

TIBET DIGEST

JUNE 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.

www.fnvaworld.org
143, 4th Floor, Uday Park, New Delhi, 49
office@fnvaworld.org

Disclaimer: FNVA does not endorse "China's Tibet", "Tibet Autonomous Region of China", "Xizang" or any such phrase that denotes Tibet has been/is a part of China. Articles that contain such phraseology are news items from the Chinese state media and must not be confused as endorsement by FNVA

Table of Content

Summary- June Tibet Digest	8
CCP's Tibet Policies	8
Buddhism	9
State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau	10
Tibet in Exile	11
Cyber Security	13
Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC	13
Other News from Tibet in Exile	13
CCP's TIBET POLICY	15
TIBETAN MONK DETAINED AFTER WECHAT POST	15
Tibetan political prisoner hospitalized following severe illness	15
China Using 'Discriminatory Surveillance Technologies' To Target Muslim Minorities, Tibetans: US Report	16
China activates 'freedom in Tibet' propaganda triggered by US-Dalai Lama meet in Dharamshala	17
China reiterates conditions for talks it does not want to hold with the Dalai Lama	18
China says Dalai Lama must 'thoroughly correct' his political views	18
President Xi inspects Tibet Sinicization drive in Qinghai province	19
Former top Tibet official under probe for corruption	20
Chinese police arrest Tibetan for flying banned flag at his house consecration ceremony	21
BUDDHISM	22
China has 'natural' say in choosing next Dalai Lama, Tibet experts tell Beijing forum	22
China's Panchen visits Jokhang Temple in 'Chinese city of Lhasa'	23
China restricts key Buddhist event citing security concerns	24
REPORT: Sinicization drive pervades China's religious repression in Tibet	24
US report highlights China's policy of controlling all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism	25
Xi visits Tibetans and temple in western China, calls for ethnic unity	26
Dalai Lama's Remarks On Reincarnation Are A Slap On Xi Jinping's Face: Tibet Watchers	28
Beijing uses Chinese Buddhist group to transform Tibetan Buddhism: report	28
STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU	30
Urgent action needed to save Hindu Kush Himalaya, the world's 'water tower'	30
China's Climate Hegemony: Exploiting Tibet and Manipulating the Maldives	31
China sends glacial water from Tibet to the Maldives, raising concerns	33
Tibetan lakes are estimated to expand 50% by 2100: Chinese study	34
China Gold's Jiama mine in Tibet resumes operations	35
	1

TIBET IN EXILE	36
Discourse facilitator ‘Democracy and Debate’ launches report on opinion poll from Tibetan public	36
Tibetans worldwide rejoice over Dalai Lama’s successful knee surgery	37
Tibetans worldwide pray as Dalai Lama undergoes knee surgery in the USA	37
‘Dalai Lama will live on, Xi Jinping will die’ —former Tibet PM on reincarnation geopolitics	38
'Tibetans Forced To Join Chinese Army Won't Be Deployed Near Indian Border': Tibetan Govt In Exile Head	39
US is Ready to Stand With Tibet and Its People	39
PM Modi meets US delegations who visited Dalai Lama despite China's objection	41
Nancy Pelosi, After Meeting Dalai Lama, Says China Is ‘Trying to Erase’ Tibetan Culture	42
Nancy Pelosi's scathing attack on Xi Jinping: 'Dalai Lama's legacy will live forever, you'll be gone'	42
US Legislators in Dharamsala to Meet Dalai Lama, China ‘Gravely Concerned’	44
Washington’s new Tibet policy bill ‘likely to be counterproductive’	44
Tibetans protest Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s visit to New Zealand with six demands	45
Dalai Lama keeps cards close to chest on his successor, says 'not thinking of re-incarnation'	46
US ‘Resolve Tibet Act’ an important tool to internationally counter China’s claim on Tibet	46
Canada should consider recognizing Tibet as an Independent Nation	47
EU officials to make rare Tibet visit to examine human rights	47
Exiled Tibetan political leader honored with democracy medal	49
115 candidates for the European Parliament pledge to support Tibet	50
US Congress passes Resolve Tibet Act	50
Dalai Lama to meet Australian ministers	52
Canadian Parliament supports Tibet’s self-determination	52
Auckland Tibetan Association Calls on PM Luxon to Raise Tibet During the Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s Visit to New Zealand	53
Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang Launch Autobiography of Former Kalon Tashi Wangdi	54
Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Indian PM Modi for Historic Third Win	55
Dalai Lama to visit US for knee treatment in coming weeks	55
Department of Religion and Culture’s Monastic Assessment Committee Presents Report of their Findings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama	56
Tibetans in Dharamshala vote in the 2024 Indian general elections	57
New school for overseas Tibetan kids aims to preserve language	58
CHINA POLITICS	60

CHINA: Harsh words, political disloyalty allegations mark purge of two former defence ministers	60
Xi Says China Planning 'Major' Reforms Ahead Of Key Political Meeting	61
China condemned for rejecting key recommendations of UN review of its rights record	61
Chinese Government Rejects Key Human Rights Recommendations in Latest UN Review	62
Cities, provinces across China join global propaganda push	64
Xi calls for carrying forward patriotism	65
Xi Jinping visits Mao's caves	66
Xi Jinping tells top PLA leaders they must eliminate 'conditions that breed corruption'	67
China's leader Xi Jinping vows to step up crackdown on corruption in armed forces	68
Xi stresses PLA's political loyalty at crucial meeting held in old revolutionary base	68
Chinese Communist Party warns members not to criticise policy ahead of major economic policy meeting	69
China's Communist Party Members Revised Disciplinary Code Details "Hundred Sins"	70
China rolls out 'zero tolerance' crackdown on fake government officials, financial crimes	70
Xi Jinping using relatives to conceal \$707.2mn wealth, says report	71
In China, regional security officials have been told to make regime stability a priority	71
Key report helps to reveal the wealth and corruption of the CCP	72
China's political advisors meet on high-level socialist market economy	73
PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC	75
US: China still arresting 'thousands' each year for practicing faith	75
After Escaping China by Sea, a Dissident Faces His Next Act	76
China's political refugees remain at risk long after leaving country	78
Chengdu Early Rain Church Member Detained for Commemorating Tiananmen	79
MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	80
Xi eyes military supremacy as he reorganises China's armed forces	80
China is snapping up land near military sites — Washington needs to act ASAP	82
Central Military Commission Tells PLA to Tighten Budget	82
Xi signals further military purges to eradicate corruption	82
China Sends Advanced Fighter Jets to Contested Border with India, Satellite Images Show	83
China to boost rail links to Xinjiang and Tibet, with eye on supply chains and energy security	84
China reported to have boosted offensive air capabilities along Tibet-border with India	85
CYBER SECURITY	86
Chinese hackers have stepped up attacks on Taiwanese organizations, cybersecurity firm says	86

Geologists raise concerns over possible censorship and bias in Chinese chatbot	87
Hackers for hire: How the Chinese Communist Party is trying to monitor the entire world	88
CHINA IN THE REGION	91
China - Hong Kong	91
Man charged under new Hong Kong security law over ‘seditious’ social media posts remanded in custody	91
Hong Kongers embrace politics in UK, but some still fear Beijing	92
China’s intelligence agency says trial of Hong Kong 47 a ‘major test’ of national security, rule of law	92
17 people jailed up to 5 years, 10 months over attempted escape from besieged Hong Kong campus during 2019 protests	93
Three arrested in Hong Kong for ‘insulting’ Chinese anthem at World Cup qualifier	94
China – Nepal	96
Govt slammed for BRI agreement with China	96
Nepal seeks Interpol help for two citizens held by China for allegedly helping Tibetans flee	97
Nepali leaders reaffirm commitment to one-China principle	97
No info on two Nepalis called and held by China on suspicion of helping Tibetans flee	98
China’s “Empty Airport” In Nepal Sparks Online Tensions; Envoy Intimidates Journo For Reporting Pokhara Airport Loan	98
China - Pakistan	99
Pakistan's new anti-terror initiative aimed at protecting Chinese projects: Report	99
Azm-e-Istehkam: China’s wish is Pakistan’s command	100
Chinese minister urges closer ties to achieve development goals	102
China's minister reaches Pakistan today, will preside over meeting on CPEC	102
Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif highlights safety and economic cooperation with China	102
Terrorism and economy expected to top agenda at China-Pakistan talks as security concerns cloud belt and road	103
China-Taiwan	104
China presses Global South leaders to support Taiwan 'reunification'	104
China threatens death penalty for Taiwan independence ‘diehards’	105
China’s reunification is ‘unstoppable’, says Beijing’s top man on Taiwan affairs	106
China’s war games near Taiwan threaten international peace and security	107
Taiwan tracks 23 Chinese military aircraft around nation	108
China ready to ‘forcefully’ stop Taiwan independence: Defence minister	109
China – Xinjiang	109
Canadian ambassador’s visit to Xinjiang draws China’s ire	109
Sinicization in Xinjiang: CCP authorities kill Uyghurs, sell ‘halal organs’ to run medical transplant industry	110

China changes names of 630 Uyghur villages in Xinjiang: report	111
Human rights groups call for UN update, action on China's Xinjiang	112
Religious and cultural mentions removed from names of China's Xinjiang villages	113
Uyghur woman re-sentenced for teaching youth the Quran	113
Former senior Xinjiang official expelled from CPC, public office	114
China promotes Xinjiang, epicentre of human-rights abuses, as tourist destination	114
China's ethnic policy chief slams 'ignorance of history' in Xinjiang assimilation claims	116
Xinhua Headlines: "Forced labor" lies bring "forced unemployment" in Xinjiang	117
Uyghur brothers shot dead on same day in Xinjiang prison	118
Exiled Uyghur journalist links Urumqi arrests to his reporting	119
China-US	120
House passes bill urging China to mend ties with Dalai Lama	120
After South China Sea, US, China Set To Wrestle At 'Roof Of The World'; Washington Begins Himalayan Push	121
Chinese embassy threatened House lawmakers, urged them to 'cancel' Dalai Lama visit	123
A Texas congressman was sanctioned by China. He's not backing down.	124
Won't let China sway Dalai Lama's successor choice: US lawmakers	124
EU raises human rights concerns with China in 39th Dialogue Session	125
US calls for immediate release of prominent rights activists held in China	126
U.S. bans imports from 3 more Chinese companies over forced labor	126
US report documents China's extreme isolation of Tibet	128
China says US provoking arms race in moves into South China Sea	128
Five Eyes nations say China is poaching Western ex-military	129
SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS	130
Xi invokes Panchsheel as key to end today's global conflicts	130
Indian tank sinks while crossing river near China border, killing 5	131
EXCLUSIVE India Has Legitimate Say in Dalai Lama Selection, China Just Wants to Control Tibet	131
India plans Tibet renaming tactic to foil China's water diplomacy with Maldives	132
India should recalibrate its position on China, says president of Tibetan government in exile	133
'Unwarranted': India slams China, Pakistan for mentioning J&K in joint statement	135
China ready to improve bilateral ties with India and work on border dispute	135
After Modi's election win, China calls for 'stable' relations with India	136
COMMENTARIES	137
"India Should Revise Tibet Policy On China Occupation, Make Stance Clear On Dalai Lama's Succession"	137
The shift in US policy toward Tibet	138

Resolve Tibet Act: An Opportune Time To Revisit India's Tibet Policy	139
PLA reorganisation has implications for China's neighbours	141
Why Do India and China Keep Fighting Over This Desolate Terrain?	142
Straight Talk India's Himalayan Powerplay: China Caught Off Guard As India, US Play the Tibet Card	147
Centring 'Tibetan' in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies in India	149
The world ignores threats from China, promotes the cause of self-determination of Tibetan people	152
Cyberthreats sponsored by Chinese Communist Party	153
China must not choose the next Dalai Lama	154
Chinese military developments and national security challenges for India	155
Tibet is back on the table	156
Lack of education helps Xi to stay in power	158
Effects Of Indo-China Political Tension In Global Framework – OpEd	159
Opening up the Tibet front?	163
Why India's 'Tibet card' against China is stronger and working like never before	164
Awakening for Tibet	167
What's behind India's hardening posture against China?	168
China's name change spree in Xinjiang and Tibet continues unabated	169
Resolve Tibet	171
China-US-India 'situationship' over Dalai Lama: Will reincarnation have geopolitical implications?	171
The Tibet play	172
What is the Resolve Tibet Act?	173
Why Tibet Matters?	174
South China Sea tensions force US and Beijing to talk more	175
Exiled Tibet Leader Calls on World to Press China Into Talks	177
What is the Tibet-China Dispute Act passed by US Congress last week?	178
The forced assimilation of Tibet	179
China's massive attack against India: A looming possibility	180
View: India must revive its Tibetan Buddhist links to show a mirror to China	181
Before signing bipartisan-Tibet-Bill, PrezBiden ought to know it is merely a token exercise. By Hem Raj Jain	182
Why China takes young Tibetans from their families	183
China's Ambitious '5G-A' Plans in Tibet: Strategic Implications for India	184
Chinese armed forces have been upgrading. India must keep up	186
New Delhi's Tibet-Taiwan move: How India-China relations will fare under Modi 3.0	187
Why India Needs To Act Against China's Renaming Of Arunachal Spots: Intel Sources Explain Exclusive	188
The Dalai Lama Is Landing in the Middle of the 2024 Election	189

After Nepal, will China reopen Covid-closed Tibet-India border trade points?	190
Why China should introspect and stop seeing India through Western lens	190
Mainstream media turns blind eye as UN visits Xinjiang, criticises US	192
CHINA-JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA TRILATERAL SUMMIT: WHY WAS THE CHANCE TO ADVOCATE FOR XINJIANG AND TIBET NOT TAKEN?	193
What do India's neighbours expect from the new government?	195
Tibetan Participation in India's Elections: Past, Present, and Future	196
'Short of war,' China's gray zone strategy on Taiwan is gathering in intensity	198
India to rename two dozen places in Tibet region under China as retaliation	199
China 'Heats-Up' Indian Border With Civil-Military Fusion, Dual Use Villages To Assert Claims Near Disputed LAC	201
Decoding the role of Chinese Military Companies operating with the PLA Information Support Force (ISF): A Comprehensive Analysis of the Major Military Companies	202
China is Erasing the Memory of the Tiananmen Massacre. We Can't Let Them.	205
Unlocking Tibet: In-Depth Mapping of Transport Infrastructure Through Geo-Spatial Analysis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
INSTIGATION OF REBELLIONS IN TIBET	209
India-China Nomenclature War Intensifies In The Himalayas – OpEd	211
Six decades later, scholar locates site of secret CIA-Tibet training camp	212
With China willing to discuss 'Dalai Lama's future', Tibetan fate hangs in balance	214
Publications	217
My Life - Born in Free Tibet, Served in Exile	217
Taken Away: The Ordinary Life of a Lama by Doboomb Tulku With Sudhamahi Reghunathan	217
ICT's Tibet Roundup—2024 Issue 11 (June 16-30)	217

Summary- June Tibet Digest

In June, Tibet faced significant developments across political, cultural, and environmental fronts. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Qinghai Province emphasised ethnic unity and sinicisation of Tibetan Buddhism amid heightened US-China tensions over Tibet. China reiterated demands for the Dalai Lama to align politically for dialogue, rejecting international influence. Corruption probes targeting officials like Wu Yingjie highlighted governance challenges. Restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism continued, prompting international criticism. Climate change impacts on the Tibetan Plateau and China's resource exploitation drew global concern. Exile support for Tibet remained strong with legislative actions in the US and Canada, despite Chinese opposition, reflecting ongoing international solidarity amid Tibetan rights issues and diplomatic tensions.

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.

CCP's Tibet Policies

Arrests and Crackdowns

Tibetan Monk Arrested Over WeChat Criticism: In Chigdril County, Golok Prefecture, a Tibetan monk was arrested a month ago for criticising a local law on WeChat. The 26-year-old monk, whose identity remains undisclosed, faces charges of separatism. His whereabouts are unknown, and his family has been denied visitation rights. Authorities conducted a political education campaign at his monastery, warning fellow monks against social media activity contrary to state policies.

Tibetan Activist Hospitalized During Imprisonment: Thupten Lodoe, a Tibetan writer and language advocate, hospitalised due to severe illness while serving a 4.5-year prison term for alleged separatist activities and social disruption. His detention is part of a broader crackdown on Tibetan intellectuals critical of Chinese policies.

Tibetan Arrested for Flying Banned Flag: Rabgang Tenzin detained by Chinese police in eastern Tibet for raising the Tibetan national flag during a home consecration ceremony. His arrest underscores China's strict enforcement against displays of Tibetan identity, with repercussions for both Tenzin and his family.

Propaganda and Surveillance

China Reactivates Tibet Propaganda Amid US-Dalai Lama Meeting: China has intensified its portrayal of Tibet on social media following a meeting between US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. This effort reflects Beijing's concerns over potential unrest and heightened US interest in the region, echoing strategies used in Xinjiang. Despite Chinese claims of autonomy and religious freedom in Tibet, reports from the Central Tibetan Administration contradict these narratives. The visit by US lawmakers and subsequent reactions underline Tibet's ongoing sensitivity for China, prompting strong responses from Chinese officials and social media.

US Report: China Uses Discriminatory Surveillance on Muslim and Tibetan Minorities: The US State Department's "2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: China" condemns China for human rights abuses against ethnic and religious minorities. It highlights forced labor, mass detentions, and the use of surveillance technologies like facial recognition and DNA sequencing in Xinjiang and Tibet. The report assigns China a Tier 3 ranking, citing minimal efforts to combat trafficking."

Political Relations and Statements

China says Dalai Lama must 'thoroughly correct' his political views: The Chinese foreign ministry stated that the Dalai Lama must "thoroughly correct" his political views to resume talks with Beijing. Formal negotiations have been stalled since 2010. This comes after US lawmakers met the Dalai Lama in India, asserting they won't let China influence his successor. China condemned the US's Resolve Tibet Act, urging the US to respect China's stance on Tibet.

China Reiterates Conditions for Talks with Dalai Lama: China has reiterated its conditions for resuming talks with the Dalai Lama following his meeting with US lawmakers. China emphasized the importance of respecting its core interests and warned the US against sending wrong messages about Tibet. Talks between the Dalai Lama's envoys and China ended in 2010, with China accusing him of seeking independence. China insists future talks focus on the Dalai Lama's return and require him to acknowledge Tibet as part of China.

President Xi inspects Tibet Sinicisation drive in Qinghai province: During his visit to Qinghai province, President Xi Jinping emphasised ethnic unity, the Sinicisation of education and religion, and ecological conservation. Xi's tour included visits to a Tibetan school and the Hongjue Temple, highlighting efforts to integrate Tibetan Buddhism with Chinese national identity. His visit coincided with rising US-China tensions over Tibet.

Former top Tibet official under probe for corruption: Wu Yingjie, the former party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, is under investigation for "severe violations of discipline and law," a euphemism for corruption. Tibetans expressed rare public approval on social media. Wu, sanctioned by the U.S. for human rights abuses, is the first ex-Tibet party chief to face such a probe. Other officials, including those from Xinjiang, are also being investigated for corruption.

Buddhism

Control Over Tibetan Buddhism

China Asserts Authority Over Dalai Lama's Reincarnation: Chinese analysts argue Beijing's right to control the selection of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, citing historical and legal frameworks. The debate intensifies as the current Dalai Lama, living in exile, approaches a decision on succession amid ongoing tensions with Beijing. Chinese state media emphasises sovereignty by using the term 'Xizang' instead of 'Tibet'."

China's Panchen Lama Visits Jokhang Temple in Lhasa: China's appointed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, visited Lhasa's Jokhang Temple, as reported on June 28. The visit was highlighted by Chinese media as part of efforts to Sinicize Tibet. Gyaltzen Norbu performed rituals and led sutra chanting with over 100 monks, emphasizing unity and prosperity. He is also involved in political and religious roles within China.

China restricts key Buddhist event citing security concerns: Authorities in Sichuan province have shortened the annual Dhokham Jang Gunchoe, a key Buddhist debate session, from two weeks to one and reduced attendees from 7,000 to 3,200, citing security concerns. The event, held under tight restrictions and heavy police presence, highlights China's ongoing control and limitation of religious activities in Tibet.

Dalai Lama's remarks on reincarnation defy China: The Dalai Lama's recent comments that he is "not thinking of reincarnation" are seen as a defiance against Chinese control over his succession. This remark comes amid increasing pressure from China to control Tibetan Buddhist practices and follows statements from the Chinese government asserting their authority over the Dalai Lama's reincarnation.

Chinese Buddhist Group Manipulates Tibetan Buddhism, Says Report: Beijing's strategy to reshape Tibetan Buddhism through the Chinese Buddhist Association, detailed in a report by the International Campaign for Tibet, highlights systematic efforts since Xi Jinping's presidency. The report reveals the Association's role in enforcing CCP directives, including the politicisation of reincarnation recognition and aligning with socialist principles, altering traditional practices.

US Criticism of China's Policies over Tibetan Buddhism

US Report: China's Sinicisation Policies and Tibetan Religious Repression: A US State Department report criticises China for controlling all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism under the guise of Sinicization, leading to human rights violations. It highlights forced disappearances, arrests, and restrictions on religious practices, including the banning of Dalai Lama images. The report notes CCP regulations enforcing loyalty and ideological control, with the United Front Work Department managing religious affairs.

US report highlights China's policy of controlling Tibetan Buddhism: A 2023 US State Department report criticises China's control over Tibetan Buddhism, noting forced disappearances, arrests, and abuses of monks and nuns. The report underscores China's efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, including controlling the recognition of lamas and mandating loyalty to the CCP. The continued disappearance of the Panchen Lama and restrictions on religious freedom remain significant issues.

Xi's Visit and Ethnic Unity

Xi visits Tibetans and temple in western China, calls for ethnic unity: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for national unity and the sinicisation of religion during his visit to Qinghai province in Tibet on Tuesday, where he inspected educational and religious sites. This visit comes amidst renewed tensions with the US over Tibet, following a meeting between US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama in India. Xi stressed the importance of ethnic unity, ecological preservation, and economic development in the region. Meanwhile, China's foreign ministry reiterated that the Dalai Lama must correct his political stance for talks to resume, rejecting external interference in Tibet-related issues.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

China's Environmental and Geopolitical Impact

China's Climate Hegemony: Exploiting Tibet and Manipulating the Maldives: China's aggressive resource extraction in Tibet and strategic water diplomacy with the Maldives pose significant environmental and geopolitical risks. Tibet's vast glacial reserves are exploited for mining, leading to severe environmental degradation and cultural erosion. China's control over Tibet's water resources gives it leverage over neighbouring states, exemplified by its donation of glacial water to the Maldives amid local shortages. Urgent international action is needed to protect Tibet's resources and neighbouring states.

China Sends Glacial Water from Tibet to the Maldives, Raising Concerns: China has sent 3,000 metric tons of Tibet's glacial water to the Maldives amid local water shortages and simultaneous water conservation regulations in Tibet. This move underscores China's use of water as a geopolitical tool, threatening regional water security and local populations. International measures are crucial to prevent further exploitation and protect vulnerable ecosystems.

China Gold's Jiama Mine in Tibet Resumes Operations: China Gold International Resources has resumed operations at its Jiama mine in Tibet, following repairs to a tailings dam. The company aims to meet production targets for copper and gold, emphasizing cautious operations to prevent future environmental incidents.

Climate Change Impacts in Tibet

Tibetan Lakes to Expand by 50% by 2100: Chinese Study: A study predicts a 50% expansion in lake surface area in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau by 2100 due to climate change, driven by increased rainfall and glacier melt. This expansion could submerge infrastructure and affect local livelihoods, necessitating urgent adaptation strategies to mitigate economic and environmental impacts.

Urgent Action Needed to Save Hindu Kush Himalaya: Extreme heatwaves in Asia highlight severe climate change impacts. India faces record temperatures exceeding 50°C, while China braces for an unusually hot summer. The

annual Snow Update Report by ICIMOD reveals snow levels in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region are nearly 20% below normal, necessitating urgent drought management. This critical water source for two billion people faces unprecedented glacier melt, demanding regional cooperation to manage natural disasters and ensure sustainability.

Tibet in Exile

Resolve Tibet Act and International Impact:

US 'Resolve Tibet Act' an important tool to internationally counter China's claim on Tibet: The Resolve Tibet Act, recently passed by the US House, aims to counter China's narrative that Tibet has always been part of China, providing a tool to challenge this claim internationally. It supports negotiations for Tibetan autonomy and reflects Western support against China's One China policy.

US Congress passes Resolve Tibet Act: The US Congress passes the Resolve Tibet Act, urging dialogue between China and Tibet to resolve longstanding disputes. This bipartisan legislation reinforces US commitment to Tibetan self-determination and counters Chinese disinformation about Tibet's historical and cultural identity.

Canada's Recognition of Tibetan Independence:

Canada should consider recognizing Tibet as an Independent Nation: Canada's Tibetan community achieves a milestone as Parliament unanimously supports Tibet's right to self-determination. The motion, spearheaded by the Canada Tibet Committee, underscores Canadian advocacy for Tibetan freedom amidst strained relations with China.

Foreign Support for Tibet

US Asserts Support for Tibet Amid Chinese Opposition: US legislators, including Nancy Pelosi and Michael McCaul, visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, affirming America's commitment to Tibet's autonomy with the proposed Resolve Tibet Act. This diplomatic gesture underscores US-China tensions over Tibetan sovereignty and human rights.

Nancy Pelosi's scathing attack on Xi Jinping: Nancy Pelosi, part of a US congressional delegation visiting India, criticised Chinese President Xi Jinping in Dharamshala, saying the Dalai Lama's legacy will endure while Xi's influence will fade. Pelosi's remarks come amid US legislative efforts to support Tibet's autonomy, opposed by China, which views the Dalai Lama as a separatist. China urged President Biden not to sign the Resolve Tibet Act, emphasising Tibet's status as Chinese territory and rejecting dialogue on Tibetan autonomy.

Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi condemned China for its attempts to erase Tibetan culture following her visit to the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India. Joined by a bipartisan delegation led by Michael McCaul, Pelosi highlighted a recent US bill supporting Tibet as a message to China. Beijing had warned against the visit, labelling the Dalai Lama as separatist. The visit underscores ongoing tensions over Tibet's autonomy and cultural preservation efforts.

EU officials to make rare Tibet visit to examine human rights: EU officials plan a significant visit to Tibet starting this weekend amidst annual human rights talks with China, aiming to assess conditions in Tibetan schools, prisons, and religious sites. This rare visit underscores ongoing international scrutiny of China's policies in Tibet, despite historical restrictions on access.

5 candidates for the European Parliament pledge to support Tibet: 5 candidates across 6 EU countries pledge to support Tibet's freedom in upcoming European Parliament elections. The Europe for Tibet campaign underscores growing European solidarity with Tibetans and their quest for autonomy and human rights.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Dalai Lama Plans U.S. Visit for Medical Treatment: The Dalai Lama prepares for a medical visit to the United States, marking his first trip abroad since 2018 amid ongoing diplomatic tensions, while U.S. legislative efforts seek to advance dialogue on Tibet-China relations through the Resolve Tibet Act. Dalai Lama's Successful Knee Surgery in New York sparks global joy, marking his first visit to the United States in over seven years. Tibetans worldwide celebrated the news, emphasizing his enduring influence despite Chinese objections to his international engagements.

Dalai Lama's Diplomatic Visit to Australia Sparks Controversy: The Dalai Lama's five-day visit to Australia includes meetings with government officials amid Chinese objections ahead of the Olympics, underscoring tensions over Tibet's status.

US Legislators Visit Dalai Lama Amid China's Concerns: A bipartisan group of US legislators, including Michael McCaul and Nancy Pelosi, visited Dharamsala to meet the Dalai Lama, prompting China to express grave concerns. The visit follows the passage of a US bill advocating negotiations between Tibet and China, highlighting ongoing tensions over Tibet's autonomy and international support for its cultural and linguistic rights.

Dalai Lama keeps cards close to chest on his successor, says 'not thinking of re-incarnation': The Dalai Lama, leading Tibet's autonomy movement, remains non-committal on his successor, stating he's currently not contemplating reincarnation. This stance challenges China's control over the Dalai Lama's succession, a process traditionally guided by Tibetan Buddhist practices.

Tibetans Worldwide Pray as Dalai Lama Undergoes Knee Surgery: Tibetans globally united in prayer as the Dalai Lama underwent successful knee surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York. While his condition is reported as good, there are no official updates from his office. The revered leader, soon turning 89, received widespread support with followers gathering to pray and perform rituals for his recovery.

Monastic Assessment Committee Presents Findings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama: The Department of Religion and Culture's Monastic Assessment Committee completed its evaluation of Tibetan monasteries across India, Nepal, and Bhutan. They presented their findings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, highlighting efforts to uphold religious traditions amid challenges.

Modi Meets US Delegation:

PM Modi Meets US Delegation Despite China's Objection: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with a US Congressional delegation, led by Michael McCaul and including Nancy Pelosi, after their visit to the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. The delegation praised Modi for his election win and emphasized the importance of India-US relations. The visit drew a strong response from China, which opposes contact with the Dalai Lama. The US delegation's visit and support for Tibetans' rights have heightened tensions with China. Modi and the US delegation discussed strengthening the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, focusing on trade, technology, defence, and cultural exchanges.

Protests and Advocacy in New Zealand

Tibetans Protest Chinese Premier's Visit in New Zealand: Tibetans and supporters protested against Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand, demanding human rights and freedom in Tibet. Despite facing physical violence and harassment, demonstrators raised Tibetan flags and voiced demands including dialogue with the Dalai Lama, access to Tibet for independent observers, and the release of political prisoners. The protests underscored global concerns over China's policies in Tibet amid international advocacy for Tibetan rights.

New Zealand Urged to Address Tibet During Chinese Premier's Visit: The Auckland Tibetan Association urges New Zealand's Prime Minister to raise Tibet's human rights issues during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit, emphasizing ethical concerns amidst bilateral economic ties.

Cyber Security

Increased Chinese Cyberattacks Target Taiwanese Organizations, Report Says: A cybersecurity firm, Recorded Future, reported a significant increase in cyberattacks by the suspected Chinese state-sponsored hacking group RedJuliett on Taiwanese organizations. The attacks, observed between November 2023 and April 2024, targeted sectors such as government, education, technology, and diplomacy, particularly during Taiwan's presidential elections. The hacking group also targeted organizations in Laos, Kenya, Rwanda, Hong Kong, South Korea, the US, and Djibouti.

Concerns Over Potential Censorship and Bias in Chinese-Backed GeoGPT Chatbot:

Geologists have expressed concerns regarding potential Chinese censorship and bias in the GeoGPT chatbot, developed with backing from the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and largely funded by China. Testers like Prof Paul Cleverley raised issues about transparency and state censorship. Discrepancies in responses to sensitive questions have highlighted these concerns.

Exposé Reveals China's Global Hacking Operations:

A leak from the hacking firm iSoon (AnXun) has exposed China's extensive network of state-affiliated hackers targeting over 20 countries. Documents reveal hackers infiltrating national databases, including British government agencies, Amnesty International, and Chatham House. Chinese hackers have also targeted the UK's Ministry of Defence payroll and other sensitive databases.

Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC

Perils of Seeking Asylum: Chinese Refugees' Ongoing Struggles: On World Refugee Day, Chinese asylum-seekers recount their harrowing journeys to escape persecution from the Chinese government, only to face transnational repression and deportation fears in host countries like Denmark and Thailand. Despite seeking safety abroad, many encounter challenges from foreign authorities, leading to legal limbo and the constant threat of repatriation.

Dissident's Escape Saga: From China to South Korea and Beyond: Kwon Pyong, a Chinese dissident, orchestrated a daring escape across the Yellow Sea to South Korea on a Yamaha WaveRunner, fleeing persecution for his criticism of China's Communist Party. Despite meticulous planning, his arrival in South Korea led to detention and legal battles. After months in limbo and facing an exit ban, he finally left for the United States, hopeful for a new beginning after years of adversity and uncertainty. His journey underscores the challenges faced by political refugees and the ongoing risks of state repression faced by Chinese dissidents abroad.

Detention for Commemorating Tiananmen Anniversary: Fu Lijun, a member of Chengdu's Early Rain Covenant Church, faces administrative detention after posting music and prayers on social media to mark the June Fourth Incident. Despite no explicit criticism of the CCP, his actions highlight ongoing restrictions on commemorating sensitive events in China.

US State Department Report Highlights China's Religious Freedom Violations: China continues to arrest thousands annually for practicing faith, undermining religious freedoms guaranteed by its constitution, says a U.S. State Department report. Released by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the report criticises China's regulations forcing clergy to pledge allegiance to the CCP, leading to arrests, torture, and disappearances among Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and Falun Gong followers.

Other News from Tibet in Exile

Advocacy for Tibetan Democratic Reforms and Global Support

Tibetan Public Opinion Poll Highlights Need for Democratic Reforms: "Democracy and Debate" released a report based on a survey of 1,088 Tibetans worldwide, highlighting the need for reforms in the Tibetan democratic system. Key findings include 89% support for equal voting rights, 80% for CTA special meetings, 70% for separating politics and religion, and 64% for increasing parliamentary seats abroad. The survey also

revealed community polarization, suggesting measures like promoting unity and following the Dalai Lama's guidance.

Geopolitics of Reincarnation Discussed at New Delhi Lecture: Lobsang Sangay, former Tibetan PM, lectured on the geopolitics of reincarnation and international diplomacy at New Delhi's India International Centre. He highlighted Tibet's strategic importance and criticised China's control over Tibetan spiritual affairs, urging global awareness and support for Tibetan autonomy.

Tibetans in PLA Won't Deploy Near Indian Border: Lobsang Sangay assured that Tibetans conscripted into the Chinese PLA won't be stationed near the Indian border, citing potential loyalty issues. He underscored Tibet's struggle for autonomy amid international support, contrasting Chinese repression with global advocacy for Tibetan rights.

Global Developments and Recognition for Tibetan Leadership

Exiled Tibetan political leader honoured with democracy medal: Tibetan President Penpa Tsering of the government-in-exile receives the Democracy Service Medal from the National Endowment for Democracy in recognition of his leadership in advancing democracy and defending Tibetan rights. The award ceremony in Washington highlights his dedication to advancing democracy and promoting the dignity of the Tibetan people amid ongoing challenges from China.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Commends Indian PM Modi's Historic Election Win: Sikyong Penpa Tsering extends congratulations to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his third consecutive election victory, emphasising India's crucial role in supporting Tibetan culture and heritage under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Washington's new Tibet policy bill 'likely to be counterproductive': A new US Tibet policy bill has passed, aiming to increase support for Tibet and counter Chinese disinformation. It challenges Beijing's claims on Tibet's history and promotes dialogue with the Dalai Lama, sparking tensions with China, who views it as an attempt to undermine sovereignty.

Cultural and Educational Initiatives in Dharamshala

Celebrating a Lifetime of Service: Launch of Tashi Wangdi's Autobiography: Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang honour the legacy of former Kalon Tashi Wangdi with the launch of his autobiography, highlighting decades of dedication to Tibet's cause and urging preservation of Tibetan history.

Tibetans in Dharamshala Participate in Indian General Elections: Tibetans in Dharamshala, including those with voter ID cards, cast their ballots in the final phase of India's general elections. The community exercised its democratic rights amidst discussions on the implications of obtaining Indian citizenship.

New Boarding School in Dharamshala Aims to Preserve Tibetan Culture: A new boarding school in Dharamshala, India, established by Tibetan Children's Villages, prepares to welcome overseas Tibetan children. Aimed at preserving Tibetan language and culture, the school addresses community concerns while integrating modern education standards.

CCP's TIBET POLICY

TIBETAN MONK DETAINED AFTER WECHAT POST

28 June 2024, [Free Tibet](#)

A Tibetan monk was arrested a month ago in Chigdril County, Golok Prefecture, after criticising Chinese law on the social media platform WeChat.

According to a source, the 26-year-old monk, whose name has been kept confidential for security reasons, was arbitrarily detained on 26 or 27 May allegedly on charges of separatism. His location still remains unknown and his family was denied visits. The social media post for which he was arrested was a comment on WeChat against a county-level law, although it still is not clear which specific law he expressed criticism against.

The same source further stated that following his arrest, the Chigdril County Executive and the Head of the United Front Work Department visited his monastery and carried out a 10-day political education campaign for his estimated 100 fellow resident monks. The monks, who were criticised by the visiting officials, were later notified by the Monastery Management Committee that they must refrain from posting any comments or likes on social media, or from sharing any information – in writing and voice message- that may go against the party-state and its political view of unity of nationalities. Their families and neighbours were also ordered to share this notification through social media.

The authorities are known to be currently carrying out more restrictions and investigations in the monastery with door-to-door visits to interrogate everyone.

Tibetan political prisoner hospitalized following severe illness

28 June 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar

Thupten Lodoe's jailing was part of a larger crackdown on Tibetan writers and intellectuals.

A Tibetan writer and advocate for the preservation of the Tibetan language who is serving a nearly 4.5-year jail sentence for engaging in separatist acts and social disorder, is being treated at a hospital for a serious illness, two Tibetan sources said.

Thupten Lodoe, also known by his pen name Sabuche, is in his 30s and hails from Seshul county, called Shiqu in Chinese, part of the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province.

He was arrested in October 2021 and detained for six months before being sentenced to four years and five months in prison in June 2022 for writing articles deemed a threat to national security and unity.

Lodoe has been detained in a prison in Dartsedo, or Kangding in Chinese, where he has endured harsh conditions, including hard labor, inadequate food and

poor living conditions, said the sources who requested anonymity for safety reasons.

Authorities said Lodoe is receiving medical treatment, but they did not disclose his illness or the hospital's location, the sources said.

Lodoe's arrest was part of a larger crackdown on Tibetan writers, intellectuals and cultural figures arbitrarily imprisoned in undisclosed locations, usually for long periods and with no disclosure of their whereabouts. Most were arrested after sharing their views or information about conditions in ethnic Tibetan areas under Chinese government rule.

Following his sentencing, his family was harassed by Chinese authorities, and his two children were barred from attending school.

Fluent in Tibetan, Chinese and English, Lodoe studied at a school established by the Panchen Lama, whose Buddhist spiritual authority is second only to that of the Dalai Lama, in Sichuan province.

Despite a job offer from the Chinese government, he chose to work independently as an author, writing extensively about the Tibetan language — which Beijing has sought to repress along with Tibetan religion and culture — and translating the American national anthem and poems by an ancient Persian poet into Tibetan.

Chinese police previously warned him to stop writing such articles, but he kept doing so, a friend of Lodoe told Radio Free Asia in an earlier report.

China Using 'Discriminatory Surveillance Technologies' To Target Muslim Minorities, Tibetans: US Report

26 June 2024, [News18](#)

The report, titled "2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: China," released on Tuesday, has assigned China a Tier 3 ranking, the lowest rating, citing extensive evidence of forced labor and other human rights abuses

The US State Department has released a report on human trafficking, raising serious concerns about China's treatment of ethnic and religious minorities.

The report, titled "2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: China," released on Tuesday, has assigned China a Tier 3 ranking, the lowest rating, citing extensive evidence of forced labor and other human rights abuses.

"The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; therefore the PRC remained on Tier 3," the report stated.

The report further highlights a systematic government policy of widespread forced labor, particularly targeting Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and

other minority groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang).

DETENTION UNDER 'VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND DERADICALIZATION'

These individuals are often detained under the pretext of 'vocational training' and 'deradicalization', the report stated.

"PRC authorities reportedly surveilled, harassed, threatened, attempted to discredit, and sought the extradition of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, and other forced-labor survivors seeking asylum abroad in retaliation for their contact with foreign media outlets," it stated.

Additionally, the report mentions that NGOs estimate that one in every 26 Uyghur and other ethnic minority individuals in Xinjiang is imprisoned under the Ministry of Justice's jurisdiction. This demographic makes up 33.7 percent of China's total formal prison population.

The US State Department's report underscores that the People's Republic of China's (PRC) "pervasive, state-sponsored labor trafficking" makes it less likely for the government to identify members of these minority groups as "trafficking victims."

OVER MILLION SUBJECTED TO MASS DETENTION AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

The report also highlighted that since 2017, over one million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and other minority groups have been subjected to mass detention and political indoctrination.

"The government continued to transfer thousands of detainees into forced labor in dozens of other provinces, according to NGO estimates and media reports," it added.

Citing PRC government documents, the US State Department report stated that local governments in China have at times arrested Muslims arbitrarily or based on spurious criminal charges and administrative violations, including violations of birth restrictions.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to confiscate, cancel, or refuse to renew the PRC passports of Uyghurs and individuals from other mostly Muslim ethnic minority groups living abroad, including those with legal permanent resident status or citizenship in other countries, as a coercive measure to lure them back to Xinjiang and likely detain them within the camps," it added.

USING DISCRIMINATORY SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Furthermore, the report points out the use of discriminatory surveillance technologies, such as facial recognition and DNA sequencing, to monitor and detain predominantly Muslim Turkic minorities in Xinjiang. Similar technologies are reportedly used to collect DNA from ethnic Tibetans across Tibet.

According to the report, following their detention, many individuals are subjected to forced labor in

factories producing a variety of goods, including garments, automotive components, footwear, and electronics, for both domestic consumption and international export.

“Despite phasing out of the internment camp system, forced labor in these industries likely continues under the auspices of former detainees who were transferred out of detention into forced labor at existing manufacturing facilities, and in the ongoing labor transfer program. Coercive conditions reportedly included threats of physical violence, confiscation of travel and identity documents, forcible drug intake, physical and sexual abuse, and torture, among others,” it added.

China activates ‘freedom in Tibet’ propaganda triggered by US-Dalai Lama meet in Dharamshala

26 June 2024, [The Print](#), Sana Hashmi

India has avoided using the so-called Tibet card in the past but even this issue isn't off the table now as New Delhi works with the US to address the China factor.

The portrayal of Tibet Autonomous Region on Chinese social media, especially after the meeting between US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, underscores heightened Chinese insecurity about potential unrest in Tibet and US interest. This carefully managed discourse surrounding Tibet suggests orchestrated efforts, mirroring Beijing's approach in Xinjiang to present these autonomous regions as prosperous and enjoying religious freedom, countering Western human rights concerns.

A cursory search of Tibet, referred to as Xizang by China, on several Chinese social media platforms presents a picture of a thriving tourist destination with robust infrastructure and Tibetans freely practising their religion. However, according to the Central Tibetan Administration, this portrayal is far from reality. Allegations persist of China suppressing religious freedoms in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

The stark contrast between Chinese social media and official discourse and the perspectives of Western governments and Tibetans-in-exile is evident, especially highlighted by the visit of a bipartisan delegation of United States' lawmakers led by Republican Rep. Michael McCaul to meet the 14th Dalai Lama.

Chinese media platforms are flooded with articles, posts, and videos promoting Tibet as a burgeoning tourist destination. This narrative emphasises the TAR enjoying ‘autonomy and freedom’, highlighting Beijing's initiatives in promoting Tibetan welfare and developing infrastructure.

To counter the US narrative on Tibet, Chinese media has extensively covered the rare visit by a European

Union delegation for the 39th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue to the TAR. This visit occurred just days before US lawmakers' visit to Dharamshala. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) highlighted the EU delegation's visit, stating that it deepened their understanding of the actual situation in Tibet.

Despite Beijing's strict grip over Tibet, reactions from Chinese officials and social media users to the US lawmakers' delegation visit to Dharamshala reveal deep-seated anxieties. Tibet remains a core issue for China. Lin Jian, a Chinese MFA spokesperson, emphasised, ‘Tibet (Xizang) as an integral part of China since ancient times’, categorising it as ‘an internal matter’ and warning against ‘external interference’ (read the US).

‘US meddling in China's internal affairs’

Nancy Pelosi, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, drew notable reactions from China with her fiery remarks, despite discussions on Tibet being heavily censored. Pelosi is widely disliked among Chinese officials and social media users, perceived as anti-China, at least since her outspoken criticism of China's handling of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. From her August 2022 visit to Taiwan to her recent trip to Dharamshala, discussions about her have been largely negative. Numerous posts on Chinese social media platforms have disparaged her, with a commentary in Guangming Daily accusing Pelosi of harbouring anti-China sentiments, attributing her motives to seeking attention and benefiting from tarnishing China's image.

A commentary on Baidu asserted that after over emphasising the Taiwan card, the US is now highlighting the Tibet issue, suggesting that the lawmakers visit and the Resolve Tibet Act aimed to split China. The author argues that despite China's firm stance on sovereignty and territorial integrity as non-negotiable core interests, both the United States and India (given New Delhi's permission for the lawmakers' visit) continue to hype these sensitive issues, thereby deliberately provoking tensions.

The discourse in China regarding the India-US coalition's stance on Tibet remains relatively underreported. The prevailing narrative continues to be about accusing the US of meddling in China's internal affairs, specifically in Tibet. A commentary suggested that US concerns, possibly influenced by the People's Liberation Army's powerful Xi'an H-6 twin-engine jet bombers in Tibet, may have prompted this shift in focus towards Tibet.

Whether it is Tibet or Taiwan, the perception in China is that the US is trying to leverage every possible option to hinder China's rise, using these sensitive issues as bargaining chips. Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, suggests that “the more the

US discusses Tibet, the more it reveals their support for the Dalai Lama, which he views as revisiting past issues.” However, Zhu believes Washington’s attempt to play the Tibet card will be futile due to the region’s stability.

Interestingly, Russia’s state-controlled RT posted on Weibo that the Joe Biden administration is expanding US influence in Asia, sparking controversy by selling weapons to Taiwan and raising concerns over Tibet. Whether supporting Taiwan’s or Tibet’s independence, the administration’s goal appears to be dividing China and impeding its rapid development. The RT post also claimed that even Russian President Vladimir Putin recently cautioned that NATO, led by the US, views Asia as a permanent strategic focus, posing a significant threat to regional countries, including Russia. This post gained widespread circulation on Weibo, underscoring Moscow’s alignment with Beijing on core issues important to the latter and highlighting concerns over increasing US influence in Asia.

While discussions on Weibo and other social media platforms have echoed past accusations of the US using the Tibet issue to meddle in China’s internal affairs, much of the scholarly community has noticeably refrained from addressing Tibet’s geopolitical dynamics. Despite several Tibetan studies centres established in Chinese universities, many have transformed into propaganda platforms selectively focusing on ecological issues, environmental concerns, and infrastructure development. This deliberate shift aims to divert attention from Tibet’s geopolitical relevance and the suppression of Tibetan religious and human rights.

China reiterates conditions for talks it does not want to hold with the Dalai Lama

21 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In response to a meeting he had with a bipartisan delegation of US lawmakers at his home in Dharamshala, India, on Jun 19, China has reiterated its conditions for holding talks with the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exile spiritual leader. The delegation had called on China to resume talks with the exile Tibetan leadership as sought in a Resolve Tibet Act bill that now awaits President Joe Biden’s signature for becoming law.

Responding to the bill and the Dharamshala events, the Chinese foreign ministry has said Jun 20 that the Dalai Lama must “thoroughly correct” his political views as a condition for contact with what it called China’s central government to resume.

“With regard to contact and negotiations between the central government of China and the 14th Dalai Lama, our policy has been consistent and clear,” *Reuters* Jun

20 quoted Lin Jian, a spokesman at China’s foreign ministry, as saying.

“The key is that the 14th Dalai Lama must fundamentally reflect on and thoroughly correct his political views,” Lin has said at a regular ministry news conference.

Also, responding to the US bill, Lin has said, “We urge the United States to fully recognise the importance and sensitivity of Tibet-related issues and earnestly respect China’s core interests,” Lin has said.

“We should abide by our commitment on the issue of obstacles, refrain from any form of contact with the Dalai clique, and stop sending wrong messages to the outside world.”

A ten-year-long series of talks between envoys of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government ended on a bitter note in late 2010, with the latter accusing the former of seeking independence with their demand for genuine or meaningful autonomy in exchange for accepting China’s sovereignty over the Tibetan homeland.

China also made it clear that the only talks they will hold with the Dalai Lama would be concerned with the conditions for his “return” to China, including his personal status under Chinese rule. For that, it requires him to “admit” that Tibet was part of China since ancient times and to give up all his activities in support of the Tibetan people.

But the Dalai Lama’s position remains that the only talks he can hold with China would be over the well-being of the Tibetan people as a whole; that Tibet was historically an independent country but would be willing to accept genuine autonomy under Chinese rule through a negotiated settlement, and that there is nothing to discuss as far as his own well-being is concerned.

China says Dalai Lama must 'thoroughly correct' his political views

20 June 2024, [Reuters](#)

The Chinese foreign ministry said on Thursday that exiled spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism the Dalai Lama must “thoroughly correct” his political views as a condition for contact with China’s central government to resume.

Formal talks between China and the Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 after a failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule, and his representatives have been stalled since 2010.

“With regard to contact and negotiations between the central government of China and the 14th Dalai Lama, our policy has been consistent and clear,” said Lin Jian, a spokesman at China’s foreign ministry.

“The key is that the 14th Dalai Lama must fundamentally reflect on and thoroughly correct his

political views," Lin said at a regular ministry news conference.

The Dalai Lama stepped down in 2011 as the political leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile, which Beijing does not recognise and views as a violation of China's constitution.

Yet China continues to chafe at any interaction he has with officials of other countries, including former U.S. presidents, even though the Dalai Lama says he is not seeking independence for Tibet.

The 88-year-old, whom China sees as a dangerous separatist in a monk's robes, remains the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.

U.S. lawmakers are currently asking President Joe Biden to sign a bill aimed at pressing China to secure a negotiated and peaceful agreement on Tibet.

A group of U.S. lawmakers, who met the Dalai Lama in India on Wednesday, said they would not allow China to influence the choice of his successor.

While Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the bill appears to question that position, analysts say. Beijing has rejected the Resolve Tibet Act, saying Tibet is part of China and brooks no interference from external forces.

"We urge the United States to fully recognise the importance and sensitivity of Tibet-related issues and earnestly respect China's core interests," Lin said.

"We should abide by our commitment on the issue of obstacles, refrain from any form of contact with the Dalai clique, and stop sending wrong messages to the outside world."

President Xi inspects Tibet Sinicization drive in Qinghai province

20 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Assimilating Tibet through Sinicization of education and religion and ensuring proper settlement of Chinese immigrants while also talking about ecological conservation appear to have been the main foci of Chinese President Xi Jinping's two-day inspection tour of Qinghai province, the bulk of the traditional eastern Tibetan province of Amdo (or Domey), which ended on Jun 19.

Xi, the general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, visited a middle school for Golok Tibetans and a Tibetan Buddhist temple, both in Xining, the provincial capital, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency Jun 19 and the *scmp.com* Jun 20.

The *Xinhua* report said Xi learned about the efforts being made by the Tibetan Buddhist circle in carrying forward the fine traditions of loving the country and the religion, and in promoting ethnic unity and progress.

The Tibetan Buddhist Hongjue Temple (Tsongkha Monastery) inspected by Xi has been key to Beijing's communication with a Tibetan Buddhist leader since it affirmed sovereignty over Tibet in 1951, said the *scmp.com* report. Chinese Princess Wencheng was stated to have stayed at the original site of the temple for one month when she entered Tibet as a bride of Tibet's King Songten Gampo in the seventh century AD.

Although Hongjue Temple was not the biggest Tibetan Buddhist temple in the city, it was the site of one of the most significant meetings between Communist Party's leadership and a Tibetan Buddhist leader in 1951 (Dec 15), the report quoted Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University, as saying.

Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun, then the Communist Party's deputy secretary of the Northwest Bureau and vice-chairman of the Northwest Military and Political Committee, was appointed by Mao Zedong to arrange the 10th Panchen Lama's return to Shigatse in Tibet, the report said, citing the Communist Party's archive.

"That was one of the most significant meetings that forged the friendship between Xi Zhongxun and the Panchen Lama that lasted for more than four decades," Xie has said.

The *Xinhua* report said Xi, who is also the chairman of the Central Military Commission, also learned about local efforts in advancing the education work through collaboration between the eastern and western regions and paired assistance, and in strengthening education on "forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation."

Focusing on Sinicizing the ethnic minority regions, especially in education by stressing mandarin Chinese learning and use and in religion, has been Xi's approach for homogenizing and strengthening the national unity of what constitutes the People's Republic of China.

Ethnic unity, a euphemism for encouraging the settlement of Chinese immigrants so as to Sinicize the demography of the Tibetan regions, has been a focus of Chinese government policy since the early days of the occupation rule.

President Xi sent a signal for ethnic unity as a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China – to unveil economic and social development strategies for the coming decade – was set to convene next month, said the *scmp.com* report. Xi also stressed continued efforts to advance the ecological conservation of the Tibetan Plateau and called on the province to promote high-quality development, said a *Xinhua* report Jun 20.

He met provincial party and government representatives on Jun 19 and stressed the province's "great mission" to preserve ecological security, said the *scmp.com* report, citing *Xinhua*.

Qinghai province shares the Tibetan Plateau with the Tibet autonomous region and is rich in petroleum, natural gas, and lithium, besides yielding numerous other minerals such especially as gold for China.

Former top Tibet official under probe for corruption

17 June 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar

Tibetans take to social media to welcome the move in a rare expression of public opinion.



Wu Yingjie, Communist Party secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, attends a group discussion session held on the sidelines of the annual meeting of China's National People's Congress in the Tibet Hall of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, March 6, 2019.

The Chinese Communist Party's former top boss in Tibet is being investigated for "severe violations of discipline and law," according to a statement from China's anti-corruption body, using a euphemism commonly used to describe corruption.

Wu Yingjie, former party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, is one of several top officials recently dismissed from the Chinese Communist Party amid a crackdown on officials past and present who have engaged in graft.

The move was praised by Tibetans on Chinese social media in a rare display of public opinion about such measures in China.

"It is very good that this man has been arrested," said one person. "This is good news for Tibetans," said another.

"This enemy of the Tibetans has been captured and it will eliminate harm from the Tibetan people," said a third.

In 2022, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Wu, 67, for his policies in Tibet that "involved serious human rights abuse, including extrajudicial killings, physical abuse, arbitrary arrests, and mass detentions" in the far-western region.

Additional abuses cited included forced sterilization, coerced abortion, restrictions on religious and political freedoms, and the torture of prisoners.

Wu, who now serves on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, is the first former party

secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, or TAR, to be placed under investigation and the eighth ministerial-level official to face a probe since the Communist Party's National Congress in 2022.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission announced the investigation on June 16.

Other officials under investigation include Dong Yunhu, chief of the Shanghai legislature; Sun Zhigang, a former medical reform official; Han Yong, former chairman of the Shaanxi Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Gou Zhongwen, former sports minister; Tang Yijun, former justice minister; Tang Renjian, agriculture minister; and Li Yuefeng, executive vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League.

Tibetans react

Tibetans inside Tibet took to Chinese social media to express their scorn for Wu Yingjie, known for his crackdowns and repressive policies, a source inside Tibet told Radio Free Asia on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

More than 760 comments appeared on a WeChat channel in response to a story about Wu's investigation, all expressing support for the probe.



Members of the Tibetan community in Belgium hold a demonstration to mark the celebration of the 57th Tibetan Uprising Day in front of the European Union headquarters in Brussels, March 10, 2016. (Emmanuel Dunand/AFP)

But at least one activist predicted the investigation would do nothing to change the plight of Tibetans.

"Despite Chinese leader Xi Jinping's investigation of Wu Yingjie and other officials as part of the nation's anti-corruption campaign, there will be no positive impact on Tibet and its related issues," said Sangay Kyap, a Tibetan rights analyst.

Shortly after Wu was promoted to party secretary in 2016, he issued a statement stressing the need for officials to "expand positive propaganda" and to "thoroughly expose and criticize" the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

Wu also urged officials to "eliminate the negative influence" of the Dalai Lama's use of religion and to guide believers to treat religion rationally.

Under President Xi Jinping, Wu also intensified repressive measures in Tibet, including the establishment of Chinese-run boarding schools with a curriculum focused on the Chinese language that undermines Tibetan culture and language, said Bawa Kelsang Gyaltsen, representative of the Office of Tibet in Taiwan.

“Wu Yingjie had been the CCP party secretary for the region, implementing severe and oppressive policies in Tibet for over 20 years,” he said, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

Another official, Jiang Jie, 58, a former senior political advisor in the TAR, was also indicted on charges of taking bribes by the Supreme People’s Procuratorate following an investigation, the body announced on June 14.

Prosecutors in Tianjin allege that Jiang, who is also a former vice chairman of the TAR’s Regional Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, misused his various positions, including serving as mayor of Dongying in Shandong province and deputy head of the regional government, to unlawfully gain advantages for others in exchange for significant sums of money and valuables.

Xinjiang official expelled

In a related development, Li Pengxin, a former deputy secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the region north of Tibet, has been expelled from the Communist Party and dismissed from public office for “serious violations of Party discipline and laws,” official Chinese media reported Monday.

An investigation found that Li, 63, had lost his ideals and convictions, was dishonest about his problems, accepted money and valuables, took advantage of his former position to seek benefits for others, and was suspected of accepting bribes, according to a statement issued Monday by China’s anti-corruption body and the National Commission of Supervision.

When Li was deputy secretary in Xinjiang from September 2016 to July 2021, he oversaw a crackdown on Uyghur educators, sending them to prison

At a meeting of party cadres in 2017, Li announced that prominent Uyghur scholar Tashpolat Teyip had been removed and replaced as president of Xinjiang University.

Afterwards, Teyip disappeared from public view, leading Uyghurs to believe he had been detained.

Uyghurs interviewed by RFA in 2018, after news about his disappearance came to light, said they believed Teyip was removed amid an unprecedented ideological purge in Xinjiang against so-called “two-faced” Uyghur officials. The term is used by authorities to describe Uyghurs who do not willingly follow directives and exhibit signs of disloyalty.

Chinese police arrest Tibetan for flying banned flag at his house consecration ceremony

04 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

For flying the Tibetan national flag atop his newly built home as a part of its consecration ceremony, Chinese police in Pashoe (Chinese: Basu, or Baxoi) County of eastern Tibet’s Chamdo City have taken away a Tibetan man last week, reported the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* Jun 3.

Rabgang Tenzin, a 51-year-old father of three, carried out the ceremony in the evening of May 28 and intended to take down the flag next morning. However, he forgot and failed to do it, the report cited three sources with knowledge of the situation as saying.

“The next day, the Chinese police arrested him, and his current whereabouts are unknown,” one of the sources has said.

The yellow-bordered blue-and-red coloured Snowlion flag of Tibet with a rising sun in the centre is a ubiquitous presence at any Tibet protest event across the free world and is banned by China.

Following the arrest, Chinese police warned the local Tibetans against talking about the incident with “outside forces” or face arrest themselves, the report cited a second anonymous source as saying.

The report said Rabgang Tenzin is a farmer who occasionally engages in small-time business.

Local residents fear that Rabgang Tenzin’s arrest could lead to his 10-year-old eldest son being expelled from the Pashoe County Elementary School, the report cited two other anonymous sources as saying.

Along with pictures of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, any display of the Tibetan national flag attracts swift crackdown and brutal punishment from Chinese authorities in Tibet.

BUDDHISM

China has 'natural' say in choosing next Dalai Lama, Tibet experts tell Beijing forum

30 June 2024, [SCMP](#)

Beijing has “natural” authority in identifying the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, Chinese state-backed analysts have said, with a year to go before the Tibetan spiritual leader is expected to announce his own decision on it.

Laxianjia, deputy director of the Institute of Religious Studies at the semi-official China Tibetology Research Centre (CTRC), referred to Beijing’s measures related to the “reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism”, passed in 2007.

They contained three principles in the selection and approval process: historical inheritance, religious rituals and approval by the central government, he told a forum in Beijing last week.

“Although the Dalai Lama is currently outside China, his reincarnation is still part of the Gelug tradition and under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government, as most temples are located within China,” Laxianjia said, referring to the Gelug – or “Yellow Hat” – sect of the exiled Dalai Lama.

“Therefore, it is only natural that the Chinese government would implement [the 2007] system and apply these principles to ensure control over Tibetan Buddhism.”

Laxianjia also said his field research showed that the general public in Tibet were not as reverential towards the 14th Dalai Lama as they had “become more aware of his political identity and his political moves abroad”, though they did acknowledge that his 13 predecessors had made significant contributions to the development of Tibetan Buddhism.

Tibetans regard the Dalai Lama as the living incarnation of the Buddha. The sitting Dalai Lama, who will be 89 this week, has hinted that he will address the issue of his reincarnation when he turns 90.

He previously suggested terminating the institution of the reincarnated Dalai Lama, but also said Beijing should have no say in this. Beijing insists that the process must follow Chinese law.

Tibet was seized by the People’s Liberation Army in 1950, a year after the Communist Party won the Chinese civil war. The Dalai Lama has lived in exile in India since fleeing a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

Beijing has blamed him for past unrest among Tibetans in China – in the 1980s and 2008 – and there have long been concerns if his death could be another flashpoint for such social tensions.

Experts at the forum in Beijing on Thursday also blamed the Dalai Lama for the lack of communication with Beijing.

“There has been no progress in this regard for many years because the Dalai Lama himself has not understood or implemented the central government’s requirements. Instead, he seeks to achieve Tibetan independence, semi-independence, or de facto independence through negotiations,” said Zhang Shigao, director of the Institute for Contemporary Tibetan Studies at CTCRC.

The panellists also argued that Beijing’s use of the name “Xizang” instead of “Tibet” in English-language articles was a way to exercise its sovereignty over the autonomous region on China’s Western border.

“Xizang” is the pinyin, or Chinese romanisation, of the Mandarin script for “Tibet”.

Liang Junyan, a researcher at CTCRC, said the term “Tibet” had taken on “more political connotations”, and Beijing had the “right to modify this name to avoid generating ambiguity”.

Liang said the name “Tibet” was misleading, as it was too broad and inaccurate from a geographical perspective. The Tibetan language is spoken not only in the autonomous region, but also in neighbouring provinces including Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu, she argued.

Chinese state media has dramatically increased its use of the term “Xizang” since the State Council, China’s cabinet, published a white paper in November on official policies related to the region. The shift has drawn intense criticism outside China.

Thursday’s forum, which aimed to address 65 years of reforms in Tibet, was attended by several Chinese and international media outlets.

Liang also pointed to several US congressional bills related to Tibet as the basis for Beijing’s adoption of the term “Xizang”.

A slew of Tibet policy bills passed by the United States in recent years had referred to the area as “Greater Tibet”, a term long advocated by the 14th Dalai Lama, and Beijing made the change to avoid any misunderstanding, Liang said.

On June 12, the US Congress passed a bill aimed at boosting support for Tibet and countering what it sees as Chinese “disinformation” about the region’s history, people and institutions. It has been forwarded to US President Joe Biden to sign into law.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, is regarded by Beijing as a “separatist” seeking independence for Tibet, a claim he denies.

He arrived in New York last week to receive medical treatment, days after meeting a seven-member US congressional delegation at his monastery in the Himalayan town of Dharamsala in northern India.

The bipartisan delegation, including former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, said they would not allow China to influence the choice of Dalai Lama’s successor and would pressure Beijing to resume talks with him.

In response, China’s foreign ministry said that its policy was “consistent and clear” – that in order to resume contact and talks with Beijing, the 14th Dalai Lama “must thoroughly reflect on and completely correct his political propositions”.

The remark came on the heels of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Qinghai province, where he emphasised the importance of national unity, particularly at a significant Tibetan Buddhist site.

China’s Panchen visits Jokhang Temple in ‘Chinese city of Lhasa’

29 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China said Jun 28 that the replacement 11th Panchen Lama Gyaltsen Norbu it has imposed on the Tibetan people after abducting into oblivion the one already recognized and proclaimed by Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in 1995 had visited Tibet’s most sacred temple in capital Lhasa that day.

Sinicizing Tibet by prefacing everything Tibetan with “Chinese” or “China’s” has long been Beijing’s preoccupation in its publicity works and its official *Xinhua* news agency headlined the news of the visit as “Panchen Rinpoche visits revered Jokhang Temple in Chinese city of Lhasa.”

The report cited “historical records” to note that the Buddha statue to which Gyaltsen Norbu bowed three times, offered a ceremonial scarf, and on which he applied gold powder “was brought to the temple by Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).”

He was then stated to have “led sutra chanting at the temple, praying for peace, prosperity and people’s well-being, joined by over 100 monks from the Jokhang Temple and the Tashilhunpo Monastery,” followed by performing “a head-touching ritual.”

The report did not quote him on any subject, but noted that he is a member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the country’s top political advisory body, vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, and president of the association’s “Xizang” branch.

Xizang is China’s name for Tibet, which it recently decided not to use anymore to make clear its further push towards Sinicizing the occupied territory.

The report said Gyaltsen Norbu had arrived in Lhasa on Jun 25 and “will perform his duties at the Xizang branch, carry out social research, and attend a series of religious activities.” It did not say how long the visit will last.

China restricts key Buddhist event citing security concerns

28 June 2024, [UCA News](#)

The annual Dhokham Jang Gunchoe or Great Winter Debate Session was shortened from usual two-week length to only one week



Ngodup Palden, an exiled Tibetan, speaks during an interview in Dharamsala in India on Feb. 19. Chinese authorities view Buddhism as a threat to its sovereignty. (Photo: AFP)

Authorities in a Tibetan-populated county in China have shortened the duration of a key week-long debate on Buddhist philosophy and have reduced the number of monks who could attend the event.

China's Sichuan province authorities reduced the duration of the annual Dhokham Jang Gunchoe or Great Winter Debate Session, *Radio Free Asia* (RFA) reported on June 27.

Traditionally, thousands of monks from Tibet's three monastic universities — Drepung, Gaden, and Sera — attend the event held in the eleventh month of the Tibetan calendar.

"They received permission, but authorities reduced the duration and the number of participants, citing security concerns," an unnamed source familiar with the incident told RFA.

Reportedly, the monastery and its supporters had petitioned the authorities for permission to conduct the gathering after their earlier request in 2023 was rejected.

The event took place at the Za Bhum Nyingma Monastery from June 19-25 under tight restrictions in Sershul county in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the Sichuan province's northwest.

Authorities had shortened the event from its usual two-week length to only one week and had reduced the number of participants from 7,000 to 3,200, RFA reported citing unnamed sources.

"Authorities also scrutinized monks and nuns attending the event to ensure they were free of political affiliations," multiple unnamed sources said. Reportedly, armed police were stationed at the Zabum Nyingma Monastery and patrolled the surrounding mountains during the gathering.

Meanwhile, lay people who had traveled from far away to witness the discussions and debates at the

monastery were held up at checkpoints, RFA reported citing unnamed sources.

Allegedly, the restrictions are an example of how China has sought to control and limit religious activities in Tibet, RFA reported.

The authorities have set up police stations in or near monasteries, subjected monks, and nuns to "patriotic re-education," and kicked Buddhist clergy members out of Buddhist institutes, RFA reported.

Chinese authorities have viewed Buddhism as a threat to its sovereignty and have engaged in implementing various restrictive policies that throttle Tibetan language, culture, and beliefs.

Earlier in April, Chinese authorities distributed a manual containing 10 bans on traditional practices related to the Dalai Lama's death to monasteries in Gansu province in China's northwest.

The manual reportedly listed 10 rules that Buddhist clergy should follow and disrupts the process of recognizing the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, which has been a contentious issue with the Chinese authorities.

REPORT: Sinicization drive pervades China's religious repression in Tibet

27 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In the name of regulations for implementing Sinicization, China officially controls all aspects of religious life in occupied Tibet and is guilty of serious violations of human rights of believers there, according to the US State Department in its 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom which was released on Jun 26. In Particular, the report criticizes China's ongoing campaign to Sinicize Buddhism under which much of the violations take place.

Across the People's Republic of China (PRC), authorities continue to arrest "thousands" of people a year for practicing their faith in ways that undermine the primacy of the Chinese Communist Party, the report says.

With regard to the situation in Tibet, the reports says the "CCP [Chinese Communist Party] regulations stipulate official control of all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, including the recognition of lamas, religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools."

And, as in previous years, there were "forced disappearances, arrests, physical abuse, and prolonged detentions without trial of monks, nuns, and other persons due to their religious practices."

Releasing the report with Secretary of State Antony J Blinken, The US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain has referred to the Chinese government's "decades of persecution of religious communities", including Tibetan Buddhists.

Dwelling on the Sinicization drive under which Tibetans are deprived of their religious freedom and

human rights, the report says: “The government continued carrying out its 2019-23 five-year plan to Sinicize Buddhism in China by emphasizing loyalty to the CCP and the state. The Sinicization plan included Tibetan Buddhism, with the involvement of the state-run BAC (Buddhist Association of China). Regulations promulgated in 2020 and 2021 further formalized administrative procedures for Sinicizing all religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, in order to ‘follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics,’ ‘correctly handle the relationship between national law and canon,’ and place more ideological controls on the training, selection, and monitoring of clergy.”

Focusing on Tibetan Buddhism specifically, the report says: “Authorities continued to require Buddhist monasteries to translate texts from Tibetan to Mandarin in what observers said was an effort to erase the Tibetan language. Authorities also continued to force monasteries to display portraits of CCP leaders and Tibetans to replace images of the Dalai Lama and other lamas in their homes with portraits of CCP leaders, including former Chairman Mao Zedong and General Secretary and PRC President Xi Jinping. Images of the Dalai Lama were banned, with harsh repercussions for owning or displaying his image. Repression, including arbitrary surveillance, increased around politically sensitive events, religious anniversaries, cultural events with religious components, and the Dalai Lama’s birthday. Authorities cancelled or curtailed lay attendance at religious events, including some that had received advanced official approval.”

Noting that the regulations regarding religion are issued by the CCP’s United Front Work Department (UFWD), the report notes that this body’s Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Work manages religious affairs through the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) in carrying out the Sinicization drive.

“The UFWD controls the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including lamas. Regulations stipulate that, depending on the perceived geographic area of influence of the lama, relevant administrative entities may deny permission for a lama to be recognized as reincarnated (a tenet of Tibetan Buddhism), and that these administrative entities must approve reincarnations. The UFWD claims the right to deny recognition of reincarnations of high lamas of ‘especially great influence.’”

The regulations also stipulate that all reincarnate lamas must be reborn within China, with the CCP maintaining a registry of officially recognized reincarnate lamas.

The report further notes: “UFWD regulations allow citizens to take part only in officially approved religious practices; these regulations assert CCP control over all aspects of religious activity, including the managing of religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools.

Through local regulations issued under the framework of the national-level Management Regulation of Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, governments of the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) and other autonomous Tibetan areas control the registration of monasteries, nunneries, and other Tibetan Buddhist religious centers. The regulations also give the CCP formal control over building and managing religious structures and require monasteries to obtain official permission to hold large-scale religious events or gatherings.”

The report continues to highlight the disappearance of Tibet’s second most prominent religious figure, saying, “The whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama and most Tibetan Buddhists, remained unknown since his 1995 forced disappearance by Chinese authorities. Nyima was six years old at the time he and his family were reportedly abducted.”

Welcoming the latest report’s release, Ms Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, has said, “The suppression of religious freedom in Tibet, including the efforts by the Chinese government to control the succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are core issues for the survival of Tibetan civilization and its future.”

She has said that given the gravity of the worsening situation in Tibet, the shedding of spotlight on Tibet in this year’s report was welcome “as this is needed more than ever today.”

The report notes that a little more than half of Chinese people are atheists or religiously unaffiliated, while 18.2% are Buddhists, 5.1% Christians, 1.8% Muslims and 21.9% followers of folk religions.

US report highlights China’s policy of controlling all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism

26 June 2024, International Campaign For Tibet

A US State Department report on religious freedom in Tibet says, “CCP [Communist Party of China] regulations stipulate official control of all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, including the recognition of lamas, religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools.”

The State Department’s 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom, released June 26, 2024, says that as in previous years, there were “forced disappearances, arrests, physical abuse, and prolonged detentions without trial of monks, nuns, and other persons due to their religious practices.”

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain released the report at an event at the State Department. International Campaign for Tibet’s Bhuchung Tsering was among a select group of people invited to attend the launch. Ambassador Hussain

referred to “decades of persecution of religious communities “ and included Tibetan Buddhists among them.

“The suppression of religious freedom in Tibet, including the efforts by the Chinese government to control the succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are core issues for the survival of Tibetan civilization and its future,” Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, said. “I welcome the spotlight put on Tibet in this year’s State Department religious freedom report as this is needed more than ever today.”

Focus on Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism

The report says, “The government continued carrying out its 2019-23 five-year plan to Sinicize Buddhism in China by emphasizing loyalty to the CCP and the state. The Sinicization plan included Tibetan Buddhism, with the involvement of the state-run BAC. Regulations promulgated in 2020 and 2021 further formalized administrative procedures for Sinicizing all religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, in order to “follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” “correctly handle the relationship between national law and canon,” and place more ideological controls on the training, selection, and monitoring of clergy.” Further, the report says, “Authorities continued to require Buddhist monasteries to translate texts from Tibetan to Mandarin in what observers said was an effort to erase the Tibetan language. Authorities also continued to force monasteries to display portraits of CCP leaders and Tibetans to replace images of the Dalai Lama and other lamas in their homes with portraits of CCP leaders, including former Chairman Mao Zedong and General Secretary and PRC President Xi Jinping. Images of the Dalai Lama were banned, with harsh repercussions for owning or displaying his image. Repression, including arbitrary surveillance, increased around politically sensitive events, religious anniversaries, cultural events with religious components, and the Dalai Lama’s birthday. Authorities canceled or curtailed lay attendance at religious events, including some that had received advanced official approval.”

Role of Infamous United Front highlighted

The report expands on the role of the infamous United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party in denial of religious freedom to the Tibetan people. It says, “CCP regulations regarding religion are issued by the CCP’s United Front Work Department (UFWD). The UFWD’s Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Work manages religious affairs through the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA).

“The UFWD controls the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including lamas. Regulations stipulate that, depending on the perceived geographic area of influence of the lama, relevant administrative entities may deny permission for a lama to be recognized as

reincarnated (a tenet of Tibetan Buddhism), and that these administrative entities must approve reincarnations. The UFWD claims the right to deny recognition of reincarnations of high lamas of “especially great influence.” The regulations also state no foreign organization or individual may interfere in the selection of reincarnate lamas, and all reincarnate lamas must be reborn within China. The CCP maintains a registry of officially recognized reincarnate lamas.

“UFWD regulations allow citizens to take part only in officially approved religious practices; these regulations assert CCP control over all aspects of religious activity, including the managing of religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools. Through local regulations issued under the framework of the national-level Management Regulation of Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, governments of the TAR and other autonomous Tibetan areas control the registration of monasteries, nunneries, and other Tibetan Buddhist religious centers. The regulations also give the CCP formal control over building and managing religious structures and require monasteries to obtain official permission to hold large-scale religious events or gatherings.”

As in previous years, the report highlights the continued disappearance of the Panchen Lama, saying, “The whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama and most Tibetan Buddhists, remained unknown since his 1995 forced disappearance by Chinese authorities. Nyima was six years old at the time he and his family were reportedly abducted.”

You can read the full text of the [Tibet section of the report here](#).

Xi visits Tibetans and temple in western China, calls for ethnic unity

20 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Hayley Wong and William Zheng

Chinese President Xi Jinping has issued a call for national unity at a Tibetan Buddhist heritage site as Tibet again becomes a point of contention in relations with the United States.

The Chinese leader visited a middle school for Golok Tibetans and the Tibetan Buddhist Hongjue Temple in the northwestern province of Qinghai on Tuesday, state news agency Xinhua said on Wednesday.

Both sites are in the provincial capital Xining. The historic temple has been key to Beijing’s communication with Tibetan Buddhist leaders since 1951.

Xi’s inspection was reportedly focused on local efforts to deepen education to forge “a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation” and strengthen “love for both the country and the religion” of Tibetan

Buddhism, as well as education support from more developed eastern provinces.

Xi met provincial Communist Party and government representatives on Wednesday and stressed the importance of cultivating national unity in the “province with concentrated ethnic minorities”, according to Xinhua.

He told leaders in Qinghai to “adhere to the direction of sinicisation of religion in our country, and strengthen the management of religious affairs, especially the management of religious venues”.

He also stressed the province’s “great mission” to preserve ecological security as the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau “has a rich and diverse but fragile ecosystem”.

The president said provincial leaders should “accelerate the construction of a world-class salt lake industrial base and make [the province] a national clean-energy industry highland, an international ecotourism destination and a green and organic agricultural and livestock product export base”.

The province shares a vast plateau with the Tibet autonomous region and has a wealth of petroleum and natural gas. It also has the country’s largest salt lake area, which contains mineral resources – like potassium and lithium – that are widely used in industries such as high-efficiency agriculture and new energy.

The president sent the signal for ethnic unity as a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China – to unveil economic and social development strategies for the coming decade – is set to convene next month.

His trip comes as tensions simmer between the US and China over the issue of Tibet.

The US Congress passed a Tibet policy bill last week which would channel funds to boost Washington’s support for Tibet and counter what it calls “disinformation” from China about the region’s history, people and institutions.

A seven-member US congressional delegation met the 14th Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader whom China has described as carrying out “anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion”, in India on Wednesday and said they would not allow China to influence the choice of his successor and would pressure Beijing to resume talks with him.

In response, China’s foreign ministry said on Thursday that its policy was “consistent and clear” – that in order to resume contact and talks with Beijing, the 14th Dalai Lama “must thoroughly reflect on and completely correct his political propositions”.

The Dalai Lama, who fled China during the Tibetan Uprising in 1959, will turn 89 next month. Beijing has blamed him for bouts of ethnic unrest in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, in the 1980s and again in 2008, upheaval that human rights groups blamed on the government’s repressive religious policies.

The Dalai Lama was born in Qinghai, where about half those living in the sparsely populated and remote inland province are non-Han Chinese, and most of the non-Han Chinese are Tibetan.

Xi last visited the province three years ago, when he described the northwestern province as “a strategic key place in maintaining stability in Xinjiang and Tibet”.

Although Hongjue Temple where Xi visited this time was not the biggest Tibetan Buddhist temple in the city, it was the site of one of the most significant meetings between Communist Party’s leadership and a Tibetan Buddhist leader in 1951, said Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University.

Xi Jinping’s father, Xi Zhongxun, then the Communist Party’s deputy secretary of the Northwest Bureau and vice-chairman of the Northwest Military and Political Committee, was appointed by Mao Zedong to arrange the 10th Panchen Lama Erdeni Chokyi Gyaltzen’s return to Shigatse in Tibet, according to the Communist Party’s archive.

The Panchen Lama is considered the most revered religious leader of Tibet after the Dalai Lama.

Xi Zhongxun met the 10th Panchen Lama at Hongjue Temple on December 15, 1951, to discuss details of the Panchen Lama’s return trip as part of a treaty signed by Beijing and Tibet that year.

“They spoke for three hours in the temple, discussed a series of important matters, including the further implementation of the agreement on the peaceful liberation of Tibet and the specific arrangements for the 10th Panchen Lama’s visit to Tibet,” Xie said.

“That was one of the most significant meetings that forged the friendship between Xi Zhongxun and the Panchen Lama that lasted for more than four decades.”

A Qinghai official said the temple still kept Xi Zhongxun and the Panchen Lama’s meeting room untouched as a memorial to mark a historic friendship between the party leadership and Tibetan religious leaders.

Besides the senior Xi’s meeting with the Panchen Lama, Hongjue Temple has been a key historical gateway of communication and interaction between China’s central government and Tibetan Buddhist leaders, according to an ethnic and religious affairs researcher from the Chinese Academic of Social Sciences.

“When Princess Wencheng travelled to Tibet to marry the then Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo, she made a stop at Xining for a month to get herself ready for the higher altitude in Tibet around 641 AD. The stop later became Hongjue Temple,” the researcher said.

Dalai Lama's Remarks On Reincarnation Are A Slap On Xi Jinping's Face: Tibet Watchers

18 June 2024, [Strat News Global](#), Tripti Nath

"I am not thinking of reincarnation."

This simple remark by the Dalai Lama is being interpreted by Tibet watchers as a slap on Xi Jinping's face and a clear message to China to mind its own business.

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who turns 89 on July 6, was responding to questions from journalists visiting Dharamshala on reincarnation. His interaction with journalists took place a day before a high profile US delegation, including former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived to meet him. The meeting is scheduled to be held at the main Buddhist temple in Dharamshala on Wednesday.

Responding to questions on his successor, the Dalai Lama replied: "I am not thinking of reincarnation. The important thing is as long as I am alive, I should use my energies to help as many people as I can."

The Chinese embassy spokesperson in New Delhi promptly took to X to demand that the Tibetan spiritual leader adhere to their laws, rituals and conventions in this regard.

Claiming that the Chinese government implements the policy of freedom of religious belief, the spokesperson said "The 14th Dalai Lama himself was found and recognized following religious rituals and historical conventions, and his succession was approved by the then central government. Therefore, reincarnation of living Buddhas including the Dalai Lama must comply with Chinese laws and regulations and follow religious rituals and historical conventions." Veteran Tibet watchers in Delhi said that while the Dalai Lama's remark may appear innocuous, it was actually a slap on the face of Chinese President Xi Jinping and a stern reminder to the Chinese to keep off issues related to reincarnation.

Tenzin Lekshay, Spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala, responded to the Chinese embassy spokesperson's post by drawing his attention to a translated version of an address on the theme of reincarnation by the Dalai Lama in September 2011.

The text was accompanied with a black and white picture of the Dalai Lama taken at the time of his official enthronement ceremony in Lhasa, Tibet, on February 22, 1940.

In his 2011 speech, the Dalai Lama touched upon how the Dalai Lamas have functioned as both the political and spiritual leaders since 1642, and warned about "an obvious risk of vested political interests misusing the reincarnation system to fulfil their own political agenda."

Vijay Kranti, Delhi based journalist and Tibetologist who first met the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala in 1972, and has been documenting Tibetan culture and life for half a century, says, "By making this assertion on reincarnation, the Dalai Lama has given a clear signal to Xi Jinping to keep off issues related to his reincarnation or that of any Tibetan reincarnated Lamas known as Tulkus in Tibetan Mahamaya Buddhism. The Chinese designs on attempting to usurp the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, is well known."

The Dalai Lama's remark was thus a slap on Chinese President Xi Jinping's face, he said.

He also trashed the statement of the Chinese Embassy spokesperson, claiming that the 14th Dalai Lama was approved by the Central government.

"This is complete rubbish, a lie and a mischievous and shameless way of rewriting History. The fact is that the Chinese representatives present at the Dalai Lama's dethronement ceremony in Lhasa had no special privileges. Nor did they have any status better than that of other foreign guests or dignitaries present at the Potala Palace.

"It is laughable that the Chinese Communist Party that is notorious for condemning and destroying religion, is suddenly trying to become champion of religious rituals related to reincarnation."

Vijay who also heads the Centre for Himalayan Asia Studies and Engagement (CHASE), a Delhi based think tank, drew attention to Order/5 issued by the Chinese government in 2007.

The order, later made into law, gives exclusive rights to the Communist Party of China to search, identify, instal and educate the new reincarnations of all Tibetan incarnate Lamas (Tulkus).

In the 90s, the Chinese attempts to instal reincarnates of Panchen Lama and Karmapa, failed miserably. While the whereabouts of the real Panchen Lama are not known till date, the Karmapa escaped from Chinese control.

The recent three resolutions passed by the US Congress unanimously have made it crystal clear that China has no role in selecting and installing either the Dalai Lama or any other incarnate Lama, he added.

Beijing uses Chinese Buddhist group to transform Tibetan Buddhism: report

02 June 2024, [RTV Online](#)

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.

STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

Urgent action needed to save Hindu Kush Himalaya, the world's 'water tower'

30 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Shyam Saran

Heatwaves across Asia are underscoring the immediate and severe impact of climate change. My country India is grappling with record-breaking temperatures, with some parts of northern India exceeding 50 degrees Celsius. China is also bracing for an unusually hot summer, which follows 2022's worst heatwave on record with abnormally high temperatures lasting over 70 days.

This extreme weather coincides with alarming findings from the annual Snow Update Report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The report shows snow levels are almost a fifth below normal in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region this year, with experts advising water officials to initiate drought management and pre-emptive emergency water supply strategies.

The disastrous impact of climate change is seen first on mountains, and this puts downstream countries on the frontline of the crisis, particularly the eight that make up the Hindu Kush Himalaya – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan – which encompasses the highest mountain ranges in the world.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya, known as the world's "water tower", is a single ecological unit, divided by political boundaries but unified by natural assets such as mountains, rivers and biodiversity. Importantly, it is the source of 10 large Asian river systems – the Amu Darya, Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow River and Tarim – serving two billion people.

Protecting these assets, such as by slowing glacier melt, is therefore critically important – but impossible without regional collaboration.

Another recent ICIMOD study confirms the region is undergoing unprecedented, and likely to be irreversible, change. Glaciers are melting at an alarming rate, and based on current projections, scientists predict that two-thirds may disappear by the end of the century. The 79 glaciers that surround Mount Everest, for example, have thinned by over 100m in just six decades, and the rate of thinning has nearly doubled since 2009.

Regional collaboration is imperative in dealing with this crisis. Natural disasters caused by climate change are increasing in frequency and intensity, and disproportionately affect populations suffering from poverty and deprivation. National boundaries cannot protect the countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya from these, irrespective of where events may have originated.

If deforestation takes place in the upper reaches of the mountain ranges, the rivers which flow across several countries will be affected through higher siltation and increased run-off. Glacier melt affects not only the countries near the mountains but also the densely populated Indo-Gangetic Plain.

Moreover, natural disasters such as flooding or extended warm weather are often followed by the spread of water or airborne diseases.

Countries in South Asia previously made efforts to present a common position on climate change, at the Cop16 UN climate conference in 2010. Countries from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had adopted an action plan for climate change, which listed several measures to deal with the challenge. Despite this initial promise, many agreed measures remain unimplemented.

Nevertheless, initiatives such as adaptation research centres and regional technology innovation networks show a willingness to address shared challenges. Revitalising this collaborative spirit is more crucial than ever.

Net zero, the carbon ambition consuming the world's attention, is at best a naive hope, and at worst, a clever deflection. Net zero by 2050 does not mean zero emissions by that date. It means that in 2050 whatever emissions are being generated are matched by expanded natural carbon sinks, like forests and oceans, and the technological solutions that enable carbon to be sucked out of the atmosphere on a large scale, efficiently and economically.

Net zero therefore is a balance sheet concept that hides the uncertainties and even improbabilities of climate action. The largest natural carbon sinks are our forests and our oceans, both of which are being destroyed by rampant deforestation and waste dumping.

I do not see how in the next 25 years this will be reversed. Some countries in the region are doing all they can to reduce the impact of climate change. For example, Bhutan is the world's first "carbon negative" country, and conserving its rich forest lands is a feat for which it should be lauded. Others in our region should follow Bhutan's example, otherwise these efforts will be for nothing.

Political boundaries, territorial disputes and mutual suspicions are hindering regional cooperation. National security concerns often restrict vital data-sharing on water-induced disasters and glacial flood outbursts. But sharing such data can save lives and enhance regional cooperation.

Leaders and citizens must recognise that the fallout from the ecological crisis will far eclipse many of the divisive issues which currently demand our attention, while regional collaboration can yield significant environmental and economic benefits.

The region's ecological challenges necessitate an urgent call for regional collaboration. By working together, sharing knowledge and empowering institutions such as ICIMOD, countries can tackle climate change, protect shared natural assets and ensure a sustainable future for all. Embracing a unified approach to these transboundary issues is not just beneficial but essential for the region's survival and prosperity.

China's Climate Hegemony: Exploiting Tibet and Manipulating the Maldives

26 June 2024, [Khabarhub](#)

In recent years, China's aggressive pursuit of natural resources and geopolitical influence has taken an alarming turn, with Tibet and the Maldives becoming key battlegrounds in Beijing's strategy of environmental exploitation and water politics.

This aggressive approach not only threatens delicate ecosystems but also poses significant risks to regional stability and the sovereignty of neighboring nations. Tibet, often referred to as the "Third Pole" due to its vast glacial reserves, stands as the largest repository of fresh water outside the Arctic and Antarctic.

This ecologically sensitive plateau serves as the source for 10 major Asian river systems, making it a critical resource for billions of people across the continent. However, China's relentless pursuit of economic gain has led to unprecedented environmental degradation in this fragile region.

The Jiama copper-gold polymetallic mine, operated by China Gold International Resources, exemplifies the destructive impact of large-scale mining operations in Tibet.

Strengthening international legal frameworks to prevent the weaponization of water resources is also crucial. As China continues to leverage its control over Tibet's resources for geopolitical gain, the world must recognize the long-term consequences of these actions.

Despite a recent tailings dam failure in March 2023 that led to a year-long closure, the mine has resumed operations with plans for expansion.

This rapid return to business as usual, coupled with the construction of a new Phase III tailings dam, demonstrates China's prioritization of resource extraction over environmental concerns.

The environmental consequences of such mining activities are severe. Water contamination from heavy metals like copper, lead, and arsenic poses immediate threats to local populations and ecosystems.

The incident at the Guolanggou dam serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing risks, with the potential for future spills remaining a grave concern.

Beyond the immediate environmental impact, these mining operations are eroding Tibet's cultural and spiritual heritage.

The Jiama Valley, the birthplace of the first king of the Tibetan Empire, has been transformed from a sacred site into an industrial zone.

This desecration of holy lands prevents pilgrims from accessing sites of historical and religious importance, effectively severing Tibetans' connection to their ancestral heritage.

China's exploitation of Tibet's water resources extends beyond its borders, as evidenced by its recent "donation" of 3,000 metric tons of Tibetan glacial water to the Maldives.

This move, occurring simultaneously with the implementation of water conservation regulations in Tibet, reveals Beijing's cynical use of water as a geopolitical tool.

The timing of these water deliveries, coinciding with the Maldivian President's state visit to China and the signing of 20 agreements for financial and military assistance, underscores the transactional nature of China's "generosity."

This water diplomacy is part of a broader strategy to extend Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean region, leveraging the Maldives' vulnerability to climate change and its need for freshwater resources.

Meanwhile, Tibetans face increasing water scarcity due to Beijing's systematic water conservation campaigns.

The forced relocation of Tibetans from water-rich areas like Gangkar township to make way for Chinese water bottling facilities further illustrates the prioritization of commercial interests over the needs of local populations.

China's control over Tibet's water resources positions it as a potential "water hegemon" in Asia. With the capacity to influence eight major transboundary river systems, Beijing holds significant leverage over lower riparian states including Bangladesh, India, and Southeast Asian nations.

This control not only serves China's domestic economic interests but also provides a powerful tool for foreign policy manipulation.

Experts warn that China's dam-building spree, with numerous dams already constructed, poses an unprecedented threat to regional water security.

The potential for China to weaponize these water resources against neighboring countries cannot be overstated, as it could significantly impact agriculture, energy production, and overall economic stability in the region.

The environmental consequences of China's actions in Tibet extend far beyond its borders. The degradation of the Tibetan plateau, often called the "water tower of Asia," threatens the long-term water security of billions of people across the continent.

Climate change impacts, accelerated by China's damming and mineral extraction activities, are altering the delicate balance of this crucial ecosystem.

Moreover, the human cost of these policies is immense. Tibetans are being systematically marginalized in their own land, forced to relocate from ancestral territories, and denied access to their own water resources.

The cultural and spiritual erosion caused by these actions threatens the very identity of the Tibetan people.

China's exploitation of Tibet's resources and its water politics in the Maldives represent a dangerous form of environmental imperialism that demands urgent international attention.

The implications of these actions extend far beyond the immediate regions, threatening ecological balance, cultural heritage, and geopolitical stability across Asia.

The international community must demand transparency and environmental accountability for Chinese mining and damming operations in Tibet, support the rights of Tibetans to manage their own natural resources, and develop regional water-sharing agreements that ensure equitable access for all riparian states.

There is a pressing need to invest in alternative freshwater solutions for vulnerable nations like the Maldives to reduce dependency on Chinese "water diplomacy."

Failure to act now could result in catastrophic consequences for the environment, regional stability, and the lives of billions who depend on the water flowing from the "Roof of the World."

Strengthening international legal frameworks to prevent the weaponization of water resources is also crucial. As China continues to leverage its control over Tibet's resources for geopolitical gain, the world must recognize the long-term consequences of these actions.

The exploitation of Tibet and the manipulation of vulnerable nations like the Maldives are not just regional issues but global concerns that require a coordinated international response.

Only through concerted effort can we hope to protect the fragile ecosystems of the "Third Pole" and ensure a sustainable, equitable future for all nations dependent on Asia's vital water resources.

The time for action is now, before irreversible damage is done to both the environment and the geopolitical landscape of the region.

The international community must unite to challenge China's environmental imperialism, protect the rights of Tibetans and other vulnerable populations, and ensure the sustainable management of Asia's critical water resources.

Failure to act now could result in catastrophic consequences for the environment, regional stability, and the lives of billions who depend on the water flowing from the “Roof of the World.”

China sends glacial water from Tibet to the Maldives, raising concerns

05 June 2024, [RFA](#), Lobsang, Tenzin Pema and Tenzin Dickyi

Tibetans meanwhile are being told to save water as Beijing engages in water diplomacy.



Maldives residents carry jugs of water distributed by Red Crescent and security personnel after a fire at a desalination plant affected water supplies in Malé, capital of the Maldives, Dec. 5, 2014.

China gifted 3,000 metric tons of Tibet’s glacial water to the island nation of the Maldives in two separate batches in March and May — the same months it unveiled and implemented water conservation regulations at home.

The Water Conservation Regulations set limits on water usage within administrative regions and prioritizes water conservation work in Tibet and other parts of China.

They were issued by China’s State Council on March 20, a week before it sent the first delivery of 1,500 metric tons of water in jugs to the Maldives, which is experiencing a scarcity of fresh water.

The regulations then went into effect on May 1, weeks before China donated the second batch of water jugs. China finalized the deal with the Maldives during a November 2023 visit by Yan Jinhai, chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region, to the low-lying archipelago threatened by rising sea levels.

The Maldives has forged strong bilateral relations with China and is a beneficiary of the Belt and Road Initiative, under which it has borrowed more than US\$1 billion from Chinese banks in the past decade, according to Western think tanks.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu signed 20 agreements, including one for financial and military

assistance, with Beijing during his inaugural state visit to China in January 2024.

The Maldives thanked the people of Tibet for their “generous donation,” which it expects will greatly support its island communities. Its freshwater resources are affected by erratic rainfall patterns and rising sea levels.

Water shortages in Tibet

But Tibetans inside Tibet said they face water shortages themselves because Chinese authorities have implemented systematic water conservation and management campaigns across various Tibetan villages and towns for over a decade.

This has occurred while authorities have restricted the availability of water and set limits on water usage at the local level.

“I have heard that China is donating bottled water from Tibet to other parts of the world for free for political gain,” said one source from the Tibet Autonomous Region, where Chinese authorities have carried out water conservation campaigns for over a decade.

“However, in Tibet, the local Tibetans do not have enough drinking water,” he said. “At times there isn’t enough water to even brush our teeth.”

On March 27, the same day the Maldives said it received the first batch of water, the Water Conservancy Bureau of Ngari Prefecture, or Ali in Chinese, the birthplace of key South Asian rivers, began a series of year-long events for the general public to promote water conservation.

In Nyingtri city, or Linzhi in Chinese, authorities have implemented the strictest water resources management system over the past several years and boast of its effectiveness.

“The water used to wash rice and vegetables can be used to mop the floor and water the flowers. ... Nowadays, water-saving behaviors like this have become a conscious action of many citizens,” said a 2023 announcement by the city government.

Meanwhile, Tibetans who have grown up on their ancestral land in Gangkar township in Dingri county, called Tingri in Chinese, are being forced to relocate to make way for the expansion of China’s water bottling facilities and industry, two sources said.

“Gangkar is known for its fertile pastureland and significant water resources from glaciers with 15 water springs in the region, which the local Tibetans have always relied on for their livelihoods,” said the first source.

Chinese authorities plan to move about 430 residents to take control of the water resources from the land, he said.

Weaponizing water

China’s move signals it is engaging in “water politics” and playing the long game for geopolitical gains in South Asia, experts said.

The Chinese government has projects underway to extract clean, clear and mineral-rich water to support the expansion of its premium mineral bottled water industry, they said.

Beijing also wants to control water flows to lower riparian states such as India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, to further its own aspiration of regional dominance, experts said.

“The imperative to address the threat of China weaponizing water in Tibet cannot be overstated,” wrote scholars Neeraj Singh Manhas and Rahul Lad in a March report titled “China’s Weaponization of Water in Tibet A Lesson for the Lower Riparian States” in the *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*.

With approximately 87,000 dams built, China poses a historic threat, having already dammed most internal rivers, they add, while calling for proactive measures to implement enduring policies to protect these vital Tibet’s water resources.

Tibet is at the forefront of China’s “water wars” in the region, said Anushka Saxena, a research analyst at the Takshashila Institution, a public policy think tank in India.

Tibet’s eight major transboundary river systems have the capacity to turn China into “Asia’s water hegemon,” given that their water can be used for both domestic economic and foreign policy-related interests, as well as can be weaponized to cause harm to lower riparian states, she said.

“In that light, China’s moves vis-à-vis export of water to Maldives cannot be isolated from the larger approach China is adopting to using Tibet’s water resources,” she added.

Tibetan lakes are estimated to expand 50% by 2100: Chinese study

03 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Victoria Bela

By the end of the century, the surface area of some lakes in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau could increase by more than 50 per cent – while other lakes around the world shrink – a new study has found.

The water volume of the lakes in the plateau in southwest China is estimated to expand by more than 600 billion tonnes, largely due to increased rainfall caused by climate warming, as well as the melting of glaciers.

If these predictions are correct, the researchers said it could have a massive economic impact on China, running into the billions.

“Our results suggest that by 2100, even under a low-emissions scenario, the surface area of endorheic lakes on the Tibetan Plateau will increase by over 50 per cent (around 20,000 sq km [7,722 square miles]) and water levels will rise by around 10 metres [32 feet]

relative to 2020,” the scientists wrote in a paper published in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature Geoscience* on May 27. Endorheic lakes, also known as closed lakes, do not have an outlet to drain into.

The team from China, Wales, Saudi Arabia, the United States and France said that this would correspond to a fourfold increase in water storage compared to what the area experienced over the last 50 years.

If steps are not taken to mitigate this, “more than 1,000 km of roads, approximately 500 settlements and around 10,000 sq km of ecological components such as grasslands, wetlands and croplands,” will become submerged, the team said.

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, known as the “Water Tower of Asia”, is the highest and largest plateau in the world and is home to more than 1,000 lakes with large reserves of water in both liquid and ice form.

“[It is] one of the regions that is most vulnerable to climate change, acting as an early warning signal for the wider effects of global warming,” the researchers wrote.

While large lakes in other parts of the world have been experiencing a decline in water storage due to both rising temperatures and human activity, lakes in the plateau have actually been expanding in recent decades due to warmer and wetter conditions.

This has mostly been driven by increases in net precipitation. While melting glaciers also contribute to this phenomenon, the researchers said the glaciers that remain have “limited storage”.

As part of the study, the team developed a simulation model for the period of 2021 to 2100 incorporating climate drivers with field surveys and remote sensing, all set to different socioeconomic scenarios to examine the future impact of increasing water storage in the plateau.

In the northern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, a twofold increase in total lake area is expected – the largest increase across the plateau. Lakes in the southeast, northwest and central parts of the plateau will also see significant expansion.

In fact, even though the southern part of the plateau used to see a shrinking trend in lake changes, it also began expanding in 2021, the team found.

The largest lake in the Tibet autonomous region, Selin Co (Siling Lake), could see an increase in water volume of around 66 billion tonnes – about an 800 sq km increase in lake area.

Despite the northern parts of the plateau being projected to experience the largest increase in water storage, roads in the northeast – where there is more human activity and infrastructure – will be the most vulnerable to inundation.

Looking at the researchers’ middle socioeconomic scenario, they estimated that inundated roads could directly lead to an economic loss of 20 billion yuan to

50 billion yuan (US\$2.7 billion to US\$6.9 billion) by the end of the century.

This “is a serious threat that should be considered in future rail and road planning,” the team said.

Many villages and livestock pens are located next to lakes in the plateau, and by the end of the century, 615 human settlements could be inundated by water.

More than 500,000 livestock could also be disturbed, and the inundation of grassland could lead to less livestock production “severely affecting the livelihoods of local pastoralists and further exacerbating poverty levels,” the researchers wrote.

The team pointed to an incident in 2011 where a lake in the plateau’s Hoh Xil Nature Reserve “burst”, leading to a blockage of the migration route for Tibetan antelope.

“Loss of cropland could disrupt food production, affecting both local food security and the regional agricultural economy,” the paper said.

The team found that several lakes are also expected to merge together as their area expands, which could also threaten infrastructure and ecology.

Plus, as the lakes’ area expands, the team said there is a “growing concern about increased emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere”.

This could create a feedback loop, as increased emissions would cause more warming, which would in turn cause further lake expansion in the plateau.

“The expanding lakes pose challenges to existing and planned infrastructure and communities and requires urgent implementation of effective adaptation and sustainable management strategies to mitigate socioeconomic repercussions,” the team said.

“Our study serves as a scientific guide for future planning and provides valuable insights to avoid the devastating consequences of the impending lake expansion.”

China Gold’s Jiama mine in Tibet resumes operations

02 June 2024, [RTV](#)

China Gold International Resources announced that the Phase II processing plant at its Jiama mine in Tibet, China, has resumed operations after being halted for over a year.

The copper-gold mine was suspended on March 27, 2023, due to a tailings overflow at the Guolanggou dam, which the company has since repaired and reinforced.

With approvals granted by Tibet government as well as relevant departments of the Chinese government, the Phase II processing plant is now operating with a daily processing capacity of 34,000 tonnes.

The Phase I plant, which has been running at a rate of 6,000 tonnes during the production ramp-up phase,

will cease operations. The plant was allowed to resume in December following approval from the municipal government.

“We are proceeding cautiously in resuming operations and ramping up productions. The root causes of the overflow have been thoroughly reviewed and the lessons learned will be applied in future operations,” stated Junhu Tong, China Gold’s chairman and CEO.

Meanwhile, the company is actively advancing the construction of the Phase III tailings dam, which it expects to complete and put into operation during the first half of 2026.

As detailed in its year-end 2023 release, the Chinese miner has set a production guidance of 95-98 million lb. of copper and 42,439-45,333 oz. of gold for the Jiama mine this year once it returns to production.

This is in addition to the 106,097-112,528 oz. of gold forecasted at its CSH mine in Inner Mongolia.

Discourse facilitator ‘Democracy and Debate’ launches report on opinion poll from Tibetan public

28 June 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Lharong, the co-founder of the Democracy and Debate during the launch of Tibetan Public Opinion Poll on June 28, 2024 (Phayul photo)

TIBET IN EXILE

Democracy and Debate, a non-partisan and independent initiative dedicated to fostering open dialogue and transparency, released a report on Friday based on a public opinion poll conducted among Tibetans from around the globe.

This comprehensive survey, which included 28 questions and garnered responses from 1,088 Tibetans residing in over 30 countries, offers a unique and expansive view of the current challenges and the need for reform in Tibetan democracy. The poll was conducted using a combination of online surveys and in-person interviews to ensure a broad and representative sample.

The findings of the poll highlighted the urgent need for reform in several areas in the political set up and democratic system of the exile Tibetan community with 89% of respondents supporting democratic reforms to ensure an equal number of voting rights for all Tibetans, 80% supporting the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) holding a special meeting to foster broader engagement and dialogue with Tibetan communities on democracy issues, 70% support the separation of politics and religion within the Tibetan democratic system and 64% support increasing the number of parliamentary seats for Tibetans abroad. Another area for reform is in the area of policy 64% support increasing the Green Book fee by 50%.

The report also highlighted several challenges facing Tibetan democracy. Many respondents pointed out the polarisation within the community. They suggested measures to reduce it, such as promoting unity, separating politics and religion, eradicating regionalism, following the guidance of His Holiness, ensuring equal voting rights, and leading by example.

“The purpose of the opinion poll is to understand Tibetan’s perspectives on Tibetan democracy as well as to establish a channel between the CTA and the Tibetan community. The discussion in Tibetan democracy often lacks data on public opinion. With this detailed data released will help policymakers, media, and the general public to understand the community’s perspective on a variety of issues, including structural issues, policy issues, and public approval ratings on institutions and decisions-makers,” stated Lharong, the co-founder of the Democracy and Debate, during the launch of the report.

Tibetans worldwide rejoice over Dalai Lama’s successful knee surgery

28 June 2024, [RFA](#)

The Buddhist spiritual leader enjoys strong support in the US, where the operation took place.

The Dalai Lama had successful total knee replacement surgery at a top New York hospital and will be discharged on Saturday, the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader’s personal physician said as Tibetans around the world rejoiced at the news.

The Dalai Lama, who turns 89 on July 6, has experienced health problems for years. His knee issues required medical attention outside northern India where he has lived in exile for 65 years following a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet.

The Nobel Prize winner enjoys strong support in the United States, especially among prominent lawmakers who have spoken out about human rights issues in Tibet, despite objections by China which views him as a separatist and bristles at his interactions with foreign officials.

“After the surgery, he returned to his room in the hospital in a very stable condition and has already had his lunch,” said Dr. Tsetan Dorjee Sadutshang, who gave a video briefing on the Dalai Lama’s condition just hours after his operation Friday at New York’s Hospital for Special Surgery, a top medical facility for musculoskeletal health.

The operation began in the early morning amid mass prayers and religious rituals by Tibetans worldwide, including those inside Tibet, for the Dalai Lama’s successful surgery and swift recovery.

“The entire team looking after His Holiness at the hospital has been very supportive and caring,” said Sadutshang, who was accompanied by Tenzin Taklha, the Dalai Lama’s secretary, at the briefing.

The treatment was successful, and the surgery ended around 7:30 a.m., said another source with knowledge of the matter.

The Dalai Lama arrived in New York on June 23, marking his first visit to the United States in over seven years and his first overseas trip since November 2018. Tibetans across Tibet have been offering prayers for his well-being ever since news of his U.S. visit reached people in various corners of the region and in Tibetan-populated areas of China’s western provinces, Tibetan sources said.

In Lhasa, Tibetans offered prayers at the Jokhang Temple, Ramoche Temple and other monasteries on Friday, as China tightened security at religious sites amid news of widespread prayer by Tibetans inside Tibet for the Dalai Lama’s successful surgery, the sources said.



People await the arrival of the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, at his hotel in New York before he undergoes knee surgery, June 23, 2024. (Adam Gray/AFP)

Tibetans worldwide also took to social media to express their joy and gratitude.

“Thank you so much for the updates, Doctor. Wishing His Holiness the Dalai Lama a speedy recovery,” wrote one Tibetan netizen, commenting on the press briefing video posted on YouTube.

Another wrote: “Thank you, USA medical team. This is really good news for us.”

The Dalai Lama’s trip to the U.S. comes in the wake of the passage of a bill in the U.S. Congress urging Beijing to re-engage with him and other Tibetan leaders to peacefully resolve their dispute over the status and governance of Tibet.

Tibetans worldwide pray as Dalai Lama undergoes knee surgery in the USA

28 June 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Tibetans across the globe are united in prayer today as His Holiness the Dalai Lama underwent knee surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in New York city.

According to *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*, both media houses headquartered in the United States, the surgery has been successful and His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s condition is good, citing

confirmed sources. However, there are no official announcements or updates from his office yet.

The surgery took place this morning (New York time) at HSS, the world's leading academic medical centre focused on musculoskeletal health. Renowned for its excellence, HSS has been ranked No. 1 in orthopaedics for 14 consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report (2023-2024) and has consistently been among the top-ranked hospitals for both orthopaedics and rheumatology for 32 years.

The Dalai Lama, the revered spiritual leader of Tibet, has been experiencing knee issues that necessitated this medical intervention. He will be 89 years of age next month on his birthday which falls on July 6th.

From Dharamshala to New York, Tibetans and supporters of His Holiness have been gathering in temples, community centres, and private homes to offer prayers and perform rituals for his swift recovery. Social media platforms are also flooded with messages of support and well-wishes from followers around the world.

The global Tibetan community remains hopeful and united in their support for the Dalai Lama during this critical time. Further updates on His Holiness's condition are eagerly awaited by his followers worldwide.

'Dalai Lama will live on, Xi Jinping will die'—former Tibet PM on reincarnation geopolitics

28 June 2024, [The Print](#), Monami Gogoi

Lobsang Sangay said 'no one has done more for Tibetans than India', adding that the Indian media has fallen prey to Chinese propaganda in the past.

Lobsang Sangay, former Sikyong or Prime Minister of the Tibetan government in exile, is confident in his understanding of how the United States functions. Shedding light on Tibet's relations with the US, Sangay, currently a Harvard Law School professor, described the ties as 'a roller coaster experience', while mentioning the US' 'ping-pong' diplomacy and Richard Nixon's attempt to normalise his country's relationship with China in order to counter the Soviet Union.

Sangay made the comments during a lecture on 'Geopolitics of Reincarnation' at New Delhi's India International Centre on 20 June in front of a full house of nearly 100 people. In the 90-minute session, the 56-year-old spoke on themes of geopolitics and international diplomacy alongside Buddhist concepts of reincarnation, karma, and compassion.

Realpolitik and spirituality might seem completely antithetical, but the two topics are interconnected for Sangay. Political acumen and spiritual wisdom intertwined to explain the evolving nature of the Chinese occupation of the Tibetan plateau, including

the thorny issue of China's position on the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.

The talk didn't happen in isolation. A day before, a bipartisan seven-member US delegation, which included former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, had visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. It was followed by their announcement that the US would not allow China to interfere in the succession of the Dalai Lama. Sangay intended to remind the audience about the Dalai Lama's statement on reincarnation from 2011, where, among several other things, he had categorically stated that the next Dalai Lama wouldn't be born in China if the issue of Tibet was not resolved. He did it by highlighting the subsequent "disinformation strategy" of the Chinese government "to manipulate and control the narrative."

The professor said the geopolitics of reincarnation affects huge geography, naming areas where Tibetan Buddhism is practised—regions along the Himalayas, inner and outer Mongolia, among other places. Continuing his argument, Sangay also mentioned China, East Asia, and Southeast Asian countries where Buddhism is a dominant religion.

"And you might be surprised to know that the third largest religion in Italy—the land of the Catholic Church and Pope—is Buddhism. In all of Europe as well. So Buddhism has become a major religion all over the world. But directly impacting this. So, the reincarnation of His Holiness Dalai Lama has major geopolitical significance," he said.

An atheistic party interfering in reincarnation

Sangay, who served as the Sikyong from 2011 to 2021, cited numerous instances of the workings of the Chinese government's "disruptive propaganda machine." To an audience comprising several journalists, he stated that the Indian media had fallen prey to Chinese propaganda in the past. Sangay recalled that in 2019, a team of Indian journalists went on a "guided tour" to China. Before the trip, he had warned a journalist not to "get fooled" by the Chinese. "They came back on July 11th or 12th. And all the headlines, in all the major newspapers of India, were this—'India should not interfere in the selection of Dalai Lama. China will select,'" he said, pointing to a slide showing headlines of several news articles.

While pinpointing the media's shortcomings, Sangay also underscored and appreciated India's role in the Tibetan freedom movement.

"No one has done more for Tibetans than India. India has done the most. Indian people have been the most hospitable. The fact that we are here, we have a government-in-exile here," he said.

He also discussed the Chinese government's ongoing efforts to assert control over the reincarnation process of Tibetan Lamas, including the Dalai Lama. Sangay pointed out the historical and political manipulations

involved, referencing the “Golden Urn” method used by the Qing Dynasty to legitimise the selection of reincarnations of Tibetan lamas. The Chinese government still insists on using this method.

“Communist Party of China, which says religion is poison, is now issuing certificates to legitimise Lamas,” he remarked, highlighting the irony in the Chinese government’s stance.

Sangay also brought to focus a 70,000-character petition, dated 18 May 1962, written by the 10th Panchen Lama and addressed to the Chinese government. In the report, Panchen Lama wrote about the destruction of monasteries and nunneries in Tibet. “After all this destruction, what legitimacy does the Chinese government have to say – we have destroyed everything but we have the right to choose your Lama?” the professor said.

Reincarnation, karma, and compassion

Balancing geopolitics and the spiritual, Sangay consistently mentioned the deeply rooted Tibetan Buddhist concepts of reincarnation, karma, and compassion throughout his lecture. He went through the Dalai Lama’s 2011 statement on reincarnation, succinctly explaining all the states of the process. He also briefed on the emanation and selection process of the next Dalai Lama, which involves divination.

Though the reincarnation process might seem “complicated” to others, Sangay said it isn’t so for Tibetans.

“For 800 years, we’ve been practising this, we have nailed it. So we know how it works. It’s a well-oiled system that we have,” he said.

During the Q&A session, when tough remarks surfaced about the US’ history of “abandoning” Tibet in the past, Sangay’s reply had a latent Buddhist approach.

“We know how America functions. Generally, we know how realpolitik is, right? In international relations, everybody works for their own national interests. So when their national interests coincide with ours, we welcome them. When it doesn’t, we are compassionate,” he said, underscoring the importance of allies.

Another question was whether Pelosi’s provocative remark in Dharmshala, where she had said that the Dalai Lama’s legacy would continue and Xi Jinping’s would be forgotten, could be read as an endorsement by the Indian government.

As a seasoned speaker, Sangay skirted a direct reply but gave a response steeped in Buddhist teachings.

“Leader Nancy Pelosi is right. His (Dalai Lama’s) legacy will live on, and Xi Jinping will die, and no one will remember. All the dictators will die. It’s a historical fact that in the 20th century, eight empires collapsed,” he said, beginning his argument. Eight empires will come in the 21st century, and they will all collapse too, he added.

“So as Buddhists, we believe in impermanence. We just have to wait and survive. And our turn will come. That’s the law of karma.”

‘Tibetans Forced To Join Chinese Army Won’t Be Deployed Near Indian Border’: Tibetan Govt In Exile Head

28 June 2024, [Times Now Digital](#)

Tibetans, forced to join the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA), wouldn’t be sent near the Indian border, Lobsang Sangay, sikong or political head of the Tibetan government in exile, said. For, they would “cross over,” he said. He also wondered how much PLA officers would trust Tibetan troops, especially if there’s been coercion in the enrolment. On the other hand, Tibetan troops with the Indian security forces did well in Ladakh and forced the Chinese to pull back several years ago, he said.

Speaking about former U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi and her bipartisan delegation of Democrats and Republicans calling on the Dalai Lama, he said it was evidence of American intent. He agreed with Pelosi’s statement about Chinese leader Xi Jinping being forgotten by history. “All dictators will die... Pelosi is right. He will be forgotten while His Holiness, the Dalai Lama will be remembered,” he added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s meeting with Pelosi’s delegation was a sign of solidarity, he added. It was also symbolic, he said.

The sikong from 2011 to 2021, Sangay said China is keen on destroying Tibetan civilisation, including repressive measures against lamas and the destruction of monasteries, but has failed so far.

Nor while the Chinese have a role in finding the next Dalai Lama. Sangay said that when the current Dalai Lama does pass on, the Regent will take over while a selection committee will shortlist about 10 little boys. Of them, two or three may go before the finding committee and from the two-three, the next Dalai Lama will be chosen through divination. The process can take 3-6 years.

US is Ready to Stand With Tibet and Its People

25 June 2024, [Japan Forward](#), Professor Pema Gyalpo

New US legislation, a Congressional delegation visit to Dharamsala, and the Dalai Lama in New York highlight American support for Tibet amid Chinese objections.

I went to Dharamsala to participate in a special prayer for the "Long Life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama." The former staff of the Central Tibetan Administration organized this event for the spiritual leader of Tibet.

While I was still in India, a very impressive and important delegation of United States friends came to Dharamsala, where His Holiness the Dalai Lama

resides today. Leading this delegation was Republican Representative Michael McCaul, along with prominent Democrat, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

This high-profile seven-member delegation made me feel that some images are powerful and others even more so. Take the case of this US Congressional delegation meeting His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharmasala on June 19, 2024.

However, even more critical politically was the picture of the same US congressional delegation meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Of course, the icing on the cake was Nancy Pelosi's announcement that President Joe Biden is likely to sign the Tibet Resolve Act very soon. Doing so would show America's support for Tibet and the Tibetan people.

In all, it is a heady combination of politics and spirituality that sends strong signals to the so-called People's Republic of China. It also shows that India is beginning to realize the importance of showing support for the Tibetan people.

Resolve Tibet Act

On June 12, the US Congress passed a resolution to enhance the Tibet-China Dispute Act, better known as the Resolve Tibet Act. Congress's bipartisan legislation now awaits signing from President Joe Biden, following which it will be ratified into law.

Following the Tibetan Policy Act or TPA (2002) and the Tibetan Policy & Support Act or the TPSA (2020), this is the third legislation that the US has taken regarding Tibet. Washington has long supported the Tibetan cause, and the latest bill is another step in the effort. The Resolve Tibet Act underlines the need for such talks to be pursued without "preconditions" on the terms to seek a settlement that resolves differences. It also states that the succession of the Dalai Lama was not of China's concern and would best be left to Tibetan Buddhists. (Of course, we Tibetans believe His Holiness will live for decades to come).

Dharmasala Delegation

This is precisely why the delegation's recent visit to Dharmasala to meet His Holiness at his temporary phodrang (palace, residence) angered China. Beijing views His Holiness, the beloved peace-loving Spiritual Tibetan leader, as a dangerous separatist. (His Holiness has handed over His Temporal power to the directly elected Sikyong)

According to a local paper, "The high-level delegation, led by Republican Representative Michael McCaul and including Democratic former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, arrived Tuesday at the hillside town, which the Nobel Peace Prize laureate has made his headquarters since fleeing from Tibet after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959. There, they met with officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile, which wants more autonomy for Tibet."

They said that a key focus of their visit was to underscore the Resolve Tibet Act. The Act aims to encourage dialogue between His Holiness and Chinese officials to find a peaceful resolution between Tibet and Beijing. The Bill should now be sent to the White House for President Biden to sign into law.

Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, speaks with former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi during their meeting at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India, June 19, 2024. (©Tenzin Choejor/Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama/Handout via REUTERS)

A Strong Message

Nancy Pelosi said the bill is "a message to the Chinese government that we have clarity in our thinking and our understanding of this issue of the freedom of Tibet."

Representative McCaul said it reaffirmed American support for the Tibetan right to self-determination. "Just this week, our delegation received a letter from the Chinese Communist Party, warning us not to come here...but we did not let the CCP intimidate us, for we are here today," he said as people cheered.

Apart from Representative McCaul, the delegation consisted of six prominent US congressional members: former House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Mariannette Miller, Gregory Meeks, Nicole Malliotakis, Jim McGovern, and Ami Bera.

Indeed, the timing and sequence of the visit is interesting. The US delegation chose first to visit Dharmasala, meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and then come down to New Delhi, where they called on the Prime Minister of India.

While the meeting was likely a bipartisan message showing US support for India and its new government, the underlying message could not have been stronger. After all, Prime Minister Modi chose to meet the delegation soon after they met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Support From India

An official Government of India release stated, "The delegation members congratulated the Prime Minister on his election for a historic third consecutive term. They expressed deep appreciation for the scale, fairness, and transparency of the recently concluded world's largest democratic electoral exercise in India." Prime Minister Modi posted a photo on X along with the message, "Had a very good exchange of views with friends from the US Congress in a delegation led by Representative McCaul, Chairman of House Foreign GOP. Deeply value the strong bipartisan support in advancing India- US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership."

Later, the delegation met India's External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that "Dalai Lama is a revered religious leader and is deeply respected by the people of India. His Holiness is accorded due courtesies and

freedom to conduct his religious and spiritual activities."

Tibetans are always grateful to the people and government of India for their help and support. India stood by Tibet in the hardest and darkest days of its more than 2,150 years of history. We understand India's delicate situation. Tibetans can not only read India's lips but also the hearts of Indian leaders and its great people.

Prime Minister Modi's meeting with the US delegation and tweeting about it was hugely significant. While in India, the delegation had an audience with His Holiness and interacted with Sikyong Penpa Tsering (the prime minister of the government in exile) and his team of leaders. Modi announcing this via X was a direct endorsement, if not an indication and acknowledgment of what was going on. Moreover, it was a brave symbolic gesture of support. Actions speak louder than words.

Now, while His Holiness is in the US for knee surgery, the next step would be for President Biden to meet His Holiness. A meeting between the two would send a clearer signal to China that it can never accomplish its erasure of Tibetan Identity and culture. Such a meeting would shield the Dalai Lama's institution from external interference, especially from atheist Chinese Communists.

This is the clearest indication yet that India and the US are aligned on Tibet, which may also encourage Japan, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. That is the long-term significance of the recent US Congressional visit to India and their meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

PM Modi meets US delegations who visited Dalai Lama despite China's objection

21 June 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with a US Congressional delegation on Thursday, following their visit to Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, earlier this week.

The delegation, including former US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, congratulated PM Modi on his third consecutive term and expressed "deep appreciation" for the scale and transparency of India's recent general elections.

Led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, the seven-member delegation highlighted the significance of India-US relations, describing them as the "most consequential one," according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

In addition to McCaul, the delegation comprised six prominent US Congressional members: Nancy Pelosi, Mariannette Miller, Gregory Meeks, Nicole Malliotakis, Jim McGovern, and Ami Bera.

The delegation expressed their support for enhancing the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership between India and the US, focusing on areas such as trade, emerging technology, defense, and people-to-people exchanges.



Prime Minister **Modi** posted a photo with the delegation on X (formerly Twitter).

"Had a very good exchange of views with friends from the US Congress in a delegation led by @RepMcCaul, Chairman of @HouseForeignGOP. Deeply value the strong **bipartisan support** in advancing India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership," he wrote on the social media platform. **A Dharamshala visit that irked China**The US delegation arrived in Dharamshala on Tuesday and met with the Dalai Lama on Wednesday. This prompted a stern response from China, which urged the United States to "fully recognize the anti-China and separatist nature of the Dalai clique" and to refrain from "any form of contact with it."

The United States has long supported the rights of the Tibetan people to practice their religion and culture, and has accused China of human rights violations in the Himalayan region bordering India. Recently, the US House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill aiming to push Beijing to resume stalled talks with Tibetan leaders and address Tibetan aspirations related to historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

The bill has aggravated tensions with China at a time when Beijing and Washington are attempting to improve bilateral relations. Additionally, India's relationship with China has been strained since a 2020 military standoff along their Himalayan border resulted in the deaths of 24 soldiers. US President **Joe Biden** is expected to sign the Resolve Tibet Act soon, which seeks to find a resolution to the Tibet dispute. While Washington acknowledges the Tibetan Autonomous Region as part of China, the bill

emphasizes the need for Tibetans to have a say in their own future.

"This visit should highlight the bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress for Tibet to have a say in their own future," said Michael McCaul, head of the US delegation and co-author of the bill, before departing from Washington.

During their meeting with PM Modi, the US delegation, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, congratulated him on his third consecutive term and praised the scale and transparency of India's recent general elections. The seven-member delegation emphasized the importance of **India-US relations**, describing them as the "most consequential one," according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

The delegation, led by McCaul, included Pelosi, Mariannette Miller, Gregory Meeks, Nicole Malliotakis, Jim McGovern, and Ami Bera. They expressed their support for deepening the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership between India and the US, focusing on trade, emerging technology, defense, and people-to-people exchanges.

Modi lauds India-US ties

Modi, in his turn, highlighted the "significant role played by the consistent and bipartisan support of the US Congress in advancing India-US ties," which, he said, are based on shared democratic values, rule of law, and strong people-to-people ties. He reiterated the commitment to "further strengthen bilateral relations for the global good," the statement said.

Modi recalled his State Visit to the US in June last year during which he had an opportunity to address a Joint Session of the US Congress for a historic second time. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said that he met with the members of the visiting bipartisan US Congressional delegation and appreciated their "strong and continued support" to the partnership.

PM Modi's third term

In the recently-held Lok Sabha polls, the BJP with 240 seats fell short of a majority but the NDA secured the mandate with 293 seats.

The Congress bagged 99 seats, while the INDIA bloc, of which it is a part, got 234 seats.

Following the polls, two Independents who won the election pledged support to the Congress, taking the INDIA bloc tally to 236.

The general election for the 18th Lok Sabha were held in seven phases from April 19 to June 1 and votes were counted on June 4.

Nancy Pelosi, After Meeting Dalai Lama, Says China Is 'Trying to Erase' Tibetan Culture

19 June 2024, [Time](#), Sudhi Ranjan Sen and Dan Strumpf

Former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi accused China of trying to erase Tibetan culture following her high-profile meeting with the Dalai Lama at his home in northern India Wednesday, a visit condemned by Beijing.

Pelosi was joined on the trip to Dharamshala by a bipartisan delegation led by Michael McCaul, the Republican chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. The group also met with officials from Tibet's government in exile.

Pelosi said a bill recently passed in Congress strengthening U.S. support to Tibet sends a strong message to China.

China is "trying to erase the culture, reduce the use of the language," Pelosi said during a public ceremony Wednesday in Dharamshala. "They are trying something that we cannot let them get away with."

"This bill is a message to the Chinese government that we have clarity in our thinking and understanding of this issue of the freedom of Tibet," Pelosi said.

Beijing had warned the U.S. lawmakers against the meeting, urging the U.S. in remarks on Tuesday to "see clearly the anti-China separatism nature" of the Dalai Lama and his followers.

China considers the Dalai Lama a separatist for his commitment to limited autonomy for the region. Pelosi has been a longtime critic of Chinese policy on Tibet, and visited the Tibetan city of Lhasa in 2015.

China annexed Tibet in the 1950s, with the Dalai Lama and other monks fleeing to India nine years later, where they live as refugees and have set up a government in exile in Dharamshala.

Officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile earlier said the U.S. visit and legislation will put pressure on China to engage with them as they seek autonomy for the region.

Nancy Pelosi's scathing attack on Xi Jinping: 'Dalai Lama's legacy will live forever, you'll be gone'

19 June 2024, [Business Today](#)

A US congressional delegation, led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaulis, is visiting India to strengthen bilateral ties and to meet the Tibetan spiritual leader.



Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is part of the delegation that reached Dharamsala on Tuesday

Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who is on a two-day visit to India, on Wednesday launched a blistering attack on Chinese President Xi Jinping, saying Dalai Lama's legacy will live forever but Xi will be gone in a few years. "His Holiness Dalai Lama, with his message of knowledge, tradition, compassion, purity of soul, and love, will live a long time and his legacy will live forever. But you, the President of China, you'll be gone and nobody will give you credit for anything," she said during the public felicitation programme at Tsuglagkhang Complex in Dharamshala.

China considers spiritual leader Dalai Lama as a separatist because of his demand for autonomy for Tibet, which Beijing occupied in the 1950s.

During the address, Pelosi said the Dalai Lama would not approve of her comment against China. "When I criticize the Chinese government, he (Dalai Lama) says, let's pray for Nancy to rid her of her negative attitudes. I hope he will indulge me today to say that change is on the way. As our colleagues have said hope brings some faith and the faith of the Tibetan people in the goodness of others is what is going to make all the difference."

A US congressional delegation, led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaulis, is visiting India to strengthen bilateral ties and to meet the Tibetan spiritual leader. Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is part of the delegation that reached Dharamsala on Tuesday.

Dharamsala is the seat of power for Tibet's government in exile since the Dalai Lama stepped into India six decades ago. Last Wednesday, the US House of Representatives voted 391-26 to approve the Promoting and Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which the Senate passed. The bill would direct funds to counter what it calls "disinformation" from Beijing about Tibet's history, people, and institutions. On Tuesday, China urged US President Joe Biden not to sign the Tibet policy bill. "The 14th Dalai Lama is not a pure religious figure, but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said. He also said that Beijing was gravely

concerned and urged the US side to fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the Dalai group, honour the commitments the US has made to China on issues related to Xizang, a Chinese name for Tibet. Jian also urged the US to have no contact with the Dalai group in any form.

On Wednesday, the White House said that Biden was going to make a decision that he thought was in the best interest of the US. "The President is going to do what he thinks is best on behalf of the American people, that's what I can tell you," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters when asked about China's warning.

Referring to the legislation, Pelosi said the passage of this bill (Resolve Tibet Act) is a message to the Chinese government that the US has clarity in its thinking and understanding of this issue of the freedom of Tibet. "Listening to the leader of our delegation and the leader of the foreign affairs committee was so masterful in not only the policy but in the process of getting it passed in the most bipartisan way."

The Resolve Tibet Act is a bipartisan bill to enhance US support for Tibet and promote dialogue between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama toward a peaceful resolution of the long-standing dispute between Tibet and China. The Act enhances US support for Tibet – empowering State Department officials to actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government, and reject false claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times".

The bill also encourages officials to push for negotiations without preconditions between Beijing and the Dalai Lama or his representatives and coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

However, Beijing is opposed to the Act and has asked Biden not to sign it. The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson has said that anyone or any force who attempts to destabilise Xizang to contain or suppress China will not succeed. "The US should not sign the bill. China will take resolute measures to defend its sovereignty, security, and development interests," Jian said.

China, which officially refers to Tibet as Xizang, earlier this year said it would talk only with the representatives of the Dalai Lama and not the officials of the Tibetan government in exile. At the same time, China ruled out dialogue on the Dalai Lama's long-pending demand for autonomy for his remote Himalayan homeland.

In its talks with China between 2002 and 2010, the Tibetan side pitched genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people in line with the middle-way policy as proposed by the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan spiritual leader has said he does not seek political

independence for Tibet but seeks autonomy for all Tibetan areas which include Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces besides the current official Tibet Autonomous Region, a truncated version of Tibet before it was annexed by China.

After a failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet and came to India. He set up the government-in-exile in Himachal.

US Legislators in Dharamsala to Meet Dalai Lama, China 'Gravely Concerned'

18 June 2024, [The Wire](#)

The leader of the group of legislators said that US President Joe Biden would soon sign into law a Bill that pushes for negotiations between Tibet and China and that has passed through both chambers of the US federal legislature.

A group of seven US legislators from either of the country's main political parties arrived in Dharamsala today (June 18) to meet the Dalai Lama, with its leader saying US President Joe Biden will soon sign a Bill that pushes for negotiations between Tibet and China. Among the legislators are Michael McCaul, a Republican who is chairman of the US House of Representatives' foreign affairs committee, and Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat who has served as speaker of the House, which is the lower chamber of the country's federal legislature.

They will meet the Dalai Lama, who is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, tomorrow, according to news reports.

"We are very excited to see His Holiness tomorrow to talk about many things, including the Bill we just passed out of Congress [the name of the US federal legislature] that basically says the United States of America stands with the people of Tibet," Reuters quoted McCaul as saying.

When asked if Biden would sign the Bill – which is officially titled the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' – into law soon, McCaul said according to Reuters: "Yes, he will, he will."

Its report added that US legislators have regularly visited Dharamsala and promoted the Dalai Lama's work in an effort to garner support for a linguistically and culturally autonomous Tibet.

Responding to the developments, China said it was "gravely concerned" and insisted the US does not engage with the "Dalai group".

"It's known by all that the 14th Dalai Lama is not a pure religious figure, but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said at a press briefing today. Lin urged the US to "fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the Dalai group, honour the commitments the US has made to

China on issues related to Xizang [China's name for Tibet], have no contact with the Dalai group in any form and stop sending the wrong signal to the world".

The Promoting a Resolution Bill was passed by both houses of the US federal legislature, most recently by the House of Representatives last Wednesday, and received broad bipartisan support, The Hill reported.

According to the website of the US House's foreign affairs committee, the Bill seeks to empower officials of the US state department to "actively and directly counter" disinformation about Tibet from China's government, as well as to reject "false claims that Tibet has been part of China since 'ancient times'."

But Lin said at Tuesday's press conference that "Xizang has always been part of China since ancient times", adding that the US "must not sign the Bill into law".

"Xizang's affairs are purely China's domestic affairs and no external interference will ever be allowed," he also said.

Washington's new Tibet policy bill 'likely to be counterproductive'

18 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Dewey Sim

A new [Tibet policy bill](#) passed in the United States last week is set to fuel fresh tensions with China, with one analyst saying it could be counterproductive.

The US House of Representatives on Wednesday approved the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which would channel funds to boost Washington's support for [Tibet](#) and counter what it calls "disinformation" from China about the region's history, people and institutions.

The bipartisan bill, among other things, refutes Beijing's claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times and promotes talks between the Chinese government and the [Dalai Lama](#), Tibet's exiled spiritual leader.

The bill's authors argued that the Chinese government was "systematically suppressing" the ability of Tibetans to preserve their religion, culture, language, history, way of life and environment.

"Passing this bill demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo in Tibet is not acceptable," said Republican representative Michael McCaul of Texas on the House floor, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

"If the CCP truly does respect 'sovereignty' as it claims to do then it will engage in peaceful dialogue with the Tibetans to resolve this conflict, not force the Tibetans to accept a CCP proposal."

"It will not go down well in Beijing. China is very sensitive about Tibet and they will see the latest move by the US as nothing more than an attempt to further smear China," he said.

Asked about the bill at a press briefing in Beijing on Tuesday, foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said Tibet had always been Chinese territory, and that issues surrounding Tibet were “purely China’s internal affairs”.

“It will not go down well in Beijing. China is very sensitive about Tibet and they will see the latest move by the US as nothing more than an attempt to further smear China,” he said.

Asked about the bill at a press briefing in Beijing on Tuesday, foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said Tibet had always been Chinese territory, and that issues surrounding Tibet were “purely China’s internal affairs”.

“Anyone or any force who attempts to destabilise Xizang to contain or suppress China will not succeed,” he said, referring to the Tibet region. “The US should not sign the bill. China will take resolute measures to defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.”

China maintains that Tibet has remained under central Chinese rule for over 700 years, despite extended periods in which Tibetan campaigners argue that the region was effectively self-governed.

Tibetans protest Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s visit to New Zealand with six demands

17 June 2024, [The Tibet Post](#), Yangchen Dolma

Tibetans and Tibet supporters have strongly protested against Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s visit to Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand and called on the Chinese government to respect human rights and demand freedom in Tibet. During the peaceful protests, Tibetans were subjected to physical violence and harassment by pro-Chinese government individuals, which represents Chinese transnational repression in the free world.

Tibetans from Auckland Tibetan Association and members of Friends of Tibet protested against Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s visit to Auckland on June 14, 2024 by holding up the Tibetan national flag, which is banned in Tibet by the Chinese government, and shouting slogans such as “We want justice in Tibet, we want human rights in Tibet, we want freedom in Tibet” etc. Supporters of Tibet also protested against Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s visit to Wellington, Capital of New Zealand on Junw 13, 2024. When Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrived in Wellington, members of the Wellington chapter of Friends of Tibet organised a demonstration to protest against Li Qiang and the CCP on the side of the road where the Premier’s motorcade passed.

A member of the Wellington Chapter of Friends of Tibet who participated in the protests, Robin Greenberg said, “In Wellington, we don’t have

Tibetans living here at the moment, Friends of Tibet feels a real privilege to make our presence felt and made the Chinese Premier seen us displaying the Tibetan flags high”. She further mentioned the importance of putting human rights above trade and holding Chinese leadership to account for its atrocities in Tibet.

Although small in number, Tibetans in Auckland made sure that their voices were heard to Chinese the Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Chinese government and that they stood up for the truth. Tibetan activists were jostled, pushed aside and relentlessly pursued around the protest site by the much larger pro-China group, who tried to tear down Tibetan banners. Yet the Tibetan flag flew high wherever the Premier had engagements in the cities of New Zealand. The Peaceful Tibetan demonstrators braved the rain and resisted beatings and harassment from their Chinese supporters.

The Tibetan protesters have made six demands of the Chinese government:

1. To Call on China to re-engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama and Central Tibetan Administration to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict.
2. Reinforce New Zealand’s expectation that China immediately grants meaningful and unfettered access to Tibet for independent observers, including the Office of the UN High Commission.
3. Demand that China end its oppressive policies targeting Tibetan children and end the residential boarding school and pre-school system that separate an estimated one million Tibetan children from their families in denial of their cultural, religious and linguistic rights.
4. Demand that China cease interference in the selection and installation of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including any future Dalai Lama. The determination of Tibetan Buddhist leaders must be determined solely by the Tibetan people, in accordance with international human rights law, without any interference by the Chinese Government.
5. Demand that China immediately release the world’s youngest political prisoner His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama and all other prisoners of conscience.
6. Demand that China repeal or amend provisions of their Criminal Procedure Law that violate the rights of detainees to a fair trial, and are routinely used to arrest Tibetans for peacefully exercising their human rights under the guise of ‘separatism’ and other State Security crimes.

Dalai Lama keeps cards close to chest on his successor, says 'not thinking of re-incarnation'

17 June 2024, [The Tribune](#), Ajay Banerjee

Developments on the front are being followed keenly by Tibetans as the Dalai Lama is leading the fight seeking autonomy from China

Keeping cards close to his chest on who will his successor, the 14th Dalai Lama, on Monday said he was not 'thinking' about re-incarnation -- a process to appoint the next Dalai Lama.

Developments on the front are being followed keenly by Tibetans as the Dalai Lama is leading the fight seeking autonomy from China; that in turn, is trying to meddle in the appointment of a successor. Speaking to a select group of media-persons from Delhi, the Dalai Lama, who turns 89 in July, was asked how would the Tibetan community maintain the sanctity of re-incarnation to which he said, "I am not thinking of reincarnation. The Important thing is as long as I am alive, I should use my energies to help as many people as I can".

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual head of the Tibetan Government in exile, headquartered here in Dharamsala.

Re-incarnation is a traditional Buddhist method of anointing a successor. A Dalai Lama before dying leave hints of where his re-birth would be. These hints are followed by a religious committee to trace the child who is supposed to have been born as the next Dalai Lama. The present Dalai Lama was selected in 1940 as five years old.

A senior official of the Central Tibetan Administration, who did not wish to be identified, mentioned the process of re-incarnation saying "his holiness (the Dalai Lama) has kept an element of surprise. He has maintained an uncertainty since China is an unpredictable entity".

For years, the Chinese government has claimed that the Dalai Lama's eventual reincarnation must comply with Chinese law—that ignores Tibetans' history of selecting the Dalai Lama without foreign interference. Tibetans want to keep China out, as that has been the case for centuries.

Spokesperson of the CTA Tenzin Lekshey says "The Chinese have never thought about Tibet, but about themselves. Beijing has no legitimate right, and there was no need to consult them on the appointment of the next Dalai Lama".

The US also wants to keep Beijing out of this 'selection' process and even passed a law 'The Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020'. It makes it official US policy that the Dalai Lama's succession is a strictly religious issue that only he and his followers can decide on. India also wants to follow the wish of the Tibetans.

The issue of re-incarnation is now being debated as the Dalai Lama had said in the past on his successor: "When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not."

On that basis we will take a decision. If it is decided that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized. The Dalai Lama has tasked the 'Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust' to locate the successor.

The procedures of search and recognition of the next Dalai Lama has to be in accordance with past tradition. On Monday morning, the Dalai Lama on being asked if he would be keen to visit his home province of Amdo in Tibet, said "I am not thinking of Amdo, neither I feel anything like that".

US 'Resolve Tibet Act' an important tool to internationally counter China's claim on Tibet

16 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Resolve Tibet Act, which was passed in its final version by the US House of Representatives on Jun 12, will be an important tool to counter China's false claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times once it is signed into law by President Joe Biden, the Sikyong (executive head) Mr Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has said.

When it becomes a law in the US, it will become an important tool for us to reach out to other governments to counter China's false narrative that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), he has said in an interview which appeared on *theweek.in* Jun 16.

"China has been asking every country to say that Tibet is part of PRC. That is why the law is important to explain to governments that if they keep parroting what the Chinese want them to say, then it is against (this) law because if they support negotiations between Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, then they cannot contradict themselves by saying Tibet is part of PRC, because that removes the very ground for negotiation," he has explained.

Support for a negotiated settlement to the issue of Tibet exists mainly in Western democracies. Most of the global south, on the other hand, play second fiddle to Beijing's line to include Tibet also in its so-called One China policy towards Taiwan. These countries are heavily dependent on Chinese investment, loan, aid, and market, although debt-burdening is now becoming a burgeoning issue to them.

This is not to say that a robust support for the Tibet issue does not exist in the civil society in these countries.

The Resolve Tibet Act recognizes the fact that China's armed annexation of Tibet more than 70 years ago is illegal under international law, that the country's legal status therefore needs to be resolved through negotiation with the Tibetan people through their leadership in exile, and that the US should gear its policy towards actively facilitating and realizing this objective.

While the CTA's policy is to seek genuine autonomy for a historically defined Tibetan homeland through a negotiated settlement, a vociferous section of the Tibetan population remains adamant in demanding independence.

Canada should consider recognizing Tibet as an Independent Nation

14 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

LETTER

The arrest of two innocent Canadian citizens by China in 2018 has strained relations between the two countries. With rising concerns about foreign interference in Canadian elections, there is growing pressure on the government and politicians to address this issue, providing an opportunity for Canadian Tibetans to advocate for the freedom and human rights of Tibetans oppressed by China. Therefore, Canadian Tibetan organizations across the country under the leadership of Canada Tibet Committee have been relentless in their efforts to garner support from politicians across the political spectrum for the Tibetan advocacy movement, achieving significant milestones along the way.

December 14, 2022, marked a historic day for Tibet as the Canadian parliament unanimously passed a motion in support of Sino-Tibetan dialogue, highlighting its dedication to promoting peaceful negotiations. The motion on Sino-Tibetan dialogue was sponsored by Conservative MP and prominent Tibetan supporter Garnett Genuis

Then, just recently, on June 10, 2024, the Canadian parliament took a remarkable step by passing a motion with unanimous consent, recognizing Tibet's right to self-determination. It was sponsored by the Bloc Quebecois Party MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe. This historic achievement in Canada's support for the Tibetan freedom movement recognizes the fundamental rights of Tibetans to choose their political and socio-economic systems. The motion marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of Tibet's aspirations for freedom.

This motion sends a powerful message to both Tibetans and the Chinese government, recognizing the

Tibetan people's persistent efforts for freedom and human rights while simultaneously expressing Canada's opposition to China's illegal occupation of Tibet.

To me, as a Tibetan Canadian, this motion reinforces our commitment to advocating for the Tibetan cause and seeking recognition for Tibet as an independent nation. We must encourage Canadian politicians to support this motion and end the classification of Tibetans as Chinese nationals on Canadian passports. Tibet was a historically independent nation, and it is only right that we Tibetans do not want to be identified as Chinese on our Canadian passports. It is both painful and outrageous for us Canadian Tibetans to see China listed as our country of origin on our passports. We aspire to have Tibet listed as our country of origin on our passports instead. This change would be a significant step towards recognizing Tibet as an independent nation.

Also, recognizing Tibet as an independent nation through a parliamentary motion would be in line with the Canadian government's position on Tibet's status adopted in 1950, when its Minister of External Affairs, Lester Pearson, sent a confidential memo to the country's Ambassador in Washington. In the memo, Pearson made it clear: "In fact it appears that during the past 40 years Tibet has controlled its own internal and external affairs. Viewing the situation thus, I am of the opinion that Tibet is, from the point of view of international law, qualified for recognition as an independent state. We look forward to advocating for our quest to recognize Tibet as an independent nation and our desire to remove China as our country of origin on our Canadian passports.

Let's strive to make this happen soon. As we are in a free country, it is our moral responsibility to support the voiceless Tibetans who are oppressed and repressed by the Chinese government.

– Youngdoug Tenzin

EU officials to make rare Tibet visit to examine human rights

14 June 2024, [RFA](#), Tenzin Pema and Jewlan

The delegation hopes to visit schools, prisons and places of worship but access could be limited.

European Union officials are scheduled to make a rare visit starting this weekend to the Tibet Autonomous Region during their annual human rights talks with China, an EU spokesperson told Radio Free Asia.

Although it isn't clear how much access the officials will ultimately be granted, the spokesperson, Peter Stano, told RFA that the EU has put forth "concrete proposals" for the places the delegation would like to

see, including boarding schools, prisons and places of worship.

“We have requested a meaningful, non-touristic visit that will allow us to measure our long-standing human rights concerns against the reality in Tibet on the ground,” Stano said.

A small group of EU officials led by Paola Pampaloni, the EU’s deputy managing director of Asia and Pacific Department, will make the visit to Tibet during the annual EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in Chongqing, China, that is scheduled to start on June 16.

A man shaves the hair of a woman as dozens of activists from Tibet, Mongolia and China, demonstrate in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, March 31, 2014, during a visit by the President of China to the European Institutions. (Thierry Charlier/AFP)

The Tibet visit was agreed in principle during a previous round of EU-China talks, the EU spokesperson told RFA. The details of the visit are being organized by Chinese authorities and remain unclear.

“It’s very rare that an official visit such as this one is taking place,” Vincent Metten, EU policy director for the International Campaign for Tibet, told RFA from Brussels. The last highest EU official visit to Tibet was more than 10 years ago when then-EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis took a trip there in September 2013.

Access to Tibet remains difficult, if not impossible, for diplomats, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, journalists and even tourists.

A U.S. State Department report on access to Tibetan areas said Chinese security forces have used “conspicuous surveillance” to intimidate, monitor, harass and restrict the movements of U.S. diplomats, officials and tourists traveling to Tibetan areas.

Tenzin Lekshay, a spokesman for the Central Tibetan Administration – the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamsala, India – said it would be crucial for EU officials to have the ability to travel freely inside Tibet for the trip to yield meaningful results.

“It would be difficult to understand the realities of human rights conditions inside Tibet if their movement is restricted by the Chinese,” Lekshay said.

Talk is cheap

News of the pending trip to Tibet comes after five human rights groups criticized the EU’s continued participation in the broader human rights dialogue with China, noting little has changed in 38 previous rounds of talks.

In a June 12 statement, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Front Line Defenders, International Service for Human Rights and the World Uyghur Congress said that the talks allow European officials to raise key issues with their Chinese counterparts.

Head of the European Union’s Delegation to the Human Rights Dialogue Paola Pampaloni briefs

journalists at the EU Delegation compound in Beijing, China, Monday, July 9, 2018. (Ng Han Guan/AP)

But the lack of measurable benchmarks or defined objectives make the discussions a largely pointless exercise, the letter states.

“While the EU raises concerns during these dialogues, it knows that the Chinese government will not acknowledge abuses, will not undertake any effort to secure accountability, and will not be persuaded to undertake any policy or legislative action to comply with China’s international human rights obligations,” the groups said.

Sophie Richardson, a visiting scholar at Stanford University’s Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of Law, said in an interview with RFA Uyghur that these types of talks can do more harm than good in that they tend to relieve the pressure on more senior political leaders to press the case for change with their Chinese counterparts.

“Beijing’s goal in these dialogues is to keep human rights out of all other conversations,” said Richardson, who previously was China director for Human Rights Watch.

“This diplomatic tool not only stopped being useful about a decade ago, but actually started to be problematic because it prevents you from doing things that I think would be more effective, like pursuing investigations of the Chinese government officials who are complicit in crimes against humanity,” she said.

European Commissioner Janez Lenarčič attends a joint news conference at the Quai d’Orsay in Paris, France, April 15, 2024. (Sarah Meyssonier/Reuters)

She added that the Tibetan trip’s value won’t be known until a clearer understanding of the restrictions the delegation will operate in is known.

The EU has been critical of Chinese policies in Tibet and in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, where more than 1 million Uyghurs and other ethnic Turkic Muslims have been detained in a crackdown that began in 2017.

Tibetan boarding schools

In December, Janez Lenarčič, EU crisis management commissioner, gave a speech criticizing China’s restrictive policies in Tibet and in Chinese provinces where many Tibetans live.

She noted political repression and widespread reports of Tibetan students being pressured to attend boarding schools with Mandarin-heavy curriculums, which critics say threatens Tibetan cultural and religious traditions.

Chinese officials say that boarding schools are the best way to educate a population of students scattered in remote areas over a vast geographical region. The students aren’t forced to attend the schools, according to official statements.

Dozens of activists from Tibet, Mongolia and China hold placards reading “Mr Xi Jinping start dialogue,

leave Tibet" as they demonstrate in front of the European Parliament in Brussels on March 31, 2014, during a visit by the President of China to the European Institutions. (Thierry Charlier/AFP)

But exiled Tibetans say Chinese authorities coerce attendance by promising to withhold governmental benefits or future educational opportunities.

Previous international delegations that have visited areas where many of the abuse claims emanate have been limited.

A 2022 United Nations report based on a trip to Xinjiang alleged serious human rights abuses had been perpetrated against ethnic Uyghurs and others there in the name of combating terrorism and extremism.

China said the report was based on "disinformation and lies fabricated by anti-China forces."

Tenzin Dawa, director of the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Dharamsala, India, said the visiting EU officials should try to find information on Tibetan political prisoners Go Sherab Gyatso and Lodoe Gyatso.

Go Sherab Gyatso is a writer and educator known for his loyalty to the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. Lodoe Gyatso was rearrested and sentenced to 18 years for protesting against repression in Tibet shortly after he had been released from a 20-year sentence.

Exiled Tibetan political leader honored with democracy medal

14 June 2024, [RFA](#), Tenzin Dickyi and Tashi Wangchuk



Tibetan President Penpa Tsering, center, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and International Campaign for Tibet Chairman Richard Gere, celebrate the 16th anniversary of the reception of the Congressional Gold Medal by the Dalai Lama at the Capitol, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023.

The leader of Tibet's government-in-exile on Thursday won the Democracy Service Medal from the U.S.-based National Endowment for Democracy, recognizing Sikyong Penpa Tsering's commitment to advancing democracy and promoting the dignity of the Tibetan people.

In his acceptance speech, Tsering dedicated the award to Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile, and to the Dalai Lama, acknowledging the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual

leader's role in defending democracy and human rights for all Tibetans.

"I am an ordinary person, but His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the architect and spirit behind everything that we are now or what we have today," he said. during the award ceremony at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington.

"This award is for the people I serve," said Tsering, who is head of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The award, which honors people defending democracy worldwide, was also given to former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, Russian opposition leader Vladimir Kara-Murza and Free Belarus leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

Since taking office after winning the 2021 democratic elections which saw a 77% voter turnout, Sikyong Penpa Tsering has worked to counter Chinese influence and mobilised Tibet's allies to speak up against the suppression of cultural identity within Tibet, said Castro. "In recognition of those efforts, it's my honour to present the 2024 democracy service medal to Sikyong Penpa Tsering on behalf of the National Endowment for Democracy.

Also on Thursday, the Tibet Action Institute received the endowment's Democracy Award for its work in documenting the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to erase Tibetan children's identity by forcibly enrolling them in state-run boarding schools in Tibet.

The Regional Center for Human Rights and the Waey Organisation also received the Democracy Award.

The National Endowment for Democracy, founded in 1983, promotes democracy worldwide through grants funded primarily by the U.S. Congress.

Resolve Tibet Act

The ceremony came a day after the U.S. Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act, urging China to resolve the Tibet-China dispute through dialogue. It now awaits President Joe Biden's signature to become law. It calls on Beijing to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama, who is the spiritual leader of Tibet, and other Tibetan leaders about how Tibet is governed. No formal talks have taken place since 2010.

Tsering welcomed the passage of the bill and expressed hope that Biden would sign it into law soon. He also confirmed that a congressional bipartisan delegation led by Rep. Michael McCaul and which includes Pelosi, is set to meet with the Dalai Lama and Central Tibetan Administration leaders in India on June 19.

Tsering also presented Pelosi — a long-time Tibet supporter and strong China critic — with her award, while lauding her unwavering fight for democracy, and against authoritarianism, everywhere.

Pelosi commended the endowment for its efforts to highlight global injustices.

“One of the cruelest tactics used by oppressors is to imprison people and make them disappear, hoping they will be forgotten.” she said.

“But we do not forget them,” she said. “Our members of Congress, in a bipartisan manner, consistently raise their names—whether on the House floor, in meetings with heads of state, or during visits to other countries.”

115 candidates for the European Parliament pledge to support Tibet

13 June 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

A total of 115 candidates from 16 EU member states have pledged to defend the fundamental freedom of the Tibetan people if elected to the European Parliament.

“Europe for Tibet” is an online campaign [launched](#) in the European Parliament on 9 April 2024 ahead of the 6-9 June European election. The counting of votes is underway, as of now 14 of 27 countries have finished counting.

The joint online campaign was led by the Office of Tibet, Brussels, Tibet Interest Group of the European Parliament, and International Campaign for Tibet with the support of the Offices of Tibet in London and Geneva and International Tibet Network.

Representative Rigzin Genkhang of the Office of Tibet Brussels stated, “In view of China’s relentless attacks on the fundamental rights of Tibetans in Tibet, it is crucial that the new Parliament reaffirms and redoubles its support for the non-violent freedom struggle of the Tibetan people. It can do so by prioritising the re-establishment of the Tibet Intergroup, which is pivotal in ensuring that Tibet remains a priority for the European Parliament.” [reported tibet.net](#).

The European Parliament is a forum for political debate and decision-making at the EU level. The Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by voters in all Member States to represent people’s interests in EU law-making and to ensure that other EU institutions are working democratically. The Parliament acts as a co-legislator, sharing with the Council the power to adopt and amend legislative proposals and to decide on the EU budget. A total of 27 countries in Europe is part of the European Union. The European Parliament has been an active supporter of the Tibetan cause and the Dalai Lama’s non-violent approach. It has advocated for dialogue to resolve differences between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, pushing for autonomy in Tibet to safeguard religious and cultural freedoms.

In 1988, the European Parliament became the first parliament in Europe to allow the Tibetan spiritual leader to address an official meeting on Tibet, despite strong protests from the Chinese government. On 15

June, a year after he presented a Five-Point Peace Plan for the restoration of peace and human rights in Tibet at the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington, D.C, the Dalai Lama was invited for the first time to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, where he elaborated on this plan, proposing a concrete framework of negotiations and the creation of a self-governing democratic Tibet “in association with the People’s Republic of China”.

Over the years, the European Parliament has raised awareness about Tibet’s human rights situation through hearings, exhibitions, and conferences. It has passed around 50 resolutions focusing on Tibet, human rights, and China, addressing issues like religious freedom restrictions and linguistic rights violations.

US Congress passes Resolve Tibet Act

12 June 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

In a second vote, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Resolve Tibet Act today, June 12, 2024. It now goes to the White House for President Biden’s signature.

Speaking on the House floor as he raised the bill, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) spoke in support of the Resolve Tibet Act, saying, “the US strongly condemns all oppression and coercion of Tibetans.” An original sponsor of the bill, McCaul added that it will help “put the people of Tibet in charge of their own future.”

Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA), the author of the bill, welcomed another chance to spotlight it. He urged his colleagues to pass the Resolve Tibet Act and said that with this bill, “we hope to restart dialogue between Tibet and China.”

Representative Bill Keating (D-MA) rose to speak in favor as well, saying the bill calls out Beijing’s “oppressive tactics and relentless disinformation campaign” about Tibet.

“This latest indication of American support of Tibet is a source of hope and encouragement to the Tibetan people, who have been nonviolently struggling against the Chinese government for more than six decades for human rights and democratic freedoms,” International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) President Tencho Gyatso said as voting concluded.

She added: “I thank the main sponsors of the bill – Representative Jim McGovern, Chairman Michael McCaul, Senator Jeff Merkley, and Senator Todd Young – for their leadership. The Resolve Tibet Act is a strong message to China that the Tibet issue has to be resolved through negotiation instead of an assault on Tibet’s unique and ancient civilization.”

Previously passed by [the House in February](#) and the [Senate in May](#), the Resolve Tibet Act emerged

from the two legislative bodies with minor wording differences that necessitated a return to the House floor. It passed again today with 391 votes in favor.

To the president's desk

The next and final step is for President Biden to sign the bill. This should happen within the next two weeks, turning the Resolve Tibet Act into law.

The Resolve Tibet Act will strengthen US efforts to push the Chinese government to resolve the longstanding Tibet-China dispute through dialogue with Tibetan leaders and arm the State Department's Special Coordinator for Tibet office with more tools to combat the CCP's disinformation on Tibet.

Quote from Congress members and Tibetan leaders

Representative Jim McGovern, D-MA, said: "Let the overwhelming passage of our strong, bipartisan bill be a clear message to the Tibetan people: America stands with you on the side of human dignity, and we support you in your quest to secure the basic rights to which you are entitled under international law. The People's Republic of China has systematically denied Tibetans the right to self-determination and continues to deliberately erase Tibetan religion, culture, and language. The ongoing oppression of the Tibetan people is a grave tragedy, and our bill provides further tools that empower both America and the international community to stand up for justice and peace."

Representative Michael McCaul, R-TX, said: "Tibetans, like all people, have the right to religious freedom – which includes freedom from CCP surveillance, censorship, and detention. If the CCP truly does respect 'sovereignty' as it claims to do then it will engage in peaceful dialogue with the Tibetans to resolve this conflict, not force the Tibetans to accept a CCP proposal. Passing this bipartisan bill demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo in Tibet is not acceptable."

Senator Jeff Merkley, D-OR, said: "The people of Tibet deserve to be in charge of their own future, and, today, Congress has voted to stand with Tibetans in their struggle for freedom and self-determination. The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act helps counter misinformation from the Chinese government about Tibet and pushes for negotiations between the People's Republic of China and Tibet to end this longstanding dispute. I look forward to President Biden swiftly signing this bill into law—the people of Tibet cannot wait any longer."

Senator Todd Young, R-IN, said: "Our bipartisan bill will refresh U.S. policy towards Tibet and push for negotiations that advance freedom for the Tibetan people and a peaceful resolution to the CCP's conflict with the Dalai Lama. Congressional passage of this legislation further demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo – both in Tibet and elsewhere – is not acceptable. I look forward to this

important effort becoming law and working with my colleagues and the Administration to ensure swift and effective implementation."

Namgyal Choedup, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration, 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."

Rep. Chris Smith, R-NJ, Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, said: "The people of Tibet will not be forgotten, and the enactment of the bipartisan *Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act* underscores that fact. The Chinese Communist Party cannot erase the history, language and culture of the Tibetan people, nor the central importance religious faith plays in the everyday lives of Tibetans. We stand in solidarity with the Dalai Lama in his quest for a lasting and just peace."

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.

[Learn more about the Resolve Tibet Act.](#)

Dalai Lama to meet Australian ministers

11 June 2024, [Reuters](#)

The Dalai Lama arrived in Australia for a five-day visit on Wednesday, with supporters urging the Australian government to encourage China to return to talks with envoys of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

The Dalai Lama will meet Immigration Minister Chris Evans, who is acting head of government while Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is overseas, as well as Foreign Minister Stephen Smith.

"This reflects the Dalai Lama's status as an international religious leader and the significant domestic interest in the Dalai Lama's visit, including from the Tibetan immigrant community in Australia," a government spokesman said.

He will also hold a series of public lectures on meditation during his trip.

The meetings with government officials are likely to upset Beijing, which is keen to contain the Tibet issue ahead of the Olympics in August.

China blames a "Dalai Lama clique" for violent protests in Tibet in March, and for protests that disrupted the Olympic torch relay.

Chinese officials met the Dalai Lama's representatives for talks on May 4, but further talks originally set to start on Wednesday were postponed after an earthquake in China in May killed or left missing nearly 87,000 people.

China's Foreign Minister Yang Jeichi on Tuesday called on the Dalai Lama and his supporters to stop their Tibet protests and attempts to "ruin the Olympics" to enable further talks.

The Australian Tibet Council said it was concerned the comments signalled China wanted to avoid further talks on Tibet ahead of the Olympics.

"With less than two months remaining before the Olympics, the Australia Tibet Council fears that the Chinese government believes that it can use delaying tactics to avoid addressing the Tibet issue," council chief executive officer Paul Bourke said.

"It's clear that it is going to take concerted pressure from concerned governments for the talks even to go ahead and a major shift in China's approach for results-orientated formal negotiations to begin before the Games."

He said the Australia Tibet Council had asked the Australian government to talk to the Dalai Lama about ways to encourage further talks with China.

Former prime minister John Howard and Rudd, who was then opposition leader, met the Dalai Lama during his last visit to Australia in 2007.

Rudd returns to Australia on Sunday after visiting Japan and Indonesia, leaving little time for a meeting before the Dalai Lama leaves the country early on Monday.

The Dalai Lama fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet. He says he advocates autonomy for the Himalayan region, and not independence.

About 30 supporters, and a small group of pro-China protesters, were at the airport on Wednesday when the Dalai Lama arrived in Sydney.

Canadian Parliament supports Tibet's self-determination

11 June 2024, [RFA](#), Tashi Wangchuk and Tenzin Dickyi

The motion recognizes that Tibetans are victims of China's systemic cultural assimilation.



Canadian lawmaker Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe of the Bloc Québécois introduces a motion advocating for Tibet's right to self-determination, at the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa, June 10, 2024.

Canada's Parliament has unanimously passed a motion in the House of Commons advocating for Tibet's right to self-determination.

The nonbinding motion recognizes Tibetans as "a people and a nation" with the inherent right to determine their own social, economic, cultural and religious policies, including the selection of the next Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

The measure demonstrates growing international support for Tibetans and their cause as the Chinese government steps up its repressive policies in the western region by eroding Tibetan language, culture and religion.

Sponsored by the bloc Québécois, the motion was introduced by party lawmaker Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe.

"The purpose of the motion was for the House of Commons to recognize that Tibetans are victims of

systemic cultural assimilation by China; and to offer unanimous support to the Tibetan people's efforts and actions towards self-determination," he said in a written response to Radio Free Asia.

The motion says Tibetans can claim the right to self-determination and freely choose their economic, social, cultural and religious policies without interference from external powers

It also says this empowerment prohibits China from interfering in the selection of the next Dalai Lama, whom Tibetans believe should be determined in accordance with their Buddhist belief in reincarnation. The Chinese Embassy in Ottawa did not respond to RFA's request for comment.

'Not forgotten'

The motion's passage on Monday follows a series of meetings between Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Namgyal Choedup, the Dalai Lama's representative for North America, and the Canada Tibet Committee with Bloc Québécois leaders in Montreal, Ottawa, and Washington.

"Canada's unanimous passage of the motion reaffirming Tibetan self-determination sends a strong message to Tibetans in Tibet that their resilience is not forgotten," Tsering posted on his X account.

Tenzin Lekshey, spokesman for the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India, expressed the gratitude of the Tibetan government-in-exile to the Canadian Parliament for supporting the motion.

"This motion holds immense significance for the Tibetan people inside Tibet, addressing key issues such as Tibet's self-determination, the future reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, Chinese interference, Chinese assimilation policies, and the importance of preserving Tibetan culture," he said.

The adoption of the motion coincides with Canada Tibet Lobby Days 2024 during which Tibetans from across Canada travel to Ottawa to meet with lawmakers and express their concerns about China's repression of Tibetans.

In December 2022, Canada's House of Commons unanimously passed a motion endorsing Tibet's Middle Way Approach and supporting the resumption of dialogue between Tibetan representatives and the Chinese government.

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.

Auckland Tibetan Association Calls on PM Luxon to Raise Tibet During the Chinese Premier Li Qiang's Visit to New Zealand

11 June 2024, [CTA](#)

The Auckland Tibetan Association has sent a letter to the New Zealand Prime Minister requesting to raise Tibet during the Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to the island country.

The letter to Prime Minister Christopher Luxon reads, "Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to New Zealand this week is a significant one and Tibetan-New Zealanders are always in support of what our leaders do to further our nation's interest. China is New Zealand's largest trading partner and we understand the government's focus on further growth opportunities."

"However I urge you not to be silenced by China and be complicit in their moral and ethical depravation."

The letter continues, "In February 2024 alone, over a thousand Tibetans in Dege County protested the planned development of a massive hydro-dam that would flood nearby villages and obliterate six monasteries, each with centuries-old Buddhist murals. The peaceful protestors, many of whom were seen getting down on their knees, wailing and begging the Chinese authorities were arrested for simply trying to protect what was rightfully theirs.

Political repression, social discrimination, economic marginalization, environmental destruction and cultural assimilation is Tibet's reality today. China's 'Sinicization' campaign in Tibet continues to intensify with state-run colonial style boarding schools housing nearly one million Tibetan children forced apart from their parents. Restrictions on the Tibetan language in schools and across monasteries is aimed to dilute and eventually erase the Tibetan cultural and religious identity. Reports from Toronto based Citizen Lab state that between 2016 and 2022, Chinese police have collected roughly 1.2 million DNA samples of Tibetans from some as young as five to combat 'crime' and 'social stability' in the region. The PRC also demanded biometric information from Tibetans in other parts of Tibet such as DNA and IRIS records on the pretext of researching altitude sickness and studying male ancestry. These actions are covertly designed to intensify political surveillance of Tibetans. Tragically, 159 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009 as a form of political protest. According to International watchdog group Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World 2024' report, Tibet is the least free country on earth with a score of 0 out of 100. On the other hand, New Zealand is one of the freest countries with a score of 99. The stark difference is glaring to say the least.

Religion is fundamental to the Tibetan way of life and Buddhism primarily defines the Tibetan national identity. The Tibetan people's devotion to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, a Nobel Laureate is viewed as an act of separatism and a national security threat by the CCP. This results in continuous crackdown on the Tibetan monastic community and freedom of religion. The visiting Chinese Premier Li Qiang himself re-affirmed the Party's stand at its annual China's National People's Congress on March 5th, 2024, by stating; *"We will adhere to the Party's basic policy on religious affairs, ensure that religions in China must be Chinese in orientation, and provide guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to our socialist society"*.

During meetings with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, we urge New Zealand Government to:

1. Call on China to re-engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama and Central Tibetan Administration to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict.
2. Reinforce New Zealand's expectation that China immediately grants meaningful and unfettered access to Tibet for independent observers, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
3. Demand that China end its oppressive policies targeting Tibetan children and end the residential boarding school and pre-school system that separate an estimated one million Tibetan children from their families in denial of their cultural, religious and linguistic rights.
4. Demand that China cease interference in the selection and installation of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including any future Dalai Lama. The determination of Tibetan Buddhist leaders must be determined solely by the Tibetan people, in accordance with international human rights law, without any interference by the Chinese Government.
5. Demand that China immediately release the world's youngest political prisoner His Eminence the 11th Panchen Lama and all other prisoners of conscience.
6. Demand that China repeal or amend provisions of their Criminal Procedure Law that violate the rights of detainees to a fair trial, and are routinely used to arrest Tibetans for peacefully exercising their human rights under the guise of 'separatism' and other State Security crimes.

China is no doubt a powerful country. Its influence has reached far and wide but not without consequences. China's Debt Trap Diplomacy in the Pacific Islands feels a little too close to home and not without threats to New Zealand. China's alleged state sponsored cyber

hacking on New Zealand parliament in 2021 and response from our government just cautioning them to *'refrain from such activity in future'* has been lack lustre.

New Zealand must shut down Confucius Institutes in its university campuses, adopt Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, adopt Magnitsky Act and oppose the Belt and Road Initiative. If New Zealand allows China to oppress and continually abuse Tibetan human rights with impunity then New Zealand is complicit in the oppression of Tibetans. I once again ask you to use the occasion of the visit of Chinese Premier Li Qiang to raise China's human rights abuses and to stand with Tibet. **Supporting the Tibetan cause is not anti-China; rather pro-justice."**

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Canberra

Sikyong Penpa Tsering and Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang Launch Autobiography of Former Kalon Tashi Wangdi

07 June 2024, [CTA](#)

Dharamshala: Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the chief guest, along with Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang and Geshe Lhakdor as special guests, launched Kasur Tashi Wangdi's autobiography "My Life: Born in Free Tibet, Served in Exile" at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamshala on 7 June 2024.

In his keynote speech, Sikyong Penpa Tsering shared the story of his first encounter with former Kalon Tashi Wangdi. He commended Kasur Tashi Wangdi for his over four decades of service to the Tibetan people. Tashi Wangdi had held six cabinet minister positions and served as the representative of the Offices of Tibet. Sikyong stressed the importance of the younger generation of Tibetans learning about the hardships and sacrifices of the senior ministers who supported His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the difficult times of the Tibetan freedom struggle. Sikyong concluded his speech by urging Tibetan elders to document their own histories in line with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He also advised Tibetans to cherish historical evidence and research materials, emphasising the importance of preserving them.

During her address, Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang acknowledged the lifelong dedication and service of former Kalon Tashi Wangdi to the cause of Tibet. She also commended the author for his decision to write his autobiography, following the advice of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The Deputy Speaker provided a detailed account of the author's life, starting from his early days as a senior clerk at the beginning of the Central Tibetan Administration, which was formerly known as the Gaden Phodrang government. She also highlighted his journey to becoming Kalon (Minister) serving the CTA's

departments. Additionally, she recognised the significant sacrifices made by the former Kalon's family in supporting him in his duties, especially acknowledging the contributions of his late wife Diky and his children, whom she found equally remarkable and praiseworthy.

Kalon (Minister) Norzin Dolma from the Department of Information and International Relations, Secretaries from Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Secretaries from Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and former CTA dignitaries and bureaucrats also graced the book launch event.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Congratulates Indian PM Modi for Historic Third Win

06 June 2024, [CTA](#)

On 6 June 2024, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration offered his congratulations to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for their landmark victory in the recent General elections 2024. In the letter addressed to PM Modi, Sikyong attributed the electoral victory to the enduring trust and confidence reposed by the people of India in Modi's robust leadership and the NDA's commitment to the nation's progress.

Sikyong further expressed gratitude to the Government and people of India for their long-standing support and hospitality extended towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community over the decades. The letter stated, "India has graciously embraced us as cherished guests, providing a sanctuary where we can safeguard our distinct culture, language, and heritage".

The letter also highlighted the deep bond between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and India, noting His Holiness's frequent reference to himself as a son of India, acknowledging the profound influence of the ancient Nalanda tradition on his philosophical outlook. Sikyong, in the letter, also underscored His Holiness's dedication to reviving ancient Indian knowledge and wisdom and expressed deep gratitude for the initiatives supported by the central and state governments in this honourable mission.

In the letter, Sikyong Tsering urged India, the world's largest democracy, to lead democratic cooperation with like-minded nations amidst current global turmoil. Sikyong wrote, "With a legacy deeply rooted in the principles of nonviolence, India's leadership is more crucial than ever in guiding the world towards peace and stability. As you embark upon this historic third term, we continue to remain highly optimistic that under your leadership, India will continue to champion the values of democracy, freedom and human rights."

Dalai Lama to visit US for knee treatment in coming weeks

04 June 2024, [RFA](#), Tashi Wangchuk and Tenzin Dicky

The Tibetan Buddhism spiritual leader's last visit was in June 2017.

The Dalai Lama is scheduled to visit the United States for medical treatment for his knees in the coming weeks, according to his office, in what would be his first visit to the country since 2017.

Though the dates for which have not yet been announced, his trip is expected to take place this summer. It will be the Dalai Lama's first overseas trip since November 2018 and first overseas trip since the coronavirus pandemic.

The statement issued by his office in Dharamsala, in northern India, where the 88-year-old Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader lives in exile, said there will be no engagements scheduled from June 20 onwards. The Dalai Lama enjoys strong support in the United States, where prominent lawmakers have spoken out about human rights issues in Tibet, through China considers him a separatist and has criticized those who meet with him.

Neither the Dalai Lama's private office nor his representative in the Washington-based Office of Tibet commented on Radio Free Asia's inquiries about the exact dates of his scheduled U.S. travel, citing security reasons.

The U.S. magazine *The Atlantic* said the exact timing of the Dalai Lama's visit "is not yet decided," citing sources involved in planning the trip, but that it will follow a visit later this month to Dharamsala by a bipartisan congressional delegation led by Rep. Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat and former speaker of the House. She is a staunch supporter of human rights in Tibet.

Her spokesperson declined to comment on the news, saying, "We do not comment on Speaker Pelosi's upcoming or potential foreign travel" due to security concerns.

The Atlantic also said the Dalai Lama, who has bad knees, has decided to travel to the U.S. "this summer to investigate the possibility of replacement" for his knees.

During the Dalai Lama's last U.S. trip in June 2017, he gave the keynote address to 25,000 graduates and their families at the University of California, San Diego. Additionally, he underwent his annual medical check-up in Rochester, Minnesota, as part of his routine health checks. His 2017 visit also included a stop in Massachusetts.

The Dalai Lama's most recent foreign trip outside of India was to Japan in November 2018, where he

conducted a series of teachings and public events in Yokohama, Tokyo, Chiba and Fukuoka.

Although he hasn't traveled abroad since 2018, he has continued to travel every year to Bodh Gaya, the holiest pilgrimage site for Buddhists, located in northeast India to conduct teachings, except during the COVID-19 lockdown in India.

Foreign visits

For years, the Dalai Lama has shared Buddhist teachings globally, while advocating for increased autonomy for Tibet and engaging with global leaders to urge China to implement these changes.

Despite the pain of being in exile, he acknowledges its benefits, facilitating his travel, interactions with diverse individuals, and the dissemination of Buddhist wisdom as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Beijing has consistently criticized and opposed any foreign trips by the Dalai Lama and regards them as “a severe insult” to the feelings of the Chinese people.

“The Chinese consider such visits ... a deviation from their commitment to recognizing the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government representing the whole of China,” Zhang Yijiong, a senior Communist Party leader, said in October 2017.

The Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration — the Tibetan government-in-exile — has adopted a Middle Way approach to the question of Tibet's status under Beijing's rule, by which accepts Tibet as a part of China but urges greater cultural and religious freedoms, including strengthened language rights guaranteed for ethnic minorities under the provisions of China's own constitution.

Nine rounds of talks on greater autonomy in Tibet and Tibetan populated areas of China were held between envoys of the Dalai Lama and high-level Chinese officials beginning in 2002, but stalled in 2010 and were never resumed.

Resolve Tibet Act

The Dalai Lama's visit comes amid the much-awaited passage of a U.S. bill urging the Chinese government to engage in dialogue, without any preconditions, with the Dalai Lama or his representatives or democratically elected Tibetan leaders to resolve the China-Tibet dispute.

The bipartisan Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, calls on China to “cease its propagation of disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama.”

The Senate unanimously approved a revised version of the bill and is due for another vote by the House. If approved, it will go to U.S. President Joe Biden, who is likely to sign it into law.

In 2020, while serving as the Democratic party presidential nominee, Biden pledged to urge China to

engage in discussions with Tibetans aimed at achieving “meaningful autonomy.”

He also said at the time that if elected president, he would meet with the Dalai Lama, although he has yet to do this since taking office in 2021.

In December 2021, the Biden administration appointed Uzra Zeya as under secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights to serve concurrently as the U.S. special coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Department of Religion and Culture's Monastic Assessment Committee Presents Report of their Findings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama

03 June 2024, [CTA](#)



Department of Religion and Culture's Monastic Assessment Committee Presents Report of their Findings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration, held a closing meeting of the assessment committee to prepare a report of their finding to be presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The 14th Tibetan Religious Conference's 13th resolution of its first agenda requires the Department of Religion and Culture to set up an assessment committee to investigate the deterioration of the religious traditions across Tibetan monasteries based in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Accordingly, the department appealed to religious heads of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Yungdrung Bon to send two representatives from each school as members of the committee, following which the committee was formed.

This year, on 9 and 10 April, the committee members gathered at the Department of Religion and Culture and devised a scheme to assess the exposition and study of religious theories and practices, instruction of Vinaya rules (monastic discipline), and incorporation of modern education, health, and science at the monasteries. The committee further established a form to be employed for the assessment.

From 11 April to 24 May, the committee dispatched four teams of three members to their assigned monasteries and thus far conducted meticulous evaluations at 76 monasteries.

Thereafter, the department convened members of the committee from 25 to 30 May and drafted a report of their assessment that was later presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama during a special audience on 31 May.

Tibetans in Dharamshala vote in the 2024 Indian general elections

01 June 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



A Tibetan monk shows his inked finger after casting his vote in Dharamshala (Photo/ANI)

Hundreds of Tibetans with voter ID voted at the Bhagsunath polling station in Dharamshala during the final phase of the 2024 Indian General Election, on Saturday. Tibetans all over India with voter ID have cast their votes in the Lok Sabha election over the course of the last few weeks. The Indian general elections, spread across seven phases took place from April 19 to June 1, 2024, to elect 543 members of the Lok Sabha of the Indian parliament. The counting of votes and the declaration of results will be done on June 4, 2024. Himachal Pradesh, home to the second-largest population of Tibetan exiles after Karnataka, conducted its polling in the final phase on June 1. Many Tibetans holding voter ID cards, predominantly in the Kangra district, where the exile Tibetan government and Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama are based, gave their mandate today.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) advised Tibetans to exercise personal discretion regarding their participation in the election. Earlier this month in an interview with *Voice of Tibet*, CTA spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay stated that the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) cannot dictate whether Tibetans in exile should acquire Indian voter ID cards and Indian passports or not, it can only offer guidance. Lekshay explained that the Indian government issues Registration Certificates (RC) and Identity Cards (IC) to Tibetans with refugee status. However, the

government also provides Indian passports and voter ID cards, which confer Indian citizenship. He emphasised the need for caution in deciding whether to obtain these documents, as involvement in Indian politics could have implications for the Tibetan community. He further stated that Tibetans must carefully consider whether such participation is beneficial for the collective future or not.

On May 27, the incumbent Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, visited Dharamshala to meet and appeal for votes from the local Tibetan community. The meeting took place at the Tibetan Settlement Office Hall in McLeod Ganj, where the Tibetan Settlement Officer presented a list of three pressing issues faced by the Tibetan community in Dharamshala.

The first issue highlighted was the construction of proper roads in the area. The second problem raised was the need for permanent shops for Tibetan shop owners, who currently operate from temporary setups along the roadside. The third issue involved resolving the dispute concerning the old Tibetan Settlement Office. Chief Minister Sukhu acknowledged these concerns and assured the community that he would make efforts to address and resolve these problems. Speaking to Phayul, a Tibetan who voted in Dharamshala today said, "It's my fifth time voting. The reason for voting is the same as our Indian counterparts, like issues including inflation of daily needs products. It is our right to choose a representative who can work on these issues. The other advantage of having a voter card is the ease of travelling to other countries. I have relatives in Nepal, and a voter ID card, helps me to travel by flight without any difficulties. With other documents, it's hard to travel there."

Another voter stated, "The reason I made a voter ID card is because of the ease of travelling to other countries. Many countries have difficulty accepting the Identity Certificate (IC) provided to us. With a voter ID, the ease of travelling is the reason."

Tibetans in Sarguja, Chhattisgarh, participated in the third phase of the elections on May 7, 2024. In the Phuntsokling settlement, Orissa, Tibetan voters were in a dilemma about whether to participate in the Indian election due to concerns about losing refugee status. In Himachal Pradesh, Tibetans with voter ID cards have been participating in Indian elections for some years.

In February 2014, India's chief election body directed all states to include Tibetans and their offspring born in India in the electoral rolls. This followed a 2013 court order granting Indian citizenship to Tibetan refugees born in India between January 26, 1950, and July 1, 1987, and their children under the Indian Citizenship Act 1955.

New school for overseas Tibetan kids aims to preserve language

01 June 2024, [RFA](#), Lobe Socktsang, Tashi Wangchuk and Tenzin Dickyi

The move comes amid China's attempts to suppress Tibetan language and culture among children.



Tibetan children pose for a photo at the Lower Tibetan Children's Villages school in Dharamsala, India, in an undated photo.

In a bid to help preserve Tibet's language and culture, a nonprofit organization in northern India is transforming one of its facilities into a boarding school where children of Tibetans living overseas can go to live and study.

The Dharamsala, India-based school being created by the Tibetan Children's Villages, or TCV, is accepting applications for the academic year starting Aug. 1 for children entering grades four to eight.

There are already several Tibetan boarding schools elsewhere in India, but this will be the first time one is being created for the children of overseas Tibetans.

The move comes as China intensifies its policies to suppress — or even eradicate — Tibetan and other ethnic languages and cultures and replace them with Mandarin and Han Chinese customs.

Chinese officials in Tibet and in Tibetan-populated areas in China's western provinces are using government-run boarding schools to assimilate Tibetan children culturally, religiously and linguistically, rights groups say.

Schools become 'battleground'

Tibetan students are being forcibly removed from their homes and immersed in a Mandarin-language curriculum without an opportunity to learn the Tibetan language or culture.

"Tibetan schools are the battleground for CCP ideology," said Kai Mueller, the Berlin-based executive director and head of U.N. advocacy at the International Campaign for Tibet, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

"We have noted so many forms of indoctrination towards Tibetan children in school that it is quite astounding," he said.



The Lower TCV school in Dharamsala, India, is being renovated as a new residential school for Tibetan children from abroad. (TCV)

The types of indoctrination include poetry competitions on Chinese President Xi Jinping Thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics, field trips to Communist Party museums, and school visits by Chinese officials and members of the Chinese military who teach children about national unity, Mueller said.

"The Chinese rulers are using ever new methods to try to transform young Tibetans into loyal Chinese," he said.

"Their main starting point is language," he said.

In a two-pronged approach, Chinese officials work to dissuade children from learning their mother tongue by sending them to compulsory boarding schools and make Mandarin attractive to young Tibetans, Mueller said.

"In this way, the Chinese leadership wants to destroy the youth's connection to traditional Tibetan culture and language," he said.



Students learn about tuberculosis at the Tibetan Children's Villages lower school in Dharamsala, India, in an undated photo. (TCV)

Grassroots idea

For this reason, many Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet urged Tibetan Children's Villages to set up a boarding school for children from overseas, TCV Director Sonam Sichoe told Radio Free Asia. The proposal was then approved by the network's board. The school's main priority will be to teach Tibetan language skills and cultural traditions, while

simultaneously receiving a modern education that is on par with the West, Sichoe said.

So far, about 15 students from the United States, Canada, Australia, Denmark and Germany have enrolled. Regardless of the numbers, the school will proceed as planned, he said.

In the dormitories, the children from overseas will be mixed with students from India so that they don't end up speaking only English, he added.



The Lower TCV school in Dharamsala, India, is being renovated as a new residential school for Tibetan children from abroad. (TCV)

Tuition, room and board cost US\$350 per child per month, Sichoe said.

Because the children are expected to come from different countries, the main medium of teaching academic subjects will be in English to ensure ease of understanding and communication, he said.

Studio Nyandak Dharamsala, a design company whose local employees are all TCV alumni, is working with school administrators to renovate the campus. Changes include the installation of Western toilets, single beds instead of bunk beds, water heating facilities and solar panels.

Expanded network

Set up in 1960 as a nursery for Tibetan children, TCV was established after the Dalai Lama proposed a center to care for kids who had been orphaned or separated from their families while fleeing after China's annexation of Tibet in 1959.

Since then, the organization expanded its footprint across India to become a network of boarding schools caring for over 15,000 children.

The Dharamsala-based Lower TCV campus — now being renovated into a residential school for overseas children — came about in the 1980s after the main TCV school was inundated with children who had been smuggled out of Tibet by Tibetan parents during China's liberalization program of that period.

Earlier this year, Jetsun Pema, the younger sister of the Dalai Lama who led the school for many years, received the Pearl S. Buck award from Randolph College in Lynchburg, Virginia, in recognition of her service.

Parents' reactions

Migmar Bhuti, a Tibetan in New York, welcomed the new boarding school, saying it would enable Tibetan

children to more effectively learn and preserve the Tibetan language and culture at an early age. But she also expressed concern over whether math, English, science and the social sciences would be adequately taught.

"Since the Lower TCV School is planning to only take in students from the fourth to eighth grades, I wonder if that will allow the children to catch up in their classes when they move back here from the ninth grade, or whether they will need to drop a grade," she told RFA Tibetan.

Given that academic and vacation schedules in the West differ from those in India, school officials are in discussions with parents about these concerns, said Choeying Dhondup, TCV's general-secretary.



The Lower TCV school in Dharamsala, India, is being renovated as a new residential school for Tibetan children from abroad. (TCV)

Kalsang Dorji, a father of two children and principal of a Sunday school for Tibetan children in Berkeley, California, said Tibetans there have wanted a dedicated residential school to teach their language and culture to youngsters.

"Not only do they get to learn the Tibetan language and culture very early on, they also have the opportunity to engage with other Tibetan children," he said.

The success of the school will be determined by the quality of the faculty and enrollment numbers, he added.

"In our community, there is a widespread desire to have a dedicated school like this for Tibetan children, which is why I deeply appreciate TCV's move to convert Lower TCV into a residential school for children from the West," Dorji said.

CHINA POLITICS

CHINA: Harsh words, political disloyalty allegations mark purge of two former defence ministers

28 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has used especially harsh words in announcing the expulsion from the party of the country's two immediate former defence ministers while also underlining their political disloyalty, noted the *scmp.com* Jun 28, citing observers and China's official *Xinhua* news agency.

In an unprecedented move, the party's 24-person Politburo decided to launch corruption investigations into Wei Fenghe and his successor Li Shangfu, and expelled both from the party, the report said, citing statements on the decision released by state news agency *Xinhua* on Jun 27.

Both have also been stripped of their positions as generals and membership of the People's Liberation Army and will reportedly face criminal charges from military prosecutors too.

Li was sacked from his job in October, just seven months after he became defence minister while Wei held the position from 2018 to 2023.

Wei had also become the first chief of the rocket force when it was formed in 2015 as part of a major military overhaul. His two successors as heads of the force, Zhou Yaning and Li Yuchao, were both ousted last year. The statements were quoted as saying the two former ministers "betrayed the trust of the party and the CMC [Central Military Commission], seriously polluted the political environment of the military, and caused great damage to the party's cause, national defence and military construction, as well as the image of its senior leaders".

The statements were stated to have singled Wei out for degrading the "political ecosystem" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Li for contaminating the PLA's military equipment industry.

Observers have drawn attention to the especially harsh wording in the brief statements of accusations against the two men. The wording is much harsher than the accusations previously made against Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, two former vice-chairmen of the CMC – China's top military command body – who were sacked for corruption during the first term of President Xi Jinping, a political scientist from Nanjing university, who asked not to be named due to sensitivity of the matter, has said.

"You can almost tell there is a feeling of 'how dare you let me down on the most important job!'"

The analyst has added that Beijing's frustration may have been compounded because unlike Guo and Xu, both Wei and Li were promoted to their most senior position under Xi.

He has noted that beside the usual short description of the alleged corruption, the *Xinhua* announcement underlined Wei and Li's political disloyalty.

The military, the bastion of the party's political power, has become a prime target for Xi's anti-graft campaign, and Beijing has said proudly that more Chinese generals have been sacked for corruption under Xi than were killed in decades of war in the 20th century, the report noted.

The official announcements were cited as saying that while Wei Fenghe was accused of taking bribes, his successor Li Shangfu was accused of both taking and giving bribes, raising new questions.

"It would be interesting to ask to whom did Li, who was already a top brass in the military, give money to," the Nanjing-based analyst has said.

The sacking of such a large number of senior defence officials is seen as a sign of the strength of President Xi's control over the military.

"Xi Jinping's control over the PLA is stronger than that of any of his predecessors, even Mao Zedong, if we look at the reforms he has been able to effect throughout the PLA since late 2015," James Char, a research fellow with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, has said.

While some observers have argued that corruption in the PLA has exposed weaknesses in its military abilities, some have argued it could actually improve the force's capacity to fight, the report said.

Xi Says China Planning 'Major' Reforms Ahead Of Key Political Meeting

28 June 2024, [Barron's](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping said Friday the ruling Communist Party was planning and implementing "major" reforms, ahead of a closely watched political conclave that is expected to put economic recovery high on the agenda.

Chinese policymakers have struggled to reignite growth since the end of strict Covid-19 pandemic health curbs in late 2022.

The world's second-largest economy is beset by a debt crisis in the property sector, persistently low consumption and high youth unemployment.

Xi said in a speech on Friday policymakers "are planning and implementing major measures to further deepen reform in a comprehensive manner".

"We will... form a more market-oriented, legal and international business environment," he said.

"China's door will only open wider and wider, and will never be closed."

Xi has touted the promise of significant reform several times this year and the government has already

enacted measures in key sectors such as real estate to try to address critical issues.

It was announced on Thursday that the delayed Third Plenum -- a meeting historically watched for signals on economic policy direction -- will take place in Beijing in mid-July.

The key meeting of top officials, originally expected last autumn, is highly anticipated in the hopes it might resolve the uncertainty that has weighed on China's economy.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's central bank, pledged later on Friday to "promote the implementation of the financial policies and measures already issued, and push for the stable and healthy development of the real estate market".

"(We will)... promote the accelerated construction of a new model for real estate development," the PBOC said in a statement.

Xi's address at Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People, delivered in front of a high-profile international audience, marked the 70th anniversary of some of China's foundational diplomatic tenets.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence include mutual respect for territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

Xi hailed China as a force for global peace, saying in his speech Beijing would continue to play "constructive roles" in international conflicts such as Gaza and Ukraine.

China has been criticised by Ukraine's allies for failing to condemn Russia's 2022 invasion and accused of favouring Moscow. Beijing insists it is a neutral party. In the Middle East, China has advocated for decades for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Xi called for greater cooperation between China and developing countries in his speech.

"Engaging in small yard, high-wall decoupling practices is to move against the tide of history," Xi said.

"It will only harm the common interests of the international community."

China condemned for rejecting key recommendations of UN review of its rights record

26 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has rejected all key recommendations urging it to end violations of human rights of its citizens while accepting only those from friendly governments which either do not criticize it or which, in fact, praises its repressive policies in the name of combating separatism and maintaining the socialist government system following the UN's Universal Periodical Review (UPR) of its record held in Jan 2024.

The UPR is a process through which all UN member states' human rights records are examined by other members and the latest was China's fourth since 2009. Announcing China's response to the 418 recommendations made at the end of the review hearing, the UN has said Jun 11 that the Chinese government had agreed to accept 290 recommendations, partially accept 8, take note of 32, and reject 98.

China has cited the 290 as those it had either "accepted and (were) being implemented" or those it had "accepted and already implemented." However, none of the "accepted" recommendations address concerns raised by UN member states about crimes against humanity, torture, forced disappearance, persecution of human rights defenders and journalists, or other grave and well-documented violations, said a group of 13 human rights organizations that include Chinese, Tibetan, Uyghur, Hong Kong, as well as international groups such as Human Rights Watch in a joint statement on Jun 25.

The statement said that through intense lobbying campaign ahead of the review, China acted to whitewash its record, submitting false information and blocking any domestic civil society groups from participating in the preparation of the state report or from making contributions to the review. It also succeeded in having a number of states friendly to it to ask bland questions that made vague recommendations while using their platform to, in fact, praise the Chinese government's rights record.

"This provided ample weak recommendations that the Chinese government could deem acceptable."

Given this context, the numerous acceptances by the Chinese government does not mean actual intention to improve its rights record. No one should confuse a high number of accepted recommendations with any real commitment by Beijing on human rights, the statement said.

In fact, China's latest rejection rate is stated to be 30%, much higher than in the last one, in 2018, at 18%.

The statement dismissed China's claim made at the Jan 2024 review of the achievement from its "acceptance" of many recommendations from the 2018 review, citing NGO research which showed that "the overwhelming majority of those accepted recommendations were so weak, vague, or based on flawed assumptions, that progress towards them cannot be meaningfully verified."

In fact, "dozens of the accepted recommendations clearly or implicitly endorse human rights violations. For example, Belarus recommended that China "[c]ombat separatism and promote modernization of the social governance system and capacity in Xizang" [using the Chinese government's official name for Tibet], the statement pointed out.

Given the sorry state of the UPR recommendations and China's rejection of their substantive contents, the statement suggested: "The Chinese government's posture towards the UPR should prompt the HRC member states and other actors to press Beijing to follow up on recommendations made by independent UN human rights monitors and officials, including Special Procedures, treaty bodies, and the OHCHR."

The joint statement came ahead of the adoption of China's UPR at the ongoing Jun 18 – Jul 12, 2024, session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. China's official position is that any discussion critical of its human rights record constitutes interference in its internal affair even as it plays an outsized role in the UN human rights system

Chinese Government Rejects Key Human Rights Recommendations in Latest UN Review

25 June 2024, [TCHRD](#)

Intense Lobbying Campaign Produces Many Weak Recommendations

The Chinese government's rejection of recommendations to end its deepening human rights crisis reflects its disdain for international human rights reviews at the United Nations, the undersigned human rights nongovernmental organizations said in a joint statement released on 25 June 2024.

On 11 June 2024, the UN made available the Chinese government's announcement to accept or reject recommendations from the latest Universal Periodical Review (UPR) in January 2024, a process through which all UN member states' human rights records are examined. In a disingenuous effort to paper over its refusal to engage to improve its appalling record, the Chinese government said it would accept 290 of the 428 recommendations, partially accept 8, note 32, and reject 98 of the recommendations made. The 290 accepted ones include those the government said it "accepted and being implemented" and those "accepted and already implemented."

None of the "accepted" recommendations address concerns raised by UN member states about crimes against humanity, torture, forced disappearance, persecution of human rights defenders and journalists, or other grave and well-documented violations.

The Chinese government, in the preparatory process leading up to the January 2024 review, as it did in and around three previous UPRs in 2009, 2013, and 2018, submitted false information, and blocked any domestic civil society groups from participating in the preparation of the state report or from making contributions to the review. Through an intense lobbying campaign ahead of the review, it acted to whitewash its record, and succeeded in having a

number of states ask bland questions, make vague recommendations, and use their platform to praise the Chinese government's rights record. This provided ample weak recommendations that the Chinese government could deem acceptable.

Despite the heavy pressure, some countries took a principled approach, raising concerns, and making recommendations, on the basis of the growing body of evidence of abuses compiled by NGOs, UN special procedures, treaty bodies and the UN Human Rights Office.

However, Beijing categorically rejected all recommendations calling on it to stop these egregious human rights violations and to end impunity for the perpetrators. The rejection rate is 30%, much higher than in 2018 – 18%. It also rejected all recommendations calling on the government to end reprisals against individuals engaging with the international human rights system, a message of disdain on the ten-year anniversary of the death of Cao Shunli in detention, a courageous Chinese human rights defender taken into custody on her way to Geneva for China's 2014 UPR.

In this context, the numerous acceptances by the Chinese government does not mean actual intention to improve its rights record. **No one should confuse a high number of accepted recommendations with any real commitment by Beijing on human rights.**

At the January 2024 review, Chinese officials claimed as the government's achievement its "acceptance" of many recommendations from the 2018 review, yet NGO research shows that the overwhelming majority of those accepted recommendations were so weak, vague, or based on flawed assumptions, that progress towards them cannot be meaningfully verified. Worse still, dozens of the accepted recommendations also clearly or implicitly endorse human rights violations. For example, Belarus recommended that China "[c]ombat separatism and promote modernization of the social governance system and capacity in Xizang" [using the Chinese government's official name for Tibet].

Since the 2018 UPR, civil society groups have documented a range of acts of intimidation and reprisals, including Chinese diplomats photographing civil society representatives and journalists inside UN premises. And intimidation was intense around and during the January 2024 review, as the Chinese government, in clear violation of its legal obligation to uphold the right to unhindered access to the UN, tried to silence critics who may offer an honest assessment. Beijing's responses to UPR recommendations also include hostility towards the process and towards UN human rights mechanisms. The government has challenged the authority of the UPR to address topics Beijing insists are a matter of "sovereignty," and disparaged the professionalism of UN human rights

experts. The Chinese government also falsely proclaimed the August 2022 OHCHR report on human rights abuses in Xinjiang, which that office alleged may constitute crimes against humanity, as "completely illegal and void."

The adoption of China's UPR at this session of the Human Rights Council should be an important inflection point. The Chinese government's posture towards the UPR should prompt the HRC member states and other actors to press Beijing to follow up on recommendations made by independent UN human rights monitors and officials, including Special Procedures, treaty bodies, and the OHCHR.

Specifically, the UN High Commissioner and member states should follow up on the landmark 2022 OHCHR report on abuses in the Uyghur region. The Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect should take concrete action in response to the referral of the situation of Xinjiang to their Office by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in November 2022.

Member states from all regional and political groups should take overdue action to heed the call by more than fifty UN human rights experts in June 2020 for them "to act collectively and decisively to ensure China respects human rights and abides by its international obligations," including by holding an HRC special session on China and establishing an impartial and independent United Nations mechanism "to closely monitor, analyze and report annually on the human rights situation in China." Such a mechanism is needed more than ever, in the face of Beijing's intransigence and deepening repression. The experts repeated the call in June 2022 and September 2022.

Member states should also press Beijing to end intimidation and seriously cooperate with other forthcoming treaty body reviews, including under the Convention against Torture, for which its state report is five years overdue, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Undersigned, in alphabetical order: Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC), Hong Kong Watch (HKW), Human Rights in China (HRIC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), International Tibet Network, Reporters without Borders (RSF), Safeguard Defenders, The Rights Practice (TRP), Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Uyghur Human Rights Project, Campaign for Uyghurs, World Uyghur Congress.

Cities, provinces across China join global propaganda push

21 June 2024, [VOA](#), Lin Yang

Each year, China's government spends billions on foreign propaganda and until recently those efforts were largely driven by departments in the central government and state media. Now, a growing number of cities are joining that effort, with the China Media Project, an independent research group, recently documenting at least 23 foreign propaganda centers at China's city and provincial levels.

China experts say the move makes sense because it allows Beijing to draw on more resources and create tailored messages at a time when the country's image is facing serious challenges over concerns that range from trade to human rights as well its handling of the COVID pandemic.

"The battle for discourse power requires all hands on deck," Jonathan Sullivan, a China specialist at the University of Nottingham, told VOA.

"In every sector, China brings its full capacity — institutional, financial and human resources — to the fight, so it is normal" for Beijing to do the same with propaganda, Sullivan said.

Joshua Kurlantzick, author of *Beijing's Global Media Offensive*, said this is one of the many attempts to spread the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, propaganda.

"If one doesn't work, China has so many efforts they can try others," he told VOA in a written response.

The centers are popping up across the country and the most recent was on June 7, when China's northeastern city of Tianjin established the Tianjin International Communication Center, or TICC.

According to the city's state-run newspaper, the *Tianjin Daily*, the new center will "use lenses and pens to demonstrate a lively Tianjin to the outside world" and "serve the country's overall public diplomacy."

The establishment of the TICC follows the formation on May 31 of Zhejiang International Communication Center. That provincial-level center, according to the China Public Diplomacy Association, will "showcase China's governance through the Zhejiang model ... and allow the world to truly understand China."

Since 2023, the spread of global propaganda centers at the local level began expanding rapidly. On July 3, 2023, Shenzhen formed the SZMG International Communication Center. A few days later, eastern Jiangsu province established Jiangsu International Communication Center on July 12.

Shanghai joined in October 2023 with SMG International, a city-level external communication base dubbed as "a video window for Shanghai's city image."

On January 6, 2024, the northern province of Hebei announced its own Great Wall International Communication Center. As of this month, China has established 23 provincial-level external communication centers, tasked to remake China's approach of delivering its message externally.

Gary Rawnsley, a professor of public diplomacy at the University of Lincoln, said these provincial-level centers indicate China has begun to realize that it cannot carry out the same propaganda to all foreigners.

"I would say that this is a clever and strategic move because it indicates that China is understanding the need to tailor its messages for particular audiences," he said. "When we look at the activities of some of these centers, they are very much oriented toward the needs and interests of people in neighboring countries."

Tailored for its audiences

"Tailored" and "targeted" are key words used by provincial-level international communication centers, or ICCs.

An article by *Qiushi Journal*, the leading official theoretical journal for the Chinese Communist Party, says the centers are "developed based on local propaganda needs" and will become "a new force" for China's global propaganda.

The Jiangsu International Communication Center has active accounts in seven languages on major social platforms that are blocked in China, including X, formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

The director of the Hubei Communication Center told a local newspaper that in addition to making full use of social media accounts, the center has adopted a "one place, one policy" approach to tailor the content according to their audiences.

"For example, we focus on football programs to Brazil and Argentina, and culinary shows to Southeast Asia and Italy," said the center's director, Cao Xiqing.

Not all the centers were established over the past year. China's Yunnan province, which borders Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam, formed the South and Southeast Asian Media Network on May 31, 2022. According to the Information Office of the Yunnan Government, this is "the only international communication center in the country specially designed for audiences in South Asia and Southeast Asia."

The regional network publishes journals in Burmese, Thai, Cambodian and Lao. In addition to distributing its content on social media, it also has web pages in seven languages — Burmese, Lao, Thai, Khmer, English, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Soft power focus

The local ICCs focus on China's soft power. Rawnsley from the University of Lincoln said this is deliberate.

"It seems to be that at the central level, they are moving toward a much more political style of programming and letting these regional centers soften their programming for particular audiences and focusing much more on culture, tourism and history," he told VOA.

VOA examined recent tweets by the Henan International Communication Center and found topics that included night scenes of its capital, Zhengzhou, foreigners learning Chinese medicine, Henan Opera and Shaolin Kung Fu. The Henan ICC also has a promotional video of the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing's massive global infrastructure project.

The ICCs also host various activities. For example, the Hubei ICC held an event named "The Story of the Communist Party of China" in May 2023, inviting foreigners in China to learn the history of the CCP.

Rawnsley said this highlights how everything the regional centers are doing is not completely autonomous.

"Everything will be following particular guidelines that are laid down in Beijing," he said.

Limited effect

Despite their rapid formations, these centers have not attracted much traffic. The Henan ICC, which joined X in November 2022, currently has 19,000 followers. The Jinan ICC's X account has around 55,000 followers since it was established in April 2022.

China has poured enormous resources into its external propaganda, yet people's attitudes toward China have worsened in recent years, especially since the 2020 coronavirus outbreak.

A poll by the Pew Research Center in May showed that 81% of Americans have an unfavorable view of China, including 43% who hold a very unfavorable view of the country.

A 2022 poll by Pew that surveyed people in 19 countries found 68% of the respondents had an unfavorable impression of Beijing. The research organization found these unfavorable opinions are related to concerns about China's policies on human rights.

China has received heavy criticism for its strict policies in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong, as well as its aggression toward self-ruling island Taiwan, which China claims as a breakaway province. The CCP leadership denies all these accusations.

Rawnsley said the problem China faces is much more than just its presentation.

"China keeps adding more and more platforms, but it doesn't change the message. It doesn't change what people know is going on inside China," he said.

"At the end of the day, policy and behavior determines credibility," he said. "Actions speak louder than words."

Xi calls for carrying forward patriotism

21 June 2024, [China Daily](#)



President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, is welcomed by monks at a Tibetan Buddhist temple in Xining, Qinghai province, on Tuesday. He inspected Qinghai from Tuesday to Wednesday. [Photo by Xie Huanchi / XINHUA]

President Xi Jinping expressed the hope for the Tibetan Buddhist circle in Qinghai province to carry on the fine traditions of patriotism, help promote religious, social and ethnic harmony, and play an active role in advancing Chinese modernization, during an inspection tour in the province.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while visiting the Hongjue Temple in the provincial capital of Xining on Tuesday afternoon.

He said the temple has played an important role as a bridge in strengthening the bond between the central government and Tibetan Buddhism over generations. "It is essential to protect this precious historical and cultural heritage, and renew efforts to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and promote ethnic unity and progress," Xi said.

The Hongjue Temple in central Xining has a history of more than 1,000 years. Konchok Gyatso, a senior monk at the temple, said it has played an important role in boosting exchanges between the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and other parts of China and promoting peace among people from different ethnic groups.

Since the establishment of the monastery in 941 AD, it has always been inclusive to different cultures, Konchok Gyatso said. "The founder of the monastery was taught and approved by three masters from Tibetan Buddhism and two from Chinese Buddhism (also known as Mahayana Buddhism). And Hongjue is the temple with the longest history for integrating the cultures of both Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism in China."

Because of such integration, it has become a well-known school among Tibetan Buddhist monks, and

many accomplished monks and living Buddhas have studied at the temple, he added. "More importantly, besides their accomplishments in Tibetan Buddhism, they all share the same vision of promoting peace and unity among people from different ethnic groups till today."

Furthermore, the temple, which is located at the eastern entry point of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, has always helped to enforce ties between the central government and Tibetan Buddhism, Konchok Gyatso said.

In 1779, the 6th Panchen Erdeni Lobsang Palden Yeshe was invited to Beijing by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). To make his stop at the Hongjue Temple comfortable, the emperor had the temple fully renovated. And it has become a key spot where the Panchen Lama — one of the two most revered living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism — stayed in Qinghai ever since.

Also, born in Qinghai in 1938, the 10th Panchen Erdeni Chokyi Gyaltsen set off from the temple to Xizang in 1951 to fulfill his duty after completing a series of studies on Tibetan Buddhism.

"He then became a living Buddha with profound Buddhist knowledge and full love of the country and his religion. He worked hard for the country's unification and ethnic unity, which inspired us all," Konchok Gyatso said.

To protect Hongjue Temple's rich cultural heritage, a renovation and restoration project was launched in 2004. Upon the completion of the project in 2014, a new grand prayer hall was built at the temple.

"When people come to visit the monastery, besides the culture of Tibetan Buddhism, we want them to see its long-lasting tradition of boosting understanding among people from different ethnic groups, such as Tibetan, Mongolian and Han," Konchok Gyatso said.

Chen Lijian, a researcher at the China Tibetology Research Center, said the temple has been influential in Tibetan Buddhism historically.

"And it will continue to serve as a key platform for promoting exchanges among different cultures and ethnic unity on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau," Chen said.

Xi Jinping visits Mao's caves

20 June 2024, [RFA](#), Qian Lang

The Chinese leader uses symbolism of wartime revolutionary base to signal grip on the military.

President Xi Jinping has led top military brass on a pilgrimage of caves that were a key revolutionary base for the late supreme leader Mao Zedong, state media reported, a move analysts said was aimed at strengthening grip over the People's Liberation Army.

The cave complex of Yan'an, in northeast China, where Mao spent the formative years of the Chinese Communist Party leadership during the war with Japan, has become a symbol of ideological purity in China, and has been described by commentators as one of the "holy sites" of the Chinese revolution.

The Yan'an conference marks "a return to the roots of the military," state news agency Xinhua paraphrased Xi as saying.

It comes after Xi fired Li Shangfu from his post as defense minister on Oct. 24, 2023, with no explanation given. A number of senior leaders of the People's Liberation Army's Rocket Corps, including the head of China's nuclear arsenal, had also been fired by Xi in July.

Yan'an is also where Mao launched a major "rectification" campaign, purging his opponents from party ranks.

Commentators told RFA that the choice of Yan'an as a venue for Xi's speech sent out a strong symbolic message.

Xi told the political work conference in Shaanxi province that "the armed forces must always be led by those who are reliable and loyal to the party," Xinhua reported.

He warned of "deep-seated problems" in the military due to a "lack of ideals and beliefs."

Useful propaganda tool

Communist troops arrived in Yan'an, on the poverty-stricken loess plateau of the Yellow River, in 1935, making their homes in caves and eating millet gruel every day until the tide swung their way in the civil war in 1948.

The Yan'an period of Chinese history is a useful propaganda tool, because it came before the power struggles and political campaigns launched by Mao against his opponents threw the country into years of turmoil and cost millions of lives, and still carries a message of hope for many Chinese people.

Current affairs commentator Cai Shenkun said Xi's message was clear.

"He is emphasizing the importance of who it is holding the gun," Cai said. "It used to be said that the party should command the gun, but the key question is, who is actually holding it?"

"Mao Zedong ruled the party with guns, Deng Xiaoping did the same," he said in a reference to Mao's successor who ordered the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre by People's Liberation Army forces in Beijing.

Wife promoted

Meanwhile, Xi has reportedly promoted his wife Peng Liyuan, a former military singer who holds the rank of major-general, to a senior position in the Central Military Commission's Cadre Assessment Committee, which approves appointments, according to senior political commentator Willy Lam.

"Peng's increasing public profile and potential elevation within the military hierarchy invites comparisons to Mao Zedong's reliance on his fourth wife, Jiang Qing, during the Cultural Revolution," Lam wrote in a commentary last month for the Jamestown Foundation .

Cai said it is significant that the conference is being held ahead of the third plenum of the Central Committee next month, and can be seen as a message that Xi is strengthening his grip on the military.

Current affairs commentator Guo Min agreed, saying that party control over the armed forces is a recurrent concern for Xi.

"He's talking about the absolute leadership of the party over the military, which basically means, his absolute command over the military," Guo said.

"Political work is actually about toeing the line, the same line as [Xi]," he said.

Xi Jinping tells top PLA leaders they must eliminate 'conditions that breed corruption'

20 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Liu Zhen

The People's Liberation Army must show absolute loyalty to the Communist Party and there can be no room for corruption in the military, President Xi Jinping told top PLA brass this week.

"We must make it clear that the barrels of guns must always be in the hands of those who are loyal and dependable to the party ... And we must make it clear that there is no place for any corrupt elements in the military," Xi was quoted by state media as saying.

Xi spoke on Monday in Yanan, in northwest Shaanxi province, at a political work conference of the Central Military Commission (CMC) with key officials and political commissars of the military, state news agency Xinhua reported. The appearance came before next month's Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which is expected to lay out China's reform and economic priorities for the next few years. The Xinhua report highlighted that the conference was initiated by Xi, who is the chairman of the CMC – the top decision-making body of the PLA.

Xi's speech, which covered a range of issues from global geopolitical challenges to the PLA's modernisation, mirrored a similar one he gave a decade ago in Gutian, Fujian province, that heralded an overhaul of the PLA and acceleration of its modernisation drive.

On Monday, Xi told the PLA elites that they must never forget the revolutionary spirit of the Communist Party founders, stay loyal to the party, and steel themselves for an unstable and rapidly changing world.

"At present, we face complex and profound changes in the world, country, party and the army," he said.

"Politically, we must incessantly promote politics in

our army-building as our military face sophisticated and unparalleled challenges so that we can ensure the nature and principles of the people's army will never change, and we can always dare to fight and win."

In order to win, Xi said leading cadres must be prepared to do "deep soul searching" and face their own shortcomings.

"[PLA] cadres at all levels, the senior ones in particular, must step forward, dare to lose face and face up to their own shortcomings and flaws ... make earnest rectifications, resolve problems that are deeply rooted in their thinking," Xi said.

He added that the top brass must eliminate "hotbeds and conditions that breed corruption" by improving the distribution of power and operational check and balance mechanisms, "enriching the toolbox for punishing new types of corruption and hidden corruption" and strengthening the all-round supervision of high-ranking officers in their performance and use of power.

Xi made no mention of individuals in his speech, which came after the sacking of dozens of senior PLA officials since last year. Former defence minister Li Shangfu was abruptly removed in October, with the reason for his removal never announced.

Additionally, nine senior generals – including past or current top commanders of the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF), the former air force commander and a few Central Military Commission officials with the Equipment Development Department in charge of equipment development of procurement – were disqualified from their posts in the National People's Congress in December. Their removals also remain unexplained.

SCMP reported last year that Beijing had started a wide-ranging anti-corruption investigation focused on the leaders of the PLARF, a key element of the country's nuclear arsenal. In December, the inquiries led to the dismissal of three senior Chinese aerospace-defence executives from China's top advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and a prominent Chinese rocket scientist was also expelled from the CPPCC in January.

The military has been one of the main targets of Xi's far-reaching anti-corruption campaign. The decade-long effort has seen the downfall of top military leaders like Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, both former vice-chairmen of the CMC, in 2014 and 2015.

The Political Work Conference is part of the Central Military Commission's meeting series on important issues, as "political work is always the lifeline of the PLA".

In 2014, Xi chaired an extended Political Work Conference of the CMC with delegates from the entire PLA in Gutian, Fujian province. The meeting echoed the 1929 meeting held in the same place by Mao Zedong, during which the Communist Party

established the principle of “the party commands the gun”.

China’s leader Xi Jinping vows to step up crackdown on corruption in armed forces

20 June 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#)

Xi Jinping has waged an unrelenting crackdown on deep-seated corruption since coming to power a decade ago, a campaign critics say is a tool to purge political rivals.

China’s President Xi Jinping has vowed to boost his crackdown on corruption and enhance loyalty within the armed forces, state media reported Wednesday. Xi has waged an unrelenting crackdown on deep-seated corruption since coming to power a decade ago, a campaign critics say is a tool to purge political rivals.

China’s former defence minister Li Shangfu was sacked abruptly last year in unexplained circumstances and replaced weeks later by the incumbent Dong Jun.

Xi addressed China’s top brass on Monday at a meeting of the Central Military Commission in the northwestern city of Yan’an, state broadcaster CCTV said.

He urged participants to “eradicate the soil and conditions in which corruption thrives (and) expand the depth and breadth of the anti-corruption struggle”, CCTV said.

Xi also called on the military to “strengthen the all-round supervision of senior cadres in exercising their duties and using their powers”.

The meeting took place as China and its regional neighbours have butted heads in recent months over territorial claims in the hotly disputed South China Sea.

China also held war games last month around Taiwan, the self-ruled island that it claims as part of its territory and has vowed to seize one day, by force if needed.

“The situation in the world, country, party and army are undergoing complex and profound changes,” Xi said, according to CCTV.

“We must unceasingly promote political army-building... and always dare to fight and win.”

Xi stresses PLA's political loyalty at crucial meeting held in old revolutionary base

19 June 2024, [The State Council](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the armed forces' political loyalty as a crucial meeting on the political work in the military was held in Yan'an, an old revolutionary base in northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), demanded efforts to ensure a solid political guarantee for building a strong military, as he addressed the CMC Political Work Conference, held from Monday to Wednesday.

The Yan'an conference, which Xi personally decided to convene, took place 10 years after a similar meeting was held in Gutian, east China's Fujian Province. The participants discussed and made arrangements for promoting political work in the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Xi emphasized the need to uphold the Party's absolute leadership over the military and to build a high-quality cadre team that is loyal, clean, responsible, and capable of fulfilling the mission of strengthening the military.

On Monday afternoon, Xi led CMC members and heads of various departments and units to visit the revolutionary relics at Wangjiaping, where the CMC's headquarters were stationed from August 1937 to March 1947.

Xi visited the former residences of late revolutionary leaders including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De in Yan'an to honor the memory of their revolutionary struggle.

The Yan'an conference marks a return to the roots of the military, Xi said.

He called on senior military officers to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted by the Party and the people to keep strengthening the armed forces.

Xi delivered an important speech at the conference, noting that after the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee held the 2014 military political work conference in Gutian and improved political conduct through rectification initiatives.

Measures to govern the military with strict discipline have been comprehensively implemented with unprecedented determination and intensity, achieving historic accomplishments in enhancing political loyalty in the military, according to Xi.

Xi stressed that political work is always the lifeline of the country's military. The armed forces must always be led by those who are reliable and loyal to the Party, and there must be no place for corruption within the military.

Noting that China's military is confronted with complicated challenges in the political work, Xi said it is necessary to continuously enhance political loyalty in the military to ensure that the people's armed forces always uphold their core values, maintain purity, and strictly adhere to discipline.

He also analyzed the deep-seated problems that need to be addressed in military political work, emphasizing that a root cause of these problems lies in the lack of ideals and beliefs.

Xi called on relevant personnel at all levels, especially senior cadres, to introspect, engage in soul-searching reflections, and make earnest rectifications.

Xi highlighted key work to enhance political loyalty in the military, urging efforts to arm the military with the Party's new theories and improve the leadership of Party organizations, as well as their capabilities of organization and implementation.

The Party leadership must be upheld in all the fields and the whole process of enhancing combat readiness, Xi noted.

Xi urged efforts to nurture a contingent of high-caliber officers, eradicate the breeding ground for corruption, and enhance the comprehensive oversight of high-ranking officers in terms of their performance of duty and exercise of power.

Officers at all levels, especially those in the higher ranks, should lead by example and serve as pioneers and models, Xi said.

Chinese Communist Party warns members not to criticise policy ahead of major economic policy meeting

16 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Sylvie Zhuang

The Chinese Communist Party's watchdog has issued a stern reminder to members not to criticise party policy ahead of a major party meeting that is likely to set the direction of economic policy for the next five years.

But analysts warned this effort to "unify thought", to use the party's own jargon, amid challenging economic conditions may further damage Beijing's credibility and erode business confidence if it is seen as "unreasonably trying to control the storyline".

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection published a special report via state news agency Xinhua on Wednesday that warned against "openly speaking ill of the party on major issues" as part of the watchdog's latest internal disciplinary drive.

The report said "public statements that contradict the decisions of the Central Committee are absolutely not allowed".

It added that public comments that "irresponsibly discuss" the party's main policies, "disrupt the thoughts" and undermine the unity of party members, warning that those who hinder policy execution must be "dealt with strictly".

Explaining its rationale, the report said the party leadership "fully listened" to different voices before it made a decision, and once it had decided all party members "must resolutely implement" that policy.

It also said there were internal party procedures that should be used to address any problems that may arise.

The disciplinary message came weeks ahead of the third plenum – a key meeting of the party's Central

Committee next month that will set the country's economic strategy for the coming five years.

The event was moved back from its customary time slot in the latter months of last year, possibly to give the leadership more time to prepare in the face of growing economic headwinds.

The event is expected to be one of the defining moments for President Xi Jinping's third five-year term as the party's leader.

Its outcome is also likely to play a major role in determining whether the country can avoid the increasingly obvious middle-income trap – where rising costs and declining competitiveness prevent emerging economies reaching high-income status – and reach the party's goal of becoming an innovation-driven developed economy.

The country is also facing multiple challenges on other fronts, including the property crisis, sluggish growth, tariffs from the United States and the European Union's de-risking strategy.

In the run-up to the plenum senior leadership figures have been touring the country to solicit opinion on economic policy, including Xi himself, who held a rare meeting with business leaders in Shandong province and pledged to carry out further reforms.

"Now, as the third plenary session is about to be held, the central leadership undoubtedly wants to control the pace of the discussion," said Dali Yang, a political scientist at the University of Chicago.

"The talk of reforms suggest that everyone is encouraged to speak out, but the ban on public criticism is a stark reminder that dissenting voices will face consequences," he said.

Deng Yuwen, former deputy editor of Study Times, the Central Party School's official newspaper, said the message being sent was "everyone should unify their thoughts before the Third Plenary Session and do not say anything that does not align with the central leadership's main themes and spirit".

He said: "Disciplinary moves of this kind are nominally confined to the party, but it is always the aim to regulate society as a whole."

The rules against public criticisms were included in a major revamp of the party's disciplinary code in 2015 that tightened its control over the membership.

The first person to fall foul of such a charge was Zhao Xinwei, the former editor-in-chief of Xinjiang Daily, the Communist Party mouthpiece in the far-western region.

He was expelled from the party in 2015 for a series of charges including openly opposing key policies aimed at combating terrorism and extremism.

Since then, more than 16 officials have been placed under investigation on suspicion of publicly speaking or going against major party policies, according to a report by the official newspaper Legal Daily in 2021.

Such moves have heightened fears the party is further chipping away at differences of opinion in line with the wider trend of tightening access to information and data.

James Zimmerman, a partner in international law firm Perkins Coie and former chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said “any attempt to unreasonably and dishonestly control the storyline will only further erode Beijing’s credibility”.

He said foreign businesses already had doubts about the credibility of China’s official data and information, and restrictions on policy discussions would further dampen investor and consumer confidence.

China has strongly hit out at questions about its future economic prospects, but last year when the country’s youth unemployment rate hit an all-time high, China’s national statistics agency simply stopped issuing the data. It said it needed to make adjustments and resumed publication six months later.

Nis Grunberg, a China analyst with the Berlin-based think tank Mercator Institute for China Studies, said the decreasing opportunities to speak out or gain access to opinion were not conducive to academic research or building business confidence.

“I don’t think obsessive streamlining of information and only making one single message available is good for business confidence or trust,” said Grunberg, adding that it is clear that Beijing wants everyone to speak with one voice.

He said the lack of transparency and trust in Chinese information also hinders academic research because it is hard to verify or test any assumptions.

“Now the third plenum is approaching and nobody knows what’s coming, really,” said Grunberg.

“So it’s very clear that everyone is supposed to stick to the official line and not to stir up some assumptions or even demands for [the reforms that are] coming.”

China’s Communist Party Members Revised Disciplinary Code Details “Hundred Sins”

14 June 2024, [China Scope](#)

The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) nearly 100 million members are studying a newly revised set of “Disciplinary Regulations.” The regulations contain over 100 provisions, leading Hong Kong media outlet Ming Pao to sarcastically comment that members who can avoid violating any of them are almost “saints” or “perfect people.”

According to the commentary in Ming Pao, the revised regulations list 158 disciplinary violations for party members. These include bans on religious beliefs, stock trading, and joining alumni or hometown associations without approval.

First introduced in 2003 and frequently revised since, the latest version of the CCP’s “Disciplinary

Regulations” took effect on January 1st, 2023 after the latest revisions were finalized in December 2022. Violations span six categories: political, organizational, integrity, mass relations, work, and life. On the political discipline front, publicly expressing “right-wing” views that “adhere to the position of bourgeois liberalization and oppose the Four Cardinal Principles,” as well as “ultra-leftist” opposition to China’s reform and opening up policies, are considered violations. Newly added are violations like “opportunistic networking” and “associating with ‘political fraudsters.’”

“Political fraudsters” refer to those who claim high-level connections to officials, those who claim to have “special backgrounds” as experts/masters, and those who ingratiate themselves with local politicians to facilitate promotions or to resolve legal cases for personal gain.

The Ming Pao commentary noted that, while some violations like “failing to resolutely implement central policies” are clear, others like “pursuing sensual pleasures and vulgar interests” or “inaction, false action, and slow action” are more vague and hard to interpret.

China rolls out ‘zero tolerance’ crackdown on fake government officials, financial crimes

07 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Sylie Zhuang

Beijing has launched a nationwide “zero tolerance” crackdown on people who pretend to be government officials to defraud investors by selling fake official seals – among other schemes.

In a meeting last week, the Ministry of Public Security called on agencies nationwide to target people who impersonated officials from government ministries or state-owned companies to dupe investors.

The rackets had “severely damaged the image of the Communist Party and the government and disrupted social and economic order”, according to a statement posted to the ministry’s website on Thursday.

In an effort to maintain a “good business environment”, the ministry said, law enforcement agencies should leverage mechanisms like big data to uncover illegal fundraising, contract fraud, and illegal deposits.

The crackdown was announced after state media published several reports about individuals or groups that have scammed investors and the public by leveraging the credibility of state institutions.

According to a November report by state news agency Xinhua, more than 20 central ministries and agencies, including the ministries of finance, agriculture and rural affairs, and science and technology, as well as state-owned enterprises, had issued “fraud prevention statements” warning the public to be aware of impostors.

In one case from a court in the city of Dezhou in the eastern province of Shandong, a gang had defrauded 286 victims of almost 29 million yuan (US\$4 million) by claiming to have “government backing”, according to the Xinhua report.

In another case from May 2023, fraudsters who pretended to be a working-group affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the country’s top national economic planner, told local government officials that could obtain subsidies of up to 10 billion yuan, according to a report in March by state broadcaster CCTV.

The scam forced the NDRC to issue a statement on its official WeChat account saying that it had no such working group and there were no such government subsidies.

Chinese authorities have also been battling frauds in which scammers use artificial intelligence to commit financial crimes with increasingly sophisticated technology.

The frequent media presence of some high-profile government officials had offered scammers abundant content to create realistic simulations for scams using facial and voice recognition, CCTV reported.

Earlier this year, Beijing vowed to ramp up a crackdown on financial crimes and pledged to improve monitoring of transactions to reduce risks.

Xi Jinping using relatives to conceal \$707.2mn wealth, says report

10 June 2024, [WION](#), Heena Sharma

Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior Chinese leaders have engaged in corruption and concealed vast amounts of wealth, using their relatives to obscure their activities, according to a US government report.

The report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a public policy research institute of the United States Congress also highlighted the challenges in obtaining public information regarding the wealth and corruption of high-ranking Communist Party officials. According to the report, Xi had accrued a staggering \$376 million in company investments by 2012.

This is in addition to an indirect 18 per cent stake in a rare-earth mineral company valued over \$311 million as well as holdings totaling \$20.2 million in a technology company.

The report underscored the lack of transparency within the Communist Party of China (CPC), as officials are not mandated to disclose their assets publicly.

Control of media is also mentioned in the report, saying that Chinese authorities want to ensure that any reporting on corruption is swiftly suppressed.

Notably, American intelligence agencies are also preparing a report that's likely to uncover major

corruption and undisclosed riches among Chinese Communist Party figures, including Xi Jinping.

CRS report is prepared for members of the US Congress ahead of this US intel report.

The CRS report indicated that there was an expulsion of 266 members of the CPC Central Committee, including prominent figures like former Defence Minister Li Shangfu and former Foreign Minister Qin Gang.

Four types of corruption

The report identified four types of corruption prevalent in China, with "access money" being the most prominent.

This form of corruption involves bribes from capitalists to powerful party officials in exchange for various privileges, as per reports. The other forms of corruption include speed money, grand theft and petty theft.

Several high-profile corruption cases involving Chinese leaders and their relatives have been uncovered by investigations, including those of President Xi's family members and former Premier Wen Jiabao's relatives.

Most of the Xi's \$707.2 million wealth were owned by his eldest sister Qi Qiaoqiao and her husband Deng Jiagui and the couple's daughter Zhang Yannan.

In China, regional security officials have been told to make regime stability a priority

10 June 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Regional officials have been told to safeguard national security and regime stability in meetings held across China ahead of the ruling Communist Party's third plenum in July.

It comes after President Xi Jinping put the focus on regime stability when the National Security Commission met in May last year.

It is rare for such meetings to be made public at any level, and it is not known how often the national body meets during its five-year term.

According to official readouts, at least four provincial and municipal committees of the National Security Commission held meetings in May and early June. The readouts were brief and made no mention of specific events or targets.

At a meeting in the southeastern province of Anhui on June 3, party chief Han Jun emphasised Xi's “holistic approach to national security” and told officials to give priority to “political security” – meaning regime stability.

Prioritising political security and Xi's “holistic approach” were also the main messages at national security meetings held in May in Shanghai in the east, as well as in Chongqing and Yunnan province, both in the southwest, according to official media reports.

Xi first made mention of the “holistic approach” during a speech at the inaugural meeting of the National Security Commission a decade ago. Xi leads the commission, which was set up under the Central Committee in November 2013 as part of a major overhaul of the party’s institutions to strengthen its control over security.

In his speech, Xi said political security was the foundation of the holistic approach to national security, and he also stressed the need for economic, military, cultural and social security.

Addressing the national body in May last year, Xi told officials to be ready for “worst-case and most extreme scenarios” so that they could withstand “high winds and waves and even perilous storms”. He said China was facing national security issues that were “considerably more complex and much more difficult” to deal with than before.

Party secretaries – who also head the provincial and municipal committees of the National Security Commission – laid out their approaches to improve security at the recent meetings.

Chongqing party chief Yuan Jiajun stressed the need to “guard against and crack down on the infiltration, sabotage, subversion and secession activities of hostile forces, resolutely fight the ideological struggle, and crack down on violent terrorist activities harshly” during a meeting on May 31, according to the official readout.

He told officials to do their “utmost to ensure economic and financial security”, especially to prevent and deal with the hidden debts of local governments and state-owned enterprises.

In Yunnan the previous day, party boss Wang Ning stressed the province’s role in safeguarding China’s southwest, including by cracking down on cross-border crimes such as telecoms scams, illegal immigration and smuggling. Yunnan shares borders with Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos.

At a meeting on May 15, Shanghai’s party chief Chen Jining said the city should build “a solid foundation for economic security and effectively safeguard cultural security”, according to party mouthpiece Jiefang Daily. Chen also called for people’s safety to be maintained, and for there to be “virtuous interaction” between high-quality development and high-level security.

A political scientist at Nanjing University said the security push needs to be balanced with development since the economy is facing more headwinds than it was 10 years ago when Xi first introduced the “holistic” concept.

“Security is certainly very important for the party’s regime stability, but by overdoing it, it seems to be eating into China’s economic growth and affecting employment, people’s lives and government revenue,” said the political scientist, who declined to be named as he is not authorised to speak to the media.

“So if they are true believers in the ‘holistic’ security approach they should take another look at how to balance it, because too much emphasis on security is creating other social risks.”

Key report helps to reveal the wealth and corruption of the CCP

09 June 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Paul Berkowitz and Bradley A. Thayer

WASHINGTON DC: *By revealing the corrupt nature of CCP, the CRS report helps the world to grasp the fundamental nature of CCP.*

An important Congressional Research Service (CRS) report was released in Washington at the end of May. The report studied the publicly available information on the wealth and corruption of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This includes the General Secretary of the CCP, Xi Jinping, and senior leadership officials of the Central Committee, the Politburo, the Politburo Standing Committee, the regional Party Secretaries, as well as the leaders of the five autonomous regions, and four municipalities that report directly to the central government. This was mandated by members of the U.S. House and Senate and also tasked the U.S. intelligence community with producing a similar, publicly available study. The report was precipitated by the fact that the CCP leadership and their families are as wealthy as Croesus while shamelessly espousing socialist rhetoric. Precisely how did selfless CCP leadership gain this wealth on their nominal salaries is curious and it is certain that the Chinese people will wish to know.

The CRS report is of paramount importance for four reasons. First, it reveals for global audiences the corrupt nature of the CCP and to identify pathways for investigative journalism, documentation on social media, and how states within the Quad may wish to employ their resources, including their intelligence communities, to document these facts. There is a rich menu of topic for journalists to explore and for other media, perhaps most importantly social media, to highlight the CCP’s wealth and corruption, and so publicize and thus inform global populations.

Second, the report reviews some of what is openly known about senior CCP officials like Xi Jinping and his family, former CCP officials like Wen Jiabao, and tycoons like Wang Jianlin. It also documents the difficulties some journalists have experienced in their investigations. Those difficulties have come from the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) government. For example, when the Wall Street Journal reported on the activities of Xi’s material cousin, Ming Chai, one of the article’s co-authors, Chun Han Wong, did not have his press credentials renewed, which effectively expelled him from the country. But there is another

more odious form employed to discourage investigation into the wealth of the CCP leadership. The example of Michael Forsythe, who was leading a Bloomberg News investigation into Xi's wealth. After publishing an exposé, Forsythe and his family received death threats, and Bloomberg's site was blocked within the PRC, and Bloomberg declined to publish a subsequent investigation into Wang Jianlin, a well-connected head of a major real estate and entertainment concern. The PRC's direct and indirect pressure against media is tangible however intrepid journalists may be. It underscores the need of alternatives to find the information, including the Chinese diaspora and by individual nation states to employ their resources.

Third, by revealing the corrupt nature of the CCP, the CRS report helps the world to grasp the fundamental nature of the CCP. While the CCP rules China, it is not its legitimate government. Their grotesque wealth and corruption are a symptom of their illegitimacy. They are not the rightful rulers of the Chinese people but gangsters, thugs and goons who came to power due to the Communist International and ultimately as a result of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's support in the wake of the defeat of Japan. They are the poisoned fruit of the Bolshevik Revolution who seek to sustain the tyranny of the failed ideology of Marxism-Leninism on the Chinese people. They only held onto power after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre because of the world's industrial states' reluctance to ostracize Beijing as long as it could provide rock bottom cheap and slave labour.

Fourth, the CRS report is the beginning of a path and framework for creating the most effective tool of political warfare that members of the Quad and other concerned nations possess. Illuminating the corruption and obscene wealth of the CCP leadership means that the CCP's legitimation crisis is close at hand for the Chinese people to act upon and for nations to factor in when calculating risk in bilateral relations. As a result of its gross human rights abuses, hyperaggression directed at East Turkestan, India, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Tibet, the CCP is beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour in international society. It is hoped that armed with detailed facts about the enormous wealth of individual leaders of the CCP, the Chinese people will turn China into a respected democracy like Taiwan.

Having made a contribution, the question becomes what will the global public do with such information. The Quad members, acting either as individual states or as a unified group, can lead the community of nations to identify the sources and location of the wealth of the CCP. It is a certainty that investigations will reveal that the CCP's leaders are billionaires with untold wealth in New York, Switzerland, Dubai, London, Paris, and other locations. While that has

been long suspected, the revelation of the facts will be a critical component for the Chinese people to free themselves from this base and evil regime.

The CRS report, and related ones, are important steps in delegitimizing the CCP to remove this aggressive cancer from continuing to harm the health of China and the body of global humanity. Working together, the international community should labour towards a complete accounting of how many billions Xi, his family, and Party comrades have in overseas banks

इस शब्द का अर्थ जानिये

, properties, and other assets. Thereby, the true, corrupt nature of the CCP leadership, with specific amounts and locations documented, will permit the victims of the CCP, domestic and international, to move to seize those assets. That window into the sordid behaviour of the CCP will permit the Chinese people and the world to demand accountability while also energizing the necessary response from people of goodwill around the world.

Paul Berkowitz is a former House Foreign Affairs Committee staffer. He covered Asia and the Pacific for Chairman Benjamin A. Gilman who was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan Award for Public Affairs in 2001. Bradley A. Thayer is the coauthor with James Fanell of "Embracing Communist China: America's Greatest Strategic Failure".

China's political advisors meet on high-level socialist market economy

04 June 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The seventh meeting of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top political advisory body, opened in Beijing on Tuesday, focusing on building a high-level socialist market economy system.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, presided over the opening meeting.

Ding Xuexiang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice premier, was invited to attend the meeting and delivered a report.

Wang called on the national political advisors to carry out in-depth consultations and put forward suggestions on building a high-level socialist market economy system, and contribute wisdom and strength to advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through Chinese modernization.

In delivering a report, Ding stressed efforts to encourage state-owned capital and state-owned enterprises to grow stronger, better and bigger, and

provide a sound environment and more opportunities for the non-public sector.

It is important to speed up the development of a unified national market, improve fundamental market economic systems such as property-rights protection, market access, fair competition and social credit, and build a high-standard market system, he said.

He called for giving full play to the strategic guidance of national development plans and strengthening coordination between fiscal and monetary policies, so as to promote sustained and sound economic development.

"We will take more initiative to align with high-standard international economic and trade rules, steadily expand institutional opening-up, and foster new advantages in global economic cooperation and competition," he said.

The political advisors listened to reports on a number of topics, including the transformation and upgrading of traditional manufacturing industries, the construction of water conservancy infrastructure for better production capacity in agriculture, and green and low-carbon transformation of industries.

The meeting will last for two and a half days. The political advisors will conduct group discussions on seven topics.

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

US: China still arresting ‘thousands’ each year for practicing faith

26 June 2024, [RFA](#), Alex Willemyns

Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Falun Gong followers are targeted.

Chinese authorities continue to arrest “thousands” of people a year for practicing their faith in ways that undermine the primacy of the Chinese Communist Party, a new U.S. State Department report says.

Released by Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday, the 25th annual Report on International Religious Freedom says China’s constitutional guarantees to religious freedom are obstructed by regulations that “require clergy to pledge allegiance to the CCP.”

The report says Chinese authorities have recently begun a campaign to enforce those regulations, after a September 2023 “administrative measure” was issued that requires religious centers to fall into line.

Under the measure, all places of worship must “uphold the leadership of the CCP, implement ‘Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,’ and promote the ‘Sinicization’ of religion,” it says.

Those who do not comply are “tortured, physically abused, arrested, disappeared, detained, sentenced to prison, subjected to forced indoctrination in CCP ideology,” the report adds, noting that charges or accusations against the faithful are often “vague or insubstantial.”

A “lack of transparency” from Chinese authorities makes exact arrest and imprisonment numbers impossible to discern, it continues, but “estimates of those imprisoned during the year [2023] for their religious beliefs ranged from the low thousands to more than 10,000.”

A little more than half of Chinese are atheist or religiously unaffiliated, the report says, while 18.2% of the population identify as Buddhist, 5.1% as Christian, 1.8% as Muslim and 21.9% follow folk religions.

Only five religions – Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism – are officially recognized in China and allowed to openly be practiced, which must be done under the banner of corresponding state-sanctioned groups closely monitored by the authorities.

Worldwide decline

Speaking at the launch of the report, Blinken noted a recent Pew survey that found worldwide religious freedom was at its lowest ebb since the polling company began tracking the issue in 2007.

He noted that the United States was not immune from the issue.

“Since Hamas’s horrific terrorist attack on Israel on Oct. 7, and the subsequent conflict in Gaza, both anti-semitism and Islamophobia have increased significantly across the globe,” Blinken said.

“Here in the United States, reports of hate crimes and other incidents targeting both Muslims and Jews have gone up dramatically.”

But he said official repression of religion was different, and pointed China’s ramping up of forced Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhists and the “genocide and crimes against humanity that China is committing against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang.”

The campaign is part of a broader campaign to force non-Han Chinese to assimilate into what Beijing considers to be mainstream culture: Chinese authorities in the past year have, for instance, banned Tibetan students speaking their native language and prohibited them from taking private classes outside the state-run schooling system.

Rashad Hussein, the U.S. ambassador at large for international religious freedom, told the launch that the campaign against the Uyghurs “follows decades of persecution of religious communities, from Tibetan Buddhists, to Christians to Falun Gong practitioners.”

Hussein noted the crackdown against Falun Gong, which Beijing considers a cult and is now headquartered in rural New York, took place 25 years ago, with many adherents fleeing from China.

“We now even see [China] attempt to reach across its borders to target individuals and silence critics, such as the reports of Chinese authorities engaging in transnational repression against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetans, Falun Gong and many more,” he said.

He noted a similar phenomenon was taking place in Myanmar, where the military junta is increasingly targeting the Rohingya Muslim minority in the country’s east as well as those practicing Christianity.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, called the accusations in the report inaccurate and accused the U.S. State Department of trying to interfere in domestic Chinese affairs.

“The Chinese government protects citizens’ freedom of religious belief in accordance with the law. People of all ethnic groups in China are fully entitled to the freedom of religious belief as prescribed by law,” he said, adding that China has “nearly 200 million religious believers.”

“We urge relevant parties to stop using the so-called religious issues to meddle in China’s internal affairs,” he said.

After Escaping China by Sea, a Dissident Faces His Next Act

23 June 2024, [The New York Times](#), John Yoon

The dissident’s lone regret after his 200-mile escape across the Yellow Sea was not taking night vision goggles.

Nearing the end of his jet ski journey out of China last summer, Kwon Pyong peered through the darkness off the South Korean coast. As he approached the shore, sea gulls appeared to bob as if floating. He steered forward, then ran aground: The birds were sitting on mud.

“I had everything — sunscreen, backup batteries, a knife to cut buoy lines,” he recalled in an interview. He was prepared to signal his location with a laser pen if he became stranded and to burn his notes with a lighter if he were captured. He also had a visa to enter South Korea, and had intended to arrive at a port of entry, he said, not strand himself on a mud flat. It wasn’t enough.

Mr. Kwon, 36 and an ethnic Korean, had mocked China’s powerful leader and criticized how the ruling Communist Party was persecuting hundreds of pro-democracy activists at home and abroad. In response, he said, he faced an exit ban and years of detention, prison and surveillance.

But fleeing to South Korea did not offer the relief he expected. He was still hounded by the Chinese state, he said, and spent time in detention. Even after he was released, he was in legal limbo: neither wanted nor allowed to leave.

It would take 10 more months for Mr. Kwon to be permitted to leave South Korea. Days before he flew out on Sunday, he returned to the mud flat where he haplessly came ashore off Incheon last summer and recounted for the first time publicly the details of his meticulously planned journey.

Court documents from his criminal case in South Korea, past interviews with his friends and family and a statement from the Incheon Coast Guard last year corroborated many of the details in his account.

On a Yamaha WaveRunner purchased with the equivalent of \$25,000 in cash, withdrawn from several banks to avoid tipping off the police, Mr. Kwon set off on the morning of Aug. 16 from the foggy coast of the Shandong Peninsula.

He said he wore a black life jacket and motorcycle helmet for the journey, where he crashed into 10-foot waves and dodged floating rice wine bottles. As his skin burned from the summer sun, he fell into the sea twice, losing his sunglasses.

He refueled using the five barrels of gas that he had tied to the WaveRunner. For himself, he had five bottles of water and five ham and tuna sandwiches. He

navigated using a marine compass and a smartphone he had acquired from someone else.

His first glimpse of land came as the setting sun gave the islands off South Korea a warm glow. What was supposed to take eight hours turned to 14. By the time Mr. Kwon arrived in Incheon, the pink sky he had stopped to admire had faded to black.

He did not see any boats or ships on guard, he said, even as he entered a heavily militarized area that the navy monitors for activity, including defectors from North Korea.

Mr. Kwon — who speaks Chinese, English and some Korean — called the local police for help. For an hour, he waited while trying to fend off mosquitoes by walking around his watercraft in beige Crocs.

That night, he said, the Incheon Coast Guard and the South Korean Marine Corps rescued him, detained him and began investigating him along with the South Korean National Intelligence Service.

South Korea rarely accepts refugees, and the authorities served him a deportation order. But over the next months, he was also banned from leaving the country as he fought a criminal charge of unlawful entry, which can be punished with up to five years in prison.

He said that he wondered how things might have unfolded had his arrival gone as planned.

South Korean prosecutors did not lift the exit ban they imposed on Mr. Kwon until his criminal case was finished this month. He said he planned to apply for asylum in the United States or Canada. His flight on Sunday was bound for Newark.

“I want to live my own life,” he said. “I want to live in peace for a while.”

Mr. Kwon, whose Chinese name is Quan Ping, is from a city in the northeastern Chinese province of Jilin, near the border with North Korea. He has visited South Korea, his grandfather’s birthplace, regularly since childhood. He spent his college years in the United States, where he went by Johnny, participated in Iowa State University’s Army R.O.T.C. program and took flying lessons, he said.

He studied aerospace engineering at the university for a few years and returned in 2012 to China, where he ran an online clothing brand and traded cryptocurrencies. He continued traveling widely, touring Lebanon and Syria as an aspiring photojournalist, he said.

He first drew the ire of the Chinese authorities when he began criticizing the Communist Party online. In 2016, he posted on social media about antigovernment protests he had attended in Hong Kong, a Chinese territory. He wore a T-shirt calling China’s leader, Xi Jinping, “Xitler.”

Chinese authorities arrested Mr. Kwon that year and sentenced him in 2017 to 18 months in prison for “inciting subversion of state power,” a charge

frequently leveled against dissidents and human rights lawyers.

After his release in 2018, the police tapped his communications, tracked his movements and periodically interrogated him, he said. State agents, he added, were alarmed by his contact with the leaders of the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising, including Wang Dan, once one of China’s most wanted men.

“I couldn’t live a normal life,” he said.

China’s Ministry of Public Security did not respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Kwon grew desperate to leave as the police investigated his family and friends. He said his plans to leave China by sea were inspired in part by the 1994 movie “The Shawshank Redemption” and by Lindsay Warner, an explorer who circumnavigated Australia on a Jet Ski. He decided South Korea was his only viable option.

He left behind his e-commerce and crypto operations, as well as his friends, family members and a girlfriend. After the rescue from the mud flat, Mr. Kwon said, investigators seemed baffled by his story and interrogated him, threatened to torture him and denied his request for a lawyer. The Incheon Coast Guard, which led the investigation, said in a statement that “there were no human rights violations” during the investigation.

In court, Mr. Kwon argued that he was a political refugee and had intended to arrive legally at the Incheon Port, less than a mile from the mud flat, with a tourist visa. A judge found him guilty of unlawful entry in November, handing down a suspended one-year prison sentence with a two-year probationary period.

The verdict released Mr. Kwon from custody but not from legal limbo. Immigration officials imposed an exit ban as prosecutors appealed the judge’s decision.

While living in his parents’ house in Ansan, south of Seoul, Mr. Kwon went to the gym, read books about crypto trading and volunteered at an English language school for adults. He said he also befriended a group of Nigerian refugees by joining their soccer club.

But he didn’t let his guard down. He stuck to the routines he had developed in China: constantly checking for security cameras, and using encrypted texting apps and signal-blocking Faraday bags.

Lee Dae-seon, a South Korean activist who has helped Mr. Kwon, said that he has warned Mr. Kwon of the dangers of China’s overseas police effort, known as Operation Fox Hunt, in which Chinese dissidents living abroad have been forcibly repatriated.

South Korea’s National Intelligence Service confirmed with Mr. Lee that he and Mr. Kwon were targets of the operation, Mr. Lee said. The N.I.S. did not respond to a request for comment.

"It is not safe for him to continue living in South Korea," Mr. Lee said.

In May, an appeals court dismissed prosecutors' appeal, as well as Mr. Kwon's lawyers' efforts to have his sentence reduced. Mr. Kwon decided not to pursue the case further so that he could leave the country quickly, and prosecutors lifted the travel ban, said Sejin Kim, his lawyer.

At the mud flat, Mr. Kwon said he was looking forward to leaving and starting a new business venture. He said some of his friends and relatives live in the United States and Canada. He is traveling to the United States on a visa for visitors.

"I want to start my second life," he said.

An immigration law specialist said that while a case for seeking asylum in the United States appeared to be strong, a decision could take years. Mr. Kwon would also have to demonstrate a "well-founded fear" of additional persecution should he be deported to China, said the specialist, Yael Schacher, of Refugees International, a nonprofit in Washington, D.C.

At Incheon Airport on Sunday, he said goodbye to his parents and friends in South Korea, where he would be barred from returning for five years because of his criminal record.

He disappeared into the security line, a ticket for seat 17A in hand, and with his Chinese passport and his South Korean deportation order in the black tactical backpack he had brought on his escape from China. He confirmed that he had boarded his plane by telephone.

"I'm happy, sad," he said minutes before his flight was set to take off. "And angry," he added, "that it took me so long to leave South Korea."

At shortly before 10 p.m., the flight status display showed that his plane had departed.

China's political refugees remain at risk long after leaving country

20 June 2024, [RFA](#), Wang Yun

On World Refugee Day, asylum-seekers share their stories about being persecuted – and fear of being sent back.

Chinese nationals are seeking political asylum in ever larger numbers, but face transnational repression from China and lack of understanding from foreign authorities as they flee persecution, refugees and those who help them told RFA Mandarin in recent interviews.

A Chinese activist who supported an online free speech campaign that saw its leader arrested in Laos and is "terrified" of being sent back to China is now facing deportation from Denmark after her asylum application was rejected by authorities there.

Liu Dongling fled China in 2018 when her son was refused an education by authorities after she helped victims of forced evictions to apply for compensation through legal channels, she told RFA Mandarin in an interview recorded two days before World Refugee Day, June 20.

She said the authorities claimed they couldn't be sure from the evidence she submitted that she was at risk if she went back to China.

But Liu says she knows otherwise, citing repeated phone calls from a state prosecutor from her home city of Zhengzhou.

"I gradually realized that this Gaoxin District People's Procuratorate official called Li Hongbin had been put in charge of my case, relating to when I was helping others with their [forced eviction complaint] cases," Liu said. "I realized that the fact that he kept calling me put me in danger."

Who is a refugee?

The United Nations defines a refugee as someone who legitimately fears persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, belonging to a social group or having a certain political opinion, and is unwilling to return to the country for those reasons.

Yet foreign governments have been repeatedly criticized by rights activists for repatriating asylum-seekers who are then arrested and jailed on their return to China.

China also actively works to force its overseas dissidents to return home, sparking international concern over the Chinese Communist Party's "long-arm" law enforcement operations, which have included running secret police "service stations" in dozens of countries, according to the Spain-based rights group Safeguard Defenders.

Liu, who started writing for the overseas Chinese-language website Boxun after leaving China, also cites the forced repatriation of rights activists Dong Guangping and Jiang Yefei by authorities in Thailand around the time she left China.

"I was told by a colleague at Boxun ... that a lot of Boxun journalists had been detained in China, and that some had even been detained in Thailand," Liu said. "So I got more and more terrified."

Captured in Laos

Liu had also been a vocal supporter via X of an anti-censorship movement started by Lao-based activist Qiao Xinxin, who was later detained and forcibly repatriated.

Qiao, whose birth name is Yang Zewei, went missing, believed detained on or around May 31, 2023 in Vientiane, after launching an online campaign to end internet censorship in China, known as the BanGFW Movement, a reference to the Great Firewall, according to fellow activists.

His family were later informed that he is being held in a juvenile detention center in Hunan's Hengyang city

in another example of China's cross-border law enforcement activities

Qiao had lived in Laos for several years before launching the BanGFW Movement, yet was believed to have been detained by Chinese police in Vientiane. Radio Free Asia contacted the Danish Refugee Council by email about Liu's case, but had received no reply by June 19. Danish Repatriation Council official Tina Fjorside confirmed on Tuesday that Liu had now entered a process that will result in her forced repatriation.

Immigration jails are 'hell on earth'

Thailand-based political dissident Li Nanfei told RFA Mandarin that he's now basically stuck in the country, playing an ongoing game of cat-and-mouse with Thai immigration authorities, and trying to stay out of their detention centers.

"Immigration detention centers are like hell on earth," Li said. "Human rights violations are very common, inmates are packed in very densely, and there is frequent violence."

Li spent his savings on bailing himself out of his last spell in detention, where he ran into plenty of other refugees on the run from China.

"The immigration prisons would hold onto them for a long time," he said. "Some people were held there for more than 10 years. Some even died in there."

Figures released by the United Nations' refugee agency UNHCR in June 2022 showed that while around 12,000 Chinese nationals sought asylum overseas in 2012, the year that Xi took office as Communist Party general secretary, that number had risen to nearly 120,000 by 2021.

The U.S. remains the most popular destination, accepting 88,722 applicants from mainland China last year. Australia took 15,774 asylum-seekers in the same year, figures showed.

New York-based current affairs commentator Ma Ju, who runs a refugee relief station offering two weeks of free food and accommodation to Chinese asylum-seekers in the city, said the refugees just keep on coming, despite the hazards of overland travel to the border with Mexico, known in Chinese as "walking the line."

"A very high proportion, about 80%, are here because of political, religious or ethnic [persecution]," Ma said. "A lot of ethnic minorities like Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Hui Muslims, Mongolians and Tibetans are there because of their religion or ethnic identity."

The vast majority can't live a life of any dignity back home in China, Ma said.

"They were in pain and misery every day -- there's nothing there for them, no dignity," he said, adding that only a small minority of refugees are basically there for what he termed "economic reasons."

In San Francisco, artist and rights activist Xiang Li has formed a group to help refugee women through art. Most of them are Chinese women.

"Some have psychological trauma and need treatment," Xiang said. "We haven't gotten to the point of offering counseling yet, but there is a kind of mutual support we can offer, which is sometimes even more effective."

Chengdu Early Rain Church Member Detained for Commemorating Tiananmen

06 June 2024, [Qi Junzao](#)

Fu Lijun cautiously posted only music and a prayer on June 4. It was enough to go to jail.

While around the world on June 4 many commemorate the anniversary of the bloody June Fourth Incident, i.e., the mass killing of students in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, of June 4, 1989, any remembrance of the event is strictly forbidden in China. Search engines have been manipulated to disable searches for "June Fourth Incident" or "June 4 Tiananmen Square." Actually, those who commemorate in any way the June 4 Incident may go to jail.

That this is not only a theoretical risk was confirmed by what happened on June 4 this year to Fu Lijun, a member of Chengdu Early Rain Covenant Church, whose Pastor Wang Yi (not a relative of the chief of Chinese Foreign Affairs with the same name) was sentenced to nine years in jail in 2019. Officially, the Early Rain Church has been liquidated, but in fact members continue to meet in private homes, under continuous police harassment.

In the early morning of June 4, Fu Lijun posted on WeChat Moments music intended to commemorate the June Fourth Incident and a prayer. There was no criticism of the CCP.

However, this was enough to mobilize the police, which acted immediately. At 7 a.m. on June 4, agents of Chengdu National Security Bureau knocked at Fu's door, and he was taken away.

He was informed that he will be administratively detained for five days, until June 10. This may seem a lesser penalty, although nobody should spend time in jail for posting music and prayers on social media. However, those who have been placed once in administrative detention in China may expect continuous surveillance for years, police harassment, and serious problems in the workplace.

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Xi eyes military supremacy as he reorganises China's armed forces

24 June 2024, Aljazeera, Frederik Kelter

China has been giving the democratic island of Taiwan – and the rest of the world – an indication of its growing military prowess in recent months.

In the run-up to Taiwan's elections in January, the island's information sphere was bombarded with coordinated cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns.

Beijing claims Taiwan as its own and has not ruled out the use of force to bring the island under its control.

Following the inauguration of the Taiwanese government last month, Chinese military might was on full display as the Chinese armed forces surrounded Taiwan in two days of drills during which Chinese state media released an animated video showing missiles raining down on major Taiwanese cities.

After the exercises, a Chinese military spokesperson said the country's armed forces remained fully prepared, highly vigilant and ready to take resolute action when it came to Taiwan.

Later in May, China's newest and most advanced aircraft carrier also sailed out from Shanghai on its first sea trials – placing the Chinese navy second only to the United States in the number of aircraft carriers in its fleet.

But despite the relentless demonstration of the military's increasing sophistication, some analysts wonder how much confidence Chinese President Xi Jinping has in his armed forces.

Last week, Xi told a military conference that there were "deep-seated problems" throughout the armed forces and change was necessary.

His comments followed a ceremony in April where he unveiled the largest reorganisation of the Chinese military in almost 10 years.

"It came as a shock, and it shows that Xi is not satisfied with the existing structure and the current capabilities of the Chinese military," Yang Zi, a PhD student at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, told Al Jazeera.

Purges and corruption

For many observers, the most unexpected element of the reorganisation was the elimination of the Strategic Support Force (SSF).

"There have been problems, purges and corruption probes in other divisions of the military," Christina Chen, a research fellow at the Taiwanese security think tank Institute for National Defense and Security Research (INDSR), told Al Jazeera.

"But we haven't heard of similar trouble within the Strategic Support Force, so there was little indication

leading up to this announcement that the SSF was in line to be reorganised.”

Xi was himself involved with the creation of the SSF, which was unveiled at the last major Chinese military restructuring in 2015.

The SSF was an elite body tasked with accelerating the development of armed forces’ space and cyber warfare capabilities and improving data sharing across services and theatres by 2020

But by mid-2019, a white paper from China’s Ministry of Defence found that SSF progress had been slow even as advanced data and intelligence were expected to play an ever more decisive role in future conflicts.

The end of the SSF indicates a loss of faith in the ability of the 2015 reforms to prepare for such conflicts and suggests the Chinese leadership will be playing an even greater role in military modernisation, according to Chen.

Instead of the SSF, the fields of space, information and cyber warfare are being placed within their own divisions directly under the supervision of the Central Military Commission, which Xi chairs.

The new structure will be vital in helping the Chinese military “fight and win in modern warfare,” Xi said when he announced the reforms.

Modern warfare is a field currently dominated by the United States military, said Chen, who sees the reorganisation as a further indication of Beijing’s determination to catch up with Washington.

Beijing and Washington find themselves on opposite sides in several disputes in the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

Washington has accused Beijing, which has been involved in a number of confrontations with the Philippines at several contested reefs, of threatening regional peace with its aggressive conduct, while Beijing has accused Washington of meddling in Asian affairs that do not concern it.

“Xi’s long-term goal is to surpass the United States militarily and make China the leading military power in the region and the world,” Chen said.

‘Ruthless adaptability’

The military reorganisation comes amid what has been described as the biggest purge in Chinese military history, with key leaders being fired or disappearing from view.

Much of the upheaval has taken place within the armed forces elite Rocket Force, which oversees Beijing’s tactical and nuclear missiles and was supposed to be among the military’s most capable units.

“The Rocket Force purges of last year showed that the Chinese armed forces are not as ready for prime time as we have previously imagined,” RSIS’s Yang said.

Prominent figures have disappeared as well. The defence minister, Li Shuangfu, who previously served

as a deputy commander of the SSF and was considered a Xi loyalist, went missing last year.

Beijing confirmed that Li had been removed in October, nearly two months after he disappeared from view.

The fact that high-ranking officers and officials seemingly close to Xi have not been spared in the purge underlines the shifting landscape of loyalty and power in Chinese elite politics, according to Shaoyu Yuan, a scholar of Chinese studies at Rutgers University in the US.

“Individuals removed might have initially risen under Xi’s patronage but their dismissal signals a recalibration of loyalty and trust as his strategic vision and his perception of potential threats evolve,” Yuan told Al Jazeera.

In Yang’s view, the purges and the recent military reorganisation suggest that Xi has little faith in the commanders who have risen through the ranks in recent times, or in the previous reforms, even though he played a key role in their promotions and the structural changes.

While that might raise questions about Xi’s choices, Yuan said the Chinese president’s reactions to his lack of faith demonstrate his ruthless adaptability as well as his willingness to recalibrate his approach to maintain control and pursue his vision.

“His determination to eliminate any structures or individuals that do not align with his current strategic objectives regardless of their past contributions may reinforce his image as a decisive leader who prioritises the present needs of the state over past allegiances,” he said.

Yuan adds that in the power dynamics around the president, loyalty must be continually earned.

“This approach can create a cycle where trust is perpetually conditional, driving the need for constant reaffirmation of loyalty,” he said.

At a recent military conference, Xi stressed that military officials, especially those at senior levels, had to have the courage to put aside their prestige and acknowledge their shortcomings.

“They must deeply self-reflect ... make earnest rectifications, resolve problems at the root of their thinking,” he said.

RSIS’s Yang expects that there will be a greater emphasis on political work within the armed forces, building on last year’s focus on Xi Jinping Thought, the president’s political, economic and social philosophy, throughout the Communist Party.

Such political work could take time away from crucial military training, according to Yang, or encourage talented officers to keep their heads down to avoid the risk of being targeted in any future purges.

“He [Xi] has no qualms about shaking things up and letting heads roll,” Yang said. “But in the end, only time

will tell whether these changes will actually enhance the Chinese military's combat capabilities."

China is snapping up land near military sites — Washington needs to act ASAP

23 June 2024, [The New York Post](#)

In yet another front where the Biden administration is blithely ignoring US national security, a bombshell Post report last week revealed that Chinese entities have bought up land around 19 military bases nationwide. The danger's obvious: Beijing can easily use surveillance tech, like drones or trackers, to monitor movements in and out of bases, among other spying. And that's plainly the *intent*: Sun Guangxin, a former People's Liberation Army general with close ties to the Chinese Communist Party, owns about 40% of Chinese-owned US land; over a few years starting in 2016, notably, he bought up \$110 million worth of land next to Laughlin Air Force Base in Val Verde County, Texas.

His plan to run a "wind farm" there was foiled by the Lone Star Infrastructure Act, blocking businesses associated with "hostile nations" from accessing the state's energy grid.

Texas isn't the only state fighting back: In 2023, 15 states passed laws regulating foreign ownership of US land; 20 more states are looking to do the same this year.

But why isn't the Biden administration doing more?

Yes, President Biden last month signed an executive order forcing a Chinese-owned Bitcoin mining firm to sell land near F.E. Warren base, which houses intercontinental ballistic missiles, in Cheyenne, Wyo. He could do the same to kick CCP-connected owners off *all* farmland near military sites.

Several lawmakers have tried to get ahead of this problem on a national level.

Last year, Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) reintroduced a bill to require the prez to prohibit entities associated with China's government from buying US agricultural land (which is virtually all the sites in question; Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Mike Rounds (R-SD) have introduced legislation to block China, Russia, Iran and North Korea from doing so.

But all these bills are dying in committee.

Congress should pass a law ASAP; in the meantime, Biden needs to start rolling back the CCP's slow, methodical invasion.

Probably, it is time for an indigenous assessment of Chinese military developments on a regular basis.

Central Military Commission Tells PLA to Tighten Budget

23 June 2024, [China Scope](#)

Due to the sliding economy, Beijing has been asking local governments to keep tight budgets. Now it has also asked the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to do the same.

China's Central Military Commission recently issued a document titled "Measures on Building the Military with Hard Work and in Thrifty Way, to Improve the Military's Quality and Efficiency." The document states that "building the military with hard work and in a thrifty way is the fine tradition of the communist party and military," and "must not be abandoned at any time or under any circumstances." It urged the military to "firmly establish the mindset of living with a tight budget, meticulously calculate and manage all endeavors with thrift." According to the website of China's Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the document emphasizes the need to "adopt concepts such as resource constraints, cost-effectiveness, integration of support, performance management, and systematic governance, to enhance the operational efficiency of military systems and the utilization efficiency of defense resources."

Xi signals further military purges to eradicate corruption

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

Speaking at China's first military political work conference in a decade this week, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated the need for the military to eliminate corruption and strengthen its loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party. He also warned of "deep-seated issues" in the military's politics, ideology, work style and discipline.

"The gun barrels should always be in the hands of those who are loyal and reliable to the party and there must be no place for corrupt elements to hide in the military," Xi said in his remarks, according to China's state broadcaster CCTV.

In a lengthy overview, Xi urged the military to enhance the thoroughness of its ideological transformation by following the Communist Party's theories, improving the leadership of party organizations, and eradicating conditions that may allow corruption to thrive.

Chieh Chung, a military researcher at the National Policy Foundation in Taiwan, said the remarks show that "Xi wants to emphasize the importance for the military to be loyal to the party and his leadership while signaling his concerns about how corruption affects the military" and its capabilities.

Xi "hopes the warnings can help accelerate the development of advanced technologies and equipment," Chieh told VOA by phone.

Since last July, China has ousted more than a dozen top military commanders, including former defense minister Li Shangfu, and leaders of the People's Liberation Army's Rocket Force.

While the Chinese government hasn't publicly linked their removals to corruption, some foreign media outlets and experts see their removal as part of the extended anti-corruption campaign Xi initiated since he came to power in 2012.

Reuters reported last September that Li was facing an investigation related to the procurement of military equipment.

The removal of top military leaders not only highlights the prevalence of corruption; it also raises other questions.

"Since corruption has hampered Russia's ability to supply its military in the Ukraine war, it raises the question of whether the Chinese military's capabilities have been compromised by corruption or not," Lin Ying-yu, a military expert at Tamkang University in Taiwan, told VOA by phone.

There is also a concern about the impact Xi's persistent attempts to eradicate corruption will have on the military internally.

"When a former defense minister can be abruptly removed from his position without any clear explanation, it will create a deep sense of fear within the military because no one knows when they might be the next one to be purged," said Su Tzu-yun, a military expert at the Taipei-based Institute for National Defense and Security Research.

Su said this is part of the Communist Party's strategy of "ruling with terror," which allows Xi to concentrate decision-making power on the top leadership within the party.

"While tackling corruption in the military is important to Xi, the anti-corruption campaign has become a political tool for him to consolidate his control over the military," Su told VOA by phone.

In January, the state-run People's Liberation Army Daily published an opinion piece that emphasized the importance of implementing Xi's instructions for the military and extending the party's governance to the grassroots level.

"By strengthening the supervision of military personnel, it builds a firm first line of defense for soldiers to comply with the rules and refuse to be corrupted," said the opinion piece run by the PLA Daily.

While Xi looks to consolidate control and build loyalty, both Chieh and Su see other potential side-effects such as the promotion of unqualified leaders and the impact that could have on the military's capabilities and readiness.

"When Beijing puts so much emphasis on loyalty to the party, it could reduce the military's combat capabilities and make the military huge but weak," Su said.

Xi's expressed desire to continue cracking down on corruption also means the Chinese military may need to go through a period of adjustment, Chieh said.

"Normally, the military's combat capabilities will decrease following several rounds of purges, so I expect the Chinese military to go through a tough period of adjustment and reorganization over the next few years," he told VOA.

And while top officials in the U.S. have repeatedly highlighted 2027 as the year that the Chinese military aims to possess the capabilities to invade Taiwan, Chieh thinks the purges and Xi's remarks at the political work conference suggest the PLA may be hard pressed to achieve that goal.

"Since the Chinese military's command system and the rocket force's capabilities may not have reached the goal set by the top leadership due to rampant corruption, I think this makes it even less likely for the Chinese military to have the capabilities required to invade Taiwan by 2027," he said.

China Sends Advanced Fighter Jets to Contested Border with India, Satellite Images Show

09 June 2024, [MSN](#), Samyarup Chowdhury

Recent satellite images have shown China deploying advanced J-20 stealth fighter jets at the Shigatse Air Base near a contested border with India.

Knewz.com has learned that the Shigatse Air Base, a dual-use airport, is located around 93 miles from the Indo-China border in the mountainous state of Sikkim. The satellite images, shared by All Source Analysis, show six Chengdu J-20 fighter jets, also known as the "Mighty Dragon," kept under protective tarps and a KJ-500 Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft stationed at the air base. *The Economic Times* reported that the Indian Air Force is already aware of the deployment of the Chinese fighter jets.

Nearly 190 miles on the other side of the contested border lies the Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Hasimara, in the Indian state of West Bengal, which is currently the home of the Air Force's second squadron of 16 Rafale fighter jets.

The deployment of the stealth fighter jets near the border was first noticed towards the end of May 2024, with Indian news outlet NDTV commenting that it has "major military implications for India."

"The forward presence of the J-20 in Tibetan airfields is a clear and present threat to the Indian Air Force. This erodes the advantage enjoyed by IAF assets like the Rafale and imposes caution against the PLAAF

[Chinese Air Force]," Sameer Joshi, former Indian Air Force pilot and CEO of NewSpace Research, said in a statement to the outlet.

"This capability, combined with an increase in the available numbers of modern fighters in the Chinese inventory, clearly negates the numerical advantage in modern jets that the IAF has enjoyed for some time." The satellite images shared by All Source Analysis also show the deployment of at least eight J-10 fighter jets at the Shigatse Air Base.

"Multiple images collected over the course of the same day indicate these aircraft arrived at the air base on 27 May 2024, preceded by the arrival of a Y-20 transport aircraft for the probable deployment of ground crew and support equipment," the analysis from the organization read.

"The J-20 aircraft are not known to be permanently based at Shigatse and deployments near the Indian border are a rare occurrence."

NDTV pointed out in its report that the Shigatse airport is located at an altitude of 12,408 feet, making it one of the highest air bases in the world. "The deployment of the J-20 shows its ability to operate from the harsh environment of ultra-high altitude Tibetan air bases," the outlet noted.

The 2,100-mile border between India and China, known as the Line of Actual Control, has been the center of constant military dispute between the two countries, with both sides making continuous efforts to reinforce their troops deployed on the border.

According to *Newsweek*, military tensions over the border erupted in a confrontation between the two forces in 2020, claiming the lives of 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers.

December 2022 saw another significant clash between the two sides, this time in the Tawang sector of the state of Arunachal Pradesh on the eastern tip of India. BBC noted that the rising tensions and sporadic conflicts between India and China would also have an "economic fallout as China is one of India's biggest trading partners."

It is worth noting that the growing hostility on political the boundary has also strained the ties between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

China to boost rail links to Xinjiang and Tibet, with eye on supply chains and energy security

03 June 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

China will step up construction of strategic railroad links in the autonomous regions of Xinjiang and Tibet in the coming years to strengthen its hold over its westernmost regions, according to a senior Chinese rail planner.

"The rail network layout still needs to be improved. There are still many places in the western regions left undeveloped, and the major strategic channels for entering and exiting Tibet and Xinjiang need to be strengthened," said Liu Wenxian, a senior official with China Railway Group's planning department.

In an interview with *The People's Rail*, a newspaper affiliated with the state-owned rail operator, Liu said the priority was to "strengthen the construction of strategic links and effectively guarantee the implementation of major national strategies".

"[We will] focus on strengthening strategic trunk channels, such as those from Xinjiang to Tibet, and fill in the 'blanks' in railway networks in key western regions so as to comprehensively improve the multidirectional connectivity between Xinjiang, Tibet and the inland," Liu was quoted as saying.

Liu said this was part of China's plan to strengthen transport links to ensure energy and supply chain security.

Beijing has "big plans" for Xinjiang and Tibet, according to a Tsinghua University researcher who studies ethnic minority issues in China.

"Xinjiang is the gateway for the strategic China-Europe freight trains, while the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is extremely important to China's western border security," said the researcher, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the topic.

"Beijing has painstakingly restored the order and security in these two regions in the past decade. Now it is time to extend the transport networks into these regions so that people-to-people exchanges can happen and goods from these regions can be sold to other parts of China. These are prerequisites for further integration."

Liu said that by 2025, China's modern railway infrastructure would be complete, with its rail network reaching 165,000km (102,526 miles), including 50,000km of high-speed rail lines.

He said China aimed to expand its rail network by 20235 to about 200,000km, of which about 70,000km would be high-speed railway.

China leads the world in high-speed railway development. According to Statista, China had 40,474km of high-speed rail lines in 2022, more than double the combined length of the next 10 countries. The United States ranked 11th in high-speed rail lines, with only 735km, but it still operates the world's largest railway network with over 220,000km in total. China ranked second in terms of total rail network length, with about 159,000km in 2023.

Liu said by the end of next year, China's rail network would cover 99.5 per cent of cities a population of more than 200,000, while the high-speed rail network would cover more than 97 per cent of cities with a population over 500,000.

Liu also said the resilience, safety and reliability of railway infrastructure would be improved, and that China's railways needed to respond better and faster to natural disasters and climate change.

However, this vision faces major financial challenges as China Railway Group has paid for the massive expansion with borrowings.

As of last year, its debt rose to 6.13 trillion yuan (US\$846 billion), with operating profits of only 330 million yuan.

China has taken the rare step of sharply increasing fares on four major bullet train lines recently – a move widely seen as an attempt to restore profitability of its debt-ridden high-speed network.

China reported to have boosted offensive air capabilities along Tibet-border with India

01 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)



Even as it keeps downplaying the seriousness of the standoff with India along the occupied-Tibet- Ladakh border, insisting that the two sides can resume normal bilateral ties without being bogged down by it, China keeps strengthening its military capability in preparation for any possible conflict. It has now deployed its most advanced J-20 stealth fighters at an airfield in Tibet in the eastern sector facing India, amid the continuing military confrontation along the entire Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is into its fifth year now, reported the *timesofindia.com* May 31.

The report cited latest commercial satellite imagery as showing the People's Liberation Army-Air Force (PLAAF) had deployed six J-20 fighters at the Shigatse dual-use airport, which is barely 155 km from the LAC and close to Doklam near the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction, in addition to the several J-10 jets and a KJ-500 AEW&C (airborne early-warning and control) aircraft already present there.

"Multiple (satellite) images collected over the course of the same day indicate these aircraft (J-20s) arrived at the air base on May 27, preceded by the arrival of a Y-20 transport aircraft for the probable deployment of ground crew and support equipment," All Source Analysis, which looks at geospatial intelligence, has said in a post on "X".

The report cited a senior Indian defence establishment official as saying the twin-engine J-20 fighters "are probably at Shigatse for high-altitude trials". The PLAAF has been regularly deploying J-20s at its airfields in the western sector like the Hotan airfield in Xinjiang, which is around 240-km from the LAC, since the military confrontation erupted in eastern Ladakh in May 2020, the report said.

India too has taken steps to strengthen its military preparedness. Apart from the Sukhoi-30MKI fighters based at Hasimara, Chabua and Tezpur in the eastern sector, the IAF also has a squadron (18 jets) of its latest French-origin Rafale omni-role jets deployed at the Hasimara air base in West Bengal, with the other one at Ambala for the western front with Pakistan, the report said.

China touts the Chengdu J-20 as the effective answer to the world's only fully-operational and proven fifth-generation jets like the American F/A-22 Raptors and F-35 Lightning-II Joint Strike Fighters.

The report said China had offset some of its air combat disadvantage due to high-altitude terrain constraints by deploying additional fighters, bombers, reconnaissance aircraft and drones after upgrading its airfields like Hotan and Kashgar in Xinjiang; Gargunsa, Shigatse, Bangda, Nyingchi and Hoping in occupied Tibet, among others. China has also constructed new runways as well as extended older ones, along with building new hardened shelters, fuel and ammunition storage facilities at these airfields.

At Hotan, for instance, the PLAAF is reported to have recently deployed two new JH-7A fighter-bombers and three Y-20 heavy-lift aircraft, among others, to add to the almost 50 J-11 and J-7 fighters, five Y-8 and Y-7 transport aircraft and KJ-500 AEW&C aircraft already present there.

CYBER SECURITY

Chinese hackers have stepped up attacks on Taiwanese organizations, cybersecurity firm says

24 June 2024, [AP News](#)

A suspected Chinese state-sponsored hacking group has stepped up its targeting of Taiwanese organizations, particularly those in sectors such as government, education, technology and diplomacy, according to cybersecurity intelligence company Recorded Future.

In recent years, relations between China and Taiwan, a self-governed island across the Taiwan Strait that Beijing claims as its territory, have deteriorated. The cyberattacks by the group known as RedJuliatt were observed between November 2023 and April 2024, during the lead up to Taiwan's presidential elections in January and the subsequent change in administration. RedJuliatt has targeted Taiwanese organizations in the past, but this is the first time that activity was seen at such a scale, a Recorded Future analyst said, speaking on condition of anonymity out of safety concerns.

The report said RedJuliatt attacked 24 organizations, including government agencies in places like Laos, Kenya and Rwanda, as well as Taiwan.

It also hacked into websites of religious organizations in Hong Kong and South Korea, a U.S university and a Djiboutian university. The report did not identify the organizations.

Recorded Future said RedJuliatt accessed the servers of those places via a vulnerability in their SoftEther enterprise virtual private network (VPN) software, an open-source VPN that allows remote connections to an organization's networks.

RedJuliatt has been observed attempting to break into systems of more than 70 Taiwanese organizations including three universities, an optoelectronics company and a facial recognition company that has contracts with the government.

It was unclear if RedJuliatt managed to break into those organizations: Recorded Future only said it observed the attempts to identify vulnerabilities in their networks.

RedJuliatt's hacking patterns match those of Chinese state-sponsored groups, according to Recorded Future.

It said that based on the geolocations of IP addresses, RedJuliatt is likely based out of the city of Fuzhou, in China's southern Fujian province, whose coast faces Taiwan.

"Given the close geographical proximity between Fuzhou and Taiwan, Chinese intelligence services operating in Fuzhou are likely tasked with intelligence collection against Taiwanese targets," the report said.

"RedJuliatt is likely targeting Taiwan to collect intelligence and support Beijing's policy-making on

cross-strait relations,” the Recorded Future report said.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately comment.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson dismissed the allegations.

“I don’t know the specifics of what you mentioned, but I can tell you that it’s not the first time the company you mentioned has fabricated disinformation on so-called Chinese hacking operations. There is absolutely no professionalism or credibility to speak of in what the company does,” the spokesperson, Mao Ning, said. Microsoft reported in August last year that RedJuliett, which Microsoft tracks under the name Flax Typhoon, was targeting Taiwanese organizations.

China has in recent years stepped up military drills around Taiwan and imposed economic and diplomatic pressure on the island.

Relations between Taiwan and Beijing worsened further after the election in January of Taiwan’s new president Lai Ching-te, who China has deemed a “separatist,” after he said in his inauguration speech that Taiwan and China were not subordinate to each other. Like his predecessor Tsai Ing-wen, Lai has said that there is no need to declare Taiwanese independence because it is already an independent sovereign state.

Like many other countries including the U.S., China has been known to engage in cyberespionage. Earlier this year, the U.S. and Britain accused China of a sweeping cyberespionage campaign that allegedly hit millions of people.

Beijing has consistently denied engaging in any form of state-sponsored hacking, instead saying that China itself is a major target of cyberattacks.

According to Recorded Future, Chinese state-sponsored groups will likely continue to target Taiwanese government agencies, universities and critical technology companies via “public-facing” devices such as open-source VPN software, which provide limited visibility and logging capabilities.

Companies and organizations can best protect themselves by prioritizing and patching vulnerabilities once they become known, Recorded Future’s threat intelligence analyst said.

Geologists raise concerns over possible censorship and bias in Chinese chatbot

24 June 2024, [The Guardian](#), Amy Hawkins

Geologists have raised concerns about potential Chinese censorship and bias in a chatbot being developed with the backing of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), one of the world’s largest scientific organisations and a Unesco partner.

The GeoGPT chatbot is aimed at geoscientists and researchers, particularly in the global south, to help them develop their understanding of earth sciences by drawing on swaths of data and research on billions of years of the planet’s history.

It is an initiative from Deep-time Digital Earth (DDE), a largely Chinese-funded programme founded in 2019 to enhance international scientific cooperation and help countries to realise the UN’s sustainable development goals.

Part of the underlying AI for GeoGPT is Qwen, a large language model built by the Chinese tech company Alibaba. One of those who had tested a pre-release version of the chatbot, Prof Paul Cleverley, a geologist and computer scientist, claimed in an article recently published in the *Geoscientist*, the magazine of the Geological Society, the UK’s professional association for geologists, that GeoGPT had “serious issues around a lack of transparency, state censorship, and potential copyright infringement”.

Responding to the article, DDE representatives Michael Stephenson, Hans Thybo, Chengshan Wang and Ishwaran Natarajan said the chatbot also used Meta’s Llama, another large language model, and that during testing they had not noticed any state censorship, which they said was “unlikely” given that the system was “based entirely in geoscience information”.

The DDE academics said: “Problems with GeoGPT have been largely solved, but the team will be working to improve the system even more. It must be stressed that at present GeoGPT has not been released and is not in the public domain.”

David Giles, a professional geoscientist, said it was “blatantly untrue” that a system based on geoscience data could be free of sensitive information.

Tests on Qwen, part of GeoGPT’s underlying AI, reveal geoscience-related questions can produce answers that appear to be influenced by narratives set by the Chinese Communist party.

For example, when asked how many people have died in a mining operation in Ghana run by the Shaanxi Mining Company, Qwen says: “I’m unable to provide current or specific information about events, including mining accidents, as my knowledge is based on data up until 2021 and I don’t have real-time access to news updates.”

The same question posed to ChatGPT, the chatbot developed by the US company OpenAI, produces the answer: “The Shaanxi Mining Company in Ghana has experienced multiple fatal incidents, resulting in a total of 61 deaths since 2013. This includes a significant explosion in January 2019 that alone claimed 16 lives.”

It is not clear what kind of answer GeoGPT, which is still in development, would give to this question.

Dr Natarajan Ishwaran, the head of international relations for DDE, said: "The team building GeoGPT has full independence. We can assure you that GeoGPT – currently in an exploratory phase and not yet open to the public – will not be affected by any state censorship."

He added that users would be able to choose between using Alibaba's Qwen or Meta's Llama as the model for GeoGPT.

Geoscientific research and data include commercially and strategically valuable information about deposits of natural resources such as lithium, which are vital for the green transition.

Giles said there was a risk that a Chinese-developed platform could "filter" information to withhold content that was useful for "mineral reconnaissance". He added: "China is very aggressively looking for minerals across the globe. There is a strategic advantage and an economic advantage in looking for mineral reserves."

An article published in 2020 by Chen Jun, an academic at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said DDE, the scientific programme that created GeoGPT, would "help enhance China's detection and security capabilities in global resources and energy".

Stephenson, Thybo, Wang and Natarajan, from DDE, said the 2020 article aimed "to encourage Chinese scientists to get involved in international science programmes" and was "purely the opinion of the author", not of DDE or the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Mohammad Hoque, a senior lecturer in hydrogeology and environmental geoscience at the University of Portsmouth, said "one danger" of using a Chinese language model for academic research was that "there will be some bias, because they have to obey local laws".

GeoGPT's terms of use state that prompting the chatbot to generate content that "undermines national security" and "incites subversion of state power" is prohibited. The terms of use also state that it is governed by the laws of China.

Hoque said GeoGPT had a greater obligation of transparency because it was developed under the auspices of an international research collaboration. "The most important thing would be to know what data they use to fine-tune and train [GeoGPT]. We have an expectation to know under IUGS."

John Ludden, the president of the IUGS, said the GeoGPT database would be made public "only if the IUGS is satisfied that the appropriate governance is in place".

Ishwaran said when GeoGPT opened to the public its training database would be made available "to those who wish to have it".

Geologists interviewed by the Guardian said the extent of DDE's links to China were not widely known

among professionals. According to a planning document published in 2021, the multimillion-pound project is "almost 99%" funded by sources in China.

The programme is part of the IUGS, an international NGO representing more than 1 million geoscientists in 121 countries, including the UK's Geological Society. Its secretariat is based in Beijing and receives "tremendous" financial and logistical support from the Chinese government, according to the organisation's 2023 annual report.

Ludden said: "The best thing for science is to be open and share data. DDE does this for geological data if openly available [and] will lead to inward investment in any nation ... [and] discoveries in research."

Hackers for hire: How the Chinese Communist Party is trying to monitor the entire world

21 June 2024, [ITVX](#), Debi Edward

In February, a leak from an anonymous source lifted the lid on **China's** network of state-affiliated hackers. Hundreds of chatlogs and files from a company called iSoon (AnXun) were uploaded to an open-source code database.

The documents gave a rare insight into an inherently clandestine industry, so analysts and journalists pored over the details.

The cache of documents showed professional hackers were paid to infiltrate national databases in more than 20 countries. The company's website presents an array of cyber-attack services it can provide.

It was clear work was being done on behalf of China's public security bureaus and even its military, indicating the Chinese state operates a **hackers-for-hire industry**.

There were several references to the UK: In one log we found what looked like a shopping list of British government agencies and organisations.

It named Chatham House and the charity Amnesty International as targets of interest. And the Foreign Office was mentioned as **being of particular value**.

ID	发布时间	区域	卖家	商品标题	美元标价	BTC成交价	成交量	好评/差评	咨询	卖家在线	购买		
31	2024-03-15	数据与信息	1881553	3月美国诈骗新出车数据41万条带余额_自动发货	380		243	6	151小时	3804	打开		
32	2024-03-21	数据与信息	1881553	3月21日更新_美国投资管高净值用户数据51万	380		290	6	151小时	4743	打开		
33	2024-03-21	数据与信息	1881553	3月台美国在线赌博带余额41万条数据_自动	350		293	6	151小时	4808	打开		
34	2024-01-09	数据与信息	1881553	2024年美国巴克莱金融投资有损人_52万条开通	399		213	6	151小时	3181	打开		
35	2023-12-11	数据与信息	1881854	12月_美国ASOS购物电话获取用户50万_开通	499		1	580	5	125小时	10026	打开	
36	2023-01-16	虚拟货币	739533	10美元超能1600国外驾照证明至少准备wan大部	10	0.0013	38	861	16	31小时	16427	打开	
37	2020-08-23	卡/ICV	569674	2020美国亚马逊礼品2020夏天数字假期合集	19.9	0.0042	4	298	34	6	51小时	5259	打开
38	2023-04-03	虚拟货币	1881343	26套完整PSD模板美国各州美国加拿大澳洲爱尔兰	50		2	589	45	273小时	10146	打开	
39	2023-11-08	数据与信息	1684215	美国奢侈品手表Wachshinder数据	299		2	125	10	98小时	1654	打开	

Screenshot of 'Chang'an' a Chinese dark net website used to trade hacked information.

In the months since the **British government** has named and shamed Chinese state-affiliated actors as

being behind several cyber-attacks on the UK, it has sanctioned two individuals and one company.

Last month, Chinese hackers were linked to an attack on the private contractor that runs the Military of Defense (MoD) payroll.

At the start of the general election campaign, MI5 and MI6 said the country should be on high alert for cyber-attacks from hostile states mentioning China, along with Russia and North Korea.

A group of Russian hackers is demanding a ransom after infiltrating NHS computer systems last week, and on Friday started to publish allegedly sensitive data online.

We set out to track down the Chinese entities named by the British government for cyber campaigns against our MPs, the MoD and the electoral commission.

In Wuhan, at the official headquarters of Xiaoruizhi, a company sanctioned by the UK there has no physical evidence that it even exists.

At its registered address, we found a company with a completely different name.

We asked at the security gate but the guard couldn't or wouldn't tell us anything about Xiaoruizhi.

At a human resources company in the city from where Xiaoruizhi workers are known to have been recruited, we were invited in for tea while they checked out the details we had given them.

A woman who at first appeared willing to help came back to tell us that her boss was travelling and so she couldn't help us at that time.

The change in her demeanour suggested she'd been told to send us away.

Naturally, it ended up being online where we picked up a trail, leading us into China's shady network of hackers.

On the dark web, we gained access to sites where one hacker claimed to be selling data from register to vote UK. The sales sample also included usernames, emails and passwords, with references to the Universal Credit and immigration systems.

Several pages showed the financial information of British citizens and one from a casino company showed the credit details of almost half a million people.

It was shocking to see such sensitive information traded by sinister actors on the Chinese dark web.

On the dark web forums, it appeared that many Chinese hackers were vying for assignments in foreign countries, suggesting there is a growing marketplace for datasets from countries around the world.

This backs up what we saw in the i-Soon leak, where it looked like foreign intel was being hacked anticipating there would be interest in it from clandestine services in China.

Nigel Inkster a former Deputy Director of MI6 believes both private and public datasets are being weaponised. He is now the Senior Advisor for the

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) on Cyber Security and China.

He told us there has been too much naivete in dealing with China, saying: "China is uniquely, promiscuous and voracious in terms of the kinds of information it is, seeking to collect.

"And this means governments need to rethink, what it is that requires, protection because, the reality in today's world is that, data sets that we hitherto have not considered very, important may actually be more important than we think and make us more vulnerable."

Bringing together publicly available information, a rare bank of leaked data and expert analysis, we built a picture of China's giant cybersecurity industry.

At its roots are hackers who are being trained at what we assess are hundreds of specialist facilities.

Graduates are given the guarantee of a job in a complex web of private and state-owned enterprises. They operate directly, or indirectly with domestic public security bureaus or for the mighty Ministry of State Security which runs foreign intelligence. The MSS acts on the orders of the Chinese communist government.

There are almost 4,000 cyber security companies operating in China, in a market worth £5 billion a year, and growing.

Many of those companies are private cyber security contractors, like i-Soon, who are helping the Chinese government scale up their cyber operation capability, offering the country a major manpower advantage and potential scope, compared to Western rivals.

It has already given China the edge when it comes to data collection through hacking means.

We travelled to Taiwan to meet with experts from Team T5, a cyber security company.

In Taiwan, cyber-attacks from China are a persistent threat and we had spoken to Team T5 earlier in the year when they were tracking Chinese cyber threats during the Taiwanese elections.

One of their lead analysts, Charles Li believes too many people just see one-off cyber-attacks that don't appear to achieve much.

But he says it is all part of a wider, long-term strategy to know the enemy and build a data bank that can be used against them.

"They realised, it is very hard for China to fight with us in traditional areas like, land, sea or airspace. And so if they can dominate the cyber war, it means, they have this, chance to fight with these Western countries. So that's their long-term strategy."

We asked Team T5 to show us an example of one of the most common methods used by hackers to target individuals, like members of parliament.

They ran me through a mock email phishing exercise whereby I received an email which looked like it had

been sent by an economic think-tank in Taipei, following up on my interest in the Taiwanese election. The email was formal and polite, and those writing it had clearly been monitoring my reporting to be able to mention specific details which made it look more legitimate. It contained a link to a PDF with the economic information which they said might be of interest.

When I clicked on the PDF, sure enough, it had articles with useful information, and there was no sign to be that in the background all the data on my computer was being transferred to my (in this case fake) cyber attacker.

With the information they could get from my computer, they could easily access my company and anyone I'd been in communication with.

It's a very common tactic but Chinese hackers have made it more sophisticated by selecting and monitoring targets very carefully so that when they strike it has a greater chance of success.

There was no response to our requests for interviews or a statement from the relevant Chinese government departments.

In the past, the Foreign Ministry has condemned the UK for politicising the issue of cyber security and dismissed any hacking accusations as lies.

The Chinese Communist Party appears to have an ambition to monitor the whole world, using all the manpower at its disposal.

CHINA IN THE REGION

China - Hong Kong

Man charged under new Hong Kong security law over 'seditious' social media posts remanded in custody

21 June 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#), James Lee

Social media posts said to be made by Au Kin-wai allegedly involved the words "Revolution is no crime, to rebel is justified," a slogan dating back to China's Cultural Revolution.

A man has been charged under Hong Kong's new security legislation over the publication of "seditious" statements on social media.

Au Kin-wai, 58, did not apply for bail and was taken into custody after he appeared before Magistrate Don So at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on Friday morning.

The social media posts allegedly involved the words "Revolution is no crime, to rebel is justified," a slogan dating back to China's Cultural Revolution, the court heard.

Au, who faces one count of "knowingly publishing publications that had a seditious intention," was not required to enter a plea.

So, handpicked by the government to preside over national security court cases, adjourned the hearing to August 7 to allow the police to look through two phones, a desktop computer, and three laptops seized from Au's home, The Witness reported.

Social media posts

According to a charge sheet provided by the Judiciary, Au had allegedly published seditious statements and images on social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, and X between March 23 and June 19.

He allegedly made those posts to incite "hatred, contempt or disaffection against the "fundamental system of the state established by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China" as well as Hong Kong's executive, legislative, or judicial authority, and its constitutional order.

It was also alleged that Au intended to "incite any other person to do an act that does not comply with the law of [Hong Kong] or that does not obey an order issued under the law of [Hong Kong]."

Separate to the 2020 Beijing-imposed law, the passage of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, known locally as Article 23, was fast-tracked by the city's opposition-free legislature earlier this year after legislation failed in 2003. It came into effect on March 23.

The law has been criticised by rights NGOs, Western states and the UN as vague, broad and "regressive." But authorities have cited perceived foreign

interference and a constitutional duty to “close loopholes” after the 2019 protests and unrest.

A 27-year-old man last Friday became the first person to be charged under Article 23. He was denied bail over wearing a t-shirt with a banned protest slogan and a yellow mask printed with statements allegedly intended to incite hatred, contempt or disaffection against the “fundamental system of the state established by the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.”

Hong Kongers embrace politics in UK, but some still fear Beijing

21 June 2024, [Reuters](#), Alun John

For Richard Wong, 25, who moved to Britain from Hong Kong two years ago, it “feels strange” taking part in a free election, exercising exactly those rights that he once fought for, knowing that his friends back home no longer can.

“Back in Hong Kong we tried so hard to get democracy and then lost it. And I moved here, and we are actually practicing democracy, but in a very different context,” said Wong, who has been knocking on doors as a volunteer for an opposition Labour party candidate in next month’s UK general election.

“I still have friends spending their time in prison and I’m ... doing this at the other end of the world.”

Since 2021, more than 180,000 Hong Kongers have moved to Britain under a special visa programme set up in response to a crackdown on dissent in their homeland, a former British colony handed back to Beijing in 1997.

China says the crackdown was necessary to restore stability after months of sometimes violent protests in 2019.

When Britain left Hong Kong it offered a limited form of British nationality to residents, which means the Hong Kongers, unlike many newcomers from elsewhere, arrive with the right to vote in the UK.

Britain’s national election next month is the first chance they will have to participate in the central ritual of democracy in their adopted home. Many are passionate about the opportunity.

“I know the power of votes. I think if we have that power we should utilise it,” said Carmen Lau, a campaign coordinator for Vote for Hong Kong 2024, a group rallying Hong Kongers in the UK to participate in the British election.

Before she moved to Britain, Lau was elected a Hong Kong district councillor in 2019, but later disqualified for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the territory’s mini constitution.

With relations between Britain and China at a low ebb, amid accusations from London that Beijing had intimidated a foreign national on British soil and

counter claims of spying activities, some Hong Kongers are still fearful China’s reach.

Lau said at cultural events many attendees wore masks and avoided cameras because they were afraid their family back in Hong Kong would be harassed.

“The right to vote is precious, and more Hong Kong people are moving to the UK and we’re concerned about China’s control and spies, so there is a need to speak out,” said one Hong Konger in the UK, Kate, 33, who declined to give her full name as she was fearful of reprisals.

China’s intelligence agency says trial of Hong Kong 47 a ‘major test’ of national security, rule of law

19 June 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#), Hans Tse

The Ministry of State Security said the verdict in the trial of the 16 defendants who pleaded not guilty to conspiring to commit subversion was a deterrent to “anti-China forces and foreign forces.”

China’s intelligence agency has called the landmark case involving 47 Hong Kong pro-democracy figures a “major test” of national security and rule of law.

The Ministry of State Security on Tuesday also said the verdict in the trial of the 16 defendants who pleaded not guilty to conspiring to commit subversion was a deterrent to “anti-China forces and foreign forces.”

“Those who dare to challenge the bottom line of China’s national security will be severely punished by the law,” the ministry said in a Chinese-language post on WeChat.

Thirty-one defendants had earlier pleaded guilty to taking part in the conspiracy over their roles in an unofficial primary election in 2020. The High Court last month found 14 others guilty and acquitted two after a trial that lasted 118 days.

Tuesday’s remarks marked the first time the ministry, which is in charge of the country’s intelligence activities, weighed in on the city’s largest national security case to date. The court is set to hear mitigation pleas from the 45 defendants convicted under the Beijing-imposed security law from June 25.

“Among the 45 people that were convicted, there were instigators of ‘black-clad violence,’ participants of the illegal ‘Occupy Central’ campaign, and leaders of anti-Hong Kong organisations,” the ministry said, referring to the 2014 civil disobedience campaign also known as the Umbrella Movement and the protests and unrest in 2019.

“A criminal and wicked idea brought them together and led them on a path of no return,” it added.

The ministry singled out former law professor Benny Tai, the key organiser of the primary election, as the “chief culprit” of the scheme that it said was directed at sabotaging the functioning of the city government

and overthrowing state power. Tai was among those who pleaded guilty.

“The anti-China forces led by Benny Tai... through illegally trying to obtain a majority in the Legislative Council and vetoing the government budget indiscriminately, would create a crisis in governance,” the ministry said.

Although a key argument of the defence was that the power to veto the government budget is written into Hong Kong’s mini-constitution the Basic Law, the three judges presiding over the case ruled that the abuse of such power would create a “constitutional crisis” and therefore would be illegal.

The ministry praised the lengthy trial as it “balanced the need to safeguard national security and to protect the rights and freedoms of the defendants.” Most of the 47 democrats have been detained since being taken into police custody on February 28, 2021, ahead of a marathon bail hearing.

The judgement had set out clear rulings of major legal disputes under the security law, the ministry said. “The court’s rulings clarified the definition and regulation of ‘subversion’... It would serve as an important reference to future [national security] cases and have far-reaching implications,” it added.

Western governments including the UK, the EU, and Australia condemned the verdict. The US had already imposed sanctions on six Chinese and Hong Kong officials in response to the arrests in 2021, with a congressional committee urging further sanctions to be imposed following the verdict.

The ministry said such calls amounted to interfering in China’s internal affairs and were “serious violations of international laws and common principles governing international relations.”

They would only make people aware of foreign forces’ “despicable scheme of leveraging Hong Kong to suppress China,” it added.

The defendants are expected to receive sentencing after their mitigation hearings, which could carry up to life behind bars.

Last week, the Department of Justice said it had filed an appeal against the acquittal of barrister Lawrence Lau, but not that of social worker Lee Yue-shun. Both Lau and Lee are former district councillors. Beijing inserted national security legislation directly into Hong Kong’s mini-constitution in June 2020 following a year of pro-democracy protests and unrest. It criminalised subversion, secession, collusion with foreign forces and terrorist acts – broadly defined to include disruption to transport and other infrastructure. The move gave police sweeping new powers and led to hundreds of arrests amid new legal precedents, while dozens of civil society groups disappeared. The authorities say it restored stability and peace to the city, rejecting criticism from trade partners, the UN and NGOs.

Since then, 128 people had been convicted under the security law, according to the security bureau.

17 people jailed up to 5 years, 10 months over attempted escape from besieged Hong Kong campus during 2019 protests

18 June 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#), Kelly Ho

Seventeen people have received jail sentences ranging from one year and eight months to five years and 10 months after they were convicted over dramatic rope escapes from a besieged Hong Kong university during the 2019 protests.

District Judge Lily Wong on Tuesday meted out prison terms to 17 people who were involved in daring attempts to flee the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) in mid-November 2019.

Dozens of protesters shimmied down ropes from a footbridge to flee the campus in Hung Hom, which was surrounded by the police amid violent clashes between protesters and officers. Some people drove cars and motorcycles to pick up the protesters, and many vehicles were intercepted by police as they tried to leave the scene.

Lin Bin, Chan Chun-fung, Mak To and Lee Man-hei, who pleaded guilty to rioting before the trial began, were each jailed for three years and eight months. A charge of perverting the course of justice earlier levelled against them was put on court file and was not pursued by the prosecution.

The remaining defendants were convicted of intending to pervert the course of justice after trial.

Ng Wai-nam, Leung Cheuk-fung, Leung Wing-yan, Lau Shuk-wa, Tom Wong, Lam Yam-to, Cheok Yuen-yi and Lai Ching-yin were also found guilty of rioting. All but Cheok were sentenced to 70 months behind bars. Cheok’s jail term was reduced to 60 months because she was a minor at the time of the offence.

Ho Ying-kit, Sin Wang-chun, Lam Sze-nga and Cheung Chung-hee, who only faced the perverting justice offence, were each jailed for 20 months.

Chan Chun-yeung, who pleaded guilty to an additional charge of dangerous driving, was given a two-year prison term.

The case originally involved two more defendants, who were earlier sentenced to a training centre.

In jailing the defendants, Wong said the authorities had issued daily warnings urging the public not to go to PolyU. The defendants had been “stubborn” and ignored such warnings, the judge said, concluding that they must have been on the side of the “black-clad” protesters.

“They agreed with the violence,” Wong said in Cantonese, adding that some defendants who had been PolyU students were responsible for “destroying their school campus.”

The judge went to say that the defendants had tried to evade arrest with their escape attempt, which “seriously undermined the administration of judicial justice.”

Under Hong Kong laws, rioting is punishable by up to ten years in prison, although jail terms meted out by the District Court are capped at seven years.

Tuesday’s sentencing was held in the court’s largest courtroom, designed to hold up to 50 defendants and in which the view of the dock is partially restricted. Those sitting in the seats on the right-hand side of the courtroom must rely on a video livestream to get a clear view of the judge and the defendants.

As a result, family members and friends of the defendants had to stand up from their seat or swarm to the back of the counsels’ desk to wave at their loved ones. Some also made a heart gesture with their hands.

Protests erupted in June 2019 over a since-axed extradition bill. They escalated into sometimes violent displays of dissent against police behaviour, amid calls for democracy and anger over Beijing’s encroachment. Demonstrators demanded an independent probe into police conduct, amnesty for those arrested and a halt to the characterisation of protests as “riots.”

Three arrested in Hong Kong for ‘insulting’ Chinese anthem at World Cup qualifier

07 June 2024, [The Guardian](#)

Police say spectators ‘turned their backs toward the pitch and did not stand for the playing of the national anthem’

Three people have been arrested for turning their backs and remaining seated when China’s national anthem was played prior to Hong Kong’s home World Cup qualifier against Iran, police have said.

Football spectators in Hong Kong used to boo the Chinese anthem as a show of political discontent, but the government banned the practice in 2020 as part of a wider crackdown after huge democracy protests in the city.

At Hong Kong Stadium on Thursday, police said, two men and a woman were arrested because they “turned their backs toward the pitch and did not stand for the playing of the national anthem”.

“Police stressed that anyone who publicly and intentionally insults the national anthem in any way commits a crime,” a police statement said.

The three arrested were between the ages of 18 and 31. If convicted they face up to three years in jail and a fine of HK\$50,000 (£5,000/US\$6,400).

Hong Kong’s hopes of reaching the next stage of qualifying for the 2026 World Cup were already over and they went on to lose the game to Iran 4-2.

Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China but competes in its own name in many international sports, including football.

During the politically tumultuous 2010s, the Hong Kong team became a vessel for civic pride and occasionally anti-government sentiment.

At the time, the Chinese national anthem was routinely drowned out by boos before Hong Kong matches, enraging local and mainland officials.

Soon after Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong in 2020, the finance hub passed a separate local law criminalising insults towards the anthem.

Heavy security in China and Hong Kong on 35th anniversary of Tiananmen crackdown

04 June 2024, [NPR](#)

Checkpoints and rows of police vehicles lined a major road leading to Beijing’s Tiananmen Square on Tuesday as China heightened security on the 35th anniversary of a bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

China has long quashed any memory of the killings, when the Chinese government ordered in the army to end the months-long protests and uphold Communist rule. An estimated 180,000 troops and armed police rolled in with tanks and armored vehicles, and fired into crowds as they pushed toward Tiananmen Square.

The death toll remains unknown to this day. Hundreds, if not thousands are believed to have been killed in an operation that started the night before and ended on the morning of June 4, 1989.

The crackdown became a turning point in modern Chinese history, ending a crisis in favor of Communist Party hardliners who advocated for control instead of political reforms.

The economy boomed in the ensuing decades, turning a once impoverished country into the world’s second largest economy, but societal controls have been tightened since party leader Xi Jinping came to power in 2012.

Across China, the event remains a sensitive and taboo subject that is heavily censored, and any mention or reference on social media is erased.

It was just another day in the Chinese capital, with hundreds of tourists lining the streets leading to gates to enter Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the former imperial palace that sits across from the north side of the square. Those who lost family members in the crackdown are generally prevented from gathering or grieving in public.

Asked by a foreign journalist for comment on the 35th anniversary during a daily foreign ministry briefing on Monday, spokesperson Mao Ning shrugged off the event.

“The Chinese government has long since come to a clear conclusion on the political disturbance that took place in the late 1980s,” she said, without elaborating. Tiananmen Mothers, a group formed by families of the victims, made an online appeal to the Chinese government to publish the names and numbers of those who died, grant compensation to the victims and their relatives and pursue the legal responsibility of those responsible.

“The June 4 tragedy is a historical tragedy that the Chinese government must face and explain to its people, and some people in the Government at that time should be held legally responsible for the indiscriminate killing of innocents,” the group said in a letter signed by 114 family members and published on its website, which is blocked in China.

Tiananmen memorials have also been scrubbed out in Hong Kong — for years the only place in China where they could take place. On Tuesday, a carnival organized by pro-Beijing groups was held in a park that for decades was the site of a huge candlelight vigil marking the anniversary.

Police used a new [national security law](#) to arrest eight people over the past week for social media posts commemorating the crackdown, including Chow Hang-tung, a former organizer of the vigil. Several pro-democracy activists told The Associated Press that police had inquired about their plans for Tuesday.

Officers were out in force in Causeway Bay, a bustling shopping district close to the park where the vigil was held. Police briefly detained a performance artist the previous evening in the same neighborhood.

Some Hong Kong residents remembered the event privately, running 6.4 kilometers (4 miles) on Monday — a reference to the June 4 date — and sharing Tiananmen-related content on social media. The British consulate posted a photo on the social media platform X showing a smartphone’s flashlight turned on with “VIIIV,” the Roman numerals for 6/4, printed on it.

An independent bookstore, which displayed “35/5” on its window — a roundabout reference to the date of the crackdown as May 35th — wrote on Instagram that police officers were stationed outside the shop for an hour on Sunday, during which they recorded the identity details of customers.

Hong Kong’s leader John Lee did not answer directly when asked Tuesday whether residents could still publicly mourn the crackdown. He urged residents not to let down their guard against any attempts to cause trouble.

“The threat to national security is real,” Lee said at a weekly briefing. “Such activities can happen all of a

sudden and different people may use different excuses to hide their intention.”

Commemorative events have grown overseas in response to the silencing of voices in Hong Kong. Vigils were planned in Washington, D.C., London, Brisbane and Taipei among other cities this year, as well as a growing number of talks, rallies, exhibitions and plays.

China and Hong Kong reportedly detain dissidents before Tiananmen Square anniversary

03 June 2024, [The Guardian](#), Helen Davidson

Events marking 35 years since troops ended peaceful protest with deadly violence are banned in China and Hong Kong

Chinese and Hong Kong authorities have arrested or put under surveillance several dissidents before the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre this week, according to human rights groups.

On 4 June it will be 35 years since Chinese soldiers shut down a weeks-long peaceful protest with violence, killing anything from several hundred to several thousand people.

Commemorative events are planned in cities around the world, including Tokyo, London, Taipei and New York — where a museum dedicated to the massacre was opened last year — but not in the country where it occurred.

The event has been banned from public acknowledgment in China, prompting those who want to commemorate or discuss it to find creative ways to get around censors to avoid persecution.

Human Rights Watch said several individuals connected to the 4 June remembrance had been put under surveillance or temporarily moved from their homes by authorities. Among them were Zhan Xianling, a founding member of the Tiananmen Mothers group of victims’ relatives, the human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang, and the Guizhou student leader Ji Feng.

Mentions of the anniversary are largely impossible on China’s strictly controlled internet and media. Even obscure references in photos, words and dates are often blocked from social media posts.

Famous photographs, such as that of the “tank man”, are banned, but so too are images or mentions of yellow rubber ducks after the toy became a popular replacement image. In 2022, one of China’s most popular shopping influencers was abruptly taken off air after a cake shaped like a tank was briefly shown on his live stream.

In the lead-up to the anniversary, some platforms and institutions appeared to be removing any opportunity for memorial posts. On its Weibo account on Friday, World of Warcraft said its website would be undergoing maintenance from 3-5 June, and users would be unable to log in or leave messages. On

Saturday, a secondary school in Shanxi issued a notice to staff telling them not to post on social media until notified, and that assembly and religious activities were banned on 4 June, according to "Teacher Li", who runs an information-sharing and activism-monitoring account on X.

For three decades, the largest Tiananmen memorial event was held in Hong Kong, but under a tightening crackdown by the city's government against the pro-democracy movement, that too has been banned. Attempts to organise candlelit vigils across the city and in homes have resulted in arrests.

Last week, Hong Kong police used a new national security law to arrest seven people, accusing them of publishing messages with seditious intent ahead of an "upcoming sensitive date".

The police searched homes and seized electronic devices. "Those who intend to endanger national security should not imagine that they can avoid police pursuit anonymously online," the police said.

One of the women arrested was already in prison. Local media identified her as Chow Hang-tung, a prominent barrister and human rights activist who has been jailed on other charges.

Chow's case is the subject of a documentary that will be screened at a 4 June event in Japan on Tuesday. She had been an organiser of Hong Kong's Tiananmen Vigils, with the since-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China. However, in December 2022, she and others were charged with "inciting others to take part in an unauthorised assembly". Chow was acquitted, but that was then overturned by the court of appeal in January. "The Chinese government is seeking to erase memory of the Tiananmen massacre throughout China and in Hong Kong," said Maya Wang, the acting China director at Human Rights Watch. "But 35 years on, the government has been unable to extinguish the flames of remembrance for those risking all to promote respect for democracy and human rights in China."

The introduction of two new national security laws since 2020 have driven a climate of fear and self-censorship in Hong Kong, where activists, media, and others say it is not clear where the red lines are for authorities.

In its most recent issue, Hong Kong's Christian Times newspaper published mostly blank space on its front page. It also did not publish it online as usual, saying it could not do so because of "circumstances".

In an editorial, the paper, which in the past has often published articles about the Tiananmen anniversary, said society had become "restrictive", and it could only "respond to the current situation by turning paragraphs into blank squares and white space".

"Even a prayer that originates from historical memories may arouse 'concern'," it said.

"Facing history honestly is not to perpetuate grievances, nor to smear and incite, but to give future repentance and reconciliation a solid foundation."

China – Nepal

Govt slammed for BRI agreement with China

27 June 2024, [The Himalayan Times](#)

Former foreign minister and Nepali Congress lawmaker Narayan Prakash Saud assailed the government for conducting risky foreign policy vis-à-vis neighbors and powerful countries.

Speaking during the special hour of the House of Representatives, Saud said the prime minister mentioned during China's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Sun Weidong's recent Nepal visit that the government could soon sign the Belt and Road Initiative agreement with China.

Stating that there had been no discussion with the opposition party on the BRI agreement, he said the way the government was dealing with neighbors and powerful countries had exposed Nepal's diplomatic capacity. The government had not consulted political parties, especially the opposition, on the level of talks it had been holding with the Chinese government on BRI.

He said foreign policy should be conducted on the basis of consensus among political parties. "Prithvi Narayan Shah had called Nepal a yam between two boulders, which meant two inanimate stones and one animate yam which is dynamic," Saud said and added that the way the government was conducting Nepal's foreign policy made Nepal a dynamite between two boulders. "If dynamite between two boulders explodes, it can damage the two boulders but, in that case, the dynamite will cease to exist," he added. Saud also assailed the government for recalling 11 Nepali ambassadors from foreign missions.

Another Nepali Congress lawmaker Rajendra Bajgain demanded that the government present the BRI agreement Nepal signed with China in Parliament. "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), sometimes referred to as the New Silk Road, is China's major strategic program. On May 12, 2017, Nepal and China signed an MoU on the BRI. Why has that framework document not been made public yet?"

He said BRI cannot be a competitive program against Millennium Challenge Corporation, a grant project because China had a plan to provide soft loans for BRI projects at the high-interest rate of 2 to 4 percent. "The MCC was a grant, and it became a subject of parliamentary debate and was approved after a long tug-of-war. The BRI should also be a matter of parliamentary discussion," he added.

"We want to hear the government's view on the BRI funding modality. Nepal is serving internal and external debts amounting to 50% of its GDP. A country serving nearly one and a half trillion in debt cannot bear more." He said the World Bank and Asian Development Bank had been providing loans to Nepal at one percent or less interest rate. He said the country should not take loans from China. "The loan period from the World Bank and ADB is 40/50 years. The situation is that we are borrowing from the World Bank and ADB at an annual interest rate of 0.50% to 1%. China's interest rate ranges from 2% to 4%. In this scenario, we will fall into a debt trap."

The BRI needs to be read and understood because it has five declared objectives, among which two are Policy Harmonization & Coordination, Bajgain said while adding that the two objectives of policy harmonization and policy coordination in BRI were not good for Nepal. "Policy Harmonization & Coordination means making the policies of different jurisdictions identical. How is this possible? We are not the same countries!"

"Two countries' policies cannot be similar," he added. Bajgain further stated, "As far as we know, the BRI MoU mentions that the Implementation Plan document does not include a signature clause. How does the government intend to bypass the parliament and sign the BRI Implementation Plan?"

Saud said as the world was witnessing polarization from unipolarity to multipolarity, the world was witnessing conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia Pacific region and there was a risk of Asia becoming embroiled in the conflict. At this juncture when we are supposed to adopt mature diplomacy and reliable conduct, we have recalled our ambassadors from 11 powerful countries, he added. He said the prime minister told the HoR that the government recalled Nepali ambassadors as they were appointed on the basis of political quota. Saud said that the government's move to recall ambassadors without any reason had diminished Nepal's credibility in the international community. Stating that new ambassadors were nominated by the government without any accepted criteria, he said one ambassadorial nominee declined the offer as he was not consulted prior to his nomination. Human rights activist Sushil Pyakurel, who was nominated ambassador to South Korea, declined the offer, saying he was not consulted prior to his nomination.

In an oblique reference to Rastriya Swatantra Party, Saud said that a political party had solicited applications from ambassadorial aspirants in the manner NGOs recruited their human resources and the move had undermined Nepal's prestige and diplomatic norms. He urged the government to withdraw its decision to recall Nepali ambassadors from foreign countries.

Nepal seeks Interpol help for two citizens held by China for allegedly helping Tibetans flee

24 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Nepal has requested the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) to find the whereabouts of two of its youths from its border district of Gorkha, knowing fully well the duo had been called to Tibet on some pretext and then arrested by the Chinese police there. The initial Jun 9 and 12 media reports on their disappearance more than a month earlier suggested that they were suspected of having tried to help Tibetans to flee their Chinese ruled homeland.

It was not clear whether Nepal had raised the matter directly with the Chinese authorities in Tibet who were earlier reported to have admitted having them in coercive custody.

The District Police Office, Gorkha, on Sunday (Jun 23) submitted an application to Interpol urging it to trace the location of Rapke Lama and Karma Cheden Lama of Lama Gaun, Chumanubri Rural Municipality-7, Gorkha, who were nabbed by Tibet police one-and-a-half month ago, reported [theannapurnaexpress.com](#) Jun 24.

The Interpol will search for them in coordination with Beijing-based Interpol, the report cited SP Basudev Pathak from the District Police Office as saying.

"The duo had gone to Bhajyupa to search for Yarsagumba on Apr 29, but they did not return home till late night. On May 16, outgoing ward Chairman Pasang Lama got a call from Shigatse Police Office, Tibet, and told him that the missing youths are under the control of Shigatse Police," the report quoted an application submitted by Karma Chetan's wife as saying.

The issue of the duo's disappearance was raised in parliament by on Jun 11 by Nepali Congress lawmaker Rajendra Bajgain who represents the Gorkha constituency.

Narrating the sequence of events of their disappearance, Bajgain had told parliament, "Some one and half months back, they received a call. ... The phone calls were made by Tibetans who were arrested by the Tibetan authorities. While receiving the phone calls, they were asked to come to Tibet. Then they were arrested after reaching there."

Nepali leaders reaffirm commitment to one-China principle

17 June 2024, [Xinhua](#)

Nepal's Acting President Ram Sahay Prasad Yadav and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, in recent separate meetings with a senior Chinese political advisor, reiterated the country's commitment to the one-China principle.

While meeting with Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Bateer in Kathmandu on Friday and Sunday respectively, they also vowed not to allow any force to use Nepal's territory to harm China's interests and voiced readiness to continue to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with China in various fields.

The Nepali leaders expressed their appreciation of China's long-term and valuable support to Nepal's economic and social development.

For his part, Bateer said that as China and Nepal are close neighbors linked by the same mountains and rivers and enjoying a long-standing friendship, the Chinese side is willing to work with the Nepali side to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields, and continuously deepen China-Nepal strategic cooperative partnership.

During his stay in Nepal from Friday to Monday, Bateer also met with Nepal's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Indira Rana.

No info on two Nepalis called and held by China on suspicion of helping Tibetans flee

12 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Police in Chinese ruled Tibet lured and arrested two Nepali youths on suspicion of trying to help Tibetans flee their occupied homeland. And they have remained missing for the last one month and half, reported *kathmandupost.com* Jun 12, citing a Nepali lawmaker.

Rapke Lama and Karma Cheden from northern Gorkha district were arrested a month ago and their whereabouts are yet to be known, Nepali Congress lawmaker Rajendra Bajgain has said in Parliament on Jun 11.

"Two youths of Gorkha were detained by the Tibetan security officials but the government has been clueless," Bajgain has said. "I ask for an answer from the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

Stating his position on the issue on X (formerly *Twitter*), Bajgain has said, "The arbitrary arrest was made allegedly because they helped the Tibetans flee... But to reassure you, we do not play against China here and respect them as our close neighbour. We are only speaking for a better environment within the Himalayan border."

Narrating the sequence of events of their disappearance, Bajgain has told parliament, "Someone and half months back, they received a call. ... The phone calls were made by Tibetans who were arrested by the Tibetan authorities. While receiving

the phone calls, they were asked to come to Tibet. Then they were arrested after reaching there."

He has expressed disappointment over the government's ignorance or indifference on the development. "The Nepal government is not aware of this incident. No one knows their condition, whether they are alive or not... I would like to draw the attention of the foreign ministry regarding this incident."

China's "Empty Airport" In Nepal Sparks Online Tensions; Envoy Intimidates Journalist For Reporting Pokhara Airport Loan

03 June 2024, [The EurAsian Times](#), Ritu Sharma

With no international flights, the Pokhara International Airport has become a \$215.96 million white elephant for Nepal. Made with Chinese loans, the high-interest rate is soon going to result in a debt problem for the Himalayan country.

A Nepali journalist was at the receiving end of China's 'Wolf Warrior' diplomacy for reporting on the project's pitfalls.

So far, information in the public realm has said that Nepal has to pay a 2 percent interest on the US \$215.96 million Chinese loan for building the Pokhara International Airport, which has also been built by Chinese firms. However, a senior Nepali journalist, Gajendra Budhathoki, quoted "a signed official document" that the actual interest rate is 5 percent. Budhathoki posted on X a social media post asking the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, for clarification. In an acerbic response, the Chinese envoy asked for the journalist's apologies.

However, a senior Nepalese journalist has said he had a copy of a signed official document showing the actual interest rate is 5%. In seeking clarification on this anomaly in an online post on May 27, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, severely scolded senior Nepalese journalist Gajendra Budhathoki, demanding that he apologize.

Song said in his post on X: "Worst lies that I ever saw. It is public information, yet you dare lie about it." In another post, he demanded an apology from Budhathoki, the chief editor of Taksar magazine, and also from "whoever the people you represent."

Budhathoki, in his response, asked Song not to "intimidate" him as he has proof.

Nepal's second-biggest airport, financed and constructed by China, was inaugurated with much fanfare in January 2023. The rate of interest for the loan was earlier reported to be 2 percent. But Budhathoki claims that he had the signed document for the loan agreement showing that the Export-Import Bank of China has given the loan at 5 percent.

The Economic Times has called the Chinese envoy's public spat with the Nepali journalist part of 'Wolf Warrior diplomacy', a brand of hyper-public diplomacy conducted by Chinese diplomats targeting the host governments.

Song's outburst has invited the ire of former diplomats and journalists in Nepal. "It is unusual for a foreign ambassador to demand an apology from a host country journalist for a social media post. He could refute or ask the government to clarify. The foreign ministry should remind the ambassador of the limits of 'public diplomacy' and risks of direct engagement," Acharya opined in his post.

An International Airport With No Flights

Around a decade ago, China agreed to give loans to build the airport. China's CAMC Engineering, the state-owned construction firm, built the airport. However, the airport has failed to attract any regular international flights, barring a few flights from China. This has raised questions about how the airport will generate revenue to repay the Chinese loan. Kathmandu has been seeking Beijing to change the loan terms to ease the financial burden on the country, but China has not relented so far.

In November 2023, The New York Times published a report that the Chinese construction firm had inflated the cost of the project and undermined Nepal's efforts to maintain quality control, putting its business interests first. The report said that Nepal's Civil Aviation Authority, reluctant to ruffle feathers in Beijing, overlooked the firm's wrongdoings.

In the aftermath of the report, Nepal's Commission for the Investigation of Abuse and Authority raided the Pokhara offices of the Civil Aviation Authority and seized documents related to the project. An investigation has been launched to ascertain the allegations.

A preliminary report shows that narrow-body jets like the Airbus A320 and A319 have payload issues due to obstacles near the airport, which is a 25-minute hop from Kathmandu.

The report indicates that the Pokhara International Airport has a payload penalty ranging from 5 to 10 tonnes, depending on the temperature and distance. The permissible load for an A320 is 77 tonnes, but an A320 taking off from Pokhara will be allowed to carry a maximum load of only 68 tonnes.

This load restriction means that airlines either incur a loss while flying to Pokhara or raise fares to compensate for 50 percent of the seats that have to be left empty. China also pulled the airport into a geopolitical quagmire with India by unilaterally proclaiming it part of its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Nepal entered the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China to facilitate transit transport, logistics, and related infrastructure development

through cross-border projects, including railway, road, civil aviation, power grid, information, and communication.

Following the signing of the framework, Nepal initially listed 35 projects to be implemented under BRI; later, this number was whittled down to nine.

Even despite the Nepalese government's apprehensions about how the projects will be financed—through soft loans or grants—China has moved to unilaterally claim various projects to have been completed under the framework of BRI.

Last June, Song launched the WeChat Pay Cross-border Payment Service in Nepal during the first Dragon Boat Race Festival between the two countries in June 2023. He posted on X: "Warm congratulations on WeChat Pay Cross-border Payment Service Inauguration in Nepal. A new step forward in financial connectivity, one of the five "connectivities" under the BRI initiative."

The fate of the Pokhara International Airport resembles that of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport at Hambantota, which has earned the moniker of "world's emptiest airport."

The airport was built at the cost of US \$209 million, out of which China financed US \$190 million in the form of soft loans. With no flights, the cost of paying off this loan alone was nearly US \$ 17 million per year.

China's Money – A Poisoned Chalice

Countries around the world that have taken large loans to fund infrastructure projects are said to be spiraling down into a debt trap. Sri Lanka is a case in point. China has been lending money for infrastructure projects close to the market interest rate and, in most cases, has insisted on using Chinese firms and contractors.

China uses the loans to seek geopolitical leverage. A 2021 study analyzed over 100 debt financing contracts China signed with foreign governments.

The borrowing countries were bound with absolute confidentiality, and the contract also contained clauses against restructuring the loan from 22 major creditor nations known as the "Paris Club."

China also retained the right to demand repayment anytime and could use it to strong-arm countries to be in line regarding issues like Taiwan.

China - Pakistan

Pakistan's new anti-terror initiative aimed at protecting Chinese projects: Report

25 June 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Islamabad recently approved a revitalised national counter-terrorism campaign known as 'Operation Azm-e-Istehkam'.

China's reported hesitation to invest in new projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stems largely from concerns about the security of its citizens and assets in Pakistan.

This hesitation appears to have prompted the Pakistani government to take action, as Islamabad recently approved a revitalised national counter-terrorism campaign known as 'Operation Azm-e-Istehkam'.

According to a recent editorial in Dawn, the move underscores Pakistan's recognition of the importance of addressing China's security concerns, especially at a time when attracting foreign investment is critical for the country's economic development.

Speaking at a press conference in Lahore, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif clarified that the main focus of operations under 'Azm-e-Istehkam' will be in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) and Balochistan.

He mentioned that a comprehensive plan detailing the framework for these operations will be announced in the coming days. Notably, Chinese citizens, workers, or projects have been targeted by violence or security threats within Pakistani territory.

These incidents have raised concerns about the safety and security of Chinese nationals and investments in Pakistan, particularly under projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Such attacks can have significant implications for bilateral relations between China and Pakistan, as well as for regional stability and economic cooperation.

However, military operations conducted by Pakistan frequently face allegations of human rights violations, which involve accusations of excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, disappearances, and mistreatment of civilians in conflict zones such as Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and in areas affected by insurgency.

These allegations are often reported by human rights organisations and international observers, raising concerns about the protection of civil liberties and adherence to international humanitarian law.

Such reports can strain Pakistan's relations with the international community and prompt calls for accountability and reforms within the military and security forces.

Azm-e-Istehkam: China's wish is Pakistan's command

24 June 2024, [ORF](#), Sushant Sareen

The new operation Azm-e-Istehkaam is designed to curb Islamist terror networks and is clearly undertaken to allay the fears of China.

Military operations by Pakistan Army against Islamist radicals and terrorists are like the country's annual budgets: They all pretend to be aimed at solving the critical problems but they all falter because they never

address the underlying structural causes that gave rise to the problem in the first place. And, quite like the budgets, military operations are often devised and designed not so much to address the principal problem as they are to satisfy and appease foreign players—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in case of the budget, and increasingly China, in case of the anti-terror operations.

Yet another operation

Once again, Pakistan's hybrid regime has announced yet another military operation—Azm-e-Istehkaam (Resolve of durable stability)—to “combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner”. Since 2007, this is the twelfth major anti-Islamist terrorist military operation, there have been many minor ones as well. Most of the earlier operations were of a tactical nature, focusing on a particular area that had become particularly troublesome. For instance, the Operation Rah-e-Rast and Rah-e-Haq were in Swat region, Sherdil was in Bajaur and Rah-e-Nijaat was in South Waziristan agency. The two big operations on a much broader front were the Zarb-e-Azb, which started in North Waziristan and then was extended to other regions, followed by Radd-ul-Fassad which was more an intelligence based operation to strike at terrorist networks which had spread throughout Pakistan. The new operation Azm-e-Istehkaam is aimed at curbing the Islamist terror networks which have resurfaced with renewed vigour and virulence after the Afghan Taliban shattered the “shackles of slavery” of US and its allies, ironically enough with Pakistan's assiduous assistance.

The new operation Azm-e-Istehkaam is aimed at curbing the Islamist terror networks which have resurfaced with renewed vigour and virulence after the Afghan Taliban shattered the “shackles of slavery” of US and its allies, ironically enough with Pakistan's assiduous assistance. Ostensibly, it aims at “full-blown kinetic efforts of the armed forces [which] will be augmented by full support from all law enforcement agencies, empowered by effective legislation to address legal voids that hinder effective prosecution of terrorism-related cases and award of exemplary punishments to them [terrorists].” Every military operation bears the unique imprint of the Army chief: Gen Ashfaq Kayani was very cautious and worried about the blowback, and therefore preferred limited operations; Gen Raheel Sharif preferred an all-out kind of operations without bothering too much about consequences; Gen Qamar Bajwa preferred small, tactical, intelligence based operations. The next few weeks will give a good idea about the military approach of the current Army Chief Gen Asim Munir. China gets what China wants

However, what is clear is that this is the third military operation that is being taken to assuage the Chinese.

In 2007, the Lal Masjid operation which became the catalyst for the formation of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and led to a massive spike in terrorist activity inside Pakistan was launched after the Islamist radicals in the mosque raided a Chinese massage parlour and abducted the Chinese workers. The Chinese government is reported to have leaned very heavily on the then military dictator Pervez Musharraf to send in the Army to clean up the Lal Masjid. The Zarb-e-Azb operation was also prompted in part by Pakistan wanting to assure the Chinese that the operation was aimed at Uyghur militants. This latest operation has once again been forced on Pakistan by the Chinese. On 29 May, the Business Recorder newspaper reported that Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong told a visiting Pakistani delegation that was in Beijing to prepare for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit about "the need for another Zarb-e-Azb against terrorist forces such as TTP, Majeed Bridge, BLA and others to crush them once and for all". Recent attacks on Chinese—the latest being the suicide bombing in March of a bus carrying Chinese engineers working on the Dash dam project—had angered the Chinese who had been given repeated assurances by the Pakistanis of fool proof security.

Not only were Chinese investments in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) proving to be a loss-making venture, even the physical security of Chinese workers in Pakistan was in grave jeopardy. It was made clear to the Pakistanis that future Chinese investments were contingent on Pakistan getting its act together on providing security to the Chinese workers. During Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing in June last, despite all the hyperbole that usually accompanies anything to do between China and Pakistan, there was very little outcome in substantive terms. Speculation has been rife that there is a visible cooling off in the bilateral relationship. The Chinese seemed to be losing interest in at least the economic side of things which was supposed to have added a new dimension to the security and strategic relationship when CPEC was initiated 10 years ago. For a couple of years now, the Chinese have been trying to impress on Pakistan that without political stability (Istehkaam) and security, there was no way that the CPEC projects could move forward. The same message was given by Xi Jinping during Shehbaz Sharif's visit. And just a day before the announcement of the new military operation, the visiting Chinese minister Liu Jianchao bluntly informed his Pakistani hosts that "security threats are the main hazards to CPEC cooperation...In the case of Pakistan, the primary factor shaking the confidence of Chinese investors is the security situation."

The Chinese have, for long, been trying to impress upon the Pakistanis that if they are unable to protect Chinese workers, China should be allowed to bring in

their own security. But Pakistan has balked at this demand and reiterated assurances of providing complete security to all Chinese.

The Chinese have, for long, been trying to impress upon the Pakistanis that if they are unable to protect Chinese workers, China should be allowed to bring in their own security. But Pakistan has balked at this demand and reiterated assurances of providing complete security to all Chinese. However, things seem to be reaching the point where Pakistani assurances need to be backed by concrete action on ground. This is required not just to satisfy the Chinese who are critical because they are really the only economic game in town for Pakistan, but also to push back the alarming inroads made by the TTP and other armed groups, including Baloch separatists. With Pakistan's economy in a mess, it desperately needs both foreign and domestic investment. But given the political instability and the deteriorating security situation, neither domestic nor foreign investors are ready to invest in Pakistan. However, conducting a large scale anti-terrorist military operation will not be an easy option for a variety of reasons. Between a rock and a hard place

First, there is no political consensus behind such an operation. In the fractious political environment, there are already carping sounds being made by the opposition. Add to this the fact that the civilian government does not really have the mandate to govern because they have come into power through a very controversial and tainted election. Second, a military operation is an expensive exercise. Although the defence budget has been increased by around 18 percent, more money will need to be pumped into what is essentially both a war of attrition accompanied by some higher intensity combat. Third, if the military operations lead to greater violence, then it will spook most potential investors. The economic crisis is immediate and if there are major terror attacks then whatever negligible chance there is of the economy recovering will go up in smoke. Fourth, Pakistan is increasingly getting embroiled in what threatens to be an endless war, especially because the Afghan Taliban are unlikely to dump the Pakistani Taliban. Taking the war into Afghanistan to force compellence on the Afghan Taliban will mean a conflict that will suck Pakistan into the Afghan vortex.

Fifth, Pakistan has a fundamental ideological confusion in both state and society that militates against successfully fighting terrorism. It is not possible to extol the virtues of jihad against India, nurture and support terrorist organisations active against India, but fight against similar organisations that target Pakistan. Add to this the growth of fundamentalism and radicalism inside Pakistan, and it becomes even more difficult to prosecute this war. Soft-peddling and encouraging groups like the Bareilvi

radicals of Tehrik-e-Labbaik and turning a blind eye to extremist ideology and indoctrination that is running rampant in society will only increase the complexity of the task of fighting terrorism. Pakistan Army just doesn't get it that the antidote of terrorism is not extremism. Finally, at a time when Pakistan has ramped up tensions against India—the recent terrorist attacks in Jammu are an example—can it afford a three active fronts, i.e., against India, Afghanistan and internal?

Pakistan has a fundamental ideological confusion in both state and society that militates against successfully fighting terrorism. It is not possible to extol the virtues of jihad against India, nurture and support terrorist organisations active against India, but fight against similar organisations that target Pakistan.

While the economic aspect could be addressed with assistance from the US (which appears to be cozying up to the idea of cooperating with Pakistan on the terrorism issue) and China, the bigger problem will be the political crisis which is likely to deepen in coming weeks with rising economic difficulties being faced by an already squeezed citizenry that is increasingly blaming the Pakistan Army and the incumbent regime for much of its woes. On the flip side, the Pakistani state doesn't have the luxury of time to wait until the economic and political situation stabilises before it grabs the bull of terrorism by its horn. The longer it waits, the greater the ingress of the Taliban and the more difficult it will be to extirpate them.

Chinese minister urges closer ties to achieve development goals

21 June 2024, [The Express Tribune](#)

Liu Jianchao says China-Pakistan friendship's foundation is public support

The senior Chinese minister conveyed these views during a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad. Addressing the Pak-China Consultation Mechanism meeting, Liu expressed that the event marks a positive step towards strengthening the relationship between the two countries.

He stated that the development of China and Pakistan would bring mutual benefits and create new opportunities through bilateral agreements.

Liu stressed the foundation of the China-Pakistan friendship lies in public support and highlighted plans for media, student, and youth exchanges.

He mentioned that both nations' leaders had agreed on upgrading the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He also pointed out the necessity of improving security conditions to attract more investment to Pakistan.

Dar stresses political unity on CPEC

Dar welcomed the Chinese delegation, stating that their visit would boost mutual trust. He noted that all political parties in Pakistan support CPEC, recognising it as a cornerstone of cooperation between the two countries.

Dar praised the socio-economic benefits CPEC has brought to Pakistan and reaffirmed the country's commitment to its further development.

Earlier, a Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson announced that Deputy PM Dar met with Liu Jianchao. Both sides appreciated CPEC's contributions to Pakistan's development and pledged to continue its successful implementation.

Liu reiterated China's special regard for Pakistan in its foreign policy and expressed a desire to strengthen their strategic partnership. The two sides expressed satisfaction with the progress of CPEC and agreed to enhance high-level engagements and communication on key regional and global issues.

China's minister reaches Pakistan today, will preside over meeting on CPEC

20 June 2024, [Dunya News](#)

Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Liu Jianchao will arrive here on Thursday (today) on a three-day visit to Pakistan. Jianchao, who is also a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee will participate in third meeting of the Pakistan-China Joint Consultative Mechanism.

During the visit, Liu Jianchao along with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister will co-chair the Third Meeting of the Pakistan-China Joint Consultative Mechanism of the Political Parties on CPEC.

He will also call on the senior civil and military leadership.

According to the Foreign Office, Minister Jianchao is visiting on the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif highlights safety and economic cooperation with China

06 June 2024, [Global Times](#), Xie Wenting and Bai Yunyi

Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif made a strong commitment in Beijing on Thursday during a business reception event, stating that he would attach even greater importance to the safety of Chinese people in Pakistan than to the safety of his own children. He assured that Pakistan will make all necessary arrangements to protect Chinese people.

Shehbaz made the commitment at the Pakistan-China Friendship and Business Reception, which was held in Beijing on Thursday, with the participation of dozens of diplomats and businesspeople from both China and Pakistan. This event was part of the activities during Shehbaz's visit to China aimed at further enhancing cooperation and pushing forward the construction of the upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

At the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Shehbaz is paying an official visit to China from Tuesday to Saturday. This also marks his first visit to China since the establishment of the new Pakistani government this year.

At Thursday's event, Shehbaz recounted his first visit to China back in 1981 and hailed the remarkable development that China has achieved over the past decades, while stressing that Pakistan wants to learn from China's progress.

In an op-ed that Shehbaz wrote in the Global Times, he said that he viewed the visit as "a vital opportunity to further strengthen cooperation between Pakistan and China across political, economic, trade, and investment domains."

"Personally, it will also be an opportunity for me to, once again, benefit from Chinese wisdom on issues of peace, security, and development," he wrote in the Global Times.

During this visit, in addition to leading a federal cabinet, he also led a huge business delegation. At Thursday's event, Pakistani businessman Salim Ghauri told the Global Times that he is very excited to visit China with the prime minister and the business delegation.

"China is a friend; China is a big economy. Pakistan can learn from China's growth and how they achieved it. I think it is important that we come to China regularly and see what China has done and benefit from it," he told the Global Times.

Ghauri owns a software development company. According to him, China is the company's biggest market, and they have over 20 customers in the country, including some big companies. The company also runs a main office in China. "We have Chinese engineers working for us, so we work together in Pakistan and China to develop software... I think there could be more cooperation with the Chinese software industry to research and develop better products," he said.

Hasan Farid, a postdoctoral fellow at Hohai University, performed a song celebrating the relationship between China and Pakistan at Thursday's event. Majoring in business administration, he told the Global Times that he hopes to land a job in China in the future, after being in China for seven years. Farid believes that the prime minister's visit is a "very

good opportunity, and the timing is really important for both Pakistan and China," as the visit demonstrates how serious the government of Pakistan is about CPEC and how much Pakistan is looking forward to attracting foreign investment, especially from China, which is Pakistan's all-weather strategic cooperative partner. He said people in Pakistan are also looking forward to the development of the upgraded version of the CPEC, viewing it as a "game changer" that will help Pakistan and the region develop.

Terrorism and economy expected to top agenda at China-Pakistan talks as security concerns cloud belt and road

02 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Zhao Ziwen

- *Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will head to China, where he will meet President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang*
- *Beijing is the South Asian country's key trading partner and investor, but Chinese-driven infrastructure projects have been targets of terror attacks*

Counterterrorism cooperation and the economy are expected to be high on the agenda when Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif makes a five-day trip to China next week.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning confirmed on Friday that Sharif's trip, which starts on Tuesday, will include talks with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

Sharif will also visit Guangdong province, China's economic hub, and the northwestern province of Shaanxi.

"Under the guidance of the leaders of the two countries, China and Pakistan have in recent years had close high-level exchanges, steadily advanced practical cooperation ... on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and maintained sound communication and coordination in international and regional affairs," Mao said.

It is Sharif's first trip to China since starting his second term as prime minister in March. His visit comes amid concerns about security in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan and northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, the site of a number of major Chinese infrastructure projects under the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

In the latest in a string of attacks targeting personnel working on Chinese projects, five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver were killed in a suicide bombing on their way to the Dasu hydropower dam project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in March.

Islamabad said it arrested 11 militants accused of being involved in the attack. It said the suicide bomber

who targeted the Chinese convoy was an Afghan national.

One of the deadliest acknowledged attacks was in July 2021, when a suicide bomber on a bus killed 13 people, including nine Chinese workers in the province. More than 20 Chinese personnel were wounded in that attack.

Sharif's visit also comes as Pakistan faces a debt crisis and fiscal deficits.

According to data shared by the State Bank of Pakistan, the country's external debt reached around US\$130 billion in 2023 – double the figure in 2015.

Chinese debt accounts for 13 per cent of Pakistan's total foreign debt, said Zhao Shiren, China's counsel general in Lahore, while addressing a gathering of business leaders in March.

Zhu Yongbiao, a professor with the school of politics and international relations at Lanzhou University, said China's investment in Pakistan would weather the constant terrorism threats.

Zhu said that China was "generally satisfied" with Pakistan's counterterrorism operations, but that both sides still needed to strengthen cooperation in the field.

"The main area [of the visit] is still economic and trade cooperation, in order to help Pakistan's development and enhance its capacity of self-reliance."

China is Pakistan's key trading partner and investor, especially in the country's infrastructure.

China's mega project in Pakistan – the CPEC – is a flagship infrastructure project under the global Belt and Road Initiative and is designed to link China's northwest Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region directly to the Arabian Sea and the oil-rich Middle East.

As of the end of 2022, the CPEC had brought in a total direct investment of US\$25.4 billion to Pakistan, official news agency Xinhua reported, citing data from the Chinese embassy in Islamabad.

It generated 236,000 jobs, helped construct 510km (317 miles) of highway, and contributed to the development of an 886km national power transmission network in Pakistan.

Afghanistan could be another topic discussed during the talks. China has started to lean on Afghanistan's Taliban regime to prevent cross-border attacks on Chinese personnel and interests in neighbouring Pakistan, according to an earlier report from South China Morning Post.

The Post has learned that several Chinese diplomats in Islamabad and Kabul are seeking to persuade the Taliban to rein in Pakistani Taliban militants and prevent a surge in cross-border terrorism attacks.

Islamabad has accused Kabul of harbouring militants, but the Afghan regime has denied these claims.

China-Taiwan

China presses Global South leaders to support Taiwan 'reunification'

24 June 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Ken Moriyasu

When Chinese Premier Li Qiang visited Malaysia last week, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that his country firmly supports China in "achieving national reunification."

Support for China's "reunification" with Taiwan was not a phrase that Anwar used when he met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing in March 2023, at least according to the Chinese readout. But Anwar joins a list of Global South and other leaders who have recently mentioned "reunification" in their meetings with Li or President Xi Jinping -- a trend that has not gone unnoticed by Western analysts.

"Beijing is no longer satisfied with deterring Taiwan independence. Xi Jinping is now seeking to promote reunification," said Bonnie Glaser, the managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

China has long made its diplomatic relationships contingent upon its partners' acknowledgment that there is only "one China." But its recent engagements with some other countries suggest it increasingly demands more than that.

During a state visit to China in April, Surinamese President Chandrikapersad Santokhi said that Suriname will continue to "unswervingly support China in achieving national reunification." Some, like King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, have said they support "peaceful reunification."

But others, like Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who both had state visits in May, said they support "complete reunification" without adding conditions on how that should take place.

For Malaysia's part, when it established diplomatic relations with China in May 1974, it said it recognizes the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, and "acknowledged" Beijing's position that Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory.

That Malaysia did not "recognize," "support" or "endorse" that position on Taiwan was in line with the "One China" policies of other nations around the world. The U.S. holds that there is but one entity called "China," but leaves ambiguity over sovereignty. U.S. presidents have repeatedly reassured Chinese leaders that Washington does not support Taiwan independence.

But Anwar's explicit support for "reunification" appears to be one step closer to Beijing's position. Communist China has never controlled Taiwan, but

considers the island part of its territory and has refused to rule out taking it by force.

Some leaders, such as Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Bahrain's King Hamad, Egypt's Sisi and Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang have also expressed support for a One China "principle," a subtle but important choice of word that implies endorsement of Beijing's stance that Taiwan is a province of China.

Analysts in Washington say they started to take note of the shifting rhetoric around last fall, ahead of Xi's meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden in Woodside, California, in November.

Rush Doshi, who until recently served as the National Security Council deputy senior director for China and Taiwan, said, "This is [China's] response to the United States enlisting its allies and partners to speak publicly about the importance of peace and stability in the [Taiwan] Strait."

Most Western leaders are not playing Xi's game. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken simply told Xi in April that the U.S. adheres to the One China policy.

But in January, Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar told visiting Premier Li in Dublin that Ireland always abides by the One China "principle" and that he "hopes that China will achieve peaceful reunification at an early date," according to the Chinese readout. Varadkar later corrected the record, stating the One China "policy" of Ireland, a European Union member, had not changed.

Some analysts say that last month's inauguration of Taiwan's new pro-sovereignty President Lai Ching-te may fuel Xi's drive to press more leaders to publicly support "reunification."

Russell Hsiao, executive director of the Global Taiwan Institute in Washington, said Anwar's statement is "one of many troubling signs of the more aggressive turn in Xi's approach to Taiwan we could expect to see more in the years to come, as Beijing turns the screws on the Lai administration."

This shift in Beijing's strategy began in the latter half of former President Tsai Ing-wen's second term, Hsiao said. "Beijing is no longer simply seeking political endorsement from other countries of its 'One China principle,' but for them to take action that actively supports its position on 'reunification.'"

While it would be more challenging for China to force major powers to concede to this position, "it would be harder for smaller countries to resist Beijing's pressure," Hsiao said. "What this change means in practical terms requires careful and close observation."

But Doshi was confident that support from Global South countries would only go so far.

"China may get countries to support unification, but does that mean those countries support war? No,

none of them want that. The global economic cost would be too great," he said.

China threatens death penalty for Taiwan independence 'diehards'

22 June 2024, [The Guardian](#)

Beijing ramps up pressure over 'crime of secession' while Taipei says China has no jurisdiction over Taiwan and urges its people not to be intimidated

China has threatened to impose the death penalty in extreme cases for "diehard" Taiwan independence separatists, a ratcheting up of pressure even though Chinese courts have no jurisdiction on the democratically governed island.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory, has made no secret of its dislike of President Lai Ching-te, who took office last month, saying he is a "separatist", and staged war games shortly after his inauguration.

Taiwan has complained of a pattern of ramped up Chinese pressure since Lai won the election in January, including ongoing military actions, trade sanctions and coast guard patrols around Taiwan-controlled islands next to China.

The new guidelines say China's courts, prosecutors, public and state security bodies should "severely punish Taiwan independence diehards for splitting the country and inciting secession crimes in accordance with the law, and resolutely defend national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity", according to China's state-run Xinhua news agency.

The notice Beijing released on Friday specified the death penalty for "ringleaders" of independence efforts who "cause particularly serious harm to the state and the people", Xinhua said.

Other leading advocates could face jail terms ranging from 10 years to life.

The new guidelines – to take effect from Friday – were being issued in accordance with laws already on the books, including the 2005 anti-secession law, Xinhua said. That law gives China the legal basis for military action against Taiwan if it secedes or seems about to.

Sun Ping, an official from China's ministry of public security, told reporters in Beijing the maximum penalty for the "crime of secession" was the death penalty.

"The sharp sword of legal action will always hang high," she said.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council denounced Beijing's move, urging its people not to be threatened by China. "The Beijing authorities have absolutely no jurisdiction over Taiwan, and the Chinese communists' so-called laws and norms have no binding force on our people," it said in a statement on Friday. "The government appeals to our country's people to feel at ease and not

to be threatened or intimidated by the Chinese Communist party.”

The guidelines detail what is considered a crime worthy of punishment, including promoting Taiwan’s entry to international organisations where statehood is a condition, having “external official exchanges” and “suppressing” parties, groups and people that promote “reunification”.

The guidelines add a further clause to what could be considered a crime – “other acts that seek to separate Taiwan from China” – meaning the rules can be broadly interpreted.

Lai has repeatedly offered to hold talks with China but has been rebuffed. He says only Taiwan’s people can decide their future.

China has taken legal measures against Taiwanese officials before, including imposing sanctions on Hsiao Bi-khim, Taiwan’s former de facto ambassador to the US and now the island’s vice-president.

Such punishments have little practical effect as Chinese courts do not have jurisdiction in Taiwan, whose government rejects Beijing’s sovereignty claims. Senior Taiwanese officials, including its president, also do not visit China.

China’s reunification is ‘unstoppable’, says Beijing’s top man on Taiwan affairs

15 June 2024, [SCMP](#), Xiamen and Hayley Wong

Beijing has “firm determination, sufficient confidence and strong capability” to destroy any efforts by Taiwanese separatists, mainland China’s top political adviser and No. 4 official told a forum aimed at boosting exchanges with the island’s mainland-friendly camps.

“No matter how the situation in the Taiwan Strait changes, the fact that both sides belong to one China cannot be denied,” Wang Huning said in his opening speech at the annual Straits Forum on Saturday, held in the southeastern port city of Xiamen in Fujian province.

“The historic trend of China’s renaissance and reunification is unstoppable.”

Wang is Beijing’s top man on Taiwan affairs and a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Communist Party’s top decision-making body. He is also chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the country’s top advisory body.

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. Most countries, including the United States, Taiwan’s top weapons supplier, do not recognise the island as an independent state. However, Washington is opposed to any attempt to take Taiwan by force and is committed to arming it.

Fujian is located just to the west of the Taiwan Strait and is the closest part of the mainland to Taiwan, both geographically and culturally.

Despite Taipei’s warnings that the forum is a “united front tool”, Taiwan’s main opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), sent a delegation led by vice-chairman Sean Lien Sheng-wen. Beijing has described the forum as the biggest platform for cross-strait “people-to-people exchanges”.

Beijing’s Taiwan Affairs Office said it expected over 7,000 attendees from Taiwan to join some 50 events during the week-long forum on grass-roots governance, youth exchanges, and cultural and economic exchanges.

Chang Li-shan, chief of Taiwan’s Yunlin county, also attended the forum and was invited to speak at the opening ceremony, drawing criticism from Taipei’s Mainland Affairs Council. Chiu Chui-cheng, the council’s minister, expressed “displeasure” over local officials joining the events.

The opening event on Saturday was hosted by Song Tao, director of mainland China’s Taiwan Affairs Office. Fujian party chief Zhou Zuyi was among the other high-ranking officials there.

In his speech, Wang said the foundation, “driving force” and development of cross-strait relations all depended on the people.

He urged people on both sides to “resolutely oppose Taiwan independence and foreign interference” and “jointly push cross-Strait relations back on the right track”.

The KMT’s Lien said at least 60 per cent of Taiwan’s population “disagreed with the elected government’s speeches and actions on Taiwan independence”, as reflected in the island’s presidential and legislative elections this year.

He called on the two sides to “reduce hostile words and practices” so that “people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait will not have any doubts or uneasiness about the interactions between the two sides”.

“We must also not be kidnapped by a few extreme people with ulterior motives, let alone be misled by some extreme remarks,” he added.

Lien touted the KMT’s approach to promoting “peaceful win-win cooperation” in his speech and during his meeting with Wang before the opening ceremony.

In January, William Lai Ching-te from the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party was elected as Taiwan’s new leader with 40 per cent of the votes.

In his inauguration speech, Lai said the Republic of China, Taiwan’s official name, and the People’s Republic of China were “not subordinate to each other”. Beijing described the speech as a “confession of Taiwan independence” and has previously

described him as a “separatist” and “destroyer of cross-strait peace”

The People’s Liberation Army then held massive military drills around Taiwan. Beijing said the exercises were “punishment” for “Taiwan separatists” and a “severe warning” to outside forces intent on interference and provocation.

In a blow to Taiwan’s chemical exports, a suspension of tariff cuts took effect on Saturday on 134 items under the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement – the only trade agreement between Beijing and Taipei.

The Straits Forum, held annually since 2009, has been a platform for signalling new Taiwan policies. At last year’s forum, Wang announced that a cross-strait “integration development” pilot zone would be built in Fujian.

In September, Beijing released a comprehensive guideline for building the zone to promote peaceful reunification.

The plan called on Fujian authorities to remove long-standing restrictions on Taiwanese living on the mainland – such as inconveniences in housing, employment and social security.

Beijing also aims to create interconnected communities between the mainland city of Xiamen and the Taiwan-controlled island of Quemoy, also known as Kinmen, which are less than 5km (three miles) apart. Similar plans are under way for Fujian’s provincial capital of Fuzhou and the Taipei-governed archipelago of Matsu, which are about 20km apart.

Fujian party chief Zhou told the forum that 121 major projects for Fujian-Taiwan integration have been planned or implemented since last year, including providing water, gas, electricity and bridges to Kinmen and Matsu.

Wang said in his speech that these policies had been “widely welcomed”.

Beijing has so far issued 16 policy documents to promote the plan, including 20 measures issued by the Ministry of Education on Wednesday to make it easier for Taiwanese students and teachers to find courses and jobs in Fujian.

In a meeting attended by senior officials before the forum on Friday, Wang urged related government departments to make the integration of Fujian and Taiwan “deeper” and “more solid”.

While this year’s forum appeared to emphasise peace, some delegates raised concerns about the cross-strait situation.

During a parallel event on Friday, Cheng Ting-wen, secretary general of the Chinese Youth International, an organisation that promotes youth exchanges, expressed worries about the PLA’s presence in the Taiwan Strait.

China’s war games near Taiwan threaten international peace and security

12 June 2024, [The Conversation](#)

Taiwan recently saw yet another peaceful transition of power with the inauguration of President Lai Ching-Te, who was elected to office in January.

In his inaugural speech, Lai called on neighbouring China to cease its acts of intimidation and to “choose dialogue over confrontation.”

China responded by launching a simulated blockade of Taiwan. The People’s Liberation Army released images boasting its ability to rain missiles on one of the most densely populated countries in the world as “strong punishment.”

Democracy under threat

Beijing’s standard reaction to the democratic voting rights of 24 million people is to threaten to “break skulls and let blood flow.” For China, Taiwan as a renegade province that must “return to the embrace of the motherland” despite the fact China does not have any authority over Taiwan.

In recent years, China has been trying to use its diplomatic clout and influence at the United Nations to rewrite history and legitimize its claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.

While Taiwan ranks highly on the Human Freedom Index (just one spot ahead of Canada), China is a techno-authoritarian state that has regressed even further under the reign of Xi Jinping.

Millions of Uyghur Muslims remain in re-education and forced labour camps, while Tibetans are forced to “Sinicize” and lose their cultural and religious heritage.

Reaching beyond borders

Political dissidents, journalists and foreign nationals are not immune from intimidation or imprisonment.

In what has been termed transnational oppression, aided through Chinese so-called police stations operating with impunity overseas, the Chinese government targets and threatens Chinese nationals and critics of China wherever they are.

Many governments, including Canada’s, caution against travel to China and Hong Kong due to the “risk of arbitrary enforcement” of laws prohibiting activities or speech critical of the Chinese Communist Party.

China’s censorship, surveillance and arbitrary arrests are widespread, and such tactics and technologies are alarmingly being exported worldwide.

While the Chinese government condemns the forced divestment of TikTok, the app — together with Facebook, WhatsApp and Google — are all banned within the great firewall of China.

War games

When former United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in 2022, China conducted similar war games.

Incursions by Chinese warships and fighters into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone are increasing in frequency. In addition, short of mounting an invasion, China is increasingly testing the waters by deploying its maritime militia to swarm islands under Taiwan's control.

Known as "grey-zone" tactics, they fall short of the use of force, which is prohibited under international law. Also referred to as "salami slicing," grey-zone tactics that are not strictly attacks make it hard for others to respond without potentially escalating a situation to a conflict.

But not responding to threats of force or military intimidation risks normalizing such aggressive behaviour and emboldening China to further destabilize international peace and stability.

Such acts of harassment and threats can happen not just on Earth but in cyberspace and outer space, all of which can have severe repercussions on civilian life and infrastructure.

Pattern of reckless behaviour

Closely allying with Russia, and actively supplying weapons to sustain its war in Ukraine, China has not concealed its desire to reshape the world order.

Taiwan is not alone suffering China's increasingly brazen naval and aerial military operations. Canadian and Australian aircraft enforcing United Nations sanctions against North Korea have also been repeatedly harassed on international waters, where states supposedly enjoy the freedom of navigation.

Meanwhile, China is continuously engaged in violent border clashes with India, is challenging the sovereignty of islands that belong to Japan and militarizing islands in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

Deliberate jamming of navigation and emergency distress signals in the Asia-Pacific, which threatens the safety of international aviation, has also been attributed to China.

Why Taiwan matters

Tech executives around the world were recently in Taiwan to talk about the future of AI and innovative technologies. With Taiwan's prowess in computing technologies and chip production, Jensen Huang — the Taiwanese-born NVIDIA CEO — described his homeland as "the unsung hero, a steadfast pillar of the world."

But Taiwan is also on the front lines of an increasingly aggressive and assertive China. On a daily basis, Taiwan experiences the highest rate of cyberattacks in the world originating from China, all aimed at disrupting government services and sowing social distrust.

Taiwan has much to share with the world on how to enhance citizen participation in the digital age, counter foreign influence and dispel misinformation and disinformation that undermine trust in democratic institutions and processes.

The latest war games surrounding Taiwan are just another reminder of the various ways China tries to undermine liberal democracies and international peace and security. Today it may be a simulated attack. But the world must stand together and prevent it ever becoming reality.

Taiwan tracks 23 Chinese military aircraft around nation

04 June 2024, [DT Next](#)

The median line notably bisects the Taiwan Strait in a way that separates the island from China, which Taiwan claims to be a part of its territory.

TAIPEI: Taiwan tracked 23 Chinese military aircraft around the nation, the country's Ministry of National Defence said on Tuesday. It included fighter jets, transport aircraft, and drones. Out of these aircraft, 16 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait. In a post on social media platform X, Taiwan MND wrote, "Overall 23 PLA aircraft (J-16, Y-8, UAVs, etc.) were detected at 0820 hrs today. Out of which, 16 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered the north, central, and southwest parts of Taiwan's ADIZ in conducting joint combat patrol along with PLAN vessels."

The median line notably bisects the Taiwan Strait in a way that separates the island from China, which Taiwan claims to be a part of its territory.

The Chinese military aircraft were spotted right after China sent in 19 aircraft, eight naval vessels, and four Chinese coast guard ships around the self-governed island within 24 hours ending at 6 a.m. on Tuesday.

"19 PLA aircraft, 8 PLAN vessels, and 4 CCG vessels operating around Taiwan were detected today. 17 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's northern and SW ADIZ. ROC Armed Forces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly," Taiwan's Ministry of Defence said in a post on X earlier today.

Taiwan monitored the situation and responded accordingly.

Meanwhile, amid tense ties with China and the country's growing aggressiveness, the Defence Minister of Taiwan, Wellington Koo Li-Hsiung, visited the Army HQ to receive a briefing on the operational concepts for the country's ground forces.

The MND, in a post on X, wrote, "On June 3, Defence Minister Wellington Koo Li-hsiung visited the Army HQ

to receive a briefing on the operational concepts for Taiwan's ground forces and key future acquisitions to enhance warfighting capabilities."

"Minister Koo emphasised the importance of integrating active duty and reserve forces, strengthening command and control for joint operations, and adopting realistic training aligned with our asymmetric warfare strategy," the post added.

China ready to 'forcefully' stop Taiwan independence: Defence minister

02 June 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Dong Jun says 'whoever dares to split Taiwan from China will be crushed to pieces and suffer his own destruction'.

Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun has said the country's military was ready to "forcefully" stop Taiwan's independence, in a fiery speech at a Singapore security forum.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue conference in Singapore on Sunday, Dong said the self-ruled democracy of Taiwan was the "core of core issues" for China, but claimed Taiwan's governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was incrementally pursuing separatism and bent on erasing Chinese identity.

China views Taiwan as its own territory and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve unification.

Last month it staged two days of war games around the island after the May 20 inauguration of President William Lai Ching-te. Lai and the DPP say it is up to the people of Taiwan to decide their future. Beijing calls him a "separatist".

"Those separatists recently made fanatical statements that show their betrayal of the Chinese nation and their ancestors. They will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history," Dong said.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army has always been an indestructible and powerful force in defence of the unification of the motherland, and it will act resolutely and forcefully at all times to curb the independence of Taiwan and to ensure that it never succeeds in its attempts," Dong told the forum on Sunday.

"Whoever dares to split Taiwan from China will be crushed to pieces and suffer his own destruction."

Reacting to the Chinese minister's statements, Taiwan's government said it deeply regretted the "provocative and irrational" remarks.

Dong's comments in Singapore followed the first substantive face-to-face talks in 18 months between the defence chiefs of China and the US. Dong and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met for more than an hour at the luxury hotel hosting the forum.

"We have always been open to exchanges and cooperation, but this requires both sides to meet each other halfway," Dong said. "We believe that we need more exchanges precisely because there are differences between our two militaries."

After the meeting, Austin said telephone conversations between US and Chinese military commanders would resume "in the coming months", while Beijing hailed the "stabilising" security relations between the two countries.

President Joe Biden's administration and China have been stepping up communication to ease friction between the nuclear-armed rivals, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken visiting Beijing and Shanghai last month.

A key focus has been the resumption of military-to-military dialogue, which is seen as critical to preventing flashpoint disputes from spinning out of control.

China scrapped military communications with the US in 2022 in response to then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

On the South China Sea, which China claims almost entirely and where it has been involved in frequent confrontations with Philippine vessels, Dong warned of "limits" to Beijing's restraint.

China has fired water cannon at Philippine vessels in contested waters at Second Thomas Shoal and Scarborough Shoal, which Beijing seized from the Philippines after a months-long stand-off in 2012.

"China has maintained sufficient restraint in the face of rights infringements and provocation, but there are limits to this," Dong said.

China accuses the US of using the Philippines as a "pawn" to stir up trouble in the South China Sea.

After the Scarborough Shoal incident, Manila took its case to international arbitration. The court found in favour of the Philippines, and that China's claims had no legal basis. Beijing has ignored the ruling.

China – Xinjiang

Canadian ambassador's visit to Xinjiang draws China's ire

25 June 2024, [RFA](#), Jewlan

Jennifer May raised concerns about human rights violations against Uyghurs.

Canada's ambassador to China expressed concern over documented human rights violations against Uyghurs with top officials during a visit to Xinjiang, sparking criticism from the Chinese Embassy in Canada that said her concerns were based on "fabricated rumors and reports with ulterior motives."

Ambassador Jennifer May visited the far-western region on June 19-22 and met with Xinjiang Party Secretary Ma Xingrui and other senior regional government officials, according to a statement issued by Global Affairs Canada, the government department that manages diplomatic relations.

Very few Western diplomats have visited Xinjiang in recent years. It was the first visit to the region by a Canadian diplomat in 10 years. Last August, a group of diplomats from Mexico, Pakistan, Iran and other countries visited the region as part of a government-sponsored tour.

May went to Xinjiang as part of Canada's diplomatic engagement with China and to raise concerns "over credible reports of systematic violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang" affecting Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples, the statement said.

Specific concerns included restrictions on Uyghur-language education and the forced placement of Uyghur children in boarding schools, it said, but did not provide detail about the places May visited or what she saw.

In February 2021, Canada's House of Commons passed a motion declaring the Chinese government's mistreatment of Uyghurs — including the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs in state-sponsored camps, the use of Uyghur forced labor, the suppression of Uyghur religious practices, and the forced sterilization of women — a genocide.

May also repeated Canada's calls for China to allow U.N. independent experts unfettered access to all regions of the country, including Xinjiang, the statement said.

"Until an independent investigation team can visit, assess the situation, and release an unbiased report, Canada is signaling that China's propaganda and staged displays showing Uyghurs as content are ineffective and disregarded," said Memet Tohti, executive director of the Ottawa-based Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project.



Jennifer May, Canada's ambassador to China, appears on CTVNews, June 18, 2024. (CTVNews screenshot)

A 2022 report by the then-U.N. Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet, who visited Xinjiang, found that

China's mass detentions of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in the region may constitute crimes against humanity. Uyghur rights groups criticized the tightly organized trip as a staged tour.

Beijing has denied accusations of severe rights violations.

May's visit coincided a call by international human rights organizations and Uyghur advocacy groups on June 20 for the U.N.'s current human rights chief, Volker Türk, to provide a public update of measures taken by the Chinese government and his office to address the situation in Xinjiang.

'Same old rhetoric'

On Monday, the Chinese Embassy in Canada issued a statement saying that Canada "repeated the same old rhetoric, expressing so-called concerns based on fabricated rumors and reports with ulterior motives, without mentioning what Ambassador May really saw and heard in Xinjiang."

The embassy urged Canada to be objective and unbiased and to show Canadians what May saw during her visit. It also said that Xinjiang enjoys social stability, economic prosperity, ethnic unity and religious harmony.

"Human rights of people of all ethnic groups, including their right to use and advance their own ethnic languages, are fully protected," the embassy said.

"Canada has repeatedly made unwarranted remarks about other countries' human rights situation, while turning a blind eye to its own racial issues," the embassy went on to say, citing systemic racial discrimination and unfair treatment of indigenous people, homeless people whose rights are not protected, and racial discrimination against Black civil servants in the federal government.

Canada has long upheld human rights protections and has voiced its concerns about them periodically, said John Packer, a law professor and director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa.

"This has been a contentious part of the relationship because China does not share the same perspective and considers these issues a matter of internal affairs, feeling it is inappropriate for Canada to raise them," he told Radio Free Asia.

Because Canada and China are parties to international treaties, including human rights agreements such as the U.N. Charter and the Genocide Convention, they are bound by certain multilateral standards, making it legitimate to discuss such matters in international forums and in bilateral relations, Packer said.

Sinicization in Xinjiang: CCP authorities kill Uyghurs, sell 'halal organs' to run medical transplant industry

24 June 2024, [Organiser](#)

As an integral part of the Sinicization of non-Chinese communities, including the Turkic minorities and the Uyghurs, in Xinjiang, the cruel Chinese authorities are forcibly killing Uyghurs and selling their organs to run a lucrative medical transplant mission and meet its demands besides regular detention and torture placing PRC at a high position in human rights abuses. The situation regarding the treatment of Uyghurs in China is deeply concerning and has raised serious allegations of human rights abuses, including forced organ harvesting. In March, during a US congressional committee hearing, experts had claimed that Chinese authorities had gathered genetic information from the Muslim Uyghur minority, with the aim of supporting a forced organ transplant programme targeted at attracting Muslim medical tourists from Gulf states.

In a post on X, Uyghur-American politician Salih Hidayar stated, "China has inaugurated a "Children's Organ Transplant Centre." As part of the Uyghur genocide, China has been harvesting Uyghurs' organs and selling them as "halal organs." Since 2014, nearly a million Uyghur children have been forcibly separated from their families. Is this another step in China's ongoing Uyghur Genocide and notorious organ harvesting practices?"

There have been allegations and reports from various sources, including human rights organisations and testimonies from individuals, suggesting that Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities in Xinjiang have faced severe repression, including forced labour, mass detention, and possibly forced organ harvesting. These claims are serious and demand thorough investigation and accountability.

According to the Minnesota-based non-profit organisation 'World Without Genocide', Uyghurs are reportedly being killed for their organs to meet the demands of a lucrative transplant industry valued at approximately USD 1 billion annually. These allegations are serious and have been raised by various human rights organizations, investigative journalists, and testimonies from individuals who claim to have been affected or have knowledge of such practices.

However, due to the secretive nature of the Chinese government and limited independent access to Xinjiang, verifying these claims with concrete evidence remains challenging. International bodies and governments have called for investigations into these allegations, emphasising the need for transparency and accountability from Chinese authorities. Advocacy groups continue to monitor the situation closely and push for international scrutiny to ensure the protection of human rights and dignity for all individuals affected.

China changes names of 630 Uyghur villages in Xinjiang: report

24 June 2024, [RFA](#), Gulchehra Hoja

It's another way of erasing Uyghur religion, history and culture, a human rights group says.

China has changed the names of about 630 Uyghur villages to Mandarin words such as "Harmony" and "Unity" to promote ethnic harmony in Xinjiang, a report by a human rights group found,

The move is "part of Chinese government's efforts to erase the cultural and religious expression" of the more than 11 million predominantly Muslim Uyghurs living in China's far-western Xinjiang region, New York-based Human Rights Watch, or HRW, said in its June 18 report.

"How these village names are being kind of erased and replaced shows how dystopian the whole project of the Chinese government in the Uyghur region is," Maya Wang, acting China director at HRW.

"It's about repressing people and ... the past, and erasing the future, and erasing what they can imagine as a possibility for their own children or grandchildren," she said.

The results came after HRW and Norway-based Uyghur Hjelp scraped names of villages in Xinjiang from the website of China's National Bureau of Statistics.

All told, China changed the names of 3,652 of 25,000 Uyghur villages in Xinjiang between 2009 and 2023, but most of these changes have been mundane, such as correcting numbers or the way the names were written, they found.

But 630 of the changes were more dramatic and religious, cultural or historical in nature. And most renamings occurred between 2017 and 2019, when the Chinese government's repression escalated in the region, the report said, but they appear to be continuing.

'Erasing symbols'

For example, Aq Meschit, or "White Mosque," village in Akto county, Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture, was renamed Unity village in 2018.

The same year, Hoja Eriq, or "Sufi Teacher's Creek," village in Aksu Prefecture was rechristened Willow village.

And Dutar, a village named after a Uyghur musical instrument, in Qaraqash county of Hotan prefecture, was renamed Red Flag in 2022.

The Chinese government has used the village renamings along with other tactics, including the banning of hijabs for women, beards for men, and Muslim names for children, to wipe out Uyghur culture and to humiliate the ethnic group, Wang said.

“On a very fundamental level, erasing the symbols of people, the language and culture is about erasing who they are and teaching them to fear,” she said.

The village renamings are also part of the greater set of serious rights abuses and crimes against humanity involving the detentions of an estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic people in “re-education” camps, torture, forced labor, sexual violence and the forced sterilization of woman, Wang said.



Uyghur children play in a square where a propaganda poster shows Han Chinese and Uyghurs posing together in a photograph with the words 'Hotan City Unity New Village Unity Square' at the Unity New Village in Hotan, northwestern China's Xinjiang region, Sept. 20, 2018. (Andy Wong/AP)

Campaign for Uyghurs, a Washington-based Uyghur advocacy group, condemned the village renamings.

“The names, which have now been changed to empty CCP [Chinese Communist Party] slogans, once reflected our long history and rich culture and have been in our homeland for hundreds of years,” said Rushan Abbas, the group’s executive director, in a statement.

“Although the CCP appears to celebrate Uyghur culture by showcasing elements like our music and dance, these displays are nothing but hollow propaganda masking the regime’s ongoing and systematic suppression of cultural and religious expression,” Abbas said.

In response to such measures, foreign governments, especially those in Muslim-majority nations, can put pressure on the Chinese government to stop its abuses involving religious and ethnic minorities and condemn such behavior, said Ibrahim Hooper, national communications director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Washington.

Human rights groups call for UN update, action on China's Xinjiang

20 June 2024, [VOA](#)

Human rights groups on Thursday called for the United Nations to act and provide more updates on a report published nearly two years ago about a range of rights violations in China’s remote western region of Xinjiang.

The report, issued in August 2022, found that actions taken in Xinjiang may have constituted “crimes against humanity.” It also highlighted what it called highly “credible” abuses, including “torture, forced sterilization, sexual violence and forced separation of children.”

China called the report a “farce” and a politically motivated attempt to smear its reputation.

Now, nearly two years later and with few updates, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Service for Human Rights and the World Uyghur Congress issued a statement Thursday calling for action by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk.

“The ongoing absence of public reporting by the high commissioner to follow up the atrocity crimes documented by his own office risks undermining the trust placed in his office by victims and survivors,” the statement said.

Türk mentioned Xinjiang Tuesday when he presented his global updates at the 56th session of the U.N. Human Rights Council. In his update, Türk said he “continued to engage with China on a range of human rights issues, including the serious concerns my office identified in the Xinjiang region.”

Rights groups, however, say that did not go far enough. In their statement, the rights groups said Türk did not provide “any specifics about his engagement with the government, a substantive update on the situation in Xinjiang, nor an assessment of the implementation of the report recommendations by his office.”

The rights groups added, “It’s up to the U.N. high commissioner to make full use of that report to improve the situation for Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang.”

Rights groups have been working together since 2018 to “push the Human Rights Council and other U.N. bodies to document and respond to growing evidence of atrocity crimes in China and to disseminate these findings globally.”

On Thursday they also said that the U.N. had failed to make the report available in any language other than English, adding that they have provided their own unofficial translations in the body’s other official languages: Arabic, French, Russian, Spanish and Chinese.

Religious and cultural mentions removed from names of China's Xinjiang villages

19 June 2024, [NBC News](#)

The name changes appear to be part of a Chinese government attack on the cultural identity of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, Human Rights Watch said in a report.



Police officers walking past the Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar, a city in China's western Xinjiang region, in 2018. Bloomberg via Getty Images file

Authorities in China's western Xinjiang region have been systematically replacing the names of villages inhabited by Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities to reflect the ruling Communist Party's ideology, as part of an attack on their cultural identity, a report released by Human Rights Watch said Wednesday.

About 630 villages in Xinjiang have had their names changed to remove references to Islam or the Uyghurs' culture and history, according to the group's report, done in collaboration with the Norway-based organization Uyghur Hjelp.

The report compared the names of 25,000 Xinjiang villages as listed by the National Bureau of Statistics of China between 2009 and 2023.

Words like "dutar," a traditional Uyghur string instrument, or "mazar," a shrine, have been removed from the names of villages, and replaced with words such as "happiness," "unity" and "harmony" — generic terms often found in the Communist Party's policy documents.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to faxed questions about the report and its policies in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang is a vast region bordering Kazakhstan that is home to about 11 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities. In 2017, the Chinese government launched a campaign of assimilation that has included mass detentions, alleged political indoctrination, alleged family separations and alleged forced labor among other methods.

As part of the crackdown, more than 1 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other ethnic minorities

were estimated to be held in extralegal internment camps. The Chinese government at the time described the camps as "vocational training centers" and said they were necessary to curb separatism and religious extremism.

The U.N. Human Rights Office in 2022 found accusations of rights violations in Xinjiang "credible" and said China may have committed crimes against humanity in the region.

The changes to the names of Xinjiang villages included removing mentions of religion, including terms such as "Hoja," a title for a Sufi religious teacher, and "haniqa," a type of Sufi religious building, or terms such as "baxshi," a shaman.

References to Uyghur history or to regional leaders prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 have also been removed, according to the report.

"The Chinese authorities have been changing hundreds of village names in Xinjiang from those rich in meaning for Uyghurs to those that reflect government propaganda," said Maya Wang, acting China director at Human Rights Watch. "These name changes appear part of Chinese government efforts to erase the cultural and religious expressions of Uyghurs."

The Chinese government wants to "erase people's historical memory, because those names remind people of who they are," said Abduweli Ayup, a Uyghur linguist based in Norway and founder of Uyghur Hjelp. Most of the village name changes occurred between 2017 and 2019, at the height of the government crackdown in Xinjiang, according to the report.

Uyghur woman re-sentenced for teaching youth the Quran

18 June 2024, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

Heyrinisa Memet had just completed a 10-year prison term after a 2014 crackdown.

Soon after completing a 10-year prison term, a Uyghur woman was sentenced to another 14 years in jail for attempting to split China by teaching the Quran to teenagers, authorities with knowledge of the situation said.

Heyrinisa Memet, in her mid-40s, had been previously sentenced during a crackdown in 2014 after a "terrorist attack" in Xinjiang that Chinese authorities blamed on separatist Uyghur Muslims.

Within days of her release, she was sentenced again on June 11 for activities back in 2014 — providing religious instruction to youth at the request of her neighbors — the director of security of Zulkum village in Kashgar prefecture said, insisting on not being identified for fear of reprisal.

“Her crime was teaching religious content to kids,” he said. “She wasn’t changing those kids’ ideology, she was just teaching them religious content.”

In recent years, Chinese authorities have punished large numbers of Uyghurs in Xinjiang for religious offenses, including teaching the Quran to children, according to leaked Chinese government documents, data compiled by Uyghur rights groups, and accounts of former detainees from “re-education” camps.

Authorities have criminalized such activities because they believe that Uyghurs use religion to incite subversion of state sovereignty, endanger social stability, and advocate religious extremism, terrorism and ethnic separatism.

Memet was one of three people from Zulkum village sentenced at closed-door trials in Makit county of Kashgar prefecture on June 11, according to the village security director and to an officer at the village police station.

Two other Uyghurs from the community who had finished serving prison sentences were tried anew as well, said the village security director, who like others in the report, declined to be named so as to speak freely.

“It’s been one and a half years since their release,” he said. “There was no problem, but they were arrested only because they were in prison before.”

They were sentenced to 18 years in prison for listening to audio recordings or watching videos, he said.

“There was no mention of extremism, but they were keeping those audio and videos,” the village security director said. “They were accused of having hatred towards Han Chinese people, but there was no evidence.”

Authorities informed their families that their previous “education” was not sufficient, so they were taken away for further “education,” he said.

Previous sentence

The village security director went on to say that authorities first sentenced Memet when she was swept up in a crackdown following a “terrorist attack” on a market in Xinjiang’s capital Urumqi on May 22, 2014.

On that morning, five assailants in two sport utility vehicles drove into a busy street market, tossing out explosives and mowing down the mainly Han Chinese shoppers before colliding with each other and exploding. More than 40 people, including four of the assailants, were killed, and over 90 others injured.

The attack occurred amid a string of violent incidents in Xinjiang that officials blamed on separatist Uyghur Muslims.

At the time, activists said the violence was being driven by authorities’ restrictive and discriminatory policies directed at Uyghurs, and the belief that only Han Chinese migrants were benefiting from economic growth in the region.

A police officer in Makit county told Radio Free Asia that some of the Uyghurs sentenced during the 2014 crackdown had completed their terms, but were transferred to jail upon release.

Some were kept in jail for a month, some for a year, and others were sentenced again, he said.

Among them were three people from Zulkum village who were sentenced up to 18 years in prison, he said, but could not provide further details.

Former senior Xinjiang official expelled from CPC, public office

17 June 2024, [Xinhua](#)

Li Pengxin, former deputy secretary of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has been expelled from the CPC and dismissed from public office over serious violations of Party discipline and laws.

The decision was made following an investigation by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the National Commission of Supervision (NCS) with the approval of the CPC Central Committee, according to a statement released by the CCDI and NCS on Monday.

The investigation found that Li had lost his ideals and convictions, and was dishonest about his problems in the face of Party inquiry, the statement said.

Failing to abide by the central Party leadership’s eight-point decision on improving conduct, he attended banquets and accepted vehicle and driver services that could affect the fair execution of his official duties, according to the investigation findings.

He was found to have accepted money and valuables, and taken advantage of his former position to seek benefits for others in mineral exploitation projects, enterprise operations and job adjustment and promotion, which are in violation of relevant regulations.

According to the statement, Li’s actions constituted serious duty-related violations, and he was also suspected of taking bribes, the statement said.

Li’s illicit gains will be confiscated, and the case will be transferred to the procuratorial organs for examination and prosecution in accordance with the law, according to the statement.

China promotes Xinjiang, epicentre of human-rights abuses, as tourist destination

17 June 2024, [ANI](#)

China’s Xinjiang region, which has been under the scanner for violating human rights, has now been shown as a far more idyllic view of the region as instructed and funded by Xi Jinping government to

promote it as a tourist destination through a television drama, the Wall Street Journal reported.

According to the United States, China's far western Xinjiang region is often associated with detention camps and a wide network of security checkpoints to control Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities. However, Beijing has been for years now, denying Western allegations of human-rights violations in Xinjiang, with China portraying the region as infected by a violent strain of religious extremism that needs to be eradicated.

"To the Wonder," the television drama depicting Xinjiang as a land of beauty and wide-open steppes rather than a dangerous backwater inhabited by potential terrorists, the Wall Street Journal reported. Meanwhile, now, China's propaganda system is promoting a far more idyllic view of the region at least for a domestic audience, as reported by Wall Street Journal.

Recently, a Chinese television drama, "To the Wonder," about the love between a Han Chinese writer and a Kazakh man, has grabbed the country's attention, dominating social media and sparking a Xinjiang tourism boom.

The show "To the Wonder" is part of a ramped-up effort to showcase Xinjiang as a beautiful land instead of a dangerous land occupied with potential terrorists. Moreover, their strategy has proven successful, especially among young, urban Chinese looking for escape from their hectic lives, reported Wall Street Journal.

"To the Wonder" is one of the most popular drama series this year on the Chinese internet and the state broadcaster, attracting more than 100 million viewers online within a week of its release in early May.

The head of tourism in the small Xinjiang town of Altay, where the show is set, said that the bookings there have increased 370 percent since the show began.

The show has been funded by the state and heavily promoted by their official media, is based on a popular memoir published in 2010 by Li Juan, about her family's hardships among Kazakh nomads in northern Xinjiang.

The director, Teng Congcong, is known for work with a focus on women and she told the local media that she saw potential in Li's book for another female portrait, Wall Street Journal reported.

Li was born in a Xinjiang paramilitary compound in 1979, when Beijing sent young Han Chinese to help develop the remote area. She spent most of her childhood in Altay.

Last year, the National Radio and Television Administration selected the show for state funding.

Notably, one of the criteria was that projects must "tell the China story well."

The show, co-produced by the state broadcaster and video platform iQiyi, also highlighted a new business

model for Chinese authorities, with local officials tapping into the popularity of dramas filmed in their regions to promote tourism.

The radio and television administration further encouraged platforms to use algorithms to promote the shows, stating, "Positive energy should generate massive traffic".

However, the promotion has mostly targeted young Chinese, but the show was included in the Canneseries, an international television festival held annually in Cannes, France, and is also airing in Kazakhstan this month.

The Xinjiang official account on X, promoted the show in English-language tweets, saying it represents the "freedom, grandeur and beauty of northern Xinjiang." Human-rights concerns in Xinjiang, covering the one-sixth of China's land territory, have been one of the focal points of US-China tensions, reported Wall street journal.

The Chinese government has been targetting Uyghurs and other minorities with mass detention and omnipresent surveillance as part of a campaign of forcible assimilation, which has also encouraged marriages between Han Chinese and minority members.

Additionally, some governments, rights groups and researchers have also alleged that the Chinese authorities are employing forced labor in Xinjiang as part of the campaign.

The US law bans imports linked to the region and their lawmakers label Beijing's treatment of Uyghurs as a form of "genocide".

China's government, however, has portrayed the assimilation campaign as an effort to fight religious extremism and terrorism.

According to the officials, the efforts to relocate rural residents to factories help improve their income and living standards, Wall street Journal reported.

Daria Impiombato, an analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a Canberra-backed think tank, said that the authorities are trying to sell a more "docile and lovable" image of China's frontier regions. Impiombato also co-wrote a report on how Chinese authorities have begun to enlist women as "frontier influencers" in propaganda efforts around troubled regions such as Xinjiang and Tibet, wall Street Journal reported.

Xinjiang's propaganda department has planned to spend 308 million yuan, or roughly USD 43 million, on culture tourism and communications and media this year, which is more than 60 per cent of its total budgeted spending and 27 per cent more than it spent on such items in 2020.

The boosting tourism helps the Chinese government bring Xinjiang into the mainstream, making it just like any other place in China, Impiombato said.

Traditionally, minorities have been depicted in official Chinese media as either living in backward conditions or glorifying how much better their lives have become under the Communist Party leadership.

"To the Wonder" is a more nuanced portrayal. It shows the everyday struggles of the herders and their love of nature and their livestock.

In one of the scenes, with little cash on hand, a Kazakh family insists on paying a debt with a camel, as reported by Wall Street Journal.

However, a few scenes remind the audience of the reality of life in Xinjiang, such as when two Kazakh men have to hand over their pocket knives to use public transportation.

The Human Rights Watch released a report in February, stating that it found that Chinese authorities are coercing Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims away from their homes and into jobs in factories and warehouses around China.

Earlier in May, Thea Lee, the deputy undersecretary for international affairs at the US Labor Department said that the forced labourers are being transferred from Xinjiang to elsewhere in China in growing numbers. (ANI)

China's ethnic policy chief slams 'ignorance of history' in Xinjiang assimilation claims

16 June 2024, [The Star](#), Yuanyue Dang

China's top ethnic policy official has dismissed claims that Xinjiang is being "assimilated" into Chinese culture as "ignorance of history".

Pan Yue, director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, made the remarks during a keynote speech on Wednesday at an international forum in Kashgar, a city in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region that was once part of the ancient Silk Road.

His comments come as Beijing continues to promote its new ethnic integration policies and defend measures taken in the vast western region home to the mainly Muslim Uygur minority.

"There is an inaccurate narrative in the international community that separates Xinjiang culture from Chinese culture and even sets them against each other. But a large amount of archaeological evidence tells us that Xinjiang has been an important part of the Chinese cultural sphere since ancient times," Pan said.

"There is also an international narrative that contradicts the facts and portrays Xinjiang's relationship with Chinese culture as 'assimilation'. This is ignorance of Chinese history."

The people of ancient western regions far from central China – some small states ruled by nomadic peoples rather than the Han Chinese who later became the majority of the Chinese population – "have also been co-creators of Chinese culture", Pan said.

These regions include what is now the Xinjiang region, as well as the Tibet autonomous region to its south and parts of central Asia.

After thousands of years of "migration, settlement, trade and marriages", "Xinjiang and central China [now] eventually belong to a single political community", Pan said, adding that Islamic culture represented only one part of Xinjiang's "diverse religious culture".

Xinjiang has a population of about 26 million, close to two-thirds of which is made up of ethnic minorities, including Uygurs and Kazakhs.

Ethnic tensions, particularly in Xinjiang and Tibet, have been a challenge for the government. Controversial governance measures in place in Xinjiang since 2016, in response to once-frequent violent attacks there, have led to allegations of human rights abuses, which Beijing denies.

Pan's comments were in line with Beijing's push over the past decade for a "sense of community for the Chinese nation".

The concept was introduced by President Xi Jinping in 2014. At a meeting in 2021, he said that building this sense of community should be at the heart of all ethnic minority policies and urged local authorities to take more proactive measures.

The measures include promoting the use of "standard spoken and written Chinese", meaning Mandarin, and reinterpreting Chinese history to say that China's 55 ethnic minorities had created civilisation with the Han Chinese majority since ancient times.

The International Forum on the History and Future of Xinjiang, which opened on Wednesday, was jointly organised by several universities in Beijing and Xinjiang.

Official media reported that more than 100 experts from China, the United States, Australia, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Egypt, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other countries attended the event in Kashgar, where the remains of a third century Buddhist temple were discovered recently.

Archaeologists said the Buddha statues unearthed at the site bore the characteristics of those from central China, a claim in line with Beijing's historical narrative.

A university textbook edited by Pan, published in February, has been described by experts as the most direct articulation of China's ethnic integration policy as laid down by Xi a decade ago.

The book argues that all ethnic groups have accepted the concept of zhonghua, or Chinese culture or civilisation, since ancient times. It also cites political divisions and "social cleavages" in the West to justify Beijing's policy of ethnic integration.

"Neither the harmonising 'melting pot' policy nor the ultra-diverse model of ethnic governance works," the book says.

Similar views were expressed in Pan's speech. He said China had not experienced "religious wars", "colonial expansion" or "cultural export" for thousands of years, and could "maybe provide a reference for the ethnic and religious conflicts that still exist in the world today".

In recent years, the Xinjiang government has also sought to improve its international image through outreach efforts.

It has frequently hosted visits by foreign envoys, media delegations, religious figures and academics, and sent officials to promote the region in Central Asia and Africa.

Xinhua Headlines: "Forced labor" lies bring "forced unemployment" in Xinjiang

07 June 2024, [Xinhua](#)

What Aminam Tulladin wants above all else is her old job back.

Recalling her workdays just a few years ago, she described the moment she received her first pay check as "an elating moment."

Now, the 26-year-old from northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is a housewife struggling to make ends meet.

"I'm yearning to go back to work," she said.

Starting in 2017 as an intern at a textile processing company in Qingdao, a coastal city in eastern China, Aminam Tulladin was more than thrilled to hear that her boss, Xu Caifeng, decided to move their company to her home county, Shache, in southern Xinjiang.

One year later, her hard work was rewarded with a promotion to team leader and a decent salary of over 3,000 yuan (about 421.9 U.S. dollars) a month.

Back then, the company, Shache Xiongying Textile Co., Ltd., employed nearly 1,000 staff with orders mainly coming from Europe and the United States, logging an annual sales revenue of 15 million yuan.

As their business continued to grow, Xu and her husband channeled more money into the company and built a second-phase workshop in the latter half of 2019.

The future seemed bright and promising. Never could they have imagined that their fates would take a sudden turn just because of some lies fabricated by someone a million miles away.

"FORCED LABOR" OR "FORCED LAYOFFS?"

Soon after the completion of the new workshop, Xu became concerned when their incoming orders gradually dwindled, and eventually, their European and U.S. business nearly came to a halt, rendering the new workshop "idle from the moment it was built."

It took them a while to finally discover the reason. "It turned out that our factory was mentioned in a report

written by Adrian Zenz, who accused factories in Xinjiang of 'forced labor'," said Xu.

Under the guise of an academic study, Zenz concocted a series of "research reports" related to Xinjiang, wantonly discrediting the region.

In one report, he made the groundless claim that hundreds of thousands of ethnic minority workers in Xinjiang were "forced" to pick cotton by hand, urging the international community to issue temporary sanctions against any production containing cotton from Xinjiang.

Back in 2018, with a view to expand into the European and U.S. markets, Xiongying applied for and obtained a BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative) human rights certification.

BSCI representatives stayed at Xiongying for a week, conducting an extensive review of the company's daily production and the lives of its employees. "None of them raised any concerns," Xu recalled.

Now the once bustling community with modernized workshops has almost turned into a ghost town. Only half of the machines on the second floor of the three-story factory remain operational, and fewer than 100 employees remain to fulfill the meager orders that trickle in.

Aminam Tulladin and many other ethnic minority employees had to quit their jobs due to the decrease in orders.

"We obtained this certification to secure more orders, but instead, what we got are production halts and sanctions..." Xu's voice trailed off as she fought back tears.

Xiongying is just a microcosm of numerous companies affected by the U.S. sanctions against Xinjiang.

More than half of the farmers in Xinjiang grow cotton to make a living, and the textile industry creates nearly one million job opportunities across the region. Shache, where ethnic minorities constitute over 95 percent of its population, used to have nearly 100 textile enterprises, but today fewer than one-fifth remain operational.

In recent years, Western media has kept hyping Xinjiang-related issues, fabricating "forced labor" in its cotton industry, and Washington signed the so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act" into law.

Ostensibly to safeguard "human rights" under the guise of combating "forced labor," the law has only caused "forced unemployment" that led to poverty in and outside Xinjiang.

Even outside the region, like in the central Chinese province of Hubei, about 1,000 natives of Xinjiang had to quit their jobs from the local non-woven fabric sector and move back home, though none of them had worked against their will.

In a recent interview, a Chinese manufacturer-exporter who had to lay off all his Xinjiang employees because of the act, quoted a stark ultimatum from his

American clients: "As long as you have one single worker from Xinjiang, we cannot work with you."

"WHAT WILL OUR FUTURE BE LIKE?"

Also starting as an intern, Aminam Iminniyaz, 26, has worked at Xiongying for six years.

"The job is close to home and offers competitive wages, and has good benefits," she said.

Though plummeting orders forced Xu and her husband to lay off the majority of their employees, the wages of those who stay have remained unchanged.

"What will our future be like if the company doesn't thrive? I fear that our current livelihoods could be at risk," said Aminam Iminniyaz. "Many people have lost their jobs. I feel very angry."

Also subject to sanctions is Hoshine Silicon Industry Co., Ltd., a world-leader in silicon manufacturing. In June 2021, Hoshine and four other solar energy companies in Xinjiang were included in the "entity list" by the United States and subjected to unjustified sanctions. The reason given was that these companies violated the human rights of ethnic minorities and engaged in the purported "forced labor."

Its subsidiary in Ganquanpu Economic Development Zone in the regional capital Urumqi has also been affected.

"It's a huge blow to us," said Cheng Yufeng, general manager of the subsidiary. "We lost almost all our customers in the United States and many customers in other regions such as Europe, racking up billions of yuan in losses."

In Hoshine's project in Turpan, nearly 10,000 ethnic minority employees make up 70 percent of its total workforce. The proportion is 50 percent and 20 percent in its factories in Shihezi and Urumqi, respectively. The fate of companies subject to unfair sanctions is closely intertwined with the lives and incomes of the local ethnic minority group.

"NO 'FORCED LABOR' AT ALL!"

In 2020, 10 natives of Moyu County in Hotan came to work at Saurer Xinjiang Intelligent Machinery Co., Ltd., in Urumqi. Munarwan Nur, now 28 years old, is one of them.

Recalling her initial days in Urumqi, Munarwan Nur said: "I wasn't used to it at first. I dared not talk too much as my Mandarin was not good."

But now, this cheerful, cosmopolitan young woman, effortlessly switches between her native Uyghur language and Mandarin.

In July last year, Munarwan Nur and her husband purchased a home in Urumqi. They plan to bring their two children to the city for their schooling this summer.

"Now, I've got a clear goal in life, and I'm highly motivated," she said.

From Moyu to Urumqi, Munarwan Nur's journey is backed by the regional government's efforts from 2018 to 2020 to provide employment opportunities

and facilitate poverty alleviation for those who are willing and capable to work in 22 deeply impoverished counties across the four prefecture-level regions in southern Xinjiang.

Through technical training and employment, these individuals were given the opportunity to improve their lives. Unfortunately, these efforts have also been unjustly labeled as "forced labor."

Zenz, the so-called German scholar, said in a report that poverty alleviation is an extremely intrusive combination of forced or at least involuntary training and labor, inter-generational separation and social control over family units.

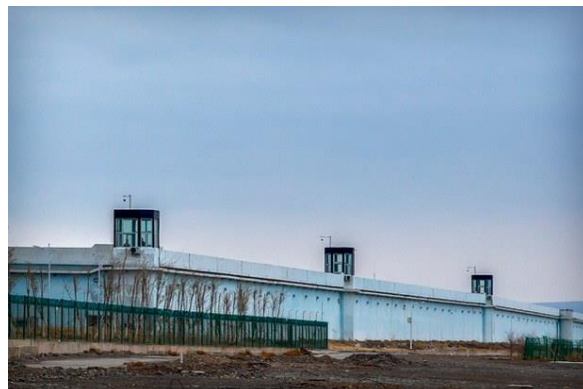
"Our decision to stay or leave is completely voluntary," said Munarwan Nur. Out of the 10 employees who initially joined Saurer, seven have already left. Some have chosen to find jobs near their home to better take care of their families, while others went back to farming. "Our contracts, benefits and salaries are exactly the same as our Han colleagues. We have weekends and holidays off, and get paid for extra working hours," said Abuduwali Abla, also from Moyu. Abuduwali Abla, 39, a father of four, is responsible for sorting goods at the factory. When asked about his income, he took out his phone and showed Xinhua his bank statements, which showed a deposit of 68,000 yuan for the year 2023. In comparison, the per capita disposable income of residents in Xinjiang that year was 28,947 yuan.

When asked if he felt compelled to stay at the company, Abuduwali Abla said: "I won't leave unless they asked me to. Where can you possibly find 'forced labor' like this?"

Uyghur brothers shot dead on same day in Xinjiang prison

06 June 2024, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

They were involved in a scuffle with a security guard who killed them, officials and police say.



People stand in a guard tower on the perimeter wall of the Urumqi No. 3 Detention Center in Dabancheng in northwestern China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, April 23, 2021.

Two Uyghur inmates — biological brothers — were working in a vegetable field at Qarabughra Prison in Xinjiang's Kunes county in early May, when a security guard grabbed one of them by the leg and began dragging him.

The older brother, Sidikjan Ablikim, 35, rushed over to Ablehet, 33, to free him, according to police and prison officers with knowledge of the situation.

An argument ensued, and the brothers physically clashed with the guard, while a third inmate intervened.

The guard then pulled out his gun and shot and killed the Abilkims, the police and prison officials said.

Little is known about the brothers other than that they were from Atush, transliterated as Artux or Atush, the capital of the Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture in northwestern China's Xinjiang region.

RFA was unable to find out further details, the reasons for their arrest or the duration of their sentences.

"Situations like this come up rarely," said an officer who has worked at the Qarabughra Prison for 25 years. "There hasn't been anyone who died in the fields [while performing labor] due to a conflict, besides them."

Expanded to handle more inmates

Qarabughra is one of the oldest prisons and largest detention centers in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, the prison officer said.

In 2017, as Chinese authorities began detaining Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims en masse in Xinjiang in an effort to eliminate what they said was "terrorism" and "religious extremism," Qarabughra Prison was expanded to handle inmates brought in from other parts of the region.

As part of the crackdown, Chinese authorities ordered Uyghur students studying in Egypt and other predominantly Muslim countries to return to Xinjiang where they were promptly arrested for the purported "crime" of studying abroad.

Some of the students were tried in Atush, their hometown, and sent to Qarabughra Prison in Kunes county. However, it is unknown whether the Ablikim brothers had studied abroad and were arrested upon return.

RFA contacted relevant authorities in Kunes county and Ghulja city, called Yining in Chinese and capital of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, for more information on the brothers and their deaths.

A Kunes county police officer, who declined to be identified because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media, said the prison had released the bodies of the two inmates.

The officer knew this because he worked as a security guard along the roads where the vehicle carrying the dead prisoners passed.

Because the brothers died the same day, the officer said he had assumed they had been involved in a fatal

accident. However, he did not ask his boss about it, because it was not his job to inquire about the identities of the dead or their cause of death.

"Both are deceased, and they were both from Atush," he said. "Another inmate was hospitalized from that conflict."

Information about the incident was not reported at an official meeting, and because of the tragic nature, news of it was spread by word of mouth among the others who knew about the Ablikims' argument with the guard and their subsequent shootings, the officer from the Kunes county police said.

Other officials contacted by RFA declined to comment, stressing that any matters related to the prison were confidential.

Exiled Uyghur journalist links Urumqi arrests to his reporting

05 June 2024, [VOA](#), Liam Scott



Kasim Kashgar, center front, is photographed with, from right, Semet Ababekri, Abdukadir Rozi, Akber Osman, Mirkamil Ahmed and Mehmud Abdukeyum, during a school party in Urumqi in August 2015. (Photo courtesy of Kasim Kashgar)

Former colleagues of exiled Uyghur journalist Kasim Kashgar have been imprisoned in China's Xinjiang region, seemingly over their connection to the Washington-based reporter.

Those convicted are Mirkamil Ahmed, Semet Ababekri, Abdukadir Rozi, Mehmud Abdukeyum and Akber Osman. Each has been sentenced to at least seven years in prison, Kashgar said.

Kashgar, who reports for Voice of America, says he learned of the convictions from an acquaintance in May.

At VOA, Kashgar regularly covers Uyghur human rights issues. He believes his former colleagues — who worked with him at the language school he founded in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi — were targeted due to their association with him.

"Their 'mistake' was their past proximity to someone now affiliated with a U.S. news agency covering Uyghur-related news," Kashgar said.

It's unclear when the convictions occurred, since the Chinese government rarely publicizes that kind of

information. It's also unclear what the exact charges are.

Kashgar said he learned from sources familiar with the cases that all five were accused of having been recruited by Kashgar to become members of the World Uyghur Congress, or WUC.

Headquartered in Munich, the WUC advocates for Uyghur human rights internationally. But Beijing views it as a separatist organization.

The Chinese government regularly uses bogus charges of separatism and terrorism as an excuse to target Uyghurs, according to human rights groups.

Kashgar said his contact with the WUC is limited to interviews as part of his VOA coverage.

In an emailed statement to VOA, the spokesperson at China's Washington embassy said, "China is a country ruled by law" where all ethnic groups "enjoy equality." "Xinjiang's judicial organs pursue social fairness and justice, which are the values of the rule of law," the spokesperson said. The email went on to repeat the common government narrative that Beijing's policies in the region are for counterterrorism purposes.

Some advocates say the recent convictions underscore the extent of arbitrary detentions in Xinjiang, which many Uyghurs prefer to call the Uyghur Region or East Turkestan.

"It demonstrates that, first of all, this kind of arbitrary detention, and also retaliation by association, has not stopped at all, despite the fact that the government is claiming otherwise," Zumretay Arkin, the WUC's spokesperson and advocacy manager, told VOA.

In the region, the Chinese government stands accused by foreign governments and human rights groups of committing genocide and crimes against humanity against the majority-Muslim Uyghur ethnic group. Beijing has long denied any wrongdoing in the region. Kashgar fled Chinese surveillance and repression in his homeland in 2017 for the United States. He started work for VOA in 2019.

The journalist says he faced Beijing-backed harassment over his work in the form of transnational repression. Earlier this year, he learned from sources that the Chinese government had officially labeled him a "key person involved in terrorism."

But verifying such information is difficult. Experts say Beijing intentionally makes it difficult to confirm such reports.

The situation involving his former colleagues extends back to March 2021, when Kashgar received a phone call from a childhood friend in Xinjiang.

After being jailed multiple times, the friend had been forced to become an informant for China's Ministry of State Security intelligence agency, Kashgar said.

Now, the intelligence agency wanted Kashgar to spy for them, the friend said. Kashgar declined.

In the weeks that followed, Kashgar learned that five former employees had been disappeared by Chinese security officials.

Human rights groups estimate that around 1 million to 2 million Uyghurs have been held in the region's mass internment centers.

Kashgar said he knows of at least seven other former employees arrested in Xinjiang, but it's unclear whether any of them have been convicted.

This kind of story is common for Xinjiang, according to Arkin. To retaliate against vocal Uyghurs in the diaspora, the Chinese government has a pattern of targeting their family, friends and colleagues who still live in the region.

"This really has been, in my opinion, one of the most successful ways of silencing the diaspora," Arkin said. "Because you're facing this constant dilemma, because you're putting the lives of your relatives, your family and friends at risk, you're constantly wondering if your work is worth it."

Arkin said she has heard of other cases of Uyghurs in Xinjiang being questioned over alleged links to the WUC. "It's used as a tool of fear — inside, but also outside," she said.

In the diaspora, it's likely intended to make exiled Uyghurs too scared to be involved with groups like the WUC out of fear of potentially putting their loved ones in Xinjiang at risk, Arkin said.

Learning of his former colleagues' convictions has taken a toll, Kashgar said.

"It was very difficult to go to sleep and concentrate, focus on anything. It still gives you a lot of stress. But I want to seek justice for them," he said. "I don't want to be feeling guilty. But at the same time, there's some sort of that emotional side that hits me, because those former colleagues never, ever committed any sort of crime."

A 2022 report by the United Nations Human Rights Office determined that the extent of arbitrary detention of Uyghurs in Xinjiang may constitute crimes against humanity.

China-US

House passes bill urging China to mend ties with Dalai Lama

24 June 2024, [The Hill](#), Lauren Irwin

The House voted Wednesday to pass a bill that is urging China to mend ties with the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders.

The legislation, named Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, received broad bipartisan support and encourages China and Tibet to resolve the long-standing dispute over Tibet's governance.

The bill now heads to President Biden's desk after being passed by the Senate last month.

"Tibetans, like all people, have the right to religious freedom — which includes freedom from [Chinese Communist Party] surveillance, censorship, and detention," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Michael McCaul (R-Texas) said in a statement.

The legislation will allow State Department officials to "actively and directly" counter disinformation about Tibet that's spread by the Chinese government, namely rejecting false claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times," the lawmakers said in their release.

It will also allow the U.S. to push for negotiations between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives over the future of Tibet.

The lawmakers noted that no formal dialogue between Tibetan and Chinese authorities has happened since 2010.

As the U.S. seeks to continue its diplomatic conversations with China, the legislation is a reminder that the U.S. recognizes the territory of Tibet as a country occupied by the People's Republic of China and said there are significant human rights issues taking place there. China often pushes back on the Western view, accusing the U.S. of interfering in its sovereign affairs.

Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.) said in a statement that the bill will refresh the United States's policy toward Tibet and push for negotiations to free the Tibetan people.

"Congressional passage of this legislation further demonstrates America's resolve that the [Chinese Communist Party's] status quo — both in Tibet and elsewhere — is not acceptable," Young's statement said.

"I look forward to this important effort becoming law and working with my colleagues in the Senate and with the Administration to ensure swift and effective implementation."

House Rules Committee Ranking Member Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) said he hopes the bipartisan support on the bill sends a message to the Tibetan people that America stands with them.

"The ongoing oppression of the Tibetan people is a grave tragedy, and our bill provides further tools that empower both America and the international community to stand up for justice and peace," McGovern's statement said.

After South China Sea, US, China Set To Wrestle At 'Roof Of The World'; Washington Begins Himalayan Push

24 June 2024, [The EurAsian Times](#), Shubhangi Palve

A geopolitical drama is unfolding in the shadow of the world's highest mountains. The United States, long on

the back foot in the Indo-Pacific, is now making a bold move on the Tibetan plateau. But this isn't just about America and China—India finds itself at the center of this high-altitude power play.

The United States, which was for quite some time in a defensive stance in the Indo-Pacific region, is now shifting to an offensive approach against China on the issue of Tibet.

This strategic shift is playing out on Indian soil, adding a new dimension to the already tense U.S.-China-India relationship. With ongoing trade disputes and Taiwan issues, Tibet's emergence as a flashpoint further complicates this global rivalry.

The US Congress recently passed the "Resolve Tibet Act," which advocates dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama. This act is a sharp jab at Beijing's "One China Policy" and a clear sign that Washington is changing its tune.

History Of US-Tibet Relations

Imagine a century-long story filled with covert operations, spiritual leaders, and mountain warriors. That's the tale of Tibet, and it's heating up once again. The history of U.S.-Tibet relations is complex and often divided.

Aaron Bekemeyer, in his paper for 'History 363' titled 'The Nuances of the US-Tibet Relationship,' argues that 'US-Tibet relations allowed Washington flexibility to avoid total rapprochement with China and maintain Tibet as a potential political tool in Sino-US and other international relations.'

Rewind to the 1950s... After the Communist Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1949 and 1950, the United States covertly supported various forms of Tibetan anti-Chinese resistance as part of its opposition to the Communist regime. However, following the Sino-U.S. rapprochement in 1972, Tibet's utility as an American foreign policy tool quickly diminished.

For the past century or so, Tibet's history has been marked by confusion and conflict over its international political status. In the first half of the twentieth century, Tibet enjoyed de facto independence. Despite Chinese claims to sovereignty, Tibet secured British recognition of its autonomy in 1914 and maintained a military and diplomatic defense against Chinese encroachments. These factors allowed Tibet to conduct its own affairs until 1949.

According to Bekemeyer, the US, involved in the region only from the 1940s, recognized Tibetan autonomy but stopped short of full diplomatic recognition of Tibet as an independent nation. However, in 1950, after Mao Zedong's Communists took power in China, the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet, and Tibetan representatives were coerced into signing the Seventeen-Point Agreement, which absorbed Tibet into China.

Beginning in the 1950s, the U.S. provided covert support for a Tibetan 'Guerrilla force' and non-military

support for the Dalai Lama. This support continued until the normalization of Sino-American relations in 1972.

By 1974, the U.S. had ceased its support, including cutting off the subsidy to the Dalai Lama and his government. Consequently, Tibet became a lesser issue in U.S. foreign policy, and Washington never again matched the level of commitment it had displayed in the 1950s and 1960s.

The US Tibet Policy Bill

This month, the US Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act, a legislation advocating for a peaceful resolution of the dispute over Tibet's status and governance. The Act calls on Beijing to resume dialogue with the Tibetan spiritual and political leader, the Dalai Lama. This significant expansion bolsters the Dalai Lama's authority in choosing his successor and mandates decisive US action against Chinese interference, effectively rejecting China's long-held 'One China Policy' and its authoritative grip over Tibet. The legislation marks a notable shift in Washington's approach under President Joe Biden, signaling a more assertive stance against Beijing.

Conversely, China has issued warnings to the US regarding the Tibet policy bill. Officially referring to Tibet as Xizang, China stated in April 2024 that it would only engage in dialogue with representatives of the Dalai Lama, not with officials of the Tibetan government in exile based in India. Additionally, China has ruled out discussions on the Dalai Lama's long-standing demand for autonomy for his remote Himalayan homeland.

Interestingly, Former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all met the Dalai Lama. However, Donald Trump, who had a different stance on Tibet, did not meet him. Current US President Joe Biden has also yet to meet the Dalai Lama.

However, the Dalai Lama has reached the US for medical treatment and has been received very warmly by his supporters. It is unclear whether the Dalai Lama will meet any U.S. officials during his trip.

Earlier, the Dalai Lama stated that he does not seek independence from China but rather autonomy. While China continues to regard Tibet as its territory, Tibet does not consider itself subject to Chinese rule and continues to advocate for its independence.

Role Of India In U.S.-China Dispute Over Tibet

Recently, India's role in the U.S.-China dispute over Tibet gained attention when a group of seven U.S. lawmakers visited Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, to meet the 88-year-old Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

Nancy Pelosi, after the meeting, stated, "The passage of this bill is a message to the Chinese government that we have clarity in our thinking and our understanding of this issue of the freedom of Tibet."

Tibet's significance in U.S. foreign policy extends beyond Sino-U.S. relations. At the very least, Washington's position on Tibet has implications for its relations with India. Understanding India's role requires knowing about the Special Frontier Force (SFF).

The Special Frontier Force (SFF)

The Special Frontier Force (SFF), also known as the Vikas Battalion, has played a crucial role in preventing Chinese occupation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

The SFF was established on November 14, 1962, in the aftermath of the Sino-India war. Following the war, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and India's Intelligence Bureau (IB) collaborated to train a 5,000-strong Tibetan force for potential missions against China.

According to Tibetologist Claude Arpi, in an interview with 'India Today,' the force was the brainchild of former IB director B.N. Mullick and the CIA.

In the 1950s, the CIA and IB set up Mustang Base in Nepal's Mustang region to train Tibetans in guerrilla warfare. The Mustang rebels facilitated the Dalai Lama's escape to India during the 1959 Tibetan Uprising. The CIA, a civilian foreign intelligence service of the U.S. government, had been involved in a covert program to train Tibetan guerrillas to combat Chinese forces in Tibet since the 1950s.

The SFF is currently based in Chakrata, Uttarakhand, and its insignia features a snow lion. The exact current strength of the force remains unknown.

The SFF gained attention following the Ladakh clash, particularly after the death of Tenzin Nyima, a Tibetan trooper, in a landmine blast at Pangong Tso. Images of his body wrapped in Indian and Tibetan flags brought focus to this secretive security force of trained mountain warriors.

The SFF operates under the operational control of the Indian Army but remains a separate entity due to its inclusion of Tibetan refugees and international implications. Military experts note that the SFF comprises both men and women who receive training equivalent to that of elite commandos.

The SFF has been instrumental in several major military operations, including Operation Eagle (1971 war with Pakistan), Operation Bluestar (1984 clearing of Amritsar's Golden Temple), Operation Meghdoot (1984 securing of the Siachen glacier), and Operation Vijay (1999 Kargil war with Pakistan), as well as numerous counter-insurgency operations. Despite its significant contributions, the SFF has largely operated in the shadows.

Army Alaska's 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, snowshoe across the drop zone during Exercise Spartan Pegasus Feb. 24 at Deadhorse, Alaska. Spartan Pegasus allows USARAK to maximize training resources across multiple units to

maintain readiness in a wide array of mission sets across the Arctic and Pacific region. (U.S. Army photo/Staff Sgt. Daniel Love

Shifts In India's Tibet Policy

The Tibetan movement is currently facing significant survival challenges.

On June 5, 2024, *The Diplomat*, an international online news magazine based in Washington, DC, reported that India plans to rename more than two dozen places in China's Tibet Autonomous Region in a tit-for-tat move against China renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to the report, the Army's Information Warfare Division has finalized the list of renamed places and will soon release it.

Like the US, India's stance on Tibet has not remained consistent historically. Amid escalating tensions with China, there has been a shift in India's Tibet policy.

In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet and sought refuge in India, arriving on March 31 of that year. Upon reaching India, he established a government-in-exile.

In June 2003, India officially acknowledged Tibet as part of China following a meeting between then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Chinese President Jiang Zemin. However, Indian officials clarified that this recognition was indirect, focusing on the autonomous Tibetan region rather than the entirety of Tibet, which is a significant portion of China.

This policy shift marked increased public engagement by the Indian government with the Dalai Lama. For instance, in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited Lobsang Sangay, head of the Tibetan government in exile in India, to his swearing-in ceremony. However, Modi did not extend an invitation in 2019 for his second term, prioritizing a smooth summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Currently, India's approach to Tibetans in India is guided by executive policy rather than law. While this policy has improved welfare measures for Tibetans in India, it lacks legal backing on core Tibetan issues. Therefore, there is a growing call for India to adopt a more assertive stance on Tibet in its dealings with China.

As the Dalai Lama ages and questions of succession loom, the stakes are higher than ever. Will India forge its own Tibet policy? Can the US successfully challenge China's grip on the region?

Chinese embassy threatened House lawmakers, urged them to 'cancel' Dalai Lama visit

21 June 2024, [Josh Christenson](#), *New York Post*

China's embassy to the US sent a threatening letter to lawmakers who visited the Dalai Lama in Tibet this week urging them to "cancel" the trip, according to a copy of the missive exclusively reviewed by *The Post*.

"I am writing to express deep concern on the HFAC congressional delegation's visit to Dharamshala," Minister-Counselor Zhou Zheng wrote to aides of House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas) and ranking member Gregory Meeks (D-NY).

"The visit interferes with China's internal affairs, violates China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. China firmly deplores it," Zheng said, referring to Tibet as "Xizang ... an integral part of Chinese territory since [the] Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century."

"We strongly urge the Congress to cancel related activities, so as to help maintain the current stabilizing momentum of China-US relations, rather than the opposite," he added.

The bipartisan House delegation met Wednesday with the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, in northern India — despite Beijing's warnings against US association with the leader of "anti-China separatist activities under the guise of religion."

"Just this week our delegation received a letter from the Chinese Communist Party, warning us not to come here," McCaul said during the meeting, "but we did not let the CCP intimidate us, for we are here today."

"Communist China's oppression of the Tibetan people, bullying of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and warnings to those of us who visited Tibetans living in exile in India are inappropriate and all the more reason why the United States and the international community must work together to counter Chinese misinformation about Tibet's history, advocate for the Tibetan people's self-determination and encourage a continuity plan for the Dalai Lama's successor," Staten Island GOP Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, who was also on the trip, told *The Post* Friday.

McCaul, Meeks, Malliotakis, House Speaker emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and other House members greeted officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile, which has had no relations with Beijing since 2010.

The Dalai Lama, 88, fled to Dharamshala after a failed uprising against China in 1959.

He has dismissed allegations of fueling separatism in Tibet and claimed he stands only for the protection of its native Buddhist culture.

"The human rights conditions in Xizang are better than ever, as witnessed by the international community," the letter to the congressional delegation from the Chinese embassy claimed — contradicting reports of hundreds of thousands of Tibetan farmers being forced into labor camps to correct their "backward thinking."

The House lawmakers told a crowd of hundreds gathered outside a monastery in the hillside town, some of whom waved American flags, that the visit underscored the successful passage by Congress of the

Resolve Tibet Act, which among other provisions calls on the State Department to “counter disinformation” spread by Beijing — including the idea that the region has been part of China for centuries.

Pelosi called the legislation “a message to the Chinese government that we have clarity in our thinking and our understanding of this issue of the freedom of Tibet.”

President Biden has not yet signed the bill into law after it passed Congress last week.

“The President is going to do what he thinks is best on behalf of the American people, that’s what I can tell you,” White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters in a Tuesday press briefing.

Lin Jian, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, said the same day that the White House “must not sign the bill into law,” or China will take as yet unrevealed but “resolute measures.”

The visit marked the second time Pelosi has disregarded Chinese warnings of US involvement in the Far East, following an August 2022 visit to Taiwan. The Dalai Lama was expected to fly to the US on Thursday for medical treatment on his knees. It’s unclear whether he met with any other officials while on American soil.

A Texas congressman was sanctioned by China. He's not backing down.

21 June 2024, [Houston Chronicle](#), Jeremy Wallace

A lot of members of Congress talk tough about combating Chinese influence around the globe, but few are getting under the skin of communist leaders there quite like U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul.

The Austin Republican has already been personally sanctioned by the Chinese government and helped trigger an intimidating war games display during a visit last year to Taiwan. He was at it again last week, leading a congressional delegation to meet with the Dalai Lama in India’s Dharamshala despite vocal Chinese opposition.

China invaded the independent Himalayan country of Tibet in 1950 and has controlled the territory ever since. The Dalai Lama, the head of Tibetan Buddhism, fled into exile to India amid a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule.

McCaul, who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was a key force in helping pass a resolution in Congress earlier this month calling on China to reengage in peaceful talks over Tibet. But Beijing hasn’t held dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama since 2010.

Lin Jian, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, urged McCaul and other Washington officials to stop supporting Tibetan independence.

“It’s known by all that the 14th Dalai Lama is not a purely religious figure, but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion,” Lin said.

The latest dustup with McCaul comes just over a year after China imposed sanctions directly against McCaul for leading a delegation to visit Taiwan. Those sanctions included freezing assets and properties he has in China and prohibiting any organization or individual in China from working with him. They also prohibit McCaul from traveling to China. McCaul doesn’t have assets in China.

China’s foreign ministry said last year that McCaul had frequently interfered in the country’s internal affairs with his words and actions and harmed China’s interests. They accused him of “seriously harming China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and sending a serious wrong signal to Taiwan independence separatist forces.”

The sanctions haven’t stopped McCaul, as evidenced by his trip to Taiwan in May in which he gave new President Lai Ching-te a cowboy hat as a gift.

“Being sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party is a badge of honor,” McCaul said. “Nothing will deter the United States from supporting free, democratic nations — including Taiwan.”

McCaul, first elected to Congress in 2004, represents the sprawling 10th Congressional District, which includes 13 counties stretching from Austin to Katy.

He has used his role on the Foreign Affairs Committee to also call for moving supply chains away from China and going after U.S. companies that are providing technology that is allowing the Chinese to expand their military and espionage activities.

In 2022, McCaul and then-incoming House Speaker Kevin McCarthy held a press conference in Houston to blast the Chinese government for using their since-closed consulate in Houston for spying and stealing trade secrets and technology from organizations including the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, NASA and the energy sector.

McCaul says he sees trips like the one to meet with the Dalai Lama as a continuation of his effort to deter Chinese aggression and stand up for allies that need U.S. support.

“I hope our visit served as a symbol of the U.S. government’s support for the people of Tibet and the friendship between our two peoples,” McCaul said.

Won’t let China sway Dalai Lama’s successor choice: US lawmakers

20 June 2024, [The Tribune](#)

Meet spiritual leader in Dharamshala, reiterate support for free Tibet.

The ongoing war of words between the US and China over the autonomy for Tibet escalated on Wednesday with an American Congressional delegation, on a visit to Dharamsala to meet the Dalai Lama, saying Washington won't let Beijing "insert" itself in choosing a successor to the Tibetan spiritual leader.

"Things have changed, (China should) be ready for that," said the US delegation after meeting the Dalai Lama in the morning. There has been no reaction from India since the US announced on June 15 that its delegation would visit McLeodganj where Tibetan government-in-exile is headquartered.

Michael McCaul, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House, who is leading the delegation, said they discussed with the Dalai Lama "how to move ahead with China on having a free Tibet". Asked whether the Tibet-China negotiations could restart, he said "that was for the US State Department to decide".

After emerging from the meeting, the delegation attended a public reception organised by the Central Tibetan Administration (government-in-exile). Hundreds of Tibetans applauded with shouts of 'Tashi Delek' (greetings in Tibetan) as the delegation members held small US and Tibet flags in their hands. "The Chinese Communist Party continues to threaten the freedom of Tibetans. They want to insert themselves into the succession plan of the Dalai Lama. We will not let that happen... China has been falsely claiming Tibet as its part since the 13th century. The Tibetans as well as the US know that's not true," said McCaul.

He also mentioned a law titled the Tibet China Dispute Act, also referred to as the Resolve Tibet Act, which has been passed by the US Congress and seeks to strengthen efforts to "resolve the Tibet issue as per international norms under a negotiated settlement". "It allows for self-determination," he said.

Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of the US House, said the law was a message to the Chinese that "we now have clarity in our thinking and understanding on the issue of freedom of Tibet". "The Chinese are trying to change the culture by reducing the use of the (Tibetan) language... Han (ethnic Chinese) are coming in... Things have changed now, get ready for that," she said. Taking on Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pelosi said "the Dalai Lama would live long and his legacy would live forever". "But you, the President of China (Xi), nobody will know you and nobody will give you credit for anything," she said.

Jim McGovern, who authored the Bill, said China has an opportunity and it should release all political prisoners, including the Panchen Lama (who disappeared in 1995 as a six-year-old)."

The bipartisan US Congressional delegation, including Meeks, McCaul and Pelosi, met EAM S Jaishankar on Wednesday. Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra

was also present. "Pleasure to meet with the bipartisan US Congressional delegation," posted Jaishankar on X.

He also thanked each of the members by name and appreciated their "strong and continued support for the Indo-US strategic partnership".

EU raises human rights concerns with China in 39th Dialogue Session

18 June 2024, [ANI](#)

The European Union reiterated its persistent concerns regarding fundamental freedoms, labour rights, judicial independence, and cases of forced labour in China, during the 39th session of the joint Human Rights Dialogue held in Chongqing. The session, which took place on June 16, followed a side visit to Tibet from June 13-15. In a press statement, the EU voiced concerns over restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly, and religion in Tibet. It also highlighted the issues of rights to equality and freedom from discrimination, including the rights of women and LGBT. The EU also reiterated its unequivocal opposition to the death penalty, urging China to implement a moratorium and provide transparent data on its use. It emphasized that religious leaders should be selected without government interference, respecting religious norms, particularly in the case of the Dalai Lama's succession.

The EU highlighted the vulnerability of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, including Uyghurs and Tibetans, the negative impact of Hong Kong's new national security legislation on rights and freedoms, and the erosion of the region's autonomy. Expressing deep concerns over the human rights situation in Xinjiang, Tibetan areas, and Hong Kong, the EU cited reports of crackdowns on human rights defenders, lawyers, and journalists. It further urged Beijing to stop human rights violations and investigate the cases of unlawful detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and ill-treatment.

Specific cases raised included EU citizen Gui Minhui, Uyghur academic Ilham Tohti, and Tibetan Activists Go Sherab Gyatso and Tashi Dorje. The EU also addressed the detention of individuals for exercising freedoms of religion, belief, expression, and peaceful assembly, highlighting the cases of Xu Na, Pastor Wang Yi, Zhang Chunlei, Ding Yuande, Yu Wensheng, Xu Yan, Zhang Zhan, Li Qiaochu, Peng Lifa, and Kamile Wayit.

The European Union also called for a reassessment of China's national security framework to ensure compliance with international human rights law. It encouraged Beijing to invite UN Special Procedures

and monitoring bodies to assess and improve its human rights record.

China, in response, discussed the situation of refugees, migrants, and manifestations of racism in the EU, and focused on economic, social, and cultural rights there. The EU also updated China on incoming European legislation requiring human rights due diligence for companies and prohibiting products made with forced labour on the EU market. Both parties affirmed the importance of upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discussed achieving the full realization of economic, social, and cultural rights alongside civil and political rights. The EU emphasized that all human rights are interconnected, interdependent, and equally necessary for protecting human dignity. The Dialogue concluded with an agreement to continue exchanges in preparation for the next Human Rights Dialogue in 2025. It was co-chaired by Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific in the European External Action Service, and Shen Bo, Director General for International Organisations and Conferences at China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with EU Member States participating as observers. (ANI)

US calls for immediate release of prominent rights activists held in China

18 June 2024, [SCMP](#)

The United States on Monday condemned prison sentences given to women's rights activist Sophia Huang Xueqin and labour rights activist Wang Jianbing in China and urged Beijing to release both activists immediately.

The sentences demonstrate China's "continued efforts to intimidate and silence civil society", US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

Supporters said Huang has been sentenced to five years in prison on charges of incitement to subvert state authority, almost three years after she and Wang were detained.

The verdict provided to Associated Press stated that Huang would also face a fine of 100,000 yuan (US\$14,000), underscoring the ruling Communist Party's intolerance of any activism outside its control in a system whose upper echelons are dominated by men.

China's #MeToo movement flourished briefly before being snuffed out by the government. China often silences activists by holding them incommunicado for a long time and then sentencing them to prison.

Huang's release date was listed as September 18, 2026, accounting for her earlier detention. Co-defendant Wang was sentenced to three years and six

months on the same charge. Wang is more known for his labour rights activity but also helped women report sexual harassment.

Huang and Wang's cases appear to have become intertwined as part of the most recent wave of a general crackdown on rights advocates, a trend that predates the #MeToo movement and includes previous incidents such as the 2015 detentions of women distributing pamphlets against sexual harassment on public transport.

Working as a freelance journalist, Huang helped spark China's first #MeToo case in 2018 when she publicised allegations of sexual harassment made by a graduate student against her PhD supervisor at one of China's most prestigious universities.

Friends say that Huang and Wang disappeared on September 19, 2021, a day before Huang was scheduled to fly to the United Kingdom to start a master's degree programme on gender violence and conflict at the University of Sussex. They went on trial in September 2023.

The International Women's Media Foundation earlier gave Huang its Wallis Annenberg Justice for Women Journalists Award.

Supporters of Huang and Wang created a GitHub webpage to post case updates and share their thoughts. China is routinely listed by monitoring groups as among the top imprisoning nations of journalists.

Amnesty International's China Director Sarah Brooks issued a statement condemning Huang's conviction as an attack on women's advocacy in the People's Republic of China, which has long promoted the concept that "women hold up half the sky", but whose institutions remain dominated by men.

"These convictions will prolong their deeply unjust detention and have a further chilling effect on human rights and social advocacy in a country where activists face increasing state crackdowns," Brooks said in an emailed statement.

"In reality, they have committed no actual crime. Instead, the Chinese government has fabricated excuses to deem their work a threat, and to target them for educating themselves and others about social justice issues such as women's dignity and workers' rights."

U.S. bans imports from 3 more Chinese companies over forced labor

11 June 2024, [UPI](#), Chris Benson

The Biden administration Tuesday banned imports from three more Chinese companies in a continued crack down on the use of forced labor of Asia's minority populations in America's supply chain.

The Department of Homeland Security "will not tolerate forced labor in U.S. supply chains and will enforce our laws across all industries and sectors," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Tuesday in a statement.

The three companies in China named by the Department of Homeland Security produce seafood, aluminum and footwear goods. DHS said those three industries play an important role in Xinjiang's economy.

"We will continue to investigate companies that use or facilitate forced labor and will hold those entities responsible," Mayorkas said while urging stakeholders across industry, civil society and international partners "to work with us to eliminate the scourge of forced labor."

The call was made by the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force, chaired by DHS, which is comprised of the federal departments of commerce, justice, labor, state and treasury. The office of the U.S. Trade Representative also sits on the task force.

They now join 68 other Chinese companies put on the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List. U.S. Customs and Border Protection will stop their goods from entering the United States over allegations of using or facilitating forced labor of members of the Uyghur population, including the Kazakh and Kyrgyz people, from the Xinjiang region in northwestern China.

The United States, which has already taken similar actions, has accused China of committing genocide against its Uyghur Muslim population in the northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where Beijing is estimated to have interned about a million of them in concentration camps since 2017.

Shandong Meijia Group Co., Ltd., also known as Rizhao Meijia Group, is based in Shandong Province. They process, sell and export frozen seafood products, vegetables and other quick-frozen convenience food. Shrimp supply chains have shown "a disturbing pattern of profiting off of the globe's most vulnerable populations," according to John Williams, the Florida-based Southern Shrimp Alliance's executive director.

In a news release, the Southern Shrimp Alliance called Tuesday's move a "groundbreaking announcement."

As an example, Argentinian red shrimp packed by Uyghurs in Chinese seafood processing plants "should not be competing with wholesome products in American grocery stores," Williams said.

The United States claims the seafood company took part in a Chinese government-sponsored labor transfer program to move and deliver Uyghur people, and individuals from other persecuted minority groups, out of the Xinjiang region for labor at its factory in Shandong.

Williams said the task force's effort to counter forced labor in seafood supply chains "sends a strong

message" to U.S. seafood importers "that chasing lower costs and higher margins cannot replace ethical and legal obligations."

Dongguan Oasis Shoes Co., Ltd., also doing business as three other "Dongguan" styled companies, is headquartered in Guangdong Province and manufactures shoe and shoe material goods.

It is alleged Dongguan cooperated with the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps to recruit, transfer and receive people of persecuted minority groups, including Uyghurs, out of the Xinjiang region to a Guangdong factory near China's southeastern coast.

Xinjiang Shenhua Coal and Electricity Co., Ltd. is a Xinjiang-based company that produces electrolytic aluminum, graphite carbon and prebaked anodes.

It was alleged the company likewise took part in a Chinese government-lead labor transfer program to similarly recruit, move and deliver minority citizens groups out of the region for forced labor.

An independent British tribunal said in 2021 in a 63-page report that Beijing subjected the Uyghur people to "unconscionable cruelty" and crimes against humanity in actions that amounted to genocide, it concluded.

The bipartisan Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act - signed December 2021 by President Joe Biden -- bans the import of goods from the region over alleged human rights abuses against the Muslim Uyghur population, unless the importer proves goods are not made with forced labor. It also imposes sanctions on foreign individuals who make use of forced labor.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla, a co-sponsor of the bill, described the law signed by Biden at the time as the "most important and impactful action taken thus far by the United States to hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for their use of slave labor."

According to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, a Washington-based research and advocacy group, 1 in 26 Uyghurs and non-Han people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwest China were incarcerated in 2022 representing roughly 449,000 people.

While the Uyghur and non-Han population in Xinjiang made up only 1% of China's overall population, the ethnic minority in the Uyghur Region account for 34% of China's estimated prison population, according to the report.

US report documents China's extreme isolation of Tibet

10 June 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

A new State Department report says that Chinese security forces intimidated, monitored, and harassed Americans in Tibet – and that many diplomats, officials, journalists, and tourists were barred from entering Tibet at all.

A consistent theme is that the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is uniquely subjected to wide-ranging restrictions on access. These restrictions are not in force in any other provincial-level entity in the People's Republic of China.

"The State Department's report documents China's efforts to lock diplomats, journalists, and American visitors out, and keep the Tibetan people locked in. The goal of this legislation is to open Tibet, and the administration should make greater use of sanctions to bring accountability to the Chinese officials responsible for these restrictions," said Tencho Gyatso, president of International Campaign for Tibet.

Onerous restrictions

This is the sixth annual State Department report on access to Tibet. It notes that while the COVID-era restrictions on travel in other parts of the PRC eased, government regulations and procedures impeding travel to Tibet remain in place.

American officials are largely banned from entering Tibet. The report states that U.S. officials made three requests for official travel to the TAR in 2023, none of which were approved.

Diplomatic and official faced fewer formal restrictions on access to regions of Tibet outside the TAR, but PRC officials instead used conspicuous surveillance to intimidate, monitor, harass, and restrict travel to these areas.

The report also says that China's decision to close the American consulate in Chengdu severely inhibits American diplomatic and official access to Tibet, with responsibility for these duties now placed some 800 miles away from Tibet in the embassy in Beijing.

Key findings

Other significant findings from the report include:

- During the reporting year, the U.S. mission personnel were unable to conduct any American Citizen Services visits to the TAR in 2023 because requests for visits by consular officers were not approved. No consular officer has visited the TAR since 2019.
- Access to these areas for journalists remained restricted and limited.
- When U.S. journalists gained access to Tibetan areas, the PRC government further suppressed their ability to report about Tibet by intimidating and preventing PRC citizens

from interacting with foreign press. By hosting group tours, the government has been able to cite increased numbers and greater access to the region while maintaining strict control over the information conveyed.

- Tibetan Americans undergo a stricter screening process than other U.S. citizens when applying for PRC visas at PRC embassies. Tibetan Americans reported more frequent harassment by security officials in Tibetan areas than in other parts of China, including requirements to report to the local UFWD office where some were reportedly interrogated, threatened, and forced to download tracking software on their phones.
- Some members of the Tibetan American community reported they self-censored their behavior in the United States out of fear of retribution against their family members in Tibet or fear of losing future access to Tibet and threats from PRC officials.

Read the State Department report [here](#).

China says US provoking arms race in moves into South China Sea

09 June 2024, [Reuters](#)

The U.S. poses the largest security challenge in the South China Sea as its military deployment there is turning it into "the whirlpool of an arms race", Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong said in remarks published on Sunday.

Recent maritime run-ins between China and the Philippines, a U.S. treaty ally, have made the highly strategic South China Sea a potential flashpoint between Washington and Beijing.

"At present, the biggest security challenge in the South China Sea comes from outside the region," Sun said in comments published by his ministry, after attending a high-level meeting on East Asian cooperation in Laos. Sun said U.S.-led forces were "promoting military deployment and actions in the South China Sea, inciting and intensifying maritime disputes and contradictions, and damaging the legitimate rights and interests of coastal countries".

A move by the United States to deploy medium-range missile systems in the area "is dragging the region into the whirlpool of an arms race, placing the entire Asia Pacific region under the shadow of geopolitical conflicts", Sun said.

China is committed to properly managing disputes with the parties in the South China Sea through dialogue, he added.

In April, the Philippines said during a meeting with U.S. allies that it was determined to assert its sovereign

rights in the South China Sea, accusing China of escalating "its harassment" of the Philippines.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion in annual ship commerce, and has deployed hundreds of coast guard vessels as far as 1,000 km off its mainland to police what it says is its jurisdiction.

The Philippines and China have sparred repeatedly this past year near disputed features that fall within Manila's exclusive economic zone. China routinely accuses the Philippines of encroachment while Manila and its allies have condemned what they call aggression by Beijing.

The United States has said it stands with Manila.

Five Eyes nations say China is poaching Western ex-military

05 June 2024, RFA, [Alex Willemyns](#)

The People's Liberation Army is 'aggressively recruiting Western military talent.'

Former U.S. Marines Corp pilot Daniel Duggan, who is facing extradition to the United States for allegedly breaking U.S. arms control law after he trained Chinese pilots, poses for a picture in this undated handout picture.

China's navy and air force have been "aggressively recruiting Western military talent" to train their aviators in complex aerial maneuvers taught by U.S. armed forces, the American-led Five Eyes intelligence sharing network said in a bulletin on Wednesday.



The warning came as former Marine and naturalized Australian citizen Daniel Duggan, 55, fights to avoid extradition to the United States after being accused of training Chinese military pilots at a school in South Africa from 2010 to 2012, when he was a U.S. citizen. The joint bulletin from the Five Eyes countries – the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand – warns that China's People's Liberation Army "continues to target current and former military personnel" to train pilots in advanced techniques.

Recruitment is "not always obvious, as companies may not initially promote the PLA's role," it says. "Job

locations may be in China, South Africa, or elsewhere, with lucrative contracts and the opportunity to fly exotic aircraft, with vague details on the ultimate customers."

Western nations have taken action to counter the threat, the bulletin adds, including putting "commercial restrictions" on private schools like the Test Flying Academy of South Africa, where Duggan worked and said he believed he was only training civilian Chinese pilots.

Duggan, who became an Australian citizen in 2012 and has six school-aged children with his Australian wife, was charged with violating the U.S. Arms Export Control Act for accepting US\$100,000 to train Chinese pilots without permission from the State Department. According to an indictment, Duggan provided "instruction on the tactics, techniques and procedures associated with launching aircraft from and landing aircraft on a naval aircraft carrier" and acquired a U.S. Navy and Marines training aircraft – a T2-Buckeye – to assist.

He also lived in Beijing between 2014 and 2020, according to reports, and was an acquaintance of convicted Chinese hacker Su Bin, who was arrested in Canada in 2016 and charged with theft of U.S. military aircraft designs by hacking American defense contractors.

Duggan renounced his American citizenship at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing in 2016, and was arrested in Australia in October 2022. He has since been held in a maximum security prison two hours west of Sydney, from which he has strenuously denied the accusations. Michael Casey, the director of the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center, said Wednesday's bulletin was meant to warn ex-service members that China's efforts to recruit them "continue to evolve in response" to countermeasures by Five Eyes militaries.

The bulletin should "deter any current or former Western service members from actions that put their military colleagues at risk and erode our national security," he said.

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Xi invokes Panchsheel as key to end today's global conflicts

30 June 2024, [Times of India](#)

BEIJING/DELHI: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday highlighted the relevance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which gained traction with the Non-Aligned Movement, to end the present-day conflicts and sought to expand influence in the Global South amid its tussle with the West. Xi, 71, invoked the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, termed as Panchsheel by India, at a conference in Beijing to mark its 70th anniversary and also sought to juxtapose them with his new concept of Global Security Initiative envisaging a shared future for mankind.

The Panchsheel pointers were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India signed on April 29, 1954, according to the MEA. No Indian official was reported to have participated in the conference on Friday. The invitees included former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and several politician and officials from various countries that have close ties with China.

The five principles formed part of the legacy of the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru and his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai in their unsuccessful quest to find a solution to the vexed boundary issue. "The Five Principles answered the call of the times, and its initiation was an inevitable historic development. The Chinese leadership in the past specified the Five Principles in their entirety for the first time, namely, 'mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity', 'mutual non-aggression', 'mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs', 'equality and mutual benefit', and 'peaceful coexistence'," Xi said.

"They included the Five Principles in the China-India and China-Myanmar joint statements which jointly called for making them basic norms for state-to-state relations," Xi said.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were born in Asia but quickly ascended to the world stage. In 1955, over 20 Asian and African countries attended the Bandung Conference, Xi recalled. The Non-Aligned Movement that rose in the 1960s adopted the Five Principles as its guiding principles, he said.

"The Five Principles have set a historic benchmark for international relations and international rule of law," he said, highlighting their relevance to ending the present-day conflicts.

Indian tank sinks while crossing river near China border, killing 5

29 June 2024, [VOA](#)

Five Indian soldiers were killed when a military tank they were traveling in sank while crossing a river in the remote region of Ladakh, which borders China, officials said Saturday.

The tank sank early Saturday due to sudden increase in the water levels of Shyok River during a military training activity, according to an Indian army command center statement. It said the accident took place in Saser Brangsa near the Line of Actual Control that divides India and China in the Ladakh region.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh called it an “unfortunate accident.”

“We will never forget exemplary service of our gallant soldiers to the nation. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The nation stands firm with them during this hour of grief,” Singh wrote on the social platform X.

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a standoff in Ladakh since May 2020, when they clashed along their land border in the region, with 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers killed.

The skirmish turned into a long-running standoff in the rugged mountainous area, where each side has stationed tens of thousands of military personnel. New Delhi and Beijing have held a series of diplomatic and military talks to resolve their worst military conflict in decades.

The border dispute between India and China dates to the 1950s, and the two sides fought a war over it in 1962.

EXCLUSIVE | India Has Legitimate Say in Dalai Lama Selection, China Just Wants to Control Tibet

19 June 2024, [News18](#), Manoj Gupta

Indian officials have questioned that when PRC continues to use various derogatory terms like ‘wolf in a monks robe’ for the Dalai Lama, why are they interested in seeking the control of the reincarnation of a man they so despise?

Amid talks of the 14th Dalai Lama’s successions, sources in India have lashed out at China for trying to control the reincarnation by saying its approval is necessary for the candidate. Sources have said only India has a legitimate say in the Dalai Lama selection and that China was confusing the world and wants to control Tibet.

Sources said that being invited to an enthronement much like an oath taking ceremony of current times does not mean giving official legitimacy to the leader in question as the local people and those believing in

him have already put him in the role of leadership. “This would mean those leaders from nations who had come to PM Narendra Modi’s oath taking ceremony have given him official legitimacy to govern India for the next 5 years, certainly not,” sources said.

Indian officials have questioned that when PRC continues to use various derogatory terms like ‘wolf in a monks robe’ for the Dalai Lama, why are they interested in seeking the control of the reincarnation of a man they so despise?

The first Dalai Lama was born in 1391 and the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949. “How can they have claim over an institution that precedes their formation,” sources questioned. The Dalai Lama had formally set up the institution of the Ganden Phorang in 1642 which is before the PRC was formed.

PRC’s Founding Father Chairman Mao had infamously said ‘Religion is poison’ taking it from the Marxist maxim of ‘Religion is Opium to the masses’ when he met the Dalai Lama in 1956. This is a dictum even followed by the current Communist leadership in China led by President Xi Jinping. Hence, the question is as to why the CCP is so interested in controlling Buddhism in Tibet. The cultural revolution is a standing example and its impact remains large as religions and traditions including Tibetan Buddhism were destroyed and ravaged by the Communist Red Guards.

The abduction by the CCP of the current 11th Panchen Lama gives a clear indication of how Beijing has and continues to control Buddhism, but has failed.

ORDER NUMBER 5 MENTIONED BY CHINESE SPOKESPERSON

People’s Republic of China under the Communist Party of China called for Tibet’s invasion in 1949 and it was only in 2007 that they came up with ‘Order number 5’, which is a set of rules and regulations by Beijing to confirm the reincarnations of high lamas practising the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. If the process laid out by PRC in the order number 5 is so vital to them, why did the PRC only introduce this order in 2007 and not immediately during the years post occupation?

No Tibetan law or religion demanded the establishment of the Order number 5. This order was introduced to control and strangle the practice of Buddhism, Indian sources said. Order number 5 is to control Buddhism, not to promote it.

Indian officials have stated that the PRC has no legitimate role in Tibet. While they thought controlling Buddhism was one way, but they have failed miserably as numerous monks and nuns have been fleeing Tibet. Since coming to power, Xi Jinping had made it his mission to sinicize the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism and he has done this by carrying out previous policy mentioned above (Order number 5) and also enforcing Tibetan Buddhist Institutes in Tibet to adopt and adhere to ‘Xi Jinping thought of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era’.

CURRENT SITUATION OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

The current monastic education in Tibet stifles proper education and debates. The number of monks/nuns have been restricted, displaying a portrait of His Holiness in a monastery or even possessing one is a punishable offense. A source said, "Namkyi, who escaped exile recently, highlighted to us all how by her carrying a picture of the Dalai Lama and calling for his return branded her as a political prisoner and she was sentenced."

Recent incidents like the Larung Gar demolition, destruction of Buddhist Statue in Drago County, all indicate how the current communist leadership from Beijing views Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. Yet, still they claim to have legitimacy over the Dalai Lama which is "confounding".

INDIA

India has a more legitimate say when it comes to the Dalai Lama as Buddhism originated and spread from India to the rest of the world. The Buddhism that the Dalai Lama teaches and other practices are by and large from the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism.

A statement by the Ministry of External Affairs must be made stating that India will support and endorse the 15th Dalai Lama in accordance with the processes set forth by the current 14th Dalai Lama and that it would strongly oppose outside interference and influence in matters related to his succession as it is a purely religious matter and it is for the Tibetans to decide for themselves; and should the 15th Dalai Lama wish to be in India, then he too shall be an honoured guest just like the 14th Dalai Lama and the Government of India shall provide all the support as offered to the current Dalai Lama to the 15th Dalai Lama. India should be seen as the main unifying force in safeguarding the sanctity of the succession process which will remove doubts and anxiety from the minds of Tibetans. In this context, the Government of India must publicly endorse the statement of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, on the issue of his reincarnation made on September 24, 2011.

India plans Tibet renaming tactic to foil China's water diplomacy with Maldives

17 June 2024, [India Today](#), Pradip R. Sagar

The military is apparently awaiting the government's go-ahead for the move aimed at countering Beijing's geopolitical narratives

Geopolitical manoeuvring between China and India, particularly over the sensitive issues of water resources and territorial claims, highlights the complex dynamics of the region. China's recent gesture of gifting water to the Maldives from the Tibetan glaciers, while promoting water conservation

campaigns in Tibet, has once again drawn attention to its strategic objectives vis a vis environmental concerns arising out of its actions.

China's alleged exploitation of Tibet's water resources, coupled with its attempts to alter the narrative through renaming and territorial claims, has met with opposition from India. In response, New Delhi has considered similar tactics, including renaming places in Tibet, as a form of diplomatic retaliation.

The strategic implications of these actions extend beyond mere symbolism, reflecting the broader competition for influence and control in the Himalayan region. With both countries vying for dominance and asserting their respective narratives, tensions persist, necessitating a careful balance of diplomatic and strategic manoeuvres.

As India weighs its response and the Narendra Modi government considers its options, the situation underscores the delicate balance of power and the imperative of strategic foresight in navigating complex geopolitical challenges.

In a heightened effort to woo the Maldives, China has gifted 3,000 metric tonnes of water from the Tibetan glaciers to the island nation, in two separate batches in March and May. The move has put China in a peculiar situation. Incidentally, on March 20, barely a week before the first consignment of water was sent, China had unveiled the country's water conservation regulations.

Effective from May 1, the regulations aim to provide a legal guarantee for China's water security, the advancement of ecological progress and high-quality development. Adhering to the vision that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets", China has taken multiple steps to protect its water resources and restore harmonious ecological systems.

Beijing, in a social media campaign, has been asking residents across Tibet to conserve water. Multiple social media posts claim that in Sa'gya County, Tibetans are urged to conserve water "this at a time when bottled water companies allegedly exploit the pristine waters of Tibet for profit at the cost of ecological damage.

However, China observers claim that Tibet's water resources are comparatively in higher quantity vis-à-vis China. Beijing has been exploiting these resources, which are extremely vulnerable to climate change, biodiversity, and species housing rare flora and fauna, as well as the intangible Buddhist heritage associated with the rivers in Tibet.

The majority of Chinese bottled water companies, such as Nongfu Spring, in alleged nexus with cadre of the Communist Party of China (CCP) in Tibet, are exploiting the water resources of the plateau region. This is in addition to existing and proposed river water transfer projects.

Observers feel that while New Delhi has donated potable water to the Maldives in the past, it has not damaged the fragile ecology of the Himalayas for such procurement for Male.

It is claimed that China's move to send "glacial water" from Tibet to the Maldives also serves its ulterior political motive of getting Male to help formalise Tibet's name as the Beijing-preferred 'Xizang', and let the world accept the former in the years to come, as has been the case with East Turkestan, now called 'Xinjiang'.

China has been pushing narratives by changing the names of the places, including Arunachal Pradesh, multiple times. China claims Arunachal as its territory by referring to it as 'Zangnan' or southern Tibet. China has rechristened 30 locations in Arunachal with Chinese and Tibetan names. New Delhi has consistently rejected China's attempts to rename places in Arunachal, asserting that the state is an integral part of India.

Barely a couple of months before the G20 leader's summit in New Delhi last September, Beijing had played mischief by releasing a new map that asserted territorial claim over Arunachal and Aksai Chin in Ladakh. In the 2023 edition of China's 'standard map', uploaded by its ministry of natural resources on the website of its standard map service website, Aksai Chin and Arunachal are among the south and south-east Asian territories marked within the Chinese borders.

In retaliation, the Indian military has planned similar tactics by changing the names of close to 30 places in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), backed by extensive historical research. However, the Indian military is awaiting a go-ahead from the newly formed Modi government 3.0 before escalating matters. South Block officials believe this is the only way to counter the narrative as China only understands the 'tit for tat' language.

India should recalibrate its position on China, says president of Tibetan government in exile

16 June 2024, [The Week](#), Namrata Biji Ahuja

PENPA TSERING HAS been closely watching China's military drills in the Taiwan Strait, renaming of villages in Arunachal Pradesh and the aggression in Ladakh. The president of the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala has trashed China's claims over Indian territory, citing the 1914 Simla Agreement that defines the border between India and Tibet to which Tibetans were signatories. "Tibetans are happy with that," he says. Excerpts from an interview:

“ As long as you keep giving more business to China, it will keep growing. And right now, there is no sign of China attempting to make a move towards more openness and becoming a responsible partner in the global community. ”

Q/ China's military drills in the Taiwan Strait have spurred concerns about a potential armed conflict in the Indo-Pacific region.

A/ Some years ago, when China announced air defence identification zones, I told our American friends that if the Chinese can claim the air they will claim anything underneath that. This is exactly what is happening, and it is not just the endeavour of reunification or invasion of Taiwan. Look at the whole of South China Sea or East China Sea, alongside Japan and Taiwan. China is giving Chinese names to all these territories. This is to redefine history, remove the historical background and claim these territories as its own. Though China denies territorial hegemonic ambitions, the world knows better.

But I tell the Taiwanese that China is not ready to attack them yet. Xi Jinping keeps moving the generals and commanders from one place to another in a very short period of time. There is no time for the generals to build relations with cadres. A general and the second-in-command do not trust each other. Then there are political commissars who oversee their work and they also do not trust each other. It is good for Xi to ensure that there is no military coup against him, but it is not enough to fight a war. You need synchronisation among the cadres and also between the different arms of the military.

China is the only country that spends more money on internal security than external security threats, which demonstrates the deep distrust between the rulers and the ruled.

These are serious vulnerabilities aside from the economic wars that China is going through and the pivoting towards the Global South, which is also a huge competition for India. The question is how much purchasing power does the Global South have? And if China floods all the Global South countries with cheap products, it will kill all their small and medium-scale industries. Many already have realised the impact of Chinese investments in their countries. For example, all the African countries are now restructuring their loan repayment. And the level of debt economies that China has created around the maritime Silk Road and the taking over of strategic locations are known to people who understand China. Unfortunately, the Global South still has to learn more. They have very little understanding of China's motivation.



Dalai Lama | AP

Q/ How do you assess the border dispute between India and China?

A/ Way back in 1949, just after communism took over China, it invaded Tibet. Now, it claims parts of the Indian territory as southern Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh. But we Tibetans were signatories to the 1914 Simla Agreement that defines the border between India and Tibet through the McMahon Line. We are happy with that. But China's claim over all these territories in Arunachal Pradesh or in Ladakh is based on what it claims to be Tibet's territory. It has now started renaming all territories, including those in Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the question now is whether the Tibetan interest and the Indian interest aligns or not.

India has been following the One China policy for decades. The only change now is that India does not keep repeating it. And, as I always say, India knows best. We also understand that India or any country will not leave aside its national interest for the interest of Tibet. But I think India tried its best to reach out to China, create a better atmosphere, both in political and business relationships. Unfortunately, China is pushing India more towards the west because of its behaviour.

Q/ Should India be worried about China's ambitions?

A/ The question is whether China needs India and the western world more or the democratic world needs China more. As long as you keep giving more business to China, it will keep growing. And right now, there is no sign of China attempting to make a move towards

more openness and becoming a responsible partner in the global community. Particularly in Europe and America, you get this feeling that you cannot make China more powerful than what it already is. Chinese investments are growing in space technology, military, quantum computing, artificial intelligence and the Belt and Road Initiative, and creating debt economies around the world. So maybe it is time for India to recalibrate its position on China. Beijing respects only strength, not weakness.

We follow a non-violent approach to resolve the China-Tibet dispute through the Middle Way policy espoused by the Dalai Lama (in pic), which can only be understood if we understand the polarities that exist.

Q/ The US Senate has passed the Resolve Tibet Act, urging the Chinese government to engage in dialogue with the Dalai Lama or Tibetan leaders to resolve the China-Tibet dispute. How significant is this development?

A/ We have been working closely with the US Congress over the past two years to move this bill called the Resolve Tibet Act, which talks about countering China's disinformation on Tibetan history. And we are almost there. The bill was passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee in November 2023, and this February it was passed on the House floor with 392 votes in favour. In April, it was unanimously moved in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and it recently went through the Senate. When it becomes a law in the US, it will become an important tool for us to reach out to other governments to counter China's false narrative that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China.

We follow a non-violent approach to resolve the China-Tibet dispute through the Middle Way policy espoused by the Dalai Lama, which can only be understood if we understand the polarities that exist. One polarity is to understand the historical status of Tibet as an independent state, and the other polarity is the present situation of Tibet under the repressive communist government. The historical status has not been pushed as much as we would have liked to and China, on the other hand, has been asking every country to say that Tibet is part of PRC. That is why the law is important to explain to governments that if they keep parroting what the Chinese want them to say then it is against the law because if they support negotiations between Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, then they cannot contradict themselves by saying Tibet is part of PRC, because that removes the very ground for negotiation.

Q/ The Dalai Lama turns 89 next month. As the political head of the Tibetan government in exile, what is your focus today?

A/ I have been travelling a lot to visit all the Tibetan settlements over the last two years. I promised my

people that I would visit every single community two times in five years. We created a platform called the Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group, where every Tibetan can join in advocating for Tibet. And this has been gaining ground now. One of our challenges is to prepare our younger generation for future leadership. Another challenge is to identify future challenges and make sure that those challenges are not there even before we reach there. Even though His Holiness keeps reassuring us that he will live for another two decades and more, we have to keep the community together, communications going on and reach out to the international community. I tell our Chinese friends, let us see whether Chinese Communist Party outlives the Dalai Lama or His Holiness outlives CCP.

Q/ Do you think it is time the Indian government openly declared that the Dalai Lama's successor will be chosen by the Dalai Lama himself or the Tibetan government in exile?

A/ To some extent it is taken for granted as to where India stands on this, whether it says it vocally or not. I am sure the Indian government is concerned about these issues and developing its own strategy. I believe that it is not going to happen during my tenure. His Holiness will definitely live long. But, at the same time, just as every government has its protocols, we are also preparing protocols. Whenever that eventuality happens, it will be revised by successive Sikyongs or Kashag (cabinet) members at that time.

I am sure that the Indian government will also be seriously thinking about this even though I have not had concrete conversations about this. But I think it is understood that these are definitely matters of concern. Fortunately for the Tibetans, because of His Holiness's leadership, we enjoy bipartisan, bicameral support on Tibet in the US. Even in the Indian Parliament, we have an all-party Indian parliamentary group for Tibet and all the successive governments have followed similar policies on Tibet. Of course, they are more vocal when they are in the opposition and less vocal when they are in government, but they all have the same thinking and support for Tibet.

'Unwarranted': India slams China, Pakistan for mentioning J&K in joint statement

13 June 2024, Times of India

The ministry of external affairs on Thursday condemned the references of Jammu and Kashmir in the China-Pakistan joint statement calling it 'unwarranted'. In response to media queries on references to Jammu & Kashmir in the China-Pakistan Joint Statement, spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "We have noted unwarranted references to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the joint statement between China and Pakistan of 07 June 2024.

We categorically reject such references. Our position on the issue is consistent and well-known to the concerned parties. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has the locus standing to comment on the same."

"The same joint statement also mentions activities and projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, some of which are in India's sovereign territory under forcible and illegal occupation by Pakistan," New Delhi's statement read.

The MEA said it resolutely opposes and rejects any moves by other countries to reinforce legitimise Pakistan's illegal occupation of these territories, impinging on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

China and Pakistan recently released a joint statement after Shehbaz Sharif talked with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the Kashmir issue.

The joint statement said both China and Pakistan underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability in South Asia, the need for resolution of all outstanding disputes, and their opposition to any unilateral action. "The Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The Chinese side reiterated that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is left over from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements," the statement said.

China ready to improve bilateral ties with India and work on border dispute

12 June 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

China said it is ready to collaborate with India to improve bilateral relations and mentioned that their border disputes "should be handled properly." This statement comes close on the heels of Narendra Modi returning to Prime Minister's chair for record-equalling third straight term though with a reduced majority.

According to a post on X by the Chinese embassy's spokesperson in India, China also highlighted that a stable relationship is "in the interest of both countries and conducive to peace and development in this region and beyond."

"China and India are important neighbouring countries. Relevant border issues should be handled properly. A sound and stable #ChinaIndia relationship is in the interest of both countries, and conducive to the peace and development in this region and beyond. China is willing to work with India to push forward

bilateral relations in the right direction," the Spokesperson of Chinese Embassy in India wrote.

The embassy's statement comes a day after India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar reaffirmed his commitment to "finding a solution for the border issues" with China.

India will focus on resolving the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, Jaishankar said on June 11. This comes amid the over four-year border dispute in eastern Ladakh that has significantly strained ties between the two Asian giants. Shortly after taking charge of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for a second term, Jaishankar, referring to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, said efforts will be made to address the challenge and that it "cannot be the policy of a good neighbour." India-China relation after border clashes

China and India's relationship has been fraught since deadly border clashes in 2020, which resulted in at least 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese casualties. Despite multiple rounds of diplomatic and military negotiations aimed at easing tensions, relations remain tense.

Recently, Chinese Premier Li Qiang congratulated PM Modi on his re-election, but President Xi Jinping has not yet extended his congratulations, highlighting the ongoing strain between the two nations.

Meanwhile, a Chinese government spokeswoman last week criticised an exchange over X between Modi and the government of Taiwan, which China claims as its territory.

"We noted the results of India's general election and extend congratulations on the victory of the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the National Democratic Alliance," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

A healthy and stable China-India relationship is in the interest of both the countries, and conducive to the peace and development in this region and beyond, Mao said while responding to a question by the official media seeking China's comment on Modi's win.

China stands ready to work with India to act in the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples, bear in mind the overall interest of our ties, look to the future and advance bilateral relations on a healthy and stable track, she said.

India blocks Chinese money

Since 2020, India has tightened restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from countries sharing land borders, mainly targeting Chinese investments. This policy change followed the Covid-19 outbreak and increased tensions at the Ladakh border. Consequently, Chinese automakers such as EV giant BYD have faced hurdles in expanding their investments in India.

BYD also proposed a joint venture with India's Megha Engineering, one of the biggest buyers of electoral

bonds, but this plan was rejected by the home ministry.

In the four years since the rule change, the government has received around 450 applications from Chinese companies, rejecting 180 of them. Approximately 70 applications have been approved, including some from entities considered essential for iPhone production. Currently, about 200 proposals are pending with the government.

After Modi's election win, China calls for 'stable' relations with India

05 June 2024, [AA](#), Riyaz ul Khaliq

China expresses readiness to work with India to 'steer development of bilateral relations on a healthy and stable track'

China on Wednesday called for "stable" relations with India after Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed third term win in general elections, state media reported.

"A sound and stable China-India relationship serves the common interests of both sides and is conducive to peace and development of the region and the world at large," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters in Beijing.

Modi on Tuesday evening claimed a win for the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the seven-phased general elections.

According to official results, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 240 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament, while the main opposition Indian National Congress got 99 seats.

The BJP, however, remained short of the 272-seat majority on its own.

Tuesday's results, however, showed the NDA alliance won over 272 seats, the number required to form the government, while the opposition alliance secured over 230 seats.

Felicitating Modi on his win, Mao said: "China is ready to work with India to proceed from the fundamental interests of the two countries and the two peoples, bear in mind the overall situation and the future, and steer the development of bilateral relations on a healthy and stable track."

India and China have counterclaims in Arunachal Pradesh state of the South Asian nation while the two Himalayan neighbors are engaged in a border tussle in the Ladakh area of the disputed Jammu and Kashmir.

“India Should Revise Tibet Policy On China Occupation, Make Stance Clear On Dalai Lama’s Succession”

30 June 2024, [StratNews Global](#), Amitabh P. Revi

A conversation on China occupied Tibet: past, present and future with Ambassador Dilip Sinha. His latest book is 'Imperial Games In Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood And Sovereignty'

China Occupied Tibet

“India’s position at that time (China’s invasion of Tibet in 1950) was that the invasion was wrong. The matter should be settled peacefully. And Tibet has internal autonomy. Now, all this has been violated by China. So China has violated the basis on which India and others formulated their policies. It is time to revisit the issue.”

On *'The Gist'*, **Ambassador Dilip Sinha** speaks to StratNews Global Associate Editor **Amitabh P. Revi**. Ambassador Sinha is the author of the book *'Imperial Games In Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood And Sovereignty'*. You can find it in bookstores and online. Above all, it will officially launch in July. Ambassador Sinha has served as India’s Envoy to the UN in Geneva, was the Former Head of the UN Division and Ex-Head of the PAI(Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran) Division in the Ministry of External Affairs.

“China Claims Everything

“In his book, Ambassador Sinha demolishes the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) attempt to rewrite history by claiming Tibet was always part of China. “China now claims that even Chinggis Khan was Chinese. So they claim everything. But, the Mongols were the first to rule over Tibet. Thereafter Tibet became independent. The Manchus conquered China in 1721. When the Manchu dynasty collapsed in 1912, Tibet declared independence. Tibet was independent until 1950 when Communist China invaded.” Infact in history there were times when Tibetan rulers invaded China and captured the then capital.

Ambassador Dilip Sinha discusses:

- The recent U.S. bipartisan lawmakers’ visit to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, NSA Ajit Doval and EAM Dr S. Jaishankar meeting the delegation subsequently.
- The latest Tibet Act passed by both Houses in the U.S.
- Whether the U.S. is firing off India’s shoulders India’s Tibet and China policy post-independence to the present.
- The Great Game over Tibet.China’s renaming of locations in Tibet, Xinjiang and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Debunking Chinese imperialism which is now presented as a CCP narrative of the so-called century of humiliation.

COMMENTARIES

- The criticality of the Dalai Lama's succession.
- China crushing religion on one hand and usurping religious authority on the other.
- Whether Xi Jinping fears religion.
- What it will take for Tibet to be independent again.
- And how India and Tibet helped preserve each others customs, traditions and manuscripts during invasions.

The shift in US policy toward Tibet

29 June 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Sumit Kumar

Delegation-level visits between the two countries have become an integral part of transformed relations between India and the US. Therefore, the visit by a bipartisan group of seven US lawmakers, led by US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul to India from June 16 to Thursday last week would have largely gone unnoticed in India and abroad. However, the US delegation's four-day visit to India assumed huge importance this time, because of the meeting between the US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama.

- This in turn brings us to the focal question: How and to what extent has the meeting between the US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama underlined a change in the US policy toward Tibet, and how would the shift in US policy impact China's claim over Tibet?

Historically, US policy toward Tibet has been inconsistent and unpredictable.

For example, while the US has consistently accepted that Tibet is part of China, Washington provided financial and military assistance to Tibetan guerrillas in the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, Washington's policy toward Tibet witnessed a dramatic change in the backdrop of a rapprochement between China and the US in the 1970s. More to the point, Tibet became almost a non-issue for the US.

However, Tibetans succeeded in drawing the attention of the US administration to the issues of human rights violations, suppression of freedom of expression and others through their pro-Tibet international campaign. Then-US president Ronald Reagan signed into law the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989, which specifically asked the US to urge China to actively reciprocate the Dalai Lama's efforts to establish a constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet. It also asked China to respect internationally recognized human rights and end violations of Tibetans' human rights.

The emergence of the US as the sole superpower in the post-Cold War era positively impacted Washington's approach toward Tibet.

More importantly, then US-president George H. W. Bush declared the Dalai Lama and the government-in-exile as "Tibet's true representative."

The rise of China among other developments in the 21st century has further forced Washington to double down on its policies supporting the cause of Tibetans. More to the point, China has aggressively pursued the policy of dismantling the historically important legacies of Tibet by destroying several monasteries and imposing Chinese culture, rules and regulations on Tibetans. Moreover, Chinese atrocities against Tibetans have also increased over the years.

Consequently, it has become obligatory for the US to take strong measures in support of Tibet as a part of its foreign policy objective to promote freedom, human rights and democracy across the world.

The US administration has been agitated by Chinese President Xi Jinping's (习近平) efforts to challenge US dominance by challenging the existing liberal international order.

Beijing has adopted an assertive posture against its neighbors in east, southeast and south Asia. More importantly, the rise in China's military activities against Taiwan has alarmed the US. Thus, there is an increasing realization among the strategic community in Washington that the US should boost global support for Tibet to challenge China's dominance over Tibet.

Another aspect of the US' renewed Tibet policy is to ensure that the identification and installation of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders, including any future Dalai Lama, is determined solely by those within the Tibetan Buddhist faith community, in accordance with internationally recognized rights to religious freedom.

In this context, a new US bill — Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute — that awaits US President Joe Biden's assent is seen as a paradigm shift in US policy toward Tibet and China.

For example, the bills says: "The United States Government has never taken the position that Tibet was a part of China since ancient times."

It also states that claims made by officials of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times are historically inaccurate.

In other words, departing from its previous position, the US now considers Tibet a sovereign state, rather than a part of China. Consequently, the bill talks about Tibetans' right to self-determination.

The bill also asks China to cease its propagation of disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama. At the same time, it expects the US to take public diplomacy efforts to counter disinformation about Tibet from China and the Chinese Communist Party.

Of course, transformed ties between New Delhi and Washington, and turbulent relations between Beijing and New Delhi, are another factor for the US to utilize the Tibet issue to prove its utility for India.

After all, the shift in the US' Tibet policy would greatly help India to allow more freedom to the Tibetan government-in-exile on its soil.

The new US bill on Tibet extends legitimacy to India's decision to provide asylum to Tibetans and allow the operation of the government of Tibet to function.

On the other hand, the credibility of the US would also be enhanced among its allies, partners and friends in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, the Biden administration's policy toward Tibet strongly reciprocates Modi's approach to Tibet.

Thus, while it is not unusual for the Indian government to allow a meeting between the bipartisan group of seven US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, the shift in US foreign policy has certainly squeezed China's political space on the Tibet issue.

Resolve Tibet Act: An Opportune Time To Revisit India's Tibet Policy

29 June 2024, [Kashmir Observer](#), Anuraag Khaund

Tibet once again came to the fore-front of news headlines past few days because of two momentous actions by US and India. On 12 June, the US House of Representatives passed the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet- China Act (also known as the Resolve Tibet Act) which for the first time clearly stated the Washington's position on Tibet not constituting 'a part of China since ancient times'. The Act also called for the dispute between Tibet and the People's Republic of China (PRC) to be 'resolved in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, by peaceful means, through dialogue, without pre-conditions' while enhancing bipartisan US support to the Tibetan issue. The above Act can be termed historic in the sense that the wording clearly posits Tibet and PRC as two separate entities locked in a long-standing dispute of international dispute (reference to international law) instead of the former being a part of the latter's territory and hence the dispute being 'internal.' Also noteworthy is the fact that the Act stipulates the US government to counter Beijing's disinformation of Chinese historical claims over the Tibetan plateau including not just the current Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) but also the provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Yunnan.

In India, the new Modi 3.0 government has given the green signal to rename 30 places in Tibet in a tit-for-tat move aimed at Chinese action of renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing refers to as 'Zagnan' or Southern Tibet on March 2024. This, and other events such as Taiwan President Lai Ching- te's

congratulatory message to PM Modi and the latter's reciprocation of the same with wishes of closer New Delhi- Taipei ties have led to the speculation that Sino-Indian ties are bound to remain rocky like in the previous years since 2020. Moreover, Xi Jinping's act of not personally congratulating the new Indian PM on his assumption of office and the blatant Chinese pessimism on social media regarding the new government can be seen as an indication of the continuation of the current situation described as 'armed coexistence'.

Both the above instances involving India and US, two prominent democracies and global players have resulted in the re-emergence of the question of Tibet which have often remained on the backburner in an attempt not to stir up trouble with China. For India, the passage of the Resolve Tibet Act and the US clarity of position on Tibet is an opportune time to re-visit and re-examine its own Tibet policy which is still weighed down by history.

Criticism of India's policy towards Tibet can be traced back to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's prescient letter in 1950 about nefarious Chinese designs on Tibet and its negative implications upon the security of then newly independent India. His premonitions were proved true by the 1962 war despite Nehru's acknowledgment of Chinese control over Tibet under the *Panchsheel* or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co- existence in 1954. Since then, over the years, corresponding to ebb and flow in Sino- Indian ties, there have been calls to revisit the over-cautious Indian approach to respecting Chinese sensibilities with no substantive reciprocation from the other side. This was reflected in the comments made by the Indian Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs in 2017 which stated that while New Delhi *'is overly cautious with China about China's sensitivities while dealing with Taiwan and Tibet, China does not exhibit the same deference while dealing with India's sovereignty concerns, be it Arunachal Pradesh or that of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir'*. Hence, the Committee called for adopting a 'flexible approach' in dealing with Beijing which include Taiwan. And should include Tibet as well.

Calls for revision of India's Tibet strategy have become stronger in the backdrop of the continuing military standoff in Ladakh since 2020. This was reflected in action such as the PM's conveying birthday wishes to the 14th Dalai Lama and the attendance of then *Sikyong* (President) of the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) Dr Lobsang Sangay during Modi's first swearing ceremony in 2014. The re-naming of places in Tibet mentioned above has led to the opinion that the latter action is 'tantamount to India re-opening the Tibetan question'. And it was about time that the Tibetan question be brought up for discussion and recalibrated in tune with India's changing geopolitical

and strategic equation with China. While the above tit-for-tat renaming is a good start, yet as scholar Claude Arpi opines New Delhi will have to be more proactive in formulating a new comprehensive strategy vis-à-vis Tibet.

A first step, as mentioned earlier, is the re-discovery and highlighting of the age old historical links between Tibet and India especially the Indian imprint in Tibetan culture, religion, medicine and language. Like in the renaming initiative, meticulous research must be directed towards the links between Tibetan and Sanskrit languages, Buddhist Gurus and monks from Indian subcontinent who preached in Tibet, and the cross-cultural exchange between Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism and Hindu Tantric tradition visible in deities such as Palden Lhamo (similar features with Hindu Goddess Kali). To this end, the Government of India should provide active support and funds to institutions such as the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Norbulingka Institute, Men-Tsee-Khang (Tibetan traditional medicine) and the Tibet Museum in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. The highlighting of the above linkages would put a strong dent to Chinese claims of control over Tibet since time immemorial. In this regard, New Delhi could also cooperate with the US as countering Chinese disinformation constitutes one of the objects of the Resolve Tibet Act.

The Sino- Indian rivalry over Buddhism constitutes another crucial area tied to New Delhi's Tibet policy. China has made significant inroads into the world of Buddhism by increasing its influence in platforms such as World Fellowship of Buddhists, the International Council of Day of Vesak (ICDV) as well as promoting the development of Buddhist sites such as Lumbini in Nepal- the birthplace of Gautama Buddha. Such increasing influence over the Buddhist world is utilised by Beijing to push the narrative of China, rather than India, being the historical centre of Buddhism while discrediting the Dalai Lama using rival sects as proxies. In the near future, the above influence could also be used to prop up support and legitimacy for the Chinese appointed 15th Dalai Lama after the passing away of the current one. Hence, India needs to urgently step up its game in the battle for influence by actively supporting bodies such as the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) under the Union Ministry of Culture and organising the Global Buddhist Summit (GBS) annually. The recent inauguration of the Nalanda University in Rajgir, Bihar on 19 June near the site of the historic ancient seat of Buddhism 34 years after the idea was first deliberated in Parliament in 2010, is a welcome move which arrived late but nonetheless would bolster New Delhi's soft power capabilities given it is utilised properly.

The most important pillar buttressing the Indian link with Buddhism and Tibet is the 14th Dalai Lama himself

who on many occasions have underlined the umbilical connection between India (Guru/ Mentor) and Tibet (Chela/ Disciple). Moreover, the proclamations of the Dalai Lama himself regarding his re-incarnation such as stressing his exclusive right to choose his own way of re-birth/ re-incarnation and his (legitimate) successor hailing from a free country (possibly India) puts New Delhi in an advantageous position vis-a vis China. Hence, India should strongly back the appointed successor or any reincarnation born on Indian soil while also actively supporting and coordinating with the Gaden Phodrang Foundation- the body deputed by His Holiness with the responsibility to recognize the latter's reincarnation. In this regard, Washington's support could also be sought within the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA) 2020 which among other things, clearly stipulates the Tibetan Buddhist communities' sole right to appoint the 15th Dalai Lama without external (Chinese) influence. At the same time, Buddhist countries such as Japan and Vietnam to extend support to any future India born reincarnation- countries having strained ties with China currently. The 15th Dalai Lama born and raised in India and receiving the support of Buddhist population worldwide would be an asset to New Delhi in maintaining and consolidating its position among the Tibetan communities in exile all over the world and in the leadership of Buddhism over China.

As a response to the mention of Kashmir in joint China-Pakistan statements, India should release an official statement supporting the Resolve Tibet Act and especially its emphasis on the resolution of the dispute between the two parties through dialogue. At the same time, both New Delhi and Washington should include Tibet and the Dalai Lama during summit level and high-level bilateral talks and release joint statements on the same thereby highlighting the disputed nature of Chinese occupation of the Tibetan plateau. Similar statements could also be generated bilaterally as well as multilaterally with countries like Japan and Vietnam since the Act also stipulates the US 'to coordinate with other countries.... towards the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.'

The recent visit of a US high level delegation to India whose itinerary includes a meeting with the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala is a step which should be made frequent and actively emulated by high ranking Indian ministers having audiences with the Tibetan leader. Important commemorations of Tibetan history such as Tibetan Independence Day (13 February) and Uprising Day (March 10) should include high level Indo- US participation as well as promotion of the events brushed under the carpet by Chinese narrative. Moreover, both New Delhi and Washington should bring up the gross human rights violations happening in Tibet on UN and other related forums. The UN's focus should be brought upon the Tibetan self

immolations and escaped political activists seeking asylum in India and elsewhere including allowing the latter to present testimonies in international fora. These would dent Chinese claims of peace and development in Tibet while also countering Beijing's unnecessary meddling with Kashmir at the UN.

Finally, New Delhi should synergise its increasing ties with Taiwan with its Tibet policy. Despite the historical uneasiness between the both, India could devote efforts at bringing them closer and even support TGIE's efforts to re-establish the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet in the Legislative Yuan (Taiwanese parliament). In addition, Taiwan's Buddhist connection could lead Taipei to support the Dalai Lama's chosen re-incarnation candidate. In this, the US could be roped in given the latter's status as the most important ally of Taiwan.

Mao Tse Dong in 1950 had justified Tibet's annexation in terms of the latter being the 'palm' to 'five fingers' (Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh). It is time India weakened the iron grip over the palm for the sake of the fingers crucial to our security and integrity.

PLA reorganisation has implications for China's neighbours

27 June 2024, [The Tribune](#), Jayadeva Ranade

As the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia have shown, the battle of perception has become very important in present-day warfare to win popular support.

APPARENTLY undeterred by the turbulence in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), sparked by the disappearance of China's then Defence Minister Gen Li Shangfu and the 'removal' soon thereafter of the Commander and Political Commissar of the PLA Rocket Force and at least 11 other Generals, Chinese President Xi Jinping has effected the largest reorganisation of the PLA since 2016. It demonstrated his grip on the PLA. It showed that the PLA officers have imbibed lessons from their close study of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. One major lesson has been the importance of propaganda and the ability to craft and shape popular perceptions. In Gaza, for example, Israel found that it lost global popular support, which had suddenly and overwhelmingly shifted in favour of Palestine. This was one backdrop that possibly precipitated the dissolution of the PLA Strategic Support Force (SSF) and the establishment of the PLA Information Support Force (ISF).

On April 19, Xi announced the formation of the PLA ISF. He simultaneously announced the establishment of the PLA Aerospace Support Force and the PLA Cyberspace Support Force and the dissolution of the PLA SSF. The order of precedence for the new services, important for the hierarchy-conscious PLA, was

indicated as thus: the PLA Aerospace Support Force, PLA Cyberspace Support Force, PLA ISF and the Joint Logistics Support Force. Each of these is now an independent entity at the Deputy Theatre Commander-level, reporting directly to the Central Military Commission (CMC). They have single missions and are focused on one aspect of warfare, which would be intended to make command and control, as well as their performance, more effective.

Among the reasons for the reorganisation would be that the capital-intensive PLA SSF encompassed a range of varied aspects of modern hi-technology warfare capabilities, probably making it difficult for the PLA SSF Commander to pay adequate attention to the individual specialised forces under his command. At a time of rapid advances in technology and battlefield tactics evolving on the battlegrounds in Ukraine and West Asia, which the PLA leadership has been studying and analysing very carefully, this would be an impediment to the PLA becoming a world-class military capable of fighting and winning wars.

As the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia have also shown, the battle of perception has become very important in present-day warfare to win popular support and influence outcomes. Information warfare and shaping scenarios has been noticeably prominent and successful in both these conflict zones. Reorganisation of the SSF will ensure focused attention and better utilisation of funds for each force. Since all forces are specialised, they will establish separate training establishments so that professionally competent personnel are available.

The main functions of the PLA ISF, as presently discernible, includes communications, including satellite communications, analysis of battlefield environment and target data, and maintenance, disruption and monitoring of cyber and communications channels. Many of the entities integrated into the ISF are from the SSF.

Available information shows that the agencies integrated into the PLA ISF include the headquarters of the now-disbanded SSF, the Information and Communication Base, and the Information and Communication Brigades of the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts. Additionally, it encompasses the Target Data Battalion, Battlefield Environment Battalion, Communications Support Battalion, Spectrum Control Battalion, and the Intelligence Analysis Centre of the Joint Staff Department of the CMC. Certain functions and capabilities from the Battlefield Situation and Strategic Early Warning Sub-Centres of the Joint Operations Command Centre of the CMC, as well as the Battlefield Situation Battalion, Information Service Battalion, and Command Operations and Maintenance Battalion of the Theatre Command Joint Operations Centres, have also been integrated. Furthermore, some forces from the 35th

Base and the Satellite Communications Centre of the former SSF, along with the Battlefield Environment Research Institute and the Network Information Research Institute of the Systems Engineering Research Academy of the Academy of Military Sciences, are now part of the ISF.

Most personnel of these formations and units would have been retained and moved to the ISF with their original units. The leadership elements would largely have been left undisturbed. The Commander and Political Commissar of the Aerospace Force and Cyberspace Force could similarly have been left in place.

Earlier, speaking at the National People's Congress on March 7, Xi had focussed on the building of strategic capabilities in emerging fields, the need to understand developments in emerging fields, and efficient integration of new productive forces and new combat forces.

Xi also underscored the importance of innovation and deepening reform of the national defence science and technology industry system. He stressed the importance of "integrating preparation for maritime military warfare, safeguarding of maritime rights and development of the maritime economy". He simultaneously highlighted the importance of a network space defence system and enhanced safeguards for national network security.

The reorganisation has implications for China's neighbours. Creation of the ISF implies increased attention to signals and electronic monitoring, interception and disruption capabilities. It will probably be responsible for disinformation campaigns and will enhance its cyber warfare capabilities. The ISF will be under pressure to show results, and cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns against targets — Indian, South Asian, South East Asian, etc. — can be expected to increase. The Dalai Lama's establishment would equally be a target. An important area of focus for the new force will be the maritime domain and particularly the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

Why Do India and China Keep Fighting Over This Desolate Terrain?

27 June 2024, [New York Times](#), Yudhijit Bhattacharjee

The 2,100-mile border separating India and China passes through some of the world's most inhospitable terrain. In the west, it runs along India's Ladakh region, at an altitude of 13,000 to 20,000 feet. During the months when the area isn't covered in snow, the ground resembles a moonscape. The earth is sandy, strewn with rocks and pebbles; not a blade of grass grows anywhere; there are no visible signs of animal life. In winter, temperatures can drop to -40 degrees.

The bleak conditions and barren vistas can induce despair in those who set foot on the land. "I've been to those places," a former Indian diplomat who now works for an international Buddhist organization in Delhi told me. "When you visit, you tend to think, Who the hell even wants this area?"

But that's not how nation-states view territory, no matter how desolate it is. That is why India and China have their armies deployed on these heights along an unmarked and, in many places, contested boundary between the two countries. In the absence of any fencing or barbed wire to demarcate territory, soldiers from each nation contend with considerable ambiguity when conducting patrols along what's known as the Line of Actual Control. Vinod Bhatia, who served as director general of military operations for the Indian Army and is now retired, describes it as a line of perceptions.

"It's four lines, actually," he told me when I visited Delhi last year. "One is the Indian perception of the Line of Actual Control. Another is the Chinese perception of the Line of Actual Control. Third is the Indian perception of the Chinese perception of the Line of Actual Control — because we have a perception based on their line of patrolling. And the fourth is, of course, the Chinese perception of the Indian perception of the Line of Actual Control."

This lack of clarity means that there are several places along the border that are effectively a no-man's land, where both Indian and Chinese troops carry out patrols. Soldiers from each side routinely leave empty cigarette packets and beer cans behind as marks of territorial claim. At the same time, soldiers on each side are legally bound to exercise restraint during patrols, according to a 1996 agreement between the two countries that prohibits the use of firearms and munitions at the border.

When units from the two sides run into one another, they follow a mutually agreed upon protocol to avoid confrontation. "We pull out a banner that says in English and in Chinese: 'You are in our territory. Please go back,'" Bhatia told me. "And they hold up a banner of their own that says in Hindi and in English: 'You are in our territory. You go back.'"

Historically, such face-offs have been resolved peacefully. In recent years, however, confrontations have sometimes spiraled into skirmishes. One night in early December 2022, for instance, hundreds of Chinese troops attempted to breach, in four spots, a stone wall along a border ridgeline in the Yangtze plateau, located on an eastern stretch of the border in India's easternmost state, Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims is a part of Tibet. According to Indian press reports — the Indian Army has not provided a public account — the Chinese troops were armed with nail-studded clubs, monkey fists (knotted-up portions of rope used as a weapon) and stun guns. The Indian

soldiers, using crude weapons of their own, eventually forced the Chinese troops to retreat.

Though there were no fatalities, the engagement was violent, making it the most severe skirmish since a June 2020 clash in the Galwan Valley, which proved fatal for 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese soldiers.

Episodes like those in Galwan and Yangtze reflect an era of increased hostility between the two countries, which have generally maintained a peaceable, if strained, relationship in the decades since they fought a war in 1962. Today, India and China have each stationed an estimated 60,000 soldiers along the Line of Actual Control.

Jayadeva Ranade worked for many years with India's Research and Analysis Wing, the country's main foreign intelligence agency; he now serves on India's National Security Advisory Board. In his view, skirmishes along the border are likely to be regular occurrences for the foreseeable future. "This conflict isn't going to go away in a hurry," he told me. And in large part, the matter is about more than just gaining territory; it's also about a broader geopolitical rivalry. "The bigger issue is they don't want India to rise," Ranade says, referring to China. "Because they see themselves as the only power in the Indo-Pacific region."

The two countries are increasingly jockeying for global influence as well. A strong nationalist leader rules each country: President Xi Jinping in China and, in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who just won a third term in office, despite his party's electoral setbacks that will make him dependent on allies in Parliament. Xi, in his address to the 19th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017, declared that China "has stood up, grown rich and is becoming strong" and could offer "Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind."

More recently, Modi has been emboldened by India's growth. The country's population surpassed China's last year, and its economy, while still much smaller than China's, is expected to grow faster in the coming years. Like Xi, Modi has spoken of India's ambition to reclaim its ancient glory and return to its status as Vishwaguru, a Sanskrit phrase that means "teacher to the world." India now acts with an assertiveness it lacked even a decade ago.

Harsh V. Pant, a professor of international relations at King's College London, characterizes Modi's government, compared with previous governments, as "much more robust in articulating India's national-security priorities and making the case that New Delhi will stand up for those interests." In 2019, that stance was demonstrated when India conducted airstrikes against what it claimed were terrorist training camps in Balakot, Pakistan. "Balakot was a signal that we are

willing to use the instrumentality of the military to achieve certain outcomes and test how far we can go," Pant told me. Last year, India rebuffed criticism from the European Union over its continuing imports of Russian oil, which was seen as helping Russia in its war against Ukraine.

New Delhi's assertiveness was again on display in a diplomatic crisis last year, when Canada announced that it suspected Indian intelligence of having been involved in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader on Canadian soil. The Indian government denied the charge and demanded to see evidence of that claim. It also accused Canada of sheltering Sikh terrorists. Canada had to withdraw 41 of its 62 diplomats from India in October, after the Indian government said it would revoke their diplomatic immunity. As further retribution, visas for Canadians were suspended for more than a month.

In May, after Canadian police arrested and charged three Indian citizens based in Edmonton for last year's murder, India's foreign minister suggested that the killing was related to gang violence and chided Canadian authorities for having allowed "organized crime from India, specifically from Punjab, to operate in Canada."

It isn't uncommon to detect a degree of belligerence in how Indian officials talk about these matters. When I visited Delhi last fall, the mood in the capital over Canada's allegations was one of defiance. Pankaj Saran, who served as India's deputy national-security adviser from 2018 to 2021 and now runs NatStrat, which researches security issues, contrasts India's self-assuredness on the international stage today with its diffident foreign policy of the 1980s. "Back then, we were literally riding the coattails of the Soviet Union," he told me. But as the world's fifth-largest economy, India no longer has any reason to be timid. "Today," he says, "we have a government that believes we've been taking the hit for far too long."

The Indo-China war of 1962 was precipitated by a series of border clashes not too different from those of recent years. The earlier ones were about more than territorial disagreements, though. China was smarting from India's embrace of the Dalai Lama, who had fled Tibet in 1959 and established a government in exile in Dharamshala, India. At this point, the two countries were still young in their modern incarnations; neither had an impressive military. But the People's Liberation Army of China was stronger, and Indian troops suffered a humiliating defeat, which impelled India to increase military spending. A month after the war began, around the same time that India requested that the United States intervene with air support, China declared a unilateral cease-fire, effectively ending the conflict. India had to accept that Aksai Chin, an area of 15,000 square miles that it

claimed as its own, would remain under Chinese control.

An uneasy truce held for the next several decades, except for a confrontation in 1986-87 on the eastern stretch of the border, in a valley bordering the hilly and verdant Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Indian officials say that the status quo began to change in 2013, right after Xi Jinping became China's president. In April of that year, weeks before the newly anointed Chinese premier Li Keqiang was scheduled to visit Delhi, Chinese troops entered the Depsang Plains in Aksai Chin and set up an encampment just 20 miles south of an Indian military base. Alarmed by the incursion, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police pitched its own tents about 300 yards away. The standoff continued for about three weeks before it was resolved through talks, and both sides removed their encampments.

Less than a year and a half later, days before Xi's state visit to India in 2014, Chinese troops entered Chumar, in eastern Ladakh. "This time it was deeper into our territory and on a broader swath," Ranade told me when we met for coffee in Delhi last summer. Modi reportedly raised the matter with Xi during a dinner in Ahmedabad, and weeks later the troops withdrew from the area.

Some Indian officials back then were of the view that Depsang and Chumar were one-off incidents, attributable solely to People's Liberation Army commanders on the ground locally, but Ranade was certain that Beijing had to be involved. In those days, he prepared a regular report on China for a think tank, based on his analysis of Chinese materials. He learned a few things that were troubling: The P.L.A. was conducting more exercises in Tibet (and using more weapons in them) than ever. "Then they began having paratrooper exercises there, and they had some kind of aircraft coming in there, which was again unusual," Ranade told me. The increased military preparedness signaled an aggressive posture. "I said: 'Look, there's something brewing. I can't tell you what it is, but it doesn't look good to me.'"

The next notable confrontation unfolded in Doklam, a plateau roughly 800 miles to Ladakh's east, close to where the borders of Bhutan, China and India meet. China claims Doklam as its territory, while India and Bhutan maintain that the area is a part of Bhutan. Bhutan has historically relied on India's help to defend its borders, so when China started to build a road into Doklam in June 2017, Indian troops entered the area to stop that construction, and the two sides formed human walls that faced off against each other.

Srikant Kondapalli, a professor of China studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, recounted to me what he had learned from an Indian brigadier about how Indian forces attempted to gain a psychological advantage in the conflict. "They put together some 40 to 50

especially tall Indian soldiers, all above six-and-a-half feet, and pitched them against the Chinese, who were a lot shorter," Kondapalli says. He believes the intimidation tactic helped India as the troops went eyeball to eyeball. Scuffles broke out intermittently. The face-off lasted 73 days. India was able to shut down the road project, which would have put the Chinese military within striking range of the Siliguri corridor — a strategically vital sliver of land that connects India's northeastern states to the rest of the country.

'If this was not premeditated, how come the Chinese had iron clubs with spikes and barbed wire?'

Then came the clash in the Galwan Valley, during a June night in 2020. The valley is along the Galwan River, just southwest of Aksai Chin. Tensions had been simmering there since April, when Chinese troops pitched tents in the valley. The Indian military saw this as yet another incursion across the Line of Actual Control by the P.L.A. According to Indian officials, China agreed to withdraw from these areas, including from the valley.

The violence in mid-June began when Col. Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who commanded an Indian Army unit tasked with monitoring the Chinese withdrawal from Galwan, reportedly got into a heated exchange with Chinese soldiers who were supposed to have left by then. Although the Indian Army hasn't released details, I gathered the broad outlines of the incident from Indian security and intelligence sources, including Jayadeva Ranade, whose own understanding of the incident comes from a careful reading of media reports. He told me that Babu, who was accompanied by two men when he walked over to the Chinese camp, was attacked. "One of the men came back and told the others in his unit," Ranade said, "and they went over and there was a showdown."

The Chinese soldiers were apparently armed with metal clubs studded with spikes and wrapped in barbed wire. The fighting, which continued late into the night and involved dozens of men on each side, might have been less bloody if the soldiers had used their firearms. In all, 20 Indian soldiers, including Babu, were killed. State media in China later reported four deaths on the Chinese side, although Indian officials claim the number was significantly higher.

The brutal fighting in Galwan didn't strike Ranade as entirely unexpected. He saw it not as a fracas that spiraled out of control but rather an attack planned by the Chinese — the kind of thing he had been warning his colleagues about. As he put it to me, "If this was not premeditated, how come the Chinese had iron clubs with spikes and barbed wire?" Ranade said he had come across calls put out by P.L.A. units inviting bids to supply similar weapons as recently as March 2023, which indicated continued hostile intent. "So obviously, they are preparing."

In 2017, Xi Jinping wrote a letter to two sisters from a yak-herding family in Lhunze County, in southern Tibet, adjacent to Arunachal Pradesh, thanking them for their efforts in safeguarding the border. According to Chinese state media, the two Tibetan women and their father had been the sole inhabitants of their town Yumai for a period of years until the mid-1990s; its population has since risen to more than 200. In his letter, which was widely publicized in China, Xi expressed hope that the family would inspire other herders to put down roots in the area like “galsang flowers” and become guardians of Chinese territory. Since taking over as president, Xi has repeatedly talked about being uncompromising in protecting the country’s “core interests” — a term that is understood to include China’s territorial and sovereignty claims. Under Xi, the country has converted coral reefs and sand piles dredged up from the seabed in the South China Sea, which it maintains belongs almost entirely to China, into artificial islands that are now heavily militarized with missiles and air strips. Xi has also emphasized China’s commitment to realizing its long-held dream of “reunification” with Taiwan, which split from mainland China in 1949. A similar priority is the consolidation of Chinese control over Tibet by squashing a decades-long Tibetan independence movement. China’s aggressive stance along the border with India, Kondapalli told me, is being driven by the same overarching goal of asserting sovereignty over disputed areas.

A senior Indian intelligence official I met with in Delhi last year explained that China’s hostility along the Line of Actual Control had two strategic objectives: diminishing India’s impact in its own backyard and tying down India’s military in order to weaken India’s broader geopolitical influence. “We are the big brother in our region: Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka — everyone looks to India when they have a problem,” he said. “China wants to dent us by saying, ‘How is India going to be your net security provider when they can’t handle their own risk?’” He attributed Chinese cyberattacks directed at India to the same motive: a desire to reduce India’s standing. China’s hostility, he said, was aimed at diluting India’s participation in strategic alliances that have emerged to counter Chinese threats.

One such example is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, a group made up of India, the United States, Australia and Japan, which share the goal of preventing China from dominating the Indo-Pacific. The Chinese, according to the intelligence official, “don’t want India to be the long arm of the United States in this region or to be an active part of things like the Quad, which brings you back to the border issue. They want to keep us pinned down on the land borders because the future of geopolitics is maritime. They don’t want us to lift our heads.”

China’s economic muscle has helped expand its influence in the region in ways that India hasn’t been able to match, the official told me. As part of its Belt and Road Initiative, which Xi began in 2013, China has invested in infrastructure projects in every one of India’s neighbors. “We call them strategic projects because they are going into them with no consideration of what they’ll get back in business terms,” he said. What China was gaining from these investments was “massive leverage.” Not only was India unable to compete in terms of resources, he added, India was also not allowed to operate as he claimed the Chinese do. “They literally come with bags of cash,” he said. “We have to have parliamentary approval, this approval, that approval.”

At the Tibetan border, this approach has taken a more physical form, as China has built more than 620 new “xiaokang” — or “moderately well-off” — villages all along the Tibetan border. Billions of yuan have been spent on roads, power stations, schools and health care facilities to support these villages. Each settlement consists of about 100 homes equipped with modern amenities like heating and internet connectivity. A mix of Tibetans and Han Chinese — many of whom are ex-military men — have moved into the villages, Kondapalli says, effectively changing the demographics of the area and enhancing Beijing’s ability to crush Tibetan resistance.

“These settlements are de facto intelligence outposts,” Kondapalli says. In contrast to the xiaokang villages, which are right next to the Line of Actual Control, the settlements on India’s side are 20 to 30 miles inside Indian territory. That gives the settlers in these villages an opening to encroach upon land that belongs to India, Kondapalli says.

Indian authorities see the establishment of these border villages as buttressing a strategy of gradual encroachment — or “salami slicing,” as it’s known among security strategists — that China has practiced over the years in the South China Sea and is now attempting to replicate along the Line of Actual Control. The high-ranking Indian intelligence official I spoke with in Delhi explained to me how the Chinese military had been operating on the border. “It’s very simple, but very clear,” he told me over breakfast on the patio of a Delhi hotel. “It starts with their yaks coming into pastures that are common grazing grounds at the border. After a few weeks of the yaks hanging around, the herdsman will come. Then, they start making trails for the herders. And then, because there are herders and yaks there, the P.L.A. will come, saying, ‘These are our nationals — we’re just checking on them.’”

The official went on: “Once the troops start coming in for patrols, then they’ll pitch tents, saying, ‘Our troops need to rest.’ The next thing they’ll do is, ‘The trails are not good enough, let’s start making roads.’ Then

they'll prevent our patrols from coming into that area. Once the roads are properly made, the tents will become cemented structures. So, in about eight to nine steps, they will create new facts on the ground and say, 'This is ours.'" Effectively, winning a war without firing a shot.

That's what the P.L.A. appears to have been aiming for, not just in the Galwan Valley but also in several areas along the border in eastern Ladakh that Chinese troops moved into in the spring of 2020. The clash at Galwan was followed by a withdrawal from that site by both sides, but Chinese soldiers continued to occupy other areas, including those on the banks of Pangong Lake, whose westernmost edge lies 50 miles to the south of the Galwan Valley.

India fought back. On the evening of Aug. 29, 2020, troops from a secretive Indian guerrilla force, together with soldiers from the Indian Army, began ascending the slopes of a mountain in eastern Ladakh. The mountains are part of the Kailash Range, a chain of rugged peaks, the tallest of which reach 22,000 feet, beginning near Pangong's southern bank and extending southeast for some 500 miles. Because of the difficult terrain, the heights along the range were left unoccupied by both India and China after the 1962 war. But now, nearly six decades later, Indian Army commanders hoped to take control of several of these hilltops.

As Lt. Gen. Y.K. Joshi, the top commander in charge of the operation, later disclosed in media interviews, the operation, called Snow Leopard, had been planned as a response to the P.L.A.'s incursions. By the night of Aug. 29, Indian troops were in possession of a strategic peak. The following morning, Indian tanks rolled up a mountainside several miles southeast on the range, enabling the Indian Army to occupy a high mountain pass known as Rezang La, a strategic location overlooking a Chinese garrison stationed at Moldo on the other side of the range. By the time the P.L.A. could bring its equipment and troops up the slopes on their side, Indian troops already had the advantage.

The action was "well planned, well thought out and executed, achieving total surprise," Joshi said in a video interview with Nitin Gokhale, a veteran Indian military journalist who runs a foreign-affairs website called Stratnews Global. (The Indian Army has not officially released any information about the operation, but I got a summary description of it from Gokhale.) The Indians suffered one casualty: 53-year-old Nyima Tenzing of the guerrilla Special Frontier Force, which was established 60 years ago to conduct covert operations against China. Tenzing, like other troops who make up the S.F.F., was of Tibetan origin and died from a land mine left behind after the 1962 war.

As Joshi explained to Stratnews, India's goal in taking the Kailash heights was to compel China to withdraw

from the areas occupied by the P.L.A. after their incursions earlier that month. The strategy gave India leverage in negotiating with China, and ultimately led to success: In February 2021, the P.L.A. dismantled its structures and pulled its soldiers back from those sites in exchange for Indian troops vacating the hilltops.

That doesn't mean, however, that the Chinese have given up. In fact, the P.L.A.'s military presence in the broader area north of Pangong Lake has increased significantly since 2021. According to an analysis by the Center for Strategic and International Studies of satellite images taken on Oct. 4, 2022, the Chinese have built a new P.L.A. divisional headquarters just north of Pangong, just three and a half miles from the Line of Actual Control. Its support buildings are, the C.S.I.S. reports, "flanked by a bevy of trenches and revetments for storing and securing equipment."

At the end of last August, China's Ministry of Natural Resources released a new map that rendered Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh as Chinese territory. China has published such maps before. But the timing of the new release — less than two weeks before India was to host the G20 summit in Delhi — suggested that it was a calculated jab intended to undermine India precisely when the country hoped to showcase its rising influence. A government spokesman said such actions by China served only to "complicate the resolution of the boundary question."

India sees China employing similar tactics to try to pressure India on Arunachal Pradesh, which the Chinese government calls Zangnan. In April, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs announced that it was renaming 30 places in the region — the fourth such move since 2017. In March of last year, China chose not to send its delegate to a G20 event hosted by India in Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh, as a reminder that it considers India's rule there illegitimate. "When there's a delegation of Indian bureaucrats traveling to China, the Chinese embassy here in Delhi will not issue a stamped visa to the delegate who belongs to Arunachal Pradesh," says the former diplomat now at the nonprofit Buddhist organization. Instead, embassy officials permit entry by stapling an unstamped piece of paper to the passport. "They say the individual is welcome because his land is a part of China." The result, the former diplomat told me, is that the Indian government then can't send that delegate because doing so would register approval of China's position.

India has its own anxieties about Indians living near the border: It worries that they might shift their allegiance to China.

One reason for China's interest in Arunachal Pradesh, especially its district of Tawang, is the existence of Buddhist holy sites in the state, including the Tawang monastery. Founded in the late 17th century, it is the world's second largest Buddhist monastery, after the

Drepung monastery in Lhasa, Tibet. The Tawang monastery was the Dalai Lama's first refuge in India when he fled Tibet in 1959, crossing over into Arunachal Pradesh after an arduous trek through the mountains. Derek Grossman, of the RAND Corporation, explains that China wants Tawang because it believes that control over what is currently the most important center of Tibetan Buddhism outside Tibet will help consolidate its hold over the Tibetan population. "They have some fears that because India continues to give safe refuge to the Dalai Lama, at some point the Dalai Lama could return to Tawang and use it as leverage to galvanize the Tibetan people to try and declare independence from China," Grossman says.

India's government has its own anxieties about Indians living close to the border: It worries that they might shift their allegiance to China. Arunachal Pradesh, like much of India's northeast, is less developed than other parts of the country; many rural communities in remote areas live in relative isolation. Yeshi Phuntsok, a retired government employee who lives in Tawang, told me that even 20 years ago, many people in the village where he grew up were not fully aware that they were Indians. "They didn't know there was a country called India or that there was a country called China," he says. Over the years, outreach efforts by Indian authorities have helped change that, he says: "Now, they understand that India is their country."

This fledgling, still-forming sense of Indian identity in parts of the border population is another reason the xiaokang villages built by China are a source of concern for the Indian government. "Their thinking is that when they publicize the development of their villages, people on our side of the border will look at that and say, 'Oh, we are so badly off,'" the Indian intelligence official I had breakfast with told me. "And the Tibetans will see that Arunachal is so poor by comparison."

Better cellular connectivity in China's border villages is a source of envy across the Line of Actual Control, where citizens in some areas are able to receive signals from Chinese cellphone towers. Phones can automatically switch to the Chinese network near the border, Phuntsok told me. Earlier on the day we spoke, he had visited an area close to the Line of Actual Control. "Right after I got there, I noticed that my phone was showing 3:30 p.m.," he said. For a little while, Phuntsok puzzled over how the time could have passed so quickly. He then realized the phone was showing Chinese time, which is two hours and 30 minutes ahead of Indian time there.

Ngawang Tashi, a Buddhist monk from Arunachal Pradesh, told me that China's attempts to woo India's predominantly Buddhist border population is part of a larger effort to "sinify" Buddhism — that is, dilute its Tibetan identity and make it more Chinese. He said he had heard about the Chinese government offering

houses and financial benefits to Indian yak herders to get them to settle in some of the newly built villages. "Most people here are loyal to India and followers of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," he told me. But after the current Dalai Lama is gone, that could change, he added. "They can be swayed when there is money being offered."

Belatedly, the Indian government has responded to China's xiaokang villages with a "vibrant villages" program, announced in April last year. Over the next decade, the government says, it plans to invest \$600 million in the development of about 3,000 villages that are already settled along the Line of Actual Control, from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. By building roads, dams, schools and hospitals, and by improving telecom services throughout this stretch, authorities hope to give people in border communities a reason to stay where they are and stay loyal to India.

The skirmishes of the past few years have had a silver lining, says Claude Arpi, a longtime scholar of Tibet and Indo-China relations who is currently a distinguished fellow at the Center of Excellence for Himalayan Studies at Shiv Nadar University. It has forced the two sides to come to formal agreements about the border at certain places in Ladakh. "In fact, this is the first time that a map for the L.A.C. exists for this area," Arpi told me.

Disagreements about the boundary persist elsewhere, however, including Demchok and Depsang. It's unclear if those will be resolved anytime soon, even though Modi and Xi Jinping agreed at a summit in South Africa last August to expedite "disengagement and de-escalation" on the border, according to an Indian government spokesman. Despite his party's loss of its majority in the recent election, Modi's decision-making power on nationalistic issues like border disputes with China is unlikely to diminish in his third term, which in turn means India's assertiveness along the Line of Actual Control is likely to continue. "Today, after what happened in Galwan, there is no question that China can come more than a few hundred meters inside India's territory," Arpi says. "India has responded very strongly for once."

Straight Talk | India's Himalayan Powerplay: China Caught Off Guard As India, US Play the Tibet Card

26 June 2024, [News18](#), Sanbeer Singh Rathore

For now, India has made it abundantly clear to China that unless it course-corrects, New Delhi's activism for both Taiwan and Tibet will only rise

The new Indian government was sworn in on June 4. Within days, a bipartisan American delegation led by the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs chair Michael McCaul was in town. The town in question was Dharamshala — the seat of the Tibetan

government in exile and where the Dalai Lama has been living ever since he fled Tibet. Despite China's warnings to Washington against the said visit, the American delegation met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi after their talks with the Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama. That Nancy Pelosi is a personality deeply embedded in the American establishment is a well-known fact. As such, her visit had to have the sanction of the top echelons of both the Biden administration and the Modi government. Her visit to Dharamshala was, for all practical purposes, as significant as her trip to Taiwan in 2022, if not more.

Naturally, this has made many in India and around the world sit up and take notice. After all, Washington and New Delhi's Tibet push has come out of the blue. On expected lines, the intention of the visit has come under scrutiny. China is flummoxed, while many in India appear to be apprehensive of the Americans using New Delhi as a shoulder to fire from. However, this is certainly not a haphazard decision by India, much less one taken under pressure. It is a warning shot for China and its president, Xi Jinping. India is essentially signalling to China that play-time is over. The scare of falling out of line vis-à-vis the "One China Policy" is over. One-sided bullying will no longer allowed to be the norm. China can no longer rename Indian villages and expect New Delhi to sit by idly. The rules of engagement have changed.

It was about time India let China know that it too can press some of Beijing's raw nerves. While caution is advisable, it is refreshing to see India demonstrate the ability to play the game as an equal power. Bullying tolerated beyond a point is as good as submission. As a side note, it is surprising to watch the US take up the issue of Tibet's autonomy so aggressively. The US appears to be trying to gain leverage over Beijing in the run-up to it making a move on Taiwan. The invasion of Taiwan looks inevitable, and is only a question of "when" and not "if". Joe Biden also has good reason to push the Tibet card now, at the fag end of his Presidency, given how American foreign policy since 2020 has been an unmitigated disaster. If this indeed turns out to be the first and last Biden presidency, he would like to end it on a high note and be seen as a President who brought Tibet back on the table.

For India, China's growing appetite for expansionism is quite concerning. Beijing has been upping the rhetoric on "South Tibet", renaming Indian villages and refusing to disengage from crucial areas in Ladakh. It is also expanding its outreach in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and attempting to lure traditional India-friendly countries under its umbrella. For India, the worry in a post Taiwan-invasion scenario will be where China turns its eyes next. Chances are, Beijing's focus will turn to Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh even as it steps up activities in the IOR.

India does not want to be taken by surprise and left devising a strategy when the crisis strikes. By allowing the US delegation to not just visit Dharamshala but also meet the Dalai Lama, the Indian government has made it clear it can also play the Tibet and Taiwan cards at a time and place of its choosing.

That the same has happened at the very outset of Modi's third term in power is quite telling as well. It is a sign from the Indian government that China will be taken head on over the next five years.

The US has orchestrated a big show of strength alongside India in order to publicise the bipartisan Tibet policy bill. After all, the visit came in the backdrop of Biden preparing to sign the Tibet policy bill adopted by both the US Senate and the House of Representatives. The bill seeks to counter China's narrative about its control over Tibet and promote dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama.

The Tibet Policy Bill refutes China's claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times. That, in Beijing's mind, is a direct affront to the "One China Policy" – something which India is now party of.

WHAT PROMPTED THE CHANGE IN INDIA'S STRATEGY?

There are a couple of factors playing on India's mind. First, China and India are both engaged in an active standoff in Eastern Ladakh. Beijing wants India to accept the new status quo in Ladakh and allow the bilateral relationship to remain unaffected. However, New Delhi is willing to have none of it and insists that absent a resolution in Ladakh, the bilateral relationship will remain in the cold storage.

For far too long, India has had a headless and incoherent policy of dealing with China. Finally, one can witness signs of New Delhi getting its act together and a much more strong-headed and mature China policy taking shape – one which will become even more apparent and concrete in the months to come. Moves relating to Taiwan and Tibet appear to be part of the same strategy, which India is now using to gain leverage over China.

China's recent gesture of gifting water to the Maldives from Tibetan glaciers, while hypocritically promoting water conservation campaigns, has not gone unnoticed. In response, New Delhi is preparing to rename 30 villages in Tibet, as a form of diplomatic retaliation. The message for China could not be any clearer.

China claims Arunachal as its territory by referring to it as 'Zangnan' or southern Tibet. It has renamed 30 locations in Arunachal Pradesh with Chinese and Tibetan names. This appears to have been the last straw for India. Not only is China refusing to expeditiously resolve the standoff in Eastern Ladakh, but is also consistently pushing its own narrative on Arunachal Pradesh by calling it "South Tibet".

Besides, only months prior to India hosting the G20 leader's summit in New Delhi last September, Beijing had released a new map that asserted territorial claim over Arunachal and Aksai Chin in Ladakh. In the 2023 edition of China's 'standard map', uploaded by its ministry of natural resources on the website of its standard map service website, Aksai Chin and Arunachal are among the south and south-east Asian territories marked within the Chinese borders. Add to it China's growing eye in the Indian Ocean Region, and India believes the time to take concrete action is now. India has finally realised that China is not a country that can be ignored. Beijing's expansionist tendencies know no bound. There will not suddenly come a day when China forgets all about its fictitious claims on Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh and other sovereign Indian areas. For now, India has made it abundantly clear to China that unless it course-corrects, New Delhi's activism for both Taiwan and Tibet will only rise. In the times to come, one can expect more facets of this Himalayan powerplay to unfold.

Centring 'Tibetan' in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies in India

25 June 2024, [SNU](#), Swati Chawla

Although prompted by tensions with China, the recently renewed administrative and scholarly interest in the Himalayan regions of India bordering Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet is nevertheless an opportunity to correct broader historical amnesia about the long histories of interconnectedness in the area. It is vital here to acknowledge the contribution of the six-decade-long exile of the Dalai Lama— both the institution and the person—and of the Tibetan community in exile in preserving Himalayan traditions and histories and in shepherding the institutions that enabled their revival in postcolonial India. This article makes a case for centring Tibet and Tibetan exiles in Tibetan and Himalayan studies in India.

Keywords: Tibetology, Tibetan exile, Himalayan studies

It had been a huge discovery for me— the Himalayas are not part of Indian history.

— Aniket Alam, 2020ⁱ

My pet peeve is that you can't have a China policy without a Tibet policy, and you can't have a Tibet policy ... without a Himalayan policy — a 'Himalayan policy' that encompasses both 'domestic Himalaya' and 'inter-state Himalaya.'

— Siddiq Wahid, 2020ⁱⁱ

Introduction

In June 2023, following a *chintan shivir* (brainstorming session) chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) asked personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) to collect histories

of the border villages manned by them “extending up to the past 2,000 years” (Manral 2023). Some understood the move was connected to the government's plans to improve infrastructure in the border region. The 'Vibrant Villages Programme,' for example, aims to develop and create employment opportunities and promote local products in the border areas, which, the Home Minister stressed, could “eventually stop migration” out of these villages. He added that “contact and communication with every border village and its residents is very important for the security of the borders” (Manral 2023).

The Vibrant Villages Programme, a scheme sponsored by the Union Government for the financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26, has earmarked 2,967 villages along India's northern and eastern borders with Tibet/China, situated across 19 districts in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh (Union Territory). The Programme has also authorised the establishment of several units of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), enhancing their infrastructure and inducting over 9,000 troops (*The Indian Express* 2023).ⁱⁱⁱ

This recognition of the need to better document and understand the histories of India's vast border regions, stem depopulation, and bridge the disconnect between the locals and the officers of the Indian state is a reminder of the cartographic anxiety that continues to plague the Indian republic three-quarters of a century after decolonisation.^{iv} The 2,000-year village histories

collected by CAPF personnel—which would subsequently be added to their training module (Manral 2023) would undoubtedly reveal the older provenance for this anxiety and its relation to processes of border-making and nation-building. Most importantly for this article, these histories also remind us of the region's embeddedness within the Tibetan Buddhist cultural world— age- old relations of trade, intermarriage, seasonal migration, and monastic patronage among Tibet and parts of Himalayan India— and the impact of the six-decade-long Tibetan exile on Himalayan peoples.

Regrettably, though, amidst laudable suggestions such as the promotion of traditional knowledge practices, showcasing local culture and heritage, and promoting social entrepreneurship—all of which, it is hoped, would encourage locals to stay in their native villages and perform a more significant role in safeguarding the borders (Manral 2023; *The Indian Express* 2023)— there is scant acknowledgement of this wider context and shared history, or of the debt of gratitude India owes to organisations and initiatives established by Tibetans in exile, which have been long performing some of the very tasks outlined by the MHA (Chawla 2023).



Figure 1. "Tibet Border NOT China Border," Graffiti at Tibetan settlement at Majnu ka Tila, Delhi (August 2021). Photo (panorama) by the author.

Two years before the *chintan shivir* mentioned above, on 28 January 2021, as Indian and Chinese troops faced off in Ladakh in the western Himalaya, *The Times of India* reported about the Indian Army's proposal for its officers to study Tibetology in order to "counter the propaganda and spread of influence by China." As scholars of Tibet and the Himalaya, many of us welcome the so-called "Tibetology proposal" to understand "Tibetan history, culture, and language on both sides of the Line of Actual Control" (Pandit 2021). The government is right to emphasise the importance of building expertise on Tibet to understand the history and contemporary challenges in India's relationship with China.

India-China relations cannot be approached through a strictly bilateral prism that excludes Tibet and the Himalaya. Equally, however, Tibetology cannot be confined within the bounds of state interests and territorial conflicts on either side of the Tibetan plateau. And it cannot disregard the Tibetan community in exile (Chawla and Balasubramaniam 2021).

Forgotten friends?

The Indian Army's instrumental and strategic employment of Tibetology is not very different from how Tibet and the Himalaya have been approached in most scholarship. The production and codification of knowledge about Tibet had served European imperial interests from the earliest missionary writings to the travelogues and the histories written by diplomats.^v Linguistic competency was part of colonial officers' training; they learned the Central Tibetan dialect and were often tutored by monks from Sikkim, Ladakh, and Darjeeling who had spent time in Tibet (McKay 1997). This interest and expertise in Tibet declined in the postcolonial period. Officers were not posted in the frontier regions long enough to produce a cadre that knew the region and the language or could conduct original research. According to historian Tsering Shakya, Indian diplomatic scholarship about Tibet after Independence mostly regurgitated colonial writing.^{vi}

When I began scouring the archival record for my doctoral work, I realised that the exiled nuns and monks I had met in Dharamsala, who (or whose parents) had migrated after 1959, were far from blazing a trail. In fact, they had followed in the footsteps of their kinsmen and traders, monks and laypeople, who had, for generations, been crisscrossing what later became firm national borders. Furthermore, while looking for "Tibet" in archival catalogues and indices, I kept running into correspondence routed through Sikkim and Bhutan. My knowledge of Tibetan exile and of South Asian history thus far had not alerted me to these longer histories and interconnections.

I realised, too, that my own ignorance was not unique. As Indrani Chatterjee pointed out in her aptly titled monograph *Forgotten Friends*, postcolonial historians of modern India have "mastered a particular kind of forgetfulness about their trans-regional, trans-sectarian, and trans-national precolonial histories" (Chatterjee 2013, 20). A series of personal interviews on the state of the field of Tibetan studies with scholars of Tibet and the Himalaya from South Asia in late 2020 revealed that, like me, many of them had first discovered these interconnections in the archives that had been omitted from our history books (see the first epigraph by historian Aniket Alam).^{vii} Their research and teaching, like mine, have since sought to transcend regional and disciplinary boundaries in contemporary South Asia. In Chatterjee's words, an "insistent mapping of a relational universe" is "the starting point of the journey out of a fragmented landscape," through which postcolonial historians are attempting to revive "a modicum of the friendships that have been valued in and among Buddhist communities" (Chatterjee 2013, 20, added emphases).



Figure 2. "Jai Bharat, Jai Tibet" ("Long live India, Long live Tibet"). Graffiti at Tibetan settlement at Majnu ka Tila, Delhi (February 2022). The rest of the slogan, "Boycott Made in China", is partially visible. The PRC flag forms the background. Photo by the author.

A reciprocal debt

Thus, 60 years into the Dalai Lama's exile, his unifying role is widely recognised among the Buddhist communities in the region, as is the grassroots work of

lay and monastic educational organisations under the Central Tibetan Administration (Wahid 2014; Chawla 2022a; Palsang 2009). The recent courses in Tibetology are a nod to this storied history of institution building. Let us take the institutes identified by the Indian Army Training Command (ARTRAC) for their officers could enrol for training in Tibetology. Two of these— the School of Buddhist Philosophy in Leh, Ladakh (now known as the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies) and the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) in Sarnath^{viii}— were established in the early years after Independence, and focused on the study of Buddhism. Nehru had suggested to Foreign Secretary Subimal Dutt (1955-61) that CIHTS at Sarnath be run almost entirely by the Tibetan monks who had followed the Fourteenth Dalai Lama into exile.^{ix} The Tibetan exile community has since shepherded this institution. A third, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Sikkim, was inaugurated by India’s first Prime Minister in 1958; the Dalai Lama had laid its foundation the previous year on his way back from India for the 2,500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations. Also on the list is the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education in Bengaluru, which was established for Tibetans in exile as part of the Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) under the exile administration.

Indeed, monastic scholars from Tibet have long performed the yeoman’s service of shepherding the discipline of Tibetan and Himalayan studies in India. Its foundation in the modern period was arguably laid by Rabindranath Tagore when he envisioned Santiniketan—which features on the ARTRAC list— as a meeting place for the languages and cultures of India. Tagore’s invitation to the French Indologist Sylvian Levi (1863-1935) to Santiniketan in 1921 “may be

termed as the starting of scientific studies on Indo-Tibetan Studies at Visva-Bharati” (Loseries 2010, 58–59). In 1954, the Department of Indo-Tibetan Studies was established to “promote research on age-long cultural relations between India and Tibet.” From its establishment through the 1980s, the Department invited Tibetan Buddhist monks, many of whom had come into exile in the 1950s, to collaborate with Indian scholars (Dash, Narendra [2000] 2017b; [2000] 2017a; Loseries 2010).

Among the Tibetan lamas who served at the Department was Chimed Rigzin Rinpoche (1922-2002), popularly known as C.R. Lama, a non-celibate Tantric master in the Nyingma tradition, who served as the first head of the Department (1954-1987) and helped build its manuscript and xylograph collection, with manuscripts he had brought out of Tibet forming its foundation (Yachin and Fischman 2022; Dash, Narendra [2000] 2017b). Lama was the first Tibetan to hold such a position in an Indian university and was part of the delegation that met Zhou Enlai at Visva-

Bharati during the latter’s visit to India in 1956, where Nehru himself accompanied him.

Another illustrious Tibetan scholar who served at Santiniketan was Lama Chimpa (1923-2011), who was born in Inner Mongolia and received his basic education there before moving for further monastic studies to Beijing and subsequently to two important Geluk monasteries in Tibet— Kumbum and Drepung. (Sera, Drepung, and Ganden are the “great three” Geluk monastic universities of Central Tibet.) Lama Chimpa came to India in 1951. He worked at the International Academy of Indian Culture in Nagpur and Delhi (1952-61) and taught at the Department of Buddhist Studies—also on the ARTRAC list— at the University of Delhi.^x He subsequently taught Tibetan language and literature at Visva Bharati from 1962 till his retirement in 1993 (Gerke, Barbara 2000; Das, Ritiman 2022; Kravchenko and Zaitsev 2003; Tan 1999).

Another Tibetan lama, Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, was born and studied in Golok in Amdo. Following the political upheaval in Tibet, he came to Sikkim in 1957 and moved to India in 1958. He taught at Lucknow University (1967-76) and Visva Bharati (1976-80) before moving to the United States in 1980 (*Snow Lion Publications* 1986).

Conclusion

Thanks in large part to the work of Tibetans in exile and the support from successive Indian governments, there is no location more advantageous than India for studying Tibet and the Himalaya. Indian institutions — national- and state archives, and private collections in libraries and individual families — house the richest material for this research. Linguistic and field expertise abound, as do opportunities for learning the Tibetan language.

In the end, the Himalaya is not, and never was, an insurmountable “natural barrier”—a sentry as Indian school children sing in *sare jahaan se achcha*^{xi}— that separated India from its neighbours in the north and the east. It behoves us then, as Indian scholars, policymakers, and administrators, to approach our border regions, not as foreign and mythologised others, nor as sterile but strategically vital spaces, but as hosts to interconnected yet internally diverse ecologies, societies, and politics that crisscross many contemporary borders, and are often ensconced in a Tibetan and Buddhist cultural sensibility.

Let us broaden the mandate for Tibetology and write more of India into the story. Let us ask of it lessons about our shared histories, and not just about how best to counter an ‘other’ beyond the mountains.

The world ignores threats from China, promotes the cause of self-determination of Tibetan people

25 June 2024, [Mizzima](#), Sun Lee

Ignoring Chinese threats, a high-level bipartisan U.S. delegation has visited Dharamsala in India to meet Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and asserted that the Tibetans have the right to self-determination and should be allowed to practice their religion. Their visit came shortly after the U.S. House passed the Resolve Tibet Bill that recognizes the rights of the Tibetan people and calls for resolving the dispute between Tibet and China peacefully and in accordance with international law, through dialogue.

To the chagrin of China, the delegation of the U.S. House of Representatives had among its members Nancy Pelosi, the former Speaker of the U.S. House. In 2022, ignoring threats from China, she visited Taiwan. Nancy Pelosi is a well-known disciple of the Dalai Lama and it is unlikely that threats from China will deter her from visiting the Buddhist spiritual leader.

Ignoring the ire of China, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has met members of the bipartisan group of American lawmakers after their meeting with the Dalai. At about the same time, the Canadian House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution supporting the right of self-determination of Tibet; asserting that the Tibetans, as a people and a nation, possess this fundamental right.

With all these developments coming within the span of about 10 days, Beijing has now realized to its dismay that the world will not succumb to its pressure and bullying tactic; nor will it accept the Chinese propaganda about the legitimacy of Chinese occupation of Tibet. Beijing has now been reduced to appealing to U. S. President Joe Biden not to sign the Tibet Support Bill which is now on the latter's table and is waiting to be signed into law. In a climb down from its earlier stubborn position of refusing to talk to the Dalai Lama, China has called upon the latter to "to have complete reflection on and thoroughly correct its political propositions," without offering any explanation what these mean.

Beijing even had the audacity to threaten the U.S. lawmakers not to meet the Dalai Lama. "Our delegation received a letter from the Chinese Communist Party warning us not to come here. They repeated their false claim that Tibet is part of China since the 13th Century but we did not let the CCP intimidate us and we are here today," leader of the delegation U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee chair Michael McCaul has disclosed in a news conference in Dharamsala held under the aegis of the Tibetan government-in-exile which China dismisses as a mere political clique.

"The Tibetan people possess a distinct religion, culture and historic identity and they should have a say in their own future. They should be able to freely practice your religion and that is why we are here in defiance of the CCP warning," he said.

"They repeated their false claim that Tibet is part of China since the 13th Century but we did not let the CCP intimidate us," McCaul said. Thus the U.S. lawmakers who represent the people of America have upheld the historical reality that China had never been in full political control of Tibet, that the degree of this control has been a loose suzerainty which is far from sovereign rights, that on several occasions in the past Tibet has been independent of any Chinese control and that between 1912 and 1950 Tibet was an independent country. Thus, the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1950 was illegal.

The Resolve Tibet Bill was passed in the U.S. House by an overwhelming majority of 391 to 26; with all the Democrats and most of the Republicans voting in its favour and only 26 Republicans voting against.

"The United States has never accepted that Tibet was part of China since ancient times as the CCP falsely claims," McCaul, who was one of the movers of the Bill, said. "This legislation clarified U.S. policy and highlights the unique language, religion and culture of the Tibetan people. It directs U.S. diplomacy to push back against Chinese propaganda, ensures Tibetans have a say in their own future and stresses on the need for dialogue between the CCP and other democratically elected leaders of Tibet. Any resolution must include the wishes and voices of the Tibetan people."

The motion adopted in the Canadian House of Commons has opposed China's systematic cultural assimilation of Tibetans and affirmed the rights of Tibetan people to freely choose their economic, social, cultural and religious policies without interference from external powers; including the selection of the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama.

The text of the motion in the Canadian House asserts that "China is carrying out a policy of systematic cultural assimilation against Tibetans," that "Tibetans, as a people and a nation, can claim the right to self-determination, they are empowered to freely choose their economic, social, cultural and religious policies without interference from any external power" and that "this empowerment prohibits China from interfering in the choice of the next Tibetan spiritual leader, the eventual successor of the 14th Dalai Lama." Thus the Canadian resolution is in tune with the present stand of the Dalai Lama of real autonomy for the Tibetan people; though the assertion of the right to self-determination implies political freedom as well. In this context, the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the delegation of the U.S. lawmakers carries a significant message of Indian

support for the cause of the Tibetan people, say observers.

Indian support is most important for the world to advance the cause of the Tibetan people; India being the closest neighbour of Tibet and offering shelter to the largest number of Tibetan refugees in the world; nearly 100,000 of them. The Dalai Lama has been a guest of honour of India since 1959, with 'head of the state' status.

A strategic partnership between the U.S. and India is important to defeat the Chinese designs in the Tibet plateau, they say. "Together we can send a powerful message of deterrence to the Chinese Communist Party because when the world's two largest democracies stand together, freedom and liberty win over tyranny and oppression," McCaul said in a statement after the meeting.

Cyberthreats sponsored by Chinese Communist Party

24 June 2024, [The Washington Times](#), Sen. Marsha Blackburn and Rep. Bob Latta

Tens of millions of families and small businesses across the country use wireless routers as their primary access point to the internet. Many of these routers are susceptible to infiltration by foreign actors, including China, jeopardizing our national security and exposing our country to serious danger.

Just last year, U.S. and Japanese officials revealed that BlackTech, a hacker group connected to the Chinese Communist Party, targeted routers at government agencies and corporations in the two countries to steal intellectual property, including from the defense, technology and electronics sectors.

In January, the Justice Department also reported that Chinese-sponsored hackers infected routers in the U.S. with malware to target critical water, energy and transportation infrastructure — an attack that FBI Director Christopher Wray called a "pre-positioning to cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities in the event of conflict" between America and China.

The threat of cyberattacks is even greater with routers developed by Chinese companies. Because of strict laws in China that require companies to collaborate with the Communist Party, including by sharing users' sensitive data, Chinese-developed routers are especially vulnerable to infiltration by state-backed hackers. This past January, China-linked hackers in Europe targeted home routers developed by the Chinese company TP-Link, whose products U.S. cybersecurity experts have repeatedly warned are susceptible to cyberattacks.

Despite these vulnerabilities, several federal agencies, including the Defense Department, have purchased TP-Link routers.

After years of complacency in Washington about China's threat to our nation's information networks, the Trump administration and Congress took bold action in 2020 to protect the American people with the passage of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act.

As a result of this crucial legislation, the Federal Communications Commission ultimately banned the sale and import of equipment from Chinese-owned telecommunications companies such as Huawei and ZTE, which U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies deem national security threats. As we speak, U.S. companies continue to rip and replace Chinese-made software and communications equipment.

While these efforts delivered real results to protect Americans, our nation continues to face threats of Chinese espionage and cyberattacks — and there are few larger potential vulnerabilities, if exploited, than wireless routers.

Make no mistake: Wireless routers with security vulnerabilities, especially those developed by Chinese companies, threaten the safety of every American.

Thankfully, momentum is growing in Congress to address this issue.

As the ranking member on the Senate Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety and Data Security and the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, we are spearheading the bipartisan Removing Our Unsecure Technologies to Ensure Reliability and Security Act, known as the ROUTERS Act.

This crucial legislation would require the Commerce Department to review the national security threat posed by any router that is designed, developed, manufactured or supplied by a company under the jurisdiction of China, as well as U.S. adversaries Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela.

Depending on the study's outcome, Congress could take further action to require the Commerce Department to designate dangerous routers as national security threats, allowing the FCC to halt their sale in America under the Trump-era Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act.

Given the grave threats to our national security, it should be no surprise that the House Energy and Commerce Committee recently approved the ROUTERS Act in a unanimous and bipartisan 43-0 vote. As China works to undermine U.S. global leadership, it is essential that we protect our intellectual property, critical infrastructure and American citizens from the Chinese Communist Party's malicious cyberattacks. With the ROUTERS Act, Congress has an incredible opportunity to help make that happen.

China must not choose the next Dalai Lama

24 June 2024, [The Japan Times](#), Brahma Chellaney

The U.S. and India should stop Beijing from hijacking the selection

As the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, visits the United States to receive medical treatment on his knees, concerns over who will succeed him have become acute. While Tibetans around the world pray that the 88-year-old Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, still has plenty of life ahead of him, China is eagerly awaiting his demise so that it can install a puppet successor.

Tibetans regard the Dalai Lama as the living incarnation of Buddha, with a total of 13 reincarnations since 1391. When one Dalai Lama dies, the search for the next one begins, with a council of senior disciples taking responsibility for identifying the figure based on signs and visions. But in recent years, the Chinese government has insisted that only it has the right to identify the next Dalai Lama.

This would not be the first time China selected a leader of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1995, it anointed its own Panchen Lama, whose spiritual authority is second only to that of the Dalai Lama, after abducting the actual Panchen Lama — a 6-year-old boy who had already been confirmed by the Dalai Lama. Almost three decades later, the real Panchen Lama is among the world's longest-serving political prisoners.

China also appointed the Karmapa, Tibetan Buddhism's third most important spiritual leader and the head of the Karma Kagyu sect. But in 1999, its appointee, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, fled to India. The ease with which the 14-year-old Karmapa escaped China raised suspicions among Indians about his loyalties.

After imposing travel restrictions on him, India decided in 2018 to no longer recognize the China-anointed Karmapa as the legitimate head of his sect. Now, he and his rival Karmapa, Trinley Thaye Dorje, have issued a joint statement pledging to cooperatively resolve the leadership split in the Karma Kagyu sect.

But the Dalai Lama is China's white whale. The incumbent — who was identified as the Dalai Lama in 1937, at age 2 — has been a thorn in the side of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since Beijing's 1951 annexation of Tibet. With his relentless espousal of nonviolence, the Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, embodies Tibetan resistance to the Chinese occupation. (Had Tibet remained self-governing like Taiwan, it would be the world's tenth-largest country by area.)

In his past incarnations, the Dalai Lama was not only Tibet's spiritual leader, but also its political leader,

making him a kind of cross between a pope and a president. But the Dalai Lama ceded his political role in 2011 to a Tibetan government-in-exile, which is democratically elected every five years by Tibetan refugees living in India and elsewhere.

Moreover, the Dalai Lama has declared that he might choose not to be reborn — a decision that would undermine the legitimacy of any Chinese-anointed successor. He knows that, for China, a Dalai Lama devoted to the CCP is much more useful than no Dalai Lama at all. He also knows that, while he has retained his mental acuity, his body is weakening. In 2016, he underwent radiation therapy for prostate cancer. He says he was “completely cured,” but continues to struggle with his knees. Given his advanced age, more health problems are to be expected.

The Dalai Lama's frailty is one reason why his travel schedule has slowed considerably. But it is not the only one: Bowing to Chinese pressure, most countries — including European democracies and Asia's Buddhist states (except Japan) — are unwilling to grant him entry.

Fortunately, some countries have retained their backbones. The U.S. is hosting the Dalai Lama for knee treatment and India has been his home for more than 65 years. India has officially designated the Dalai Lama its “most esteemed and honored guest,” while the Tibetan leader describes himself as a “son of India.”

In fact, India is home to the vast majority of Tibetan exiles and has played a central role in helping to preserve Tibetan culture, including by supporting Tibetan-language schools. By contrast, China has been working actively to destroy Tibetan culture and identity, especially since Chinese leader Xi Jinping has been in charge.

Meanwhile, China's appropriation of Tibetan natural resources has gone into overdrive, with consequences that extend far beyond the Tibetan Plateau. Resource-rich Tibet is a source of fresh water for more than one-fifth of the world's population and a global biodiversity hotspot. The plateau influences Asia's weather and monsoonal patterns, as well as the Northern Hemisphere's “atmospheric general circulation” — the system of winds that helps transport warm air from the equator toward higher latitudes, creating different climate zones.

It is imperative that the U.S. and India work together to foil China's plan to handpick the next Dalai Lama. Already, America's Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which took effect in 2020, says that “the wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama, including any written instructions, should play a determinative role in the selection, education, and veneration of a future 15th Dalai Lama.” And it calls for sanctions on Chinese officials who interfere with Tibetan Buddhist succession practices.

But more must be done. For starters, U.S. President Joe Biden should take the opportunity presented by the Dalai Lama's knee treatment to fulfill a 2020 campaign promise to meet with the spiritual leader. More broadly, Washington should work together with India to devise a multilateral strategy to counter Xi's plan to capture the more than 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama.

This must include efforts to persuade the Dalai Lama to spell out, once and for all, the rules that must be followed to identify his successor.

Chinese military developments and national security challenges for India

23 June 2024, [Financial Express](#), Bhartendu Kumar Singh

The LAC that was 'relatively peaceful' until a decade ago, has metamorphosed into an active front with looming war threats.

A major national security challenge that the government would face in this tenure is the momentous developments in Chinese military preparedness affecting the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the Indo-Pacific area. While China's military modernisation has been an ongoing process for the last few decades (and so has been India's defensive response), its pace has accelerated in recent times. The LAC that was 'relatively peaceful' until a decade ago, has metamorphosed into an active front with looming war threats. Unless deftly handled, the bilateral military power balance would soon become too asymmetrical and may critically imperil the LAC sanctity.

Much of the current modernisation goals for the PLA were finalised in the 20th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in October 2022. The military dimension of the Report to the Congress focused on 'intensifying and accelerating the PLA's modernisation goals'. Accordingly, by 2027, the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) is to aim towards finishing its first phase of modernisation process. This is the time when the PLA would have completed 100 years of its foundation. The second phase of military modernisation would complete by 2035. By 2049, China aims to metamorphose its PLA into a world-class armed force capable of out rightly taking on the US military muscle in the Indo-Pacific region.

Even while 2027 is still a couple of years ahead, we can already see many visible and demonstrative changes in countless aspects of the PLA's force modernisation. For instance, China has successfully completed the reorganisation of its PLA into integrated theater commands since 2016 and is running with an eight-year advantage. The Western Theater Command,

headquartered at Chengdu, has been quite active through construction of roads, rails and new settlement colonies near the LAC. One only has to visit the Chinese Ministry of Defence website to get a first-hand glimpse of the day-to-day developments on military logistics and advancements, whether in Western Theater Command or elsewhere.

While there are many sources of information on Chinese military developments, probably the most accurate reporting about Chinese military developments on an updated basis is published by the US Department of Defence. Called the Annual Report to the Congress on 'Military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China', the 2023 version brings out some major policy and logistics developments related to the PLA not covered succinctly elsewhere. For example, the report adequately exposes the offensive aspects of China's so-called 'active defence' policy. Similarly, since 2022, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) appears to have been increasingly using the term 'integrated national strategic systems and capabilities'. On the weapons front, China has moved quite ahead with deployment of hypersonic weapons. By 2027, China would have achieved substantial progress in the field of mechanisation, informatisation, and intelligentisation of its armed forces. China is also making commendable progress in many other areas that are going to affect its military modernization in the coming days. For instance, the Chinese realise that military innovation is the key to maintain an edge in military modernisation and dominate neighbouring rivals. President Xi Jinping has launched an innovation-driven defence development strategy (IDDS). China is resorting less to 'reverse engineering' of foreign weapons as was the case in the past and has invested heavily in high tech weapons. Techno-nationalism has played a key role in the expansion and consolidation of its domestic military industrial complex (MIC). Similarly, China's progress in artificial intelligence and robotics is much better than many countries. It is gainfully deploying robots in mundane soldiering duties and counter-terrorism operations.

Apart from the conventional build-up of forces, China has also resorted to, in recent times, what Fiona S Cunningham of University of Pennsylvania calls as 'strategic substitution'. China is using information-age weapons such as cyber operations to enhance its strategic leverage and coercive powers. While China is using this as 'an increasingly capable instrument of state craft' against the US, India is not immune to Chinese subtle adventures. For example, it is said that Chinese cyber-attacks were behind the Mumbai power grid failure of March 2021. In February 2024, the Washington Post reported that Chinese intelligence and cyber-surveillance accessed 95.2 gigabytes of Indian immigration data. These are just representative

examples. The actual quantum of attacks from the Chinese cyber hackers spans across different sectors, including financial markets.

In the coming days, the LAC itself would witness increased activities on the Chinese side. The Chinese PLA may increase the frequency and intensity of coercive and risky operations near the LAC. There could be more military exercises and force mobilisation in a teasing manner. Concurrently, China would try to wean away Bhutan through border agreement without involving India. It would also bring Nepal closer through project finalisation and financing of railways extension from the Tibet side to Kathmandu. Finally, we may see more espionage activities from the Chinese side into Indian territories! The LAC would, therefore, remain an area of utmost national security concern to India. Unfortunately, strategic experts and military planners in India remain caught in a binary about national security challenges emanating from China. Against the long, real and perpetuating threat from the Chinese aggressive posturing on the LAC, we are often told about a larger threat emanating from China's increasing footsteps in the Bay of Bengal and the wider Indian Ocean region. While there is no doubt that the Chinese are making increasing maritime forays near India's southern waters, we are perhaps making the mistake of treating both the threats on the same level-playing platform. Outright confrontation with China on the oceanic front will only mean more diversion of scarce defence logistics and resources.

Fortunately, at the policy level, India's defensive preparations against Chinese military development near the LAC has been calibrated, thoughtful and on the right trajectory. The border infrastructure has improved with new roads and more are in offing! Realising that technology is the key to rise in great power status along with robust defence preparedness, India has been investing in military technology and innovation. However, getting inputs about China's military developments from western sources may not sub-serve our knowledge requirements. The focus of the Pentagon annual report on Chinese military developments, for example, is on the PLA's force mobilisation along the Taiwan Straits. These reports do not focus on LAC and touch them only tangentially. Thus, we may be certainly missing out on many important military developments across the LAC.

Tibet is back on the table

23 June 2024, [The New Indian Express](#), TK Vineeth

The Tibet issue was back in the headlines after the US Congress passed a bill that supports the Tibetan cause. The legislation, which calls for Beijing's re-engagement with Tibet's spiritual leader Dalai Lama to address the

concerns of Tibetans, also authorises use of funds to counter China's 'disinformation campaign' on issues related to Tibet such as the region's history, demography, culture and customs, and high institutions including that of the Dalai Lama. The bipartisan bill, passed by the Congress early this month, is now on US President Joe Biden's table awaiting his signature to ratify it into law.

What's in the bill

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, is the third such piece of legislation on Tibet passed by the US Congress after the Tibetan Policy Act (TPA) of 2002, and the Tibetan Policy & Support Act (TPSA) of 2020. It unambiguously questions China's territorial claims over Tibet and seeks to redress the region's unresolved status. It notes that talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama have been stalled since 2010 after the Chinese side imposed unreasonable conditions.

In its talks with China between 2002 and 2010, the Tibetan side only sought genuine autonomy in line with the middle path approached proposed by the Dalai Lama. However, the talks never reached their logical conclusion as China was not ready to give up its tight grip over the annexed region.

What sets the latest US legislation apart is that it underlines Tibetans' right to 'self determination' and identifies the large swathes of geographical areas that were historically part of Tibet but were cut into pieces and merged with neighbouring Chinese provinces such as Sichuan and Yunnan after China's military invasion of the plateau in 1950. New Chinese provinces such as Qinghai were also created with the bulk of Tibet's land. Recognising the historical geography of Tibet is the most notable feature of the new bill as it precisely identifies the Chinese designs to disfigure the historical Tibet and seeks to highlight that by referring to the original geography of the region.

US paradigm shift

The US has for decades turned a blind on the Tibet issue so as not to offend China. The TPA of 2002, for example, termed Tibet a part of China. "The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region -- hereinafter referred to as "Tibet" -- to be part of the People's Republic of China. This long-standing policy is consistent with the view of the international community... Because we do not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the United States does not conduct official diplomatic relations with the Tibetan 'government-in-exile' in Dharamsala," the Act said. The ruse for this line was that the Dalai Lama wanted greater autonomy for Tibetans and not independence for Tibet. The bill didn't go beyond requesting China to have talks with the Tibetan side and listen to their concerns.

But with the dramatic shift in geopolitical dynamics, Washington woke up to the potential of the Tibet issue

to keep an aggressive China on the defensive. The TPSA of 2020 authorised funds for NGOs working to help the Tibetan communities. More importantly, it sought a US consulate in Tibetan capital Lhasa. “The Department of State may not authorize any new Chinese consulates in the United States until a U.S. consulate has been established in Lhasa, Tibet,” it said. The bill also underscored Tibetans’ right to select and venerate their own religious leaders. This was in response to China’s diktat that the next Dalai Lama can’t be chosen without its permission. With this, the TPSA opened the doors for the US to issue economic and visa sanctions against any Chinese officials who interfere with the succession of the Dalai Lama.

The 2024 bill is much stronger in terms of what it seeks to achieve. It calls for establishing a statutory definition of Tibet and clearly states that it will include areas in Chinese provinces outside the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) – a limited area which China established in 1965 to be treated as Tibet. “This bill defines Tibet to include the TAR and the Tibetan areas of the Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces,” it says. The bill also states that it is US policy that the conflict between Tibet and China is unresolved and that Tibet’s legal status remains to be determined in accordance with international law.

To drive home the point, a bipartisan US Congressional delegation visited Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama at Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh last week and pledged support to the Tibetan cause. This is a huge departure from the 2002 legislation that said the US won’t interact with the Tibetan government-in-exile. During the visit, the US team, headed by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul and including former US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Paul, said China’s claims over Tibet are untenable. To the chagrin of Beijing, both McCaul and Pelosi stated that Biden would soon sign the Resolve Tibet Act.

China’s hard stand

China claims Tibet has been its part since ancient times, a proposition that doesn’t have many takers. It invaded the plateau in 1950 with military power and formalised the annexation through an agreement signed between Lhasa and Beijing on May 23, 1951 under duress. According to L L Mehrotra, former secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, the Dalai Lama himself came to know of it four days after it was ‘signed’ when Radio Peking broadcast it on May 27, 1951. They did not even know its contents until then. “With PLA guns pointed at the Tibetans in Lhasa, an agreement was imposed on them on May 23, 1951—the infamous 17 Point Agreement under which the Tibetans were made to accept Tibet as a region of China and not only Chinese suzerainty over it but absolute control,” Mehrotra says in his book ‘India’s Tibet Policy – An appraisal and options’.

China’s stand on Tibet has only hardened over time. Earlier this year, Beijing said it could hold talks with the representatives of the Dalai Lama but not of the ‘illegitimate’ Tibetan government-in-exile based in India. However, the offer for talks was a non-starter because China outright ruled out any dialogue on the Dalai Lama’s main demand -- autonomy for Tibet.

Beijing treats the Dalai Lama as a separatist, though the spiritual leader has clarified that his objective is not to seek political independence but autonomy and freedom in religious affairs that lie at the core of Tibet’s identity.

Last week’s US delegation visit to Dharamsala and the new legislation on Tibet evoked angry reaction from Beijing, which is nervous about rising international attention. Warning Biden against signing the latest piece of legislation, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said it would provoke counter measures.

India’s nuanced position

For India, Tibet is a sensitive issue as it has to balance its delicate relationship with China with which it has long-pending border disputes. India welcomed the Dalai Lama and a sizable Tibetan refugee population with open arms in 1959 when they fled their homeland after a failed uprising against China. While India has historically supported the Tibetan cause, New Delhi’s official position since Jawaharlal Nehru’s time has been to accept Tibet as part of China.

India first accepted Tibet as a Chinese region in April 1954 when then PM Nehru signed the Panchsheel agreement with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. The stand was further confirmed in December 1988 when then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China and “reiterated that Tibet is an autonomous region of China”. He also gave an undertaking to the Chinese that Tibetan refugees in India would not be allowed to “engage in political activities against China”.

The Chinese got India to reinforce the two points again in June 2003 during the then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s Beijing trip. In what was seen as an oversight by the Indian side, Vajpayee’s joint statement with the then Chinese premier Wen Jiabao used the legal term ‘recognize’ to describe India’s position on Tibet.

“The Indian side recognizes that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People’s Republic of China and reiterates that it does not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India,” the joint statement read. China used this statement to claim Tibet is a done deal.

While India hasn’t sought to reverse its policy, New Delhi seems to have relaxed the curbs on the freedom of expression of Tibetans in India. When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited India in September 2014 to meet PM Narendra Modi, the Indian government allowed Tibetan exiles to stage protests on New Delhi’s streets. Some activists even managed to make it to the

vicinity of the summit site, sending alarm bells in Beijing.

A settlement in favour of the people of Tibet could work in India's favour as it will negate China's outlandish claims on Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing refers to as South Tibet. It may also address China's disregard for the McMahon Line, the boundary between Tibet and India settled as part of the Simla Accord of 1914 signed by British India, Tibet and China, to some extent.

There are concerns if India openly supports the 'Free Tibet' movement, China can raise the Kashmir issue. In that sense, the American move on Tibet puts India in an unenviable position.

Lack of education helps Xi to stay in power

23 June 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Wang dan

When Xi Jinping visited France, he again made a book list. He gave a bunch of books to French President and Mrs Macron, including Chinese translations of French authors such as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* and *The Lady of the Camellias*, Victor Hugo's *Ninety Three*, Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* etc. This is of course a way to bring the two countries closer together, and also shows Xi's love and understanding of French culture. Mrs Peng Liyuan, the wife of Xi Jinping, also said during the trip that she and Xi Jinping "read these books when we were young."

When he was young Xi Jinping was sent to the countryside for labour reform during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and he was a member of the "five black categories"—Chairman Mao's political classifications during the Cultural Revolution that ordained people in these groups class enemies: Landlords, Rich Farmers, Counter-revolutionaries, Bad Elements and Rightists. It is doubtful whether he had the time and energy to read so many masterpieces of world literature when he had to "carry 100 kilograms of wheat on his shoulders and walk 10 kilometers up the mountain," but we do not have any evidence to say that he did not, so let us leave it open to doubt for the moment. However, it is a fact that after he came to power, he liked to draw up book lists and talk about his extensive knowledge of books. I am also a reader, and I believe that most people in the world who like to read agree with my judgment: those who really like to read do not go around making lists of books and bragging to others about how many books they have read. If this is really the case, then the books have actually been read in vain. Therefore, those who go around making out book lists to show that they are knowledgeable are usually those who are less knowledgeable or even uneducated. The conclusion is: Xi Jinping is in fact a "poorly educated" person.

I do not mean to look down on those who are less educated. My point is that being less educated is one of the reasons why Xi Jinping was chosen to be the successor of the ruling group of the Communist Party of China. I am afraid that outsiders do not quite understand this point, or they may find it inconceivable. But if you know the history of the Communist Party, you will know that this is a fact.

Chen Boda was Mao Zedong's wordsmith, and the theoretical authority of the Communist Party of China, and his understanding of Mao Zedong was unrivaled in the Party. His son, Chen Xiaonong, published a book entitled "Chen Boda's Last Oral Memories" in Hong Kong in 2005, in which it was mentioned that Mao Zedong had made an internal speech about his successor before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, and when it came to the criteria for selecting his successor, he explicitly said, "He should be young, less educated, and politically conservative" (page 264). Of course, it is understandable that they should be young and politically conservative: the successor cannot be someone who is old and does not stand up for the prevailing interests of the Communist Party. But the criterion of "someone who is less educated" is quite intriguing.

The reason he emphasized the need to be "less educated" illustrates his mistrust of and vigilance against "the educated." An educated person usually has the ability to think independently. Such an "educated person" may not only break

इस शब्द का अर्थ जानिये

the monopoly of totalitarian ideology, but also challenge official public opinions and propaganda, and it is certainly not an insurance policy for an authoritarian regime to have such a person as the successor to Communist Party leadership. It cannot be denied that Mao Zedong, who read omnivorously on the ancient art of emperors and kings, had his own unique way of selecting his successor.

The successors that Mao Zedong began to painstakingly groom after overthrowing his first chosen successors Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and other founding fathers, be it Wang Hongwen, who was directly promoted from factory worker to vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, or Hua Guofeng, who was a mediocre and incompetent hack, all on close examination fit the characteristics of "young age, little education and politically conservative." The Communist Party superficially summed up the lessons of the Cultural Revolution, but at heart it still adheres to Mao Zedong's way of doing things. Chairman Mao's long-time secretary Li Rui once said, "the Chairman Mao problem remains unchanged."

Deng Xiaoping's chosen successors, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, had some education, or at least had a lot of "educated" people around them, but they were all

overthrown in the end. Jiang Zemin, although he likes to show off his knowledge of foreign languages and arts and culture, is far from being “educated.” And Hu Jintao is famously uneducated, and reportedly only has story books from the former Soviet Union on his bookshelf. Obviously, although Mao Zedong is no longer with us, it is still a tradition within the Chinese Communist Party to make “little education” one of the criteria for selecting a successor. The reasoning behind this continuity is the same as that of Chairman Mao’s thinking, that an educated person is not so reliable. Let us take a look at Xi Jinping. When he was selected as successor, did he fulfill the criteria of “young age, little education, and politically conservative”? All of them! Obviously, Xi Jinping was able to rise to the top and maintain his power until today because he truly meets the criteria set by Mao Zedong for the Communist Party’s successor. The legitimacy of his rule within the Communist Party derives from this.

It is only with this understanding that we can see why Xi Jinping, with such a low level of knowledge and education, can sit firmly on the throne as the highest leader. Only by truly understanding the past history of the Chinese Communist Party can we understand the reality of the Communist Party today.

Effects Of Indo-China Political Tension In Global Framework – OpEd

23 June 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Ambassador Kazi Anwarul Masud

Mayuri Banerjee a Research Analyst with the East Asia Centre at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. Her research focus is on India-China relations. She primarily looks at the role of memory and trust in India-China relations after the 1962 war and Indian media’s perception of China. In an article she traced the history of the Sino-Indian border dispute has a long and complex history. If one were to look for some key points one could mention: Aksai Chin: One of the disputed territories is Aksai Chin, which is administered by China but claimed by India. It lies at the intersection of Kashmir, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Aksai Chin is mostly uninhabited high-altitude wasteland, but it has significant pasture lands at the margins. McMahon Line: The other disputed territory is south of the McMahon Line, in an area formerly known as the North-East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh). The McMahon Line was signed between British India and Tibet as part of the 1914 Simla Convention, but China disowns this agreement, stating that Tibet was not independent when it signed the Simla Convention.

1962 Sino-Indian War: The conflict escalated in 1962 when Chinese troops attacked Indian border posts in

Ladakh in the west and crossed the McMahon Line in the east. The war resulted in significant casualties. There were border clashes in 1967 in the region of Sikkim, despite an agreed border. In 1987 and 2013, potential conflicts over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were successfully de-escalated. Recent Tensions: Multiple skirmishes broke out in 2020, leading to dozens of deaths in June. Agreements signed in 1993 and 1996 aimed to address the boundary question, including confidence-building measures and defining the LAC. Various dispute resolutions have been established over the years. In summary, the India-China border dispute remains ongoing, with historical roots and periodic tensions. Diplomatic efforts continue to find a resolution to this complex issue. Assessing the success of Border Dispute Management Talks and Confidence-Building Measures. The success of the bilateral dialogue mechanisms and confidence-building measures described above needs to be assessed according to three aspects; management of border conflict, addressing the bilateral trust deficit, and resolution of the border dispute. A cursory review of the state of affairs indicates that, in all three aspects, both countries have achieved minimal success. For instance, in the matter of border conflict management, the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the LAC has been one of the most important stated objectives. Although China and India have been able to avert a major 1962-style confrontation, the number of military incursions by China has risen sharply, from 334 in 2014 to 606 in 2019.

The Galwan Valley military standoff led to severe military clashes; and the stalemate continues. Simultaneously, local feuds between the armies have inclined toward more violence, that is from fist fights and throwing stones, the armies of the two sides have resorted to more violent measures including the use of clubs studded with nails or wrapped with metal barbed wire. These instances point toward a lack of local-level communication and understanding, which persists amid the backdrop of diplomatic proclamations of friendship and cooperation. Likewise, despite high level political and diplomatic exchanges and frequent meetings of the top leadership, the trust deficit between the two countries has only widened. There exists the perception of a considerable security threat on both sides as India and China have moved rapidly to upgrade their border infrastructure and military capabilities along the disputed border on the sidelines of the Special Representative Talks and Joint Working Group meetings. In recent years, a vigorous border infrastructure race has developed between the two countries, wherein both sides have engaged in building extensive road and railway connections on their respective sides of the border, upgrading military

facilities, and increasing overall troop deployments for quick mobilization. This in turn has aggravated insecurities in both countries and is considered one of the primary reasons for the frequent border skirmishes along the LAC. In particular, the Doklam (2017) and Galwan Valley (2020) clashes were triggered by road-building activities undertaken by China and India, respectively. Apart from upgrading military infrastructure along the border, both sides have also invested heavily in modernizing their conventional and non-conventional combat forces as an indication of battle preparedness to the other. In view of increasing military capabilities, assertive behavior and intense distrust, the notion of peace along the LAC seems dependent on the political wisdom of their respective governments. Even after fifteen rounds of Joint Working Group meetings and eighteen rounds of Special Representative Dialogues, the border dispute is far from being resolved. Even though the negotiation process follows a generous principle of package settlement through a sectoral approach, the two countries have failed to go beyond routine delegation meetings and joint declarations.

The ascent to power of Xi Jinping in China and Narendra Modi in India, known for their strong leadership and corporate style of politics, had raised hopes for a final settlement of the border dispute, but domestic political considerations and strategic threat perceptions continue to severely constrain the ability of these political leaders to undertake sweeping decisions to resolve the dispute. The border dispute undeniably remains one of the major issues impinging on Sino-Indian bilateral ties. Experts contend that there are multiple factors today which sustain the border dispute. The first is the geographical constitution of the disputed areas: The rugged, featureless terrain and extreme weather conditions make determination of the precise alignment challenging. Subsequently, implementation of border agreements on the ground also remains elusive. Second, there is asymmetry in the level of urgency for the settlement of the border dispute. In contrast to New Delhi's endeavors seeking a quick settlement, Beijing has staunchly resisted any fast-tracking of the resolution process, arguing that the border dispute is a complicated question and should be negotiated only when conditions are favorable.

The primary reason for this difference in approaches is that the disputed border does not pose a security threat to China, and therefore Beijing is willing to wait for a more beneficial resolution. In contrast, New Delhi sees the border dispute as source of instability and worries and that China would use the unresolved border to bully India. The third factor inhibiting the resolution of the border dispute is intense nationalism in both countries. For China, the border dispute is intrinsically linked to Tibet and the Dalai Lama, and

since the CCP has always projected the Tibetan government-in-exile in a negative light, territorial concessions involving Tawang will not only endanger China's own rule in Tibet but will also be seen domestically as sign of weakness; a terrifying prospect for the Chinese leadership. As for India, no political party would be able to propose a territorial exchange with China without seriously jeopardizing its electoral prospects, as the memories of 1962 war continue to haunt the Indian national psyche. Lastly, along with the boundary dispute, new issues have begun to stir trouble in Sino-Indian bilateral ties. India's concerns regarding China's diversion of the Yarlung-Tsangpo/Brahmaputra river water, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and China's growing influence in South Asia have emerged as new irritants for Indian policy makers.

Similarly, Beijing too is annoyed by India's increasing proximity with Southeast Asian countries and its diplomatic-military exchanges with the United States, Japan, and Australia. These issues further erode political will in both countries and in this context territorial exchange by swap or political settlement appears a daunting task. As evinced by the recent Galwan Valley clashes, managing the border dispute is both a political and an economic exigency for India and China because any major confrontation between the two countries will not only hurt the long-term prospects for development of both, but will also have significant repercussions on Asian stability and prosperity. Therefore, the policy-making elites of both countries need to frame innovative solutions like creating soft borders through civilian, cultural, and economic exchanges, and involving local communities in managing the border. Such an approach can help reduce the number of military encounters between the two countries and create an enduring peace in the border region.

The two countries should also aim toward building strategic trust through open dialogue, exchange of information, and verification mechanisms along the disputed border. Enhancing military-to-military communication, technological collaboration and engagement on multilateral platforms remain indispensable toward building trust. Public perception is another key area that needs to be urgently addressed through civilian exchanges. This would go a long way toward dispelling stereotypes and negative perceptions. Track-II dialogue involving strategic-affairs experts and academics from the two countries could also be organized to identify new areas for cooperation. For the foreseeable future, the border dispute will remain a pressing challenge in Sino-Indian ties, however, it is in the national interest of both countries to prioritize their larger bilateral relationship, while at the same time erecting confidence-building measures and dialogue

mechanisms to better preserve the benefits accruing from the relationship. The border dispute undeniably remains one of the major issues impinging on Sino-Indian bilateral ties.

Experts contend that there are multiple factors today which sustain the border dispute. The first is the geographical constitution of the disputed areas: The rugged, featureless terrain and extreme weather conditions make determination of the precise alignment challenging. Subsequently, implementation of border agreements on the ground also remains elusive. Second, there is asymmetry in the level of urgency for the settlement of the border dispute. In contrast to New Delhi's endeavors seeking a quick settlement, Beijing has staunchly resisted any fast-tracking of the resolution process, arguing that the border dispute is a complicated question and should be negotiated only when conditions are favorable. The primary reason for this difference in approaches is that the disputed border does not pose a security threat to China, and therefore Beijing is willing to wait for a more beneficial resolution. In contrast, New Delhi sees the border dispute as source of instability and worries that China would use the unresolved border to bully India. The third factor inhibiting the resolution of the border dispute is intense nationalism in both countries.

For China, the border dispute is intrinsically linked to Tibet and the Dalai Lama, and since the CCP has always projected the Tibetan government-in-exile in a negative light, territorial concessions involving Tawang will not only endanger China's own rule in Tibet but will also be seen domestically as sign of weakness; a terrifying prospect for the Chinese leadership. As for India, no political party would be able to propose a territorial exchange with China without seriously jeopardizing its electoral prospects, as the memories of 1962 war continue to haunt the Indian national psyche. Lastly, along with the boundary dispute, new issues have begun to stir trouble in Sino-Indian bilateral ties. India's concerns regarding China's diversion of the Yarlung-Tsangpo/Brahmaputra river water, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and China's growing influence in South Asia have emerged as new irritants for Indian policy makers. Similarly, Beijing too is annoyed by India's increasing proximity with Southeast Asian countries and its diplomatic-military exchanges with the United States, Japan, and Australia.

The famous newspaper *The Diplomat* in a report on the US containment of the Sino-Indian relations has reported that The United States and India have just completed a ministerial dialogue between the U.S. secretaries of state and defense, Antony Blinken and Lloyd Austin, and their Indian counterparts, Minister of External Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Minister of Defense Rajnath Singh. This "2+2

Dialogue" was preceded by a video conference between U.S. President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and both leaders said they looked forward to meeting again shortly in Tokyo. Although the "2+2" was nominally focused on international security and was the first to occur since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the world's two largest democracies paid relatively little attention to the largest international assault on democratic values since World War II and what Russia's assault means for international peace and security. In a Joint Statement remarkable for its 13-page length and the breadth of its coverage, only a short paragraph dealt with the situation in Ukraine. There was mention of a humanitarian crisis, a condemnation of civilian deaths, a call for the cessation of hostilities, and lip service to the principles of the United Nations Charter, but nothing more.

India's hesitancy to work as a full partner of the U.S. in furthering international peace and security on the basis of India's own democratic values when it comes to Russia and Ukraine. This hesitancy can be more fully understood by examining Jaishankar's framework for U.S.-India relations. Jaishankar's views are of tremendous importance to the Modi government and to Modi himself. Not only has Jaishankar been the minister of external affairs since the start of Modi's second term, but he became foreign secretary soon after Modi began his first term as prime minister, an office to which Modi arose without extensive experience in international security matters. A thumbnail and easily accessible statement of Jaishankar's international framework can be found in [his talk](#) to the Atlantic Council on October 1, 2019. This framework is important not only because of the office held by Jaishankar, but also because it is largely a distillation of the views of many Indians, particularly those of India's traditional academic and governmental elites. Jaishankar holds a Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University and is personally and professionally connected to prominent Indian governmental circles. The Jaishankar doctrine is grounded firmly in history and in two analytic divides: East vs. West and India's political vs. non-political interests. As expressed in the Atlantic Council talk, the bedrock of his East vs. West analysis is "two centuries of national humiliation" during which "the West" extracted some "\$45 trillion" in value from India (as well as subjecting China to a single century of national humiliation). In this formulation, the U.S. is definitely a part of "the West" and India a part of the "the East." Thus, the U.S. presumably bears some responsibility for the two centuries of national humiliation experienced by India at the hands of the British Empire. This analysis leaves aside the fact that the U.S., like India, was a colony of the British Empire and fought two wars against the British for its

independence. It had nothing to do with the “\$45 trillion” extracted by the British Empire from India, and yet this Indian colonial experience is somehow relevant to U.S.-India relations.

Unspoken is the concept that Russia and the Soviet Union were not and are not now part of “the West,” but, like India, are part of “the East” and outside any responsibility for India’s historic “two centuries of national humiliation.” Make no mistake that Jaishankar’s concept of “the West” is now centered on the United States. This concept evidently derives from U.S. leadership of a network of treaty obligations that were designed to constrain the Soviet Union and international communism. At one point in his talk, Jaishankar references Japan and South Korea, and even all the OECD countries, as part of “the West.” In this analysis, “the West” has become not a geographic designation but a political concept apparently growing out of the Cold War. Again, India is not a part of “the West.” Adding to the historic estrangement caused by colonialism, the U.S., as the leader of “the West,” has imposed on India a “Goldilocks” policy of both supporting India and suppressing India. According to Jaishankar, this is to ensure that India is neither too weak nor too strong but, like the porridge in the Goldilocks story, somewhere in between. Prime historical examples of this, according to Jaishankar, are the 1962 invasion by China, where the U.S. supported India, and the 1971 war for the independence of Bangladesh where the U.S. was not supportive. This historical interpretation of East vs. West fits snugly with the other major dichotomy of the Jaishankar doctrine, namely the political vs. non-political aspects of the East-West relationship.

A strength of the Jaishankar doctrine is that it allows for a full range of cooperation on “non-political” aspects of the U.S.-India relationship. There is a recognition that the United States has had a policy of strengthening India from an economic developmental perspective and has been a fount of growth for world development generally. Now that India has largely dismantled its top-down economic model, or “license raj,” the way is open for full cooperation on all “non-political” fronts. However, when it comes to “political” endeavors, i.e. those having to do with international security and strategic matters, the aforementioned East vs. West analytic dichotomy requires that the relationship must be more circumscribed. The Cold War ended badly for India in the sense that the USSR and Russia were no longer the strong sources of support they had been up until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Still the political nature of the India-Russia relationship seems to require that India maintain a distance from the United States and the West where Russia is involved. This distancing is often referred to by Indian commentators as “strategic autonomy.” A key component of this strategic

autonomy seems to be resistance to outside requests, comments, or even questions concerning India’s strategic or political choices. Apparently still influenced by what Jaishankar formulates as the two hundred years of national humiliation by the West, such entreaties may be viewed as infringements on strategic autonomy if not national sovereignty. To achieve full and equal partnership between the world’s two largest democracies, the U.S. needs to do more in working with India to satisfy India’s needs for arms and energy without bending to Russia. The 2+2 made continued progress on the arms front. Greater oil, gas, atomic, and renewable energy support also seem to be making progress.

A full U.S.-India partnership requires that India adjust the analytic approach which contributes to India standing aside when it comes to opposing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The old “East vs. West” dichotomy no longer applies to U.S.-India relations, if it ever did. Certainly, India and the U.S. are different, but these two great democracies have far more in common than India has with the traditional pillars of “the East” – Russia and China. This is particularly true when it comes to the fundamental value and rule of the post-World War II era: that nations must refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Some may seek to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the basis of U.S. transgressions of the past. This is simply a reiteration of the schoolboy amoral justification of “he did it too.” Two wrongs still do not make a right and the rule of law requires that each situation be judged on its own merits. In the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the use of force is singular in its breach of the rules that have kept the planet from another world war over the past seventy years. The dichotomy between political and non-political interests is also in need of adjustment. India is no longer a new republic struggling to throw off the remnants of British colonialism and rightly sensitive to perceived restraints on its sovereignty.

India is a great power. The U.S. needs to treat India like a great power, and India needs to act like one. Great powers do not take umbrage at requests or criticisms simply because they are from foreigners. Rather they evaluate such entreaties and make judgments as to what is in their interests in the present and the future. Great powers work with others to strengthen their own security even where it involves binding commitments. Reality is not divided into political and non-political spheres. In today’s world some issues traditionally viewed as “non-political” are as important to national security as any traditionally “political” issues. The internet of things and the hacking of systems comes to mind. The opposite is also true. Numerous “political” issues from defense

procurement to immigration have enormous “non-political” consequences.

The essential point is that strategic decisions should be premised on present and future interests, including fundamental values. The U.S. and India must make decisions based on present realities and future needs, not premised on an analysis of the superseded past. These decisions should not be bound by historical conceptions of East vs. West or political vs. non-political. The U.S. and India should recognize that present decisions are setting precedents. If the Russian use of death and destruction and nuclear threats in regard to Ukraine are successful, the use of these tactics by authoritarian regimes such as China is sure to follow. This is a manifestation of the violent approach to international affairs that has plagued mankind throughout history and now again faces the U.S., India, and the world.

India Reiterates Tibet Position After US Delegation Visit – OpEd

23 June 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Subir Bhaumik

Immediately after a visiting US delegation upped the ante on Tibet, India reiterated its stance on His Holiness’ Dalai Lama, emphasising his “revered” status and the respect accorded to him by the Indian people. “The Government of India’s position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama is clear and consistent. He is a revered religious leader and is deeply respected by the people of India. His Holiness is accorded due courtesies and freedom to conduct his religious and spiritual activities,” the Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a press briefing. Jaiswal’s comments follow the visit of a seven-member US Congressional delegation which asserted that President Joe Biden will soon sign a bill on Tibet that has upset China. Jaiswal however refrained from commenting on the succession of the Dalai Lama, but highlighted the spiritual leader’s significant role in India’s cultural fabric.

“A seven-member US Congress delegation paid a visit to India from 16-20 June 2024. The bi-partisan delegation was led by Rep. Michael McCaul, Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Committee. They visited Dharamshala on 18-19 June,” the MEA spokesperson said.

He said the delegation also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and interacted with External Affairs minister S Jaishankar and Commerce & Industry minister Piyush Goyal.

“As regards the statements by the US delegation, I would refer you to the US side and it is for them to answer,” he said.

In a strongly-worded statement on Chinese President Xi Jinping, former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — who is part of a US Congressional delegation — said on

Wednesday that while the legacy of the Dalai Lama will live forever for compassion and tradition, the Chinese President will be gone and nobody will give him any credit.

Pelosi made these comments after meeting the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. The US Congressional delegation is led by US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul and has members including Pelosi, who is now Speaker Emerita, and prominent US Congressional members — Mariannette Miller, Gregory Meeks, Nicole Malliotakis, Jim McGovern, and Ami Bera.

While the Dalai Lama meets foreign diplomats and visitors, this delegation is one of the most high-powered delegations from the US in recent years. Pelosi has been at the forefront of challenging Beijing, as she had visited Taiwan in August 2022.

The delegation’s visit comes after the US Congress last week passed a bill urging Beijing to re-engage with the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders to peacefully resolve their dispute over the status and governance of Tibet.

Pelosi and McCaul told journalists in India that the government of President Joe Biden will sure implement the Tibet bill.

India recently hit back at China by renaming more than 30 places in Tibet. This was a riposte to Beijing which has named 60 places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh with Chinese names in an attempt to back its claim on the Indian province China calls “Southern Tibet.”

The Indian renaming of Tibetan places in effect as reopening the Tibet question because India has so far recognised Tibet as part of China.

Opening up the Tibet front?

23 June 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

China’s recent aggression in every direction in its neighbourhood is leading to a storm building up for itself. Its massive and intrusive military build-up and exercises across the Taiwan Straits, South China Sea and on the borders with India are not only unnerving for the countries involved but are also causing them to push back.

The non-resolution of the border stand-off since 2020 has created an armed stalemate on India’s borders. Another front, albeit a politico-diplomatic one, is opening on the Tibet issue with the US congressional delegation’s visit to Dharamshala.

China upped the ante following the visit of Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August 2022 when she was Speaker of the US House of Representatives. China’s military crossed the median line that separates it from Taiwan, and has kept up its intimidatory tactics ever since.

On April 8 this year, it conducted “combat readiness patrols” in response to US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy’s visit to Taiwan. These Chinese intrusions have intensified after Taiwan’s presidential elections earlier this year. Yet, it seems, Beijing’s two-pronged approach – applying military pressure from outside and running influence operations inside Taiwan -- are not working

China’s heightened political rhetoric on ‘One China’, frequent military activities, attempts to diplomatically isolate Taipei, or foment internal political struggles in Taiwan have raised concerns about potential miscalculation and accidents leading to an escalation in the Taiwan Straits.

Another potential conflict is emerging in the South China Sea between China and the Philippines at the Second Thomas Shoal. China claims 80 per cent of the whole region, despite The Hague tribunal quashing its claims in July 2016. On June 17, China’s coastguard vessels rammed into a Filipino military boat, armed with a domestic legislation to seize any foreign personnel in the disputed seas.

The ensuing skirmish left a Filipino soldier with a severed finger and two vessels destroyed. The incident came close to what Philippine President Marcos has declared as a red line – any Filipino casualty. The US invoked the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty with the Philippines, but tensions did not subside. Closer home, China has not accepted the olive branch extended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his remarks to Newsweek last month. On the other hand, it has been exerting military pressure on the borders and in India’s neighbourhood, specifically in Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Despite 21 meetings at the military level for “dis-engagement and de-escalation” on the borders, three areas still remain contentious.

China is opening another front in Tibet. In August 2020, China’s Communist Party began “sinicising Tibetan Buddhism” and enhanced Han Chinese intrusions. China built more than 600 “well-off society” villages on the borders with India, Nepal, Bhutan and was even preparing to do so in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. Nearly one-third of these built-up structures came up on the path that the Dalai Lama took in 1959 while fleeing to India. It is an indication that Beijing is preparing to effect a transition to the 15th Dalai Lama. Beijing has announced that it will exercise a “golden urn” process of selecting the 15th Dalai Lama, a bid to cause schisms among Tibetans.

The bipartisan US congressional delegation’s visit to Dharamshala on June 18-19 came in the light of these developments and was meant to apprise the Dalai Lama of the Resolve Tibet Act that the Biden administration is considering signing into law.

Among other things, the delegation suggested resumption of the stalled dialogue between China and

Tibetan representatives, stopping Chinese disinformation about Tibetan history and culture and, intriguingly, “self-determination” for Tibet.

While US delegation visits to Dharamshala are not exactly new, considerable interest and publicity was generated both due to the “self-determination” comment and the delegation’s meetings with PM Modi and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar. Since the Roosevelt administration in the early 1940s, the US has considered Tibet a part of China (under the then Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek). The US continued to follow this policy even after China came under Communist rule, only raising human rights issues from time to time.

The Obama administration in its ‘G2’ phase with China downgraded the Tibet factor, signalled by Obama meeting the Dalai Lama in the Maple Room of the White House, meant for spiritual leaders, rather than in the Oval Room. Such obsequiousness toward China began to change with Obama’s ‘Pivot to Asia’, a change that accelerated under the Trump and Biden administrations. While India is cautious of the vagaries of US policy toward Beijing, the pounding pressure that China is exerting on Delhi may yet be a factor in how the Modi government views the Tibet issue going forward.

Why India's 'Tibet card' against China is stronger and working like never before

22 June 2024, [First Post](#), Madhur Sharma

China is averse to any country’s official engagement with the Dalai Lama, whom it calls a separatist over his demand for real autonomy for Tibet

In a rare visit, a delegation of American lawmakers visited Himachal Pradesh’s Dharamshala this week to meet the Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama.

In a well-orchestrated convergence of mutual interests, the United States, the Tibetans in exile, and Indians with their nod to the visit came together to send a message to China. The message found its mark. Shortly after the US delegation comprising House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi began their engagements with Tibet’s Government-in-Exile, the Embassy of China in India warned the United States to not “send the wrong signal”.

“We urge the US side to fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the Dalai group, honour the commitments the US has made to China on issues related to Xizang, stop sending the wrong signal to the world,” said the Chinese mission in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

The post used the Beijing-imposed name Xizang for Tibet as part of its practice of renaming minority-

populated regions in China to undermine their history identity and culture.

The Dalai Lama arrived in India in 1959 along with a large number of his followers. He had fled for his life from Tibet's capital Lhasa following the failure of an uprising against the Chinese repression in the region. The Communist Party of China's (CPC) forces had invaded and captured Tibet in 1949-50. Since the Dalai Lama's arrival, China has denounced his presence and has consistently sought to undermine the movement he and his fellow exiles have waged.

Following the engagements in Dharamshala, the US delegation led by McCaul met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval on Thursday. It rested all doubts as to whether the visit had New Delhi's approval.

The convergence of India and the United States is part of the message to China that if you do not respect our sensibilities, we would not respect yours. It is not sudden but in the making since 2020 when China inexplicably plunged the bilateral relationship to its lowest since 1962 with a confrontation in Ladakh. For a long time before that, sections in the government and outside tracking China had questioned the rationale of respecting China's red lines with no reciprocity.

The India-China relationship has lacked mutual respect from the onset, says Tej Pratap Singh, a scholar of China at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

"In 1954, India and China signed the Panchsheel treaty. China still attacked India in 1962. Then, India unilaterally revived the relationship in 1976 by restoring ambassador-level ties and then Rajiv Gandhi made a historic visit to China in 1988. In 2003, Atal Bihari Vajpayee formalised the acceptance of the One China Policy. In all these years, China never offered any reciprocity despite all the concessions from India. China neither settled the border nor acknowledged historical agreements. Instead, it opened a new front in Sikkim and waded into the Kashmir issue," says Singh, Professor, Department of Political Science, BHU.

Ladakh stand-off a watershed moment for India-China ties

Despite the then-External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj telling her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in 2014 that just as India accepted the One China Policy, India expected China to go by a One India Policy, the Modi government accommodated Chinese concerns for years.

Until 2020, Modi invested heavily in managing ties with China. India did not overtly engage with Taiwan or Tibetans. Modi's meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2014 was very low-profile and Tibetans' events were shifted from New Delhi to Dharamshala in 2018-19 as Modi reached out to Xi repeatedly. Two summits were

held in China's Wuhan and Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu — 'Wuhan Spirit' was the buzzword.

Even as India continued to try to accommodate China, there was no reciprocity. When Chinese President Xi Jinping first visited India in 2014, the visit overlapped with a Chinese military incursion in Ladakh. Then, in 2017, China waged a stand-off in Doklam at the India-China-Bhutan trijunction. China also opened a fresh flashpoint at the Sikkim border that was otherwise considered settled.

Even that did not make India turn too hawkish. The shift only came in 2020 when China mounted incursions after incursions in Ladakh and Sikkim. The paradigm shift was cemented on June 15, 2020, when the Chinese killed at least 20 Indian soldiers in a clash in Galwan Valley in Ladakh's east.

Following the Ladakh stand-off, the Modi government blocked Chinese telecommunication firms like Huawei from the roll-out of the 5G network in the country. It blocked Chinese investments, mergers, and acquisitions, and clamped down on the Chinese companies operating in the country — Chinese apps were banned, loan apps were brought under the scanner, and companies like Vivo and Oppo were pushed to sell majority stakes of India units to Indian companies.

For the first time, India acknowledged the existence of the Special Frontier Force (SFF), one of the shadowiest Indian special forces rooted in the India-China conflict and staffed by Tibetans in exile in large numbers. The official engagement with the Tibetans also increased following the Ladakh stand-off.

In 2021, Modi publicly wished the Dalai Lama for the first time in many years and has continued to do so every year since. In the years since, the Indian military has facilitated the Dalai Lama's visit to Ladakh and flown him into the region — claimed by China bordering his homeland of Tibet— in military helicopters. Top officials like governors and chief ministers have met him and the Indian leaders have increasingly referred to the border with China as the India-Tibet border —which it actually is— instead of the India-China border.

During the Ladakh stand-off, videos were also released of Tibetans tying the 'khata' —the sacred white Tibetan sash— on vehicles of Indian Army and SFF that were carrying troops for deployment to the frontlines. While the engagement with the Tibetans picked up pace, India also ramped up cautious engagement with Taiwan as China also became aggressive by the day regarding the self-ruled island and increased military provocations there.

Since 2020, there has been a recognition of the reality that India does have some levers that it can pull regarding China to signal that respect for sensibilities cannot be a one-way street, says Manoj Kewalramani, a China scholar at the Takshashila Institution and

author of the book *Smokeless War: China's Quest for Global Primacy*.

"Since 2020, India has been telling China that we can indeed pull some levers on issues that concern you. The idea is that if you do not accept our concerns, we will not accept yours. The US delegation's meeting with the Dalai Lama is also part of the signalling to China that if you worsen the relationship by ratcheting up disputes, we can also rake up stuff that you may otherwise consider settled. This may include giving foreign governments a platform to engage with the Tibetan 'separatist' movement," says Kewalramani.

While the post-2020 approach to China is indeed a paradigm shift, there is also an element of continuity. Even though India formally accepts the One China Policy, India has not iterated that since 2009. The idea is that One China will be only iterated if the other side iterates One India, as Swaraj told Yi in 2014.

Is India playing the 'Tibet Card' — again?

The commentary on Tibet ranges from it being a non-issue to it being one of the central issues in the India-China relationship. Kewalramani says it's a knob for New Delhi that it can turn up or down as per the situation.

"The real question is not if India is playing the Tibet card or not. The question is what's the endgame from turning up the knob now. Does New Delhi feel the Tibet issue gives it enough leverage? That does not seem likely. But turning up the knob now can definitely lead to annoyance and friction for China and undermining the Chinese narrative. That way, the moves regarding the Tibetans can be meaningful," says Kewalramani, a Chinese Studies Fellow and the Chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Studies Programme at the Takshashila Institution.

This time, India is not playing the card alone. It is joined by the United States. Even though the American interest in Tibet may look sudden and sceptics of the US foreign policy may flinch at the India-US convergence, neither of them is new.

Since the 1950s, the United States and India have been engaged on the issue of Tibet. Initially, the United States tried to rope in India to mount a united response to the Tibet question. The United States also supported Tibetan guerillas against the Communist regime of Beijing and, following the India-China War of 1962, helped India enlist Tibetans in the SFF and supported India militarily.

In her book *Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War*, Tanvi Madan noted that while the United States was willing to address the Tibet issue in early 1950s, it was not willing to do it without India and was wary of spillovers.

"But, while Washington was willing to encourage Tibet's leaders and its autonomy in spirit, it was unwilling to act alone to provide military or financial

assistance or appoint official representatives to Tibet. Acheson [US Secretary of State] maintained that India had the primary responsibility to help Tibet...Furthermore, like Britain and India, the US was concerned about any spillover impact on the Korean situation — the reason why it would not promise a specific response to a potential Tibetan appeal to the UN," noted Madan, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Asia Policy Studies of the Brookings Institution.

The book also quoted the US Department of State saying at the time: "Tibet as a weapon for alerting GOI [Government of India] to the danger of attempting to appease any Communist Govt and, specifically, for manoeuvring GOI into a position where it will voluntarily adopt a policy of firmly resisting Chinese Communist pressure in south and east Asia."

As was the case in 1950-60s, the US outreach to India over Tibet is part of a broader geopolitical contest. While the contest was with the global Communism in the Cold War, the United States is now in competition with China — some see it as one of democracy versus autocracies.

"For the past few years, the United States has witnessed an increased focus on Tibet about real autonomy for the region. There is also a sense in the United States of an existential clash with China. This is what's leading to the increased India-US convergence on China and the moves regarding Tibet are part of the bigger response to rising and aggressive China," says Kewalramani.

Even as India and the United States appear to be playing the Tibet Card jointly, some critics question the utility and even the existence of such a card. Former Indian diplomat Phunchok Stobdan has argued that there has never been a Tibet card as India and the United States both accept the One China Policy, Tibet itself has accepted Chinese sovereignty, and the Dalai Lama's establishment is also eager to make a deal with China than waging an overt conflict.

In his book *The Great Game in Buddhist Himalayas: India and China's Quest for Strategic Dominance*, Stobdan further flagged that the US involvement brings harm instead of benefits. He wrote, "The Dalai Lama and the 'Tibet Card' are Cold War-era relics. The issue has been kept alive for almost six decades, mainly due to the games being played, some at the behest of Western powers. The Dalai Lama and Tibet 'cards' have not served any deterrent purposes for India; rather, they have prolonged mutual suspicion and hostility with China."

While the extent of the leverage the Tibet Card gives India is up for debate, Kewalramani tells Firstpost that the idea is to keep the wound open.

"If you keep the wound open, the Tibet question in this case, then who knows where it leads someday? Maybe, nothing may happen today, but who knows

what the card might yield in the future? So, you don't put a lid on the issue," says Kewalramani.

India has upped the ante with China

When Modi and Jaishankar met the US Congressional delegation, the gloves came off. The speculation by some on social media that the delegation had gone rogue with their statements was settled and New Delhi's approval of the visit was for all to see.

Kewalramani says that India is playing a high-risk game now considering China too holds levers against India.

"Even as India has been shifting its policies regarding China since 2020, it has done so very carefully. India does not speak about Xinjiang. India is very cautious about Taiwan and has issued very cautious and few statements in recent years. So, India's actions with China are very calculated. These moves regarding Tibet with the United States, however, mark a shift to a high-risk approach," says Kewalramani.

Even as the United States is on the same page for now with India on Tibet, there are doubts in some quarters whether that's going to last. Singh, the China scholar at BHU, highlights that the United States backed India on China and Tibet in 1950-60s but it petered out by 1970 and the United States was on the other side entirely in 1970s.

"The US policy on Tibet has been patchy, but now that China is the main US adversary, which is also the case with India, the two countries may have much more lasting convergence than in the 1950-60s on Tibet as the Tibet Card can be part of the broader efforts to contain China," says Singh.

As far as the policy shift's risks are considered, Singh tells Firstpost that being risk-averse has not paid India over the years. He argues that the more anyone accommodates China, the more belligerent China becomes. Citing the case of the failed Western bet on bringing China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and legitimising it internationally with the hope that it would liberalise the country, Singh says softness with China has never paid off.

"India has always been reactive with China. It has never been proactive. Even as there has been a shift in the past few years, India is still not properly proactive. But there is at least much more sharpness in the reactions now. The hope is that this will evolve into a proactive policy. As for the risks, you need to take risks. Otherwise, you don't even have a chance at making gains," says Singh.

Awakening for Tibet

22 June 2024, [Sri Lanka Guardian](#), N.S. Venkataraman

Let Not the World Conscience Remain Silent Anymore on The Plight of Tibetans.

Around 60 years ago, China forcibly entered Tibet and occupied the region. Until then, Tibet was a peaceful country where Tibetans lived according to high-value systems and Buddhist philosophy, with goodwill towards all. Tibet had no substantial army, and when China carried out the aggression and its troops entered Tibet, all Tibetans could do was peacefully protest. The merciless Chinese troops massacred thousands of Tibetans who were protesting. In this grim situation, the respected spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, had no choice but to leave Tibet and enter India with around 85,000 Tibetan followers.

During this period of stress, Tibet was largely abandoned to suffer by the rest of the world. The government of neighboring India should have protested against the Chinese invasion, but instead recognized the occupation of Tibet by China. At that time, many voices in India urged the government to protest, but it did not. All that the Government of India did was allow the Dalai Lama and his followers to stay in India as refugees. Over the last sixty years, the third generation of Tibetans mostly live as refugees in India. Over the last sixty years, China has systematically plundered Tibet's mineral wealth, such as lithium, and water resources. The Chinese government has been sending native Chinese to settle in Tibet, aiming to destroy Tibetan culture and traditions. Several monasteries in Tibet have been destroyed.

This injustice against Tibet by China continues today.

In the last six decades, China has shown its territorial greed by entering into war with India and occupying thousands of kilometers of Indian territory. The occupation of Tibet by China was clearly the first step in achieving this territorial expansion. China continues this practice of claiming the territories of other countries to this day, seemingly with impunity.

In this context, it is heartening that the U.S. House of Representatives has passed the "Resolve Tibet Act," which calls on the Chinese government to engage with the Dalai Lama to restore Tibet's independence to Tibetans.

Subsequently, an influential group of U.S. lawmakers met with the Dalai Lama in Himachal Pradesh, India, exchanged views, and offered support to the Tibetan cause. They have also clearly warned the Chinese government that they will take steps to safeguard Tibet's sovereignty in the future.

As expected, the Chinese government has protested against these observations by U.S. lawmakers, claiming that Tibet is an internal matter for China.

What will happen next?

While U.S. lawmakers have taken steps to support the Tibetan cause, albeit after many decades, it is better late than never. The question now is whether other countries in the world, particularly Western democracies and thoughtful individuals in these regions, will voice their support for the initiative taken by U.S. lawmakers.

The ball is now clearly in the court of the Government of India to take the initiative forward and support the Tibetan cause. The question remains whether the Government of India will fulfill its responsibility towards an independent Tibet. It is notable that Indian Prime Minister Mr. Modi has not met with the Dalai Lama even once during his ten-year tenure as Prime Minister.

Recently, China has acted against India's interests in several international forums, clearly viewing India as a primary adversary.

Possibly, the Indian government does not want to antagonize the Chinese government to avoid military confrontation. If this is India's stance, it reflects a defeatist attitude lacking in courage and conviction. Millions of Indians sympathize with the Tibetan cause and want the Indian government to advocate for Tibet in international forums.

Many Tibetans have become refugees in various countries, later becoming citizens. They are primarily occupied with making a living and are unable to substantially contribute to their homeland's cause.

The initiative of U.S. lawmakers should gain momentum, and India can play a crucial role in advocating and strengthening the Tibetan cause, urging the world conscience, which has been largely silent regarding the plight of Tibetans, to speak out."

This version maintains the essence of your message while enhancing readability and clarity.

What's behind India's hardening posture against China?

22 June 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

There is a small but stark shift in India's approach to China in the past few weeks which indicates the Modi government in its third term might harden its posture against the neighbour with which relations have been hostage to heightened border disputes ever since skirmishes between Indian and Chinese forces along the border in 2020.

PM Modi is likely to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Kazakhstan in the first week of July where he might run into China's President **Xi Jinping**. Shortly before a possible meeting between the two leaders, India seems to be hardening its posture against China. The two meetings between Modi and Xi after the Galwan clashes at the G20

Summit at Bali in 2022 and the BRICS Summit in South Africa a year later failed to yield any positive results. Thousands of troops remain deployed on either side of the Sino-India border.

India's 'no' to 'business as usual'

China is pressing India to restart direct passenger flights after a four-year halt, but New Delhi is resisting as a border dispute continues to weigh on ties between the two countries, Reuters has reported recently. Several times over the past year or so, China's government and airlines have asked India's civil aviation authorities to re-establish direct air links, two people with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters, with one saying China considers this a "big issue".

"We hope the Indian side will work with China in the same direction for the early resumption of direct flights," China's Foreign Ministry told Reuters in a statement, adding that resuming flights would be in both countries' interests. But a senior Indian official familiar with India-China bilateral developments said of Beijing's desire to resume flights: "Unless there is peace and tranquility on the border, the rest of the relationship cannot move forward."

India is refusing to let the ties normalise with China without a resolution of the border disputes. Direct flights between India and China were halted four months after the pandemic broke out. Except for a smattering of covid repatriation flights, they have not resumed even though India lifted covid restrictions on international air routes a year later and China lifted all covid travel measures in early 2023.

Modi's Taiwan move

After results of the 2024 **Lok Sabha elections** were announced, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te congratulated Modi on his third consecutive victory in the general elections and said he looks forward to expanding the "fast-growing" ties between the two nations. He further stressed **expanding India-Taiwan collaboration on trade**, technology and other sectors to contribute to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

"My sincere congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi on his election victory. We look forward to enhancing the fast-growing Taiwan-India partnership, expanding our collaboration on trade, technology & other sectors to contribute to peace & prosperity in the IndoPacific," President Lai posted on X. Modi replied: "Thank you @ChingteLai for your warm message. I look forward to closer ties as we work towards mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership."

This formal exchange between the two leaders angered China which lodged a protest with India for Modi's acknowledgement of Taiwanese president's congratulatory message. The Chinese foreign ministry urged India to resist Taiwan's "political calculations"

and not do anything to violate the “one-China principle”.

Under its **"One China Policy"**, China opposes all forms of official interactions between Taiwan authorities and other countries, saying Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. Like other countries which have diplomatic ties with China, India too follows the "One China Policy" even though there has been no public articulation of it since 2010. For China, PM Modi had crossed a red line by talking to the new Taiwanese president whom China views as a dangerous rebel.

The tit-for-tat Tibet gameplay

Nearly two weeks ago, there were reports of India planning to do something which can outrage China. India is planning to rename over two dozen places in China's Tibet Autonomous Region in a tit-for-tat move against China renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh, according to a report in the Diplomat. The list of places to be renamed has been finalised by the Army's information warfare division and will be released soon, said the report. The new names are backed by extensive historical research and widely held opinions of the local residents, many of whom fiercely oppose the Chinese names.

The renaming campaign aims to push through an Indian counter-narrative on the border through regional and global media, anchored on both solid historical research and local residents' voices. In the past, China has changed names of places in Arunachal Pradesh. In March, it renamed 30 places along the Line of Actual Control in the state, including 11 residential areas, 12 mountains, four rivers, one lake, one mountain pass, and a piece of land. It was the fourth time that China unilaterally renamed places in the state. India has repeatedly rejected China's move to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that the state is an integral part of the country and that assigning "invented" names does not alter this reality.

A few days ago, India allowed a high-level US congressional delegation, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to meet the [Dalai Lama](#) at his Indian home, a visit that was condemned in advance by China's government, which considers the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader a separatist. At the same time, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan was in India discussing security and technological cooperation. The visit by the US congressional delegation came right after a bipartisan bill was passed by the US House of Representatives, seeking to push Beijing to hold dialogue with Tibetan leaders that has been stalled since 2010.

In what China would see as a further provocation, PM Modi met with the US Congressional delegation following their meeting with the Dalai Lama

What's behind India's aggressive posture?

While India's aggressive posturing against China, especially with regard to Tibet, points at an increasing coordination with the US, it also indicates India's move could reopen the **Tibet issue**. India's Taiwan and Tibet moves clearly show India's push against the "One China Policy". So far, India had restrained from openly challenging the policy but now it could be sending the message that if China is not mindful of India's territorial concerns, India too would no longer acknowledge China's sensitivities. "India has once again indicated that it is willing to gradually ramp up pressure on issues like Tibet and Taiwan," Harsh Pant, an international relations professor at King's College London, has told Hong Kong-based daily South China Morning Post. He said that New Delhi had made it clear that unless Beijing recognized "India's concerns and sensitivities and respects Indian interests", it was not moving from that posture.

Michael Kugelman, director of the Wilson Centre's South Asia Institute, told SCMP that it seemed as though India was "trying to signal that it can use its relationship with the US as leverage". "It can show China that there are ways that it can push back," he added.

"India appears more risk tolerant now when it comes to how far it's willing to go with pushing the Tibet issue," Kugelman said.

Many think a less-than-expected mandate for PM Modi in the Lok Sabha elections will make his government averse to accommodating Chinese concerns because it could be seen as a sign of weakness by his voters.

China's name change spree in Xinjiang and Tibet continues unabated

22 June 2024, [First Post](#), Mahesh Rajan Debata

The sinister design by the Chinese authorities to change the names of places, cities, and townships is not limited to its provinces or territory alone; rather, it goes beyond the borders.

The Chinese Central government has not only been devising but also religiously implementing the policy to change the names of streets, villages, places, and townships in the country, especially in the minority-dominated areas in its western part. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) have borne the maximum brunt in this process.

For example, in Chinese academic parlance, Tibet has been described as Xijang since 2023. This Chinese trick has two mottoes: firstly, China deliberately attempts to dilute the culture of the minority people, or perhaps aims at stamping out ethno-religious or ethno-cultural identities of the minorities, particularly the Uyghurs

and Tibetans; and secondly, it wants to expand the process of sinification by dint of imposing the overarching Chinese communist ideology on the minority people.

In a joint report published recently by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and a Norway-based Uyghur organisation (Uyghur Help), the Chinese atrocities on Uyghur culture and identity have come to light time and again. According to the report, the Chinese Central Government has been "systematically changing hundreds of village names" bearing historical, religious, and cultural meanings for Uyghurs into new names that faithfully reflect the ideology of the Communist Party of China (CCP).

It is important to note herewith that the name-changing spree in Tibet and Xinjiang by the Chinese can be traced back to the end of the 2000s, particularly after the Tibet unrest in March 2008 and the Urumqi riots (5 July 2009) in XUAR. Along with the stern policy of "Strike Hard, Maximum Pressure" in both Tibet and Xinjiang, it led to massive securitisation and surveillance in both the restive regions in the later period.

The Chinese authorities have meted out excesses against Tibetans and Uyghurs. They slyly began one of the government-sponsored measures of "cultural erasure" of the Uyghurs and Tibetans as part of their sinification design. It has been an uphill task for these hapless minorities to maintain their centuries-old unique culture against 75 years of Chinese onslaught. The HRW Report gives detailed information, elaborating that as many as 3,600 of a total of 25,000 villages in Xinjiang (almost 15 per cent of the total villages) have witnessed name change in the last one and a half decades (from 2009 to 2023). In 630 villages (nearly one-fifth of the total of 3,600 villages), the names bearing the religion, culture, and history of Uyghurs have witnessed change.

The popular Uyghur names, such as Mazar (shrine), Hoja (Sufi teacher), Meschit (mosque), Haniqa (Sufi meeting place), Gumbaz (dome), Orda (palace), Xelpe (Khalifa), Wap (Islamic Foundation), Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), Dutar (an Uyghur music instrument) and Sultan (Emir), are now replaced with pejorative Chinese names such as Hongxing (Red Star), Qianjin (Forward), Hongqi (Red Flag), Youyi (Friendship), Guangming (Light), Bostan (Oasis), Hexie (harmony), Tuanjie (unity) and Xingfu (happiness).

It is found to be a classic case of sinification that Chinese authorities have been imposing on minority nationalities, especially against Uyghurs and Tibetans, since Qing rule. The process of sinification has taken on a new tone and tenor since the communist takeover of Xinjiang in 1949. However, what is not reported in the media is the renaming of some famous streets in the capital, Urumqi, and Kashgar, as confirmed news reports are awaited.

Earlier, seven years ago, two reports were published. One was by Human Rights Watch—"China bans many Muslim baby names in Xinjiang" (April 24, 2017)—and the other was by Radio Free Asia—"Xinjiang's 'List of Forbidden Names' forces Uyghurs to change the names of children under 16"—which described how Chinese authorities at the local political committee in Tohula township of Karakash county in Khotan prefecture banned several Muslim names like Arafat, Saddam, Medina, Husein, Seypidin, Seypulla, Nesrulla, Shemsidin, and Mujahit (for boys under the age 16) and Muslime, Muhlise, Ayshe, Fatima, and Hediche (for girls under the age 16).

This measure was commensurate with the Chinese government's "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification" that was adopted unanimously at the 28th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth People's Congress for the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on March 29, 2017.

In addition, the authorities gave an ultimatum of 72 hours to change the names and issued a diktat not to provide the Uyghur children bearing any of the banned names the much-needed hukou (household registration), which is a necessary condition to enrol tiny tots in public school and other social services in the minority areas. It is a brazen display of Chinese indifference towards the minority culture of a multicultural society like China. Besides, it perhaps spells out the spread of fear of the Chinese among the young and impressionable minds so that they will not raise their voice against the government in the future. It is imperative to highlight here that this sinister design by the Chinese authorities to change the names of places, cities, and townships is not limited to its provinces or territory alone; rather, it goes beyond the borders. For instance, the Chinese government exhibited the audacity to rename as many as 62 villages in the Indian province of Arunachal Pradesh in four phases in the last half a dozen years. The People's Republic of China not only brazenly, forcefully, and aggressively claims the Indian province of Arunachal Pradesh as its integral part but has also renamed it Zangnan (South Tibet).

The Indian news media and foreign media have aired the attempt by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs to change the names of six places in Arunachal Pradesh in 2017, 15 in 2021, 11 in 2023, and 30 in 2024, respectively. It exposes the mens rea of an alien, arrogant, and aggressive China against its immediate neighbour (India), with whom it fought a war in 1962 and was involved in intimidation, intrusion, and internecine conflict all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the last six decades.

Resolve Tibet

22 June 2024, [The Statesman](#)

The visit by US lawmakers to meet the Dalai Lama in India marks a significant moment in the on-going Tibet-China dispute.

The visit by US lawmakers to meet the Dalai Lama in India marks a significant moment in the on-going Tibet-China dispute. This gesture, coupled with the “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Bill” ~ passed by the US Congress ~ signals a shift in US policy that could have profound implications for Sino-American relations and the future of Tibetan autonomy. For decades, the Dalai Lama has been a symbol of peaceful resistance and spiritual resilience. His exile from Tibet in 1959 and his subsequent life in India have highlighted the struggles of the Tibetan people under Chinese rule.

The meeting between the Dalai Lama and influential US lawmakers, including Mr Michael McCaul and Ms Nancy Pelosi, underscores a renewed commitment from Washington to support Tibetan rights and challenge Beijing’s heavy-handed policies in the region. China’s insistence on controlling the succession of the Dalai Lama illustrates its broader strategy of exerting influence over Tibetan Buddhism and suppressing any form of dissent. Beijing’s stance that its atheist leaders should approve the Dalai Lama’s successor is not only an affront to Tibetan spiritual traditions but also a clear attempt to legitimise its rule over Tibet. The Dalai Lama’s suggestion that his successor might be found in India further complicates China’s narrative and asserts Tibetan agency in spiritual matters.

The Resolve Tibet Bill is a legislative milestone that sends a clear message to Beijing that the international community, led by the United States, is no longer willing to passively accept China’s dominance over Tibet. If President Joe Biden signs this bill into law, it would represent a significant departure from the longstanding US policy of recognising Tibet as part of China. Such a move would undoubtedly escalate tensions between the two superpowers, but it would also reaffirm America’s commitment to human rights and self-determination. India’s role in this geopolitical drama is also noteworthy. As the host country of the Dalai Lama and home to a substantial Tibetan exile community, India has a vested interest in the outcome of the Tibet-China dispute.

The strained relationship between India and China, particularly following the 2020 border clashes, adds another layer of complexity. Strengthening ties with the US and supporting the Tibetan cause aligns with India’s strategic interests and its efforts to counterbalance China’s growing influence in the region. This renewed focus on Tibet by US lawmakers

could set a precedent for other countries to adopt similar policies, creating a broader coalition advocating for Tibetan rights. The global community’s increased attention on Tibet might pressure Beijing to reconsider its hard-line approach and engage in meaningful negotiations with Tibetan leaders. However, it is crucial to recognise that the Dalai Lama has consistently advocated for genuine autonomy rather than outright independence for Tibet. This “middle way” approach seeks to preserve Tibet’s cultural and religious identity while remaining within the framework of the Chinese state.

China-US-India ‘situationship’ over Dalai Lama: Will reincarnation have geopolitical implications?

22 June 2024, News One, Deebashree Mohanty

The former Sikyong (political leader) of the Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay said on Thursday that the reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama will impact geopolitics to a great extent, he also said that China will not have any role to play in the process of reincarnation, search and even training of the next Dalai Lama. So, what is the plan, and what is going to be India’s role in it?

There is a lot of noise around the Dalai Lama these days. Apart from the fact that he will mark his 89th birthday on July 1, and that he has an impending trip to the US during the same time, there are murmurs that a reincarnation for the new Dalai Lama maybe on the anvil. Is this the real reason why the high-level US delegation led by former US Congress Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, resulting in some tensions in China? To top all these curious events, former Sikyong (political leader) of the Central Tibetan Administration, Dr Lobsang Sangay, sparked a controversy when he endorsed India as Tibet’s closest ally and also mentioned the reincarnation of the new Dalai Lama and what would be China’s role in this rebirth.

Who is the chosen one, and what geopolitical ramifications will this rebirth have? Sangay said we will get a clearer picture soon, but there will be no role of China in the process of rebirth, selection of the Lama and training. This is not a new development as the 14th Dalai Lama (whom China sees as a “dangerous separatist,”) had in 2023, made an announcement in this regard saying that the new head of Tibetan Buddhism will be in Mongolia, a position for which China wanted Mongolia to seek its consent. However, Chinese representatives have been quiet on the matter till so long.

What this announcement did was reiterate that China will have no role whatsoever in the process of the rebirth of the latest Dalai Lama. “The next Dalai Lama will not be born in China. His Holiness, the 14th Dalai

Lama has already declared that. In response, the Chinese government launched a major campaign to counter that position. But it is clear that Beijing does not have any role to play in the reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama," he said, making an elaborate presentation on the idea of reincarnation and why it could have a major geopolitical implication.

The new Dalai Lama; endless possibilities

Why is China's interference a matter of concern for Tibet, Sangay pointed out that there are many Buddhist dominated countries in Asia and beyond and all these countries could end up being affected if the Chinese interfere with the process of finding a successor to the present Dalai Lama.

Earlier in June, the present Dalai Lama who resides in McLeodganj, met with the US lawmakers and discussed the process of reincarnation when McCaul in his remarks before the Tibetan community in Dharamshala declared that China is trying to interfere into the "succession" of the present Dalai Lama. Who is going to be the successor to the 14th Dalai Lama is a question that begs some explanation, although political activists have said it depends on whether Tibet opts for reincarnation or emanation. The 14th Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile, has floated the possibility of a non-traditional succession. He already ended the post's political powers in 2011 in favour of an elected Tibetan government-in-exile and has been keeping Beijing on its toes with his grand plans for the succession. He has alternatively suggested that his reincarnation could be a girl for the first time, or that he might be the last Dalai Lama.

There is also the intriguing possibility of "emanation before death" in which case, Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama's spirit could transfer to an adult successor. With all these endless possibilities, it is anyone's guess who is going to take over from the present Dalai Lama but what the globe awaits is a lot of political upheaval during the process of such an eventuality.

China's stance on the new Dalai Lama: China has insisted that the successor to the present Dalai Lama will require its approval and that the successor will have to be found "within the country". They had cited historical reasons behind this claim. A point that was quickly dispensed with by Sangay who reminded that the fourth Dalai Lama Yonten Gyatso was born in 1589 in Mongolia and that the sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang in 1683, indicating that there are historical precedents that the Dalai Lama was reincarnated on occasions outside of China.

US's support for Tibetan ideology: US lawmakers have time and again re-affirmed the support of the US for the Tibetan spiritual leader and his advocacy for Tibetan autonomy. The latest visit also reflected the interest of the US in human rights issues related to Tibet and the broader geopolitical context involving China. The US government has frequently criticized

China's human rights record in Tibet, highlighting issues such as religious repression, cultural assimilation, and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly. The Congress has passed several resolutions supporting the rights of the Tibetan people and recognising the Dalai Lama's leadership. Notably, the Tibet Policy Act of 2002 mandated support for Tibetan cultural preservation and established the position of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues within the US State Department.

India's stance on the reincarnation: India's interest in Dalai Lama stretches much beyond just border politics with its neighbour, China. We have spiritual and philosophically vested interests as well. The Dalai Lama is not only the tallest Buddhist leader in the world, for Buddhists, he is the personification of the Avalokitesvara and his reincarnation (or not) will determine whether the world can save Tibetan Buddhism from the Chinese Communist Party. India is home to the largest cohort of Tibetan refugees in the world. Hence Indian politicians sense that a post-Dalai Lama scenario should be guided by India, so as to reduce the possibility of extremism in the Tibetan ranks.

Since giving asylum to Dalai Lama, India has also revitalised its own Buddhist heritage — with over 200 monasteries and thousands of monks and a concerted attention to Buddhist conferences to provide platform for evolving Buddhist thought. It is imperative that India doesn't leave the future of Buddhism to either China or chance. Politically too, it's in India's interest to participate actively in the reincarnation. In fact, as India fights to stabilise the border conflict with China, its stand and actions on Tibet will be very important. Tibet is not Taiwan. It has rapidly been elevated — for geopolitical, cultural and ecological reasons — as one of India's more important interests. They all run through the Dalai Lama.

Is it going to be easy for all the three parties — China, US and India to reach a common consensus? That is a distant reality according to political pundits. But because China considers Dalai Lama's reincarnation as something very important not because they care about the Dalai Lama but about subduing Tibet, the real question (and challenge) is can India or the US stop China in its tracks?

The Tibet play

21 June 2024, [Times of India](#)

A bipartisan US delegation meeting the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala has brought back the Tibet issue to the front burner. Of course, China has objected to the visit. The delegation included former US House speaker Nancy Pelosi, who had also visited Taiwan in 2022 despite Beijing's protests. Biden is going to soon sign

the Resolve Tibet Act, which calls on Beijing to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. This puts India, the host country of the Tibetan gov-in-exile, in a decision spot.

Question of future | Given the Dalai Lama's advanced age, the matter of his inevitable succession assumes salience. The US delegation affirmed that Washington would not allow Beijing to interfere with Dalai Lama's succession. Meaning, it will not accept a Beijing-appointed Dalai Lama. India, however, has remained relatively quiet on the matter. But its opinion will matter for the future of the Tibetan movement. It must start thinking now.

Moral imperative | India is expected to continue its support to the Tibetan gov-in-exile and the more than 70,000 Tibetan refugees in the country even after this Dalai Lama. Tibetan refugees also constitute one of the most successful examples of rehabilitation in modern history. At a time China has even stopped referring to Tibet by name – using the Chinese term 'Xizang' instead – it's India that has emerged as the cultural home of Tibetans.

Strategic imperative | Plus, India-China relations are at a major low. China has repeatedly intruded into and occupied Indian territory. Both armies are eyeball-to-eyeball in the higher Himalayas. India has stopped referring to the 'One China' policy for years. And since China doesn't see India as an equal and treats the border dispute as a convenient political tool, New Delhi should have no hesitation in backing the Tibetan cause. India needs leverage. And the Tibet issue is a big one.

What is the Resolve Tibet Act?

21 June 2024, [CTA](#), Anagha Jayakumar

The Resolve Tibet Act passed by Congress on June 12 is a bold successor to the two acts preceding it. We explain.

The United States Congress on June 12 passed the Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act, better known as the Resolve Tibet Act. The bipartisan legislation now awaits assent from President Joe Biden following which it will be ratified into law.

This act is the third notable piece of legislation that the US has taken regarding Tibet, following the Tibetan Policy Act or TPA (2002), and the Tibetan Policy & Support Act or the TPSA (2020). What are the provisions of the Resolve Tibet Act? How is it different from the previous laws passed by Congress?

Key provisions

The Resolve Tibet Act authorises the use of funds to counter Chinese disinformation about Tibet "including disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan

people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama."

The act also challenges the Chinese contention that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times. It urges China to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, as well as democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community "without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences." Underlining the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination and human rights, the act makes a note of China's duty as a signatory of two covenants — the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — that advocate the same.

The Resolve Tibet Act seeks to recognise and address the multi-faceted socio-cultural identity of the Tibetan people, in particular their "distinct historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity." Finally, it amends the TPA to define the exact geographical areas part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Different from previous legislation

The Resolve Tibet Act is a bold successor to the two acts which preceded it.

The TPA, the first of its kind explicitly concerning Tibet, took a cautious stance in defining American policy on Tibet. While it flagged the ill-treatment of Tibetans, unlike the 2024 act, it recognised China's claim that Tibet was an integral part of China.

The 2002 act encouraged the Chinese government to pursue dialogue with the Dalai Lama as a "constructive partner," but reiterated his lack of intent in pursuing sovereignty or independence for Tibet, stressing instead on his desire for greater autonomy for Tibetans in China. The TPA even clarified that the US government did not maintain any official relations with the Tibetan government-in-exile, led until 2011 by the Dalai Lama himself, and would only meet him in his capacity as a spiritual leader, and Nobel Laureate. The TPSA of 2020 pushed for constructive dialogue between the PRC and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, or democratically elected leaders of Tibet resulting in a "negotiated agreement", encouraging international support towards the same. The Resolve Tibet Act underlines the need for such talks to be pursued without "preconditions" on the terms to seek a settlement that resolves differences. The TPSA also stated that the matter of succession of the Dalai Lama was not of China's concern and would best be left to Tibetan Buddhists.

Why Tibet Matters?

21 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Tenzin Dorjee* argues that Tibet matters not just to the Tibetan people for the preservation of their national identity and for upholding the integrity of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also because it occupies a globally critical position as the 'Roof of the World,' 'the Water Tower of Asia,' and the 'Third Pole,' besides being the inheritors of the complete teachings of the Buddha, all of which China has set out to destroy.

Tibet is the "Roof of the World," "the Water Tower of Asia," and the "Third Pole." Despite these facts, Tibet does not garner the same attention and concerns as Ukraine and the Middle East Crisis in today's news. Understandably, the Ukraine and the Middle East Crisis are houses on fire, and Tibet is apparently not. However, while the world is duly concerned about and attending to the houses on fire, Red China tries to erase even the name 'Tibet'. It now calls Tibet by its Chinese name 'Xizang,' with Tibet as such being no more. China forcibly expects the world to accept the Sinicized name for Tibet – 'Xizang.'

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Tibet matters geopolitically and Tibet belongs to Tibetans, not Chinese. Arguably, Tibet matters from a social-ecological perspective. This article reflects on why Tibet matters, albeit the world may become apathetic and complacent. Tibet is the "Third Pole" with the world's largest ice reserves besides the Arctic Circle and Antarctica; Tibet's ice caps are melting faster than elsewhere. If global warming is of concern for survival reasons, Tibet certainly matters more than that reflected by our current state of thinking. Red China has systematically and forcibly uprooted Tibetan nomads from their pasturelands and mined Tibet's minerals, including gold, uranium, copper, and other metals. These and innumerable other projects that solely benefits China – 'the Great Motherland' – have ravaged the ecology of Tibet. The victims are not only Tibet, Tibetans and Tibetan animals and birds, but also the world at large. Satellite images show the Tibetan mountains, including Mt. Kailash – my birthplace – holy to the Bon, Tibetan Buddhism, and Hindu faiths, are bare and unsightly as global temperatures keep swelling. Tibet is the Roof of the World; if the roof caves in, the world, too, will cave in. Saving Tibet is saving the world.

Air and water are essential for the survival and thriving of the human civilization. Tibet is the "Water Tower of Asia" – lifeline for almost 2 billion people living in the downstream countries, including China, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Water, not oil, is the most basic necessity of life. The major rivers of Asia, including the Indus, Brahmaputra, Sutlej,

Mekong, and Yangtze, originate in Tibet. China has built mega dams to harness Tibet's waters and in times of war, it can cut off the water lifeline for India and other downstream countries. A prominent geostrategist, Brahma Chellaney, argues that water wars are waged among riparian neighbours in many parts of the world in his book *Water, Peace, and War: Confronting the Global Water Crisis* (2013) and China controls the major water sources of Asia in Tibet.

Recently, China donated 1,500 tonnes of Tibet's Glacier Water to the Maldives while the downstream countries face draught issues. China is known for toxic loan diplomacy, pressuring loan-recipient countries to support its global expansion policies to unseat the U.S. global leadership. Now, China has started water-gifting diplomacy with Maldives which is expected to accept Chinese name "Xizang" instead of the established English name Tibet. Global warming and water crisis are likely to trigger the next geopolitical war in Asia. Our world cannot afford a Third or another global war, especially between the two giants in Asia – India and Red China. Tibet matters in saving Asia and the world at large.

Also, as long as faith and human rights matter, Tibet matters. Human rights are universal rights enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. These rights include the freedom of faith or religious belief, freedom of speech, and freedom to speak one's mother tongue. China has enslaved the Tibetans, as is evident in the latest report of the Freedom of House (2024). The House rated Tibet -2/40 on political rights and 2/60 on civil rights, yielding an overall score of 0/100. Tibet is China's North Korea regarding human rights and freedom.

According to Tibetan sociologist Dr. Gyal Lo, who has testified at various hearings, China has forcibly removed over 1 million Tibetan children from their homes and segregated them into Colonial Boarding Schools, where they have restricted the teaching of Tibetan language and forced the Chinese language on them instead. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington, D.C., awarded a 2024 Medal to the Tibet Action Institute's Lhadon Tethong and Dr. Gyal Lo for documenting China's assimilation policies and ruthless colonial boarding school system in Tibet. This is only a recent manifestation of China's systematic plan and action to erase Tibetan linguistic and cultural identity. NED also honoured Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the political leader of Tibetans, with a 2024 medal for his service to sustaining and promoting Tibetan democracy in exile. The European Parliament has called on China to address this issue but dismissed its call. China feels the importance of being assertive and listens to no one but themselves.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the State Department of the United States annually rated China as a Country

of Particular Concern for systematically, continuously, and egregiously violating its citizens' freedom of religion and belief. China has persecuted Christians, Uyghurs, Buddhists, Falun Gong, and other Sinicized religions to serve the Communist Ideology and Power Control.

In Tibet, according to a new report, China has mandated the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) to implement President Xi's thoughts and strategies to Sinify or Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese leadership believes that Sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism will erase the Tibetan identity that is rooted in Buddhism. As a significant part of it, they formulated laws and policies to control the unique Tibetan reincarnation system. China has installed Gyaltsan Norbu as the 11th Panchen Lama, completely disappearing the real Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for over thirty years. They feel so assured of their control of Panchen Lama's reincarnation that they intend to do the same with the next reincarnation of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. But their plan will be a fiasco as His Holiness the Dalai Lama lives in India, and he will reincarnate in a free country if the Tibet-China conflict persists.

The United States has passed and implemented several laws, such as the Tibet Policy and Support Act and the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, to counteract China's plans and actions. A high-level U.S. Congressional delegation, including Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, led by the US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, has met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, presented a copy of the recently passed Promoting Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute bill to him. It also met with the Tibetan Political Leader Sikyong Penpa Tsering and the Tibetan Parliament Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and members in Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration. Along with everyone else, I urge President Biden to sign the bill as soon as possible and implement it earnestly. Notably, this would-be law requires the United States to counteract China's misinformation about the historically independent status of Tibet and to reject any installation by China of the next Dalai Lama, as Tibetans have the sole right to decide on their reincarnation system.

Last but not the least, Tibet matters because Tibetan Buddhism matters globally and locally. Tibet had remained isolated for centuries and preserved the Nalanda Tradition of Buddhism intact in the Tibetan language. It is now being restricted and sought to be erased in Tibet by Red China. India is the Guru and the Tibet is Chela or Disciple. Tibetan Buddhism traces its origin and lineage to the ancient Nalanda Monastic University in India. Undisputedly, the largest and complete collection of Buddhism now exists in the Tibetan language (which is invented, based on the

Devanagari script of India): It includes 108 volumes of Sutras (Words of Buddha), over 200 volumes of Shastras (Indian Commentaries), and thousands of other volumes authored by Tibetan masters over the centuries. Guru-Chela relationship is the most sacred and ultimate relationship of all and India has graciously hosted Tibetan refugees for decades.

China aggressively claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet and has named various locations with Sinicized Tibetan names. In a tit-for-tat response, India is going to decide to rename many places in Tibet proper. I urge India that now is the time to firmly and actively support resolving the Sino-Tibetan issues via peaceful negotiation (Ahimsa) between His Holiness the Dalai Lama or Tibetan political leadership and China. The United States will firmly stand with India on such actions.

Tibetans have re-established in exile in India many of their monastic universities, such as Sera, Drepung, Gaden, and Tashi Lhunpo, where monks systematically pursue Buddhism in the Nalanda Tradition, leading to the Geshe Lharampa Degree (Ph.D. equivalent) after twenty-five years of study and debate. The native Bon religion and the four major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism thrive in diaspora in India with their respective monasteries and study centres. Tibetan Buddhism and culture pervade the Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Spiti, and Kinnaur, Mongolia, and it has now spread to different parts of the world. Sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism will not work in the long run as Tibetan Buddhism has already spread far and wide and is not confined to the China-controlled Tibet.

Tibet matters globally and locally so long as the above reasons matter. Saving Tibet is saving Asia and the world at large.

South China Sea tensions force US and Beijing to talk more

21 June 2024, [BBC](#), Laura Bicker

Washington and Beijing are talking more regularly to avoid a conflict in the South China Sea despite their "contentious and competitive" relationship, the United States ambassador to China has told the BBC.

"Our militaries are operating in very close proximity to one another in the South China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait. You don't want to send the wrong signal," Nicholas Burns said in an interview in Beijing earlier this week.

The South China Sea has become a dangerous flashpoint, where Beijing's claims are ratcheting up tensions with Taiwan and Philippines, as well as their most powerful ally, the US.

Chinese and Philippine vessels have been playing a dicey cat-and-mouse game in the contested waters in recent months - the latest altercation this week

allegedly involved Chinese coastguard personnel boarding a Philippine boat and attacking soldiers with swords and knives.

The US, which has stitched together military alliances from Manila to Tokyo, has repeatedly vowed to defend its allies' rights in the South China Sea.

This has further strained ties with China – the relationship was already reeling from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Chinese claims over self-governed Taiwan and a trade war.

Mr Burns said these were flashpoints that still “completely divided” the two sides, but it was important to try to “get people together” where possible.

“The Chinese have agreed to increase our military-to-military communications and that's really critical for us. You want to have communication because the last thing we want is an accident, a misunderstanding that leads to conflict,” said the 68-year-old diplomat.

While tensions have eased, the upcoming US presidential election has the potential to disrupt the relationship again.

“We've warned the Chinese not to involve themselves in our election in any way, shape or form,” Mr Burns said, adding that the US was “very concerned” about the possibility.

Earlier this year FBI officials said China would likely continue its efforts to sow divisions and could help spread disinformation online.

The ambassador said the FBI also had evidence of “cyber aggression by Chinese authorities” against the US. Beijing has always denied accusations of state-sponsored cyber warfare and says it too is a victim of this type of crime.

Both Joe Biden and Donald Trump are vying to be tough on Beijing, a strategy they see as a vote-winner. In May, President Biden announced a raft of new tariffs on Chinese-made electric cars, solar panels and other goods. Few electric cars reach US shores, but Ambassador Burns denied that domestic politics had played a part in this decision.

He said this was an “economic move” designed to safeguard American jobs. Meanwhile, China has warned it may retaliate with tariffs of its own.

But there are some bright spots despite the rivalry.

Before sitting down for our interview, Mr Burns had a meeting with China's climate envoy as the world's two biggest polluters try to find ways to reduce harmful emissions.

Washington and Beijing are also holding what are described as “high-level talks” to prevent the drug fentanyl reaching US shores, which Mr Burns described as “critical”.

Most of his meetings are at a ministerial level and audiences with President Xi are reserved for when senior US officials, such as Secretary of State Antony Blinken, visit.

Both sides have also vowed to work towards more “people-to-people” exchanges. This comes as the number of US students studying in China has fallen from around 15,000 in 2011 to 800.

Mr Xi hopes to open the door for 50,000 American students to come to China in the next five years. He said on a visit to San Francisco last November that it was the “ultimate wish of our two peoples for exchanges and cooperation”.

But Ambassador Burns accused parts of the Chinese government of not taking these warm words seriously: “Since the San Francisco summit, there have been 61 separate incidents when the security forces or a government ministry have prevented Chinese citizens from participating in public diplomacy programmes at this house, at our embassy or they have prevented people from travelling to the US to participate in joint trips – so it has been very difficult for us to bring people together.”

On the other side, Chinese students and academics have reported being unfairly targeted by US border officials. Beijing's embassy in Washington lodged a formal protest and accused US authorities of “unwarrantedly” interrogating, harassing, cancelling the visas of and even deporting several students from China with valid travel permits upon their arrival in the US.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also described the allegation as “groundless”.

“The US has been using national security as excuse for a long time, interfering normal people-to-people communications and exchanges between the countries, ongoing unwarranted harassment, questioning and repatriation of Chinese students and scholars to the U.S.. This has created a serious chilling effect,” a spokesperson told the BBC.

Washington has also placed a “level 3” travel advisory on China urging visitors to “reconsider” their travel. Mr Burns denied this alert was contradictory to a US plea to “bring people together,” but was rather a precaution.

“There are Americans imprisoned here who we believe are wrongfully detained, wrongfully prosecuted, I've been visiting these prisoners and we want them released.” He said several Americans had been subjected to “exit bans” by China and had their passports taken at the airport and could not leave.

China, in turn, has left the US off a list of countries that are exempt from visas for up to 15 days of travel - Australia is on the list after Beijing recently mended ties with Canberra.

That “people-to-people” contact – a relatively easy goal in an otherwise thorny relationship – is proving to be so difficult is perhaps a sign of the continuing lack of trust on both sides.

But the biggest fault line for now may well be the war in Ukraine.

The US seems to believe China could hold the key to halting Russia's progress on the battlefield. And Ambassador Burns reiterated Washington's message that Beijing's support for Moscow's invasion will not be tolerated.

"China is not neutral in this war," he said. "China is showing its true colours. It's supporting Russia, supporting Putin as he unleashes this barbaric war on Ukrainian civilians. We know what is being shipped by Chinese companies and we know the impact it is having on Russia's ability to conduct this war."

He said there were "tens of thousands" of Chinese companies supporting Moscow. "We have sanctioned a great number and we are prepared to do more if the government here does not pull back."

His statements echo those made by the G7 in Italy last week, which claimed China's support for Russia was "enabling" the war in Ukraine. They also threatened more sanctions to punish Chinese entities that they say are helping Russia circumvent Western embargoes.

Beijing has dismissed these warnings as "full of arrogance, prejudice and lies".

Still, some would call this an improvement from 2022. Following then-Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, an infuriated Beijing shut down all cabinet-level communication in Washington. Relations again nose-dived in early 2023 on the eve of a visit from Mr Blinken. He cancelled his trip after the US shot down a high-altitude Chinese balloon which flew across North American airspace.

Ties finally stabilised only in November last year when Mr Biden and Mr Xi met in San Francisco.

Mr Burns said his first two years in post were tough – there was little communication with Chinese officials. Now, he adds, relations are "relatively better" but he sees a tough road ahead: "This very difficult rivalry is going to be present for some time to come."

Exiled Tibet Leader Calls on World to Press China Into Talks

20 June 2024, [Bloomberg](#), Sudhi Ranjan Sen and Dan Strumof

The head of Tibet's government-in-exile encouraged countries to join the US in pressuring China to resume direct negotiations with Tibetan officials, calling recently passed legislation strengthening American support for overseas leaders of the region an important new tool.

Penpa Tsering, the prime minister of the government-in-exile, said back-channel discussions with the Chinese government have taken place since January of last year, but nothing concrete has emerged. Beijing and Tibetan officials held nine rounds of talks between

2002 and 2010 with no clear outcome. No formal discussions have been held since then.

"First thing would be to establish — reestablish contact," he said during an interview with Bloomberg TV in the northern Indian town of Dharamshala, where his government has been based since 1960.

"We know that China respects only strength, not weakness, so we ask people or countries to stand up for the values of freedom and human dignity and democracy," he added.

His comments follow a visit by a high-level US congressional delegation to Dharamshala led by House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul and including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The bipartisan group of lawmakers arrived on Tuesday, holding talks with officials from the Central Tibetan Administration and meeting with the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader.

"The so-called Tibetan government-in-exile is an out and out separatist political group and an illegal organization in total violation of China's constitution and laws," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said Thursday at a regular press briefing in Beijing. "The 14th Dalai Lama must thoroughly reflect on and completely correct his political propositions."

Earlier this month, the US Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act, which strengthens Washington's support for Tibet's exiled leaders, including the Dalai Lama, and pushes for Beijing to negotiate with them. President Joe Biden is expected to sign the bill into law.

The Chinese government has condemned the act and the lawmakers' visit. Beijing considers the Dalai Lama a separatist for his commitment to limited autonomy for the region of Tibet, which China annexed in the 1950s. The Dalai Lama and other monks later fled to India as refugees and set up a government-in-exile.

"We urge the US to clearly see the sensitivity and importance of Xizang-related issues, earnestly respect China's core interests, honor its commitment on Xizang, refrain from having any forms of engagement with the Dalai group and stop sending out to the world wrong signals," said Lin, using another word for the Tibetan region.

The issue remains a diplomatic sensitivity between India and China, which has at times accused New Delhi of conspiring with the US to undermine Beijing's authority in Tibet. Relations between the two soured after a 2020 border clash that left over 20 Indian soldiers dead. New Delhi and Washington have grown closer in the aftermath of that incident, with the congressional delegation's visit to Dharamshala coinciding with one from US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to New Delhi for high-level talks. The Chinese government has said the Dalai Lama can return only if he gives up any pretensions for an independent Tibet. The Dalai Lama and his supporters say they don't seek independence but instead greater

autonomy within China's system, including an elected legislature and independent judicial system. Beijing rejects the claim as insincere.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman on Tuesday urged the US to "see the anti-China separatism nature" of the Dalai Lama and his followers.

In his comments to Bloomberg TV, Tsering called the Resolve Tibet Act "a new tool in our hands to reach out to other governments and see whether they can take similar positions." Tsering said recent back-channel communications with Beijing have taken place through interlocutors, and said re-establishment of official contact was a key next step.

He also addressed the question of who might follow the current Dalai Lama, saying that succession would be "purely religious and traditional."

No successor to the 88-year-old spiritual leader has been designated yet, but Beijing has started laying out the case for why it should appoint the next Dalai Lama instead of his exiled supporters in northern India.

That has heightened fears among followers of the Dalai Lama that, after his passing, there will be two claimants to the position: one selected by them and another by the Chinese government. Questions of who will replace the Dalai Lama are sensitive, pitting China against nations like the US, which has warned Beijing against interfering with the process.

On Monday, the monk told a small group of reporters in Dharamshala that he isn't yet thinking about his reincarnation.

What is the Tibet-China Dispute Act passed by US Congress last week?

19 June 2024, Business Standard, [Bhaswar Kumar](#)



Dharamshala: Tibetan Spiritual Leader Dalai Lama With Former US House Of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi And Other Members Of The US Congressional Delegation After A Meeting At His Residence, In Dharamshala, June 19, 2024. (Photo: PTI)

A Bill that aims to counter China's position that it has controlled Tibet since 'ancient times' and to promote dialogue between Beijing and exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, was passed by US lawmakers and went to President Joe Biden's desk last week.

The House of Representatives, the lower chamber of the US Congress, voted 391-26 on June 12 to approve

the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, which had passed the Senate, the upper chamber, last month.

A press release on the website of Jeff Merkley, the Democratic senator from the US state of Oregon who had introduced the Bill in the Senate, said that the US Congress had passed the "bipartisan Bill to enhance US support for Tibet and promote dialogue between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Dalai Lama towards a peaceful resolution of the long-standing dispute between Tibet and China".

The release added, "The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act now goes to President Biden, who is expected to sign it into law."

What does the Bill aim to do?

In essence, the Bill aims to harden Washington's position on Tibet and pressure Beijing into resuming negotiations with the Dalai Lama.

No formal dialogue between Chinese and Tibetan authorities has happened since 2010.

The Bill aims to direct funds to counter what it describes as "disinformation" from China about Tibet's history, people and institutions.

The Bill also refutes Beijing's claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times. And, going a step further, it would make it official US policy that the dispute over Tibet's status is unresolved.

It would also make it policy that Tibet refers not only to the Tibet autonomous region, as defined by Beijing, but also Tibetan areas of the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, and Sichuan.

The Act aims to enhance US support for Tibet. It would empower US State Department officials to "actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government, rejecting false claims that Tibet has been part of China since 'ancient times'," said the release from Merkley's website.

The Act will also push for negotiations "without preconditions" between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community.

Finally, it will also make it the US State Department's responsibility to "coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts" towards the goal of "a negotiated agreement on Tibet".

CCP's status quo in Tibet 'not acceptable'

"The people of Tibet deserve to be in charge of their own future, and, today, Congress has voted to stand with Tibetans in their struggle for freedom and self-determination," said Merkley, co-chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, according to the release.

Merkley added that the Act would help "counter misinformation from the Chinese government about Tibet" and would push for "negotiations between the PRC and Tibet to end this longstanding dispute".

"I look forward to President Biden swiftly signing this Bill into law... the people of Tibet cannot wait any longer," said Merkley.

"Our bipartisan Bill will refresh US policy towards Tibet and push for negotiations that advance freedom for the Tibetan people and a peaceful resolution to the CCP's conflict with the Dalai Lama," said Indiana's Republican Senator Todd Young.

Young added that Congressional passage of the Bill "further demonstrates America's resolve that the CCP's status quo – both in Tibet and elsewhere – is not acceptable".

"Let the overwhelming passage of our strong, bipartisan Bill be a clear message to the Tibetan people: America stands with you on the side of human dignity, and we support you in your quest to secure the basic rights to which you are entitled under international law," said Democratic US Representative Jim McGovern, who is also a member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

"The PRC has systematically denied Tibetans the right to self-determination and continues to deliberately erase Tibetan religion, culture, and language. The ongoing oppression of the Tibetan people is a grave tragedy, and our Bill provides further tools that empower both America and the international community to stand up for justice and peace," added McGovern.

What is China's position on Tibet?

China claims that Tibet has been under central Chinese rule for over 700 years.

However, Tibetan activists have argued that the region was self-governed for extended periods.

While the Dalai Lama has not recognised Beijing's historical claim over Tibet, he has also said that he does not seek political independence for the region.

In April, the Chinese foreign ministry said that any talks with the Dalai Lama would not address the question of Tibetan autonomy. Instead, any such talks would only concern his "personal future" or that of his close associates.

At present, the US State Department considers the Tibet autonomous region and other Tibetan areas to be a part of China.

However, Washington has not explicitly taken the position that Beijing's occupation of Tibet in the 1950s was in accordance with international law.

The forced assimilation of Tibet

18 June 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Khedroob Thondup

The situation in Tibet is complex and sensitive, with reports saying the Chinese government is attempting to assimilate Tibetan culture into the Han culture.

China's approach to education in Tibet has raised significant concerns regarding the forced assimilation

of Tibetan children. About 1 million have reportedly been separated from their families and placed into government-run boarding schools.

The educational content of the schools revolve around the Han culture, with Mandarin as the medium of instruction. The system is seen as a large-scale program intended to assimilate Tibetans into Han culture.

The focus on Mandarin and Han cultural norms has resulted in Tibetan children losing proficiency in their native language and, consequently, the ability to communicate effectively with their elders, contributing to the erosion of their Tibetan identity.

The increase in boarding students is partly due to the closure of rural schools, which have been replaced by township or county-level institutions which primarily use Mandarin for teaching and communication, often requiring children to board.

The measures are part of what some experts describe as a policy of forced assimilation, which runs contrary to international human rights standards for education, linguistic and cultural rights, and freedom of religion or belief.

China's constitution states that citizens "enjoy freedom of religious belief;" but limits protections to "normal religious activities" without defining what "normal" is. Regulations stipulate religious activity must not harm national security and control all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.

The Chinese Communist Party promotes "Sinicization" policies which aim to interpret religious ideas in accordance with its ideologies, and emphasize loyalty to the party and the state.

There have been reports of disappearances, arrests, torture, physical abuse and prolonged detentions without trials due to their religious practices. People have also reportedly died in custody or as a result of long-term illnesses and injuries sustained following beatings and mistreatment during incarceration.

The government has undertaken a large-scale campaign of "re-education" or "vocational training" in military-style camps to conduct forced political indoctrination, and to transform farmers and herders into laborers in other industries.

Authorities have also arrested writers, singers and artists for promoting Tibetan language and culture. Supporters of the Dalai Lama and other religious leaders could be arrested under China's anti-organized crime program.

These are challenges faced by Tibetans practicing their religion and maintaining their cultural identity. They reflect concerns raised by human rights organizations and independent experts regarding the preservation of Tibetan culture and identity.

China's massive attack against India: A looming possibility

17 June 2024, [ORF](#), Kartik Bommakanti

India might be deceiving itself by believing China will limit itself to "grey-zone operations" along the Sino-Indian border, avoiding all-out war. This assumption, while comforting, could be dangerous.

Now that the dust has settled with the conclusion of the 2024 parliamentary elections, it is time to take stock of India's ongoing boundary confrontation with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Notwithstanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's conciliatory statement that India and China must restore peace and tranquillity on their contested boundary, all adversarial relationships, especially involving territorial disputes, hold the distinct possibility of culminating into a full-fledged war and the India-China relationship is no exception. The wider strategic community believes that a massive attack by the PRC against India will never happen. In fact, one former Indian envoy to the PRC observed recently: "So there is a pattern of aggressive behaviour [from China], of trying to change status quo [against India and in the South China Sea (SCS)] through salami slicing, incremental steps by staying short of an all-out military conflict and changing ground realities." This statement by itself is not wrong, but salami slicing and incremental gains, which the PRC has already made against India, are among a menu of possibilities, which includes a massive attack and full-scale war. The difficulty with worst-case assumptions about the prospect of menacing adversary behaviour is that they mandate economic sacrifices that civilians do not want to make.

Unfortunately, the worst is possible, and India experienced this with the outbreak of the Sino-Indian War in 1962. After all, as Krishna Menon who was Defence Minister during the 1962 war ruefully observed: "...I make no secret of the fact that we were not prepared for a war [massive attack] against China...We expected negotiation and diplomacy to play their part [not war]." The run-up to the war also sowed civil-military tensions especially under the Indian Army Chief General Thimmaya to the extent that the latter, who was "acutely" aware of the China threat warned that the Nehru-led leadership was not paying attention to China's robust military strength and the distinct possibility that Beijing could attack massively. At most, the Nehru government saw only a "limited attack" as a possibility that India could counter with the defences it was preparing. History is instructive in the present challenge that China poses India. The ongoing confrontation between India and China is similar, but not identical to the one faced by

Nehru's India in the run-up to the 1962 War. Before the onset of the 1962 conflict, Nehru was wedded to his own assumptions that the superpowers would restrain the Chinese which would be adequate to head off a Sino-Indian War. At best limited military measures both in capabilities and logistics from India's end would suffice, Nehru concluded. The leadership was also convinced that China would not want war with India because it would trigger a world war, which in turn rested on the assumption that India was too critical to the balance of power for the two Cold War superpowers—namely the United States (US) and the erstwhile Soviet Union. They believed that the Soviets would restrain the Chinese. A critical corollary reinforcing these assumptions for the Nehru-led Indian government was that the series of skirmishes along the Sino-Indian boundary such as the violent, yet limited clashes in geographic scope and force that occurred in Longju and Kongka Pass would be the shape of Chinese conduct obviating the need for India to robustly build-up its defences against a massive Chinese attack. It turned out to be a fatal error because the Nehru-led leadership fell victim to Chinese deception as it inferred too much from skirmishes in that it provided confirmation bias to Nehru's existing belief that China cannot want war along the contested Sino-Indian boundary and rested on the assumption that these limited clashes would be the enduring pattern of Chinese military conduct along the disputed frontier.

Unfortunately, the worst is possible, and India experienced this with the outbreak of the Sino-Indian War in 1962.

These were the deeply held beliefs until the Chinese shattered them in October of 1962. In the Eastern sector of the boundary during the 1962 War or formerly called the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), the People's Liberation Army (PLA) overran Indian Army defences to the point that they almost reached the outskirts of Guwahati. They also killed thousands of Indian soldiers and took several thousand Prisoners of War (POW). What saved the day for India in the Eastern sector or the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and what is now called Arunachal Pradesh was the Chinese decision to withdraw their forces behind the McMahon Line unilaterally. In the Western sector of the boundary, the Indian Army performed better, because its defences and logistics capabilities were better built. These were the only two consolatory outcomes for India from that humiliating war. Otherwise, poor leadership at the national level, low spending on defence capabilities, poor command, low force morale among Indian troops and weak logistics combined to produce a disastrous military outcome, especially in the NEFA.

In the Eastern sector of the boundary during the 1962 War or formerly called the Northeast Frontier Agency

(NEFA), the People's Liberation Army (PLA) overran Indian Army defences to the point that they almost reached the outskirts of Guwahati.

While India has improved significantly over the years in terms of logistics, airfields, a greater number of all-weather roads and capabilities for the IA, China's capabilities in the form of air defences, air bases, heliports and logistics along the Sino-Indian boundary and the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) has also improved considerably. There is a widespread consensus in India that a massive attack will not be executed by the PRC with the latter confining itself to the seizure of territory in Eastern Ladakh as what happened in April-May of 2020, the bloody Galwan clash that ensued the following month and the attempted seizure of Yangtse by the PLA in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian boundary in December 2022. It rests on the rather quaint assumption that China has already made the territorial gains it intended to make against India in 2020 and at best a limited attack of some sort is likely, but not a massive attack—a view held by a wide swathe of Indian strategic establishment. It is entirely plausible that India might be falling prey to the same level of deception as before that China in contemporary parlance would restrict itself to “grey-zone operations” or the odd skirmish and intrusion throughout the Sino-Indian boundary and will not pursue an all-out war or a substantial attack. This assumption may be psychologically comforting but potentially damaging. There is a widespread consensus in India that a massive attack will not be executed by the PRC with the latter confining itself to the seizure of territory in Eastern Ladakh as what happened in April-May of 2020, the bloody Galwan clash that ensued the following month and the attempted seizure of Yangtse by the PLA in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian boundary in December 2022.

Spending on defence as the Interim Budget tabled before the Parliament vividly shows is simply inadequate to meet the shortfall in capabilities the Indian Armed Forces currently face. Constraints on military spending have been further exacerbated by supply bottlenecks due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war with the IAF unable to spend the allocations made to the service in last year's full budget. In any potential Sino-Indian boundary war, the IAF will have a pivotal role to play and if the service is inadequately equipped due to military supply constraints, New Delhi will need to move away from reliance on Russian military hardware or weapons and spares. If anything, it lends more urgency to India's need to diversify away from Russia, because China could see an opportunity to launch a massive attack against India, due to India's dependence on Moscow for military supplies. Tacit or even explicit collusion between Beijing and Moscow could also crystallise if the former launched a massive

attack against India as what happened in the 1962 Sino-Indian boundary war. India's dependence on Russian military hardware only compounds India's Russia supply problem. Even worse, there is still a presumption in India that an outright war triggered or caused by China will catalyse US to intervene on India's behalf. This is highly conditional. Again, history is instructive. Let us not forget, Washington intervened and extended military aid on behalf of India only after the Nehru-led government sought it in late October 1962. In the event of a Sino-Indian War today, it may happen if India solicits American military assistance or may not happen even after India seeks aid from the US. There is neither automaticity nor inevitability to the extension of American military aid to India because Washington retains the choice not to do so and may be compelled to demur due to its commitments to Israel, Ukraine and its East Asian allies in the Indo-Pacific. This will leave India confronting a militarily hostile and aggressive PRC entirely on its own making it imperative to augment India's conventional military strength. Therefore, taking American support for granted will, at a minimum be risky and at a maximum dangerous, for New Delhi. The costs of leaving things to chance are prohibitive for New Delhi.

History provides illuminative value for the realities India confronts today against China. Now that the Modi government has been re-elected to a third term, it is time to prioritise defence spending, especially capital acquisitions, and for a broader defence roadmap to tackle the China challenge on the military front.

View: India must revive its Tibetan Buddhist links to show a mirror to China

15 June 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Shishir Gupta

The Modi government has no intentions of renaming places in Tibet as a tit for tat to China. India has umbilical links with Tibet.

New Delhi: Four years ago on this day, the Gallant 20 led by brave 16 Bihar Commanding Officer Colonel B Santosh Babu repelled a PLA attack near Patrolling Point 14 in Galwan in East Ladakh, resulting in death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of PLA personnel.

While many Indian soldiers lost their lives due to drowning in frozen Galwan river, the brief skirmish was a game changer as the Indian Army, shedding the 1962 loss, took on the aggressive PLA and ensured that Chinese did not disturb the status quo in Galwan by erecting a new post.

Apart from the PLA aggression in East Ladakh in May 2020, the Xi Jinping regime has launched full-fledged

information warfare against India by renaming geographical entities in Arunachal Pradesh. In 2017, the Chinese released Mandarin version of six places in Arunachal Pradesh, 15 places in 2021 in second list, 11 more places in third list in 2021 and in March 2024, another 30 places were renamed by Xi Jinping regime as if to earmark their claims on the Indian border state. While there were media reports of India planning to rename some 30 places in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as a riposte to the Chinese exercise in Arunachal Pradesh, the Ministry of External Affairs is not aware of any such exercise.

Fact is that India does not need to do any renaming in Tibet to make its point to the Communist Party of China as the Indo-Tibetan plateau of Lamas has ancient links with India through Buddhism. Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in Tibet are revered by both the Hindus and the Tibetan Buddhist alike with Hindus making pilgrimage to the abode of Lord Shiva for centuries.

Despite Chinese communists trying to impose atheism on the Tibetan and Chinese people at large, Buddhism is growing in China by leaps and bounds. Fabulous Buddhist temples are being built all over China especially in Tibet so much so that priests and followers of the religion have given up on meat eating and turned vegetarians. Since Buddhism spread to Tibet through teachers in Nalanda in Bihar, all the major sutras are based in Sanskrit and hence chanted as such including ubiquitous "Om Mani Padme Hum." Hindu female deity 'Saraswati' resembles Manjushri, a Bodhisattva representing transcendent wisdom in Mahayana Buddhism. The list goes on and on. Suffice to say that India-Tibet links are civilizational and intertwined through the Nalanda-Lhasa link of the past centuries. After all, it was the Nalanda masters who taught Buddhism to their Tibetan counterparts, a fact acknowledged time and again by the 14th Dalai Lama. Despite 74 years of brutal occupation by the Han Chinese, the Communist Party of China, much to its chagrin, finds Buddhism flourishing in Tibet and the chants of Sanskrit based sutras pervading the Indo-Tibetan plateau. India does not need to rename places in Tibet to emphasize on its historical relationship with the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism, it is reverberated in the mantras daily in the highlands and in the temples. It is time that India recognizes its past linkages and ancient tradition with Tibet. This alone will give jitters to the Xi Jinping regime.

Before signing bipartisan-Tibet-Bill, PrezBiden ought to know it is merely a token exercise. By Hem Raj Jain

14 June 2024, [Pakistan Christian Post](https://www.pakistanchristianpost.com)

Tibet Bill is classic example of "Muddai Sust Gavah Chust" (Petitioner is lazy / disinterested but witnesses are serious / alert / interested) (2)- Prez Biden before signing Tibet Bill should demand (i)- proofs of Tibetan's STRUGGLE for freedom and self-determination (ii)- categorical statements of TGE / Dalai Lama declaring independence of Tibet (iii)- Expected role of the USA & Tibet-bordering-India in militarily helping this 'struggle' (3)- If the USA is really interested in independence of Tibet then it should commission US-Tibetan-Buddhism for this mission (4)- The USA will have to clarify Pakistan policy also because part of Tibet (in Ladakh) is with Pakistan. The US Congress (in the present global scenario of Cold War-II where the USA is trying to contain & discipline China) may be thinking that the USA has unsettled China and has put it on defensive by passing bipartisan Tibet Bill which is waiting for the signatures of Prez Biden to become law (as reported at <https://mcgovern.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=400111>) but the USA is living in its make believe world if it thinks so (about unsettling China and putting it on defensive by this Tibet Bill) for the reasons explained below:- (1)- The commentary by Jim McGovern on Tibet Bill says that "The people of Tibet deserve to be in charge of their own future, and, today, Congress has voted to stand with Tibetans in their struggle for freedom and self-determination" but this is not supported by facts on ground. Rather, "Tibet Bill is classic example of "Muddai Sust Gavah Chust" (Petitioner is lazy / disinterested but witnesses are serious / alert / interested) because there is no armed struggle (which only matter in any independence struggle) by Tibetans for their independence.

2)- Hence Prez Biden before signing Tibet Bill should demand from the US-Congress (i)- The proofs of Tibetan's STRUGGLE for freedom and self-determination (ii)- The categorical statements of Tibet Government in Exile (the TGE at Dharamshala) / Dalai Lama declaring independence of Tibet especially given the fact that Dalai Lama in the past has been equivocal about independence of Tibet and has been saying that he is not for separation of Tibet from China (as mentioned in

<https://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/opinion/details/4376> about <https://www.hudson.org/human-rights/the-dalai-lama-is-an-anti-separatist-element>) and (iii)- The expected role of the USA & Tibet-bordering-India in militarily helping this 'struggle' (3)- If the USA is really interested in independence of Tibet then it should commission US-Tibetan-Buddhism

for this mission as mentioned at <https://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/opinion-details/4376> otherwise this Tibet Bill is merely a token exercise or maximum a trial balloon to see how China reacts to it and will create more problems / confusion for Tibetans and for the larger world community. (4)- The USA will have to clarify Pakistan policy also because part of Tibet (Ladakh) is with Pakistan and India is already talking about recovering PoK militarily back from Pakistan.

Therefore Prez Biden should be objective before signing the said bipartisan-Tibet-Bill and should sign it only when Tibetans show any interest (worth the name on ground) in their independence.

Why China takes young Tibetans from their families

13 June 2024, [The Economist](#)

Visiting a Tibetan region where children must attend Chinese-language boarding schools

An air of quiet piety hangs over Rongwo Monastery in the western province of Qinghai. The streets near this ancient complex draw pilgrims and Tibetan Buddhist monks in dark red robes. Local believers make circuits around the monastery's yellow walls, turning a line of wooden prayer-wheels as they walk.

On a recent Monday afternoon, though, chattering schoolchildren thronged this sacred neighbourhood in the heart of Tongren, a small mountain city known to Tibetans as Rebkong. Youngsters in red scarves and uniform tracksuits bought fruit and snacks from market stalls, most without a parent in sight. Teenage high-schoolers and pupils half their age hauled small suitcases or sat in weary groups beside piles of schoolbags, bringing the bustle of a railway station to streets around the monastery.

Government policy explains the hundreds of unaccompanied minors filling Tongren's historic centre. This particular Monday was a public holiday for pupils across China, as the country marked the Dragon Boat Festival with a long weekend. But these youngsters were overwhelmingly ethnic Tibetans. As a result, on an overcast holiday afternoon they had already bid their families goodbye and were now heading back to one of Tongren's dozen or so boarding schools, in time for classes the next morning.

An ever-larger majority of Tibetan youths attend state-run boarding schools at the primary and secondary level, and in extreme cases pre-schools. That is true whether they live in the harshly policed Tibet Autonomous Region, or in the parts of historical Tibet that the Communist Party carved off and handed to the neighbouring provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan (these are run as "Tibetan autonomous prefectures"). At least 78% of Tibetan

pupils board, according to official data collected by the Tibet Action Institute, an overseas campaign group.

Lessons in these schools marginalise Tibetan culture. Over the past few years Mandarin Chinese has replaced Tibetan as the medium of instruction, with Tibetan taught only as a language, alongside English. All pre-schools, including in ethnic areas, have used Mandarin since 2021, to "seize the key period of language learning in early childhood", as the education ministry puts it.

Authorities call boarding schools "very convenient" for Tibetan farmers' and herders' children who would otherwise face "long and arduous journeys to school". Officials insist that parents freely choose whether children board. In Qinghai, a rugged place with Han Chinese, Tibetan, Hui Muslim and Mongolian populations, the provincial government declared in 2018 that "in principle" children should board only when necessary, that they should not board until the fourth grade (ie, age 11), and that in remote pastoral areas school policies should follow "the wishes of the masses".

Tibetan exiles and activists challenge this narrative. They cite state-media reports boasting of motherly care given to four- and five-year-olds in Tibetan boarding schools. They describe parents being threatened with fines or with a denial of schooling later on if they do not send children to board. Many Tibetan families see Mandarin as a path to employment. But as recently as the early 2000s Qinghai officials pursued that goal in more humane ways. To reduce drop-out rates and raise exam scores they expanded bilingual education, hired Tibetan teachers and accredited schools run by monks. Not now. Private Tibetan schools have been closed and teachers sacked for teaching Tibetan beyond the curriculum. This has sparked parent protests, including near Tongren in 2020.

Chaguan travelled to Tongren to weigh claims that coercive assimilation is now the norm. While in Qinghai he was followed by up to five unmarked cars. Tibetan-speaking officers (one of whom flashed a police badge) filmed and eavesdropped on conversations. In Huangnaihui, a hilltop village near Tongren, an officer's curt intervention silenced a school headmaster who had been asked how Tibetan parents view Chinese-language schooling.

Despite the officers' efforts, holes appeared in the official narrative. Start with those pupils in Tongren. Though some stepped off long-distance buses, others turned out to be locals, undermining claims that Tibetan boarding-school construction is solely explained by the need to spare herders' children from long journeys. Then consider two boarding schools in a river valley below Rongwo Monastery that serve Hui Muslim and Tibetan pupils, respectively. Hui pupils

who live in Tongren do not have to board, but rules are different for Tibetan pupils, your columnist was told.

Building schools to forge souls

In a Tongren suburb stands the Nianduhu Township Boarding Primary School. Its gates are flanked by murals showing pupils saluting the national flag, the Great Wall of China and the slogans: "I will become a great Chinese person" and "The motherland in my heart". The Tibetan-majority school is building dormitories. From the autumn 400 students will live in them, a local education official said. Asked about first- and second-graders, aged eight and nine, he replied that county authorities still need to decide whether those youngest pupils will board, but "the other students will all be boarding." That includes children with families nearby.

Such policies reflect an assimilationist logic. In 2015 the State Council (China's cabinet) called for faster boarding-school construction to fulfil "the goal that students of all ethnic minorities will study in a school, live in a school and grow up in a school". That serves a larger ambition: to "forge a strong sense of the community of the Chinese nation". That is party-speak for promoting a single national identity to defend social stability and national security. Though clunky, the phrase is enshrined in the party constitution as a guide to ethnic work in the Xi Jinping era. If Tongren residents forget the slogan they need only look up. It is spelled out in big red characters on the hill opposite Rongwo Monastery.

China's Ambitious '5G-A' Plans in Tibet: Strategic Implications for India

13 June 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Tenzin Younten

China's expansion of the "low-altitude economy" with cutting-edge tech has deep implications for its surveillance capabilities along the disputed border.

On May 21, China achieved significant progress toward the establishment of a "low-altitude economy" in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), with the successful functional verification of its first ever 5G-Advanced (5.5G) synaesthesia integrated base station in Lhoka (Shannan) Prefecture bordering the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base stations have been described by Huawei as a new revolutionary technology, along with passive IoT and endogenous intelligence, spurred by the 5G-A era.

China has developed the new 5G-A base stations to overcome the longstanding challenges faced by its traditional radars and cameras in terms of detecting and identifying small-sized drones operating within low-altitude airspace. These 5G-A base stations are equipped with comprehensive sensing capabilities that enable identification, real-time positioning, speed

detection, and tracking of low-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, ground vehicles, and other illegally intrusive targets. Following the completion of the first station, the China Mobile Tibet Company announced that its 5G-A base station has detection capabilities surpassing traditional radars. According to the company, the goal of these base stations in Tibet's border areas is to build low-altitude sensing networks, thereby fostering the development of drone inspection and early warning systems.

On April 29, Huawei and China Tibet Mobile Company completed construction of another 5G-A base station on Mount Everest near the Indian border.

At the heart of Beijing's broader strategic vision of establishing a "low-altitude economy" lies the construction of 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base stations, enhancing the network infrastructure and connectivity within low-altitude airspace. The use of 5G-A is a recent development in China, with 2024 being marked as the starting year for its commercialization. On June 6, over 35 Chinese cities including Beijing, Changchun, Harbin, Chengdu, and Tianjin, promoted the upgrade and evolution of existing 5G networks to 5G-A, while launching the "Joining Hands to Open a New Era of 5G-A" initiative.

The low-altitude economy refers to various economic activities occurring within the vertical airspace that extends from 1,000 to 4,000 meters above the ground where civil-manned and unmanned aircraft vehicles operate and promote the integrated development of related fields.

China's strategic vision for a "low-altitude economy" is enshrined in the "Implementation Plan for Innovative Application of General Aviation Equipment (2024-2030)" published on March 27 of this year. It describes China's overarching goal of achieving safe and efficient operation of low-altitude production and operation networks by 2030, setting a target for the low-altitude economy to be worth 1 trillion yuan that same year.

More significantly, the plan has also particularly placed 5G-A synaesthesia integrated technology as the cornerstone of the development of the low-altitude economy industry.

5G-A Synaesthesia Integrated Bases as the Backbone of the Low-Altitude Economy

The innovation of synaesthesia integrated technology in 5G-A has garnered great attention in China recently. 5G-A synaesthesia integrated technology combines multiple capabilities such as communications, imaging, and computing power, turning a regular communication network into a supercharged "radar," with high-precision and resolution perception capabilities.

The 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base stations are the fulcrum of the "low-altitude economy," as popularized with news headlines such as "5G-A enables the low-altitude economy to take off" by China National

Radio (CNR) on May 22. CNR paraphrased Cao Lei, deputy director of the Wireless and Terminal Technology Research Institute of the China Academy of Mobile Communications, as saying that “based on 5G-A technology, a new low-altitude intelligent network infrastructure can be created that integrates ‘communication, detection, navigation, and control,’ providing businesses with low-altitude network information transmission, supplementary safety controls, and other services, enabling the vigorous development of the low-altitude economy.”

China’s Northeast Securities Co. also reiterated that “5G-A (5.5G) introduced integration sensing technology is expected to become the core communication technology for low-altitude economic air traffic control systems.”

The 5G-A technology is not only superior to the 5G technology in terms of a tenfold increase in connectivity, speeds, and coverage but also provides a critical boost to managing unmanned aerial vehicles, thus revolutionizing industries focused on the low-altitude space. Tang Xue, vice president of ZTE, aptly articulated that 5G-A “isn’t about faster internet; it represents a paradigm shift in the way we live, work, and play.”

Therefore, these new 5G-A synaesthesia integrated bases in Tibet will be the catalyst to the establishment of a low-altitude network system, which will enhance communication, sensing, and computing services for drones operating in the low-altitude air spaces near the border areas.

Strategic Implications for the China-India border dispute

Yin Hao, an academician of the China Academy of Science, emphasized the need for a comprehensive monitoring service system for unmanned vehicles and drones during the “Wireless Sensory Integration Forum” on April 16. While speaking on the innovative directions of 5G-A, Yin highlighted the fact that cellular information networks can assist large-scale deployment of base stations with wireless sensing functions, enabling ubiquitous and continuous monitoring and tracking of low-altitude aerial vehicles.

The primary objective of the “low-altitude economy” is the commercialization of low-altitude airspace, which mainly includes drone delivery services, winged taxis for daily commutes, and drones or helicopters for tourism purposes. However, this emerging strategic industry also caters to the diverse needs of military players in the commercial, industrial, and civil sectors.

Notably, the world’s first 5G-A 128TR synaesthesia base station equipped with maritime monitoring technology was just completed in March in Zhejiang province, showcasing its use for maritime security. Similarly, the construction of 5G-A base stations in

Tibet’s border areas holds major strategic benefits for China. The technology bolsters infrastructure and network systems surrounding drone operations for both civilian and military purposes. The 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base stations in Tibet are presumed to support China’s border operations and management.

On April 16, a 5G-A base station in China’s southwestern province of Yunnan was built for border monitoring. Afterward, Yunnan Mobile announced that this base caters to the needs of the Public Security Bureau, enhancing their border inspection and supervision tasks.

These bases can be used for military and security applications in border areas in multiple scenarios. First, these 5G-A base stations possess many functions that could directly benefit the Chinese border defense forces or police including their capabilities for detection and monitoring, classification or identification, locating and tracking, alerting, drone support, reconnaissance, communication, and others. With these critical functions, the 5G-A synaesthesia integrated bases will significantly strengthen the management and monitoring capabilities of drones along the border.

Second, these base stations can bolster the PLA’s anti-drone defense system and serve as an early warning system against drone intrusion in its border areas, as remarked by the China Tibet telecom company in Shannan prefecture.

Third, the roll-out of 5G-A enhances China’s Smart Border Defense capabilities across the TAR’s border areas, defined as using modern scientific and technological methods to conduct real-time, comprehensive, and accurate monitoring and control of national borders.

Thus, China’s “low-altitude economy” is not only a major economic boost but also a significant push to form a long-term mechanism to ensure national security and stability in border areas. Moreover, the construction of 5G-A bases and the development of the low-altitude economy aligns with Beijing’s broader goal of strengthening border defense by revitalizing and developing the border area.

Conclusion

Amid heightened border tensions between India and China, the construction and operationalization of the 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base under the broader “low-altitude economy” vision are directly linked to Beijing’s strategic interest in bolstering border defense and security. These represent the latest developments in the ongoing drone race between India and China in the Himalayas.

China has already built 11,719 5G base stations in the TAR. A recent official announcement during the High-Quality Development Mobile Communications Forum indicated that the 5G network across China will be

upgraded to 5G-A network. It implies that more 5G-A synaesthesia integrated base stations will be constructed in TAR. The 5G-A base stations and the development of the “low-altitude economy” have the potential to revolutionize the PLA’s drone warfare and anti-drone defense systems in Tibet’s border areas.

On the other side, the Indian military has also strengthened its defense against drone attacks and intrusions along its Himalayan border with the recent induction of laser-based Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction Systems, capable of both “soft” and “hard” kills, including jamming and laser-based interception.

The TAR constitutes a portion of the historical geography of Tibet, with the traditional areas of Tibet comprising almost the entirety of the Tibetan Plateau. Since the People’s Republic of China’s occupation of Tibet in the 1950s, China’s economic policies in Tibet have always been closely tied to its strategic and military visions, encompassing infrastructure development, rural and urban construction projects, energy infrastructure projects, dams, and many more. The establishment of the “low-altitude economy” in the TAR represents Beijing’s latest attempt to transform the region into a highly militarized zone and strengthen its preparedness for potential conflicts with adversaries.

It is imperative to understand that 5G-A synaesthesia integrated bases in China are still in the developmental and testing stage. Some critics doubt the feasibility of such a grand vision of establishing a “low-altitude economy” in the Tibet Autonomous Region. In fact, there are many uncertainties and operational challenges facing China’s plan in the harsh and rugged terrains and atmosphere of the Tibetan plateau. However, concerns regarding the expansion of the “low-altitude economy” in Tibet’s border areas and its strategic ramification demand serious consideration and continuous monitoring.

Chinese armed forces have been upgrading. India must keep up

12 June 2024, [The Indian Express](#), Anushka Saxena

The Information Age is enabling revolution in military affairs, and the PLA is adapting to new modes and methods of warfighting. Integrating these is key for India as well.

As part of the reforms in the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) since 2015, China has focussed on preparing for combat keeping conditions of the “Information Age” in mind. It is doing so by integrating its services, arms and systems into a joint, network-centric fighting force. The PLA Western Theater Command (WTC) has played a proactive role in securing China’s southern and

southwestern borders, preparing for conventional and non-conventional warfighting, and acclimatising its personnel to the rough terrains and harsh altitudes of Xinjiang and Tibet. India is one of the principal operational directions in which the WTC is mandated to act. India needs to assess the WTC’s operational structure, training mandates and warfighting priorities, especially the theatre’s “multi-domain integrated joint operations” (MDIJO) efforts.

The WTC has focussed on three key factors. These include conducting combat training and preparedness exercises, getting acquainted with WTC’s harsh terrain bordering India; and building air superiority and transportation capabilities.

The WTC invests significantly in combat training and simulation. Accounts of such exercises feature both its successes and failures. In August 2018, an anti-aircraft artillery unit of Xinjiang Military District (MD) conducted a live-fire exercise in the Tian Shan mountains to refine the troops’ integrated combat capabilities. This was a test of the interplay between Command and Control (C2) and ground-based air defence units. The evaluation stage which assessed damage revealed that many anti-aircraft positions were in flames — indicating a failure on the surprise attack test. An assessment like this may give the Indian security apparatus clues as to the WTC’s weaknesses and what it should focus on.

Given the tough terrains and complex environments, aerial dominance is central to the theatre’s capabilities — and its biggest challenge. When pitted against India, an assessment of the ORBAT (order of battle) formulated by the Belfer Center indicates that as of 2020, the ground forces deployed on both sides are similar in numbers (over 2,05,000 troops), while Indian fighter jets outnumber Chinese — a 250 to 157 balance.

On ground-based air defence, four air defence brigades are attached each to the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts and the WTC 76th and 77th Group Armies. At the same time, the WTC air forces have their long-range surface-to-air missile installations. The WTC is enabling PLA ground and air forces to combine air defence systems. In light of this, India is investing in its own indigenous Very Short-Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORADS) and Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) to expand Army Air Defence (AAD) capabilities.

Over the years, anti-aircraft artillery units along with ground-to-air missile units, have become the backbone of the WTC’s air defence capabilities. In May 2021, the Xinjiang MD engaged in six rounds of weapons acquisition. At the time, India and China were still recovering from the deadly Galwan Valley clashes of June 2020. The fifth and sixth rounds of acquisition focussed solely on aerial superiority, through the induction of the PHL-11 122 mm calibre

self-propelled multiple rocket launcher system and the HQ-17A field air defence missile system.

The challenge of transportation is central to training in these terrains too. Given the “last-mile delivery requirements” of high-altitude zones specifically in the WTC, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are adopted for transporting food and essentials to active personnel. This is in addition to the induction of the Xi’an Y-20 “Kunpeng” heavy-transport aircraft, which can fly winter gear to border troops stationed along the LAC in seven hours.

Evidence for the use of UAVs comes from a November 2020 drill conducted by the logistics departments of the PLA army and the Tibet MD, where a drone delivery unit was required to transfer hot food, water, medicine and other urgent aid to personnel located at a base in the mountains, assuming that the manned mobile ground transportation unit was “blocked by enemy fire.” According to the report, the success of the drone delivery unit was determined by how decisive drone operators were in making a comprehensive judgement on terrain, wind speed, temperature and other factors to ensure the unit’s safe landing at the predetermined destination. The report promises that the PLA army logistics department is preparing to expand drone delivery to armament and ammunition supplies to active last-mile locations.

In an era where the Information Age is enabling revolution in military affairs (RMA), the PLA is adapting to new modes and methods of warfighting. Integrating these is key to the PLA’s goal of becoming a “world-class force” by 2049. Over the next few years, it is only likely that the WTC will double down on such measures, creating a joint force capable of conducting successful combat operations. India, then, must continue to observe developments in the WTC and direct its efforts towards countering them.

With Rajnath Singh’s re-appointment as India’s defence minister, one of the priorities on his military modernisation agenda would be the creation of integrated theatre commands (ITCs) in the Indian armed forces. Even though there is no intended timeline for this yet, Singh has argued that in some countries, theaterisation has taken more than two decades to materialise. This is true in China’s case if one considers the MR model a rung in the evolutionary ladder of theaterisation in the PLA. Now, as the point person for India’s theaterisation, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan has positioned the reform as India’s response to jointness efforts in the PLA. Given that ITCs are intended to promote a joint culture and not a service-specific culture, Chauhan has expressed the belief that the reform will catapult India into a new era of combat preparedness. However, with the Chinese PLA many steps ahead of the Indian armed forces in this regard, a concrete delivery timeline and

a larger, non-lapsable modernisation fund will be critical.

New Delhi’s Tibet-Taiwan move: How India-China relations will fare under Modi 3.0

12 June 2024, [FirstPost](#), Sriparna Pathak

The tone China has set to the relationship through its actions, be it at the border, through grey zone warfare, or its support for Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, the bilateral ties between two Asian giants under Modi 3.0 will continue to be a rocky one, if not rockier.

As the dust settles on the Indian general elections and the world watches polls in other parts of the world, questions continue to emerge on what sort of India would emerge further under the third term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet saw the retention of several ministers from Modi 2.0, including External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. This signals continuity in India’s foreign policy under Modi 3.0.

Even before the ministries had been announced, events affecting India’s foreign policy, particularly with regards to China, had been taking place. Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te congratulated PM Modi on X, and PM Modi reciprocated the wishes, stating that he looks forward to closer ties as India and Taiwan work towards a mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership.

China flared up, and the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India wrote on X that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China and that it is an “undeniable fact, a universal consensus of the international community, and a basic norm in international relations”. The interesting part to note is that while world leaders took to X to wish PM Modi, China’s President Xi Jinping did not send a personal note of congratulations, and the Chinese foreign ministry instead congratulated him, the BJP, and the National Democratic Alliance, adding that China looks forward to a “stable and healthy China-India relationship”. China, along with the US, was among the last countries to wish PM Modi.

A few days earlier in May, when elections were on-going, China released an old video of the Galwan Valley clash of 2020 at Pangong Tso finger 4. The clash is four years old, but the timing of the release raises suspicions about influencing the Indian electorate’s choices regarding voting for a government that could not stand up to the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, as portrayed in the video.

Before the last phase of elections in India, Meta released its threat adversarial report, in which it stated that they had removed 37 Facebook accounts, 13 pages, five groups, and nine Instagram accounts for

violating its policy against “coordinated inauthentic behaviour”. The network originated in China and was running what has been called “Operation K”, targeting the global Sikh community, including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, the UK, and Nigeria. The purpose was to divide the Indian electorate and interfere in India’s elections.

In April of this year, China released a list renaming 30 more places in Arunachal Pradesh. China also lodged a diplomatic protest with India over Prime Minister Modi’s visit to Arunachal Pradesh, where he dedicated the Sela Tunnel to the nation, which is to be built at an altitude of 13,000 feet. All this happened while India was either gearing up for elections or was in the thick of it.

Reportedly, India is set to rename 30 places in occupied Tibet, which China claims is called ‘Xizang’ and is currently a special administrative zone in China. China’s behaviour in 2024 alone set the tone of the bilateral relationship. With its posturing, usage of disinformation during elections, and diplomatic flare-up immediately after elections, China has given a clear-cut message as to which direction it wants the relationship to flow in.

On June 8, on Chinese social media, another video with the narrative that the Chinese People’s Liberation Army had thrashed the Indian Army was circulating in large numbers. However, neither country’s government has reported any clashes so far in 2024. Grey zone warfare, which operates in the absence of hot conflict, is an integral aspect of China’s three warfare strategies, which need to be factored in while analysing Sino-Indian relations and China’s posturing towards India.

In June this year, think tanks from India and Taiwan held military simulations that focused on scenarios about the Taiwan Strait and the India-China border in 2035. This is also not something that Beijing would view with kindness. However, while India adheres to China’s One China policy, it has active economic, technological, and civil society partnerships with Taiwan.

On the day of the swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet, there was a terror attack in Reasi, in Jammu and Kashmir, in which nine victims on the bus carrying pilgrims succumbed to gunshot wounds. The Pakistan-supported The Resistance Front (TRF) has claimed responsibility for the terror attack. China has often blocked India’s attempts at the United Nations to blacklist Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. In March this year, India stated that blocking evidence-based proposals in the UN Security Council to blacklist global terrorists without justification smacks of “double speak” in dealing with the scourge, which was a veiled reference to China that has put holds on multiple bids by India to sanction Pakistan-based terrorists. Given that India has yet again suffered Pakistan-sponsored

terrorism, Modi 3.0 will further double down on Pakistan-based terrorism while facing fresh hurdles from China.

On June 11, India’s EAM Jaishankar stated that the focus will be to resolve remaining issues along the India-China border and cross-border terror solutions with Pakistan. This is exactly in line with the party’s election manifesto, which mentioned strengthening border defences.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who retains his role in Modi 3.0, reaffirmed India’s commitment to safeguarding its borders and strengthening defence manufacturing and exports. He emphasised the priority of protecting India’s integrity and sovereignty during Modi 3.0. The focus is clearly on China.

Given the events that have unfolded so far in the bilateral relationship and the tone China has set to the relationship through its actions, be it at the border, through its grey zone warfare, or through its support for Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, the relationship between India and China under Modi 3.0 will continue to be a rocky one, if not rockier. New Delhi needs to be prepared for fresh surprises from Beijing and prepare accordingly.

Why India Needs To Act Against China's Renaming Of Arunachal Spots: Intel Sources Explain | Exclusive

11 June 2024, [News18](#), Manoj Gupta

Amid the Centre's plan to rename 30 places in Tibet, top intelligence sources said: “If allowed to continue, it poses serious implications for the region...It will have a major impact in the next 20 years if we don’t act and prove the facts.”

China’s bid to rename locations encircling the state of Arunachal Pradesh is a deliberate attempt to show territorial dominance and poses serious implications for the region, said top intelligence sources, amid the Centre’s plan to rename 30 places in Tibet. China has changed the names of 126 villages since 2017.

India has been rejecting China’s renaming of places in Arunachal, asserting that the state is an integral part of the country and assigning “invented” names does not alter this reality. Earlier in the day, CNN-News18 reported how the newly elected NDA government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the renaming of 30 places in Tibet, in response to China’s nomenclature aggression.

“While renaming by China won’t change the reality, it suggests aggression plans. This is ‘thread of beads’ strategy, whereby it encircles the entire region, much like what has already happened in the Indo-Pacific where people use the term ‘string of pearls’. Continuing with this can cause major tension in the region. If allowed to continue, it poses serious implications for the region...India’s aim in changing

names of spots in Tibet signals that Tibet, too, is a part of India. Even the locals there refer to the equation as Indo-Tibet relationship, not Indo-China,” said sources. “China’s actions can alter history and future generations will have the same identity. This encroachment is in the mind space and in social media, which will majorly attack future generations. This is a deliberate attempt to show territorial dominance. It will have a major impact in the next 20 years if we don’t act and prove the facts,” they added. Speaking at the South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce, Jaishankar had in April said, “If today I change the name of your house, will it become mine? Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always be a state of India. Changing names does not have an effect. Our army is deployed there (Line of Actual Control).”

In April, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs released the fourth list of standardised geographical names in Zangnan, the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh which Beijing claims as part of south Tibet. According to state-run Global Times, the Chinese government posted 30 additional names for the region. The Chinese Civil Affairs Ministry released the first list of the standardised names of six places in Zangnan was released in 2017, while the second list of 15 places was issued in 2021, followed by another list with names for 11 places in 2023.

The Dalai Lama Is Landing in the Middle of the 2024 Election

11 June 2024, [MSN](#)

In early September of 2020, Joe Biden, then the Democratic nominee for president, promised to put values—values held in contempt, he argued, by the man he would go on to defeat—at the center of American foreign policy. To act on his promise, he said, he would do something Donald Trump had neglected to do. “I’ll meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” Biden [said](#).

For American presidents, meeting the 14th Dalai Lama can bring tension and discord, because Communist Party leaders in Beijing consider Tibet to be a part of China. They consider any recognition of the Dalai Lama—a Mandela-level icon, a symbol of Tibet’s will to survive, and also (by the way) a living Buddha, a bodhisattva, to his millions of followers—a terrible insult to Chinese sensitivities. (To be fair, Chinese leaders are omnidirectionally offended, by supporters of Taiwanese independence and Hong Kong democracy; by Christians and Uyghurs and Mongols; and by anyone else who threatens their Middle Kingdom sense of imperial entitlement.)

More than three years into his term, Biden has not made good on his promise, though he has a plausible excuse: The Dalai Lama is 88 years old and in declining

health, and he seldom leaves his home in exile in Dharamsala, in the Himalayan foothills of India. But the Dalai Lama’s age now provides a path for Biden to keep his promise: The bodhisattva has bad knees and has decided, after much procrastination, to come to New York this summer to investigate the possibility of replacement.

A visit by Biden to the Dalai Lama’s hospital—or an after-surgery invitation to the White House—would signal continuing American concern over the oppression of Tibet and Tibetans, as well as support for one of the most heroic and pacific humanitarian leaders of our age. Such a visit would also have the benefit of signaling to the Chinese government that a U.S. president makes decisions independent of Chinese Communist feelings. (American CEOs are particularly feeble at signaling such independence.) A call on the Dalai Lama couldn’t possibly hurt Biden’s standing among voters, especially considering the Dalai Lama’s previous lack of interest in meeting with Trump when he was president. Five years ago, when I visited the Dalai Lama at his monastery in Manali, he told me that he did not look favorably on Trump’s jingoistic “America First” rhetoric. “Everyone first,” he said, laughing. “A much better idea.”

The exact timing of his trip to the United States—his first in seven years—has not yet been decided, but it will follow another event of some significance: a visit later this month to Dharamsala by Representative Nancy Pelosi, the former speaker of the House, and a congressional delegation. Pelosi has championed the Tibetan cause for decades, and, to her credit, she is loathed by Beijing for her comprehensive criticism of China’s human-rights record. In one of Pelosi’s earliest meetings with the Dalai Lama, she was so ferocious in her criticism of China’s human-rights abuses that the Dalai Lama said, impishly, “Now let us all pray so that we could rid Nancy of her negative attitudes.” (Pelosi’s trip has not yet been announced, and her spokesperson declined to comment, citing security concerns; news of the Dalai Lama’s proposed visit this summer was confirmed to me by sources involved in planning the trip.)

The reemergence of the Dalai Lama into American politics in the months preceding the 2024 presidential election is good news for the unfortunate Tibetan cause, constantly steamrollered as it is by the raw deployment of Chinese power. In Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, fear is ever present that the Dalai Lama’s eventual demise will make even more marginal the cause of Tibetan cultural and political independence. (As is implied by his status as the 14th Dalai Lama, the discovery of a 15th Dalai Lama is likely, though he will be reincarnated, according to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, as a small child, not as someone ready for international

diplomacy. And the Chinese government has its own plan to identify and elevate a quisling lama.)

Two months ago, I visited Dharamsala with, among others, Arthur Brooks, the Atlantic columnist and frequent writing collaborator of the Dalai Lama's. We both experienced a religious leader who, though hobbled by knee pain and slowed by age, was still lucid and eloquent on the great subjects of freedom and happiness. I called Arthur today to ask him what he makes of this news.

"In a contentious election year, it's good to remind Americans of our core values as a people, and among those values are religious freedom and standing up for the dignity of all people around the world," he said. "His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as we saw in Dharamsala in April, still has the ability to remind people around the world of what is good and true. For a Tibetan monk, he has an uncanny gift for bringing out the best of what it means to be a person and an American. This is an opportunity that President Biden cannot and should not miss."

After Nepal, will China reopen Covid-closed Tibet-India border trade points?

11 June 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

After China reopened 14 border trade points between its occupied Tibet and Nepal on May 25 after a prolonged Covid-19 closure, those on the Indian side of the border in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand state are feeling left out and have asked New Delhi to take up the issue with Beijing.

Indian traders in the area had been travelling to Tibet through the Lipulekh pass since 1992. The trade route was closed rather suddenly after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019, forcing Indian traders to return from the Taklakot mart in Tibet, leaving behind their woollen merchandise, reported *economictimes.com* Jun 10.

Five years have passed but the route has not been opened, the report cited an organisation of Indian border traders in the district's Dharchula town as saying.

The report said the traders who belong to the Bhotia tribe started to raise their demand for reopening of the trade route through Lipulekh after China recently opened all 14 trade passes with Nepal.

"We have so far sent 22 applications to the government of India requesting it to take up with the Chinese authorities the reopening of the trade route through Lipulekh pass but have received no response so far," Jeewan Singh Rongkali, president of Bharat Tibetan Simant Vyapar Samiti, Dharchula, has said.

He has said Indian tribal traders from Dharchula alone had left trading items worth Rs 15 lakh in Taklakot

Mart in Tibet at the time of the closure of border trade in 2019.

He has said over 450 Indian traders used to supply essential goods to residents of over 45 villages of western Tibet through this trade route since 1992.

"Out of over 1.5 crore trade annually, we have paid lakhs of rupees towards customs duty and other taxes to the government of India," Rongkali has said.

He has expressed fears that the mart made for Indian traders in Gakkhu town of Taklakot could be handed over to Nepalese traders, given the fact that China has not given permission to open passes along the India-China border.

Why China should introspect and stop seeing India through Western lens

08 June 2024, First Post, [Ambuj Sahu](#)

The Chinese strategic worldview is most receptive to how the US thinks and acts. Thus, it has also seen India in the same light in the last three decades

On May 27, 2024, *Global Times* published an article on India-China cultural exchanges written by Liu Zongyi, a senior scholar on the Indian subcontinent at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies. Liu Lǎoshī (teacher in Chinese) argues that people-to-people exchanges between India and China have suffered due to the deteriorating state of bilateral ties. He also believes that India sees US-China rivalry as a strategic opportunity to "rise as a great power" and seeks to "please the US at the expense of China-India relations."

According to him, "the regrettable situation in [bilateral ties], especially in terms of cultural and humanistic exchanges, is closely related to changes in India's domestic politics [and] the rise of *Hindu nationalism*". He goes one step further to criticise India's civilisational worldview as a *vishwaguru* and accuses it of lacking "a tradition of real historical research and serious historical records".

India's critique, as per Liu Lǎoshī's analysis, lies at three levels. Geopolitically, he dismisses India as a strategic appendage of the United States, unable to act in its own national interest. In domestic politics, he attributes right-wing populism and PM Modi's Hindu nationalism to the pursuit of aggressive foreign policy. Civilisationally, he narrowly interprets the concept of *vishwaguru* as 'world teacher' and falls into the trap of buying Western narratives of Indian civilisation.

Though he calls China "open and inclusive" and "good at learning from other civilisations", he forgets that India has been a *shruti-smriti* (listening-remembering) civilisation. His accusation of India's lack of written historical research is surprising and reflects China's

civilisational closeness to seeing others in the image of self. However, he is not alone.

Many Chinese academics in the last five years have taken similar lines in their analysis of India-China relations, especially since the border standoff in April 2020. Instead of blanket labelling them as propagandists of the CCP, it is important to point out that they risk groupthink in their own strategic analysis of India. They must realise that it is detrimental to India-China ties and the interests of both countries.

Watching India with American Lens

After the Cold War, the dominance of the US was the single most significant factor in shaping China's foreign policy. Strategists like Michael Pillsbury and Rush Doshi have provided detailed insights based on personal experiences and primary sources to show how China, after the 1990s, has sought to replace the US as the leading player in Asia. The Chinese strategic worldview is most receptive to how the US thinks and acts. Thus, it has also seen India in the same light in the last three decades.

Despite PM Vajpayee naming China as the reason behind India's nuclearisation in 1998, China did not destabilise the Himalayan borders because it was still recovering from the Third Taiwan Straits Crisis and preparing the ground for the US-China Relations Act of 2000.

There were no strong objections from China to the India-US Civil Nuclear Deal (2008) because it could not risk antagonising the US amidst President Hu Jintao's 'Peaceful Rise' narrative. Today, their Foreign Ministry Spokesperson reacts adversely to the smallest developments in the India-US relationship.

China's aggressive inroads in the Indian subcontinent and the Belt and Road Initiative came only in the mid-2010s, when the Obama Administration had already decided to 'Pivot to Asia.' Significant border transgressions, such as Doklam (2017), coincide with President Trump's disruptive approach to China, and the recent border standoffs occurred when US-China relations were in their worst phase. Contrary to the conventional logic of accommodating one adversary when competing with the other, China becomes hostile to the US and India simultaneously. It is a strong indication that China wears an American lens when dealing with India and sees it as a colluder with the US. China is most hypocritical in its perceptions of India's domestic policy and civilisational worldview. Responding to the West's allegation of authoritarianism and human rights, Chinese leaders have echoed many times that countries have a right to decide their form of governance as per the needs of the people. China's socialist system is a punching bag for the West and is often called oppressive and totalitarian. Until PM Modi suffered a setback in the 2024 general elections, India's legitimate and democratically-elected government was also being

undermined every other day by the Western media. It is duplicitous to see China extend similar treatment to India, a fellow non-Western country.

Under the Modi government, the *Vishwaguru* jibe is often used as a sarcastic dismissal of India's global aspirations and quest for status. How can a mere \$2,500 per capita GDP have anything to teach and offer the world? Irrespective of India's capacity to be a *vishwaguru*, the Chinese would find that one need not be a teacher in the orthodox sense to guide and learn only if they could remember their own heritage. Confucius once said, "If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher".

Like Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara delayed his own nirvana to help the other earthbound fellows attain the knowledge, India supplied COVID-19 vaccines to 101 countries at the cost of delaying the inoculation of its own masses. This *vishwa bandhu* zeal is not new. China should remember how even a colonised India sent a medical unit under Dwarkanath Kotnis to help the People's Liberation Army in the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1938. However, the Chinese civilisation is still traumatised by the Century of Humiliation and seeks retribution from the West, particularly the US.

The 'Three Shoulds' and One 'Must'

India's global aspirations are the international manifestation of Swami Vivekananda's words, "Strength is goodness, weakness is sin", because, in world politics, only material strength and diplomatic boldness are respected. No one should understand this better than China.

China should know that it has to live and co-exist with India, even if it drives the US away from Asia. Ancient civilisations thought not in years but in decades and centuries, so the following Three Should's would help China stabilise its relationship with India and attain a peaceful co-existence.

First, China should see its ties with India and the US separately. India is an autonomous power that does not subscribe to the ally-adversary dichotomy. It should also have the same regard for India's strategic space in the subcontinent as it expects the West to do so in Taiwan and East Asia.

Second, China should realise that, like all rising powers, India's recourse to nationalism reflects its global aspirations, fuelled by its economic prospects and aspirational youth. As it adopted Soviet-style Communism with Chinese characteristics, India would also infuse liberal democracy with its millennia-old values.

Third, as one of the two surviving ancient civilisations, China should see the Indian worldview to ensure its knowledge vacuum is not filled by superficial narratives advanced by vested interests in the West. It would only lead to strategic miscalculations and push India further away from China.

Before these 'Three Shoulds', there is 'One Must' that China needs to acknowledge if it genuinely seeks a rapprochement with India. China must realise that cultural and economic exchanges can only take place when countries do not threaten each other's security and political stability. Therefore, maintaining peace and tranquillity at the borders is fundamental for any normalisation of India-China relations.

Mainstream media turns blind eye as UN visits Xinjiang, criticises US

08 June 2024, [Pearls and Irritations](#), Jerry Grey

Human Rights are big news again. There are murders in Gaza, there are restrictions in Ukraine, there are allegations of abuses in Iran and any other place that the US sees as an adversary but, one thing that isn't big news is that the United Nations has recently visited Xinjiang. So far, 100% of our mainstream media have ignored this news.

The UN Special Rapporteur, Dr Alena Douhan didn't find human rights abuses by Chinese authorities on Chinese minorities, what she found instead were abuses by the USA against Uyghurs, caused by illegal and unilateral sanctions. But that's a different story.

It isn't just in China where the US could be accused of committing crimes against humanity. It's in their own streets, cities and especially their prisons. In fact, the situation is so bad that, across the political spectrum, 71% of all Americans feel their country is headed in the wrong direction.

When we look closer, we see they are right. US poverty, according to their own census in January 2024 increased to 11.5% and that means 37.9 million people are living below the poverty line in the world's richest country. This reflects in perceptions about safety too. While the FBI and the Bureau of Justice both report that crime, particularly violent crime has fallen, they both also report that the perception of safety from those crimes has also fallen – what this means is that, even though the numbers show crime is down, the reality is that people don't believe it. And this is borne out by the fact that only 41% of violent crimes were even reported.

Crime in the USA, according to both the FBI and Department of Justice (DoJ) is down but according to Gallop and Pew Research, it's up. It's just not being reported anymore. The FBI and the DoJ both report that solving crime is down too yet prison populations are increasing. If crime and clear up rates are decreasing but convictions are increasing – something is wrong with the statistics; in 2022 the number of inmates rose by 2%.

Perhaps it's related to the slave labour they accuse China of, the USA has legally mandated forced labour in prisons through the 13th Amendment and now

prison labour constitutes a huge contribution to the manufacturing of everything from breakfast cereals to the bombs dropping on Gaza.

Gun deaths are definitely not decreasing, the Gun Violence Archive reports 181 mass shootings in the USA up to 30th May, that's more than one a day with 44 deaths a day on average.

The Rand Organisation reported that forced labour and human trafficking into the USA, are both increasing. The number, they think, is up to 17,500 people a year. But that's not the worst of it, there are apparently 10.4 million people working illegally in the USA as undocumented labourers and since Biden took office, there have been over 2 million new workers arriving illegally every year. All the evidence suggests that many of these workers are underpaid. This is a form of human rights abuse not just for the illegal and undocumented workers but for the people who live in the region and are forced to accept lower incomes.

In four states, Colorado, Georgia, New Hampshire and Wisconsin, the minimum working age is 12, kids who ought to be in school can get out and get a job. There is only state, New Jersey, with a minimum working age of 16 and for all the rest the age is 14. Principle 5 of the 10 Principles of the United Nations Global Compact states that developed nations, and the US is one, should have no child under 13 in work at all and no child under 15 in anything other than "light work". Hazardous work should not be commenced until the child reaches 18. The US laws put them in breach of UN standards.

For a microcosm of what's wrong with income inequality in the USA, look no further than the Walmart organisation. They are the USA's largest employer and the owners, the Walton family are the USA's richest family with a combined wealth greater than Bezos or Musk. Yet when Bernie Sanders commissioned a report, it found that Walmart and Amazon contribute to the same problem. These massively rich individuals employ people who don't earn enough to live and need social security, Medicaid or food stamps to survive.

In other words, US taxpayers support people employed by the country's richest people. The Federal minimum wage has remained at \$7:25 since 2009. If that's not a human rights abuse, we need a new definition – but even this gets even worse – there are still 20 states that can pay as low as \$2:13 if the employee collects tips.

The Prindle Institute reports that failure to act on poverty is a human rights abuse, but when the UN went to the USA to check, they were ignored. Failure to act on gun control is a human rights abuse and this is a can that has been kicked along the road by the Biden Administration. They have increased background checks but not reduced the number of

guns on the streets. Failure to offer due process and a fair trial with the presumption of innocence is a human rights abuse which has been ignored by mandatory minimum sentencing standards introduced under Trump and continued under Biden. Failure to provide a safe environment for people to live and work, to commune in their neighbourhoods is a human rights abuse that the world can see just by switching on social media and taking a look at their tent cities and the drug addled streets.

While the US government points fingers, the UN points right back at them. The world is misinformed by US controlled or influenced media. US citizens are misled into believing their country is the arbiter of freedom and democracy. 71% of them have realised that their government is, in fact, the perpetrators of misery both at home and abroad.

CHINA-JAPAN-SOUTH KOREA TRILATERAL SUMMIT: WHY WAS THE CHANCE TO ADVOCATE FOR XINJIANG AND TIBET NOT TAKEN?

07 June 2024, Anna Pepe, [IARI](#)

The China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit was put on hold for four years. This year, the summit was finally convened, and the representatives of the three East Asian States met in Seoul on the 26th and the 27th of May. The highly anticipated summit took place in a surely competitive climate, as well as two weeks after Xi Jinping's tour of Europe and the Uyghurs and Tibetans' protests that accompanied it. This temporal proximity may have left observers to wonder whether the PRC controversial Xinjiang and Tibet policies would be among the themes of this year's summit, and who would take the chance to advocate for change. They were not, and no State did. Why?

In September 2023, after the ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN Plus 3) summit in Jakarta, South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul stated that the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan and the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s senior diplomats had agreed to resume trilateral dialogues at the "earliest convenient time". As reported by Japanese broadcaster TBS, ROK had suggested convening the *China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit* already in December; however, the dates remained under discussion. The news attracted attention from both the regional and the international audience. The three States had not held the summit since its 2019 edition in Chengdu, China, due to restrictions to contain the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and to the deterioration of ROK-Japanese relations.

In the last two months, new articles on the finalisation of plans for the two-days summit emerged, after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's ritual offering at the controversial Yasukuni Shrine and PRC's

response to Kishida's statements during his visit to the U.S. had foreshadowed a turnaround. According to *NikkeiAsia*, Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yook Suk Yeol were to attend it in South Korea (chair of this edition), presumably on the 26th and the 27th of May. Moreover, as stated by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Tokyo had been arranging bilateral summits on the fringes of the *China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit*.

RPC President Xi Jinping meanwhile returned from his week-long tour of Europe, five years after his last visit in 2019. Although the public's attention has been directed to understand whether Xi Jinping succeeded in restrengthening EU-PRC relations ahead of the EU Parliament elections (and to annihilate the threat of tariffs imposition on Chinese imports), there has been a second important effect of Xi Jinping's tour worth of mention: Uyghurs and Tibetans' protests in France and Hungary.

As French President Macron welcomed Xi Jinping on May 5, Uyghurs protested carrying placards against the Chinese crimes against their community. The protest, organised by the *European Uyghur Institute*, was partially sabotaged by a shouting group with Chinese flags. The French International News reported of Tibetans protesting Xi Jinping's visit as well, unfurling a large, white banner saying "Free Tibet. Dictator Xi Jinping, your time is up!" on a bridge as the President's motorcade passed, and then gathering in the afternoon in Republic Square and chanting "Long Live Tibet".

Tibetan protesters' plan to unroll a second banner, together with the Tibetan flag, on the Elisabeth Bridge in Budapest on May 6 was sabotaged by Chinese activists. The Tibetans protesters said the nearby Hungarian police did not intervene. Before Xi's arrival, Tibetans had already gathered to protest his visit to Hungary and to demand the cessation of human rights violations in Tibet; however, Xi's motorcade had avoided the protesting crowd by taking a secondary route.

The temporal proximity between Xi's tour and the *China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit* may have left observers to wonder whether the PRC controversial Xinjiang and Tibet policies would have been among the themes of this year's summit. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk readdressed the issue two months ago, on the 55th session of the Human Rights Council, demanding to the Chinese government to implement the recommendations made by his Office and other human rights bodies in relation to "laws, policies and practises that violate fundamental rights, including in the Xinjiang and Tibet regions".

Among the summit participants, and **at least in theoretical terms**, Japan is the one that could have

addressed the matter. We should indeed remember that it was Japan that championed the acceptance of the controversial concept of “human security” by governments in the East Asian region, thanks to a promotional campaign to which Japanese leaders devoted considerable financial and human resources. The Japanese government has offered many assistance programs in human security name as part of the *Overseas Development Assistance* (ODA). It is worth mentioning the establishment of the *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security* (TFHS) at the initiative of Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi in March 1999 as well. Certainly, acting as promoter of human security – albeit revisited – has enabled Japan to acquire a more prominent role on the international stage, independently of the U.S., and yet without jeopardising the friendship with the now decades-old ally or violating the 1947 Constitution.

Moreover, we should remember at least four other, most recent events.

Soon after his election in February 2021, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that Japan would not hesitate to criticise China’s human rights record, and appointed Erkin Said, a high-ranking official, as his human rights advisor. In October 2022, Japan voted at the United Nations Human Rights Council in favour of a resolution calling for a debate on an August report from Michelle Bachelet, then U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, which detailed possible crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities. That effort fell short by only two votes.

In November, Kishida reiterated Japan’s stance on human rights amidst a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping; without however directly mentioning the Uyghurs or the Tibetans. In December 2022, Japan’s upper house of Parliament, the House of Councilors, adopted a resolution to strengthen the Japanese government’s commitment to the cause by monitoring the situation and implementing new relief policies. Shortly after, the PRC Foreign Ministry stated the resolution “ignores the facts, maliciously slanders China’s human rights situation, seriously violates international law and basic norms governing international relations, grossly interferes in China’s internal affairs, and is extremely egregious in nature”. Although the resolution does not explicitly condemn the PRC nor mention it by name, Uyghur activists warmly welcomed its adoption. Ahmatjan Litip, Secretary-General of the *Japanese Uyghur Association*, emphasised how the resolution constituted an important precedent in Japanese legislative tradition: “in its first such resolution which has just passed, and the word ‘Uyghur’ is in the title (...)”. Moreover, on December 24, Japan announced it would not send its high-ranking officials to the *Beijing Winter Games*. The announcement came after the U.S.

decision to launch a diplomatic boycott of the Games citing “genocide and crimes against humanity” in Xinjiang; however, the government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno affirmed Japan had defined its action plan on its own. Japan never labelled its decision a “diplomatic boycott”; as acknowledged by The New York Times journalist Victor Mather, this aligned the country “with the United States while avoiding an official snub of China, Japan’s largest trade partner.”

However, **in practical terms**, there are factors that need to be considered.

Over the past few years, the PRC has surely grown its presence in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, and Kishida and Yoon might have therefore thought that addressing such a sensitive theme would stir **already turbulent waters**. Moreover, Japan and ROK seized this summit to back the case for addressing the implications of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)’s nuclear and missile development program. The PRC has been the DPRK’s top benefactor and, therefore, the most appropriate actor to (**at least attempt to**) persuade Kim Jong Un to desist from dangerous practices. Before the summit, Joseph DeTrani (U.S. special envoy for six-party denuclearization talks with North Korea from 2003 to 2006) said Seoul and Tokyo would “try to get China to convince North Korea to cease providing arms to Russia for its war in Ukraine” and “to use its leverage to halt ballistic missile launches.”

Lü Chao, an expert on the Korean peninsula issue at the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, correctly predicted the meeting would have promoted cooperation in diplomatic coordination, information communication, climate change, and logistics connectivity as well – perfectly in line with the *leitmotif* the founders of the CJK trilateralism wished for it to have. As remembered by Victor D. Cha and Marie Dumond, “the early roots of CJK trilateralism fell under the auspices of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) format. Proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, the leaders of the “plus three” countries held an informal breakfast meeting on the sidelines of the APT. Discussions revolved around various ways to promote collaboration across different sectors including trade, commerce, environment, and agriculture through joint research. Sensitive political and security issues remained off the table, although security cooperation did appear on the agenda on occasion.”

According to diplomatic observers, the PRC’s eagerness to participate in the trilateral summit was due to the need to protect its interests from the U.S.-led bloc. The RPC has already articulated its concerns about Japan and ROK’s renewed security cooperation with the United States. The summit followed the August 2023 *US-ROK-Japan summit* at Camp David,

where they agreed to strengthen their deterrence against DPRK threats and to defend a free and open Indo-Pacific against Chinese aggressions. DeTrani believed “China will ask that the ROK and Japan not to align with the U.S. against China, an issue that wasn’t on the table in 2019.” Therefore, any mention of the latest protests of PRC Xinjiang and Tibet policies, among others, might have been seen by China as a further sign of Japan’s alignment with the U.S., and sabotaged the summit and Japan and ROK’s plan to discuss higher-ranking issues on their common agenda.

Finally, matters-ranking aside, it is important to note that although Japan has shown interest in Xinjiang and Tibet situations, as we have seen its policies have never showed the **necessary assertiveness** to persuade observers it would have **explicitly** addressed the matter at the summit.

What do India’s neighbours expect from the new government?

07 June 2024, [Frontline](#)

A break down of India’s most important regional ties and how they will likely evolve under a new coalition government.

India’s general election has delivered a surprise setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which failed to win an outright majority and now needs the backing of its coalition partners to remain in power.

Over the past decade, Modi and the BJP have enjoyed authority and dominance over national politics. His third term as prime minister, however, will likely not be as smooth sailing as it was during the past decade, given the challenges of coalition politics. On foreign policy, though, the election outcome will not have much impact, experts have said.

Since Modi came to power in 2014, New Delhi has adopted “Neighborhood First” as a core component of India’s foreign policy, focusing on repairing and bolstering its ties with countries in the region.

Pakistan tensions remain

India’s most tense relationship is with its arch-rival and neighbour to the west, Pakistan. Many Pakistanis closely followed the Indian elections. “We are quite happy” to see Modi’s party lose its outright majority in parliament, Mushahid Hussain, a Pakistani senator and expert in foreign affairs said. “It will be a more chastened and somewhat weakened Modi now sitting in the PM office in Delhi,” he said, adding that Pakistan hopes to see “a more subdued Indian approach to Pakistan in terms of tone and rhetoric.”

Modi’s government has refused to engage with Pakistan over the past few years since accusing Islamabad of cross-border terrorism. India and

Pakistan have fought three wars and many skirmishes since both were carved out into two independent states in 1947, as British colonial rule of the subcontinent came to an end. Both claim the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir in full, but rule it in part. Relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbours have remained tense over the past few years.” From Pakistan’s perspective, one question will be whether Modi, who engaged in anti-Pakistan rhetoric in the election campaign, doubles down on it or backs away from it,” said Madiha Afzal, a foreign policy expert at the Brookings Institution.

Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan’s former representative to the United Nations said that it’s not a “favourable climate” for India-Pakistan re-engagement. “Pakistan expects little change, if any, from Modi’s third term in power. Prospects for any normalisation of ties between India and Pakistan are at best uncertain,” she said, adding that Islamabad “will adopt a wait-and-see policy.”

China looms in the background

As Islamabad strengthens its friendship with Beijing, which in turn is pumping billions of dollars of Chinese money into Pakistan to build key infrastructure such as roads and ports, India remains wary of China’s growing footprint and influence there. After the announcement of the election results, China congratulated Modi on his victory and called for “healthy and stable” bilateral relations.

Deep-seated mutual distrust has long characterised Sino-Indian relations, plagued by unresolved border disputes. Tensions remain high, with tens of thousands of Indian and Chinese soldiers massed on their disputed border since 2020, when a clash left 20 Indian troops and four Chinese soldiers dead.

Sana Hashmi, a China expert who previously worked as a consultant in India’s Foreign Ministry, said there won’t be any major improvement in India-China ties in the coming years. Without any Chinese concessions on the border issue, she said, New Delhi is unlikely to “turn mellow on its China policy”.

Sri Lanka invited to Modi’s swearing-in

The swearing-in ceremony for Modi’s third term is expected to take place on June 8. New Delhi has invited the leaders of some of India’s neighbours, including Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, to the event, according to local media reports. Both Hasina and Wickremesinghe have said they will be in attendance, a leading daily reported on June 6.

In recent years, Sri Lanka has become an arena of geopolitical rivalry and maritime competition between India and China. The country is strategically located at the crossroads of busy shipping routes. India and Sri Lanka share not only close trade relations, but also ethnic and religious ties.

But Chinese attempts to gain sway in Colombo over the past decade have caused concern in New Delhi. “Even while colonial legacies have historically bound India and Sri Lanka together, current events highlight complex dynamics,” said Anandhi Sasidharan, a former Sri Lankan minister, pointing to Sri Lanka’s acute economic crisis, debt problems, and the related geopolitical implications.

Under Wickremesinghe, however, relations between Sri Lanka and India appear to have strengthened over the past couple of years. The outcome of the Indian elections won’t have a major impact on ties with Sri Lanka, according to experts. “While Modi’s party may lack a clear majority, signalling potential constraints on policy implementation, India’s longstanding assistance to Sri Lanka remains steadfast,” said Shihar Aneez, a journalist based in Colombo.

Building on strength with Bangladesh

India’s relations with its eastern neighbour, Bangladesh, which have strengthened substantially over the past decade, will likely remain steady, said Bangladeshi officials and observers after the election results became clear. “Our deep friendly ties will continue,” Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told journalists, adding that bilateral ties reached new heights under Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart, Hasina.

The relationship between New Delhi and Dhaka is deeply entrenched and both share security and economic interests. “There won’t be any significant policy changes regarding Bangladesh,” said Touhid Hossain, a former Bangladeshi foreign secretary.

Ali Riaz, an expert on Bangladesh and professor at Illinois State University, echoed this view. “Nothing will deter Modi to continue his foreign policy objectives as the Indian establishment will continue supporting his government,” he said. “There isn’t much disagreement between the BJP and opposition parties on projecting India as an emerging global power.”

Tibetan Participation in India’s Elections: Past, Present, and Future

07 June 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Kalyani Yeola and Tenzing Dhamdul

Historically, Tibetans have been reluctant to claim Indian citizenship (and their right to vote) over fears of losing their distinct identity. That is changing.

India, the world’s largest democracy, recently concluded its general elections, forming a new government once again led by the victorious Bharatiya Janata Party. Amid this democratic exercise, a significant development has emerged involving the Tibetan population that has sought asylum in India since the occupation of their homeland by China.

In the latest general elections, a notable number of Tibetans participated in the seventh phase of voting in Himachal Pradesh on June 1, 2024. In this election, for the first time, a Tibetan settlement officer formally presented a list of pressing issues to the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who visited Dharamshala to appeal to the exiled Tibetans to exercise their right to vote in India.

Furthermore, the two main national political parties of India, the BJP and the Indian National Congress (INC), had town hall meetings with Tibetans in Dharamshala in the lead up to the elections.

Historically, Tibetans have participated in Indian general elections primarily in the border regions adjacent to Tibet, including Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and West Bengal. However, recent years have witnessed a rise in Tibetan voter participation across India. This increase can be attributed to a landmark decision and subsequent directives issued by the Election Commission of India. In 2014, the Election Commission’s chief instructed all Indian states to include Tibetans and their descendants born in India in the electoral rolls. This directive aligned with the 2013 court order that granted Indian citizenship to Tibetan refugees born in India between January 26, 1950, and July 1, 1987.

However, in implementing the 2014 directive, the government of India effectively decoupled the right to vote from citizenship for Tibetans residing in India. The government mandated that Tibetans must legally apply for citizenship rather than claim it as a birthright. This policy highlights the complexity of the relationship between citizenship and voting rights for Tibetans in India.

Elections and Tibet

Since the establishment of the Tibetan government-in-exile (officially known as the Central Tibetan Administration) in Dharamshala on April 29, 1959 Tibetans have developed their own system of governance outside of their homeland. Following the 2001 reforms, Tibetans began directly electing their political leader, the Kalon Tripa (later known as Sikyong), thereby exercising their right to vote in exile. Since then, Tibetans have held elections for their government-in-exile, achieving the unique accomplishment of having Tibetan voters from over 20 different countries participate in these elections. This form of democratic exercise is fundamentally distinct from the political system in occupied Tibet, which is currently governed by the Chinese Communist Party. This history demonstrates that Tibetans in the diaspora, particularly those residing in India, are well-acquainted with the electoral process and are not novices when it comes to participating in elections. Despite their experience, there is concern within the Tibetan community regarding participation in India’s voting exercises. Fears about losing their identity and

culture are paramount among Tibetans, particularly since voting rights are largely tied to obtaining Indian citizenship, which would necessitate forfeiting their Residential Certificate (RC). The RC is a legal document provided to Tibetans by the government of India. Once Tibetans procure citizenship and a voter card, the RC becomes null and void and must be returned to the government.

Nevertheless, there has been a clear increase in the number of Tibetans participating in Indian general elections from 2014 to 2019 and the current 2024 elections. There are two major reasons for this trend. First, Tibetans migrating to other countries have begun acquiring citizenship in those nations (which, unlike India, do not provide an RC). Previously, there was a taboo against Tibetans in India procuring Indian citizenship, even if legally applicable. However, this has changed as Tibetans see their family members gaining more legal access, including political rights, in other countries they reside in by acquiring citizenship.

One Tibetan voter remarked to Phayul Media: "When prices of essentials increase and policy changes occur in India, we Tibetans living in India are also impacted. Hence, it is our right as well as duty to elect the right individual who will bring change and alleviate the problems we face."

Second, although India has provided Tibetans with several rights to sustain and rehabilitate themselves, there are limitations. These include restrictions on buying property and the ease of traveling abroad, especially using the Identity Certificate provided by the government of India to Tibetans in India for travel abroad (which even Indian immigration officers often do not recognize). Traveling to Nepal, the home of another large Tibetan community, by flight is only possible for Tibetans with citizenship or a voter card; even travel by bus and other means becomes problematic with security checks where they do not accept Identity Certificate.

A Tibetan who participated in the recently concluded general election stated, "I have relatives in Nepal and meeting them becomes a problem if I do not have proper travel documentation. This is where the voter card becomes crucial, as Nepal recognizes it, unlike our Identity Certificate, making travel hassle-free."

These issues have become more pressing as Tibetans have moved from merely sustaining themselves to prospering, necessitating the ability to travel abroad and buy property.

Significance of Tibetan Participation in India's General Elections

Since being forced into exile in 1949, Tibetans have moved to different regions of the world and made significant contributions to their respective nations. Many have even started taking active political and administrative roles. Notable examples include Bhutika Karpoche, a member of the provincial parliament of

Ontario (Canada); Aftab Karma Singh Pureval, the current mayor of Cincinnati (U.S.); and Namgyal Gangshontsang, the mayor of Oetwil am See (Switzerland), to name a few.

Furthermore, even if Tibetans are not able to be directly elected and involved in decision-making, their votes in countries like the United States have enabled them to effectively lobby legislatures to pass concrete bills and acts that support Tibet and the Tibetan people. Most recently, the Europe for Tibet campaign – led by various offices for Tibet, Tibet support groups, friends of Tibet, and Tibetans – in line with the ongoing European Union (EU) Parliament elections has been able to lobby and garner the support of more than 100 contesting candidates for Tibet.

Many Tibetans and observers believe that it is high time for Tibetans in India to legally claim their vote and push for their political, social, cultural, and educational rights. Although they do not possess the right to hold dual citizenship in India, they can participate in both the Tibetan government-in-exile (TGIE) elections and the Indian general elections. By making good use of this opportunity, Tibetans can lobby for their rights in India.

Conversely, India might contemplate instituting provisions for representing individuals of Tibetan origin within the Indian Parliament, drawing inspiration from the historical allocation of two reserved seats for the Anglo-Indian community. Considering the long-standing presence and contributions of Tibetans in India both before and after its independence, such a measure would be appropriate and just.

Conclusion

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the Galwan Valley clash between India and China, fewer Tibetans have been able to escape occupied Tibet and come to India, where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile are based. Migration is a phenomenon that has impacted everyone and, supplemented by legal and other constraints, Tibetans in India are also migrating to many developed countries. However, there has been an increase in Tibetans obtaining legal documents in India, including citizenship, and they have gradually become more vocal about their rights and duties. It is likely that Tibetan participation in subsequent general elections will continue to increase.

The Dalai Lama, whom many wish to see conferred the Bharat Ratna, and other Tibetans who have received Padma Shri and other awards, including for gallantry in defending the nation, have been integral to India's growth since its independence in 1947. Tibetans who have settled in India and many born here represent a national asset with their unique culture, heritage, and identity that must be preserved and allowed to flourish. These elements are vital for India to realize its

vision of a “Viksit Bharat” (Developed India) by 2047 and to showcase to the world the principle of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (The World Is One Family).

‘Short of war,’ China’s gray zone strategy on Taiwan is gathering in intensity

06 June 2024, [The Washington Post](#), Kevin Rudd

The West must strongly deter — without foreclosing a future reconciliation between Taipei and Beijing.

Kevin Rudd is Australia’s ambassador to the United States and was previously prime minister and foreign minister. This is an edited extract of a speech delivered Thursday at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. The speech is a personal reflection in his capacity as a China scholar and not as an official representative of the Australian government.

The central question for our time, if we are to avoid war across the Taiwan Strait, is to understand how Chinese President Xi Jinping actually interprets the deterrence strategies of the United States, Taiwan itself, and U.S. allies and strategic partners.

What strategy is China now embarking upon, short of preparation for an actual invasion, to achieve its political objectives in relation to Taiwan? And what is the role of deterrence in responding to such a strategy?

The key to understanding Beijing’s red line on Taiwan’s political status is China’s fear that Taiwan will become an independent state, and be recognized by the international community as such, thereby destroying the possibility of unification with the mainland.

This, in turn, is based on Beijing’s insistence that any political dialogue between Taiwan and the mainland must be based on the “1992 Consensus” — an ambiguous arrangement broadly based on the principle of “one China,” albeit with differing interpretations of what that means to each side.

Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), in government since 2016, has opposed the “one China” element within the 1992 Consensus. As a result, Beijing has rejected all official dialogue with Taiwanese administrations since the party came to power. The DPP has argued that Taiwan was already independent and so had no need formally to declare it. Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan’s president from 2016 to 2024, took this concept further — continuing to reject the 1992 Consensus, while refining the Democratic Progressive Party’s position on Taiwan’s political status as one committed to “maintaining the status quo.” This position has been reiterated by the new DPP president, William Lai, who took office last month.

But Beijing is increasingly making it plain to foreign interlocutors that this stance is not sufficient. Far from

being relieved that the DPP has stepped back from the brink of any formal declaration of independence, Beijing is signaling loud and clear that its political objective remains forcing Taiwan into negotiations on its preferred “one country, two systems” model, which it has used for Hong Kong.

Beijing might well be in the process of concluding that Taiwan thinking of itself as de facto autonomous, with the international community on much the same page, will become further entrenched — and irreversible. As time begins to run out (from China’s perspective), we will begin to see a change in Chinese strategy toward the “Taiwan problem.” **Indeed**, we are already seeing it, with China increasingly availing itself of a multidimensional “gray zone” strategy over the past 18 months or so, a strategy aimed at applying new forms of pressure on Taiwanese and international public opinion to force Taipei to the negotiating table. Prominent analysts have described the gray zone strategy as seeking “economic, military, diplomatic, or political gains without eliciting a costly and direct response from an opponent.” Others have described it as a “short of war” approach — a combination of political, military, diplomatic, economic and cyber measures whose objective is to achieve a psychological, attitudinal and then behavioral change on the part of Taiwanese public and political opinion. Story continues below advertisement

These measures include intensifying political assaults by Beijing to delegitimize Taiwanese political leaders opposed to unification. They also involve military assets: naval, air, coast guard and other intrusions across the median line, across Taiwan’s 24-mile contiguous zone and in and around Taiwan’s offshore islands, are meant to show the Taiwanese that their administration is incapable of defending Taipei’s claims to sovereignty. They also entail punitive economic measures (well short of a blockade) aimed at impeding Taiwanese trade, investment and other national income, to demonstrate to apolitical Taiwanese voters Taipei’s vulnerability.

During her tenure, Tsai pointed to mounting cyber intrusions into Taiwan’s economic and communications infrastructure, again with the intention of demonstrating to the Taiwanese people the acute vulnerability of their systems to an integrated cyberattack.

For China watchers, there are some similarities in Beijing’s “short of war” strategies that have already been tried in the South and East China Seas, and those being tried on Taiwan. Japan has seen this with the intensity of People’s Liberation Army Air Force sorties around Senkaku-Diaoyu Dao. We have also seen China assert nonlethal coercive actions in relation to the Second Thomas Shoal and the Philippines.

With Taiwan, however, there appears to be a growing intensity across the full range of gray zone activities.

And those are likely to increase as the DPP settles in for another term and as Beijing's preferred political partner on Taiwan (Kuomintang, or KMT) looks at the prospect of a cumulative 12 years in opposition.

An embrace of gray zone agitation does not mean China has suspended its efforts to build the military capabilities necessary to take Taiwan by overwhelming military force. Those efforts continue.

And there is no inconsistency in China pursuing these two approaches in tandem. China's political strategy for unification with Taiwan has always had a fundamental military component. Indeed, these two approaches are entirely compatible if their cumulative effect is to reduce Taipei's deterrence and war-fighting capabilities, as well as its political, social and economic resilience.

Deterring China from launching military action against Taiwan is the cornerstone of a U.S. and allied strategy for preserving the status quo and the wider geostrategic stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The question that arises for all of us, however, is how to also deter China's emerging menu of measures that remain "short of war" and "short of invasion" but that share the same political objective, which is to force Taipei to capitulate.

Governments across the region and the world will increasingly be required to draw a clear linkage between identifiable gray zone actions on the one hand and a series of calibrated policy responses on the other. The alternative is no response at all — which presumably is Beijing's current expectation.

In the future, the Taiwanese might choose to engage in a fresh round of negotiations with Beijing on easing cross-strait tensions, new forms of economic cooperation and new approaches to the political relationship between them.

Story continues below advertisement

Indeed, all our interests would be served by breaking the 1992 Consensus impasse so that effective dialogue can recommence after nearly a decade of silence. Silence accentuates tension; talking can reduce it. As Winston Churchill famously reminded us, it's always better to "jaw-jaw than war-war."

But there is a difference between a voluntary, agreed approach to negotiations and a coerced one.

For Beijing, reassurance that Taipei and its international partners will sustain the status quo on Taiwan's future political status is essential for strategic stability. But with Xi's evident frustration at Taiwan's continuing autonomy, reassurance alone will not be sufficient.

It needs to be part of a much wider equation of integrated deterrence that will command all our efforts for the decade ahead if we are to successfully preserve the peace.

India to rename two dozen places in Tibet region under China as retaliation

06 June 2024, [The Northlines](#), Girish Linganna

India has initiated a retaliatory effort against China's renaming of locations in India's Arunachal Pradesh state. The Indian government intends to rename over two dozen places in China's Tibet Autonomous Region as a response.

According to The Diplomat, a media organization, they have obtained a comprehensive list of the places that will be renamed in China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Indian military sources have provided this list, and it is anticipated that the official release will take place once the new government assumes power in Delhi, following the formation of the new government.

Starting on June 8, Modi will serve his third term as Prime Minister with a smaller majority, necessitating reliance on coalition partners for governing. However, this reduced political space is unlikely to significantly affect foreign policy, as there is broad support across multiple political parties for Modi's objective of enhancing India's global influence and power.

New Delhi suspects that China's renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh is an attempt to bolster Beijing's territorial claim on this large province in northeastern India, which China refers to as Zangnan or "southern Tibet." This move is seen as an effort to assert control over the region and consolidate China's influence.

According to The Diplomat, the Indian Army's information warfare division is believed to be responsible for the renaming of Tibetan places in Arunachal Pradesh. Additionally, with the support of renowned research institutes such as the Asiatic Society in Kolkata, the Indian Army has been actively disproving the legitimacy of the Chinese names by conducting thorough research. Their efforts aim to counter China's narrative and provide accurate information regarding the region.

Under its logo, the Indian Army has shared detailed tweets that challenge China's renaming of seven places in Arunachal Pradesh. Furthermore, they are actively working to counter the renaming of all the other 30 or so places that the Chinese government has renamed. The tweets aim to provide accurate information and refute China's attempts to assert control over these regions.

India's military has recently compiled a list of over 30 places in Tibet that are set to be renamed. The objective behind this is to reclaim their ancient names in Indian languages, which are derived from historical records. This initiative aims to restore and recognize the historical significance of these places based on authentic sources.

According to sources, this list of renamed places in Tibet will soon be made public through various media

platforms. This is part of a larger global campaign aimed at presenting a compelling counter-narrative to China's claims on India's Arunachal Pradesh state and other disputed border regions. The intention is to showcase India's perspective and challenge China's assertions by providing alternative viewpoints and historical evidence.

Military officials, who wished to remain anonymous, have stated that the new names given to these places are supported by thorough historical research. This signifies that considerable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of the chosen names.

According to an Ex IB officer, if India proceeds with the renaming campaign, it would essentially reopen the issue of Tibet. Although India has recognized Tibet as part of China following its forcible occupation by Beijing, the current Modi government shows a willingness to change its stance in order to counter China's aggressive actions. This shift in approach reflects India's efforts to challenge China's territorial claims and renaming initiatives, as reported by *The Diplomat*.

In recent weeks, the Indian Army has arranged numerous media trips to the contested border regions. During these visits, journalists were given the opportunity to interact with local residents who strongly dispute China's claims and assert that their allegiance has always been to India. These efforts aim to showcase the perspective of the locals and highlight their unwavering support for India's sovereignty over these areas.

An officer involved in the campaign, who preferred to remain anonymous, stated that the primary objective is to promote India's counter-narrative regarding the disputed border. This would be achieved by leveraging regional and global media platforms and emphasizing both comprehensive historical research and the opinions of local residents. The aim is to establish a strong and credible narrative that supports India's perspective on the border issue.

In an apparent attempt to reinforce its territorial claim over Arunachal Pradesh, China renamed 30 locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in India's northeastern state in March. The Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, responsible for naming administrative divisions, issued a list of "standardized" geographical names in Arunachal Pradesh, known as Zangnan in Beijing's terminology. This move by China was reported by the *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong-based newspaper.

China's renaming of locations in Arunachal Pradesh comprises a list that consists of 11 residential areas, 12 mountains, four rivers, one lake, one mountain pass, and a parcel of land. These new names are recorded in Chinese characters, Tibetan language, and pinyin,

which is the Roman alphabet-based representation of Mandarin Chinese.

Quoting the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, the *South China Morning Post* reported that the renaming of geographical names in Zangnan (Arunachal Pradesh) was carried out in accordance with regulations defined by China's cabinet, the State Council. The ministry, in collaboration with other relevant departments, stated that they standardized certain geographical names in the region based on these provisions.

China's decision to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh is not new, as this marks the fourth instance of such a unilateral action by Beijing. In 2017, the first list of six standardized names for locations in Arunachal Pradesh was released, followed by a second list in 2021 featuring 15 place names. In 2023, a third list was published, containing names for 11 places. However, the most recent fourth list is particularly significant, as it introduces nearly the same number of new place names as the previous three lists combined. India has consistently dismissed China's attempts to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, affirming that the state is an intrinsic component of the nation. India maintains that the act of assigning "invented" names does not change the underlying reality of Arunachal Pradesh's status as an integral part of the country.

In 2023, the former spokesperson of India's External Affairs Ministry, Arindam Bagchi, expressed the country's response to the reports of China's renaming efforts. He straightforwardly rejected China's attempt, emphasizing that this was not the first time such actions were taken by China. India's outright rejection asserts its stance on the matter, asserting that it does not accept the validity or legitimacy of China's renaming endeavors.

Furthermore, in response to China's latest round of efforts to assert its claims on Arunachal Pradesh, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the region in March 2024. During his visit, he inaugurated the Sela Tunnel constructed at an elevation of 13,000 feet. Beijing responded by filing a diplomatic protest with India.

Addressing China's persistent claims on Arunachal Pradesh, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar described them as "ludicrous" on March 23. He emphasized that the state was an inherent and natural part of India, firmly rejecting China's assertions.

Regarding the issue of Arunachal Pradesh, India's External Affairs Minister responded that it is not a new matter. He highlighted that China's claims and attempts to expand those claims are baseless and continue to be deemed as ludicrous. He made these remarks while addressing a question on the Arunachal issue during a lecture at the esteemed Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. The minister emphasized India's steadfast position regarding the region's status.

In addition, the External Affairs Minister reiterated India's clear and unwavering stance on the matter, noting that it has remained consistent over time. He acknowledged that the issue of Arunachal Pradesh would be an integral part of the ongoing boundary discussions between the two countries. This statement reflects India's commitment to address the matter within the context of bilateral dialogues. (IPA Service).

China 'Heats-Up' Indian Border With Civil-Military Fusion, Dual Use Villages To Assert Claims Near Disputed LAC

05 June 2024, [The Eurasian Times](#), Ritu Sharma

India's China problem has been festering for some time now. The new Indian government will have a task cut out for it to arrest the downward spiral of ties with China as Beijing has already begun upgrading its "xiaokang" (villages) along the 3,500-kilometer-long border with India. Experts see it as a "gray zone" tool from China's playbook to assert claims on disputed areas.

These villages have "military and dual-use infrastructure," and many are clustered along the eastern sector that borders Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state that China covets and claims to be "South Tibet."

A no-patrol buffer zone was created around Patrolling Point-14 in Galwan Valley three weeks after the violent clash in which 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed on June 15, 2020. China, however, has recently completed construction of a road from the north of Samzungling to the Galwan Valley, providing the PLA with a 15 km shorter alternate axis to rapidly build up troops in the area.

China has also tried to offset its air combat disadvantage at high altitudes by deploying its J-20 and J-10 fighters closer to the border.

The infrastructure building is 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," an analysis by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) contends.

The analysis, done under the China Power Project, elucidates how these villages are located as close as just seven kilometers from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The border village of Zhuangnan (庄南) has

seen significant additions to military or paramilitary infrastructure in recent years.

Previously, satellite images showed a walled complex with at least eleven buildings in 2019. By 2020, some buildings will be demolished to pave for new ones. In 2022, barracks-like structures appeared along with a large building and a radome or communication tower. An image from December 31, 2023, showed the construction of new infrastructure for monitoring or logistics support purposes.

"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," the commentary reads.

The location of these villages so close to the border indicates that it gives the Chinese Army and Para Military forces a "vantage point" for monitoring activities along the border.

Indian experts have been raising concerns over the massive infrastructure building on the Chinese side of the border.

Former Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane (retired) told the EurAsian Times: "China has been investing in creating infrastructure, especially roads and railways in border areas ostensibly for the benefit of local people. However, in the absence of any sizable local population to justify such investment, it is apparent that such developments are for military purposes."

Another village, Majiduncan, less than 10 km northwest of the disputed border, has seen many infrastructure additions over the past two years. Earlier, it had few buildings and a helipad, but by November 2023, images show that a huge building complex had emerged alongside two helipads and a paved network of roads.

"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," the CSIS commentary reads.

Civil-Military Fusion To Assert Claims

The dual-use facilities align with China's Land Borders Law, which embeds border defense into the responsibilities of border area governments. The border villages are meant to strengthen the construction of defense infrastructure to maintain border security.

"This emphasis on leveraging civilian villages to support the military bears the hallmarks of China's "military-civil fusion" strategy, which aims to fuse

China's economic and military development to support overall national objectives," the report reads. China has also been constructing a new highway, G216, along the Ladakh region of India, which will allow the rapid mobilization of Chinese troops during a similar confrontation between the two countries on the LAC.

So far, China has only one highway, G219, in Ladakh. Earlier, the treacherous terrain in the region thwarted Beijing's plan for infrastructure development. But not anymore. The sole highway has been vulnerable to the Indian military. And now, China is close to eliminating its vulnerability by completing an alternate route known as the G216.

The CSIS analysis covers just four villages. In recent years, China has expanded and upgraded its civilian and military infrastructure in the area.

The Pentagon's 2023 Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China said that Beijing continued to develop military infrastructure along the LAC. "These improvements include underground storage facilities near Doklam, new roads in all three sectors of the LAC, new villages in disputed areas in neighboring Bhutan, a second bridge over Pangong Lake, a dual-purpose airport near the center sector, and multiple helipads," the report said.

With the adversarial ties between India and China showing signs of improvement, New Delhi has also started building strategic infrastructure on the border. India has been building tunnels, roads, and bridges on its side of the border for quick deployment of troops and weapons.

However, beyond infrastructure development, the new Indian government will need to focus on defense acquisition for its military to continue combating parity with China.

Decoding the role of Chinese Military Companies operating with the PLA Information Support Force (ISF): A Comprehensive Analysis of the Major Military Companies

05 June 2024, [Usanas Foundation](#), Tenzin Younten and Tenzin Sherap

The establishment of the PLA's Information Support Force (ISF) has significantly reshaped China's military-industrial complex, driving major Chinese military companies to the forefront of military informatization and Information Warfare. This paper delves into the critical roles of these companies within the PLA ISF's operational framework and their contributions to the development of an advanced, integrated military information network system capable of supporting China's strategic objectives in future warfare.

On April 19, the historic establishment of the PLA's Information Support Force (ISF) marked a new era in China's military Modernization, Informatization, and Intelligentization efforts.

The move, part of a broader military reform aimed at the rapid development of a highly informatized force, had an immediate and massive impact on Chinese military companies. These companies, key players in coordinating the construction and application of the military network information system, have seen a significant surge in their stock prices, reflecting their integral role in the nation's defense industrial base.

More than a month has passed since the PLA's last reform. The newly formed PLA ISF is poised to streamline and integrate key companies in the Military communication and information technology sectors, fostering enhanced coordination and a unified approach to military informatization and information warfare. Notably, there were four major impacts of the PLA ISF's establishment on China's Military Industrial complex:

1. The pivotal role of the Chinese military companies in the formation and operationalization of PLA ISF.
2. The Chinese companies engaged with the PLA ISF are poised to play a greater role in advancing the military informatization and building of the PLA's network information system.
3. PLA ISF is expected to drive rapid growth in military companies, particularly those within the information and technology sectors.
4. Creation of new employment opportunities for Chinese youths in the Military.

As published on the China Energy Network on May 21, 2024, Minsheng Securities released a research report on the computer industry, which pointed out that the military industry is facing a major turning point in military informatization and resonates with the four major impacts.

On May 22, [Yuncaijing](#) (云财经网), a leading financial trading research platform in China, reported a significant stock rise of industries within the military sector especially in the information and technology sectors following the PLA ISF's formation. The stocks of China's military industry giant including Jiean Hi-Tech (300845), Guanxiang Technology (301213), Gaoling Information (688175), Guangha Communications (300711), Gaomeng New Materials (300200), Shipbuilding Emergency (300527) among many others all rose by a 20 percent. Simultaneously, many other industry giants such as Beijing Andawell Technology Co., Ltd, T(300581), Tianhe Defense (300397), Torch Electronic (603678), and Andaville(300719) stock experienced a 10 percent increase.

Other significant military companies recording stock rise include Zhongbing Red Arrow Co., Ltd. (000519), Fenghuo Electronics (000561), Aerospace Changfeng (600855), and TianJin 712 Communication & Broadcasting Co Ltd (603712). This stock increase highlights investor confidence in the strategic importance and future profitability of companies aligned with the PLA ISF. By China's 7.2 percent increased defense budget announced this year, Zhiyan Consulting's forecast stated that China's expenditure for military information network-related companies is expected to exceed 250 billion yuan in 2025, and its total market size will exceed 160 billion yuan by 2027. This document offers a comprehensive analysis of more than 70 prominent Chinese defense companies believed to be operating in cooperation with or under the PLA's Information Support Force. It outlines their involvement in information procurement, processing, transmission, and security, as well as their role in the production of military electronic components and simulation technologies. The paper is structured into two sections, covering the profiles of Chinese defense companies operating alongside the PLA's Information Support Force and the potential for substantial job creation in the military information technology sector for Chinese youth in the upcoming years.

Broadly, the recent establishment of the PLA's three new independent arms under a new force structure was a strategic requirement to achieve a fully modernized national defense and military force by 2035 and to become a world-class military by 2049. The founding of the PLA's Information Support Force and integration of military companies within it adheres to the 2027 benchmark goal of integrated development of the Chinese military through mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization and fielding a combat-ready force with improved strategic capabilities to defend national sovereignty, security, and development interests. (Guangming Daily, 2020)

Chinese Military Companies' alignment with PLA's Information Support Force drives Military Informatization"

With the significant stock rise of key Military industries across China, the Chinese information and technological companies are steadfast to play a major role in the newly formed PLA ISF.

The wave of mergers and alignment of Chinese military industries with the PLA ISF is evident by their role in the construction and development of the military information network system and their subsequent contributions to the PLA ISF's operational framework. Some companies like Zhimingda (智明达), and Fenghuo Electronics (烽火电子) have made such connections more noticeable. On May 17, Zhimingda (688636.SH) stated on an investor

platform, "The information support force is a relatively new military branch, and equipment in this field is being planned, and the company will actively participate in it". Similarly, On May 16, Fenghuo Electronics shared "the establishment of the information support force provides the company with opportunities to participate in the informatization construction of the army. The company will continue to promote business development and contribute more to the informatization of the army".

In recent years, under Xi's Central Military Commission and the Central Commission for Military-Civilian Fusion Development, China has systematically reorganized its science and technology enterprises to ensure that new innovations simultaneously advance economic and military development. With the recent strategic overhaul of PLA, the Chinese Military or Civilian companies in the domain of information and technology will operate directly or indirectly under the Chinese Information Support Force (ISF), making significant strides towards creating a world-class Informatized Military. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the PLA to create a highly informatized force capable of dominating all networks and expanding the country's security and development interests. It is increasingly clear that Chinese military companies are leading the charge toward creating the PLA's Information Network System, also known as the "operational system of systems", enabling the PLA to acquire, transmit, process, and use information during a conflict to conduct integrated joint military operations across the ground, maritime, air, space, cyberspace, and electromagnetic spectrum domains.

According to the People's Liberation Army Daily, Military Informatization refers to the continuous development process of widespread use of information technology in all fields of military construction based on mechanization. This includes building information networks and information systems, extensive acquisition, in-depth development and sharing of information resources, and promoting the overall transformation of the military.

Breakdown of major Chinese military companies operating within the PLA ISF's operational framework

On the founding day of PLA ISF, [President Xi Jinping](#) underscored the significance of this new strategic branch of the military as a key pillar in coordinating the construction and application of the network information system.

As PLA ISF accelerates the process of military informatization and integration of all PLA four Service Branches and four independent Arms through the network information system to meet the needs to win future wars. China continues to prioritize C4I modernization (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence) that emphasizes the

importance of rapid information collection, processing, and sharing and accelerated decision-making. Unlike the shadowy Strategic Support Force, PLA ISF aims to foster more effective coordination with its aligned industries by providing a clear and concise operational framework that is geared towards expediting the military informatization process and fortifying China's Information Warfare and Multi-Domain Precision Warfare (MDPW: 多域精确战) capabilities anchored in C4ISR.

In essence, the core objective of the newly formed PLA ISF is to construct the PLA's network information system sometimes called the "operational system of systems" through rapid military informatizations efforts. On May 4, [PLA daily news](#) commenting on the PLA ISF characterized Modern warfare as a confrontation or contest between systems, emphasizing the criticality of information warfare capabilities. The extensive lists of more than 70 military companies (not conclusive) supporting the core operations of the PLA Information Support Forces and the development of an integrated Military Network System across 6 different domains included:

1. **Information Acquisition** : 29 Major Military Companies working in this domain are manufacturers of Sonar, Infrared radiation, Radar, and Satellite, which are vital to the PLA ISF's information acquisition operations. These products have military applications spanning military detection, defense, attacks, navigation, command and control system, and more.
2. **Information Transmission**: 15 major military companies support military information transmission, specializing in wireless communication, Broadband communication, and Quantum communication technologies.
3. **Information Processing**: 11 military companies support the information processing operations of the PLA's Information Support Force, encompassing Command and dispatch, data storage, and data management systems, forming the backbone for integrated joint military operations.
4. **Information Security**: 7 major companies contribute largely to the information security operations, specializing in quantum cryptography, software development, and Electronic pairing to protect military information and communication assets.
5. **Military Electronic Components**: 6 major military companies listed below are manufacturers of the Multilayer Chip Ceramic Capacitors, Tantalum capacitors, and other critical components used in electronic

equipment and systems of the PLA ISF and the military.

6. **Military Simulation**: In 2020, the market size of China's military simulation industry was approximately 11.852 billion yuan, and it is expected that the industry market size will exceed 20 billion yuan by 2027. The three military companies listed are core providers of military simulation technologies, crucial to the military informatization operations undertaken by the PLA ISF.

In alignment with their increasing importance to the PLA ISF, the list of 72 major military companies under the PLA ISF has recorded a massive boost in investment and stock value in varying degrees.

[Table 1 : Major Military or "Military-Civil fusion" Companies operating within PLA Information Support Force's Operational framework.](#)

Source: This table is collated, translated and analyzed by the authors from Chinese sources including announcements, news, official statements, research analysis and reports.

Creation of new job opportunities for Chinese youths in the Military

After the People's Liberation Army (PLA) implemented its latest reform on April 19, one of the predominant topics of public discussion in China was the potential for significant job opportunities for Chinese youths in the forthcoming years. The focus of these opportunities is expected to center around education and employment in the fields of cybersecurity, information technology, and aerospace.

The establishment of new independent arms such as the Information Support Force (PLA ISF), Military Aerospace Force (PLA MAF), and Cyber Force (PLACF) within a new force structure has led to the creation of more positions in PLA for the civilian to join as a military servicemen or either as civilian personnel. A major change in the PLA's civilian recruitment is inevitable. A Chinese news article on 28th April mentioned that "in the 2025 civilian recruitment positions to be released in October this year, we will also see a large number of new or expanded positions in the three types of units: military aerospace forces, cyberspace forces , and information support forces". Similarly, another News article in China reiterated that 2025 military civilian recruitment is expected to be the year with the largest number of recruitments and positions in recent years.

Conclusion

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has a history of relying on both Military and Civilian companies in the information and technology sectors, in particular, their use in C4I (Command, Control,

Communications, Computers, and Intelligence) operations and building joint combat capabilities. The alignment of over 70 major military companies within the PLA ISF's operational framework underscores their critical role in constructing and application of an integrated, highly informatized military network information system.

The Chinese military companies operating under the control of the People's Liberation Army's Informationization Support Force (PLA ISF) are a fundamental element of China's plan to attain a fully modernized military by 2035 and a globally competitive military by 2049. The ongoing advancement and assimilation of cutting-edge information technologies will play a critical role in achieving these strategic objectives, ensuring that China maintains a leading position in the realm of "information warfare".

China is Erasing the Memory of the Tiananmen Massacre. We Can't Let Them.

04 June 2024, [US News](#), Sophie Richardson

It's long past time to hold Beijing accountable for human rights violations.

The woman's voice cracks as she calls for the souls of the dead to rest in peace. More than three decades since their loved ones were killed by Chinese security forces in the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989, family members vowed in a recording last week to press on "until the day of justice arrives."

On the 35th anniversary of the fatal crackdown on unarmed protesters, Chinese president and Communist Party leader Xi Jinping has silenced discussion in China of what happened in 1989. We can't let him silence us too.

We must remember the students, workers, journalists and others who gathered peacefully in Beijing at a moment of political fluidity in April 1989, demanding free speech, economic reform, greater liberties and an end to corruption. As the protests grew, the government imposed martial law the following month. When protesters didn't disperse, authorities killed hundreds or perhaps thousands of unarmed citizens in Beijing and other cities. We don't know exact numbers because China suppressed them, hiding the death toll and scope of the nationwide crackdown.

Chinese leaders have had 35 years to face up to the past. Yet they steadfastly refuse to do so, presumably fearing that truth and accountability for Tiananmen — and for so many other violations of Chinese citizens' basic human rights — will threaten their iron grip on power.

Unfortunately, democratic nations — including the United States — have allowed China's economic and strategic importance on the world stage to take precedence, enabling impunity for the crimes of Tiananmen by failing to impose meaningful consequences on the Chinese government.

Issuing statements commemorating the crackdown, as the U.S. and others have done in the past, is a symbolic but insufficient gesture. China's leaders have committed even worse human rights violations in the years since Tiananmen, including genocide against the minority Uighurs in western China, in part because they face few to no domestic or international consequences for doing so. Democracies need to demand the release of those wrongfully detained in China, and accountability for China's crimes against humanity. One option would be establishing international tribunals to investigate these crimes.

There are 27 Chinese citizens serving sentences or under detention in mainland China and Hong Kong for their involvement in the protests or commemoration of 1989, according to the global Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders; three other Tiananmen veterans were "persecuted to death" by authorities, including 2010 Nobel Peace laureate Liu Xiaobo.

In Hong Kong, once an island of free expression, 1 million people gathered in Victoria Park 35 years ago to protest the crackdown. For decades, tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of Hongkongers marked the event in an annual candlelight vigil at Victoria Park — until those events were banned in 2020.

Xi's efforts to control past, current and future critiques of the government aren't limited to June 4, or confined to the country's borders. When years of China's draconian "zero-COVID" controls prompted peaceful protests in China, authorities squashed dissent. Peng Lifa, who hung a banner on a bridge in Beijing calling for an end to the lockdown and for democracy, was taken by police in October 2022 and hasn't been heard from since. Other protesters held up blank pieces of paper across China in November 2022, but they too were persecuted and references to their efforts were censored.

Increasingly, commemorations of June 4 and other Chinese government assaults on human rights take place outside China. People will gather this year from Toronto to Tokyo. In Hong Kong, courageous individuals have attempted private remembrances or public acts, including publishing a newspaper with a blank front page ahead of June 4. As Beijing increasingly seeks to silence Chinese overseas, those who join these gatherings must be wary of state surveillance. At a Tiananmen commemoration in California last week, organizers obscured some participants' identities, fearful of reprisals against those people and their family members still in China.

Even as Xi increases repression domestically and internationally, the Tiananmen Mothers have called for transparency and accountability regarding June 4, and for Chinese authorities to respect the rule of law. The mothers' photos of their children who died in 1989 are now faded, but they reflect the spirit of people inside and outside China bravely demanding respect for their human rights. Their actions should galvanize leaders of democracies into action. Even one more year of impunity for the Chinese Communist Party will have devastating consequences for human rights.

04 June 2024, [Takshashila Geospatial Bulletin](#), Dr. Nithiyandam Yogeswaran

The Backstory

China's ongoing efforts to overcome the significant barriers that impede movement between the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Chinese provinces are part of larger strategic goals. These barriers, including surging rivers, rugged mountain terrain, fragile ecosystems, and extreme climatic conditions, have been a part of Tibet's landscape for centuries. The year 1959 marked a significant shift when the transportation of supplies from provinces like Yunnan, Sichuan, and Qinghai heavily relied on humans and livestock. Since then, Tibet's transport infrastructure has seen substantial growth. The total road network in TAR, which was 7,300 km in 1959, expanded to 120,000 km by 2021, a growth of 1543%. This development includes major highways that connect cities, towns, and rural areas within TAR. The integration of Tibet into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2016, a global infrastructure development strategy, has further accelerated this infrastructure growth, profoundly transforming TAR's social and economic landscape.

Despite its sparsely populated mountainous terrain, constructing rail lines in Tibet has been a strategic imperative for China. The inauguration of Tibet's first rail line, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, in 2006 was a significant milestone. This strategic vision is evident in that by 2020, Tibet will have only about 800 km of railway, a length comparable to that of Shanghai, despite Tibet being approximately 200 times larger in land area. However, this scenario is beginning to change. In 2021, China launched Tibet's first high-speed rail line, connecting the regional capital Lhasa with Nyingchi. This line significantly enhances the capability to transport civilians swiftly, as well as PLA troops and equipment, across the eastern part of Tibet, thereby bolstering China's logistical capabilities. The implications of these developments are underscored by notable railroads such as Qinghai-Tibet (2000 km) and Sichuan-Tibet Railway, which connects Tibet externally; meanwhile, Lhasa-Shigatse (253 km) and Lhasa-Nyingchi (435 km) are the major

rail projects that network internally within Tibet, underscoring the importance of Tibet's transport infrastructure.

As per literature, in recent years, air infrastructure has been significantly enhanced alongside the expansion of road and rail networks. Between 2017 and 2022, five airports were upgraded, and four new airports were established. Additionally, nine heliports became operational, further strengthening the region's air connectivity.

Why it is essential to understand transport infrastructure?

Studying the expansion of roads and other transportation networks in Tibet is essential for India. Firstly, enhanced connectivity in TAR can significantly impact regional trade dynamics, facilitating faster and more efficient movement of goods between China and South Asia. The development of robust transport infrastructure in Tibet enhances China's logistical capabilities, affecting the strategic balance in the region. Improved roads and railways mean quicker mobilisation of military assets, a critical consideration for India given the long-standing border disputes with China. Moreover, the environmental impacts of such infrastructure projects are significant. The fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan plateau, with its unique biodiversity and delicate balance, is susceptible to disturbances from large-scale construction activities. Understanding the environmental repercussions of these developments is vital for India, particularly concerning transboundary river systems originating in Tibet, which are lifelines for millions in South Asia. Lastly, the socio-economic transformation of Tibet, driven by improved infrastructure, can lead to demographic shifts and altered socio-political dynamics in the region, influencing Tibet's stability and potentially affecting neighbouring areas, including India. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the transportation network expansion in Tibet offers valuable insights into the broader implications for trade, security, environmental sustainability, and regional stability, all of which are paramount to India.

Road Infrastructure of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)

It is well-established that road infrastructure is crucial for various aspects, including a region's economic development. Figures 2 and 3 clearly illustrate that road networks have significantly expanded. When comparing maps from the pre-independence era to those of the present day, it is evident that the networks have rapidly extended both in length and breadth. This article will further explore whether this growth has primarily been in significant roads or if there has been a more extensive development of minor networks in the region.

Refer to Figure 2, which illustrates both minor and major roads. Specifically, the various categories of

roads are detailed, with trunk and other significant roads depicted by blue lines. These trunk roads connect significant towns and critical areas along the border. Additionally, the figure shows minor roads, including tertiary and secondary roads extending across small villages and remote posts situated in regions closer to the border, remote villages in the valley, and rugged mountains.

While minor roads are crucial for last-mile connectivity, developing major roads is essential for significant progress. Let's delve into this topic through the maps (Figure 4 & 5). The maps illustrate the network of substantial roads established over the past few years. The total length of highways in Tibet spans close to 18,000 km. Among these, the G318, the longest highway in Tibet, connects Shanghai to Tibet. Other significant highways include G109, G219, G214, and the Sino-Nepal Friendship Highway (also part of G318). The connectivity of these highways is detailed in Figure 4.

In addition to the major trunk roads, the trunk link roads play a crucial role in connecting the primary arteries with various regions. These can be considered secondary roads within the area, collectively spanning close to 14,000 kilometres across some of the most challenging terrains in the world. Different forms of minor roads extend further from these secondary roads, reaching villages and remote areas. Refer to Figure 5, which illustrates the significant and primary highway links. The types of roads are asphalt, concrete, gravel, paved, unpaved, and dirt.

Rail Network Infrastructure in Tibet

In late 1999, while other engineers were still figuring out how to make it work, Zhang Luxin, a renowned engineer with extensive experience in railway construction, proposed a new plan. His idea involved following the plateaus that stretch for hundreds of miles. Although the plateau is flat, it is situated at a high altitude and subjected to harsh weather and melting permafrost, making it a challenging route. Zhang argued that it is the best route because it has been used for other purposes. Since the 1970s, this path has been used for an oil pipeline and the route of the Qinghai-Tibet Highway. Many doubted Zhang's plan, believing workers could not survive the high altitudes. More than 644 kilometres of the railway would be built on permafrost, which remains frozen throughout the year. Some considered the technology for building on permafrost too new and risky. However, Zhang persuaded them that it was feasible. Officials approved the route from Golmud to Lhasa, and construction began. This project became one of the most challenging railway lines ever built, high up in the mountains. Today, we see numerous high-speed railways and long tunnels constructed with cutting-edge technology.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) includes several projects in Tibet that are also aimed at enhancing connectivity between China, Nepal, and Bhutan. Central to this effort is the development of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. This network includes infrastructure projects such as the railway extension towards the Nepalese border at Gyirong, which aims to connect with the planned Kathmandu-Kerung railway. These rail and road links are expected to facilitate trade and transit between Tibet and Nepal, promoting economic integration and regional cooperation. Additionally, there are discussions about extending road connectivity from Tibet to Bhutan, which would further enhance regional connectivity under the BRI framework. These projects are part of China's broader strategy to strengthen economic ties and enhance logistical links in South Asia through Tibet.

The Tibet railway network, notably the Qinghai-Tibet Railway and its extensions, is both a challenging and impressive feat due to several unique factors. The railway traverses some of the world's highest and most inhospitable terrains, with sections reaching over 5,000 metres, presenting significant engineering and human health challenges, such as altitude sickness and extreme weather conditions, including sub-zero temperatures and strong winds. Much of the railway is built on permafrost, requiring innovative engineering solutions to ensure stability, such as laying tracks on thick layers of rock and concrete to prevent the permafrost from melting and destabilising the tracks. Constructing the railway in a fragile ecosystem requires careful planning to minimise environmental impact. This includes building bridges over animal migration paths and using unique materials to reduce soil erosion. Transporting materials and machinery to such remote and high-altitude locations posed significant logistical challenges, and the workforce had to endure difficult living conditions. Ensuring a continuous supply of necessary materials was complex.

Despite these challenges, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, completed in 2006, is a remarkable engineering achievement. It includes the Tanggula Pass, the world's highest railway pass at 5,072 metres, and the Fenghuoshan Tunnel, the highest railway tunnel in the world. Advanced technologies were employed to address the challenges of building on permafrost and high altitudes, such as cooling pipes and insulation layers to stabilise the ground and pressurised train cabins to ensure passenger comfort at high altitudes. The railway has significantly boosted the economy of Tibet, facilitating the transport of goods and people, improving access to remote areas, promoting tourism, and providing better connectivity for local populations. The extension of the railway network towards Nepal and potentially Bhutan demonstrates

China's commitment to regional connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative, aiming to enhance trade and economic integration between China and its South Asian neighbours.

Air Infrastructure of Tibet Autonomous Region

Air infrastructure is vital in Tibet, overcoming significant geographical and topographical challenges, including high altitudes, mountainous terrain, and harsh weather conditions that make ground transportation difficult. It provides a reliable alternative for moving people and goods efficiently, boosting tourism and facilitating trade. Strategically, air connectivity allows for the rapid deployment of troops and supplies, which is essential for border security. It also enhances accessibility to remote areas, ensuring the delivery of essential services and promoting cultural exchange and integration. Key airports like Lhasa Gonggar and investments from initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are central to these efforts, highlighting air travel's crucial role in Tibet's economic and social development.

The air infrastructure in Tibet has significantly improved over the years. Several old airports have been renewed, and new airstrips are being constructed. Additionally, many shorter airstrips and heliports have been strengthened.

In our previous research, we covered some of these developments. However, in this edition, we have found that the infrastructure has grown even more. For instance, the number of airstrips has increased from 9 to 13 in the last two years. Existing literature on the topic identified nine airstrips till 2022. Meanwhile, our current study has identified 13. The number of functional and non-functional helipads identified through open-source intelligence is significantly higher than previous research in the public domain.

As stated in earlier research, most airports and airstrips in the Region serve dual purposes, catering to tourism and civilian movement within the country and acting as military bases for the PLA's Air Force. Although the capacity for military operations at these airstrips is unclear, Tibet has several functional civilian airports, with Lhasa Gonggar International Airport being the largest and most important. Lhasa Gonggar Airport has a significant capacity to handle 9 million passengers annually. The airport's Terminal 3, which opened in 2021, contributes significantly to this capacity with 21 additional boarding gates and extensive facilities designed to accommodate high passenger volumes. Other notable airports in Tibet include Nyingchi Mainling Airport, Shigatse Peace Airport, Ngari Gunsa Airport, and Qamdo Bangda Airport. These airports form a network facilitating domestic and limited international travel, primarily connecting to major Chinese cities and Kathmandu in Nepal.

Overall connectivity: transportation nexus

Integrating Tibet's Road, air, and rail infrastructure creates a transformative nexus that significantly impacts tourism, economic activities, and military logistics. This comprehensive transportation network facilitates greater accessibility, enabling a surge in tourism by connecting remote areas with significant cities and international destinations. For instance, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway and newly expanded air routes have improved connectivity, boosted the number of tourists and contributed to the local economy.

Furthermore, the development of these infrastructures supports large-scale economic projects and civilian activities by enhancing the flow of goods and services, which is vital for Tibet's economic growth. The railways and highways, such as the Qinghai-Tibet and Sichuan-Tibet Highways, play a critical role in the movement of both civilian and military personnel, underscoring their importance.

Overall, the enhanced transportation infrastructure in Tibet fosters regional economic development and tourism and strengthens the military's logistical capabilities, contributing to the area's stability and significance.

Nexus between Transportation network and PLA presence

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the strategic distribution and connectivity of major PLA bases in Tibet. Figure 12 depicts the locations of these bases across the region, while Figure 13 highlights the comprehensive network of road, railway, and air infrastructures connecting them. This map underscores how transport infrastructures are designed with dual purposes, serving both civilian needs and military operations.

Settlement infrastructure and road connectivity

Figure 12 shows the distribution of major cities, small and medium towns, and villages within the Tibetan region. Some of these settlements are close to the borders shared with India and Bhutan.

Figure 13 highlights the connectivity of these settlements to major roads. This visualisation specifically showcases the significant roads, indicating a well-established network. It is important to note that this network includes paved and unpaved minor roads, serving multiple purposes. These minor roads provide crucial last-mile connectivity, linking remote posts and villages to the broader transportation system.

The complexity of the terrain

Tibet's terrain is complex, with vast plateaus, towering mountain ranges, and dramatic altitude variations, posing challenges for infrastructure development. The 3D map of Tibet Autonomous Region and other vital prefectures follows:

The maps (1414–18) show how challenging it is to find flat land for development in Tibet due to its rugged terrain. Few flat areas are suitable for construction, making land availability a significant challenge. Despite these obstacles, essential infrastructure

projects, especially transportation, have been successfully established in the region. The images illustrate how even the most minor pieces of land are creatively used for various purposes, highlighting the region's resourcefulness in overcoming geographical constraints to develop essential infrastructure. This reflects the difficulties and achievements in adapting to Tibet's unique environment.

Tunnels and culverts in the complex terrain

In our study, we have mapped the locations of over 400 culverts and more than 600 spatial segments of tunnels in the region. The culverts are built primarily to allow water and debris passage over canals, rivers, streams, and ditches. On the other hand, the tunnels are designed specifically for road and railway systems, forming integral components of transportation networks. Tunnels and culverts are essential for ensuring the efficient use of transportation infrastructure under all weather conditions. Additionally, the tunnels reduce travel times and improve access to strategically important areas, offering economic or military advantages.

Culverts play a critical role in maintaining transportation routes' structural integrity and functionality by preventing water accumulation and erosion, thereby mitigating potential damage to the infrastructure. Meanwhile, tunnels facilitate seamless traffic flow through challenging terrains, such as mountains and hills, enhancing connectivity and accessibility. This improved connectivity supports economic activities by providing quicker routes for transporting goods and services. It enhances the mobility of military forces, ensuring rapid deployment and logistical support in critical areas. Integrating these infrastructural elements demonstrates a sophisticated approach to overcoming geographical challenges and optimising the transportation network for multifaceted benefits.

Parting shot

The insights shared in this edition aim to provide foundational spatial information about the transport infrastructure of the Tibet Autonomous Region, showcasing its readiness for economic expansion, resource utilisation, and military fortification compared to neighbouring areas. The focus has been mapping the various types of existing infrastructure and the inherent complexities of Tibet's unique and challenging terrain.

This analysis highlights the significant progress made in constructing roads, railways, and air links in one of the world's most challenging regions. The vast plateaus and towering mountain ranges necessitate specialised construction techniques and meticulous planning. Developing such infrastructure is a technical achievement and a necessity, enhancing connectivity and fulfilling civilian and military needs.

Our research extends beyond this initial study. We are delving deeper into the remote sensing of infrastructure and the engineering methods employed in Tibet's transport systems. Understanding the composition and resilience of the materials used is crucial for assessing these constructions' long-term sustainability and durability in harsh environmental conditions.

Moreover, future editions will comprehensively analyse key transport hubs and their evolution. This will include detailed studies of major highways, railway lines, and airports, examining how their development has impacted regional growth and security dynamics. By mapping these elements, we aim to provide a holistic view of how transport infrastructure supports broader socio-economic and strategic goals.

INSTIGATION OF REBELLIONS IN TIBET

03 June 2024, [Geopolitika](#), Shane Quinn

The land area called Tibet, in south-western China, is a vast and strategically important part of the Chinese nation, resting on the borders of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. The size of Tibet, if including most of the sparsely inhabited Tibetan Plateau as part of its territory, amounts to 970,000 square miles which is almost 4 times bigger than France.

The Chinese authorities, however, recognise the part of Tibet located on the western side of the plateau, and in 1965 the area was formally established as the Tibet Autonomous Region by Beijing. The Tibet Autonomous Region consists of 472,000 square miles which is still much larger than nearly every European country.

Tibet is the highest region on earth with an average altitude above sea level of nearly 4,400 metres. The overall temperature in winter remains below freezing. In the winter of 2018/2019, the coldest in Tibet for two decades, the average temperature was minus 4.3 degrees Celsius which was almost half a degree lower than in usual years.

Many Tibetans live outside of cities and towns. Sixty-nine percent of inhabitants in the central part of the Tibet Autonomous Region were living in rural areas by 2017. There they have farmed yaks and sheep on the high altitude, semi-arid grasslands and valleys, while they grow crops such as barley.

With the introduction by Beijing of healthcare programmes in Tibet since 1951, the average life expectancy of Tibetan residents has grown significantly. At the start of 2020 the typical life expectancy in Tibet was 70.6 years, whereas in 1950 it had only been 35.5 years. Because of its elevation and challenging land, the population of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2022 consisted of a still modest

3.64 million people; but this is a population increase of around 15 percent since 2012.

Asia's biggest rivers can be traced to Tibet such as the Yangtze, the Mekong, and the Yellow, which are a vital water source for many people living in nations like China, India, Pakistan and Thailand.

In modern history Tibet was reintegrated to China just over 300 years ago. The Qing dynasty of China assumed control over the region in 1720, when Chinese soldiers that year defeated and expelled the Mongol forces of the Dzungar Khanate from Tibet. Yet the history of Tibet as being part of China dates much further back, to the mid-13th century, when the region was incorporated to China under the Yuan dynasty. China's authorities have strongly argued that Tibet continued to be a Chinese territory during the Ming dynasty which lasted until 1644.

Over elapsing centuries one of the greatest challenges to China's control over Tibet occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, in the immediate years after the successful culmination of the Chinese revolution in 1949. The revolution re-established China's independence after many years of meddling in the country by the Western powers, such as from the United States.

After 1948 the US had "lost China to communism" and policies were undertaken in Washington to reinstate their authority over China, with territories like Tibet identified as target areas. The CIA and to a lesser extent the US military helped to instigate anti-Chinese insurrections in Tibet, such as occurred from 1956 in the Kham and Amdo areas in the eastern part of the Tibetan Plateau.

The CIA directly intervened in Tibet and following 1956 went so far as to fly hundreds of Tibetan militants to the US, where they underwent training by CIA personnel at a facility in the state of Colorado. This military training centre, called Camp Hale, was built for US mountain troops in 1942 and was positioned high up the Rocky Mountains. In the latter stages of World War II, some Wehrmacht troops captured by the US Army in North Africa were sent to Camp Hale where they were kept prisoner.

After completion of training at Camp Hale the "Tibetan freedom fighters" were flown in planes belonging to a CIA airline, called the Intermountain Aviation and Intermountain Airways, and also by the US Air Force, to a secret base for operations against China constructed in the town of Aspen, a Colorado skiing hotspot.

The failed 1959 rebellion in Tibet against Beijing's authority was most heavily encouraged by Washington. As early as May 1957 armed Tibetan groups were created with CIA support. The following year (June 1958) an anti-Chinese guerrilla army, the Chushi Gangdruk Volunteer Defense Force, was established and its members were subsequently

armed and trained by the Americans. The 1959 rebellion was supported not only by the CIA but by intelligence agents from India and Nepal, countries that were staunch US allies at the time.

The 14th Dalai Lama, an influential religious leader who is alive today, managed to evade Chinese government troops in March 1959 during the insurrection. Through wearing a disguise, on 17 March he fled Tibet southwards to India having been escorted to the border by CIA-trained Tibetan militants. Beijing's soldiers were understandably enraged when they discovered the Dalai Lama was nowhere to be seen.

The Dalai Lama's older brother, Gyalo Thondup, also still living, had a leading role in the 1959 revolt. Thondup was in contact with the Americans for years. He had visited Washington in 1951 and provided intelligence details and local knowledge about Tibet to senior American officials.

Thondup insisted the Dalai Lama was not told about CIA assistance to the Tibetans which is obviously untrue. US State Department documents, released in August 1998, outlined that the Dalai Lama himself received from the CIA \$180,000 every year from the late 1950s to 1974. This means the Dalai Lama was already being furnished with large amounts of American money at the time of the 1959 rebellion. The sum of \$180,000 in 1959 is currently worth almost \$2 million.

The Dalai Lama was previously receiving a financial allowance from the CIA dating to at least the early 1950s, and maybe as far back as 1949, at the end of the revolution. The CIA budget, relating to Tibet, was multiple times larger than the funds that were allocated for the British and US-led coup against the Iranian government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953.

The Dalai Lama has backed the unification of separatist groups in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, with the ultimate aim of these Chinese regions seceding altogether from China. The Dalai Lama said, "Geography, history and currently Chinese occupation is connecting our three peoples. I remain optimistic that the true aspirations of the peoples of East Turkestan [Xinjiang], Inner Mongolia and Tibet will be fulfilled in a not too distant future".

American media later acknowledged the covert CIA training of Tibetan militants in Colorado. The CIA was also involved in funding "Tibet Houses" in cities like New York and Geneva, while the CIA's budget extended to providing "educational opportunities" to Tibetans at Cornell University in New York, and supplying the insurgents with military equipment.

On 6 January 1960 for example, unmarked CIA aircraft flying over Tibet dropped to the militants below 650 pallets containing weapons, medical supplies, and food. In the weeks before that, CIA planes had

dropped military hardware such as hundreds of American M1 Garand rifles, grenades, mortars, and machine guns.

Two more CIA air drops consisted of a further 1,170 M1 Garand rifles, 200 cases of ammunition for the rifles, and 20 cases of grenades. The M1 Garand was the firearm most commonly used by the US Army in World War II and the Korean War, but by 1957 the rifle was considered obsolete by the Americans.

Another CIA air drop in early 1960 amounting to 430 pallets, which contained weapons and other supplies, was sent to 4,000 Tibetan insurgents below. Their position was identified by China's military pilots and heavily bombed. Occasionally, Chinese warplanes dropped leaflets ordering the militants to surrender and to ignore the Americans.

The Chinese aircraft often attacked enemy positions in the morning, at about noon, and then at around 3 pm or 4 pm. Fifteen warplanes would arrive in groups of five with each carrying between 15 to 20 bombs. Once the enemy forces were located, it was not a hard task for China's pilots to execute their combat mission. Across the Tibetan Plateau there is scarcely any cover in which to conceal men and equipment. For the Chinese airmen the most difficult job was finding the enemy due to the vastness of the land.

According to a retired CIA officer living in the eastern United States, the Americans wanted to inflict injury on the Chinese in Tibet, and were aware they would be unlikely to drive Beijing's divisions out of the area. Tibetan guerrilla forces, with logistical support provided by the US, attacked China's lengthy supply lines in Tibet and attempted to tie down Chinese soldiers and make life difficult for them. These attacks, although they inflicted damage, could not succeed over time because of the greater size of China's military; and the fact that, compared to the enemy, Beijing's troops were also better equipped and had advanced weapons like the Chinese Type 56 assault rifle, which was first produced in 1956.

Control over the Tibetan Plateau is crucial for China. Robert Barnett, an author who focuses on Tibet, wrote that the Tibetan Plateau from a military viewpoint is important because it is made up of the high ground and central, south and east Asia converge around it.

From the late 1950s CIA training camps were set up in Nepal including close to Pokhara, Nepal's second biggest city, and in the district of Mustang, where Tibetan insurgents were trained by CIA operatives. There were at least 15 camps being used which were spread over Nepal, India, and inside China itself in Tibet.

By using Nepal and India as bases, the Americans were involving those two countries in the conflict against China. In the year 1964, the CIA spent \$500,000 (worth \$5 million today) on the guerrillas in Nepal; \$400,000 (\$4 million today) for the training of Tibetans in

Colorado; \$225,000 (\$2.2 million today) on equipment, transportation and expenses; \$185,000 (\$1.8 million today) for flying to India the Tibetans trained in Colorado; \$125,000 (\$1.2 million today) for expenses, equipment and supplies to Tibetan reconnaissance teams, and on the storage of supplies, aircraft refuelling, agents' salaries, and formulation of traineeships for the network of agents in Tibet.

Moreover, the CIA in 1964 spent \$75,000 (\$744,000 today) on maintaining the Tibet Houses in New York, Geneva, and other cities; \$45,000 (\$446,000 today) on "educational programmes" for 20 Tibetan youths; and the Dalai Lama of course received his annual \$180,000. The Dalai Lama's entourage stressed that he never spent any of the money on himself.

A security guard for the Dalai Lama, Lobsang Tsaltrim, said that he was hired by the CIA in 1964 and had no qualms about it. The insurgents could be naive and were often unable to comprehend that the Americans were using them for their own strategic purposes. The Dalai Lama, regardless, admitted that the US military aid was "entirely political" in nature.

At the end of 1962 the Americans were granted access to an airfield beside New Delhi, India's capital city. From this airfield the Tibetan militants were flown to Colorado in groups of 40 or 50 men.

Upon finishing their training in the US they were returned to India by aircraft, and shortly thereafter north to Tibet where they jumped out of the planes and deployed their parachutes. Hundreds of other Tibetan insurgents were flown to the American-held islands of Okinawa and Guam where they received training in guerrilla warfare, and they were then sent back to Tibet to fight against the Chinese forces.

A joint CIA-Indian command centre was set up in New Delhi in the early 1960s, as relations between India and China continued to worsen during this period. The Dalai Lama's brother, Thondup, was forefront in directing US military aid through India's northern region of Darjeeling across the Indian-Chinese border into Tibet.

India-China Nomenclature War Intensifies In The Himalayas – OpEd

03 June 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Subir Bhaumik and Pratyusha Mukherjee

India has intensified with China "a silent war" focussed on challenging China's renaming of places in India's Arunachal Pradesh state to strengthen its territorial claim on it.

The Indian Army's information warfare division, backed by celebrated research institutes like the British-era Asiatic Society based in Kolkata, have swung into action to counter the Chinese nomenclature offensive.

Already tweets by the Army have challenged the Chinese renaming of the seven places in Arunachal and efforts are on to put out counter each of 30 odd places renamed by the Chinese .

After a new government takes charge in Delhi, India may rename nearly 30 places in Tibet Autonomous Region of China, military officials said.

The new names will be backed by extensive historical research, they said.

These writers are in possession of the entire list of Tibetan places that India will rename.

“As and when that happens, it will be tantamount to India reopening the Tibetan question. So long India has accepted Tibet as part of China since it was forcibly occupied by Beijing, but now the Modi government seems prepared to change course to deflate the Chinese cartographical and nomenclature aggression,” says former Intelligence Bureau officer Benu Ghosh, who served on the LAC for long years and pursued his mountaineering interests simultaneously.

The Indian Army has in recent weeks organised lots of media trips to these disputed border areas and got them to speak to locals who fiercely oppose Chinese claims and say they were always part of India.

“The ultimate target is to push through the Indian counter-narrative on the disputed border through regional and global media, anchored on both solid historical research and local residents voxpops,” says an officer involved in the campaign, but did not wish to be identified.

In what is seen as a bid to assert its claim on Arunachal Pradesh, China renamed 30 places along the line of actual control (LAC) in India’s northeastern state. The Chinese ministry of civil affairs, responsible for the establishment and naming of administrative divisions, released the fourth list of “standardised” geographical names in Arunachal Pradesh recently, which Beijing calls Zangnan, according to a Hong Kong-based daily. This is the fourth time China has unilaterally renamed places in Arunachal Pradesh, having done it previously in 2017, 2021 and 2023.

The list of places renamed by China includes 11 residential areas, 12 mountains, four rivers, one lake, one mountain pass and a piece of land. The names have Chinese characters, Tibetan and pinyin, the Roman alphabet version of Mandarin Chinese.

“In accordance with the relevant provisions of the State Council [China’s cabinet] on the management of geographical names, we in conjunction with the relevant departments have standardised some of the geographical names in Zangnan of China,” South China Morning Post quoted the ministry as saying.

Beijing released the first list of the so-called standardised names of six places in Arunachal Pradesh in 2017, the second list of 15 places in 2021 followed by another list with names for 11 places in 2023.

India has repeatedly rejected China’s move to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, asserting that the state is an integral part of the country and assigning “invented” names does not alter this reality.

In 2023, then external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said: “We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright.”

He added, “Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. Attempts to assign invented names will not alter this reality.”

The recent statements by China to reassert its claims over the state started with Beijing lodging a diplomatic protest with India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Arunachal Pradesh, where he dedicated to the nation the Sela Tunnel built at an altitude of 13,000 feet in Arunachal Pradesh.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on March 23 dismissed China’s repeated claims on Arunachal Pradesh as “ludicrous” and that the frontier state was a “natural part of India”.

“This is not a new issue. I mean, China has laid claim, it has expanded its claim. The claims are ludicrous to begin with and remain ludicrous today,” he said in response to a question on the Arunachal issue after delivering a lecture at the prestigious Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

“So, I think we’ve been very clear, very consistent on this. And I think you know that is something which will be part of the boundary discussions which are taking place,” he said.

Six decades later, scholar locates site of secret CIA-Tibet training camp

03 June 2024, [University of Colorado Boulder](#), Clint Taibott

Carole McGranahan, a CU Boulder anthropology professor who has long studied the Tibetan perspective of China’s invasion and occupation of Tibet, joins the Tibetan community to commemorate the location on June 9 at Camp Hale, Colorado.

For decades, the CIA’s training of Tibetan soldiers to fight Chinese invaders was a state secret, but even after the U.S. government formally acknowledged the CIA-Tibet effort, the exact location of the Tibetan camp remained a mystery.

With the dogged research of anthropologist Carole McGranahan, the precise location is now known. McGranahan, a University of Colorado Boulder anthropology professor who’s been studying the Tibetan perspective on the resistance to China for more than three decades, will soon join Tibetans from

Colorado and beyond to commemorate the camp, six decades after it was closed.

The memorial gathering, which is titled “Dumra/The Secret Garden—Commemorating the CIA-Tibet Program at Camp Hale,” will take place at noon on June 9 at Camp Hale National Monument.

Members of the Tibetan community from around the world and several members of parliament of the Dalai Lama’s exile government in India are scheduled to attend, as is one of his cabinet ministers.

McGranahan said finding the training camp’s actual location now is meaningful for two reasons. “One is that most of the veterans and retired (CIA) agents have passed,” and the other is that the history of the operation had been suppressed and concealed for decades—a condition McGranahan calls “arrested history.”

Tibetans, for instance, have been unable to “celebrate and honor these soldiers in a way that they deserved,” she said. “This service, not just to Tibet but to the Dalai Lama, was the defining moment of their lives.”

For the Tibetan community to know the actual location, she added, “is meaningful in a way that even as a scholar I hadn’t fully appreciated.”

Fraught history

McGranahan’s work adds detail to the history of Tibet and China, which has long been fraught.

In 1949, Mao Zedong won the civil war in China, defeating Chiang Kai-shek. Mao, the first leader of the People’s Republic of China, promised to “liberate” Tibet, which was then an independent country headed by the Dalai Lama, the country’s political and spiritual leader.

Within a year, the Chinese army invaded Tibet and marched on the capital, Lhasa. For the next decade, the Dalai Lama and Tibet’s government sought to negotiate—under military duress—with China. Meanwhile, Tibetan citizens facing Chinese invaders from the east began fighting back.

Initially, they fought with whatever they had from wherever they were. Later, the Tibetans formed a citizens’ army called Chushi Gangdrug, whose mission was to defend the Dalai Lama, Tibet and Buddhism.

The Tibetans’ resistance caught the attention of the United States. “This is during the Cold War, so this was roughly 1956, and the Tibetans were on their own, fighting communists,” McGranahan noted.

The U.S. Department of State got involved, as did, secretly, the CIA, which launched a program to train Tibetan soldiers. That program landed in Colorado in 1958 at Camp Hale, near Vail, Colorado, the widely known training ground of the 10th Mountain Division fighters who served in World War II.

About 300 Tibetan soldiers were trained at Camp Hale from 1959-64. The CIA kept a tight lid on information about the program, and closely guarded entrance to and from the site. The camp closed in 1964, but the

CIA continued to support the Tibetan resistance until 1973.

McGranahan began researching the Tibetan resistance in 1993, when she was working on her PhD in history and anthropology at the University of Michigan.

“One of the things I wanted to do was to understand and tell the story of the Tibetan resistance to China from the Tibetan perspective, because in the English language, it had been told almost exclusively as a story about the CIA,” McGranahan noted recently.

That approach clearly left out the Tibetan perspective, which, “frankly, to me, was more interesting and needed to be told,” she said.

In her doctoral research, McGranahan interviewed more than 100 Tibetan veterans, including many who had trained at Camp Hale. She noted that the 300 Tibetans who were trained in Colorado were a small portion of the thousands of fighters in the Tibetan Chushi Gangdrug army.

Though she focused on the Tibetan perspective, she also interviewed about 10 retired CIA officers who had been stationed at Camp Hale. At the time, the CIA operation was still top secret. “Protocol didn’t acknowledge the operation,” she said. “There was nothing public about it.”

That changed on Sept. 10, 2010, when the U.S. government installed a plaque at Camp Hale formally acknowledging that the CIA had trained Tibetan officers there.

One day prior, on Sept. 9, 2010, Duke University Press released McGranahan’s book, *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*.

The public announcement stemmed from the efforts of Ken Knaus, a retired CIA agent, who enlisted the help of former U.S. Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo. Together with Roger McCarthy, Knaus had been in charge of the CIA-Tibet operation, and it had been the lifelong mission of both men to tell the story of the operation and to install a plaque at Camp Hale.

Searching for the garden

McGranahan, who describes herself as the group’s “resident scholar,” joined the dedication ceremony in 2010. After the ceremony, the Tibetan veterans and the CIA officers wanted to find the site of the CIA camp, which CIA officers called “The Ranch” and Tibetans called “Dumra,” meaning garden.

But the group’s desire to see the Dumra location was thwarted by the fact that the CIA had demolished and obscured any trace of the facilities. “The site was made to look as if nothing had been there,” McGranahan observed.

“And to the dismay of the veterans on both sides, they could not find the camp,” she added. “The very camp they had lived in, they couldn’t find. This was very distressing to everyone.”

It's also understandable. Camp Hale encompasses 53,804 acres, and landmarks that were clearly seen six decades ago could easily be obscured.

Last fall, McGranahan contacted a CU alumnus, Tracy Walters, who lives in the Vail Valley and who does a lot of hiking, camping and bike-riding through Camp Hale. She told him the story of the lost CIA training site, and he offered to help.

Using photos of the CIA site from the early 1960s and comparing them with satellite images, Walters determined where he thought the location was.

She and Walters visited the site in February, strapped on snowshoes to navigate the four feet of snow there, "and we snowshoed out, trying to match up the photographs of the camp with the current landscape, basically 60 years later," she said.

McGranahan emailed the photographs of the site, new and old, to the one still-living CIA officer, Bruce Walker, who had been stationed at the camp. "He wrote back immediately, 'Yes, that is the site, and I am the one who took those photographs you're holding up in the picture.'"

It turns out that U.S. Highway 24, which is near the CIA training site, was not heavily used in the early 60s, and the site couldn't be seen from the highway. Also, the CIA agents and Tibetan soldiers entered from Colorado Highway 91, near the Climax molybdenum mine at Fremont Pass.

Having found the location, McGranahan contacted members of Chushi Gangdrug or their descendants, who said, "We need to do a ceremony there." Former agent Walker, now 91, also plans to attend June 9.

McGranahan underscores the significance of identifying the precise location of this chapter of history:

"You can feel the resonance, the poignancy of it, of what it means to be on the place where there was a hope, there was a camaraderie, there was a commitment. Certain aspects of that did come to fruition, certainly the camaraderie, and there's a hope that remains."

China still controls Tibet, but the two groups—CIA agents and Tibetan fighters—remain committed to each other.

The June 9 ceremony is organized by the CU Department of Anthropology and Tibet Himalaya Initiative together with the Colorado Chushi Gangdrug and Vail Symposium. Co-sponsors for the event are the CU Boulder College of Arts and Sciences, the Departments of Communication, Ethnic Studies, Geography, History, Linguistics, Religious Studies and Sociology, the Center for the American West, the Center for Asian Studies, the Institute for Behavioral Science and the Museum of Natural History. It is also co-sponsored by Nova Guides, Polar Star Properties and 10th Mountain Whiskey

Additionally, on June 7 at the Vail Symposium, McGranahan, India-based filmmakers Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin, and retired CIA officer Bruce Walker will present a research talk "Dumra at Camp Hale: The CIA's Tibetan Resistance Program" about the secret CIA training camp for Tibetan resistance soldiers at Camp Hale that operated from 1958-1964.

This presentation is the basis for a book they are co-authoring about Camp Hale's Tibetan history. Their presentation will be live-streamed.

With China willing to discuss 'Dalai Lama's future', Tibetan fate hangs in balance

02 June 2024, FirstPost, [Claude Arpi](#)

Beijing has not called Dalai Lama a 'separatist' leader; instead, it has shown interest in discussing his 'personal future'

On May 24, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public meeting in Mandi to support Bollywood actress and BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut. In the course of his speech, he mentioned Tibet, something he rarely does. According to a press release from the PMO, Modi asserted: "The Congress government was so timid that it was afraid to even mention the name of Dalai Lama Ji. I frequently engage in discussions with Dalai Lama Ji. He is a stalwart of our rich heritage. India is the land of Buddha, and the Modi government has been actively promoting this heritage."

The 'frequent discussions' are not in the public domain; we only know that from time to time, a phone call is made from Delhi to Dharamsala on the Dalai Lama's birthday.

This statement, however, raises the issue of Tibet, which seems to have been dormant for years.

The political head of Tibet's government-in-exile, Penpa Tsering, recently visited the United States and Canada. Everywhere, the Sikyong conveyed the urgent situation in Tibet "highlighting China's efforts to eradicate Tibet's distinct culture and identity and assimilate the Tibetan people".

During an encounter with the Tibetan Diaspora, Penpa Tsering noted that the priorities and policies of his government were to enhance the stability and efficiency of departments within the Central Tibetan Administration and implement the Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy.

He admitted that he was in contact with Beijing; according to Firstpost, the Sikyong stated: "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." Penpa Tsering, however, insisted that the talks were "very informal".

PTI quoted him, saying, "I have my interlocutor who deals with people in Beijing. Then there are other elements also trying to reach out to us."

Beijing was quick to retort: "[We] will talk only with the representatives of the Dalai Lama and not the officials of the Tibetan government-in-exile."

The positive side was that Beijing did not call the Dalai Lama a separatist and instead said it was ready to discuss his "personal future".

This has been Beijing's position for the past four decades: the discussions can only be about the Dalai Lama's future.

The Future

This, however, raises the issue of the future of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

In the early 1980s, the Dalai Lama envisaged a Middle Path approach, probably based on the "One Country, Two Systems" slogan coined by Deng Xiaoping at the end of the 1970s.

The Tibetan leader elaborated his vision for the future in two documents, a Five-Point Peace Plan in 1987 in Washington, DC, and his Strasbourg Proposal in 1988. The first of the five points was "transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace", a concept certainly appealing for India; another point was "respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms".

The 'Zone of Peace' would soon be dropped, and the riots in Lhasa in 1989 and the subsequent imposition of martial law demonstrated the limits of the second. In his Strasbourg Proposal, the Dalai Lama spoke of "the whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the People's Republic of China".

This was before the events of Tiananmen Square; before June 1989, there were probably chances that China could join the concert of democratic nations and be a normal state.

Ten rounds of negotiations took place between the Dalai Lama's representatives (the CTA's representatives have always been banned in Beijing) between 2002 and 2010. This led nowhere.

China, a Great Power

Things have changed since then; China has become the second most important economic player in the world, while the situation within the Middle Kingdom has grimly deteriorated since 2012, at least in terms of individual liberty.

Today, after the recent events in Hong Kong and the military threats against the 'renegade island' (Taiwan), 'One Country, Two Systems' cannot be envisioned anymore. This makes the situation in Tibet (and in Xinjiang, the other Chinese colony) more precarious than ever.

Taiwan

In February, a Chinese writer living in exile, Yuan Hongbing, revealed that China planned to use the Kuomintang's (KMT's) influence in Taiwan's legislature to boost its United Front strategy. Yuan said that the information came from a "princeling" (son of a Chinese revolutionary leader) whom Xi Jinping does not dare to challenge. According to Chinascope, a US website carrying information on the Mainland, "the CCP is not just using military intimidation to destabilise Taiwan; it is also using propaganda, the deployment of agents, and the expansion of the KMT's legislative power to override the Taiwanese administration."

Last week, Chinese military spokesperson senior Colonel Wu Qian told a press conference that China's reunification is an irreversible trend in history and that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is ready to take resolute actions to counter any "Taiwan independence".

Soon after Lai Ching-te took charge as Taiwan's president on May 20, the Chinese military warned Taiwan that "independence" would mean "war" and Beijing would thwart any foreign interference in support of "separatist activities" in the democratic-ruled island.

The recent military drills that followed were more to 'scare the chicken' than a rehearsal, as an 'influence' takeover will certainly be less costly and risky for Beijing. Yuan added that "the CCP's Taiwan policy has shifted from coercion and enticement to psychological warfare, aiming to demoralise Taiwanese."

Deterioration in Hong Kong

Around the same time, the BBC reported that a court in Hong Kong "found 14 pro-democracy activists guilty of subversion in the largest use yet of a China-imposed National Security Law. They included former lawmakers Leung Kwok-hung and Helena Wong, journalist-turned-campaigner Gwyneth Ho, and ordinary Hong Kongers who joined the mass protests of 2019, such as nurse Winnie Yu".

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee took Beijing's side and declared that his government will do its "utmost to prevent, suppress, and impose punishment" for any activities "endangering national security".

Situation in Tibet

In Tibet, the situation is also rapidly deteriorating. A report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted, "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 kilometres away—are voluntary." The Chinese rationale was to "improve people's livelihoods and protect the ecological environment".

Using over 1,000 official Chinese media articles between 2016 and 2023, as well as government publications and academic field studies, HRW said that

China's own media reports showed that participation in "whole-village relocation" programmes in Tibet is in fact compulsory. "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 kilometres 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," said the report.

HRW could not find a single case where a village scheduled for relocation was able to avoid being moved.

What is left of the 'genuine autonomy' the Dalai Lama was dreaming of in the 1980s? Probably not much today.

Another Report

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet reported in May that the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), a non-political organisation, "is becoming a key instrument in the Chinese Communist Party's strategy to assimilate and transform Tibetan Buddhism, particularly in relation to the search for and recognition of reincarnate lamas".

When it speaks of the 'sinification of Buddhism', Beijing is obviously thinking of the succession of the Dalai Lama.

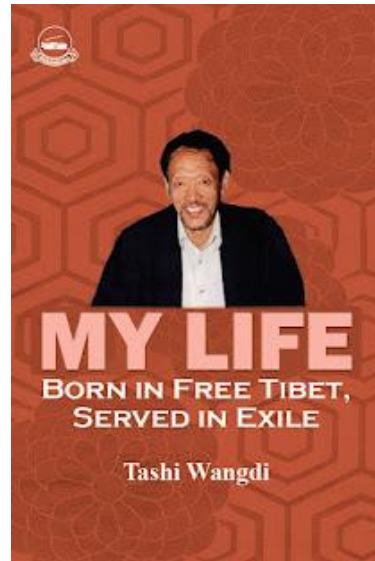
Since President Xi Jinping's announcement of his intent to sinify all the religions in China, the BAC has been "mandated as the tool to implement campaigns that will contribute to its fruition, particularly in connection with Tibetan Buddhism".

Founded in 1953, the BAC's charter was amended in 2020 to include "Sinification of Buddhism in China", one of its objectives in order 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". During the recent Two Sessions held in Beijing in March 2024, Wang Huning, the Party's chief ideologue, mentioned that the BAC "carried out 10 research and inspections in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Tibet-related counties in Sichuan Province on promoting the sinification of Tibetan Buddhism".

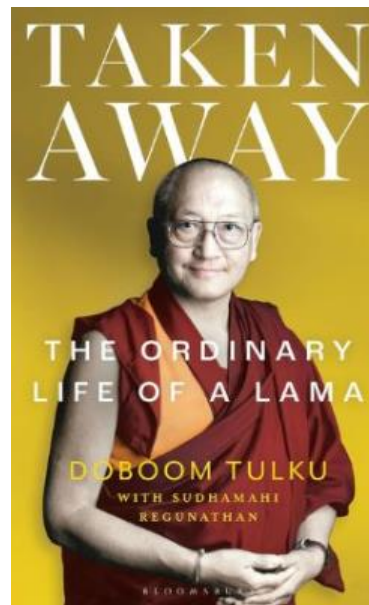
In the present circumstances, hopes for a better tomorrow are presently limited.

One can only hope that when the Indian prime minister calls the Dalai Lama on July 6 to wish him on his 89th birthday, the Tibetan leader will be able to convince PM Modi that the fates of Tibet and India are intimately linked, in particular as far as the boundary between them is concerned.

Publications



My Life - Born in Free Tibet, Served in Exile



Taken Away: The Ordinary Life of a Lama by Doboomb Tulku With Sudhamahi Reghunathan



ICT's Tibet Roundup— 2024 Issue 11 (June 16-30)