASSF) has been disbanded. In late 2015, the People's Republic of China (PRC) under President Xi Jinping announced the creation of the PLASSF along with Peoples Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF), which were two new services. The PLARF which was the erstwhile Second Artillery Force (SAF), in the latest shake-up, has not been dissolved and still retains command authority. In addition to these two new services, with now only the PLARF surviving, five Theatre Commands (TCs) were also set up in 2015-16. The PLASSF was a unified service that integrated the Chinese military's space, cyber, electronic, and psychological warfare capabilities and its replacement is the Information Support Force (ISF). Xi said that the new force would be "...a brand-new strategic arm of the PLA and a key underpinning of coordinated development and application of the network information system", which he added would help the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "...fight and win in modern warfare."

What brought about the dissolution of the PLASSF and its replacement—the Information Support Force (ISF)? Three general explanations are proffered. First is that the PLASSF was a strategic force that needed to be brought under greater oversight and control of the Central Military Control (CMC)—the top political and military decision-making body in the PRC led by President Xi Jinping. A second factor and a corollary to this bureaucratic impediment was the inherent rigidity of the PLASSF to the extent that Theatre Commands (TCs) had to secure its approval for resources or assets which the PLASSF could block or delay because it enjoyed co-equal command status and authority with the TCs. In a nutshell, the shift is also due to the need for limiting excessive control. A third and final reason is the experience of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which has visibly demonstrated to the Chinese that flexibility in the release and the use of cyber-, electronic-, and space-borne resources more efficiently was a necessity, acting as compelling drivers

behind the change for operational effectiveness in the battlespace.

The People's Liberation Army Cyberspace Force and Aerospace Force have been created, bringing the number of forces to four, which includes the People's Liberation Army Logistics Support Force (PLALSF) whose establishment predates the current transformation.

Whatever the ostensible reasons for the PLASFF's axing, the constituent elements of the newly established ISF are network information systems and communications support supplemented by potential network defence. ISF is primarily geared toward protecting and defending Chinese networks against external intrusions and attacks. Additionally, the People's Liberation Army Cyberspace Force and Aerospace Force have been created, bringing the number of forces to four, which includes the People's Liberation Army Logistics Support Force (PLALSF) whose establishment predates the current transformation. Now the TCs, which are crucial for the defence of Chinese territory and offensive operations including overseas missions, can avail the services of each of the arms more smoothly and efficiently. What is not evident is whether additional divisions have been instituted such as the separation of Cyber Warfare and Electronic Warfare (EW) and presumably the Cyber Force will be the new arm that oversees and pursues integrated CW-EW missions and whose resources the TCs can avail. The combined applications of CW-EW are likely to be more pronounced, especially in the context of what the Chinese call "intelligicised warfare" which will involve greater use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation in warfare.

Implications for India

The changes that we see today relate mostly to Command and Control (C2), and the TCs' easier access to the capabilities and resources which the erstwhile PLASFF controlled. If anything, the reshuffle is an effort to leverage cyber, EW, Space and counterspace capabilities for their effective application in multi-domain operations. Even prior to the latest rejig, the Chinese invested heavily in cyber and space capabilities as the 2024 Chinese defence budget demonstrates, which witnessed an increase of 7.2 percent despite low Chinese economic growth. India should now be even more alert and prepared simply because the capabilities of the Chinese relevant to cyber weapons, EW, space and counterspace systems have received a significant amount of investment for the pursuit of joint operations and the dissolution of the PLASFF has nothing to do with Chinese capabilities in the space, cyber, and EW areas *per se*. They are not just geared for an invasion of Taiwan, the PRC's cyber, EW, space and counterspace capabilities can be used in a military contingency against India. Indeed, the Chinese quest to match and redress the gaps in their

cyber and space capabilities against the Americans for a Taiwan invasion can easily be shifted to service the People's Liberation Army's Western Theatre Command (WTC) military operations for offensive and defensive missions vis-à-vis India, due to the "fungibility" of cyber, EW, space and counterspace assets. China's aim to match or even surpass the United States (US) has opened up a significant gap between China and India in the space and cyber domains.

India defeated the intrusion, but the lack of adequate Indian space assets was evident and it was able to defeat it because the US extended its superior space surveillance assets.

One of the most visible manifestations of this was the American assistance to India when Chinese forces attacked Yangtse in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh in December 2022. India defeated the intrusion, but the lack of adequate Indian space assets was evident and it was able to defeat it because the US extended its superior space surveillance assets. In the space domain, at a minimum, the space power differential is significant between India and China and reveals the extent to which Chinese space military assets are substitutable.

The establishment of the ISF as well as a separate Cyber and Space force has other implications for India in that the TCs, especially the WTC, which is responsible for ground and air operations along the Sino-Indian boundary, can now access the newly established ISF, Cyber force and Aerospace force's resources more easily. To be sure, the WTC would have some organic cyber and EW assets, but the erstwhile PLASFF was too rigid in extending assistance to the TCs, which was one of the primary precipitants for the recent reorganisation. A further implication of the PRC's decision to subdivide the former PLASFF into separate forces is that it provides greater flexibility, demonstrating to Indian military planners that they need to consider how they deploy discrete assets connected to space, cyber, EW and psychological operations; where they overlap; and where they serve as enablers and force multipliers for conventional military operations.

The Xi-led leadership's decision to disband the PLASFF should not be considered definitive, it could revive itself in another guise with possibly some of its functions amalgamated into a new service in the future.

AI is another area where India will need to pay greater attention given the Chinese commitment to "intelligicised warfare". AI can augment and render Chinese intelligence collection and cyberwarfare capabilities more effective. Last but not least, the Xi-led leadership's decision to disband the PLASFF should not be considered definitive, it could revive itself in another guise with possibly some of its functions amalgamated into a new service in the future. What is

and should be instructive for Indian military planners and strategists in regard to the organisational changes implemented by the Chinese leadership is that it underlines the importance of experimentation, flexibility, and even adaptation, given what the PRC has witnessed through the recent military experience of others such as the Russians and Ukrainians in their ongoing war.

China doesn't need to invade to achieve Taiwanese unification

13 May, 2024, [The Hill](#), Dan Blumenthal and Fred Kagan

The U.S. faces the most challenging international security environment since the end of World War II.

The war in Ukraine rages even as war continues and threatens to expand in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China continues to harass and intimidate its neighbors, and Washington is more acutely aware of the threat of a Chinese attack against Taiwan.

More attention to Taiwan's security is welcome, but the current public discourse remains too focused on the threat of a Chinese invasion of the island. Beijing still has other options to force unification short of invasion, including an escalation of its ongoing hybrid warfare campaign against Taiwan. U.S. policy is not well designed to deter or defeat such a strategy.

China is more likely to pursue a "short of war coercion campaign," as we call it, centered on political and economic warfare accompanied by limited kinetic action than an invasion of Taiwan for three main reasons:

First, annexing Taiwan by means short of war significantly limits possible damage to other Chinese grand strategic objectives. The People's Republic of China's long-term strategic goals are to continue to build-up what it calls its comprehensive national power and become the world's leading power. It then aims to decisively reshape international politics and place itself at the center. Although Chinese leader Xi Jinping clearly believes that unifying Taiwan with the mainland is a key component of this grand strategy, he may be loath to risk China's march to geopolitical dominance by starting a full scale and likely global war. Second, a short of war strategy centered on political warfare and limited kinetic action could be successful. Taiwan's most recent elections highlighted deep domestic political divisions, coinciding with a rise in skepticism of America's support. These sentiments are further reinforced by the fact that Taiwan remains internationally isolated. Taiwan status is *sui generis* in international affairs: it is a fully functioning nation-state not recognized by the international powers. This

creates an opening for China's manipulation of Taiwan's understandable fears of abandonment.

Third, strategies short of war are consistent with Chinese strategic thinking and previous behavior. A number of Chinese warfighting concepts reference the utility of fighting wars using means beyond traditional applications of kinetic force. These concepts have been employed regularly in Chinese "gray zone operations" in the South and East China Seas and Taiwan Strait. Given their general success, China will likely intensify their employment in a campaign to annex Taiwan.

Our new report demonstrates that Beijing can realistically accomplish such a strategy. By adopting the mindset of Chinese strategic planners, we devised a plausible short of war coercion campaign that would let China establish political control over Taiwan without an invasion or overt military blockade.

The campaign we modeled ran for four years, from the inauguration of a new Taiwanese president through his first term. During this period, China would break the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, degrade the Taiwanese government's ability to govern, and significantly undermine the Taiwanese will to resist and U.S. desire to aid Taiwan.

We found that four years of constant Chinese air and naval incursions, a quasi-blockade, political warfare and manipulation, extensive cyber and physical sabotage of Taiwan's critical infrastructure, and deadly force on offshore islands would generate "cognitive overload" within the Taiwanese government and a sense of chaos throughout Taiwan's populace.

During the course of such a campaign, the U.S. would be inundated with Chinese information warfare and become convinced that Taiwan is not "worth" going to war over, especially following new economic deals with China. Those who are skeptical of China's ability to paralyze U.S. responses have not been paying attention to Russia's political warfare against the U.S. since 2015, which almost led to a rupture with NATO over Ukraine. In particular, if China's campaign to inflict pain does not trigger any of the indicators and warnings of the invasion the U.S. is preparing for, the U.S. might well stay out of a Chinese coercive campaign.

In our notional campaign, after Taiwan is thrown into chaos and seemingly abandoned by its strongest ally. China then seizes the opportunity to offer "peace," promising to halt the coercion campaign and guarantee a level of autonomy in exchange for cooperation following guidelines dictated by Beijing. The Taiwanese government, despite having no desire to become part of China, chooses to end its people's suffering, agreeing to a plan that would eventually lead to the unification China desires.

The scenario outlined in our report does not represent our assessment of what we think will necessarily

happen. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate that a short of war coercion scenario is realistic and highly dangerous.

There are several steps that the U.S., Taiwan, and regional allies can take to head off such a strategy. These governments must begin by clearly articulating Taiwan's sovereign rights under international law, thus combating Chinese lawfare campaigns justifying blockades and shipping inspections regimes as "internal matters."

The Taiwanese and U.S. governments should also cooperate to improve Taiwan's counter-influence and anti-subversion legal authorities and capabilities. This cooperation should extend to broader efforts to better prepare Taiwan to withstand blockades and blockade-like economic activities.

Finally, a U.S.-led coalition should impose political and economic costs to deter Chinese military intimidation efforts. For example, the answer to China's current air incursions over the Taiwan Strait should be both greater civil aviation cooperation between Taiwan and the international community and the integration of Taiwan into a regional air defense architecture. Beijing has many ways to successfully gain control of Taiwan, including intensifying its ongoing "gray zone" operations. China may seek to exploit Taiwanese vulnerabilities, primarily Taiwan's international isolation and lack of alliance relations, in a coordinated short of war coercion campaign that inflicts massive pain on Taiwanese society and prevents U.S. intervention.

By focusing on the means by which China is likely to intensify its coercion efforts, the U.S. can overcome them.

China's sinicisation campaign puts Islamic expression on the line

13 May 2024, [East Asia Forum](#), Hannah Theaker

China has been pursuing a 'sinicisation' policy to make Islam in China more 'Chinese', leading to transformations such as the removal of 'foreign' architectural features from mosques and the introduction of Chinese-language equivalents for Arabic 'halal' signs in restaurants. The gradual 'sinicisation' campaign led by President Xi Jinping is aimed at reducing foreign influence, by fostering an 'appropriately Chinese' formation of Islam and ensuring adherence to a state-defined level of 'Chineseness', with the ultimate goal of strengthening the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party. The first images of Chinese mosques with their domes torn off began circulating in 2018. Soon, other news reports highlighted rare, isolated instances of public protest, in which Hui Muslims came out onto the streets to resist demolitions or forced renovations of their mosques.

Under a drive to remove aesthetic signs of the so-called 'three changes' — Arabisation, Saudization and pan-halalification — 'Arabic'-style mosques across the country have had their minarets shortened and domes removed, replaced with often incongruous pagoda-style roofs. Muslim restaurants have been required to remove their Arabic-language 'halal' signs and replace them with a Chinese-language equivalent. In early 2024, reporting by the Financial Times and a groundbreaking report by Human Rights Watch, have laid bare the nationwide-wide scale of these renovations.

Such renovations are the most visible aspects of an unfolding campaign to secure the 'sinicisation' of Islam, a campaign intended to remove signs of foreign influence and ensure that Islam in China is appropriately 'Chinese in orientation'. The term 'sinicisation of religion' was first used by Xi Jinping in 2015, not long after the inauguration of the 2014 'Strike Hard Against Violent Terrorism' campaign in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Following the country's ethnopolitical turn under President Xi Jinping, non-Han identities have been increasingly perceived as a potential threat to national stability and ethnic minorities and religious groups are policed for their adherence to a state-defined standard of 'Chineseness'.

The concept of 'sinicisation' and the idea that the 'sinicisation' of a particular group marks a level of civilisation has a long history in Chinese-language political discourse. But Xi's redeployment of the term needs to be understood in the context of recent state campaigns that have sought to explicitly link loyalty to the Party with being Chinese and a sharp move toward assimilationist policies directed at non-Han ethnic and religious minorities.

In the rhetoric of the current campaign, Islam is implicitly a foreign religion. To be made safe, Islam must adapt to Chinese circumstances.

State narratives around the sinicisation of Islam suggest that an appropriately Chinese form of Islam had evolved over the long history of Islam in China. But in recent years, the infiltration of 'foreign forms of Islam' has caused an unacceptable deviation away from this old and appropriately sinicised Islam. The current campaign is justified as a course correction, necessary to safeguard the Chinese nation and the proper path of development, and to ensure that extremist tendencies are pre-emptively nipped in the bud.

The sinicisation of Islam is underpinned by similar logic to the mass repression and detention of Uyghurs and other Islamic minorities in Xinjiang, though the campaign has been less overtly coercive in its implementation. With the state definition of violent incidents in Xinjiang as acts of Islamic extremism and routine acts of Islamic observance by Uyghurs and

other minorities seen as potential indicators of extremist tendencies, work to rectify Islamic observance across China has acquired a particular urgency.

Surveillance and detention of Muslims across Xinjiang has meant increased attention to Islamic communities elsewhere in China. It remains important to acknowledge that there have been no mass arrests to date and communities beyond Xinjiang retain some scope to practise their faith in a way that is impossible inside Xinjiang.

The scale and transformative intent underpinning the sinicisation campaign has been slow to emerge, partly as the policy has been implemented at different timelines in different regions.

The forced renovations of mosques have been accompanied by a series of interventions into the lives of mosque communities. This has ranged from measures to ensure that religious education is in line with ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, to bringing ‘excellent traditional Chinese culture’ into mosques and to revising translations of religious texts into Chinese. It has also entailed restrictions on teaching Arabic, controlling the appointments of religious professionals and tightened governance of mosques and the China Islamic Association.

While much less visible to the wider public, these changes have deep significance for affected communities — dictating how homes should look, how Islam should be taught and how believers should worship. Of particular concern to many are the restrictions on teaching children about Islam, which remains tightly intertwined with Hui heritage — a potentially existential threat to cultural transmission. The nature of these interventions reveal that sinicisation is about ensuring the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party, Party ideology and a Party-backed vision of ‘Chineseness’. It is about control, and, in pursuit of control, has gone far beyond the initial campaigns to remove aesthetic markers perceived as ‘foreign’. The quiet closure of large numbers of mosques across Ningxia, justified in the name of reducing ‘burden’ on the communities supporting them, suggests that ultimately there is little place for religion or cultural plurality in Xi’s vision for a modern Chinese community.

China Threatens India’s Hold Over Siachen, Kashmir As Beijing ‘Creeps Into’ Shaksgam Valley Using CPEC

13 May, 2024, [Eurasian Times](https://www.eurasiantimes.com), Karan Sharma

China’s recent construction of a road in the Shaksgam Valley, a disputed region along the borders of the Chinese province of Xingjiang and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), has reignited tensions in the already volatile region.

The latest reports suggest that the Indian army is analyzing the strategic impact of the new road, which enters the lower Shaksgam valley from the Aghil Pass. The road infrastructure has been under development since June 2023, with construction efforts resuming in the summer of 2024.

Currently, its endpoint is a mere 30 miles from the Indian position over the Siachen Glacier. The Shaksgam Valley, part of the larger Trans-Karakoram tract, has been a contentious issue since its transfer by Pakistan to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) under the 1963 Sino-Pakistan Agreement. This transfer, regarded by India as illegal, has fueled longstanding territorial disputes in the northern areas of PoK and Ladakh.

Today, the Trans-Karakoram tract has become a focal point of geopolitical significance, mainly due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The CPEC, a flagship project under China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to connect China’s Xinjiang province to Pakistan’s Gwadar Port through a network of energy, logistics, and transportation-related infrastructure projects.



Overview of the Shaksgam Valley relative to other important strategic areas in North Ladakh. Source: <https://twitter.com/NatureDesai>

However, the corridor passes through disputed territories of PoK, particularly Gilgit-Baltistan, which makes the Chinese-funded project unacceptable to India. This latest road construction in the lower Shaksgam Valley through the Aghil Pass has added another layer to the complex web of territorial disputes in Northern Ladakh.

The new road extending closer to the Siachen Glacier, a region of strategic importance for India due to its high altitude, which provides a dominant military position, directly challenges India’s security interests in the India-Pakistan-China trisection near Siachen.

India has consistently opposed Chinese infrastructure projects in PoK, viewing them as a violation of its territorial integrity. The emergence of a second Chinese road intersection in the Karakoram, this time through the Aghil Pass in the Shaksgam Valley, represents a significant development; the pre-existing

route in the PoK, i.e., National Highway 35/G-314 through the Khunjerab Pass, serves as a vital link of the CPEC, now constructing an alternative route through the Shaksgam Valley introduces a new dynamic.

There can be multiple potential objectives behind China's actions in Shaksgam, each carrying significant implications for India. One plausible objective behind China's activity in the Shaksgam Valley is to reduce its reliance on the Khunjerab Pass for the CPEC.

The existing route through the Khunjerab Pass, particularly the Karakoram Highway, is vulnerable to disruption during times of conflict, primarily due to the threat of an Indian aerial offensive.

By constructing an alternative route through the Shaksgam Valley, China aims to mitigate this vulnerability and ensure uninterrupted connectivity with Pakistan, thereby safeguarding its strategic interests.

Secondly, China's actions in the Shaksgam Valley can be interpreted as a move to assert its permanent claim over the territory. India has long contested the transfer of the Shaksgam Valley from Pakistan to China in 1963; the recent infrastructure development in the region serves to solidify China's presence and signals to India that the transfer of the Shaksgam Valley was not merely symbolic.

Thirdly, China's activities in the Shaksgam Valley may also be aimed at neutralizing India's strategic advantage in the Karakoram and Trans-Karakoram tract, particularly due to the uninterrupted Indian presence over the Siachen Glacier since the Kargil conflict of 1999.

India's military presence in Siachen, occupying high-ground positions, has historically provided it with a strategic advantage in the Karakoram sector. By establishing infrastructure in the Shaksgam Valley, China seeks to counterbalance India's advantage and potentially pose challenges to its military posture in the area.

This reflects China's strategic calculus to recalibrate the balance of power along the disputed border regions, particularly in Northern Ladakh.



The roadhead in Lower Shaksgam: Source: <https://twitter.com/NatureDesai>

The implications of this development are concerning for India, as it brings twin threats in close proximity to

the Siachen Glacier. With China now asserting its presence in the north of the valley and Pakistan maintaining its military presence to the west and south, India faces a complex security challenge that requires careful navigation and strategic planning.

While the current road is located in the lower Shaksgam Valley, further construction in the Upper Shaksgam Valley could bring Chinese posts and road infrastructure within 10 to 15 km of Siachen, posing a direct threat to India's position.

The situation is compounded by the ongoing conflict between India and China in the Depsang plains sector just to the East of Siachen, which has witnessed unprecedented mobilization by both sides since the Galwan conflict in June 2020.

As the conflict enters its fifth year, the potential for further escalation remains a cause for concern. In response to China's provocative actions in the Shaksgam Valley, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, has announced that India has lodged a formal protest with China.

Infrastructure construction in the Shaksgam Valley is not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of Chinese expansionism along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and its borders with neighboring countries.

Similar developments have been observed in regions such as Doklam near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction, Aksai Chin, and the Namka Chu Valley in Upper Tawang along the border of Arunachal Pradesh. Indian strategist Brahma Chellaney has aptly characterized China's strategy as "salami-slicing," wherein it incrementally gains strategic advantages in contested areas without escalating conflicts into overt battles. This gradual but persistent approach allows China to expand its influence and alter the ground situation in its favor while avoiding significant pushback.

Moreover, recent comments by retiring Admiral John Aquilino, the former US Pacific commander, shed light on China's broader strategy of aggressive expansionism.

Admiral Aquilino has likened China's tactics to a "boiling frog" strategy, wherein it gradually raises the threshold of aggression until other nations fail to realize the critical point in a conflict. This strategy has been evident in the South China Sea, where China has incrementally militarized disputed islands and reefs, leading to heightened tensions with neighboring countries and the United States.

The situation in the Himalayan theater is no exception, as Chinese expansionist activities along the LAC demonstrate. The gradual but persistent development of military infrastructure poses a significant challenge to regional stability and security.

India must remain vigilant and proactive in countering these threats, both diplomatically and militarily, to

safeguard its interests and prevent further encroachments on its territory. In conclusion, China's actions in the Shaksgam Valley are part of a broader pattern of expansionism and strategic maneuvering in the region.

India's response must be robust and multifaceted, incorporating diplomatic protests, enhanced military preparedness, and closer engagement with regional partners to address the challenges of Chinese assertiveness effectively.

India must bolster its border security measures to prevent further Chinese encroachments and incursions. This may involve deploying additional troops and enhancing surveillance capabilities to deter any further attempts by China to alter the status quo. India recently sent an additional 10,000 troops to the middle LAC sector of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in March, just before the commencement of the national elections; this extra strength is over and above the 50,000 troops deployed in 2021.

India can also explore applying sanctions targeting Chinese companies involved in infrastructure projects in disputed territories. By imposing economic costs on China, India can send a strong message that unilateral actions will not be tolerated.

Collaborative efforts with countries such as the United States, Japan, Australia, members of the QUAD and AUKUS can provide India with additional diplomatic leverage and intelligence support in countering Chinese aggression.

Reports of crucial American intelligence during the Galwan conflict with China strengthen the case for increased intelligence sharing and developing India's own intelligence infrastructure along the LAC and Tibet.

By adopting a comprehensive and proactive approach, India can effectively respond to Chinese transgressions in the border areas and safeguard its territorial integrity and national security interests. It is essential to send a clear message to China that any attempts to alter the status quo will be met with a robust and resolute response from India.

Chinese Foreign Agent was Behind New York Parade with Eric

12 May, 2024, [Newsweek](#), Didi Kirsten Tatlow

What has become an annual parade in mid-town Manhattan for Asian Americans was set up with the blessing of Mayor Eric Adams by the CEO of a company that is a registered foreign agent of China, according to documents obtained exclusively by *Newsweek*.

The findings raise new questions over Chinese influence operations in the United States, and particularly in New York, where Adams and some other top politicians have previously received

campaign donations from members of groups linked to China's ruling Communist Party. *Newsweek* has reported on the extensive network of such groups in the U.S.

The annual Asian-American parade began in 2022 and will next take place on Manhattan's Sixth Avenue on May 19 as part of the city's "Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month".

The parade says it welcomes all Asian-Americans, but documents obtained by *Newsweek* show that organisers exclude groups they deem to be politically and religiously controversial — and critics of China's rulers believe that means them.

Tibetans, Taiwanese, Hong Kongers and others at odds with the Beijing leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) questioned how representative the parade was of the Asian-American community. They had not been invited to take part, were not successful in applying, or didn't want to join as they felt unsafe, they said.

Among them was Frances Hui, founder of a community group called We The Hongkongers. She said that two weeks after applying all she had received was requests for more information, to which she had responded.

"It is obvious to me that they are trying to stall our application until they can find a way to reject us from participating," said Hui.

Hundreds of pages of emails obtained by *Newsweek* under a freedom of information request show the parade was set up in 2022 by Robin Mui, CEO of the Chinese-language media *Sing Tao US*, which was ordered by the Department of Justice to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act in 2021. Working with Mui was Better Chinatown USA, a community organisation led by Steven Tin, the organizer of Lunar New Year events in Manhattan's Chinatown.

The parade was organized in conjunction with Adams, his Asian Affairs advisor Winnie Greco, an AAPI advisory team in the mayor's office, and other city officials.

Unravelling of Chinese spies' dirty work in Europe

12 May 2024, [Monitor](#)

What you need to know:

Those who have closely watched activities of China's intelligence agents, say their key focus remains in acquiring information related to internal security, foreign and national security policymaking, scientific research, and technology.

After Sweden recently expelled a Chinese journalist on the charge of threatening the Nordic country's national security, Germany and the United Kingdom last week announced arresting six people on suspicion of spying for China. With such developments, a major question lying uppermost on everyone's mind is:

Whether China is emerging as a spying superpower with Europe becoming a major hub of its espionage-related activities?

2. According to the Institute for Strategic Research, a Paris-based military think tank, China has a vast network of organisations, which include the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and the Ministry of State Security (MSS) to carry out spying activities.

3. The French military's think tank said China's Ministry of Public Security's intelligence branch alone employs between 80,000 and 100,000 people, while the Ministry of State Security employs around 200,000 agents. However, the exact figure of agents hired by these Chinese ministries could be very high, Paul Charon, a China specialist at the Institute for Strategic Research was quoted by The Japan Times as saying.

4. In 2020, investigations carried out by journalists Die Welt and La Stampa, based on sources from the European External Action Service (EEAS), uncovered the existence of an extensive network of Chinese intelligence agents in Brussels. At that time, there were as many as 250 Chinese intelligence officials in Brussels, making the city which hosts NATO headquarters and several European Union institutions, the capital of Chinese spies, said journalists Die Welt and La Stampa in their report in Bloomberg.

5. Those who have closely watched activities of China's intelligence agents, say their key focus remains in acquiring information related to internal security, foreign and national security policymaking, scientific research, and technology. To achieve their objective and purpose, these Chinese spies, as per experts, use various methods which include human intelligence, honey trapping, kompromat, signals intelligence and co-optation of ethnic Chinese diaspora communities and associations.

6. Chinese spies' modus operandi is also different in comparison to intelligence agents from the US, Britain, Israel, and others. For example, Chinese intelligence agents recruit local officials, politicians, businessmen, academics, journalists, activists, and ethnic Chinese communities to seek information, influence policies or sabotage activities that are unfavourable to China.

7. This could be clearly seen in the case of Germany as one of the three people arrested by authorities last week for working as spies for China, belongs to the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a far-right party which is contesting elections for the European Parliament, scheduled for June this year. He has been identified as Jian G, a German national who, as per media reports, is working as an assistant for the AfD's candidate for the European Parliament elections, Maximilian Krah.

8. German prosecutors said Jian G, 43, who had dual German and Chinese citizenship passed on information about the European Parliament to Chinese intelligence. He is believed to have passed on information about negotiations and decisions made in

the European parliament in January 2024. He is also suspected of spying on Chinese opposition leaders in Germany. Though details of his espionage activity are under the probe, the incident has rattled Germans. They fear he could have passed on several sensitive information to his handlers from China as he was working with Maximilian Krah since 2019, a BBC report said.

9. In 2023, Germany's security service, BfV issued an unusual warning, stating: "In recent years, China's state and party leadership has significantly stepped up its efforts to obtain high-quality political information and to influence decision-making processes abroad." BfV has been warning publicly about the risk of trusting China since 2022, The New York Times said.

10. Arrest of German nationals for their spying activities, has proved such warnings by BfV true. Close on the heels of Jian G's arrest, two men and a woman were also detained in Germany on suspicion of their involvement in gaining information about the country's military technology.

11. However, of these three suspects, Thomas R worked as an agent for an employee of the MSS, the Chinese secret service, DW said. He allegedly obtained information about innovative technologies which could be used for military purposes, the German news outlet said. While the two others, both married couples, were arrested by German authorities as they worked very smartly to get information on the country's research on combat vessels.

12. The couple, Herwig F and Ina F, opened a front office in a German town called Dusseldorf and through it, contacted people working in the field of science and research. This way, the couple first completed a project on the operation of high-performance marine engines for use on combat ships. At the time of their arrest, as per DW, the suspects were in negotiations on other projects that could be of use for the PLA Navy.

13. These arrests took place a week after Olaf Scholz visited China. It was his second such visit since he became German Chancellor in 2021. In the West, Scholz's China visit received a fair amount of criticism as it occurred when the 27-member European Union was chalking out a comprehensive and consistent long-term "China strategy." It is all about the reduction of risks from economic dependencies on China. Germany has itself launched its China strategy in 2023.

14. But then experts give varied opinions on China's hyper intelligence gathering activities across Europe. Some say China's recent espionage activities in Germany, the UK, Netherlands, and Norway have shown that the East Asian country tries to penetrate deep into political sphere, technology companies and universities of the continent in order to manipulate its political processes through its leaders and electorate to bend them to a new world order that it has been working diligently to create.

15. Two British nationals who were arrested in March 2023 and formally charged last week with spying for China, included a former researcher for a prominent UK parliamentarian of the ruling Conservative Party. As per The Sunday Times, researcher Christopher Cash had access to several Conservative lawmakers.

16. The British Sunday newspaper report also said that the researcher had access to Security Minister Tom Tugendhat and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairwoman Alicia Kearns among others.

17. In March, as per Reuters, the British government summoned the Charge D' Affairs of the Chinese embassy in London after accusing Chinese hackers of stealing data from Britain's elections watchdog and carrying out a surveillance operation against lawmakers. But despite such clear-cut involvement of China in political manipulations in Britain and Germany, Beijing has denied any wrongdoing on its part. "As for the so-called Chinese spy cases, we have stressed multiple times that the so-called threat of Chinese spies is purely baseless. We firmly oppose groundless accusations and vilification against China," Wang Wenbin, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, said.

18. This denial, however, cannot obfuscate the fact that Beijing has made Europe a hub of its espionage activities. On April 18, the Dutch military intelligence agency, MIVD said in its annual report that Chinese spies had targeted the Dutch semiconductor, aerospace and maritime industries. While the British Intelligence Chief recently maintained that in the UK alone, Chinese spies had approached more than 20,000 people for providing information through networking platforms such as LinkedIn. Similarly, Norway's intelligence service earlier in this year said Chinese spies operate all over the continent and are involved in political and industrial espionage. Recent arrests in Germany and the UK point to this fact.

How China's latest government overhaul is shaping up, and what it says about the Communist Party's priorities

12 May, 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

- New bodies dedicated to issues such as financial risk and social stability are being established at a central and local level
- Shake-up is seen by some analysts as part of wider moves to strengthen the party's control over key policy areas and organs of government

Since taking the helm of the Communist Party in 2012, President Xi Jinping has constantly been overhauling China's massive system of state and party organs to reflect Beijing's shifting priorities.

In the latest restructuring plan, rolled out in the spring of 2023, Beijing moved to assert more direct party control over a wide range of key policy areas, including science and technology, the financial sector and social stability.

A year later, the nature and scale of the restructuring is starting to take shape as new agencies covering these areas have been set up by central and local governments.

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Looking closely at their operations provides an opportunity not just to see how they operate in practice, but also helps shed more light on Beijing's policy priorities and the challenges it faces.

For example, the establishment of new financial regulatory bodies by both central and provincial governments highlights the sense of urgency around tackling financial risk, while the newly established National Data Administration will play a key role in China's plans to develop artificial intelligence by managing data resources.

The top Hong Kong and Macau policy office will also report directly to the party's Central Committee, rather than the State Council, the country's cabinet, to improve coordination with other branches of government as Beijing seeks to tighten its control over the city.

The overhaul is an "important part of the ruling Communist Party's effort to channel nationwide resource-to-technology self-reliance, while strengthening the party's control over financial and social risks", as it faces an increasingly hostile West, according to Alfred Wu, an associate professor with the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

"In China's party and state-led governance model, setting up party commissions or government bureaus are usually the best way to influence the resource allocation on priorities as it is trying to shift the key economic growth engine from property to technology," he said.

"It is a painful and long process. China hopes to use the party-led finance model to pump more money into research and development, while keeping an eye on social stability because of higher unemployment."

The efforts to ensure stability extend all the way down to the grass roots, where social work departments – which have to handle petitions and grievances from the public – are being established at county level, the only new bodies to operate at such a low level.

While departments supervising economic matters only make sense on a larger scale, the opposite is true for social stability, according to Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University.

“It has to reach the grass roots level to know what is wrong on the ground and take immediate action,” said Xie.

At the central level, Beijing appointed Wu Hansheng, a veteran party administrator, as head of the Social Work Department in July 2023.

At a meeting in February, Wu and his lieutenants set out this year’s key tasks, telling provincial social control teams to quickly formulate plans to find ways to better handle petitions and listen to grass-roots grievances and suggestions. They were also urged to deploy more staff to identify and defuse any potential social risks.

The central department is also tasked with asserting the party’s leadership over various sectors of society, including industry federations and party branches in private companies. It also aims to extend the party’s reach into the gig economy and among the growing number of self-employed people.

Most of the provincial officials who attended the event were the secretaries of local new economy and new social organisation work committees, which have been established since 2016 to extend the party’s reach into the private sector and new internet industries, where the party previously had a limited reach.

A Zhejiang cadre said building a social organisation network across the country is still a work in progress. “We are still in the process of clarifying our new lines of reporting, finding duplicate functions and streamlining them. But the instruction from the top is very clear, get it done before the end of the year – and they won’t accept excuses,” he said.

The first new body to be established was the National Administration of Financial Regulation, which was set up in May last year – indicating the leadership’s belief there is an urgent need for better oversight of the financial sector.

In March last year Beijing also said it would replace local financial regulatory bodies with the provincial outposts of the National Administration of Financial Regulation in a clear sign of Beijing’s distrust of local governments when it comes to tackling the problem – especially since giving them free-rein over regulation is seen as a major source of corruption.

Most of the regional financial regulatory heads have been sent from central offices in Beijing

As part of this drive another body, the Central Financial Work Commission, headed by Premier Li Qiang, was set up later in the year to design, coordinate and supervise financial polices for better stability and development.

A political scientist from Nanjing University said the leadership has grave concerns about financial risk and corruption, because the damage it can cause to ordinary people’s lives is “nuclear grade”.

“If you compare the damage from different sectors ... financial sector corruption is definitely going to lead

the chart as they can influence the flow of or have access to the whole financial markets worth trillions of yuan.

“While other officials are taking bribes in thousands or millions of yuan, the financial sector’s corruption can easily reach billions, leaving big holes and major headaches in the system,” he said.

He cited the case of Lai Xiaomin, the former chairman of Huarong, one of China’s largest state-controlled asset management firms, who was executed in 2021 for taking almost 1.8 billion yuan (US\$277 million) worth of bribes – a crime the supreme court said had a “particularly severe” social impact.

The political scientist said the government shake-up showed “Beijing is very clear about this now. The financial sector shall not have its own agenda. It shall just serve its role of moving capital to where the party wants it to go”.

Three regional officials involved in the overhaul said the new local financial bodies will only operate in provincial capitals and a handful of major cities.

“So in Guangdong, you will see a provincial financial regulatory bureau and two municipality level bureaus in Guangzhou, the provincial capital, and Shenzhen, a city under separate state planning. That is all,” a Guangdong official said. An official in Guizhou concurred. “We will only have a provincial financial regulatory body and municipal financial regulator in our provincial capital Guiyang. Many cadres working in the financial area will be redeployed, especially those in smaller cities,” he added.

An official involved in the institutional overhaul in Shanghai, China’s financial and commercial centre, said the overhaul is aimed at removing the responsibility for developing markets from the municipal financial office to focus on regulation.

“The financial works office’s job was to serve local governments and financial institutions, coordinate financial resources, help to obtain more credit to finance local development projects, and assist local companies to go public.

Now it is different. The central government’s priority for us is to identify potential financial risks within our jurisdiction and manage them before it blows up,” said the Shanghai official.

“It is not just changing the plate outside our office. It requires a drastic change in how we run the bureau, our mentality, how to regulate the interactions between officials and the financial institutions to avoid corruption etc. We are just embarking on it.”

When it comes to data management the implementation at a provincial level is more patchy.

AI is seen as the next major area of competition between China and the US, and data is a vital resource for developing and training the technology.

After the launch of the National Data Administration, 20 out of the mainland’s 31 provinces, regions and

municipalities have so far set up their own data management offices to fit with Beijing's blueprint to develop China's data infrastructure and integrate and share data resources.

The plan will see national hub nodes set up in some of the country's key economic hubs, such as the Yangtze and Pearl River Deltas as well as around Beijing, and in less populated areas including Inner Mongolia, Gansu and Ningxia.

Except for Ningxia, all other provinces and regions mentioned in the plan have already announced new data agencies, led by directors with professional backgrounds in computers and big data.

Some provinces – Shaanxi, Hebei, Inner Mongolia and Guangdong – have also included “government services” in the name of their data agencies, suggesting a clear expansion in their role to allow residents to have one-stop access to government services.

The most mysterious of the new party organs are those set up to coordinate scientific development, with little information being released about their operations across the country.

The Central Science and Technology Commission was set up to oversee the sector from the top, but the only public reference to this new party body is a statement on the Ministry of Science and Technology's website in July that said cadres had studied the outcome of its first meeting.

Unlike the other newly established party organs, even the leadership of this body is unknown, something analysts said may be a sign of China's concerns about scrutiny from the West and may even indicate it has links to the military.

“China needs to avoid attention from the West so that it can push forward its science and tech development agenda with relatively fewer obstacles and intervention,” said Tsinghua's Xie,

He noted that China's ambitious tech development and talent attraction plans – such as the Made in China 2025 blueprint and Thousand Talent Plan – has been used by the West to track the new industries China is betting on and its international talent recruitment, so “staying low-key is the natural response”.

Information about science bodies on the provincial levels is also very limited. As of the end of April, only Henan and Inner Mongolia had announced the establishment of their own science commissions, which were chaired by senior officials.

National University of Singapore's Wu said it is still too early to say if the overhaul is effective as such drastic organisational changes need time to clear up any confusion or internal disputes they may cause.

“Many companies take years to complete their merger and acquisition process, not to mention mega-Chinese party and state machines which have faced three major reshuffles since Xi came to power.”

Xi's three rounds of institutional reform – announced in 2013, 2018 and last year – have all aimed to centralise power in the hands of party apparatchiks and streamline the ever-ballooning bureaucracy to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

“Deciding on the organisational structure and the staffing are probably the easiest parts of the latest reshuffle. It can be done in two years. Going forward, the bigger challenge is for the new agencies to prove themselves,” Wu said.

China wants to control reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama

12 May, 2024, [Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

By influencing the reincarnation process, China aims to assert its sovereignty over Tibet.

REINCARNATION

The Chinese government's interest in controlling the reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama, despite officially being an atheist state, is rooted in political and religious reasons. The Dalai Lama is a significant figure in Tibetan Buddhism and is traditionally believed to be reincarnated after death. The selection of his successor has historically been a religious process. However, the Chinese government has sought to control this process for several reasons. By influencing the reincarnation process, China aims to assert its sovereignty over Tibet, which it annexed in 1951. Controlling the selection of the next Dalai Lama allows China to mitigate any potential political unrest or movements for Tibetan independence. China has imposed regulations that reincarnations must be recognized by the state and must be born within China's borders, which gives the government control over Tibetan Buddhism. This control is also a way for the Chinese government to remove the influence of the current Dalai Lama, who lives in exile and is a global advocate for Tibetan rights and autonomy. The Chinese authorities have enshrined the right to appoint and recognize reincarnated lamas into Chinese law, setting a precedent for state control over religious practices. The issue of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation is not just a religious matter but also a significant geopolitical issue, involving not only China and Tibet but also India, where the current Dalai Lama resides in exile. It's a complex interplay of religion, politics, and international relations.

BACK-CHANNEL

TALKS

Back-channel communications with the Chinese government can be considered ineffective for several reasons, as highlighted by recent reports and statements from officials involved in such discussions: Despite the existence of back-channel talks, there has

been little to no progress in achieving their intended outcomes. For instance, the President of the Tibetan government-in-exile mentioned that while back-channel talks with China exist, they have not progressed enough to be discussed publicly. There is a high level of suspicion and distrust from the Chinese side, which hampers open and constructive dialogue. The Chinese authorities are very cautious and suspicious, making it difficult to move the talks beyond a preliminary stage. The Tibetan community has been advised to prepare for a long-term struggle, possibly extending over decades, indicating that there is no expectation of a quick resolution through these back channels. The talks are described as very informal, with no immediate expectations from them. This informal nature might contribute to the lack of concrete outcomes and the absence of a structured dialogue process.

There are internal challenges within the communities engaged in back-channel talks, such as the younger generation's restlessness due to the lack of progress. This internal unrest can affect the effectiveness of the talks.

External geopolitical factors, such as the relationship between India and China, can also influence the effectiveness of back-channel communications. The dynamics of these relationships can either highlight or overshadow the issues being discussed in the back channels.

These points suggest that while back-channel talks are a step towards dialogue, their effectiveness is limited by various factors, including political, social, and diplomatic complexities.

Khedroob Thondup is the son of Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of the Dalai Lama. Educated at St Stephens College, Delhi University and the University of San Francisco, Khedroob Thondup was Personal Assistant to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and accompanied him on his first trip in 1979 to the U.S. He was sent by the Dalai Lama to Beijing 1980 till 1993 in dialogue talks. He interacted with Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun and Hu Jintao. He is President of the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre, Darjeeling since 1987.

The escaped dissident still pursued decades on by China

11 May, 2024, [BBC](#), Gordon Corera

Three decades ago, Chinese dissidents were being smuggled out of the country in a secret operation called Yellow Bird - but as one of them tells the BBC, Beijing is still pursuing them.

June 1992: It was the middle of the night on the South China Sea, and a Chinese patrol vessel was

approaching a boat en route from the Communist mainland to the then-British colony of Hong Kong.

As border troops came on board to talk to the crew, their voices could be heard by a group of people packed into a secret compartment below deck.

A few minutes earlier, when the patrol boat was spotted, these secret passengers had been given an urgent order.



Beijing 1989: Yan Xiong pictured during the Tiananmen Square protests

"I was told to hide," one of them, Yan Xiong, recalls. "Don't make any noise!"

Most of those hiding were economic migrants, hoping to find work in Hong Kong – but not Yan.

He was a political dissident, and if he was discovered, he would be in serious trouble.

Yan was being smuggled out of China as part of a secret operation code-named Yellow Bird.

The patrol eventually sailed away, and in the early hours Yan - who had never travelled in a boat before that night - arrived in Hong Kong.

After a hearty breakfast, he was taken to a detention centre. This was, he was told, for his own safety. Walking the streets could be dangerous.

Being in detention was not new to Yan. He had already spent 19 months in a Chinese prison for his part in 1989's Tiananmen Square protests. Students had called for greater democracy and freedom, but the Communist Party sent in tanks to crush them.

At the end of June 1989, the Chinese government said that 200 civilians and several dozen security personnel had died. Other estimates have ranged from hundreds to many thousands.

On his release, Yan had made his way to southern China where, in scenes that could have been taken from a spy film, he was sent from one public phone booth to another, to be put in touch with the people who could get him out.

He was not the only dissident to undertake this risky journey.

Speaking to the BBC for a new series, *Shadow War: China and the West*, Chaohua Wang recalls her escape. Despite being number 14 on a list of the 21 most wanted people after the Tiananmen Square protests, she managed to evade capture, hiding in tiny rooms

for months before heading south and becoming part of the Yellow Bird escape line.

"I was like a parcel moved from one [person] to another," she says.

"I didn't even know the name Yellow Bird for quite some years."

Yellow Bird may sound like a classic spy operation, and many believed that an intelligence service - MI6 or the CIA - had come up with the idea. But they had not.

In fact, it was a private enterprise undertaken by concerned groups of citizens in Hong Kong, motivated by a desire to help out those who were on the run. Among them were the local film and entertainment industry and (more usefully) organised crime, in the form of the triads.

"They [the triads] had a lot of Chinese police in their pockets," says Nigel Inkster, who at that time was an intelligence officer based in Hong Kong. This was what enabled them to move people out of hiding in Beijing and smuggle them across the border.

The UK and US only became involved when those people who arrived in Hong Kong needed to work out where to go next.

Yan remembers being visited by what he described as an "English gentleman" who never gave his name but helped him with the paperwork.

"It is better for you to go to America, not England," the man told him. Within days Yan was in Los Angeles. Chaohua Wang also ended up in the US.

Why not England?

Former officials have told the BBC the UK was reluctant to take in Tiananmen protesters because it was desperate to avoid upsetting China in the run-up to the 1997 handover of Hong Kong.

An agreement had been signed by the UK in 1984, but the events of Tiananmen Square five years later raised difficult questions about Hong Kong's future.

In 1992, a few weeks after Yan's arrival in the colony, the former Conservative cabinet minister Chris Patten became the last governor of Hong Kong.

He says he was determined to embed greater democracy, in the hope it would endure after the handover, and he announced proposals for the democratic reform of Hong Kong's institutions, aimed at broadening the voting base in elections.

There was opposition to the reforms not just from China's leadership but also from those in London who did not want to antagonise Beijing.

"My main responsibility was to try to give people in Hong Kong the best chance of continuing to live in freedom and prosperity, and to do so after 1997," the former governor, now Lord Patten, tells me. He says he also was aware of - but not involved in - Yellow Bird.

The reluctance to allow dissidents to come to the UK - and the anger in some quarters about Patten's reforms - speaks to a central question from the 1990s which still matters today: How far should the West go to

avoid angering China and accommodate its rise, especially when it comes to values like human rights and democracy?

Yellow Bird ended on the rainy night in July 1997 when Hong Kong became sovereign Chinese territory. For a few years, the liberties that Patten had been trying to secure, held. But in the past decade, China - under Xi Jinping - has taken a more authoritarian turn and has tried to bring Hong Kong into line.

Yan took US citizenship and lived a model American life. He joined the US army and served in Iraq as a military chaplain.

He might have thought the hand of China's Communist Party could not reach him in his new home, but he was wrong.

In 2021, he decided to run for public office. He stood as a candidate in the Democratic primary for New York's 1st Congressional District.

Yan started noticing some odd occurrences during his campaign. Strange cars followed him and lurked outside where he was staying at three in the morning. At campaign events, people would try to block him from speaking.

He learned why when the FBI came to talk to him. A US private investigator had told them he had been approached by an individual in China, who had asked him to carry out surveillance on Yan. It seems the idea of a former Tiananmen protester entering US Congress was unacceptable.

"He had specifically told our private investigator that they needed to undermine the victim's candidacy," says FBI agent Jason Moritz.

The FBI were able to monitor events as the Chinese-based individual proposed the investigator dig up dirt on Yan. If he could not find any, he was instructed to make some up. If that did not work, beating him up or even staging a car accident was suggested.

"They want to smother and kill my campaign," Yan explains.

The person instructing the private investigator, the FBI assessed, was working on behalf of China's Ministry of State Security. They were indicted but could not be arrested because they were outside the US.

China has consistently denied claims of political interference. But this is not the only case where it is alleged to have become more assertive in tracking down those it considers dissidents in other countries. There have been claims of "overseas police stations" in the UK and US and of individuals being pressured to return to China or be silent.

Yan's story reveals that as China has become more confident and controlling at home, it has also sought to extend its reach abroad. And that is increasingly causing friction over issues of espionage, surveillance and human rights.

Meanwhile, Yan's message to Western governments when dealing with China is simple: "They've got to be careful."

What Xi Jinping Really Thinks

11 May, 2024, [Time](#), Steve Tsang

Xi Jinping has changed China fundamentally. He has kept the same political system that Chairman Mao Zedong created when he founded the People's Republic of China in 1949. Mao governed China with "Mao Zedong Thought," which he introduced in 1945. Deng Xiaoping put that aside when he took power in 1978 and unleashed the "reform and opening up" era. The Dengist approach was in turn jettisoned with "Xi Jinping Thought" as the de facto state ideology in 2017. Xi is not attempting a Maoist restoration; he has ambitions even greater than Mao.

At the core of Xi's vision is the fulfilment of the "China Dream of national rejuvenation" by 2050. But what does Xi Thought really entail? To understand this properly, we consulted all publicly available speeches, writings, and policies of Xi in the first comprehensive study of his ideology to explain how this supreme leader of one of the world's most important countries is upending both China and the world in profound ways.

Xi's ambition to strengthen his regime security, enhance the Chinese Communist Party's supremacy, and deliver his dream of national rejuvenation can be boiled down to two visions.

"One Country, One People, One Ideology, One Party, and One Leader"

The first vision is to create "one country, one people, one ideology, one party, and one leader." Xi's vision of "one country" requires every Chinese person to submit oneself to the greater good of China as interpreted by the Party. His vision of "one country" calls for the resolute defense of China's honor. This requires a forceful approach to tame China's restive peripheral regions, lest they become centrifugal forces. It also implies that Xi is serious about using force to take Taiwan or territories defined by the party-state as Chinese. He sees building the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into a, if not the, world-class military as essential to advancing his vision of "one country."

To create "one patriotic people," Xi Thought makes every Chinese person take on a politicized national identity and learn its tenets. Chinese heritage or culture are made inseparable from political loyalty to the PRC, the CCP, and its top leader. Thus, the Maoist ideas of the mass line (making people believe whatever the Party does is in their best interest) and the United Front (the ultimate divide and rule methodology) have been reinvented. In Xi Thought,

the extreme measures used are meant to "educate" and "level up" those Xi deems to have fallen astray, such as the Muslim Uyghurs, other minorities, Hong Kongers, and some private tech conglomerates, so that they can become full and useful members of the "one family" that is China. Xi wants to turn his "one people" into new socialist Chinese patriots. To this end, he invests in forging Xi Thought into the "one ideology" that enables them to think correctly. He believes that ideological indoctrination is not effective if it is not all-encompassing. That means standardizing not only people's thinking in political or historical matters but also how education and entertainment providers operate. For this reason, Xi uses technology adroitly, such as *Xuexi qiangguo*, the mobile app that promotes Xi Thought, to require Chinese citizens to learn Xi Thought and be monitored in how hard they are learning it on a daily basis. This is reinforced by the use of digital surveillance technologies to ensure no critical comments on Xi is allowed.

To bring Xi's vision for "one country," "one people," and "one ideology" into reality, Xi Thought reinvigorates and "upgrades" the CCP into the "one party" that can guide everyone, everywhere, and in all policy areas under himself as supreme leader. The "upgraded" CCP is a Leninist party that follows strict discipline, embraces centralized hierarchy, penetrates society effectively, and upholds Xi's leadership. Xi believes that these attributes can enable the Party, under his guidance, to lead everyone and everything in China. To cement his hold on power, Xi effectively prohibits any plan for succession, a major departure from recent Chinese leaders.

Making China "Great Again"

As Xi's global vision is guided by a "China First" principle, which in reality means putting the power and interest of the Party—and himself as its core leader—above all other considerations, it guides Chinese foreign policy to make the world safe for authoritarianism. A world unsafe for authoritarian states like Xi's China is one in which his government can fall victim to a "color revolution." This vision also includes the ambition to "modernize and transform" the U.S.-led rules-based international order into one that dovetails with China's interests and values. Xi Thought's other key foreign policy tenet, that Chinese diplomats and officials must proudly tell China's story well and demand others to pay due respect to China, underpins the advent of "wolf-warrior" diplomacy. This combination has six main implications, not in order of importance.

First, despite China's craving for soft power, the Xi approach undermines China's capacity to enjoy soft power in the rich world. But the focus of Xi Thought on soft power is the less developed, less wealthy, and often undemocratic parts of the world. Its Sino-centric mentality that primes the Chinese people to feel

superior to others, in line with Xi's *tianxia* worldview, where China was the "top civilization" power, is offensive to many. But the fundamentally transactional nature of Xi's approach—whether investments via the Belt and Road Initiative or support for authoritarian rulers abroad—make Beijing a valuable partner around the globe.

Second, while China under Xi Thought ultimately aims to make China the preeminent power in the world, it will not seek to replace the U.S. as the global hegemon. It implies that if the U.S. should withdraw from a leadership role in a region and China gets to fill the void, it will do so on its own terms and not pick up where the Washington may leave off. Under Xi, China will continue to advocate multipolarity as it weakens U.S. global hegemony, but it sees it as a stepping stone toward China's own unipolar moment, which Xi expects to achieve by the mid-century.

Third, putting China first also implies that China will take a more assertive approach toward its neighbors and the rest of the world. Under Xi Thought, China will adopt a tough line on territorial or maritime disputes, be it in the East China Sea, South China Sea, or China's western land borders. The only major exception is over the Russian Far East, which Tsarist Russia took from the Manchu Qing Empire in 1860. Xi's China claims the Manchu Empire as Chinese and will want this vast territory back but will hold off demanding it so that China can keep strategic partnership with Russia while it competes with the U.S. for global leadership. As a corollary to this assertive approach is a readiness to insist on China's extraterritorial reach. Under Xi, Chinese fugitives, including alleged corrupt former officials and dissidents, have been brought home to face "justice." Beijing has also pushed the Hong Kong State Security Law and enhanced the United Front work overseas.

Fourth, Xi Thought has a different view of globalization, where furthering it should only be pursued if it is beneficial to China. In policy terms, this translates into selective decoupling, as Xi seeks to strengthen China's economic strength through innovation by any means necessary and to reduce its economic vulnerability to potential Western sanctions. In terms of China's place in the global supply chain and economic integration, China will prioritize its domestic political needs ahead of the global common good, as evidenced in how the "dynamic zero COVID" policy and its associated lockdowns have been implemented. Fifth, under Xi Thought, the primary focus for China's foreign policy competition is the U.S. That means engaging in intense and often antagonistic competition with Washington. This includes inculcating hatred against the U.S. among China's population, and celebrating major U.S. foreign policy mistakes and its democratic mishaps. While it does not intend China to replace the U.S. as the global

hegemon, it does ultimately require Beijing to displace Washington as the preeminent power and assert its leadership for the world.

Sixth, and most important of all to Xi Thought, is seizing Taiwan and integrating it into the PRC. There is no doubt that Xi prefers a peaceful solution over Taiwan, which can be achieved by Taipei surrendering and accepting "reunification" with China. Since that is unrealistic, Xi requires the PLA to stay prepared to use force. However Chinese control over Taiwan is to be achieved, it can only happen by China either deterring the U.S. from interfering in line with the American Taiwan Relations Act or being sufficiently defeated to back off. Either way, China prevailing over Taiwan against U.S. wishes will fundamentally change the global and Indo-Pacific power balance, and the U.S. will have conceded a key geopolitical sphere of dominance. A Chinese victory here will show the world that Xi's China Dream of national rejuvenation has been accomplished.

ངང་མ་གཞི་རྒྱུ་ལས་དབུགས། **My Destiny with Amdo Ngaba:
Generational Impeded Culture leading to Self-
Immolation in Ngaba**

10 May 2024, [FNVA](#), Rinzin Namgyal

Abstract: In the reverberating words of Barbara Demick, Ngaba stands as the formidable bastion of Tibetan resistance, epitomising a steadfast defiance against Chinese dominance. Embodied in the proverbial wisdom, "if there is a fire in Lhasa, the smoke will rise from Ngaba," lies the profound significance of this town nestled in Eastern Tibet. Within the tapestry of its history, Ngaba emerges as a focal point in the perpetual struggle against Chinese encroachment, marking the zenith of third epoch of resistance. My narrative intertwines with the essence of Amdo Ngaba, unearthing "Generational Impeded Culture" that culminate in the fervent protests saturating this region. Comparative scrutiny juxtaposes Ngaba's fervour with the broader spectrum of Tibetan resistance, illuminating its unparalleled fervour evident in self-immolations, demonstrations, and myriad forms of dissent. Ngaba emerges as a crucible wherein the dialectics of heritage and modernity converge, forging a collective consciousness that pulsates with resilience. It is a saga of identity wrested from the clutches of assimilation, a testament to the indomitable spirit of a people entrenched in the sanctity of their cultural and national legacy against the Chinese occupation. Till date 65 cases of Tibetan Self-Immolating in the Ngaba County has been reported, recovered and recorded. (I was able to gain this valuable data through the help and assistance of TCHRD). Read more [here](#).

Backdoor support of China fuels Nepal's cartographic aggression irks India.....

May 10 2024, [Organiser](#)



The cabinet of Prachanda recently decided to include a map on its new banknotes that depicts portions of the Indian state of Uttarakhand as part of its territory. Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states – Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. The disputed areas include Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani in the Rs 100 denomination bank notes. It is seen as a deliberate and provocative act by Nepal. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has stated that such unilateral measures are not going to change the reality on the ground. Together, the three disputed areas cover about 370 sq km. The strategic Lipulekh pass connects the Indian state of Uttarakhand with the Tibet region. The Kalapani area is strategically significant in South Asian diplomacy as it is at the tri-junction between India, China, and Nepal. Nepal has claimed that these areas belong to it. In 2020, India inaugurated the 80 kilometres road to facilitate pilgrims visiting Kailash-Mansarovar in Tibet in China, which is around 90 kilometres from the Lipulekh pass. Lipulekh is a strip of land on the northwestern edge of Nepal, lodged between Nepal, India, and Tibet. It is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. The road has strategic value for India as it will be the first to provide connectivity to the Indian troops deployed on the Line of Actual Control with China in Uttarakhand.

The map was adopted by consensus in Nepal's Parliament four years ago. The Prime Ministers of India and Nepal have agreed to examine the border issue and settle it through diplomatic means and channel. Following Nepal's cabinet decision, Jaishankar said that discussions regarding the border issues are going on through established platforms. However, it appears that Nepal is not running at the same pace as India in this matter. Unlike in 2020, when the new map was adopted, the May 2 decision to put it on the currency note has met with scepticism and criticism.

The fissures in the bilateral relations of India and Nepal emerged when the well placed 2005-2014 relations between India and Nepal, when Nepal witnessed a

transition in its secular and federal features vanished into thin air in 2015 after the Maoists flat refused the suggestion of New Delhi that Nepal's constitution should be delayed until the concerns of the Terai parties are addressed. The 134-day blockade of Nepal that began in 2015 created a major trust deficit against India. K.P. Sharma Oli who took over as PM of Nepal in 2015, quickly shifted his allegiance towards China. In 2018, Oli returned as PM again. In 2020, he built the consensus in Parliament for Nepal's new map that included the disputed regions. India strongly objected to such acts.

The said issue needs to be resolved with evidence and diplomatic routes. Notably, the cabinet decision on printing new notes has come in just two months after Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) CPN (UML) joined the ruling coalition in Nepal. His party's manifesto clearly promises to bring the contested areas into Nepal. The country has slowly drifted apart from India, and China has moved in to fill the vacuum with investments, aid, and loans. China's charm offensive in Nepal might be veering the Himalayan country away from India. China considers Nepal a key partner in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and wants to invest in Nepal's infrastructure as part of its grand plans to boost global trade. It has been reported that in 2022, China offered Nepal a Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network created by blasting tunnels through the mountainous Tibetan plateau under its flagship Belt and Road Initiative. But the project has been marred by delays over finance. China has already constructed Pokhara International Airport, but India continues to deny permission to fly overhead to flights heading to the Chinese-built airport. This means that the airport remains inactive. India has also squandered away its goodwill bank in the country, as its new recruitment scheme cut out the Nepalese Gurkhas from getting recruited in its Gurkha regiments. It has been nearly three years, and not a single Nepali Gurkha has joined the Indian Army, denting century-old ties.

There has been a change within Nepal as to how they compare the 2020 and 2024 issue. Unlike in 2020, when the new map adored by Nepal, there is no visible consensus on the current decision by putting up the map on the currency notes. It is being believed that the decision is perceived as unwise. Many in Nepal believe that the issue should be settled through diplomacy and dialogue without any cascading consequences, which compels India to play the hardball vis a vis the Himalayan country. The Nepalese government is however, taking it lightly and believes that it can improve its chances by shaking hands with China. As India is currently undergoing its national elections, the new government will have its work cut out to seriously recalibrate its approach towards its neighbourhood policies. Despite having in

principle agreements on the resolution of the tedious border issues, both India and Nepal have to set a time-bound framework to fix the tangible issue of disputed territories and restore the non-tangible historical ties.

Human rights organizations hold lecture tours at world-renowned universities to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre

09 May, 2024, [VOA](#), Zhou Xingchen

Zhou Fengsuo, executive director of the human rights organization Human Rights in China, gave a speech at Stanford University on Tuesday (May 7), telling the story of the June 4th massacre that he personally experienced in Tiananmen Square 35 years ago, and telling the real history to the world, especially the younger generation. This is part of the "Tiananmen Square Student Protests and Democracy in China" series of lecture tours jointly organized by China Human Rights and Humanitarian China and student organizations from well-known universities around the world to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the 1989 student movement.

After being invited to give lectures on the June 4th theme at Cambridge University, Georgia Free Students Union, Brown University, and Columbia University in April and May, Human Rights in China held a June 4th-themed lecture at Stanford University in the San Francisco Bay Area on May 7. Zhou Fengsuo, executive director of Human Rights in China and co-founder of Humane China, delivered a speech titled "From the Tiananmen Student Movement, the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Movement to the White Paper Movement - Chinese Student Movement and Chinese Democracy."

Survivors of the Tiananmen Massacre told the truth and remembered history.

Zhou Fengsuo was one of the student leaders of the Tiananmen student movement and served as a standing committee member of the Beijing University Student Autonomy Federation. After the authorities suppressed the student movement, he was listed as one of the 21 backbone members of the Chinese Communist Party, wanted and imprisoned. As an eyewitness, Zhou Fengsuo recounted his experience in Tiananmen Square in 1989. He said: "The student protest group persisted in Tiananmen Square for 50 days. As a survivor, I want to tell the real history to the world. I like talking to young people, this is very important. Young people need to know the truth of history, we need Keep the truth and keep this fighting spirit going."



On May 7, 2024, Zhou Fengsuo, executive director of the human rights organization Human Rights in China, delivered a speech at Stanford University on the theme of "From the Tiananmen Student Movement, the Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Movement to the White Paper Movement-Chinese Student Movement and Chinese Democracy." (Photography by Zhou Xingchen)

Zhou Fengsuo's speech about "the students' protests have won the support of the people" was applauded by the audience.

He said: "The 1964 student movement was supported by all the Chinese people. In Beijing alone, more than 1 million people took to the streets to support the student protests, accounting for one-tenth of Beijing's population at the time. Not only in Beijing, citizens took to the streets to support students in hundreds of cities in China. There were large-scale protests in Shanghai, Chengdu, Wuhan and other places. Almost every university has an independent student organization to organize protests, including CCTV and People's Daily. Many journalists, including daily newspapers, participated in the protest and covered the student demonstrations at the time."

The truth about June 4th is still shocking

People from all walks of life, including teachers and students from Stanford University, citizens of the San Francisco Bay Area, and members of local democracy and human rights organizations, participated in the lecture and subsequent discussion sessions. Tom, a student at Stanford University, is one of them. He spoke about his feelings in an interview with VOA after the meeting. "We had seen some information about the Tiananmen Massacre from the Internet. Although I rarely talk about the Tiananmen student movement with my friends and parents, we are very interested in the history of the Chinese democratic movement and hope to hear personal accounts from the Tiananmen protest students. Narration. Mr. Zhou Fengsuo's speech today gives us the opportunity to understand

the real history, which is very good," he said. Mobi, a graduate of Stanford University, was also happy to have the opportunity to hear the history of the June 4th incident from those who witnessed it. After the lecture, he told America: "Although I have read some information about the June 4th Movement, I am still very happy to hear people who participated in the 1989 student movement speak about that period of history in person, because in 1989, I was it was very small, and for me, it was a very idealistic student democratic movement."

Ms. May, who came all the way from Fremont to Stanford University to hear Zhou Fengsuo's speech, told VOA that she was very shocked after listening to the speech.

She said: "From Mr. Zhou Fengsuo's speech, I learned for the first time that the youngest child among the June 4th victims was only three and a half years old! He also mentioned that after the Tiananmen Massacre, he saw more than 40 corpses at the entrance of Fuxing Hospital. The bodies of the victims. This time I saw with my own eyes the list of wanted students he brought to the speech, the bloody clothes in Tiananmen Square, and the photos of more than 100,000 people commemorating June 4th in Victoria Park in Hong Kong. These are all the CCP's suppression of students! The evidence of the movement and the massacre of unarmed students is so cruel!" The 1989 Tiananmen Student Democratic Movement, also known as the 1989 Democracy Movement, the 1989 Student Movement, the Tiananmen Incident or the Tiananmen Massacre, refers to the massacre that began in mid-April 1989. Triggered by the commemoration of Hu Yaobang, Chinese college students launched a demonstration movement in Tiananmen Square that lasted for nearly two months. The students raised demands such as anti-corruption, freedom, and democracy. The student movement that started in Beijing soon swept many cities across the country, and college students from all over the country took to the streets to protest and demonstrate. From the evening of June 3 to the early morning of June 4, the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China ordered the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the Armed Police Force and the police to use force to clear the demonstration crowds in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Many students and citizens were massacred. For the Tiananmen massacre. Immediately, the Chinese authorities issued a wanted order for the fugitive student movement leaders.



File photo: June Fourth witness Fang Zheng (in a wheelchair), from left: Wang Dan, Zhou Fengsuo, Li Xiaoming, Wu Renhua, Teng Biao and Wang Juntao in front of the Tank Man installation in front of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei.

Fang Zheng: It is very important to tell young people the truth about June 4th

Fang Zheng, president of the China Democracy Education Foundation, a pro-democracy organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, is another victim and survivor of the Tiananmen massacre. As a senior student at Beijing Institute of Physical Education, Fang Zheng held on to Tiananmen Square until the last moment. In the early morning of June 4, he withdrew from Tiananmen Square and walked to Liubukou. In order to save a female classmate, he was run over by a tank and his legs were broken. Fang Zheng told Voice of America after the lecture at Stanford University that in the context of the CCP banning Chinese people from mentioning the 1989 student movement and arresting people commemorating the Tiananmen Massacre, survivors of the Tiananmen Massacre went on a lecture tour to world-renowned universities. , it is very important to tell and spread the truth about the Tiananmen Massacre to young people. He said: "China Human Rights and Humanitarian China have been committed to exposing China's human rights disasters and rescuing persecuted Chinese human rights defenders for many years. Zhou Fengsuo himself has been paying attention to China's domestic rights protection struggles for many years. He has intervened and spoken out on China's current human rights incidents. He is very suitable for communicating with young people who are concerned about Chinese democracy, from telling the history of China's democratic movement to discussing with young people how China can further develop democratic movements and carry out human rights causes in China now and in the future. , I believe there will be many sparks."

"Today's young people will play a leading role in the future of the world and China in ten and twenty years. They determine the future, and young people must be made aware of the crimes and tyranny of the CCP. It is very important for young people to have a correct understanding of the nature of the CCP," Fang Zheng emphasized.

Zhou Fengsuo: The June 4th clearance was a deliberate massacre.

Zhou Fengsuo emphasized during the interactive session with students: "The tank attack on Tiananmen from the evening of June 3 to the morning of June 4th was not an accident at all. The June 4th clearance was a deliberate massacre. "It was a carefully planned massacre carried out by the CCP army. Deng Xiaoping wanted to kill the protesting students and citizens and create fear in people's hearts so that the CCP could continue to govern smoothly and he could live in peace.

"In an interview with Voice of America after the meeting, he said that the massacre did not only occur in Beijing.

He said: "In the end, the CCP deployed 250,000 troops to suppress the protesting students and citizens in Tiananmen Square. But the massacre occurred not only in Beijing, but also in many other places. For example, Chengdu. One of the most revealing studies is about the Tiananmen Square massacre. Massacre, NPR reporter Louisa Lin wrote a book specifically confirming the large-scale killing of participants of the 1989 student movement by the Chinese Communist Army in Chengdu."

Zhou Fengsuo: He was moved by the interaction with the audience after the speech

This pro-democracy activist who has been committed to promoting human rights in China said that during the interactive sessions after the speeches at various universities, many audience members told him about their experiences in Tiananmen Square, which moved him very much.

"After I gave a speech at Cambridge University, a Uighur girl told me that when her father participated in the pro-democracy movement in China in 1989, he wrote a slogan in support of democracy and freedom. At that time, he escaped censorship. But after Ten years later, this matter was discovered, and her parents were forced to flee to England, so she was finally born in England. This is a very representative story, showing that people of all nationalities were widely involved in it at that time. Participate. Ten years later, they are still being persecuted for this matter, which shows how afraid the CCP is of the 1989 student movement," Zhou Fengsuo said.

He said that during his speech, he would meet young students from China and feel the inspiration they received from the 1989 student movement. They are all eager to talk about what they want to do to bring about democratization in China, and many people will think of some very practical issues, such as how to organize in this difficult situation of network security and how to pay attention to China. political prisoners. Zhou Fengsuo also mentioned that young people in the West are also very interested in the June 4th and Tiananmen movements.

He said: "This year, several young Americans said that what happened in 1989 changed their lives. They saw the problems of the Chinese Communist Party today and the harm caused by China's lack of democratization. They also felt more urgently that China We need democracy and freedom, and we also want to learn about another possibility in China through this incident in 1989, that is, how can China be democratized, and how should democratic countries deal with demons like the CCP now? I think these are very meaningful. "

Fang Zheng, chairman of the China Democracy Education Foundation, said that when the anti-extradition movement occurred in Hong Kong, one million Hong Kong people took to the streets to demonstrate, which proved that the people supported Hong Kong's social movements and democratic demands; even the events that will happen in China in 2022 are mainly young people. The protest movement on the streets and the white paper movement with the "anti-blockade" as its appeal also received widespread support from the Chinese people. Because of this, this democratic movement with a mass base achieved a basic victory, and finally ended with China The government ended the blockade, although the CCP arrested many young people involved in the White Paper Movement.

After the lecture, Zhou Fengsuo told VOA that Human Rights in China will hold lectures on the June Fourth student movement and Chinese democracy at well-known universities such as the University of Calgary in Canada, the University of London, and Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan. In addition, Humane China will also hold an exhibition of June Fourth cultural relics.

From the bookshelf: 'The Political Thought of Xi Jinping'

13 May 2024, [ASPI](#)

At the Chinese Communist Party congress in October 2017, 'Xi Jinping thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era' was formally incorporated in the party constitution—alongside Mao Zedong thought, Deng Xiaoping theory, Jiang Zemin's 'important thought on the three represents' and Hu Jintao's 'scientific outlook on development'.

In the CCP ideological hierarchy, 'thought' is at the top, followed by 'theory', while Jiang's 'three represents' and Hu's 'scientific outlook' are considered to be action manuals, lower on the scale. Labelling Xi's input to CCP ideology as 'thought' puts him on a par with Mao and ahead of Deng Xiaoping, at least in principle. But the length and clunkiness of the name of Xi's dogma, contrasting with the punchy title 'Mao Zedong thought', is generally seen to indicate that Xi is not yet in the same class as the great helmsman.

Is this significant? To the casual reader, Xi Jinping's written works and speeches might simply seem like disjointed pronouncements presented in the heavy jargon of the CCP. But do they in fact form a coherent body of work intended to guide Chinese decision makers, party cadres and the population at large? And can they serve as a guide for outsiders wishing to understand and predict the actions of China's leaders? In the book *The Political Thought of Xi Jinping*, Steve Tsang and Olivia Cheung think they do. The authors ambitiously tackle the task of making Xi Jinping's thought accessible to the general reader. Tsang has published widely on Chinese politics and is director of the China Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, where Cheung is a research fellow. Together they have reviewed the vast body of work that has emerged in Xi's name during his decade in power.

At the centre of Xi's thought lies the CCP, which in his view has been weakened over the years by factionalism, corruption and the separation of party from state instigated by Deng Xiaoping. Xi sees the state as subservient to the party, as simply the executor of party policies, and has systematically reversed Deng's political reforms and brought state organs firmly under party control.

Xi's ideological mission is to reinvigorate the CCP and consolidate China as a party-state. He wants to make the party great again. Pursuing this theme, the authors devote an entire chapter to 'The party leads everything', detailing how Xi has shifted control of all major policy processes to the CCP and, ultimately, himself.

The authors review policy decisions and specific actions in the context of Xi's concern to maintain control, from economic policy, diplomacy and fighting corruption to reining in the rival youth league faction led by his predecessor Hu Jintao and the late Li Keqiang. Even the central bank's recent monetary policy decisions appear to be driven by Xi Jinping thought.

When the tennis star Peng Shuai in 2021 went on the social media platform Weibo to accuse former deputy premier Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault, many expected disciplinary action against Zhang. But censors quickly took down Peng's post, and she disappeared from view and later retracted the allegations and announced her early retirement. Zhang remained unscathed. The message was clear: the CCP could initiate disciplinary action against its members but would not entertain outside complaints.

A fascinating chapter on the 'socialist market economy' should set off alarm bells in corporate boardrooms. Xi favours state-owned enterprises, is wary of the private sector and has implemented a raft of measures to extend party control into the decision-making bodies of private companies, local and foreign.

According to the authors, Xi will support private enterprises 'only if they prove themselves totally loyal to the Party and willing to serve China's interests as defined by the Party or himself.' The star pupil in this regard is the technology giant Huawei, a cutting-edge but steadfastly loyal business.

The chapter on a 'common destiny for humankind', again, bears careful reading by diplomats and defence specialists. As the authors see it, Xi's ultimate ambition is to restore the system of *tianxia* (all under heaven), with China as the central power, surrounded by vassal states and operating in a global environment that poses no threat to authoritarianism. Under this Sinocentric world view, divide-and-rule politics, wolf-warrior diplomacy and assertive efforts to undermine the liberal rules-based order can be expected to continue, while peaceful resolution of China's claims on Taiwan seems unlikely.

At the same time, the authors flag elements of hypocrisy. Xi's moves to stamp out corruption and factionalism were presented to the public as designed to reinvigorate the party. But equally clearly, they were intended to eliminate Xi's adversaries and rivals.

Will Xi Jinping's dogma eventually shed its awkward title, be renamed 'Xi Jinping thought' and be proclaimed the state ideology? Since this would put the ambitious Xi unequivocally on a par with chairman Mao, the authors consider it likely. But so far party elders have kept Xi waiting. The issue will be high on China watchers' agenda during the 2027 party congress.

The Political thought of Xi Jinping is one of the first serious efforts to analyse Xi's political doctrine. As such, it is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the underpinnings of Xi's actions, or to make an informed guess at his next moves.

China Must Cease Collective Punishments Targeting Families of Tibetan Human Rights Defenders

09 May, 2024, [TCHRD](#)

In an interview with TCHRD, Namkyi, a 24-year-old former political prisoner, describes making the difficult decision to leave her family, and her daring escape across the border with her childhood friend and cousin sister Tsering Kyi, both of whom arrived in India last summer. Despite the punitive measures imposed by Chinese authorities, it was the suffering of her loved ones that weighed heaviest on her conscience. Namkyi detailed the prevailing culture of fear and oppression, where dissent was stifled and discouraged, leaving individuals like herself isolated in the struggle for justice.

On 21 October 2015, Namkyi, along with her sister, Tenzin Dolma, who were both 15 at the time, staged a peaceful protest carrying two large portraits of His

Holiness the Dalai Lama while marching on the 'Martyrs Road' in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. They called for "Freedom in Tibet" and the "Return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche to Tibet".



Namkyi with her brother Gendun Phuntsok before her escape

Within 10 minutes a squad of between four and five Chinese Armed Police officers arrived and brought them to a detention centre. Both sisters endured rigorous and relentless interrogations, and experienced severe physical and psychological torment, including prolonged exposure to extreme heat, deprivation of sleep and inadequate food, and solitary confinement, as they awaited sentencing during a one-year pre-trial detention period.

Prior to her sentencing, Namkyi underwent intense political re-education sessions at the detention centre. Authorities frequently told her,

For one hour every week, they were given "political re-education" sessions. These sessions consisted of watching government TV news channels and sitting through lectures on Xi Jinping 'Thought', Chinese language and Chinese laws.

On 23 November 2016, the Trochu County People's Court handed down a three-year prison sentence to Namkyi and Tenzin Dolma, who faced charges of 'inciting separatism' in a closed-door trial. Despite being only 16 years old at the time, the court intentionally raised their age to 18. They were subsequently imprisoned in the Sichuan Province Women's Prison. During the initial three months of their imprisonment they were forced to endure mandatory military style training, 'political re-education', and forced to learn the Chinese constitution. They had to study for, and complete, an oral test on numerous Chinese documents, and

underwent training for daily activities as prisoners. They were subjected to excessive hard labour for over 12 hours per day, where they had to make copper wires, cigarette boxes and wristwatches.

They were provided with extremely poor quality food, including watery rice porridge and uncooked meals, which compounded their already weakened physical state, making the rigorous mandatory military training exceptionally difficult. Namkyi recalls that despite requiring medical assistance, it was repeatedly denied. On 21 October 2018, the sisters were released from prison following the completion of their sentences. However, they continued to be detained at the police station in Ngaba County for a week, as their family were required to submit a pledge letter for their release. Like many other Tibetan political prisoners in Tibet, their identity cards were blacklisted, as well as their family's household registration cards (Ch: Hukou) ; this was due to the involvement of Namkyi, Tenzin Dolma and their brother, Gendun Phuntsok, in political activism. Consequently, they were excluded from government welfare schemes, from which they had previously received a small amount of rice and grains annually. Following their release, heightened surveillance and stringent monitoring severely restricted their ability to move freely and access vital service; they were denied medical examinations in hospitals. Their nieces and nephews also faced administrative obstacles when attempting to enrol in universities, a consequence of the Chinese government's practise of collective punishment. They were largely penalised due to their association with political prisoners, illustrating the unjust repercussions endured by families of Tibetan political prisoners.

In 2015, TCHRD reported the sentencing of Gendun Phuntsok, Nyamki's elder brother, and Lobsang Kelsang, two monks from Kirti monastery, after they participated in a peaceful protest in Ngaba County. The County People's Court in Tashi Ling (Ch: Li) County, Ngaba, sentenced Gendun Phuntsok to four years in prison and Lobsang Kelsang to three and a half years. Despite being 17 years old at the time, Gendun Phuntsok's age was falsely increased to 18 by Chinese authorities.

Gendun Phuntsok, was released from prison in 2019 after serving a four-year sentence; the news of his release only came to light following Namkyi's escape from Tibet. Upon release he was emaciated, and required extensive medical attention for injuries sustained during his imprisonment. Initially treated in Ngaba County, he was later transferred to Chengdu's Municipal People's Hospital, where it was discovered that he had suffered broken ribs and untreated tuberculosis in prison. His family members incurred medical expenses exceeding 10,000 Chinese Yuan, costs which were not covered by the Chinese government. To this day, he continues to endure

chronic pain from the rib injuries inflicted during his time in Chinese custody.

Similarly, Lobsang Kelsang, who was sentenced at a similar time, was released in poor health conditions. Despite completing his prison term, he faced an additional six months imprisonment for allegedly reacting negatively to prison guards, which led to a prolonged period spent in harsh conditions in solitary confinement. Upon release his health was severely compromised, and he was on the brink of death. Numerous Tibetan political prisoners have attested to being denied adequate medical attention, a violation of both Chinese law and international standards, including the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners. The deliberate withholding of medical care as a means of further persecution against detainees and prisoners of conscience indicates a tacit endorsement of such practices by the Chinese government, forming a systemic pattern of abuse.

Namkyi, Tenzin Dolma, and Gendun Phuntsok hail from a nomadic family in Chugle Gabma Village, Cha Township, Ngaba County. They are the children of Mrs. Rigkho and Mr. Tragya, also known as Tashi Gyatso. Nyamki fled Tibet to raise awareness about the hardships faced by Tibetans under Chinese oppression, and is urging the international community not to be swayed by the false narratives which are propagated by the Chinese government.

India's Spying Upsurge Can Complicate Security Ties With the West

06 May 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Mohamed Zeeshan

Espionage is standard fare for almost all global powers, but China and India stand out for their specific interests in their country's mammoth diaspora.

China and India might be seen as each other's geopolitical opponents, but last month, they were both at the receiving end of similar exposés in the great global espionage game.

In Britain and Germany, six individuals were arrested on charges of spying for Beijing. Among those arrested were a young aide to a prominent member of the British Parliament, and a German citizen of Chinese descent who worked for a far-right German member of the European Parliament. The accusations, authorities said, involved infiltrating the political establishment and attempting to influence the democratic process.

Meanwhile, in Australia, reports said that a few Indian spies had been removed from the country a few years ago after they were caught trying to steal sensitive

defense secrets, obtain classified information on trade, and monitor the Indian diaspora.

Espionage is standard fare for almost all global powers, but China and India stand out for their specific interest in their country's mammoth diaspora.

For years, China has spied on its own diaspora through various means. In the initial years, these efforts were largely driven by paranoia following the flight of dissidents as far back as after the Tiananmen Square protests. But in more recent years, Beijing has also cultivated neo-nationalist diaspora elements to do much more than merely spy on Chinese dissidents; members of the Chinese diaspora have been caught trying to infiltrate Western institutions and pilfer trade secrets, influence political decision-making, and obtain sensitive defense technology.

New Delhi is increasingly watching and learning.

India has long been dismayed that in the great power game, its economic influence is sorely lacking. In the last four decades, China has built an extraordinary trade footprint covering much of the world. In 2001, when China first acceded to the World Trade Organization, over 80 percent of countries for whom data was available counted the U.S. as a larger trade partner than China. By 2018, the tables had flipped: two-thirds of the world was trading more with China than with the U.S. that year, according to Australia's Lowy Institute.

In 2022, China accounted for over 14 percent of the world's total export in goods. India's share was less than 2 percent.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has made a strong rhetorical push to correct this disparity. But India's weak integration in terms of trade and investment agreements, its relatively poor labor productivity, and continued infrastructure problems have kept that gulf wide. Instead, Modi made an intelligent calculation early on that India had to rely on a different, more potent asset to grow its global influence: its vast, highly-skilled, and politically influential diaspora.

Indians abroad make up the largest diaspora group in history: some 18 million people, according to the United Nations. Each year, they send back record sums of money in remittances — as much as \$125 billion in 2023 alone. They are also among the highest income-earning groups across much of the West, and occupy positions of high power across politics, business and the arts.

Very early in his term, Modi attempted to connect with the diaspora in ways that none of his predecessors had done — holding massive rally-like events in New York, Sydney, and elsewhere. That was at the time a conscious foreign policy effort. In 2015, Ram Madhav, then the general secretary of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), explained: “[The diaspora] can be India's voice even while being loyal citizens in those countries.

That is the long-term goal behind diaspora diplomacy. It is like the way the Jewish community looks out for Israel's interests in the United States."

Yet, as Hindu nationalism came to dominate the BJP's politics at home, the diaspora abroad became increasingly fragmented and incoherent. A 2020 survey of Indian Americans by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace found that as much as 69 percent of Hindus in the United States approve of Modi's performance as prime minister. Yet, only 20 percent of Muslims and 34 percent of Christians did.

Democrats in the survey were also less likely to approve of Modi and the BJP than Republicans, and that has also borne out on Capitol Hill. When Modi visited Washington for a state visit last year, a handful of progressive Democrats publicly protested and vowed to boycott his speech. Another group of lawmakers — led by Indian American Representative Pramila Jayapal — signed a public letter, pushing President Joe Biden to raise human rights issues with Modi.

In more recent times, New Delhi has found itself at odds with Sikhs in the West. That fault line has resulted in accusations in Canada and the U.S. that agents of the Modi government were involved in plotting and executing the assassination of Sikh separatist leaders. These tensions are unlikely to go away easily. Both China and India see their diaspora as an extension of their own national security. Scuffles with dissidents at home engender scuffles with dissidents in the West.

So far, the West's response to India has been starkly different from its response to China, but it also faces a different challenge. For years, Europe and Australia continued to seek economic cooperation with China despite these tensions. But those ties have since come crashing down after Beijing sought to leverage its trade profile to coerce the European Union and Australia.

With India, the West has sought to strengthen security ties, in large part to cultivate an ally that can counterbalance China in the Indo-Pacific. Those ties have involved not only the transfer of advanced defense technology, but also intelligence-sharing, training, and joint operations.

But can such security cooperation run in tandem with New Delhi's desire to expand its espionage operations in the West or monitor dissidents abroad? If the U.S. and its allies sense a risk that India may leverage its role in these information networks for purposes that aren't mutually acceptable, it may jeopardize India's security ties with the West.

What China is signaling by renaming regions

05 May 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Khendroob Thondup

In the intricate ballet of geopolitics, names signify more than mere identification: They embody history, culture and sovereignty. The recent decision by China to refer to Arunachal Pradesh as "Tsang Nan" or South Tibet, and to rename Tibet as "Xizang," is a strategic move that extends beyond cartography into the realm of diplomatic signaling.

This op-ed explores the implications of these actions and India's potential response.

Names are potent symbols in international relations, encapsulating the essence of a nation's stance on territorial disputes.

China's choice to rename regions within Indian territory is not merely a linguistic exercise, but a symbolic assertion of sovereignty.

Such actions are provocative, touching upon the sensitive chords of territorial integrity and national identity.

India's response, maintaining the use of the name "Tibet," is a reaffirmation of historical and cultural recognition.

By doing so, India not only challenges China's unilateral renaming, but also underscores its commitment to respecting the historical context of the region.

This stance is significant, as it reflects India's adherence to global norms and understanding, despite China's attempts to reshape international perceptions.

The term "Sinicization" denotes the process by which non-Chinese societies are influenced to adopt Chinese cultural, linguistic and societal norms.

In Tibet's case, this process is a deliberate effort by the Chinese government to integrate Tibetan culture into the broader Chinese cultural framework.

The renaming of Tibet to "Xizang" is a facet of these Sinicization efforts, aiming to solidify China's rule and dilute the Dalai Lama's influence and the global recognition of the Tibetan cause.

The international community, including governments and organizations, often weighs the historical and cultural context heavily when referring to regions.

Despite China's renaming efforts, many continue to use the term "Tibet," aligning with the established global understanding.

This collective stance is crucial, as it supports the cultural and religious identity of the Tibetan people against the tide of Sinicization.

The Indian government has firmly rejected China's attempts to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, emphasizing that such actions do not alter the state's status as an integral part of India.

This rejection is a clear message to China and the international community that India stands firm on its territorial sovereignty.

India's potential reciprocation, refusing to accept the name "Xizang" and instead using "Tibet," is a powerful diplomatic gesture.

It is a declaration that India does not recognize the Sinicization of Tibet and supports the region's historical and cultural identity as they are known internationally.

The naming dispute between India and China over Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh is more than a war of words: It is a reflection of deeper geopolitical tensions and the struggle for cultural preservation.

India's stance, rooted in historical recognition and international law, serves as a bulwark against attempts to rewrite history and infringe upon rights of sovereignty.

As the situation evolves, the international community's role in upholding these principles becomes ever more critical, ensuring that names — and the identities they represent — remain respected on the global stage.

Opinion | China Is Revamping Its Military, And India Must Not Take It Lightly

02 May 2024, [NDTV](#), Harsh V. Pant

While India continues to be absorbed in its long-drawn elections, the rest of the world is moving ahead with its own priorities. Last week, Chinese President Xi Jinping undertook a comprehensive restructuring of his country's armed forces when he made a surprising decision to dissolve the Strategic Support Force (SSF), a military division he established in 2015 to merge various capabilities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), including space, cyber, electronic, and psychological warfare.

In its stead, Xi introduced the Information Support Force, which he described as "a fresh strategic component of the PLA and a crucial support for the coordinated advancement and utilisation of the network information system". As a result of this revised framework, the PLA now comprises four primary branches: the ground forces, naval forces, air forces, and the rocket forces. Additionally, there are now four auxiliary units: three divisions derived from the SSF, and the Joint Logistic Support Force.

Harnessing AI And Emerging Tech

While Xi himself underscored the importance of the move in enabling the Chinese military to effectively "engage and triumph in contemporary warfare", his extensive anti-corruption campaign within the PLA last year precipitated this restructuring. It implicated influential generals and caused significant disruption within the rocket force, a prestigious division

responsible for managing China's rapidly expanding cache of nuclear and ballistic missiles. The restructuring strengthens Xi's direct oversight of the PLA's strategic capacities and emphasises China's aspirations to proficiently harness Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies in anticipation of what it terms the "intelligentised warfare" of tomorrow.

And this is critical for China as it continues to push its military to adapt to the changing strategic realities and the rapidly evolving nature of contemporary warfare. Over the past decade, Beijing has pursued a comprehensive modernisation of its military capabilities, aiming to transform the PLA into a formidable force capable of safeguarding its interests regionally and globally. This modernisation drive has encompassed various aspects, including technological advancement, organisational reform, and doctrinal evolution.

Preparing For Modern Warfare

One of the focal points of China's military modernisation has been the development and acquisition of advanced weaponry and equipment. This includes the enhancement of its naval capabilities with the commissioning of aircraft carriers, modernisation of its air force with next-generation fighter jets, and bolstering its missile forces with advanced ballistic and cruise missiles. Additionally, China has invested heavily in cyber and space capabilities, recognising their importance in modern warfare.

Moreover, organisational reforms have been instituted to streamline command structures, improve joint operations, and enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the PLA. These reforms have included the establishment of new commands and theatre commands, as well as efforts to professionalise and modernise the military personnel.

It goes without saying that China's military modernisation poses several significant consequences for India, both in terms of security dynamics and strategic calculations. Its enhanced military capabilities, particularly in areas such as naval expansion, missile development, and cyber warfare, could potentially tilt the balance of power in the region, thereby altering the strategic landscape vis-à-vis India. The military modernisation seems to have already emboldened Beijing to assert its territorial claims more strongly, potentially heightening the risk of border skirmishes and military confrontations between the two countries. This has exacerbated existing tensions and destabilised the region.

Why India Should Pay Attention

Furthermore, China's growing military prowess has implications for India's defence planning and security posture. New Delhi is compelled to invest more resources in its own military modernisation efforts to

maintain a credible deterrent against potential Chinese aggression, which may require diverting resources away from other development priorities.

Over the last decade, India has embarked on a series of defence reforms aimed at modernising and enhancing the efficiency of its armed forces. One significant reform has been the promotion of indigenous defence manufacturing through initiatives like the "Make in India" programme. This initiative seeks to encourage domestic production of defence equipment, reducing reliance on imports and bolstering India's self-reliance in defence capabilities.

The 'Make In India' Initiative

Additionally, there has been a focus on streamlining defence procurement processes to expedite the acquisition of critical military hardware and technology. Measures such as the Defense Acquisition Procedure (DAP) and the Strategic Partnership Model aim to facilitate smoother procurement processes and encourage private sector participation in defence production. There have also been efforts to enhance defence infrastructure along India's borders, particularly in border areas with China.

This includes the development of roads, airfields, and other infrastructure to improve mobility and logistical support for the armed forces. Moreover, there has been an emphasis on promoting jointness and integration among the three branches of the Indian armed forces - the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force - to enhance operational synergy and effectiveness.

And yet there is a need for quicker reforms and broader restructuring. Indian debate on theatre commands is still in limbo, and rationalisation of the human resources and technology ratio is still at a nascent stage. China's recent moves are a wake-up call. Making Indian armed forces fit to fight 21st-century wars should be the topmost priority for any government that takes office in June.

India is starting to split in two parts, What's Next?

01 May 2024, [Ground Report](#), Wahid Bhat

Recent studies at the American Geophysical Union conference propose a seismic shift in India's geology. Rather than a sideways split, seismic data hints at a horizontal division in the Indian Continental Plate.

A recent study suggests that India's geological landscape is undergoing significant transformation, with indications that the Indian Continental Plate might be undergoing a horizontal split rather than a conventional sideways separation.

The analysis of seismic data gathered from southern Tibet, coupled with a reevaluation of previous research, has unveiled a striking portrayal of the

immense geological forces at play beneath the Himalayas.

Seismic data reveals Himalayan geological forces

Presenting at the American Geophysical Union conference in San Francisco last December, researchers from institutions in the US and China unveiled findings suggesting a unique disintegration process within the Indian continental plate. As it interacts with the basement of the Eurasian tectonic plate, situated above it, the Indian plate undergoes a transformative process.

Contrary to prevailing models explaining the elevation of the Tibetan plateau and the formation of the Himalayan mountain range, this discovery offers a surprising compromise. Traditionally, these phenomena were attributed to a collision between the Indian and Eurasian crustal fragments. This collision, dating back approximately 60 million years, involved the Indian plate subducting beneath its northern neighbour, propelled by currents of molten rock within the mantle.

Scientists propose that the split is occurring in layers rather than the plate breaking into two distinct pieces. The formation of the Tibetan Plateau has sparked considerable debate within the scientific community regarding its underlying causes.

According to a January 2024 study, the Indian tectonic plate is splitting into two layers, each about 100 kilometres (60 miles) thick, as it moves towards the Eurasian plate. This process, known as "delamination", is causing the landmass to decrease by 2 millimetres per year.

The study suggests that the plate is separating into higher and lower layers, with the elevated section contributing to Tibet's high peaks and the lower part submerging into the Earth's mantle.

India's plate undergoes horizontal split

A recent study suggests that India's geological landscape is undergoing significant transformation, with indications that the Indian Continental Plate might be undergoing a horizontal split rather than a conventional sideways separation. Scientists propose that the split is occurring in layers rather than the plate breaking into two distinct pieces.

"Levels of helium present in the Tibetan springs led us to draw our arguments," explained Simon Klemperer of Stanford University and co-authors on the study. "Our research revealed a pattern suggesting that the mantle was close enough to the Earth's surface for the rare helium-3 to emerge through the springs in northern Tibet," they added.

"In southern Tibet, the prevalence of Helium-4 indicates that the plate has not yet split there," stated Professor Douwe van Hinsbergen of Utrecht University in an interview with Science Magazine. Reflecting on the concept, he added,

"We didn't know continents could behave this way and that is, for solid earth science, pretty fundamental," Professor Douwe van Hinsbergen, who is not an author of the study said.

Research into the density of the mantle and crust indicates that the buoyant Indian continental plate should not sink easily, suggesting that submerged sections of the crust likely continue to grind along under the Eurasian plate rather than plunging into the depths of the mantle.

Indian plate distorts; land wrinkles, folds

Another theory proposes that the Indian plate may be undergoing distortion, causing some areas to wrinkle and fold while others dip and dive.

Diverse interpretations arise depending on the favoured evidence and data processing methods. In a study led by geophysicist Lin Liu from the Ocean University of China, researchers collected 'up-and-down' S-wave and shear-wave splitting data from 94 broadband seismic stations spanning southern Tibet. This data, combined with previously gathered 'back-and-forth' P-wave data, yielded a more nuanced understanding of the underlying dynamics.

Fabio Capitanio, a geodynamicist at Monash University, underscores the uncertainties surrounding the process, noting the limited data available. 'It's just a snapshot,' he remarks. However, Capitanio acknowledges the significance of the research as a crucial step toward understanding the formation of our modern landscape. 'It's the type of work that we need to move [forward],' he asserts.

Professor Douwe van Hinsbergen, who highlights the novelty of the findings said, 'This is the first time that ... it's been caught in the act in a downgoing plate.' Scientists have long theorized about the possibility of tectonic plates unzipping, driven by the layered composition of buoyant crust and denser upper mantle rock.

Such a split occurs along the weak interface between these layers, a phenomenon previously studied in the interiors of thick continental plates and simulated in computer models.

Earthquake risks tied to ancient collisions

A more recent analysis, based on a different set of earthquake waves, indicates a tear along the western edge of the delaminated slab. According to Anne Meltzer, a seismologist at Lehigh University, almost every landmass on Earth, including the Himalayas, was formed from similar collisions. Understanding these collisions not only illuminates our current landscape but also helps us grasp the earthquake risks along ancient continental scars.

The study's implications are profound, extending beyond mountain formation to earthquake prediction. By gaining a clearer 3D insight into tectonic plate interactions, scientists can enhance understanding of

Earth's surface changes and potentially improve seismic event forecasts.

Celal Sengor, a professor of geological engineering at Istanbul Technical University, who was not involved in this research, remarks, "India was going far too fast after it parted company with Africa-Madagascar and Australia. ... Its speed northward, concerning the rest of Eurasia, was faster than any plate motion we know today, or have inferred in the past across a single plate boundary. This paper not only has changed some of our ideas on the paleotectonics and paleogeography of the neo-Tethys but has given us a new model about what double subductions can do."

Competition and conflict: On the U.S.-China relationship

01 May 2024, [The Hindu](#)

U.S. and China must manage their differences responsibly

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's marathon talks with top officials in China, which includes President Xi Jinping, have underscored the desire of the two countries to stabilise their relationship and the resultant challenges. Mr. Blinken stressed that the U.S. would make sure that the competition between the world's two largest economies "doesn't veer into conflict". Mr. Xi said they should seek common ground "rather than engage in vicious competition". But the Blinken visit also exposed the structural fault lines in the Sino-American competition. He raised America's concerns about what he called China's "support for Russia's defence industry" and threatened actions if Beijing "doesn't address this problem". China slammed the "hypocrisy and irresponsibility" of the U.S., which just decided to send military aid worth \$61 billion to Ukraine and then made "groundless accusations" against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia. China also attacked the U.S. policy towards Taiwan and the South China Sea and urged Washington to look at China's development "in a positive light".

Both the U.S. and China have mutual deep misgivings. U.S. National Defence Strategy documents name China as a "revisionist power" and a pacing technological and military challenger. The U.S. has imposed export controls to limit China's growth in strategic sectors, particularly semiconductors, and imposed high tariffs on Chinese goods. It has also doubled down on its support for Taiwan and bolstered defence cooperation with the Philippines, which has disputes with China in the South China Sea. Beijing has blamed the U.S. for South China Sea tensions and called Washington's support for Taiwan as an intervention in its internal affairs. While it is practically impossible to reset ties

given these structural challenges, there are areas of cooperation as well. In November 2023, when Presidents Xi and Biden met in California, both sides decided to resume bilateral military-to-military communication, cooperate in addressing the risks of artificial intelligence and launch efforts to control the production of fentanyl. Tackling climate change and global food security are also areas of cooperation. A key lesson from the Cold War is that if competition between superpowers turns ugly, it could affect the world through proxy conflicts, economic wars and diplomatic crises. As the two most powerful countries, they should stay away from repeating history. Even if they are not able to resolve their ideological and geopolitical differences, they should build the guardrails that could prevent the competition from turning ugly and stay focused on the areas of cooperation, addressing the common challenges of the world.

Where is the Panchen Lama? Will the CCP manipulate the Dalai Lama's Reincarnation?

01 May 2024, [Tibet Policy Institute](#)



On January 28, 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama (strangely) passed away at the Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse. On May 14, 1995, His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama. However, three days later, six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, along with his family, was secretly abducted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and their whereabouts remain unknown to this day.

Ye Xiaowen, then head of the CCP's Religious Affairs Bureau, once told Agya Rinpoche that, after the Dalai Lama announced the spirit child, the situation was really tense. They acted immediately, borrowed three airplanes from the Politburo Standing Committee, and hid the three spirit children in three separate locations, without anyone knowing.

The CCP indeed concealed their whereabouts very effectively so that no one would find them. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima has been missing since May 17, 1995, for 29 years now, and his fate remains a mystery. This

year 2024, April 25 marked Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's 35th birthday.

Despite continuous international pressure to disclose the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama, the CCP maintains its stance, insisting that the so-called "reincarnated Panchen Lama" is simply an ordinary Chinese citizen leading a normal life. They claim that he and his family do not wish to be disturbed by the outside world.

One might wonder, what kind of "ordinary citizen" requires the entire might of a country to shield them from any outside interference? Not only have they been shielded, but all traces of his family, including his parents, have vanished without a trace, to such an extent that it sends chills down one's spine!

The Origins of the Reincarnation System of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

65 years ago, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959. But why, in 1995, did the Dalai Lama in India endorse the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama? To understand this, we must delve into the origins of the reincarnation system between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

In the 14th century A.D., Gendun Chupa, the first Dalai Lama and a disciple of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa school, established the Tashilhunpo Monastery. Through scholarly debates, he defeated the foreigners who challenged him from India and thus, earned the title "Panchen Dakshinpo," meaning the Great Wise One, abbreviated as the Panchen Lama. This marked the origin of the title "Panchen." Gendun Chupa served as the first Dharam seat of Tashilhunpo Monastery, and "Panchen" became an exclusive title for the abbots of the monastery. After several successions, in the early 17th century, Lobsang Choegyal, a monk from Wensa Monastery, became the Zashlun Monastery Panchen.

In 1642, the Fifth Dalai Lama established the Gandenphodang regime, and the Dalai Lama system, rooted in the Gelugpa school, became the paramount authority in Tibetan politics and religion. Lobsang Chökyi, a revered teacher of the Fifth Dalai Lama, traced his lineage back to Khedrup Györgyi, another disciple of Tsongkhapa. Consequently, "Panchen" became an exclusive title for the abbots of Tashilhunpo Monastery, and the monastery became the permanent seat of the Panchen Lama. Henceforth, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were referred to as "Gyawa Yabsai," which translates to "King of Buddha Teacher and Disciple." Tibetans often say, "the sky has the sun and the moon, the earth has the Buddha king, master, and disciple." According to the highest reincarnation tradition of the Tsongkhapa Gelugpa Dharma lineage, when either the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama passes away, a search is conducted for the reincarnation of the deceased. If the living person is too young, or both the Dalai Lama

and the Panchen Lama have passed away, the responsibility of finding the reincarnation falls upon the highest-ranking living monks. This custom has been established over a long history but was not always a requirement.

For instance, when the 14th Dalai Lama recognized a Lama from Sera Monastery as his reincarnation, the search group confirmed his identity immediately, without additional procedures. Similarly, after the passing of the Ninth Panchen Lama in 1937, the Kashag (Cabinet) and Dzong Rinpoche issued an order to find the reincarnation of the Tenth Panchen Lama through divination.

From a secular perspective, the Panchen Lama system is an extension of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation system. Without the Dalai Lama's position as the leader of Tibetan politics and religion, the Panchen Lama system would not have evolved.

The Chinese Communist Party abolishes the Dalai Lama's certified spiritual child and decides to draw lots from a golden bottle.

The Chinese Communist Party (CPC) reacted strongly to the Dalai Lama's certification of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation. They announced the abolition of this certification and decided to select a Panchen Lama who met their criteria by drawing lots from a golden vase.

On November 29, 1995, the CCP conducted a "golden vase lottery" at Dazhao Monastery in Lhasa, selecting Panchen Norbu. Both of Khensen Norbu's parents were members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which prohibits its members and their families from practicing religion. However, the Khensen Norbu family enjoyed certain privileges. The CCP was well aware that finding the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama would likely involve cooperation with the Dalai Lama. During a meeting of the panel responsible for selecting the reincarnated Panchen Lama, Yan Mingfu, then head of the Central United Front Work Department, and Luo Gan, Secretary General of the State Council, expressed their willingness to "communicate with the Dalai Lama" and even "adopt the Dalai Lama's views." Gyalwa Dhondup, the Dalai Lama's second brother, wrote in his memoir "The Maker of the Kalundu" that Deng Xiaoping wanted the Dalai Lama to personally preside over the Panchen Lama's farewell ceremony after his passing. The authorities may have wanted to emphasize this point to increase the legitimacy of the Panchen's reincarnation.

According to Gyalwa Dhondup, during his visit to Beijing in 1994, a representative of the Panchen Lama's search team visited him, asking him to deliver a gift from the Dalai Lama and a letter from Chaza Rinpoche.

Why then did the CCP react so strongly when the Dalai Lama announced the reincarnation of the Panchen

Lama? The atheist CCP, involved in Tibetan religious affairs, not only claimed the authority over reincarnation, which is traditionally outside its jurisdiction, but also detained Chagzar Rinpoche, who was originally appointed by the authorities as the deputy head of the Panchen Reincarnation Search Leading Group.

The CCP's sudden change in attitude can be best understood through Jiang Zemin, the then president of the CCP, who issued the directive that led to the "golden vase lottery" maneuver.

The Tibetan monk who was [exasperated] by the golden vase stick-withdrawal – Agya Rinpoche

In 1998, Agya Rinpoche, departed from the United States. In his autobiography, "Against All Odds," Rinpoche reveals that the Golden Bottle Lottery held at the Dazhao Monastery in Lhasa during the night of 1995 was the final catalyst for his departure. Who is Agya Lobsang Tubdan Rinpoche? He was recognized at the age of two by the 10th Panchen Lama as the 8th Agya Rinpoche, was one of the abbots of Kubum Monastery. Kubum Monastery, the birthplace of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa school, holds a significant place in Tibetan Buddhism. Agya Rinpoche is considered the reincarnation of Tsongkhapa's father, which bestows upon him a highly revered status.

Before his departure in 1998, the CCP appointed Rinpoche as the president of the China Buddhist Association and a member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Rinpoche was also the sutra teacher of the Panchen Gyaltzen Norbu, originally favored by the CCP. Ngagyar Rinpoche had personally witnessed the CCP's manipulation of the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

In "Against the Wind and the Water," Agya Rinpoche writes, "I was not surprised that the Dalai Lama announced the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Master; it was the attitude from above that surprised me."

In 1992, there was full cooperation between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Communist Party. On September 27 of that year, two months after the Dalai Lama's announcement of the 17th Karmapa, the Chinese government recognized Ogyen Trinley Dorje as the reincarnation of the Karmapa. This led Tibetans to anticipate that the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama would follow a similar authentication process, fostering good cooperation between the CCP and the Dalai Lama. On November 28, 1995, Agya Rinpoche and others were transported to Lhasa by a special CCP plane. On the night of the 29th, at around 2:00 a.m., the Golden Vase Lottery was held at the Da Zhao Monastery amidst a heavy military and police presence. The

entire city of Lhasa was under a state of near-martial law. Agya Rinpoche exclaimed, "If the Golden Vase ceremony is so grand, why is there such a politically charged atmosphere?"

Rinpoche observed the entire process of the Golden Vase lottery at the Da Zhao Monastery and later wrote in his autobiography, "I expected the person to shake the vase until a sign emerged, but to my surprise, he merely touched the three signs briefly. Then, he selected one and handed it to the Central Special Envoy, Luo Gan, who nodded in approval. The Bohol Living Buddha then handed the sign to Jiangchun Lobu, who loudly declared Kyanzan Norbu of Gyari County as the winner."

Jiangcun Luobu announced that "Gyentse Norbu won the lottery." The names Jiangcun Luobu and Gyentse Norbu are written the same way in Tibetan, which later became a topic of conversation among Tibetans, teasing the Chinese Communist Party for the apparent manipulation of the Panchen Lama reincarnation. During the plane ride back to Beijing, Ye Xiaowen, then director of the CCP's Religious Affairs Bureau, candidly informed Agya Rinpoche and Jamyang Rinpoche, "It's just a formality. We filled it with a bit of cotton. Did you notice the signboard was slightly raised? We placed some cotton in the signboard bag to ensure it was slightly higher in the bottle, thus ensuring the chosen spiritual child would be the one we wanted."

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses the golden vase as a tool to manipulate the reincarnation of Tibetan monks.

Following the establishment of the Ganden Phojang regime in Tibet in 1642 and the Manchu Qing Empire in 1644, a relationship between the two sides was established. As a patron of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, in 1792, the Qianlong Emperor, suspecting misuse of the Tibetan reincarnation certification system for personal gain, sent a golden vase to be used in drawing lots for certifying the reincarnation of senior monks.

In China, drawing lots from a golden vase is equivalent to divination in monasteries and Taoist temples. In Tibet, a similar form of divination, dowsing, was originally practiced. The candidate's name is written on a slip of paper, wrapped in dough, and placed in a vessel. The vessel is then shaken to make the dough jump out, revealing the chosen individual. Thus, for Tibetans, the golden vase is not an exotic system but a substitute tool for traditional divination practices, catering to Tibetan culture and aesthetics. Tibetan Buddhism recognizes the reincarnation of monks through various methods. The first is the reincarnation of the undead, where monks directly identify their reincarnation. The second is the reincarnation of a child with deep memories of their previous life, such as the Second and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama recognized the

lamas of Sera Monastery who came to find him, and the Dharma vessels of his previous life before being certified. The search party confirmed his identity as the Dalai Lama without further procedures. The third type involves a child leaving a prophecy or will in their previous life, as seen in the Karmapa reincarnation system. The fourth type occurs when a child lacks memories or a prophecy from their previous life. Tibetan monks and Dharma protectors divine to identify the reincarnated child. Other forms of divination, such as using three oranges, as done by the 13th Dalai Lama to find the 9th Panchen Lama, have also been practiced. Therefore, the golden vase divination, as a substitute for traditional divination, is considered the least preferred option and is not mandatory.

In the case of CCP authorities, they tamper with the process by placing cotton in the bag, ensuring that the sign they want to choose is slightly higher in the bottle. Instead of allowing the sign to jump out naturally, they directly select the pre-determined sign from the golden vase. Learning from the feudal empire's practices, CCP officials use the so-called "golden vase" to assert control over the reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhist monks, satisfying their desire for power and emulating imperial practices. In 2007, the CCP government introduced the "Methods for Managing the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" claiming complete authority over reincarnation. According to this policy, without the Communist Party, there would be no recognition of reincarnated lamas. Only those approved and permitted by the CCP can be reincarnated, while dissenters are denied reincarnation. The Party asserts its supremacy over religion, allowing only those who pledge allegiance to the Party to have any freedom, while those who resist are suppressed.

For Tibetans, finding the reincarnation of a high lama is a significant endeavor, requiring the identification of a genuine reincarnated child, which is no small task. However, for CCP officials, a reincarnated child is merely a child, and any child will suffice. The CCP seeks a puppet Panchen Lama that it can manipulate, hence the selection of Khensang Norbu, whose parents are both members of the CCP, making him easier for the authorities to control. In recent years, the CCP has organized the "Tibetan Buddhism Living Buddha Reincarnation Exhibition" in Tibet and conducted tens of thousands of lectures in Tibetan communities, colleges, and monasteries. These events assert the CCP's authority over reincarnation, promoting the "golden vase sign" as the most authoritative method. The CCP has also implemented the "Ten Prohibitions" in Tibet, explicitly stating its refusal to allow any unauthorized activities related to the death of the Dalai Lama. It is evident

that the CCP has made extensive preparations. By trampling on Tibetan religious traditions and defying the international community, the CCP has manipulated the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, using Gyentse Norbu as a political tool to indoctrinate Tibetans. The question of whether the authorities can continue to manipulate the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama to achieve their goal of completely eradicating Tibetan culture, and how to prevent such a plot, has become the most pressing challenge of our time.

PS: This is a roughly translated version of an article originally written in Chinese by the author -Phenthok. For any unclarity with the translation, please refer to the original [article](#) written in Chinese and published by Beijing Spring.

Can Nepal get a lift from wooing by India and China to become a middle-income economy?

01 May 2024, [SCMP](#)

Nepal has drawn considerable foreign investment in recent years as it aims to become a middle-income country but its “dysfunctional” politics may curb its ambition amid strategic jostling between India and China, according to economists.

During a two-day investment summit in Kathmandu that concluded on Monday, representatives of India and China vied to draw closer to Nepal and strengthen their country’s economic footprint in South Asia.

Potential investors pledged during the summit to inject as much as 9.13 billion Nepali rupees (US\$68.3 million) into the country, which is still navigating its transition from a centralised monarchy to a federal democratic republic under its 2015 Constitution, as well as an economic transformation from being less reliant on international aid to becoming a hub for global investments.

“Our unwavering commitment to liberal economic policies lays the foundation for a vibrant and investor-friendly business environment,” said Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

“Nepal’s strategic location, situated between emerging markets India and China, signifies it as an ideal investment destination,” he told the summit during its opening on Sunday.

While India and China did not directly compete with each other to invest in the projects offered at the summit, their overlapping interests could be seen in the resulting deals that were announced.

Unsurprisingly, delegates from India and China formed the largest contingent among the 2,400 representatives from various countries who attended the summit. While India sent about 150 participants, China’s delegation was twice as large.

At the summit’s opening on Sunday, Beijing announced the exemption of visa fees for Nepali travellers starting on May 1. This is in addition to the start of commercial flights from two international airports in the Nepali cities of Pokhara and Lumbini.

The airports were built with Chinese funding totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. In contrast, India has hesitated to open up air routes to Nepal due to the two airports’ link to Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative.

“Air and road links and border checkpoints are progressing well. Feasibility studies of the cross-border railway and cross-border transmission lines are moving forward. That’s why today’s summit holds a very special significance,” said Luo Zhaohui, chairman of the state-run China International Development Cooperation Agency, during his address at the event. Piyush Goyal, India’s federal minister for commerce and industry, said in a speech at the event via a video call: “We will continue to expand our trading and business relationship. I urge Indian investors across the globe to invest in Nepal, to seize the opportunity, and become a part of emerging Nepal.”

Tapping hydropower potential

Landlocked Nepal has been wooing foreign investors, primarily from its neighbours, in various sectors, particularly hydropower.

The impoverished South Asian country is home to eight of the world’s largest mountain peaks, with dozens of rivers flowing from them, offering immense potential for harnessing hydropower.

While the country currently produces 3,200MW of hydropower, multiple large-scale projects with a combined capacity of 5,568MW are in the pipeline.

India is heavily invested in Nepal’s hydropower projects, while China is seeking to gain a foothold in the sector.

However, the Nepali government is hesitant to accept Chinese investment in hydropower due to concerns that India and Bangladesh – the only two markets for the electricity generated – may be reluctant to purchase power from China-linked projects, according to economists.

“From the Chinese side, there is considerable interest in hydropower and related projects. From the Indian side, buying energy for Chinese-invested projects is hesitant. Chinese investors will have a tough time selling this energy generation,” said Jaya Jung Mahat, a policy economist with the Nepali Institute of Policy Research.

“Transporting energy to Chinese territories is challenging due to the high mountains between the countries. It’s easier for Indian investors and the [Delhi] government can facilitate the purchase,” Mahat added.

Stifling bureaucracy

Nepal's transition from a low-income nation to a middle-income nation can only succeed with the help of India and China, economists say.

"Nepal is transitioning from being a recipient of aid and development help to attracting investments. All countries are substituting aid with trade and investment," said Sujeeva Shakya, founder-chair of Nepal Economic Forum, a Kathmandu-based economic policy and research institution.

"We need US\$7 billion-US\$8 billion [in the coming years] to grow our economy at an accelerated pace. We have 600,000 people entering the job market. Wherever the investment comes from, it doesn't make any difference," Shakya said.

Critics question, however, whether events like the summit can help improve Nepal's economic outlook unless its government undertakes measures to improve the country's political stability, cut red tape and develop a robust bureaucratic framework.

"The leadership, governance system, and population are divided along political party lines and have become toxic and dysfunctional," said Kedar Neupane, an economist at the Nepal Policy Institute think tank.

The country's leadership should address bureaucratic and policy hurdles to entice foreign investors, Neupane said.

"Successive governments in Nepal have failed to see things from a realistic economic perspective due to political divisions.

"This summit may not deliver significant new investments beyond some pledges ... other than serving as self-amusement for the organisers."

In response to the criticisms, Investment Board Nepal CEO Sushil Bhatta said the government was determined to tackle the difficulties that companies faced in doing business in the country, citing the recent introduction of new laws to remove investment bottlenecks.

He said: "The higher political leadership has expressed commitment for continued reforms in the investment regime

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